

Similarities and Differences in Local Self- Government in Lithuania and Slovakia

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Abstract

The paper refers to similarities and differences in the position of local self-government in two countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic. The results of contribution are based on a system of public administration applied in each country, territorial and administrative division of the countries as well as the basic legal norms governing the status and role of local self-government. In the final part it refers to creating and the competences of individual local self-government bodies and the relationships among them. In terms of the status of local self-government Lithuania belongs to the countries that implemented the consolidation of settlement structure. Performance of local self-government is being implemented through 60 municipalities where the number of inhabitants ranges from 4.400 to 580.000. Slovakia is characterized by high fragmentation of settlement structure (2.890 municipalities) with high proportion of small villages. Each municipality in Slovakia is a separate self-governing unit, where the scope of the population living in them ranges from 11 to 413.192.

Keywords: public administration, administrative-territorial division, local self-government, administrative-territorial unit, competences of municipalities, institutional structure of municipality

JEL Classification H11, H70, H77

Introduction

In the 90s of the 20th century the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had gone through the major changes that significantly affected their political, economic and social life. In connection with the transition from centrally controlled economy with a strong centralized state to parliamentary democracy in a number of them changed the perception of public administration as the executor of the state executive power. The countries started to form new public institutions, which had not been characterized only by a simple exercise of state power, but which in the significant extent independently set their goals and make decisions to achieve them. Such specific entity became territorial self-government.

Territorial local self-government represents the realization of the right of its organs to administrate and manage substantial share of public affairs under its own, legally defined competence and in accordance with the interests of residents who are living on its administered territory. The object of local self-government is to provide governance and public administration to local areas. Entities which locally implement these activities are municipalities that have legally recognized rights and duties to carry out these activities. All municipalities seek to provide for public safety and perform some degree of public work [Rosenbloom, Kravcuk, Clerkin, 2009].

Position and competencies of local self-government depends on the system of public administration applied in a particular country. Territorial local self-government as a subsystem of public administration is also identified with the executive branch of government.

Territorial self-government is characterized with democratic administration of power, territorial autonomy, autonomous responsibility and optimal combination of original and transferred competencies.

Purpose and Methodology

The aim of this paper is to highlight the status of local self-government in the two countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Lithuania and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia), which in the 90s changed their political system that significantly affected constitution and administration performance.

The paper is thematically divided into four basic parts. The first section briefly describes both surveyed countries and their system of public administration. This section also points out the status of local self-government as well as the basic legal norms and standards constituting of local self-government in both countries. The second part analyzes and compares the territorial-administrative division of Lithuania and Slovakia, which is closely linked to organizational and management structure of public administration. One part of this section presents the size structure of basic territorial units and administrative units. At the end this section refers to similarities and differences between these two countries in terms of territorial administration units as well as in terms of consolidation resp. fragmentation of settlement structure.

The third part refers to similarities and differences in the functions and duties that the local government meets, including a review of local government expenditure by function classification. The final, fourth part of the paper focuses on the constitution, status and competencies of local self-government bodies, especially municipal council, the mayor, controller bodies, municipal office and others.

Development and the position of local self-government were examined in long time period, for Lithuania since 1992 and the Slovak Republic since 1990, when were occurred already mentioned significant political changes in both countries. Data regarding the structure of local self-government expenditure in Slovakia we examined with static analysis to 31st December 2012, because until time to completing the paper data from 2013 are not yet published. The information received from Ministry of Finance of Lithuania created a possibility to examine data regarding the structure of local self-government expenditure of year 2013. Other data that are presented in the paper, we recorded to 31st December 2013. In Slovakia we have used data on the size categories of municipalities, downloaded from the document “Size groups of municipalities of Slovakia in figures”, which was officially published in 2010, data as of 31.12.2009.

Underlying data we obtained from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Finance SR, Government Office SR, the Constitution SR, the relevant legal norms and other regulations, as well as from own experience and direct action in a number of local self-government bodies (Deputy mayor, Head of the municipal Office, Member of the Municipal Council). We use information from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Interior of Lithuania Republic as well as from Department of Statistics of Lithuania.

Results

1. General Information about State, System of Public Administration and Legal Acts on Local Self-Government

Lithuania is a small European country situated by the Baltic Sea. Its neighbors are the Republic of Latvia (in the north), the Republic of Belarus (in the east), the Republic of Poland and Russian Kaliningrad Oblast (from the south and south-west). The total area of Lithuania is 65.300 km². According to the estimate of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, approximately 3 million people resided in Lithuania in 2013. The average density of population is 45.5/km².

68.5% of the Lithuanian population reside in cities and towns and 31.5% in rural residential areas (townships, villages, and steadings). According to the ethnic composition there are 84.6% of Lithuanians, 6.6% of Poles; 5.8% of Russians and 2.3% of people of other nationalities.

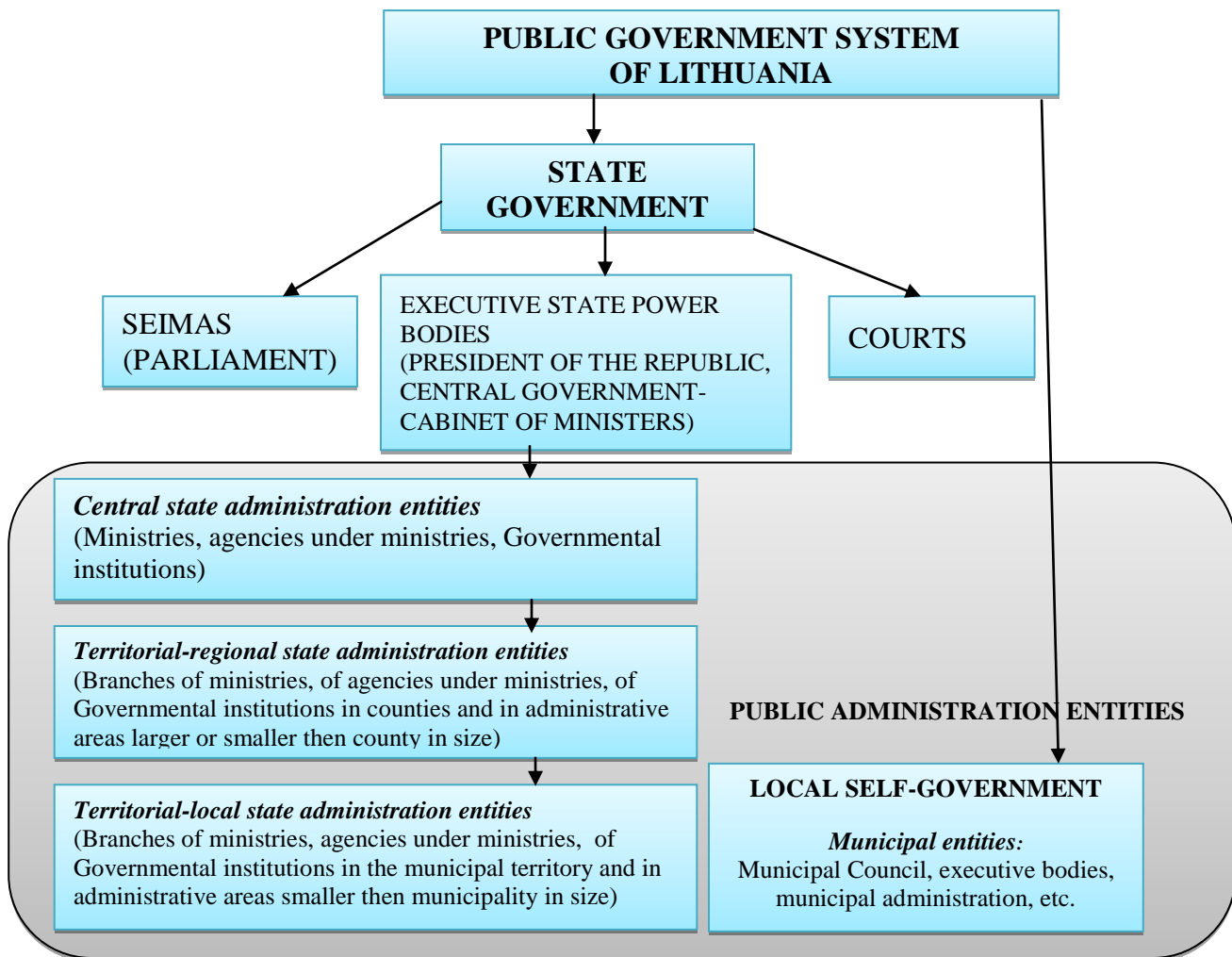
The capital of Lithuania is the city of Vilnius located within Vilnius City Municipality. In 2013 580,000 people lived in Vilnius. Vilnius City Municipality is the largest municipality in Lithuania, but it does not have a special status: local public matters are solved there in accordance with the general provisions of the Law on Local Self-government.

According to *the form of state government* Lithuania is a parliamentary republic with certain elements of the mixed form of state government, according to *the territorial structure of state government* - a unitary state and according to *the political regime* – a democratic state.

Under the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (adopted in 1992 at the national referendum) *the Lithuanian public power* (more precisely, the public government system) consists of *state power* (state government sub-system) and *local self-government* (local self-government sub-system). At the same time the local self-government is recognized as a specific public administration system which operates on different grounds than the state power and is not directly subordinate to the state power. Relations between the state government institutions and local self-government entities (municipalities and etc.) are based on: 1) defining of municipal competences by the Constitution and laws as well as on division of municipal competences to own competences and competences delegated by the State), 2) the possibility for the state authorities to influence municipalities only by legal and economic measures, 3) legal (administrative), performing and financial supervision of municipalities, as well as judicial control and resolution of disputes judicially, 4) provision of consultation and cooperation. The place of local self-government in the public government system is shown in **Figure 1**.

