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**Author**

HOAREAU, Cecile (RITZEN, Jo; MARCONI, Gabriele)

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**Abstract**

This study measures and compares the extent to which national governments' policies foster the contribution of higher education to economic innovation across Europe. The study stresses the relevance of policies which are 'empowering' for higher education institutions, i.e. provide them with appropriate resources and regulatory environments. The assessment relies on quantitative composite scores, using non-arbitrary weights and eighteen policy indicators across 32 European countries. A large number of countries belong to a 'middle group' in our overall assessment, indicating a relative cohesion in Europe. Yet, substantial variations exist, each European Government having room for policy improvement. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)