

FLASH EUROBAROMETER 578

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

EUROBAROMETER REPORT
March - April 2026



Survey conducted by Demoscopy at the request of Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)

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This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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Table of contents

Table of contents	3
Introduction.....	4
Key findings	7
1. Adoption of AI or automated systems in European companies.....	9
1.1 Current use and adoption plans	9
1.2 In-house development vs. external suppliers	11
1.3 Origin of suppliers and degree of customisation	12
2. Uses of AI or automated systems, motivations and human oversight.....	14
2.1 Areas of use of AI or automated systems in workforce matters	14
2.2 The role of humans in AI-supported decisions	16
2.3 Reasons for adopting AI or automated systems	17
3. Trust and perceived impact	19
3.1 Employer trust in AI or automated systems for workforce decisions	19
3.2 Perceived employee reactions	21
3.3 Expected impact on some dimensions of job quality	22
4. Barriers to adoption and building trust	25
4.1 Overview of barriers	25
4.2 Cost, regulatory uncertainty and lack of expertise	27
4.3 Employees' concerns and management distrust	28
4.4 Factors for building trust among staff	29
5. Technical specifications	31
6. Questionnaire	33

Introduction

The European Union is operating in a context of rapid technological change, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Algorithmic Management (AM) tools are increasingly shaping productivity, work organisation, and job quality.

AM is commonly understood as **the automation of management functions for monitoring and decision-making**. AM systems can be simple (without ‘intelligence’, such as portable monitoring devices) or more advanced and autonomous (AI-based, such as face recognition software or automated CV screening for recruitment).

The following explanatory text was used during this survey: *“algorithmic management or automated systems refers to digital systems that help managers organise the workforce and/or support their decisions about tasks, schedules, performance or staffing. These systems can be powered by Artificial Intelligence or not and include both tools that automate decision-making and tools that make recommendations, while the final decision is taken by people.”* The use of these technologies continues to rise, with 20% of EU enterprises with 10 or more employees using AI technologies in 2025, compared with 13.5% in 2024.¹ However, adoption remains highly uneven: in 2025, AI use was far more common in large businesses (55.03%) than in medium-sized (30.36%) and small businesses (17%).²

This issue is becoming more important in the wider European discussion about digitalisation and working conditions. In this context, it is important to better understand what encourages or prevents companies from introducing these technologies.

The 2026 Flash Eurobarometer was designed with this objective in mind. It aims, first, to

identify the main workplace-related drivers and obstacles influencing SMEs’ and Mid-Caps’ decisions to adopt, extend or refrain from adopting AI and algorithmic management tools. Second, it seeks to assess current levels of use and trust in these systems within companies.

Within this framework, the survey provides evidence-based insights into:

- The current use of AI and algorithmic management systems in SMEs and Mid-Caps.
- Companies’ levels of trust in these systems, including perceptions of transparency, human oversight, accountability and employee acceptance.
- The main workplace-related drivers encouraging companies to adopt or expand the use of AI and algorithmic management tools.
- The main obstacles limiting adoption, especially those related to costs, internal expertise, legal uncertainty, trust and concerns about working conditions and job quality.
- Areas where policy support, guidance or social partner engagement may help facilitate responsible AI adoption in the workplace.

On behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), Demoscopy interviewed heads of privately owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Mid-Caps with 1 to 749 employees across all 27 Member States of the European Union (EU).

Between the 20 March and the 13 April 2026, 12,826 interviews were conducted using a CATI

¹ Eurostat, *20% of EU enterprises use AI technologies*, News article, 11 December 2025.

² Eurostat, *Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises*, *Statistics Explained*, December 2025.

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

(Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) data collection mode, with around 500 interviews carried out in larger Member States and 250 interviews in smaller Member States.

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Notes

- For readability, the term 'AI' is sometimes used alone in this report; unless otherwise specified, it refers to both AI and other automated systems, as defined in the survey.
- **Survey data are weighted**
- Survey results are subject to **sampling tolerances** meaning that not all apparent differences between countries or groups may be statistically significant.
- When respondents could select **more than one answer**, the **sum of response percentages may exceed 100%**.
- Respondents were first given a short explanatory description of algorithmic management and automated systems; its exact wording is reproduced in the questionnaire at the end of this report.
- In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation as indicated below

BE  Belgium	FR  France	NL  Netherlands
BG  Bulgaria	HR  Croatia	AT  Austria
CZ  Czechia	IT  Italy	PL  Poland
DK  Denmark	CY  Rep. of Cyprus*	PT  Portugal
DE  Germany	LV  Latvia	RO  Romania
EE  Estonia	LT  Lithuania	SI  Slovenia
IE  Ireland	LU  Luxembourg	SK  Slovakia
EL  Greece	HU  Hungary	FI  Finland
ES  Spain	MT  Malta	SE  Sweden

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 EU Member States. For practical reasons, interviews were only carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus

Key findings

Adoption of AI and automated systems remains limited and uneven across EU SMEs and mid-caps, with a clear divide between adopters and non-adopters

- 42% of EU SMEs and Mid-Caps currently use AI or automated systems in their operations, including 12% that do so extensively. Over one third of businesses (35%) neither use these technologies nor plan to adopt them.
- Adoption varies sharply across Member States, ranging from around two-thirds of companies in Denmark to approximately one third in France and Germany, around one quarter in Italy and is consistently higher among larger, higher-revenue firms.
- A significant share (35%) of AI and automated systems are not customised for the specific needs of their adopters; 43% partially, and only 15% are fully customised.
- The suppliers of AI and automated systems are either located outside the EU (30%) or in a mix of EU and non-EU countries (22%). The highest adopters tend to rely more heavily on systems located outside the EU.

AI and automated systems are used mainly to organise and monitor work; individual HR decisions such as recruitment or dismissals remain the least affected

- Among companies using or planning to use AI or automated systems, the most frequent areas are customer relations (47%), performance monitoring (36%) and logistics, planning or scheduling related to staff management (30%). Their use in recruitment (11%) and HR decisions such as promotions or dismissals (9%) are lower.

Employer trust in AI or automated systems is moderate and strongly shaped by the need for human oversight

- Fewer than half of businesses (44%) express overall trust in AI or automated systems for workforce-related decisions, with only 3% reporting full trust. Trust is consistently higher among companies that already use these technologies.
- Across all firms, human control over decisions is important: among companies using AI or automated systems, 90% keep humans in charge of decisions (52% with humans always deciding on system suggestions, 38% fully human), while only 2% rely on full automation. Human review or override is also the most frequently cited factor for building staff trust (34%).

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Structural barriers dominate, but they are perceived as manageable rather than prohibitive

- The adoption of AI or automated systems is primarily constrained by structural factors: around half of businesses cite high investment costs (50%), regulatory uncertainty (49%) and lack of internal expertise (48%) as important difficulties. These structural barriers concern resources, skills and regulation, as distinct from human-factor barriers (management distrust, employee concerns), which are cited less often.
- Human-factor barriers, including management distrust (37%), employee surveillance concerns (33%) and other employee fears (31%) remain important, although they are cited more unevenly, with around one third of firms dismissing them as not a difficulty at all.
- Marked geographic disparities exist across all barriers, with Southern and

Eastern European countries consistently reporting higher levels of concern.

Human oversight and system reliability are the two pillars of staff trust in AI

- When asked what would most help build staff trust in AI systems, businesses converge on two priorities: the possibility for humans to review or override decisions (34%) and evidence that the system works accurately and reliably (33%). These results, nearly equal in weight, point to a dual expectation combining the preservation of human agency with empirical proof of quality and performance. Staff training (30%), regulatory compliance (27%) and transparency about how decisions are made (27%) are also frequently cited.

1. Adoption of AI or automated systems in European companies

1.1 Current use and adoption plans

The adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management among SMEs and Mid-Caps highlight both emerging use and significant non-adoption

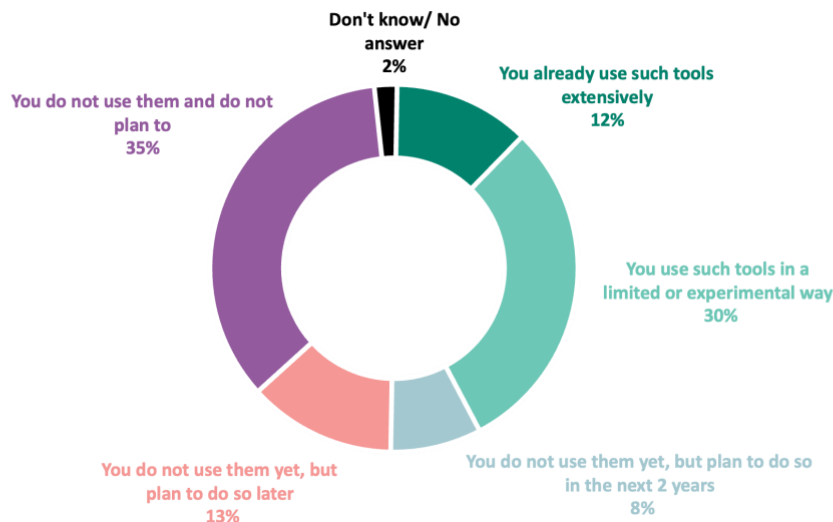
Out of the 12,826 businesses surveyed, the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Algorithmic Management (AM) remains relatively limited. Only 12% of companies report using these technologies extensively, while 30% have adopted them in a limited or

experimental way. This brings **total adoption to 42%**, indicating that fewer than half of EU SMEs and mid-sized companies are currently engaging with AI or automation.

