



Survey on the access to finance of enterprises (SAFE)

Analytical Report 2017

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SUMMARY

Having sufficient access to finance is an important determinant for the development of an enterprise. It is a well-known phenomenon that SMEs¹ face different challenges when accessing finance compared to large scale enterprises (LSEs). LSE's for instance, have direct access to capital markets whereas for SMEs this holds to a lesser extent or they have no access at all. Ultimately, the specific financing needs of SMEs warrant specific policy actions.

In 2008, the ECB and DG Enterprises and Industry of the European Commission established the Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises (SAFE). These surveys, conducted across the EU Member States and several additional countries, were held in June-July 2009, in August-October 2011, in August-October 2013, in September - October 2014, in September - October 2015, in September - October 2016, and in September - October 2017. The most recent wave covers 34 countries: the EU-28 Member States as well as Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. The current report discusses the results of the September - October 2017 wave and presents significant developments over time.

Use of external financing

EU28 SMEs mention credit line or overdraft, leasing and hire purchase, bank loans and trade credit as the most relevant sources of external financing. These same four types of external financing were most relevant in both 2016 and 2015 as well. Regarding the sources of finance actually used, EU28 SMEs most often report using credit line or overdraft, leasing or hire-purchase, bank loans and trade credit. The use of these types has been relatively stable between 2015 and 2017.

In 2017, 29% of EU28 SMEs had applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit card overdraft. Of these applications, 75% were successful in the sense that these SMEs obtained at least 75% of the required amount. Comparable results are obtained for bank loans and trade credit. Regarding other forms of external financing, 16% of the EU28 applied for these, of which 79% obtained at least 75%.

Of the external financing obtained by SMEs, 36% related to amounts of less than EUR 100,000. The size of the most recently obtained loan varies strongly with enterprise size, where the largest amounts obtained were found in enterprises with over 250 employees.

SMEs reported the interest rates decreased slightly between 2016 and 2017.

Regarding the principal reasons behind loan application, fixed investment, inventory, and working capital were mentioned most often by EU28 SMEs.

¹ In this report SMEs are defined as enterprises with 1-249 employees (hence, enterprises without paid staff are excluded); large scale enterprises (LSEs) are enterprises with at least 250 employees. Within SMEs, a distinction is made between micro enterprises (1 -9 employees), small enterprises (10 -49 employees) and medium-sized enterprises (50 -249 employees).

Access to external sources of financing

In 2017, just as in 2015 and 2016, SMEs in the EU28 were generally positive about changes in the availability of various types of financing. However, slightly more SMEs reported deterioration in the availability of debt securities issued rather than an improvement in 2017.

The proportion of EU28 SMEs which reported that their needs for trade credit, equity, leasing or hire-purchase, or other types of loans had increased was higher than the proportion of SMEs reporting a decrease in their needs.

In the EU28, more enterprises experienced a decrease in interest rates than an increase. Additionally, a larger proportion of SMEs reported an increase rather than a decrease in loan size and loan maturity. In contrast, more SMEs reported increases in the non-interest rate costs of financing and collateral requirements than a decline.

Future outlook

66% of the EU28 SMEs expects moderate or substantial turnover growth. This proportion has increased consistently in each survey year since 2009. At the Member State level, SMEs in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Greece and Malta are most positive about their expected growth. Growth expectations are highest in industry and they increase with enterprise size.

EU28 SMEs are more confident when talking with banks about financing and obtaining the desired results (68%) than when talking to equity investors and venture capital firms (23%). These proportions have been rather stable since 2014

SMEs prefer debt financing over equity financing (6%).

Almost half of SMEs (47% in EU28) do not perceive any limitations in their access to future financing. Those that do perceive such limitations most often cite insufficient collateral or guarantees (13%) and interest rates and prices of financing (12%) being too high as the main cause. The larger enterprises have become, the fewer obstacles they see in obtaining finance. However, gazelles and high-growth enterprises less often report to perceive no obstacles in obtaining external finance than other enterprises.

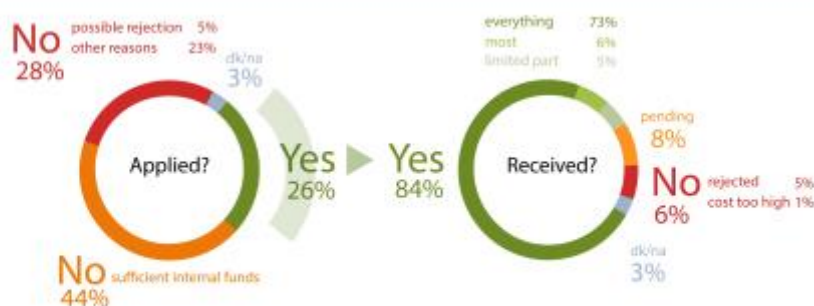
Nearly one out of four SMEs (23%) in the EU28 needs financing amounts of between EUR 25,000 and EUR 100,000 to realise their growth ambitions. SMEs active in industry require the largest amounts to realise their ambitions and the required amounts increase with enterprise size.

On balance, SMEs expect the availability of all types of financing to improve in the six months from October 2017 to March 2018.

Growth ambitions of SMEs increase



Bank loan applications



Availability of finance improves



Terms and conditions tend to improve



Remarks:

- Due to rounding, figures describing aggregates may differ slightly from the sum of the constituent parts.
- In the panels 'Availability of finance improves' and 'Terms and conditions tend to improve' categories 'not applicable' and 'don't know' have been excluded.

1. USE OF EXTERNAL FINANCING

1.1. Key findings

EU28 SMEs mention credit line or overdraft as the most relevant sources of external financing. Leasing and hire purchase are considered to be second most relevant, bank loans third most relevant and trade credit fourth most relevant. These same four types of external financing were most relevant in both 2016 and 2015 as well. Regarding the sources of finance actually used, EU28 SMEs most often report using credit line or overdraft, leasing or hire-purchase, trade credit and bank loans. The use of these types has been relatively stable between 2015 and 2017.

In 2017, 29% of EU28 SMEs had applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit card overdraft. Of these applications, 79% were successful in the sense that these SMEs obtained at least 75% of the required amount. Comparable results are obtained for bank loans and trade credit. Of the EU28 SMEs, 26% applied for a bank loan in 2017, and for 78% of these applications at least 75% of the amount required was actually obtained. Amongst EU28 SMEs, 35% applied for trade credit, and for 86% of these applications at least 75% of the amount required was obtained. Regarding other forms of external financing, 16% of the EU28 applied for these, of which 81% obtained at least 75%.

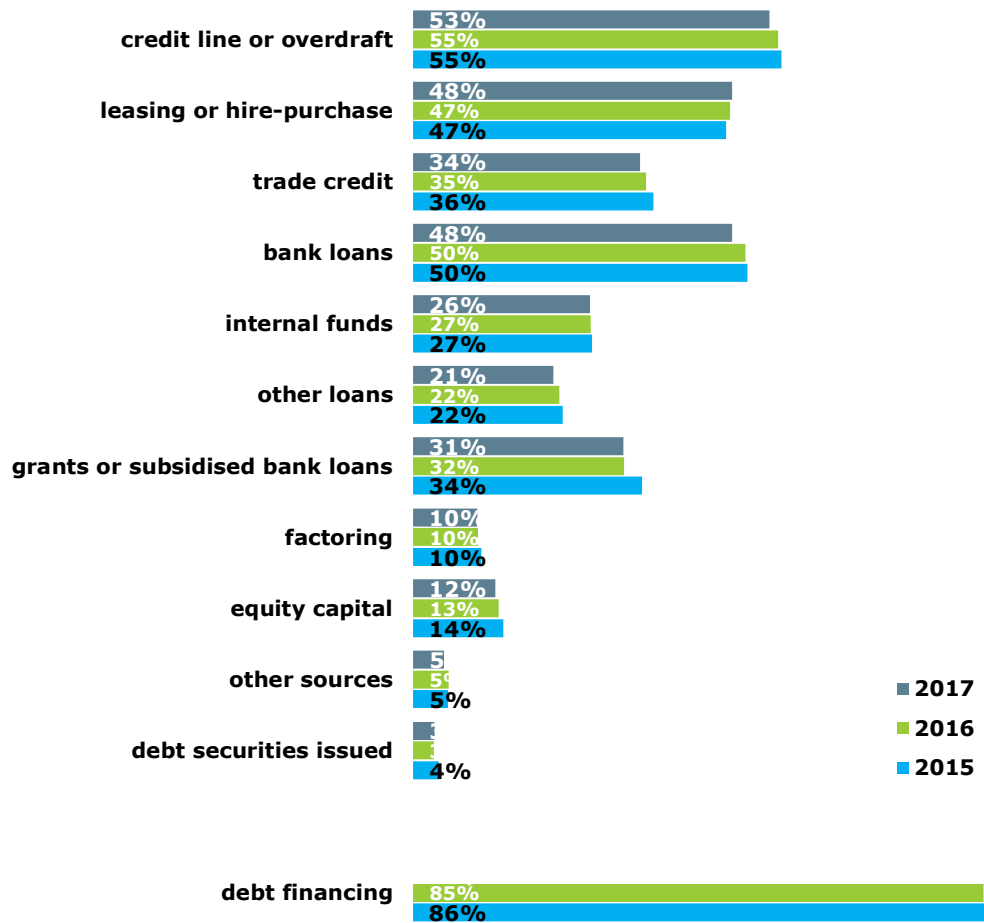
Of the external financing obtained by SMEs, 40% related to amounts of less than EUR 100,000. The sizes of the loans obtained varies considerably across countries. Small loans are most often reported by SMEs in Spain and Lithuania, and large loans are most often reported by SMEs in Austria and Germany. The size of the most recently obtained loan varies strongly with enterprise size, where the largest amounts obtained were found in enterprises with over 250 employees.

Regarding the principal reasons behind loan application, fixed investment, inventory, and working capital were mentioned most often by EU28 SMEs.

1.2. Relevance of sources of financing

The extent to which SMEs in the EU28 consider various funding sources relevant to them is presented in figure 1. Credit line or overdraft is mentioned by 53% of the respondents as being relevant in 2017, which is slightly lower than in 2016 and 2015. Leasing and hire purchase, together with bank loans are the second most relevant type of finance with 48% of the respondents mentioning this type of finance. Then, trade credit is also presented as a relevant type of financing followed by bank loan, and internal funds. 5% of the enterprises considered other sources, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, relevant to their enterprise. Equity, factoring, other sources and debt securities are mentioned as relevant by less percentages of the SMEs than the other types of finance.

figure 1 Relevance of different types of financing for SMEs in the EU28 in 2017, 2016 and 2015.



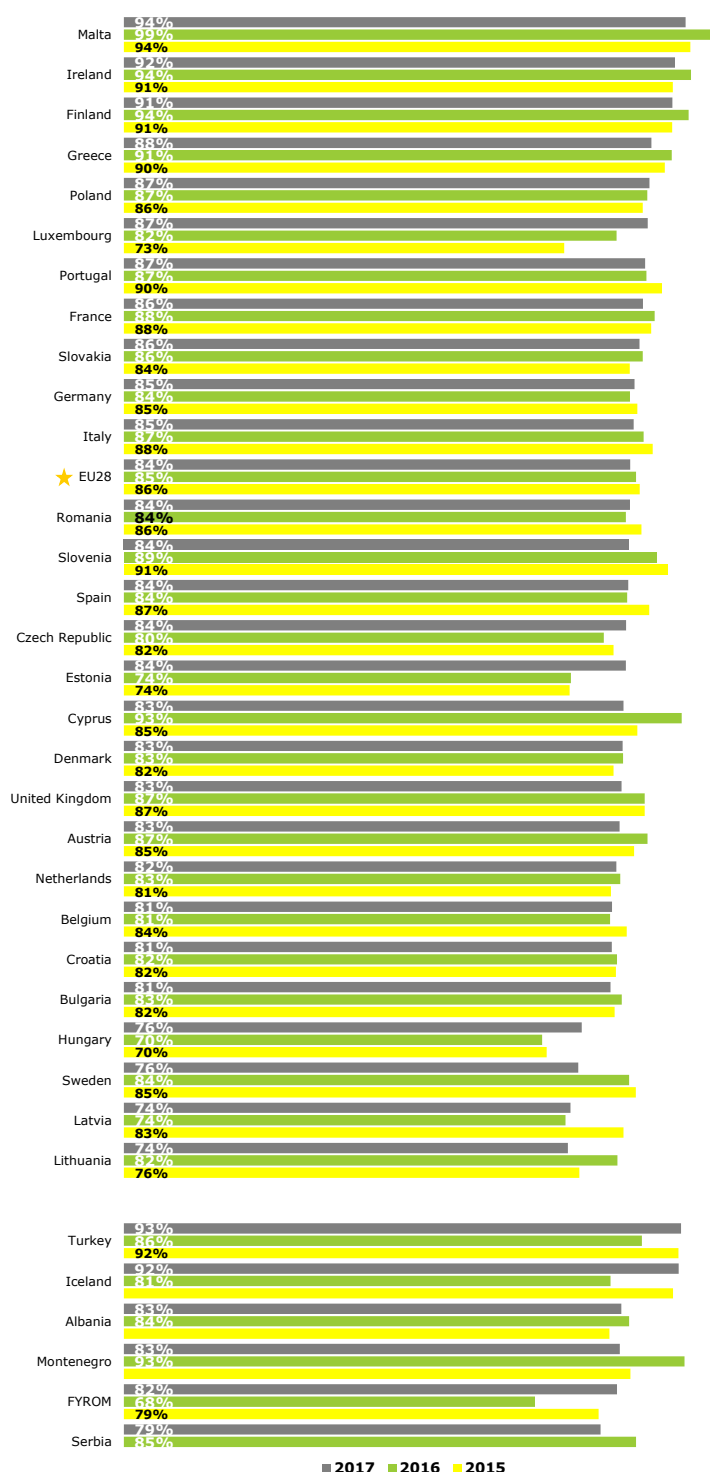
Q4. Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future?

Note: Debt financing: credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft + leasing or hire-purchase + factoring + trade credit + bank loan + other loan + grants or subsidised bank loan + debt securities issued

Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

In figure 2 the relevance of debt financing is presented by country. In all the countries surveyed the vast majority of SMEs indicated that at least one type of debt financing was relevant to their enterprise. For EU28 countries the proportion of SMEs that indicated debt financing to be relevant ranged from 94% of all SMEs in Malta, to 74% of all SMEs in Lithuania. For the non-EU28 countries the proportions ranged from 93% of all SMEs in Turkey, to 79% of all SMEs in Serbia. For most EU28 countries, the extent to which debt financing was relevant to SMEs did not change significantly in 2017.

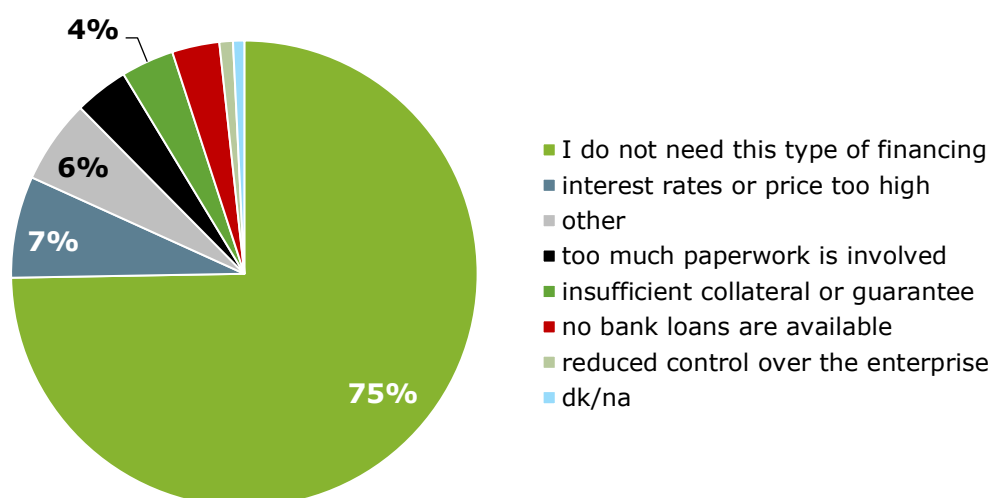
figure 2 Relevance of debt financing for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country in 2015, 2016 and 2017



Q4. Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future?

Note: Debt financing: credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft + leasing or hire-purchase + factoring + trade credit + bank loan + other loan + grants or subsidised bank loan + debt securities issued
Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 3 Reason why bank loans are not relevant for enterprise for SMEs in the EU28 in 2017



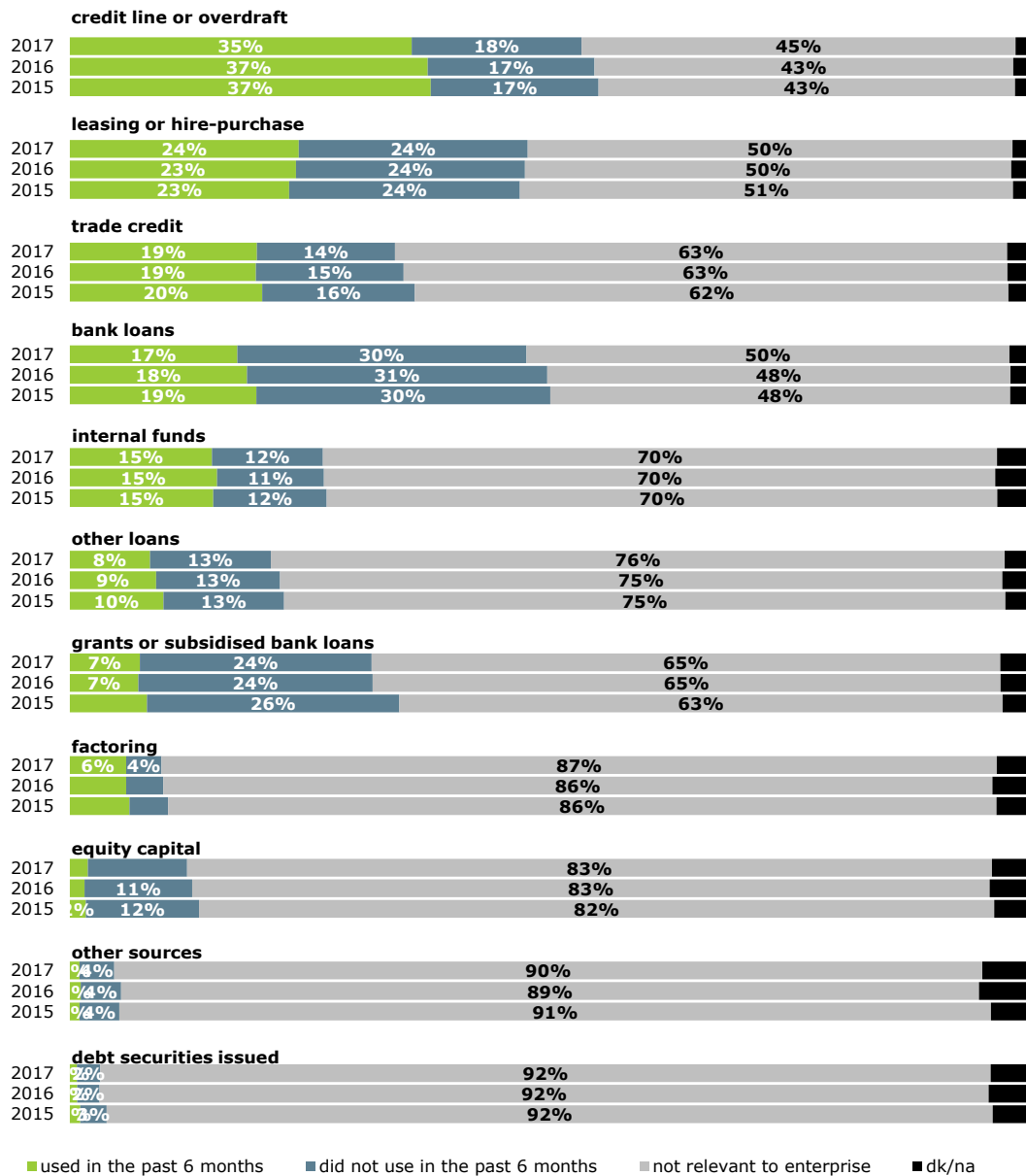
Q32. You mentioned that bank loans are not relevant for your enterprise. What is the main reason for this?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

SMEs which reported that bank loans are not relevant to their enterprise were asked why this was the case (figure 3). In 2017, 75% (74% in 2016) of SMEs in the EU28 for which bank loans are not relevant said this is because they do not need that type of financing. Of the SMEs in EU28, 7% (8% in 2016) indicated that bank loans are not relevant because of the high interest rates and other costs. The remaining SMEs reported various other reasons for the irrelevance of bank loans.

1.3. What sources of finance were used?

Figure 4 presents the percentage of enterprises that actually used the different types of financing. Credit line or overdraft have been used most often as sources of external financing. In 2017, 35% of all EU28 SMEs used credit line or overdraft in the past six months compared to 37% in 2015 and 2016. In 2017, leasing or hire-purchase (24%) and trade credit (19%) were the second and third most often used type of financing. Bank loans were used by 17% of the SMEs between April and September 2017, which was a slight decrease compared to the same period in 2016. In 2017, 15% of all EU28 SMEs made use of internal funds, 8% used other types of loans, 7% of the SMEs used grants or subsidised bank loans, and another 6% made use of factoring. Equity (2%), other sources (1%), and debt securities (1%) were the least popular types of financing.

figure 4 Use of different types of financing in the past six months for SMEs in the EU28 in 2014, 2015 and 2016



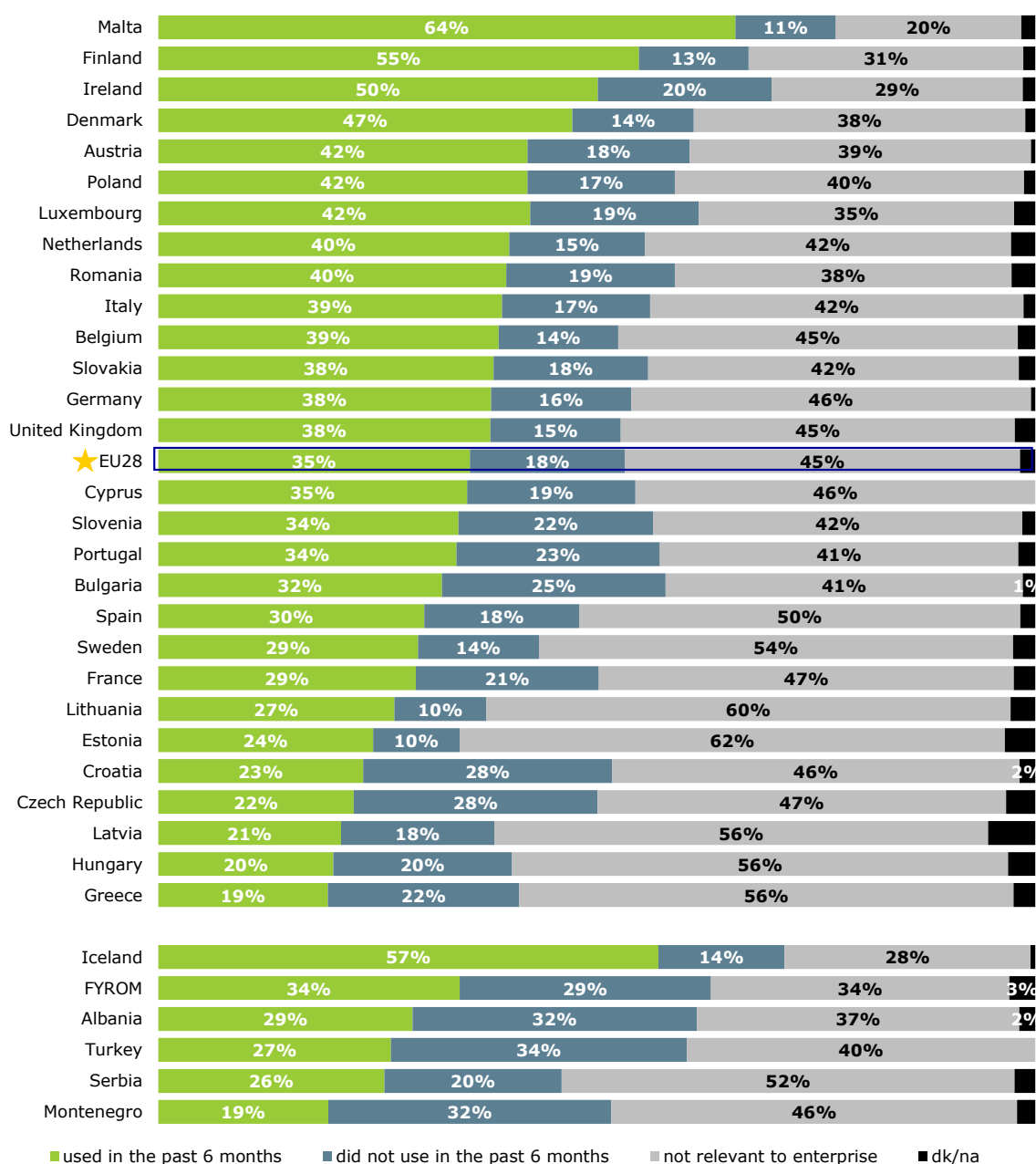
Q4. Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

1.2.1 Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of credit line and overdrafts. Figure 5 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 5 Use of credit line, bank overdraft or credit overdraft in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



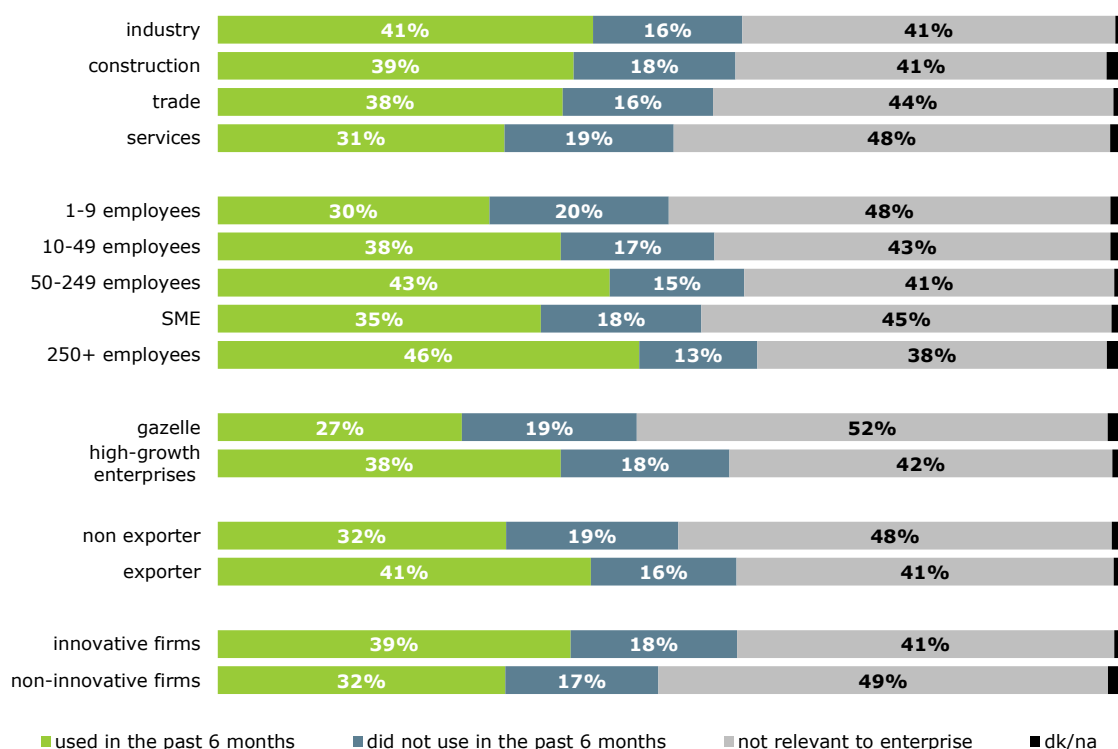
Q4c. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit overdraft - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained trade credit from your business partners in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The data in the figure shows that there are substantial differences between countries. In Malta, Finland and Ireland just over half of all SMEs used credit line or overdraft whereas in Hungary and Greece only 20% and 19% of all SMEs respectively, used this type of financing. Among non-EU28 countries, the Icelandic SMEs used credit line or overdraft most often, and Montenegrin SMEs did so least often.

Figure 6 presents a breakdown by enterprise characteristic by economic sector, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 6 Use of credit line, bank overdraft or credit overdraft in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4c. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit overdraft - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you retained earnings or sold assets in the past six months?

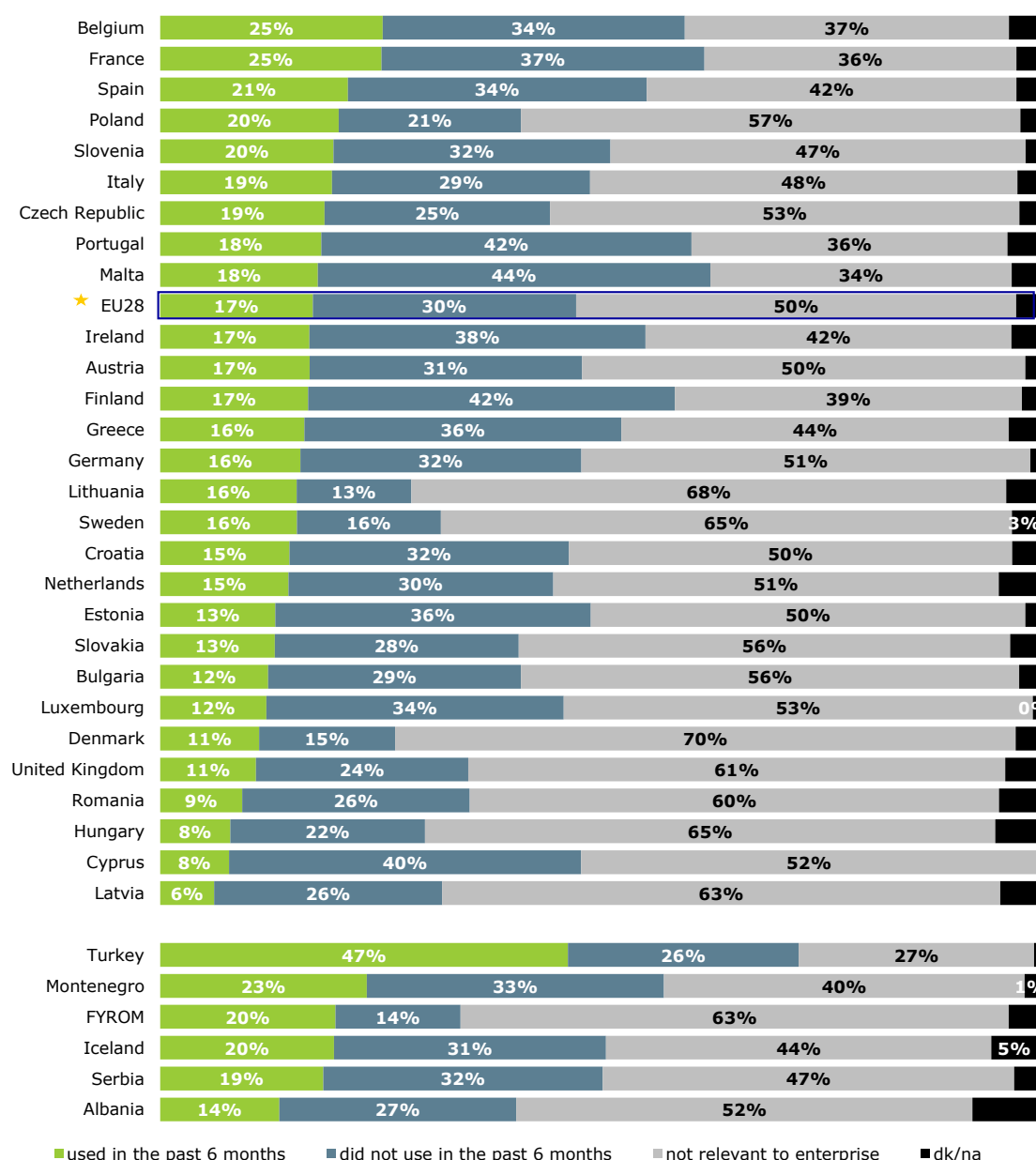
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Among the four sectors distinguished, SMEs in industry most often used credit line and overdraft and SMEs in services use this type of financing least often. The proportion of enterprises that used credit line or overdraft increases with enterprise size. The use of credit line or overdraft is most prevalent among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The use of credit line or overdraft occurs the least among gazelles: 27% of the SMEs in this category compared to 35% of all SMEs in the total EU28. The use of credit line or overdraft for high-growth SMEs is slightly higher than in the EU28. Exporting SMEs are more likely to use credit line or overdraft than their non-exporting counterparts. Furthermore, the use of this type of financing is more prevalent among innovative SMEs.

1.2.2 Bank loans

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of bank loans. A breakdown by country in figure 7 presents the results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 as well as Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM.

figure 7 Use of bank loan in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



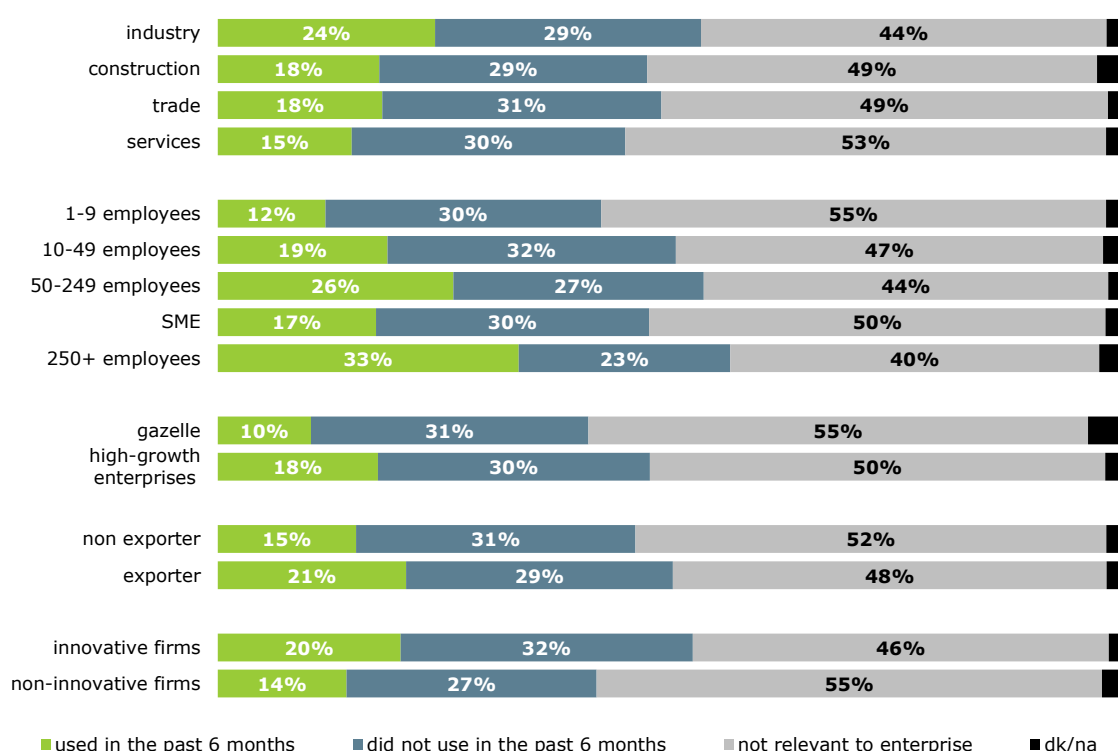
Q4d. Bank loan - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you taken out a new loan or renewed such a loan in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The figure shows that SMEs in France and Belgium made use of bank loans most often. Around a quarter of SMEs in these countries used bank loans between April and September 2017. A fifth of SMEs in Spain, Poland and Slovenia also made use of bank loans in this period. In contrast, in Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary and Romania less than one out of ten SMEs used this type of financing. Among non-EU28 countries, Turkish SMEs used bank loans most often and Albanian SMEs the least often.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 8 presents the results by economic sector, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status, and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 8 Use of bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4d. Bank loans - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you taken out a new loan or renewed such a loan in the past six months?

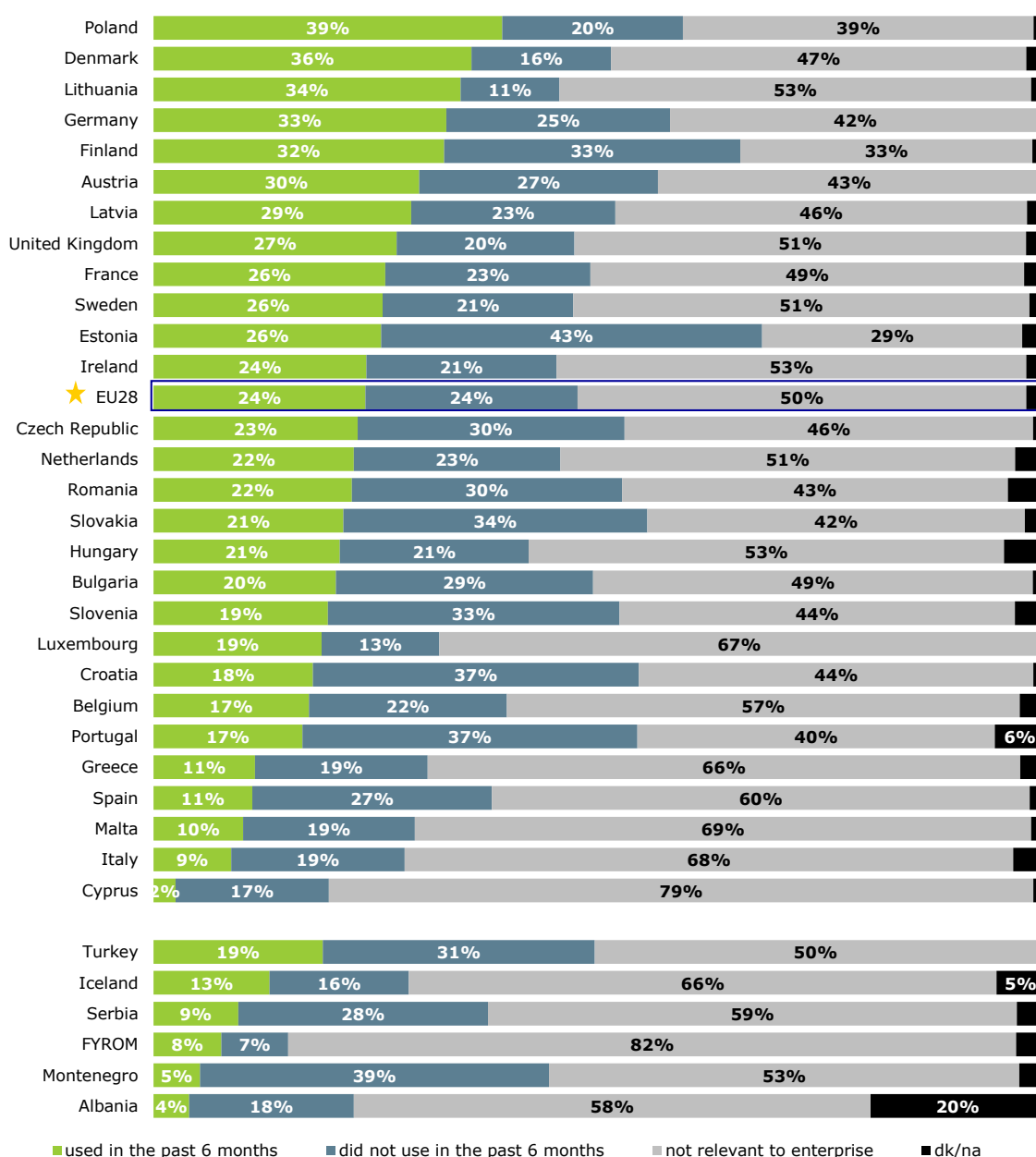
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Comparing across sectors, SMEs in industry most often used bank loans and SMEs in services used this type of financing least often. The proportion of enterprises that used bank loans increases with enterprise size. The use of bank loans is most prevalent among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). Between April and September 2017, 10% of gazelles used a bank loan compared to 17% of SMEs in the total EU28. The proportion of use for high-growth SMEs is slightly larger than that of SMEs in the EU28. Compared to non-exporting SMEs, exporting SMEs are more likely to use bank loans. Furthermore, the use of this type of financing is more prevalent among innovative SMEs.

1.2.3 Leasing or hire-purchase

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of leasing or hire-purchase. A breakdown by country in figure 9 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM.

figure 9 Use of leasing or hire-purchase in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q4m. Leasing or hire-purchase - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?

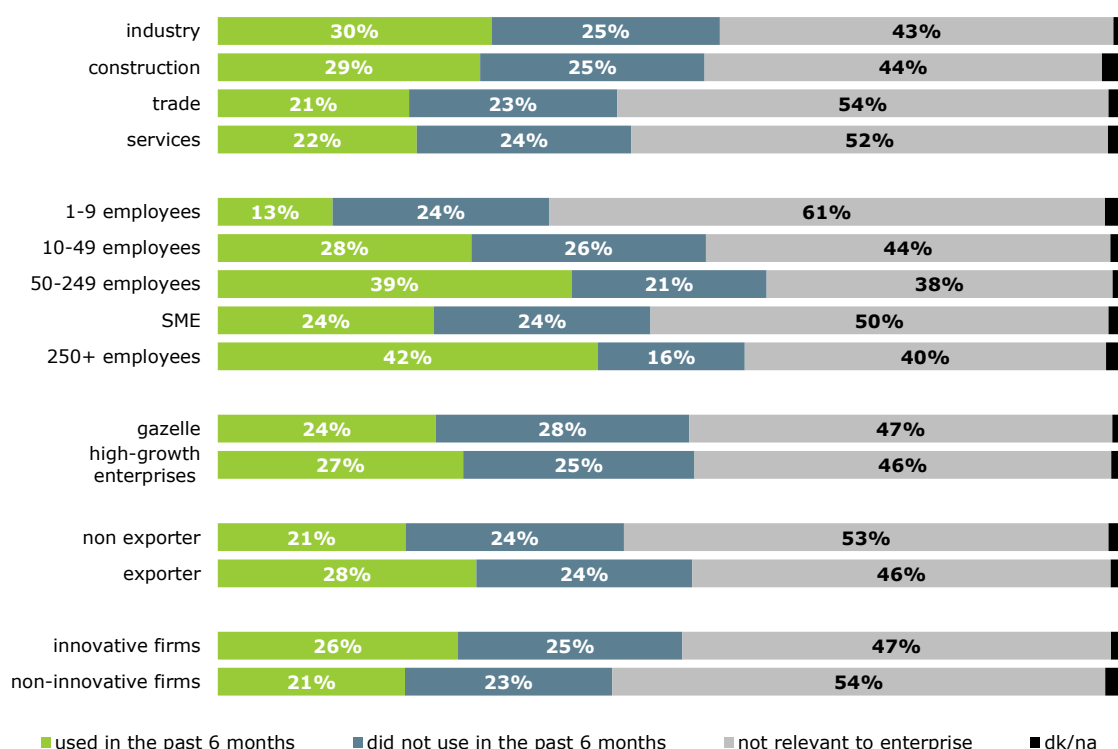
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Again, the use of this type of financing varies greatly among countries. In Poland, Denmark, Lithuania, Finland and Germany about a third of all SMEs used leasing or

hire-purchase, whereas in Italy and Cyprus only 9% and 2% respectively used this type of financing between April and September 2017. Among non-EU28, countries SMEs in Turkey use leasing or hire-purchase most often and SMEs in Albania used this the least often.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 10 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 10 Use of leasing or hire-purchase in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4m. Leasing or hire-purchase - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?

