No upswing yet in sight

DIHK Economic Survey Early Summer 2025

DIHK German Chamber of Commerce and Industry

IHK German Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Contents

Imprint

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Key results

Forecast: The mood among companies remains poor. An upturn is not yet in sight. None of the indicators surveyed provide any sustainable impetus for the economy as a whole. For 2025 as a whole, the DIHK expects gross domestic product to shrink by 0.3 percent.

- There are no signs of an improvement in the economic situation in early summer 2025. Only 25 percent of companies currently describe their **business situation** as "good" (at the start of 2025: 26 percent), while 25 percent say the situation is poor (unchanged compared to the start of the year). The situation balance fell slightly by one point to zero points.

- Companies' **business expectations** remain predominantly pessimistic despite a noticeable improvement. Around a quarter of companies have a negative outlook for the future (26 percent compared to 31 percent previously). The proportion of companies that expect business to improve over the next twelve months has risen slightly to 16 percent (previously 14 percent). Accordingly, the balance of expectations (minus 17 to minus 10 points) is now less negative. This means that the balance of expectations is exactly the same as the previous year's figure and well above the long-term average (three points).

- Once again, economic policy conditions are the most frequently cited **business risk**. At 59 percent, they are only just below the all-time high (60 percent). Just under 6,000 companies made use of the free text response option for the economic policy framework conditions. By far the most frequently mentioned keyword is "bureaucracy", while 24 percent of industrial companies see "trade barriers" as an economic policy risk. The second and third most common business risks are domestic demand (57 percent) and labour costs (56 percent, all-time high).

- The industry's **export expectations** are deteriorating, primarily due to the tightened and unpredictable US tariff policy. Export plans are deep in negative territory: 29 percent of companies expect exports to fall over the next twelve months, while only 19 percent expect them to rise. The balance of export expectations deteriorated by two points to minus ten points.

- Companies remain very hesitant about their **investment plans** in Germany. Only 24 percent of companies are planning to increase investment, with a third stating that they intend to reduce investment. The balance of investment intentions rose only slightly by three points to minus seven points, which corresponds to the weak level of the previous year. The main investment motives are replacement investments and rationalisation. At 19 percent, the proportion of companies intending to expand capacity is at a historically low level.

- Only 13 percent of companies are planning to increase employment in the coming months, while more than one in five companies (22 percent) are reducing their workforce. At minus nine points, the resulting balance is well below the long-term average (minus one point) and has improved slightly by one point compared to the previous survey.

- The tense business situation and continued negative business expectations have also led to an increase in the proportion of companies reporting financing difficulties. 43 percent (compared to 41 percent previously) consider their **financial situation** to be problematic.

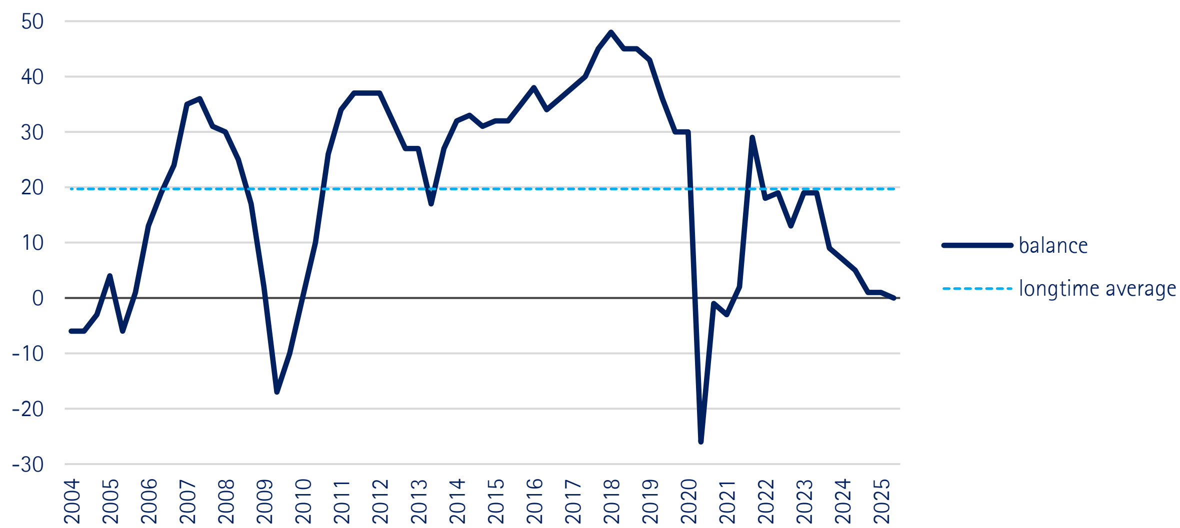
Current business situation of companies

The business situation for companies remains tense in the early summer of 2025. Ongoing burdens, such as high costs and weak demand at home and abroad, as well as prolonged uncertainty about the economic policy course are weighing on sentiment. Added to this are global political tensions and the abrupt tightening of US customs policy, which companies operating abroad in particular are confronted with.

A quarter of companies report a good business situation (25 percent compared to 26 percent previously), while the same number of companies report a poor situation (unchanged at 25 percent). The situation balance fell slightly by one point to zero points. This is the lowest value since the coronavirus pandemic (start of 2021: minus three points). The long-term average is plus 20 points.

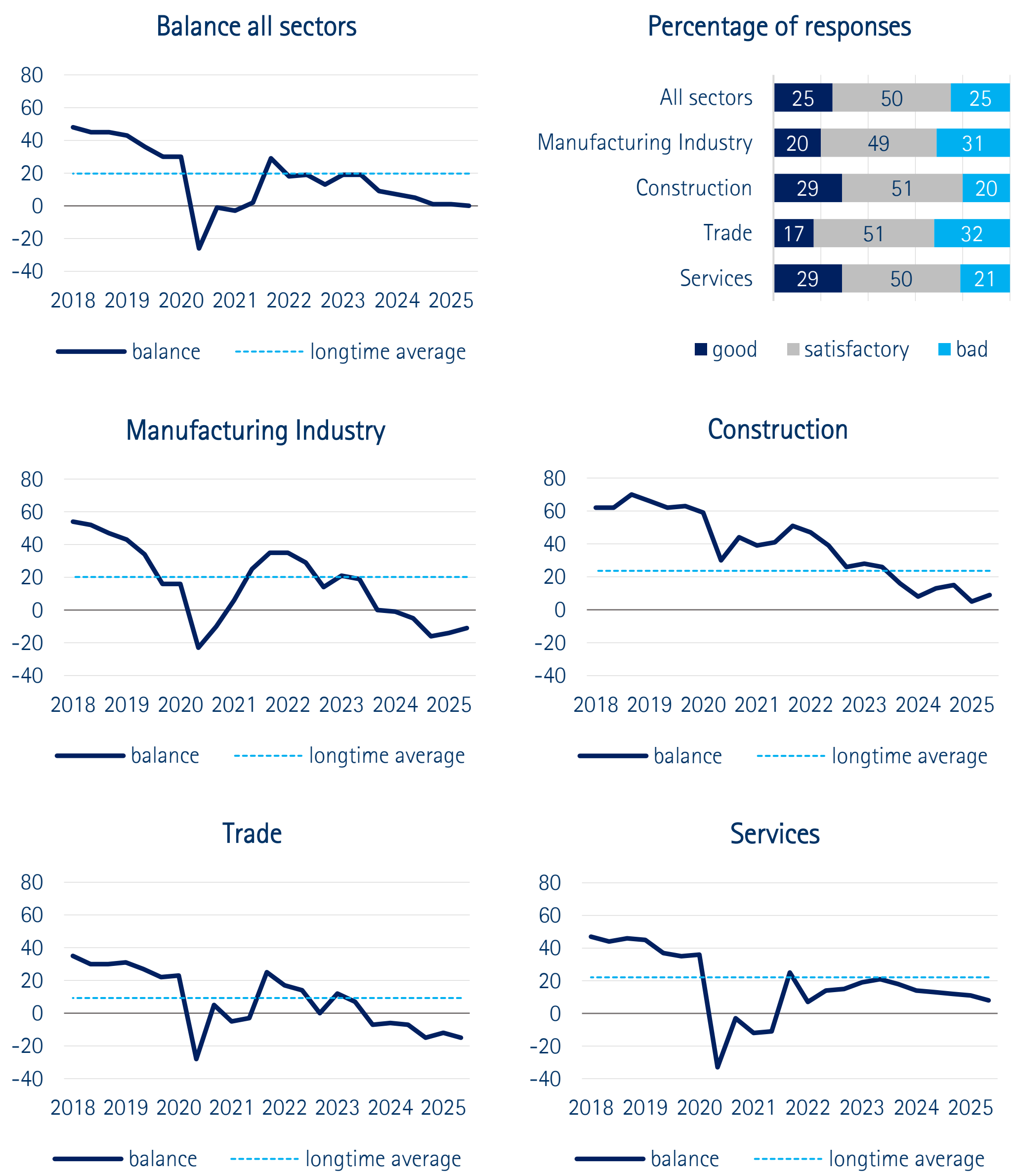
Looking at company size, it is clear that small and medium-sized companies in particular are feeling the economic downturn. The situation balance for companies with up to 20 employees fell from minus one to minus three points. This is well below the average of eleven points in recent years. In larger companies with up to 1000 employees, the business situation improved slightly. The situation balance rose from five to six points. Large companies with 1,000 employees or more rated their current business situation best: the balance is seven points (previously eight points).

Business situation of companies (balance of good minus bad responses, long-term average since 2003)



In **manufacturing industry**, companies continue to assess their current business situation as predominantly negative: almost one in three companies rate their situation as "poor" (31 percent, compared to 33 percent previously), while only one in five companies say their situation is good (20 percent, compared to 19 percent previously). The balance has risen from minus 14 to minus eleven points. However, the level is still six balance points below the previous year's figure and well below the long-term average of 20 points. The sector continues to suffer from weak demand, high costs and poor location conditions in some cases.

Business situation of companies (balance of good minus bad responses, long-term average since 2003)



The situation among **manufacturers of intermediate goods** is recovering, albeit still at a very weak level. More than a third of companies rate the situation as poor (36 percent), while only 15 percent rate it as good. At minus 21 points, the situation balance is still clearly in negative territory. However, for the second time in a row, companies rated their current business situation as better than in the respective previous survey (balance of minus 26 points at the start of the year and minus 30 points in autumn 2024). The weakness in industry and the associated low demand for inputs and high costs are weighing heavily on companies. In the energy-intensive industry, the balance remains in negative territory at minus 26 points. Although energy prices have fallen recently, they remain at a significantly higher level compared to the period before the Russian war in Ukraine. Companies in the timber industry are seeing a clear improvement. Compared to the previous survey, the balance has improved by 14 points to minus ten points.

The situation assessments of **capital goods manufacturers** improved slightly compared to the previous survey. The balance rose from minus eleven to minus six points, but is still far below the average of recent years (26 points). In the automotive industry, companies are still predominantly negative in their assessment of the current business situation, although the sector is benefiting from comparatively strong exports in the first quarter. This also reflects pull-forward effects due to the threat of US automotive tariffs. The situation balance has risen significantly from minus 30 to currently minus 15 points. Mechanical engineering companies also see their situation as slightly better than recently. The balance increased slightly by four points to minus ten points. In contrast, a deterioration can be observed in the medical technology sector. After an increase at the start of the year, the balance has fallen again from 17 to eleven points.

Business for **producers of consumer goods and consumer goods** continues to be sluggish. Persistent consumer restraint and uncertainty about global economic development are weighing on many companies. After a slight recovery, the balance of situation assessments fell by two points to minus six points. The situation in the printing industry is particularly bad. The situation balance fell from minus 17 points to minus 23 points. The situation in the food and animal feed industry has also deteriorated. The balance fell from 14 to twelve points. Only the pharmaceutical industry stands out positively. Business is still going well. The balance rose by four points to plus 36 points.