A significant proportion of businesses (35%) neither use these tools nor plan to adopt them, while 21% of firms express some intention to adopt AI or automated systems in the future, although this remains a minority.

Q1 Which of the following best describes your company's current situation regarding artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace?

Base: all businesses (12826)



AI adoption varies considerably across EU Member States, reflecting differing national contexts and levels of technological uptake

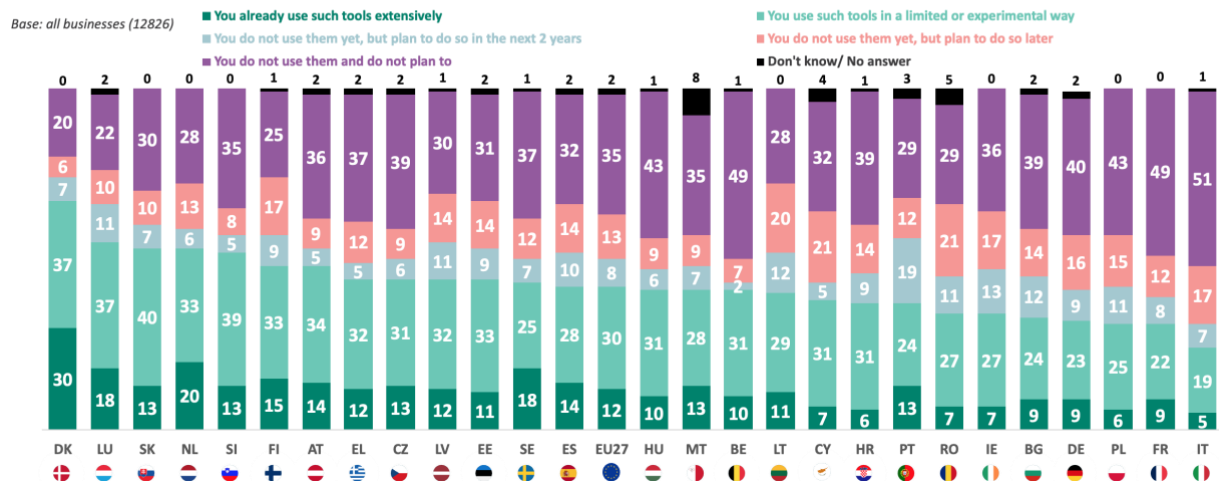
AI and AM adoption varies significantly across EU Member States, revealing substantial cross-country disparities. In Denmark, for example,

around two-thirds of companies report using these technologies, while adoption stands around 50% in smaller, highly open economies such as Luxembourg, Slovakia, and Slovenia. By contrast, adoption drops to around one-quarter

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

in larger European economies such as France, Italy, and Germany.

Q1 Which of the following best describes your company's current situation regarding artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace?



AI adoption also differs across firms depending on their structural characteristics, including sector, size and turnover

Looking at the profile of firms using AI, adoption is highest in the services sector (47%), followed by manufacturing, retail (36%) and industry (31%). Adoption rises steadily with company size, from 41% among firms with fewer than 10 employees to 49% in those with 10-49, 56% in

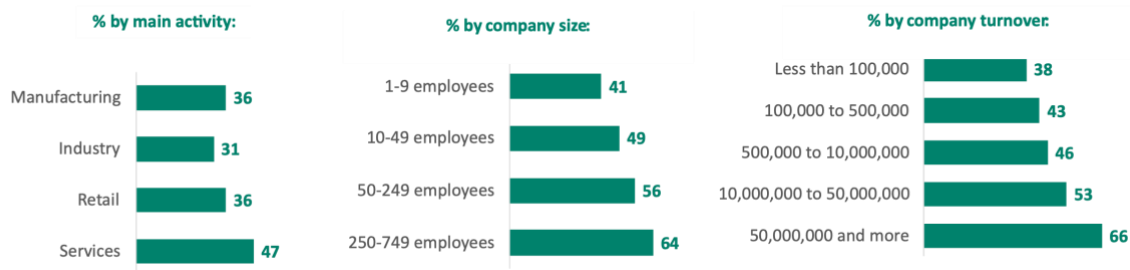
those with 50-249 and 64% in those with 250-749 employees. A similar pattern emerges when considering turnover: companies with revenues of €50 million or more have the highest adoption rate (66%), while those with less than €100,000 in turnover show the lowest (38%). These results should be interpreted with some caution, given the small subsample for this first category (193 respondents).

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Q1 Which of the following best describes your company's current situation regarding artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace?

Base: businesses who already use AI or automated systems extensively (1523)

Total 'You already use such tools'



1.2 In-house development vs. external suppliers

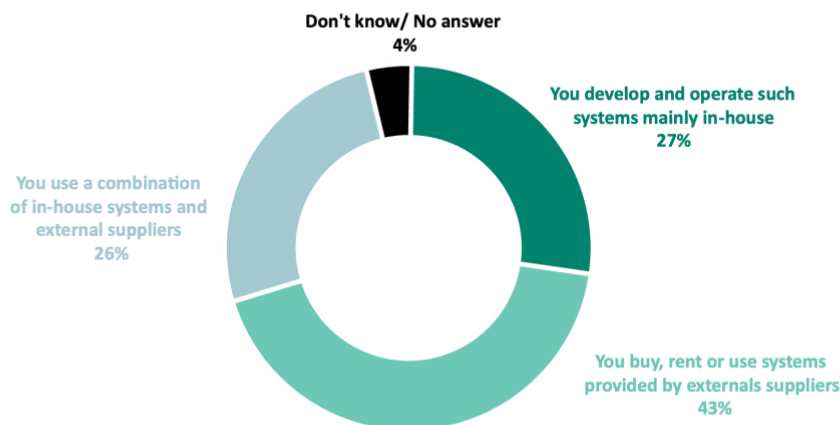
Firms adopt different approaches when implementing AI and automated systems, ranging from in-house development to reliance on external providers

Among businesses that use AI or automated systems in the workplace, 27% primarily develop

and operate these systems in-house. By contrast, 43% purchase or lease them from external suppliers. More than a quarter of firms rely on a combination of in-house development and external solutions. **Overall, around seven in ten AI-using companies depend, at least in part, on external providers.**

Q1b Which of the following best describes how your company uses artificial intelligence or algorithmic management systems in the workplace?

Base: businesses who use AI or automated systems in the workplace (5357)



Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

1.3 Origin of suppliers and degree of customisation

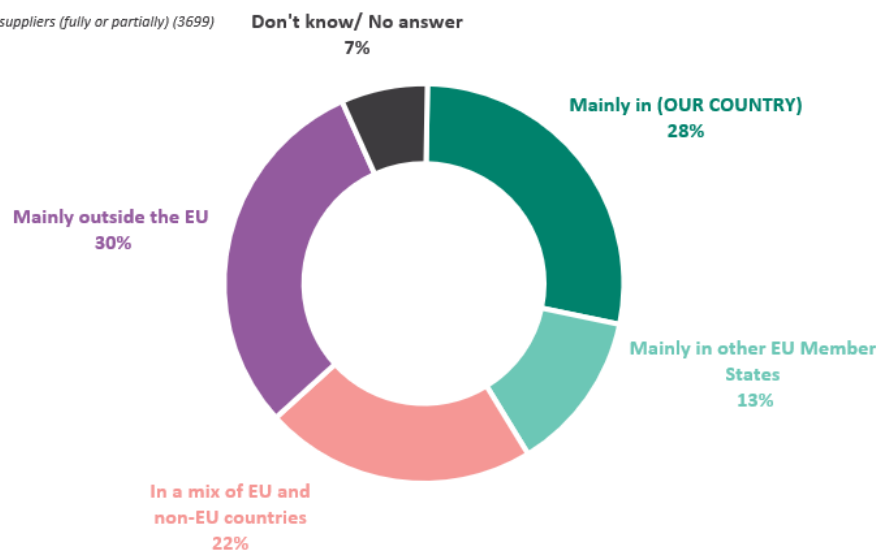
The geographical location of automated systems used by EU SMEs and Mid-Caps varies between EU-based and non-EU based infrastructures

Around 40% to half of EU SMEs and mid-caps use automated systems that are located within the

EU. Specifically, 28% rely primarily on systems hosted in their own country, 13% in another EU Member State, and 22% use a combination of EU- and non-EU-based systems. By contrast, 30% of firms rely mainly on automated systems located outside the EU.

Q1c Are the main suppliers of these automated systems located...?

