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### Knowledge networks and internationalization of innovative activity across European and Neighboring countries

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#### OBJECTIVE

In this paper we propose original, exploratory evidence on the characteristics of knowledge flows of European Neighbouring Countries (ENC) based on a statistical databank, set up by CRENoS, on patenting and citations at the European Patent Office and at the Patent Cooperation Treaty according to the place of residence of either the inventors or the applicant. We consider the 16 European Neighbouring Countries and their relationships with European Union, with the United States, with Japan and with other ENC's. We also use data provided by WIPO, which distinguish patents at National Patent Offices according to the residence of applicant. The analysis is mainly descriptive and aims at unfolding the main characteristics of this phenomenon.

#### MAIN RESULTS

The degree of internationalization of innovative activities of ENC's, as expected, is extremely limited but it is increasing along time and especially the biggest countries in terms of population, are getting more and more important for European countries as much as for the United States. Moreover, knowledge flows are clearly influenced by several dimensions of proximity: geography matters but also technological, historical, cultural and linguistic distances seem to play some role.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

We are aware that the analysis provided in this paper is mainly exploratory and comments have to be considered with cautious, as tentative conclusions. Policy value added is even more difficult to extract and therefore no more than tentative.

The main general policy implication of this first investigation is that the internationalization process of EN countries is rather heterogenous and this asks for a strategy able to take into account each country singular features and peculiarities. Among such characteristics one should mention not only economic phenomena but also geographical, historical and cultural features which seem to play an important role in conditioning knowledge flows across countries.