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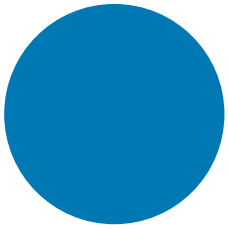
Enterprise Europe Network SME growth forecast 2017-18



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enterprise europe network
Business Support on Your Doorstep

European Commission

Foreword

Since we came into office three years ago, this European Commission has put the creation of more jobs and growth at the centre of our policy agenda.

We want to see new and sustainable jobs across Europe's regions and communities. We want to promote investment and innovation not just in the promising areas of digitalisation, Key Enabling Technologies and the circular economy, but also in more established areas.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are at the heart of that. They account for the overwhelming majority of jobs and businesses in Europe and play a key role in innovation and job creation. This is why Europe's programme for the competitiveness of SMEs (COSME) is so essential: providing advice through the Enterprise Europe Network, helping SMEs access finance, and connecting them up with one another.

The good news is that our collective efforts are paying off: Europe's economy has entered its fifth year of recovery. It is now reaching all EU Member States and this is expected to continue over the next year [1].

This report provides us with valuable additional information: a snapshot of what is happening on the ground for our SMEs.

It provides two key messages.

First, our SMEs are sharing the benefits of the wider recovery. 85 % expect to create or maintain jobs in the next year, 54 % expect to increase their market share, and 65 % of those exporting within the Single Market and beyond expect to increase their turnover. In some Member States, that figure is close to 90 %.

Second, the Network is providing real value. Every year, it helps around 230,000 companies to innovate and grow. 86 % of those companies are satisfied with the service they received. A recent evaluation showed that SMEs that use the Enterprise Europe Network's services grow on average three percentage points more than those that do not [2].

This is great news. I hope that we can see even better news in coming years, and continue to work with these dynamic companies to boost Europe's growth and jobs.

Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Commissioner for Internal Market,
Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

1 According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

2 According to the Final evaluation of the impact of the Enterprise Europe Network 2008-2014, European Commission (2015).

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SME growth forecast 2017-18 Top 5 insights

SMEs with international ambitions are turning a corner after the most challenging years of the economic crisis. The Enterprise Europe Network's survey data shows a confident SME community across Europe with a thirst to innovate and a positive outlook for jobs and growth.

1. Confidence

65 % of SMEs who internationalise expect to increase their turnover in the next 12 months.

Small businesses are willing to take the risk to expand their business beyond their home countries and confident that it will pay off. Innovative companies are driving this confident mood: over half of the companies who expected their turnover to increase were innovative SMEs.

Slovakian SMEs (88 %) were most confident about increasing their turnover while small businesses in Italy (52 %) had the lowest expectations.

2. Growth

54 % of SMEs expect to increase their market share in the next 12 months.

Small businesses are now bullish about their growth prospects with a majority expecting to increase their market share. Innovation is one of the factors driving this competitiveness – over half of the companies expecting to increase market share also expected to deliver enhanced innovation in their products or services.

We found the most optimistic SMEs in Slovakia (78 %). SMEs in Lithuania (38 %) were the most cautious about their near-term growth prospects.

3. Jobs

85 % of SMEs expect to create or preserve jobs in the next year.

Levels of employment have been gradually improving in the EU over the past 4 years[1]. This positive outlook is also reflected among Europe's internationally-focussed SMEs whereby 32 % expect to create jobs and 53 % expect to preserve jobs. The profile of these companies is evenly balanced between more traditional and more innovation-focussed businesses.

Estonian SMEs (53 %) had the highest expectations for job creation while SMEs in Lithuania (15 %) were the least optimistic.

4. Engagement

Every year around 230,000 SMEs benefit from key Enterprise Europe Network services.

SMEs are choosing to invest their time and effort strategically to stay ahead of the game. While companies want the best advice to grow their business, they are also seeking out practical support and guidance that will help them to innovate and improve in the medium-term. And while companies want to meet potential business partners, they are also investing the time beforehand to improve their pitching skills.

5. Trust

86 % of clients are satisfied with the Network's services and 93 % would recommend its services to others.

