

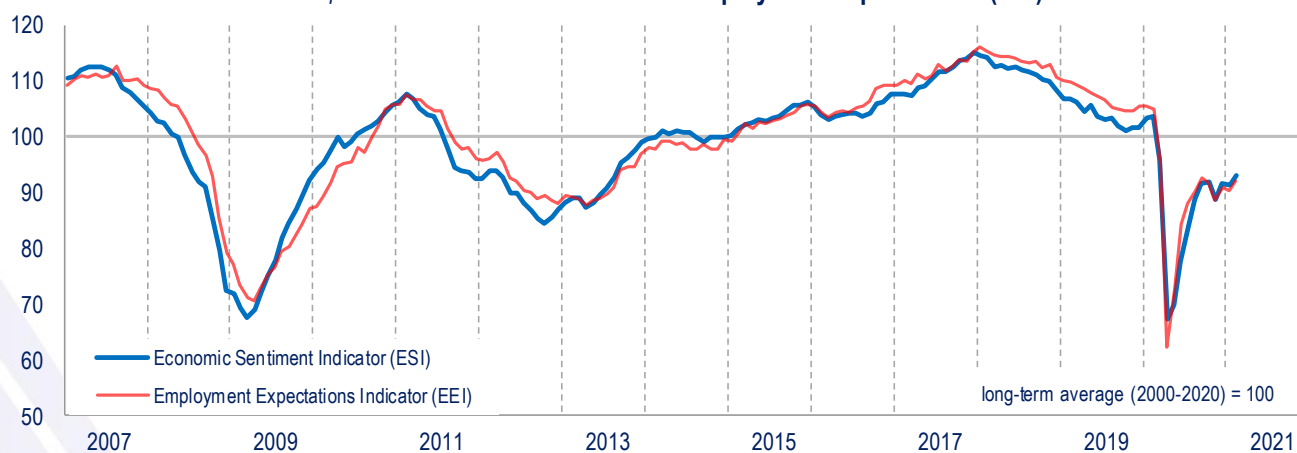
Business and consumer survey results for February 2021

Economic Sentiment and Employment Expectations picking up in the EU and the euro area

In February 2021, the *Economic Sentiment Indicator* (ESI) picked up in both the EU (+1.9 points to 93.1) and the euro area (+1.9 points to 93.4) compared to January. The *Employment Expectations Indicator* (EEI) also increased (+1.7 points to 91.9 in the EU and +1.8 points to 90.9 in the euro area).¹

EU developments

Graph 1: EU Economic sentiment & Employment expectations (s.a.)

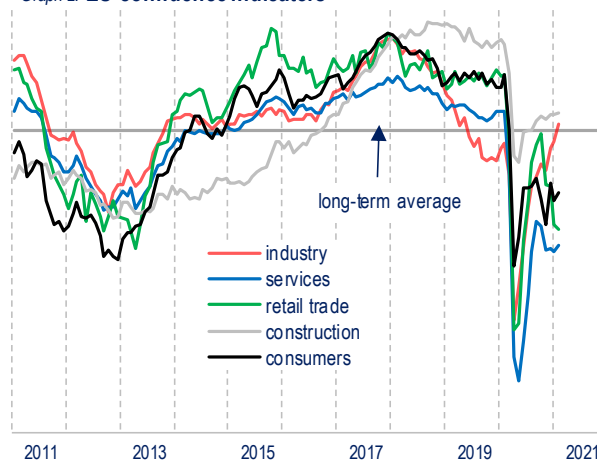


source: European Commission services

In the EU, the ESI's increase in February was driven by improving confidence in industry, services and among consumers, while confidence declined slightly in retail trade and remained broadly unchanged in construction. Amongst the largest EU economies, the ESI rose markedly in Poland (+4.7), Italy (+4.4), Germany (+3.0) and, to a lesser extent, in France (+0.9). By contrast, sentiment worsened strongly in Spain (-3.2) and, more mildly so, in the Netherlands (-1.3).