Base: businesses who use external suppliers (fully or partially) (3699)



Significant differences can be observed across EU Member States in terms of domestic, EU or non-EU providers

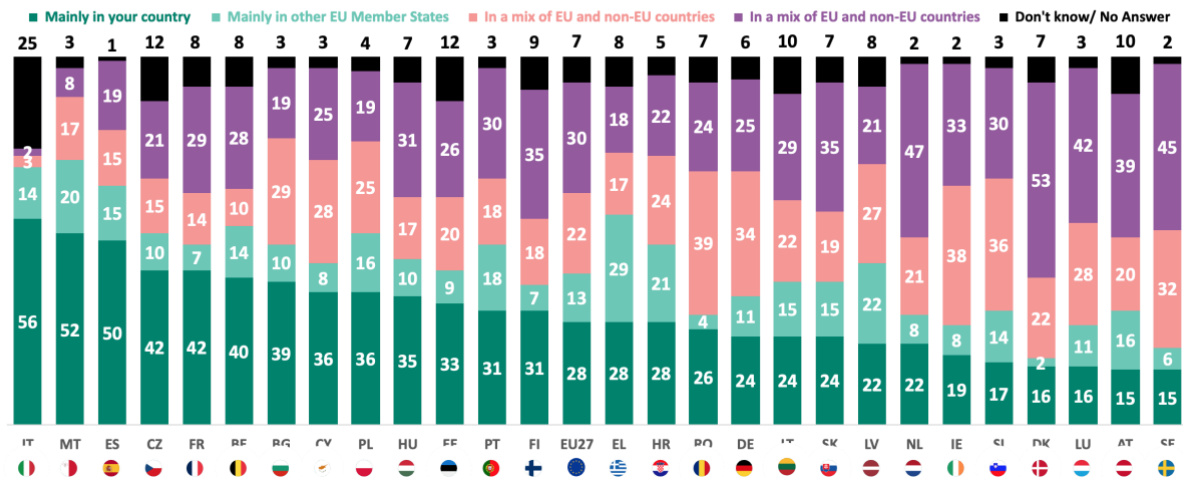
Country-level differences reveal distinct patterns. Large EU economies such as Italy, France, and Spain tend to rely primarily on domestically located systems, a trend also observed in smaller countries like Malta and Cyprus. In

contrast, Northern European countries such as Sweden and Denmark rely more heavily on systems located outside the EU. These countries are also among the highest adopters, which may partly account for this broader sourcing. Meanwhile, Romania (39%), Ireland (38%), and Slovenia (36%) show the highest shares of firms using a mix of EU and non-EU suppliers.

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Q1c Are the main suppliers of these automated systems located...?

Base: businesses who use external suppliers (fully or partially) (3699)



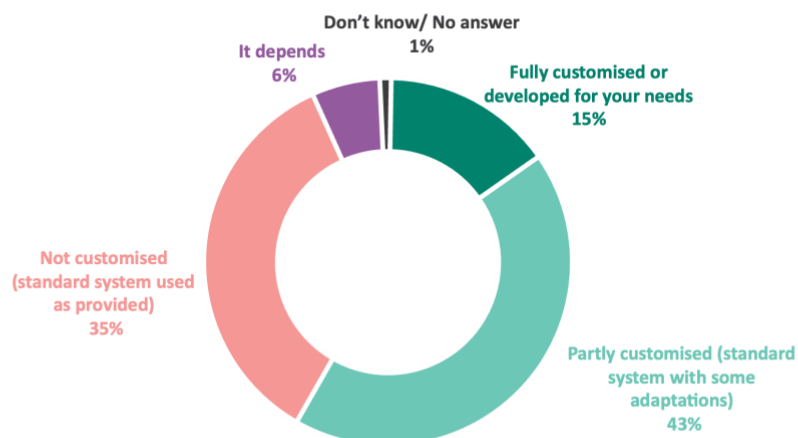
The degree of customization of automated systems varies across firms, ranging from fully tailored solutions to standard, off-the-shelf systems

In terms of customization, 15% of automated systems used by companies can be fully

customised or developed for their specific need, while 43% can be partially customized. Altogether, this means that 58% of such systems involve some degree of customization. However, a significant share (35%) consists of standard systems used without modification.

Q1d To what extent can these automated systems be adapted or customised to your company's specific needs?

Base: businesses who use external suppliers (fully or partially) (3699)



2. Uses of AI or automated systems, motivations and human oversight

2.1 Areas of use of AI or automated systems in workforce matters

AI and automated systems are used mainly for customer-facing and work-organisation tasks; individual HR decisions remain the least frequent

An analysis of the areas in which AI or algorithmic management systems are used or envisaged, based on companies that currently use or plan to use such technologies, shows that one domain clearly stands out. Close to one company in two (47%) among current or prospective AI users reports deploying AI in customer relations and client service, a field that typically covers chatbots and other client-facing automated tools. Two further dimensions are cited significantly, though to a lesser extent, by around one third of these companies: the monitoring of performance and productivity (36%) and logistics, planning or

scheduling related to staff management (30%). SMEs and Mid-Caps that use or plan to use AI appear much more reluctant to entrust it with individual HR decisions. Only 11% do so for the recruitment or screening of candidates, and just 9% for HR decisions concerning employees such as promotions or dismissals. **Overall, AI and automated systems are applied more to customer-facing and work-organisation tasks than to individual HR decisions, which remain largely with people.**

Q2 In which of the following areas, does your company currently use or plan to use artificial intelligence or automated systems?

Base: businesses who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8116)



Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

The ranking of AI uses is stable across Member States

At country level, this ranking proves stable. Customer service or client relations features among the three most cited workforce-related areas of AI use in all 27 Member States, and comes first in 21 of them, reaching its highest levels in Malta (65%), Poland (64%), Greece and Romania (both 58%). In the few countries where customer service does not come first, another area takes the lead: monitoring of performance or productivity in France (50%), Lithuania (59%), Finland (48%), Estonia (41%) and Croatia (33%), or logistics, planning and scheduling in Spain (42%). The top of the ranking therefore remains consistently occupied by the same most common

uses. The reverse finding is just as consistent. In the large majority of Member States, recruitment or screening of candidates and HR decisions concerning employees are among the two least-cited areas of AI use. Even at their highest, these

items remain well below the most common uses, though not negligible: recruitment reaches up to 25% and individual HR decisions up to 18% in some Member States, while remaining close to zero in others. Overall, the composition of AI uses in workforce matters is convergent across the Union: what sets countries apart is less the nature of what they automate than the overall intensity with which they do so.

Q2 In which of the following areas, does your company currently use or plan to use artificial intelligence or automated systems?

Base: Respondents who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8,116 businesses)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Customer service or client relations	47	32	46	53	50	42	39	52	58	38	48	20	54	54	41	48	47	32	65	52	40	64	51	58	53	52	48	43
Monitoring performance or productivity	36	24	31	44	28	22	41	39	36	37	50	33	47	37	36	59	35	30	33	36	14	55	40	40	28	17	48	39
Logistics, planning or scheduling related to staff management	30	25	26	37	37	25	27	46	29	42	32	29	35	35	26	29	32	18	32	22	22	36	32	32	34	26	31	29
Selection and recommendations of trainings for workers	19	6	13	28	18	15	18	34	25	17	21	9	8	40	19	31	19	13	11	14	12	29	19	23	9	9	22	18
Health, safety or risk prevention	15	3	10	18	20	11	16	33	12	12	18	4	12	20	13	19	10	8	8	22	7	20	14	21	13	5	22	23
Recruitment or screening of candidates	11	6	6	10	25	10	13	16	20	10	13	5	3	7	6	14	12	5	12	6	6	13	12	17	12	5	19	13
HR decisions about employees, such as hiring, promotions, and/or firing	9	6	6	6	18	7	7	13	9	11	9	5	5	8	7	15	10	8	15	14	2	7	13	17	13	2	9	13
None of these	23	36	25	19	21	38	24	21	11	20	19	34	18	16	25	19	25	35	20	27	37	8	14	20	16	29	19	27

Values in % - Bold = highest value in row - Color intensity reflects magnitude

Trust goes hand in hand with higher adoption across all uses, but even among trusting companies, sensitive HR uses remain a minority

A breakdown of these areas of use according to employers' trust in AI for workforce decisions confirms, as one might expect, that usage is systematically more widespread among companies that trust AI than among those that do not. The gap reaches 13 percentage points for

customer service (53% among trusting companies against 40% among distrusting ones), 12 points for monitoring of performance or productivity (42% vs. 30%) and for logistics, planning and scheduling (36% vs. 24%), before narrowing to around five points for training selection (21% vs. 16%) and health, safety or risk prevention (17% vs. 12%). Two more specific

