

Which countries are most prepared for the future of work?

by Lisa Ardill

The Lisbon Council's latest Future of Work Index reveals which EU workforces are best placed for jobs down the line.

The Lisbon Council has released its 2019 [Future of Work Index](#), ranking 28 EU countries on their preparedness for the jobs and labour markets ahead of us.

The publication highlights how the world of work is changing with digital technology and other innovations – and how policies will need to be updated to reflect that.

The Lisbon Council said that the aim of the report is “not to flatter some or embarrass others”.

“To the contrary, every country has areas where they can improve. The aim is to help countries understand what those areas are – where the weak spots in their social fabric and policy framework lie – and to find ideas and inspiration from other countries that might be doing things a little bit better.”

Ranking and trends

The index ranking is based on a number of elements, including the degree to which a country's workforce is mobilised and integrated, how well those workforces are prepared for the modern economy, and how well they're preparing for and managing change.

Drawing from those, the Council lists three pillars as the building blocks for its ranking method. Modern workforces, new jobs and new tools, and transition effectiveness are the most critical aspects from which a country's readiness for the future of work can be determined.

Questions enveloped by these pillars include whether or not a workforce has the right skills for the digital economy, and whether the digital jobs are there for them if they attain those skills.

Major trends that are predicted to impact the ways we work around the world are touched on in the report too, with the rise of independent working and freelancing and evolving workplaces among them.

The study also offers insights into a [policy bank](#) that catalogues reform efforts in EU member states. This is an effort to chronicle the reform steps that countries are taking to prepare themselves for the modern economy.

Key finding

In terms of overall rankings, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands are all at the top of the list, receiving commendation for new jobs and new tools, signifying a smooth transition for their respective workforces to the knowledge economy.

At the bottom of the index is Greece, which performed poorly in all three categories for a modern workforce.

As for Ireland, the country came in at seventh in the overall ranking, securing a solid place within the top 10. It's listed at ninth place for the modernity of its workforce, and 15th for its inclusion of women within that.

Clarifying the relevance of this study, the Council added: "It doesn't matter how well-prepared people are if the jobs and opportunities aren't there too.

"One important indicator of this is the speed with which the unemployed are able to get new jobs. This varies widely in European states. In Sweden, the average wait is eight months. In Greece, it runs around two and a half years."