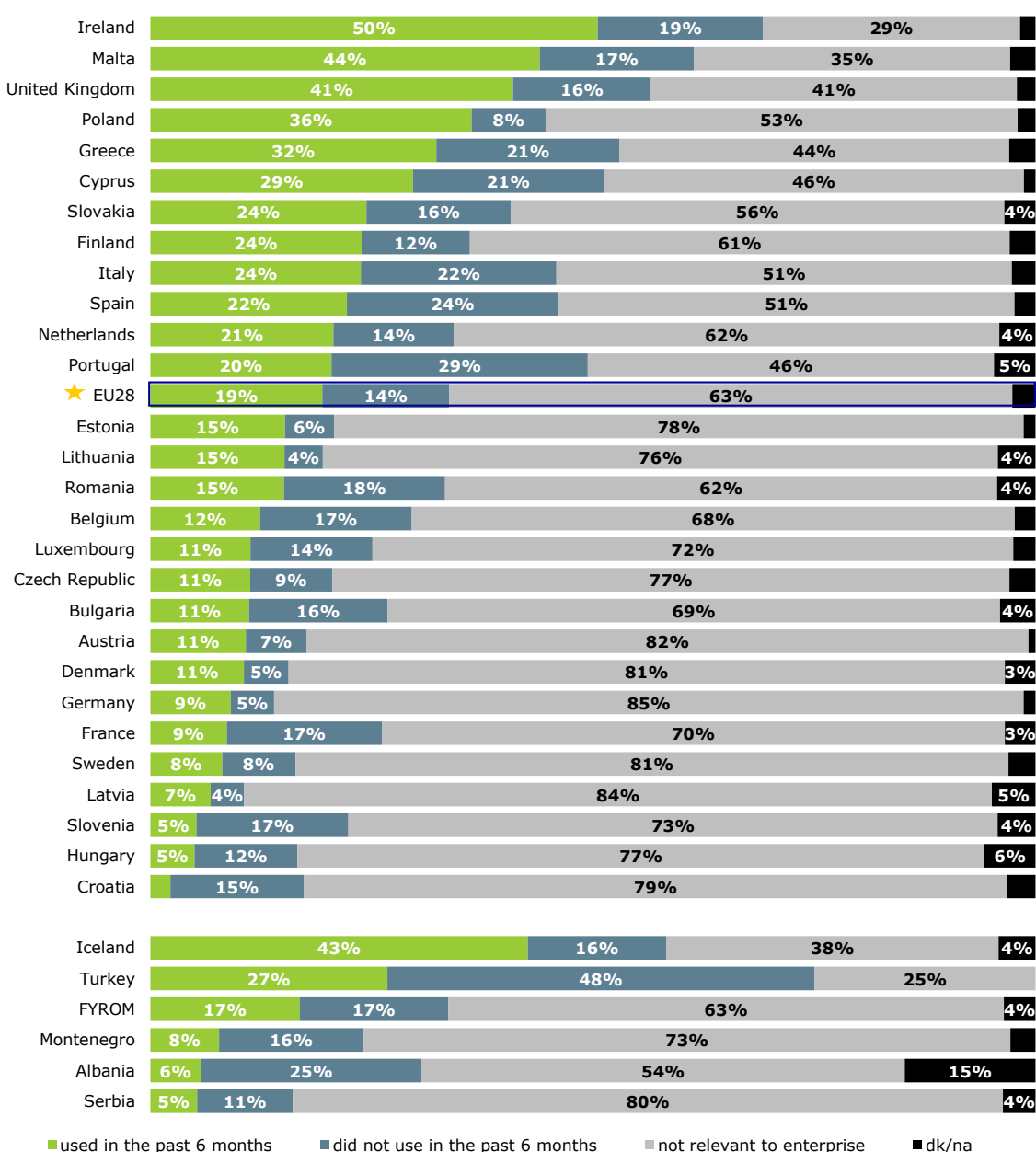
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Between April and September 2017, SMEs in industry (30%) and construction (29%) most often used leasing or hire purchase and SMEs in trade and services used this type of financing the least often. The use of leasing or hire-purchase varies greatly across size. The use is most prevalent among medium (50 to 249 employees) and large enterprises (with at least 250 employees), and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The proportion of use of leasing or hire-purchase for those SMEs which can be categorised as gazelles is the same as the SMEs in the EU28. The proportion of high-growth SMEs that used leasing or hire-purchase is higher than the SMEs in the total EU28. Compared to non-exporting SMEs, exporting SMEs are more likely to use leasing or hire-purchase. Furthermore, the use of this type of financing is more prevalent among innovative SMEs than among non-innovative SMEs.

1.2.4 Trade credit

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of trade credit. Figure 11 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 11 Use of trade credit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q4e. Trade credit - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained trade credit from your business partners in the past six months?

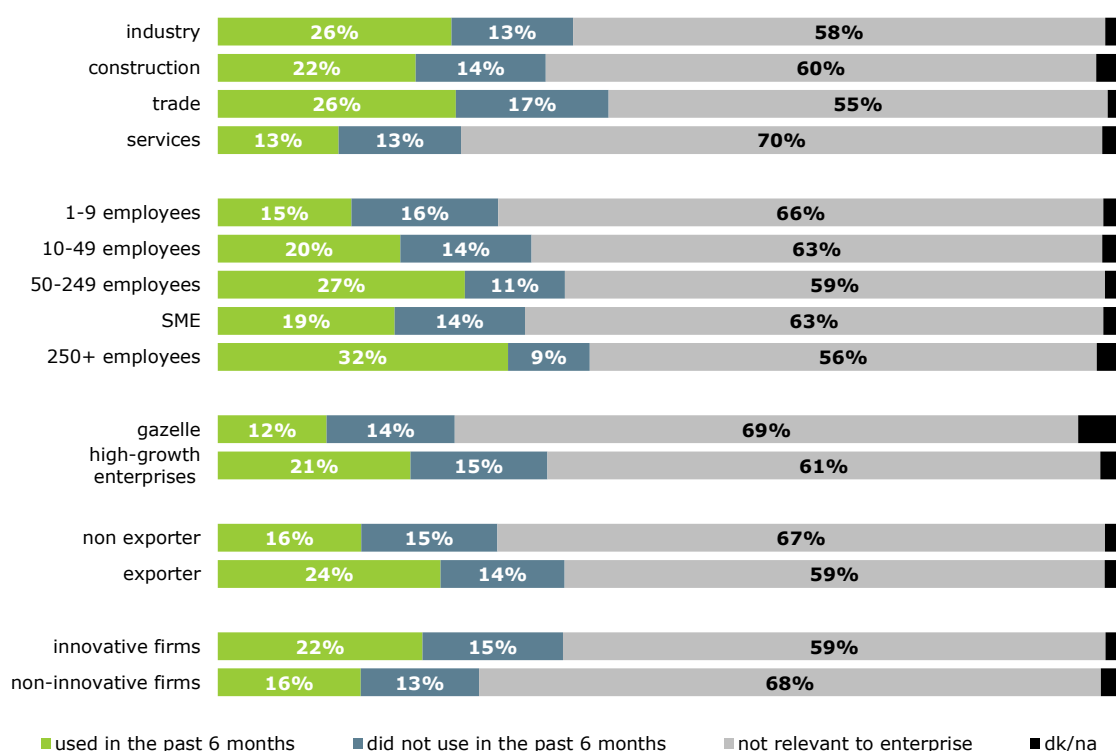
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The data in the figure reveal that there are substantial differences between countries. In Ireland about half of all SMEs obtained trade credit whereas in Slovenia, Hungary

and Croatia respectively only 5% or less of all SMEs obtained this type of financing. Also among non-EU28 countries there are large differences: SMEs in Iceland used trade credit most often and SMEs in Serbia used trade credit least often.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 12 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 12 Use of trade credit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4e. Trade credit - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained trade credit from your business partners in the past six months?

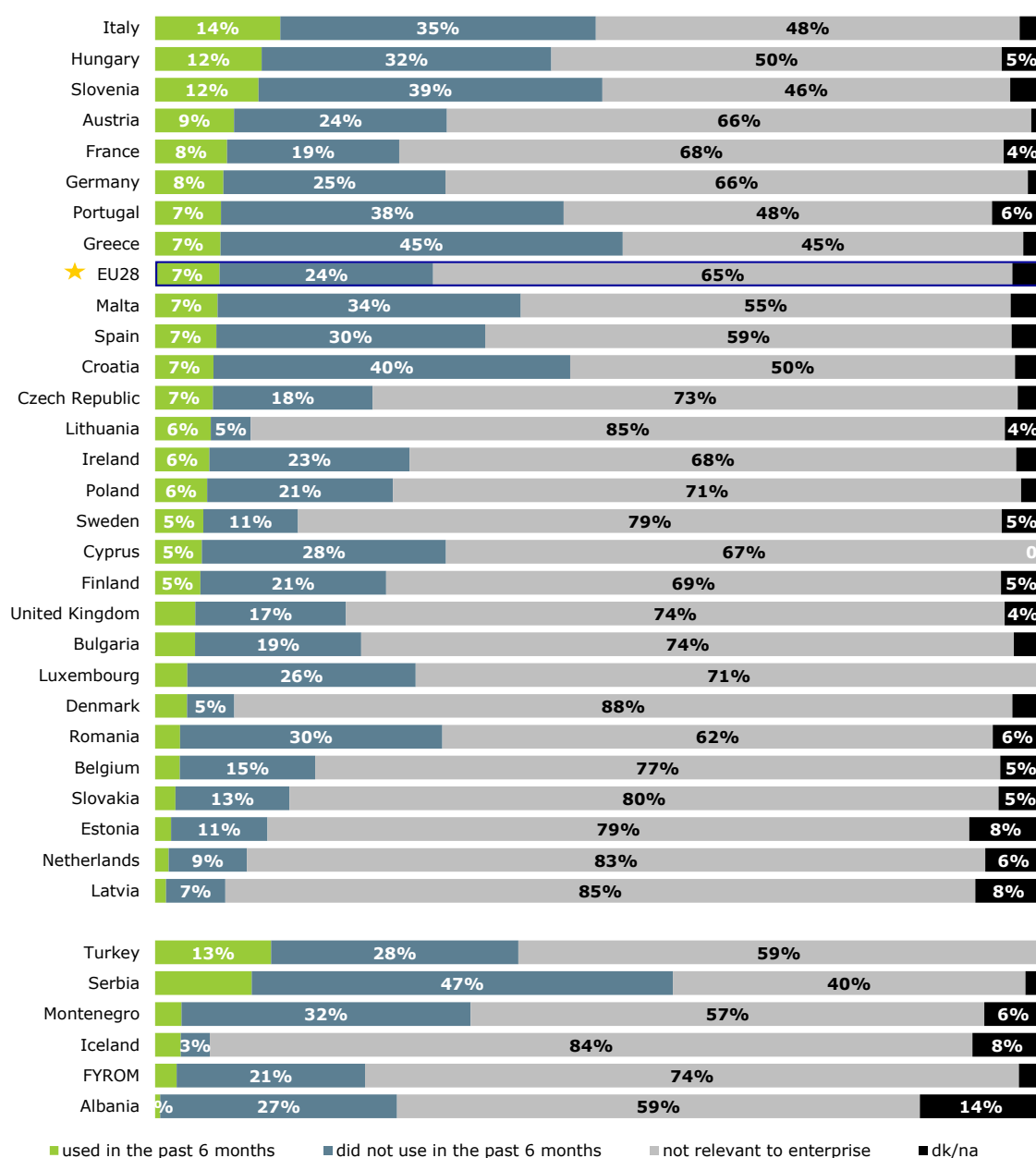
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Among the four sectors distinguished, SMEs in trade and in industry are most likely to have obtained trade credit and SMEs in services least likely to use this type of financing. The proportion of enterprises that obtained trade credit increases with enterprise size. The use of trade credit is most prevalent among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). Compared to non-exporting SMEs, exporting SMEs more often obtained trade credit. In addition, the proportion of SMEs that obtained trade credit between April and September 2017 is higher among innovative SMEs than among non-innovative SMEs.

1.2.5 Grants or subsidised bank loans

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of grants or subsidised bank loans. Figure 13 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in in each of the EU28 as well as in other countries.

figure 13 Use of grants or subsidised bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



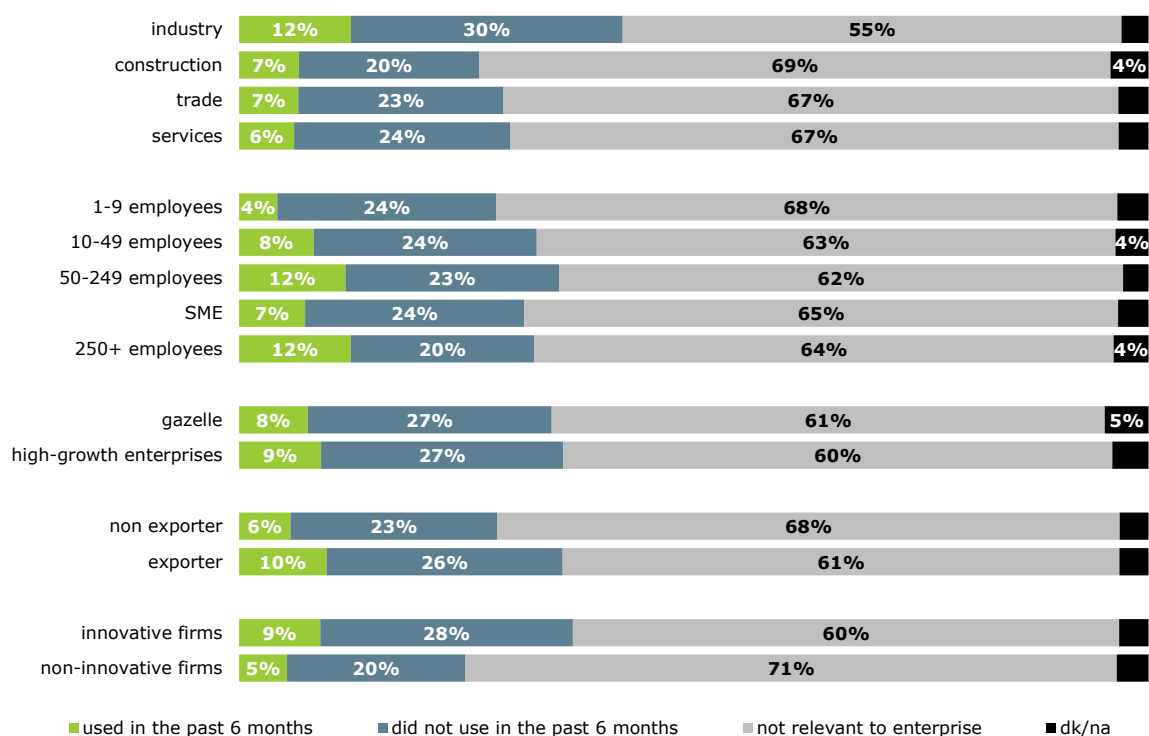
Q4b. Grants or subsidised bank loans - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Between April and September 2017, SMEs in Italy used grants or subsidised bank loans the most. In Latvia this type of financing was only used by a very small proportion of all SMEs. Among non-EU28 countries, the proportions of SMEs that used grants or subsidised bank loans ranged from 13% in Turkey to 1% in Albania.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 14 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 14 Use of grants or subsidised bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4b. Grants or subsidised bank loans - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?

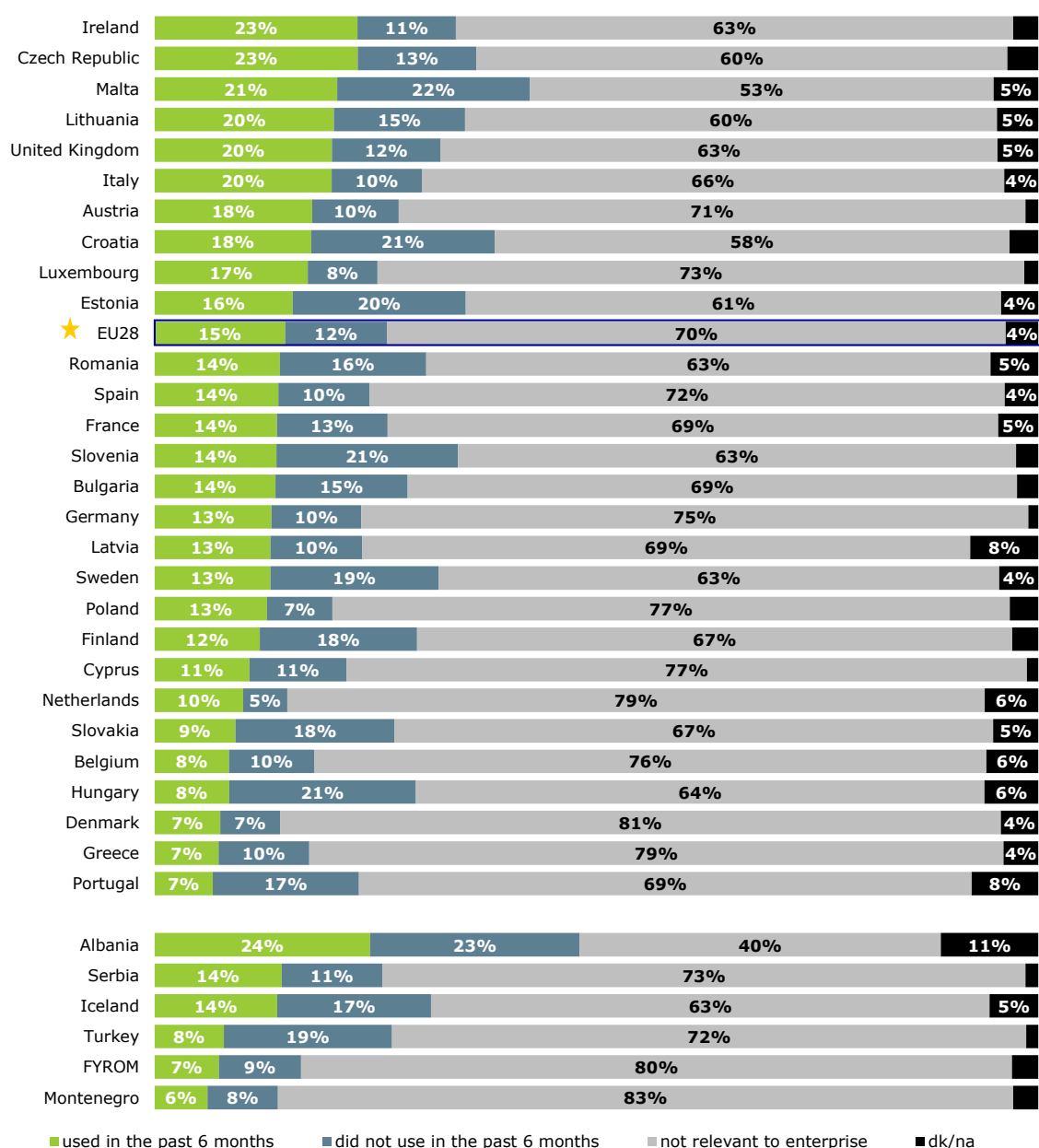
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

For the use of grants or subsidised bank loans, SMEs in industry are the largest users in comparison to other sectors. When comparing across size of the enterprise, the use of grants or subsidised bank loans is most prevalent among medium sized enterprises (50 to 249 employees) and large enterprises (at least 250 employees), and least prevalent among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The use of grants or subsidised loans is the least among gazelles: 8% of SMEs in this category versus 7% of SMEs in the total EU28. The proportion of high-growth SMEs that used grants or subsidised loans between April and September 2017 is slightly larger than the proportion in the EU28, and for gazelles this proportion is slightly lower. Exporting SMEs are more likely to use grants or subsidised loans than their non-exporting counterparts. In addition, relatively more innovative SMEs used grants or subsidised loans in 2017 than non-innovative SMEs.

1.2.6 Retained earnings or sale of assets

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of retaining of earnings or selling of assets. Figure 15 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 15 Use of retained earnings or sale of assets in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



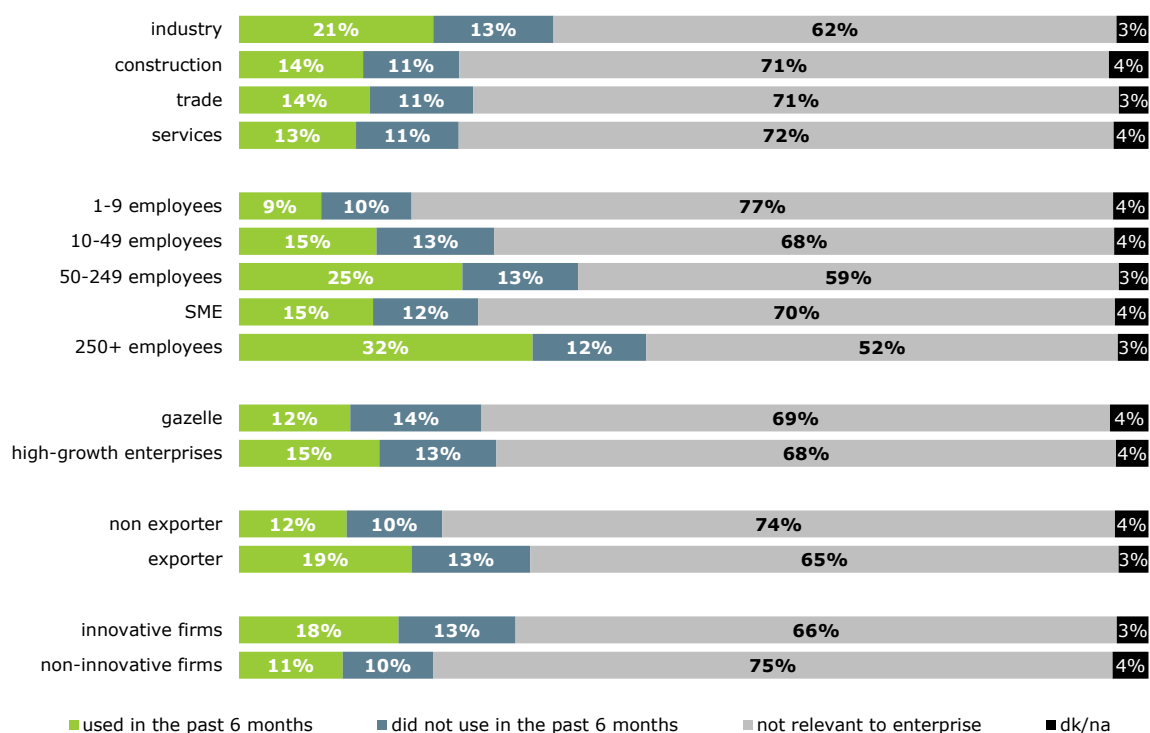
Q4a. Retained earnings or sale of assets - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you retained earnings or sold assets in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Between April and September 2017, nearly a quarter of all SMEs in Ireland and the Czech Republic retained earnings or sold assets. In Greece, Denmark and Portugal only 7% of all SMEs retained their earnings or sold their assets. Among non-EU28 countries, the proportions of SMEs that retained their earnings or sold their assets ranged from 24% in Albania to 6% in Montenegro.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 16 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 16 Use of retained earnings or sale of assets in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4a. Retained earnings or sale of assets - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you retained earnings or sold assets in the past six months?

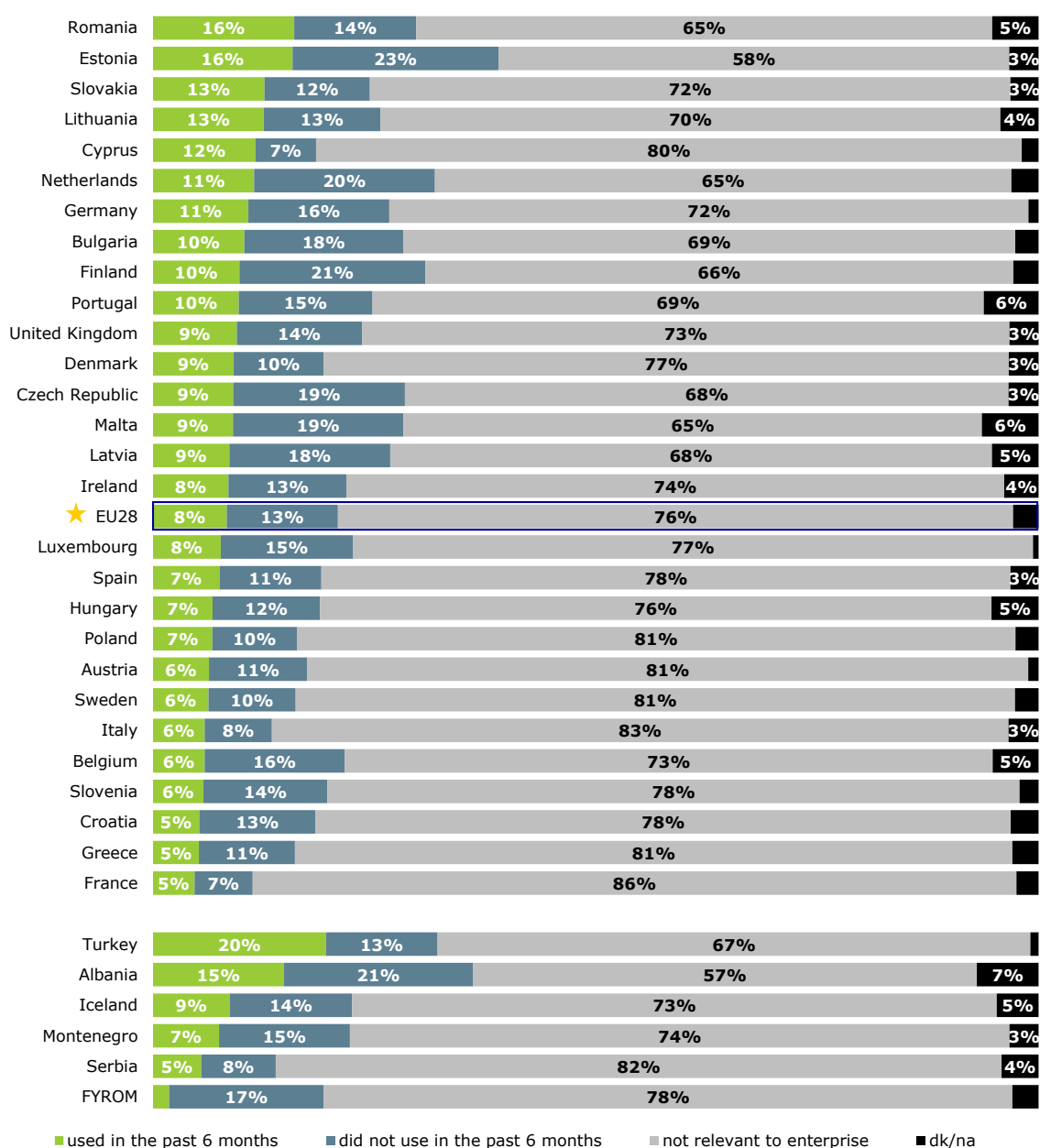
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Among the four distinguished sectors, SMEs in industry are most likely to retain earnings or sell assets. The relative number of enterprises that retained earnings or sold assets increases with enterprise size. Retaining earnings or selling assets is most prevalent among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The proportion of SMEs that retained earnings or sold assets is lowest among gazelles: 12% of SMEs in this category compared to 15% of SMEs in total the EU28. The proportion of high-growth SMEs that did this is on par with the EU28. Exporting SMEs more often retained earnings and sold assets in comparison to non-exporting SMEs. Furthermore, the proportion of SMEs that retained earnings or sold assets between April and September 2017 is higher among innovative SMEs than among non-innovative SMEs.

1.2.7 Other loans

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of other loans, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders. Figure 17 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 17 Use of other loan in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



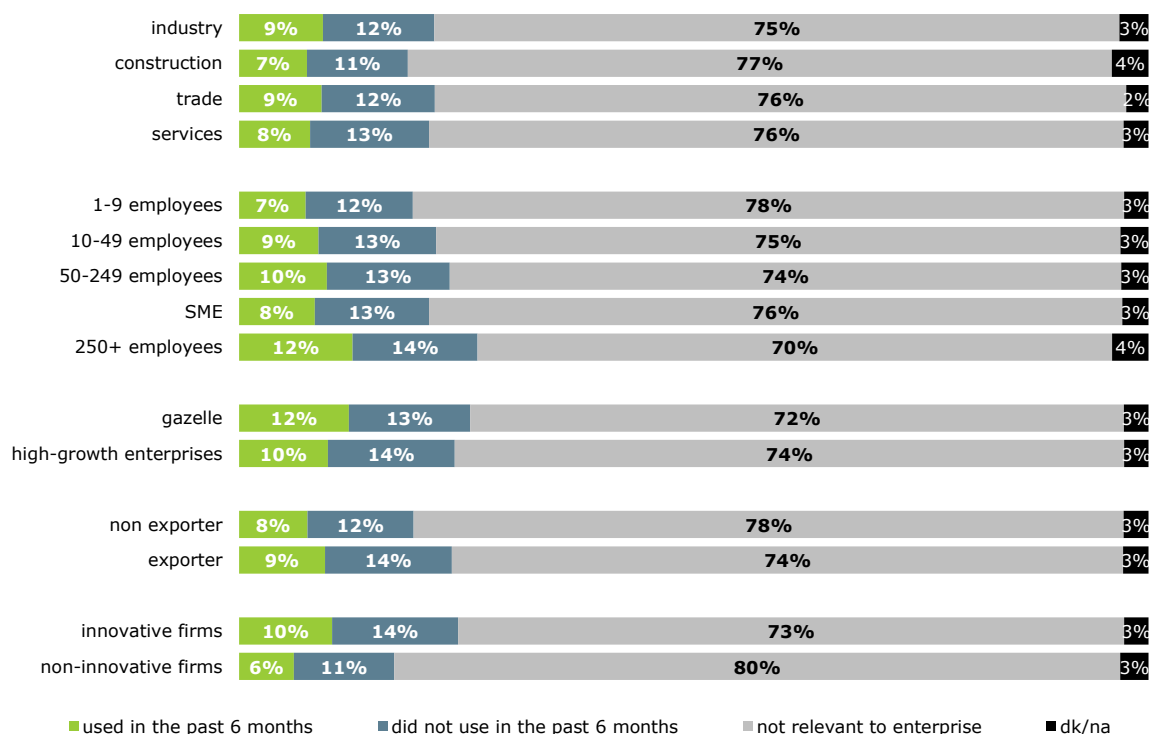
Q4f. Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you taken out or renewed such a loan in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The figure shows that SMEs in Romania and Estonia most often used other types of loans. The proportions of SMEs that used other types of loans between April and September 2017 range from 16% in Romania to 5% in Croatia, Greece and France. In the non-EU28 countries, SMEs in Turkey use other loans most often and SMEs in FYROM the least often.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 18 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 18 Use of other loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4f. Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you taken out or renewed such a loan in the past six months?

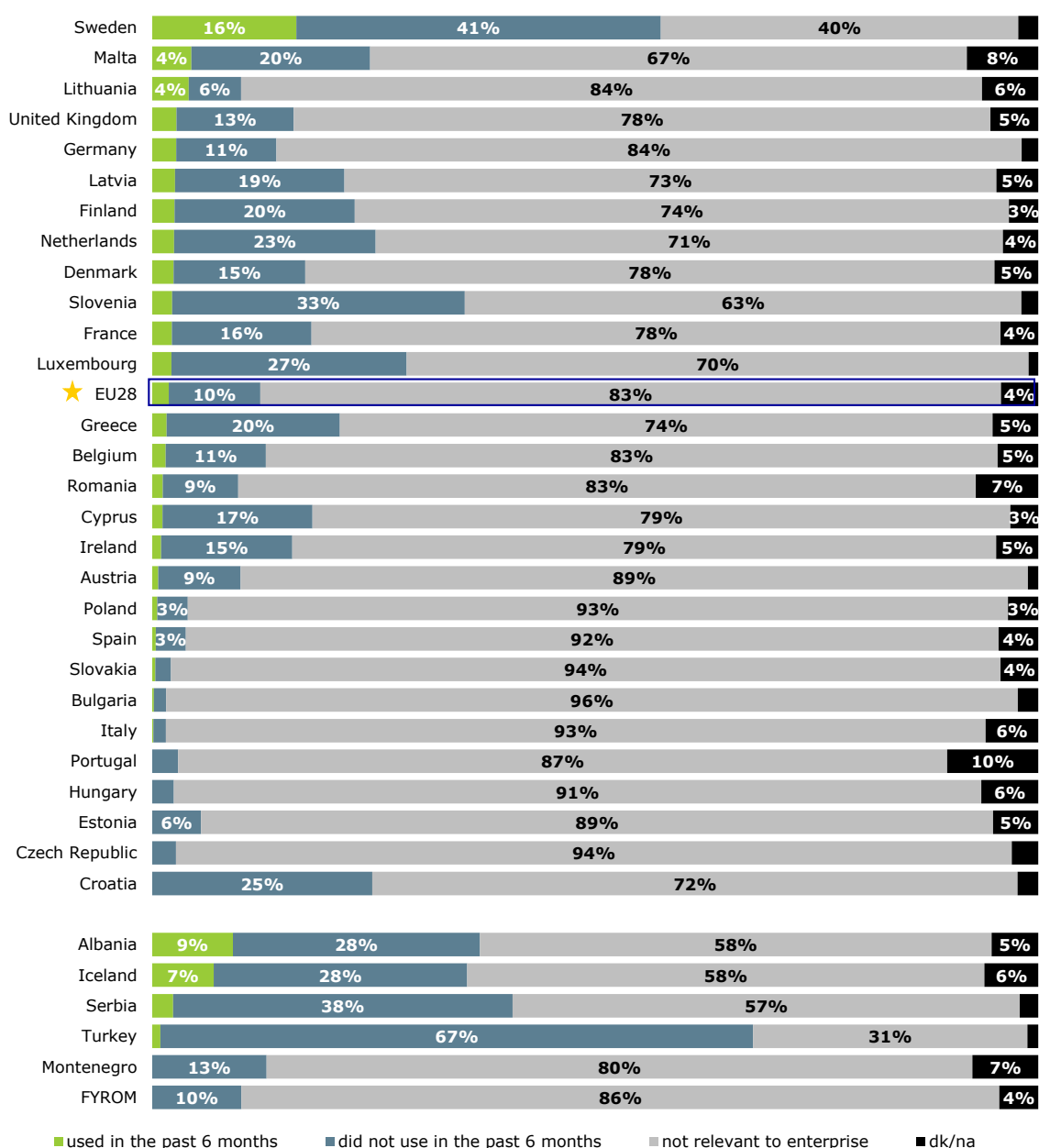
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

There are no large differences between the four distinguished sectors. In all sectors about one in ten SMEs used other loans. There is also only a small variation across enterprise size. The proportion of SMEs that have taken out or renewed other types of loans is highest among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and lowest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The proportion of SMEs that used other types of loans is highest among gazelles: 12% of SMEs in this category compared to 8% of SMEs in total EU28. The proportion of high-growth SMEs that used other types of loans is slightly higher than the EU28. Also, for exporting and non-exporting SMEs and SMEs there were no large differences in the extent to which other types of loans were used; there were however slight differences between innovative and non-innovative enterprises.

1.2.8 Equity capital

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of equity capital. Figure 19 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 19 Use of equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q4j. Equity capital - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you issued equity in the past six months?

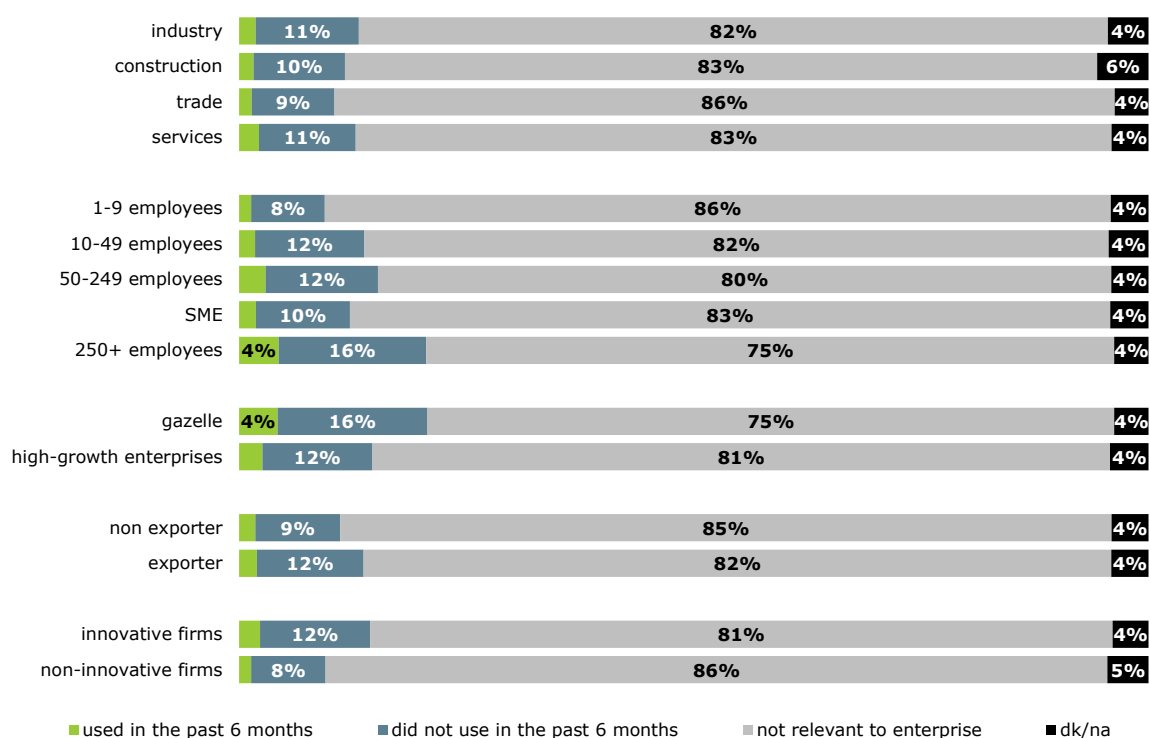
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Between April and September 2017, equity was issued by only a small proportion of the European SMEs. The proportions of SMEs that issued equity range from 16% in

Sweden to zero in Italy, Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Estonia. Of the non-EU28 countries SMEs in Iceland and Albania reported to have the most issued equity between April and September 2017.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 20 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 20 Use of equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4j. Equity capital - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you issued equity in the past six months?

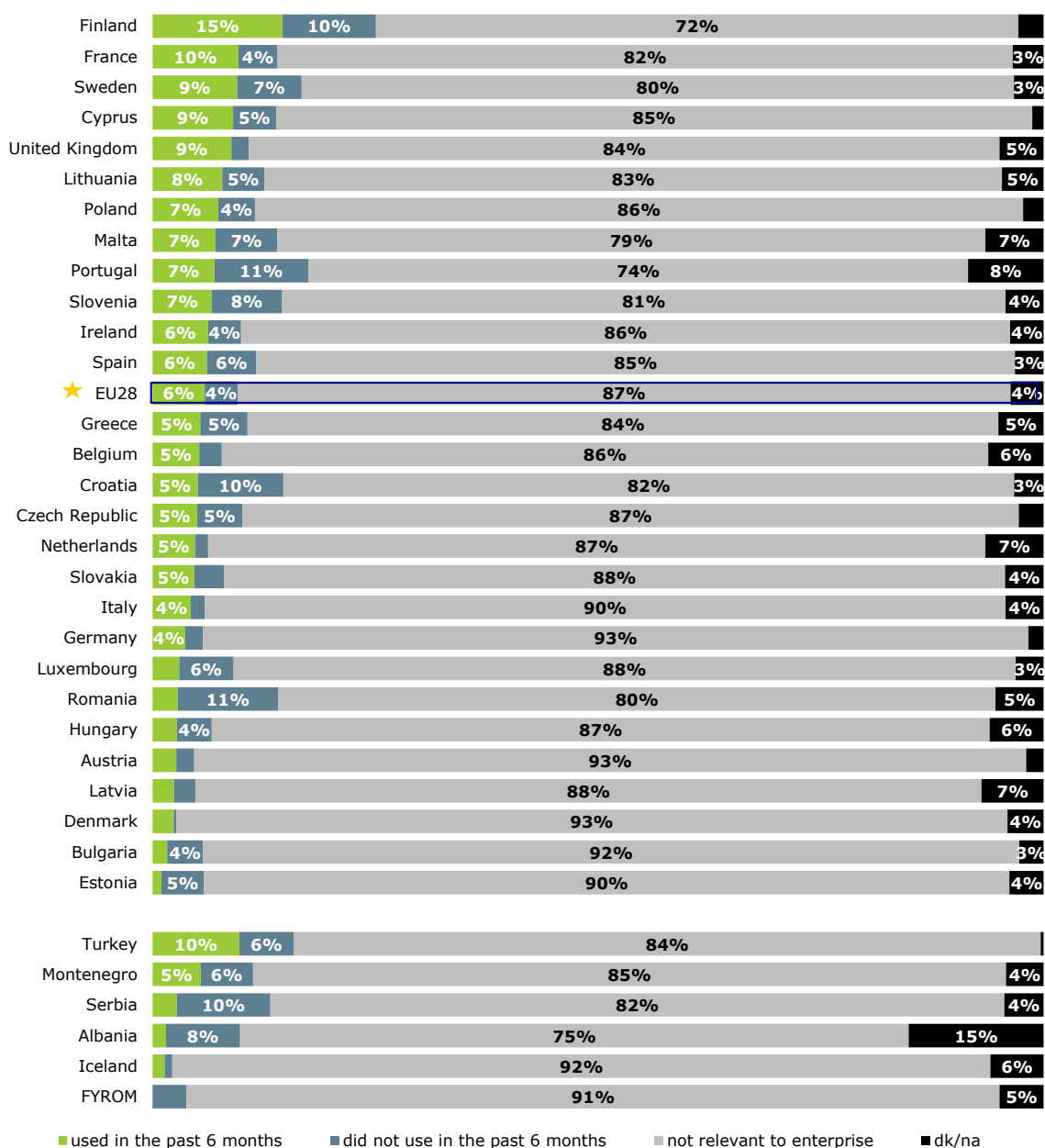
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Among the distinguished types of enterprises, the proportion of SMEs that have issued equity only varies slightly. The proportion of SMEs that have issued equity is highest among gazelles: 4% of SMEs in this category compared to 10% of SMEs in total EU28.

