



European Committee  
of the Regions

# Press Release

CoR/23/38.en  
Brussels, 27 March 2023

## Regional Competitiveness Index 2022: Europe needs strong investment on cohesion to tackle territorial competitive gaps

*Less-developed regions have improved their performances, triggering significant economic advantages for their citizens, but big differences remain in particular between large urban areas and the rest*

The 2022 edition of the **Regional Competitiveness Index (RCI)**, presented at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), crowns the Dutch region of Utrecht, followed by Zuid-Holland and the French capital region of Île-de-France as the most competitive regions in the European Union. The comparison with previous editions shows that regions of eastern and southern Europe are catching up. However, in many countries the gap between the capital city region and the remaining territories is still particularly wide.

The RCI was developed by the European Commission to assist policy makers with the design of better policies and monitoring their effectiveness, and is of particular interest for national and local authorities responsible for regional development strategies. The 2022 edition, named Regional Competitiveness Index 2.0, was unveiled during an event hosted by the CoR, with the presence of **Elisa Ferreira**, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms.

Opening the event, the Chair of the CoR Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (**COTER**) and Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, **Emil Boc** (RO/EPP) underlined that "on the one hand, the Regional Competitiveness Index is a tool that can help every region to assess its performance, compared with other regions and with itself over time. On the other hand, the RCI can be useful for national and local decision makers responsible for regional development strategies, in particular in the context of cohesion policy. The index will be a powerful tool to support the CoR's work on the future of cohesion policy as well as the #CohesionAlliance's campaign to reinforce social economic, and territorial cohesion in the EU."

**Robert Strijk** (NL/RE), Regional Minister of Economic and European Affairs of the province of Utrecht, said: "I am happy and grateful to find our ambitious region taking first place in the European RCI. First and foremost, Utrecht is the beating heart of a healthy society. As a region, we are on a mission to make significant and lasting improvements to the health and well-being of our inhabitants. We imagine and work towards a world in which people live better and more fulfilling lives, amidst an environment that entices them to do so. Working alongside businesses, institutions and governments, we have got the skills, resources and tenacity to deliver upon this vision."

**Jakub Chełstowski** (PL/EPP), Marshal of the Śląskie Voivodeship, said: "A number of measures are being taken in my region to improve the economic situation and further enhance economic opportunities. These include projects involving the Upper Silesia Fund, which is dedicated to the economic promotion of the region and the creation of favourable conditions for investment and export. The aim is to increase the value of direct investment in the region, increase the level of exports, particularly from SMEs, and promote the region as an attractive place to live and work."

Despite the improvements recorded in the last decade, the RCI shows competitiveness disparities between regions that affect the economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. In order to advocate cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU and plead for a strong Cohesion Policy beyond 2027, the CoR and the leading European associations of regions and cities founded the **#CohesionAlliance**. On 16 March, the Alliance kicked off the reflection process on the future of cohesion policy launching two new calls for contributions:

- a **broad consultation** to receive feedback on the future role and design of cohesion policy;
- a **call for Cohesion Local Stories** to showcasing how cohesion policy has a unique role to support cities' and regions' development.

To stay up to date with all the activities of the #CohesionAlliance and the latest development on cohesion policy, you can sign up to receive the new #CohesionAlliance newsletter [here](#).

## Background:

The RCI is a composite indicator which provides a synthetic picture of territorial competitiveness (the ability of a region to offer an attractive environment for firms and residents to live and work) for each of the regions of the 27 EU Member States. It is based on the **statistical, NUTS 2 (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics) regions**, with NUTS 2 regions that are part of the same functional urban area combined. More information is available [here](#).

The European Commission published the RCI for the first time in 2010 and updates it every three years, with slight modifications incorporated into each edition. This year is the fifth edition of the report, and it contains several changes in the methodology that nonetheless allow for meaningful comparisons with previous editions. The previous edition was presented during the **European Week of regions and Cities 2019**.

## Contact:

Matteo Miglietta

Tel. +32 (0) 470 89 53 82

[matteo.miglietta@cor.europa.eu](mailto:matteo.miglietta@cor.europa.eu)



### The European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives from all 27 Member States. Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. To sit on the European Committee of the Regions, all of its 329 members and 329 alternates must either hold an electoral mandate or be politically accountable to an elected assembly in their home regions and cities. [Click here](#) for more details on your national delegation.

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