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# Digitalisation: Italy's delays and the European situation

***Before 2020, 37% of European companies had not yet adopted any advanced digital technology. What is the situation after the pandemic?***

The **digital revolution** has already transformed industries, production processes and ways of living and working. But although the adoption of digital technologies by EU companies is improving, the gap with the US has not yet been closed.

These are the findings of the ' **Digitisation in Europe 2021-2022**' survey conducted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) of more than 13,500 companies in the EU and the UK. Let us therefore discover in detail what the state of digitisation in Europe is, with a particular look at Italy.

## The state of digitisation in Europe

Before 2020, 37 per cent of EU companies had not yet adopted any advanced digital technology.

This pandemic has greatly accelerated the digital transformation of the European economy, making digitisation an integral part of the very survival of companies, as it has enabled them to continue their activities through remote working, eCommerce sales and online management of communications and meetings with customers, suppliers or employees.

To date, 46% of European companies have reportedly undertaken digital transformation actions as a result of the pandemic. However, the situation is very varied, with significant differences between countries, size classes and sectors.

From a territorial perspective, 48% of companies in Western and Northern Europe have invested in digital, compared to 43% of companies in Southern Europe and 37% in Central and Eastern Europe.

Looking to the future, the most digitised companies state that their main investment priorities are the development of new products, services or processes and the expansion of capacity. Less digital companies, on the other hand, state that they will mainly invest in the replacement of buildings, machinery and equipment. Overall, non-digital companies (20 per cent) state that they have no plans to invest in digital technologies.

In order to reduce the digital gap between the most and least digitally advanced companies, the EIB emphasised the need to intervene through three main areas

- targeted **financial support** for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- **advisory services** to non-digital companies on available financing;
- investment in **training and retraining of people**.

Only by intervening to help companies invest in the new technologies they need can we stimulate growth and help close the existing gaps in Europe, strengthening cohesion and reducing the gap with the US.

## Digitalisation in Italy: between delays and surprises

But what is the situation in Italy? Only 40 per cent of companies have undertaken digitisation initiatives: a number therefore lower than both the EU average and the average of southern European companies.

However, the survey reveals a positive fact regarding the adoption of hi-tech: in Italy, 65% of companies adopt advanced technologies, against 61% of the EU average. Such technologies include digital solutions such as 3D printing, Internet of Things, Big Data Analysis, advanced Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality.

As regards the size gap, in Italy only 9% of large enterprises are not digital, compared to 25% of medium-sized, 44% of small and 47% of micro enterprises.

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