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# European Innovation Scoreboard 2021 published

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Tags: European Innovation Scoreboard | 2021

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On 21 June 2021, the European Commission released the European Innovation Scoreboard 2021, which shows that Europe's innovation performance continues to improve across the EU.

On average, innovation performance has increased by 12.5% since 2014. There is continued convergence within the EU, with lower performing countries growing faster than higher performing ones, therefore closing the innovation gap among them. According to the 2021 Regional Innovation Scoreboard also published on June 21, this trend applies to innovation across EU regions. In the global landscape, the EU is performing better than its competitors like China, Brazil, South Africa, Russia, and India, while South Korea, Canada, Australia, the United States, and Japan have a performance lead over the EU. This year's European Innovation Scoreboard is based on a revised framework, which includes new indicators on digitalisation and environmental sustainability, bringing the scoreboard more in line with the EU political priorities.

## Key findings

Based on their scores, EU countries fall into four performance groups: Innovation leaders, Strong innovators, Moderate innovators and Emerging innovators.

Sweden continues to be the EU Innovation Leader, followed by Finland, Denmark and Belgium, all with innovation performance well above the EU average.

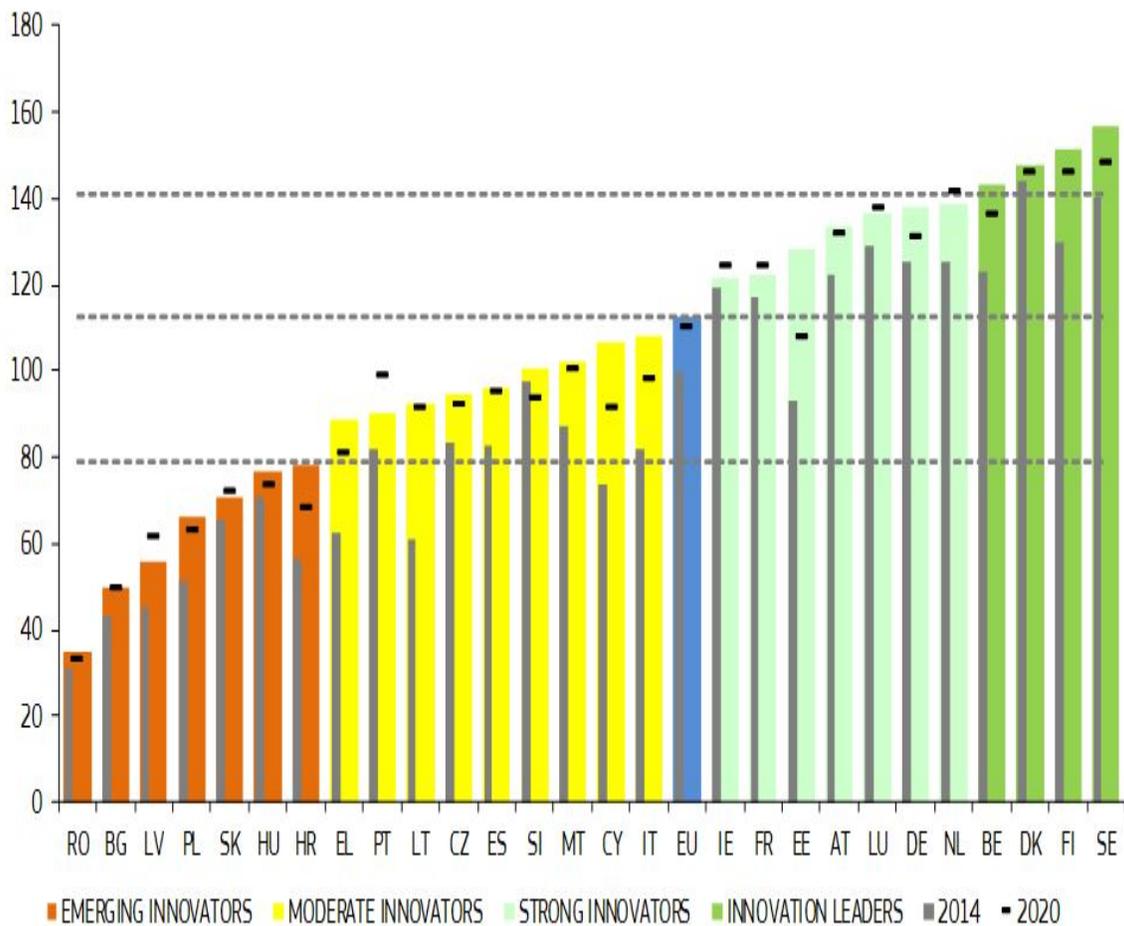
The performance groups tend to be geographically concentrated, with the Innovation Leaders and most Strong Innovators being located in Northern and Western Europe, and most of the Moderate and Emerging Innovators in Southern and Eastern Europe.

