Foundation for
Family Businesses

# Adjust the compass towards competitiveness

EU Family Business Survey 2026

**The companies surveyed most often agreed with the following statements:**

Regulatory burden limits investment in critical areas
**83%**

Compliance costs exceed 7% of annual revenue
**26%**

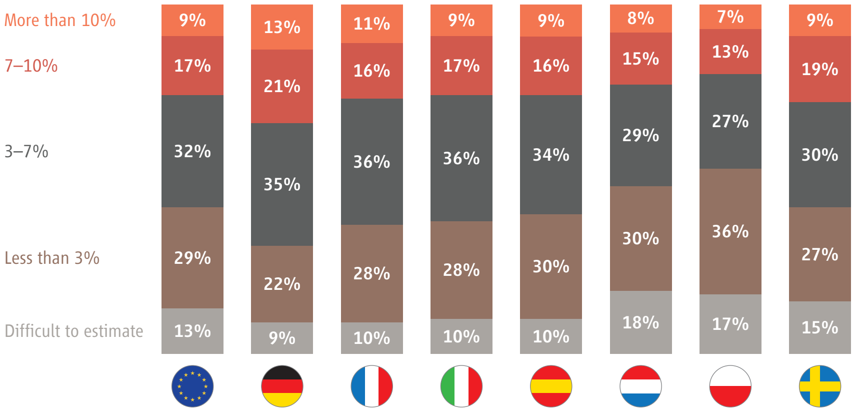
Digital transformation and IT investment are the most severely constrained
**40%**

## Why this is a European problem

1. **A consistent pattern:** this finding holds across national borders, market sizes and business models – it is not an isolated case.
2. **Regulation is misdirecting investment:** it is crowding out spending on digitalisation and innovation.
3. **Announcement vs. experience:** Companies have so far seen little tangible relief from the EU's simplification agenda, despite promises such as the "one-in, one-out" rule.
4. **Building trust:** ongoing reform initiatives – the Digital Omnibus and the CSRD reform – will determine whether trust can be restored.

## Regulatory burden accounts for a substantial share of costs

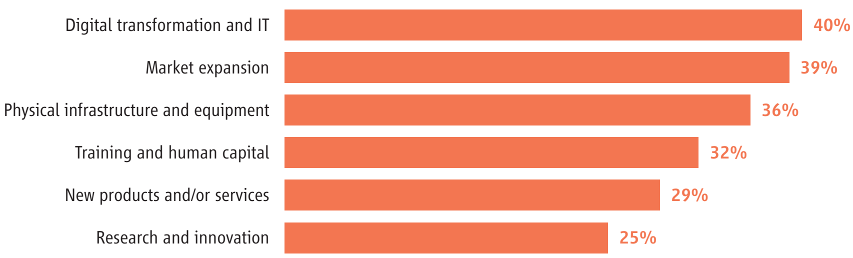
**Twenty-six per cent of companies report compliance costs above 7% of annual revenue. In Germany and France, however, more than one company in ten reports spending over 10% of revenue on compliance costs:**




Source: EU Family Business Survey 2026, N = 2,101.

## Regulatory burden is holding back investment

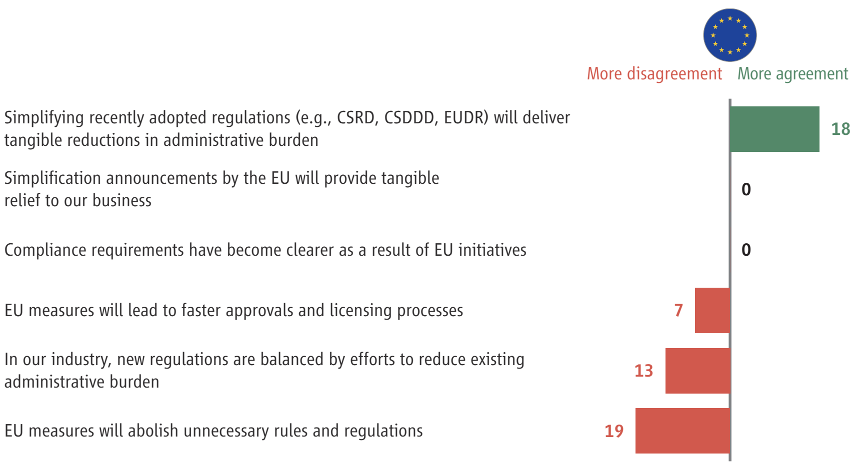
**The following key business areas are particularly affected:**




Source: EU Family Business Survey 2026, N = 1,745.

## Regulatory burden as a competitive disadvantage

Respondents are notably sceptical: **on average, 19 percentage points more companies disagree** than agree with the statement that "EU measures will abolish unnecessary rules". This doubt is especially pronounced among companies in Germany, Poland, France and Sweden.




Source: EU Family Business Survey 2026, N = 2,101.

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This information is drawn from the study **"Adjust the compass towards competitiveness – EU Family Business Survey 2026"**, produced by Edelman Intelligence on behalf of the Foundation for Family Businesses.

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The Foundation for Family Businesses is the leading research funder on family businesses in Germany and Europe. It advises policymakers and the media on economic policy, legal and tax issues. Founded in 2002 and based in Munich, the foundation is now supported by more than 600 companies drawn from among Europe's larger family businesses.

www.familienunternehmen.de/en | info@familienunternehmen.de