1.2.9 Factoring

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of the use of factoring. Figure 21 presents a breakdown of results for SMEs by country in each of the EU28 as well as in Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and the FYROM.

figure 21 Use of factoring in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.

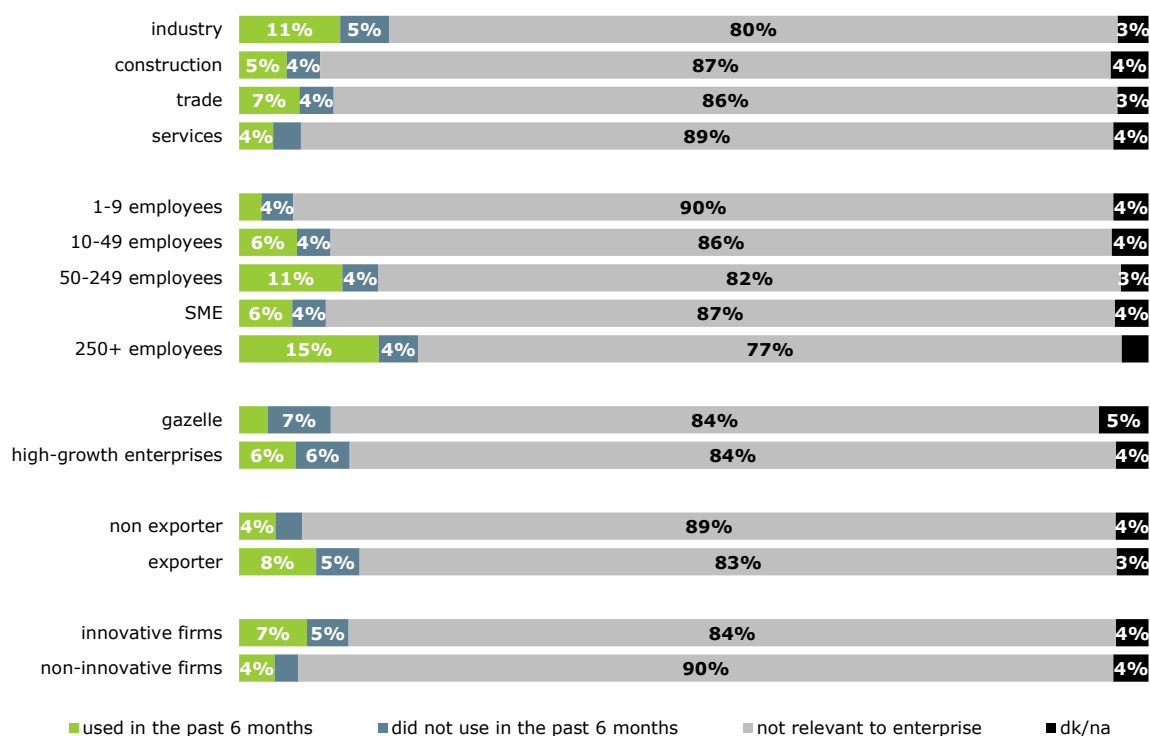


Q4r. Factoring - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you used factoring in the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The proportions of SMEs that have used factoring between April and September 2017 range from 15% in Finland to practically zero in Estonia. For the other European countries the proportions range from 10% in Turkey to zero in FYROM.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 22 presents the results by economic sector economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. All results are for all SMEs except when presented by size class.

figure 22 Use of factoring in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics



Q4r. Factoring - Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Have you used factoring in the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Comparing across sectors, SMEs in industry most often used factoring and SMEs in services used this type of financing the least. The proportion of enterprises that used factoring increases with enterprise size. The proportion of SMEs that have used factoring between April and September 2017 is highest among large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) and smallest among micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). The number of high-growth SMEs that used factoring is on par with the EU28. Exporting SMEs are more likely to have used factoring than non-exporting SMEs. Furthermore, innovative SMEs more often used factoring than their non-innovative counterparts.

1.4. Types of external financing applied for

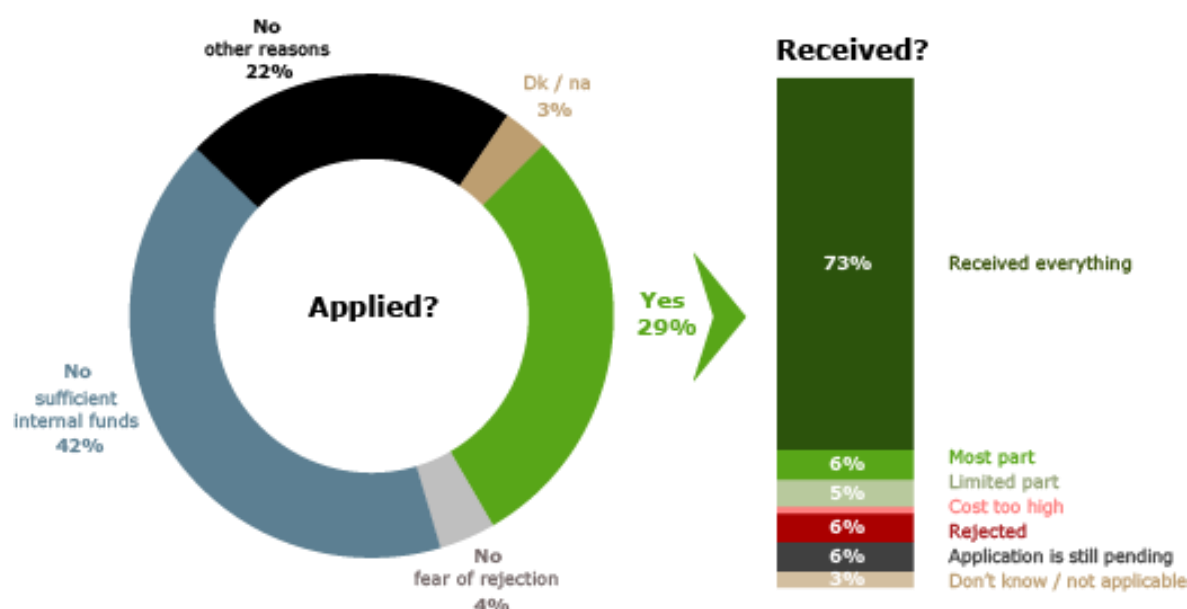
This section covers the types of external financing that SMEs actually applied for. The proportion of SMEs applying for a type of financing and the outcome of these applications are discussed for credit line and overdraft, bank loans, trade credit and other types of external financing.

The discussion of each type will follow the same structure. First, overall results are presented for SMEs in EU28 with the most recent results being compared to preceding survey years. This is followed by a comparison by country and enterprise characteristics.

1.4.1 Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft

The proportion of EU28 SMEs that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - or did not do so due to various reasons - as well as the corresponding success rates are presented in figure 23. The proportions refer to SMEs that indicated credit line or overdrafts to be relevant to their enterprise. In 2017, 29% (31% in 2016) of SMEs in the 28 Member States of the EU applied for credit line or overdraft. Most of them were successful in doing so: 73% (71% in 2016) of all applications were granted in full and another 6% (7% in 2016) were granted most of the amount applied for. In 2017, the rejection rate for credit line or overdraft applications was 6% (6% also in 2016). Most SMEs that did not apply for overdraft or credit line, mentioned the availability of sufficient internal funds cited as the most important reason for not doing so (42% in 2017 and 39% in 2016).

figure 23 Proportion of EU-28 SMEs that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft in the past six months (April to September 2017) and the results they obtained, where "most" means that at least 75% of the requested amount was obtained and "limited part" means that less than 75% of the requested amount was obtained. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated credit line and overdrafts are relevant to their enterprise.



Q7ad. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Q7bd. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The proportion of SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM that considered credit line or overdraft to be relevant to their enterprise and applied for a bank loan between April and September 2017 and their subsequent success rates vary strongly between countries. In figure 24 the differences regarding the proportion of SMEs that did and did not apply are presented. This figure shows that 49% of the SMEs in Slovenia and 51% of SMEs in FYROM that consider credit line or overdraft to be relevant applied. Other countries where a relatively large proportion of SMEs applied for credit line or overdraft were Lithuania (48%), Slovakia (43%) and Italy (44%). Comparatively few SMEs applied for this type of external financing in Ireland, the Netherlands and Finland (all 15%).

In most countries, the most often reported reason for not applying for overdraft or credit line were the sufficient availability of internal funds. The Netherlands, Finland, Belgium and Germany have the largest proportions of SMEs citing this reason for not applying for credit line or overdraft. In the other countries, most SMEs indicated they did not apply due to other reasons. Lithuania has by far the greatest proportion of SMEs citing "other reasons" for not applying for a bank loan. In Greece, the proportion of SMEs reporting fear of rejection is relatively high (26%).

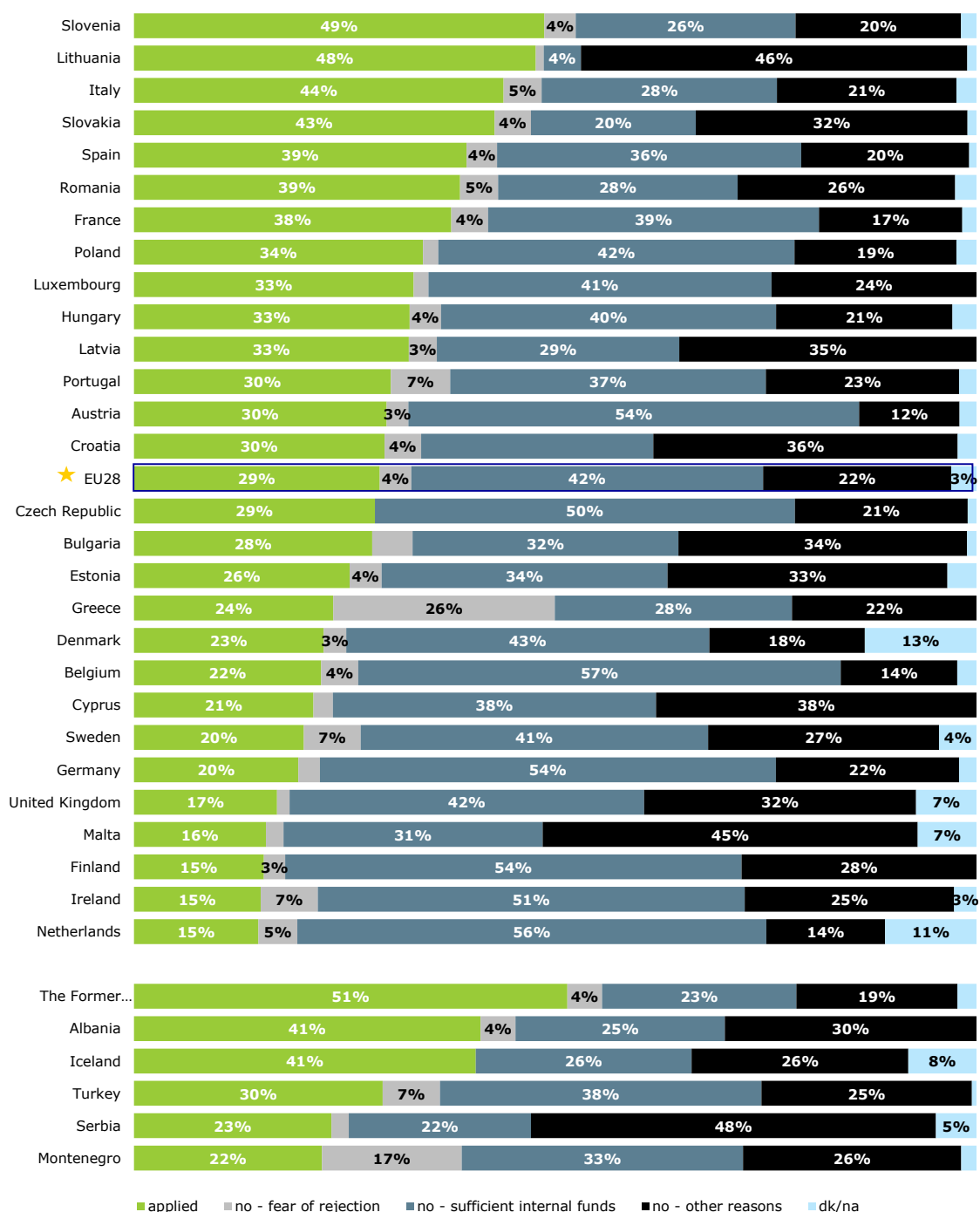
In figure 25 the results after application for credit line or overdraft are presented. The success rate is highest in Albania, where most applying SMEs received the full amount (100%). Also in Austria, Poland, Bulgaria and especially Finland a high proportion of SMEs received the full amount applied for. In Greece, only 36% of SMEs received the total amount of financing they applied for. Flat-out rejection rates were highest in The Netherlands (17% of overdraft or credit line applications were rejected completely) and Ireland (13%).

Of the four economic sectors distinguished in figure 26, the highest proportion of SMEs to apply for credit line or overdraft is found in industry: 35% of all SMEs in this sector applied for this type of external financing versus 25% in the services. The proportion of enterprises that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft between April and September 2017 increased with size; 39% of large enterprises (with at least 250 employees) applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft compared to 26% of micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees).

The proportion of exporting SMEs that applied for this type of external financing is higher than that of non-exporting SMEs. Furthermore, innovative SMEs applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft more often than non-innovative SMEs.

Compared to other sectors, SMEs in construction have the lowest proportion of applicants that received everything (figure 27). The proportion of SMEs that received the total amount applied for increases with size: 83% for large enterprises (with at least 250 employees), compared to 68% for micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees). 77% of SMEs that can be categorised as gazelles received everything they had applied for compared to 73% of SMEs in the total EU28. The proportion of high-growth SMEs that applied and received everything is only slightly smaller than the proportion of SMEs in the total EU28. Non-innovative SMEs more often applied successfully than innovative SMEs. SMEs in construction have a slightly higher rejection rate for credit line or overdraft applications (7%) than in the other sectors. The rejection rate decreases with size. The rejection rate for large enterprises was 1% compared to 8% of micro enterprises. The rejection rate across high-growth SMEs, exporters and non-exporters and innovative and non-innovative SMEs was similar.

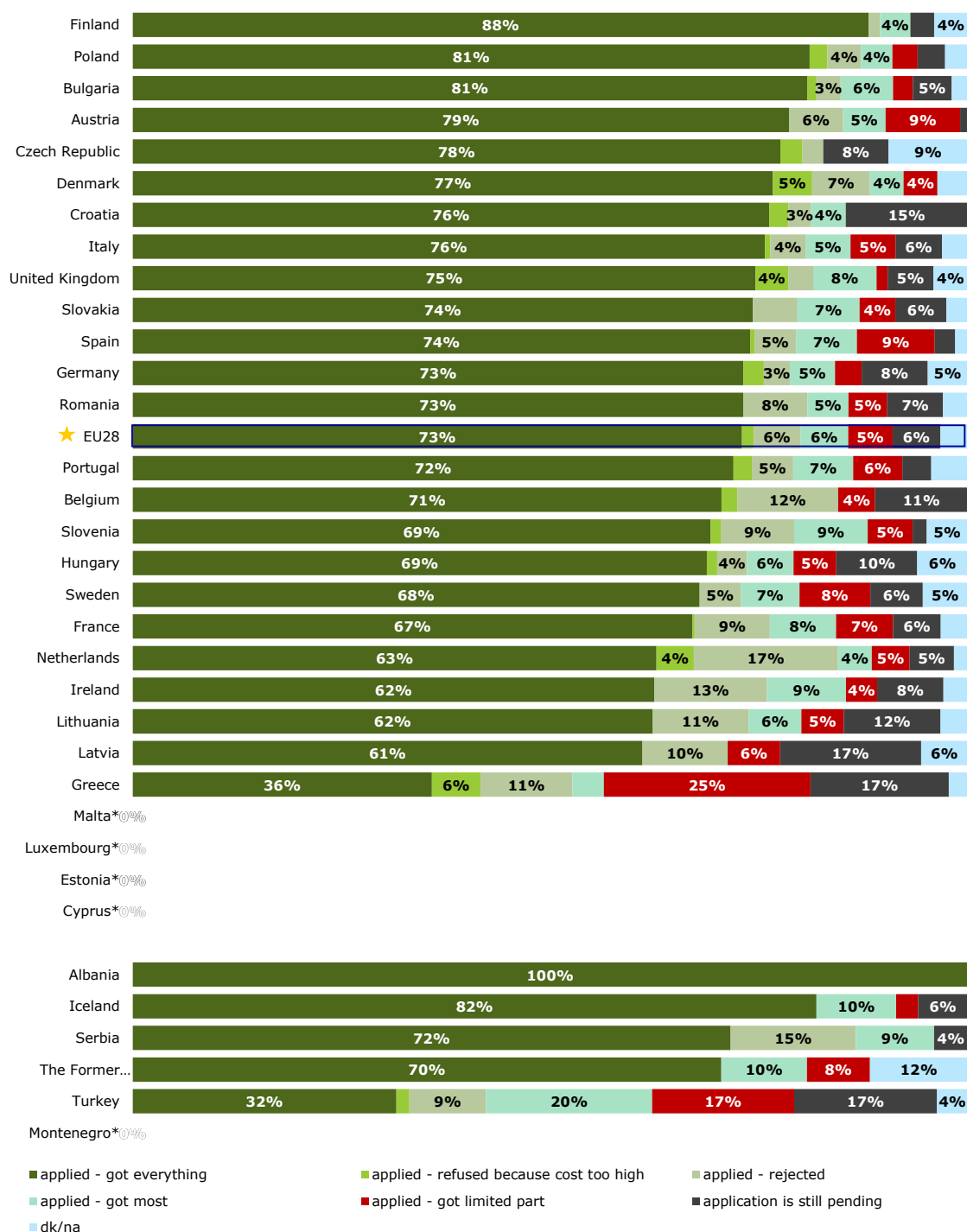
figure 24 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by country. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated credit line and overdrafts are relevant to their enterprise.



Q7ad. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 25 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft, by country in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that credit line and overdrafts are relevant to their enterprise.

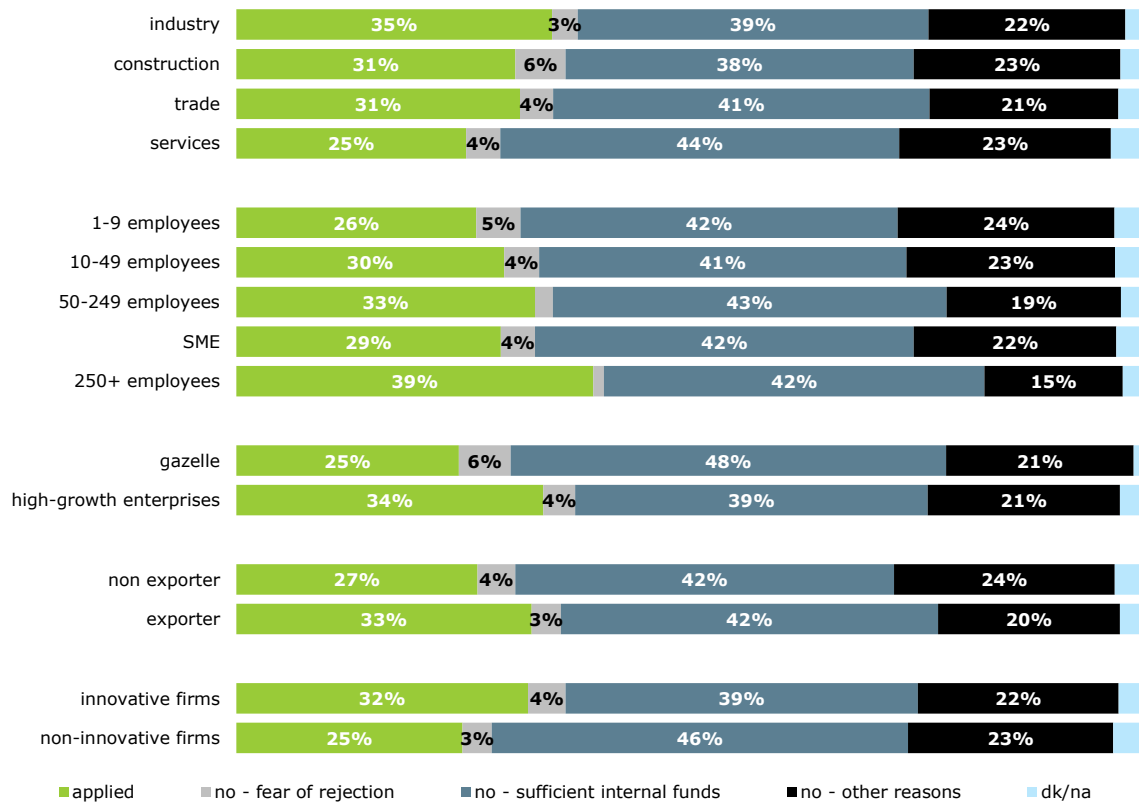


Q7bd. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, because of low unweighted number of observation.

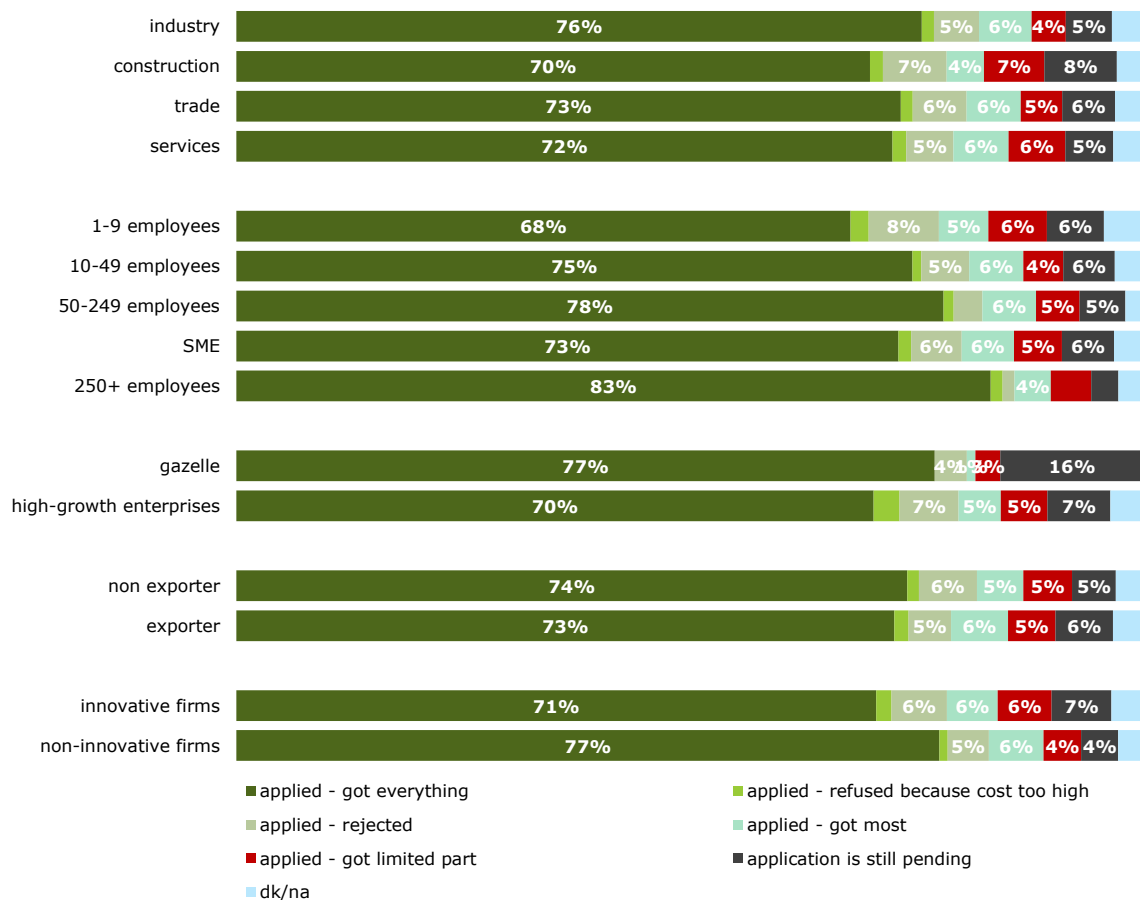
figure 26 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by enterprise characteristics. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated credit line and overdrafts are relevant to their enterprise.



Q7ad. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 27 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for credit line, bank overdrafts or credit cards overdraft, by enterprise characteristics in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that credit line and overdrafts are relevant to their enterprise.



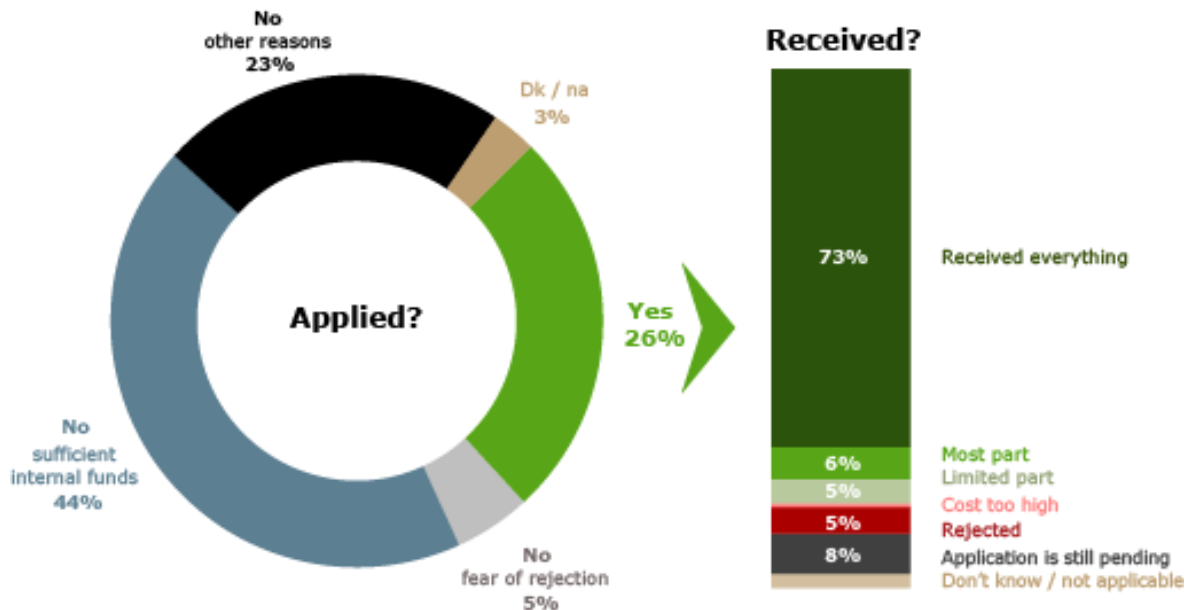
Q7bd. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

1.4.2 Bank loans

The proportion of SMEs in the EU28 that applied for a bank loan - or did not do so due to various reasons - as well as the corresponding success rates are presented in figure 28. The proportions presented refer to SMEs that indicated bank loans to be relevant for their enterprise. In 2017, 26% of these SMEs in the 28 EU Member States applied for a bank loan, which was similar to the proportion of applications in 2016 (27%). Most of them were successful in doing so: 73% (70% in 2016) of all applications were granted in full and another 6% (5% in 2016) were granted most of the amount applied for. In 2017, the rejection rate for bank loan applications was 5% compared to 7% in 2016. Most SMEs that did not apply for a loan, did so with the availability of sufficient internal funds cited as the most important reason for not doing so (44% in 2016 and 41% in 2016).

figure 28 Proportion of EU-28 SMEs that applied for bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) and the results they obtained, where "most" means that at least 75% of the requested amount was obtained and "limited part" means that less than 75% of the requested amount was obtained. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.



Q7aa. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

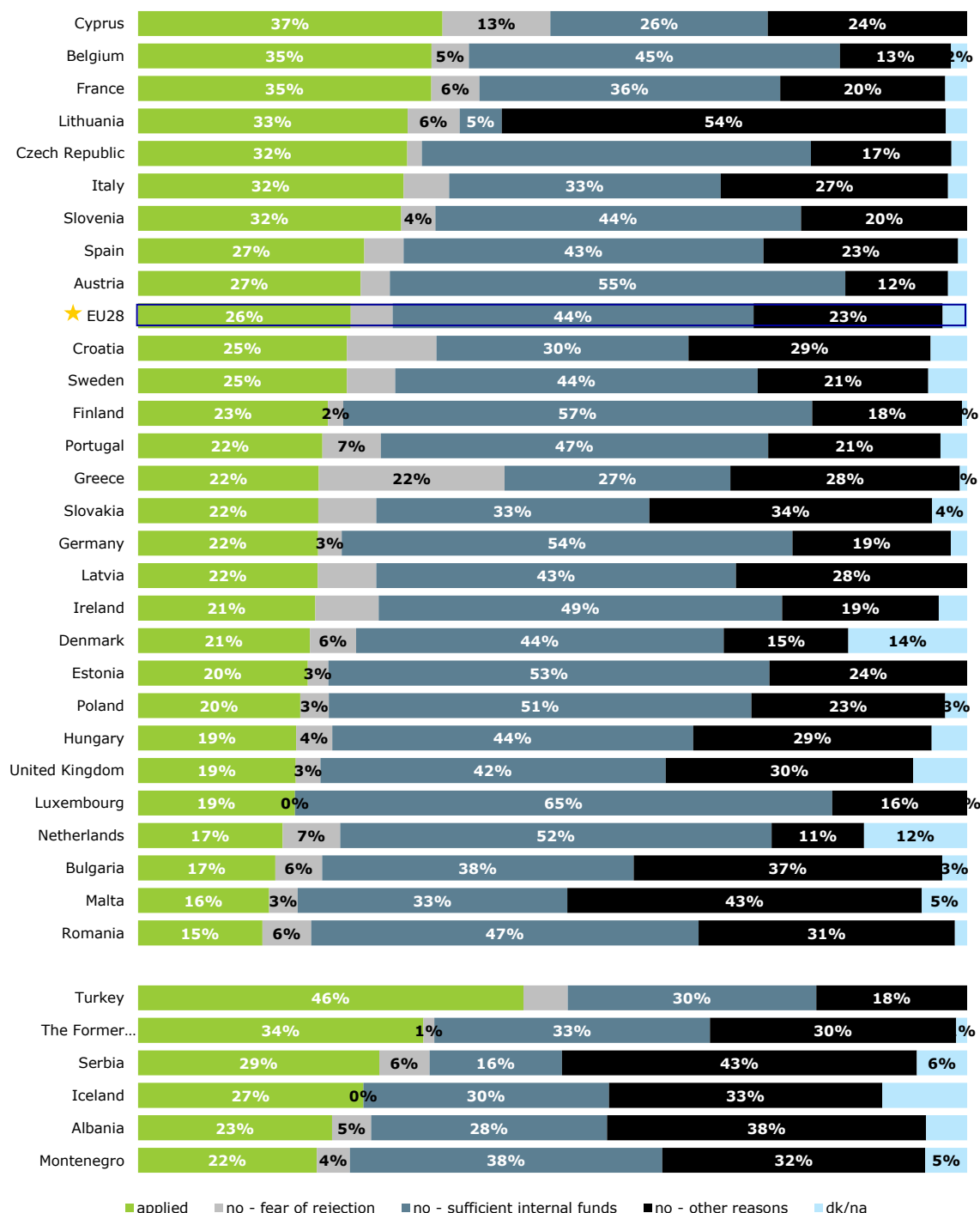
Q7ba. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Figure 29 shows that there are large differences between countries regarding the proportion of SMEs applying for bank loans. In Cyprus, France, Belgium, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Austria, the proportion was higher than the EU28 average of 26%. In Romania the proportion of SMEs applying for bank loans was 15%. Also the non-EU countries show remarkable differences regarding the proportion of SMEs applying for bank loans. It should be noted that in Greece, many SMEs (22%) did not apply for bank loans because of fear of rejection; to a lesser extent, the same holds for Cyprus (12%) and Croatia (11%).

The extent to which SMEs have been successful in applying for bank loans is further detailed in figure 30. In most EU Member States more than 70% of the SMEs received everything, with SMEs in Czech Republic, France and Germany the most successful. In Greece, Hungary and Cyprus the proportion of SMEs receiving everything is much lower. Figure 31 presents the rejection rates of EU28 SMEs by country. The highest rejection rate was found in Cyprus with 33% of the SMEs reporting that the application had been rejected, with the second highest rejection rate found in Romania (18%). 85% of the SMEs in Serbia report that they received the full bank loan they applied for; with half of the SMEs in Turkey reporting that they received everything is less than the EU average.

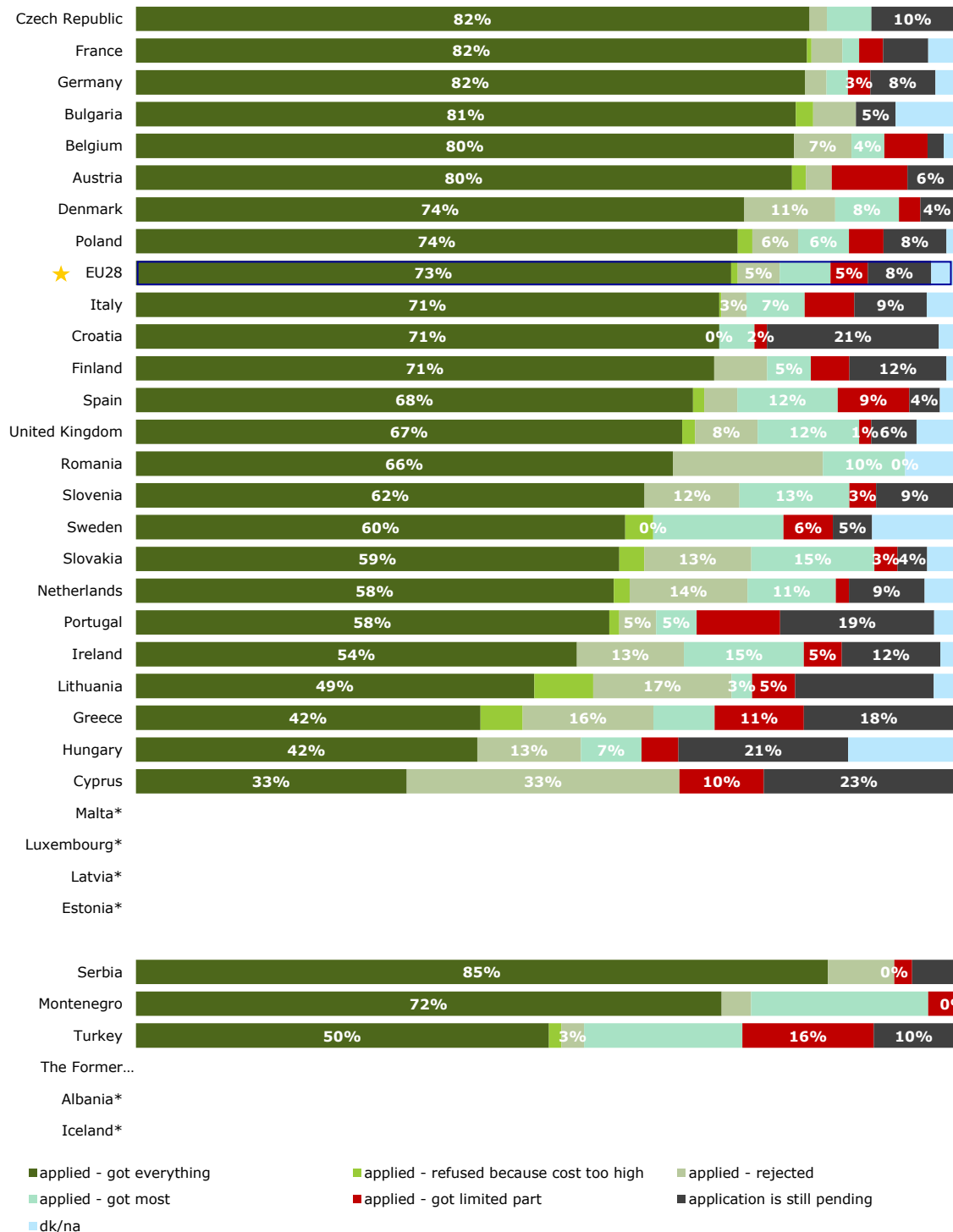
figure 29 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for bank loans or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by country. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.



Q7aa. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 30 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for bank loans, by country in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.

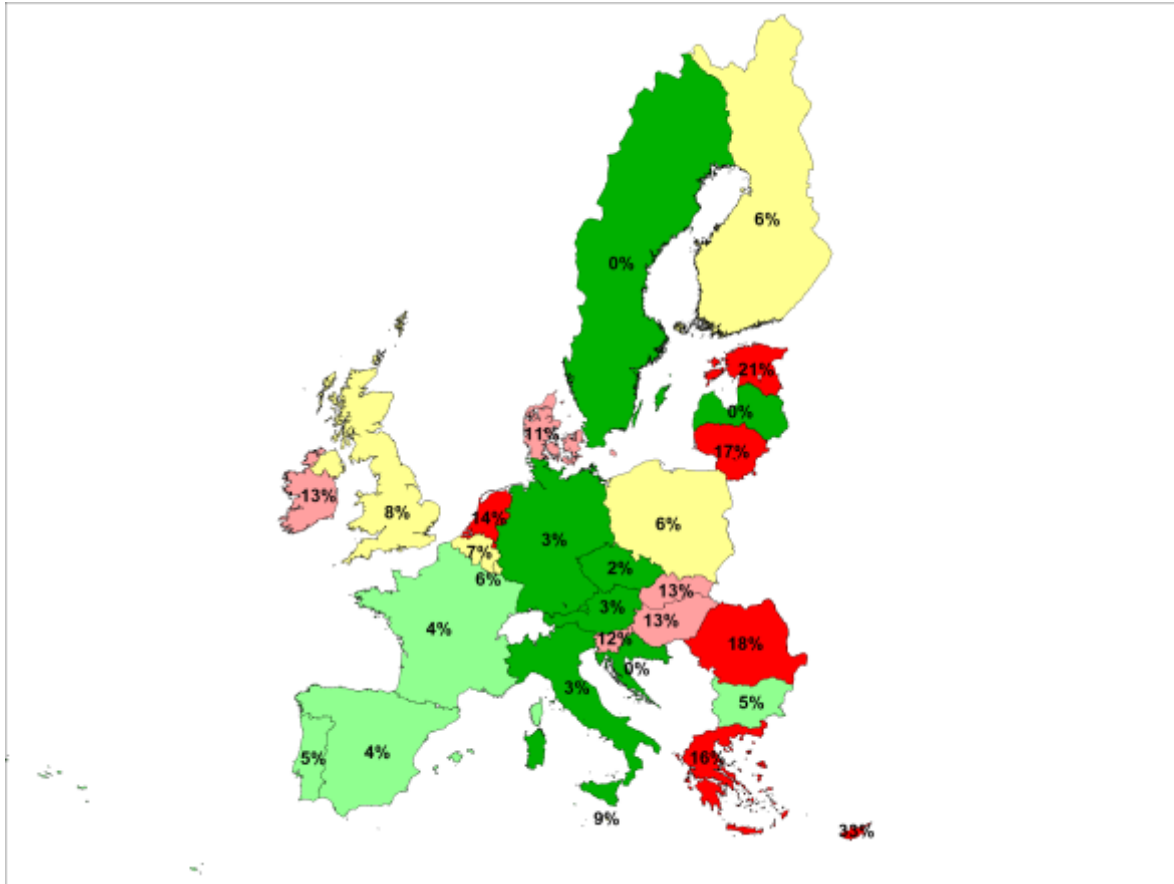


Q7ba. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, because of low unweighted number of observation.

figure 31 Rejection rates of bank loan applications of SMEs in EU-28, by country in 2017

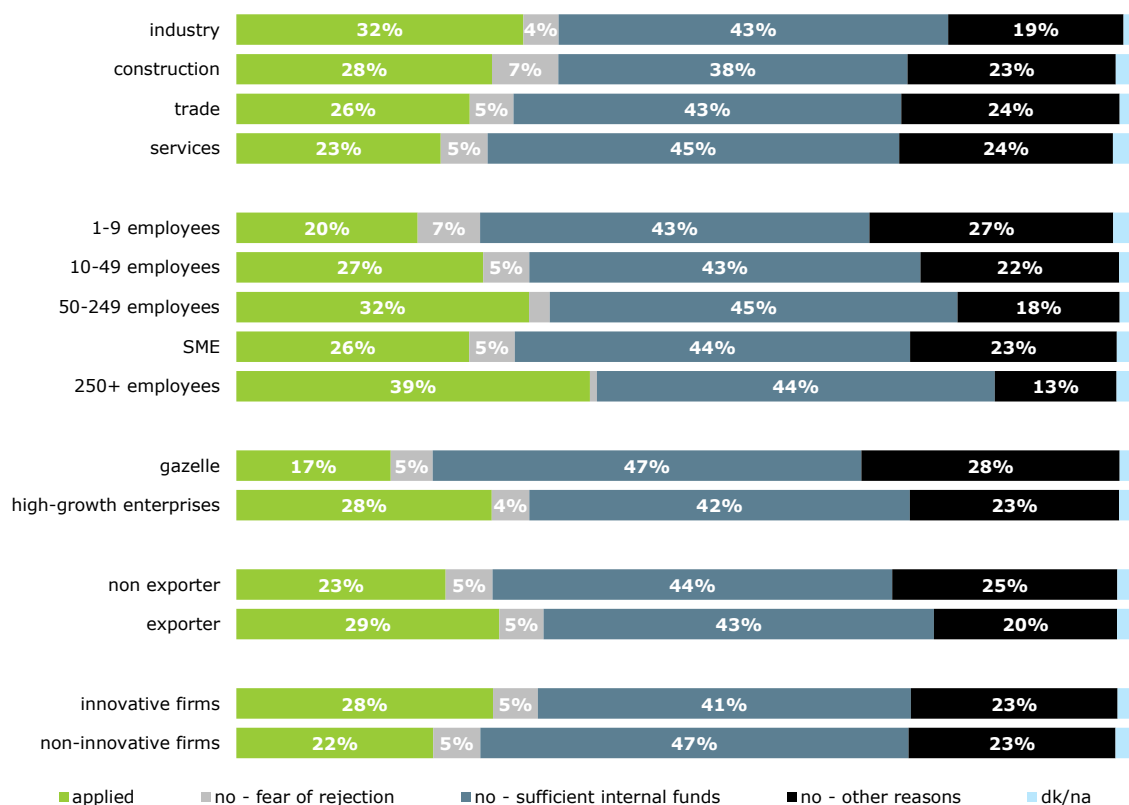


Q7ba. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Grey coloured countries indicate that the unweighted number of observations was low and therefore results are not presented.

figure 32 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for bank loans or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by enterprise characteristics. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.



