

## Belgium (Flanders) is a top 5 “innovation leader” in Europe

The 2022 edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard is out. Published by the European Commission, it reveals that the EU's innovation performance has grown by about 10% since 2015. So, who's among the best players? Belgium, of which Flanders is the northern region, steals the show with a top 5 performance.



### **Cream of the crop as far as innovators go**

Based on the 2022 European Innovation Scoreboard, the EU member states fall into 4 performance groups: innovation leaders, strong innovators, moderate innovators and emerging innovators. The first group of innovation leaders only features 5 member states, each having obtained a score that's above at least 125% of the EU average. These countries are Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and, of course, Belgium (whose performance is at 128.8% of the European average). Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden are innovation leaders with innovation performances well above the EU average.

### **Strong grower, too**

What's more, Belgium is clearly on a trajectory of continuous improvement. Between 2015 and 2022, the country's innovation performance steadily went up by 16.8 percentage points. This is nearly twice as fast as the EU's average improvement rate (9.9 percentage points) in that same timeframe.

According to the complete 2022 European Innovation Scoreboard report, Belgium's performance increased very strongly in 2020 in particular. This was “due to substantial increases in foreign doctorate students, non-R&D innovation expenditures, innovation expenditures per employee and SMEs with business process innovation.”

### **Solid innovation linkages and research system**

When it comes to Belgium's and Flanders' innovative strengths, the 2022 European Innovation Scoreboard mainly points to the presence of strong innovation linkages, an attractive research system and a high use of information technologies.

As such, the main relative strengths cited in the report are:

- public-private co-publications
- innovative SMEs collaborating with others
- (foreign) doctorate students
- enterprises providing ICT training
- international scientific co-publications