



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS MEMO

Brussels, 6 November 2012

Innovation performance of 190 European regions compared

Innovation is a key driver of economic growth and jobs. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2012, published today, provides a comparative assessment of how European regions perform with regard to innovation. The report covers 190 regions across the European Union, Croatia, Norway and Switzerland. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard is based on the methodology of the Innovation Union Scoreboard ([IP/12/102](#)).

The Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2012 classifies European regions into four innovation performance groups, similarly to the Innovation Union Scoreboard: there are 41 regions in the first group of "innovation leaders", 58 regions belong to the second group of "innovation followers", 39 regions are "moderate innovators" and 52 regions are in the fourth group of "modest innovators".

The innovation performance varies more at the regional than at the national level

The results show that there is considerable diversity in regional innovation performance not only across Europe but also within the Member States. Most of the European countries have regions at different levels of innovation performance. The most pronounced examples are France and Portugal: in both countries the performance of regions (including overseas territories) ranges from innovation leaders to modest innovators. Other countries with wide variations in performance are Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom: all have at least one region in 3 different innovation performance groups. The most homogenous countries are the moderate innovators Greece, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, where all regions except one each are also moderate innovators. The situation is similar in Romania and Bulgaria where most or even all regions are modest innovators.

The most innovative regions

The most innovative regions in the EU are typically in the most innovative countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland. In Germany, 12 out of 16 regions are innovation leaders. In Finland 3 out of 5 regions and in Sweden 5 out of 8 regions are innovation leaders. Only in Denmark, the majority of the regions are innovation followers, and 2 out of 5 regions are innovation leaders, including the capital region of Copenhagen and Midtjylland. The regional innovation diversity is very low in non-EU Switzerland, which according to the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2011 outperforms all EU Member States: all Swiss regions except one are innovation leaders.

Innovation strengths and weaknesses

The analysed regions show diverse strengths and weaknesses in their innovation performance. Similarly to the national innovation leaders and followers, the majority of regional innovation leaders and followers have a balanced innovation system, which means that they score high across a number of various indicators such as public and private R&D expenditures, innovative activity of SMEs, public-private collaboration in research and innovation, development of technological and non-technological innovations, number of patents, as well as commercialisation of innovative products and employment in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services. The moderate and modest innovation regions have a less balanced innovation structure. In particular, they suffer from a relatively low innovation activity of SMEs and very low business R&D expenditures. Moreover, in these regions the innovation collaboration between enterprises as well as between enterprises and public organisations is much below the European average. The result is a relatively low number of patents and technological and non-technological innovative products and solutions that are developed in moderate and modest innovator regions.

Capital regions are often national leaders, notably in less performing countries

In almost all analysed European countries capital regions are the national innovation leaders. In some Member States the capital regions play a particularly outstanding role so that the capitals outperform the national average innovation performance by two broad performance groups. This is the case in Czech Republic and Portugal, both of them being moderate innovators, where their capital regions Praha and Lisboa belong to the European regional innovation leaders.

In the countries that are identified as moderate innovators by the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2011, the most innovative regions are typically the capital regions as well: Praha in Czech Republic, Attiki in Greece, Bratislavský kraj in Slovakia, Közép-Magyarország (capital region) in Hungary, Mazowieckie (Warsaw) in Poland and Lisboa in Portugal. Similarly, in modest innovator Romania the Bucuresti-Ilfov region is much more innovative than any other Romanian region. This is not the case in the innovation leader countries where the innovation excellence is distributed more equally throughout the countries.

