



# UTRECHT GOT TALENT

Europe's most competitive region



# Discover Utrecht's unique strengths

Globally renowned knowledge institutions, an exceptionally well-educated workforce, centrally located in the heart of the Netherlands, excellent business locations: these are Utrecht's main economic strengths. So far, our unique qualities have attracted well over 900 international businesses to the Utrecht region. These include companies active in sectors such as life sciences, gaming, financial and business services, ICT and sustainable economy.

# Utrecht comes highly recommended!



**Johannes Hahn,**  
Member of the European  
Commission in charge of  
Regional and Urban Policy

"I congratulate the region of Utrecht for being ranked as the most competitive EU region by the regional competitiveness index 2013. Also in the 2010 edition, Utrecht received the highest score. Utrecht's score is not due to a single dimension of competitiveness, but to consistently high score on all the 11 dimensions used in this index. Utrecht scores among the top ten regions in five dimensions and in the top twenty regions for another five dimensions. It is striking that Utrecht is actual never ranked first on a single dimension. In my view, this underlines the importance of a strong and balanced performance for competitiveness for which Utrecht justly was ranked first."



**Henk Broeders,**  
Chairman of the  
Economic Board Utrecht

"Utrecht has been ranked Europe's most competitive region. This represents a great impetus for the entrepreneurs, knowledge institutions and government bodies that helped achieve this result. We now face the challenge of strengthening our current position: a number one ranking cannot be taken for granted. This holds true especially in an age when the world around us is rapidly changing: societal challenges such as the affordability of health care and depletion of raw material resources call for an innovative new approach. The Economic Board Utrecht strives to transform societal challenges into commercial opportunities, thus strengthening the regional economy. We focus on three specific areas: healthy living, the green economy and smart technology applications. We support initiatives that contribute to these goals. A good example would be the application of games in the health care sector. This new development offers great potential, and as such has attracted the attention of investment funds. A new number one ranking, in other words, is within reach!"



**Hannie Kroes,**  
SKF有限公司经理

"Utrecht is an ideal location for our international staff (R&D). The region offers a large number of valuable facilities, such as the International School. The city is just thirty minutes away from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, a major hub with direct connections to many destinations around the world. Our green business park in Nieuwegein gives you a real sense of being on campus. We welcome some 10,000 (international) visitors a year, and they greatly value our location."

# A broad basis for success

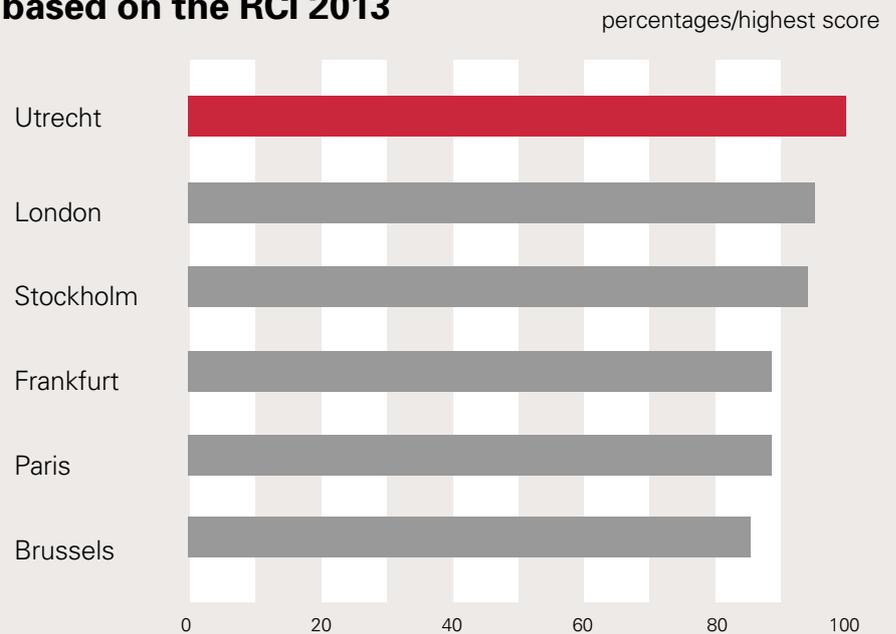
**In a September 2013 announcement that surprised many, the European Union named Utrecht as Europe's most competitive region for the second time. The region's leading position is recorded in the EU Regional Competitiveness Index (RCI), an authoritative study of 262 European regions commissioned by the European Commission. So, how did Utrecht – the Netherlands smallest region – manage to take the lead in this European benchmark?**

