Mapping Regional Prosperity

The Legatum Prosperity Index™

2021
The varying performance of the Index’s seven regions provide an illustration of how prosperity has plateaued. Five regions have experienced a deterioration in their prosperity over the last year, whilst Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa are the only regions to have recorded an improvement in 2021. The greatest deterioration in the past year has been seen in Latin America and the Caribbean (4th), with all but five countries in the region weakening as a result of the pandemic alongside faltering Governance. We have seen prosperity weaken in the world’s two most prosperous regions — North America and Western Europe. Whilst North America (1st) remains the world’s most prosperous region, it has deteriorated for the second year in a row.

Prosperity in Eastern Europe (3rd) has improved for the fifth year in a row. Progress has been driven by growing confidence in key institutions, increasing levels of civil and social participation, as well as improving social tolerance. Though still ranked last, sub-Saharan Africa (7th) has continued its steady progress. Prosperity in the region has now increased for the 11th consecutive year, driven by consistent progress in health, levels of social tolerance, and infrastructure and market access. However, the pace of progress continues to lag behind that seen in regions like Eastern Europe and Asia-Pacific over the past decade.

The following pages explore in more detail how and why prosperity has been changing in each of these regions over the last decade.

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Prosperity by region
Education is a particular strength in Canada (15th), with 99.8% of the population enrolling in secondary school and women spending an average of 15.7 years in school, some of the highest rates seen anywhere in the world.

Rates of suicide in the United States (20th) stand at 14.5 deaths per 100,000 population, contributing to the country's low ranking for mental health (135th).

The United States ranks 4th for both Enterprise Conditions and Infrastructure and Market Access, a reflection of its status as a leading country for business. The United States enjoys the highest availability of skilled workers in the world.

Fiscal Sustainability declined sharply in the United States, as the pandemic has impacted the government’s balance sheet. Debt now exceeds $28 trillion, an increase of nearly $5 trillion in the past 14 months.
Education has improved in the United Kingdom (13th), with a 10% increase in people completing tertiary education (90%).

Spain (24th) is the Western European country whose prosperity has improved most in the past decade, driven by a notable improvement in Safety and Security. There has been a sharp decline in property crime, while the percentage of people who have reported stolen property in the last year has fallen from 14% to 8%.

Sweden (3rd) is the Western European country whose prosperity has deteriorated the most over the last ten years. Since 2011, it has experienced a deterioration in six of the Index’s 12 pillars, with the greatest deteriorations seen in Governance, Social Capital, and Investment Environment.

Greece (43rd) is the least prosperous country in Western Europe. It ranks 131st for Social Capital, with only 8.4% of the population agreeing that people can be trusted, down from 21% just ten years ago.
Eastern Europe (3rd)

Hungary (44th) is the Eastern European country whose prosperity has deteriorated the most over the last ten years. It now ranks 82nd for Governance, with trust in government, the legislature, and the public sector continuing to fall.

Estonia (17th) is the most prosperous country in Eastern Europe, ranking in the top 25 for all but one pillar. It has seen particular improvement in its Living Conditions over the past decade, with 88% now able to live on their household income, up from just 59% in 2011.

Azerbaijan (86th) is the least prosperous country in Eastern Europe. Alongside weak Governance and Natural Environment, it performs particularly poorly for Personal Freedom. It ranks 153rd for Freedom of Assembly and Association and 158th for Freedom of Speech and Access to Information, both of which have deteriorated over the past decade.

Georgia (53rd) has seen a major improvement in fixed broadband subscriptions over the past decade, with the number increasing by more than six times. As a result, since 2011, the percentage of the population using the internet has increased from 20% to almost 70%.

EASTERN EUROPE AND GLOBAL Prosperity

EASTERN EUROPE PILLAR CHANGE, 2011-2021
Venezuela (147th) is the country in this region whose prosperity has deteriorated the most over the last ten years. The number of people in Venezuela that have not had enough money to buy food has nearly doubled to 73% since 2011.

Haiti (155th) is the least prosperous country in Latin America and the Caribbean. It ranks below 150th for six pillars, while for its best performing pillar — Personal Freedom — it still ranks only 107th. It performs particularly poorly in Health, with immunisation rates for hepatitis currently at 51%, almost 40 percentage points lower than the global average.

Uruguay (37th) is the most prosperous country in Latin America and the Caribbean, ranking 16th in the world for Personal Freedom and 28th for Governance. More than 90% of survey respondents were satisfied with their degree of freedom to choose what to do with their lives.

Pre-primary enrolment in Peru (61st) has improved from 77.8% to 99.7%, contributing to a boost in Education in the country.
Pakistan (138th) is one of the least prosperous countries in Asia-Pacific. It is ranked 167th in the world for Natural Environment, 150th for Safety and Security, and 143rd for Education. Though improving, rates of primary and secondary school completion remain low, at 58% and 46% respectively.

India (101st) has seen a great improvement in its Social Capital. Trust in key institutions such as local police, banks, the judicial system and courts, and the national government has increased by ten percentage points since 2011.

Papua New Guinea (128th) is the country in Asia-Pacific whose prosperity has deteriorated the most over the last ten years. It has experienced a significant deterioration in its Health, with immunisation rates falling. The proportion of children receiving hepatitis immunisations has fallen from 65% in 2011 to just 37%, the lowest rate anywhere in the world.

New Zealand (8th) is the most prosperous country in Asia-Pacific, due in part to its strong Social Capital (4th). Almost 60% of New Zealanders think most people can be trusted, one of the highest proportions worldwide.
Israel (32nd) is the most prosperous country in the MENA region. It has some of the highest immunisation rates in the world with over 96% of children receiving immunisations for diphtheria, measles, and hepatitis.

Syria (158th) has seen its prosperity deteriorate more than any other country in the world in the past decade as a result of its civil war. It now has the greatest number of conflict-driven internally displaced people in the world, having increased from 20,000 per million people in 2011 to over 375,000 per million people.

Over the past decade, Saudi Arabia’s (75th) prosperity has improved more than any other nation in the region, driven in large part by improvements in Education. Tertiary enrolment rates have more than doubled to 71%, while secondary enrolment rates are now over 96%, placing Saudi Arabia in the top 20 in the world.

Yemen (165th) is the least prosperous country in the MENA region. High corruption levels across the judiciary, legislature, and public sector have hindered prosperity, while the economy is struggling with the lowest labour participation in the world at just 39%.
Côte d’Ivoire (120th) has experienced the greatest improvement in its prosperity of any country in the world in the past decade. It has seen major improvements in all pillars apart from Personal Freedom and Natural Environment, rising 24 places in the global rankings as a result. It has made particularly strong progress in Economic Quality since 2011, with high-tech manufactured exports more than doubling as a share of total exports.

Mali (151st) has seen the second greatest deterioration in prosperity in sub-Saharan Africa in the last decade, after South Sudan. Ongoing and widespread insecurity has seen the number of terrorism deaths increase more than tenfold from one to 25 deaths per million people since 2011.

South Sudan (167th) is the least prosperous country in the world. War and civil conflict have persistently troubled this country, resulting in large numbers of refugees. There are almost 200,000 refugees in South Sudan per million inhabitants.

Mauritius (45th) is the most prosperous country in sub-Saharan Africa. It ranks in the top 50 for seven of the Index’s 12 pillars.