Lithuanian state power (more precisely, state governance) is organized and executed in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Lithuania, international treaties, secondary legislation. The state power is organized according to the principle of separation of powers: spheres of legislative, executive and judicial powers are institutionally separated. State government powers are restricted and divided among the spheres of state government by the Constitution (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 1: Public Government System in Lithuania in 2014



Source: own processing based on the Constitution of Lithuania Republic and the Law on Public administration of Lithuania Republic

Figure 2: State Government (State Power) in Lithuania (2014)

SINGLE CHAMBER PARLIAMENT (SEIMAS)	PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC
141 members elected for 4 year term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71 elected by direct universal suffrage • 70 elected by proportional representation „Constantly working“ Last elections in 2012 Main functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representation • laws „making“ • participation in the creation of central government (cabinet of ministers) and parliamentary control • state budget, taxes • participation in formation of foreign policy <i>Speaker Loreta Grauziniene</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected by direct universal suffrage for 5 years term • Part of executive state power (institutions of state administration) • The head of the state • Last election in 2014 • <i>President of Lithuania – Dalia Grybauskaitė</i>
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (CABINET OF MINISTERS)	COURTES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of 15 members: prime minister and 14 ministers • Part of executive state power) • XVI central government from 2012 <i>Prime minister Algirdas Butkevicius</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional court (9 members) • Supreme court and Court of appeals; territorial courtes • Administrative courtes

Source: own processing based on the Constitution of Lithuania Republic

Local self-government is organized and implemented in the Republic of Lithuania in compliance with:

1. The provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (Lithuania has the constitutional framework of local self-government which consists of the provisions of Chapter X of the Constitution and other provisions, also the documents of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania on the basis of which the official constitutional doctrine of local self-government was shaped);
2. The provisions of the European Charter on Local Self-government (Lithuania signed this international instrument in 1996 and ratified it without reservations in 1999);
3. The provisions of the Law on Local Self-Government (the Law on Local Self-Government may be considered as a certain codified legal act which regulates activities of municipalities in an integrated way: defines the main concepts, determines the municipal competence which is divided in groups according to the selected characteristics, a specific model of institutional structure is embedded, sets out the powers and mutual relationships of each municipal institution and agency, determines the principal forms of legal and non-legal activities of municipal bodies (sittings, legal acts, etc.), determines the functions, rights and duties of municipal councilors (local politicians) as well as the text of their oath, grounds for termination of the term of office before it expiration, defines relationships between the state power and municipalities, lays down legal guaranties and economic basis of municipal activities, etc.). At present the third revised version of the 1994 Law on Local Self-government is in force;
4. The principle embedded in the Constitution and explained in the constitutional doctrine of local self-government regarding the supremacy of the representative body of the municipality (municipal council) over the executive body of the municipality and the accountability of the latter body to the former body (implementation of this principle differs from the implementation in the state governance system);
5. Other legal acts (laws, international agreements and secondary legislation) which forms an integrated and dynamic legal system.

The Slovak Republic is a small country situated in the Central Europe. On the northern border it neighbors with Poland, on the west with the Czech Republic, on south-west with Austria, on the south Hungary and on east with Ukraine. The Capital is Bratislava, which is situated in the southwestern part of Slovakia. The total area of Slovakia is 49 036 km², where lived 5,415,949 inhabitants to 31.12.2013 there, while the population density per km² was 110 inhabitants.

In terms of ethnic structure (2011) the largest representation has Slovak nationality (80.7%), followed by the Hungarian nationality (8.5%) and the share of the Roma ethnicity with 2% share. 7% of the population did not publish their nationality and the remaining 1.8% presents other nationalities living in Slovakia. Official language is Slovak.

Since 1st May 2004 Slovakia is the member of the European Union, since 21st December 2007 it entered into the Schengen area and from 1st January 2009 the euro currency replaced the Slovak crown, with which it was joined to the European Monetary Union. The Slovak Republic is a unitary state - it has a unified system of law and indivisible area. In terms of the political system it is a parliamentary democracy.

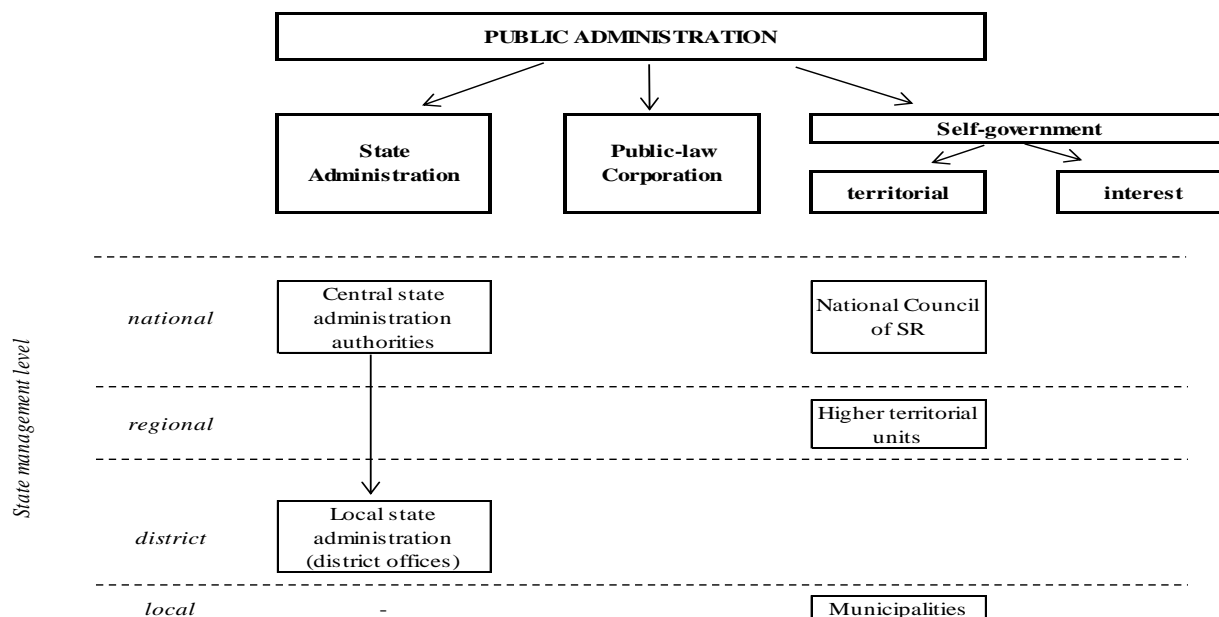
State power in Slovakia in terms of the Constitution is divided into legislative, executive and judicial [Nižňanský, Hamalová, 2013]. Executive power of the state is in Slovakia implemented through public administration authorities who represent state administration and self-government. Special position in the system of public administration belongs to a public-law corporation (the National Bank of Slovakia, the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic, The Slovak National Theatre, Slovak Academy of Sciences and others).

State government is represented by institutions whose competence to carry out different activities arisen of their establishment, thereby they receive certain powers and competence, but also the responsibility for management performance [Kosorín, 2003]. For it is typical enacting jurisdiction. State administration performs its activities immediately after the establishment of its organizational units throughout whole country. Its task is to provide and regulate all aspects of life that are crucial for the proper functioning and existence of the state [Hamalová, Belajová, Majorošová, 2011].

State administration bodies operate at different state management levels which in principle can be divided into: central state administration authorities (government ministries) and local government authorities (district offices), which operate at the district level of state management. This level in terms of classification NUTS regions corresponds to level IV.

The Slovak Government is the supreme executive authority. It consists of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime-ministers and the Ministers. Government is appointed by the President of the Slovak Republic on the proposal of the Prime Minister. Slovakia currently have in the acts at the head of government the Prime Minister, 4 Deputy Prime ministries (from which 3 are simultaneously ministers) and 13 ministers who are responsible for the relevant ministries. The Government is responsible for performing of its duties to the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

Figure 3: System of Public Administration in Slovakia since 1st October 2013



Source: own processing

The National Council is composed of 150 members (councilors) who are elected in direct elections by inhabitants of the Slovak Republic for a period of four years. It is the sole constitutional and legislative body of the Slovak Republic. As an elected body it represents sovereignty of the state and the people, and therefore it belongs among authorities of self-government.

From a political perspective the self-government is understood as a form of implementation of public administration by inhabitants. It presents an action, which provides in limited range itself governance of dedicated common affairs. It is performed by legal entities in their own name and on their own responsibility. The self-government is divided into territorial and interest. The principle of developing these two representatives of the self-government is different. Territorial self-government is formed on a territorial principle and a decision of the State under law. The essence of interest self-government is a voluntary bundle of groups of people who share a common profession, resp. other common interest.

The essence of territorial self-government is founding on personal, territorial and economic bases. Personal base is formed by communion of persons (inhabitants) who have permanent residence on the territory of the administrative unit and after the age of adulthood can participate in all acts in terms of valid legislation (to vote, to be elected, to work in advisory bodies of self-government, to initiate petitions and etc.). The territorial base is given by its cadastral area - borders, in which a particular self-government operates. Economic base of self-government is created by specific legal provisions under which local self-government act autonomously, manage their property and financial resources.

The Constitution of Slovakia since its inception guarantees the autonomy of territorial self-government at the local level. Amendment to the Constitution adopted in 2001 it actually constitutes the regional level of self-government, which representative is higher territorial unit (HTU).

The Constitution in Articles 65 and 66 establishes the independent position of both levels of self-government. The municipality and the higher territorial unit are legal persons, which under the conditions provided by law independently manage their own property and their financial resources. Their needs they predominantly finance from own revenues and from state subsidies. Special Act stipulates which taxes and fees are incomes of the municipality and which of the higher territorial unit. Government subsidies both representatives of self-government may also request, but only within the law. Municipality and also higher territorial unit shall have the right to associate with other municipalities (in the case of higher territorial unit with other higher territorial units) to ensure that matters of mutual interest.

Public-law corporations are characterized by a distinctive range of activities promoting the public task. Their orientation is enshrined in legislation. The public character is reflected in the composition of their supreme self-governing bodies [Cibáková, Beňová, Neubauerová et al, 2012]. Their representatives are elected by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the tripartite principle (they are composed of staff nominated employees of the organization themselves, employees whose proposes the employer and employees whose Government suggests). They work fundamentally on the principle of an independent body in order to mitigate the negative effects of the market and the lack of democracy of state administration [Klimovský, 2014].

Territorial self-government in Slovakia is constituted and operates in accordance with:

- The Constitution of the Slovak Republic, in which the guarantee of territorial self-government is enshrined,
- The Law no. 369/90 Coll. on Municipalities, which specifies the position of the municipality as the basic units of self-government, determines its competence and defines creating, status and role of municipal authorities,
- The Law no. 302/2001 Coll. on self-government of higher territorial units, which specifies a position, the role and authorities of higher territorial units (self-governing regions),
- Other laws, which create the framework for territorial self-government operating,
- with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the European Charter of Regional Self-Government. European Charter of Local Self-Government establishes a common European standard for securing and protecting the rights of local governments, commits its signatories to apply its basic principles, which guarantees the political, legal and financial independence related to municipal activities at the local level in EU member states. Ratification process was completed in 2000. European Charter of Regional Self-Government was officially published only in 2005 with adoption of a declaration highlighting the importance of the regional degree of self-government in EU countries. Its principles it also reflected in the laws of the countries that make up the legal operating environment for regional self-government [Hamalová, 2007].

2. Administrative-Territorial Division in both Countries and Size of Municipalities

About Lithuania. As already mentioned, according to the territorial structure of state government Lithuania is a unitary state. However, due to the fact that *the state power is decentralized* (part of the state executive powers is transferred to municipalities and not-governmental organizations) and *deconcentrated* (part of the state executive powers is distributed among various central and territorial state administration entities, there is a three-tier system of general courts of general, etc.), the territory of Lithuania is divided into the areas intended for public government, which are of two types:

- 1) Administrative-territorial units: counties (*apskritis*) and municipalities (*savivaldybės*)
- 2) Administrative areas (areas of covered by state institutions): larger or smaller than county in size.