## Conclusions

According to the RCI 2013 Index:

- A strong and balanced economic profile: with a high average score in all areas of this European ranking, Utrecht beats leading regions such as London, Frankfurt and Paris. This unique combination lends Utrecht its competitive strength.
- Excellent scores in the European Top Ten in the areas of 'labour market/efficiency' (No. 2), 'higher education' (No. 5), 'market size' (No. 8) and 'infrastructure/location' (No. 8).
- In comparison with 2010, Utrecht has improved its regional position in the areas of 'health' and 'higher education'.

## Bench Mark EU regions based on the RCI 2013



## Top Ten EU regions based on the RCI 2013

percentages/highest score

Ranking	Region	Score (0-100)
1	Utrecht	100
2	London and surrounding area	94
3	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire	94
4	Stockholm region	93
5	Surrey, East and West Sussex	91
6	Amsterdam region (North Holland and Flevoland)	90
7	Frankfurt region	89
8	Paris region (Ile de France)	89
9	Copenhagen region	89
10	South Holland	88

Source: EU Regional Competitiveness Index 2013

# Institutions

**How stable is the regional administrative and political climate? Based on combined national and regional data, Utrecht scores well in the RCI 2013. The region took 18th place on the European ranking for administrative cooperation potential.**



“With a highly educated and young population, an advantageous location, pleasant living environment and a highly varied – and thus healthy – economy, Utrecht offers a broad basis for success. Our creative and enterprising residents play a key role in realising our economic plans. For me, these aspects lend the Utrecht region its unique strength!”

**Mirjam de Rijk,**  
Alderwoman for Economic Affairs,  
Municipality of Utrecht

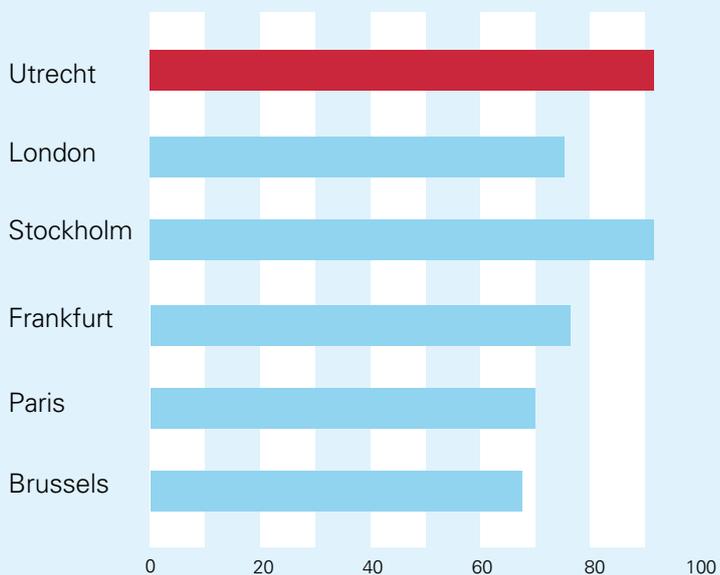


“The announcement of Utrecht’s ranking as the most competitive region is a wonderful recognition of our position in Europe! Now it’s time for the Economic Board Utrecht to capitalise on that achievement and further strengthen our position.”

