WHAT ARE SCALERS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

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Helping SMEs scale up

➢ For more info, visit: https://oe.cd/ScaleUp

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Grow and go? Retaining scalers in the Nordic countries

Unleashing SME potential to scale up

Understanding Firm Growth (Pilot)

Financing Growth and Turning Data into Business (Pilot)

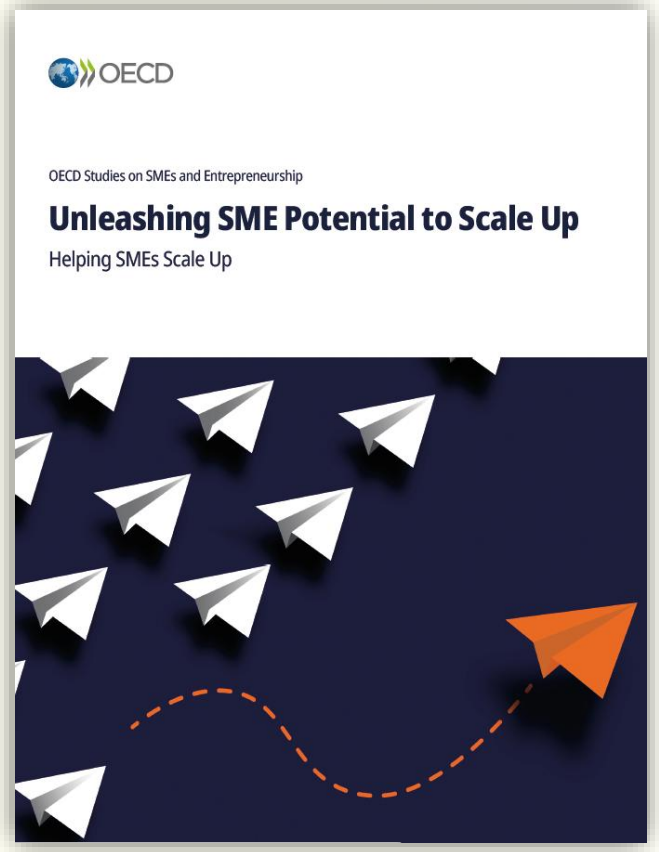
Financing SME growth in Germany

2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026



Understanding scalers

Unleashing SME Potential to Scale Up



