

PRESS RELEASE

Foreign investment: France retains its first place in Europe

Paris, May 21, 2026 – EY today published the European Attractiveness Survey 2026, which tracks and analyzes foreign investment decisions in Europe and the perception of France by international business leaders. In a global environment marked by geopolitical tensions, economic slowdown and increased international competition, France retained its first place in Europe for the seventh consecutive year, with **852 projects recorded in 2025**, ahead of the United Kingdom (**730**) and Germany (**548**). This performance confirms the strength of France's economic fundamentals, while highlighting the need to defend and renew this leadership in an increasingly demanding environment.

France is holding up better than many of its neighbors on several key indicators. Projects hosted in France generated nearly **28,000 jobs**, a decline limited to **4%**, well below the European average (**-25%**).

France also restated its position as a preferred destination for foreign industrial investment. In 2025, it attracted **354 industrial investments**, accounting for **42%** of the projects identified, enabling it to remain **number one in Europe for manufacturing investment**. Despite a decline in volume in a more challenging economic environment, foreign investment continues to support industrial activity and productive employment in the country, with a **net positive balance of 1,376 industrial jobs**.

The survey also highlights several strategic key strengths of France's attractiveness. **France is making progress in attracting headquarters**, with a **17% increase** in one year, and is ranked **second in Europe** in this category. It also remains a major hub for technology and sovereignty activities. It remains **the leading European hub for attracting foreign investment in artificial intelligence**, with a **26%** increase in projects in one year, while the software and IT services, defense and low-carbon energy sectors are among the drivers of this renewed attractiveness.

France confirmed that its economic attractiveness is also regional. With four regions in the top 15 most attractive regions in Europe, it demonstrated that foreign investment is not concentrated in a few major cities but spread widely throughout the country. Ile de France (Paris region) remained the leading French region with **233 projects**, while Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes stood out with a level of job creation close to that of the capital region, and Grand Est and Hauts de France both confirmed their attractiveness.

The perception survey associated with the survey also confirmed that **France remains the European country considered most attractive by international executives**, cited by **38%** of them, ahead of Germany and the United Kingdom (**31% each**). Its main strengths remain the **size of its market**, its **capacity for innovation**, the **quality of its infrastructure**, the **availability of low-carbon energy** and the **quality of its workforce**. At the same time, investors expressed strong expectations regarding the **clarity of public policies**, **political stability**, **cost competitiveness**, **taxation** and **administrative simplification**.

In the short term, **57%** of the executives surveyed stated they are considering investing in France in 2026. This level reflects continued high confidence: France's attractiveness remains real, but it must continue to be supported by decisive action to strengthen competitiveness, fast-track decision-making, secure the regulatory environment and prepare for the next investment cycle focused on innovation, critical infrastructure, the ecological transition and talent. **For Business France, these results confirm the need to pursue a pro-active approach, with all the partners gathered in Team France Invest, to enhance France's attractiveness as an investment location.**

“For the seventh year in a row, France has confirmed its position as the leading European destination for foreign investment. Against of global backdrop of geopolitical tensions and greater investor caution, this result sends a clear message: France attracts, innovates and continues to impress. This performance has not arisen by pure chance: it is based on strategic choices made over many years, which have sustainably strengthened our country’s economic attractiveness and changed France’s image on the international stage. We have built solid foundations – for innovation, industry, talent and competitiveness – which mean that we are at the forefront of Europe today. Our collective responsibility now is to preserve and strengthen these achievements so as to maintain this momentum and continue to make France a land of investment, growth and opportunity,” said Nicolas Forissier, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and France’s Economic Attractiveness.

“France has remained at the top of the European attractiveness rankings since 2019. In a complex and uncertain geopolitical environment, this performance reflects the strength of our fundamentals, in particular the depth of the market, quality of infrastructure and excellence of our talent. It also stems from nearly ten years of pro-business reforms promoting innovation and reindustrialization. However, this leadership must now be boosted. Attractiveness is never a given; it is built over time through consistent public action, the competitiveness of our environment and our collective ability to transform our key strengths into sustainable projects that create value and jobs across the entire country,” said Pascal Cagni, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Business France.

“The results of the EY 2026 Survey show that France continues to attract high-value-added projects in strategic sectors, such as industry, artificial intelligence, decision-making centers, defense and low-carbon energy. This momentum reflects the joint commitment of the government, Business France and local authorities to support investors as closely as possible to their needs. In a more selective environment, our responsibility is clear: to convert this confidence into tangible investments that create jobs, sovereignty and sustainable growth,” said Louis Margueritte, Chief Executive Officer of Business France.

About Business France

Business France is the public consulting business serving the international development of the French economy. It is responsible for fostering export-led growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating foreign investment in France.

It promotes France’s firms, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the V.I.E international internship program, which connects businesses with young talent for international assignments.

Business France has more than 1,400 personnel, both in France and in 53 countries throughout the world.

In 2025, support from Business France made it possible to generate €2.5 billion in additional export revenues for French SMEs and mid-size companies, accounting for more than 25,386 jobs created or planned. Business France supported 59% of the 1,878 foreign investment decisions in 2025, accounting for 35,426 projected jobs.

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