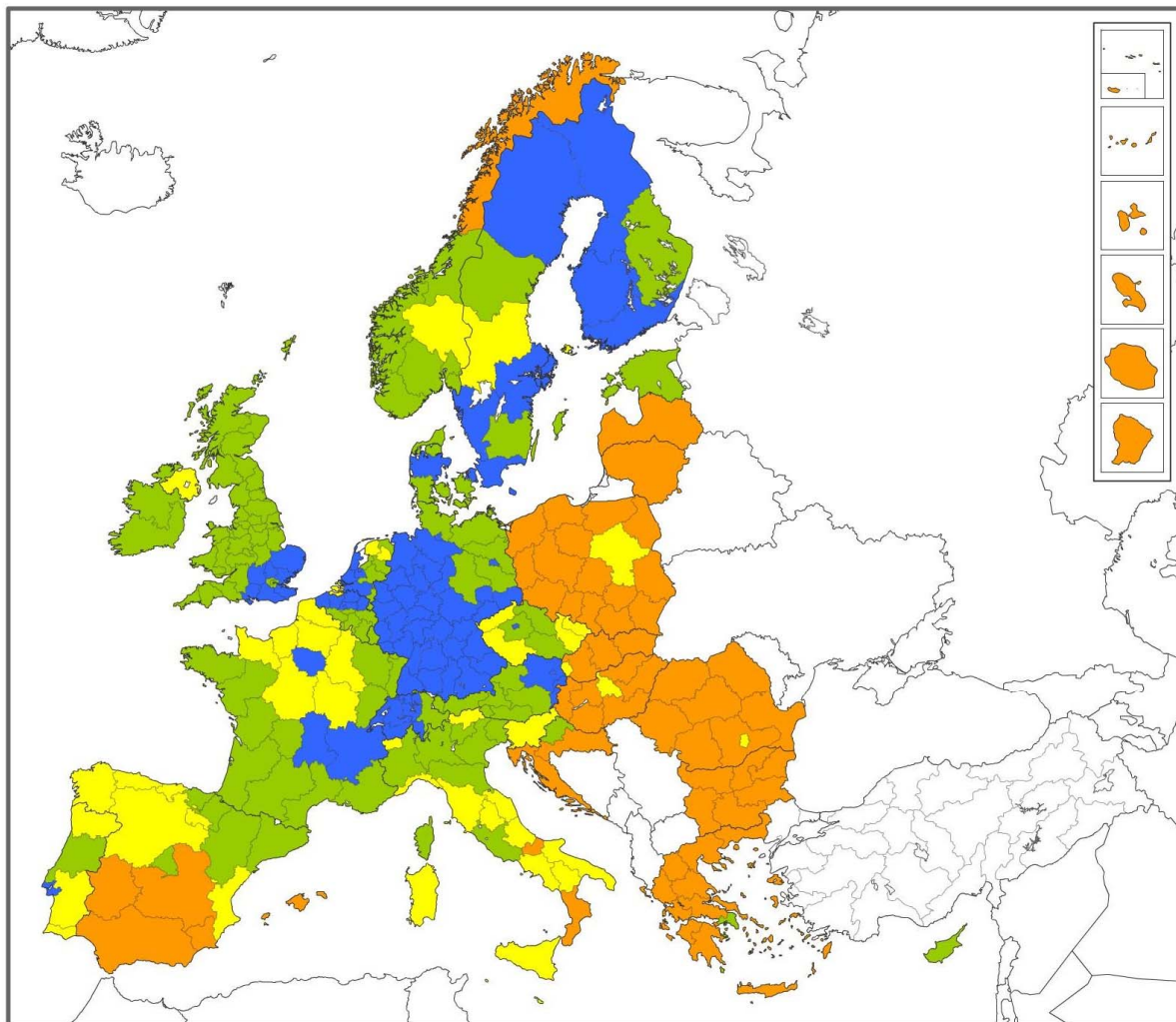
Innovation performance in regions relatively stable but some leaders emerge

Since 2007, the regional performance has been relatively stable. Most European regions seem to maintain their innovation potential and activity. However, there are clear upward movements. The number of innovation leaders increased by 7 regions between 2007 and 2011. Four regions improved from moderate or modest innovators to the category of innovation followers. 8 regions are continuously improving their innovation performance scoring higher in each of the three Scoreboards (2007, 2009, 2012): the German Niedersachsen, French Bassin Parisien and Ouest, Italian Calabria and Sardegna, Polish Mazowieckie, Portuguese Lisboa and the Swiss region of Ticino.

