

EU regions want a better and more efficient Regional Innovation Scoreboard



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In an opinion drafted by Mikel Irujo (ES/EA), Director-General for External Action of the Government of Navarre, the European Committee of the Regions calls on the European Commission to further develop its Regional Innovation Scoreboard for the next edition in 2021. The CoR believes that the Regional Innovation Scoreboard should become a tool that helps EU regions to develop their innovation ecosystems and implement on the ground EU's political agenda, including the Green Deal.

The European Commission publishes the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) every two years. It helps regions assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of their research and innovation ecosystems and can have a political impact at national and regional level. However, the CoR believes that the RIS indicators should be better linked to other monitoring tools and related EU policies and strategies to better align the RIS 2021 with the new priorities of the post-2020 programming period.

"The Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021 should also address the issue of building regional resilience through innovation, in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, it would be useful to assess the vulnerability of regional smart specialisation strategies in times of crisis", rapporteur Mikel Irujo points out.

The most recent edition of the Regional Innovation Scoreboard in 2019 placed Helsinki-Uusimaa on top , followed by other Scandinavian capital regions. On the other hand, many regions in Southern and Eastern Europe, including in Spain, achieved below average results.

Mikel Irujo's opinion will be adopted at the CoR plenary session this week during the European Week of Regions and Cities . It suggests carrying out thorough analysis to assess whether the current RIS indicators are suitable for measuring innovation or if new indicators need to be incorporated, for instance those linked to digitalisation or gender. Meanwhile, where appropriate, other indicators could be discarded or weighted less.

The Commission should also address the issue of missing data by developing new tools to gather reliable information from all regions, as well as take better into account the heterogeneity of European regions and differences in the criteria applied by the regional and national statistics offices.

To tackle the innovation divide, the opinion suggests broadening the concept of smart specialisation and increasing the use of RIS in benchmarking and benchmarking regional innovation policies. It also asks the Commission to investigate the link between funding under the Structural Funds and the innovation potential in European regions.

The first Annual Regional and Local Barometer , which was published on Monday, expresses concerns on the fragilising impact of brain drain on some regional innovation ecosystems. It highlights the need to prioritise innovation and transformation investment in Member States and regions according to their competitive strengths, thus putting smart specialisation at the heart of a comprehensive European recovery plan from the Covid-19 crisis.

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