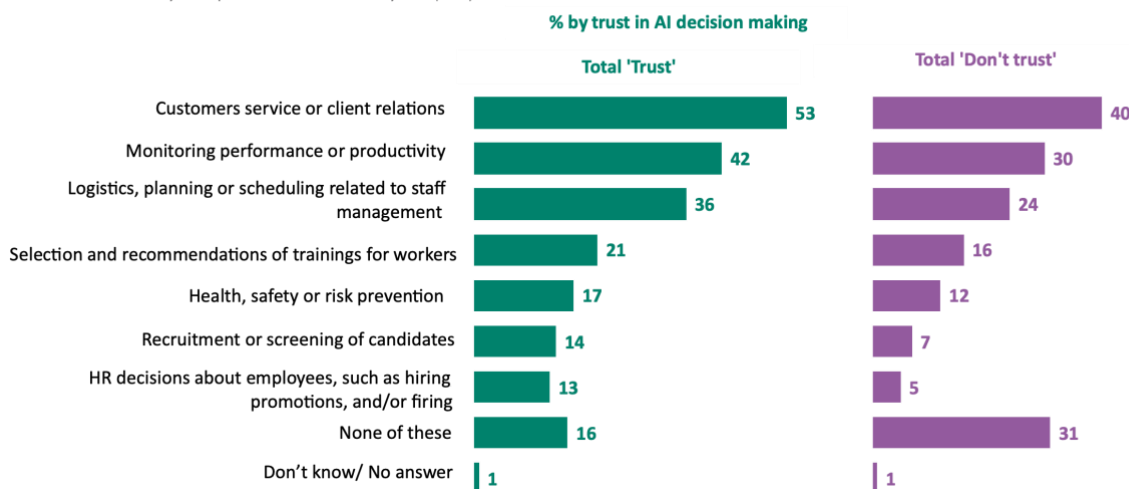
Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

patterns, however, deserve attention. First, on customer-facing and work-organisation tasks, adoption remains substantial even among companies that express no trust in AI for workforce decisions: four in ten distrusting companies (40%) still use or plan to use AI in customer relations, and around a quarter do so for monitoring of performance (30%) or staff

logistics (24%). Second, trust is also associated with markedly higher use of sensitive HR tasks, roughly twice as high as among distrusting companies, although these uses remain a minority even among trusting companies: 14% use or plan to use these systems for recruitment, and 13% for HR decisions such as promotions or dismissals.

Q2 In which of the following areas, does your company currently use or plan to use artificial intelligence or automated systems?

Base: businesses who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8116)



2.2 The role of humans in AI-supported decisions

Nine in ten SMEs using AI keep humans at the centre of workforce-related decisions

The decision-making model described by SMEs and Mid-Caps that currently use AI or automated systems in the workplace is one in which human oversight remains important. Over half of these companies (52%) indicate that automated systems make suggestions, but that humans always take the final decision, while a further 38% report that decisions are fully made by humans, with AI playing no decision-making role. Conversely, only 2% of companies have fully automated their decisions without any human

intervention, and a further 7% let automated systems take the decision, subject to possible human review in the event of a complaint.

This pattern is broadly shared across the Union. Fully automated decision-making without human intervention remains marginal in every Member State, never exceeding 5% of AI-using companies (Portugal). Conversely, the combination of "AI suggests, humans decide" and "decisions fully made by humans" exceeds 80% in 25 Member States out of 27, and reaches its highest levels in Lithuania (97%), Luxembourg (96%) and, notably, Denmark (95%), where adoption of AI or

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

automated systems are the most advanced. In a handful of southern Member States (Italy, Malta, Greece, Spain, Cyprus), a somewhat larger share of AI-using companies report that automated systems take the decision, subject to possible human review; but even there, the share of fully automated decisions stays between 1% and 4%.

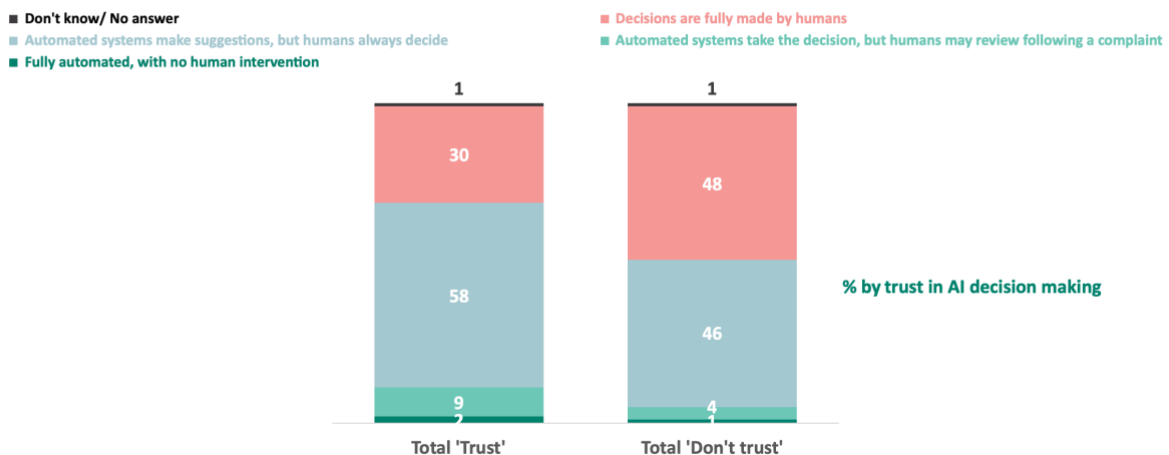
Trust repositions AI as a decision-support tool, but full automation stays marginal whether the technology is trusted or not

A breakdown by employer trust in AI for workforce decisions shows that trust reshuffles the mix of oversight arrangements without challenging the principle of human oversight

itself. Among companies that trust AI, 58% report that automated systems make suggestions while humans always take the final decision, against only 46% among companies that do not trust AI. Conversely, 48% of distrusting companies say that decisions are made entirely by humans, with AI playing no role, compared with 30% in the trusting group. Trust therefore tends to push AI from the sideline into a decision-support role, rather than from a decision-support role into a decision-making one. By contrast, fully automated decision-making without any human intervention remains marginal regardless of the level of trust, at 2% among trusting companies and 1% among distrusting ones. Even the companies most confident in AI do not, at this stage, translate that confidence into full delegation; they use the technology as an assistance tool rather than as a decision-maker.

Q3 When such systems are used, how are decisions usually made?

Base: businesses who use AI or automated systems in the workplace (5357)



2.3 Reasons for adopting AI or automated systems

European employers mostly turn to AI to enhance quality and efficiency, not to replace workers

Among the reasons cited by European SMEs and Mid-Caps for using, or considering the use of, AI or automated systems in the workplace, improving the quality of products and services

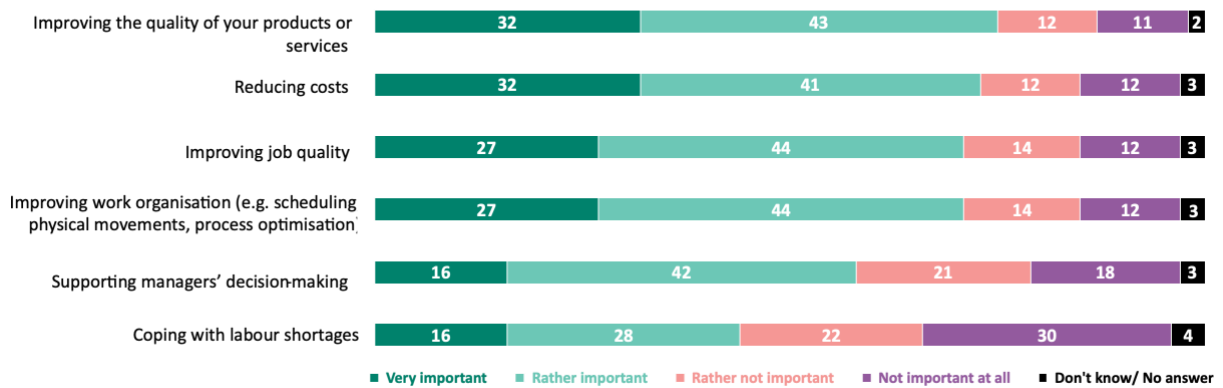
Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

(75% important, of which 32% very important), reducing costs (73%, of which 32% very important), improving job quality (71%, 27% very important) and improving work organisation such as scheduling or process optimization (also 71%, 27% very important) all emerge as widely shared motivations, with very close levels of support.

Two motivations depart more clearly from this pattern. Supporting managers' decision-making is considered important by 58% of current or prospective users, but only 16% see it as 'very important'. Coping with labour shortages stands out as the least cited reason of all, judged important by only 44% of users and prospective users, with 30% explicitly considering it 'not important at all'.

Q7 For each of the following, please tell me whether it is an important reason why your company uses, or would consider using, artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

Base: businesses who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8116)



Across the Union, AI or automated systems are viewed as a quality and efficiency lever, not a workforce substitute

Since this question is only asked to companies that currently use or plan to use AI, country-level results rest on smaller national sub-samples and should be read with a degree of caution. That

said, the structure observed at EU27 level proves stable across the Union. Coping with labour shortages stands as the least cited motivation in 25 Member States out of 27, and remains among the two least cited reasons in every single Member State. In several Member States (Romania 61%, Malta and Portugal 57%, Slovakia 56%, Lithuania and Cyprus 54%), this rationale climbs to clearly higher levels; yet even there, improving quality or reducing costs come ahead.

