



## **Global Data Barometer**

# **THE STATE OF DATA FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD IN EUROPE**

December 2022

## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary .....   | 3  |
| Recommendations.....  | 6  |
| The Global Data Barometer: Unleashing the Power of Data.....              | 9  |
| Finding 1: Europe: global data leader with the glass half empty.....      | 10 |
| Finding 2: Strong on procurement and health, weak on anti-corruption..... | 11 |
| Finding 3: Data is not fully open.....                                    | 13 |
| Finding 4: EU Regional Variations .....                                   | 16 |
| Finding 5: Investment in Capacity Helps Outcomes .....                    | 20 |
| Finding 6: Regulations Make a Difference.....                             | 24 |
| Finding 7: Climate Data: Missing in Action! .....                         | 27 |
| Finding 8: Lack of Data Risks Opening the Door to Corruption .....        | 30 |
| About the Global Data Barometer and its Methodology .....                 | 36 |



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European region is a global leader on open data according to the findings of the 2022 Global Data Barometer (GDB) survey of 109 countries. Yet, the 21 European countries still only score an average of 51% out of a maximum of 100 in the GDB scoring system, with significant weaknesses including the fact that government data is not made available as open data, and that key datasets needed to discuss pressing public issues, such as climate change or to combat corruption, are not available in many countries.

### **Finding 1: Europe's data glass is half empty!**

The 21 European countries in this study (20 EU Member States plus the UK) have a comparatively better score than other regions of the world, with a 51% average total. This is a poor result after fifteen years of work to open up government data for the public good and given Europe's recognition of the multiple social, economic, and democratic benefits of digitalisation and open data.

### **Finding 2: Strong on procurement and health, weak on anti-corruption**

Europe scored relatively well on Health and Covid-19 data (61%), a result of work to collect, digitalise and publish data in almost real-time during the pandemic, showing what can be achieved where there is a need accompanied by political will.

Similarly, the scores for Public Finance data (60%) and Public Procurement data (55%) reflect the emphasis that has been placed on democratic benefits of fiscal and spending transparency.

Of concern are the low levels of availability of important datasets, for all of which the EU region scores below 50%, namely Company Information (49%), Political Integrity (38%), and Land data (36%) and the surprisingly poor score of only 44% for data on Climate Action.

### **Finding 3: Data is not fully open – especially land and lobbying data**

With a score of 53% for openness of data, the European region did not perform well. The GDB found that much data is not released according to the highest open data standards, meaning that it is not free of charge, nor openly licensed, nor are entire datasets updated in a timely fashion and made available in a searchable, machine-readable format, for download and reuse.

The more open datasets were Covid-19 Vaccination data (85% of available data is open data), Budget and Spending (76%), Health Vital Statistics (76%) and Emissions (73%). There were very low levels of open data for Land Tenure data (24%) and Lobbying (24%) caused, respectively, by land data only being available against payment, and lobbying data simply not existing in many countries.

### **Finding 4: EU Regional Variations**

The Global Data Barometer study has revealed significant variations across the European region. Overall, Estonia had the highest score, with strong performers including Denmark, Finland, France and the UK. All the high scores reflected investment in the data ecosystem in these countries over recent years.

Some other countries such as Italy and Spain had strong scores on many indicators, but fell down on others, for instance Spain was strong on data capabilities but weaker on publication of data as fully open data.

For every surveyed country, it is possible to find areas where countries perform better, and areas where improvement is necessary, but consistently at the bottom of the European league table, were Greece, Lithuania and particularly Malta, which scored poorly on the evaluation of data availability in the areas of access to information, climate vulnerability, real-time healthcare system capacity, and lobbying.

### **Finding 5: Investment in capacity helps outcomes**

The Global Data Barometer evaluation of “Capabilities” inside government found that Europe scored well, with an average of 69% and all 21 European countries scoring over 50%, the only aspect of the GDB research for which this was true: for other elements of the survey some countries scored above 50% and others below it.

European countries have invested well in developing online services (82%) and in digitalisation of government (81%). Quite a few countries have specific, well-funded, open data initiatives (66%) and there has been a reasonable development of digital skills (61%). They are weaker on government support for reuse at only 39%, thereby undermining the potential value of public data for entrepreneurship, participation, accountability, combating fake news, and preventing corruption.

There is a correlation between the capacities in each country and the other scores for the Global Data Barometer modules. The strongest countries on Capabilities were Estonia (92%), Spain (82%), the Netherlands (81%), France (79%), and Finland (79%), all of which have invested significantly in both open data and digitalisation more generally.

The weaker performers in terms of Capabilities were Latvia (59%), Greece (58%), Malta (57%), Croatia (54%) and Romania (53%), countries which also score badly on the actual data availability indicators, particularly Greece and Malta, confirming the finding of a correlation between capacity and outcomes.

### **Finding 6: Regulations make a difference**

A key finding of the GDB is that regulations make a difference and that countries with more regulations requiring collection and/or publication of specific data have significantly more data available. This is true even for countries which did not have strong performance overall, such as Bulgaria (50%) or Croatia (48%), but which do have data available where there are rules requiring it.

Conversely, the absence of rules means little or no data, particularly when there is no EU directive requiring that data be collected and published. Hence there were low scores for most countries on access to information data and on lobbying data, neither of which are regulated by the EU.

The GDB also found that not all countries have yet implemented their obligations under EU directives. For instance, company registration and ownership data is not open, in spite of being a High-Value Dataset in the EU’s Open Data Directive, in part at least because of the lack of an implementing regulation from the European Commission. Furthermore, we found that not all countries had opened their beneficial ownership registers even prior to the [22 November 2022 Court of Justice of the](#)

[European Union ruling](#) which has subsequently resulted in many countries closing down public access to these registers on grounds of personal data protection.

### **Finding 7: Climate data is missing in action!**

The GDB's evaluation of Climate Action data in Europe found that the average score for the European countries was just 44%, so one of the weakest European scores for the various types of data surveyed.

There is more information available on Emissions (61%), and Biodiversity (43%) but very little data on Vulnerabilities to climate change (28%). Whilst on all these datasets there is better availability in Europe than the global averages, that does nothing to justify not providing the public with greater information on these pressing 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

### **Finding 8: Lack of Data Risks Opening the Door to Corruption**

The average score for European countries on the selected anti-corruption indicators is just 42%. Relatively stronger performers on the availability of anti-corruption data are the UK (67%), followed by Estonia (59%), France (56%) and Denmark (55%). The countries with the least data available are Lithuania (30%) and Malta (30%). The overall poor score and the wide disparity puts all of Europe at risk as illegal activity and organised crime shifts to less-well-regulated jurisdictions.

European countries generally score well on the publication of budget and spending data (65%) and on Public Procurement data (63%) reflecting years of work to open up this data, but fall down on datasets essential to ensuring government integrity such as Asset Declarations (39%) and Lobbying data (18%).

The score for beneficial ownership registers was already only 34% before a recent case from the Court of Justice of the European Union which has resulted in many beneficial ownership registers being closed to the public. Other registers needed to track money laundering and use of stolen assets are not available, notably land ownership data at only 18%.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### European Governments

European governments are urged to review results of the Global Data Barometer which will provide a valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of each government and provide guidance for a plan of action on how to create genuine open data ecosystems that serve to sustain democratic processes. Specifically, it is recommended that they:

- » Strengthen and expand the legal framework requiring the collection, management and publication of key datasets, with such regulations mandating that data is released in accordance with open data standards;
- » Ensure the availability of data needed to inform the important debates of our time such as climate change, with an immediate priority focus on climate vulnerability data;
- » Ensure that data needed to prevent and expose corruption is made available immediately as fully open data, prioritising company registration and ownership data, including beneficial ownership of companies, land registration and use data, and lobbying data;
- » Strengthen their digital and data capacities where needed, and ensure that there are clear open data strategies and initiatives that include central, regional, and local government;
- » Increase support for the reuse of public data, with a focus on small and medium businesses, civil society organisations, investigative journalists, and citizens in general.

In addition, **EU Member States** should ensure that they have transposed and implemented all EU directives which require that data be collected and published.

### European Union

**The European Union** as a whole should review the levels of publication of key datasets as identified by the GDB with a view to informing its open data strategies and other rules that require Member States to publish data.

**The European Commission** should take specific action, including:

- » Ensure that the current revision of the list of High-Value Datasets under the Open Data Directive makes it a priority to include datasets on climate change and those needed for preventing corruption.
- » The EU should develop a comprehensive set of EU regulations and directives which establish the collection and transparency of data necessary to prevent and combat corruption. Immediate open data priorities are rules on the beneficiaries of all EU funds, ownership and beneficial ownership of companies, open land tenure data, regulation of lobbying, and rules on conflicts of interest and assets declarations.
- » Support capacity building in the Member States which are currently underperforming on open data, including through use of funding available for digital initiatives – such as that linked to the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) Funds.
- » Propose that RRF Funds spending linked to climate transition be linked to open data work so as to ensure the existence and publication of climate-related data.

**The European Parliament** should:

- » Investigate the status of existing data listed in the Open Data Directive list of High-Value Datasets, which the Parliament has already approved, such as company registration and ownership data, and why this is not yet being made public in many Member States.
- » Actively engage in the process of defining the High-Value Datasets to ensure that they are those needed for public debate and participation on issues such as climate change and combatting corruption.

### Open Government Partnership (OGP)

**The Open Government Partnership** should engage in and help facilitate European region debates on how to further advance Europe's digitalisation and opening up of data for the public good. Specifically, it should:

- » Review commitments made by its member countries and seek to identify why certain datasets which have been prioritised by the partnership, such as beneficial ownership registers and lobbying transparency data, are still largely absent in the European space;
- » Support the exchange of strategies, skills and best practices, between governments around Europe, so that all countries have the necessary set of capabilities to exploit the full potential of open data;
- » Encourage its Europe member countries which are performing well on specific aspects of open data to share technical and strategic expertise with those countries in the region which are seriously underperforming;
- » Encourage countries which are making OGP commitments on open data to ensure that these are accompanied by corresponding regulations, so as to guarantee consistent and sustainable opening of the datasets;
- » Convene a discussion to focus on how to increase the availability of Climate Action data in the European region, acting as a forum for an exchange of best practices on this topic;
- » Continue to engage in debates on open data for preventing and combatting corruption, making use of the strong experience of its members by convening specific knowledge-sharing fora on how to increase levels of digitalisation and open data for delivering integrity in government.

### The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

- » The OECD should engage actively in the European region in debates on how to further advance Europe's digitalisation and open data as a priority as part of countries' open government commitments supporting the exchange of skills and expertise among its member and other countries.
- » Through its research, the OECD should continue to gather data on the state of digitalisation and data in member and other countries so as to further advance understanding of what is working, what is not working, and how to ensure better use and opening up of public data.
- » The OECD should support projects to share best practices on open data for combatting corruption so that no country is lagging behind.

## Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations have an important role to play in engaging with national governments, the European Union and the Open Government Partnership to improve the state of data. Specifically:

- » Organisations working in areas such as health reform, fiscal transparency, anti-corruption, and climate transition are encouraged to engage with and support open data campaigns;
- » Organisations working on open data should collaborate with governments, the EU, OGP, and other actors, to strengthen skills and to facilitate skill transfer as and where needed;
- » Open data and transparency organisations as well as those in specific thematic sectors should advocate for a strong legal framework to ensure sustainable compliance with commitments;
- » All civil society organisations are encouraged to engage with in the debate about the High-Value Datasets under the EU's Open Data Directive.
- » Civil society organisations and journalists working on preventing and investigating corruption should join and support current transparency and open data campaigns.

Access Info can provide more specific information about how civil society can engage in these discussions and processes.



## *The Global Data Barometer:*

### *Unleashing the Power of Data*

We live in the era of the data economy, a moment in history where every step we take, we generate data which is immediately used for tracking, targeting, communicating, and many other purposes. In this digital world we live in, people are used to immediate access to information, and often, more worryingly, to disinformation. Governments, and public administrations in general, carrying out their daily activities, generate huge amounts of data, created thanks to the funds provided by millions of taxpayers. And nowadays, people expect governments to release large amounts of data so everyone can know about their actions, can hold governments accountable, reveal fake news, or reuse the information for any purpose.

Releasing data alone, however, is not enough. Relevant data strategies need to be implemented along the way, ensuring public officials are properly trained, and that there is active promotion on the benefits of releasing data following open data standards. Governments should promote the reuse of public data to enhance the benefits that open data brings to societies and economies. Governments should also promote a greater interoperability among the datasets they release. This would truly unleash the full potential that open data can bring to society.

The [Global Data Barometer](#) (GDB) is a collaborative project that aims to measure the state of data in relation to urgent societal issues. Together with regional hubs and thematic partners, it seeks to evaluate, country by country, the availability of data, the rules governing data, the capacity of the countries to create, share, and use data, and how released data is being used, around the issues of climate action, company information, health and Covid-19, land, political integrity, public finance, and public procurement.

Access Info Europe is one of those regional hubs and coordinated the data collection process in 27 countries, most of them in the European region, out of the 109 countries included in the GDB study.

In this report, key data from 21 European countries has been analysed, of which 20 are member states of the European Union (EU), and one, the United Kingdom, a former member after its removal in 2020. These 21 countries are all members of the [Open Government Partnership](#), which means every two to four years, they have to submit an action plan co-created with civil society making concrete and measurable commitments to enhance transparency, accountability and public participation in government.

The countries covered by Access Info are, in general, some of the most developed countries in the world, in terms of both economic and democratic development. They are countries which led the open data movement, and the European Union countries led the way with common standards on opening up public sector information as part of ensuring a level playing field for reuse of data, with a large and increasing number of companies making use of public data, as well as use by civil society and investigative journalists.

## Finding 1

### Europe: global data leader with the glass half empty

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Overall, the European region is the strongest in the world in the Global Data Barometer study of 109 countries, with the 21 European countries (20 EU Member States plus the UK) scoring an average of 51%, compared with an average of 30% for the other countries in the survey.

The score for each country comprises all the aspects of data measured by the GDB survey, including both data governance – the regulatory framework – and the data capacities or “capabilities” of public bodies, which analyses whether countries have the means, connectivity, skills, and institutional capacity to create, share, and use data for the public good.

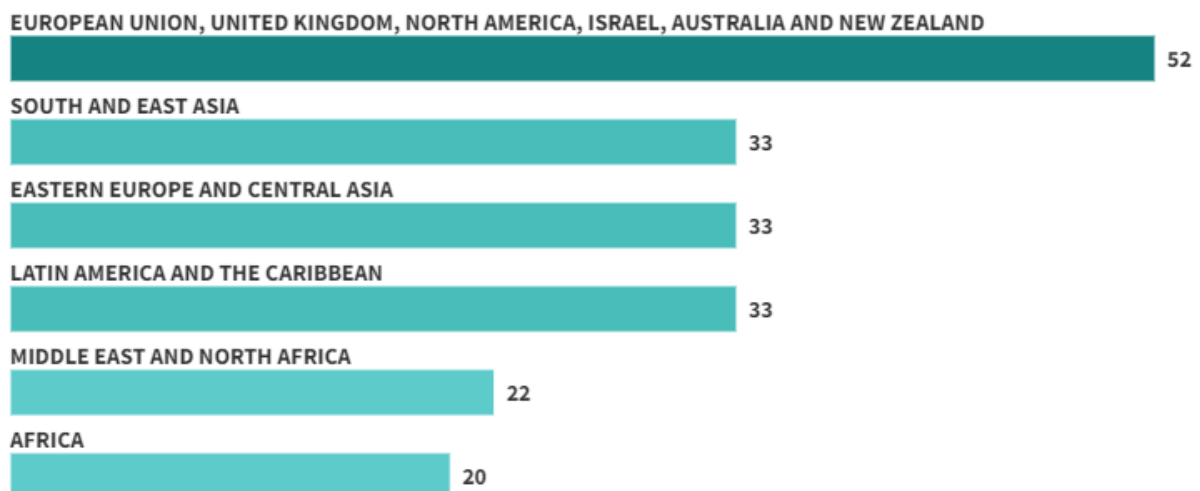
The Global Data Barometer study further examined data availability – including whether data is available in open data formats – along with an evaluation of the use by and impact on members of the public of the data that is available.

This European score is similar to the average for other developed economies, which the Global Data Barometer included in one region comprising 26 countries, being 21 European countries plus Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, and the United States of America.

As can be seen from Table 1, this group of developed economies scored 52% on average compared with other regions, such as South and East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, which all scored 33%, while the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region scored 22%, and the Africa region just 20%.

#### Total Score by World Region

Table 1



The comparatively better score for countries in the European region is, nevertheless, nothing to be proud of, as to achieve an average of just half the possible Global Data Barometer score is a very poor result.

The digital age is still relatively young, and the open data movement even younger. The European countries in this GDB study are, however, all members of the Open Government Partnership (launched in 2011), have all made multiple data-related commitments, and have made much of their advances on opening public data for the public good in the past fifteen or so years. In this context, their mediocre scores point to an urgent need to review whether they are being successful in creating genuine open data ecosystems that serve to sustain democratic processes, and to evaluate how better to move towards that goal.

## Recommendations

European countries, EU Member States and the UK, should take immediate action to:

- » Evaluate their data ecosystems for weakness that need to be addressed;
- » Improve the collection, governance, and publication of data;
- » Ensure the availability of data needed to inform the important debates of our time such as climate change;
- » Ensure that data needed to prevent and expose corruption is made available immediately as fully open data.

## Finding 2

### Strong on procurement and health, weak on anti-corruption

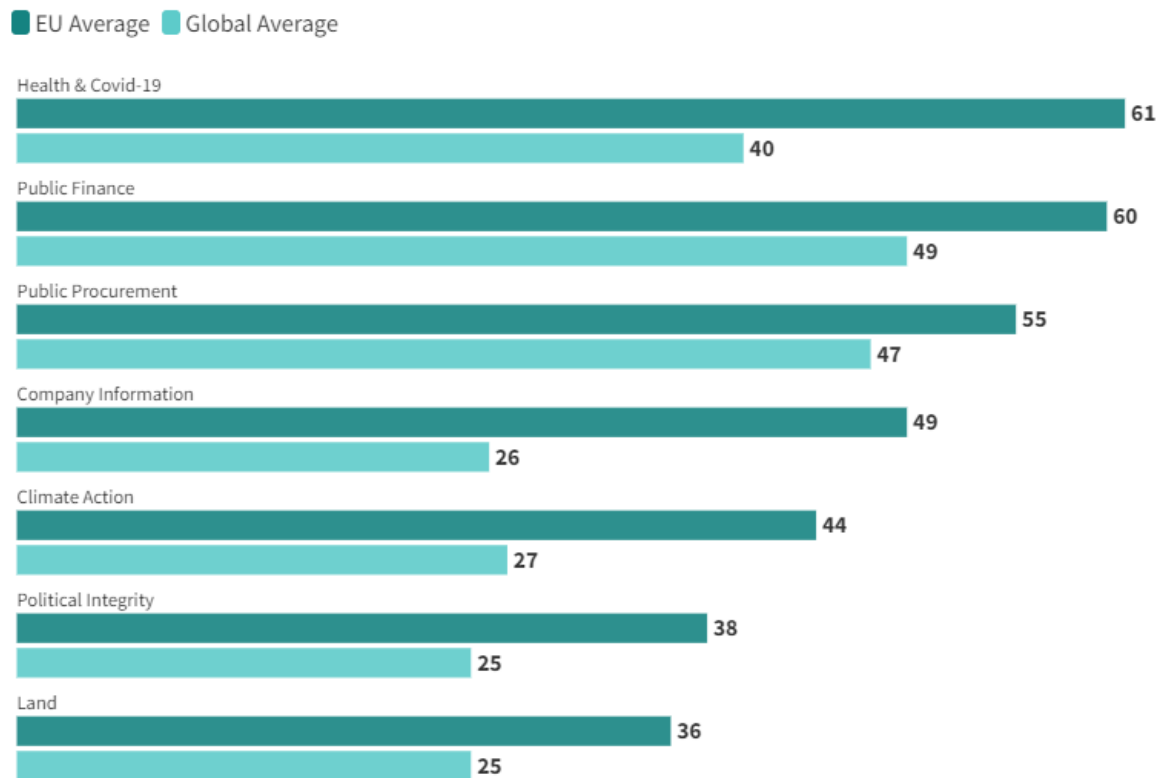
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When it comes to an examination of the GDB survey thematic modules, we found that there are relatively high levels of transparency in the areas of Health and Covid-19 data, along with Public Finance and Public Procurement data.

The good score for Health and Covid-19 data (61%) across European countries is instructive because the score was brought up by the good availability of Covid-19 vaccination data (67%), which was available in all European countries, along with good Vital Statistics data such as births and deaths (63%), whereas Real-Time Healthcare System Capacity (hereinafter “Healthcare Capacity”) data was lower (38%).

## Score by Type of Data

Table 2



Covid-19 data is an example of where a particular context has resulted in investment in more rapid collection of relevant information, in the digitalisation of the compilation of the data, and in publishing it rapidly, given the importance of communicating this data to the public in a timely manner – even daily – during the course of the pandemic.