Competitiveness needs SMEs that scale up

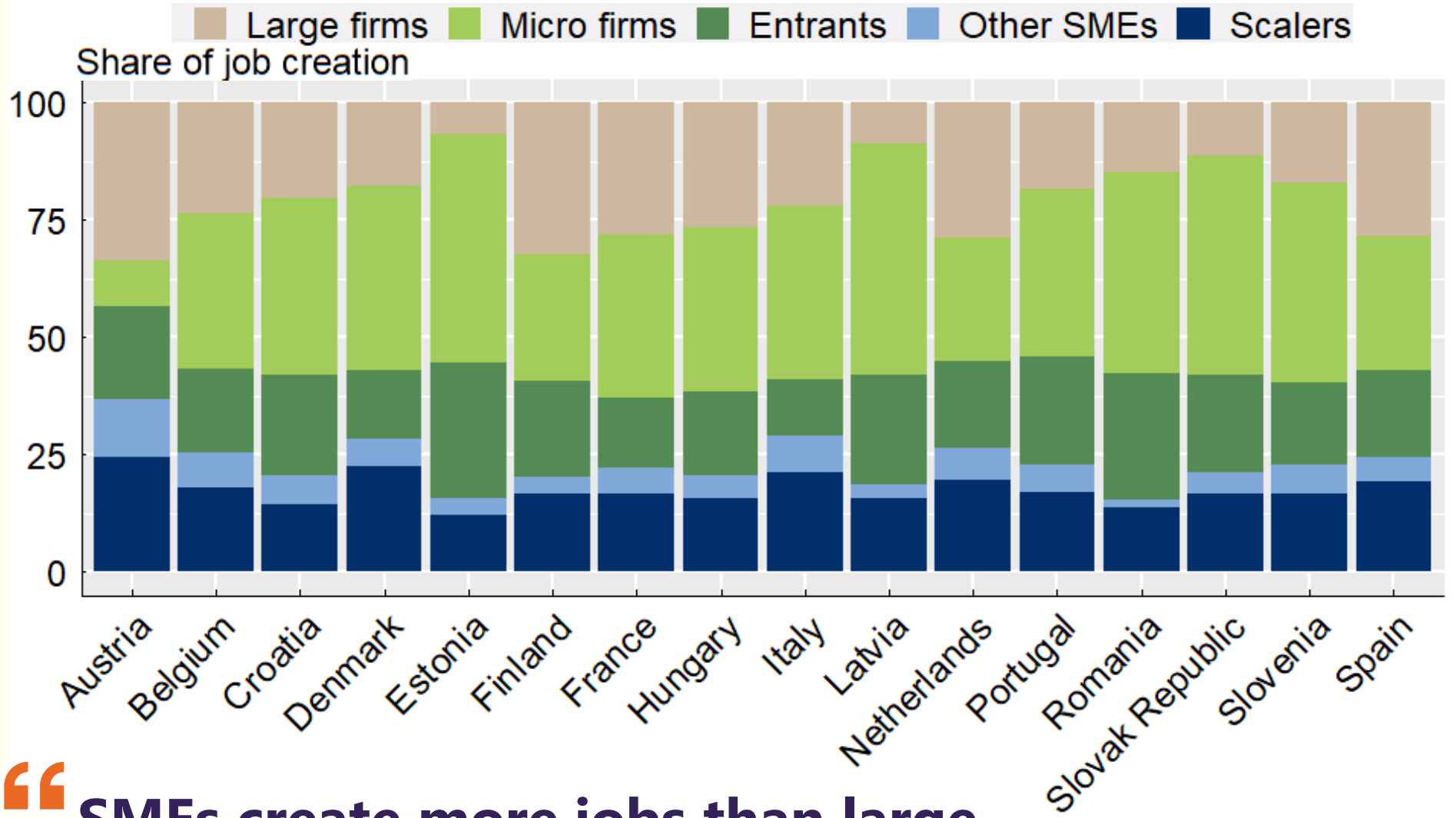
Without scalers, multifactor **productivity** would have been 6% lower for the median SME in 2020 across 11 countries with available data.

Investments underpin the growth of scalers.

53% to 61% are "strategic scalers" that **invest before scaling up**. Another 31% to 39% of "transformational scalers" **invest during their growth phase**.

Scalers are SMEs in the **non-financial business sector** with **10-249 employees** with an average **growth rate of 10%+** (or 20%+) for **3 consecutive years** in either **employment** or **turnover**