3. Trust and perceived impact

3.1 Employer trust in AI or automated systems for workforce decisions

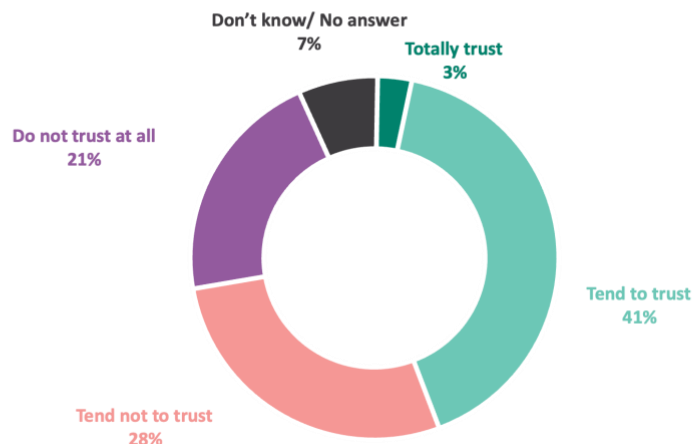
Trust in AI or automated systems for workforce decisions remains moderate and cautious: only 3% of European employers fully trust the technology in this area, and 21% do not trust it at all.

When asked how much they trust AI or algorithmic management systems to support decisions in their company related to the workforce or staff matters, European SMEs and Mid-Caps express only

moderate confidence. The Total 'Trust' reaches 44% (3% totally trust, 41% tend to trust), against a Total 'Don't trust' of 49% (28% tend not to trust, 21% do not trust at all), while 7% of respondents are unable to position themselves. Even within the trusting camp, support is essentially cautious and qualified, with 'tend to trust' answers accounting for almost the entirety of positive opinions. This is consistent with the patterns observed in the previous section.

Q4 In your view, how much do you trust these artificial intelligence or automated systems to support decisions in your company related to the workforce or staff matters?

Base: All businesses (12826)



Total trust varies markedly across Member States, from 22% in Germany to 63% in Portugal, yet 'totally trust' never exceeds 7% in any Member State.

The country-level reading reveals significant differences in overall level. Total 'Trust' is highest

in Portugal (63%), then in Denmark, Romania and Slovenia (each at 58%), followed by Lithuania (53%), Greece (51%) and Malta (50%). Total 'Trust' falls clearly below the EU27 average (44%) in a group of Northern and Continental European countries, reaching its lowest values in Germany (22%), Austria (31%), France and Poland (both

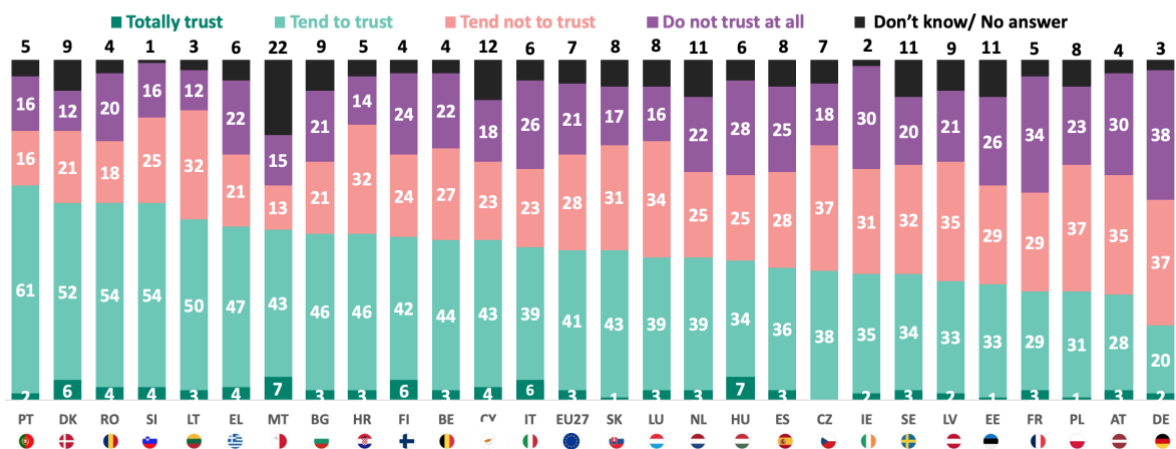
Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

32%). France and Germany, in particular, combine relatively limited AI adoption (9% extensive users in both) with the most reserved attitudes towards AI for workforce decisions: in Germany, 75% of employers do not trust AI in this area, of which 38% do not trust it at all. Italy is a notable counter-example: despite the lowest extensive adoption rate of all Member States (5%), Italian employers express a near-EU27 level of trust

(45%). **Beneath these national differences, the most telling result is that 'totally trust' never exceeds 7% in any Member State, with the highest values reached in Hungary and Malta. Across the Union, full confidence in AI for workforce-related decisions remains the exception rather than the rule, regardless of where AI adoption itself stands.**

Q4 In your view, how much do you trust these artificial intelligence or automated systems to support decisions in your company related to the workforce or staff matters?

Base: All businesses (12826)



Although a causal link cannot be determined from the data, **trust grows with hands-on AI experience and with company size, yet it rarely achieves full confidence: even among AI users and among Mid-Caps with 250 to 749 employees, only 5% of employers report totally trusting AI for workforce decisions.**

The question was put to the entire sample, irrespective of any actual AI use, which allows to examine the contrast between users and non-users. Among employers who already deploy AI or automated systems, Total 'Trust' rises to 58%, far above the 34% recorded among non-users. The asymmetry is even sharper at the extreme of distrust: 30% of non-users reject AI outright for workforce decisions, against only 11% among users.

Yet, even among AI users, the share reporting full trust amounts to a mere 5%, the rest of their 58% favourable response being composed almost entirely of qualified, conditional support ('tend to trust', 53%). Even daily exposure to algorithmic tools, in other words, falls short of producing unreserved confidence when staff matters are at stake. A similar dynamic plays out along the company-size axis. Confidence climbs steadily with scale, from 43% in micro-enterprises (1 to 9 employees) to 48% in small businesses (10 to 49), 55% in medium-sized firms (50 to 249) and 61% in Mid-Caps employing 250 to 749 staff, while outright distrust falls from 22% to 10%.

Sectoral differences, by contrast, are barely noticeable, with Total 'Trust' fluctuating only between 40% in Industry and 45% in Services. Turnover has no noticeable impact on the level of trust: full trust never exceeds 4%. The results are consistent: experience and scale soften outright

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

mistrust and broaden conditional support, but they do not unlock full confidence.

3.2 Perceived employee reactions

Reported employee reactions to the introduction of AI or automated systems in workforce-related areas tilt clearly to the positive side, with 55% of employers describing them as positive against only 15% as negative; the figures point to limited workplace friction so far, even if they need to be read with the caveat that they reflect employer perceptions rather than employees' own voice.

A first methodological precaution is in order: this question was put to employers themselves, who were asked to describe the reactions of their staff to the introduction of AI or automated systems in workforce-related areas. The findings therefore do not capture the views of employees directly.

Among SMEs and Mid-Caps that already use or plan to use AI in such areas, 55% of business

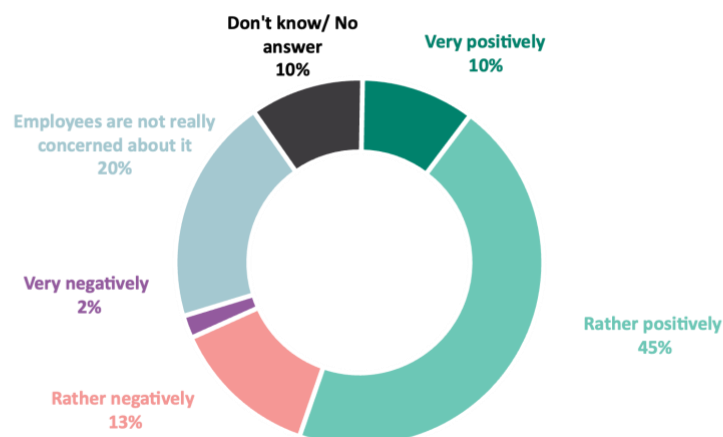
leaders describe employee reactions as positive (10% very positively, 45% rather positively), while only 15% report negative reactions (13% rather, 2% very). A further 20% consider that their employees are not really concerned about the topic, and 10% are unable to provide an assessment.

The intensity of negative reactions is, in particular, very low: only 2% of employers describe their staff as reacting very negatively, against 10% who report very positive reactions.

The relatively large share of "not really concerned" answers (20%) is also worth noting, suggesting that, at this stage of deployment, AI and automated tools have often been integrated without becoming a topic of worker-employer discussions.

Q5 In general, how do employees in your company react to the use (or the planned use) of such artificial intelligence or automated systems in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

Base: businesses who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8116)



Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

In every Member State, employees are described as reacting more positively than negatively to the introduction of AI; yet the gap between positive and negative reactions varies sharply.

