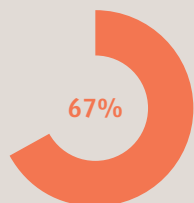


A Call for Smarter Integration: What Family Businesses Expect from the EU



of business leaders from family businesses headquartered in Italy agree that “family businesses are under-recognised as drivers of EU competitiveness”.

This rises to 75% of business leaders from non-family businesses headquartered in Italy.

Top threats to competitiveness

Family businesses headquartered in Italy are most concerned about rising/volatile energy prices, while geopolitical risks top the list of threats for non-family businesses. Both business types rank skilled worker shortages as well as tariffs and trade barriers as other top concerns.

	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	Rising/volatile energy prices	Geopolitical risks (e.g. war, sanctions, supply chain shocks)
#2	Shortage of skilled workers	Shortage of skilled workers
#3	Tariffs and trade barriers	Tariffs and trade barriers
#4	Geopolitical risks (e.g. war, sanctions, supply chain shocks)	Cybersecurity threats (e.g. data breaches, ransomware, cyberattacks)
#5	Cybersecurity threats (e.g. data breaches, ransomware, cyberattacks)	Rising/volatile energy prices

Over half (56%) of family business leaders say they have postponed key investments due to market and policy instability, though this rate is not as high as for non-family businesses (68%), demonstrating resilience within family businesses against external pressures.

Summary of key findings amongst Italian family business leaders

1. Two-thirds of family business leaders headquartered in Italy (67%) feel their role in driving EU competitiveness is overlooked. Non-family businesses agree.
2. For family businesses, volatile energy costs top the list of concerns, while non-family businesses focus more on geopolitical instability. Labour shortages and trade-related disruptions cut across both groups.
3. Reducing complexity in regulatory processes is the change family businesses want most, while non-family firms call for more streamlined digital tools.
4. When looking to expand or invest, business leaders in Italy continue to prioritise EU markets. Interest also extends to key global players like the USA.
5. Businesses show growing interest in engaging with EU support, particularly for trade, innovation, and Single Market access. Frameworks must be designed to support growing demand and uptake.

What will make businesses more competitive?

Reducing administrative burdens tops the list of priorities for family businesses, while the most desired change among non-family businesses is a single digital portal to handle regulatory compliance admin. Across all businesses, fast, transparent, simple frameworks would all help boost competition.

Percentage of business leaders who say the following will make their company more competitive		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
Reducing administrative burdens on our company	69%	68%
Creating faster or more transparent approval processes for permits, subsidies, or certifications	66%	63%
Simplifying sustainability reporting frameworks to make them more practical for the company I work for	63%	67%
Introducing a single digital portal to handle regulatory submissions, or business administration	63%	71%
Offering tailored advisory services to help navigate compliance requirements	62%	56%
Expanding access to public procurement opportunities	60%	67%
Release new regulation only with a trial phase/sunset clause	52%	56%
Adjusting regulatory thresholds to reflect the characteristics of the company I work for	49%	46%

Total sample size Italy n=601; family business leaders n=475; non-family business leaders n=126.

The data are taken from the study “**A Call for Smarter Integration: What Family Businesses Expect from the EU**” prepared by Edelman Data & Intelligence (DXI) for the Foundation for Family Businesses.

The non-profit Foundation for Family Businesses is the most important sponsor of academic research around family businesses. It is a primary point of contact for politicians and the media in matters related to economic policy, legislation and taxation.

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To the study:



