

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



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

This rises to 74% of business leaders from non-family businesses headquartered in Spain.

Top threats to competitiveness

Family businesses headquartered in Spain point to the shortage of skilled workers as the top threat to their competitiveness. Tariff and trade related barriers top the list for non-family businesses headquartered in this market.

	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	Shortage of skilled workers	Tariffs and trade barriers
#2	Rising/volatile energy prices	Shortage of skilled workers
#3	Competition from outside the EU	Limited access to financing or investment capital
#4	Cost of administrative and compliance burdens	Increasing volume of regulatory and compliance burdens
#5	Geopolitical risks (e.g. war, sanctions, supply chain shocks)	Rising/volatile energy prices

Family businesses headquartered in Spain appear more resilient to external pressures. 66% say economic and geopolitical instability is making it harder to stay competitive, compared to 78% of non-family firms – a significant difference of 12%pts.

Summary of key findings amongst Spanish family business leaders

1. More than two thirds of family businesses headquartered in Spain (68%) agree that they are under-recognised for their contribution to the EU’s competitiveness.
2. Skilled labour shortages top the list of threats to competitiveness for family businesses headquartered in Spain, while non-family firms point to tariff and trade barriers.
3. The majority of businesses headquartered in Spain are loyal to their home market and neighbouring EU markets, showing a strong interest in investing in these markets in the future.
4. Future intent to engage with the Single Market, trade agreements and EU funding is strong. A more integrated Single Market, strengthened access to funding, and negotiated trade agreements are key priorities.
5. Both business types feel held back by EU bureaucracy, calling for a reduction in administrative burden, and reforms to make processes faster and more streamlined.

What will make businesses more competitive?

Making frameworks easier, simpler and faster to use is a priority reform for family businesses headquartered in Spain. For non-family businesses, reducing administrative burden is most imperative for improving competitiveness.

Percentage of business leaders who say the following will make their company more competitive		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
Creating faster or more transparent approval processes for permits, subsidies or certifications	70%	71%
Simplifying sustainability reporting frameworks to make them more practical for the company I work for	69%	63%
Expanding access to public procurement opportunities	68%	62%
Offering tailored advisory services to help navigate compliance requirements	67%	72%
Reducing administrative burdens on our company	67%	80%
Introducing a single digital portal to handle regulatory submissions, or business administration	67%	78%
Release new regulation only with a trial phase/sunset clause	59%	51%
Adjusting regulatory thresholds to reflect the characteristics of the company I work for	58%	59%

Total sample size Spain n=600; family business leaders n=510; non-family business leaders n=90.

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.

To the study:



Usage of EU policies

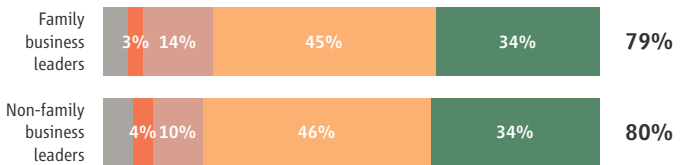
Family businesses headquartered in Spain show strong intent to engage further with EU frameworks/initiatives in areas like innovation funding, access to the Single Market, and EU grant schemes. While current usage remains modest, future engagement is set to rise. This growth potential underscores the importance of delivering less complex, effective frameworks that make participation impactful.

	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
Support for compliance with EU sustainability or reporting standards	30%	31%	27%	31%
EU-funded support or grant schemes	28%	24%	26%	33%
National or regional government support linked to EU funding	27%	20%	24%	22%
Access to the EU Single Market	26%	30%	35%	34%
Trade agreements between the EU and non-EU countries	24%	36%	33%	28%
Business advisory services or training funded by EU or national programs	23%	20%	32%	27%
EU innovation funding	22%	23%	30%	32%
Participation in EU-supported clusters of business networks	21%	21%	26%	37%

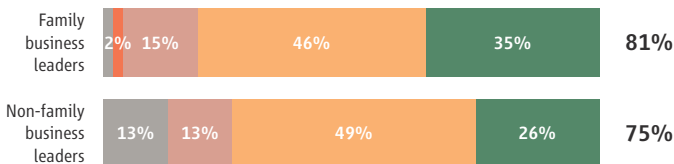
Impact of EU policies

Generally, both family and non-family businesses headquartered in Spain view the EU as a positive driver of their competitiveness both in their home market and abroad. Family businesses are particularly likely to see the EU as a positive influence on their ability to compete beyond the EU.

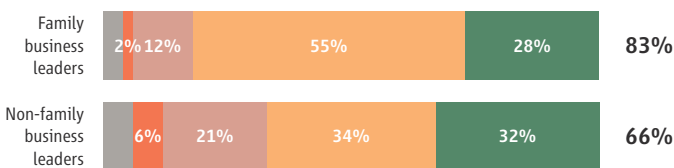
Rating of EU's impact on company's ability to compete in Spain



Rating of EU's impact on company's ability to compete in other EU markets*



Rating of EU's impact on company's ability to compete outside of the EU*

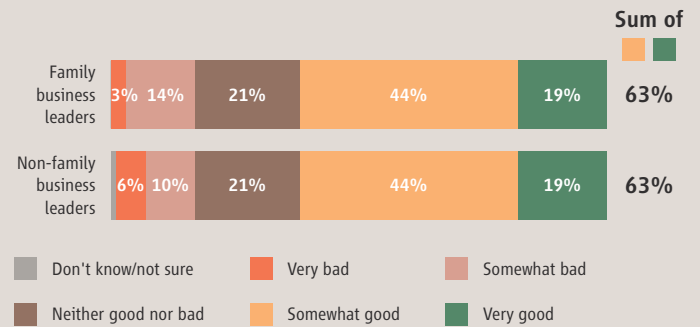


Legend: Don't know/not sure (grey), Very negative (red), Fairly negative (brown), Fairly positive (orange), Very positive (green).