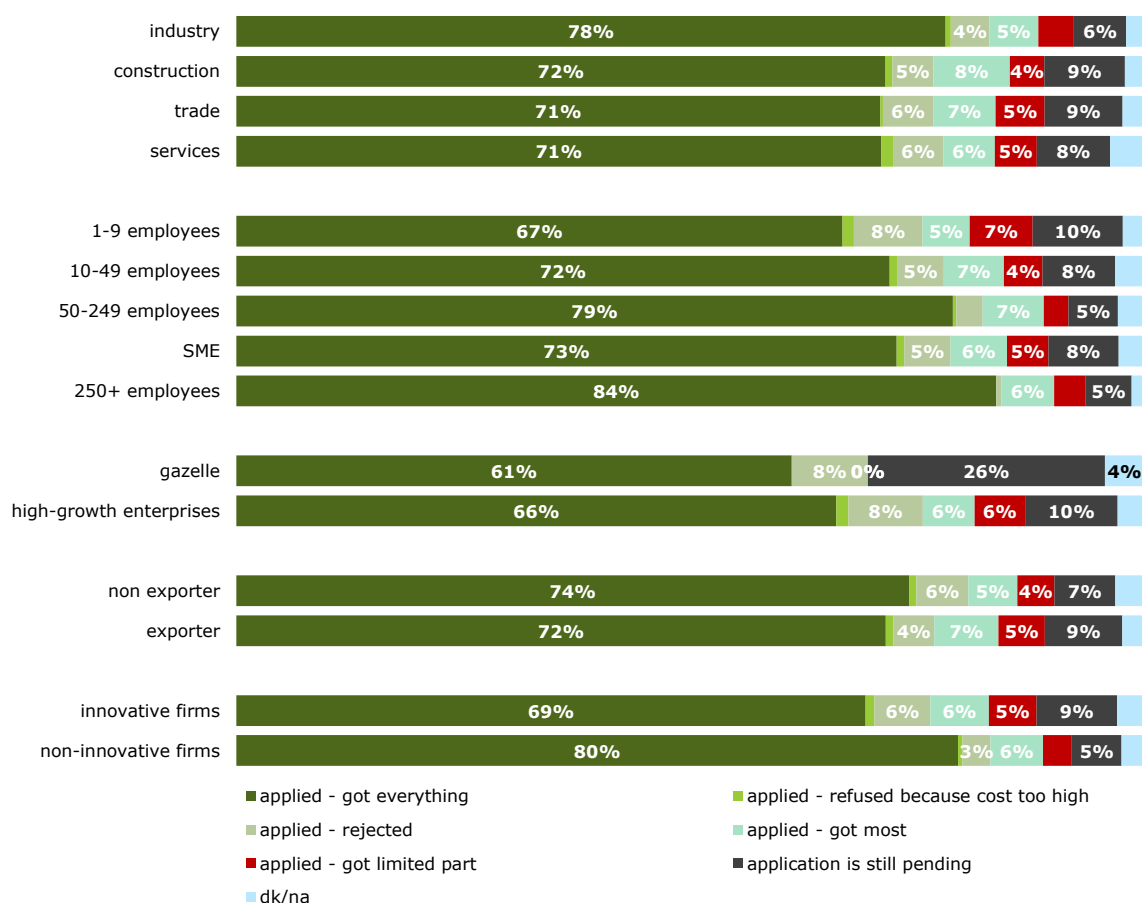
Q7aa. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The application for bank loans is further detailed by enterprise characteristic in figure 32. There is some variation regarding the proportion of SMEs applying for bank loans across sectors of industry; for industry the proportion is 32% compared to 23% in services. There is a strong correlation between enterprise size and the proportion of enterprises applying for bank loans: only 20% of micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees) report having applied for bank loans, whereas this proportion amounts to 39% for enterprises with more than 250 employees. High-growth SMEs apply for bank loans more often than average. Exporting SMEs apply for bank loans more often than non-exporting SMEs. The proportion of innovative SMEs applying for bank loans is larger than the proportion of non-innovative SMEs.

Figure 33 shows how successful the application for bank loans has been. 78% of the SMEs in industry received everything they applied for; for the other sectors of industry this proportion was 72% for construction and 71% for the others. The proportion of enterprises reporting having got everything varied between 67% in micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees), and 84% in enterprises with more than 250 employees. The proportion of gazelles (61%) and high-growth enterprises (66%) that report to have received everything is below the average for EU SMEs (73%). Slightly more non-exporters (74%) report they have received everything compared to exporters. 69% of innovative firms report they have received everything, while for non-innovative firms this proportion amounts to 80%.

figure 33 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for bank loans, by enterprise characteristics in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.

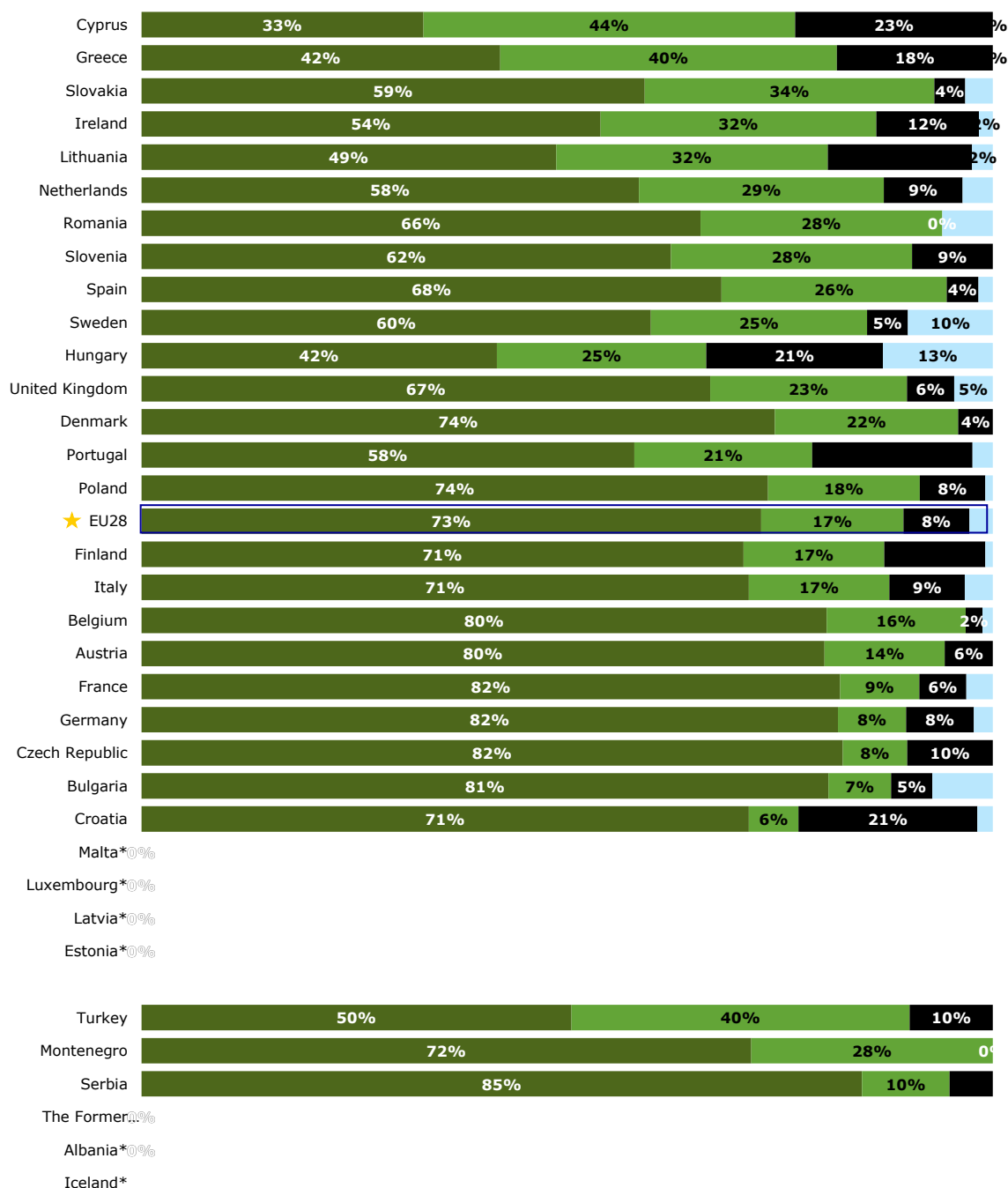


Q7bb. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

According to figure 34, 73% of the EU28 SMEs applied for bank loans and received everything; 17% of the SMEs applied but did not obtain the financing they had planned for. These proportions vary strongly across countries. The proportion of SMEs that applied for bank loans but did not get the financing they planned for was highest in Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia and Ireland. It was lowest in the Croatia. Also in Turkey the proportion of SMEs that reported they had applied for bank loans but have not obtained the financing they planned for is considerable (40%).

figure 34 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM that applied for bank loans. Sorted by SMEs that applied and did not get the financing they had planned for. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that bank loans are relevant to their enterprise.



■ applied and received everything
■ applied and did not get the financing they had planned for
■ application is still pending

Q7bb. Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

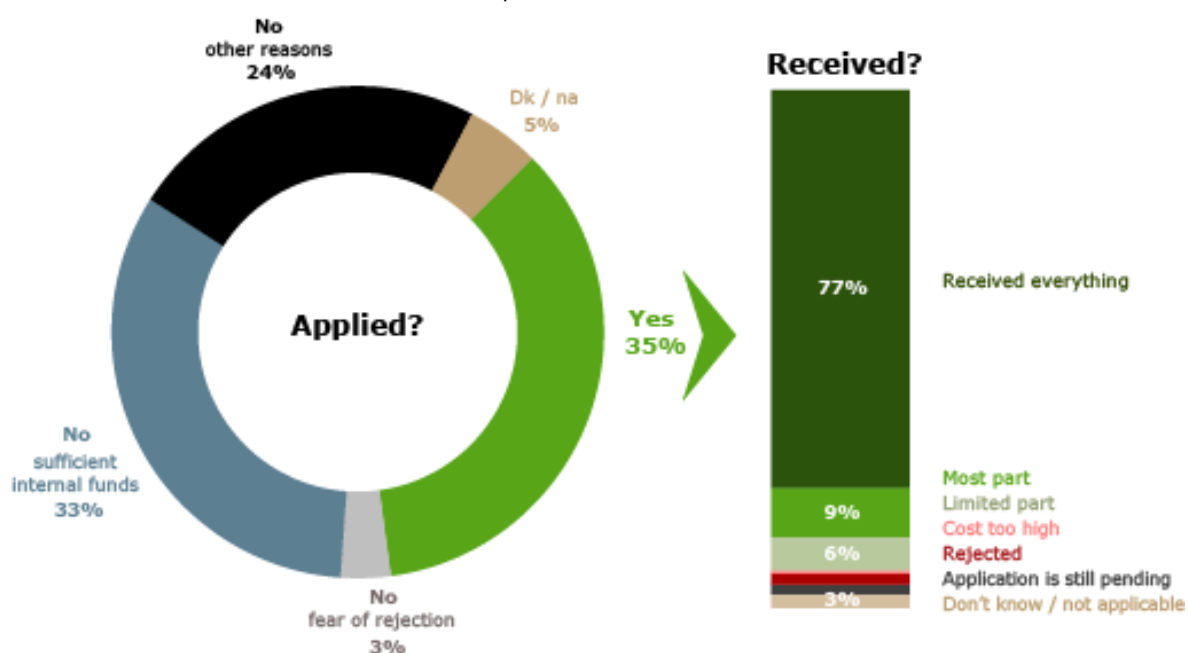
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, because of low unweighted number of observation.

1.4.3 Trade credit

The proportion of the EU28 SMEs that applied for trade credit - or did not do so due to various reasons - as well as the corresponding success rates are presented in figure 35. The proportions refer to SMEs that indicated trade credit to be relevant to their enterprise. In 2017, 35% of these SMEs in the 28 Member States of the EU applied for trade credit, which was the same as in 2015 and 2016. Most of them were successful in doing so: 77% (73% in 2016) of all applications were granted in full and another 9% (11% in 2016) were granted most of the amount applied for. In 2017, the rejection rate for trade credit applications was 2% which was the same as in 2016. Most SMEs that did not apply for trade credit, did so with the availability of sufficient internal funds cited as the most important reason for not doing so (33% in 2016 and 32% in 2015).

figure 35 Proportion of EU-28 SMEs that applied for trade credit in the past six months (April to September 2016) and the results they obtained, where "most" means that at least 75% of the requested amount was obtained and "limited part" means that less than 75% of the requested amount was obtained. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that trade credit is relevant to their enterprise.



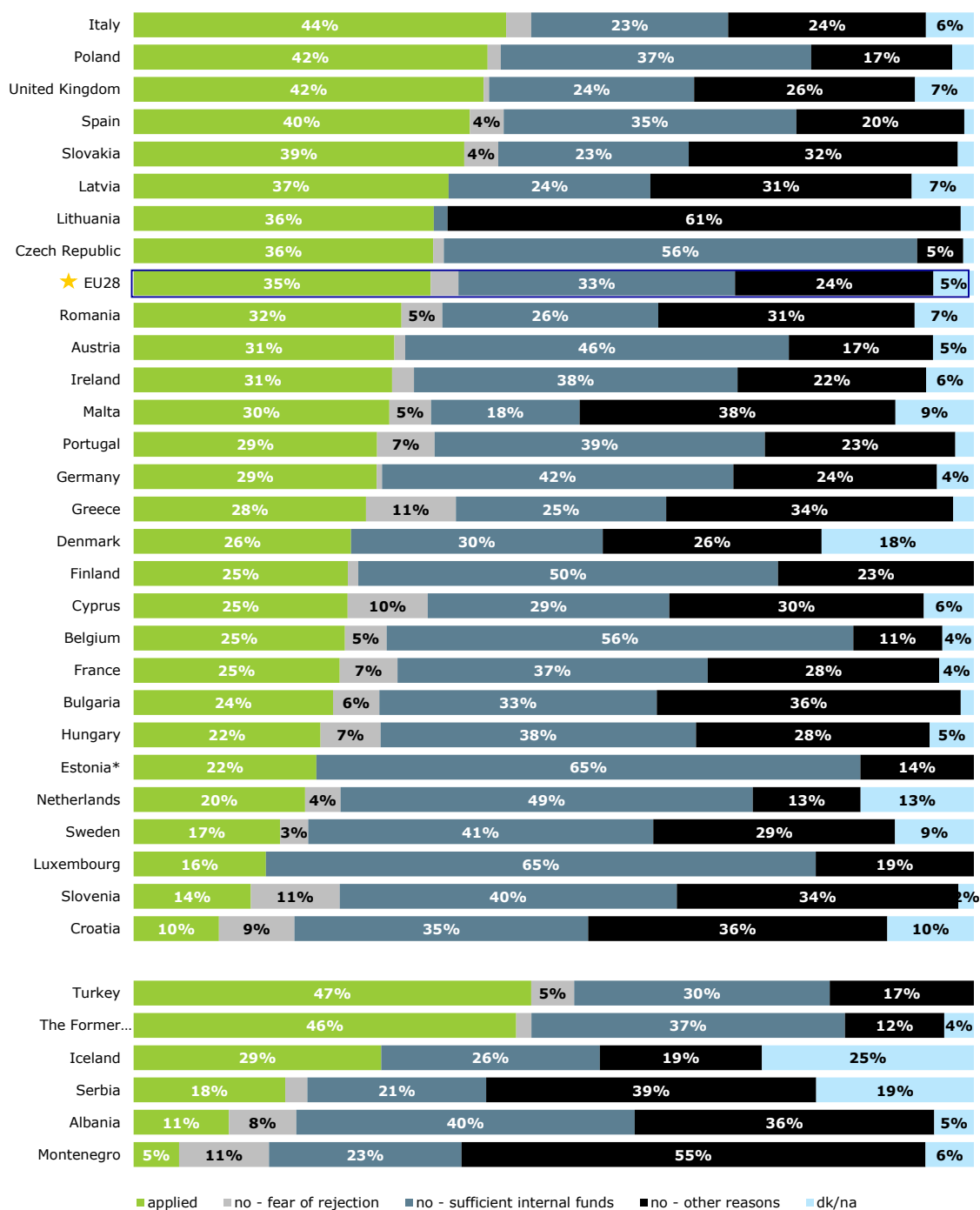
Q7ab. Trade credit - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Q7bb. Trade credit - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

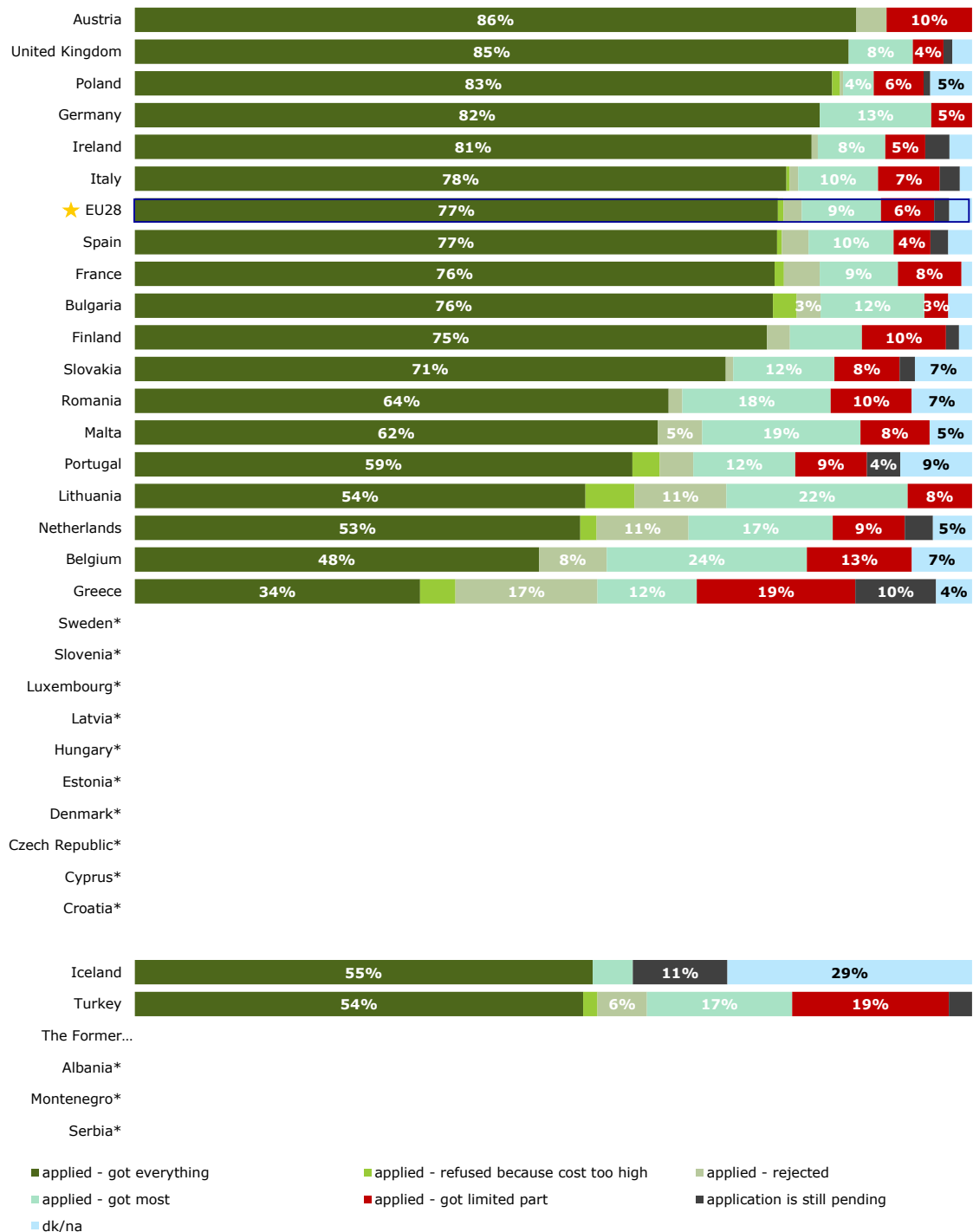
The proportion of SMEs applying for trade credit varied considerably across countries, as shown in figure 36. Within the EU28, this proportion varied between 10% in Croatia on the one hand, and over 44% in Italy. 11% Greek and Slovenian SMEs report not having applied for trade credit because of fear of rejection; this is much higher than in other countries. In the Estonia and the Luxembourg, 65% of the SMEs report not having applied for trade credit because they had sufficient internal funds.

figure 36 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for trade credit or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by country. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that trade credit is relevant to their enterprise.



Q7ab. Trade credit - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 37 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for trade credit, by country in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that trade credit is relevant to their enterprise.



Q7bb. Trade credit - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

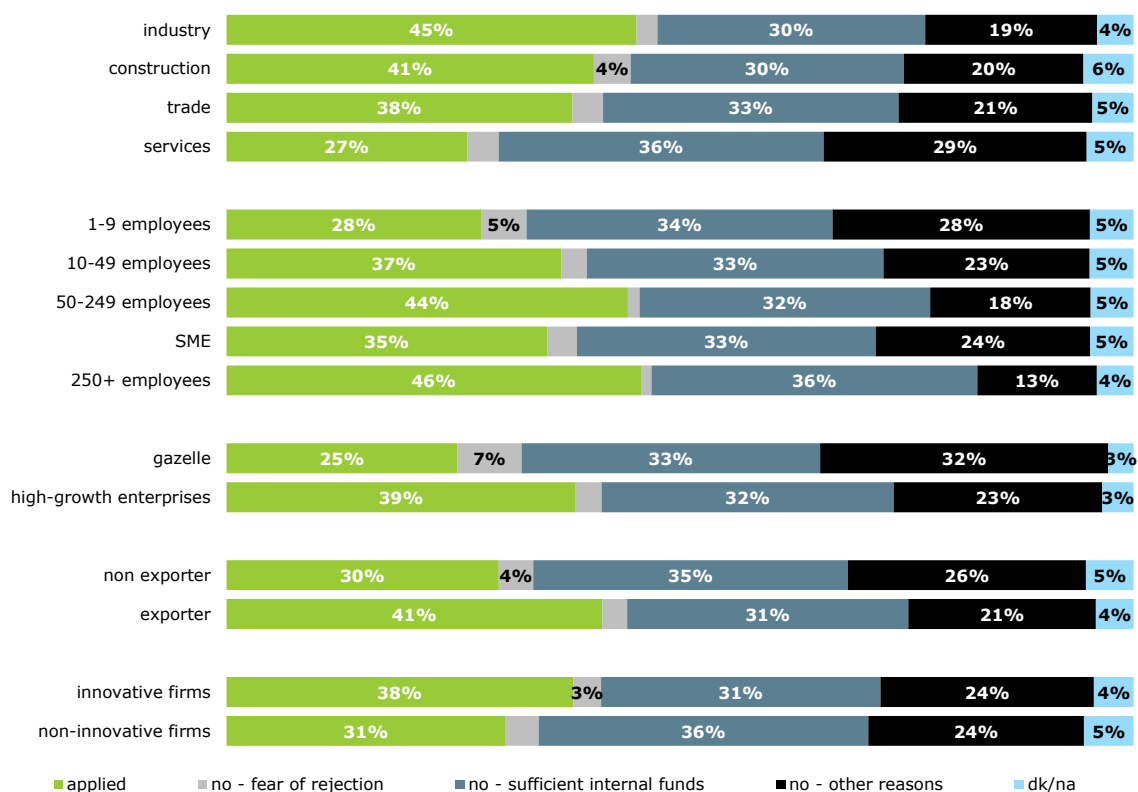
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, because of low unweighted number of observation.

In EU28, 77% of the SMEs report they received everything they applied for, and another 9% report they received not everything but at least 75% of what they applied

for. Figure 37 shows that in general the proportion of SMEs reporting they received everything varies between 34% in Greece and 86% in Austria. In Greece 12% of SMEs reported receiving at least 75%, and 19% receiving some but less than 75% of what they applied for.

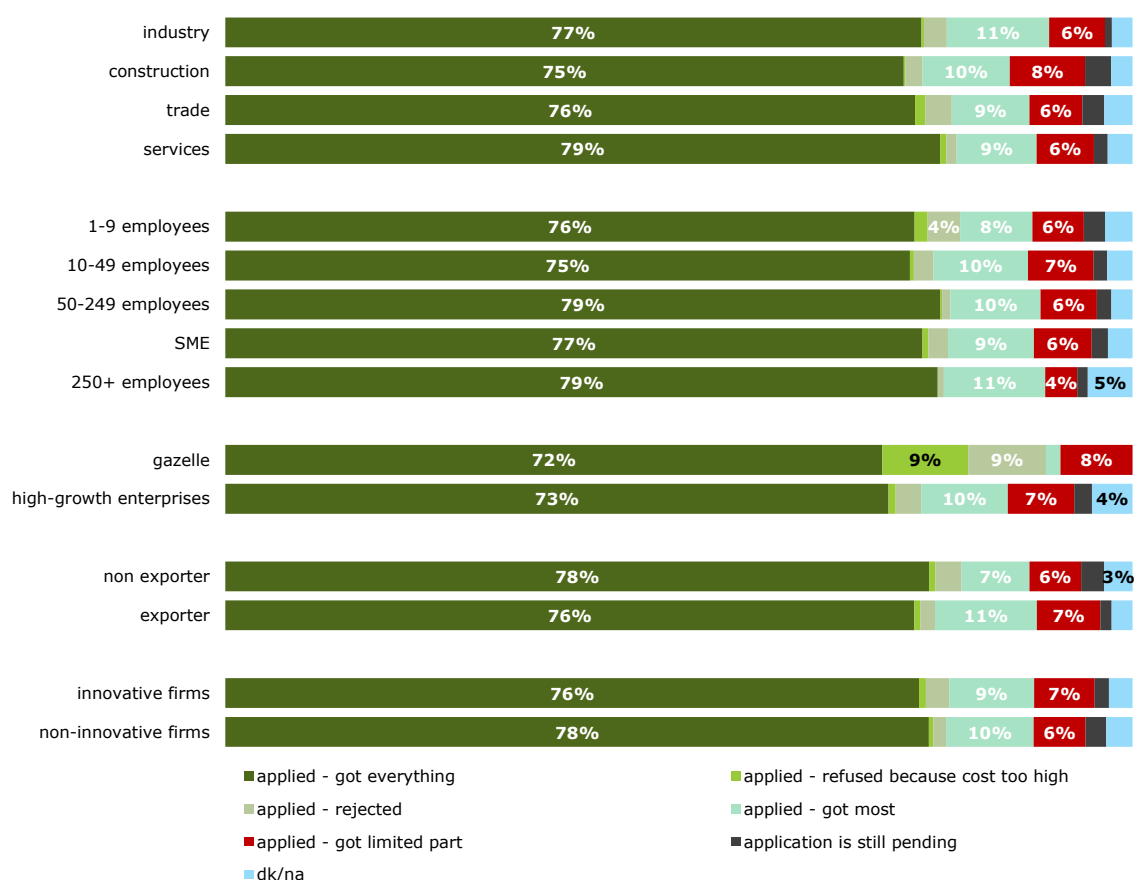
figure 38 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for trade credit or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by enterprise characteristics. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that trade credit is relevant to their enterprise.



Q7ab. Trade credit - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Figure 38 shows that SMEs in industry and construction applied for trade credit, while this proportion amounted to 38% in trade, and 27% in services. Less enterprises with 1 -9 employees apply for trade credit than enterprises with 250 or more employees. The proportion of gazelles SMEs having applied for trade credit (25%) is below the average of EU SMEs. Exporters more often apply for trade credit than non-exporters. The proportion of innovative applying for trade credit is higher than non-innovative SMEs.

figure 39 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for bank loans, by enterprise characteristics in 2017. The proportions relate to SMEs that indicated that trade credit is relevant to their enterprise.



Q7bb. Trade credit - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

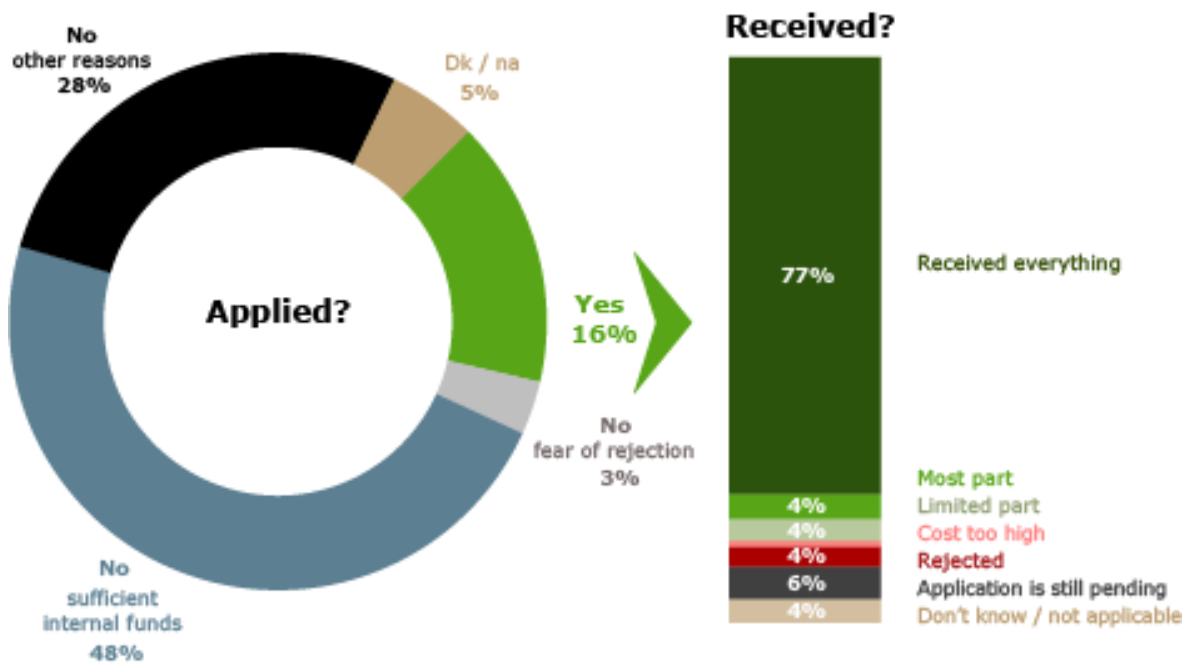
The proportion of SMEs in construction that applied for trade credit and received everything is 75%; this is slightly less than the proportion of SMEs that applied for trade credit and received everything in other sectors of industry (figure 39), with SMEs in the service industry receiving the highest percentage (79%). The proportion of enterprises that applied for trade credit and obtained everything is lowest in enterprises with 10 -49 employees, and highest in enterprises with over 250 employees. Gazelles and high-growth enterprises do not differ much regarding the proportion reporting they applied for trade credit and obtaining everything. Non-exporters have been slightly more successful than exporters in obtaining all trade credit they applied for. Also non-innovative SMEs have been slightly more successful in obtaining all trade credit they applied for than non-innovative SMEs.

1.4.4 Other external financing

The proportion of EU28 SMEs that applied for other external financing - or did not do so due to various reasons - as well as the corresponding success rates are presented in figure 40. In 2017, 16% of these SMEs in the 28 Member States of the EU applied for other external financing, which was the same as in 2016. Most of them were successful in doing so: 77% (75% in 2016) of all applications were granted in full and another 4% (5% in 2016) were granted most of the amount applied for. In 2017, the

rejection rate for other types of external financing was 4% compared to 3% in 2016. Most SMEs that did not apply for other external financing, did so with the availability of sufficient internal funds cited as the most important reason for not doing so (48% in 2017 and in 46% 2016).

figure 40 Proportion of EU-28 SMEs that applied for other external financing in the past six months (April to September 2016) and the results they obtained, where "most" means that at least 75% of the requested amount was obtained and "limited part" means that less than 75% of the requested amount was obtained.



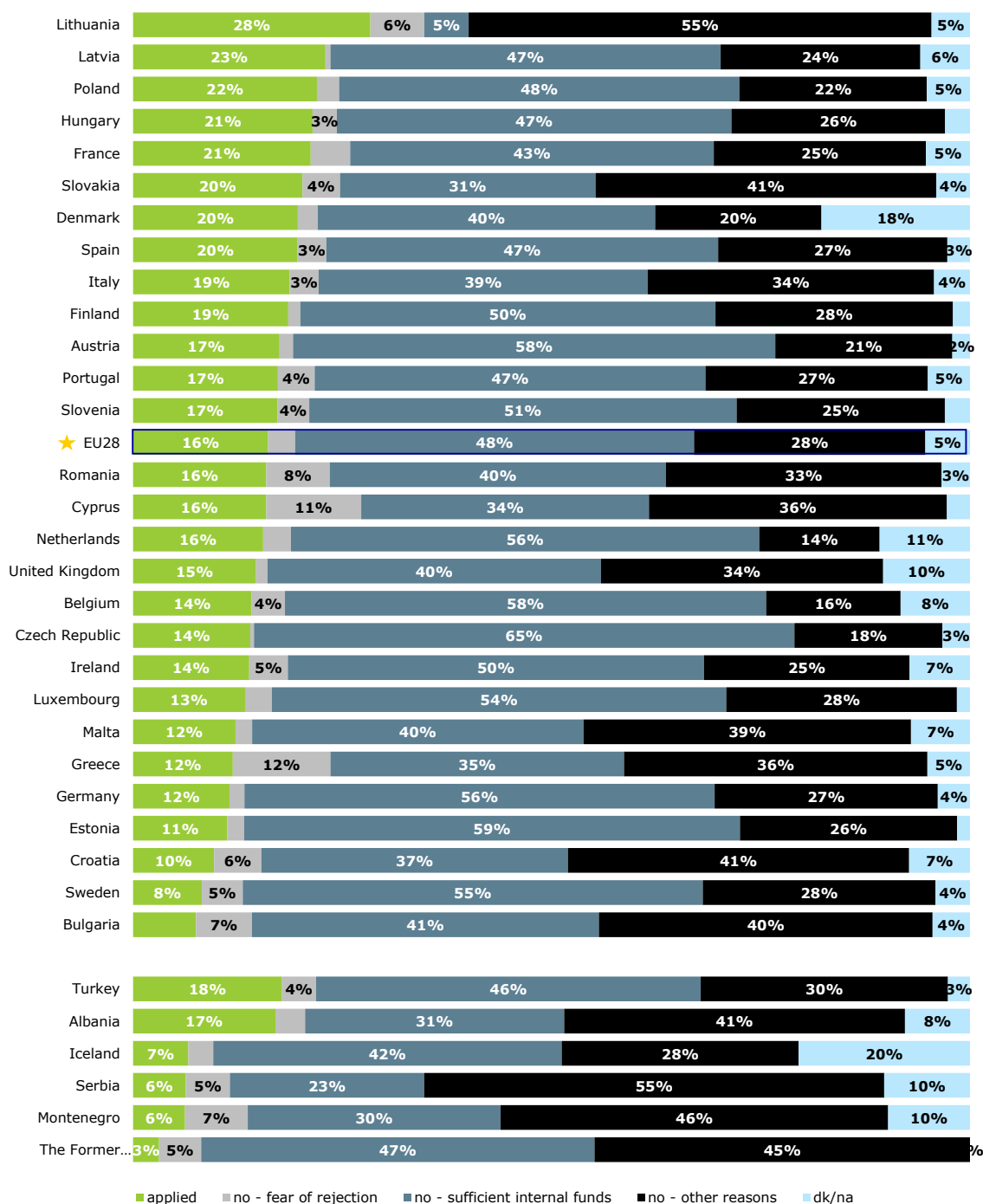
Q7ac. Other external financing - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Q7bc. Other external financing - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Figure 41 shows that the proportion of SMEs applying for other external financing varied considerably across countries. The proportion of SMEs applying for other external financing was lowest in Bulgaria, Sweden and Croatia, and highest in Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. In Greece and Cyprus, a large proportion of SMEs did not apply for other external financing due to the fear of being rejected (12% and 11% respectively).

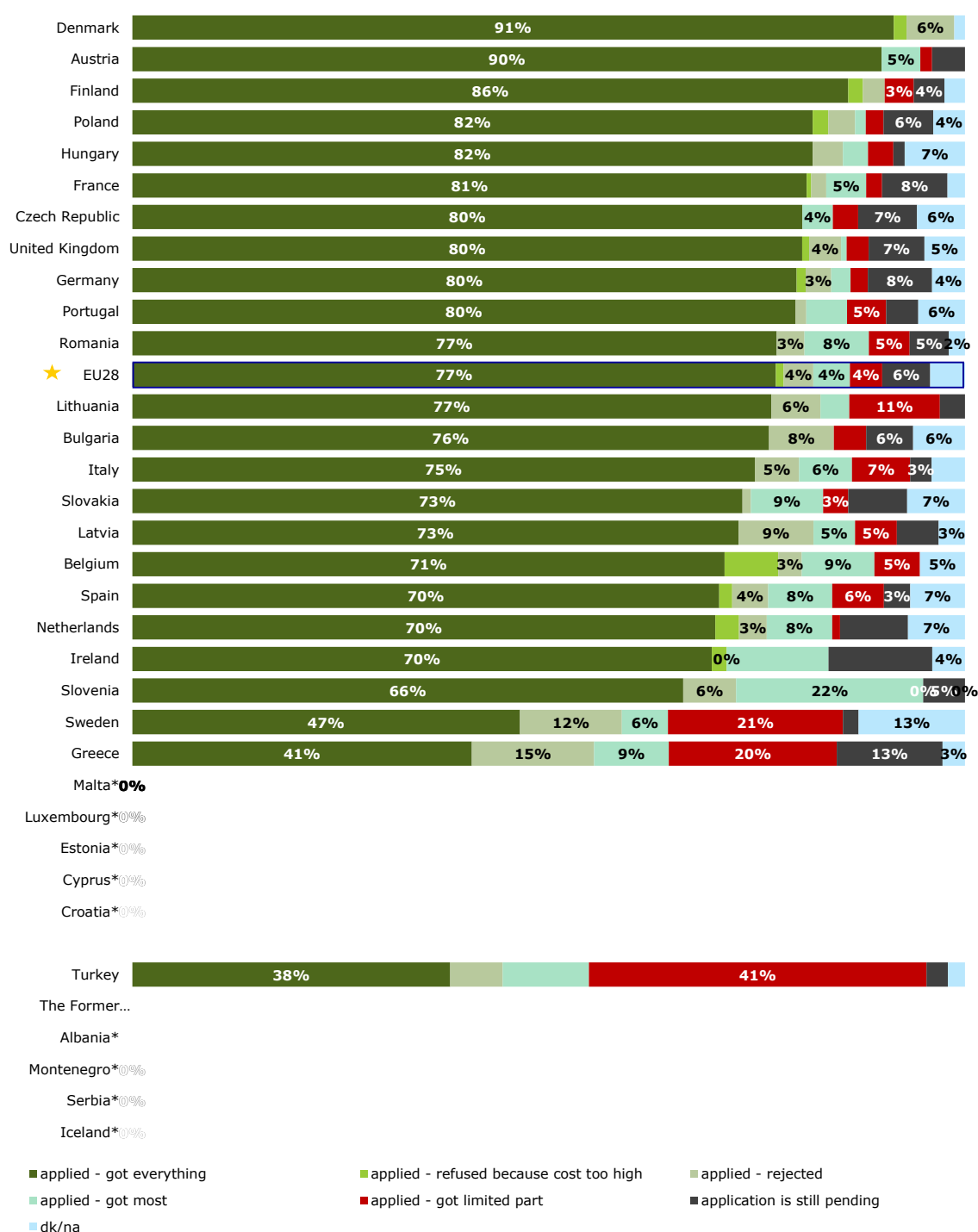
figure 41 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for other external financing or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by country.



Q7ac. Other external financing - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 42 Obtained result of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM that applied for other external financing, by country in 2017.



Q7bc. Other external financing - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

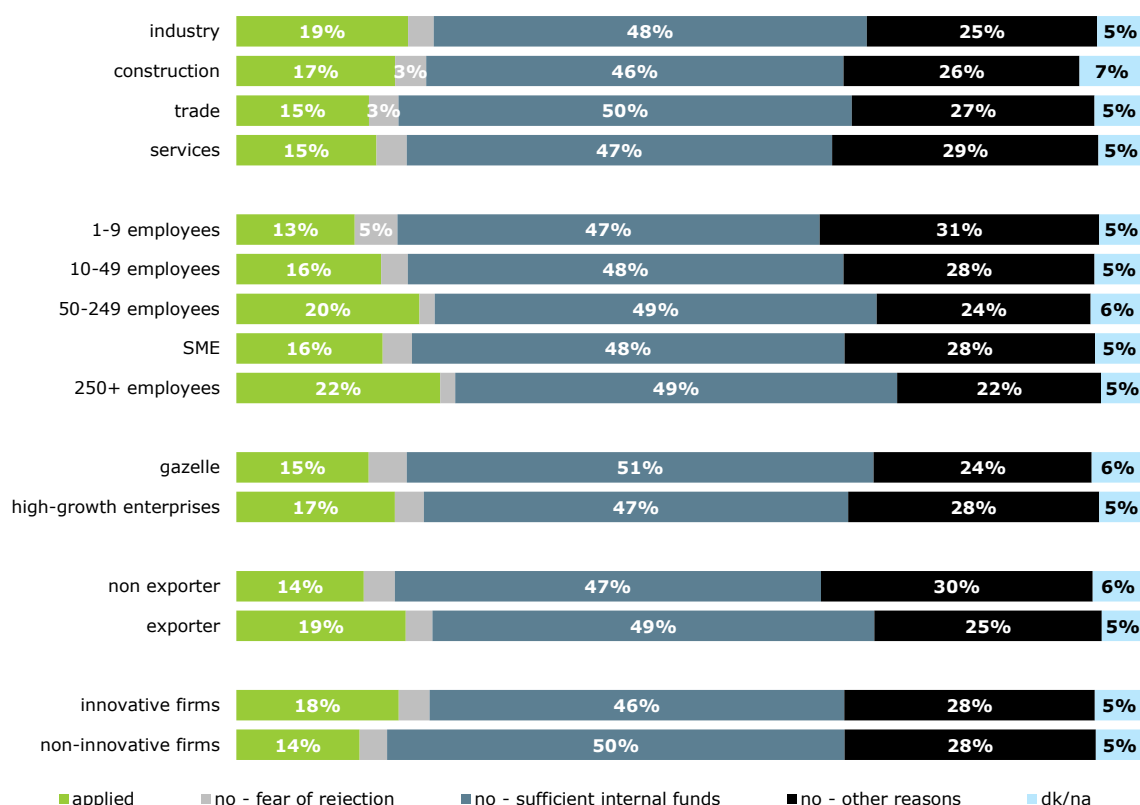
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, because of low unweighted number of observation.

In several countries, the proportion of SMEs that received the full amount of trade credit they applied for is higher than the EU28 average of 77% (figure 42). This holds

in particular for Denmark, Austria and Finland. On the other hand, only a relatively small proportion of SMEs in Turkey report they received other financing they applied for. For Greece and Turkey this corresponds with a larger proportion of SMEs getting only a limited part.

figure 43 Proportion of SMEs in EU-28 that applied for other external financing or did not apply because of possible rejection, sufficient internal funds or other reasons, in the period between April and September 2017, by enterprise characteristics.