The stronger scores on Public Finance data (60%) and Public Procurement data (55%) reflect the emphasis that has been placed on fiscal and spending transparency right from the start of the open data movement, and indeed previously, given that much of this data would have been available in printed formats and then in documents published on early websites. Furthermore, public procurement has been a focus of EU directives, which require publication of, at the very least, the tender notices and contract award notices.

By contrast, there are some important datasets for which the EU region scores below 50%, namely Company Information (49%), Political Integrity (38%), and Land data (36%) – all of which are needed for investigative journalists and anti-corruption groups.

There is also a surprisingly poor score of only 44% for data on Climate Action (See Finding 7 below for more details on this).

Just as much effort was made during the Covid-19 pandemic to systematise, digitalise, and publish relevant health data, it is clear that, given the importance of other data sets, particularly the Climate Action data, the same investment of resources should be prioritised to improve the levels of publication of this data.

## Recommendations

- » European countries and the European Union should review the levels of publication of key datasets as identified by the Global Data Barometer with a view to ensuring that data is collected and that these are published across the region.
- » The European Commission's ongoing process of defining the key datasets for which publication will be required under the revised list of High-Value Datasets under the Open Data Directive should include, in particular, data on Climate Action and Political Integrity, including as a priority Company Ownership and Land data, which are datasets that are essential for anti-corruption work.
- » The European Parliament should actively engage in the process of defining the High-Value Datasets (HVD) to ensure that it includes needed data, and should also ensure that existing data in the HVD list that the European Parliament has already approved, such as company registration and ownership data, is indeed made public.
- » The Open Government Partnership and the OECD should engage actively in the European region in debates on how to further advance Europe's digitalisation and open data as a priority as part of countries' open government commitments.
- » Civil society organisations working in areas such as health reform, fiscal transparency, anti-corruption, and climate transition, which are not already engaged in open data work, are encouraged to join the campaign to increase transparency in these areas, and can contact Access Info for more information about the Global Data Barometer and how to support our recommendations and future activities.

## Finding 3

### Data is not fully open

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Most of the available data identified by the GDB is not fully open. In other words, the data is not released following open data standards, namely being available free of charge, openly licensed, and with the entire dataset available as a whole in a machine-readable format.

The average level of openness for the datasets evaluated by the Global Data Barometer survey was just 53%. What this means is that, even when data is collected and available, it's not published as fully open data.

The GDB went beyond the usual definition of "open" to examine whether the available datasets were accompanied by accessible and open official tools to help users explore the data, whether they were updated in a timely fashion, and whether historical data was available so that changes over time could be tracked and analysed.

The GDB study looked at the availability of different types of data, and for each, it analyses how open these types of data are.

If we look at the specific areas, we find the higher amount of open data available in the field of Covid-19 Vaccination, which demonstrates that governments can collect and release relevant data in accordance with open data standards if there is a social value in doing so. Furthermore, this can be done rapidly, with updates coming even on a daily basis, where there is a strong demand met by political will to respond.

The types of data that follow in terms of openness are Budget and Spending (76%), Vital statistics (76%) and Emissions (73%), data that is usually collected in most European countries, and generally available in line with open data standards.

### Levels of Openness of the Specific Datasets

Table 3

| Area                               | Datasets                             | Amount of Open Data Available |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Climate Action                     | Emissions                            | 73                            |
|                                    | Biodiversity                         | 47                            |
|                                    | Vulnerability                        | 38                            |
| Health                             | Vaccination Covid-19                 | 85                            |
|                                    | Vital Statistics                     | 76                            |
|                                    | Real-Time Healthcare System Capacity | 48                            |
| Land                               | Land Use                             | 62                            |
|                                    | Land Tenure                          | 24                            |
| Company Information                | Company Register                     | 59                            |
|                                    | Beneficial Ownership                 | 36                            |
| Political Integrity                | Political Finance                    | 57                            |
|                                    | Public Consultation                  | 43                            |
|                                    | Asset Declarations                   | 41                            |
|                                    | RTI Performance                      | 39                            |
|                                    | Lobbying                             | 24                            |
| Public Finance                     | Budget and Spending                  | 76                            |
| Public Procurement                 | Public Procurement                   | 67                            |
| <b>Average Open Data Available</b> |                                      | <b>53%</b>                    |

There are, on the contrary, low levels of open data for Land Tenure data (24%) and Lobbying (24%). Here the reasons are distinct. Land tenure data exists in all European countries, but the registers are not open, usually being accessible only on a record-by-record basis, against payment or even only where there is a specific interest in having the particular information.

There is, by contrast, a different reason for the lack of Lobbying data. As already noted above, this data is not even being collected in most European countries as there are no lobby control laws. This

means that the public is denied access to this data in any format, certainly not as open data, and not even upon request or payment.

The lack of data availability and openness of public data is a serious obstacle to public participation. Furthermore, if data is available but not open, this stymies the work of civil society in holding government to account. Overall, a lack of openness risks undermining the effectiveness of many public policies and reducing trust in government action.

## Recommendations

**Governments across Europe** should facilitate the use of public data to enhance the benefits that open data brings to societies and economies. To this end:

- » Data should always be made available as open data in machine-readable formats, with entire datasets available for download as a whole;
- » Data should always be made public free of charge;
- » Governments should make much better use of open licenses, which permit any type of reuse, including for commercial purposes;
- » Data should be updated in a timely manner, and provided along with historical data so as to allow users to track changes over time;
- » Ideally, governments should provide strong search functions and other tools to help users explore the data and so maximise the value to all members of the public.

**Europe's governments** should make a priority of releasing as open data those datasets which are needed for addressing current societal challenges. In line with the levels of digitalisation and transparency achieved with respect to Covid-19 data, governments should prioritise addressing the significant underperformance of available open data on:

- » Biodiversity
- » Climate Vulnerability
- » Land Tenure
- » Beneficial Ownership
- » Lobbying
- » RTI Performance

**The European Union** through the current revision of the list of High-Value Datasets linked to the Open Data Directive should make it a priority to include in the list of data that Member State must release as open data the datasets necessary for engaging in debate on climate change and in preventing corruption.

**Civil society organisations** working on climate change and combatting corruption should engage with national open data processes, as well as with the Open Government Partnership and the European Union, to press for great openness of key data. Access Info is available to provide further information about how to get involved.

**The Open Government Partnership** should review commitments made by its members countries to open up government data and seek to identify why certain datasets which have been prioritised by the partnership, such as beneficial ownership registers and lobbying transparency data, are still largely absent in the European space.

## Finding 4

### EU Regional Variations

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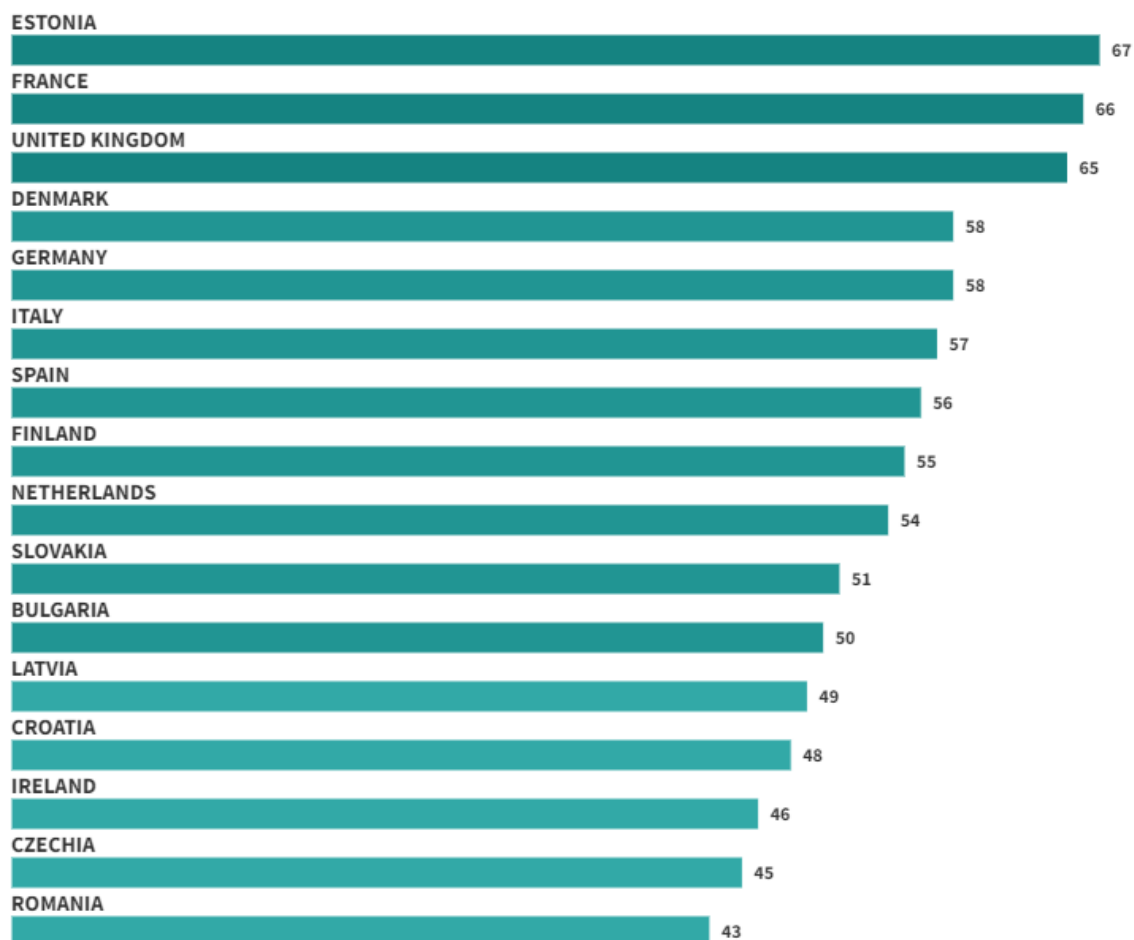
There is a significant variation across Europe with some countries being particularly strong data performers and others lagging seriously behind, even falling below global averages.

As a broad observation, countries in northern and western Europe, the more established democracies and more developed economies perform better, so we find countries such as Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK among the strongest performers. Also among the leaders are Italy and Spain, which have invested in open data and digitalisation over recent years.

Outpacing them all, however, is Estonia, which for the last two decades has made digitalisation a top priority. Estonia, scoring 67%, is the second-highest scorer in the world, only after the USA (68%). Estonia is the current chair of the Open Government Partnership, in part in reflection of its leadership in this area.

#### Score per Country

Table 4







For every surveyed country, it is possible to find areas where countries perform better, and areas where improvement is necessary.