Lithuania has a two-level and two-category system of administrative-territorial units:

1) **Since 1995 Lithuania has 10 higher-level administrative-territorial units – counties (*apskritis*).** According to the Eurostat classification the counties are assigned to territorial units of NUTS III level. *A form of state local government is applied in these units*, i.e. only territorial state administration entities (branches of ministries, of agencies under ministries, of Governmental institutions) subordinated to the central state administration entities (ministries, agencies under ministries, Governmental institutions) operate within their territory. The exception is a special entity – *the county regional development council* which consists of representatives authorized by the Central Government (Cabinet or ministers) and municipal councils (mayors and councilors) and which is intended for the implementation of regional policy (its powers and the procedure for setting up are laid down in a special law);

2) **60 lower-level administrative-territorial units – municipalities (*savivaldybės*); a form of local self-government is applied in these units.** According to the Eurostat classification the municipalities are assigned to territorial units of NUTS IV level. Since 1995 municipalities are made into one formation combining urban-central residential areas and rural residential areas which are very much integrated with such city-center. Depending on the prevailing type of residential area the municipalities are divided in Lithuania into urban municipalities and district municipalities. A special law defines the criteria and procedure of establishing new municipalities. Establishment of a new municipality may be initiated by the Government or an initiative group of local residents. A final decision is taken by the Seimas on the recommendation of the Government after all the documents necessary for establishment of a municipality are considered, local surveys are conducted and opinions of the municipal councils whose administrated territory is modified are received. Municipal councils are granted the right to divide the municipal territory into the territories administrated by wards and to organize there the performance of part of the functions of providing public administration and public services through branches of the municipal administration (structural-territorial subdivisions) called wards. Wards are headed by a career civil servant – a warden (appointed by the decision of the municipal executive institution – *director of municipal administration*).

Although the ministries and other state institutions accountable to the Central Government (Cabinet of ministers) were required to establish their territorial entities in the counties, nevertheless, starting from 1995 one can observe the increase of the number of cases where artificial administrative-territorial units called *administrative areas* are set up with the intention of performing the state (state administration) functions which fall within the responsibility of the ministries and other central state administration institutions. They can be larger or smaller than the county area. The creation of these artificial administrative-territorial units was highly prompted by the financial crisis of 2008-2012 and the Central Government seeks to centralize the functions as well as to abolish state administration entities with fewer than 20 employees.

Since 2000, discussions are held in Lithuania concerning the possibility to abolish 10 counties and to establish 3-5 *regions* intended for the performance of the functions related to state administration, regional policy implementation and administration of the European Union support. The actual, practical steps were taken by the 15th Government in 2010 when it fulfilled the reform of the counties. Unfortunately the only result of that reform was the liquidation of part of the state institutions operating in the counties.

Sizes of counties and municipalities as well as their distribution by certain criteria are specified in **Table 1 and Table 2. Figure 4** shows the evolution of the system of the administrative-territorial units of Lithuania. **Table 3** reveals the type of territorial governing bodies and the exact governing territory of their operation.

Table 1: Size (By Population) of Higher-Level of Administrative-Territorial Units in Lithuania (2013)

POPULATION	COUNTIES (APSKRITYS)	PERCENTAGE
UP TO 100 000	0	0
100 000 – 200 000	5	50
200 000 -500 000	3	30
OVER 500 000	2	20
TOTAL	10	100

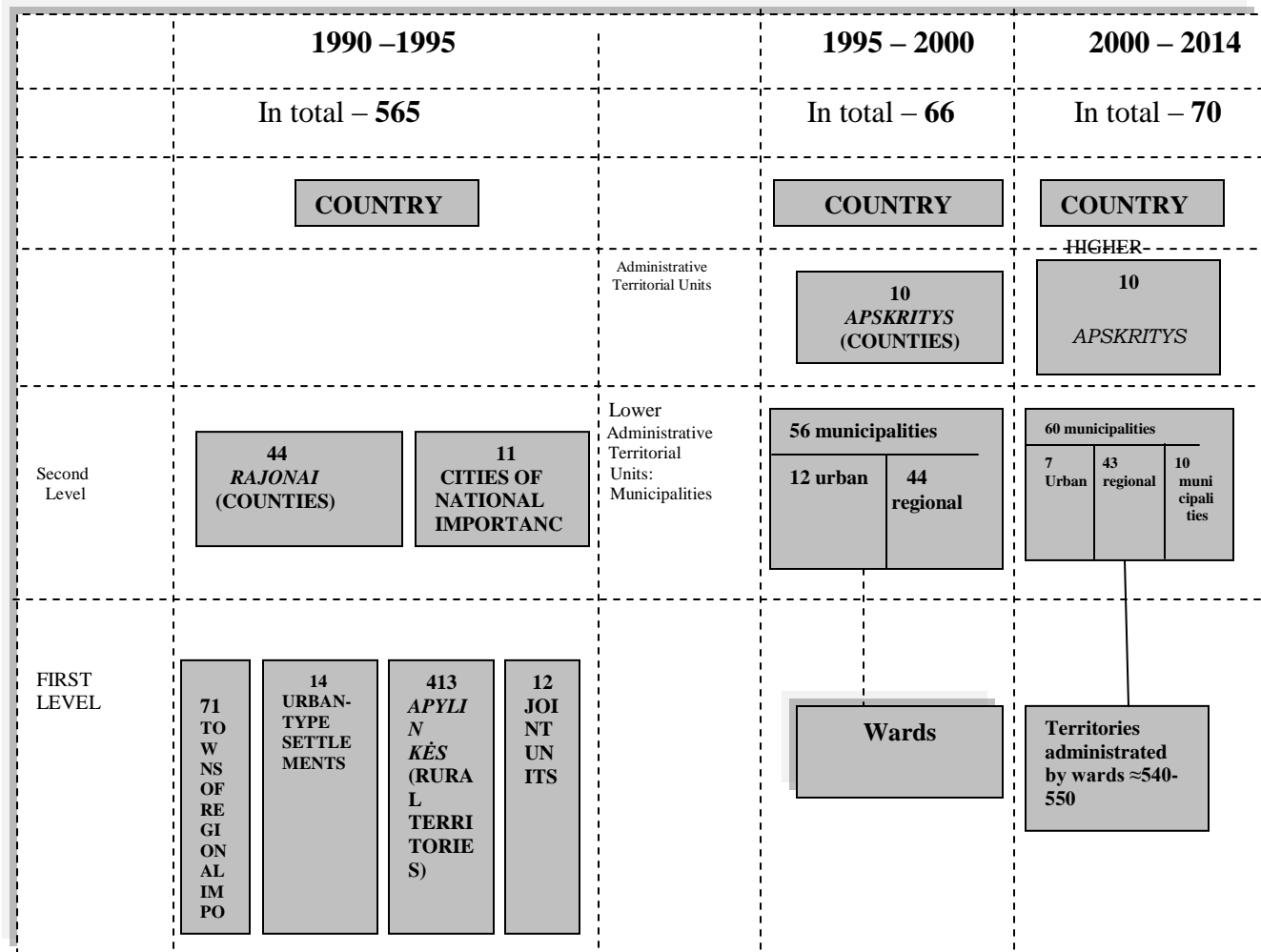
Source: own processing based on data of the Department of Statistics of Lithuania

Table 2: Size (By Population) of Lower-Level Administrative-Territorial Units in Lithuania (2013)

POPULATION	MUNICIPALITIES (SAVIVALDYBĖS)	PERCENTAGE
UP TO 5 000	2	3,3
5 001 – 10 000	2	3,3
10 001 – 15 000	2	3,3
15 001 – 30 000	23	38,5
30 001 - 50 000	19	31,7
50 001 – 100 000	8	13,3
100 001 – 300 000	2	3,3
OVER 300 000	2	3,3
TOTAL	60	100
BIGGEST	VILNIUS CITY MUNICIPALITY - 580 000	
SMALLEST	NERINGA MUNICIPALITY - 4400	

Source: own processing based on data of the Department of Statistics of Lithuania

Figure 4: System of Administrative Territorial Units of Lithuania in 1990-2014



• Note: According to the official documents there was the following number of first-level administrative territorial units:

81 towns of regional importance;
 22 urban-type settlements; and
 423 *apylinkės* (rural territories).

Source: own processing

Table 3: Territorial Government Entities in Administrative-territorial Units of Lithuania

	State Government (Administration)	Local Self-Government	Delegated Territorial Government
Administrative area larger in size than apskritis (county)	Territorial customs offices** Environmental protection departments **	None	Pursuant to the decision of state government, governing bodies with special competence and other entities (e.g. public enterprises) which manage and provide public services in one or more areas manage these entities. Territorial subunits of non-territorial self-governing social associations (such as those pertaining to agriculture and trade: the Chamber of Agriculture, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Auditors, etc.), authorized pursuant to the valid procedures to carry out certain functions of public administration (e.g. registration of companies, distribution of quotas, licensing, government oversight function, etc.)
Apskritis (County) as an administrative territorial unit	County governor* and his administration (from 1995 to 1 July 2010) Government representative * and his office Territorial tax inspectorates ** Territorial police offices, etc.	None	Regional Development Council
Administrative area smaller than apskritis (county) but larger than municipality in size	Territorial labour exchange offices** (until 2012), etc.	None	
Municipality, as administrative territorial unit	Territorial branches of police offices, etc. **	Local municipal council; director of the municipal administration; the municipal administration	
Administrative area smaller than municipality in size	Territorial branches of police offices**	Branches of municipal administration: wards	

Source: own processing based on the Law on Public administration of Lithuania Republic

Notes:

* Administrative territorial entity of prefect type

** Administrative territorial entity of de-concentrated administration type

About Slovakia. The creation of current system of **public administration in Slovakia** was based on experiences and approaches applied in developed countries, taking into account also historical context of social and territorial development of Slovakia. It was adopted the concept of a dual system of public administration in which operate two relatively independent subsystems (central and local government). This concept is preserved until now, despite the fact that it since 1989 has public administration in Slovakia undergone through several reform stages. In 1st January 1991 municipalities' self-government was formed on local level (first stage of the reform of public administration and also the first stage of reform of territorial self-government). During further development two more stages of the public administration reform took place, which were mainly related to the change of territorial and administrative division of Slovakia and the transfer of competencies from the of state administration to territorial self-government. In 1996 the change territorial and administrative division of Slovakia took place, in which was created 79 districts and 8 regions (Table 4 and Figure 5).