In all twenty-seven Member States without exception, employers describe their staff as reacting more positively than negatively to AI or automated systems in workforce-related areas. The breadth of the lead, however, is uneven. Positive perceptions reach their highest in Greece and Malta (both 71%), Lithuania (68%), Ireland (67%) and Belgium (66%), and recede to their lowest in Germany (33%), the Netherlands (36%) and Romania (41%). The net balance ranges from sixty-six percentage points in Malta to a much tighter twelve-point gap in Germany. France records the highest share of perceived negative reactions of any Member State (26%), with 8% of employers describing them as "very negative" against an EU27 average of 2%. In Germany, only 33% of employers describe employee reactions as positive, the lowest score in the Union, but the share reporting negative reactions remains contained (21%), while a record 35% (against 20% at EU27 level) consider that their staff are not really concerned by the matter.

Acceptance is slightly more pronounced in companies that already use AI, and in the services sector, while company size has little impact; only the largest firms by turnover stand out for a more cautious tone.

The socio-demographic picture broadly mirrors the EU27 average, with two noteworthy nuances. Among companies that currently use AI or automated systems, the share reporting positive employee reactions rises to 61%, six points above the all-respondents baseline (55%). The gap is also visible by sector: services report 58% positive reactions, against 47% in manufacturing, consistent with the broader weight of customer-facing AI uses noted earlier.

Company size, when measured by number of employees, has no meaningful effect, with positive perceptions remaining around 55% in micro-enterprises as well as in Mid-Caps. The only group to depart noticeably from this pattern is composed of the largest companies in turnover terms (over fifty million euros), where only 44% of employers describe employee reactions as positive against 25% as negative; the small sub-sample for this category (193 respondents) calls, however, for some caution.

3.3 Expected impact on some dimensions of job quality

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

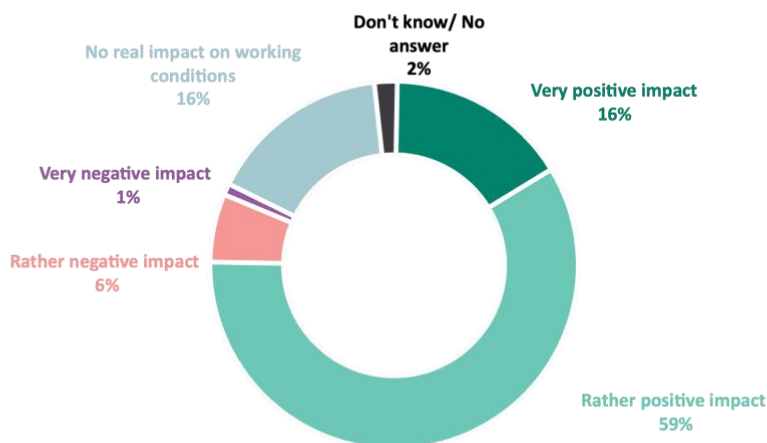
Three quarters of European employers (75%) expect AI or automated systems to have a positive impact on job quality, while only 7% anticipate a negative one; the optimism, however, is measured, with just 16% expecting a "very positive" impact.

Among SMEs and Mid-Caps that already use or plan to use AI or automated systems, the perceived impact on job quality (covering job

satisfaction, safety, privacy and workload) tilts clearly towards optimism: 75% expect a positive effect (16% "very positive", 59% "rather positive"), against only 7% who foresee a negative one. A further 16% expect no real impact on working conditions, and 2% cannot give a view. The optimistic camp is therefore broad but moderate in tone, with "rather positive" answers far outweighing "very positive" ones, while strong negative views are exceptional (only 1% expect a "very negative" impact).

Q6 Overall, do you think these technologies have or could have a positive or negative impact on job quality (e.g. job satisfaction, safety, privacy, workload) in your company?

Base: businesses who currently use or plan to use AI or automated systems (8116)



Optimism on job quality is shared across Member States, though with varying intensity

Optimism on job quality is shared across the Union, with Total Positive ahead of Total Negative in every Member State; France stands out as the most reserved (54% positive, 18% negative). The optimistic lead holds in all twenty-seven Member States, but its intensity varies. Total Positive ranges from 85% in Greece, Cyprus and Malta to 54% in France, with twenty-two Member States above 70%. Malta records the highest "very positive" share of any country (36%, against 16% at EU27 level), while France sits at the opposite end with only 8%. France is also the country where the negative perception is highest (18%

Total Negative), followed by Germany (16%) and Luxembourg (15%).

Some Member States (Ireland 27%, Estonia 24%, Germany and Sweden 23%, Denmark 22%, Finland 22%) stand out for the unusually high share of employers expecting "no real impact" on working conditions.

The optimistic outlook on job quality is broadly shared across sectors and company sizes, and notably extends to companies that do not yet use AI: 67% of non-users still expect a positive impact, against 79% of current users

Sectoral differences are limited, with Services slightly ahead (77% Total Positive) of

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Manufacturing (71%) and Industry (70%). Company size produces no meaningful gradient, with positive perceptions ranging only between 74% in small companies (10 to 49 employees) and 78% in Mid-Caps.

The most telling comparison lies between users and non-users of AI: although companies that

already deploy the technology logically show stronger optimism (79%), 67% of those who have not yet adopted it also expect a positive impact on job quality, only twelve points below the user level. The positive view of AI's expected effect on job quality is not confined to companies that have already adopted it.

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

4. Barriers to adoption and building trust

4.1 Overview of barriers

Structural barriers dominate AI adoption in businesses

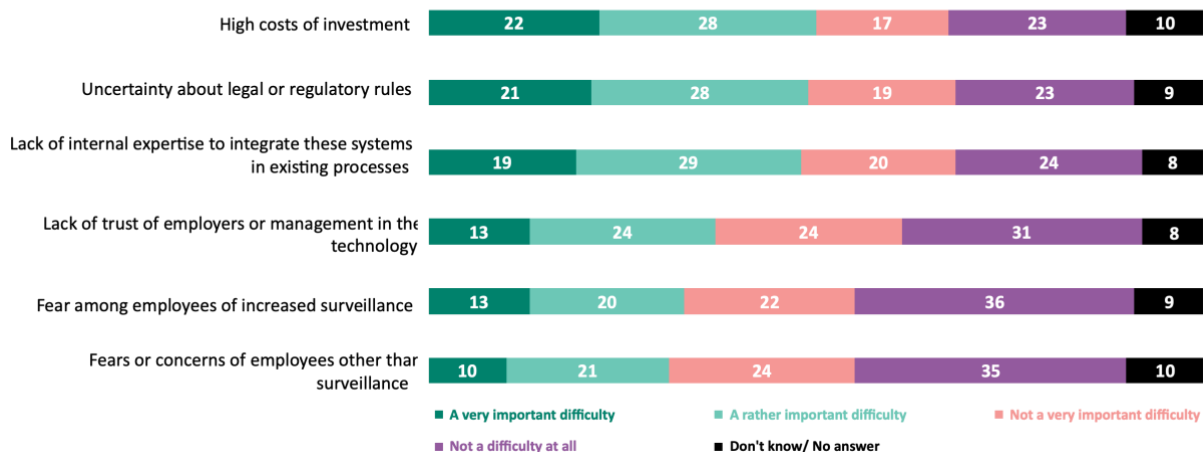
The adoption of AI or automated systems in companies is primarily constrained by structural rather than human factors. Around half of businesses identify high investment costs (50%), regulatory uncertainty (49%), and a lack of internal expertise (48%) as important difficulties.

However, these barriers are more often perceived as “rather important” than “very important”. Only around one in five firms consider them very important (22% for costs, 21% for regulatory uncertainty, and 19% for lack of expertise), while larger shares classify them as rather important (28–29%).

Factors related to perceptions and attitudes play a more limited role.

Q8 Could you please tell me whether each of the following represents an important difficulty or not to implement AI or automated systems in your company in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

Base: All businesses (12826)



Country-level data reveal substantial variation in the perception of all six barriers, though the intensity and geographic patterning of these differences are not uniform across obstacle types

For structural barriers, the dividing line runs broadly along North/South and West/East axes. Investment costs are rated as an important difficulty by more than 60% of businesses in Italy (68%), Romania (65%), Greece (63%), Cyprus

(60%) and Poland (60%), whereas this share falls to just 24% in Denmark and 31% in Belgium (a gap of more than 40 percentage points between the most and least concerned countries). A comparable pattern holds for regulatory uncertainty, which is flagged as an important barrier by 63% of Greek businesses and 60% each in Ireland, Spain, Italy and Cyprus, against 34% in Hungary and Malta, and 40% in Denmark. Lack of internal expertise follows a similar geography, with Cyprus (67%), Spain (60%), Lithuania and

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Poland (57% each) at the upper end, and Malta (36%), Belgium (38%) and Denmark (39%) at the lower end.

For human-factor barriers, the country variation is equally pronounced but follows a somewhat different pattern. Fear of surveillance among employees is reported as an important difficulty by half of Cypriot businesses (50%) and by 47% of French firms, both well above the EU27 average of 33%, while remaining below 20% in Italy and Denmark. Employee concerns beyond surveillance are also most prevalent in Cyprus (48%), Ireland (43%) and Germany (40%), while remaining comparatively lower in Denmark (16%), Hungary (20%) and Belgium (22%).