**Remco van Lunteren,**  
Vice Governor Economic Affairs,  
Infrastructure, Transport &  
Finance Province of Utrecht

## Institutions

percentages/highest score

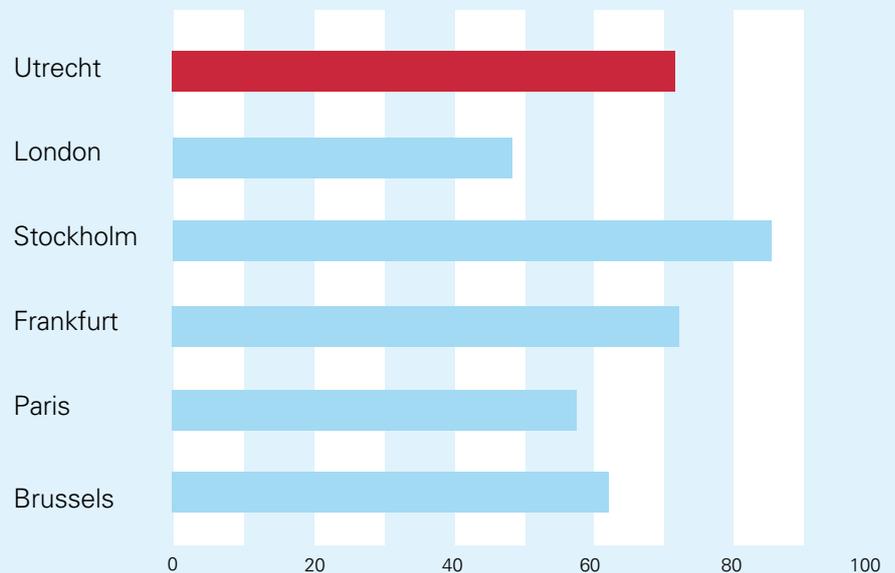


# Macroeconomic stability

**The economic stability data for the Utrecht region in the RCI 2013 is based on national indicators. The assessment is based on aspects such as cost savings by the national government, bond yields and the financial position of the public governmental budget. Based on this data, the Utrecht region achieved 10th place in the final ranking.**

## Macroeconomic stability

percentages/highest score

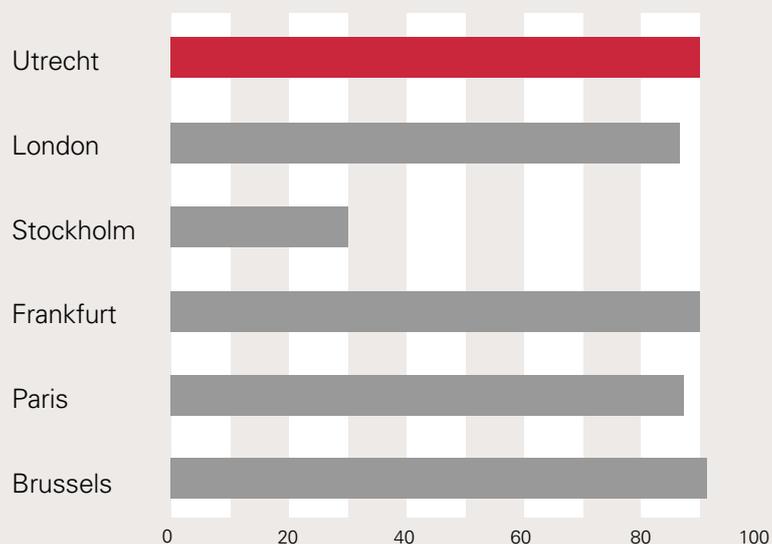


# Infrastructure

**Naturally, the region's accessibility is an important competitive factor. RCI 2013 assessed Utrecht in terms of travel times to and from the region, by both car and public transport. The vicinity of national airports also served as a key criterion. Utrecht – centrally located in the heart of the Netherlands – scored well on the test, achieving 8th place in the final European ranking.**

## Infrastructure

percentages/highest score



"In early 2013, we decided to concentrate staff from six offices in a single building. We eventually opted for the Pand Zuid building in the WTC Papendorp complex in Utrecht. The business park offers a highly professional, business-like atmosphere. The location is also easily accessible by both car and public transport. Crucially, we are also easily accessible from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. We have offices in 26 countries and operate in over 100 countries around the world. With our head office here in the Netherlands and expanding international activities, we regularly receive visitors from other countries. Our Utrecht office is an ideal location to receive guests from both the Netherlands and abroad."