Industry confidence improved for the third month in a row (+2.4), thanks to positive developments in all its three components. While managers' *production expectations* saw the steepest rise, also their assessments of the *current level of overall order books* and the adequacy of the *stocks of finished products* improved. Of the questions not entering the confidence indicator, both managers' views of *export order books* and their appraisals of *past production* improved. **Services confidence** picked up (+1.1), driven by managers' more positive assessment of the *past business situation* and improved *demand expectations*, while their assessment of past demand remained virtually unchanged compared to January. The small rebound in **consumer confidence** (+0.8) reflected an improvement in households' assessments of their *future financial conditions*, their *intentions to make major purchases* and, especially, their expectations about the *general economic situation*. Consumers' assessment of their *past financial situation* remained virtually unchanged. The slight further decline in **retail trade confidence** (-0.5) resulted from marked deteriorations of managers' assessments of the *past business situation* and the adequacy of the *volume of stocks*, only partially offset by a strong improvement concerning the *expected business situation*. **Construction confidence** remained broadly unchanged (+0.3), as

Graph 2: EU confidence indicators²

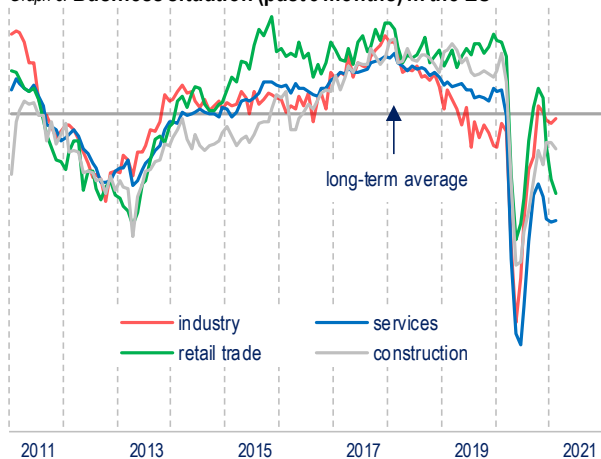


¹ The Employment Expectations Indicator in for France was revised compared to the January press release, the net effect being an upward revision of the EEI for January by 0.2 points to 90.2 in the EU and by 0.3 points in the euro area to 89.1.

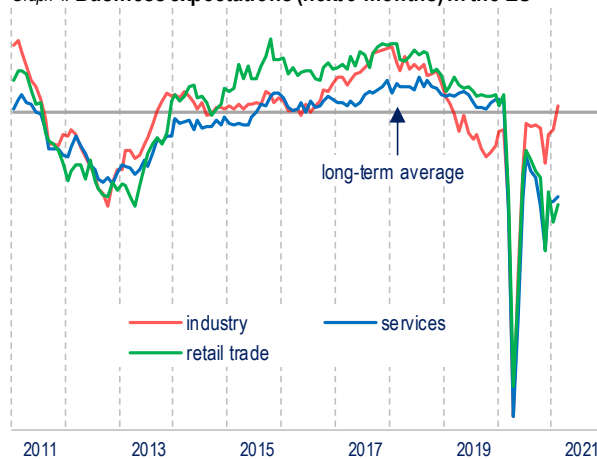
² The graph presents standardised series to correct for differences in means and standard deviations.

managers' improved appraisal of the *level of order books* was mostly offset by more muted *employment expectations*. **Financial services confidence** (not included in the ESI) dropped substantially in February (-4.5). However, while manager's appraisals of *past demand* and the *past business situation* worsened significantly, their *demand expectations* improved markedly.

Graph 3: Business situation (past 3 months) in the EU²



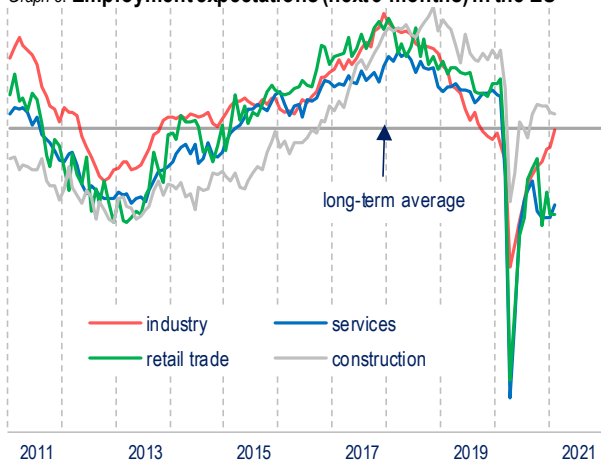
Graph 4: Business expectations (next 3 months) in the EU²



