

# Only four EU countries lead the US in digitalisation – EIB launches new report on digitalisation in the EU and US

*Source: Firm level data collected by the EIB Investment Survey in 2019. The EIB Digitalisation Index consists of five components: digital intensity, digital infrastructure, investment in software and data, investments in organisational and business process improvements, and strategic monitoring system.*

## **Digital firms perform better**

The report also finds evidence of better and more dynamic performance by digital businesses. Digital firms tend to have higher productivity than non-digital firms, have better management practices, are more innovative, grow faster and create higher paying jobs – also making recovery after a global crisis easier.

Size also matters for digitalisation: large firms tend to digitalise faster in both the EU and the US. This size effect is particularly pronounced among manufacturing firms. Only 30% of EU firms with fewer than ten employees adopted digital technologies, whereas this share increases to 79% for firms with more than 250 employees. . A major barrier that is specific to Europe is an unfavourable firm-size distribution. Many small, especially older, firms in the EU consider labour market regulations, business regulations and the lack of external finance to be major obstacles to investment, which may further exacerbate the delay in digital technology adoption.

Read the report and the country-level analysis:

<https://www.eib.org/en/publications/who-is-prepared-for-the-new-digital-age>

or

Read the summary online:

<https://www.eib.org/en/about/economic-research/surveys-data/eibis-digitalisation-report>

For further information and interview requests, journalists are invited to contact EIB Communications Officer Jan Gerrit Wnendt (+352 691 284 340), [j.wnendt@eib.org](mailto:j.wnendt@eib.org).

## **Background information**

### **About the Economics Department of the EIB**

The EIB Economics Department provides economic research and studies, as well as unique analysis of investment activities in the EU and beyond, and supports the Bank in its operations and in the definition of its positioning, strategy and policy. Chief Economist Debora Revoltella heads the Department, a team of 40 economists.

### **About the EIB Investment Survey (EIBIS)**

The EIB Group Survey on Investment and Investment Finance is a unique, annual survey of some 13,500 firms. It comprises firms in all EU Member States, as well as a sample of US firms which serves as a benchmark. It collects data on firm characteristics and performance, past investment activities and future plans, sources of finance, financing issues and other challenges that businesses face. Using a stratified sampling methodology, EIBIS is representative across all Member States of the EU and for the US, as well as for firm size classes (micro to large) and four main sectors. It is designed to build a panel of observations to support time series analysis, observations that can also be linked to firm balance sheet and profit and loss data. EIBIS has been developed and is managed by the Economics Department of the EIB, with support for development and implementation by Ipsos MORI.

For more information see: <http://www.eib.org/eibis>.

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**[Article – Covid-19: emergency measures to help EU farmers and fishermen](#)**



In order to avoid disruption to food supplies, the EU has taken urgent measures to support food producers.

### **Main problems faced by food producers**

While delays to cross border flows of agriculture goods were solved by the introduction of so-called [green lanes](#), which allow the circulation of vehicles transporting critical goods, the aquaculture, agriculture and fish sectors still face serious difficulties.

Food producers face labour shortages due to the suspension of the free movement of seasonal workers, on who they rely heavily. The European Commission has said they can be considered as critical workers, but understandably, many don't wish to leave home. Lower production could in turn have an impact on prices. In addition, the agriculture sector has lost major clients with the closure of hotels and restaurants.

### **Support for fishermen and aquaculture**

During the plenary session on 17 April, MEPs approved financial assistance for [hard-hit fishing communities and aquaculture farmers](#). Fisheries are facing logistical difficulties in ports, increased freight prices for shipping fish products, trade restrictions with non-EU countries, a collapse in prices, loss of markets, concerns over crew safety and limited possibilities for crew rotation due to quarantine.

A number of emergency measures will help the sectors, including increased possibilities for state aid and the introduction of support measures through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which will be made more flexible.

EU countries will be able to provide [support](#) to:

- Fishermen for the temporary cessation of fishing activities
- Aquaculture farmers for the temporary suspension or reduction of production
- Producer organisations for the temporary storage of fishery and aquaculture products

### **How is the EU helping farmers?**

On 15 April Parliament's agriculture committee welcomed the Commission's [plans to help the agri-food sector](#), but called for more targeted action, including market measures such as private storage. MEPs also called for the activation of the crisis reserve to help struggling agricultural sectors and said EU farm policy will need adequate long-term budget support in the post-Covid period.

Among the measures are the reallocation of unused agriculture funds to fight the effects of the crisis in rural areas. A more flexible and simplified European agriculture fund for rural development will allow for loans or guarantees at favourable conditions such as very low interest rates or favourable payment schedules to cover operational costs of up to €200,000.

The Commission has also proposed to cut the number of physical on-farm checks, to extend the deadline for farmers to apply for direct payments and rural development payments by one month to 15 June 2020 and to increase the advances of these payments from mid-October.

As regards [seasonal workers](#), who are crucial for planting, tending and harvesting, EU countries are encouraged to treat them as critical workers, exchange information on their needs and ensure their smooth passage across borders.

Find out what other [measures the EU has taken](#) to combat the pandemic.

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## **[EUIPO Guidelines in electronic format: new functionalities](#)**

*April 20, 2020 [About the EUIPO](#)*

EUIPO Guidelines in electronic format: new functionalities



The [EUIPO Guidelines for Examination of EUTMs and RCDs](#) in electronic format have been enhanced with new functionalities.

Among the improvements, an advanced search function and the possibility to download a PDF on Part and Section level have been made available, following the feedback received from users.

An **advanced search function** has been made available to allow users to better define searches. It is now possible to search in the entire Trade Mark or Design Guidelines publication, in a specific Part, or in a specific Section. In which Part or Section a search is initiated depends on where you have navigated to within the Guidelines.

Additionally, in order to improve the user experience, the term searched for (or its linguistic variant) is now **highlighted in the list of search results**. So-called 'breadcrumbs' have also been added to the search results list, enabling users to easily spot the searched terms in the Guidelines.

**Part and Section-level PDFs** have also been made available to download from the Guidelines. The type of PDF that will open depends on and recognises the following:

- a) in which publication (Trade Mark Guidelines or Design Guidelines) you are browsing;
- b) in which edition you are browsing (2017, 2020);
- c) where in the Guidelines you have navigated to (which Part or Section);
- d) in which language you are browsing, and
- e) whether you have 'Show modifications' turned on or off; either a 'clean' version or a version with tracked changes will open.

The [updated tutorial](#) provides more detailed information about the new features, including the improved search functionalities (pages 11-13) and how to download each type of PDF (page 16).

In addition to these improvements, the **responsive design** which allows the Guidelines to be consulted from other devices, such as a tablet or smart

phone, has also been enhanced.

The EUIPO welcomes your [feedback](#) and continues to work on further improvements for an enhanced user experience on the Guidelines.

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