In the **retail** sector, the downward trend shows no sign of abating. Only 17 percent of retail companies rate their current situation as good (previously 18 percent), while just under a third of companies report a poor situation (32 percent compared to 30 percent previously). As a result, the balance fell by three points to minus 15 points. Low consumer demand in particular is weighing on the sector. In addition, companies are facing high labour costs and uncertain economic policy conditions, such as the unpredictable US customs policy. The situation in wholesale is particularly bleak. The situation balance remains at minus 18 points. The main reason for this is the weak demand from industry, which is also unable to report an economic upturn. With a balance of minus 15 points, the retail sector recorded its lowest value since the coronavirus pandemic, following a recent minus 10 points.

The business situation of companies in the **construction sector** has improved slightly due to the mild winter, but cannot match previous results. Just under three in ten companies (29 percent compared to 27 percent previously) rate their situation in early summer 2025 as "good", while one in five companies report a poor business situation (20 percent compared to 22 percent previously). The balance rose by four points to plus nine points, but is still below the previous year's figure (balance in early summer 2024: 13 points). This means that companies are reporting the worst business situation in an early summer since the financial crisis. Building construction recovered slightly compared to the start of 2025, from minus seven to minus three points, but remains at the weak level of the previous year (balance in early summer 2024: also minus three points). Numerous challenges are weighing on the sector. In addition to bureaucratic hurdles, lengthy planning and approval procedures and difficult financing conditions, the shortage of skilled workers and high labour costs in particular are having a negative impact on business. Civil engineering is more stable compared to the other sub-sectors, with a balance of 14 points. However, the balance fell significantly by ten points, and even by 14 points compared to the previous year's survey. Here too, companies are increasingly suffering from the lengthy planning and approval processes as well as the high costs. In addition, the current lack of an approved federal budget is having a negative impact on the awarding of public contracts. In the finishing trade, the business situation improved by seven points to 21 points, partly due to seasonal factors, although this is also well below the previous year's figure (situation balance in early summer 2024: 29 points).

Compared to the other sectors, the **services industry** is still predominantly reporting a positive business situation. However, a slight economic slowdown is also noticeable here. At 29 percent, slightly fewer companies are reporting a positive situation than at the start of the year (30 points). On the other hand, slightly more companies rated their current business situation as "poor" (21 percent compared to 19 points previously). The balance fell from eleven to eight points. The persistently weak industrial economy is weighing on the business of the predominantly business-related service providers. The situation balance fell slightly by two points to 15 points. This puts the balance well below the long-term average (30 points). The legal and tax consultancy and auditing sub-sectors are robust overall, with the balance stabilising at a high level of 55 points (previously: 55 points), as are financial service providers with a balance of 33 points (previously 25 points). The security industry also recorded an upturn due to the stronger public focus on security issues, with a balance of 17 points (previously down one point). Predominantly personal service providers are not seeing any significant growth impetus; like many other sectors, they are exposed to uncertain economic policy conditions and high labour costs. Despite a positive assessment of the situation, the balance has fallen from 15 points to eleven points (long-term average 14 points). The leisure industry with art, entertainment and recreation companies are feeling the effects of the general consumer restraint. The situation balance fell to zero points after a recent plus of seven points. A similar picture is emerging in the cultural and creative industries. The business situation balance deteriorated from eleven points to four points.

The negative trend in the **hospitality industry** is continuing in early summer 2025. More than one in three companies see themselves in a poor business situation (35 percent compared to 29 percent previously), while only 17 percent still report a good situation (previously 21 percent). The situation balance slipped significantly by ten points to minus 18 points. High labour costs and energy prices in particular contributed to this negative result. Travel agents remain robust. Despite the downturn due to slightly weaker demand overall, companies with a positive business situation clearly outweigh those with a poor assessment of the situation (34 percent) (15 percent). The sector thus continues to benefit from Germans' desire to travel.

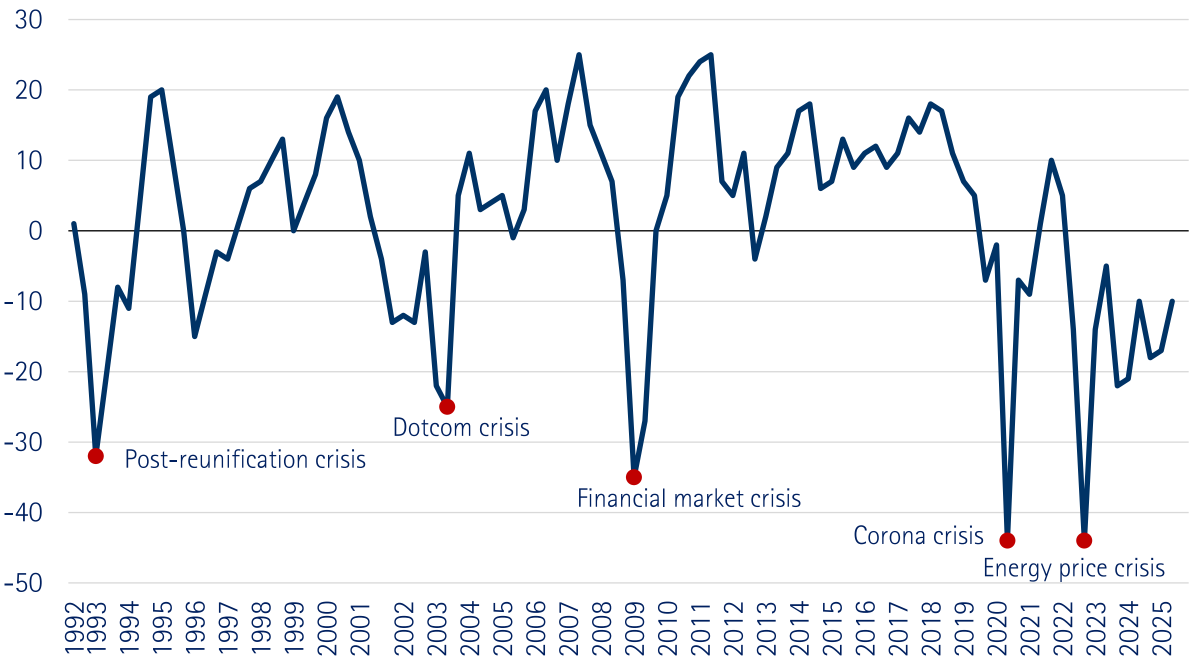
The business situation in the **transport sector** is stagnating at a low level. The mood in companies continues to be worse than in the service sector overall. The balance fell by one point to minus seven points. Persistently high costs for energy, labour and modernisation are weighing on transport companies, while at the same time they are exposed to cautious consumer behaviour. In addition, long planning and authorisation procedures and high bureaucratic hurdles are preventing an upturn. The business situation in local road and rail transport paints a similar picture (situation balance of minus four after minus three points recently). The business situation for taxi companies is particularly gloomy. Almost half of the companies rate their situation as "poor" (40 percent). The balance fell significantly from minus nine to minus 28 points. Road freight transport is suffering from infrastructural problems, with dilapidated bridges and other issues leading to longer journey times due to detours. High labour costs and a shortage of skilled workers are also weighing on the industry. The situation balance fell by three points to minus 13 points. Shipping continues to be negatively impacted by geopolitical uncertainties and the profitability of freight journeys currently remains very volatile. The balance has fallen again to minus twelve points (most recently minus four points).

Business expectations of the companies

Companies' business expectations improved noticeably in early summer, but remain predominantly pessimistic. Around a quarter of companies have a negative outlook for the future (26 percent compared to 31 percent previously). The proportion of companies that expect business to improve over the next twelve months has risen slightly to 16 percent (previously 14 percent). The balance of expectations rose accordingly from minus 17 to minus 10 points. This is exactly the same as the previous year's figure and well below the long-term average of three points. Uncertain economic policy conditions in Germany are still making companies cautious. This is compounded by a weak domestic economy, subdued demand from abroad and structural problems such as rising labour costs and continuing high energy and raw material prices. In addition, the unpredictable US trade policy is now also weighing on the global economy and thus also on the export-orientated German economy.

In terms of company size, the picture is mixed. Positive expectations predominate among large companies (more than 1,000 employees), with the balance rising from three to six points. For the remaining companies, however, the outlook remains negative. Expectations remain particularly gloomy for small companies with fewer than 20 employees, despite a slight improvement in the balance by five points to minus 14 points.

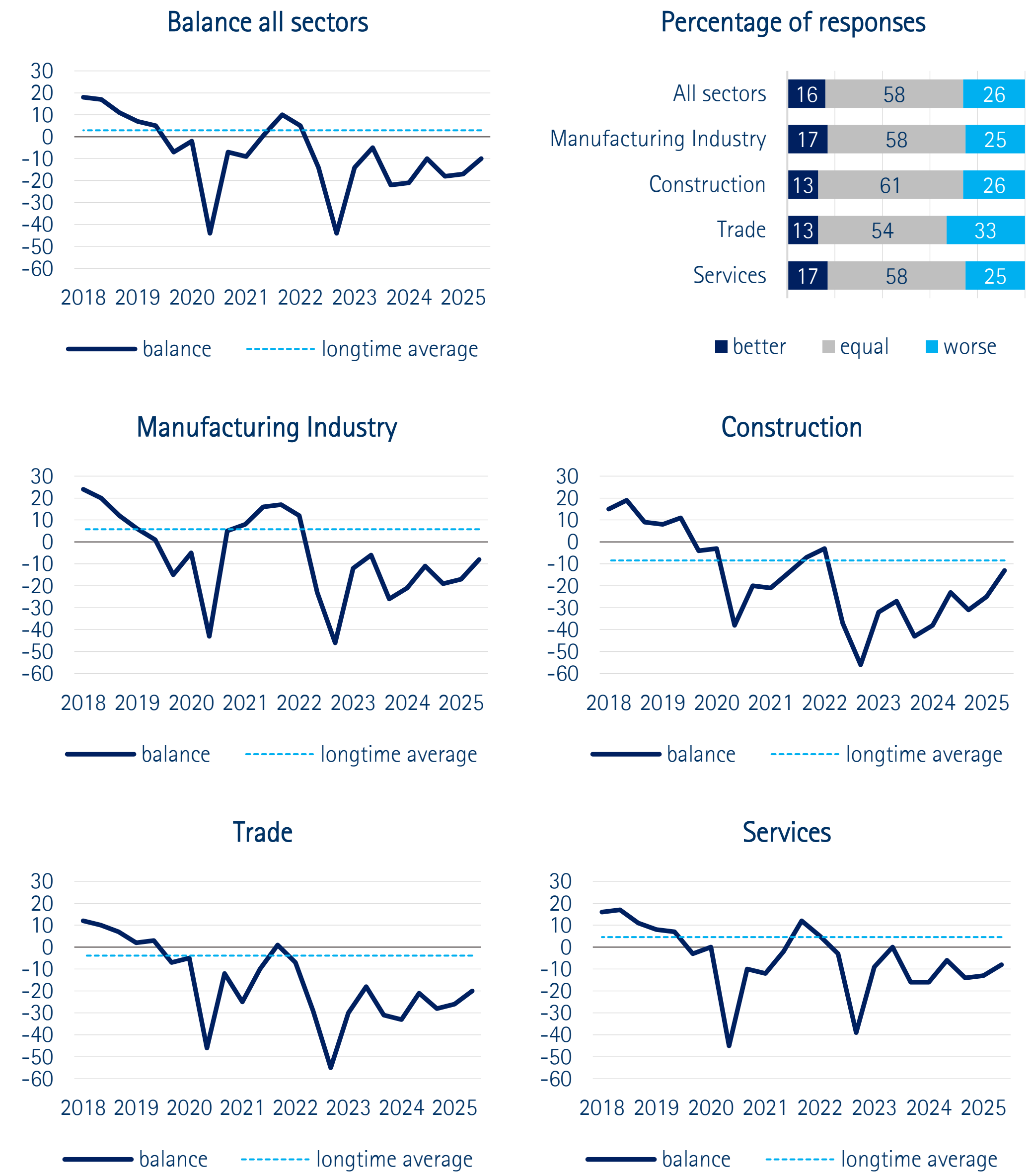
Business expectations of companies (balance in points, long-term average since 2003)



The **manufacturing industry** is suffering from a lack of domestic orders and a global economy slowed down by US tariffs. In addition, there are numerous structural concerns, such as high energy and raw material prices, oppressive labour costs and uncertain economic policy conditions. This is weighing on business expectations overall. Hopes that the reforms and special funds announced in the coalition agreement will be implemented quickly are brightening expectations: 17 percent of companies anticipate an improvement in the coming twelve months (previously 14 percent), while a quarter (25 percent after 31 percent previously) expect business to deteriorate. The balance has risen significantly from minus 17 to minus eight points. However, it is far below its long-term average (plus six points).