Since it was launched in 2008 the Network has remained a trusted source of support and advice for SMEs wishing to expand their businesses internationally. Its solid performance is supported by evidence that SMEs who use the Network's services grow on average three percentage points more than those who do not[2].

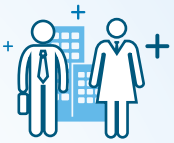
1 According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

2 According to the Final evaluation of the impact of the Enterprise Europe Network 2008-2014, European Commission (2015).

SME growth forecast 2017-18
Top 5 insights

65 %
of SMEs who internationalise expect to increase their turnover in the next 12 months

54 %
of SMEs expect to increase their market share in the next 12 months



85 %
of SMEs expect to create or preserve jobs in the next year

303,000
SMEs benefitted from our information services and training sessions

103,000
SMEs got advice from our experts to help them innovate and grow internationally

Over the past 2 years
457,915
SMEs benefitted from key Enterprise Europe Network services

46,000
SMEs participated in our brokerage events where they held 156,000 business meetings

5,915
SMEs benefitted from our tailored innovation support packages

86 %
of clients are satisfied with the Network's services and 93% would recommend its services to others

Country by country overview

Austria

1.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

57 %
Expect to increase market share

61 %
Expect to increase turnover

10 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN AUSTRIA
2015-16

2,487
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,390
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

7,201
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

86
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Belgium

1.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

62 %
Expect to increase market share

72 %
Expect to increase turnover

32 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN BELGIUM
2015-16

1,389
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,619
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,076
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

111
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Bulgaria

2.8 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

72 %
Expect to increase market share

82 %
Expect to increase turnover

28 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN BULGARIA
2015-16

1,957
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,131
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

7,035
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

115
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Croatia

2.6 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

61 %
Expect to increase market share

71 %
Expect to increase turnover

39 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN CROATIA
2015-16

612
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

551
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

4,321
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

42
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Cyprus

2.3 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

38 %
Expect to increase market share

38 %
Expect to increase turnover

46 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN CYPRUS
2015-16

581
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

195
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

1,923
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

8
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Czech Republic

2.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

45 %
Expect to increase market share

63 %
Expect to increase turnover

21 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN CZECH REPUBLIC
2015-16

1,670
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,176
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

6,372
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

183
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Denmark

1.8 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

62 %
Expect to increase market share

74 %
Expect to increase turnover

36 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN DENMARK
2015-16

1,028
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

833
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

2,314
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

109
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Estonia

2.8 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

59 %
Expect to increase market share

71 %
Expect to increase turnover

53 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN ESTONIA
2015-16

784
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

205
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

1,348
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

33
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Finland

1.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

49 %
Expect to increase market share

65 %
Expect to increase turnover

22 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN FINLAND
2015-16

1,485
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

414
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,607
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

113
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

France

1.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

47 %
Expect to increase market share

58 %
Expect to increase turnover

28 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN FRANCE
2015-16

10,691
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

4,411
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

23,610
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

497
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Germany

1.9 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

44 %
Expect to increase market share

56 %
Expect to increase turnover

26 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN GERMANY
2015-16

11,799
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

4,105
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

33,628
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

721
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Greece

2.5 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

58 %
Expect to increase market share

67 %
Expect to increase turnover

22 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN GREECE
2015-16

16,172
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,186
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

9,237
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

152
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Hungary

3.5 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

54 %
Expect to increase market share

70 %
Expect to increase turnover

32 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN HUNGARY
2015-16

2,196
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

897
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

8,106
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

89
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Ireland

3.6 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

59 %
Expect to increase market share

68 %
Expect to increase turnover

36 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN IRELAND
2015-16

1,925
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

459
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,844
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

60
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Italy

1.1 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

50 %
Expect to increase market share

52 %
Expect to increase turnover

31 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN ITALY
2015-16

5,885
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

3,943
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

33,446
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

786
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Latvia

3.5 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

54 %
Expect to increase market share

60 %
Expect to increase turnover

17 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN LATVIA
2015-16

1,621
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

559
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,535
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