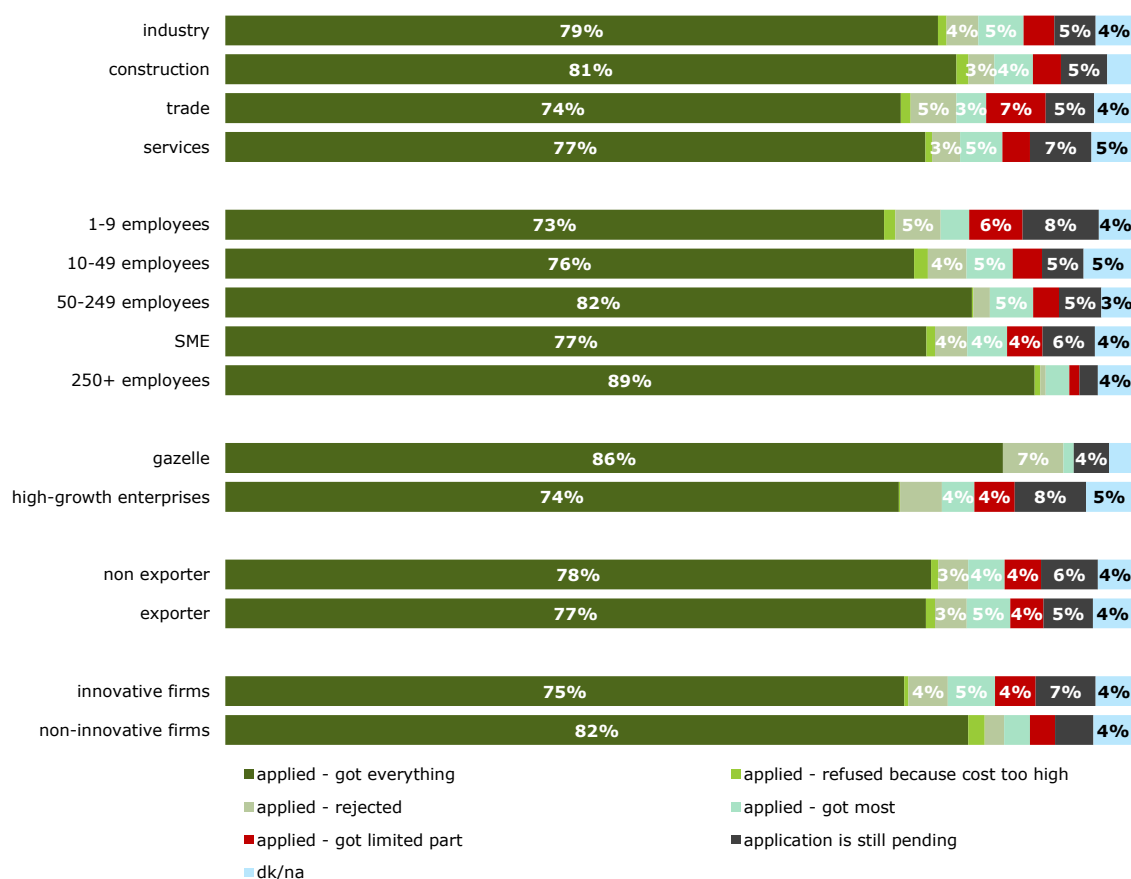


Q7ac. Other external financing - Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

In figure 43 results on enterprises that apply or did not apply for specific reasons for other external financing are disaggregated by enterprise characteristic. The proportion of SMEs that applied for other external financing does not vary much across sectors of industry. The proportion of SMEs that applied for other external financing (16%) is smaller than the proportion of enterprises with more than 250 employees applying for other external financing (22%). 17% of high-growth enterprises applied for other types of external financing, and 15% for gazelles. Exporting SMEs report having applied for other external financing to a slightly larger extent as non-exporters. Innovative SMEs more often report to have applied for other external financing than non-innovative SMEs.

figure 44 Obtained result of SMEs in EU28 that applied for bank loans, by enterprise characteristics in 2017.



Q7bc. Other external financing - If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?

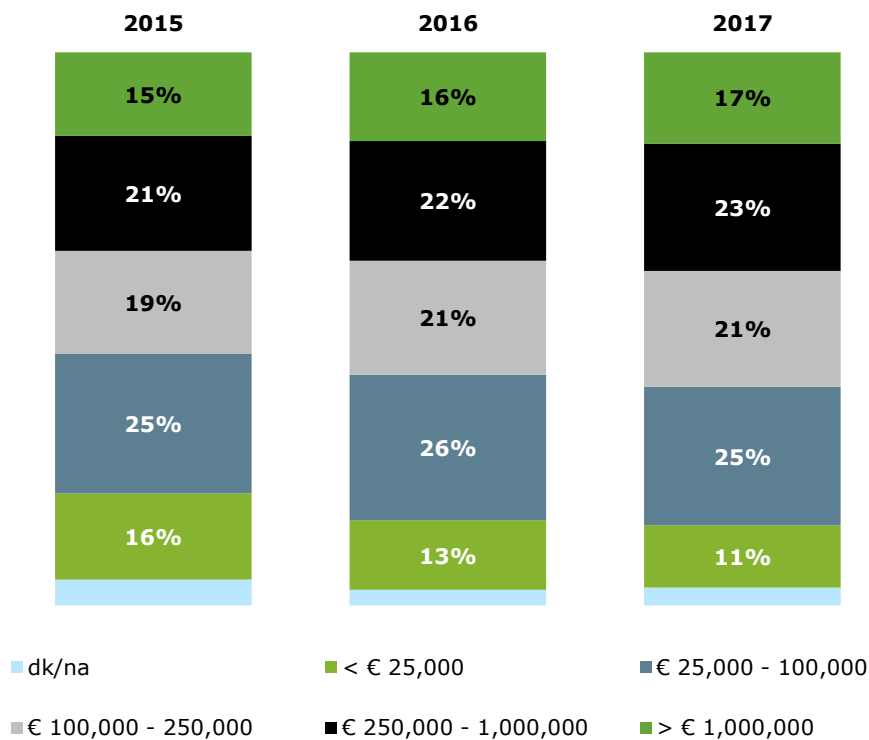
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Figure 44 shows the results obtained from applying for other external financing disaggregated by enterprise characteristic. SMEs in Construction have been the most successful in getting everything they applied for; SMEs in industry, services and trade were slightly less successful, albeit there is not much difference in the figures. The proportion of enterprises with 1 -9 employees reporting they got everything they applied for is less than the corresponding proportion for the total group of SMEs. More gazelles report they got everything they applied for than high-growth enterprises and SMEs in general. Exporting and non-exporting SMEs did not differ much with respect to the proportion reporting they got all other external financing they applied for. A lower proportion of innovative SMEs reports having obtained all other external financing they applied for than non-innovative SMEs.

1.5. Last obtained amount of external finance

In 2017, 25% of EU28 SMEs report that the last loan they have obtained amounts to between EUR 25,000 and EUR 100,000, which is slightly down on 2016. In the same year, 11% reports the last loan obtained amounts to less than EUR 25,000; 21% reports the last loan obtained amounts to between EUR 100,000 and EUR 250,000, while 40% reports an even larger loan (figure 45). These proportions have remained relatively rather stable since 2015.

figure 45 Size of the last loan of SMEs in EU-28 for the period 2015-2017

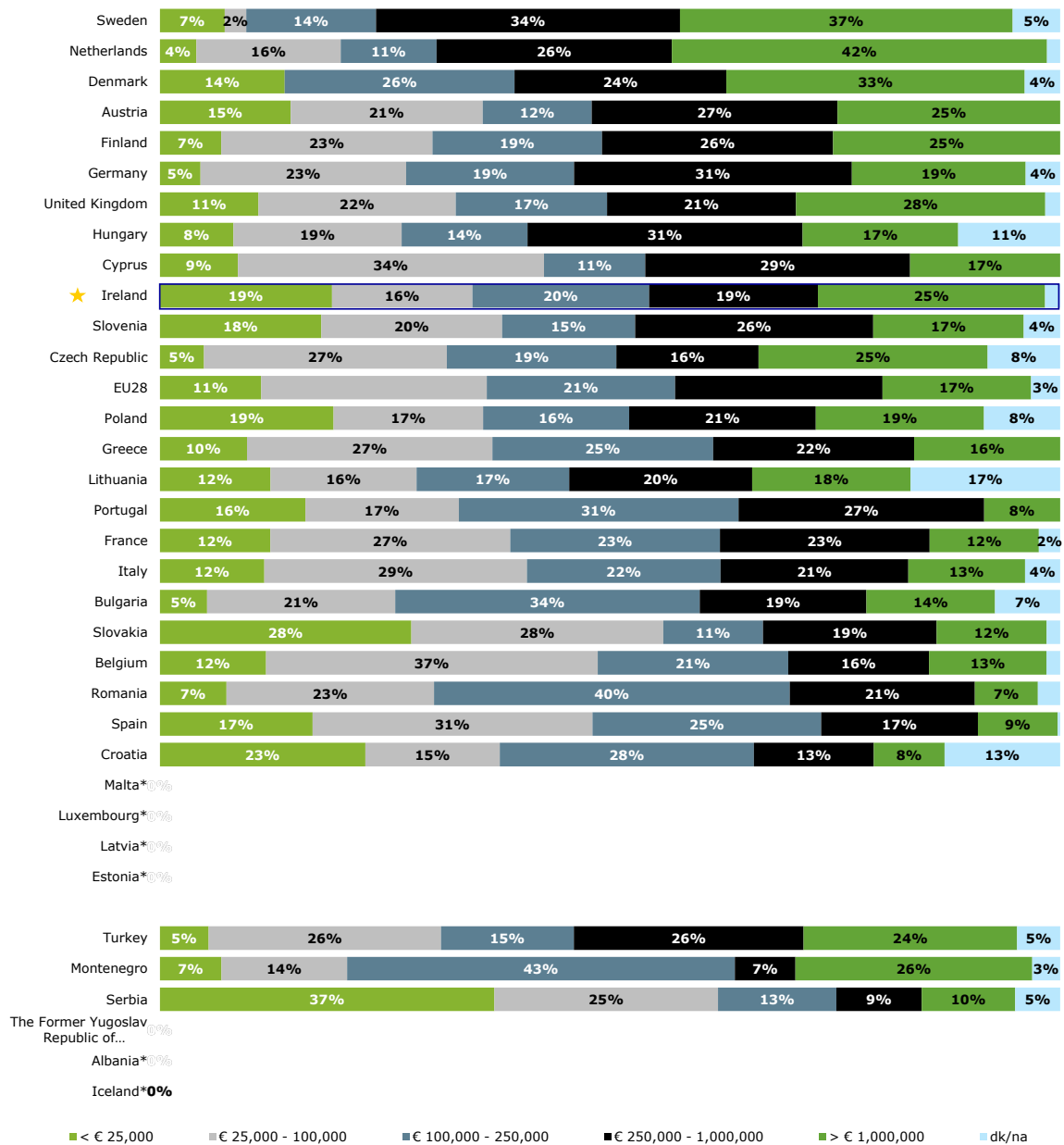


Q8a. What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise obtained or renegotiated in the past six months? / What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise attempted to obtain in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016, 2015 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

The size of loans obtained varies considerably across countries (figure 46). Small loans (less than EUR 25,000) are most often reported by SMEs in Slovakia (28% of SMEs that applied for a loan) and Croatia (23%). Large loans (more than EUR 1 million) are most often reported by SMEs in The Netherlands and Sweden.

figure 46 Size of the last loan of SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM by country in 2017

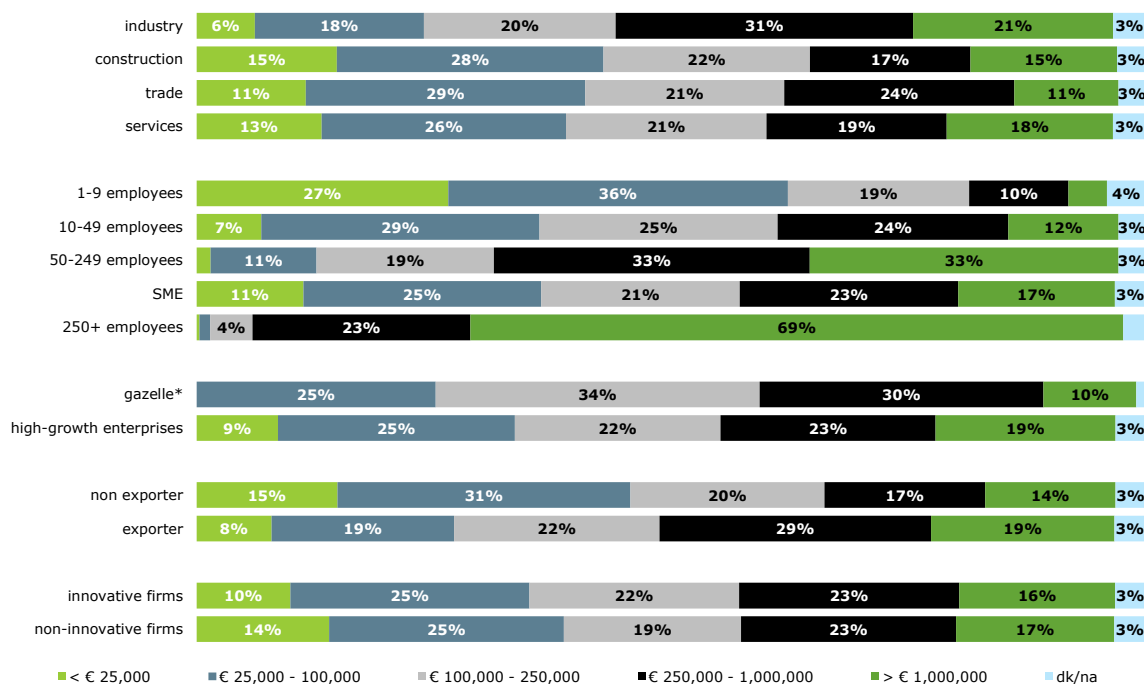


Q8a. What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise obtained or renegotiated in the past six months? / What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise attempted to obtain in the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, unweighted number of observations is below 20.

figure 47 Size of the last loan of SMEs in EU-28, by enterprise characteristics in 2016



Q8a. What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise obtained or renegotiated in the past six months? / What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise attempted to obtain in the past six months?

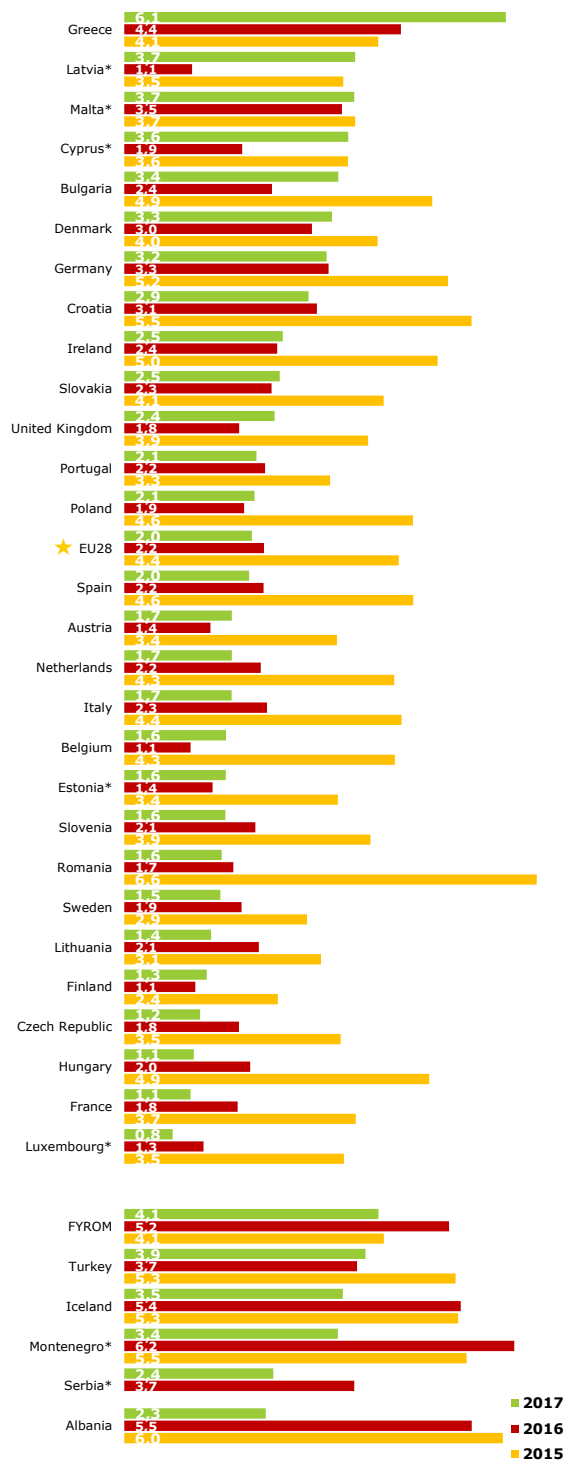
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Figure 47 shows the distribution of loan size by enterprise characteristic. SMEs in industry more often report larger loans: the proportion of loans obtained larger than EUR 100,000 in industry is much larger than the corresponding figure for construction, trade and services. Loan size is correlated to enterprise size. For instance, 53% of the enterprises with less than 10 employees report that the last loan obtained is less than EUR 100,000, whereas for SMEs as a whole this proportion amounts to 36%. Conversely, for enterprises with more than 250 employees 69% of loans obtained is at least EUR 1 million. 25% of the loans obtained by gazelles is less than EUR 100,000; for high-growth SMEs this figure amounts to 34%. Non-exporters more often obtain loans of less than EUR 100,000 (46%) than exporters (27%). The size-distribution of loans for innovative SMEs does not differ much from the size-distribution of loans for non-innovative SMEs.

1.6. Charged interest rate

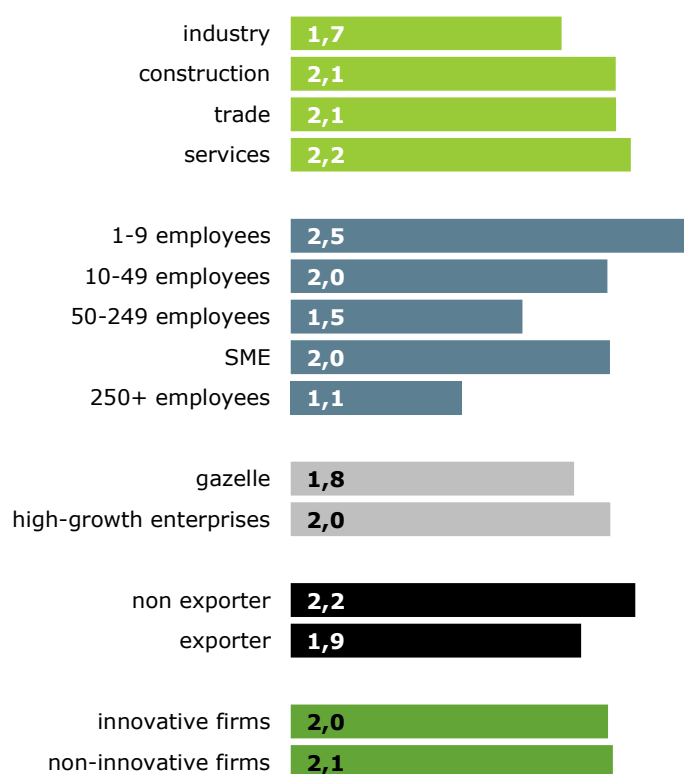
In 2015, the interest rate on bank overdraft and credit line paid by SMEs in EU28 amounted to 4.4%; in 2016, this has decreased to 2.2%, and in 2017 to 2% (figure 48). The interest rates charged to SMEs' bank overdraft and credit line varies considerably across countries. Within the EU, it is highest in Greece, Malta, Germany, Croatia and Denmark (6.1% in 2017), and lowest in Luxembourg (0.8%). In almost half of the Member States, interest rates charged to SMEs have increased in 2017. Interest rates charged to SMEs in Albania, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, FYROM, and Turkey are higher than the EU28 average.

figure 48 Mean of the interest rate on bank overdraft and credit line for SMEs in EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country in 2016



Q8b. What interest rate was charged for the credit line or bank overdraft for which you applied?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 49 Mean of the interest rate on bank overdraft and credit line for SMEs in EU-28, by enterprise characteristics in 2016



Q8b. What interest rate was charged for the credit line or bank overdraft for which you applied?

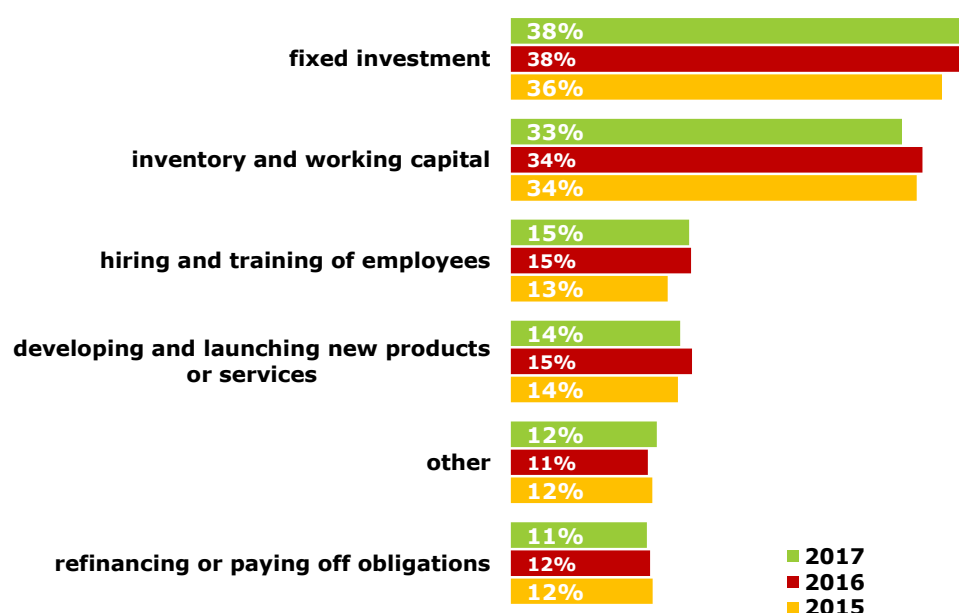
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The interest rate on bank overdraft and credit line paid by SMEs is differentiated by enterprise characteristic in figure 49. There are only minor differences between sectors of industry, with industry having slightly lower rates than other enterprises. Micro enterprises (1 to 9 employees) are charged a higher interest rate than the EU28 average for SMEs. Gazelles pay lower than average interest rates, while high-growth enterprises are charged the same as the EU average. Non-exporting SMEs are charged interest rates that are higher than average, while exporting SMEs pay below average rates. Non-innovative firms pay interest rates that are slightly higher than average.

1.7. Purpose of the most recent loan

Figure 50 shows for what purpose the EU28 SMEs have been using the most recent external financing obtained during the last six months in 2015, 2016, and 2017. The largest categories reported are fixed investment (reported by 38% of SMEs) and inventory and working capital (reported by 33% of SMEs). Other specific categories reported are hiring and training of employees (15%), developing and launching of new products or services (14%) along with other purposes (12%).

figure 50 Purpose for which external financing has been used by SMEs in EU-28 in the past six months (April to September)



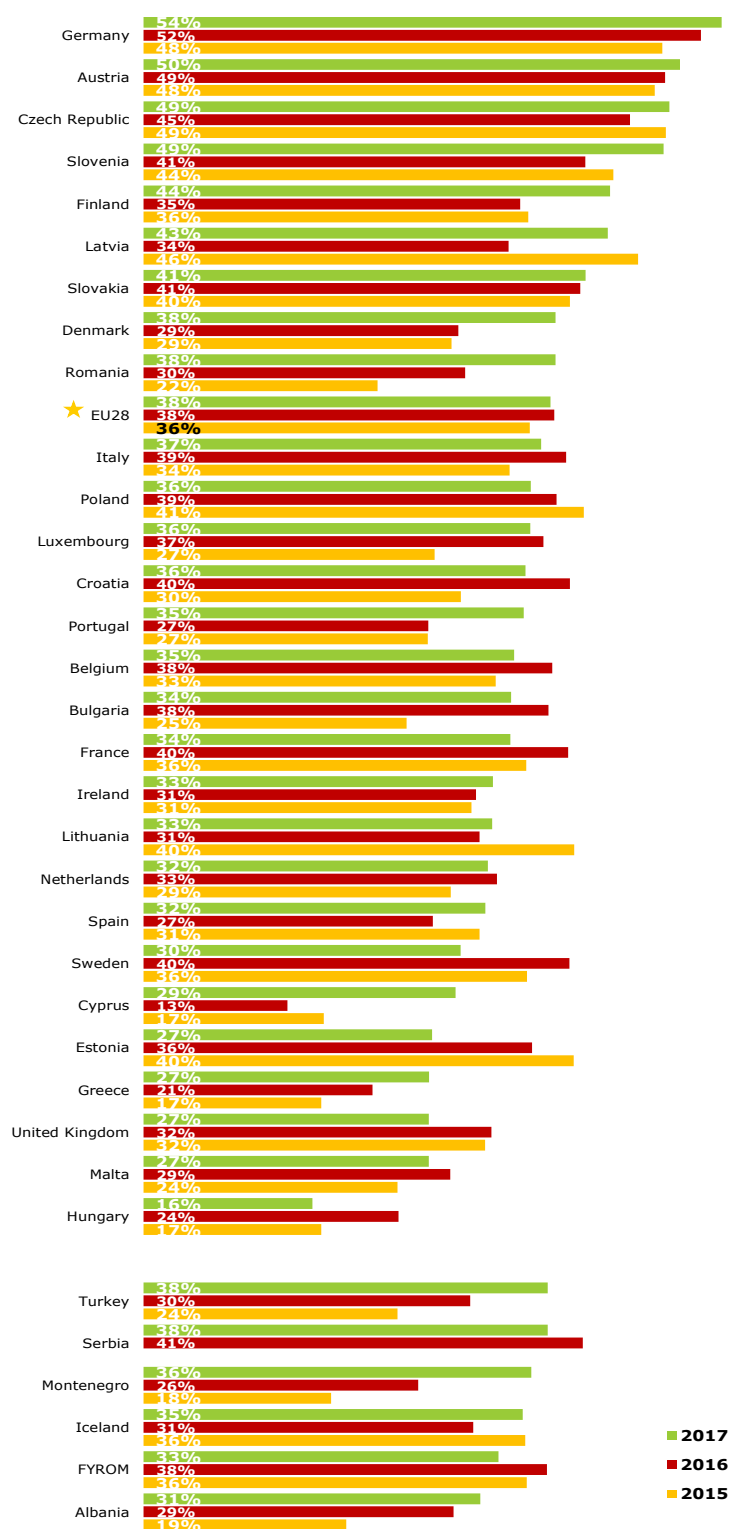
Q6a. For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months
Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

In the next section 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 more detailed results are presented for fixed investments and inventory and working capital, since these are the most often reported purposes for obtained financing.

1.6.1 Fixed investment

The last external finance obtained has been used most for fixed investment in the Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic (figure 51), and the least in Hungary, Malta, and the United Kingdom. In many EU Member States, the use of the last obtained external finance for fixed investment has decreased compared to 2016. In non-EU countries, use of the last obtained external finance for fixed investment varies between 38% of SMEs in Serbia and Turkey, and 31% in Albania.

figure 51 External financing used as investments in property, plant or equipment (fixed investment) by SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM in the past six months (April to September 2017), by country

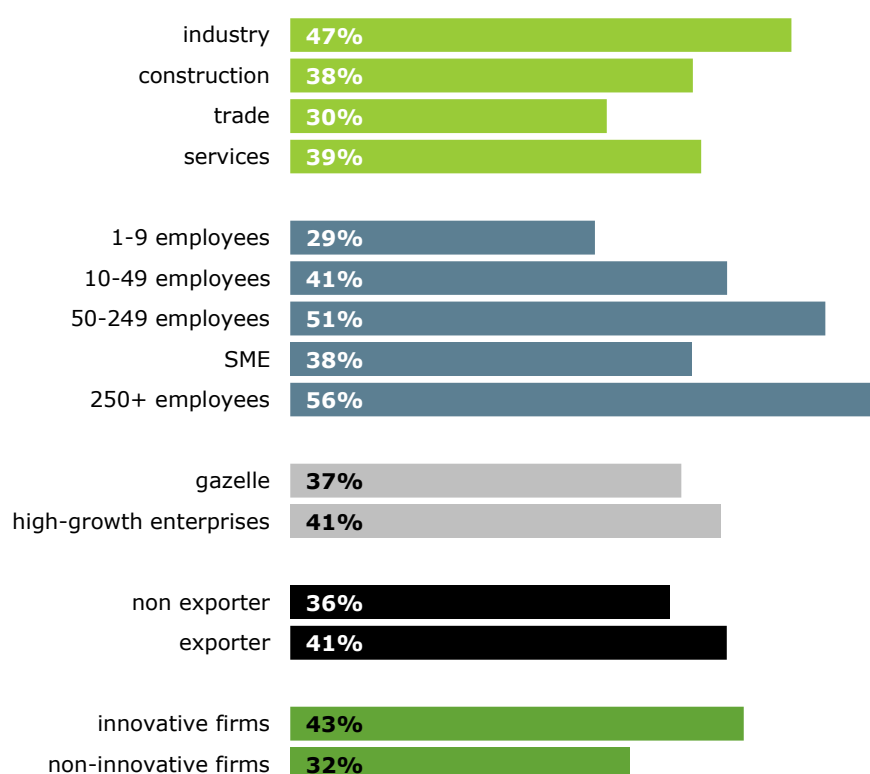


Q6a1. Investments in property, plant or equipment (fixed investment) - For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

The use of the last obtained external financing for fixed investment is most often reported in industry, by 47% of EU28 SMEs (figure 52), followed by services (39%) and construction (38%). There is a clear correlation between enterprise size and the use of the last obtained external financing for fixed investment: it is lowest in enterprises with less than 10 employees (29% of enterprises), and largest in enterprises with more than 250 employees (56%). High-growth SMEs use the last obtained external financing more often for fixed investment than the average for SMEs in the EU28. The same holds for exporters (versus non-exporters) and for innovative SMEs (versus non-innovative firms).

figure 52 External financing used as investments in property, plant or equipment (fixed investment) by SMEs in EU-28 in the past six months (April to September 2017), by enterprise characteristics



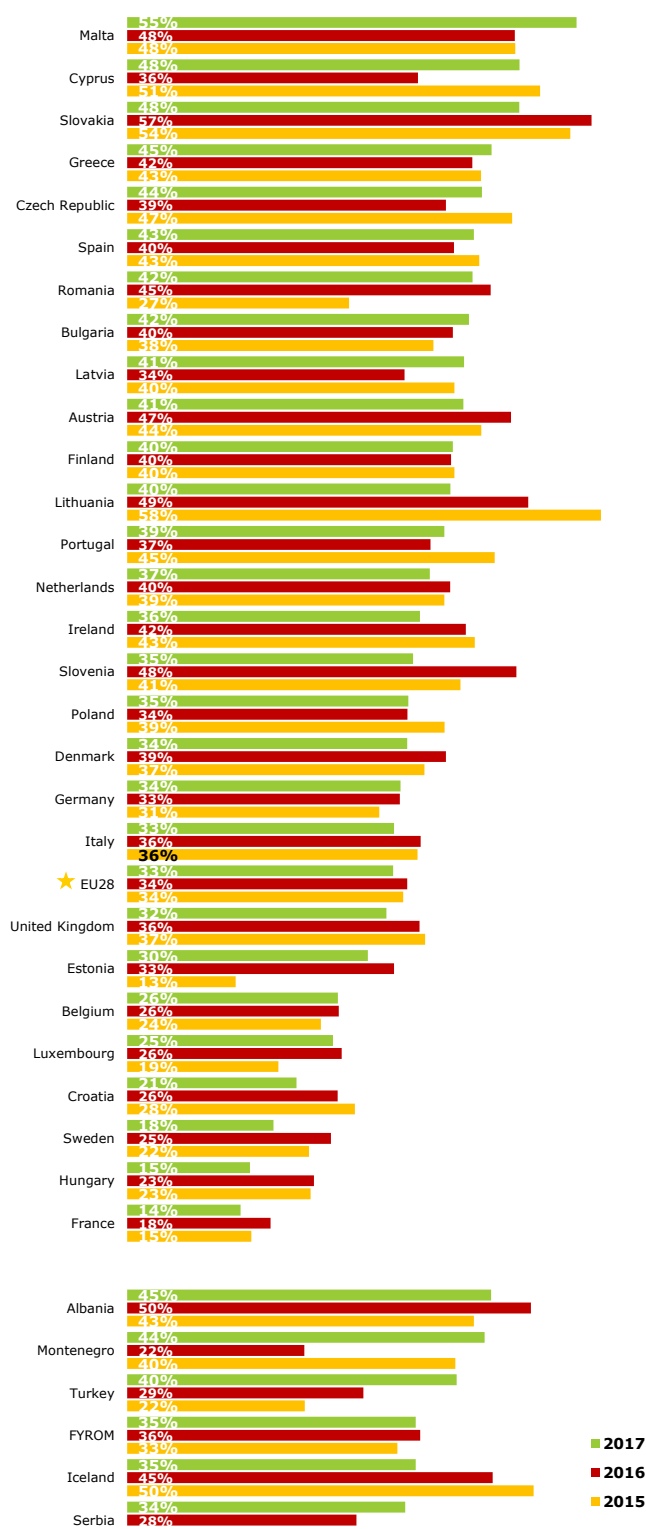
Q6a1. Investments in property, plant or equipment (fixed investment) - For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

1.6.2 Inventory or other working capital

The use of the last obtained external financing for inventory or other working capital in EU28 countries is largest in Malta, Cyprus and Slovakia, and the lowest in Sweden, Hungary and France (figure 53). Outside the EU28, the extent to which SMEs report having used the last obtained external financing for inventory or other working capital varies between 45% in Albania, and 34% in Serbia.

figure 53 External financing used as inventory or other working capital by SMEs in EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM in the past six months (April to September 2017), by country

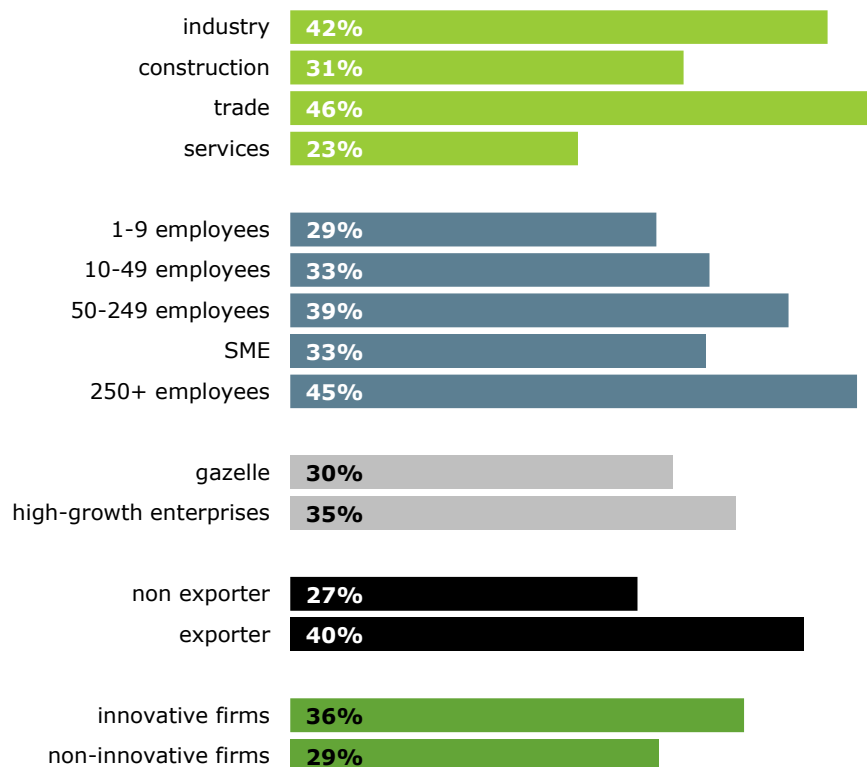


Q6a2. Inventory and other working capital - For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2015, 2016 and 2017; edited by Panteia.

In figure 54, the use of the last obtained external finance is disaggregated by enterprise characteristic. Viewed by sector of industry, use of the last obtained external finance for inventory or other working capital is mentioned most often in trade (46%) and industry (42%). The use of the last obtained external finance for inventory or other working capital is mentioned least in enterprises with less than 10 employees, and most often in enterprises with more than 250 employees. Exporting SMEs mention use of the last obtained external finance for inventory or other working capital more often than non-exporting SMEs. The same holds for innovative SMEs compared to non-innovative SMEs.

figure 54 External financing used inventory or other working capital by SMEs in EU-28 in the past six months (April to September 2017), by enterprise characteristics



Q6a2. Inventory and other working capital - For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

2. ACCESS TO EXTERNAL SOURCES OF FINANCE

This chapter details the access to external sources of finance for European SMEs. The chapter covers changes in the general economic and financial environment for SMEs (2.2), changes in the availability of various types of finance (2.3), changes in the need for external financing (2.4) and changes in the terms and conditions of bank financing faced by enterprises (2.5).

2.1. Key findings

For the first time since 2009, the survey showed that perceptions regarding the development of general economic outlook faced by EU28 SMEs were positive in 2015. In 2016 however, the proportion of SMEs that reported deterioration in their economic outlook slightly exceeded the proportion of SMEs that reported an improvement. In 2017, the balance between SMEs that reported an improvement in their economic outlook exceeded the proportion of SMEs that reported a deterioration again. The number of SMEs that reported deterioration was higher than the number of SMEs reporting an improvement for public financial support. On the other hand, SMEs are more positive about changes in firm-specific outlook, credit history, bank lending, business partners providing trade credit and investments in equity and securities, and their own capital. For these issues, the positive balance between SMEs reporting an improvement and SMEs reporting a deterioration tends to increase.

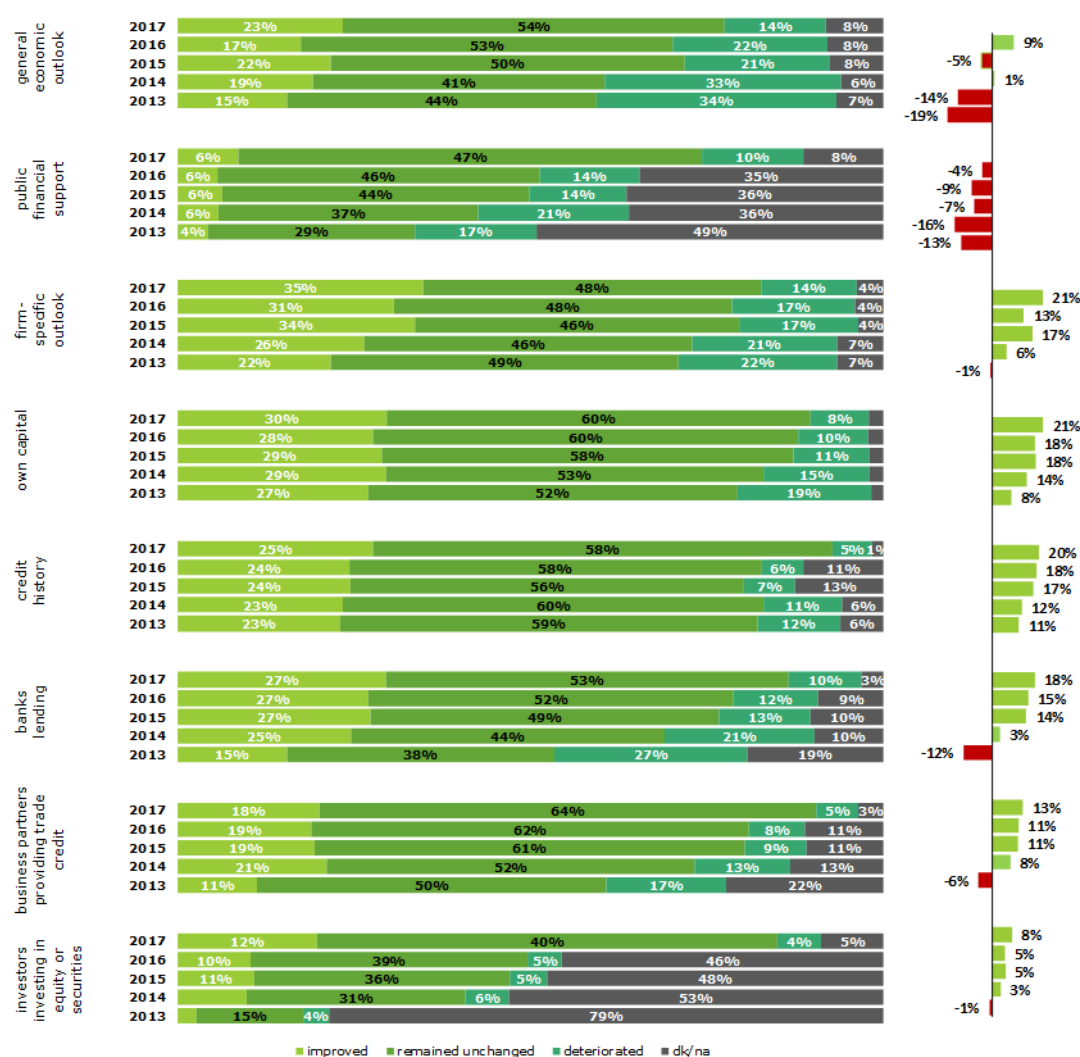
In 2017, just as in 2016 and 2015, SMEs in the EU28 were generally positive about changes in the availability of different types of financing. Regarding the availability of bank loans, trade credit, equity, leasing or hire-purchase, and other types of loans, the proportion of SMEs that reporting an improvement was higher than the proportion of SMEs reporting deterioration. In contrast, slightly more SMEs reported deterioration in the availability of debt securities issued rather than an improvement.

In 2017, the majority of SMEs in the EU28 did not experience any changes in the availability of finance for any of the types of funding. The proportion of EU28 SMEs which reported that their needs had increased was higher than the proportion of SMEs reporting a decrease in their needs for trade credit, equity capital, leasing or hire-purchase, or other types of loans.

2.2. Changes in the general economic and financial environment

This section covers changes in eight factors affecting the availability of external financing for SMEs, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for a subset of four of these types. The four types that are discussed in more detail are public financial support, the firm-specific outlook, SMEs' own capital and their credit history. Changes in these factors are first presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 55. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported improvements minus deteriorations.

figure 55 Changes in factors affecting the availability of external financing for SMEs in EU-28 in the period 2013-2017, for SMEs in the EU28.



Q11. For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

Perceptions regarding the development of general economic outlook faced by the EU28 SMEs was positive in 2017, which constitutes a decline compared to 2016. In 2016, 23% of SMEs indicated that the general economic outlook had improved, while another 14% reported a deterioration. This results in a net improvement of 9%. In preceding survey years (with the exception of 2015), this net change has always been negative.

Improvements in SMEs' perception of the general economic outlook have been considerable. In 2017, 35% of EU28 SMEs reported an improvement in their own outlook with respect to sales, profitability and their business plan. Another 14% indicated a deterioration, resulting in a net improvement for 21%.

The stock of own capital follows suit with improvements (or decreasing deteriorations) in both the general economic outlook and the firm-specific outlook. The enterprise's own capital includes both capital provided by the owners and by the shareholders of

the enterprise. When enterprises realise profits, their equity balance improves and the own capital stock grows. In 2017, 30% of EU28 SMEs reported an improvement in the enterprise's own capital. Another 8% reported a deterioration, resulting in a net improvement for 21%. This net change has been positive in most survey years and has been steadily improving since 2011.

