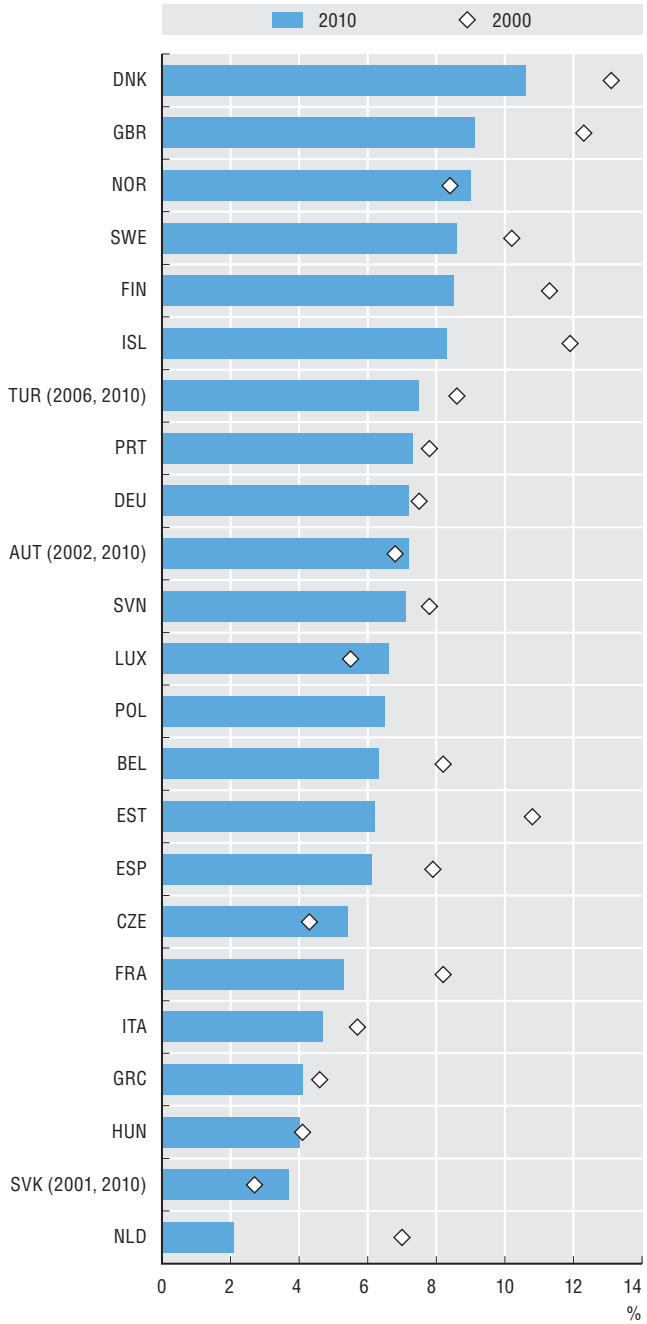
6. Mobility at the workplace

Job-to-job mobility of human resources in science and technology (HRST), 25-to-64-year-olds, 2000 and 2010

As a percentage of total employed HRST



Source: OECD, based on *ad hoc* tabulations of European Labour Force Surveys, Eurostat, May 2011.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932486412

Interaction and learning within firms enable human resources in science and technology (HRST) to share information, challenge existing patterns, and experiment and collaborate to improve products and processes. "Brain circulation" across jobs, firms and sectors of activity can stimulate knowledge transfer, application of knowledge to new problems, and lead to the adoption of best practices, greater openness, creativity and innovation. It may also involve a loss of human capital for companies that invest in developing their workers' skills.

Job-to-job mobility figures for 2010 show that HRST workers in Nordic countries and the United Kingdom were more mobile than those in other EU countries, with at least 8% having changed jobs over the previous year. Although year-to-year estimates can be volatile, they suggest that mobility generally decreased from 2000 to 2010.

A look at the occupational groups defined as HRST does not reveal systematic differences in mobility across categories of HRST. Their mobility appears to be similar to that of other employees, except in Austria, Turkey, Spain and Hungary where HRST are less mobile.