Business expectations of companies

(balance of better minus worse responses, long-term average since 2003)



Business expectations among **manufacturers of intermediate goods** have increased the most, although the outlook here has recently been particularly gloomy in view of the deterioration in competitiveness compared to other countries. The proportion of companies expecting business to deteriorate over the next twelve months fell from 34 to 25 percent. However, this still exceeds the proportion of companies expecting an improvement (17 percent compared to 13 percent previously). The balance of positive and negative expectations has therefore increased significantly by 13 balance points, but still remains pessimistic at minus eight points. The investments in security and infrastructure announced in the coalition agreement brighten up the previously very gloomy expectations for the coming twelve months, particularly in the building materials industry, but also among metalworkers. For companies in the quarrying and mining sector, the balance of business expectations climbed by 43 points to minus one point. In the metal production and processing sector, the balance rose from minus 23 to just minus nine points. In the chemical industry, the balance of expectations rose by seven points to minus three points.

Despite a significant improvement, the business expectations of **capital goods manufacturers** remain negative on balance against the backdrop of ongoing structural problems and weak demand. A quarter of companies expect business to deteriorate (25 percent after 32 percent previously). Only 19 percent (previously 15 percent) expect an improvement. The balance has thus risen by eleven points to minus six points. The outlook has also brightened only slightly compared to the previous year (balance in early summer 2024: minus nine points). Expectations in the automotive sector have improved significantly by 20 points on balance. However, with a current balance of minus four points, they are still below the long-term average of plus four points. The same applies to mechanical engineering, with the balance rising noticeably by twelve points to minus six points. Companies in the electrical engineering sector even achieved a slightly positive balance again: at just one point, however, expectations are still well below the long-term average (balance: 15 points).

The worst expectations are among manufacturers of **consumer goods.** Almost a third (29 percent compared to 26 percent previously) expect business to deteriorate, while only 16 percent anticipate an improvement. This means that the balance of business expectations has fallen by three points to minus 13 points. The pharmaceutical industry stands out positively here. Expectations in the pharmaceutical industry have also suffered a severe setback due to the US tariff announcements. However, with a balance of eleven points, expectations still remain largely positive (previously 23 points).

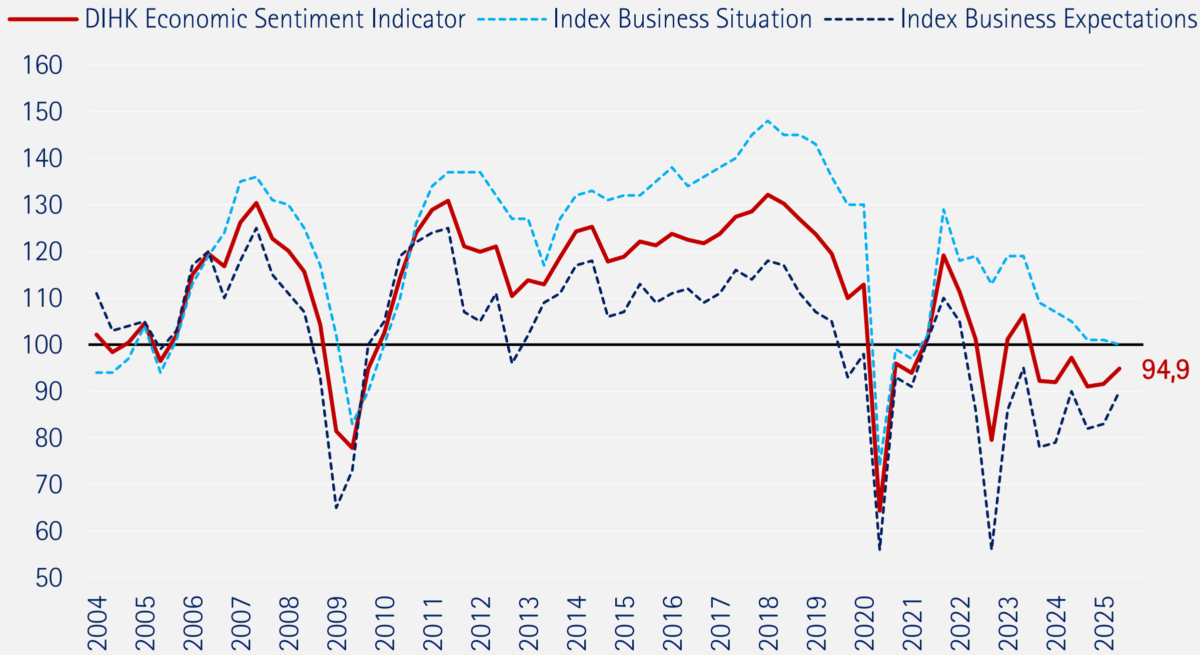
The outlook for **the construction industry** is much less gloomy than at the beginning of the year. This is partly due to seasonal factors, but also because the measures announced in the coalition agreement and the special fund for infrastructure are raising hopes of lucrative new orders. The proportion of companies expecting business to improve over the next twelve months has risen to 13 percent (previously ten percent). In contrast, the proportion of companies with poor expectations has shrunk significantly to 26 percent (previously 35 percent). The balance of expectations rose to minus 13 points. This is twelve points more than at the beginning of the year and ten points more than a year ago. Expectations have risen sharply, particularly in civil engineering. A lack of demand is no longer an overwhelming problem for companies; a below-average 42 percent see domestic demand as a business risk (previously 56 percent). The balance of business expectations climbed by 16 points to minus ten points. This is even higher than the long-term average of minus 13 points. In the building construction and finishing trades, the improvement is somewhat weaker (balance for building construction: minus 13 points after previously minus 26 points; balance for finishing trades: minus 11 points after previously minus 23 points). Companies in building construction do not yet expect the poor order situation in residential construction or commercial construction to improve significantly. Domestic demand is still cited as the most frequent risk (60 percent of companies, compared to 64 percent previously). The balance of positive and negative expectations in building construction is minus 13 points (after previously minus 26 points). In civil engineering, companies are particularly concerned about the shortage of skilled labour and the economic policy environment. The balance of business expectations rose to minus 13 points, bringing it closer to the long-term average of minus nine points. Expectations also improved in the finishing trade, but remain negative (balance of minus 11 points after previously minus 23 points).

Despite a slight improvement, business expectations in the **retail sector** remain gloomy. In addition to weak demand, companies are very concerned about high labour costs and uncertain economic policy conditions. A third of retailers (33 percent compared to 37 percent previously) expect business to deteriorate, while only 13 percent (compared to eleven percent previously) anticipate an improvement. The balance rose by six points to minus 20 points. The balance in wholesale increased by eight points to minus 18, and in retail by three points to minus 23.

Business expectations in the **service sector, which** is very heterogeneous overall, are similar to industry. A quarter of companies (25 percent after 28 percent previously) expect business to deteriorate, while 17 percent (after 15 percent previously) have positive expectations. The balance rose by five to minus eight points. This is below the long-term average of plus five points. Expectations in the hospitality industry have improved noticeably. This is partly due to seasonal factors and partly because catering businesses are hoping for the reduction in VAT agreed in the coalition agreement. Nevertheless, at minus 13 points (previously minus 29 points), the balance of expectations remains clearly in negative territory and also below the previous year's figure (minus ten points). Companies in the hospitality industry are particularly concerned about costs, especially labour costs, which are the most frequently cited business risk in the sector. The outlook for companies in the transport and logistics sector is similar. In addition to labour costs, high energy and fuel prices and uncertain economic policy conditions are causing problems for the sector. Nevertheless, the balance of business expectations rose by ten points to minus 18 points. In contrast, the outlook for financial and insurance service providers is actually positive again. At three points (previously zero points), the balance of business expectations is even slightly above the long-term average of two points.

DIHK Economic Sentiment Index

After two years of recession, there are no signs of a sustainable recovery in the German economy. Although individual indicators show slight improvements, the mood among companies remains predominantly pessimistic. The current DIHK sentiment index, which records the assessments of more than 23,000 companies from almost all sectors and regions, remains in the pessimistic range at 94.9 points.



The DIHK sentiment index is the geometric mean of the business situation index and the business expectations index. The business situation index corresponds to 100 plus the proportion of companies with a good business situation minus the proportion of companies with a poor business situation. The business expectations index corresponds to 100 plus the proportion of companies with positive business expectations minus the proportion of companies with negative business expectations.

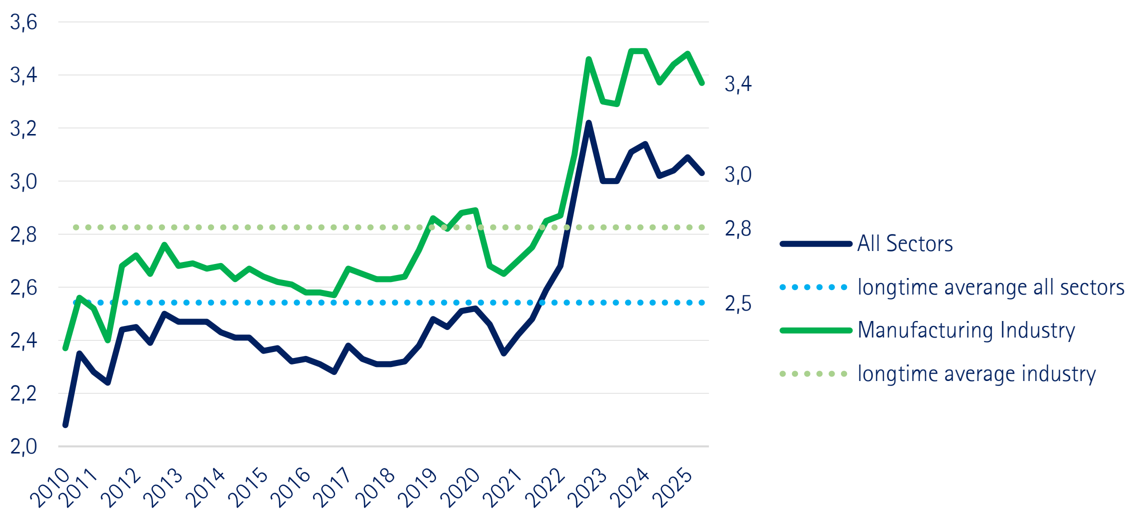
Values above 100 mean that the companies' assessment of the mood, situation and expectations is predominantly positive and vice versa.

Business risks of the companies

The pressure on companies remains high in many areas of the economy. Since the start of the Russian war in Ukraine, the number of business risks facing companies has skyrocketed. However, it is not only economic risks, such as continuing weak demand at home and abroad, that are putting pressure on the economy. Companies are also concerned about structural problems such as uncertain economic policy conditions, increased labour costs and the continuing high prices of energy and raw materials. There are a total of eight different business risks to choose from in the survey. Companies currently cite an average of 3.0 different risks. This is only slightly below the value at the start of the year (3.1) or the peak value of 3.2 in autumn 2022. Overall, companies continue to be confronted with a large number of risks and uncertainties.