Those stronger areas demonstrate that, if there is a willingness and/or the existence of specific regulations requiring the collection and publication of data, then European countries do have the capacity to do so.

### Score per Country and Type of Data

Table 5

| Country     | Climate Action | Company Information | Health & Covid-19 | Land | Political Integrity | Public Procurement | Public Finance |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Bulgaria    | 19             | 29                  | 45                | 62   | 54                  | 50                 | 80             |
| Croatia     | 6              | 71                  | 60                | 50   | 51                  | 54                 | 73             |
| Czechia     | 9              | 43                  | 74                | 30   | 26                  | 61                 | 79             |
| Denmark     | 80             | 91                  | 78                | 79   | 26                  | 61                 | 70             |
| Estonia     | 55             | 73                  | 61                | 69   | 56                  | 85                 | 77             |
| Finland     | 81             | 42                  | 59                | 30   | 36                  | 74                 | 62             |
| France      | 66             | 68                  | 74                | 49   | 56                  | 58                 | 94             |
| Germany     | 55             | 31                  | 83                | 46   | 41                  | 35                 | 87             |
| Greece      | 31             | 44                  | 38                | 22   | 24                  | 64                 | 41             |
| Ireland     | 22             | 17                  | 49                | 42   | 39                  | 30                 | 23             |
| Italy       | 63             | 73                  | 79                | 13   | 44                  | 66                 | 73             |
| Latvia      | 67             | 81                  | 68                | 11   | 40                  | 64                 | 49             |
| Lithuania   | 10             | 7                   | 50                | 28   | 27                  | 72                 | 39             |
| Malta       | 17             | 49                  | 21                | 24   | 25                  | 57                 | 59             |
| Netherlands | 57             | 52                  | 71                | 58   | 29                  | 46                 | 60             |
| Portugal    | 47             | 37                  | 51                | 5    | 31                  | 65                 | 44             |
| Romania     | 32             | 13                  | 51                | 8    | 48                  | 48                 | 51             |
| Slovakia    | 8              | 67                  | 82                | 55   | 35                  | 54                 | 44             |
| Spain       | 61             | 24                  | 54                | 36   | 38                  | 49                 | 48             |
| Sweden      | 70             | 43                  | 68                | 12   | 18                  | 1                  | 54             |
| UK          | 73             | 83                  | 60                | 33   | 60                  | 61                 | 57             |

At the bottom of the European league table, there are three countries with only 37 percentage points each: Greece, Lithuania and Malta. Some of the areas where these countries score poorly are:

- » **Greece:** weak on Data Management, Lobbying, Political Finance and Access to Information data;
- » **Lithuania:** weak on Public Consultation, Public Finance, Access to Information, and Climate Vulnerability data;
- » **Malta:** weak on Lobbying, Access to Information, Climate Vulnerability, and Real-Time Healthcare System Capacity data.

It is interesting to note that the areas where the weaker countries underperform are precisely those where there are no European Union directives requiring data collection and transparency. For instance, Greece, Lithuania, and Malta, all underperform on access to information data, something which is not regulated by the European Union since the EU does not even require that Member States have access to information laws, although in practice all have some legislation, be it stronger or weaker.

### Openness of Data by Country

A very similar pattern of regional variation emerges when we look at how open the data is. Leading the field were France (83%) and the UK (79%), with other strong performers including Finland, Denmark, Italy and Estonia. This is consistent with other findings in the Global Data Barometer survey: the countries which have invested most in digitalisation, in the digital economy, and in gathering and publishing data, have also ensured that larger volumes of data are available as open data.

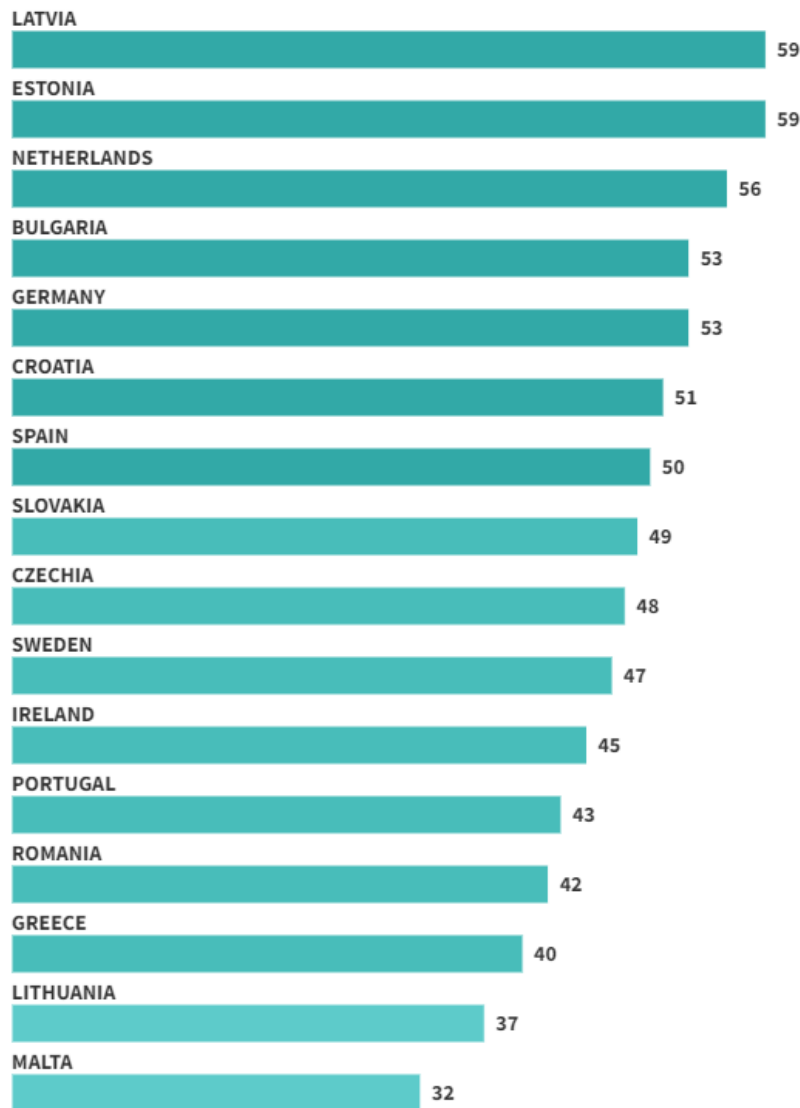
Some countries which have done relatively well on other indicators, such as the existence and availability of data, nevertheless score less well on the measurement of open data. A case in point is Spain (50%), which indicates that for all that data is currently available in Spain, it also needs to be made available in open formats.

The worst performers on open data are Greece (40%), Lithuania (37%), and Malta (32%). This is consistent with the poor performance of these three countries generally throughout the Global Data Barometer survey. In these countries, data is generally not available and, even when it is, it is not available as open data.

### How Open is Available Data in each European Country

Table 6





There is no single explanation as to why some countries have prioritised publication of certain datasets over others, nor why certain countries are doing better overall.

There are, however, elements that can be identified. These include levels of political will and commitment to open data and also the existence of regulations (be they national or EU regulations), which are examined under Finding 6 below.

The political will to collect and publish data and to stimulate the data-driven and digital economy is something that is clear from the top performers on open data in the European region: Estonia, France and the UK. A clear example of this is the work done by France's [Etalab](#), the government unit leading its public data policy with the slogan "open, share, and add value to data".

Linked to the lead taken by government departments, other national processes can have an impact, including where domestic civil society has prioritised the opening up of certain data. This could be the case in the UK, for instance, which is the country scoring highest on Political Integrity module (60%) and where civil society has campaigned hard to put in place measures that reduce corruption.

Whatever the reasons, the regional variation makes clear that some countries need to take significantly more action to ensure that data which has a high public interest value is collected and published as open data.

## Recommendations

- » **The European Union** should review the findings of the Global Data Barometer in order to identify which datasets are already accessible and which are lacking, and should prioritise action – legislative and otherwise – to ensure that such data is open.
- » **EU Member States** need to ensure that they are properly implementing existing open data requirements, such as those under the EU’s Open Data Directive, as well as best practices from other EU Member States. If properly implemented, these would level the playing field and improve the data landscape across the European region.
- » **The Open Government Partnership** should encourage European member countries which are performing well on open data to share technical and strategic expertise with those in the region which are seriously underperforming.

## Finding 5

### Investment in Capacity Helps Outcomes

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When building a data ecosystem inside any government, it is important to ensure that the public officials working on the digitalisation of information, along with those working on the management and publication of data, are all trained to a sufficient level, including training tailored to their respective roles, as well as training on the relevant legal obligations, and – importantly – on how they contribute to broader public policy goals.

In examining the capacity of each government in the GDB survey, in what is called the “Capabilities Module”, the elements examined included:

- **Training of Public Officials:** Evaluation of the extent of training to develop public officials’ data literacy and data skills.
- **Open Data Initiatives:** Evaluation of whether there exists a government data initiative, and how well resourced it is.
- **Support for Reuse:** Evidence that the government is supporting data reuse, in particular whether there is evidence of a long-term reuse support strategy.
- **Sub-National Data Capacity:** Review of the extent to which city, regional, and local governments have or are building data-management capacity.

The module also collected secondary data, from a range of reliable sources, to fill in the picture about the national infrastructure for data collection, publication, and use. The elements evaluated included:

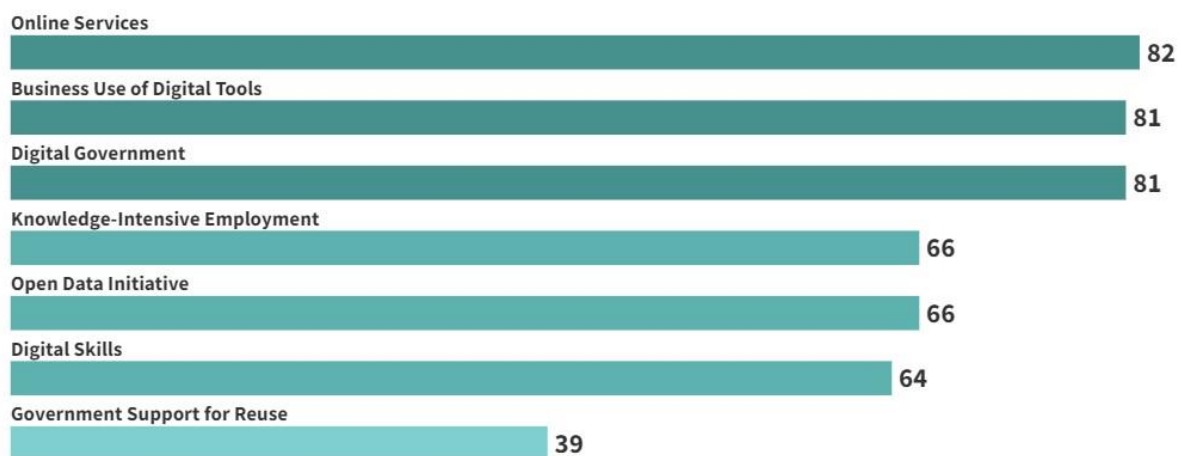
- Data institutions
- Government online services

- Use of standards and methods in statistic offices
- Digital government
- Digital skills
- Knowledge-intensive employment
- Human capital
- Internet access
- Business use of digital tools

All countries in Europe scored over 50% on the Capabilities Module, bringing up the European region score to 69%, indicating a high level of preparedness, which has no doubt resulted from governments developing specific data policies and departments, investing in digital infrastructure, conducting training of public officials, and encouraging reuse by business and civil society.