**Alex Rossen,**  
Managing Director at Unit4

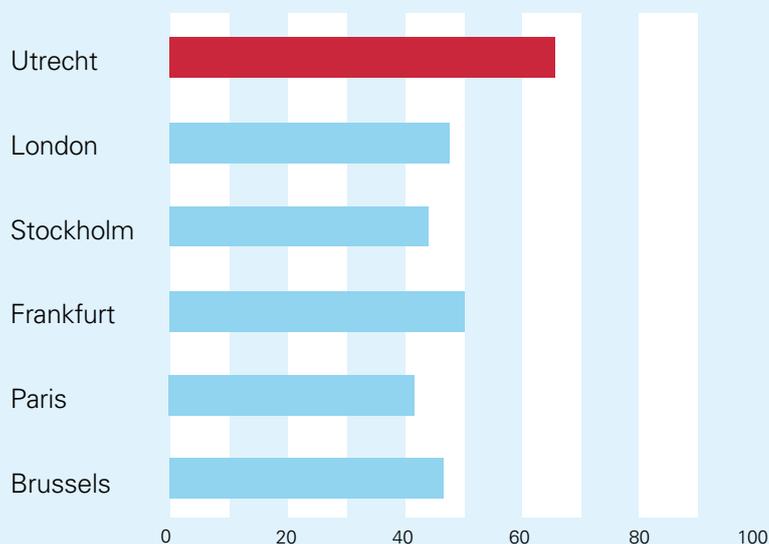


# Professional education

**The job prospects of young people are key to regional competitiveness. This is why RCI 2013 focuses on the position of vulnerable pupils and the attention they receive within the education system. Based on national data, Utrecht achieves third place on the European ranking.**

## Professional education

percentages/highest score



"This region has well-trained people at every level of the job market: schools work together and collaborate with businesses and institutions to stimulate further development of the workforce. The twelve ROC Midden Nederland colleges are focused on specific segments of the labour market. Together, they prepare young people for a large number of labour market sectors, offering the largest number of study programmes at senior secondary vocational education level. Co-design serves as a basis for all teaching, thus ensuring that our close ties with the various sectors are reflected in our vocational education. Our twelve colleges collaborate with a large number of businesses and institutions, such as Ballast Nedam, FC Utrecht, the Municipality of Utrecht, Ikea, KPN, Lego World, Rabobank and UMC Utrecht. Four of our colleges are also affiliated with the Incubator in Nieuwegein, a centre for outstanding, innovative business initiatives on the nexus between technology and care.

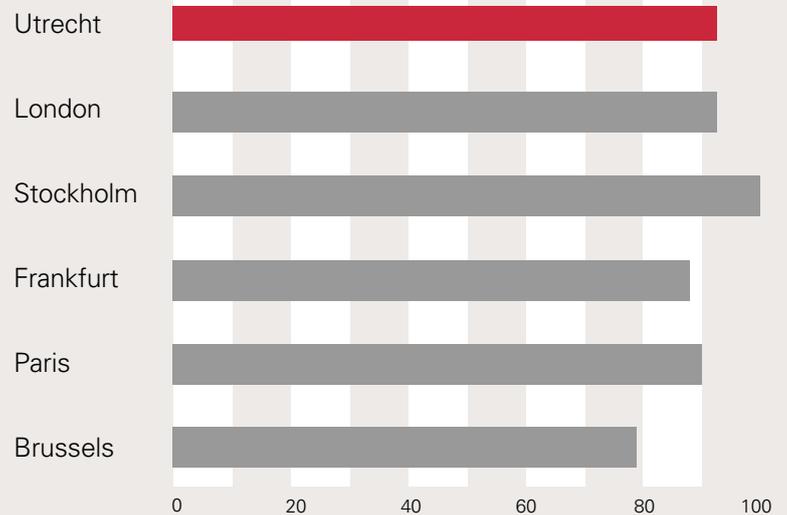
As a result, Utrecht has a highly trained workforce at every required level. The Economic Board Utrecht encourages our schools and university to work with businesses and government bodies in an effort to bolster our economic development and the future of our regional and national economy. After all, we will need a highly trained and flexible workforce if we are to maintain our leading position as Europe's most competitive region."

**Leonard Geluk,**  
Executive Board Chairman  
at ROC Midden Nederland

**What is the life expectancy for local residents? How healthy are their lifestyles? How great is the risk of serious illness or traffic accidents? Residents of the Utrecht region are amongst the healthiest in Europe. RCI 2013 awarded Utrecht 12th place in the final European ranking in terms of health.**

## Health

percentages/highest score



“Utrecht is gradually becoming a genuine Health Valley. The region is home to a great many healthcare organisations. This offers great potential for collaborations in many areas, including the St. Antonius Hospital’s specific fields of expertise: cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases and cancer. For example, we are currently running a pilot project in which specialists visit GP practices in order to discuss patients’ treatment plans. Effective cooperation between first and second-line caregivers is a crucial aspect of providing optimal patient care.”