DIHK Risk Indicator

Number of business risks mentioned (8 risks to choose from, multiple answers possible)

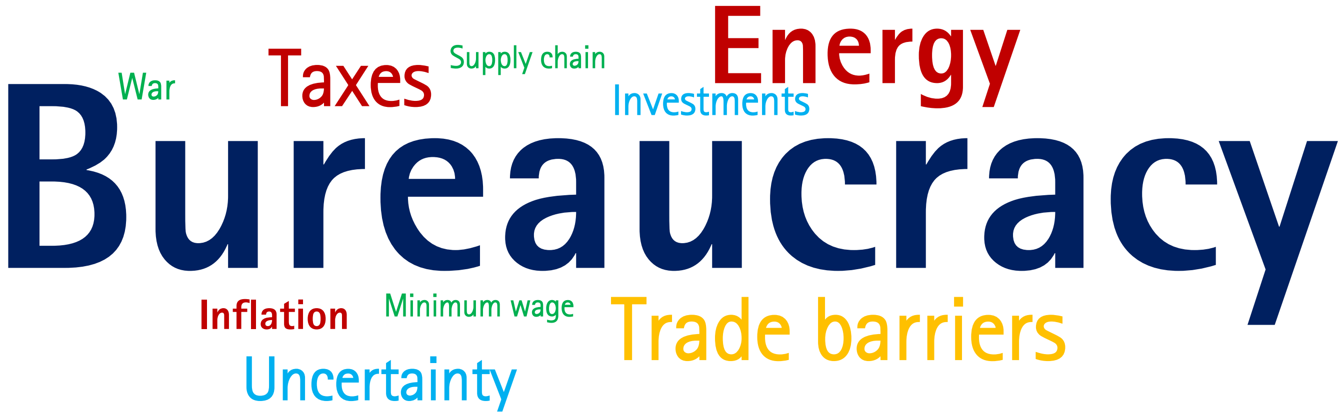


* In each wave of the DIHK Economic survey, the following eight business risks are surveyed: Domestic demand, foreign demand, lack of skilled workers, labour costs, energy and raw materials, funding, exchange rates, economic policy conditions.

For the second time in a row, **economic policy conditions** are the most frequently cited business risk. At 59 percent, they are slightly lower than the previous 60 percent at the beginning of the year, but are still the most frequent cause of concern for companies. Just under 6,000 companies made use of the free text response option for the economic policy framework conditions. "Bureaucracy" was by far the most frequently mentioned keyword. Around 43 percent of the free text responses included bureaucracy issues. In view of the stricter and very burdensome US customs policy, 14 percent of free text responses now also include trade barriers, compared to only five percent at the beginning of the year. Among industrial companies, this proportion has tripled from eight to 24 percent. Companies see further economic policy risks in energy, taxes, planning uncertainty and a lack of investment. In the hospitality industry, 15 percent of free text responses refer to the minimum wage (five percent in total).

Companies cite **domestic demand** as a business risk almost as often as economic policy conditions (57 percent after 59 percent previously). This not only reflects the reluctance of consumers to spend, but also the ongoing slump in orders in the manufacturing sector. Weak demand is the most common risk, particularly in industry (65 percent after 70 percent previously). There is also a growing fear of falling **foreign demand** among exporting industrial companies (47 percent compared to 45 percent previously). In addition to sluggish global industrial production and high domestic costs, the US administration's aggressive trade policy is causing a high level of uncertainty.

Keywords most frequently mentioned by companies when describing economic risks
(analysis of around 6,000 free text responses)



In the retail sector, companies cite domestic demand as the most common business risk (unchanged at 68 percent). Despite increased incomes, consumers are holding back on consumption. If the two exceptional coronavirus years 2020/2021 are disregarded, the savings rate of private households (11.6 percent in 2024 according to the Bundesbank) is at its highest level since 1996. Companies are also exercising restraint in the form of low investment in view of the poor economy. The special infrastructure fund announced in the coalition agreement, on the other hand, is reducing the risk of domestic demand in the construction industry (52 percent compared to 58 percent previously). Companies are expecting an increase in orders, particularly in civil engineering. This alleviates concerns about low domestic demand (42 percent after previously 56 percent). In building construction, on the other hand, domestic demand is only just below its peak (60 percent after 64 percent previously, peak). Concerns about falling demand are least pronounced in the services sector, although half of the companies here also cite this risk (51 percent compared to 53 percent previously).

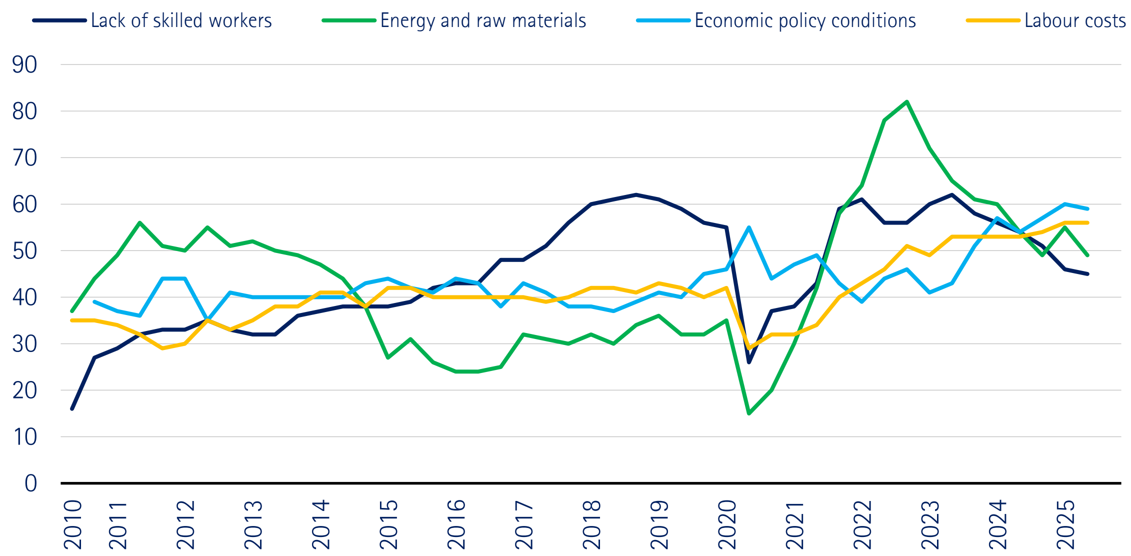
Labour costs are again the third most frequently cited business risk. The figure remains at a high of 56 percent. In all four economic sectors, more than every second company is concerned about the development of labour costs. In industry, the figure is as high as 59 percent. This is not only due to general wage increases in the wake of high inflation rates in the meantime. Demographically induced labour shortages are also making skilled workers scarcer and therefore more expensive. Added to this are the increasing social security burdens. Labour costs are often a problem, especially in labour-intensive sectors such as the hospitality industry. Almost four out of five companies (77 percent, up from 73 percent previously) cite this as a risk. The discussion surrounding the minimum wage also plays a major role here. 15 percent of hospitality businesses that made use of the free text option cited the minimum wage as a risk. In the survey at the beginning of the year, this figure was only five percent.

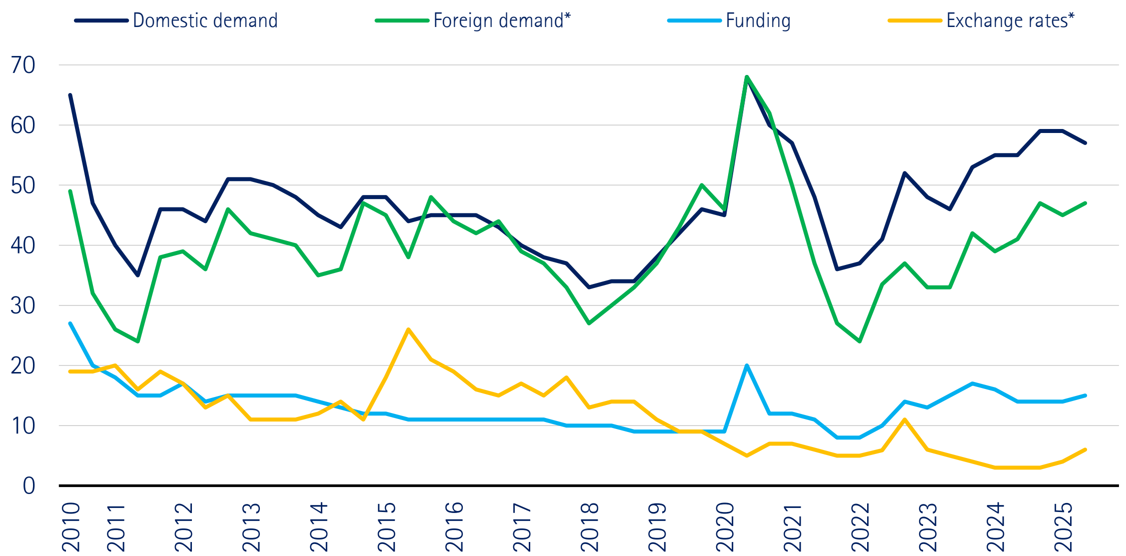
Following the start of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine just over three years ago, **energy and raw material prices** have long been the biggest business risk for the German economy as a whole. Gas and electricity prices are still well above pre-crisis levels, but have fallen slightly compared to the start of the year. The oil price in particular is currently at its lowest level since 2021, meaning that the proportion of companies citing energy and raw material prices as a business risk has fallen from 55 percent to 49 percent. Where energy is a major cost factor, such as in the energy-intensive industry, the proportion is still at a high level (71 percent compared to 76 percent previously).

The prolonged period of economic weakness continues to affect the labour market. Although demographic trends are ensuring that the **shortage of skilled labour** remains a challenge for many companies even in the current difficult economic phase, the pressure is currently continuing to ease. The bottom line is that almost one in two companies (45 percent, up from 46 percent previously) report a shortage of skilled workers as a business risk - which is exactly in line with the long-term average. In view of demographic change, the shortage of qualified labour will remain a structural challenge for companies.

Business risks for the economy as a whole

Percentage of responses; multiple answers possible; *Export industry





As in previous surveys, the shortage of skilled labour is the most frequently cited risk in the construction industry. Despite the weak construction industry, almost two thirds of companies (64 percent compared to 59 percent previously) complain about a lack of qualified staff.

The proportion of companies that see access to **financing** as a risk factor has risen slightly from 14 to 15 percent. The long-term average is 13 percent. The risk remains above average in sectors that are particularly affected by the high construction interest rates (real estate industry: 37 percent compared to 34 percent previously; building construction: 31 percent compared to 25 percent previously) and energy suppliers (36 percent compared to 35 percent previously).

Exchange rate risks currently only play a subordinate role for exporting industrial companies. Although the risk has increased slightly due to the aggressive US tariff policy at the current margin, at six percent (compared to three percent previously), the fear of exchange rate fluctuations only plays a subordinate role for German exporters.

TOP business risks by economic sector

Share of responses in percent; multiple responses possible, in brackets value of previous survey, all-time high

	Industry	Building	Trade	services
1.	65% (70%) Domestic demand	64% (59%) Lack of skilled workers	68% (68%) Domestic demand	58% (59%) Economic policy conditions
2.	62% (63%) Economic policy conditions	58% (54%) Labour costs	59% (62%) Economic policy conditions	55% (54%) Labour costs
3.	59% (60%) Labour costs	56% (57%) Energy and raw materials	55% (57%) Labour costs	50% (51%) Domestic demand
4.	59% (66%) Energy and raw materials	53% (58%) Economic policy conditions	50% (56%) Energy and raw materials	47% (49%) Lack of skilled workers
5.	47% (45%) Foreign demand	52% (58%) Domestic demand	40% (42%) Lack of skilled workers	44% (49%) Energy and raw materials

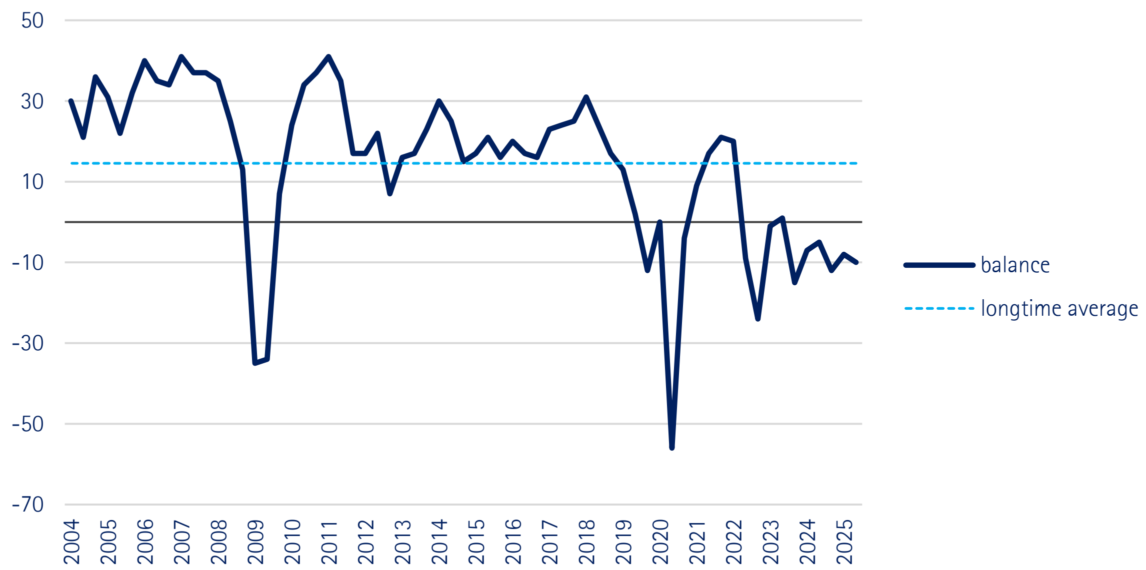
Export expectations of manufacturing companies

German industry is losing ground internationally and is confronted with a difficult and uncertain international situation. The upheaval in the international economic order and previous trade policy rules are hitting export-orientated German industry hard. The US administration's tariff plans in particular are having a negative impact on global trade relations and are putting a damper not only on global growth but also on German export prospects.