On average, the innovation performance of the EU has increased by

12.5 percentage points since 2014. Performance has increased the most in Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Italy and Lithuania.

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Five Member States witnessed an improvement in performance of 25 percentage points or more (Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Italy and Lithuania). Four Member States had a performance improvement of between 15 and 25 percentage points (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, and Sweden). For eight Member States, performance improved between 10 and 15 percentage points (Austria, Czechia, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland and Spain). The remaining 10 Member States witnessed an improvement in performance of up to ten percentage points.



Comparing the EU average to a selection of global competitors, South

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Korea is the most innovative country, performing 36% above the score of the EU in 2014 and 21% above the EU in 2021. The EU is ahead of China, Brazil, South Africa, Russia, and India in this year's EIS, while Canada, **Australia**, the United States, and Japan have a performance lead over the EU.

Innovation performance has increased for 225 regions out of the total of 240 regions over the period since 2014. There has been a process of convergence in regional performance over time, with decreasing performance differences between regions.

The most innovative region in Europe is Stockholm in Sweden, followed by Etelä-Suomi in Finland, and Oberbayern in Germany. Hovedstaden in Denmark is in fourth place, and Zürich in Switzerland is in fifth place.

*Check out "Section 4.2: Benchmarking against global competitors" in the main report which provides a comparison of the EU to some of its main global economic competitors including Australia, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the United States.*

**Members of the College said:**

Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for Internal Market, said: *"European innovations like the technologies at the heart of new COVID-19 vaccines have been crucial to fighting and overcoming the current pandemic. The EU's improved innovation performance is a very positive signal. Investing in innovation is investing in our ability to be at the technological forefront for a sustainable, digital and resilient economy and society."*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"Europe's commitment to innovation is shown by its continuous improvement in innovation performance. All EU Member States and regions are investing more on innovation and the innovation gap in the EU is decreasing. In support of Europe's innovation capacity, Horizon Europe will promote excellence and support top researchers and innovators to drive the systemic changes needed to ensure a green, healthy and resilient Europe."*

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*increasingly one of the deciding factors to promote development and convergence across the European. While these important reports highlight the progress made in much of Europe, a significant innovation divide still remains, particularly for less developed and peripheral regions. Addressing the innovation divide is critical for economic, social and territorial cohesion. Cohesion funds will continue to promote smart and place based innovation strategies.”*

## **Background**

The European innovation scoreboard provides a comparative analysis of innovation performance in EU countries, other European countries and regional neighbors. It assesses relative strengths and weaknesses of national innovation systems and helps countries identify areas they need to address. The first European innovation scoreboard was released in 2001. The European Innovation Scoreboard demonstrates the commitment of the EU and its Member States to research and innovation that is based on excellence and that it is competitive, open and talent-driven. It also supports the development of policies to enhance innovation in Europe and inform policy makers in the rapidly evolving global context. Moreover, research and innovation is an essential part of the coordinated EU response to the coronavirus crisis, supporting also Europe's sustainable and inclusive recovery. Measuring innovation performance is a key element in achieving this goal.

About two-thirds of Europe's productivity growth over the last decades has been driven by innovation, according to the report 'Science, Research and Innovation performance of the EU, 2020 (SRIP)'. Research and innovation boost the resilience of our production sectors, the competitiveness of our economies and the digital and ecological transformations of our societies. They also ensure preparedness for the future and are critical to deliver on the European Green Deal and on the Digital Compass. Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme for the years 2021-2027 with a budget of €95.5 billion, will help accelerate Europe's environmental and digital transformations. Over the same period, cohesion policy will invest over €56.8 billion in research and innovation capacities, digitalisation and skills to support the innovative and green economic transformation of the European regions. These aims also lie at the core of the EU's updated Industrial Strategy, which proposes new measures to strengthen the resilience of our Single Market. The Strategy also proposes measures to respond to our dependencies in key strategic areas as well as accelerate the green and digital transitions – all of which will be instrumental in boosting the EU's performance in innovation. In addition, the European Research

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and technology, based on excellence, while at the same time boosting the  
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## For More Information

Questions and Answers on the European and Regional Innovation  
Scoreboard 2021

European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) 2021

EIS 2021 Methodology report

EIS 2021 Database

Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) 2021

RIS 2021 – Methodology report

RIS 2021 – Database

## Source