## Data Capabilities in Europe

Table 7



What is apparent here is that many European countries have invested well in developing online services (82%) and in digitalisation of government (81%). Quite a few countries have specific, well-funded open data initiatives (66%) and there has been a reasonable development of digital skills (61%). Europe also has countries where businesses use digital tools (81%) and where there are sectors of employment that form part of the knowledge economy (66%).

The weakest aspect of the Capabilities Module is the government support for reuse at only 39%. As already observed, the public reuse of government data is what gives that data its real value both for the economy but also very much for society in general and the public good, be it facilitating evidence-based debates and combatting mis- and disinformation, permitting stronger public participation, or ensuring accountability of government action and rooting out corruption.

This coincides with a broader finding of the Global Data Barometer that there is underuse of public data by civic actors. It will never be sufficient for strong capacity to exist inside government if it is not matched by a similar capacity in the wider society.

That said, the GDB did find that all European countries have some level of knowledge-intensive employment, so between the business and social uses of data, more value could be derived from public data if governments were encouraging and supporting reuse of that data.

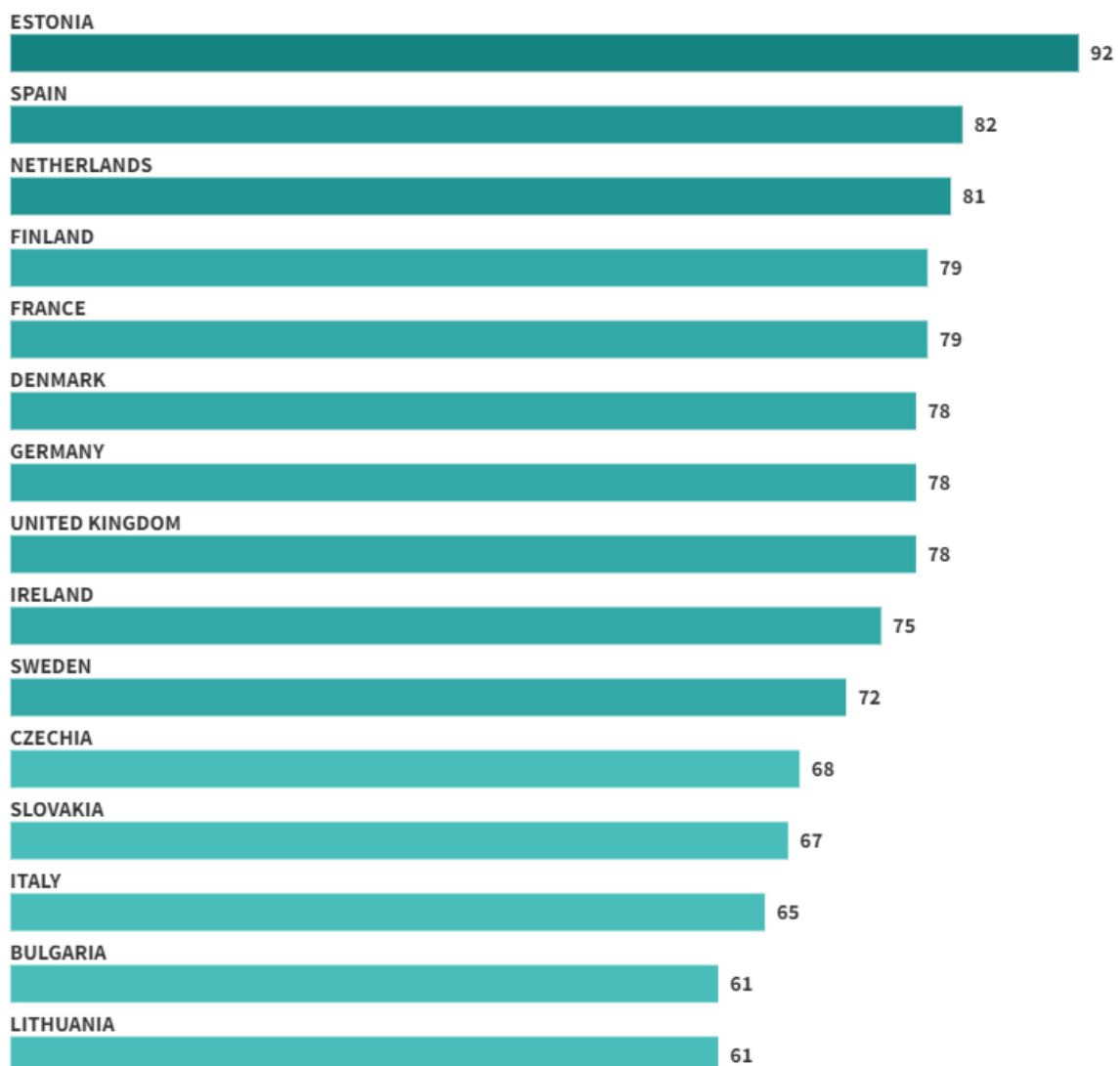
The use of public data in the digital era is absolutely essential to the health of Europe's democracies, and governments need to invest far more in facilitating this. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, public data is a valuable national resource, and governments should ensure that the public has the skills and tools necessary to benefit from it.

## Regional Variation

The strongest countries on Capabilities were Estonia (92%), Spain (82%), the Netherlands (81%), France (79%), and Finland (79%), all of which have invested significantly in both open data and digitalisation more generally.

### Data Capabilities by Country

Table 8





The weaker performers were Latvia (59%), Greece (58%), Malta (57%), Croatia (54%) and Romania (53%). It is noted that Greece and Malta are countries which have also scored badly on the actual data availability indicators.

Overall, there is a correlation between the capacities in each country and the other scores for the Global Data Barometer modules, as can be seen in Table 8 and Table 9.

### Data Capabilities Indicators in Europe

Table 9

| COUNTRY     | Digital Government | Digital Skills | Open Data Initiative | Online Services | Government Support for Re-Use | Business Use of Digital Tools | Knowledge-Intensive Employment |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bulgaria    | 50                 | 61             | 70                   | 77              | 34                            | 73                            | 48                             |
| Croatia     | 73                 | 45             | 45                   | 75              | 8                             | 53                            | 59                             |
| Czechia     | 93                 | 63             | 72                   | 72              | 24                            | 81                            | 60                             |
| Denmark     | 93                 | 74             | 51                   | 97              | 40                            | 85                            | 79                             |
| Estonia     | 93                 | 74             | 90                   | 99              | 87                            | 99                            | 75                             |
| Finland     | 100                | 81             | 80                   | 97              | 25                            | 91                            | 79                             |
| France      | 100                | 58             | 100                  | 88              | 92                            | 82                            | 75                             |
| Germany     | 93                 | 68             | 81                   | 74              | 68                            | 88                            | 75                             |
| Greece      | 57                 | 52             | 63                   | 71              | 35                            | 56                            | 47                             |
| Ireland     | 67                 | 66             | 90                   | 77              | 63                            | 73                            | 70                             |
| Italy       | 83                 | 53             | 60                   | 83              | 45                            | 63                            | 58                             |
| Latvia      | 67                 | 63             | 50                   | 58              | 20                            | 85                            | 67                             |
| Lithuania   | 80                 | 64             | 56                   | 85              | 9                             | 89                            | 68                             |
| Malta       | 93                 | 62             | 16                   | 81              | 0                             | 71                            | 72                             |
| Netherlands | 93                 | 77             | 90                   | 91              | 68                            | 99                            | 79                             |
| Portugal    | 83                 | 59             | 50                   | 84              | 0                             | 80                            | 57                             |

|          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Romania  | 47 | 58 | 51 | 72 | 54 | 80 | 36 |
| Slovakia | 77 | 60 | 80 | 72 | 19 | 86 | 54 |
| Spain    | 93 | 56 | 80 | 89 | 68 | 80 | 53 |
| Sweden   | 83 | 78 | 80 | 90 | 40 | 96 | 89 |
| UK       | 93 | 66 | 63 | 96 | 23 | 87 | 82 |

While all countries score relatively well on the capacity and infrastructure indicators, it is clear that some fall down on key aspects. Malta's weak score on open data initiatives (15%) for instance, or Croatia and Lithuania's low scores (9% each) on encouraging – or, rather, not encouraging – public reuse of government data.

To address the overall data shortcomings of many countries as revealed by the Global Data Barometer, it is important to ensure investment in building skills and capacity inside public bodies as well as in the wider society.

## Recommendations

- » **Governments across Europe** need to match their digital and data capacity with greater support for the use of public data, including use by businesses (especially small and medium enterprises), as well as civil society organisations, investigative journalist, and citizens in general.
- » **The European Union** should provide support for strengthening capacity in Member States which are currently underperforming on data. It is recommended that Member States are able to use funds to support digitalisation, anti-corruption, climate transition, and increased public participation for projects that address the specific deficiencies identified in the GDB research.
- » The **EU**, the **Open Government Partnership**, and other actors working across the European region should invest in supporting the transfer of strategies, skills, and best practices between governments so as to ensure that all countries have the necessary capabilities to exploit the full potential of data.
- » **Civil society organisations** working on open data and on training – including training of public officials and of other civic actors and investigative journalists – should collaborate with governments, the EU, OGP, and other actors, to strengthen skills in the surveyed countries and to facilitate skills transfer as and where needed.

## Finding 6

### Regulations Make a Difference

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A key finding of the Global Data Barometer is that regulations make a difference when it comes to the collection and publication of public data.



The lack of regulations in some countries goes back to the early days of the open data movement, some fifteen or so years ago, when much publication of government data on the websites of public bodies was done on a voluntary basis, at the initiative of those inside government or upon encouragement from a relatively small set of open data enthusiasts working in civil society organisations and academia.