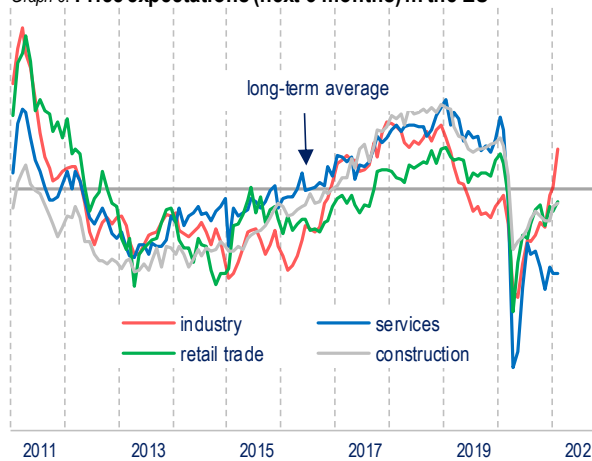
The increase in the **Employment Expectations Indicator** (+1.7) was driven by upgraded employment plans in industry and services. Retail trade managers' employment plans remained broadly unchanged, while managers in the construction sector expected employment in their firms to decrease over the next three months. Consumers' unemployment expectations, which are not included in the headline indicator, improved.

Managers' **selling price expectations** firmed in retail trade, construction and, very markedly so, in industry, driven by manufacturers of intermediate goods. Selling price expectations remained virtually unchanged in services. Consumer price expectations increased slightly.

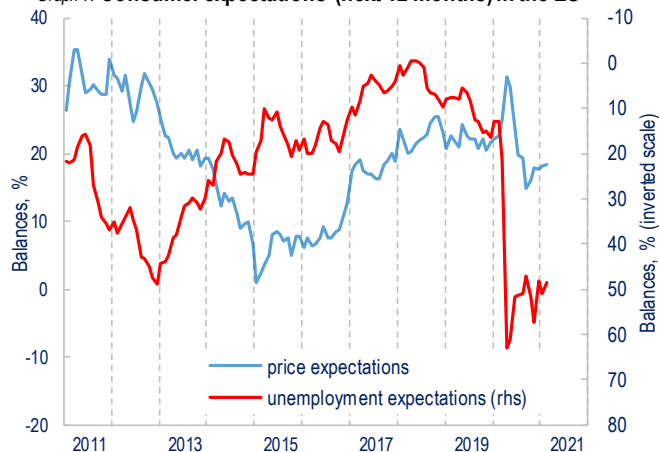
Graph 5: Employment expectations (next 3 months) in the EU²



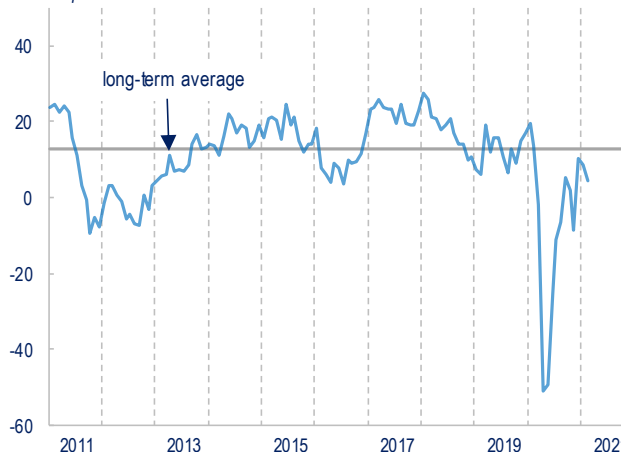
Graph 6: Price expectations (next 3 months) in the EU²



Graph 7: Consumer expectations (next 12 months) in the EU



Graph 8: EU Financial services confidence indicator



Data collection period: 1 to 22 February.

TABLE 3 (continued) : Monthly survey of services (s.a.)