At that time state administration authorities were created within (district and regional offices of the general state administration and also district and regional offices of specialized state administration) with territorial jurisdiction. General state administration offices were hierarchically under the Ministry of Interior and covered areas like issuing trade permits, the organization of elections, civil protection and crisis management etc. Specialized state administration offices were hierarchically under particular Ministries (Ministry of school, Ministry of agriculture, Ministry of transport and other 5 Ministries) and had the responsibility of school authorities, land authorities, environmental authorities, transport authorities and road management etc.

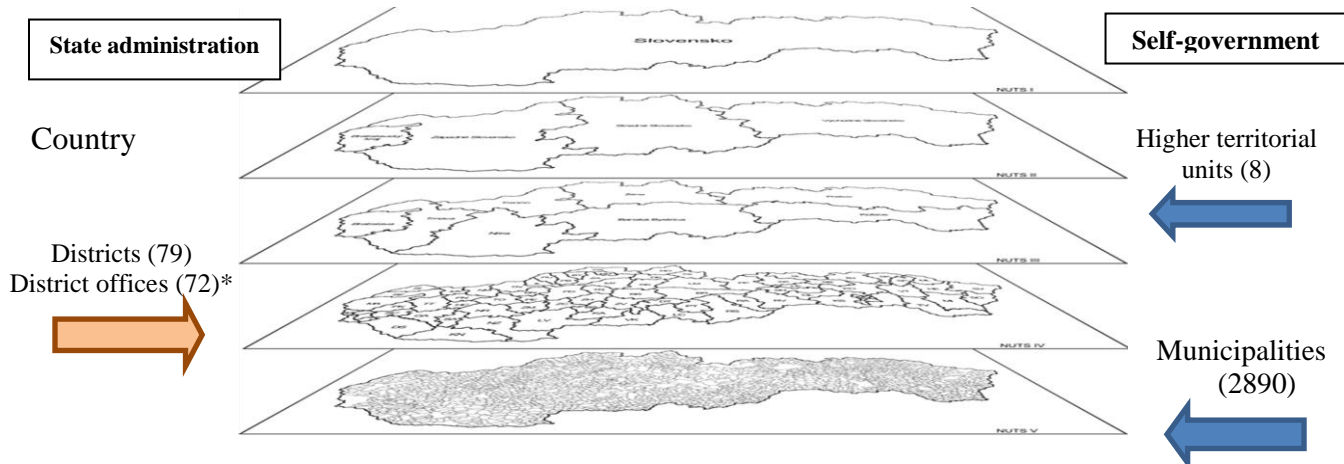
Table 4: The Current Size of Districts and Regions in Slovakia (Since 1st October.2013)

Districts		
Number of inhabitants	Number of districts	The share (in %)
up to 20 000	3	3,8
20 000 - 50000	26	32,9
50001 - 100000	33	41,8
100001-150000	14	17,7
150001 and more	3	3,8
Total	79	100,0
Regions		
Number of inhabitants	Number of districts	The share (in %)
500 000 - 600 000	2	25
600 001 - 700 000	4	50
700 001 - 800 000	1	12,5
800 001 and more	1	12,5
Total	8	100

Source: own processing

In 2001, when was the second stage of the self-government reform, a new organizational form of self-government was created - regional self-government, of which representative it higher territorial unit (self-governing region). Cadastral territory of HUTs copied territory already created regions. In the system of public administration that step was the 3rd stage of reform, in which more significant competence of state administration were decentralized on regional and local self-governments (the Law no. 416/2001 Coll. on the transfer of certain responsibilities from state administration to municipalities and higher territorial units). This process was completed in the 2005 with fiscal decentralization. By division of competencies the principle of subsidiarity was respected. Its main idea it that political decisions have to be taken as close to the citizen.

Figure 5 Actual Territorial Division of Slovakia according to NUTS regions



Source: own processing

* in terms of territorial classification of NUTS region it is level IV with 79 districts; in terms of administrative division are in these districts established 72 district offices, wherein the city of Bratislava, which is the divided to five districts and the city of Kosice to four districts have only one district office for the whole city

In 2012, the Government of the Slovak republic adopted a major reform of state administration called ESO (efficient, reliable and open state administration). Since 1st January 2013 under the reform the existence of district and regional offices (both general and specialized state administration) was ended, were created so called counties offices, which took over task and duties of extinct offices. Counties offices were canceled 30th September 2013 and since 1st October 2013 were established districts offices. The change in territorial-administrative division of the country has not come, but significantly was strengthen the position of self-government. The state administration has concentrated its activities only at the districts level (created district offices) and national level (ministries).

Local and regional self-government in Slovakia were based on the self-governing nature, and thus have a number of common characteristics and properties, which include in particular: the democratic exercise of power, they are separate legal and economic entities, self-governing tasks they are imposed only by law, they apply the same principle of authorities' constitution and they carry so original and transferred competences etc. [Papcunová, Gecíková, 2011]. Local and regional self-government differ from each other by autonomy area which manage, scale and number of responsibilities to ensure and partly also by financing. Between local and regional self-government exist complementary relations in providing of public tasks (e.g. social services, economic development, transport infrastructure), but their position is completely equal (among them are not relations of superiority or inferiority).

The basic local self-government authority in Slovakia is the municipality. The municipality is a separate legal entity that has a name, defined cadastral territory and inhabitants, who have a permanent residence on its territory. Is entitled to their own symbols (flag, seal and symbol). Under the conditions provided by law it manages its own property and its own income. The basic task of the municipality in the performance of self-government is an all-round development of the area and the needs of its people. (no. 2 § 1 of Law 369/1990 Coll. on Municipalities).

Currently there are 2890 municipalities in Slovakia (according to NUTS classification it is the level V). The size of municipalities in terms of population is significantly differentiated and moves in the range from 11 to 413,192 inhabitants. Even 67% municipalities have up to 1000 inhabitants, in which lives only 16% of total population of the country. Municipalities that fulfill the conditions of the Act (they are economic, administrative and cultural center or spa town or the center of tourism; at least one part of its territory has urban character; they have more than 5,000 inhabitants and others) can receive the status of the city. In Slovakia there are 138 such cities, other municipalities are called villages. All municipalities in Slovakia, irrespective of their size and position, have given by the law have the same competencies. The biggest municipality in Slovakia is its Capital - Bratislava, which was registered 413,192 inhabitants and the smallest village with 11 inhabitants is Havranec (31.12.2013).

Table 5: The Size Structure of Municipalities in Slovakia (31.12.2009)

The number of inhabitants in municipality	Number of municipalities (abs.)*	The share (in %)
up to199	380	13,14
200 - 499	794	27,46
500 - 999	775	26,81
1000 - 1999	555	19,20
2000 - 4999	259	8,96
5000 - 9999	56	1,94
10 000 – 19 999	32	1,11
20 000 – 49 999	29	1,00
50 000 – 99 999	9	0,31
100 000 and more	2	0,07
Total	2891	100,00

Source: Size groups of municipalities of Slovakia in figures. 2010, s.12

*Notes

This number represents the total number of municipalities in Slovakia, including four military districts. The decision of the government adopted in the 1st December 2010 was to repeal the military district Javorina, thereby, the total number of municipalities degreased to the current 2890 municipalities.

Since 1990, the number of municipalities in Slovakia has changed several times. The most recent change took place on December 1, 2010, when the military canceled Javorina circuit. Since that date the number of municipalities in Slovakia is 2890. Current legislation lays down the conditions under which can be municipality establishes, deleted, divided or merged of the municipality Newly established municipalities or extinct ones of the municipality declares The Slovak Government by Regulation Decide, however, can only with the consent of the municipality and the opinion of the district office in which territory the municipality is located (§ 2 lett.3 The Law no. 369/90 Coll. on municipalities). In practice this means that so significantly fragmented seat structure does not limit to create a new municipality after fulfillment the conditions given by law. These include that all newly emerging municipalities will have their own cadastral area or set of cadastral areas forming a coherent territorial unit and at least 3,000 inhabitants.

High fragmentation of the settlement structure (see Table 7), however, brings a number of problems associated with providing activities. They concern in first to financing of activities as well as lower the possibility of further strengthened their own tax revenues of municipalities. Rising costs of managing of municipalities with deepening decentralization process limit the resources for planning, building technical and social infrastructure, financial participation in loans and co-financing of EU funds in all the villages and small towns especially [Žárska 2007; Balážová, 2012; Knežová, 2013; Papcunová, 2013]. In the professional public these facts have opened discussions about the need for starting the process of change at the local level, which requires a process of higher efficiency of public administration.

Most European countries have already accessed in the past decades to bringing small little functional resp. dysfunctional communities into larger units - municipalities that present a viable and efficient system of public administration. Nižňanský, Hamalová [2013] suggest several options for spatial organization of local self-government in Slovakia, noting that there are considered two possible approaches, either voluntary cooperation or merging of municipalities.

The existence and operation of regional self-government are closely related to the management and governance of territorial units on hierarchically higher level such as the local level and also a lower level than the national. Establishment of regional self-government was conditioned by effort to create institutional conditions for the regional self-governments establishment and leave them responsibility for economic and social development of the area, as well as formation of a single European regional policy, which would require competent bodies at the regional level [Hamalová, 2007].

The representative of regional self-government is higher territorial unit (Law no. 302/2001 Coll government of higher territorial units). Higher territorial unit is a legal person and also economic - social unit, it has its symbols (emblem, seal, flag) and in the performance of self-government it takes care of the all-round development of its territory and the needs of their populations. There are established eight self-governing regions in Slovakia, which correspond to category NUTS III regions. Population of particular HTUs ranged from 556,577 (Trnava region) to 817,382 (Presov region). The results presented in Table 8 show that particular regions of Slovakia are relatively equally represented, either in the population or area. Significant difference can be observed in the urban population in the total population of the region, where the most significant share is in the Bratislava region (up 80.9%) compared to other HTUs and in density of population per km².

Table 6: Selected Indicators of HTU of Slovakia (to 31st December 2013)

Indicators HTU	Number of inhabitants		Area size		Density of popul. per km ²	Number of districts		Number of municipalities		The share of urban population in region (in %)
	Total	Share (in %)	Total (km ²)	Share (in %)		Total	Share (in %)	Total	of which towns	
Bratislava region	612 682	11,3	2 052	4,2	299	8	10,1	73	7	80,9
Trnava region	556 577	10,3	4 146	8,5	134	7	8,9	251	16	47,5
Trenčín region	593 159	11,0	4 502	9,2	132	9	11,4	276	18	56,1
Nitra region	688 400	12,7	6 344	12,9	109	7	8,9	354	15	45,9
Žilina region	690 121	12,8	6 809	13,9	101	11	13,9	315	18	49,2
Banská Bystrica region	658 490	12,2	9 454	19,3	70	13	16,5	516	24	53,3
Prešov region	817 382	15,1	8 973	18,3	91	13	16,5	665	23	48,1
Košice region	794 025	14,7	6 755	13,8	118	11	13,9	440	17	55,6
Total	5 410 836	100,0	49 035	100,0	110	79	100	2 890	138	54,2

Source: own processing on data from www.statistics.sk

From the point of view the territorial and administrative division of the two compared countries is organized differently. In Lithuania has been since 1995 due to territorial-administrative division strengthened state administration at counties level corresponding to NUTS region III and were created municipalities as the lowest self-government units (NUTS level IV). Establishment of new municipality can be initiated by the Government or local group of inhabitants – initiators, wherein the final decision is on Seimas. Municipal councils can divide the municipal territory into the territories administrated by wards for performance of part of the functions of providing public administration and public services which are headed by a career civil servant – a warden. The state institutions established their territorial entities called administrative areas which can be larger or smaller than the county area. Their task was performance of chosen state functions which fall within the responsibility of the ministries. In 2010 was made a reform of the counties, which result was disposal of part state institutions operating in the regions.