Leading regions with good access to EU R&D grants

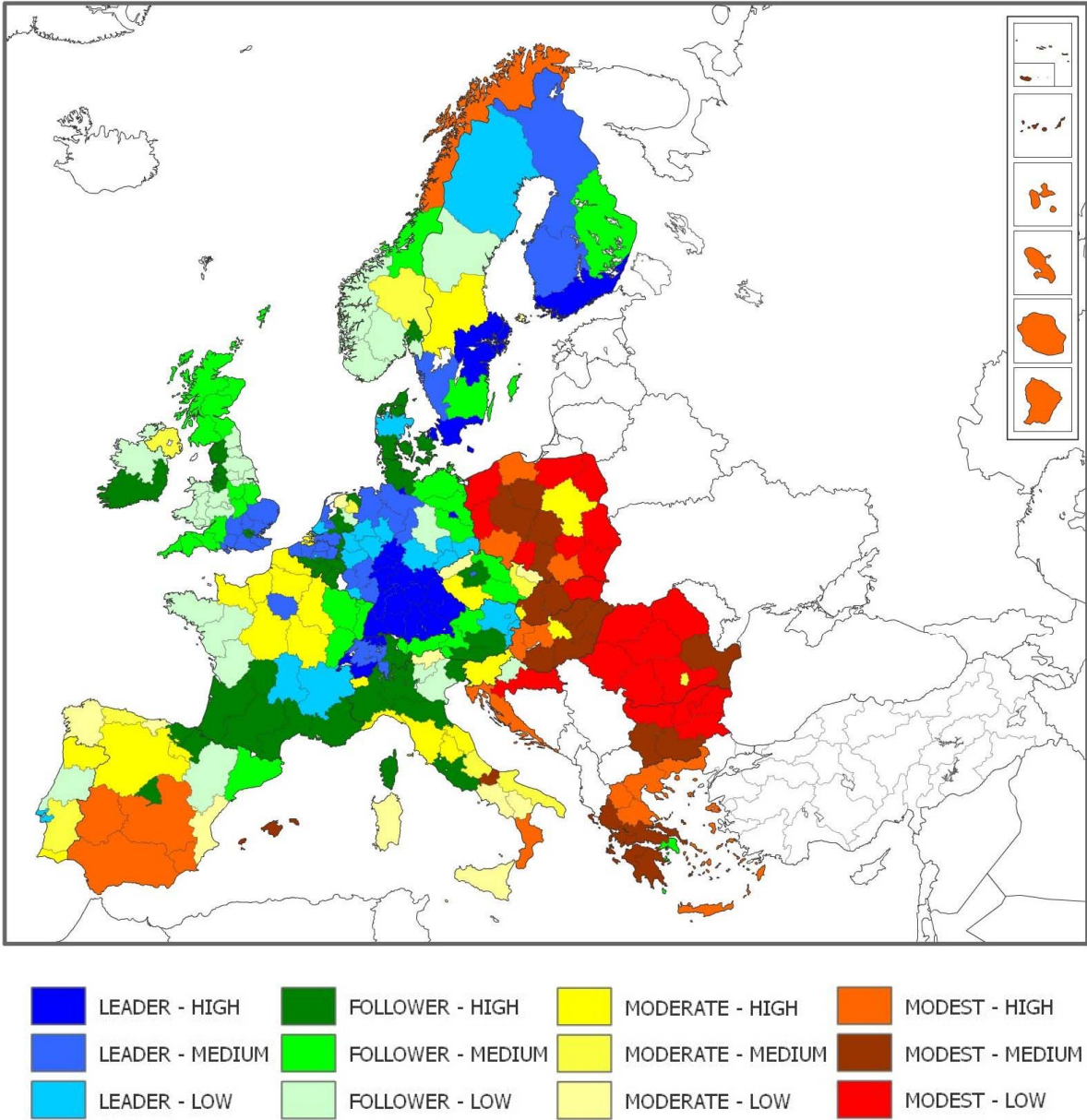
Most of the moderate and modest innovation regions barely use Framework Programme funds but they are usually high users of Structural Funds for business innovation. Several innovation leaders, on the other hand, are very successful in attracting grants under the Research & Development Framework Programme (FP): More than 90% of leading FP absorbers are the regional innovation leaders. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2012 shows that at this stage there is a lack of common pattern linking innovation performance and the use of EU funds in regions across time. For example, some of the most dynamic upward movers like Bassin Parisien and Ouest were low users of EU funds. At the same time, in the case of Calabria, Sardegna and Mazowieckie the steady increase in innovation performance happened during a period of increased use of EU funds.

Figure 1: Innovation performance by regions



To better visualise the large variety in innovation performance levels in Europe at regional level, each of the performance group is divided into 3 further subgroups in figure 2, leading to a total of 12 regional innovation performance groups.

Figure 2: RIS 2012 innovation performance sub-groups



More information about the Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2012:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/regional-innovation/index_en.htm