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Levels of competitiveness in the EU Countries: an application based on Eurostat indicators

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In the European Union the theme of economic growth is a well-discussed issue, because of the existent significant differences among the EU countries. In this context, an important element of human-centric and sustainable economic progress is represented by competitiveness. At a first sight, this concept does not appear to be countable, in this study, the authors propose to use some Eurostat indicators available in a set of member countries to measure the competitiveness levels. This approach allows to track the dynamics of competitive growth for a 7-years period from 2014 to 2020. The statistical approach has been realized using a weighted principal component analysis and drawing on a Cartesian plan a time trajectory showing the dynamics of innovation and digitalization for each country. This graphical analysis allows to extract some evidences about different paths to competitiveness within the European Union. The aim of the paper is to provide an overview of the dynamics of the competitiveness for some EU countries, limiting to two dimensions of the innovation: Research & Development and digitalization. For this reason, the economic indicators are addressed in these two directions. About R&D, the Business Expenditure and the Government Budget have been considered. On the other hand, with regards to digitalization, the number of enterprises in ICT sector and the employment in ICT at high level have been taken into account. Finally, since last point of the trajectory represents 2020, some preliminary considerations on a possible effect of the pandemic emergency on the competitiveness could be achieved.

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