Changes in credit history have followed a similar pattern. In 2017, 25% of EU28 SMEs reported that their credit worthiness had improved, while only 5% indicated a deterioration in their track record of repaying past debts. This results in a net improvement of EU28 SME's credit history equal to 20%. In 2011, the net change constituted an improvement of 8% and since that year, the net effect has been constantly improving.

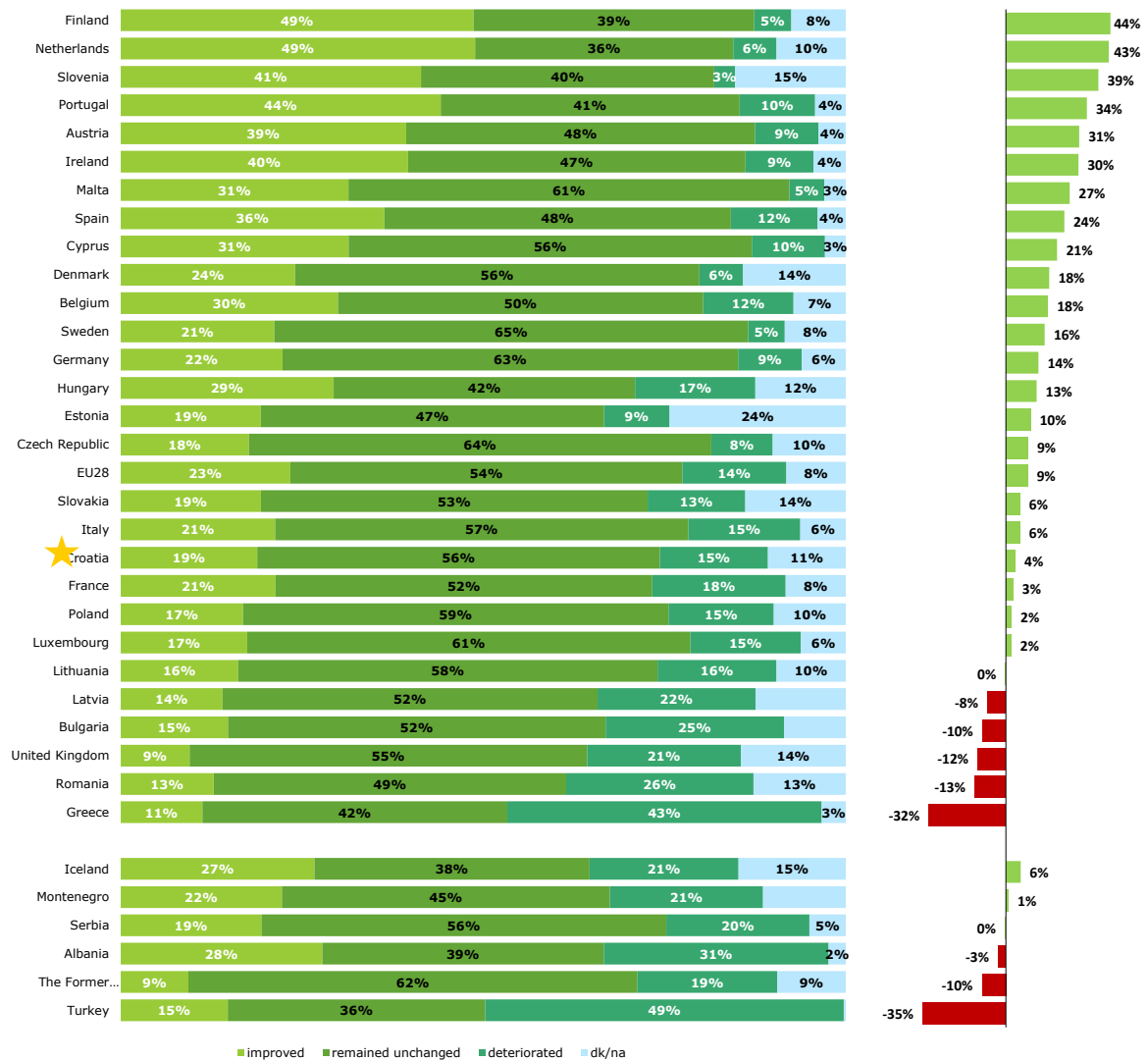
Even though EU28 SMEs perceived improvements in their credit history as early in 2011, their access to bank loans only started improving in 2014. In 2017, 27% perceived an improvement in banks' willingness to provide credit to their enterprise versus 5% perceiving a deterioration. This resulted in a net improvement of 20%, which represents a marked improvement over all recent survey years.

Access to another type of debt financing also improved in the eyes of EU28 SMEs. In 2017, 18% indicated an improvement in their business partners' willingness to provide trade credit to their enterprise. Another 5% perceived a deterioration, resulting in a net improvement for 13%. Changes in the access to trade credit have developed in a fashion similar to perceived changes in access to bank loans: from net deteriorations decreasing in size from 2011 to 2013, to increasing net improvements in thereafter.

The two factors that were least often applicable to EU28 SMEs were public financial support and investors investing in their enterprise's equity or securities. The latter saw a rounded net improvement in 2017 equal to 8%: 12% of SMEs indicated an improvement, while 4% reported a deterioration. Public financial support has been lacking since 2009 in the perception of SMEs as they have reported a net deterioration in every survey year. The net deterioration in 2017 equals -4%.

2.2.1 General economic outlook

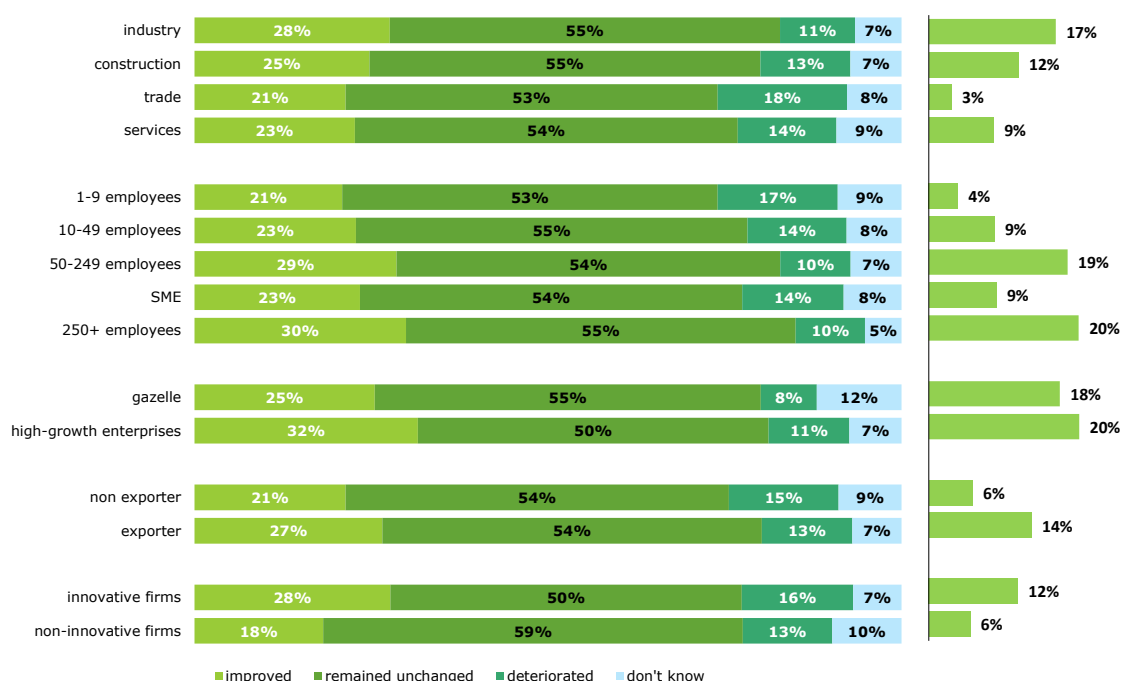
figure 56 Changes in general economic outlook in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q11a. General economic outlook, insofar as it affects the availability of external financing - For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 57 Changes in general economic outlook in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q11a. General economic outlook, insofar as it affects the availability of external financing - For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Improvements in the general economic outlook are reported by 23% of all SMEs in the EU28 (figure 56), with another 14% having experienced deteriorations in outlook, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 9%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Finland and Netherlands report the largest net increases in general economic outlook, and SMEs in Greece the largest net deterioration (-32%).

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, the identified groups report various net changes in their general economic outlook in 2017 (figure 57). Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the comparatively most favourable change in general economic outlook with an improvement of 17%, and those in trade report the lowest net increase (3%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the general economic outlook. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 20%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced a deterioration (net 4%).

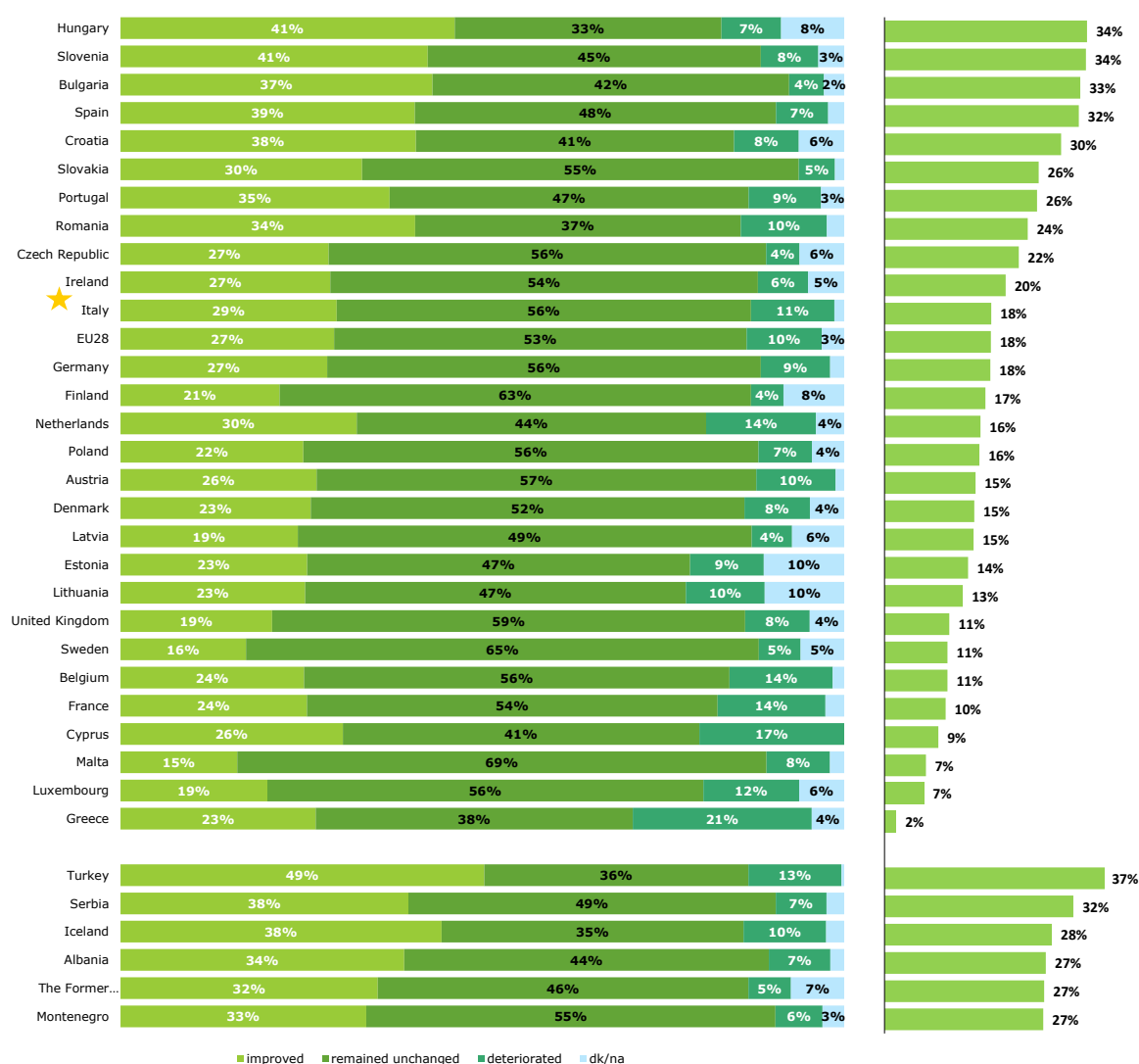
There exists relatively little difference in the changes in the general economic outlook between the two discerned types of turnover growth. This means that general economic outlook was slightly better amongst high-growth SMEs (20%) compared to gazelles (18%). Exporters (net 14%) are more positive about changes in general economic outlook than SMEs that do not export (6%) and innovative SMEs (12%) are more positive than non-innovative SMEs (6%) are.

2.2.2 Bank lending

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in bank lending and its effect on the availability of external financing. A breakdown by country in figure 58

presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. In addition figure 59 is a map which shows the net change for SMEs in the member states of the EU28. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 60 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

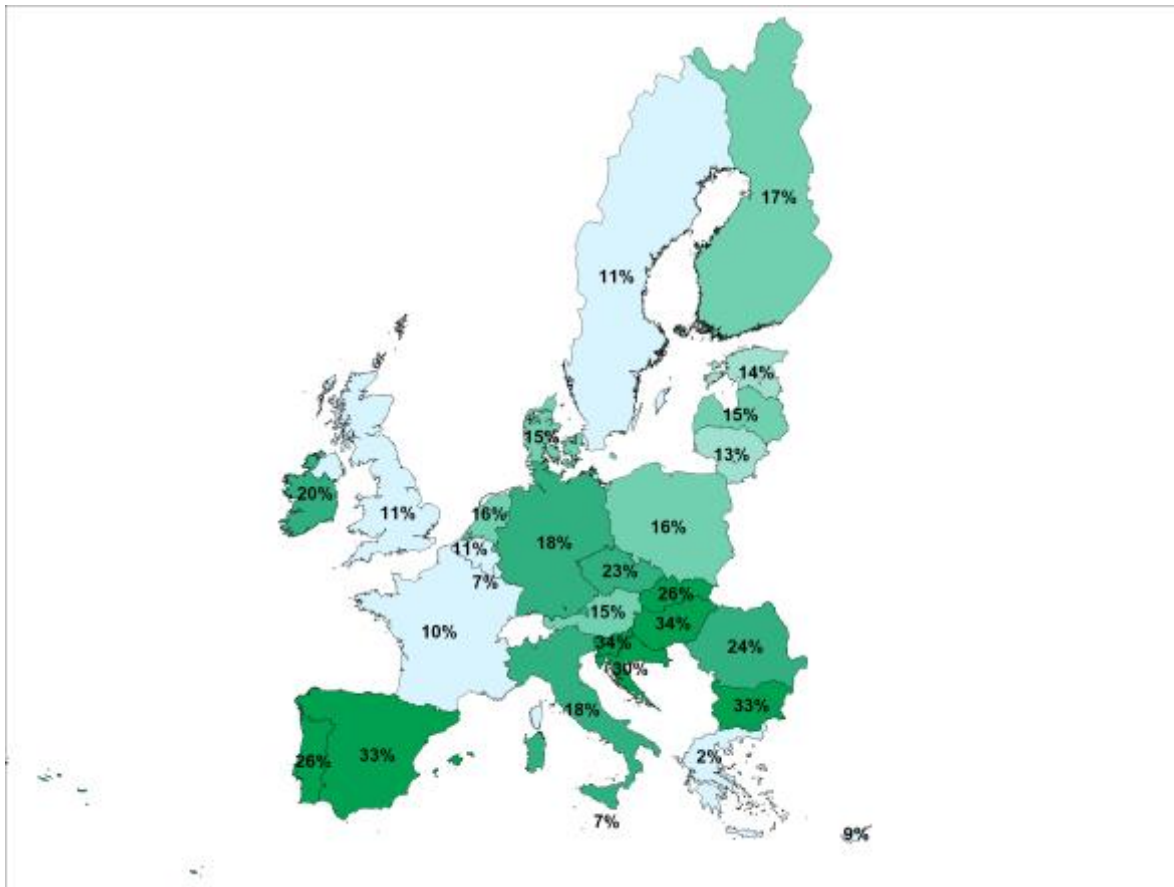
figure 58 Changes in bank lending in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q11f. The willingness of banks to provide credit to your enterprise - For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

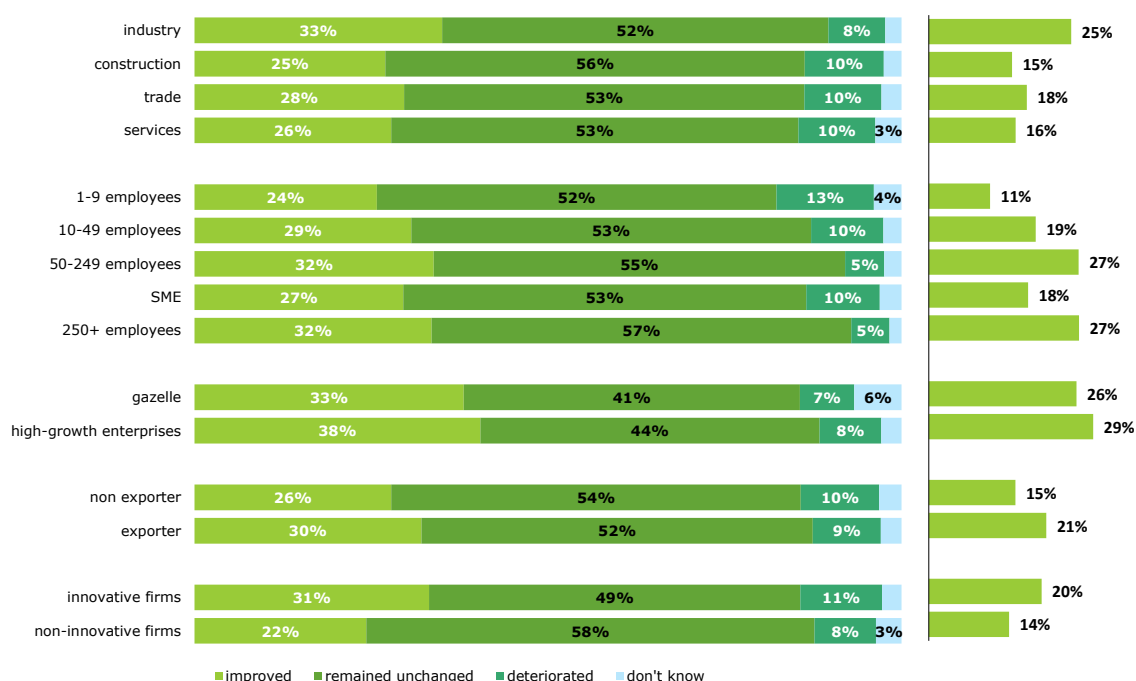
Improvements in bank lending are reported by 27% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 10% having experienced deteriorations in such access, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 18%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Hungary report the largest net increase (34%), and SMEs in Greece the lowest net improvement (2%).

figure 59 Changes (the net change between the categories improved and deteriorated) in the willingness of banks to provide credit for SMEs in EU-28 in the period 2013-2017, for SMEs in the EU28.



Q11f. The willingness of banks to provide credit to your enterprise - For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 60 Changes in bank lending in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q11f. Willingness of banks to provide credit to your enterprise - For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic (figure 60), all of the identified groups report net improvements in bank lending in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the largest net improvement (25%) and in construction the smallest net improvement (15%). There exists a relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in access to public financial support. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 27%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced a relatively weak improvement (net 11%).

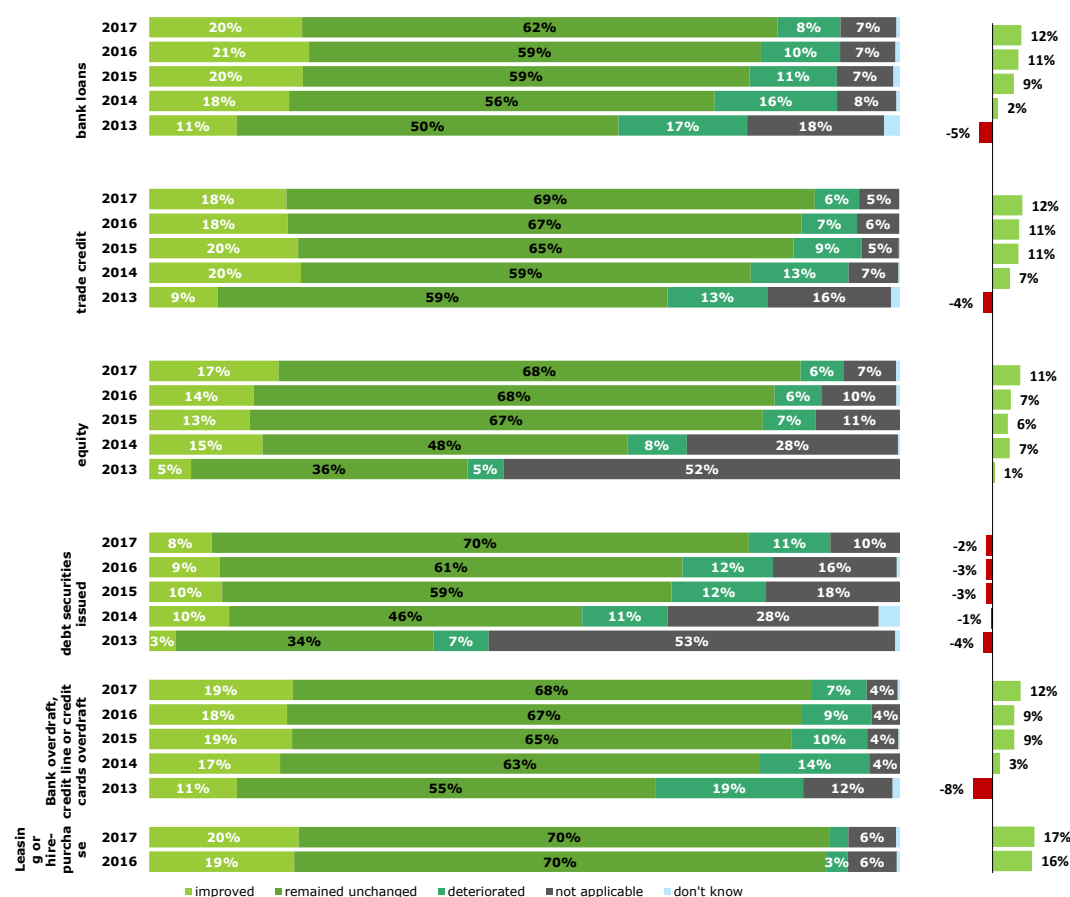
There exists a relatively small difference in the changes in bank lending between the two discerned types of turnover growth. This means that bank lending improved slightly for regular high-growth SMEs (29%) compared to gazelles (26%). Exporters (net 21%) are more positive about changes in bank lending than SMEs that do not export (15%) and innovative SMEs (20%) are more positive than non-innovative SMEs (14%) are.

2.3. Changes in the availability of financing

This section covers changes in the availability of seven types of financing for SMEs, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for a subset of four of these types. The four types that are discussed in more detail are credit line, bank overdraft or credit card overdraft, bank loans, trade credit and equity financing. Changes in the availability for these types in the six months preceding the survey are first presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2011-2015 in figure 61. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect

of reported improvements minus deteriorations. When years are excluded, the particular financing type was only first included in a later survey year.

figure 61 Changes in in the availability of different types of financing for SMEs in EU-28 in the period 2013-2017, for SMEs in the EU28.



Q9. For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

The effect of bank lending as a factor that impacts the availability of external financing for SMEs in the EU28 has seen net improvements in 2016 and 2017, as was discussed in section 2.2. Following that, the actual availability of bank loans to European SMEs has also improved in the same years. In 2017, 20% indicated an improvement in the availability of bank loans versus 8% that reported a deterioration. This results in a net improvement in the availability of bank loans for 12% of SMEs. Their availability deteriorated in 2013 with a net change of -5%, following the financial crisis of preceding years. In the subsequent survey years, the net deteriorations grew smaller and changed to increasing improvements.

Another type of bank financing experienced a strongly similar development: the availability of bank overdraft, credit line or credit cards. Whereas 19% of EU28 SMEs reported improved availability of this type of financing, another 7% reported a deterioration. This results in a 12% net improvement. Over the survey years, the availability of bank overdraft, credit line or credit cards overdraft has developed similarly to that of loans.

A similar development is observed for the availability of trade credit. The availability of this type of financing has improved over the survey years, from a net deterioration equal to -5% in 2011 to a net improvement of 12% in 2017. The latter is the result of 18% of EU28 SMEs reporting an improvement in the availability of trade credit and 6% reporting a deterioration in its availability.

Equity capital is a type of financing that is both internal (retained earnings and capital provided by the owners) and external (capital provided by external shareholders, both existing and new). In 2017, 17% of EU28 SMEs reported an improvement availability of equity financing versus 6% that indicated it has deteriorated. This results in a net improvement of 11%, similar in size to the net change reported in 2015 (6%). The most remarkable development in the availability of equity financing to EU28 SMEs, however, is that it has become a relevant type of financing to a much larger proportion of these enterprises in the survey years.

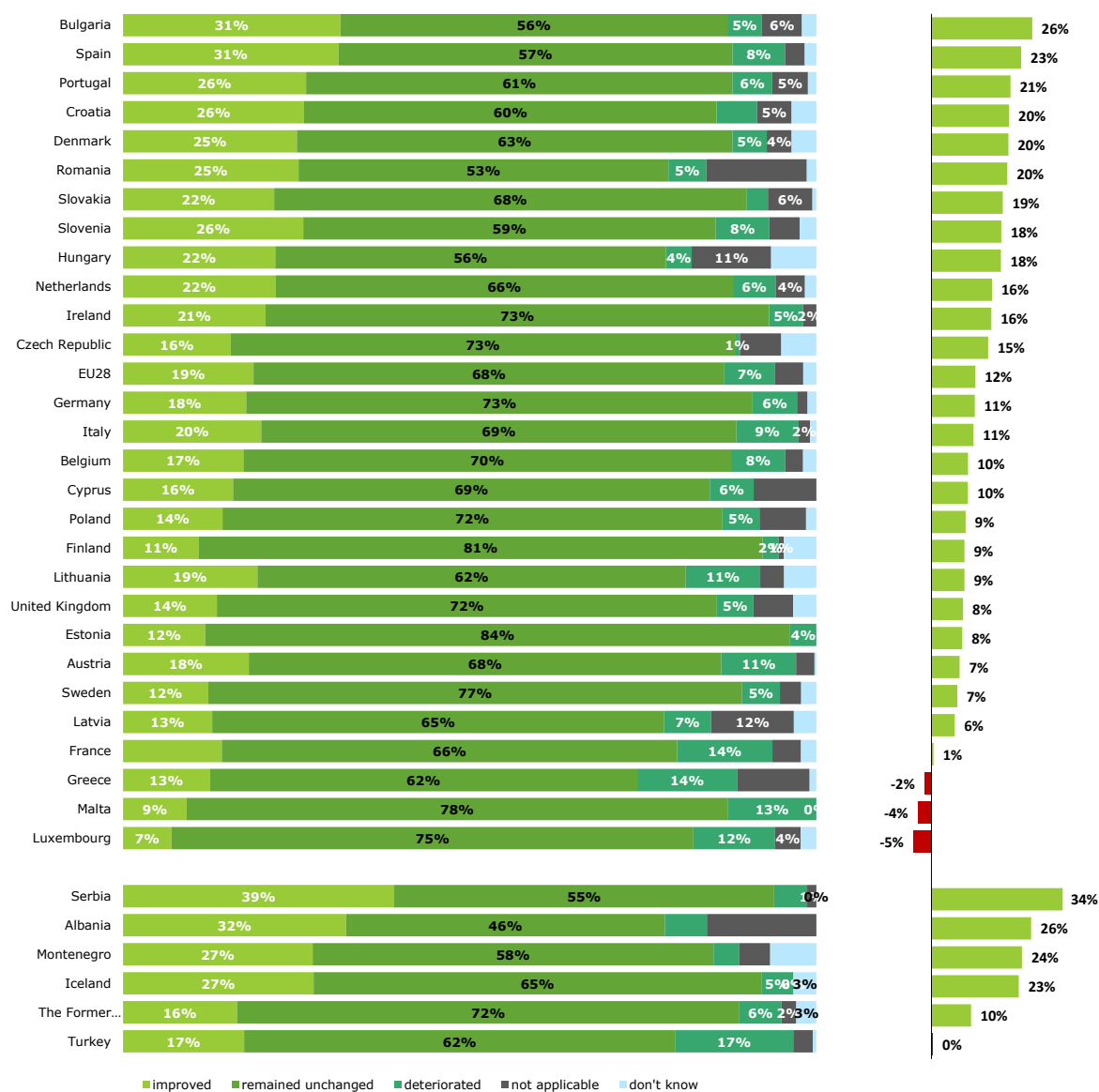
The only type of financing of which availability did not improve in 2017 was that of debt securities issued: short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by enterprises. Whereas 8% reported an improvement, 11% reported a deterioration which resulted in a net deterioration of 2%. The relevance of debt securities to SME financing seems to have improved over the years, as it also has for equity financing. Nonetheless, the proportion of EU28 SMEs that reports a deterioration of availability has consistently been larger than the proportion that reports an improvement in every single survey year since 2011.

The largest net improvement in the availability of the discerned financing types occurred for leasing or hire-purchase, which was first included as a category in 2015. It refers to obtaining the use of a fixed asset in exchange for regular payments, but without immediate ownership of the asset. In 2017, 20% of EU28 SMEs reported an improvement in the availability of leasing or hire-purchase as a type of financing to them. As only 3% reported a deterioration, the net improvement equals 17%.

2.3.1 Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the availability of credit line, bank overdraft or credits to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 62 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 63 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

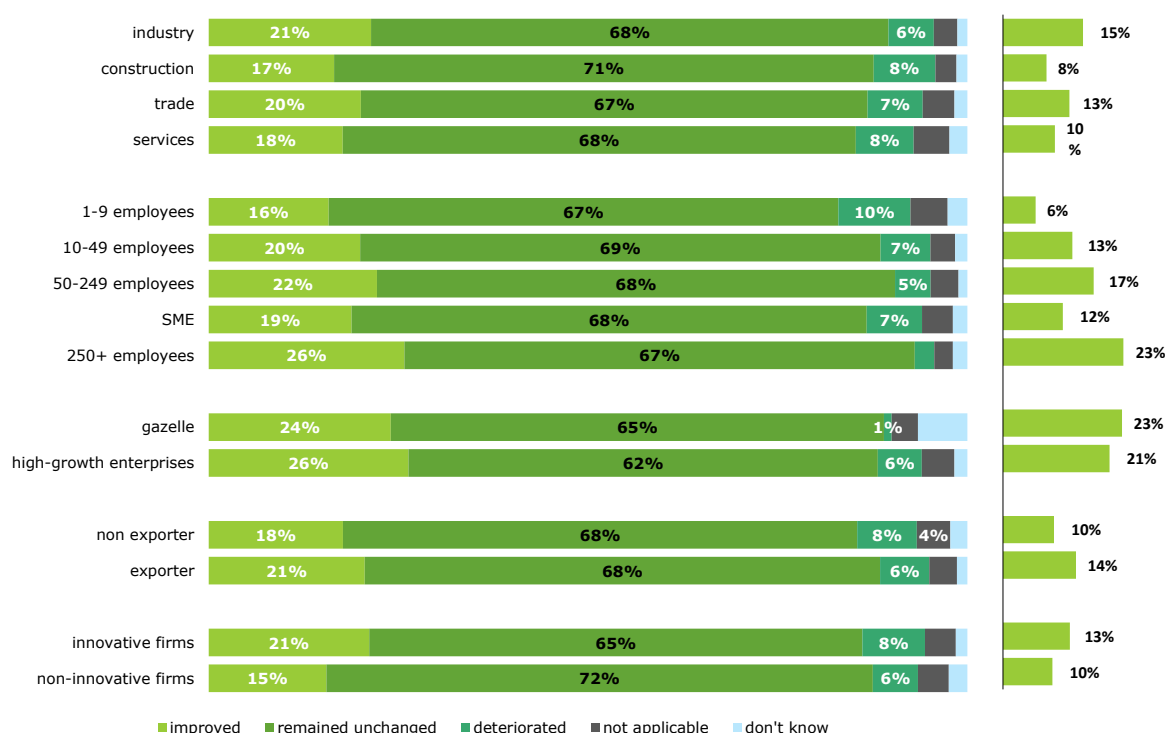
figure 62 Changes in the availability of credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q9f. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 63 Changes in the availability of credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q9f. Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Improvements in the availability of credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft are reported by 19% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 7% having experienced deteriorations in such changes, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 12%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Bulgaria report the largest net improvement for this type of financing and SMEs in Luxembourg the largest net deterioration.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the identified groups report net improvements in availability in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the largest net improvement (15%) and those in construction the smallest (8%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the availability of this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 23%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced an improvement least often (net 6%).

There exists little difference in the perceived changes in the availability of this type of financing for high-growth SMEs diversified by age: the net improvements are similar in size for both regular high-growth SMEs and gazelles (the latter consisting of high-growth SMEs no older than 5 years). Exporters are more positive than non-exporters (net 14% versus 10%) and innovative SMEs are more positive regarding the availability of credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft to them than non-innovative SMEs are.

2.3.2 Bank loans

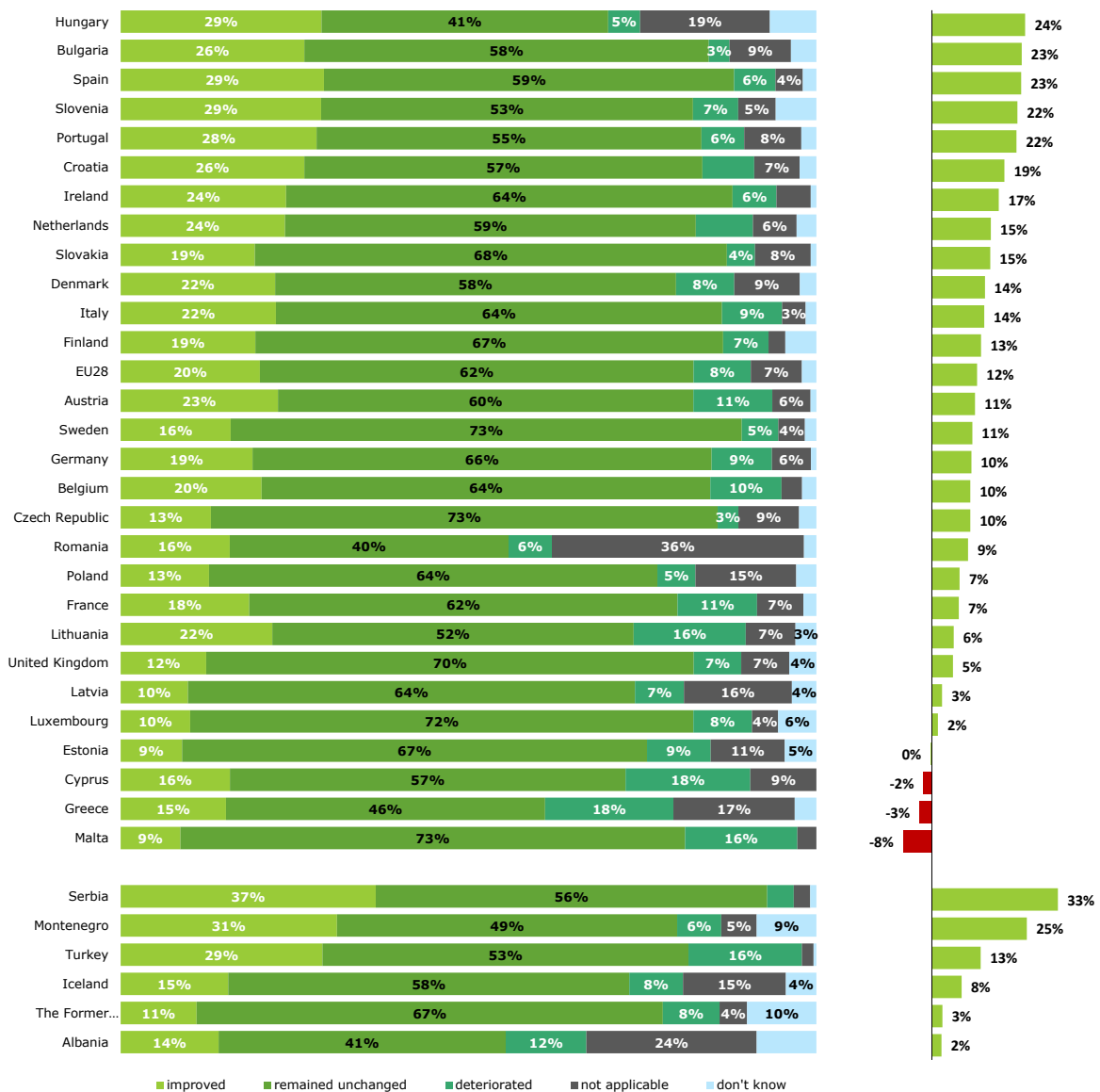
This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the availability of bank loans to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 64 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. In addition figure 65 is a map which shows the net change for SMEs in the member states of the EU28. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 66 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

Improvements in the availability of bank loans are reported by 20% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 8% having experienced deteriorations in such changes, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 12%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Hungary report the largest net improvement for this type of financing and SMEs in Malta the largest net deterioration.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the identified groups report net improvements in availability in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the largest net improvement (19%) and those in construction the smallest (8%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the availability of this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 23%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced an improvement least often (net 5%).

There exists little difference in the perceived changes in the availability of this type of financing for high-growth SMEs diversified by age: the net improvements for both regular high-growth SMEs and gazelles (the latter consisting of high-growth SMEs no older than 5 years), are 21% and 17%, respectively. Exporters are more positive than non-exporters (net 14% versus 10%) and innovative SMEs are more positive regarding the availability of bank loans to them than non-innovative SMEs are.

