

Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament
and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a
common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)

REGULATION (EC) No 1059/2003 OF THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 26 May 2003

on the establishment of a common classification
of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 285 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁽³⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty⁽⁴⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Users of statistics express an increasing need for harmonisation in order to have comparable data across the European Union. In order to function, the internal market requires statistical standards applicable to the collection, transmission and publication of national and Community statistics so that all operators in the single market can be provided with comparable statistical data. In this context, classifications are an important tool for the collection, compilation and dissemination of comparable statistics.
- (2) Regional statistics are a cornerstone of the European Statistical System. They are used for a wide range of purposes. For many years European regional statistics have been collected, compiled and disseminated on the basis of a common regional classification, called 'Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics' (hereinafter referred to as NUTS). It is now appropriate to fix this regional classification in a legal framework and to institute clear rules for future amendments of this classification. The NUTS classification should not preclude the existence of other subdivisions and classifications.
- (3) Accordingly, all Member States' statistics transmitted to the Commission, which are broken down by territorial units, should use the NUTS classification, where applicable.
- (4) In its analysis and dissemination, the Commission should use the NUTS classification for all statistics classified by territorial units, where applicable.

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

- (5) Different levels are needed for regional statistics depending on the purpose of these statistics at national and European level. It is appropriate to have at least three hierarchical levels of detail in the European regional NUTS classification. Member States could have further levels of NUTS details, where they consider it necessary.
- (6) Information on the current territorial composition of NUTS level 3 regions is necessary for the proper administration of the NUTS classification and should therefore be transmitted regularly to the Commission.
- (7) Objective criteria for the definition of regions are necessary in order to ensure impartiality when regional statistics are compiled and used.
- (8) Users of regional statistics need stability of the nomenclature over time. The NUTS classification should hence not be amended too frequently. This Regulation will ensure a greater stability of rules over time.
- (9) Comparability of regional statistics requires that the regions be of a comparable size in terms of population. In order to achieve this goal, amendments of the NUTS classification should render the regional structure more homogeneous in terms of population size.
- (10) The actual political, administrative and institutional situation must also be respected. Non-administrative units must reflect economic, social, historical, cultural, geographical or environmental circumstances.
- (11) Reference should be made to the definition of the 'population' on which the classification is based.
- (12) The NUTS classification is restricted to the economic territory of the Member States and does not provide complete coverage of the territory to which the Treaty establishing the European Community applies. Its use for Community purposes will therefore need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The economic territory of each country, as defined in Commission Decision 91/450/EEC⁽⁵⁾, also includes extraregio territory, made up of parts of the economic territory that cannot be attached to a certain region (air-space, territorial waters and the continental shelf, territorial enclaves, in particular embassies, consulates and military bases, and deposits of oil, natural gas, etc. in international waters, outside the continental shelf, worked by resident units). The NUTS classification must also provide the possibility of statistics for this extraregio territory.
- (13) Amendments to the NUTS classification will require close consultations with the Member States.
- (14) Since the objective of the proposed action, namely the harmonisation of regional statistics, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can therefore be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve that objective.

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- (15) The NUTS classification laid down in this Regulation should replace the ‘Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)’ established to date by the Statistical Office of the European Communities in cooperation with the national statistical institutes. As a consequence, all references in Community acts to the ‘Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS)’ should now be understood as referring to the NUTS classification laid down in this Regulation.
- (16) Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community Statistics⁽⁶⁾ constitutes the reference framework for the provisions of this Regulation.
- (17) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Regulation should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁽⁷⁾.
- (18) The Statistical Programme Committee established by Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom⁽⁸⁾ has been consulted in accordance with Article 3 thereof,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

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- (1) [OJ C 180 E, 26.6.2001, p. 108.](#)
- (2) [OJ C 260, 17.9.2001, p. 57.](#)
- (3) [OJ C 107, 3.5.2002, p. 54.](#)
- (4) Opinion of the European Parliament of 24 October 2001 ([OJ C 112 E, 9.5.2002, p. 146](#)), Council Common Position of 9 December 2002 ([OJ C 32 E, 11.2.2003, p. 26](#)) and Decision of the European Parliament of 8 April 2003 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (5) [OJ L 240, 29.8.1991, p. 36.](#)
- (6) [OJ L 52, 22.2.1997, p. 1.](#)
- (7) [OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.](#)
- (8) [OJ L 181, 28.6.1989, p. 47.](#)

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