SMEs are important for job creation

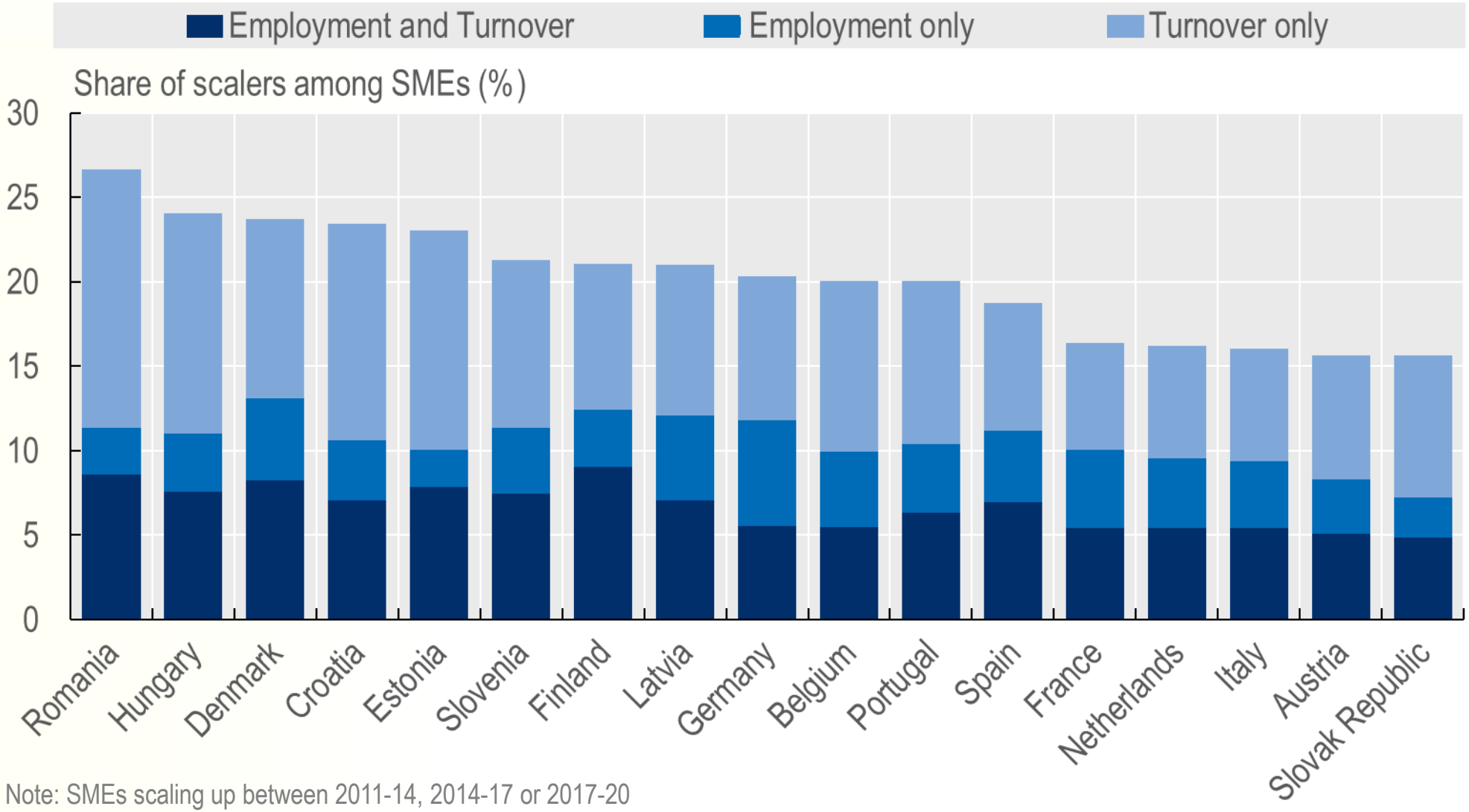


Employment scalers added 530 000 new jobs in France; 380 000 new jobs in Italy from 2017 to 2020

Employment scalers created 29% to 51% of jobs coming from existing or new SMEs.

"**SMEs create more jobs than large firms** through entry and scaling up"

