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## **EU: regions' competitiveness, Utrecht, Zuid-Holland and Ile-de-France on the rise. Eastern and Southern Europe, including Italy, lag behind**

The regions of Utrecht, Zuid-Holland and the Parisian region of Île-de-France are the EU's most competitive regions. This has been found by the Regional Competitiveness Index, or RCI 2.0, published by the European Commission today. "There are still large differences between EU regions, but also that the less developed regions have been improving their competitiveness", the Report points out. From the 2019 to the 2022 Index reports, most East European regions have kept improving, including the Baltic countries, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. However, some areas of the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria have got even farther from the EU's average. In the South of the EU, the regions of Portugal, Spain and most of Greece (which started at very low levels) have improved their ratings. Most of the regions of Italy and Cyprus have moved farther away from the EU's averages. The European Cohesion Policy supports regions in "job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve citizens' quality of life". All indicators used in the RCI are prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and it is the first time the United Kingdom is missing from the Index.

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