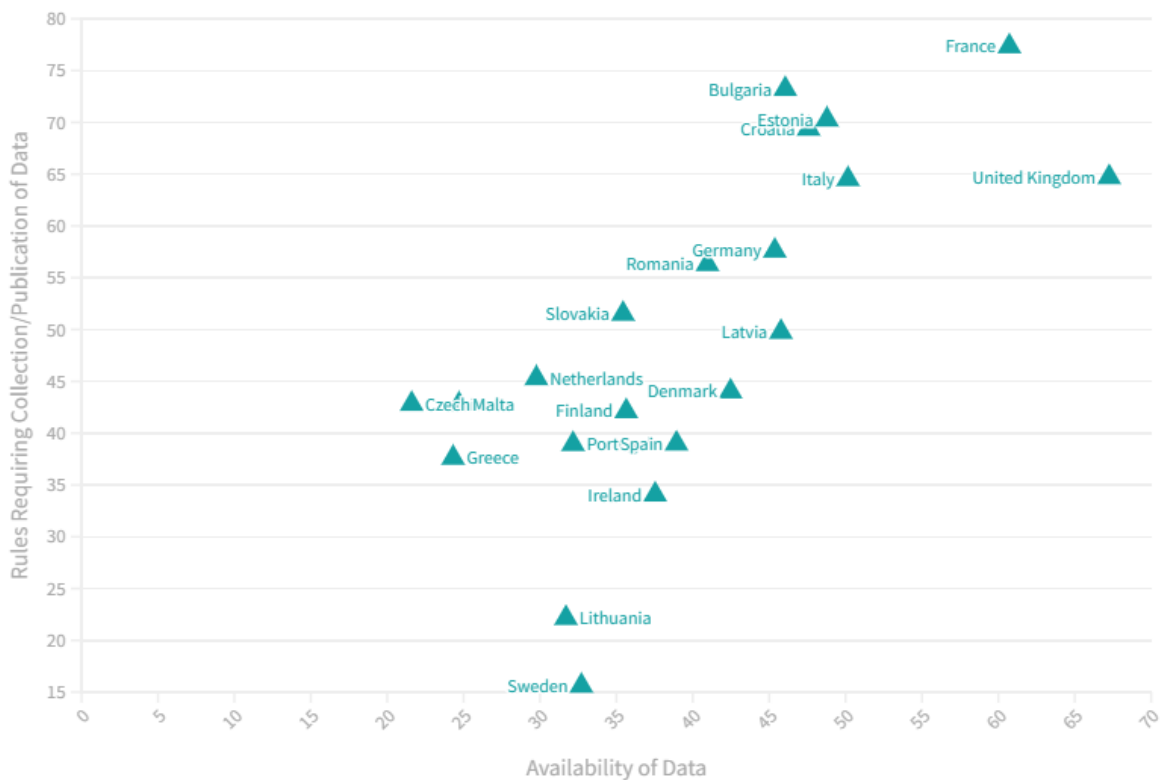
The European Union directives on open data can be traced back to the 2003 *Directive on the Re-use of Public Sector Information (2003/98)*, even though this was more about ensuring that data was sold on equal terms across the entire European market than what is currently understood as encouraging fully open public data.

Over the past decade, globally, with the advance of digital technologies, there has been increasing regulation of the collection, management, and publication of data. In the European space this includes both national rules and also the EU's *Open Data Directive (2019/1024)*, which evolved out of the earlier norms on reuse of public sector information. There are, furthermore, a series of EU Directives and Regulations in other areas which require publication of at least some minimal information, such as information on public procurement or the beneficiaries of spending of EU funds.

The Global Data Barometer found that countries with more regulations requiring collection and/or publication of specific data have significantly more data available.

## Correlation between Rules requiring Data Collection & Publication and Availability of Data

Table 10



The GDB found that even countries which had a mediocre performance, such as Bulgaria or Croatia (respectively 50% and 48% overall), did ensure the publication of data where there were rules in place requiring that they do so.

When examining particular datasets, the same pattern was confirmed and the absence of a legal framework requiring data collection/publication translates into a lack of data availability in practice. An enthusiasm for open data at some point in history accompanied by informal publication is not sufficient to guarantee sustained collection and publication of this data over time without a set of rules requiring that this be done.

The correlation between the absence of regulation and the lack of data was most strongly evident in the area of Lobbying, where the lack of legal frameworks requiring the collection and publication of this data makes it almost impossible to find data on lobbying activities in the European region. There is no relevant EU directive on lobbying and, in spite of years of campaigning by civil society organisations working on political integrity, most EU countries still do not have lobby transparency laws. The rare exceptions are France (66% score on lobbying indicators), the UK (62%) and Ireland (53%), which have all successfully adopted and implemented lobby control regulations, along with good levels of transparency around them.

The lack of any European Union requirements for Member States to have access to information laws and the failure of most countries to regulate the collection and publication of detailed data is reflected in a paucity of data on compliance with the right of access to information (RTI). Hence, in most countries, when we look for data on “RTI performance” it was absent or existed only in the most general terms. More detailed information on this aspect of the GDB survey can be found in Access Info’s accompany report on the [Implementation of the Right of Access to Information in Europe](#).

Rules themselves are not, however, always sufficient. The Global Data Barometer found that not all countries have yet implemented their obligations under EU directives. For instance, when it comes to opening up company information, the GDB survey included an evaluation of data on Company Registers, data which should be made public under the 2019 Open Data Directive. In practice, the GDB survey found a very mixed picture, ranging from countries going well beyond what is required, such as Denmark with a high score of 91% for Company Information, and other countries which have not yet fully implemented the relevant EU directives and have lower scores, such as Lithuania, which scored only 7% for Company Information.

## Recommendations

- **All European Governments** should ensure that rules are in place requiring the collection, management and publication of key datasets. Future regulations should mandate that data is released in accordance with open data standards.
- **EU Member States** should ensure that they have transposed and implemented all EU directives which require that data be opened up.
- **The European Commission** should monitor and make public the status of all regulations and directives which require data to be published, making clear where countries are falling behind either with the transposition and/or implementation of these rules.

- » **The Open Government Partnership** should encourage member countries which are making commitments on open data to ensure that these are accompanied by corresponding regulations, so as to guarantee consistent and sustainable opening of the datasets.
- » **Civil society organisations** working to promote open data should advocate for a strong legal framework to ensure sustainable government compliance with commitments. They should do so, inter alia, by encouraging such commitments in Open Government Partnership Action Plans, and by engaging in the development of EU regulations, such as the current discussion about the High-Value Datasets under the Open Data Directive.

## Finding 7

### Climate Data: Missing in Action!

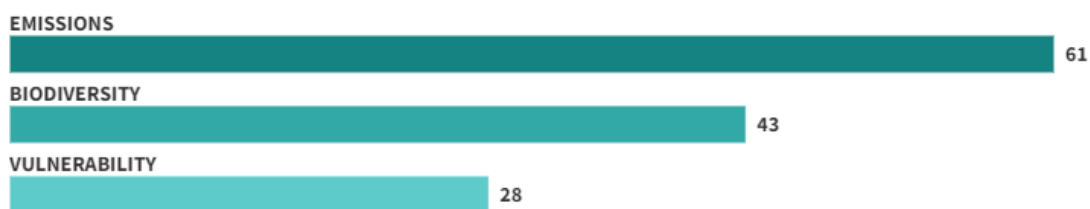
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An important focus of the Global Data Barometer was the review of Climate Action data. The average score for the European countries was just 44%, so one of the weakest European scores for the various types of data surveyed.

The Climate Action data module looked at three types of data, on Biodiversity, on Emissions and on Vulnerabilities to climate change. The overall European scores for each of these are:

#### Climate Action Data in Europe

Table 11



It is a matter of particular concern that the data which is lacking in Europe is precisely that needed to combat corruption and tackle climate change. Whilst on all these datasets there is better availability in Europe than the global averages, that does nothing to justify not providing the public with greater information on these pressing 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

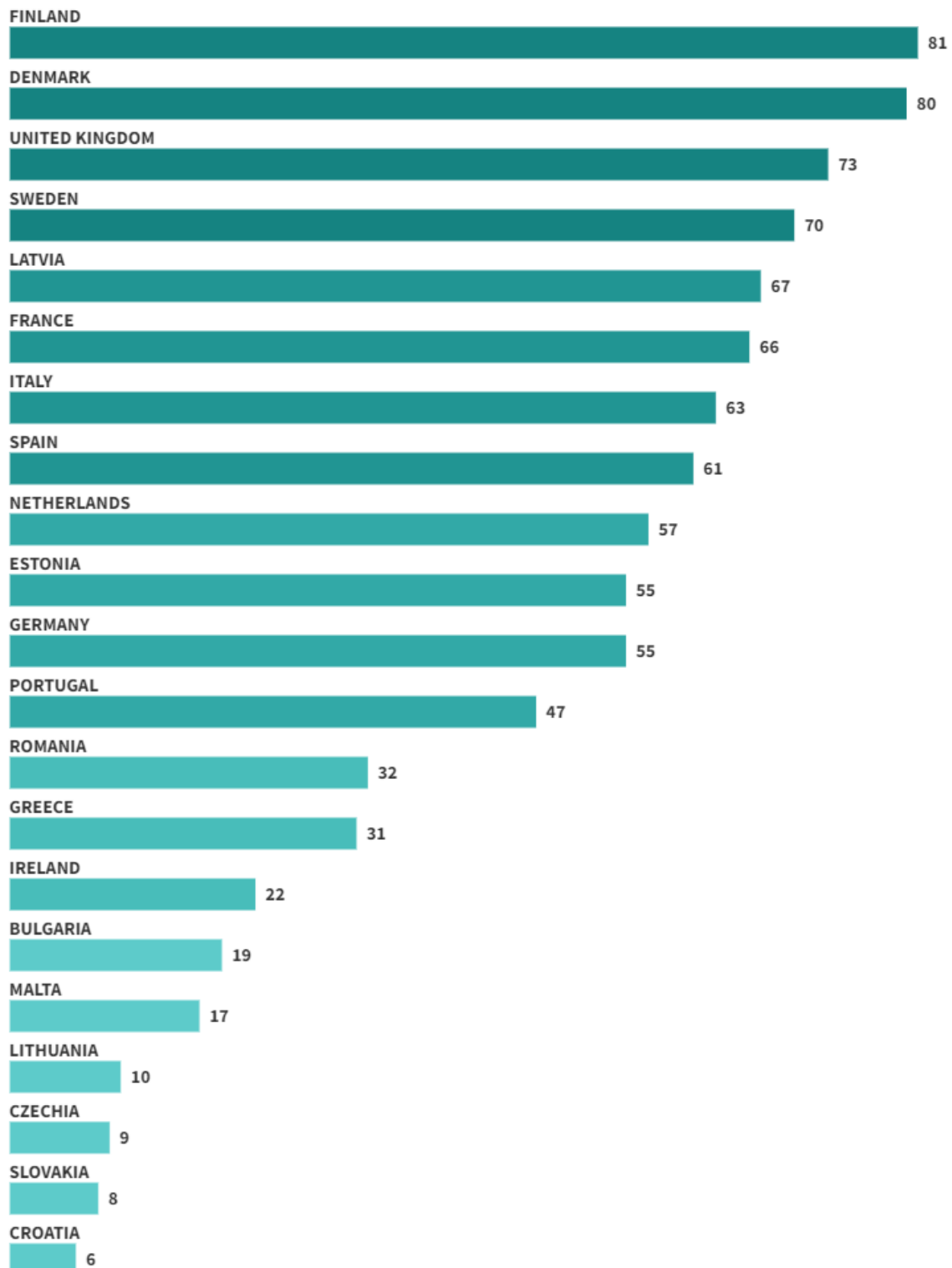
The country performance on Climate Action data across Europe was, once again, significantly varied.