16%-27% of SMEs "scale up" in either employment, turnover or both



Note: SMEs scaling up between 2011-14, 2014-17 or 2017-20

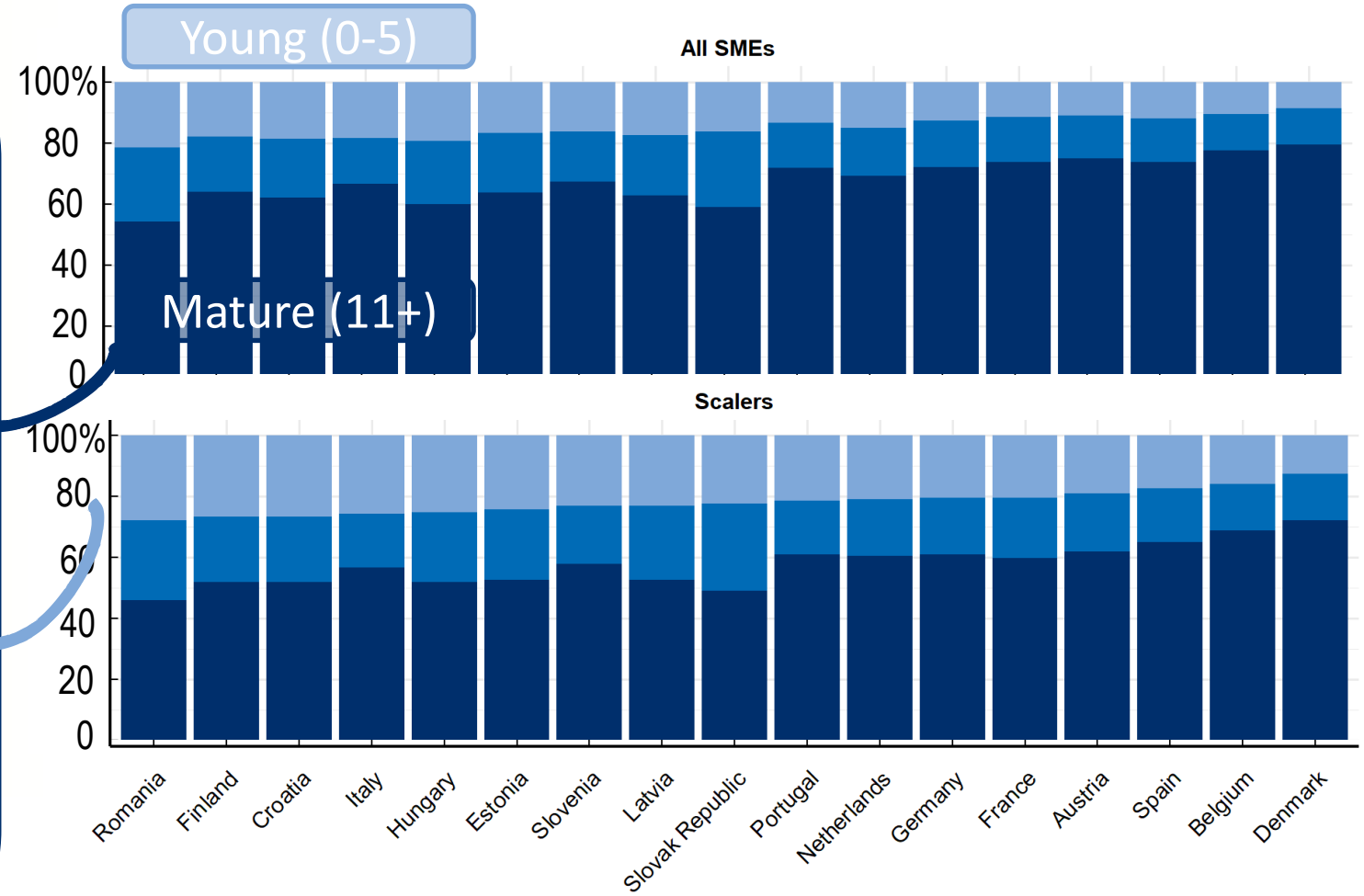
Most scalers are mature SMEs because most SMEs are mature