In Slovakia there was continued implementation of separate (the dual) model of public administration. In 1996 was made the new administrative and territorial division of the country, which created a large number of small districts at NUTS IV level (79) and regional level NUTS III level (8). To this division were adapted also creating of state administration offices at regional and district levels. Within the government-approved reform ESO occurred within a relatively short time (9 months) for subsequent reduction of state authorities, at all levels of government. The regional and district offices of state administration were abolished and after all changes in October 2013 their tasks took over new districts offices. Reform led to a reduction of state administration influence in the area. In 2001 was created second level of self-government - regional self government in the territory of 8 regions. This triggered decentralization of responsibilities from of state administration on regions and municipalities. In 2005 fiscal decentralization as significant change in financing self-government brought one proportional tax, which is divided between municipalities, regions and the state, and which strengthen the responsibility of municipalities and autonomous regions for imposing local taxes.

Problem of Slovakia is significantly fragmented seat structure, which cause lot of problems with financing not only developing activities in the municipalities, but also to provide general administration activities. In Slovakia are 2890 municipalities, while each municipality constitutes a separate self-governing unit. Range of inhabitants in municipalities is from 11 to 413,192 inhabitants.

Most European countries including Lithuania have already accessed in the past decades to bringing small little functional resp. dysfunctional communities into larger units - municipalities that present a viable and efficient system of public administration. In Lithuania, on local self-government operates 60 municipalities. Population in municipalities is in the range from 4,400 to 580,000 inhabitants.

3. Competitions of Local-self Government Unit in Lithuania and Slovakia

About Lithuania. As already mentioned, in Lithuania local self-government is a specific public administration system (more precisely, a part of the public administration system) which is not directly subordinate to the state power. Municipalities operate freely and independently within the competence defined by the Constitution and laws (as determined by Article 120 of the Constitution). This means that the municipal competence (spheres of activities and powers therein) is determined by laws, whereas the Government or state institutions authorized by it have limited access to legal and other measures to influence local authorities' decisions and actions.

Competences of municipalities in Lithuania are divided into its *own (independent)* and *assigned by the State* (implemented on behalf of the State). Competences of the said two groups differ in terms of the legal regulation principles and methods, administrative regulation scale, character of state supervision and sources of funding.

The *own (independent) competences* are determined by applying a dispositive method of legal regulation, while *assigned by the State competences* are determined by applying an imperative method of legal regulation. However, in order to define the competence of both groups a positive (also called 'general forbiddance') principle according to which municipalities may do only what is expressly stated in the legislation.

In order to define the *assigned by the State competences* (i.e. to elaborate legislative provisions) the Government or institutions authorized by it are allowed to adopt much more government-related acts if compared with the number of acts allowed to be adopted in the case of *own (independent) competences*. Essentially, the implementation of own (independent) competences are supervised only from the point of view of legitimacy: a special law provides for the appointment of Government representatives (one to each county) who exercise administrative supervision of municipalities and, where necessary, appeal against decisions (i.e. legal acts contradicting the law) and activities (i.e. failing to enforce laws and resolutions of the Government) of municipalities to general or administrative courts. Supervision of the *assigned by the State competences* are exercised from the point of view of legitimacy and expediency, controlling the legality and efficiency of the use of special-purpose appropriations allocated from the state budget to municipalities for the implementation of the competence. Such state supervision is exercised by state inspectorates and the National Audit Office of Lithuania.

The competence of Lithuanian municipalities is also divided into groups according to the nature of activities:

Rights and duties of local power are exercised by municipal councils, ***rights and duties of public administration*** – by municipal councils, executive bodies and municipal administration and ***public services*** are provided by municipal budgetary agencies and controlled entities. Such division of municipal competence shows that local self-government consists not only of public administration activities (exercise of governance functions) but also of the provision of public services.

The size of Lithuanian municipalities (which are relatively big if considering the number of residents, area and other parameters) determines the content and structure of municipal competences which is shown (disclosed) in table 7 and 8.

Table 7: Competences of Lithuanian Municipalities and Grouping Since 2008

Own (Independent) Competences (set out (assigned) by the Constitution and laws)	Assigned by the State Competences (delegated by the State to municipalities)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal budget formation and execution; • Application of tax reliefs and setting and administering of local fees and charges; • Municipal asset management, use and disposal (including privatization); • Creation and development of municipality's internal structure (election or appointment of a mayor and deputy mayors, setting up of a municipal executive body and municipal administration, establishment of municipal agencies and enterprises). <p>Functions in the area of education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organization of preschool education, non-formal education of children and adults, after-school activities for children and youth; • organization and coordination of provision of educational assistance for a pupil, teacher, family, school, measures of minimum supervision of a child; • organization of free of charge transportation to schools and to places of residence of pupils of schools of general education, who live in rural localities; • organization of meal services in educational establishments, which implement education according to pre-school, pre-primary and general education programs. <p>Functions in the area of social services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision and administering of social services; • calculation and payment of social benefits; • creation of conditions for social integration of the disabled into society; • setting-up of a social housing stock and its repairs, social housing rent; • organization of public works. <p>Functions in the sphere of culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultivation of general culture and fostering of ethno culture; • establishment, funding, supervision of municipal museums, theatres, libraries, other cultural institutions. <p>Functions in the sphere of healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary personal and public health care; • preparation and implementation of health schemes of a municipality; • development of physical education and sport. <p>Functions in the sphere of territorial development planning and infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • territory planning, implementation of solutions of a general plan and detailed plans of the territory; • issuing of construction permits; • supervision of use of construction works; • municipal social and economic development planning; • creation of conditions for business and tourism development; • participation in preparation and implementation of regional development plans; • establishment and management of protected territories; • assignment and change of addresses; • environmental protection. <p>Functions in the sphere of provision of public utilities and other services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supply and/or organization of supply of heat and drinking water; • municipal waste management and/or organization of such management; • transportation and/or organization of transportation of passengers by local routes; • maintenance of municipal roads and streets of local significance; • implementation of noise management; • establishment of the procedure for trading in public places; • maintenance and/or organization of maintenance of cemeteries. <p>Other functions which are not assigned to state administration institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining of the civil registry; • management of assigned registers, furnishing of data to state registers, management of archival documents; • civil protection; • fire safety; • calculation and payment of compensations for public utilities; • pre-primary education, general education, vocational training of children, youth and adults; • management and use of the state land and state property assigned to a municipality to hold in trust; • acceptance of citizens' requests to restore ownership rights to the existing real property; • control of use of the state language; • participation in drafting conscripts for military service, in mobilization; • participation in organizing elections, referendums, surveys; • protection of rights of children and youth; • registration of agricultural holdings and farmers' farms, administration of agricultural production quotas; • implementation of rural development programs; • provision of primary legal aid guaranteed by the State; • processing of data related to declaration of a place of residence; • other state functions delegated under the law.

Source: Law on Local Self-Government of Lithuania

Table 8: Structure of Expenditures of Lithuanian Municipal Budgets (2013)

No.	Positions	Amount in Lt Millions	Amount in Percentage
1.	General public services	824	11,3
2.	Defense	5	0,07
3.	Public order and safety	66	0,9
4.	Economic affairs	406	5,5
5.	Environment protection	253	3,4
6.	Housing and community amenities	262	3,6
7.	Health	59	0,8
8.	Recreation, culture and religion	407	5,5
9.	Education	3586	50,3
10.	Social protection	1467	18,63
	TOTAL:	7335	100

Source: information of Ministry of Finance of Lithuania Republic

In Slovakia each administration must be carried out within the law and according to legal standards [Škultéty, Andorová, Tóth, 2012]. As well as the local self-government despite significant decision making power is exercised by the legal standards that affect the most important areas of self-government activity. Tasks that the local self-government in Slovakia provides may be imposed only by law. These are in particular the Law no. 369/1990 Coll. on municipalities and its amended form and The Law no. 416/2001 Coll. on the transfer of certain responsibilities from state administration to municipalities and higher territorial units, as well as other laws (Law no. 138/1991 Coll. on Municipal Property, The Law no. 583/2004 Coll. on financial rules of territorial self-governments, The Law no. 539/2008 Coll. on regional development and others).

Table 9: Overview of Original and Transferred Competences of Local Self-Government in Slovakia

Original competencies	Transferred competencies on sections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performs tasks related to the management of movable and immovable municipality property and state-owned property abandoned to the municipality to use, • prepares and approves the municipal budget and final account of the municipality, • decides on matters of local taxes and local fees and makes their administration, • directs economic activity in the municipality, • creates an effective system of of control and creates appropriate organizational, financial, personnel and material conditions for the independent performance, • provides the construction and maintenance of local roads, public spaces, municipal cemetery, cultural, sporting and other municipal facilities, cultural monuments, historic sites and landmarks of municipality and also carries out of their administration, • provides public services, in particular the treatment of municipal waste and tiny construction waste, maintaining cleanliness in the municipality, management and maintenance of public green areas and public lighting, water supply, wastewater, wastewater management from septic tanks and local public transport, • creates and protects health conditions and healthy way of inhabitants live and work, protects the environment and creates conditions for the provision of health care, education, culture, educational activities, interest artistic activity, physical culture and sport, • fulfills tasks in the field of consumer protection and creates conditions for the supply of municipality; determines the rules of sale time in store, operating hours and services management marketplace, • caters and approves territorial planning documentation of residential units and zones, the development conception of various aspects of life of municipality, procures the housing development programs and assists in shaping favorable conditions for housing in the municipality, • carries its own investment and business activities in order to ensure the needs of community residents and community development, • establishes, dissolves, and controls under special regulations its budgetary and subsidized organizations and other legal entities and facilities, • organizes a local referendum on important issues of life and community development, • provides public order in the municipality; by Regulation may establish activities, which implementation is prohibited or limited to a specific time or at a particular place, • ensures the protection of cultural monuments in the range under special regulations and ensures the preservation of natural values, • performs the tasks of social assistance in the range under a special regulation, • performs certifying documents and signatures on documents, • leads municipal chronicle in the official language or the language of the national minority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roads (providing construction and technical equipment of roads and local roads in their ownership, carrying out the scope of of special building authority for local roads and tertiary roads, etc.), • general internal administration, management registers, • social assistance (establishment, provision and control of care in social services facilities and establishment of social services, deciding on the provision of care services, transport services and payment for those services, etc.), • territorial planning and building code, building office except in expropriation proceeding, • nature protection (tree protection, storage necessary measures to prevent, receiving notice of felling, provision of replacement planting etc.), • education (implementation of state administration in education and school facilities, appointment and removal of heads of schools and school facilities, the establishment and cancellation of primary schools, art schools, preschools, school clubs for children, school centres of activity, leisure centres, creating the conditions for compulsory school attendance in primary schools, the implementation of management control in school with financial and material resources and property, providing the conditions for catering children and pupils, processing and submitting information in the field of education and training in its competence, the allocation of funds to private schools, etc.), • physical culture, • theater activities, • health (establishment of ambulances including the medical service of first aid, establishment of specialized outpatient care facilities , outpatient clinics, hospitals of 1st type and polyclinic of 1st type, home care agencies, cooperation on prevention programs, approving office hours of private health facilities), • regional development, • tourism.