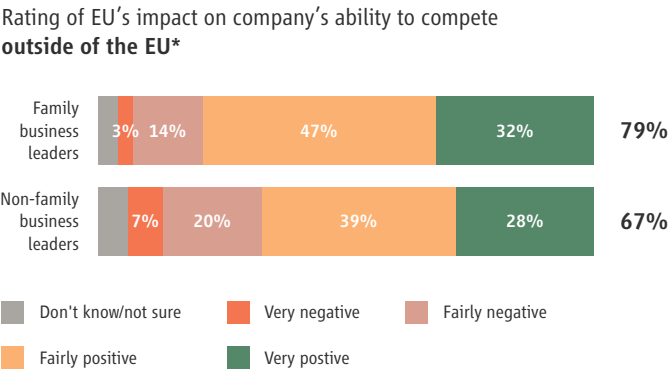
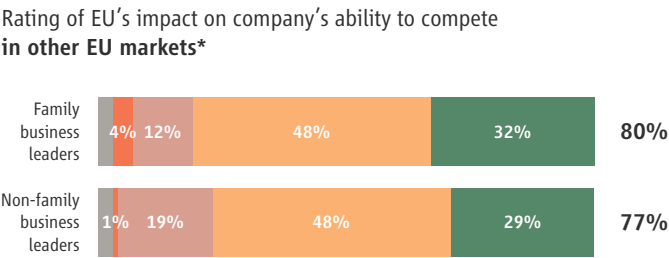
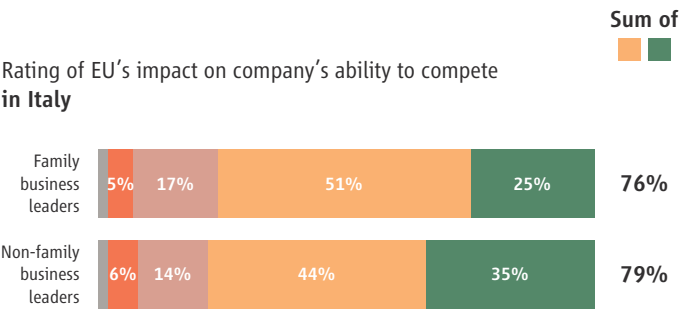
Usage of EU policies

Across both types of businesses headquartered in Italy, there is moderate current usage of EU frameworks with a clear trend that points to future uptake. In particular, a significant proportion of family businesses say they plan to access the Single Market and utilise trade agreements with non-EU countries. This highlights the importance of developing a more integrated Single Market and negotiating additional trade agreements.

	Percentage of business leaders who currently use this		Percentage of business leaders who do not currently use this but plan to use this	
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
EU innovation funding	25%	26%	33%	31%
Support for compliance with EU sustainability or reporting standards	24%	29%	35%	30%
National or regional government support linked to EU funding	24%	22%	30%	31%
Business advisory services or training funded by EU or national programs	23%	24%	33%	37%
EU-funded support or grant schemes	23%	21%	35%	34%
Participation in EU-supported clusters of business networks	21%	18%	34%	37%
Access to the EU Single Market	20%	30%	42%	33%
Trade agreements between the EU and non-EU countries	20%	29%	37%	36%

Impact of EU policies

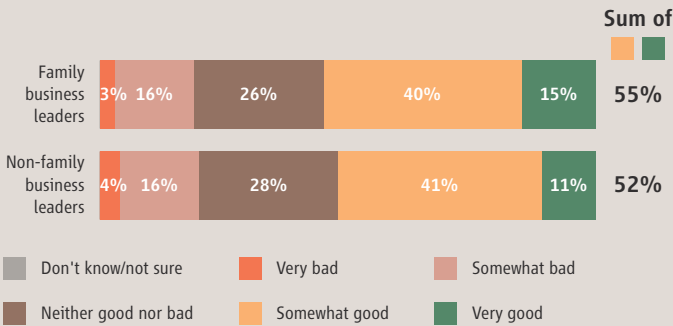
Across both family and non-family businesses headquartered in Italy, sentiment towards the EU’s impact on competitiveness is positive. This applies to competition in their home market, within other EU markets, and outside of the EU.



*Sample is based on businesses that operate internationally only. See “Demographic Supplement” for a note on the base size.

Single Market loyalty

Just over half of family businesses headquartered in Italy feel their home market is a good place to invest. Non-family businesses reflect this sentiment.



Outside of Italy, EU countries are the top choice for investment over the next 12 months and 5 years. Other large economies like the USA and China are also attractive options.