The countries with greatest levels of Climate Action data available were Finland (81%), Denmark (80%), the UK (73%), and Sweden (70%). These are good levels although clearly with the urgency of climate change upon us, even higher levels of data availability should be achieved.

Those countries low on Climate Action data, all under twenty percent, were Bulgaria (19%), Malta (17%), Lithuania (10%), Czechia (9%), Slovakia (8%) and Croatia (6%). These are worryingly low scores and need to be addressed as a top priority.

## Climate Action Data per European Country

Table 12



Looking at the specifics of which data is available in each country, it is clear that the overall European score on Climate Vulnerability Data was brought down by a series of countries not yet making this data available, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia.

### Climate Action Data per Indicator and Country

Table 13

| Country     | Biodiversity | Emissions | Vulnerability | Total |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Finland     | 100          | 78        | 65            | 81    |
| Denmark     | 81           | 78        | 81            | 80    |
| UK          | 74           | 91        | 53            | 73    |
| Sweden      | 87           | 100       | 24            | 70    |
| Latvia      | 63           | 77        | 61            | 67    |
| France      | 44           | 79        | 75            | 66    |
| Italy       | 42           | 76        | 70            | 63    |
| Spain       | 79           | 86        | 19            | 61    |
| Netherlands | 73           | 77        | 21            | 57    |
| Estonia     | 87           | 80        | 0             | 55    |
| Germany     | 55           | 68        | 42            | 55    |
| Portugal    | 62           | 46        | 34            | 47    |
| Romania     | 0            | 50        | 45            | 32    |
| Greece      | 33           | 59        | 0             | 31    |
| Ireland     | 12           | 56        | 0             | 22    |
| Bulgaria    | 0            | 58        | 0             | 19    |
| Malta       | 22           | 29        | 0             | 17    |
| Lithuania   | 0            | 29        | 0             | 10    |
| Czechia     | 0            | 26        | 0             | 9     |
| Slovakia    | 0            | 23        | 0             | 8     |
| Croatia     | 0            | 19        | 0             | 6     |

The lack of data on Climate Vulnerabilities, namely granular localised data on future natural hazards, extreme weather events, and climate variability, is of particular concern given that many of these effects are already upon us and have impacted numerous European countries in the past couple of years, most strikingly in the summer of 2022.

There was also a lack of data on Biodiversity, with this data not published online in six (6) countries, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia.

## Recommendations

- » **All European Governments** should take urgent steps to ensure the collection and publication of data relating to the climate and climate change. Climate Vulnerabilities should be a priority focus for ensuring that the public has access to the relevant data.
- » **The European Union** should examine how to ensure that all relevant climate change data held by Member States is made public, such as by including this as a High-Value Dataset under the Open Data Directive as well as including it in specific regulations and directives. All RRF Funds and CAP spending that is linked to climate transition goals should also take into account the existence and publication of this data and demonstrate how the funded actions will address specific concerns, with all of this being made public.
- » **The Open Government Partnership** should convene a discussion to focus on how to increase the availability of Climate Action data in the European region, acting as a forum for an exchange of best practices on this topic.
- » **Civil society organisations** working on both climate change and on open data should collaborate in working to ensure that Climate Action data is made broadly available.

## Finding 8

### Lack of Data Risks Opening the Door to Corruption

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It is well established that opening up data, both on government finances and spending, and other key data sets such as company and land ownership, contributes not only to rooting out and combatting corruption but to preventing it from occurring in the first place.

To that end, the Global Data Barometer findings on the levels of openness of data needed for anti-corruption work are particularly important.

The ten datasets included in the GDB study that are essential for the fight against corruption are:

- Asset Declarations
- Beneficial Ownership
- Budget & Spending
- Company Registers
- Land Tenure
- Lobby registration
- Political Finance
- Public Consultation
- Public Procurement
- RTI Performance

The average score for all European countries (20 EU countries plus the UK) across all anti-corruption indicators selected by Access Info is just 42%.

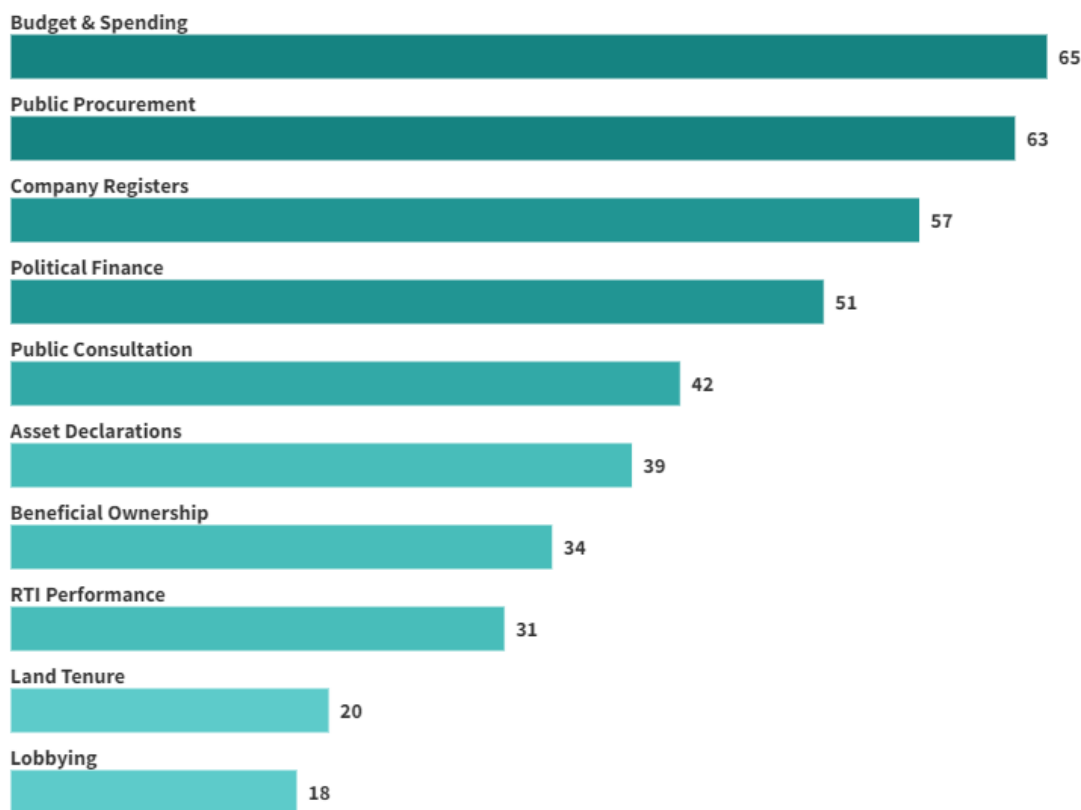
European countries generally score well on the publication of budget and spending data (average of 65%) and on Public Procurement data (63%). This is in line with a strong recognition of the importance of transparency of such data for not only anti-corruption work but simply so that the public is able to know what governments are doing and to hold them accountable for their actions.

It is, however, a matter of particular concern to find that other datasets which are essential to ensuring government integrity are largely missing. These include Asset Declarations (39%), and, most seriously, largely missing, Land Tenure (20%) and Lobbying data (18%).

The score for beneficial ownership registers was already only 34% before a recent Court of Justice of the European Union which has resulted in many beneficial ownership registers being closed to public access except on narrow grounds of a “legitimate interest” for those CSOs and investigative journalists who investigate corruption.

### Available Anti-Corruption Data in Europe

Table 14



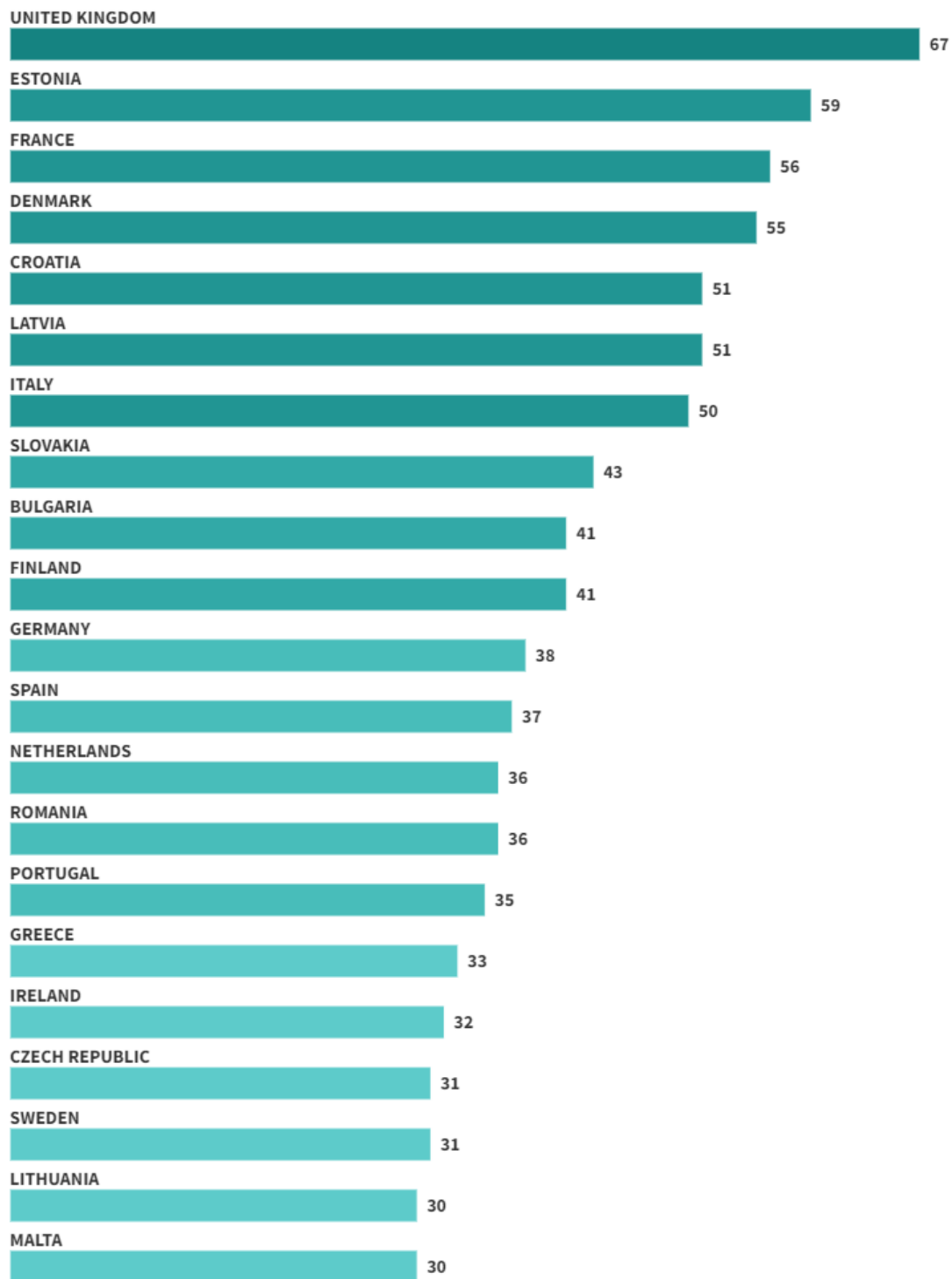
### Regional Variation Risks Facilitating Illegal Activity

