

## Eurochambres Economic Survey 2026: chambers call for policy reforms to convert business resilience into growth

The 2026 Eurochambres Economic Survey (EES2026), based on responses from 41,090 businesses across 28 European countries, reveals that entrepreneurs are striving to get back on a growth trajectory after several challenging years. Whether this can be harnessed and Europe's economy can turn the corner depends on the commitment of the EU and national governments to addressing workforce related challenges, regulatory burdens, and barriers to the single market.

The President of Eurochambres, Vladimír Dlouhý, calls on decision makers to stop stalling on competitiveness and to start acting: *“European businesses have been treading water for several years, trying not to sink in unfavourable conditions. They are now ready to start swimming forwards if policy-makers turn the tide and deliver a framework for growth. The EU must restore confidence. Instead of empty promises of growth and investment, we need decisive actions that make a difference for businesses on the ground. Entrepreneurs need lower labour and energy costs, fewer and simpler regulations, and a truly level playing field to capitalise on the single market’s potential.”*

President Dlouhý's words are backed by the results of EES2026, the 33rd consecutive such annual exercise. They indicate a modest improvement across most key economic indicators. Business confidence, national sales, and export expectations for 2026 are set to rise slightly, although remaining below pre-pandemic and long-term average levels.

The less negative performance reflects easing inflation, lower consumer prices, and relatively stronger domestic demand compared to last year. However, ongoing challenges such as high labour costs, complex and burdensome EU regulations, and geopolitical uncertainty are expected to continue weighing, especially on employment and investment.

### Key EES2026 policy messages:

- **Ensure predictability and financial support to manage excessive production costs.** Lower social security contributions and energy costs. Tailor the next MFF to SME needs with simpler access to funding opportunities.
- **Promote digital and smarter simplification:** Minimise rules for SMEs with the support of digital infrastructures to free up investment capacity, time, and resources.
- **Reduce single market fragmentation and address the “terrible ten” barriers:** Allow companies to innovate and operate seamlessly across the single market.
- **Skills as a competitive advantage:** Scale up investment in up- and reskilling, promote adult learning and VET, and the business transfer frameworks.
- **Power the green transition through affordable energy:** Accelerate clean energy deployment, expand and modernise electricity systems, and speed up permitting.
- **Enhance Europe's opportunities to trade globally:** Facilitate European SMEs internationalisation and conclude trade agreements with other global partners.

Additional Information: [EES2026 Report](#) and [EES2026 Infographic](#)

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