Most scalers are mature firms despite their lower scale-up rates

- About 58% of scalers and 48% of high-growth scalers are mature SMEs

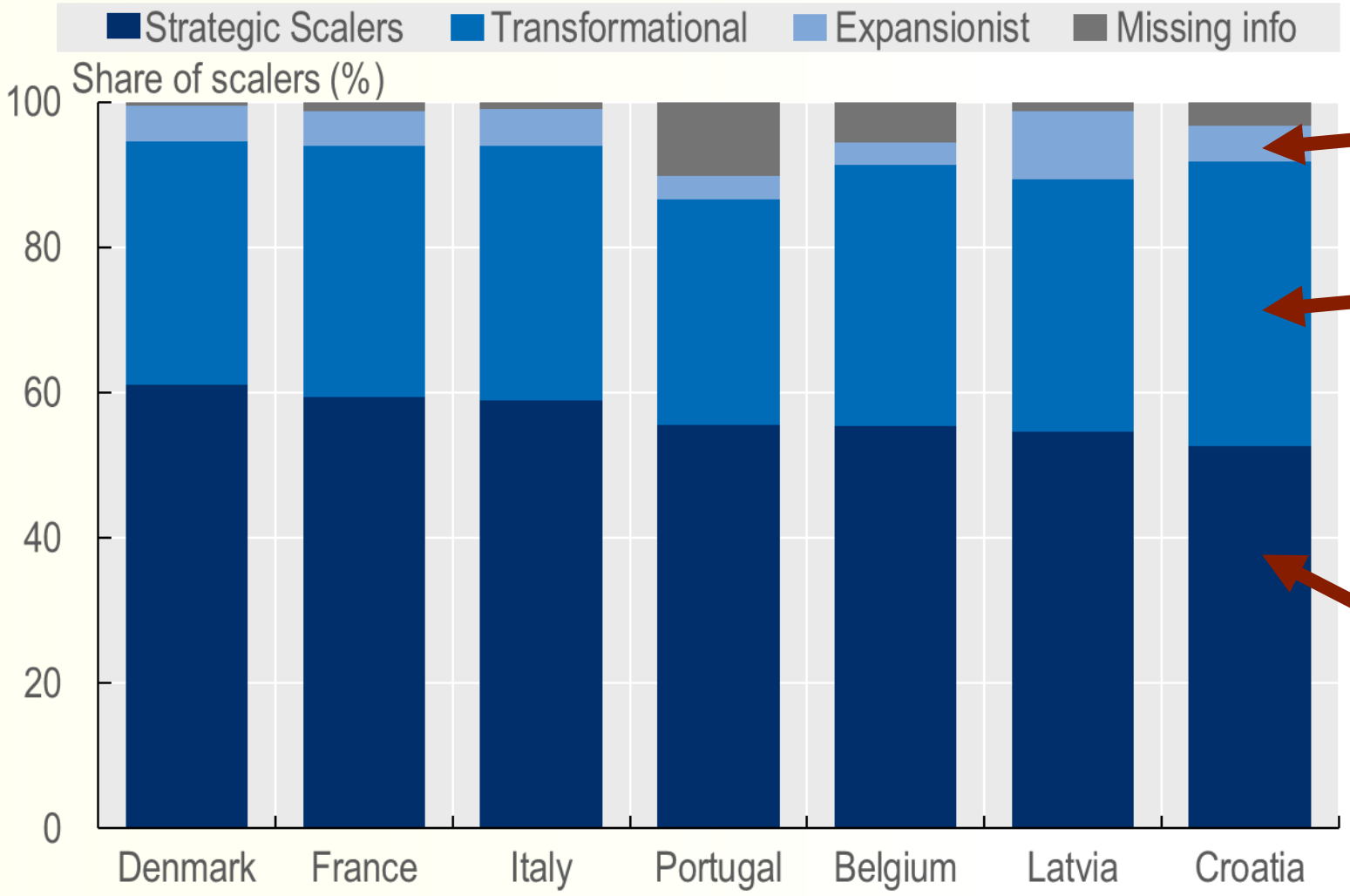
Young firms account for a small share of firms; "up or out" dynamics lead to higher likelihood to scale up

- The likelihood of a young (0-5-year-old) SME to scale up is about double that of a mature (11+) SME



Note: Differences at country and sector group level are calculated using median multi-factor productivity growth rates from 2017 to 2020. Unweighted averages across 11 countries.