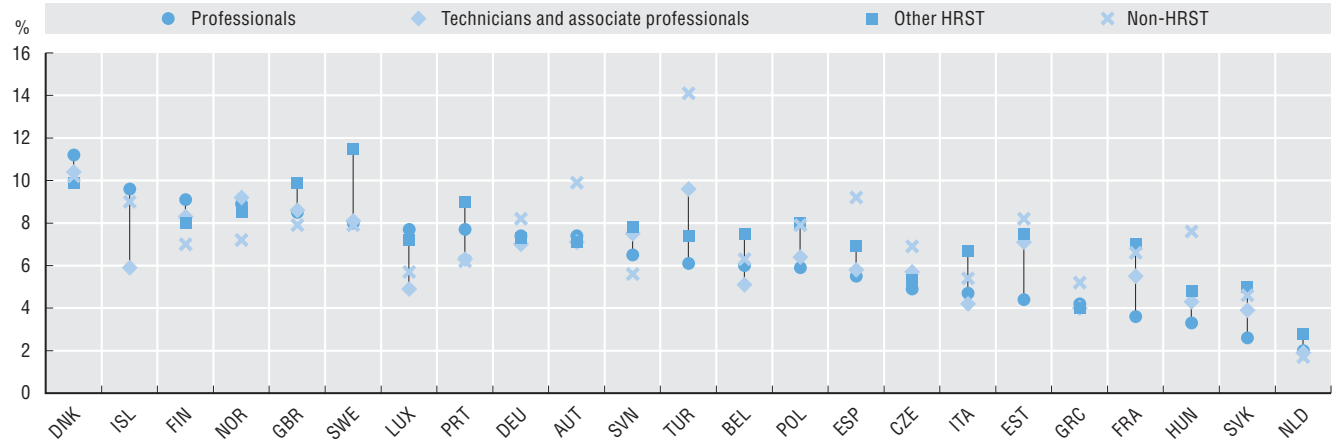
HRST acquire different knowledge and skills in different sectors. Sectoral mobility may reflect the fact that HRST skills can be applied to different domains of activity, or it may be due to a shift in the economic weight of certain industries or a change in demand for skilled workers. Mobility across sectors differs widely from country to country: it ranges from 9% to 60% of all HRST who change employers. In Estonia, France, Finland and the Slovak Republic, more than 50% of HRST who moved reported a change in sector of economic activity from 2009 to 2010. In contrast, most HRST mobility in Germany, Sweden and Slovenia occurred within sectors.

Definitions

Human resources in science and technology (HRST) describes individuals in science and technology occupations, such as professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as well as those in other occupations who successfully completed a tertiary-level education in science and technology. *Job-to-job mobility* is the movement of an employee from one job to another from one year to the next. It excludes inflows into the labour market from a situation of unemployment or inactivity. *Inter-sector mobility* reflects the flow of employed HRST whose economic activity at the NACE two-digit level differs from that of the previous year as a percentage of employed HRST who changed employers over the one-year period. The rates are calculated for those employed both in the present and previous years and whose economic activity and HRST status could be identified.

Job-to-job mobility of HRST by occupation, 25-to-64-year-olds, 2010

As a percentage of total employed in relevant group



Source: OECD, based on *ad hoc* tabulations of European Labour Force Surveys, Eurostat, May 2011. See chapter notes.

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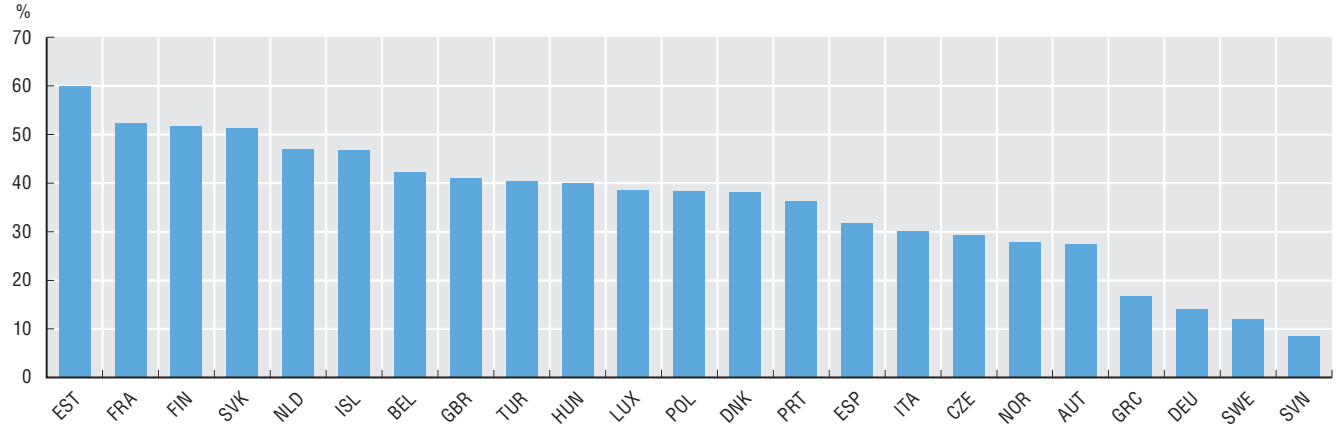
Inter-sector mobility of HRST, 25-to-64-year-olds, 2010

As a percentage of HRST changing employer



Source: OECD, based on *ad hoc* tabulations of European Labour Force Surveys, Eurostat, May 2011. See chapter notes.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932486450

Measurability

Although the importance of mobility of human resources in science and technology (HRST) is widely recognised, there are no internationally comparable data on their mobility. Very few labour-force or related household surveys collect information that can be used to estimate job and sector mobility patterns for sufficiently large samples. The European Labour Force Surveys are one of the few harmonised sources which can be reliably used for this purpose. The analysis of HRST mobility needs to take into account the problem of collecting retrospective information from respondents who typically constitute relatively small populations. These limitations make it difficult to obtain reliable estimates for analysing and comparing mobility patterns across groups and time, especially beyond NACE two-digit and/or ISCO two-digit levels. Inter-sector mobility rates may also depend on the level of aggregation in the NACE digits. To understand the effects of mobility of highly skilled workers on innovation, more detailed, internationally comparable statistics are required.