	Since 2000 (*)						2020												2021	
	Min.		Ave.	Max.		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
	Date	Value		Date	Value															
SELLING-PRICE EXPECTATIONS (Question 6)	EU	04-20	-10.6	4.0	12-07	14.4	2.9	-10.6	-9.3	-4.1	-0.4	-1.3	-1.1	-2.3	-4.2	-2.4	-2.8	-2.9		
	EA	04-20	-9.8	3.9	12-07	14.1	2.9	-9.8	-8.6	-3.8	0.0	-1.0	-0.9	-2.1	-4.0	-2.0	-3.1	-3.2		
	BE	01-10	-13.8	7.4	07-08	28.8	6.3	-1.2	0.8	2.9	5.6	2.7	4.1	2.5	3.8	5.8	-1.5	4.7		
	BG	01-11	-11.9	5.5	07-04	37.5	2.1	-9.5	-8.1	-4.5	-2.6	-2.5	-1.8	-0.7	-3.8	-4.3	-3.6	-0.4		
	CZ	05-20	-12.6	4.3	01-04	23.6	4.4	-9.6	-12.6	-3.1	-4.2	0.7	4.1	-5.1	-7.7	-2.3	3.2	5.1		
	DK	04-20	-18.7	-0.3	12-10	16.2	-2.2	-18.7	-14.3	-7.5	-6.1	-6.0	-5.0	-6.3	-9.0	-6.3	-5.7	-6.5		
	DE	04-03	-8.5	12.1	01-19	26.3	9.6	-0.9	3.5	6.0	10.0	10.3	8.5	7.5	5.5	8.0	5.8	5.9		
	EE	03-09	-31.5	8.2	01-18	26.8	10.5	-31.0	-26.3	-23.2	-13.4	-5.9	-9.9	-5.8	-7.9	-6.4	-5.6	-4.8		
	IE	08-09	-51.0	1.3	11-18	29.9	1.9	-10.7	-9.6	-7.7	2.6	7.1	-0.4	-4.2	-2.8	4.9	-0.6	8.4		
	EL	09-12	-40.2	-4.6	06-06	24.2	2.0	-17.9	-29.3	-32.6	-19.3	-12.3	-14.1	-18.4	-22.4	-22.4	-15.4	-12.4		
	ES	05-20	-19.0	2.6	09-04	20.3	1.7	-13.6	-19.0	-5.5	-2.6	-13.9	-8.7	-7.2	-9.7	-8.3	-7.9	-11.2		
	FR	07-09	-21.0	-3.4	12-00	7.1	-2.9	-19.0	-19.7	-12.1	-7.9	-7.3	-6.6	-11.1	-13.5	-10.1	-10.8	-12.6		
	HR	04-20	-19.8	-0.1	07-08	25.4	5.0	-19.8	-7.2	-7.7	-10.4	-1.3	-4.1	-3.0	-7.9	-5.7	-3.5	-3.5		
	IT	04-13	-15.6	-0.7	05-04	17.7	-5.2	:	-12.5	-7.3	-5.6	-6.1	-4.5	-4.4	-5.5	-5.5	-4.6	-5.6		
	CY	04-13	-38.9	0.3	06-03	72.7	-7.3	-27.5	-25.4	-18.1	-15.2	-10.0	-6.9	-13.7	-6.0	-8.7	-4.0	-18.3		
	LV	12-09	-31.1	5.4	12-07	35.8	-0.5	-16.7	-14.8	-9.5	-7.3	-4.3	-4.5	-4.5	-6.3	-3.7	-7.1	-6.2		
	LT	06-09	-23.0	1.4	08-06	20.8	7.7	-9.8	-4.1	-0.3	-1.1	0.3	1.8	0.2	1.8	2.1	4.0	6.1		
	LU	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		
	HU	02-09	-8.5	7.2	09-06	28.0	22.0	5.1	9.6	10.7	11.5	12.6	11.6	12.0	12.7	10.4	8.3	21.7		
	MT	11-16	-45.0	2.4	11-18	39.0	4.9	-19.2	-17.7	-12.7	-17.6	-16.5	-4.5	-10.3	-12.0	-8.6	-11.3	-6.9		
NL	08-09	-5.5	8.9	01-07	30.7	10.0	-3.8	-1.7	4.2	5.0	4.4	3.1	2.5	1.0	2.1	-0.1	3.1			
AT	05-09	-10.3	9.4	11-07	30.4	3.5	-0.8	-0.8	-4.4	2.7	2.8	0.6	3.8	-5.7	-2.7	-1.5	-1.5			
PL	04-20	-16.1	1.0	04-08	16.8	5.7	-16.1	-13.9	-7.6	-3.8	-1.7	-1.9	-1.1	-4.5	-2.0	-1.6	-0.1			
PT	04-20	-21.8	-0.8	11-05	13.7	-2.6	-21.8	-13.9	-14.5	-7.9	-6.7	-5.3	-4.6	-7.7	-8.1	-10.4	-15.0			
RO	02-21	-13.8	10.6	04-04	54.5	3.1	-12.0	-8.0	-12.2	-10.4	-10.4	-1.9	-12.8	-13.3	-12.3	-2.6	-13.8			
SI	02-10	-16.4	1.5	01-08	23.1	3.3	-13.7	-8.7	-9.7	-3.2	-2.5	-1.0	1.5	-1.3	-1.2	-1.1	-4.7			
SK	12-10	-17.5	10.6	07-02	68.9	19.9	15.2	28.6	8.2	10.4	5.5	5.2	19.6	-4.6	-9.3	-7.3	3.1			
FI	07-04	-25.1	8.1	01-08	40.7	12.0	-10.0	-4.7	-8.3	0.1	-4.1	-7.0	-12.4	-0.5	-3.7	-3.7	-2.4			
SE	05-20	-23.3	8.4	11-07	32.4	-1.2	-20.2	-23.3	-6.2	-0.2	-6.8	-7.3	-3.9	-5.5	-8.6	-1.8	-2.5			