**Prof. Dr. Douwe Biesma,**  
President of the St. Antonius  
Hospital Executive Board

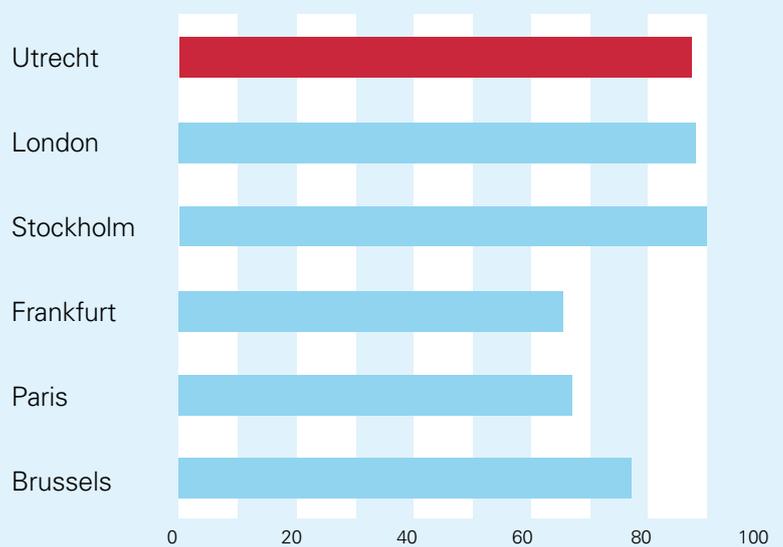


# Higher education/ Lifelong learning

**Utrecht is one of the most knowledge-intensive regions in Europe: an exceptionally high percentage of residents have a higher professional education or academic degree. The region also offers a broad range of training centres. RCI 2013 awarded Utrecht 5th place in the final European ranking in terms of higher education/ lifelong learning.**

## Higher education/ lifelong learning

percentages/highest score



“The outcome underlines the success of our intensive cooperation with regional knowledge institutions and businesses! As a leading international research university, Utrecht University conducts research in a broad range of disciplines – from infectious diseases to human rights and from climate studies to cultural history. The university also scores well in international rankings such as the Shanghai and CHE ranking. Naturally, a leading international position helps to attract talent. As a research university, this encourages us to continually improve the quality of our research and education. Students receive instruction from leading researchers, while contributing to the body of research through research internships and research Master’s. This allows us to serve as a platform for future development.”

**Marjan Oudeman,**  
President of the Executive Board of  
Utrecht University

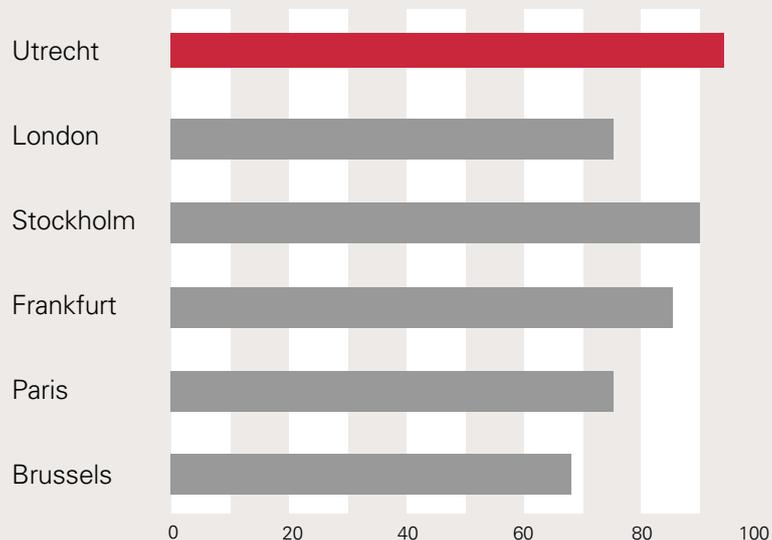


# Labour market

**Of all 262 European regions studied as part of the RCI 2013, Utrecht ranks 2nd in terms of labour market competitiveness. The assessment focused on criteria such as labour market participation, labour productivity, labour market participation by women and young people and training programs for the unemployed.**

## Labour market

percentages/highest score



“Ziggo is a relatively young company located in Utrecht that has gone through some turbulent and exciting developments over the past few years. Our organisation’s focus has shifted from infrastructure towards communication services and entertainment. Innovation and technology are thus crucial to our operations, and we need the right people to achieve our ambitions. The Utrecht region plays a crucial role in attracting this segment of the workforce.”