Lack of management trust in AI reaches its highest levels in Cyprus (55%) and Ireland (49%), and is also notably elevated in Spain (47%), Italy (46%) and Greece (45%), countries where structural barriers identified in this survey are similarly high. By contrast, management distrust is lowest in Estonia and Denmark (26% each) and Malta (27%).

Taken together, these country-level findings suggest that the experience of AI-related

barriers is not uniformly distributed across the EU. Countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, particularly Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Romania and Spain, consistently record higher levels of concern across both structural and human-factor dimensions, pointing to a potential compounding effect where **financial constraints, weaker regulatory clarity and greater workforce apprehension tend to co-occur.** Northern and Western European countries, notably Denmark, Belgium and the Nordic Member States, generally report lower barriers across the board, though the patterns are not without exception.

Structural barriers are perceived at broadly similar levels regardless of whether a company already uses AI

The most telling divergence emerges on management distrust: firms that declare a general distrust of AI in decision-making report this barrier at 42%, against 33% among those who trust AI. Sector differences remain modest, though service-sector companies consistently report the lowest levels of concern on human-factor barriers.

4.2 Cost, regulatory uncertainty and lack of expertise

The three structural barriers are cited at almost identical levels, pointing to real and tangible constraints regardless of sector or size

Half of companies report high investment costs as an important difficulty, suggesting an important role of upfront financial capacity in enabling AI adoption. Regulatory uncertainty follows closely, with 49% of firms highlighting unclear legal frameworks as a barrier, while 48% point to insufficient internal expertise to integrate AI systems into existing processes.

These three barriers also display a relatively consistent and consensual pattern: fewer companies dismiss them entirely compared to other factors (only around one-quarter say they are "not a difficulty at all"). **This indicates a broad agreement across businesses that these are real and tangible constraints, regardless of sector or size.**

Marked differences emerge across countries

Marked differences emerge across countries in the perception of investment costs as a barrier. **The share of businesses identifying high costs as an important difficulty is particularly high in Italy (68%), Romania (65%), Poland (60%), Cyprus (60%), and Greece (63%).**

By contrast, businesses in **Denmark report fewer difficulties related to investment costs, with only 24% considering them an important barrier.**

The perception of investment costs as a barrier also varies by company size

Smaller firms are less likely to report high costs as a major difficulty (49% among companies with 1-9 employees), compared with medium-sized and larger firms (55% among those with 10-49 employees, 56% for 50-249 employees, and 54% for companies with 250-749 employees).

This pattern may appear counterintuitive, as smaller firms typically have more limited financial resources; however, it could be explained by the fact that smaller businesses are less engaged in AI adoption altogether, and therefore less exposed to the associated investment costs. Conversely, larger firms, being more likely to actively explore or implement AI solutions may be more aware of, and affected by, the scale of required investments.

A similar size-related gradient is observed for the two other leading structural barriers. Regulatory uncertainty is cited as an important difficulty by 49% of the smallest firms (1-9 employees), rising to 53% among those with 10-49 employees, and reaching 59% and 61% respectively among medium and larger firms. The pattern is equally consistent for lack of internal expertise, which increases from 47% among micro-enterprises to 59% among companies with 50-249 employees.

These findings may be explained by the fact that as companies grow, their exposure and awareness to structural barriers intensifies. Larger organisations, by virtue of their greater operational complexity, may face more acute challenges in navigating regulatory frameworks and building the internal technical capacity required for successful integration.

4.3 Employees' concerns and management distrust

In contrast, barriers related to human factors, such as management distrust or employee concerns, are both less frequently cited and more unevenly perceived

A lack of trust in AI or automated systems among employers or management is mentioned by 37% of businesses, while 33% report concerns among employees about increased surveillance, and 31% refer to other types of employee fears.

These factors are also much more likely to be dismissed altogether. Around one-third of firms state that they are “not a difficulty at all” (31% for lack of trust, 36% for surveillance concerns, and 35% for other employee fears).

These attitudinal factors show a more polarised distribution than structural constraints, with some firms reporting them as important while others do not experience them at all.

Country-level data reveal particularly striking variations for human-factor barriers. Fears of

employee surveillance range from below 20% to 50% across Member States, against an EU27 average of 33%. Cyprus and Ireland consistently rank at the top across all three human-factor barriers, with management distrust reaching 55% and 49% respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, Italy combines contrasting results: despite recording among the highest rates for structural barriers, it reports one of the lowest levels of surveillance concern (19%). Denmark and Hungary remain consistently low across all human-factor dimensions.

Here too, company size plays a discernible role, albeit with a less linear pattern than observed for structural barriers. Fear of increased surveillance among employees is cited as an important difficulty by 32% of the smallest firms, rising to 41% among those with 10–49 employees, and peaking at 45% in medium-sized companies (50–249 employees), before returning to 41% among larger firms (250–749 employees). A broadly comparable pattern holds for other employee fears and for lack of management trust.

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

4.4 Factors for building trust among staff

Building Trust in AI and automated Systems

When asked about the most important factors for fostering staff trust in artificial intelligence and automated systems, respondents identified human oversight and demonstrated reliability as the two leading priorities. Indeed, the possibility for humans to review or override decisions emerged as the top factor, cited by 34% of respondents, closely followed by evidence that the system works accurately and reliably (33%).

Another group of responses reflects the importance of organisational and regulatory frameworks. Providing training to staff was cited by 30% of respondents, underscoring the recognition that technological adoption must be

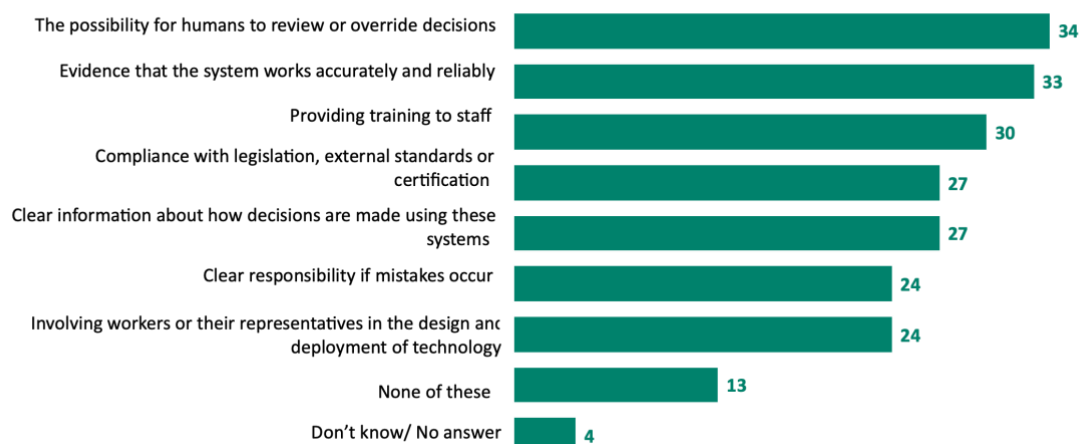
accompanied by adequate capacity-building measures. Meanwhile, compliance with legislation, external standards or certification and clear information about how decisions are made were each cited by 27% of respondents.

Accountability mechanisms also featured prominently in respondents' assessments. Clear responsibility in the event of mistakes and the involvement of workers or their representatives in the design and deployment of technology were each mentioned by 24% of respondents.

Notably, 13% of respondents indicated that none of the proposed factors were relevant to their context, while only 4% declared they did not know or gave another answer, a relatively marginal share that attests to the importance of trust for the adoption of automated technologies at work.

Q9 In your view, which of the following factors are most important for building trust among your staff in artificial intelligence or automated systems in your company?

Base: All businesses (12826)



Country-level data reveal substantial variation in the factors considered most important for building staff trust

The priority placed on human oversight is particularly high in Greece (50%), Belgium and Ireland (47% each), while Bulgaria stands out at the other extreme with 19%, the lowest share in

the EU27. Staff training shows the widest geographic dispersion: it is cited by half of Cypriot businesses (50%) and 46% of Spanish firms, yet by only 14% in Italy and 19% in the Netherlands, suggesting very different national assumptions about the role of capacity-building in AI governance. Germany and the Netherlands lead on two dimensions simultaneously: transparency

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

about decision-making and worker involvement. Spain records the lowest score on accountability, with 7% citing clear responsibility in the event of mistakes, against an EU27 average of 24%.

Companies already using AI or automated systems and those that trust AI in decision-making consistently place greater emphasis on every trust-building factor

The gap is most visible on human oversight (40% among AI users vs. 30% among non-users) and

worker involvement (28% vs. 21%). Conversely, firms that do not use AI are twice as likely to select "none of these" (17% vs. 8%), suggesting a more disengaged relationship with the question altogether. Company size plays a consistent role: larger firms systematically assign greater importance to all factors, with training reaching 41% among companies with 250–749 employees against 30% among micro-enterprises, pointing to an association between company size and more formalised trust-building.

