European Commission

Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2014

Executive summary

EN version

Enterprise and Industry

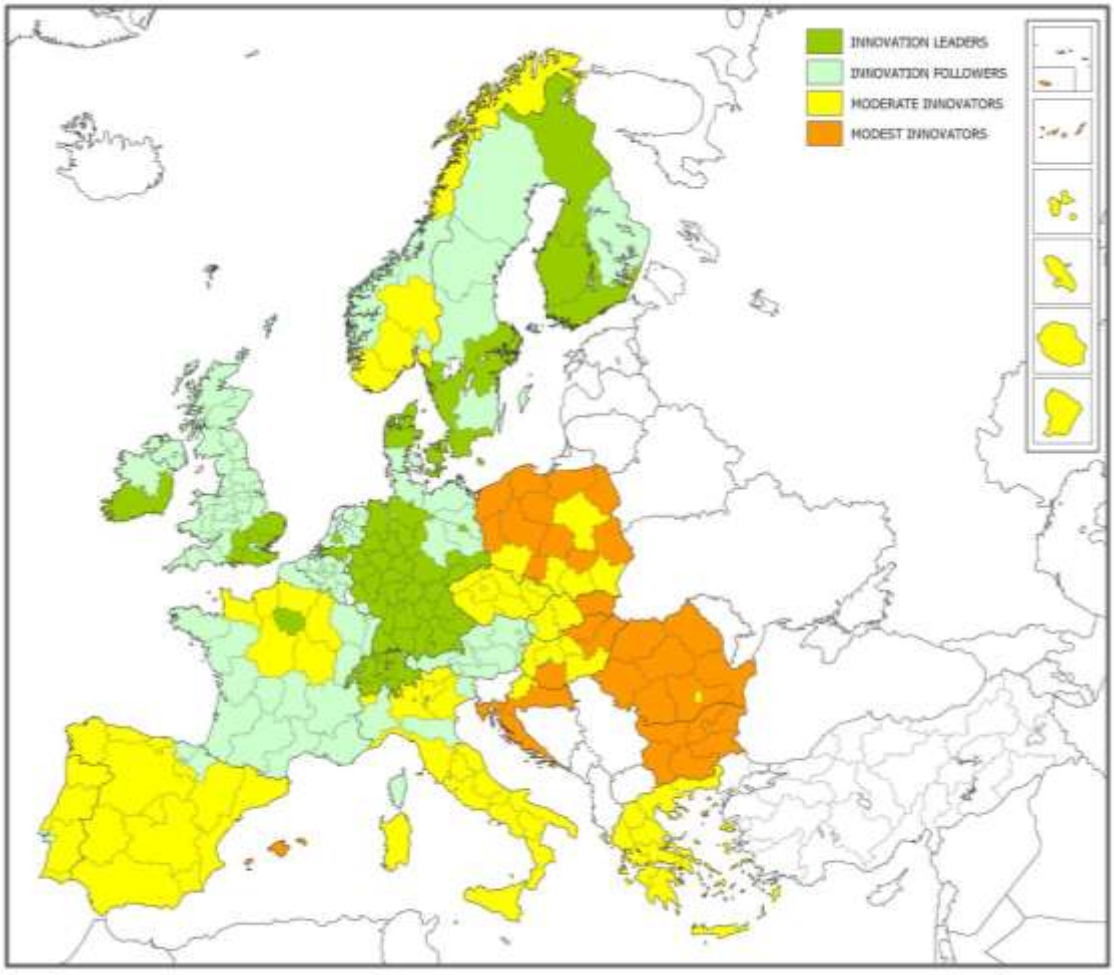
Executive summary

This 6th edition of the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) provides a comparative assessment of innovation performance across 190 regions of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland. The RIS accompanies the Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS) which benchmarks innovation performance at the level of Member States.

Where the IUS provides an annual benchmark of Member States' innovation performance, regional innovation benchmarks are less frequent and less detailed due to a general lack of innovation data at the regional level. The Regional Innovation Scoreboard addresses this gap and provides statistical facts on regions' innovation performance. Previous RIS reports have been published in 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. The RIS 2014 provides both an update of the RIS 2012 but also introduces some changes in the measurement methodology.

Regional performance groups

Similar as in the IUS where countries are classified into 4 different innovation performance groups, Europe's regions have also been classified into Regional Innovation leaders (34 regions), Regional Innovation followers (57 regions), Regional Moderate innovators (68 regions) and Regional Modest innovators (31 regions).



Map created with Region Map Generator

The most innovative regions are typically in the most innovative countries

Despite the fact that there is variation in regional performance within countries, regional performance groups do match the corresponding IUS country performance groups quite well. Most of the regional innovation leaders and innovation followers are located in the IUS Innovation leaders and followers and most of the regional moderate and modest innovators are located in the IUS Moderate and Modest innovators.

However, 14 countries have regions in two performance groups and four Member states, France, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain, have regions in 3 different regional performance groups, which indicate more pronounced innovation performance differences within countries. Only Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece and Switzerland show a relatively homogenous innovation performance as all regions in those countries are in the same performance group.

All the EU regional innovation leaders (27 regions) are located in only eight EU Member States: Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom. This indicates that innovation excellence is concentrated in relatively few areas in Europe.

For most regions innovation has improved over time

An analysis over the seven-year period 2004-2010 shows that innovation performance has improved for most regions (155 out of 190). For more than half of the regions (106) innovation has grown even more than the average of the EU. At the same time innovation performance worsened for 35 regions scattered across 15 countries. For 4 regions performance even declined at a very sharp rate of more than -10% on average per year.

Drivers of regional innovation

Additional analyses have explored the impact of potential drivers of regional innovation. Regions where people have a more positive attitude to new things and ideas (European Social Survey) have favourable conditions for both entrepreneurship and innovation. Regions with a well-developed system of public financial support for innovation with high shares of innovating companies receiving some form of public financial support are also more innovative than regions where fewer firms benefit from such support. With a lack of finance being one of the most important barriers to innovation this result shows in regions with a lack of private finding policies providing public funding can be successful in promoting innovation.

Regional research and innovation potential through EU funding

The analysis of the use of EU funding for research and innovation in the last programming period 2007-2013 distinguishes among 5 typologies of regions: Framework Programme leading absorbers (15.85%); Structural Funds (SFs) leading users targeting research and technological activities (3.66%); Structural Funds leading users prioritising services for business innovation and commercialisation (6.10%); Users of SF for both types of RTDI priorities with similar medium-to-high amounts of SF committed to projects targeting both of the above fields (3.66%); and regions with low use of Structural Funds, which make up the majority of regions included in the analysis (71%).

To understand the extent to which the EU funding is reflected in the innovation performance of the recipient regions, a cross-analysis of the region's absorption of EU funding and their results in the framework of the RIS 2014 was performed. The analysis shows that, while there are several regions that can be classified as pockets of excellence in terms of their FP participation and regional innovation capacity, only a few of the regions that are using EU funds for business innovation more intensely are above average innovation performers. The greatest majority of the EU regions in the

analysed sample are low absorbers of FP funding and SFs and exhibit moderate to modest levels of innovation. These findings point to the fact that the "regional innovation paradox" continues to be a dominant feature of the European regional innovation landscape that calls for more policy attention in the future programming period.

RIS methodology

The RIS 2014 replicates the IUS methodology used at national level to measure performance of the EU regional systems of innovation distinguishing between Enablers, Firm activities and Outputs. The RIS 2014 uses data for 11 of the 25 indicators used in the IUS for 190 regions across Europe (22 EU member states together with Norway and Switzerland).