Source: own processing based on the The Law no. 369/1990 Coll. and The Law no. 416/2001 Coll.

Some tasks had been to municipal self-government set as the original in the development of local self-government already in 1991. During ongoing public administration reform in the years 2002-2004 were gradually moved on municipalities further competences in their own, as well as the transferred responsibilities. Municipalities, however, carry a far greater range of tasks that they derive from other laws. The extent and the competencies, which local self-government performs, are the same regardless of the municipalities size expressed by the number of permanent residents or the size of the cadastral area. However, these bring in fragmented settlement structure (as mentioned in Section 2) especially to small municipalities problems not only in providing their competences, but also in their financing.

The municipality is also be seen as political-administrative institution what is historically changing and evolving, because the status of citizen changes from object on subject of social management, who is directly or indirectly involved in the management of public affairs in an autonomous territory. Residents may be involved in local self-government activities through their elected representatives or directly as individuals to decide what development strategies and programs will be implemented in the municipality, how to use municipal property and funds, what conditions the quality of life they can create in the municipality.

Within the normative activities the municipality can itself issue generally binding regulation (the GBR) for both the original and transferred competencies (Table 11). General binding regulations approved by municipal council are the applicable laws in the municipality for citizens, businesses, associations, and local self-government itself in a particular municipality for which they were issued. Besides GBR the local government prepares various guidelines affecting the performance of self-government, although not a legal value as the generally binding regulations, but they are important for self-government management and economy of local self-government. Žárska [2007] gives as an example the status of the municipality, which includes the organizational structure of the municipality, council the Rules of Procedure, the remuneration of Councilors, public procurement guidelines, GBR Principles for property management, budgetary principles and others.

The municipal government could secure autonomous tasks, it must have created the economic conditions which are given by property ownership and management rights to intend the financial system and of local self-government funds that the municipality disposes. The table 12 shows that in 2012 the municipalities had the highest expenditure on education with a share of total expenditure 35.49%. The second largest group were expenditures on general public services, particularly relating to administrative actions and rewards to elected officials and municipalities employees' wages (24.33% share).

Table 10: Expenditure of Municipalities under Various Sections Functional Classification in Slovakia (To 31/12/2012)

No.	Section	Amount in thousands of euros	Share (in %)
01	General public services	878 667	24,23
02	Defense	928	0,03
03	Public order and safety	59 003	1,63
04	Economic affairs	329 337	9,08
05	Environment protection	345 980	9,54
06	Housing and community amenities	372 022	10,26
07	Health	6 673	0,18
08	Recreation, culture and religion	199 090	5,49
09	Education	1 287 147	35,49
10	Social protection	150 248	4,14
Spolu		3 627 095	100,00

Source: own processing on data from Vyhodnotenie výsledkov rozpočtového hospodárenia obcí a vyšších územných celkov za rok 2012, MF SR

Similarities and differences:

1. Competences of municipalities in Lithuania are divided into its *own (independent)* and *assigned by the State* (implemented on behalf of the State). Competences of the said two groups differ in terms of the legal regulation principles and methods, administrative regulation scale, character of state supervision and sources of funding.

Municipalities in Slovakia fulfill, like in Lithuania, two groups of competencies. Original, which were given them by law immediately in developing of local self-government (1990) and transferred acquired in the decentralization of competencies (2001). Within the original competences decisions about implementation of the activities are shared between the elected bodies of the municipality (mayor and council), within transmitted competencies the responsibility has been delegated to mayor, resp. person written form authorized by him. For financing of the original competences municipalities use mainly tax and non-tax revenues. About their using decides the municipal council, which the simultaneously controls the financial resources management. For the financing of transferred competencies the municipalities receive transfers from the state, which are objective bound, their utilization is subject to control by public authorities (e.g. Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Finance and others).

2. In terms of expenditures functional classification the largest share of local government expenditure is concentrated in education (in Lithuania 50.3% and in Slovakia 35.49%). Other significant groups of expenditures in Lithuania are social security (18.63%) and general internal administration (11.3%). In Slovakia they are general internal administration with a share of 24.23% and housing and community amenities (10.26%). High proportion of expenditure on general internal administration is mainly related to the high number of municipalities in Slovakia. These expenditures represent payment for wages and insurance of elected officials and employees of the municipalities, as well as payments related to the common operation of the municipal offices (e.g. energy, water, etc.).

4. Constitutions of self-government bodies in LSG in both countries

About Lithuania. The organizational structure of a municipality in Lithuania serves to make the best implementation of the competence set out for the municipality. It reflects how the functions (or more precisely - the powers) and responsibilities are shared and what types of relationships bound the internal entities comprising a municipality. There is not one, but many municipal organizational structure models; moreover, quite usually different municipal organizational structure models are applied at different periods of time. Lithuania is no exception here: during the period from 1990 to 2014 *three out of seven municipal organizational structure models*, well-known in theory and applied in practice by other countries, were applied in Lithuania:

– *1990-1995 dualistic model involving a municipal council and two executive bodies formed from members other than municipal councilors.* It was later changed because of the ‘diarchy’ which caused many problems (conflicts over real power between the municipal council and its chairman and the executive bodies with municipal administration units subordinate to these bodies);

– *1995-2003 monistic model involving a municipal council and two executive bodies formed only from municipal councilors* (note: in 1995–2000 the municipal council was allowed at the beginning of its term of office to choose and to apply for the whole term of office one of the two following models: a model with a single-person executive body or a model with single-person and collegial executive bodies formed only from municipal councilors). When using the latter model, the municipal mayor was assigned a double or triple role: the chairman of the municipal council, the chairman of the single-person executive body and the chairman of the collegial executive body (board). This type of the municipal organizational structure model was relinquished when the Constitutional Court recognized on 24 December 2002 that the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Local Self-government regulating the setting-up of executive bodies (only from municipal councilors) and relationships with the municipal council were in contradiction to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. The said model allowed concentrating real power not within the municipal council but in the “hands” of the municipal mayor and/or board (i.e., the executive power). There was a real threat that the representative local governance institution would become only an ‘appendage’ to the municipal executive bodies;

- *dualistic model involving a municipal council and a single-person executive body (director of the administration) whose members are appointed exclusively not from municipal members* (the said model is applied since 25 February 2003 till now, having undergone improvement in 2008). In this model, the relationship between the municipal council and the executive body is based on the principles of supremacy of the municipal council over the executive body and the latter’s accountability to the council. Local governance in the municipality is limited to the municipal council while the subordinate and accountable single-person executive body implements the decisions taken by the council and/or directly laws and legal acts adopted on the basis of laws, provided such actions are not subject to the decisions of the municipal council.

The need to identify within a very short period of time a local self-government model which would satisfy all and to draw up and adopt essential amendments to the Law on Local Self-government (in order to eliminate contradictions to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania) determined the fact that the municipal organizational structure model chosen in 2003 was not the best in all aspects. Although this model was initially greeted with skepticism, slightly improved it continues to apply to this day.

This third municipal organizational structure model was begun to be used in Lithuania with the aim of coordinating different interests and solving governance problems arising in practice; the model is characterized by the following specific features:

- 1) The municipal mayor and the director of the municipal administration are given several roles: the municipal mayor is vested with the powers of head of the municipality and chairman of the municipal council; the director of the municipal administration not only is a single-person executive body, but also the head of the municipal administration as a budgetary institution performing public administration functions;
- 2) The attention should be drawn to one interesting and even quite unique legislative decision taken on 15 September 2008 when amending the Law on Local Self-government: from 2011 a provision of this Law entered into force allowing municipal councils by their own decision to vest executive body powers in deputies of the municipal administration director. Thus, in Lithuania not only one single-person executive body but also several such bodies may carry out activities in municipalities; however, they must be bound by certain subordination –accountability relationships;
- 3) According to legal status the director of the municipal administration and his deputy (deputies) are civil servants of political (personal) confidence appointed by the decision of the municipal council for its term of office (actually, for four years) and on the recommendation of the mayor (the candidature of director of the municipal administration the mayor chooses himself, while the candidatures of deputy directors of the municipal administration are nominated by the director of the municipal administration for the mayor to decide). On the proposal of the municipal mayor the municipal council sets the salary of the director of the municipal administration and his deputies, imposes sanction and dismisses them. This reveals that municipal executive bodies, which has the right to make decisions and ‘sign’ the administrative acts (orders) adopted by them thus becoming completely liable for all possible negative consequences of such decisions, are quite vulnerable: they may be greatly influenced not only by the municipal council but also by the municipal mayor. The legal status of a state (municipal) officer being appointed to a set term of office would allow the director of the municipal administration and his deputies to feel safer ;
- 4) At the same time heated discussions continue in Lithuania since 1998 as to the expediency to apply the ‘municipal model with a mayor subject to direct elections’. A striving to start holding direct elections of mayor was already written down in the program of the 13th Government. At the end of 2005 even two draft laws were registered in the Seimas (the first in September and the second in December) which proposed amendments of individual articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, thus, if successfully adopted, establishing necessary legal prerequisites for application of a municipal model with a mayor subject to direct elections already from 2007. Debates and voting on the said amendments of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania took place in 2008 and 2009; however, the situation remains unchanged. Another unsuccessful try to achieve this goal took place in 2011 during the term of office of the 11th Seimas and 15th Government (headed by A. Kubilius), the reasons for this failure being:
 - a) Group interests (decision of the ‘major’ political parties to approve/disapprove of a new municipal organizational structure model which would ensure/fail to ensure for them a greater success at the next election to municipal councils);
 - b) Different comprehension of the municipal organizational structure model and the place and role of mayor in that model;
 - c) Negative reaction of municipal mayors towards the new model providing for dualistic municipal organizational structure.