**Dedi Veldhuis,**  
Ziggo Vice President of  
Human Resources

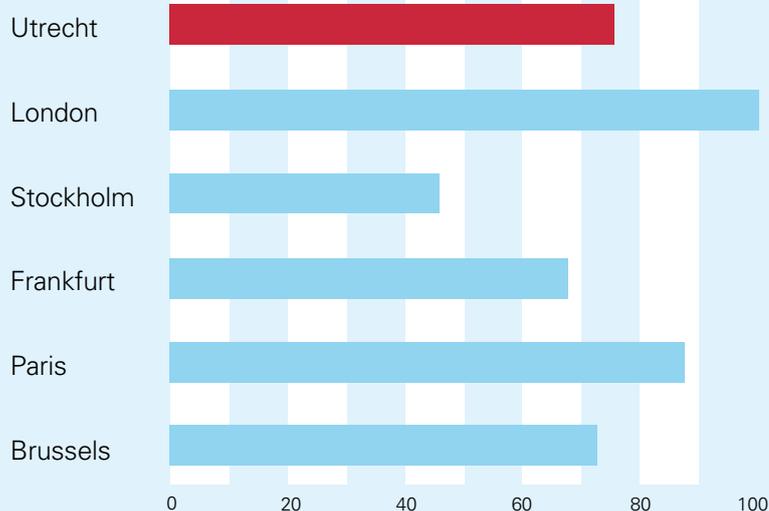


# Market size

**What is the average disposable income? What about demographic developments and the growth potential of the regional market? Based on these criteria, Utrecht's regional market potential takes 6th place on the final RCI 2013 ranking.**

## Market size

percentages/highest score



“Utrecht’s population is young and highly educated. With a varied range of higher education institutions, the city has continued access to a large number of new students each year. The region is centrally located in the Netherlands, offers an attractive living environment and plenty of employment opportunities in the knowledge and services sectors. As a result, many graduates choose to stay here after finishing their studies. In fact, Utrecht has grown more rapidly than any other Dutch city over the past few years. The city is set to experience continued growth in the years to come. With an affluent regional population, we feel confident about investing in the Hoog Catharijne shopping centre.”

**Menno Overtoom,**  
Managing Director at Corio,  
Hoog Catharijne

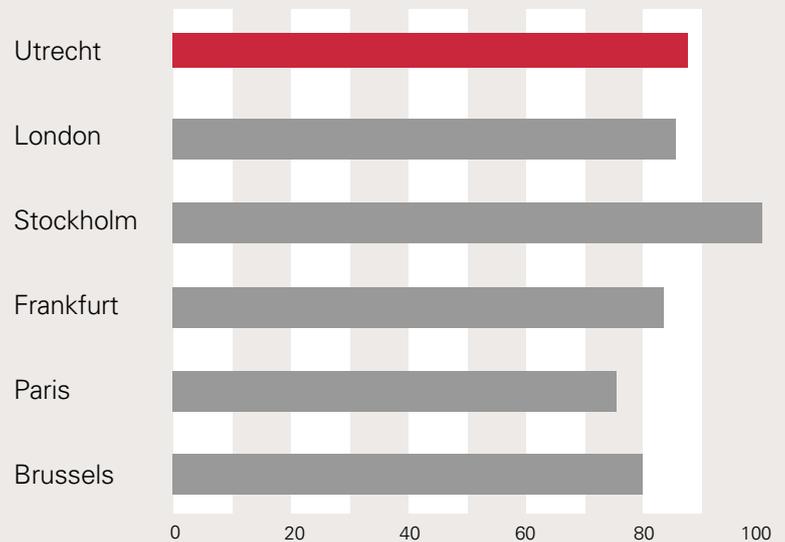


# Technology

**So what about the technological potential of Utrecht's businesses? Which new technologies are both currently available and actually being applied by our regional entrepreneurs? What about ICT connectivity to the broadband Internet network and online sales? Based on national data, Utrecht achieves 17th place in the final 2013 RCI ranking.**

## Technology

percentages/highest score



“In Utrecht innovation first and foremost is always a means to an end. Without passionate adaptation to technological disruptions such as digital distribution, crowd funding and social media our internationally renowned game-industry would perish. Therefore we were honoured, yet pleasantly not surprised to see the Utrecht way of working praised by the EU.”