(*) Minimum, maximum and averages are calculated over the period of availability which is not necessarily as from 01/2000.

(a) The indicator is the arithmetic average of the balances (%) for the questions on business situation and recent and expected evolution of demand.

TABLE 5 (continued): Monthly survey of retail trade (s.a.)

	Since 2000 (*)						2020												2021	
	Min.		Ave.	Max.		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
	Date	Value		Date	Value															
SELLING-PRICE	EU	08-09	-6.0	6.4	11-07	22.3	5.5	-5.9	-1.0	1.8	1.5	2.9	4.3	4.8	2.7	4.6	4.1	5.2		
EXPECTATIONS	EA	03-09	-8.7	5.7	11-07	21.7	3.9	-8.0	-3.1	0.1	-0.6	0.8	2.7	3.2	1.4	3.3	2.8	3.9		
(Question 6)	BE	12-20	-15.2	6.2	04-11	26.4	4.4	-7.9	-10.3	5.0	-2.7	0.3	5.6	10.0	-13.4	-15.2	1.5	7.3		
	BG	11-09	-9.2	9.8	07-08	45.8	4.3	-8.4	-5.5	0.5	3.0	-0.1	2.5	0.9	0.1	0.2	1.3	3.5		
	CZ	01-15	-11.9	4.8	08-20	27.6	8.3	22.4	22.3	18.7	22.7	27.6	21.0	15.4	15.7	19.2	14.5	22.0		
	DK	04-20	-16.4	-0.4	02-11	24.2	-2.0	-16.4	-10.9	-7.6	-3.1	-1.8	-1.7	-0.4	-0.4	-2.8	-5.5	-8.1		
	DE	04-20	-9.6	10.7	11-06	38.6	8.3	-9.6	3.0	-1.3	-2.5	5.5	8.8	10.9	12.0	18.6	11.5	11.9		
	EE	03-09	-35.9	28.5	04-11	54.9	35.3	2.4	2.5	14.3	25.0	27.3	22.8	21.3	18.9	13.1	15.2	22.2		
	IE	07-09	-51.4	8.1	11-07	39.0	13.7	-2.0	0.0	11.3	7.5	9.1	8.9	9.3	8.1	24.5	12.8	32.2		
	EL	06-12	-35.2	-0.4	05-08	33.6	13.1	4.5	-10.9	-9.4	0.6	5.1	-1.0	0.2	4.9	5.6	0.1	-0.8		
	ES	02-09	-18.6	4.3	01-05	28.7	4.5	-12.3	-7.5	-3.1	-4.9	-6.7	-4.2	-5.8	-8.8	-5.0	-2.7	-6.4		
	FR	03-09	-29.4	-2.8	11-07	14.0	-0.6	-6.0	-6.1	-2.0	-2.9	-0.4	-0.4	0.0	-4.9	-5.7	0.3	-1.6		
	HR	04-20	-16.9	1.2	06-08	31.6	6.4	-16.9	-10.9	-0.1	-9.3	0.8	-0.6	-5.3	-0.9	3.2	-3.3	-2.2		