Never the less, in June 2014 after heat discussions Seimas adopted the amendments to the Local Self-Government Law: from 2015 the mayors in Lithuania will be elected directly.

Further we will summarizing describe the key elements of the municipal organizational structure model existing in Lithuania at present (see **figure 6**):

1) Municipal Council:

1.1) roles of the municipal council:

- Representative body of a municipal community;
- Decision-making body ('execution of local power');

1.2) election to the municipal council:

- A special law on election to the municipal council; decision of the President of Republic on the election date;
- elected by the permanent residents 'belonging' to the municipality;
- 15-51 members in the municipal council (depending on the number of inhabitants);
- the municipal council is elected for a four-year term;
- the proportional electoral system (with ranking of candidates on the list);
- Lists of the candidates only from political parties (independent candidates may be entered on list of a political party). From 2015 lists of the candidates would be from political parties and *ad hoc groups* (electoral committees).

2) Mayor

2.1) roles of the mayor:

- chairman of the municipal council;
- head of the municipality (represents the municipality 'outside');
- member of the county (apskritis) council of regional development;

2.2) the mayor is elected from among the councilors by the municipal council for a period of the duration of the powers of the municipal council (four-year term). From 2015 the mayor will be elected directly;

2.3) the legal status - a politician;

2.4) the mayor could be dismissed by the municipal decision (more than half of the municipal councilors). From 2015 the mayor would be dismissed according to a special procedure;

3) Executive body – the director of the administration (from 2008 by the decision of the municipal council – deputy directors of the administration);

3.1) roles:

- Executive body of a municipality;
- Head of the municipal administration;

3.2) appointment and legal status:

- appointed by the municipal council's decision;
- appointed for a period of the powers of the municipal council (four-year term);
- appointed on the mayor's recommendation;
- Legal status – a civil servant appointed on the basis of political (personal) confidence;
- Subordinate to the municipal council and accountable to the municipal council and mayor;
- Special guaranties after the term of office: the right to return to previous position (job), special payment.

4) Municipal Administration

4.1) roles:

- Municipal body (institution) 'consists of bureaucrats' and employees who are not in the structural subdivisions;
- Execution only of public administration functions;
- Preparation and implementation of decisions of the municipal council and executive body(-ies);
- headed by the director of the administration;

4.2) it consists of:

- Structural subdivisions (departments, bureau, services);
- Civil servants and employees who are not in the structural subdivisions;
- Special structural-territorial subdivisions - wardens which are headed by the wards (wards are civil servants appointed by the decision of the director of the municipal administration following the competition);

5) Control Committee of the Municipal Council:

- comprised of an equal number of representatives delegated by all parties and coalitions; represented at the municipal council;
- chairman of the control committee is appointed by the decision of the municipal council on the proposal from the minority (opposition);
- competence (responsibilities) are determined by the law;

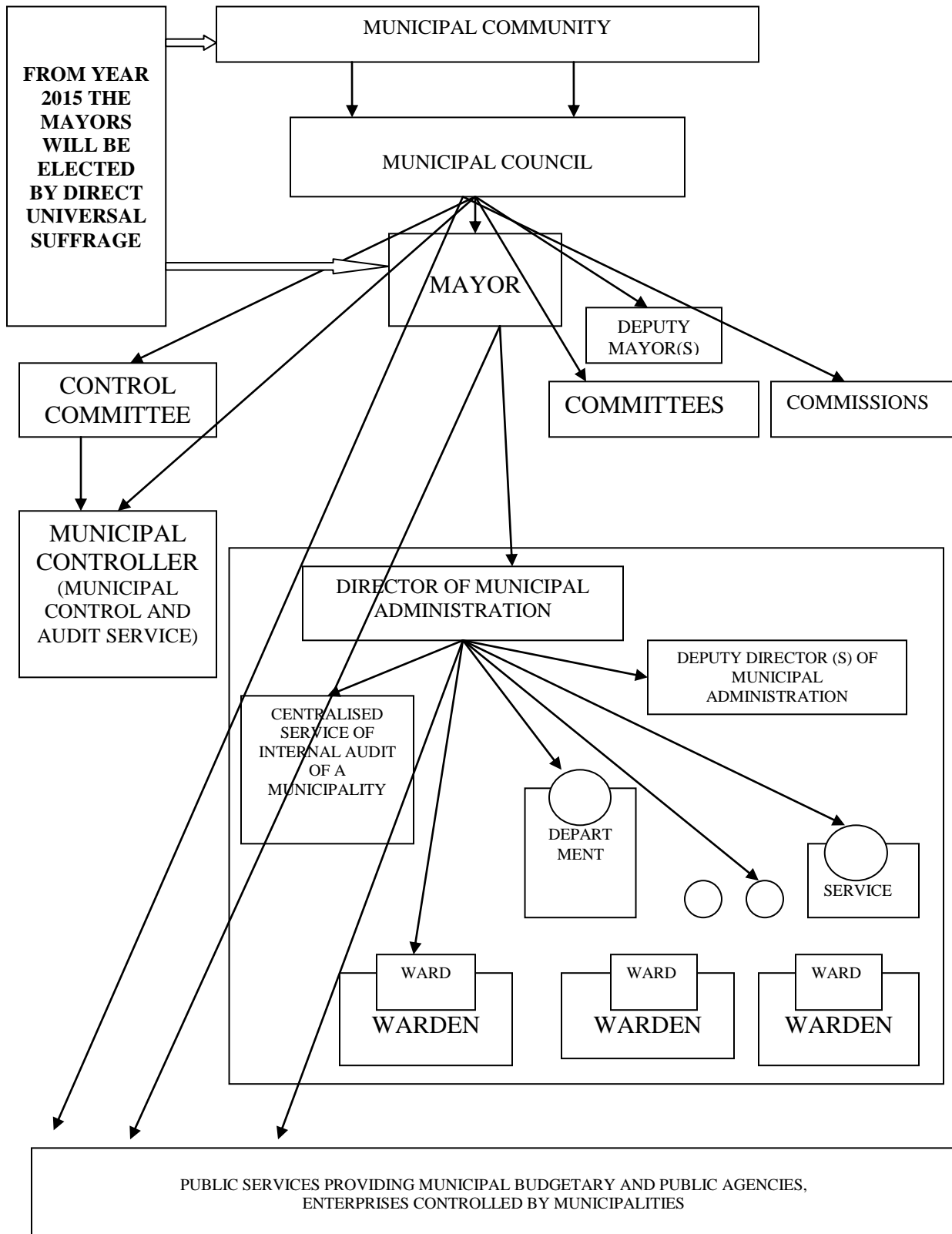
6) Municipal Controller (Municipal Control and Audit Service)

- supervision whether municipal property is managed and used in a legal, effective, economical manner, as well as the implementation of a municipal budget and use of other monetary resources;
- municipal controller is appointed by competition; his legal status – a civil servant;
- municipal controller is accountable to the municipal council;
- municipal control and audit service is established when the number of residents of a municipality is more than 30 thousand;

7) centralized service of internal audit of a municipality:

- Structural unit of the municipal administration;
- Subordinate and accountable to the director of the municipal administration;
- The head of this unit is appointed by competition; his legal status – a civil servant.

Figure 6: Structure of Political-Administrative Organization of a Municipality (Local Community) in Lithuania (Since 2003)

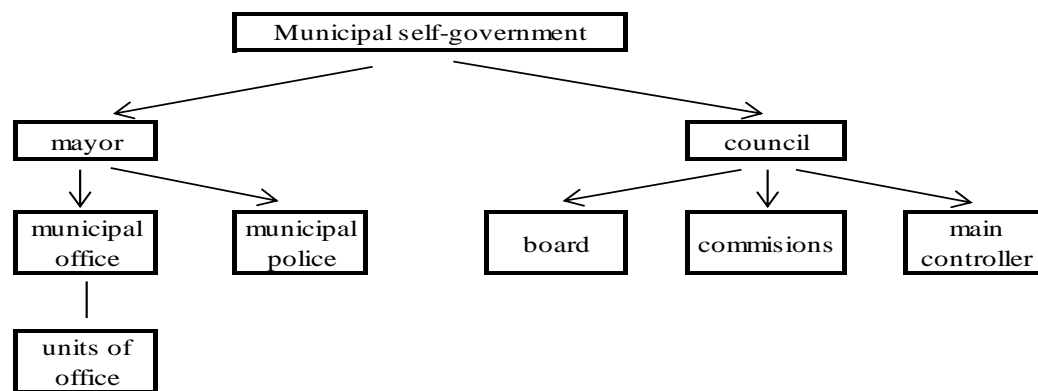


Source: own processing based on the Law on Local Self-Government in Lithuania

About Slovakia. Performance of self-government in Slovakia includes a number of activities which are substantially diverse and often time consuming. In the practice, this requires the creation of a wide range of bodies engaged in executive, audit, advisory and the proactive functions. Ultimate responsibility for the performance of self-government lies on the authorities of the municipalities. Jurisdiction of municipal authorities is given especially by law as well as the way of their appointment.

Self-governing bodies of municipalities arising from the Constitution (Article 69) and the Law on Municipalities (§ 10) are municipal council and the mayor. They are elected bodies with decision makers and decision implementers and holders and self-government management in municipalities. Each of them decides independently in terms of prescribed by law without a relationship of subordination and superiority. Some authorities of the municipalities except elected representatives such as deputy mayor, main controller of the municipality and municipal office the municipalities created individually but as obligation resulting from the law. Besides these, the municipality may create other bodies, e.g. commissions of council, municipal board. The municipality may also establish contributory and budgetary organizations establish partnerships, etc.. Creating of the structure of other bodies depends mainly on the size of municipality and its related to needs assurance especially public welfare of services and the development of area.

Figure 7: General Structure of Slovakian Municipal Self-Government



Source: own processing

Municipal bodies in general are:

1. **Municipal council**, which is composed of representatives (councilors) elected in direct elections for 4 years. Number of Members depends on the number of inhabitants in the municipality. For deputy may be elected resident of the municipality, which has a permanent residence in the municipality and no later than election day reached 18 years of age.

Municipal council determines the principles of management of municipal property, approves the municipal budget, makes decisions on local taxes, approves the development plan, acts on generally binding regulations. It also approves the mayor's salary under a separate law, elects and dismisses main controller, declares a local referendum. It approves the status of municipalities and Rules of Procedure, the agreement on international cooperation, pooling municipal resources and activities, participation in associations, as well as establishes a common regional and interest fund, awards honorary citizenship of municipality, prizes and general honors, principles for the remuneration of Members. It bases, establishes and monitors municipal enterprises, budgetary and contributory organizations established community and appoint their leaders (directors).