For example, 29 percent of companies expect exports to fall over the next twelve months (start of 2025: 28 percent), while only around one in five companies (19 percent, compared to 20 percent previously) expect an increase. Just over half of companies (52 percent) expect foreign business to remain stable. The balance of higher and lower export expectations deteriorated from minus eight points in the previous survey to minus ten points. The current assessment of export business is therefore below the previous year's figure (minus five points) and well below the long-term average of plus 15 points.

Companies' export expectations

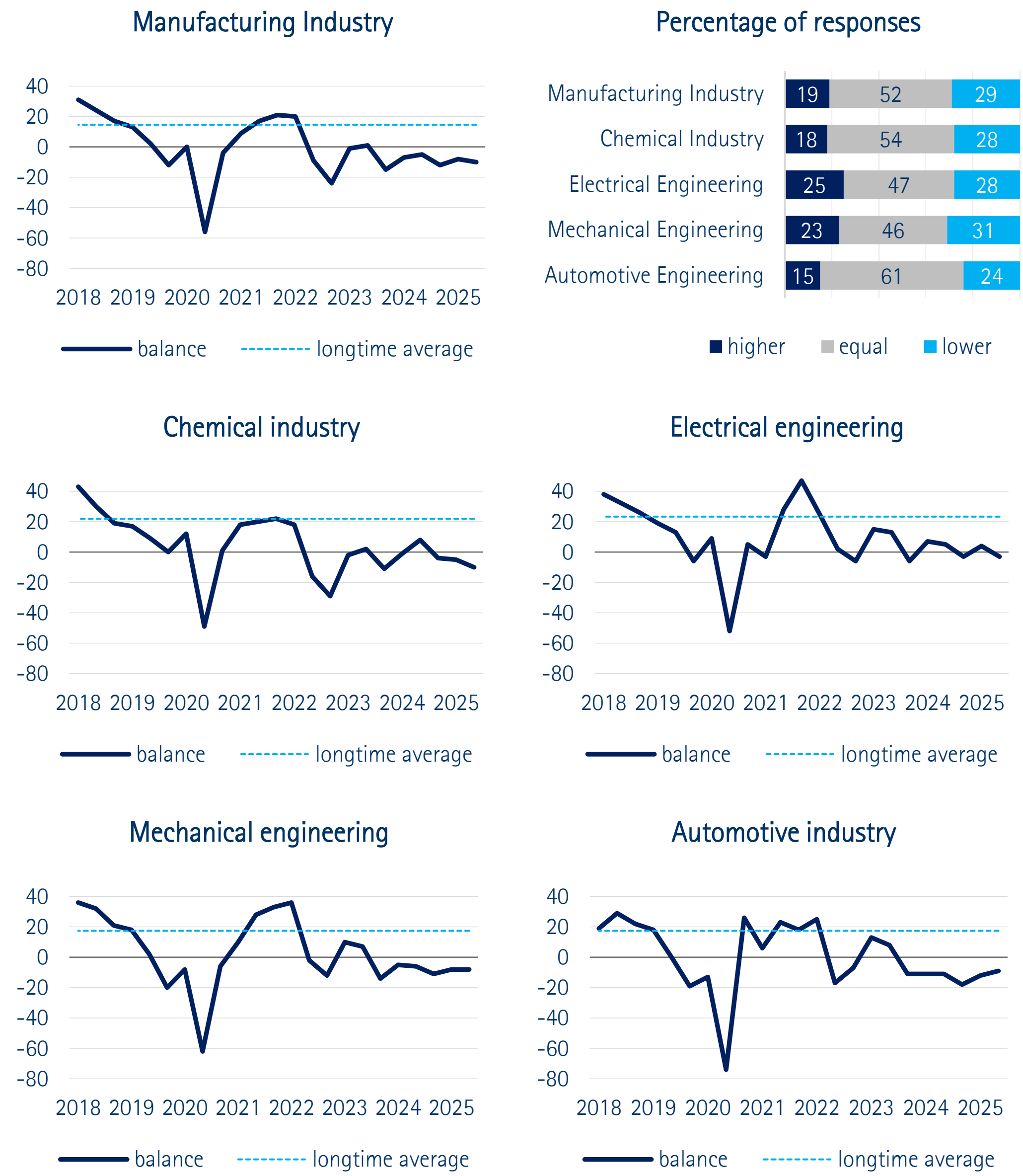
(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)



Compared to the start of the year, export expectations have deteriorated across all size categories. For companies with up to 20 employees, the balance deteriorated again from minus 19 to minus 21 points, while export expectations for companies with 20 to 200 employees fell from minus 13 to minus 14 balance points and thus also remain negative. The expectations of companies with more than 200 employees are also losing ground compared to the start of the year: the balance stands at minus two points after zero points previously. Only large companies with more than 1,000 employees are expecting export growth for the most part, although the outlook is also gloomier here (balance of plus nine after previously 13 points).

Companies' export expectations

(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)



Sluggish global growth is hardly creating any momentum for the German export industry. Companies in Germany are facing massive structural challenges at home and major trade policy uncertainty abroad. In a comparison of the main industrial groups, **manufacturers of intermediate goods** remain more pessimistic about their export expectations. A growth in exports is expected by 16 percent of companies (previously 17 percent). However, 29 percent (previously 30 percent) still expect exports to fall. The balance remains at minus 13 points. A noticeable deterioration in export expectations can be observed in **the chemical industry**. The balance fell from minus five to minus ten points and is well below the long-term average of plus 22 points. Companies in the **rubber and plastics** industry forecast their exports to be slightly worse than in the previous survey. Here too, the balance remains negative at minus 15 points, compared to minus 14 points previously. Companies in the **metal production and processing** industry, on the other hand, are less pessimistic: they have revised their expectations for foreign business significantly upwards compared to the start of the year, although the bottom line remains negative. The balance rose from minus 29 to minus 19 points. In view of the billions announced for investment in defence and security policy, including in other European countries, there is a slightly better outlook for orders in the metal industry.

The export expectations of **capital goods manufacturers** continue to deteriorate compared to the start of the year. 22 percent of companies expect exports to increase (previously 23 percent), while 29 percent anticipate lower exports (28 percent). The export balance of higher and lower expectations deteriorated from minus five to minus seven points. Among **electrical engineering manufacturers** in particular, assessments of foreign business are turning negative: the balance has fallen from plus four points at the start of the year to minus three points at present. Export expectations are therefore well below the long-term average of 24 balance points. Highly specialised **medical technology manufacturers** are also visibly losing ground: the balance has plummeted from 19 to just two points at present. The long-term average is plus 33 points. The two most important export sectors of the German economy, automotive and mechanical engineering, are comparatively stable. Exports to the EU domestic market are picking up somewhat despite, or perhaps because of, the international uncertainty caused by the change in US trade policy and are proving to be a stable target region. The balance for **motor vehicle manufacturers** improved by three points compared to the previous survey to currently minus nine points. This is two points more than a year ago, but significantly less than the sector's long-term average of plus eleven points. Companies in the **mechanical engineering** sector remain pessimistic compared to the previous survey: the balance remains at minus eight points (previous year: minus six points). However, the mechanical engineering sector's export expectations are also well below the long-term average (plus 17 points).

Export expectations for **manufacturers of consumer goods** are collapsing. The global uncertainty is clearly reflected here. Consumer goods manufacturers' expectations slipped on balance from plus two to minus nine points. The **pharmaceutical industry** is still expecting a net increase in exports, albeit significantly less than before. The balance fell from 51 to 31 points and is now back below its long-term average of 33 points. The far-reaching consequences of the US tariffs are particularly evident here - above all due to the high proportion of exports to the United States. Nevertheless, the pharmaceutical industry's export expectations have improved compared to the previous year (previous year: 13 points).

Investment intentions of the companies

Companies remain cautious with regard to their domestic investment plans. While only 24 percent of companies are planning to increase investment, 31 percent say they intend to reduce investment. The resulting balance of minus seven points represents an improvement compared to the start of the year (minus ten points), but remains well below the long-term average (plus three points). Investments are not gaining momentum.

Companies are concerned about domestic and foreign demand and see the business risks of energy and raw material prices as well as labour costs as significant obstacles to investment. At minus 19 and minus 21 points respectively, companies that see both domestic and foreign demand as a business risk once again have a significantly lower investment balance than the average for the economy as a whole (minus seven points). Companies that are concerned about their business due to energy and raw material prices and labour costs have lower investment plans for their domestic location than the economy as a whole, at minus 14 and minus 13 points respectively.

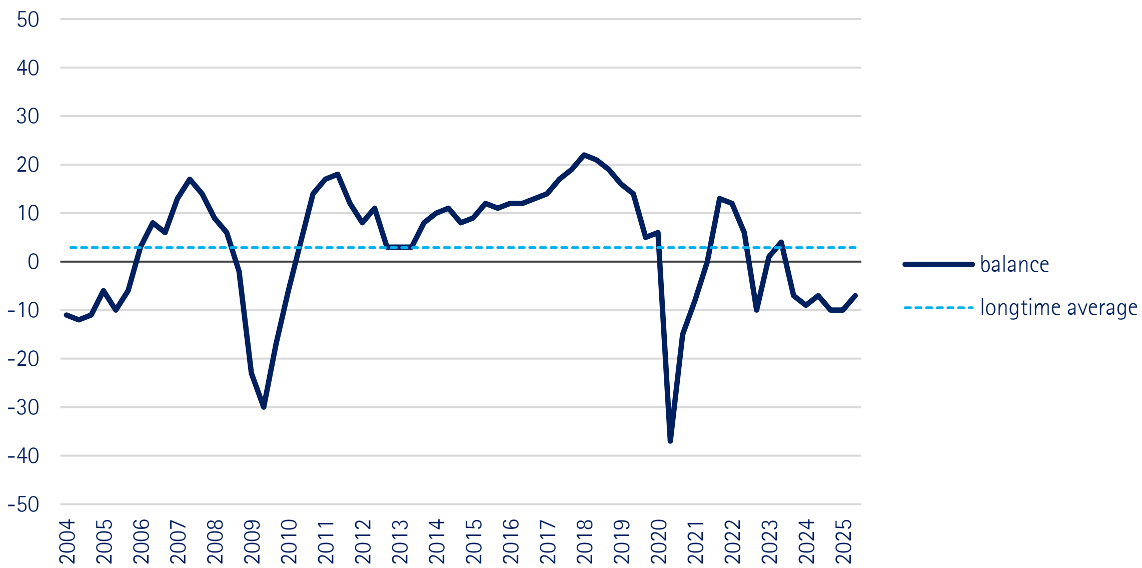
Once again, large companies (more than 1,000 employees) are the most expansive in their investment plans: while a third are planning to increase investments, 22 percent want to invest less. The resulting balance of eleven points is six points higher than in the previous survey. Small and medium-sized companies with up to 200 employees remain noticeably more restrictive. At minus nine balance points, they are more cautious than the average for the economy as a whole.

