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CLASSIFICATION OF STATISTICAL REGIONS IN KOSOVO

PROPOSAL BASED ON THE REGULATION (EC) No 1059/2003¹

Prepared by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics

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¹ 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) - Consolidated version as of 18.01.2018.

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1. Introduction

In April 2016, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and Kosovo, of the other part, has entered into force.

The SAA (art. 75) provides for the transmission from Kosovo to Eurostat its GDP per capita figures at NUTS level II. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) is already providing GDP data and other statistical indicators to Eurostat at national level. Moreover, in the framework of the process of accession to the European Union (EU), the Government of Kosovo is committed to provide official statistical data at lower territorial units, comparable with the regional data of the member states of the EU, EFTA and the other candidate countries.

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), formulated by the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), serves several objectives in the territory of the European Union²:

- It ensures harmonised standards in the collection and transmission of regional data;
 - It guarantees that published regional statistics are based on comparable data;
 - It enables the analysis and comparison of the socio-economic situation of the regions based on harmonised data;
- It supports policy interventions such as the European Structural and Investment Funds.

The NUTS classification is based on the Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 and its amendments and subdivides the economic territory of the EU Member States and the UK into territorial units (regions). “NUTS 2021” is the fifth regular revision, which comes into effect on 1 January 2021.

The KAS, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo and other national institutions, has analysed the principles of the NUTS classification and their compliance to the territorial and socioeconomic characteristics of Kosovo, before elaborating the present proposal of statistical regions in Kosovo. The analysis conducted is presented in the following chapter, for each of the three main criteria regulating the NUTS classification.

The proposed classification of the territory of Kosovo into statistical regions is intended to be used by the KAS to:

- Harmonise the Kosovo regional data and socio-economic analysis with the European Union’s regional statistics and the neighbouring countries;
- Provide to Eurostat relevant statistical indicators at regional level;
- Apply in Kosovo the Degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) classification at regional and municipality levels.

² Eurostat. 2020. Statistical regions in the European Union and partner countries NUTS and statistical regions 2021. 2020 edition. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

2. Main findings on the analysis of the criteria of NUTS classification

2.1 Criterion 1: three hierarchical levels

NUTS Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003

The NUTS classification is hierarchical. It subdivides each Member State into NUTS level 1 territorial units, each of which is subdivided into NUTS level 2 territorial units, these in turn each being subdivided into NUTS level 3 territorial units. The territory of the three levels may coincide, or just some of them. Therefore, the territorial units may be classified at several NUTS levels.

Kosovo compliance

The territory of Kosovo can be classified into three hierarchical territorial units. Its territory is organised in administrative and non-administrative units whose boundaries are well defined and are not overlapping each other.

2.2 Criterion 2: preference for administrative units already existing

NUTS Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003

The NUTS regulation states that the existing administrative units of the Member States shall constitute the first criterion used for the definition of territorial units.

Kosovo compliance

Kosovo is currently divided into 38 municipalities. The municipalities are administrative units, as regulated in the national legislation³. The same law lists the name of the municipalities and defines their boundaries. Municipalities are used by the KAS as the main reference for proposing statistical regions of Kosovo.

2.3 Criterion 3: minimum and maximum thresholds for the population size of the regions

NUTS Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003

The NUTS Regulation defines the following population thresholds that should be met by the territorial units to establish the relevant NUTS levels:

Table 1. Population thresholds according to the NUTS Regulation

Level	Minimum	Maximum
NUTS 1	3 million	7 million
NUTS 2	800,000	3 million
NUTS 3	150,000	800,000

³ Law no. 03/l-041 on administrative municipal boundaries.

The Regulation also specifies that if the population of a whole Member State is below the minimum threshold for a given NUTS level, the whole Member State shall be one NUTS territorial unit for this level.

Moreover, if for a given level of NUTS no administrative units of a suitable scale exist in a Member State, this NUTS level shall be constituted by aggregating an appropriate number of existing smaller contiguous administrative units. This aggregation shall take into consideration such relevant criteria as geographical, socio-economic, historical, cultural, or environmental circumstances.

Kosovo compliance

The total usual resident population of Kosovo is estimated at 1,798,188 people on 31 December 2020⁴. The total area is **10,905.25** km². The whole country meets the conditions for the levels I and II.