The majority of scalers make strategic investments to scale up



Expansionist scalers grow indication of strategic investments

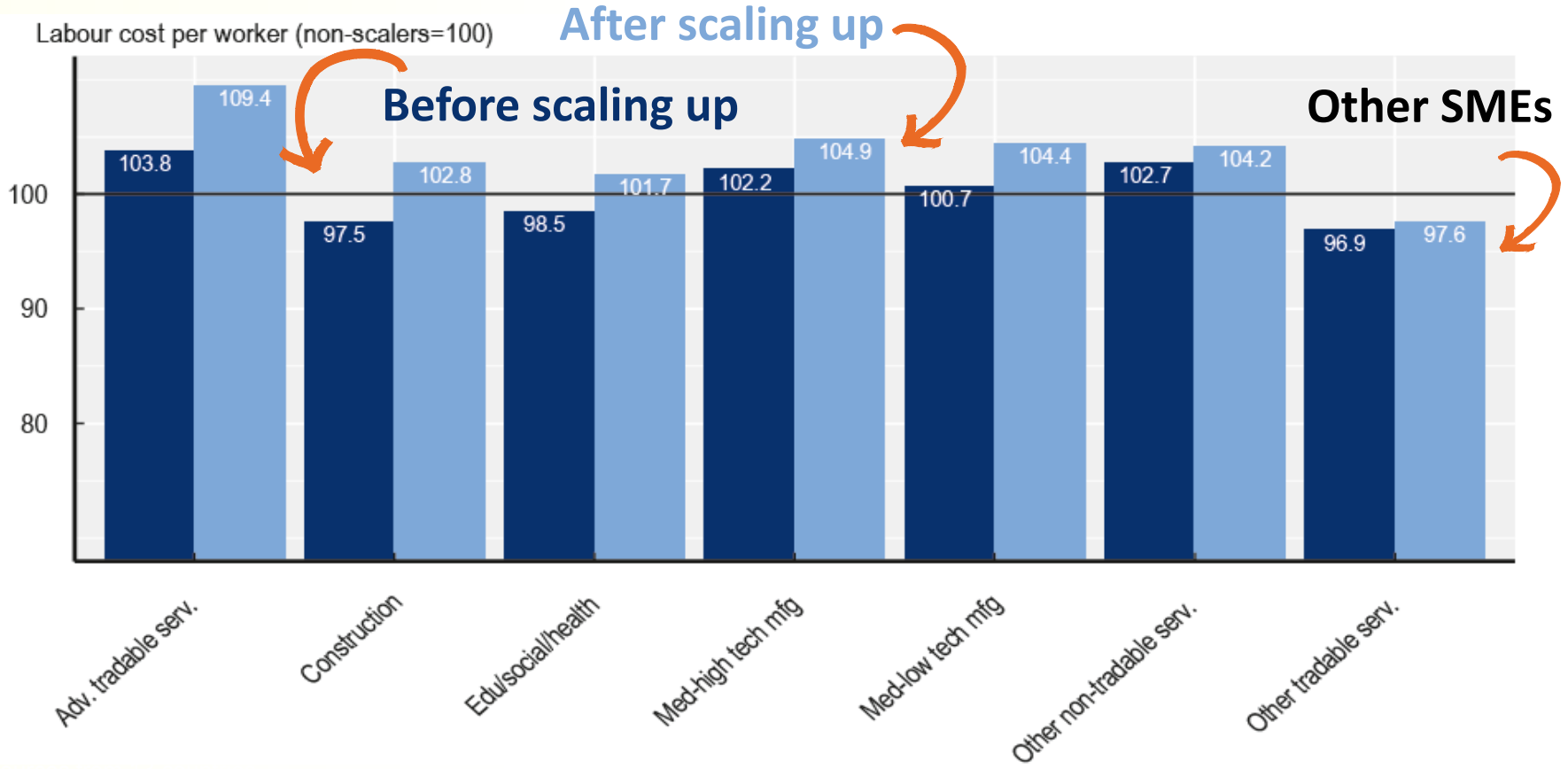
Transformational scalers invest while scaling up => Productivity grows

Strategic scalers invest in
- **human capital;**
- **tangible capital; or**
- **processes/technology**

before scaling up
=> Top 25% of SMEs in capital intensity, personnel cost per employee, or productivity