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

Single Market loyalty

Both types of businesses view Spain, the market where they are headquartered, as a good investment opportunity.



Outside of Spain, business leaders show a strong investment focus on nearby EU markets, citing them as their top choice for future investment both in the next 12 months and 5 years. Other large economies including the USA, China and the UK are also attractive.

Next 12 months		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	NET*: EU countries (47%)	NET*: EU countries (53%)
#2	China (8%)	USA (8%)
#3	USA (7%)	China (7%)
#4	Japan (3%)	UK (7%)
#5	UK (2%)	Switzerland (4%)
Next 5 years		
	Family business leaders	Non-family business leaders
#1	NET*: EU countries (43%)	NET*: EU countries (52%)
#2	USA (7%)	USA (11%)
#3	China (7%)	China (7%)
#4	UAE (4%)	India (3%)
#5	UK (4%)	Switzerland (3%)

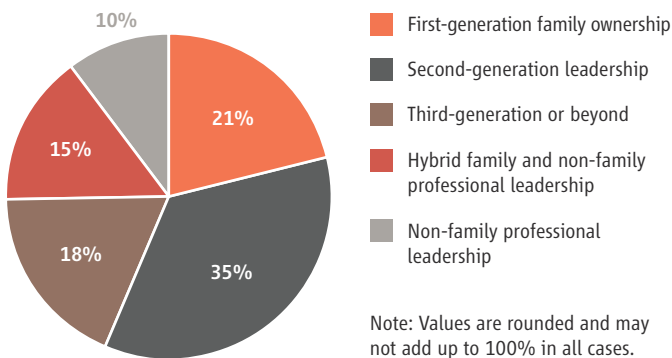
*EU countries NET= total percentage who choose one of the 27 EU markets, with the exception of the market they are headquartered in.

Demographic Supplement – Profile of Spanish Family Businesses

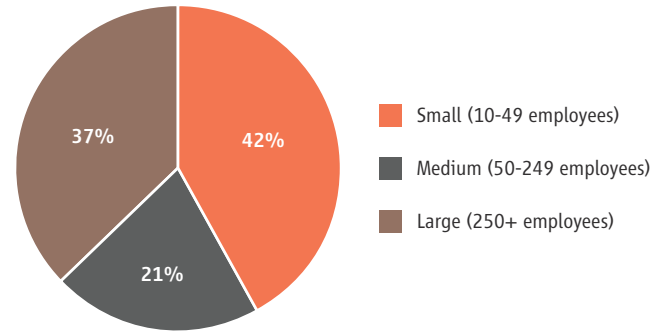
Family involvement

	Percentage of Spanish family businesses which confirmed family involvement in ...
Family members of current/previous CEO/owner currently active in executive management	70%
The company has a supervisory or advisory board	80%
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	65%
There is a designated successor for the supervisory or advisory board from the current or previous CEO/owners family	67%

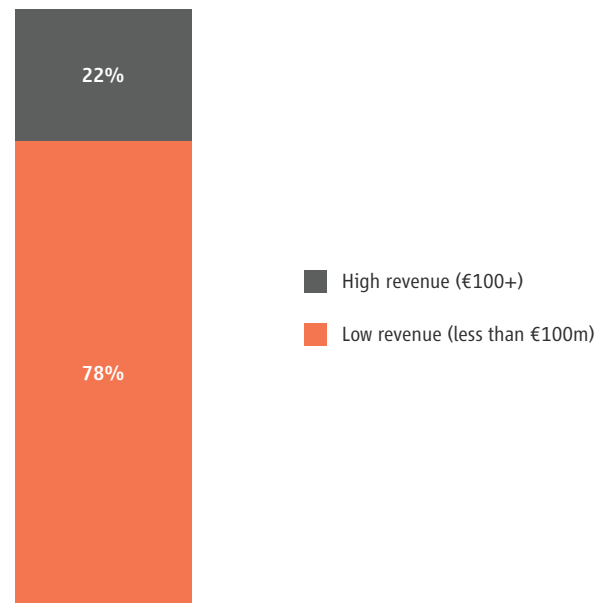
Generational structure



Business size



Revenue in most recent financial year (annual)



Sectors of industry

Sector	Percentage of Spanish family businesses in this survey
Business and Professional Services	15%
Transport and Logistics	12%
Information and Communication Technology	12%
Construction	12%
Manufacturing	11%
Trade and Hospitality	10%
Education	8%
Retail	8%
Energy and Utilities	5%
Health	5%
Other services	2%

Bases for all data included in this fact file are as follows, unless otherwise stated. Spanish base sizes: Total Spanish business leaders: n=600, family businesses headquartered in Spain: n=510, non-family businesses headquartered in Spain: n=90.

*Total Spanish business leaders whose business operates internationally: n=300, family businesses headquartered in Spain: n=253, non-family businesses headquartered in Spain: n=47.