With the exception of capacity expansions, there are no changes in investment motives compared to the previous survey. The most common reasons remain replacement requirements (67%), rationalisation (33%) and product innovations (28%). However, only 19 percent of companies want to invest for reasons of capacity expansion (previously 20 percent). This is the second-lowest figure in the economic survey; only in autumn 2003 did the motive of expanding capacity play an even smaller role (15 percent). The weak economy, structural challenges at the location and geopolitical uncertainties are causing companies to exercise caution when expanding their capacities.

Investment plans in industry are catching up more strongly than in the economy as a whole (balance improvement of five points; economy as a whole: three points). However, their balance (minus 12 points) remains below the average for the economy as a whole and well below the long-term average (plus five points).

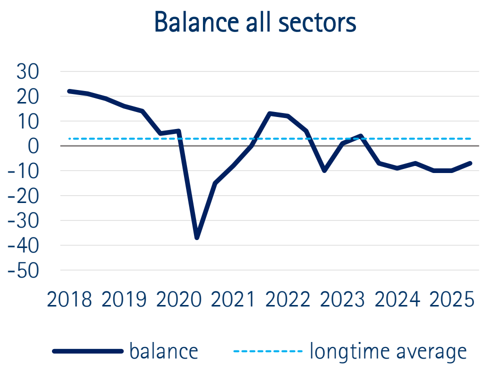
Investment intentions of companies

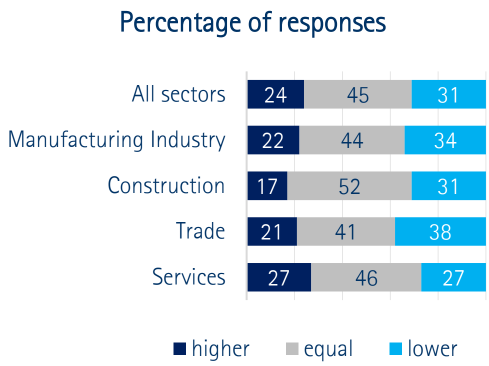
(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)

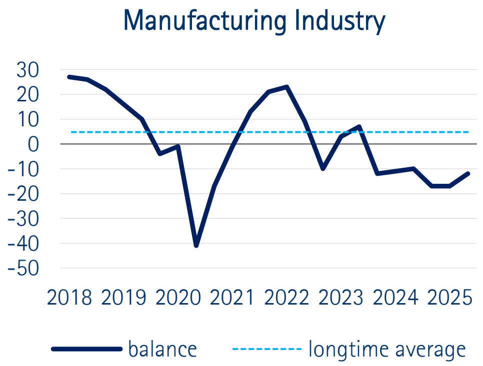


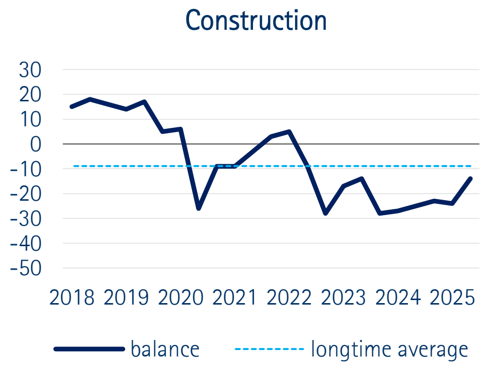
Investment intentions of companies

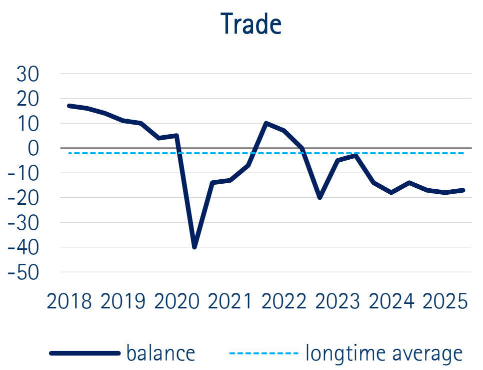
(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)

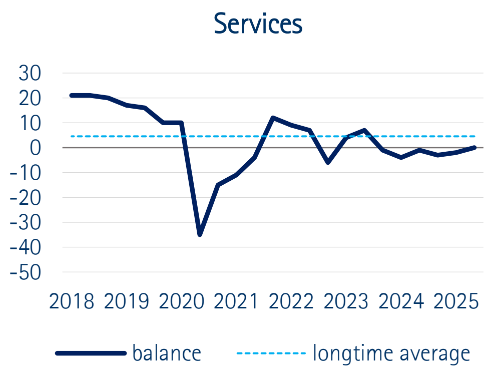












Improvements can be seen in vehicle construction (minus eight after minus 27 points), in electrical engineering (minus eleven after minus 19 points), in the rubber and plastics industry and in mechanical engineering (minus 16 after minus 22 points in each case) and among manufacturers of metal products (minus 24 after minus 31 points).

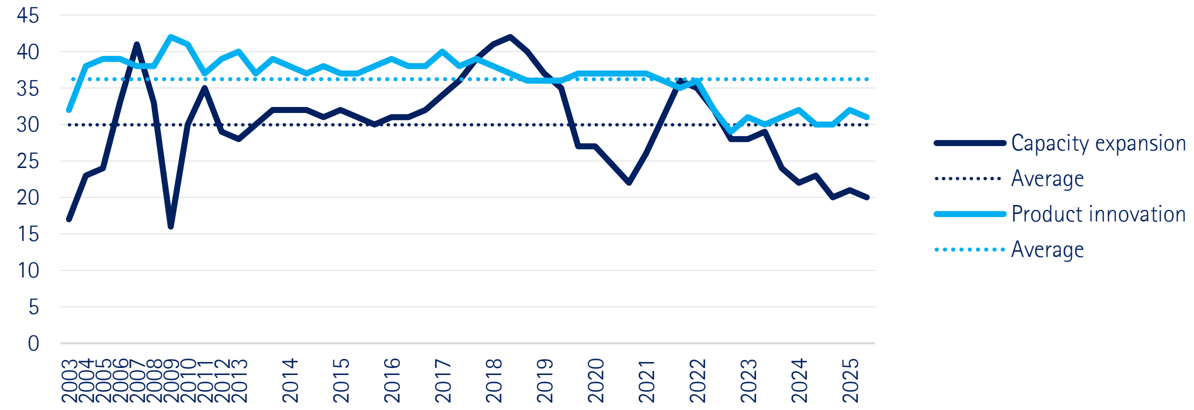
The paper and printing industry (minus ten after minus six points and minus 29 after minus 19 points respectively) and furniture manufacturers (minus 26 after minus 18 points) also cut back on their investment plans. By contrast, the chemical industry (three points after minus three points), the pharmaceutical industry (27 points after 35 points) and other vehicle construction (20 points after eight points) have more expansive investment plans than the economy as a whole. The latter is also likely to reflect increased spending on defence and security policy.

In terms of investment motives, slightly more industrial companies are planning to invest in replacement requirements than at the beginning of the year (68% after 67%), while mentions of other motives have fallen slightly, such as product innovations (31% after 32%) or capacity expansion (20% after 21%). Manufacturers of automotive parts and accessories (47 after 46 percent), electrical equipment suppliers (44 after 37 percent) and high-quality mechanical engineering (42 after 40 percent) are planning more innovation impulses. Medical technology manufacturers (43 after 51 percent), automotive manufacturers (42 after 47 percent) and pharmaceutical companies (38 after 39 percent) also plan to invest in product innovations more frequently than the industry average over the next 12 months, albeit at a lower level than at the start of the year.

Other vehicle construction (40 after 35 percent), the rubber and plastics industry (22 after 20 percent) and sewage and waste disposal (22 after 20 percent) are particularly keen to invest in capacity expansion. At minus three points, minus five points and minus seven points respectively, their business expectations are also slightly better than in industry as a whole (minus eight points).

Investment motive capacity expansion and product innovation in the industry

(Percentage, multiple answers possible, 2003 to 2012 surveyed annually, from 2012 three times a year)



Main motives for investments in Germany

(in percent; multiple answers are possible, average since 2003 in brackets)

	Rationalisation	Product innovation	Capacity expansion	Environmental protection	Replacement requirements
All sectors	33 (33)	28 (28)	19 (20)	21 (21)	67 (67)
Manufacturing Industry	42 (43)	31 (32)	20 (21)	26 (28)	68 (67)
Construction	22 (22)	18 (16)	21 (17)	17 (19)	78 (80)
Trade	33 (34)	23 (24)	17 (18)	15 (16)	67 (64)
Services	29 (29)	29 (29)	19 (19)	20 (19)	66 (65)

In the services sector, investment plans improved slightly (by two points to zero). They are therefore once again significantly better than in the economy as a whole (minus seven points). In each case, 27 percent of companies want to expand or reduce investments. Service providers in research and development (21 after minus one point), education (18 after minus one point) and the security industry (15 after minus four points) have more expansive investment plans. However, temporary employment agencies (minus 41 after minus 18 points) and management consultants (minus 14 after minus six points) have significant contraction plans. Declining demand is putting pressure on investment plans.

Bringing up the rear in terms of investment plans is the retail sector (minus 17 after 18 points). Only 21 percent want to expand their investment budget, while 38 percent will have to make cuts. Although investment plans in the retail trade excluding motor vehicles are slightly better, they cannot maintain the level from the beginning of the year (minus 16 after minus 15 points). By contrast, vehicle dealers and repairers are planning much more expansively (two after minus nine points). Replacement investments are clearly in the foreground (75 after 70 percent, average trade: 67 percent). The significant improvement in business expectations in this sector (minus 18 after minus 28 points, average for dealers: minus 20 points) is also likely to have an impact here.

In a comparison of economic sectors, the construction industry is increasing its investment plans the most (to minus 14 after minus 24 points). 17 percent plan to increase their investment budget, while 31 percent anticipate cuts. Civil engineering (minus two after minus 13 points) and the finishing trade (minus 13 after minus 20 points) in particular are planning to invest more than the average in the construction industry. In this sector, both seasonal business and the expected higher demand in the public sector are having a positive impact.

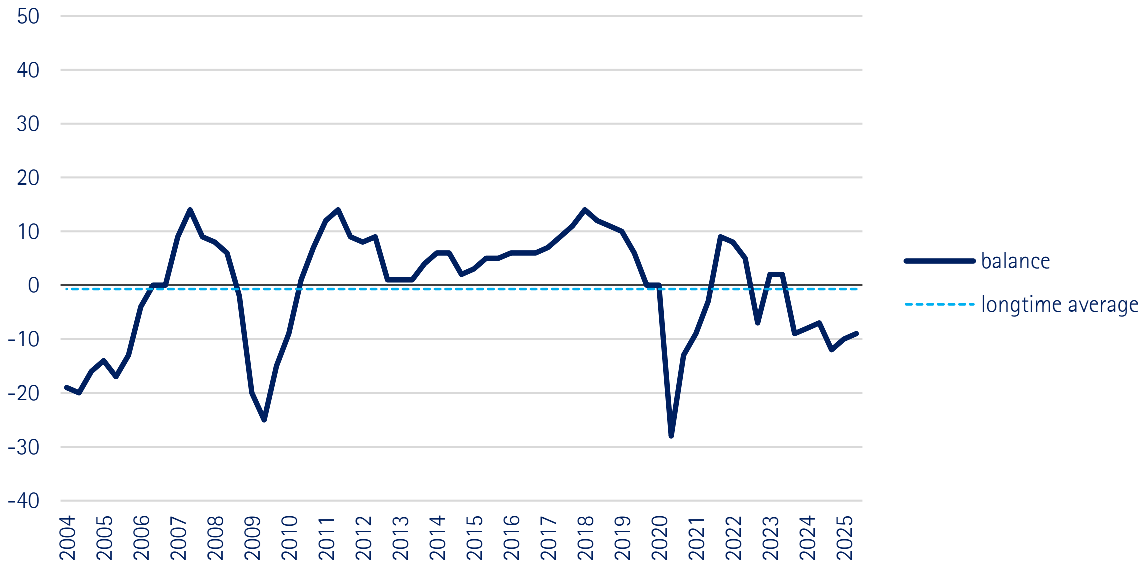
Employment intentions of the companies

Companies' improved business expectations are at best only slightly reflected in their employment plans. 13 percent are planning to increase their workforce, while 22 percent expect it to decrease. The balance is therefore minus nine points. Compared to the previous survey at the beginning of the year, this represents a slight increase of one point; looking ahead to autumn 2024, it is an increase of three points. Compared to early summer 2024, however, the balance is two points lower. The current restraint in companies' hiring intentions is also reflected in the long-term average (minus one point).