7
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Lithuania

3.1 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

38 %
Expect to increase market share

71 %
Expect to increase turnover

15 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN LITHUANIA
2015-16

1,599
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

293
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

2,188
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

63
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Luxembourg

4.4 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

0 %
Expect to increase market share

10 %
Expect to increase turnover

40 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN LUXEMBOURG
2015-16

1,318
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

577
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,207
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

8
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Malta

4.4 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

100 %
Expect to increase market share

100 %
Expect to increase turnover

91 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN MALTA
2015-16

180
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

186
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

2,036
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

4
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Netherlands

1.8 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

55 %
Expect to increase market share

66 %
Expect to increase turnover

26 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN NETHERLANDS
2015-16

2,004
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

4,289
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

12,092
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

237
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Poland

3.2 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

61 %
Expect to increase market share

73 %
Expect to increase turnover

35 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN POLAND
2015-16

4,121
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,676
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

15,586
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

226
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Portugal

1.6 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

58 %
Expect to increase market share

69 %
Expect to increase turnover

38 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN PORTUGAL
2015-16

1,524
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

876
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

5,577
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

189
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Romania

3.7 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

71 %
Expect to increase market share

72 %
Expect to increase turnover

30 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN ROMANIA
2015-16

1,753
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,822
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

9,482
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

193
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Slovakia

3.6% Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

78 %
Expect to increase market share

88 %
Expect to increase turnover

34 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN SLOVAKIA
2015-16

298
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,011
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

1,455
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

91
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Slovenia

3.1 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

50 %
Expect to increase market share

66 %
Expect to increase turnover

22 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN SLOVENIA
2015-16

765
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

605
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

3,309
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

46
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

Spain

2.4 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

46 %
Expect to increase market share

60 %
Expect to increase turnover

35 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN SPAIN
2015-16

10,935
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

4,479
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

42,329
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

772
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Sweden

2.2% Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

73 %
Expect to increase market share

85 %
Expect to increase turnover

42 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN SWEDEN
2015-16

1,870
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

554
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

7,252
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

181
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

United Kingdom

1.3 % Projected GDP growth % for 2018*

JOBS AND GROWTH PROJECTIONS

59 %
Expect to increase market share

69 %
Expect to increase turnover

39 %
Expect to create jobs

SME SUPPORT IN UNITED KINGDOM
2015-16

7,180
SMEs receiving advice from the Network

1,957
SMEs participating in brokerage events and company missions

10,187
SMEs benefitting from information and training sessions

793
SMEs benefitting from innovation support packages

* According to the European Commission's Spring 2017 Economic Forecast.

Methodology

Data on SME's projections for market share, turnover and job creation

The survey data is based on 3,680 responses from SMEs who had received advisory, innovation or partnership services from the Enterprise Europe Network. Data covers the EU's 28 Member States.

Data was collected between April 2016 and April 2017. Company projections relate to the coming 12 months.

Data was submitted electronically to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) which is responsible for coordinating the COSME programme that co-funds the Enterprise Europe Network.

Country data which represents less than 1 % of the client base and fewer than 15 responses per country (Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta) appear to be outliers. The data for these countries is not sufficiently representative to provide specific country insights. For the purpose of the report, client base is defined as the number of clients participating in information and training events.

Data on trust in the Network

The survey data is based on 2113 responses from SMEs who had received advisory, innovation or partnership services from the Enterprise Europe Network.

Data was collected by survey between 14 June and 5 July 2017.

Data was submitted electronically to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) which is responsible for coordinating the COSME programme that co-funds the Enterprise Europe Network.

The survey was open to SMEs from all countries participating in the COSME programme[1]. SMEs from 34 countries responded.

Volume of SMEs benefitting from Network services

Data covers the EU's 28 Member States.

Data was submitted by Enterprise Europe Network partners and covers a two-year period 2015-2016.

Data was submitted electronically to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) which is responsible for coordinating the COSME programme that co-funds the Enterprise Europe Network.

1 EU 28, Montenegro, Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Armenia, Ukraine, Iceland.

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