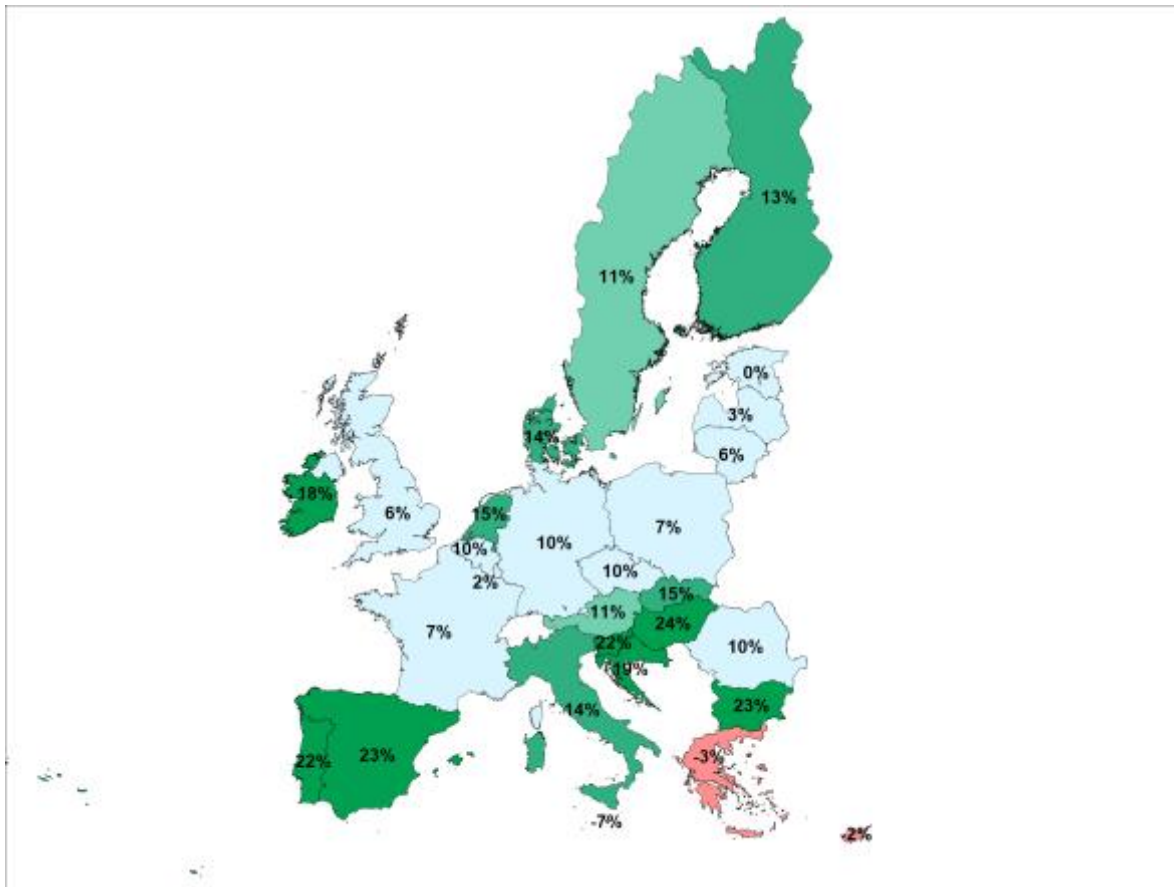
figure 64 Changes in the availability of bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q9a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

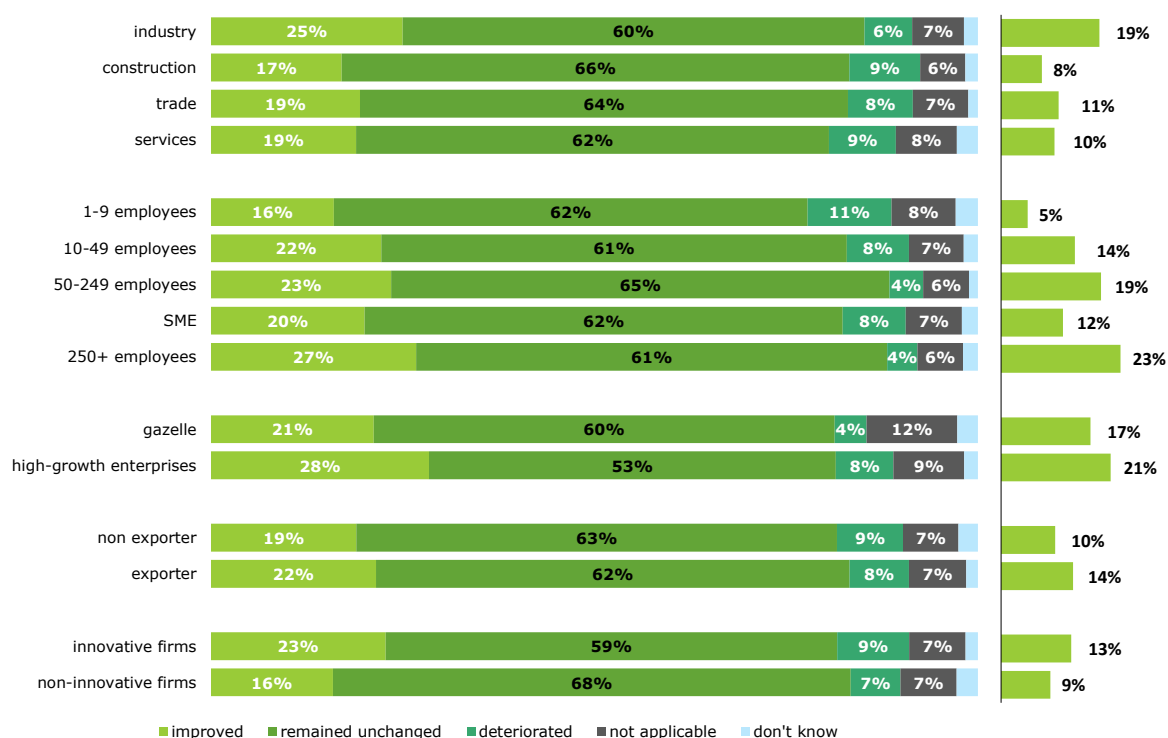
figure 65 Changes (the net change between the categories improved and deteriorated) in the availability of bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2016) for SMEs in the EU28, by country



Q9a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 66 Changes in the availability of bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



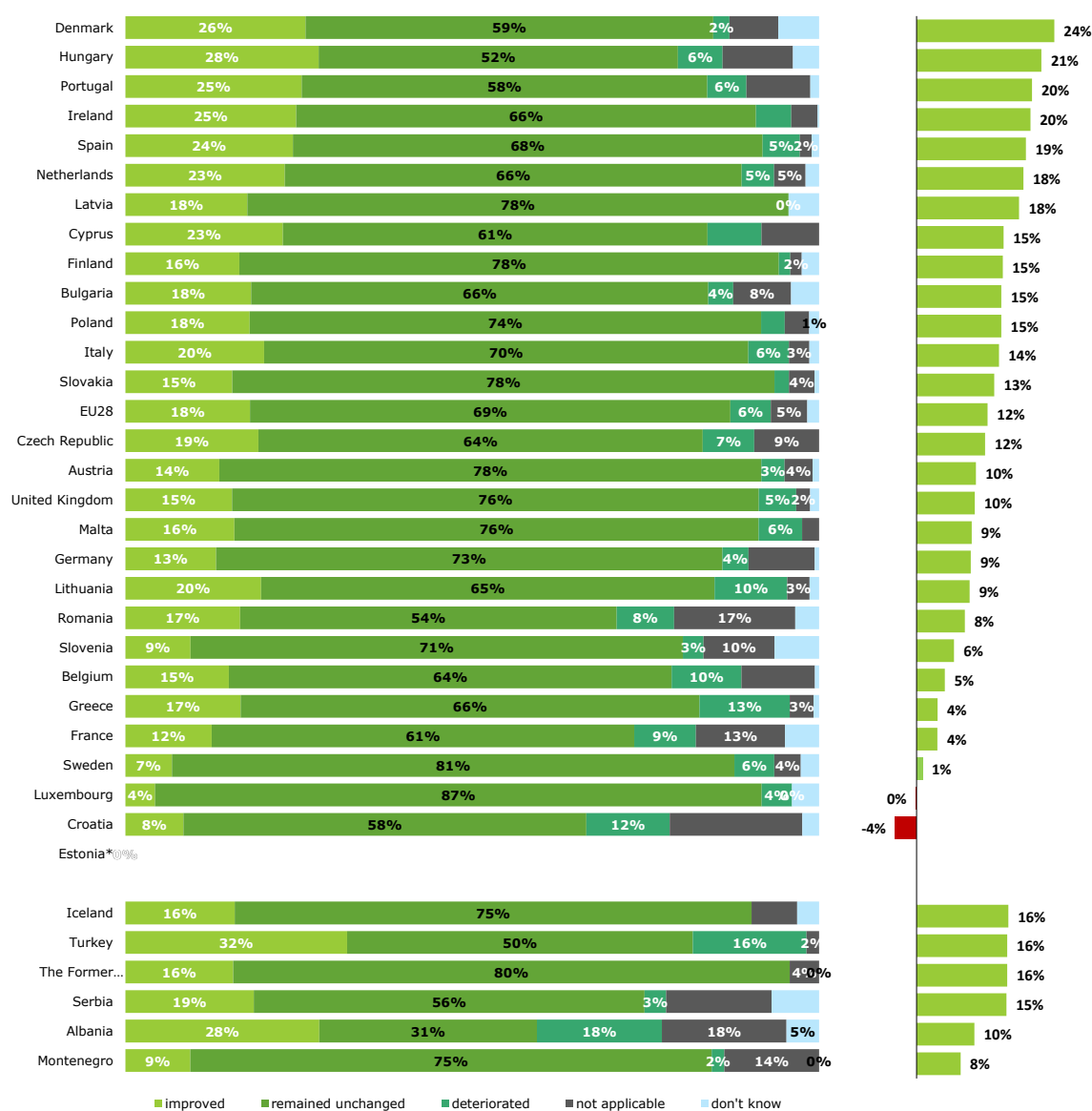
Q9a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

2.3.3 Trade credit

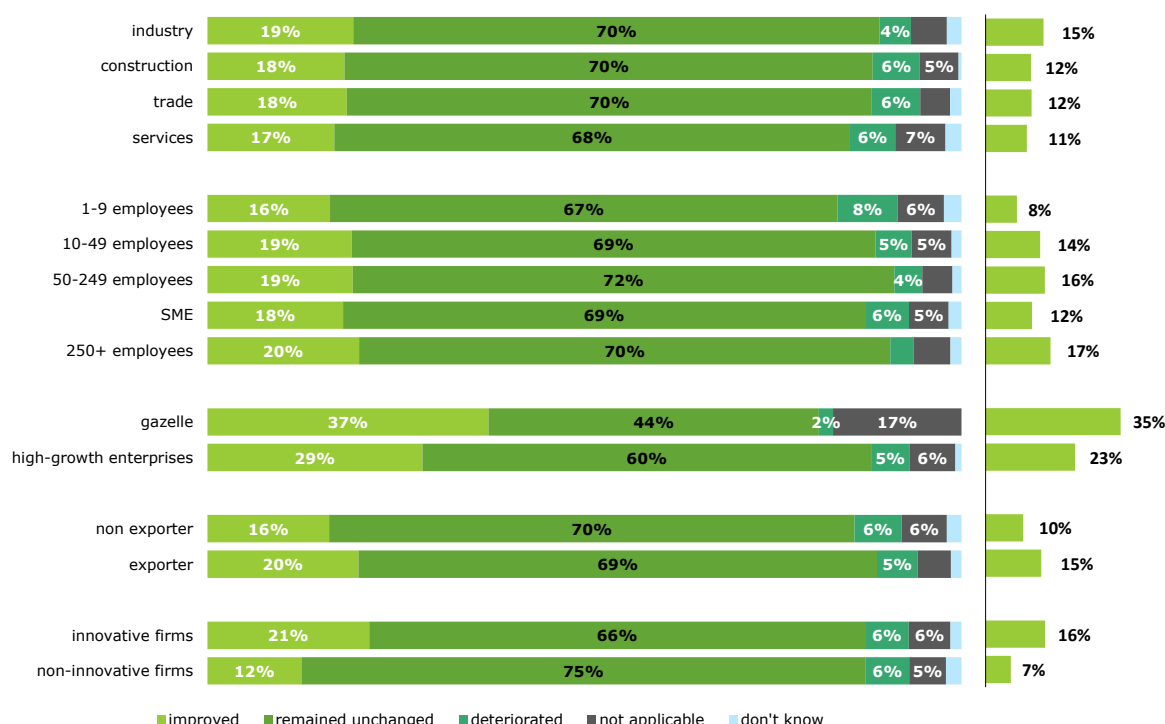
This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the availability of trade credit to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 67 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 68 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

figure 67 Changes in the availability of trade credit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q9b.Trade credit - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 68 Changes in the availability of trade credit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q9b. Trade credit - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Improvements in the availability of trade credit are reported by 18% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 6% having experienced deteriorations in such changes, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 12%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Denmark report the largest net improvement for this type of financing and SMEs in Croatia the largest net deterioration.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the identified groups report net improvements in availability in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the largest net improvement (15%) and those in services the smallest (11%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the availability of this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 17%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced an improvement least often (net 8%).

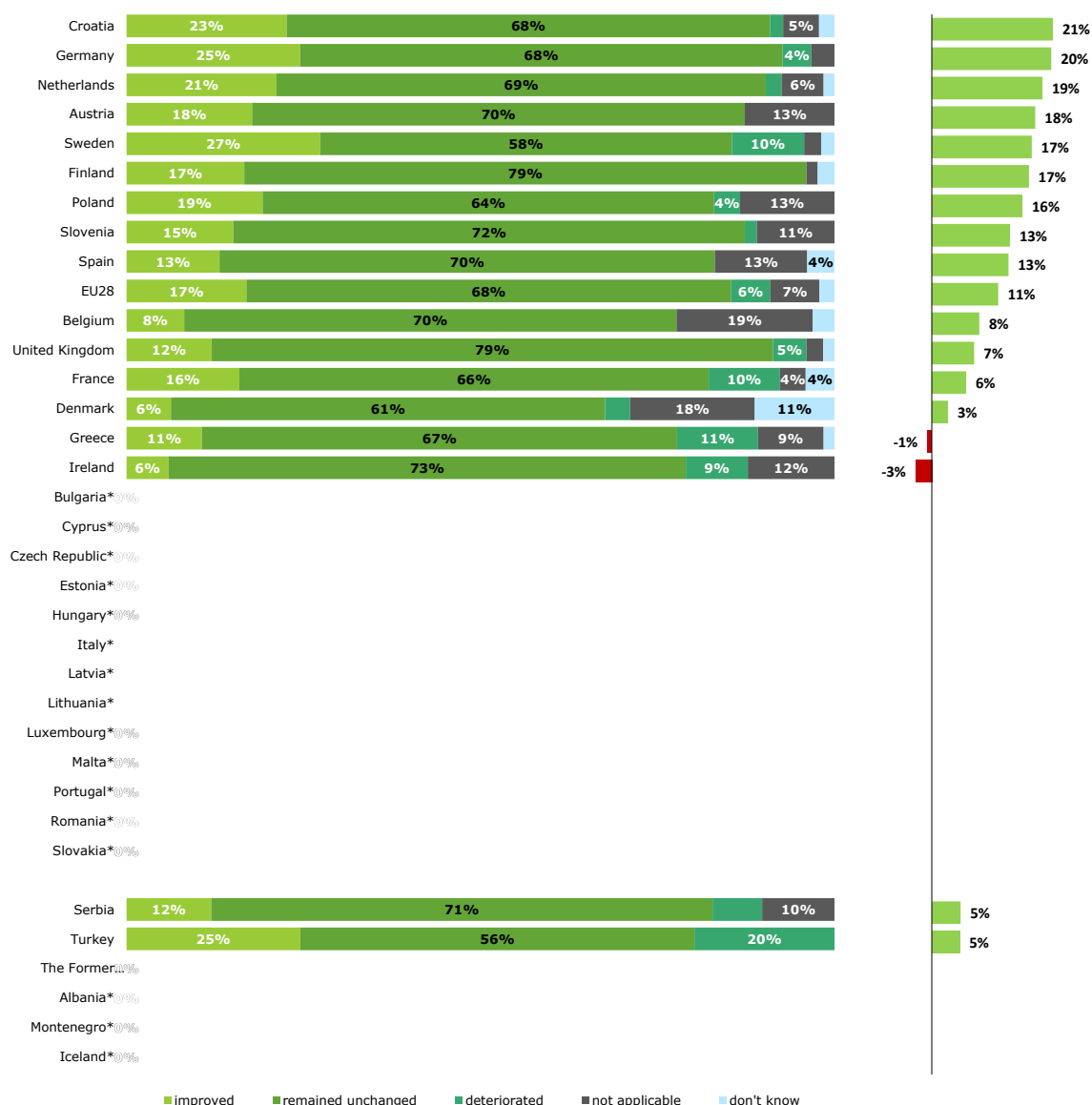
Gazelle SMEs (35%) more often report a net improvement in the availability of trade credit to them than regular high-growth SMEs do (23%). Exporters are more positive than non-exporters (net 15% versus 10%) and innovative SMEs are more positive regarding the availability of trade credit to them than non-innovative SMEs are.

2.3.4 Equity capital

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the availability of equity capital to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 69 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 70 presents these results

by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

figure 69 Changes in the availability of equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.

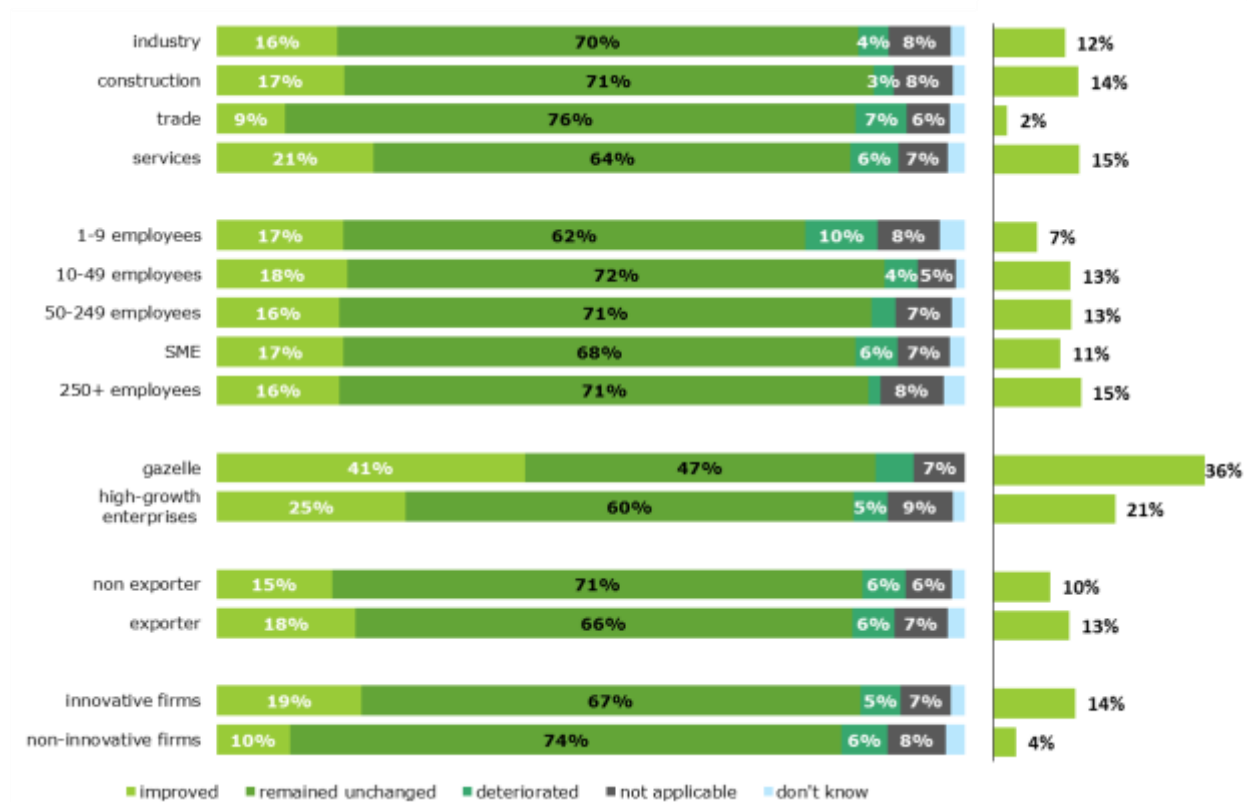


Q9c. Equity capital - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, unweighted number of observations is below 20.

figure 70 Changes in the availability of equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q9c. Equity capital - For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Improvements in the availability of equity capital are reported by 17% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 6% having experienced deteriorations in such changes, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 11%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Croatia report the largest net improvement for this type of financing and SMEs in Ireland the largest net deterioration.

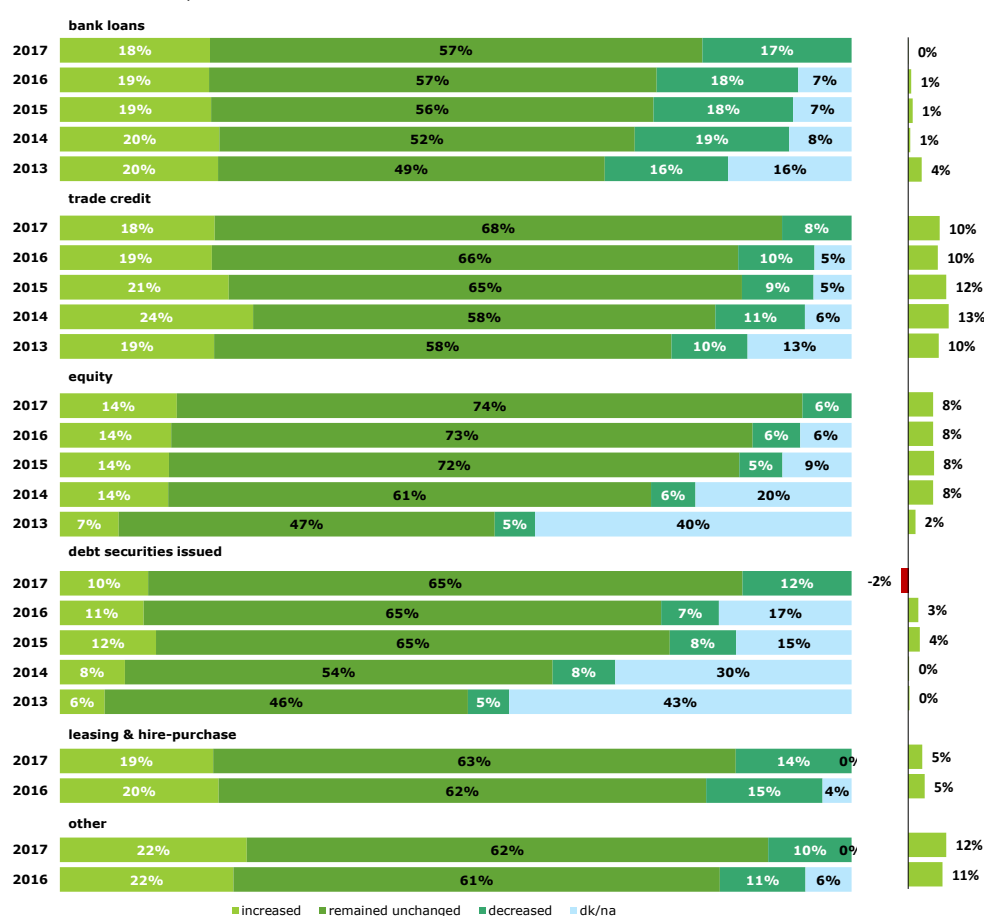
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the identified groups report net improvements in availability in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in services report the largest net improvement (15%), and those in trade the smallest (2%). There is as relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the availability of this type of financing as is the case for the three other types discussed in some detail. Big enterprises of more than 250 employees have experienced the largest improvement (net 15%), while micro enterprises of 1 - 9 employees experienced a smaller improvement (net 7%).

Gazelles (36%) more often report a net improvement in the availability of equity capital to them than non-gazelle high-growth SMEs (21%) do. These young high-growth enterprises might be of more interest to venture capitalists and business angels. Exporters are more positive than non-exporters (net 13% versus 10%) and innovative SMEs are significantly more positive regarding the availability of equity capital to them than non-innovative SMEs are (net 14% versus 4%).

2.4. Changes in the need for external financing

This section covers changes in the need for six types of financing of SMEs, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for a subset of three of these types. The three types that are discussed in more detail are bank loans, equity capital and leasing or hire-purchasing. Changes in these needs in the six months preceding the survey are first presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 71. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases. When years are excluded, the particular financing type was only first included in a later survey year.

figure 71 Changes in the need for different types of financing for SMEs in EU-28 in the period 2011-2016, for SMEs in the EU28.



Q5. For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2011-2016; edited by Panteia.

In 2017, 18% of EU28 SMEs reported that their needs for bank loans increased. A decreased need was reported by 17%, resulting in a net balance of 0%. From 2013 onward, the proportion of SMEs that indicated an increased need has remained relatively stable. The proportion indicating a decreased need, on the other hand, suffered small fluctuations from 16% in 2013, passing to 19% in 2014, until to 17% in the most recent 2017 survey. As a result, the net change remained an increase, but the size of this positive change gradually decreased reaching a 0% net result on 2017.

In contrast to this development, the need for trade credit supplied by business partners has decreased since 2014. In 2016, 19% of EU28 SMEs indicated that their need for trade credit increased, whereas in 2014, this proportion stood at 24%. At the same time, 8% reported a decreased need for trade credit in 2017, a proportion that has been more or less constant through the years since 2014. In 2017 the net increase amounted to 10%.

A similar development can be observed for equity capital (including venture capital and business angels). The proportion of SMEs reporting a decreased need has remained relatively constant throughout the survey years, while the proportion of SMEs indicating an increased need has grown from 7% in 2013 to 14% in 2017. Contrasted with a proportion of 6% of EU28 SMEs that experienced a decreased need for equity capital, this results in a 2016 net increase equal to 8%. Another important development regarding equity capital is that it has become relevant to a greater proportion of SMEs throughout the survey years. This holds especially true when compared to 2013, when equity capital was relevant to approximately 60% of all EU28 SMEs.

The relevance of debt securities issued (consisting of short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by the enterprise) has experienced a different development. The net effect grew in 2016 (3%) respect to 2013 (0%). However, in 2017, 10% of EU28 SMEs indicated an increased need for this type of financing, and another 12% reported a decreased need, resulting in a net decreased need of 2%.

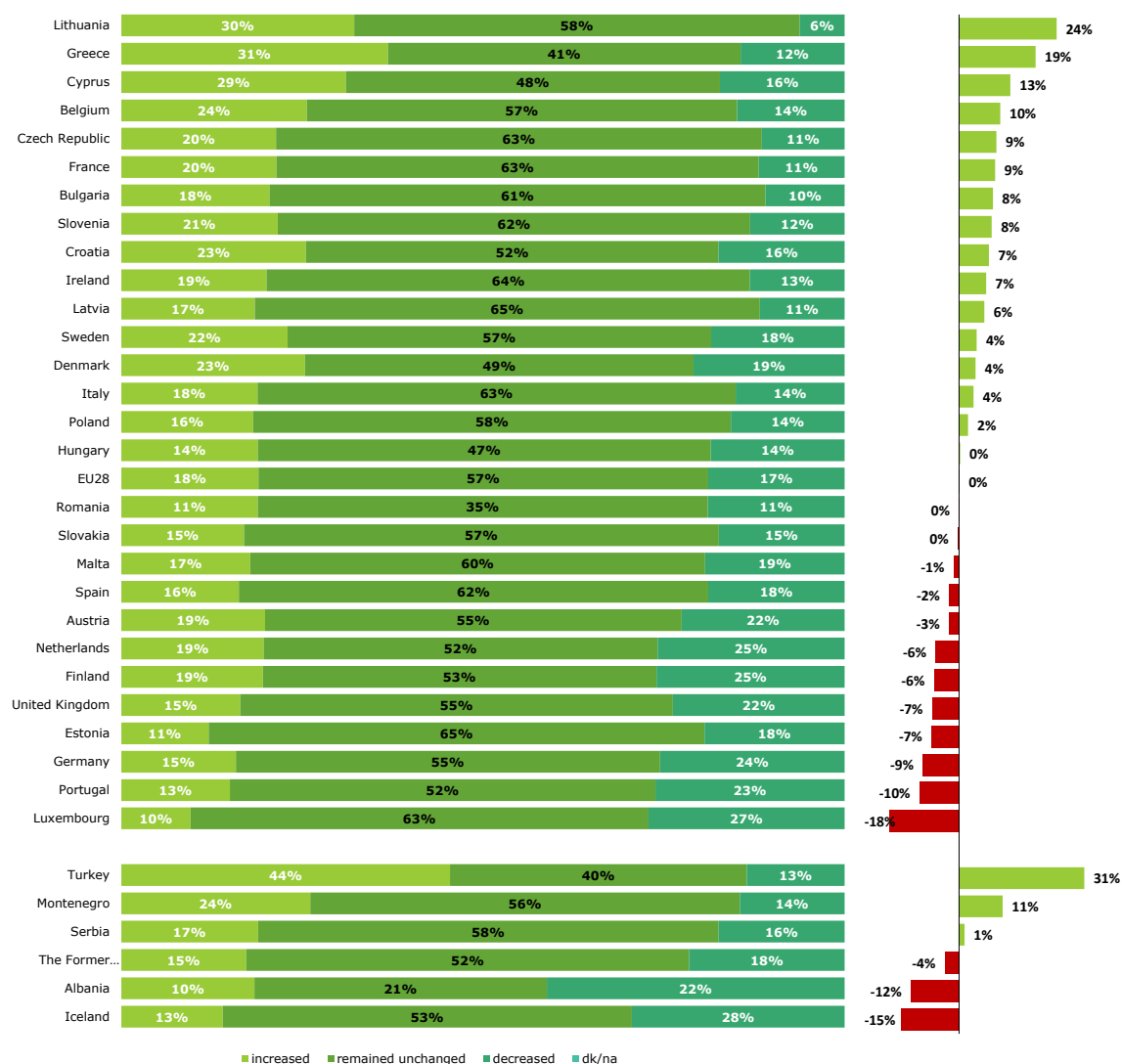
In 2017, 19% of EU28 SMEs reported an increased need for leasing or hire-purchase as a type of financing. Of EU28 SMEs 14% indicated that their needs for this type of financing had decreased, resulting in a net increase of 5%.

Loans that do not originate from banks, but from other sources such as family and friends, a related enterprise (excluding trade credit) or shareholders, were not first included in the 2015 survey, but its contents have changed as leasing or hire-purchase was added and therefore essentially excluded from the other loan category. In the 2017 survey, 22% of EU28 SMEs indicated an increased need for this type of financing, versus a decreased need for 10% of these enterprises. This results in a net increased need equal to 12%.

2.4.1 Bank loans

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the need for bank loans to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 72 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. In addition figure 73 is a map which shows the net change for SMEs in the member states of the EU28. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 74 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

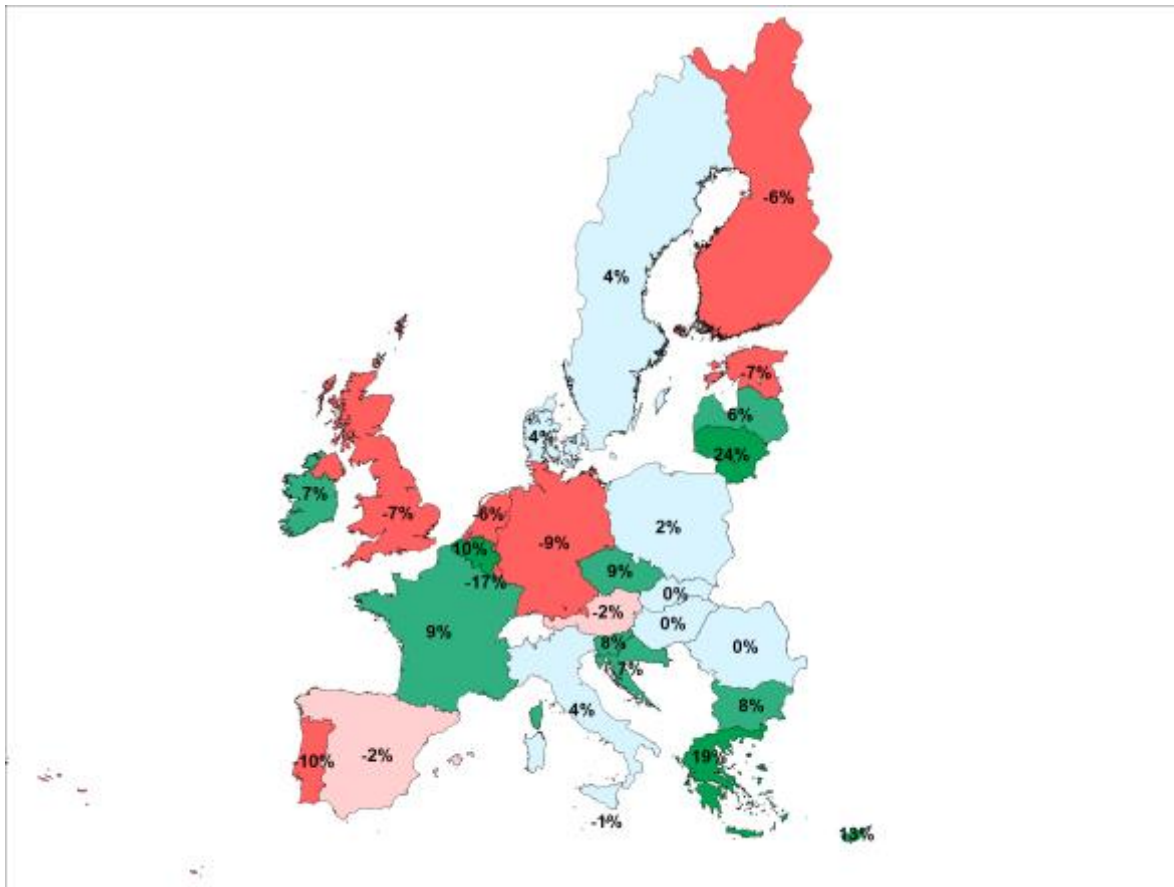
figure 72 Changes in the need for bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q5a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

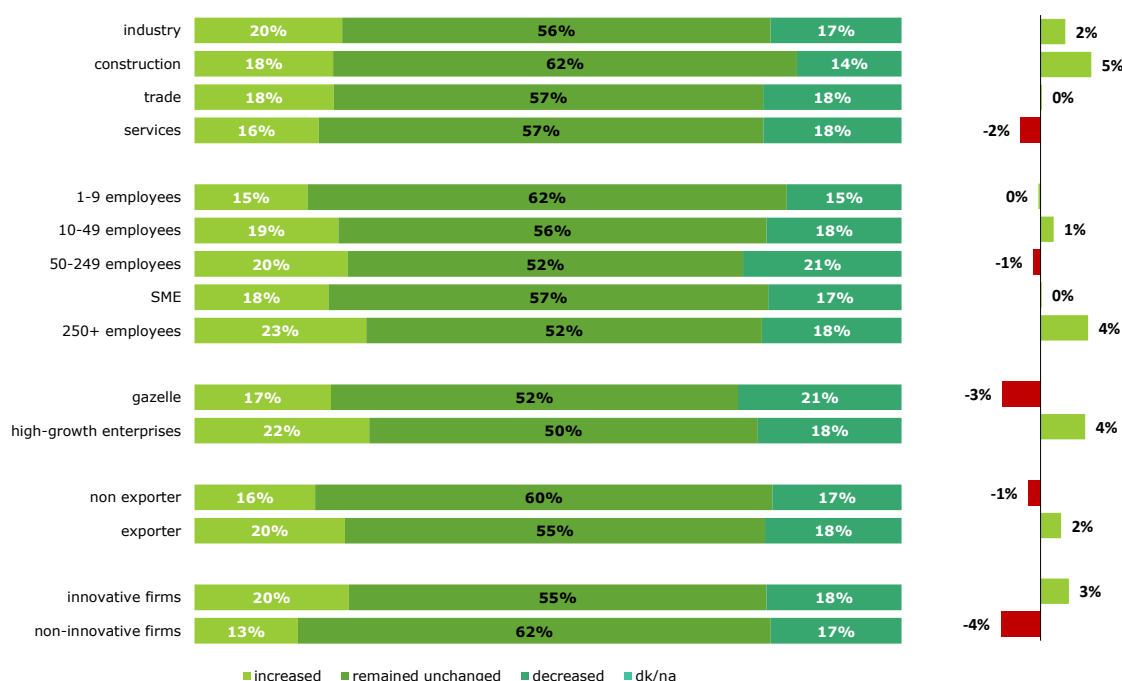
figure 73 Changes (the net change between the categories increased and decreased) in the need for bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2016) for SMEs in the EU28, by country



Q5a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 74 Changes in the need for bank loans in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q5a. Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in the need for bank loans are reported by 18% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 17% having experienced decreased needs, resulting in no net variation. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Lithuania report the largest net increased need for this type of financing and SMEs in Luxembourg the largest net decreased need.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, there exists some variation in the reported net changes in the need for bank loans in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in construction report the largest net increase (5%), larger than the one in industry (2%). SMEs in services report the highest decreased need (-2%). There is no strong relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the need for this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced an increased need (net 4%), while small enterprises of 50 to 249 employees experienced a net decrease (-1%). The variations between size-classes are relatively limited.

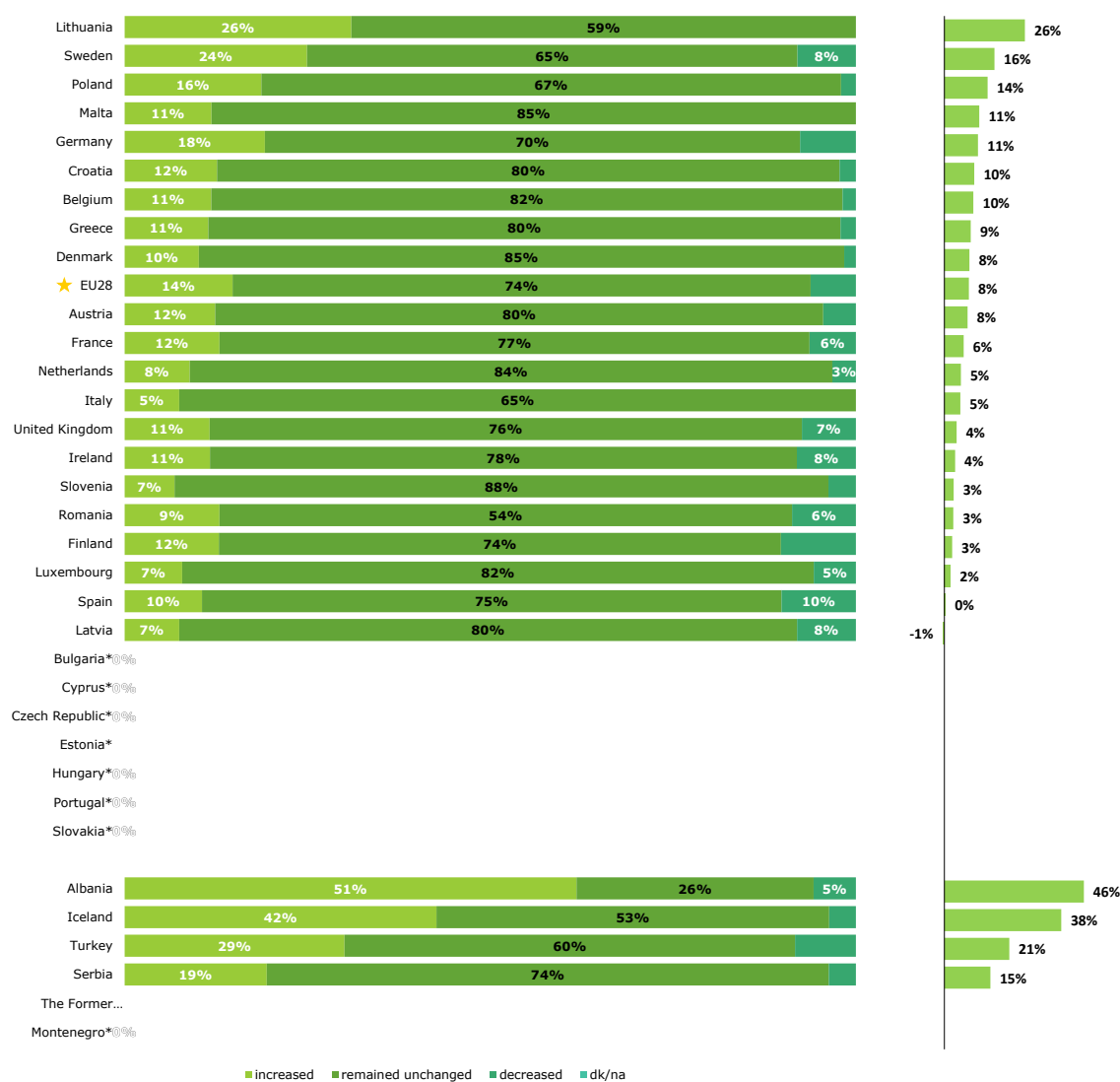
Gazelles (-3%) reported a net decrease need for bank loans whereas non-gazelle high-growth SMEs (4%) reported a net increase. Exporters experience greater increased needs than non-exporters (net 2% versus -1%) and innovative SMEs experience more needs for bank loans than non-innovative SMEs do.

2.4.2 Equity capital

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the need for equity capital (including venture capitalists and business angels) to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 75 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise

characteristic in figure 76 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases

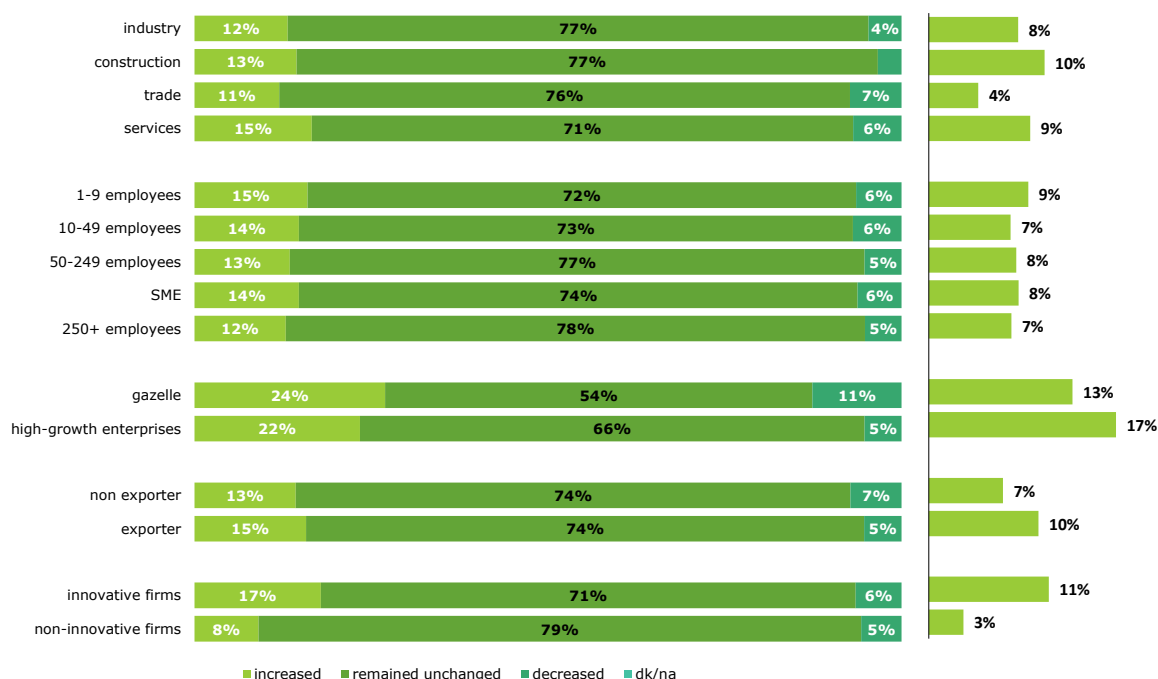
figure 75 Changes in the need for equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q5c. Equity capital - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, unweighted number of observations is below 20.

figure 76 Changes in the need for equity capital in the past six months (April to September 2016) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q5c. Equity capital - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in the need for equity capital are reported by 14% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 6% having experienced decreased needs, resulting in a rounded net increase of 8%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Lithuania report the largest net increased need for this type of financing; of the countries for which sufficient (i.e., at least 20) the smallest net increase is found in Spain. Of the countries for which sufficient observations are available Italy and Latvia show a net decrease.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all types of enterprises report net increases in the need for equity capital in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in construction report the largest net increase (10%), and those in trade the smallest (4%). There is no clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the need for this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees and small enterprises of 10 to 49 employees have experienced the smallest increase in need (net 7%), while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced a net increased need equal to 9%. This net effect, however, does not asymptotically decrease in enterprise size.

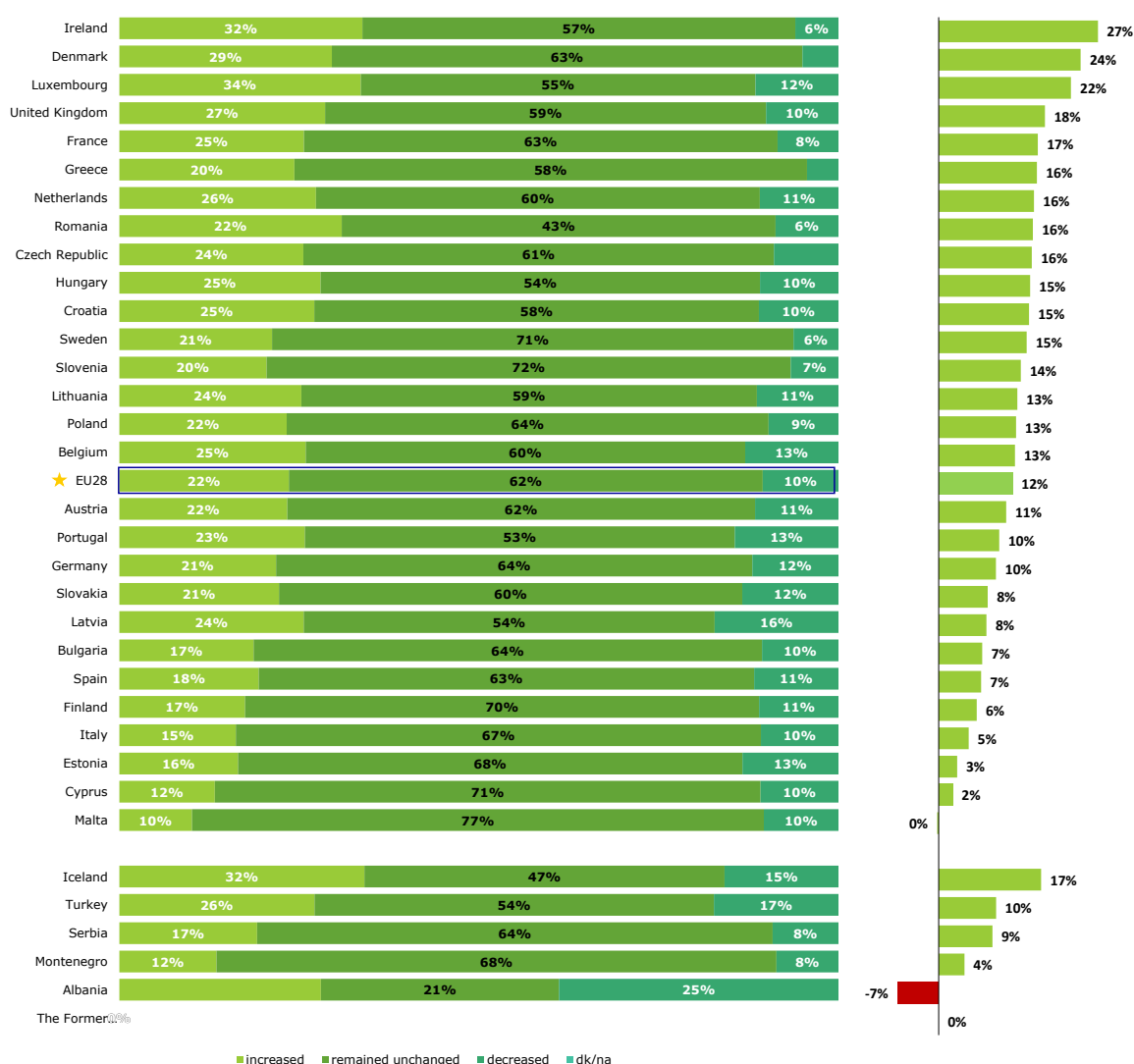
Non-gazelle high-growth SMEs (17%) more often report a net increased need for equity capital than gazelles (13%) do. Exporters experience greater increased needs than non-exporters (net 10% versus 7%) and innovative SMEs experience more needs for equity capital than non-innovative SMEs do.

