

Try Harder: Findings of the European Catch-Up Index 2017

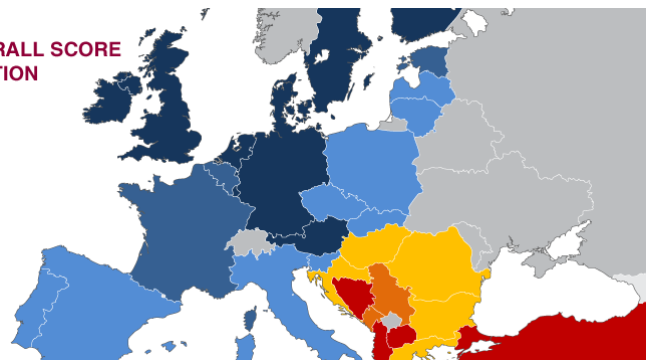
SOFIA, 16 MAY 2018. The catching-up of the new EU member states countries with their counterparts to the West continues, with the change of scores and ranking positions from 2011 to 2017 showing that as a group they are those registering biggest improvements over the years.

The report “Try Harder: Findings of the European Catch-Up Index 2017” is based on the seventh edition of the Index (www.TheCatchUpIndex.eu), which measures and ranks the performance of 35 countries – the EU member states, the candidate and potential candidate countries across four categories: Economy, Quality of Life, Democracy and Governance, using 47 indicators, with scores from 100-0 (highest to lowest) and rankings from 1-35 (highest to lowest).

The best performers in Index 2017 are concentrated in Northwestern Europe with Denmark (1st place out of 35), Sweden (2nd), Luxemburg (3rd), the Netherlands (4th) and Finland (5th) at top of the ranking while the underperformers are grouped in the Southeast Europe with BiH (35th place out of 35), Turkey (34th), Macedonia (33th), Albania (32nd), Serbia (31st).

CLUSTERS IN EUROPE BY OVERALL SCORE
THE CATCH-UP INDEX 2017 EDITION

Cluster	1
Cluster	2
Cluster	3
Cluster	4
Cluster	5
Cluster	6



In regard to the fallout of the debt crisis in Europe, the collapse of previously crisis-hit countries such as Cyprus, Greece and Spain has stopped and at the same time Ireland has made significant progress in the rankings (8th place in 2017).

Estonia (13th overall place out of 35), the Czech Republic (14th) and Slovenia (15th) are the most successful new EU member states (EU10+1) in the catching-up process, while Bulgaria (29th), Romania (27th) and Croatia (26th) remain last in the group.

In general, the catching-up in the Economy remains the most successful category and Quality of Life is the worst category for the group, which includes indicators for welfare of consumers and public services such as education and healthcare. This could be interpreted as failure to translate economic advancement into better standards of living.

A new trend is emerging as several EU10+1 countries – e.g. the Visegrad 4 - are converging with the older member states in the Economy category, but diverging in the Democracy category when their long-term Index results are compared. This may signal a new East-West divide returning to Europe, in contrast in previous findings of the Index where the North-South divides were more pronounced. It is too early to say, but this may be also a departure from the catching-up paradigm as now economic development and democracy seem to be decoupling.

The Balkan countries – as the candidate countries as well as their close EU neighbors such as Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Greece - remain a cause for concern as they are lagging behind in nearly all four categories – Economy, Democracy, Quality of Life and Governance.

The online platform at <http://www.TheCatchUpIndex.eu> allows users to view and work interactively with the data, creating their own “catching up” models and comparisons across countries and indicators.

The Catch-Up Index is a project of the European Policy Initiative (EuPI) of the Open Society Institute – Sofia.

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Catch-Up Index 2017							
Group	Country	Economy Score (100-0)	Quality of Life Score (100-0)	Democracy Score (100-0)	Governance Score (100-0)	Overall Score (100-0)	Overall Ranking (1-35)
EU15+2	Denmark	70	68	75	72	71	1
EU15+2	Sweden	69	67	74	73	71	2
EU15+2	Luxembourg	74	70	67	71	70	3
EU15+2	Netherlands	68	70	71	72	70	4
EU15+2	Finland	61	70	74	71	69	5
PCC	Iceland	62	69	67	68	66	6
EU15+2	Germany	66	68	63	69	66	7
EU15+2	Ireland	68	65	66	65	66	8
EU15+2	Austria	61	66	62	68	64	9
EU15+2	UK	61	65	61	66	63	10
EU15+2	Belgium	55	66	62	61	61	11
EU15+2	France	56	65	52	57	58	12
EU10+1	Estonia	57	53	60	56	56	13
EU10+1	Czech Republic	54	55	56	55	55	14
EU10+1	Slovenia	49	60	54	56	55	15
EU15+2	Malta	54	51	56	54	54	16
EU15+2	Spain	48	53	56	55	53	17
EU15+2	Portugal	41	50	60	59	53	18
EU10+1	Lithuania	52	46	52	49	50	19
EU15+2	Cyprus	43	53	49	50	49	20
EU10+1	Poland	46	50	48	47	48	21
EU10+1	Slovakia	48	46	48	48	48	22
EU10+1	Latvia	51	42	51	47	48	23
EU15+2	Italy	43	55	50	42	47	24
EU10+1	Hungary	44	44	36	44	42	25
EU10+1	Croatia	39	44	41	41	41	26
EU10+1	Romania	42	29	40	36	37	27
EU15+2	Greece	31	46	37	33	37	28
EU10+1	Bulgaria	40	28	35	35	35	29
CC	Montenegro	32	33	27	27	30	30
CC	Serbia	30	26	32	28	29	31
CC	Albania	29	22	26	23	25	32
CC	Macedonia	36	19	19	24	24	33
CC	Turkey	39	25	9	16	22	34
PCC	BiH	24	18	20	13	19	35

The ranking is based on the Index 2017 Overall Scores. The scores are from 100 to 0, highest to lowest. The ranking is from 1 to 35, highest to lowest position. The groups of countries are: the EU15+2 are the fifteen old EU member states and Cyprus and Malta; the EU10+1 are the new EU member states from CEE and Croatia, which joined in 2004, 2007 and 2013. The candidate countries are designated as CC and the PCC are the potential candidate countries.