With reference to the level III, the territory of Kosovo is organised in 7 economic regions which are non-administrative territorial units, although maintaining administrative relevance (Group municipalities). Moreover, although they are non-administrative regions, they are used by several Kosovo public institutions to administer at regional level (e.g., the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for inspectorate functions⁵, the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the registration of vehicles⁶). KAS has regional offices in the 7 Regions.

In terms of population threshold, based on the criteria of NUTS regulation (EC) No. 1059/2003 the 7 Regions can be classified as level III (Table 2).

Table 2. Usual Resident Population of Kosovo by region, municipality, and area. 2020

Region	Municipality	Population	Area Km ²
Pristina	Gillogoc	61,145	275.63
	Fushë Kosovë	39,948	84.09
	Lipjan	57,928	338.41
	Obiliq	18,218	104.84
	Podujevë	82,023	632.59
	Prishtinë	218,782	523.14
	Graçanicë	12,229	122.42
Total Pristina Region		490,273	2,081.12
Mitrovicë	Mitrovicë	69,331	330.72
	Mitrovica e Veriut	11,994	5.46
	Leposaviq	13,202	539.05
	Skenderaj	52,714	374.37
	Vushtrri	62,926	344.85

⁴ Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2021. Estimation Kosovo population 2020. Pristina, Kosovo.

⁵ Law no. 06/l-046 on education inspectorate in the Republic of Kosovo.

⁶ Administrative instruction no. 07/2019 on vehicle registration.

	Zubin Potok	6,664	334.38
	Zveçan	7,290	123.01
Total Mitrovica Region		224,121	2,051.84
Pejë	Deçan	42,480	293.97
	Istog	41,181	454.36
	Klinë	40,489	309.02
	Pejë	98,601	602.58
Total Peja Region		222,751	1,659.93
Prizren	Dragash	33,948	433.85
	Prizren	194,581	626.86
	Suharekë	58,194	361.04
	Mamushë	5,874	10.94
Total Prizren Region		292,597	1,432.69
Ferizaj	Kaçanik	34,672	211.27
	Shtime	27,450	134.42
	Shtërpcë	6,621	247.70
	Ferizaj	106,286	344.61
	Hani i Elezit	10,090	83.13
Total Ferizaj Region		185,119	1,021.13
Gjilan	Gjilan	77,145	391.84
	Kamenicë	27,948	416.61
	Novobërdë	7,158	203.98
	Viti	47,896	269.69
	Ranillug	3,737	77.62
	Partesh	1,699	28.67
	Kllokot	2,719	23.39
Total Gjilani Region		168,302	1411.80
Gjakovë	Gjakovë	94,334	586.64
	Rahovec	57,047	275.90
	Malishevë	57,261	306.44
	Junik	6,383	77.76
Total Gjakovë Region		215,025	1246.74
Total Kosovo		1,798,188	10,905.25

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2.4 Local administrative units (LAU)

NUTS Regulation (KE) NR. 1059/2003

To compliment the NUTS level I, II and III, the Regulation states that in each Member State, local administrative units (LAUs) shall subdivide NUTS level III into one LAU level, that shall be an administrative unit.

Kosovo compliance

As reported above at para. 2.2, the administrative division of Kosovo is based on 38 municipalities that are local administrative units. Their estimated usual resident population and their areas are reported in table 2. The small-size municipalities reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the country.

3. Proposal for the classification of Kosovo into statistical regions

Based on the findings illustrated in chapter 2 of the present document, the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, proposes to organise the territory of Kosovo as presented in the following table and map (Table 3. and Map 1.). This proposal seems in compliance with the latest version of the NUTS Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003, and consistent with the already established Statistical Regions in the neighbouring EU candidate countries.

Table 3. Proposed statistical regions in Kosovo

Code	Code from Eurostat	Level I	Level II	Level III (Regions, non-administrative units)	LAU (Municipalities, administrative units)
RKS	(XK)				
RKS 0	(XK0)	Kosovo			
RKS 00	(XK00)		Kosovo		
RKS 001	(XK001)			Prishtinë	7
RKS 002	(XK002)			Mitrovicë	7
RKS 003	(XK003)			Pejë	4
RKS 004	(XK004)			Prizren	4
RKS 005	(XK005)			Ferizaj	5
RKS 006	(XK006)			Gjilan	7
RKS 007	(XK007)			Gjakovë	4

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Map 1. Proposed statistical regions of Kosovo



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