Scalers investing in people

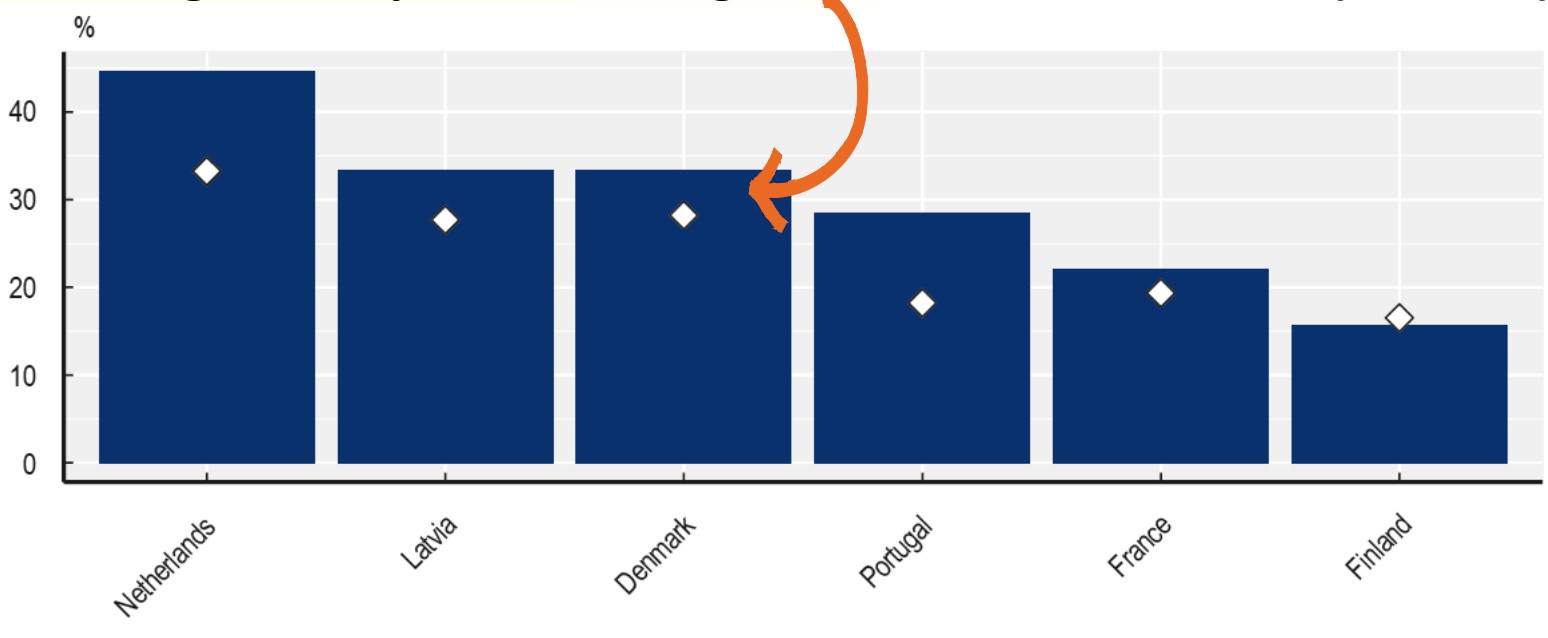
Scalers invest in skills during scale up, raising their labour cost



"More than 46% of employment scalers in advanced tradable service sectors continue to add jobs after scaling up"

Scalers investing in internationalisation

Share of goods exporters among scalers and other SMEs (2014-20)



"In five out of six countries with available data, **scalers are more likely to be goods exporters than other SMEs**"

Creating growth

Between **21%** and **42%** of turnover **scalers grew through goods exports** (50%+ of turnover increase)

Sustaining growth

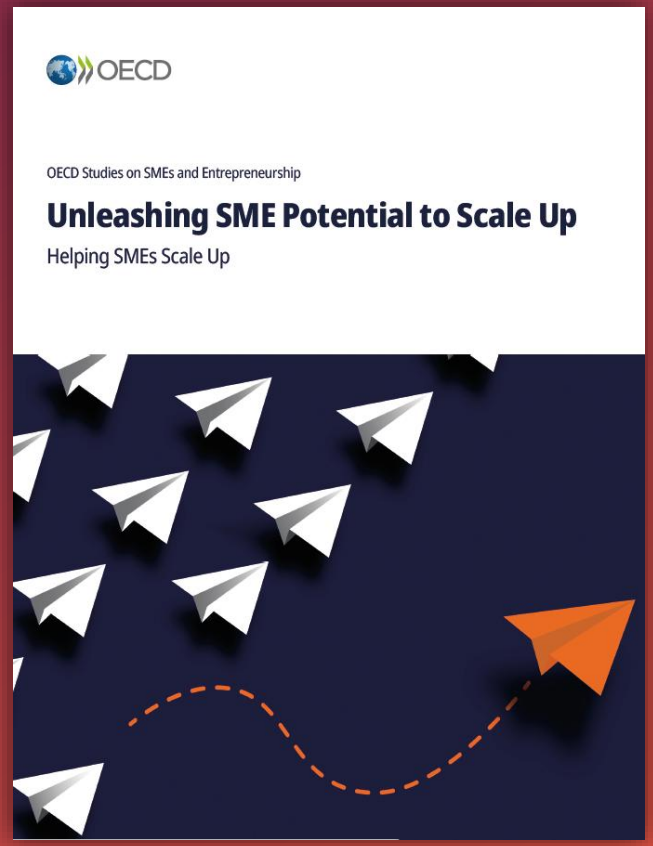
Employment **growth** in 2019 was **higher among exporting scalers** (2015-18) than among non-exporting scalers

➢ For more info, visit:

oe.cd/ScaleUp
oe.cd/ScaleUpTool

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