Municipal Council presents municipal body, which negotiates in congregation and its meetings are public opened. The municipal council may establish such subsidiary bodies:

- Municipal board which is initiative, executive and control body of council and mayor's advisory body.
- Committees of municipal council:
 - permanent or temporary (to solve a specific task),
 - mandatory and optional
- They have special functions:

- *advisory* - compile opinions on the draft as a basis for decision-making council, cooperate in the development of concepts of municipality or its individual parts,
- *initiative* - develop concrete proposals and initiatives to address general issues, edited drafts of generally binding regulations,
- *control* - check that the resolution of the municipal council, the municipal authorities on highlight deficiencies, monitor compliance with generally binding regulations.

2. Mayor is a statutory body of the municipality and property relations in labor relations staff municipality. In administrative-legal relations he is the governing body. Mayor is the highest executive body of municipality. Its function is public. For mayor may be elected the residents, for whom there were no obstacles to the exercise of voting rights and who is at the election day least 25 years of age. Among his duties belong: to determine or recall his vice – mayor, to appoint head of the municipal office and he is proposing the appointment of municipal police chief for municipal council, to call and to manage of the municipal council and municipal board, signed the resolution, to publish system of compensation of employees or to put a penalty for entrepreneurs up to 6 638 €. He may suspend a municipal council resolution.

3. Deputy Mayor (vice-mayor) is usually for full term of office delegated by the mayor within 60 days after taking of the mayor oath. If mayor does not that, the deputy mayor will be elected by the municipal council. Deputy Mayor can be only councilor. If the municipality has more than 20,000 inhabitants, the mayor may delegate to represent the two representatives of the mayor, specifying their order. Mayor can revoke the Deputy Mayor at any time.

4. Municipal office is made up of municipality employees. It is the administrative authority for the council and mayor. It provides a written agenda of all authorities of municipality, it is Mailroom documents of municipality. It provides training materials and other documents to the council and the of municipality council, drawn up a written copies of all decisions mayor in administrative proceedings, implementing regulations, resolutions and decisions of the municipal council mayor In larger municipalities (generally above 2000 inhabitants within) the work on Office is organized by the Head Office.

5. The main controller controls treasury operations, management and accounting of municipality, management of municipal property, draws up an expert opinion on the draft general budget and final account. He is elected by councilors for a period of 6 years, after election he is an employee of the office, but the mayor is not his supervisor. He is accountable to the municipal council. He participates in meetings of the municipal council and board as advisory vote. Education for main controller is given by Law. He must to have completed at least secondary education. Results of his inspections he submits to council.

Table 11: Overview of Statutory Requirements for Candidates for Mayor and Council Member in Slovakia

Function Statutory requirements	Candidate for mayor	Candidate for Council Member
Permanent residence in municipality, in which he candidates	yes	yes
Age*	25 years of age	18 years of age
No obstacles to the exercise of voting rights	yes	yes
Clean**	yes	yes
Education***	at least secondary education	no

Source: own processing based on Law no. 346/1990 Coll. On elections to municipal bodies

Notes:

* Achieved no later than the day of the election

** In submitting a candidate list the candidate is not required to document

*** Amendments to Law no. 364/1990 Coll. On elections to municipal and Law no 369/1990 on municipalities active since 1st July 2014

Control in local self-government in Slovakia is performed by internal and external way. Internal control is realized not only by legal bodies: main controller of municipality, council members, members of committees, as well as the residents (the voters) themselves. External control is carried out by state administration bodies. External control is carried out by public authorities.

Control over compliance with laws by local self-government is performed by Prosecution. Control over property management and financial resources management is realized the Supreme Audit Office. Both institutions, however, generally intervenes only when they get complaints from citizens, councilors or Mayor. Supreme Audit Office generally implements control on the basis of predetermined control plan.

In recent years in Slovakia frequently discussed issue has become the matter of education of elected self-government representatives, especially the mayor. In the current period, may apply for the post of mayor every inhabitant of municipality, which meets the statutory requirements (Table 11). In view of the wide range of diverse competencies that the local government performs, management of the considerable volume and type of municipal property (to 31.12.2013 municipal governments manage asset value 14,619 million EUR) and financial resources (to 31.12.2013 amount 3,863 million. EUR), which are bound in the municipalities' budgets, the ability to decide the use of the property, it is understandable that the rational decision-making is necessary to have knowledge of possibilities and ways of its use and recovery.

Due to the high fragmentation of the of settlement structure in Slovakia there are a number of problems not only with the performance self-government activities, but also with the quality of self-government management. The last elections to the bodies of municipalities, held in November 2010 showed that there is group of candidates who have not had completed primary education in the function of the mayor.

Therefore, the discussion about the quality of managers operating in municipal self-government (especially mayors) is eligible. If eligibility for the performance of the manager acting at the local level is understood as a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and physical and psychological readiness to perform tasks under the municipal self-government from laws, the defined development objectives and expectations of inhabitants, then it is clear that the demands for capacity to perform the functions top managers operating in municipal self-government should be placed above also by legislative requirements. Since 1st July 2014 are effective amendment to the Law no. 364/1990 on elections to municipal and The law no. 369/1990 on municipalities, under which a prerequisite for the performance of the mayor will be getting at least secondary education.

Important a local authority in Lithuania is the municipal council, which has a representative role and is also legislative body. The elections to the municipal council declared President of the Republic. The municipal council is made up of members elected for four years by residents of municipalities. Candidates for deputies are elected exclusively on the basis of political affiliation.

The municipal mayor is vested with the powers of head of the municipality and chairman of the municipal council. Same time het is chairman of the municipal council, representative of self-government and a member of the district council.

The director of the municipal administration is not only a single-person executive body, but also the head of the municipal administration as a budgetary institution performing public administration functions. With his decisions he is subordinate to the municipal council.

In Slovakia municipal self-governments practically realize two bodies: the municipal council and the mayor. Both bodies are elected in direct election for a period of four years by inhabitants of municipality, regardless of their political affiliation. They are independent of each other and there is no a relationship of superiority and inferiority. Each of them has its position given by law. Mayor of he is statutory body of municipality, simultaneously he is highest governing body and executive body of the municipality. The municipal council decides on the management of municipal property and finances.

Municipal office in both countries is administrative body which consists of staff and which implements the decisions of the mayor and council. Depending on the size of municipality can be divided into departments and divisions.

Control over compliance the budget, management of property and compliance with legal standards in Lithuania is performed by Control Committee set up by in municipal council and controller general. In Slovakia can carry out control the municipal council, the chief controller of municipality, but the residents themselves.

Conclusions

1. Role and tasks of local self-government significantly influences the decision of the State to what extent it leaves decision-making and responsibility for the development and quality of life on its own and to what extent it transferred to other entities.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe after the change of the political system adopted parliamentary system of democracy and local self-government has become an important actor of local development, which performs public administration and simultaneously independently manages and administers its territory and creates conditions for people to live.

2. Lithuania is a unitary state, which is based on parliamentary democracy. In terms of management of smaller territorial units than the state it gradually created two lower levels of governance of the country, at the level of counties (apskritis) for a total of 10 and on municipal level (60 municipalities). Within counties operate bodies of state administration (local state administration), which took over some functions of the state. The ministries and other state institution can establish their territorial organizational units in so called administrative areas, which are smaller than area of country. For establishment of these units is to employ more than 20 employees.
3. In developing of local self-government in Lithuania consolidated the settlement structure, thus there were created lower number of larger municipal units - municipalities, which are the self-governing body. In terms of classification NUTS regions they present NUTS IV level. Local self-government provides two types of competencies: the own competences which are determined by applying a dispositive method of legal regulation and assigned by the State competences determined by applying an imperative method of legal regulation.
4. From total expenditures the municipalities in Lithuania concentrate more than 50% in field of education and more than 18% in social protection. General public services create on total expenditures only 11.3% share.
5. The supreme legislative body of local self-government is municipal council, which is representative body of a municipal community and decision-making body. The municipal council is elected for a four-year term. Lists of the candidates have been only from political. Mayor is other important body of local self-government. He is chairman of the municipal council and represents the municipality 'outside' (the head of the municipality). He is a member of the county (apskritis) council of regional development. The mayor could be dismissed by the municipal decision (more than half of the municipal councilors). Since 2015 the mayor would be dismissed according to a special procedure. The control in local self-government is made by control committee of the municipal council and also municipal controller.
6. Since 2015, there have been significant changes in the election of the members of the municipal council and the mayor in Lithuania. The candidates could be from political parties and ad hoc groups (electoral committees) and the mayors in Lithuania will be elected directly.
7. The Slovak Republic, similar like Lithuania, presents parliamentary democracy. Similar like Lithuania in Slovakia is applied duals model of public administration with separate state administration and territorial self-government. The basic representative of local self-government in Slovakia is the municipality. In terms of classification NUTS regions is the level NUTS V (smaller territorial unit than in Lithuania). Municipality presents the basic administrative and governing unit, which in its own name and on its own territory manages its property and finances. The municipalities in Slovakia, similar like in Lithuania, perform their own (original) and transferred competencies. Performance of original competencies is purely the decision of the municipality. Performance of transferred competencies is financing and controlled by State, state controls, municipality is only administrator of competence.
8. Currently, there are 2890 municipalities in Slovakia, which is related to the high fragmentation of the settlement structure. This high number of self-governing units is reflected in increased expenditures on general public services (up 24.23%) of total expenditure of municipalities, which is almost 13% more than in Lithuania which has the consolidated settlement structure. The highest share of expenditures Slovak municipalities concentrated in the field of education (35.5%), and already in mentioned general public services and field of housing and community amenities (10,26%). To social protection Slovak municipalities invest only 4,14% of total expenditures, what is 14,4 % less than municipalities in Lithuania.
9. Bodies of local self-government are elected and appointed. Among elected bodies belong the municipal council and the mayor. Position of the municipal council is similar to Lithuania. It is legislative body, it decides on the use of funds, approves major development documents. It is elected directly for a four-year term. Candidates for councilors must meet legal conditions, but they can be a member of a political party or they can candidate also as independents. Mayor is the highest executive body of municipality. He is a statutory body of the municipality and the governing bod. For mayor can be elected the resident, for whom there were no obstacles to the exercise of voting rights and who is at the election day least 25 years of age.

Due to the problem with the quality of candidates for mayors in some municipalities in Slovakia was from 1st July 2014 set by law prerequisite for the performance of the mayor getting at least secondary level of education.

10. Based on the status of local self-government in both surveyed countries, Lithuania and Slovakia, we can conclude that both countries strongly prefer a democratic system of governance with dualistic model of public administration performance and with the active participation of citizens in public affairs through their elected officials (municipal council and mayor). By this way it has moved to local self-governments not only performance legal given competencies, but also the responsibility for effective, efficient and economical use of public funds.

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