In addition to the weak economic development and considerable uncertainties (such as the economic policy framework, geopolitical risks, developments in global trade), high labour costs are often an obstacle to increasing employment. The latter have increasingly become a significant business risk (56 percent) - especially in labour-intensive sectors. Of the companies planning to employ fewer staff, as many as 69% see labour costs as a business risk - significantly more than in the economy as a whole (56%). Not least the discussion surrounding the minimum wage and its possible significant increase on the part of politicians is unsettling many companies and causing them to act cautiously with regard to their personnel plans. Not only the wages directly affected by the minimum wage, but also the pressure on higher wage groups and thus on the wage structure as a whole generated by an increase play a role here.

Employment intentions of companies

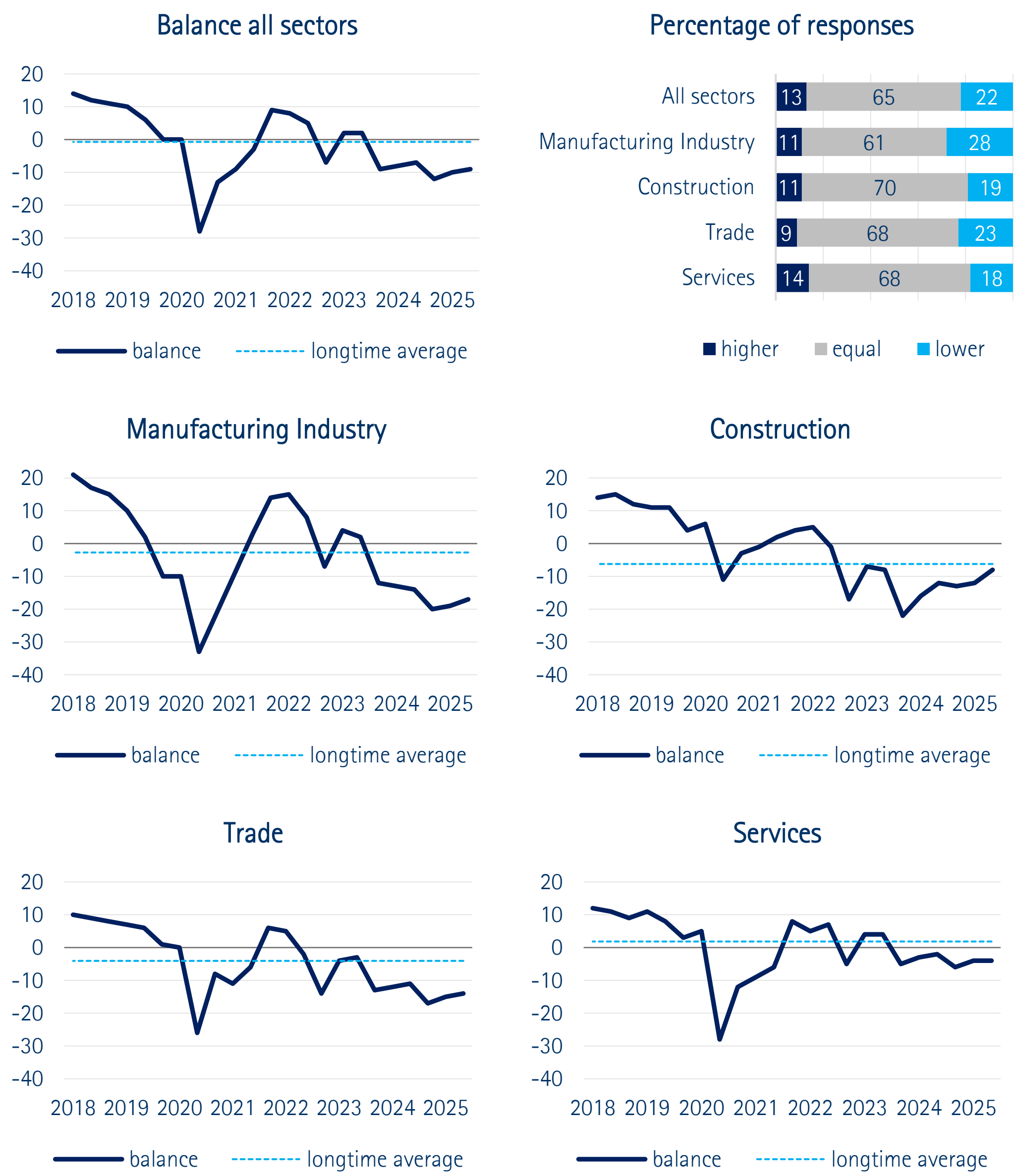
(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)



In **manufacturing industry**, the signs continue to point to a reduction in employment. Despite a slight improvement in the balance by two points to minus 17 points compared to the previous survey, this sector remains at the bottom of the list of economic sectors. Compared to the previous year, the plans have decreased once again (minus 14 points in early summer 2024).

Employment intentions of companies

(balance of higher minus lower responses, long-term average since 2003)



The employment trend remains particularly tense in important core areas of German industry. In mechanical engineering, plans have fallen from minus 18 to minus 20 points, while in machine tool manufacturing only three percent of companies are planning to increase their workforce (54 percent expect to reduce their workforce). Although plans in the automotive industry have brightened slightly, they are still clearly in negative territory (minus 38 after minus 46 points). The economic downturn and structural change, high energy prices and weak foreign trade, which is also characterised by a high level of uncertainty, are making themselves felt. The situation is somewhat better in sectors that are relevant for structural change in terms of decarbonisation and digitalisation. Hiring intentions among manufacturers of electrical engineering, electrical equipment and data processing equipment, electrical and optical products have increased slightly and are at minus ten points in each case (previously minus 14 points in each case).

By contrast, energy suppliers (26 points compared to 27 previously) and the pharmaceutical industry (19 points compared to 15 previously) are planning to increase employment. The former will need additional staff in the future in view of the challenges posed by the energy transition. However, recruitment is likely to prove difficult here, with one in two of these companies seeing the shortage of skilled workers as a business risk, while this figure is "only" 39 percent industry-wide.

In the construction industry, hiring intentions continue to rise slightly. At minus eight points on balance, employment plans are only just below their long-term average (minus six points). Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of four points. Civil engineering is in the best position with minus three points (after minus seven points in the previous survey). The special fund for infrastructure investment planned by the new German government for the coming years is likely to increase demand for civil engineering services and the corresponding personnel. However, a lack of labour and skilled workers is also a bottleneck factor in construction - at 64 percent, the proportion of companies for which the shortage of skilled workers is a significant business risk is significantly higher than the average for the economy as a whole (45 percent).

At minus four balance points, **service providers**' recruitment intentions remain at the level of the previous survey, which represents a decrease of two points compared to the previous year. 14 percent intend to increase their headcount, while 18 percent expect to reduce their workforce. In the wake of advancing digitalisation and the spread of artificial intelligence (AI) in many application areas, IT service providers and programmers, among others, are looking to expand their workforce (balance of ten points each). Recruitment plans are also positive in the R&D sector (balance of 22 points) and in legal and tax consultancy, auditing (balance of 18 points). Healthcare and social service providers are also planning to employ more staff (balance 17 points), which is a result of the increasing demand for care services for the elderly and childcare.

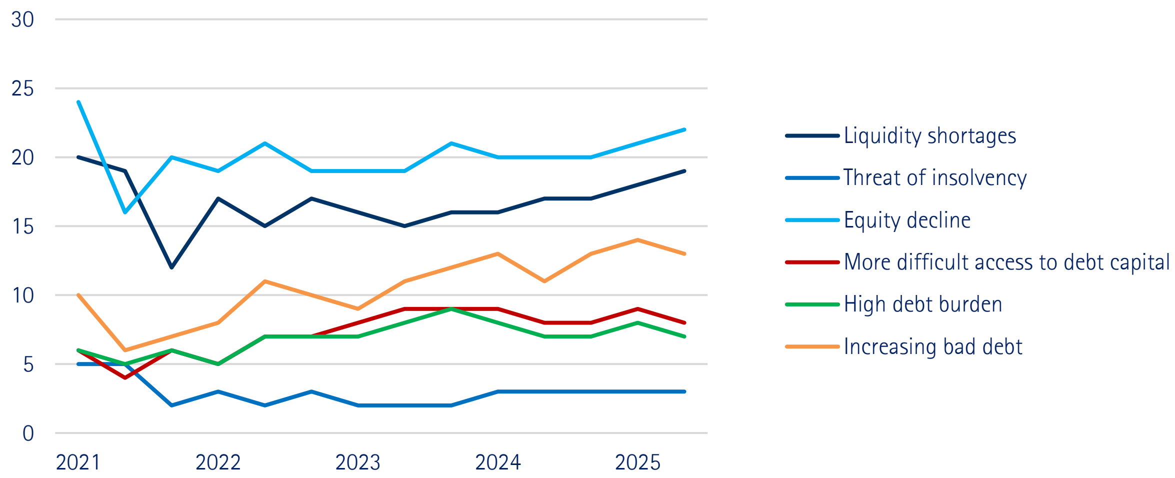
Restrictive personnel planning prevails in the hospitality industry (balance minus 17 points) and in road freight transport (balance minus 21 points), among others. High labour costs, which will become even more important as a result of a potential minimum wage increase, are likely to have a particularly large impact here. In the hospitality industry, 77% (previous survey: 73%) and among road freight transport service providers 66% (previous survey: 65%) see labour costs as a dominant business risk.

In the **retail** sector, employment plans remain in negative territory and virtually unchanged. While nine percent of companies are planning to increase their workforce, 23 percent are expecting a decrease (balance: minus 14 after previously minus 15 points). Consumer restraint is a major challenge in this sector. For 68 percent of retail companies, domestic demand is a significant business risk - this figure is 57 percent for the economy as a whole.

Current financing situation of companies

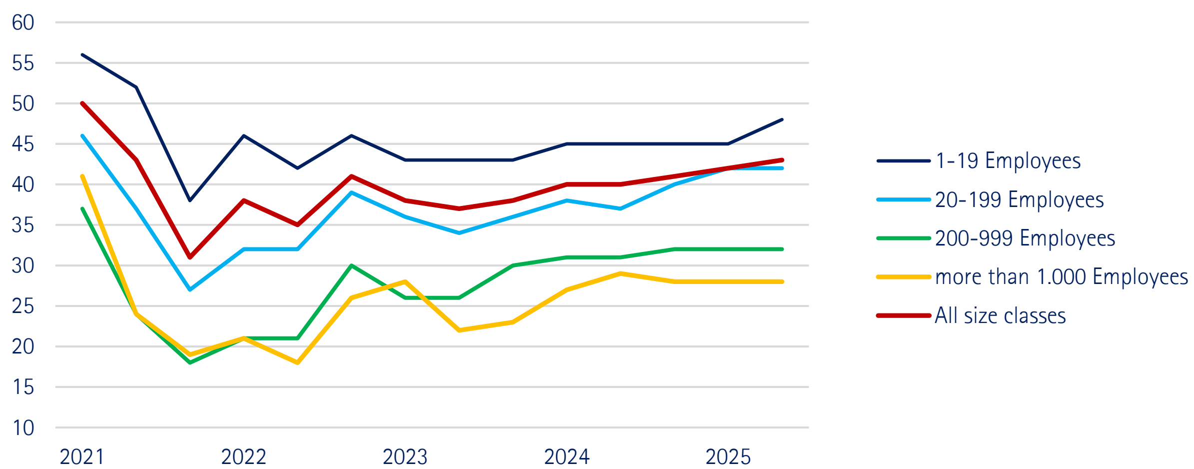
The sluggish economy, which has now been in place for many months, is increasingly gnawing away at the financial situation of companies: 43 percent of companies now rate their financial situation as problematic, one percentage point more than at the start of the year. This is the worst assessment since the end of the coronavirus pandemic and the start of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine. This deterioration extends to all sectors, but is most noticeable in construction with a decline of three percentage points (37 percent compared to 34 percent previously).