	IT	08-05	-14.5	6.9	06-08	33.1	-1.8	:	-5.1	2.1	2.3	-5.2	-1.1	-2.8	-1.6	-3.6	-3.1	0.1		
	CY	04-13	-27.7	3.9	07-08	34.3	8.3	-5.6	-1.6	0.2	1.9	3.1	5.3	2.0	1.4	4.3	0.9	-3.3		
	LV	01-10	-22.5	19.1	05-04	55.7	5.0	-7.3	0.7	9.0	10.8	6.7	6.7	3.7	0.8	3.1	2.7	4.3		
	LT	07-09	-46.5	8.0	04-11	61.7	1.2	-6.7	-3.9	2.6	2.1	1.2	3.3	2.9	3.8	1.5	0.3	2.8		
	LU	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		
	HU	03-10	3.6	32.3	06-00	80.8	14.3	18.8	31.8	25.8	20.6	23.2	27.3	34.7	28.5	28.9	29.1	36.6		
	MT	02-19	-32.9	6.2	02-21	45.3	-7.8	5.9	13.0	24.8	-6.1	26.9	18.2	28.8	27.1	22.9	45.0	45.3		
	NL	11-10	-18.7	5.4	10-12	26.2	6.4	-2.6	0.5	4.9	2.9	-0.4	1.3	-0.2	-1.2	-1.8	-6.0	-1.2		
	AT	09-09	-1.0	13.7	02-08	34.1	7.1	4.6	5.5	13.7	17.0	12.7	12.3	20.7	10.9	6.1	5.4	21.7		
	PL	07-02	-7.0	14.1	03-09	39.4	22.5	6.2	8.8	14.6	14.5	16.6	14.8	12.7	9.4	12.7	17.5	15.1		
	PT	07-03	-21.5	3.3	07-05	25.3	0.8	-9.3	-8.5	-2.3	-1.8	-2.5	-3.7	-2.0	-2.6	-0.2	-1.1	-2.1		
	RO	01-16	-14.9	24.2	10-04	56.0	11.8	13.0	18.8	25.0	26.6	22.1	16.8	14.2	11.5	13.0	15.2	9.8		
	SI	03-09	-32.6	9.1	02-08	40.2	6.8	-5.1	-5.8	23.2	8.1	2.3	9.9	11.5	8.1	5.4	-6.5	-13.7		
	SK	07-09	-36.9	15.5	11-02	73.9	23.3	-3.7	-6.8	0.2	9.4	13.3	9.2	7.8	3.8	3.1	8.1	7.0		
	FI	03-15	-48.9	4.1	07-11	59.6	-3.4	-21.4	-11.3	-2.9	0.7	2.8	-0.5	-5.8	2.3	5.9	1.7	0.8		
	SE	07-05	-10.3	14.6	11-18	38.8	22.9	12.5	18.8	8.1	13.2	18.4	15.7	21.1	13.2	17.3	11.0	15.3		

(*) Minimum, maximum and averages are calculated over the period of availability which is not necessarily as from 01/2000.

(a) The indicator is the arithmetic average of the balances (%) for the present and the future business situation, and for stocks – with inverted sign.

TABLE 7: **Monthly survey of financial services sector** ^(a)