As with other dimensions of the Global Data Barometer, we found significant variations around Europe on the anti-corruption indicators.

Relatively stronger performers on the availability of anti-corruption data are the UK (67%), followed by Estonia (59%), France (56%) and Denmark (55%). The countries with the least data available are Lithuania (30%) and Malta (30%).

### Available Anti-Corruption Data per European Country

Table 15





This reflects a wide disparity in measures taken to prevent and combat corruption and to ensure transparency of these measures. To date, no EU country has fully implemented all the corruption-prevention measures required under the UN Convention against Corruption, nor the similar requirements in the European anti-corruption conventions and as recommended by the Council of Europe's GRECO mechanism, nor those advanced by other bodies such as the OECD.

The European Union's Rule of Law reports in recent years have identified the weaknesses in the corruption-prevention systems in EU Member States, but the Global Data Barometer shows that too little is being done to address this, with some Member States clearly falling seriously behind.

At the EU level, as some countries advance with corruption prevention, others lag behind and illegal activity and organised crime shifts to less-well-regulated jurisdictions.

The serious consequence of the regional variation in the GDB anti-corruption indicator results is that the lack of strong protections against corruption in some countries is facilitating illegal activity that negatively affects the whole European region. Unless corruption-prevention measures are implemented in a consistent manner across the whole of Europe, corruption and organised crime will take advantage of countries with the weakest controls.

## How each European Country performs on Anti-Corruption issues

Table 16

| Country     | Beneficial Ownership | Company Register | Land Tenure | Budget & Spending | Asset Declarations | Lobby | Political Finance | Public Consultation | RTI Performance | Public Procurement |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Bulgaria    | 0                    | 0                | 29          | 71                | 64                 | 0     | 60                | 56                  | 72              | 60                 |
| Croatia     | 41                   | 96               | 14          | 62                | 41                 | 0     | 66                | 39                  | 83              | 64                 |
| Czechia     | 0                    | 91               | 0           | 74                | 0                  | 0     | 78                | 0                   | 0               | 68                 |
| Denmark     | 96                   | 96               | 87          | 88                | 23                 | 0     | 36                | 55                  | 0               | 70                 |
| Estonia     | 39                   | 94               | 54          | 74                | 55                 | 30    | 79                | 65                  | 0               | 100                |
| Finland     | 0                    | 81               | 0           | 65                | 20                 | 0     | 69                | 68                  | 27              | 78                 |
| France      | 61                   | 71               | 0           | 89                | 73                 | 66    | 22                | 36                  | 79              | 67                 |
| Germany     | 29                   | 24               | 0           | 83                | 45                 | 28    | 56                | 30                  | 48              | 41                 |
| Greece      | 0                    | 54               | 31          | 44                | 59                 | 0     | 4                 | 63                  | 0               | 78                 |
| Ireland     | 3                    | 17               | 0           | 42                | 49                 | 53    | 51                | 18                  | 47              | 37                 |
| Italy       | 72                   | 73               | 0           | 78                | 49                 | 31    | 25                | 47                  | 49              | 71                 |
| Latvia      | 78                   | 89               | 24          | 81                | 43                 | 0     | 60                | 58                  | 0               | 73                 |
| Lithuania   | 0                    | 0                | 0           | 71                | 38                 | 40    | 54                | 20                  | 0               | 80                 |
| Malta       | 29                   | 60               | 0           | 33                | 35                 | 0     | 24                | 51                  | 0               | 69                 |
| Netherlands | 24                   | 57               | 45          | 63                | 0                  | 18    | 38                | 66                  | 0               | 47                 |

|          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Portugal | 49 | 44 | 0  | 50 | 48 | 0  | 46 | 0  | 32 | 79 |
| Romania  | 0  | 0  | 15 | 51 | 63 | 11 | 63 | 45 | 54 | 58 |
| Slovakia | 67 | 68 | 59 | 41 | 28 | 0  | 48 | 65 | 0  | 52 |
| Spain    | 0  | 37 | 0  | 75 | 38 | 29 | 50 | 7  | 73 | 57 |
| Sweden   | 45 | 56 | 27 | 81 | 0  | 0  | 67 | 36 | 0  | 0  |
| UK       | 84 | 95 | 40 | 59 | 48 | 62 | 83 | 50 | 84 | 68 |

The detailed data reveals that every country has weak spots when it comes for data needed to combat corruption. Some of these shortcomings can be explained by the lack of EU regulations requiring transparency such as there being no directive on lobby regulation and no clear rules on opening up ownership of land.

Others low scores are failings by national authorities to meet the highest international standards, for instance, GRECO has made a series of recommendations to Council of Europe countries on improving the quality, scope, and transparency of asset declarations, but to date many of these recommendations have not been implemented.

Given that a public perception of high levels of corruption tend to undermine public trust in the democratic system, this should be a matter of top priority across Europe, and the transnational nature of organised crime and corruption means that it is a common, shared, priority.

## Recommendations

- » The **European Union** should ensure a full set of EU regulations and directives that establish the collection and transparency of data necessary to prevent and combat corruption. These directives should ensure that data is published in open data formats and accessible by anybody from inside or outside the EU, not just nationals of a particular country, in order to facilitate cross border investigations. Immediate priorities are:
  - Beneficiaries of the spending of all EU funds, including the RRF Funds;
  - Revised directives that require the opening of company registration and ownership data, including beneficial ownership data;
  - A minimum standard for collection of comprehensive asset and conflicts of interest declarations and for publication of the majority of this data;
  - A requirement to open up land tenure data free of charge with no need to demonstrate a legitimate interest;
  - An EU directive on lobbying regulation which includes transparency requirements.
- » **European countries** should integrate into national law and implement in practice all corruption-prevention measures established by relevant international treaties and standards as well as those contained in EU directives. In line with this, EU Member States should support strengthening existing EU directives that require transparency in order to combat corruption, and should support the adoption of new norms to fill the gaps.
- » There should be greater support for projects to share best practices on data for combatting corruption between European countries so as ensure that no country is lagging behind in the fight against corruption. The **European Commission** should support such projects, which

should involve relevant bodies including **GRECO**, the **OECD**, and national anti-corruption agencies, as well as civil society organisations and investigative journalists.

- » The **Open Government Partnership** should continue to engage in the debate on open data and anti-corruption, participating in discussions on the highest standards and tracking the progress that its members make in advancing against these standards. OGP could make even better use of the strong experience of its members by convening specific knowledge-sharing fora on how to increase levels of digitalisation and open data in order to prevent fraud and wrongdoing.
- » **Civil society** organisations and journalists working on preventing and investigating corruption should join and support current transparency and open data campaigns. Access Info can provide more information about ongoing activities and how to support these at the national and EU level.

## About the Global Data Barometer and its Methodology

The Global Data Barometer is a multi-dimensional and multi-layered study that assessed the state of data for public good in 109 countries. An expert survey was conducted for the period of May 2019 – May 2021 to create a new global benchmark that looks at data governance, capability, availability, and use and impact of data for public good.

The data collection in these countries was coordinated by 12 regional hubs and it was supported by 6 thematic partners: [Open Ownership](#), [Open Government Partnership](#), [Transparency International](#), [GIFT](#), [Land Portal](#), and [Open Contracting Partnership](#).

Access Info Europe acted as one of the regional hubs and covered a group of 27 countries, most of them in the European region. The results included in this report cover 20 countries that are member states of the European Union (EU): Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden. And it also includes the United Kingdom, which formally left the European Union in 2020, right after this study was started, and which also shares many norms and policies with the EU member states that were approved before its removal.

Outside of the European region, Access Info coordinated the research in Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and the United States. These countries are not included in this report, which focuses on the European region, but data about these countries, and all the 109 included in the study, can be found in the [Global Data Barometer](#) website.

To conduct the research, there was either an individual researcher or a researching organisation allocated for each country. You can see the list of researchers coordinated by Access Info [here](#).

Data was collected through an online survey composed of 2 core modules (Governance and Capabilities) and 7 thematic modules (Company Information, Land, Political Integrity, Public Finance, Public Procurement, Climate Action, and Health & Covid-19). The survey included 39 indicators distributed across the 9 modules, being the Political Integrity module the biggest one with 12 indicators. The survey was designed to measure four core pillars (Governance, Capability, Availability, and Use and Impact), and all 39 indicators fed these 4 pillars via the 2 core and the 7 thematic modules.

You can read more about the GDB Methodology in the [Global Data Barometer Handbook](#).

All data collected by the GDB study can be downloaded as open data at the [Global Data Barometer](#) website and is available for everyone to explore it, analyse it and reuse it.

## Disclaimer

The Global Data Barometer gathered 107,389 data points in the survey from all 109 countries and cannot guarantee that every value is error-free. Some responses might remain open to question due to different interpretation of guidance across researchers and reviewers, false negatives when sources went undiscovered, or false positives when a source has been interpreted over-generously.

Feedback can be provided to the Global Data Barometer at [feedback\[at\]globaldatabarometer.org](mailto:feedback@globaldatabarometer.org). The Access Info team can also be contacted at [info\[at\]access-info.org](mailto:info@access-info.org).