The following financial problems are a burden on companies (in percent, multiple answers possible)



The decline in equity is still at the forefront (22 percent compared to 21 percent previously). The proportion of companies reporting liquidity bottlenecks is also very high at 19 percent, up from 18 percent previously. Across the economy, the proportion of companies facing bad debt losses remains virtually unchanged (13 percent compared to 14 percent previously). Falling interest rates have contributed to the fact that the proportion of companies whose balance sheets are already burdened by high levels of debt has fallen slightly from eight to seven percent. Eight percent of companies report more difficult access to bank financing (previously nine percent). The number of companies that feel threatened by insolvency remains unchanged at three percent.

Share of companies with a problematic financial situation by employee size class (in percent)



In terms of company size, smaller companies always have a more critical financial situation than larger ones. While the financial situation of large companies (more than 1,000 employees) has stabilised and 28% of these companies continue to report at least one problem with their financial situation, the situation has deteriorated most significantly among small companies (1-19 employees). In view of the prolonged difficult economic situation and specific, structural disadvantages in access to financing, they are most affected by a poor financial situation. Almost every second company (48 percent compared to 45 percent previously) is critical of its own financing situation. In particular, the decline in equity (26 percent) and liquidity bottlenecks (22 percent) are an acute challenge for small companies.

The critical assessment of the financial situation in industry has remained at a high level. While the financial situation has improved slightly in mechanical engineering (41% after 42%) and noticeably in automotive manufacturing (41% after 51%), companies in the chemical industry and manufacturers of electrical equipment report a deterioration (39% after 36% and 35% after 32%).

Financing conditions in the construction industry are considered to be slightly better than in the industrial sector, although some difficulties are even increasing here too. This is due to civil engineering. Significantly more companies than in the previous survey (29 percent compared to 20 percent previously) report problems. More civil engineering companies than at the beginning of the year report liquidity bottlenecks (twelve after five percent previously) and a decline in equity (eleven after five percent previously). Measures taken by companies such as increased debt financing are leading to increasing burdens due to a high level of debt (ten percent compared to four percent previously). In the retail sector and among service providers, the financing situation has deteriorated in parallel with the deterioration in the business situation (46 percent after 45 percent and 44 percent after 42 percent respectively). Of all sectors, retail companies are facing the most financing problems. Bad debt losses, liquidity problems and a decline in equity remain high. The risk of insolvency is increasing. The same applies to a number of service providers.

The current financial situation of companies is characterised by ...

(Analysis by company size class, figures in percent, multiple answers possible)

	1-19 Employees	20-199 Employees	200-999 Employees	from 1000 employees	all classes
Liquidity bottlenecks	22	18	10	7	19
Impending insolvency	4	3	2	1	3
Decline in equity	26	20	13	7	22
More difficult access to debt capital	8	8	7	9	8
High debt burden	6	8	10	7	7
Increasing bad debt losses	12	14	12	11	13
Our financial situation is unproblematic	52	58	68	72	57
Our financial situation is problematic	48	42	32	28	43

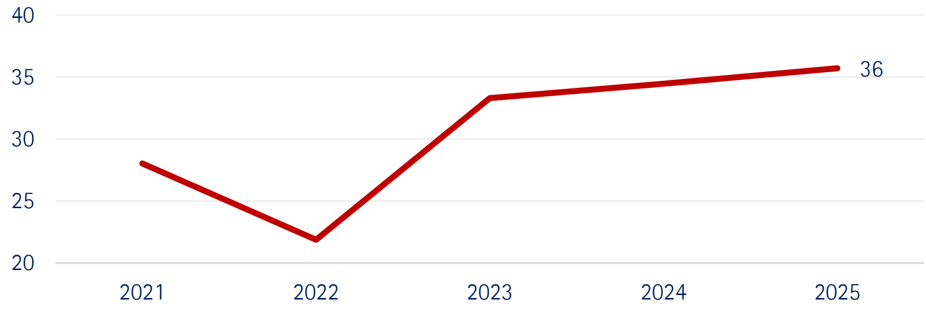
The current financial situation of companies is characterised by ...

(Analysis by sector, figures in percent, multiple answers possible)

	Industry	Building	Trade	Service provider	all industries
Liquidity bottlenecks	18	14	19	20	19
Impending insolvency	3	3	3	4	3
Decline in equity	20	19	23	23	22
More difficult access to debt capital	9	9	8	8	8
High debt burden	8	6	8	7	7
Increasing bad debt losses	13	13	15	12	13
Our financial situation is unproblematic	58	63	54	56	57
Our financial situation is problematic	42	37	46	44	43

Proportion of companies that state that their financing is impaired

(figures in percent)



Difficulties in raising debt capital: challenges remain due to high interest rates, documentation requirements are increasing significantly

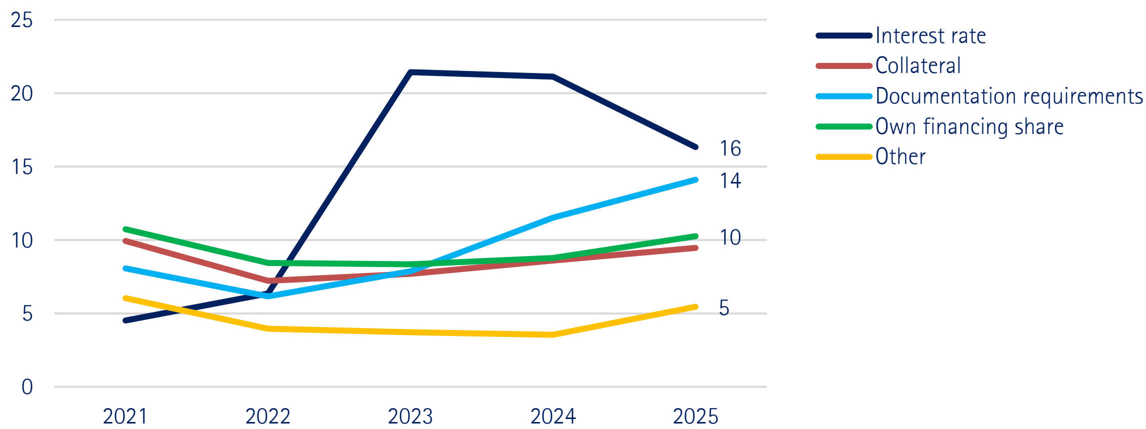
The detailed annual survey conducted by the DIHK in early summer on the challenges of raising debt capital shows that a good third of companies (36 percent) see problems here - more than in the previous year (34 percent), and significantly more than in 2022 (22 percent).

The level of interest rates is seen as problematic by 16 percent of companies. However, in early summer 2024, before the European Central Bank's interest rate cuts, this was still the case for 21 percent of companies. The transport and warehousing sector, with its long-term investments that are increasingly driven by the transformation, reports significantly higher burdens from interest rates than the economy as a whole (16 percent). High interest rates make refinancing existing loans more expensive, and new, credit-financed operating resources and investments cost more. It is to be feared that some investment projects will become unprofitable and thus be cancelled altogether.

The burden on companies due to documentation requirements has increased. One in seven companies feel that their debt financing is affected by increased documentation requirements (14 percent, up from 12 percent previously). In the automotive industry, a sector that has to meet the many and high demands of the transformation towards climate neutrality, more than one in four companies cite documentation requirements as a burden when raising debt capital (26 percent compared to 20 percent previously).

Due to the difficult liquidity and equity situation that has been smouldering for a long time, one in ten companies across the economy is having difficulties raising its own financing. One in eleven companies has problems with collateralisation - which is also the highest figure since the end of the coronavirus crisis.

The following aspects play a role for companies whose financing is currently particularly impaired (in percent, multiple answers possible)



DIHK forecast for economic development in Germany

Utilisation of gross domestic product (GDP) in Germany

Year-on-year change, in percent, price-adjusted, chained

	2023	2024	DIHK forecast 2025
GDP	-0.3	-0.2	**-0.3**
Household final consumption expenditure	-0.4	0.2	**0.5**
Government final consumption expenditure	-0.1	3.2	**2.0**
Gross fixed capital formation	-1.2	-2.7	**0.2**
- Gross fixed capital formation in machinery and equipment	-0.8	-5.4	**-1.0**
- Other fixed assets	4.7	3.9	**2.5**
- Gross fixed capital formation in construction	-3.4	-3.2	**0.0**
Exports (goods and services)	-0.3	-1.8	**-2.5**
Imports (goods and services)	-0.6	-0.7	**1.5**
Employment (change in thousands)	+336	+71	**-50**
Consumer prices	5.9	2.2	**2.1**

Questionnaire Early Summer 2025

How do you assess the current situation of your company?

- Good business situation
- Satisfactory business situation
- Poor business situation

Our current financial situation is essentially characterised by (multiple answers possible):

- Liquidity bottlenecks
- Impending insolvency
- Decline in equity
- More difficult access to debt capital
- High debt burden
- Increasing bad debt losses
- Our financial situation is unproblematic

Is your financing currently particularly affected? If yes, which aspects play a role here? (multiple answers possible)

- Interest rate
- Collateral
- Documentation obligations
- Own financing share
- Other,
  namely ... (free text field)
- No impairment

How do you expect your company to develop over the next 12 months?

- Better business situation
- Consistent business situation
- Poorer business situation

Where do you see the greatest risks in the economic development of your company in the next 12 months? (Multiple answers are possible)

- Domestic demand
- Foreign demand
- Financing
- Labour costs
- Shortage of skilled labour
- Exchange rate
- Energy and raw material prices
- Economic policy framework

How do you expect exports to develop for your company over the next 12 months?

- Higher exports
- Consistent exports
- Lower exports

How do you expect your company's domestic investment expenditure to develop over the next 12 months?

- Higher expenses
- Constant expenses
- Lower expenses

What are the main motives behind your company's planned investments in Germany over the next 12 months? (Multiple answers are possible)

- Rationalisation
- Product innovation
- Capacity expansion
- Environmental protection
- Replacement requirements

How do you expect your company's domestic workforce to develop over the next 12 months?

- Higher number of employees
- Constant number of employees
- Lower number of employees

Methodology

The DIHK results are based on surveys of companies conducted by a total of 79 IHKs. In early summer 2025, the CCIs analysed around **23,000 responses**. You can also access the regional analyses of the CCIs on the Internet at www.dihk.de/konjunktur.

In terms of economic sectors, the responses were divided between industry (26 percent), construction (six percent), trade (21 percent) and service providers (47 percent). The categorisation of economic sectors in the DIHK economic survey is based on the WZ 2008, in line with official statistics.

The responses are broken down by company size as follows: 39 percent companies with up to nine employees, 14 percent companies with ten to 19 employees, 38 percent companies with 20 to 199 employees, six percent companies with 200 to 499 employees, one percent companies with 500 to 999 employees and two percent companies with more than 1,000 employees.

The CCIs organise their sample in such a way that a representative picture of the mood of the local commercial economy is depicted (sample stratified by sector, region and company size). The aggregation at national level is based on a regional and sector-related weighting. The answers to the regular business survey questions (see questionnaire) from business premises with more than 500 employees are weighted with a factor of 2 and the answers from business premises with more than 1,000 employees are weighted with a factor of 3. The business risks are not weighted according to size classes. In the case of additional questions, the size class weighting is omitted if the unweighted proportion of companies is more meaningful.

When asked about business risks, companies can write a free text response to the answer option "Economic policy conditions". Around 6,000 free text responses were received in the current survey. These were categorised as clearly as possible based on the terms mentioned and topics covered. The most frequent answers are shown as a word cloud. The larger a term is, the higher the number of free text responses on this topic.

The CCI economic climate indicator is calculated as the geometric mean of the situation and expectations balances. The indicator therefore has the following mathematical form:

$$\sqrt{(L_1 - L_3 + 100) * (E_1 - E_3 + 100)}$$

where L_1 represents the proportion of companies with a good assessment of the situation, L_3 the proportion of companies with a poor assessment of the situation, E_1 the proportion of companies with better business expectations and E_3 the proportion of companies with poorer expectations.

The survey took **place from 24 March 2025 to 30 April 2025**.