**Viktor Wijnen,**  
Managing Director at  
Dutch Game Garden

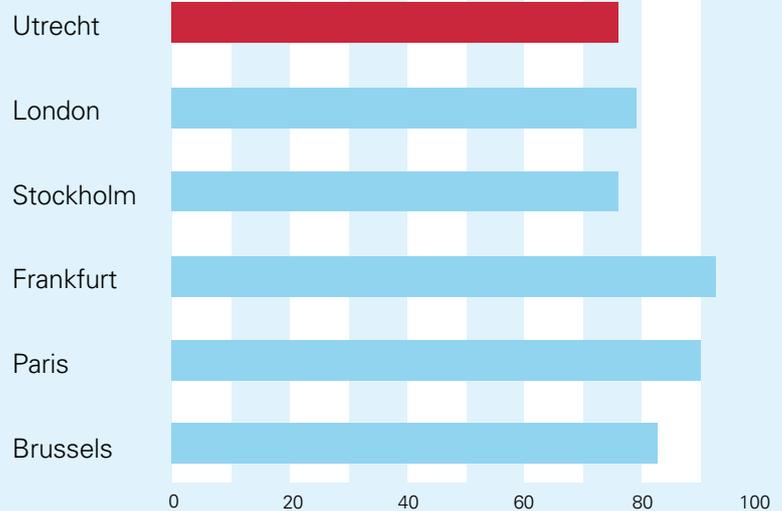


# Business services

**Business services have always been the mainstay of Utrecht's regional economy. The region's extensive experience in this area is reflected in the RCI 2013 ranking, in which Utrecht achieves 8th place.**

## Business services

percentages/highest score



"Cappgemini Nederland has maintained strong ties with the city of Utrecht for over 40 years. Naturally, the accessibility of our head office is crucial to our consultants. Utrecht is located on the nexus of the Netherlands' main motorways and railway lines, and is optimally accessible by both car and train. Utrecht plays a key role in our efforts to attract young talent. With its own university, several universities of applied sciences and a pleasant and safe living environment, Utrecht is extremely attractive to the highly trained young people we need. With Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and the Randstad conurbation at just 30 minutes distance, Utrecht was an obvious choice for our multinational operation."

**Hans Scholten,**  
Corporate Real Estate Director for  
North & West Europe at Cappgemini

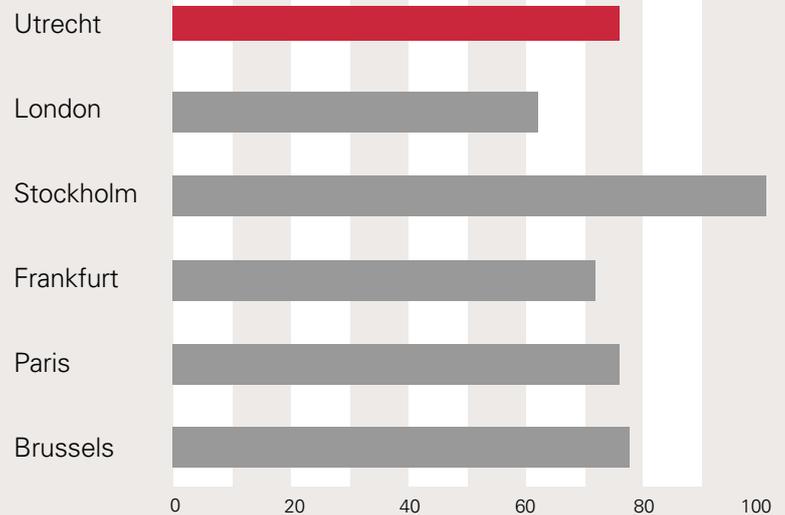


# Innovation

**RCI 2013 measured Utrecht's innovative potential by assessing indicators such as job opportunities in knowledge-intensive sectors, investments in R&D, patents and scientific publications. Utrecht achieved 14th place in the final European ranking. Recent developments (including the establishment of renowned new businesses such as Nutricia/ Danone at Utrecht Science Park) have helped to further bolster this leading international position.**

## Innovation

percentages/highest score



"The Utrecht Science Park offers a high quality scientific and medical environment for innovation in health care. It brings together different players in life sciences research and medical applications and has a spirit of entrepreneurship. It stimulates public-private partnerships that create efficiencies by sharing complementary expertise, facilities and infrastructure, and potential strong synergies in co-development of new healthcare solutions. The world-class scientific research and open-innovation climate makes the Utrecht Science Park very attractive to us."