Next 12 months		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	NET*: EU countries (51%)	NET*: EU countries (43%)
#2	USA (7%)	USA (13%)
#3	Switzerland (6%)	UK (6%)
#4	China (5%)	China (5%)
#5	UK (4%)	India (5%)
Next 5 years		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	NET*: EU countries (47%)	NET*: EU countries (33%)
#2	USA (9%)	USA (15%)
#3	Switzerland (6%)	China (6%)
#4	China (6%)	India (6%)
#5	UK (4%)	Switzerland (5%)

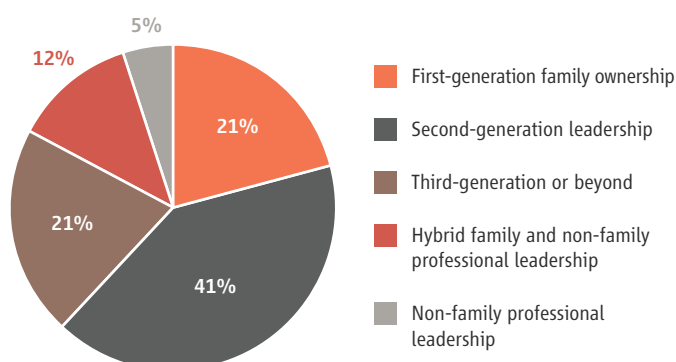
*EU countries NET= total percentage who choose one of the 27 EU markets, with the exception of the market they are headquartered in.

Demographic Supplement – Profile of Italian Family Businesses

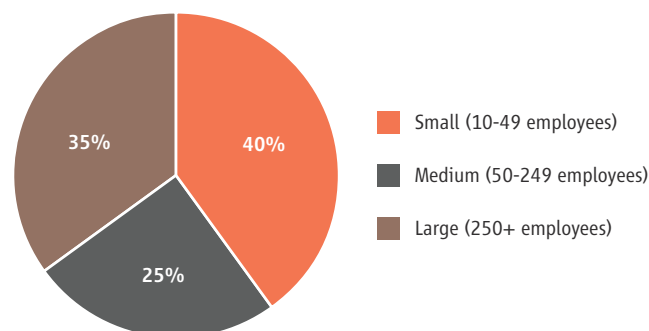
Family involvement

	Percentage of Italian family businesses which confirmed family involvement in ...
Family members of current/previous CEO/owner currently active in executive management	76%
The company has a supervisory or advisory board	77%
Family members of the current or previous CEO/owner are active on the supervisory or advisory board	72%
There is a designated successor for executive management from the current or previous CEO/owners family	70%
There is a designated successor for the supervisory or advisory board from the current or previous CEO/owners family	64%

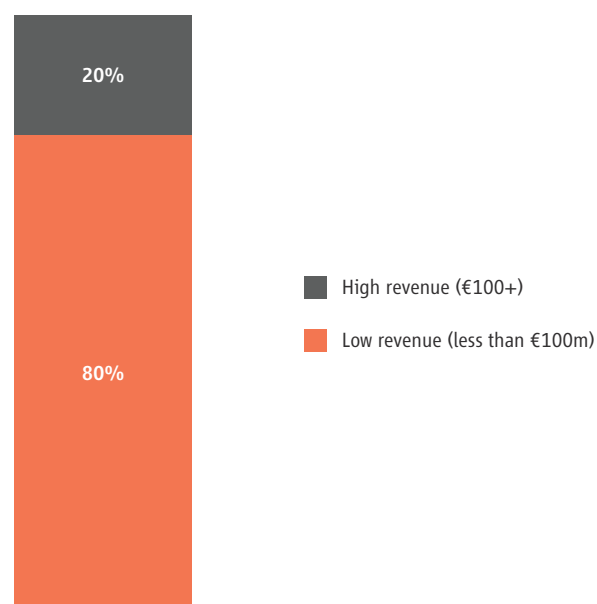
Generational structure



Business size



Revenue in most recent financial year (annual)



Sectors of industry

	Percentage of Italian family businesses in this survey
Information and Communication Technology	16%
Manufacturing	13%
Business and Professional Services	12%
Trade & Hospitality	10%
Retail	10%
Transport & Logistics	9%
Construction	8%
Health	7%
Education	6%
Energy & Utilities	5%
Other services	4%

Bases for all data included in this fact file are as follows, unless otherwise stated. Italian base sizes: Total Italian Business Leaders: n=601, family businesses headquartered in Italy: n=475, non-family businesses headquartered in Italy: n=126.

*Total Italian business leaders whose business operates internationally: Total: n=279, family businesses headquartered in Italy who operate internationally: n=210, non-family businesses headquartered in Italy who operate internationally: n=69.