5. Technical specifications

Between the 20th March and 13th April 2026, Demoscopy carried out this Flash Eurobarometer 578 at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). It is a survey coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM 'Public Opinion and Citizens Engagement' Unit).

This Flash Eurobarometer covers a group of privately owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Mid-Caps with 1 to 749 employees across all 27 Member States of the European Union, active in the following sectors: Manufacturing (NACE category C), Industry (NACE categories B/D/E/F), Retail (NACE category G) and Services (NACE categories H/I/J/K/L/M).

A stratified (quota) sampling approach was applied to ensure sufficient sample sizes across different company size categories and sectors, with particular attention to achieving adequate

representation of Mid-Caps (with higher employee counts within the 1-749 range). This sampling strategy enables robust analysis across company size segments. Following data collection, statistical weighting was applied to adjust the sample back to the real distribution of SMEs/Mid-Caps by size category in each Member State, ensuring that final results accurately reflect the true composition of the target population.

Target respondents are business owners, CEOs, managing directors, CTOs or HR managers with decision-making authority or direct knowledge of their company's working conditions and operating systems. In total, 12,826 interviews were completed via Computers Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

This data collection mode is the most appropriate for this survey as it is the only mode that enables efficient access to interviewing business leaders and company heads within the required timeframe.

Number of interviews per country

Number of interviews per country							
EU		EU	12,826	LV		Latvia	506
BE		Belgium	502	LT		Lithuania	502
BG		Bulgaria	500	LU		Luxembourg	250
CZ		Czech Republic	500	HU		Hungary	506
DK		Denmark	502	MT		Malta	260
DE		Germany	502	NL		Netherlands	502
EE		Estonia	505	AT		Austria	503
IE		Republic of Ireland	506	PL		Poland	501
EL		Greece	501	PT		Portugal	502
ES		Spain	500	RO		Romania	500
FR		France	501	SI		Slovenia	513
HR		Croatia	504	SK		Slovakia	503
IT		Italy	501	FI		Finland	500
CY		Cyprus	252	SE		Sweden	502

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

Margin of error

Survey results are subject to sampling tolerances. The 'margin of error' quantifies uncertainty about (or confidence in) a survey result. As a general rule, the more interviews conducted (sample size), the smaller the margin of error. A sample of 500 will produce a margin of error of not more than 4.4 percentage points, and a sample of 1,000 will produce a margin of error of not more than 3.1 percentage points.

Statistical margins due to sampling tolerances
(at the 95% level of confidence)

various sample sizes are in rows

various observed results are in columns

	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	95%
n=50	±6.0	±8.3	±12.0	±13.9	±12.0	±8.3	±6.0
n=100	±4.3	±5.9	±8.5	±9.8	±8.5	±5.9	±4.3
n=200	±3.0	±4.2	±6.0	±6.9	±6.0	±4.2	±3.0
n=500	±1.9	±2.6	±3.8	±4.4	±3.8	±2.6	±1.9
n=1000	±1.4	±1.9	±2.7	±3.1	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4
n=1500	±1.1	±1.5	±2.2	±2.5	±2.2	±1.5	±1.1
n=2000	±1.0	±1.3	±1.9	±2.2	±1.9	±1.3	±1.0

6. Questionnaire

Interview mode: Telephone (CATI)

Target population: Privately owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Mid-Caps with 1 to 749 employees

Coverage: 27 EU Member States

Fieldwork dates: 20th March to 13th April 2026

Sample size: 12,826 interviews (approximately 500 per country)

The target respondents are business owners, CEOs, managing directors, CTOs or HR managers who have decision-making authority or direct knowledge of their company's working conditions and operating systems.

*The representativeness of the sample was ensured using a quota sampling approach, using interlocking or marginal quotas on the following core dimensions: **company size and sector, with stratification applied at country level.***

In this survey, “algorithmic management” or “automated systems” refers to digital systems that help managers organise the workforce and/or support their decisions about tasks, schedules, performance or staffing. These systems can be powered by AI or not and include both tools that automate decision-making and tools that make recommendations, while the final decision is taken by people.

ASK ALL

Q1. Which of the following best describes your company’s current situation regarding artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. You already use such tools extensively
2. You use such tools in a limited or experimental way
3. You do not use them yet, but plan to do so in the next 2 years
4. You do not use them yet, but plan to do so later
5. You do not use them and do not plan to
6. Don’t know / No answer

Source of AI / Algorithmic Management systems

ASK Q1b IF Q1 = 1 or 2

Q1b. Which of the following best describes how your company uses artificial intelligence or algorithmic management systems in the workplace?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

1. You develop and operate such systems mainly in-house
2. You buy, rent or use systems provided by external suppliers
3. You use a combination of in-house systems and external suppliers
4. Don't know / No answer

Location of external suppliers

ASK Q1c IF Q1b = 2 or 3

Q1c. Are the main suppliers of these automated systems located...?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Mainly in (OUR COUNTRY)
2. Mainly in other EU Member States
3. Mainly outside the EU
4. In a mix of EU and non-EU countries
5. Don't know / No answer

Possibility of customisation

ASK Q1d IF Q1b = 2 or 3

Q1d. To what extent can these automated systems be adapted or customised to your company's specific needs?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Fully customised or developed for your needs
2. Partly customised (standard system with some adaptations)
3. Not customised (standard system used as provided)
4. It depends (SPONTANEOUS)
5. Don't know / No answer

Areas of use

ASK Q2 IF Q1 = 1 TO 4

Q2. In which of the following areas, does your company currently use or plan to use artificial intelligence or automated systems?

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

(Scripting instructions: MULTIPLE)

1. Recruitment or screening of candidates
2. HR decisions about employees, such as hiring, promotions, and/or firing
3. Monitoring performance or productivity
4. Customer service or client relations
5. Logistics, planning or scheduling related to staff management
6. Health, safety or risk prevention
7. Selection and recommendations of trainings for workers
8. None of these
9. Don't know / No answer

Human oversight

ASK Q3 IF Q1 = 1 or 2

Q3. When such systems are used, how are decisions usually made?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Fully automated, with no human intervention
2. Automated systems take the decision, but humans may review following a complaint
3. Automated systems make suggestions, but humans always decide
4. Decisions are fully made by humans
5. Don't know / No answer

Perceived reliability (trust)

ASK ALL

Q4. In your view, how much do you trust these artificial intelligence or automated systems to support decisions in your company related to the workforce or staff matters?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Totally trust
2. Tend to trust
3. Tend not to trust
4. Do not trust at all
5. Don't know / No answer

Employee acceptance

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

ASK Q5 IF Q1 = 1 TO 4

Q5. In general, how do employees in your company react to the use (or the planned use) of such artificial intelligence or automated systems in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Very positively
2. Rather positively
3. Rather negatively
4. Very negatively
5. Employees are not really concerned about it (SPONTANEOUS)
6. Don't know / No answer

Impact on job quality

ASK Q6 IF Q1=1 TO 4

Q6. Overall, do you think these technologies have or could have a positive or negative impact on job quality (e.g. job satisfaction, safety, privacy, workload) in your company?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE)

1. Very positive impact
2. Rather positive impact
3. Rather negative impact
4. Very negative impact
5. No real impact on working conditions
6. Don't know / No answer

Main motivations

ASK Q7 IF Q1=1 TO 4

Q7. For each of the following, please tell me whether it is an important reason why your company uses, or would consider using, artificial intelligence or automated systems in the workplace in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

(ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE ANSWER PER LINE - RANDOMIZED)

- Very important
- Rather important
- Rather not important
- Not important at all

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

- Don't know / No answer

1. Reducing costs
2. Coping with labour shortages
3. Improving the quality of your products or services
4. Supporting managers' decision-making
5. Improving job quality
6. Improving work organisation (e.g. scheduling, physical movements, process optimisation)

Main obstacles to adoption

ASK ALL

Q8. Could you please tell me whether each of the following represents an important difficulty or not to implement AI or automated systems in your company in areas related to the workforce or staff matters?

(ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

(Scripting instructions: EXCLUSIVE ANSWER PER LINE - RANDOMIZED)

- Very important
- Rather important
- Rather not important
- Not important at all
- Don't know / No answer

1. High costs of investment
2. Lack of internal expertise to integrate these systems in existing processes
3. Uncertainty about legal or regulatory rules
4. Fear among employees of increased surveillance
5. Fears or concerns of employees other than surveillance
6. Lack of trust of employers or management in the technology

Factors to build trust

Q9. In your view, which of the following factors are most important for building trust among your staff in artificial intelligence or automated systems in your company?

(MAXIMUM THREE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

(Scripting instructions: MULTIPLE – MAX. 3- RANDOMIZED)

1. Clear information about how decisions are made using these systems
2. The possibility for humans to review or override decisions
3. Providing training to staff
4. Evidence that the system works accurately and reliably
5. Clear responsibility if mistakes occur
6. Involving workers or their representatives in the design and deployment of technology

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps

7. Compliance with legislation, external standards or certification
8. None of these
9. Don't know / No answer

Flash Eurobarometer

Workplace-related drivers and obstacles for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Management by SMEs and Mid-Caps