**Hanno Cappon, PhD**  
Vice President R&D  
Nutricia Advanced Medical Nutrition  
Nutricia Research, Danone

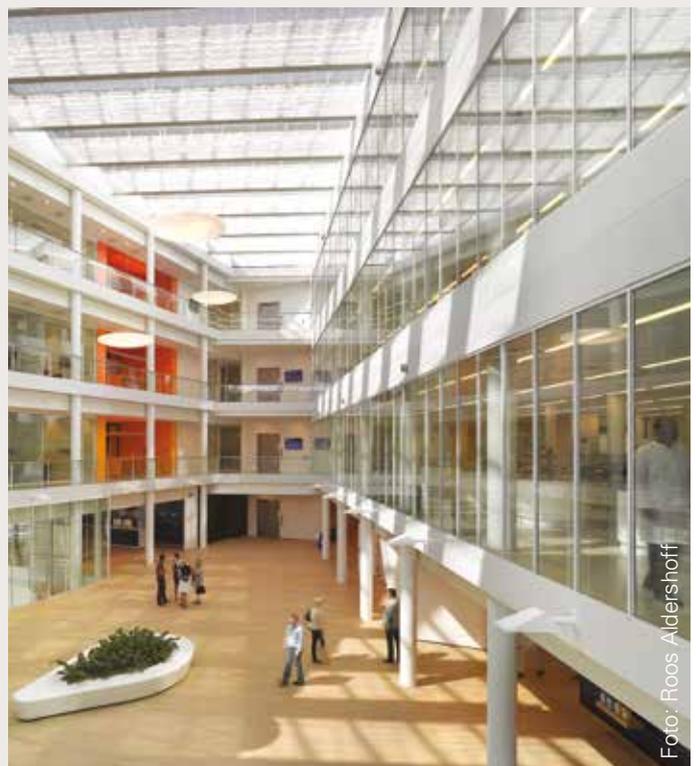


Foto: Roos Aldershoff

# Science base

**Utrecht Science Park** is the heart of Europe's most competitive region. More than 300 hectares is shared between knowledge institutions, top institutes and companies. It's a perfect starting point for top performances in research, development and innovation.

**Utrecht University** is one of Europe's leading research universities, recognised internationally for its high-quality and innovative approach to research and teaching. Founded in 1636, the University has always placed a strong focus on research. While cherishing its history, the University takes a keen interest in new scientific developments and societal challenges. Thanks to its solid grounding in broad disciplinary scholarship, Utrecht University is now at the forefront of developments in interdisciplinary knowledge. The University invests heavily in a range of thematic multidisciplinary collaborative projects that pursue excellent research under four strategic themes: Life Sciences, Sustainability, Institutions and Youth & Identity. Utrecht University is home to the only faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the Netherlands. According to the Shanghai Ranking Utrecht University is the number one research university in the Netherlands, comes 13th in Europe and occupies a shared 52nd position worldwide.

**University Medical Center Utrecht (UMC Utrecht)** is one of the top-ranked academic medical centres in Europe. Research focuses on six strategic programmes: Brain, Infection

& Immunity, Circulatory Health, Personalised Cancer Care, Regenerative Medicine & Stem Cells, and Child Health. Patient care and education are integrated into these programmes. A relentless multidisciplinary approach guarantees that patients benefit from the latest available expertise and innovative technological solutions. Interaction with patients and society creates an 'innovation loop' where societal issues guide scientific research and where scientific results quickly move from bench to bedside.

**Other Science Park residents** include HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Hubrecht Institute, Joint Environmental Laboratory (2014), Princess Máxima Center for Pediatric Oncology (2015), National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (2018), and companies like Genmab and Danone.



## More information

For more information on the Regional Competitiveness Index 2013: [www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/6th\\_report/rci\\_2013\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/6th_report/rci_2013_report_final.pdf)

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For regular updates on the latest economic incentives in the Utrecht region: [www.economicboardutrecht.nl](http://www.economicboardutrecht.nl).

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2013

Utrecht;  
28 minutes from  
Schiphol Airport

