Did you know?

Differences in productivity levels have increased since 2000 due to the capital region Île-de-France outperforming all other regions in France.

Youth unemployment is above the OECD average in all French regions, varying by up to 12 percentage points across regions.

Total public expenditure per capita by subnational governments in France is more than 30% below the OECD average.

Economic trends in regions

The regional gap in GDP per capita increased in France over the last sixteen years. The faster economic growth of Île-de-France drove this trend. Since 2012, GDP per capita in Île-de-France has grown 0.55 percentage points per year faster than in Hauts-de-France, the region with the lowest GDP per capita. In 2016, France had the tenth highest regional disparities in GDP per capita among 30 OECD countries with comparable data.

Île-de-France is not only the French region with the highest productivity levels, but also the region with the highest productivity growth in the country – 1.2% per year over the period 2000-16. As a consequence, there has been no convergence between French regions in terms of labour productivity since 2000. Youth unemployment is above the OECD average of 15.1% in all regions, ranging from 15.7% in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes to 27.6% in Hauts-de-France.

Source: OECD Regional Database.
Notes: (1) Figure on regional gap in GDP per capita: OECD regions refer to the administrative tier of subnational government (large regions, Territorial Level 2); France is composed of 13 large regions. (2) Figure on index of regional disparity: top (bottom) 20% regions are defined as those with the highest (lowest) GDP per capita until the equivalent of 20% of national population is reached, this indicator provides a harmonised measure to rank OECD countries, using data for small regions (Territorial Level 3) when available. (3) Productivity is measured as GDP per employee at place of work in constant prices, constant Purchasing Power Parities (reference year 2010).
Eight French regions rank in the top 20% of OECD regions in terms of health, with residents in the capital region having the highest life expectancy in the country and one of the highest in the entire OECD. The largest regional disparities are observed for safety, with Corsica being in the bottom 25% of the OECD regions and Brittany in the top 20%. On the other hand, Corsica ranks first among the French regions in community and self-evaluation of life satisfaction.

The top performing regions in France fare better than the OECD median region for all the well-being indicators, except for employment rate. In the regions with the worst outcomes, the unemployment rate is 5 percentage points higher and the employment rate 8 percentage points lower than the OECD median region, respectively.

Differences in well-being across regions

Relative ranking of the regions with the best and worst outcomes in the 11 well-being dimensions, with respect to all 402 OECD regions. The eleven dimensions are ordered by decreasing regional disparities in the country. Each well-being dimension is measured by the indicators in the table below.

Source: OECD Regional Database. Visualisation: https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org. Notes: (1) OECD regions refer to the first administrative tier of subnational government (large regions, Territorial Level 2); France is composed of 13 large regions. (2) Household income per capita data are based on USD constant PPP, constant prices (year 2010).
In France, 64% of the population lives in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants. The share of population in cities with more than 500,000 people is 39% compared to 55% in the OECD area.

Metropolitan areas in France accounted for 52% of national GDP and 45% of employment. Between 2000 and 2016, they generated 73% of national GDP growth, with the metropolitan area of Paris alone accounting for 45% of such growth.

In terms of GDP per capita, Paris ranks among the 20% richest among the 327 OECD Metropolitan areas. In OECD countries, Lille and Marseille are among the 25% of metropolitan areas with the highest air pollution, as measured in terms of people’s exposure to PM 2.5.

Source: OECD Metropolitan Database. Number of metropolitan areas with a population of over 500,000: 15 in France compared to 327 in the OECD.

* Note: Cities are defined here as functional urban areas, which are composed by high-density urban centres of at least 50,000 people and their areas of influence (commuting zone). For more information, see: http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/functionalkurbanareabycountry.htm.
Subnational government expenditure by function
As a share of total subnational government expenditure, 2016

Subnational government expenditure amounts to USD 4,607 per capita in France compared to an OECD average of USD 6,817. In France, this is equivalent to 19.8% of total public expenditure and to 11.1% of GDP. In comparison, across the OECD, subnational government expenditure accounts for 40.4% of total public expenditure and for 16.2% of GDP. The function ‘Other’ (housing and community amenities, recreation, culture and religion; environment; public order and safety) and economic affairs are the two largest spending items for subnational governments in France: together they represent 46% of subnational expenditure compared to 29% in the OECD area.

In France, 55.2% of total public investment was carried out by subnational governments compared to an OECD average of 56.9%.

Role of subnational governments in public investment
Subnational government public investment per capita, 2016

OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2018
The 2018 edition of OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance shows how regions and cities contribute to national growth and the well-being of societies. It updates its regular set of region-by-region indicators, examining a wide range of policies and trends and identifying those regions that are outperforming or lagging behind in their country.

Consult this publication on line: https://oe.cd/pub/2n9

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