		Since 04/2006						2020												2021	
		Min.		Ave.	Max.		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
		Date	Value		Date	Value															
FINANCIAL SERVICES	EU	04-20	-51.1	12.6	04-06	43.3	-2.1	-51.1	-49.5	-25.4	-11.0	-6.5	5.4	1.7	-8.7	10.2	8.8	4.3			
CONFIDENCE INDICATOR ^(b)	EA	04-20	-51.9	11.1	04-06	42.6	-2.6	-51.9	-48.6	-22.8	-8.6	-4.8	6.7	3.3	-7.6	11.9	11.1	5.4			
ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS SITUATION OVER THE PAST 3 MONTHS ^(c)	EU	05-20	-63.4	9.8	04-06	38.6	0.6	-50.1	-63.4	-38.1	-22.2	-9.8	1.3	1.1	-6.8	6.2	8.9	0.3			
	EA	05-20	-62.4	8.7	04-06	39.6	1.5	-50.5	-62.4	-35.6	-18.9	-7.0	3.2	3.2	-5.2	8.1	11.9	1.6			
EVOLUTION OF DEMAND OVER THE PAST 3 MONTHS ^(c)	EU	05-20	-51.6	11.7	04-06	41.6	3.4	-41.6	-51.6	-34.4	-20.5	-12.2	3.0	4.5	-2.3	14.8	13.1	5.1			
	EA	05-20	-50.8	10.5	04-06	40.3	2.8	-43.8	-50.8	-31.8	-17.2	-10.1	5.2	7.1	-0.7	18.2	17.0	6.9			
EVOLUTION OF DEMAND EXPECTED OVER THE NEXT 3 MONTHS ^(c)	EU	04-20	-61.6	16.2	04-06	49.5	-10.2	-61.6	-33.5	-3.8	9.7	2.5	12.1	-0.4	-16.9	9.7	4.4	7.5			
	EA	04-20	-61.5	14.1	04-06	47.8	-12.1	-61.5	-32.5	-1.2	10.3	2.6	11.8	-0.3	-16.8	9.5	4.4	7.8			
EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT OVER THE PAST 3 MONTHS	EU	02-09	-11.2	5.6	01-07	23.3	2.5	-9.9	-10.9	-6.4	-5.1	-6.6	-3.5	-3.5	-4.1	2.7	0.7	-1.1			
	EA	03-13	-12.4	3.9	09-08	25.7	3.1	-9.7	-11.4	-5.5	-4.6	-5.9	-1.8	-3.7	-3.3	4.9	2.2	-0.6			
EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT EXPECTED OVER THE NEXT 3 MONTHS	EU	04-20	-26.6	7.2	04-06	30.0	1.8	-26.6	-17.5	-7.7	-2.2	-1.3	3.8	-4.6	-14.8	-0.1	10.5	2.8			
	EA	04-20	-26.6	4.8	04-06	29.5	2.7	-26.6	-17.5	-6.7	-1.7	-0.9	4.9	-4.4	-14.8	0.8	11.8	4.0			

(a) Data are not seasonally adjusted.

(b) The confidence indicator is the arithmetic average of the balances (%) for the questions on business situation and past and expected evolution of demand.

(c) Component of the confidence indicator.

Methods and definitions

The Commission's harmonised Business and Consumer Survey (BCS) programme, managed by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN), was set up in 1961, and its scope has since expanded considerably in terms of both countries and sectors covered. Six surveys are conducted on a monthly basis in the following areas: manufacturing industry, construction, consumers, retail trade, services, and financial services. Some additional questions are asked on a quarterly basis in the January, April, July and October surveys in industry, construction, services, financial services and among consumers. In addition, questions on manufacturing companies' investment plans are included twice a year (April and November). The surveys are conducted by national institutes in the Member States and the candidate countries based on harmonized questionnaires and a common timetable.

The data of the surveys is processed by DG ECFIN's Unit Economic situation, forecasts, business and consumer surveys (A3), Sector Business and consumer surveys and short-term forecast.

The **confidence indicators** are produced to reflect overall perceptions and expectations at the individual sector level in a one-dimensional index. For each of the six surveyed sectors, they are calculated as the simple arithmetic average of the (seasonally adjusted) balances of answers to specific questions chosen from the full set of questions in each individual survey.

The **Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI)** is a composite indicator combining judgements and attitudes of businesses (in industry, construction, retail trade, services) and consumers by means of a weighted aggregation of standardised input series.

The **Employment Expectations Indicator** is constructed as a weighted average of the employment expectations of managers in four surveyed business sectors (i.e. industry, services, retail trade and construction).

More information on methods and definitions can be found in the [methodological guidelines](#) section of the [BCS website](#). All press releases can be found [here](#). Detailed data results of all surveys are freely available for download in the BCS [time series](#) section of the website.

You can also contact DG ECFIN at the following address: ECFIN-BCS-MAIL@ec.europa.eu

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Upcoming releases: Flash Consumer Confidence Indicator

24 March 2021

Full Business and Consumer Survey Results (incl. ESI, EEI, sectoral CIs)

30 March 2021