

Collaboration with foreign partners can play an important role in the innovation process by allowing firms to gain access to a broader pool of resources and knowledge at a lower cost and to share risks with partners.

The share of firms collaborating on innovation with partners across Europe ranges from less than 2% in Spain and Turkey to over 13% in Finland, Luxembourg and Slovenia. Collaboration with partners outside Europe is much less frequent and concerns between 1% and 5% of firms in most European countries. Overall, innovating firms from the Nordic countries and some small European economies (Belgium, Luxembourg, and Slovenia) tend to collaborate more frequently with partners abroad.

Cross-country differences in international collaboration may be due to two factors: the overall innovation rate of a country, and the propensity of its firms to collaborate with foreign partners. The latter factor seems to explain most of the observed difference in European countries. For example, Spain and Slovenia have similar innovation rates but very different international collaboration rates (1.3% and 13.4%, respectively) owing to large differences in the propensity of innovative firms to engage in foreign collaboration.

International collaboration on innovation

Collaboration on innovation with foreign partners is an important source of knowledge inflows. It can take a variety of forms with different levels of interaction ranging from simple one-way information flows to highly interactive and formal arrangements. These types of linkages allow firms to access a broader pool of inputs (*e.g.* information, technologies, human or financial resources) than what is available in their local environment. Collaboration with foreign customers or suppliers can also help firms develop new products, processes or other innovations.

Sources

Eurostat, Community Innovation Survey 2006 (New-Cronos), June 2009.

National data sources.

Going further

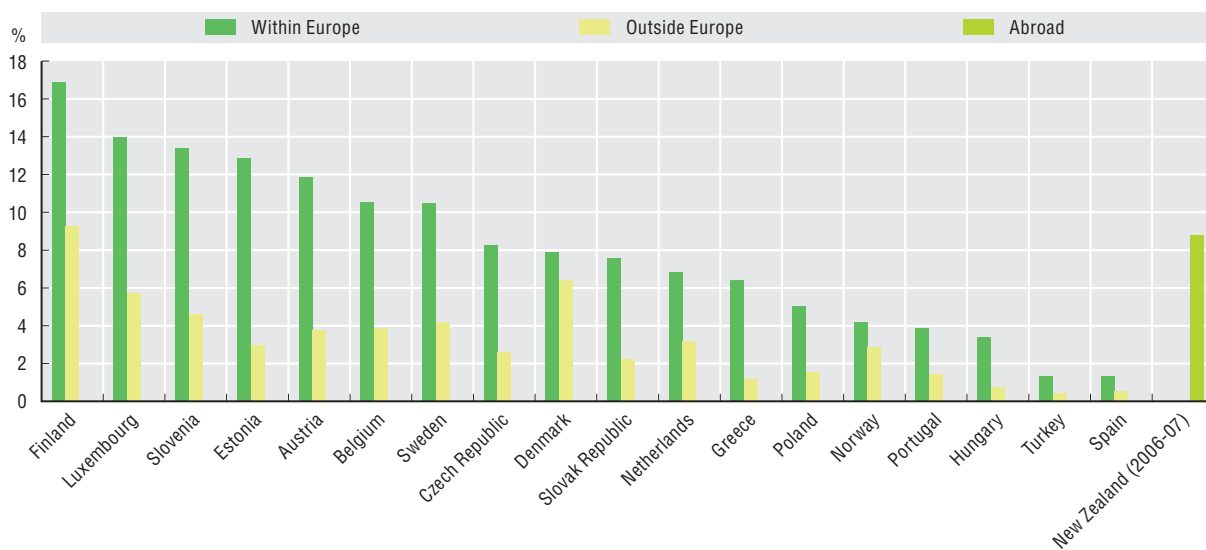
OECD and Eurostat (2005), *Oslo Manual: Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data*, 3rd edition, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/sti/oslomanual.

Figure notes

Innovation rates and intensity of foreign collaboration are expressed as percentage deviation from the EU averages (the EU average innovation rate is 35.2% and the EU average intensity of foreign collaboration is 14.8%).

Firms with foreign collaboration on innovation, 2004-06

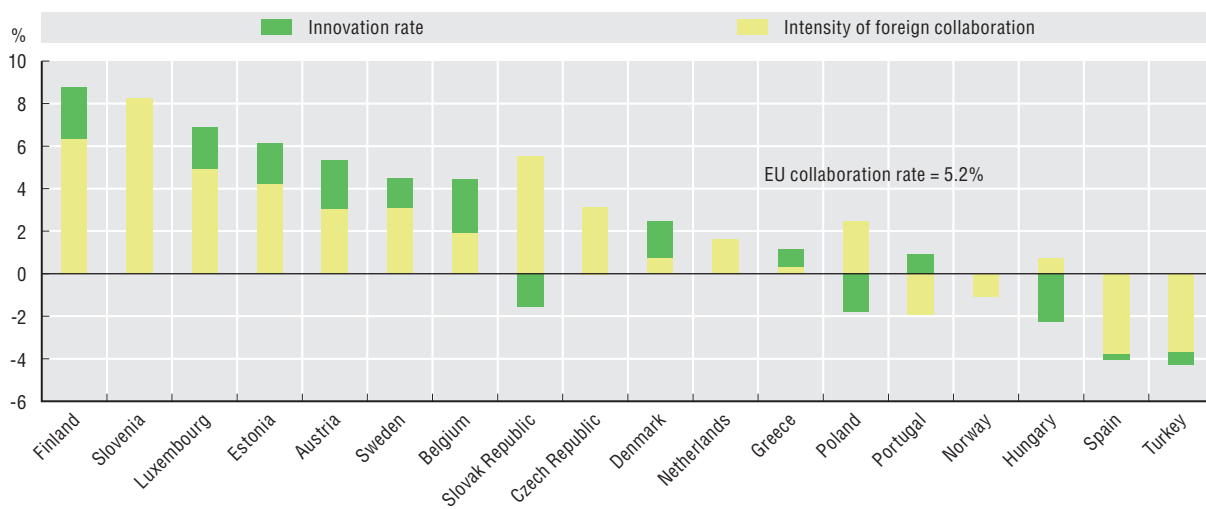
As a percentage of all firms



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/746278011864>

Foreign collaboration on innovation within Europe, 2004-06

Deviation from the European average in percentage points



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/746281028574>



From:
**OECD Science, Technology and Industry
Scoreboard 2009**

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/sti_scoreboard-2009-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2009), "International collaboration on innovation", in *OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2009*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/sti_scoreboard-2009-52-en

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