2.4.3 Leasing or hire-purchase

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the need for leasing or hire-purchase (obtaining the use of a fixed asset, in exchange for regular payments,

but without the immediate ownership of the asset) to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 77 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 78 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

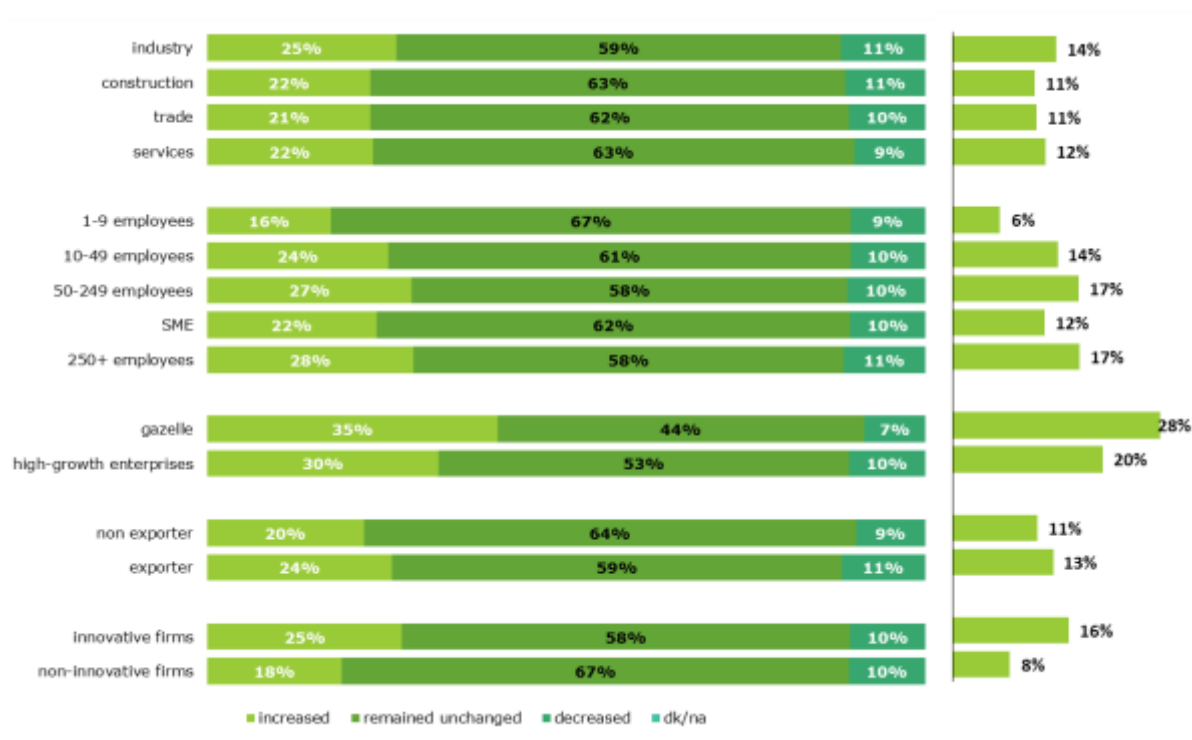
figure 77 Changes in the need for leasing or hire-purchase in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.



Q5g. Leasing or hire-purchase - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 78 Changes in the need for leasing or hire-purchase in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q5g. Leasing or hire-purchase - For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in the need for leasing or hire-purchase are reported by 22% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 10% having experienced decreased needs, resulting in a rounded net increase of 12%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Ireland report the largest net increased need for this type of financing and SMEs in Malta the lowest net increased need.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all types of enterprises report net increases in the need for leasing or hire-purchase in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in industry report the largest net increase (14%), and those in trade and construction the smallest (11%). There does not exist a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the need for this type of financing. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees and medium enterprises of 50 to 249 employees have experienced a net increase in need equal to 17%, while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees experienced the largest net increased need (6%).

Gazelles (28%) more often report a net increased need for leasing or hire-purchase than non-gazelle high-growth SMEs (20%) do. These young high-growth enterprises are still in a relatively early phase of their life-cycle and may be more dependent on external financing than other SMEs are: their net increased need is highest among all types. Exporters experience approximately slightly higher increases in needs for leasing or hire-purchase as non-exporters (net 13% versus net 10%). Innovative SMEs experience more needs for leasing or hire-purchase than non-innovative SMEs do (net 16% and net 8%, respectively).

2.5. Changes in the terms and conditions of bank financing

This section covers changes in the terms and conditions for bank financing for SMEs, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for a subset of two types of these terms and conditions. The two types that are discussed in more detail are the levels of interest rates and collateral requirements. Changes in these terms and conditions in the six months preceding the survey are first presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2011-2015 in figure 79. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

figure 79 Changes in the terms and conditions for bank financing for SMEs in EU-28 in the period 2013-2017, for SMEs in the EU28.



Q10. We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

The level of interest rates faced by EU28 SMEs has been negative for four subsequent years in 2014 -2017. In the most recent survey, 17% of SMEs reported an increase in the level of interest rates versus 22% that was faced with decreased rates by banks. The resulting net effect amounts to a net decrease by 5%. The first survey year, in 2013, saw net increases in interest rates. A net proportion equal to 14% of EU28 SMEs experienced an increase in the level of interest rates by banks in 2013.

Even though interest rates decreased more often than they increased, the other non-interest costs of financing increased. These costs include such items as charges, fees and commissions charged to SMEs when acquiring bank financing. In 2017, 33% reported an increased level versus a decrease by 7% of SMEs. The resultant net change equalled a 26% increase.

The size of loans or credit lines available to EU28 SMEs increased, signalling an improvement of this financing term. In 2017, 19% reported a size increase. Another 8% reported a decreased size, resulting in a net increase for 11% of SMEs.

Loan maturity saw a net increase for the first time in 2015, after a few years of net changes equalling 0%. This year in 2017, 8% of EU28 SMEs reported an increase in the maturity of available loans. Another 5% indicated that the maturity had decreased, resulting in a net increase for 3% of SMEs.

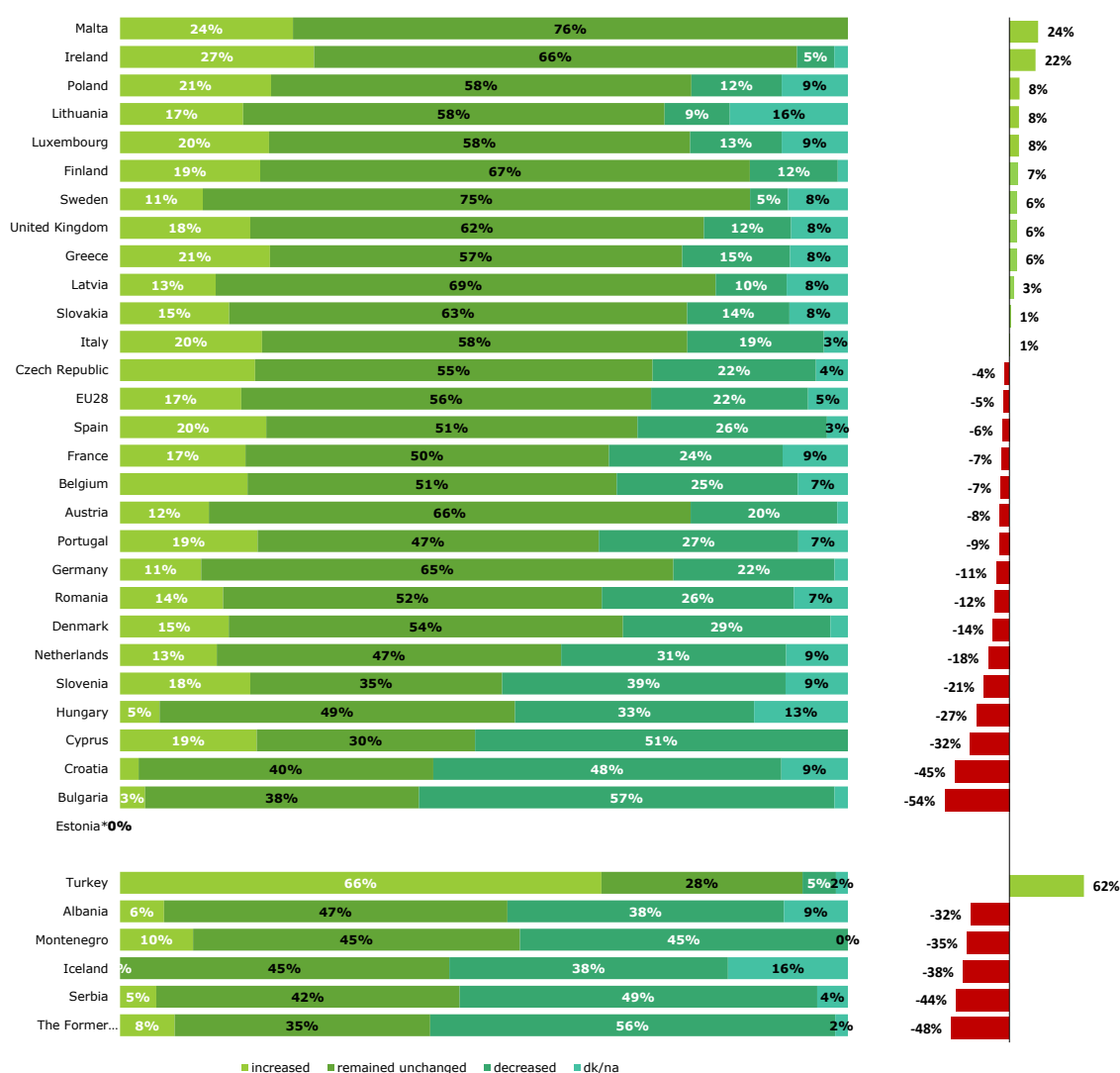
Collateral may be required by banks as a form of security given by the borrowing enterprise to the lender as a pledge for the repayment of the loan, often in the form of fixed assets. Even though the level of interest rates charged to EU28 SMEs and the size of available loans and credit lines have improved over the years, collateral requirements increased - and thus worsened. In 2017, 16% of EU28 SMEs reported an increase in collateral requirements versus a decrease reported by 4%. The net increase equals 12% of SMEs.

A similar development, with subsequent increases for each of the survey years, can be observed for other terms and conditions for bank financing. These include, but are not limited to, required guarantees, information requirements, procedures, time required for loan approval and loan covenants. The size of the net increase has decreased over the years, however, and equals 14% in 2017. This is the net change with 19% of EU28 SMEs reporting an increase in other terms and conditions versus 4% reporting a decrease. Specifically, the proportion indicating a decrease has remained relatively stable, while the proportion indicating an increase has become smaller throughout the survey years.

2.5.1 Level of interest rates

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in the level of interest rates charged to EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 80 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 81 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

figure 80 Changes in the level of interest rates in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.

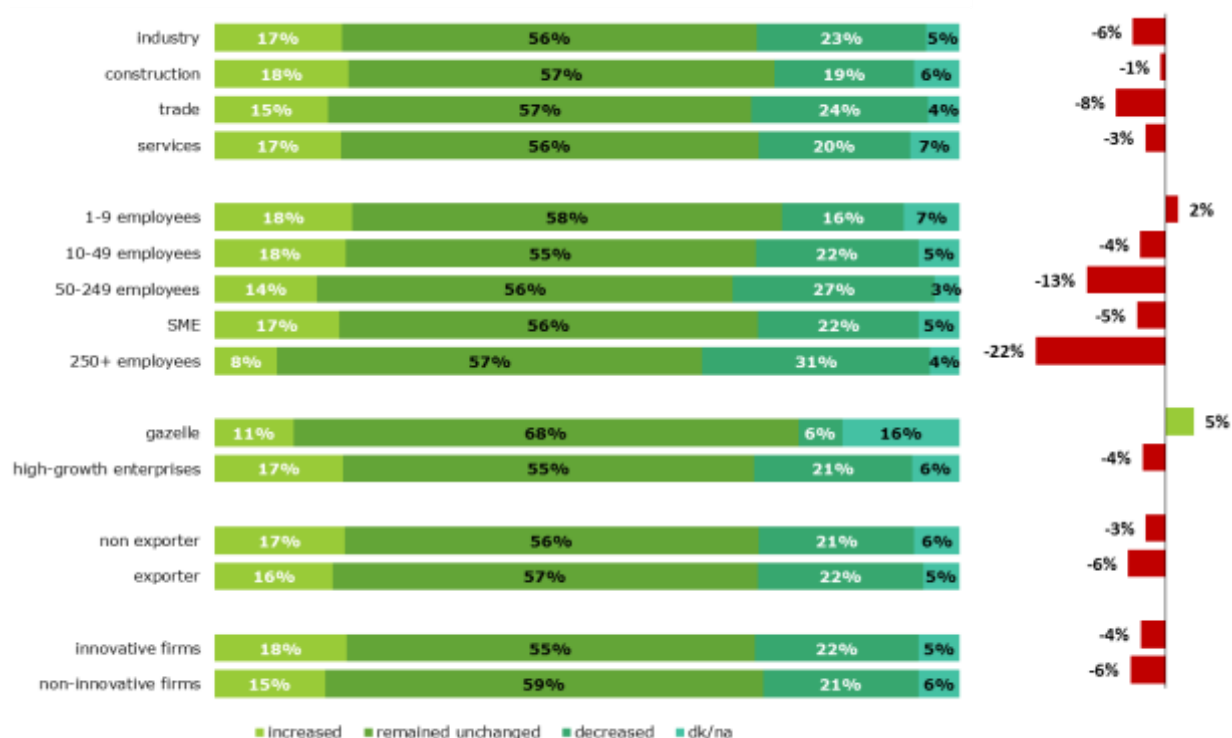


Q10a. Level of interest rates - We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, unweighted number of observations is below 20.

figure 81 Changes in the level of interest rates in the past six months (April to September 2016) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q10a. Level of interest rates - We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in the level of interest rates charged are reported by 17% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 22% having experienced decreased levels, resulting in a net decrease of 5%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Bulgaria report the largest net decreased level (and thus the largest improvement) and SMEs in Malta the largest net increased level.

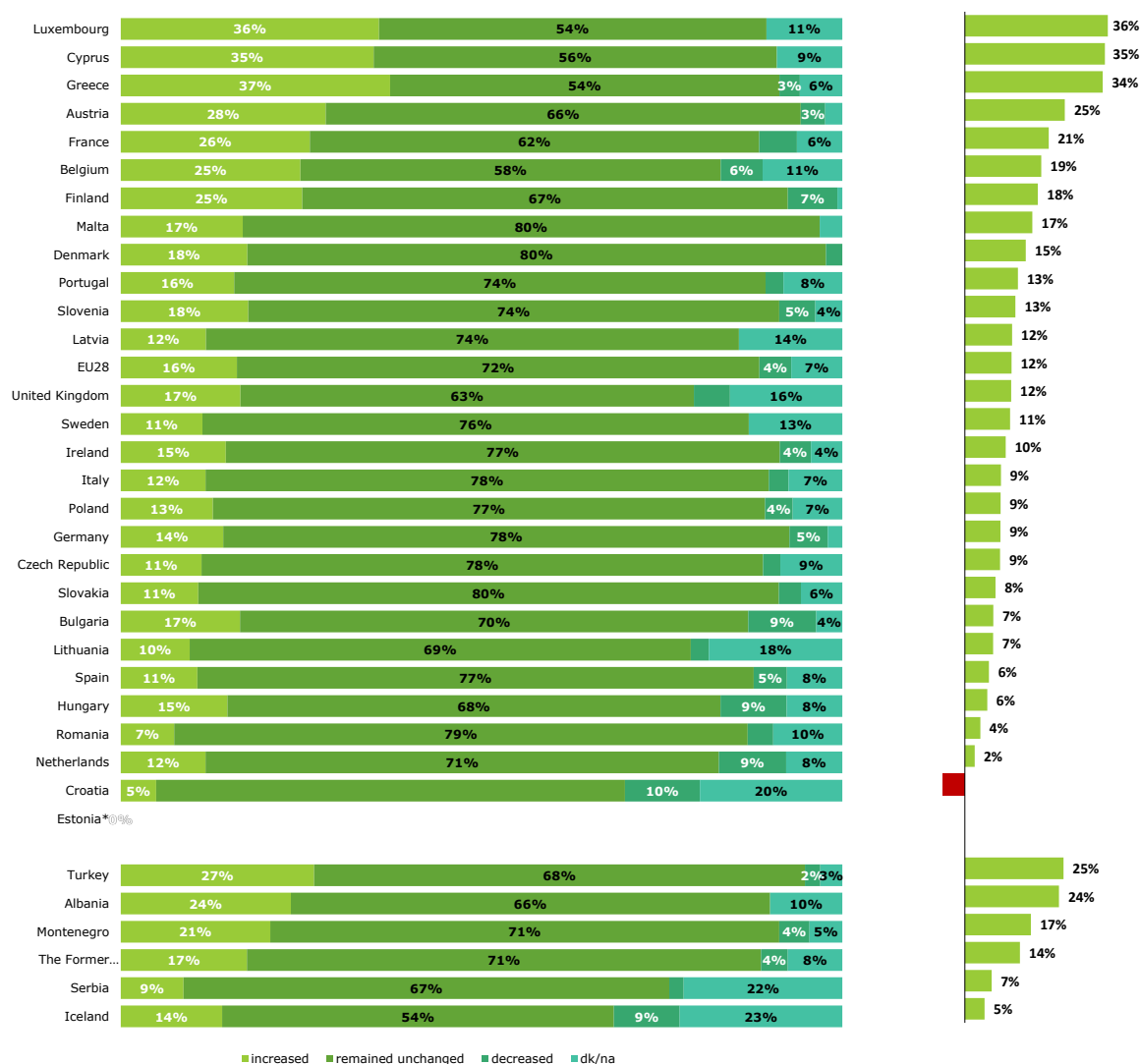
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all types of enterprises with the exception of gazelles and micro-sized companies report net decreases in the level of interest rates charged in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in trade face the largest net decrease (-8%), and those in construction the smallest (-1%). There exists a relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in the level of interest expenses charged. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced a net decrease equal to -22%, while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees least often experienced a net increase in this level (2%).

Gazelles perceive an increased interest rates financing compared to high-growth enterprises; in 2017 there was an increase of 5% for the former compared to a decrease of -4% for the latter. Exporters more often experience decreases than non-exporters (net -6% versus -3%) while innovative SMEs are faced with decrease interest levels slightly less often than non-innovative enterprises.

2.5.2 Collateral requirements

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in collateral requirements faced by EU28 SMEs. A breakdown by country in figure 82 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 83 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

figure 82 Changes in collateral requirements in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and FYROM, by country.

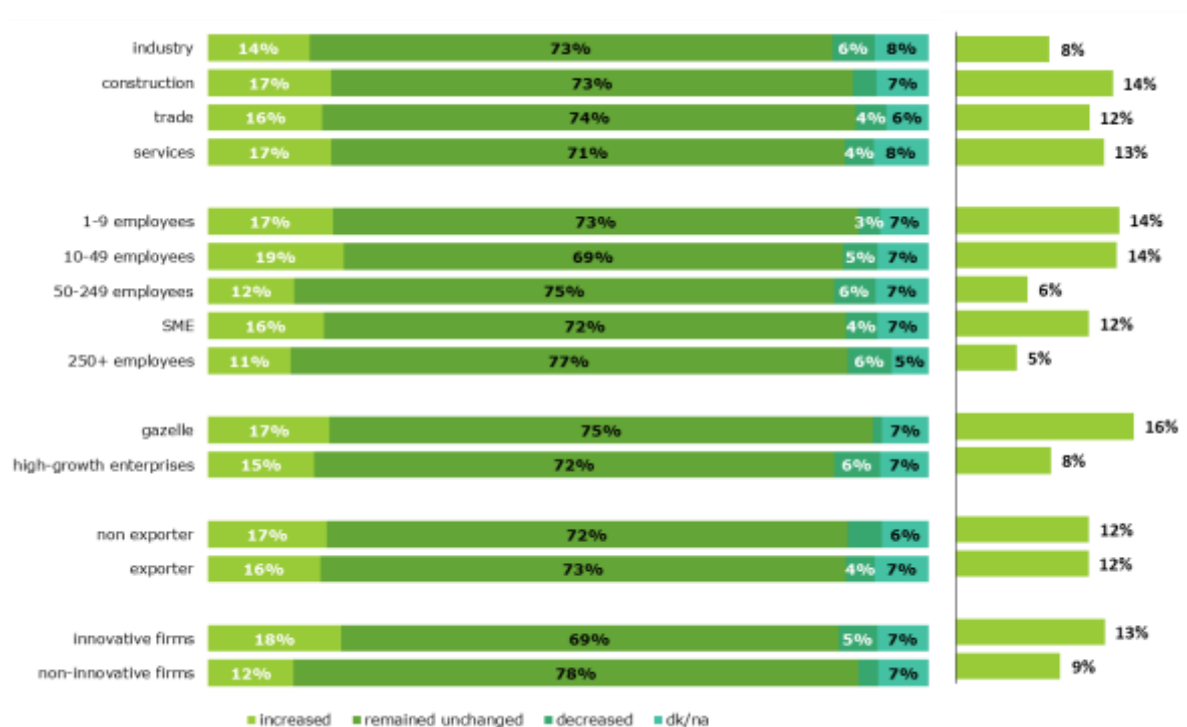


Q10e. Collateral requirements - We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

* Results are not reliable, unweighted number of observations is below 20.

figure 83 Changes in collateral requirements in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q10e. Collateral requirements - We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in collateral requirements are reported by 16% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 4% having experienced decreased levels, resulting in a rounded net increase of 12%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Luxembourg report the largest net increases and SMEs in the Croatia the smallest net increased collateral requirements.

Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all types of enterprises report net increases in collateral requirements in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in construction face the largest net increase (14%), and those in industry the smallest (8%). There is a relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in collateral requirements asked. Large enterprises of at least 250 employees have experienced a net increase equal to only 5%, while micro-sized enterprises of no more than 9 employees and small enterprises of 10 to 49 employees most often experienced a net increase in these requirements (14%).

Gazelle SMEs (16%) more often report a net increase in collateral requirements than non-gazelle high-growth (8%) do. These young high-growth enterprises are still in a relatively early phase of their life-cycle and may simply not possess sufficient collateral: the net increased requirements they face are among the lowest among all types. Exporters and non-exporters present the same increased requirements (net 12%) while innovative SMEs are faced with increased requirements more often than non-innovative enterprises.

3. OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

3.1. Key findings

Most SMEs in the EU28 expect to experience turnover growth in the next two to three years, with 66% expecting either moderate or substantial growth. This proportion has increased in each survey year since 2011. Among countries in the EU28, SMEs in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Greece and Malta are most positive about their expected growth. SMEs in Luxembourg and Austria are the least positive regarding growth expectations; these countries, 7% of the SMEs expect that their turnover will fall. The proportion of enterprises expecting to grow substantially is higher among SMEs than among large enterprises.

Amongst EU28 SMEs, 68% are confident when talking with banks about financing and obtaining the desired results, while only 23% are confident when talking to equity investors and venture capital firms. Among countries in the EU28, SMEs in Luxembourg and Finland are most confident in their talks with banks, SMEs in Greece and Lithuania were the least confident.

Debt financing is preferred over equity financing by SMEs. In the EU28, 64% preferred bank loans in 2017, while another 15% preferred loans from other sources (e.g. trade credit), and 6% preferred equity investments. These proportions tend to be stable over the years.

Of the EU28 SMEs, 47% do not perceive any limitations in their access to future financing. Those that do perceive such limitations most often cite insufficient collateral or guarantees (13%) and interest rates and prices of financing being too high (12%) as the main causes. SMEs in Sweden most often see no obstacles while this is least often the case amongst SMEs in Greece. The more enterprises are, the less obstacles they see in obtaining finance. However, the proportion of SMEs that do not perceive any limitations in their access to future financing is less than average in gazelles and fast growing enterprises.

Nearly one out of four SMEs (23%) in the EU28 needs financing amounts of between EUR 25,000 and EUR 100,000 to realise their growth ambitions. The proportions requiring larger amounts of finance is higher amongst large enterprises than amongst SMEs. SMEs active in industry require the largest amounts to realise their ambitions.

SMEs expect the availability of all types of financing (ranging from internal financing to such external types as bank loans, equity capital and trade credit) to improve in the six months from October 2017 to March 2017.

3.2. Expected growth SMEs

This section covers the annual growth in turnover SMEs expect in the coming two to three years, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic of expected growth. Expected growth is presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 84 making a distinction between moderate and substantial growth.

figure 84 Expected growth in turnover in the next two to three years by SMEs in the EU28, for the period 2013-2017.



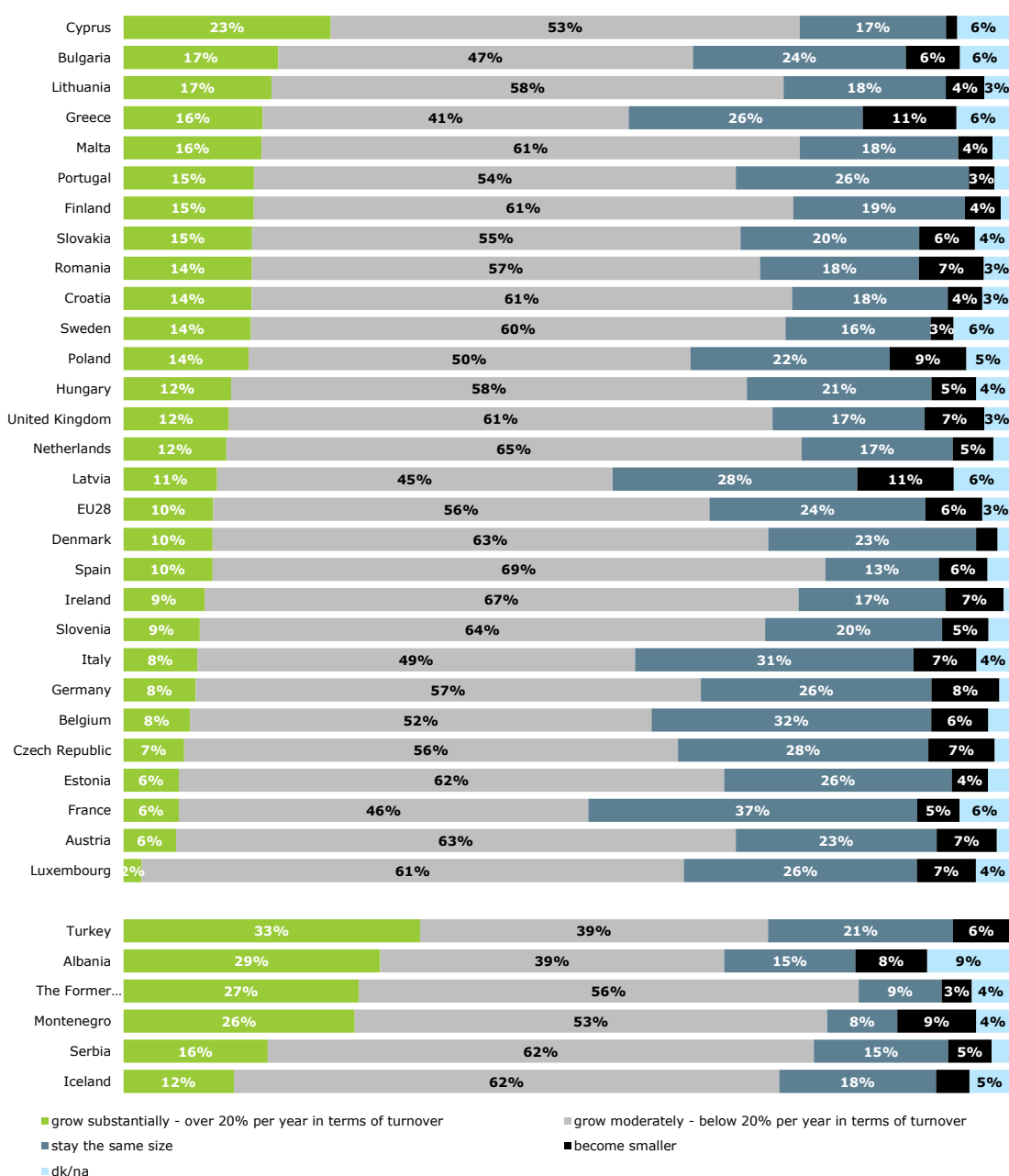
Q17. Considering the turnover over the next two to three years (2015-2017), how much does your enterprise expect to grow per year?

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

More than half of the SMEs in the EU28 expect to experience annual turnover growth in the next two to three years: 10% expects to grow substantially and another 56% expects to grow moderately. More SMEs have become positive on their future outlook. The proportion of SMEs that expects substantial growth has remained relatively stable in the period from 2013 to 2017, as has the proportion that expects turnover to remain at the same size. Changes in these years then come from the group that expects moderate turnover growth (which increased in proportion from 48% in 2013 to 56% in 2017) and the group that expects turnover to become smaller. The latter decreased from 11% to 6% between 2013 and 2017.

Figure 85 provides a breakdown of SMEs' expected turnover growth by country. The EU28 proportions correspond to those for 2017 in the graph presenting annual variations. Within the countries of the EU28, Cyprus SMEs are most ambitious in their expectations regarding turnover growth: 23% expects to grow substantially. This proportion is the smallest for Luxembourg (2%). Grouping both substantial and moderate growth expectations, Spanish SMEs expect growth most (79%) and French SMEs expect growth least (52%). The proportion of SMEs that expect turnover to shrink is the largest in Greece and Latvia (11% of SMEs).

figure 85 Expected growth in turnover in the next two to three years by SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q17. Considering the turnover over the next two to three years (2015-2017), how much does your enterprise expect to grow per year?

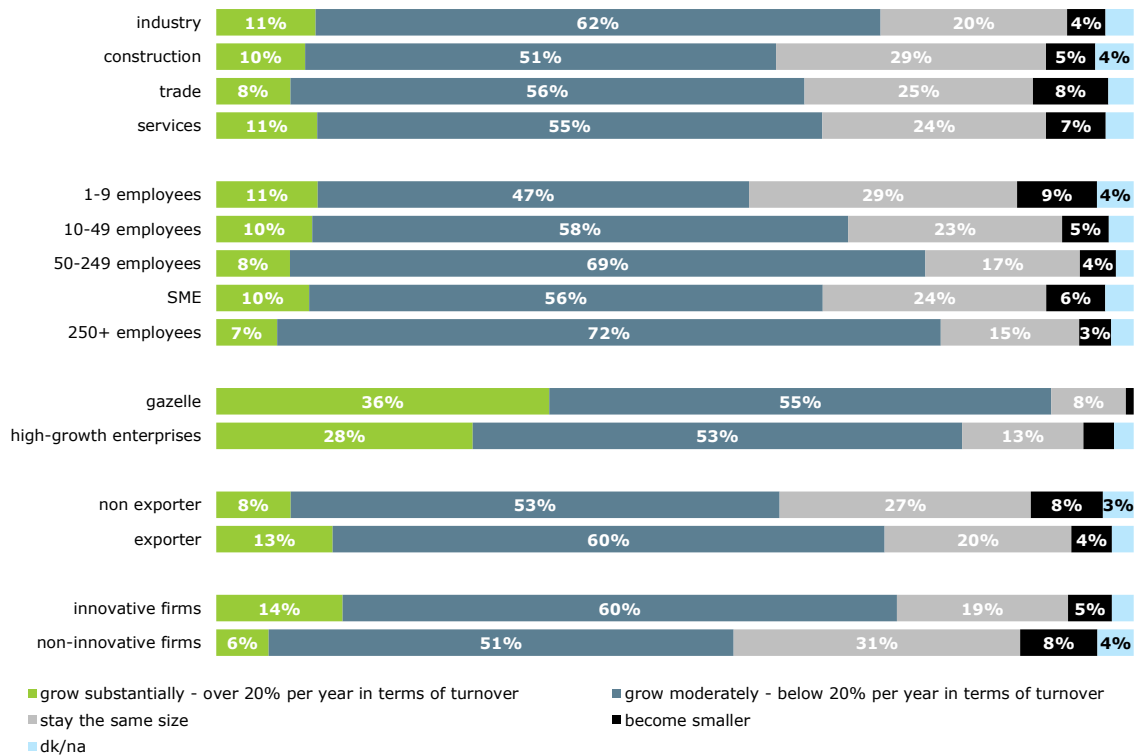
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 86 and details how expected turnover growth varies among sectors of the economy, size-classes, growth types, exporter status and innovativeness. EU28 SMEs active in industry are most positive regarding their future turnover: 73% expects moderate to substantial growth.

There appears to be a clear positive relation between enterprise size and expected turnover growth. Even though more than half of micro-sized enterprises (58%) expects moderate to substantial growth in the next two to three years, 79% of large

enterprises expects turnover to grow. The proportion consistently grows with enterprise size.

figure 86 Expected growth in turnover in the next two to three years by SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q17. Considering the turnover over the next two to three years (2015-2017), how much does your enterprise expect to grow per year?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

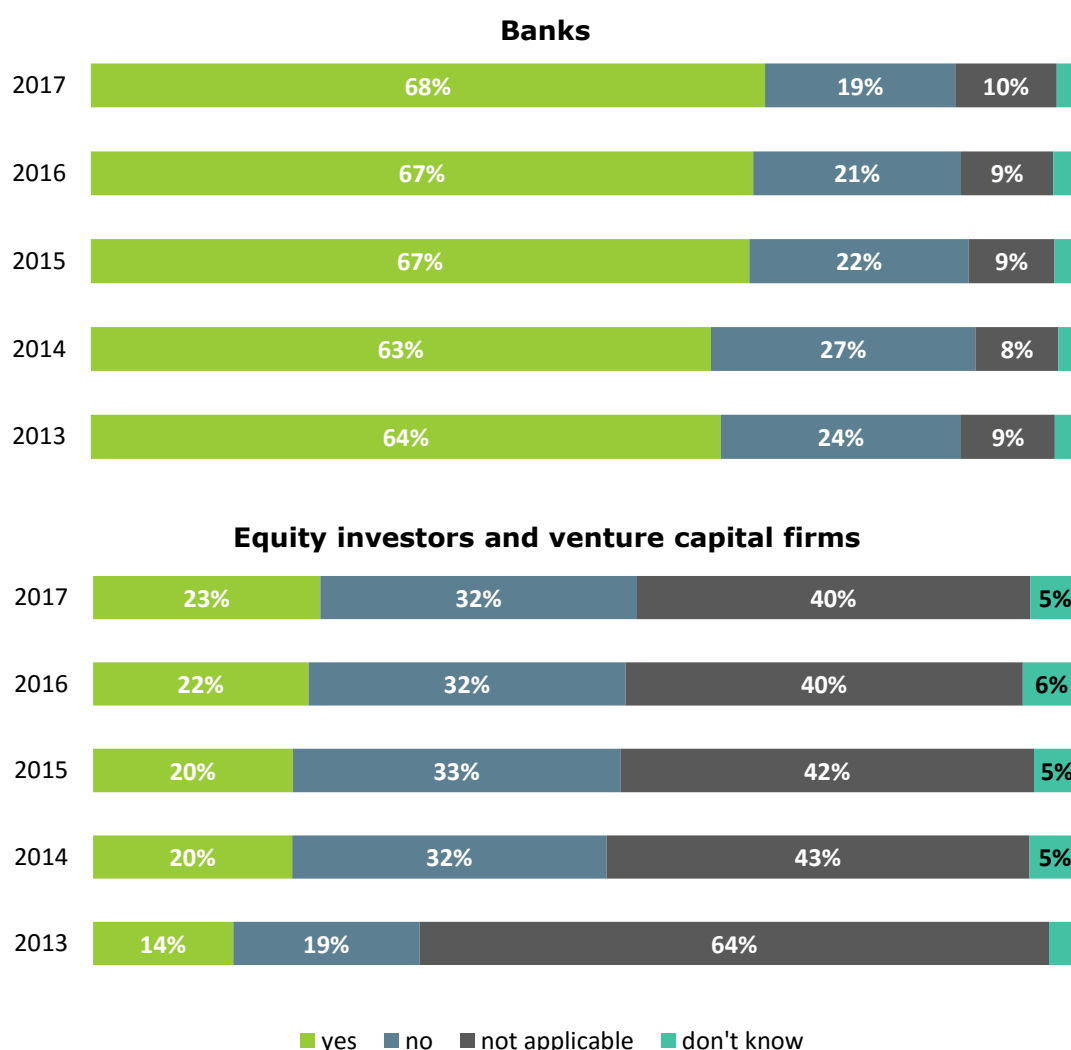
High-growth enterprises and gazelles are defined by their realised growth in recent years. Having realised substantial growth rates, it seems these enterprise types also expect to maintain such substantial growth rates in the future. The proportion of SMEs that expects substantial turnover growth is by far the greatest among these two types: 28% for high-growth enterprises and even more impressive 36% for gazelles.

SMEs that export (73% expects some degree of growth) are more ambitious in their expected growth rates than non-exporters (61%). More innovative SMEs (74%) expect their turnover to grow moderately or substantially than do the non-innovative SMEs (57%).

3.3. Confidence in being able to get future financing

To realise their growth ambitions, SMEs will need to invest, innovate and expand by entering new markets. This section covers the expected talks with financiers undertaken by SMEs to obtain the required funding, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic of the confidence SMEs have in bringing these talks to a successful close. Changes in this confidence are presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 87.

figure 87 Confidence in talking with banks, equity investors and venture capital enterprises about financing and obtaining the desired results for SMEs in the EU-28, for the period 2013-2017.



Q19. Do you feel confident talking about financing with banks and that you will obtain the desired results? And how about with equity investors/venture capital enterprises?
 Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

In 2017, 68% of all SMEs in the EU28 felt confident in talking with banks about financing and obtaining the desired results. At the same time, 19% did not. This reflects an improved perception towards such talks compared to 2013. SMEs are less positive regarding talks with equity investors and venture capital firms. Only 23% of

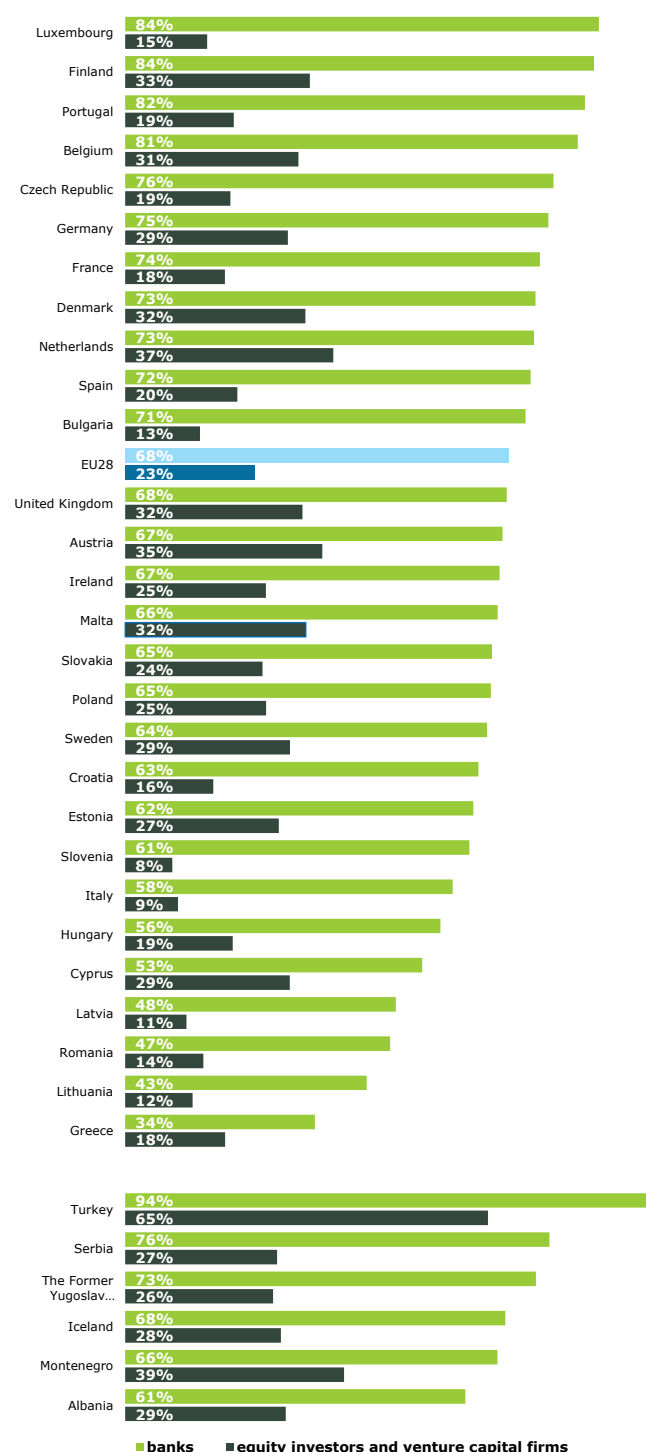
EU28 SMEs indicates that they feel confident in talking with these types of financiers in 2017, while 32% does not.

When interpreting these proportions it is key to realise that there exists a large difference in the degree to which the two types of financiers are considered relevant by SMEs. Talking with equity investors to obtain external financing is not considered relevant to their situation by 12% of SMEs (section 1.2).

Figure 88 provides a breakdown of SMEs' confidence in talking with banks and equity investors and venture capital firms to obtain future financing by country in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. The EU28 proportions correspond to those for 2017 in the graph presenting annual variations. Within the countries of the EU28, Luxembourgish SMEs are most confident in talks with banks (84%), while Dutch SMEs are most confident in talks with equity investors and venture capital firms (37%). For talks with banks, this proportion is smallest for Greek SMEs (34%). For talks with equity investors and venture capital firms, this proportion is smallest for Slovenia (8%).

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 89 and details how confidence in financing talks varies among different sectors of the economy, size-classes, growth types, exporter status and innovativeness. EU28 SMEs active in industry are generally most confident in the outcome of these talks: 73% when talking with banks and 25% with equity investors and venture capital firms. There appears to be a clear positive relation between enterprise size and confidence. Even though more than half of micro-sized enterprises (61%) feel confident to have talks with banks, 81% of large enterprises do so. The proportion consistently grows with enterprise size.

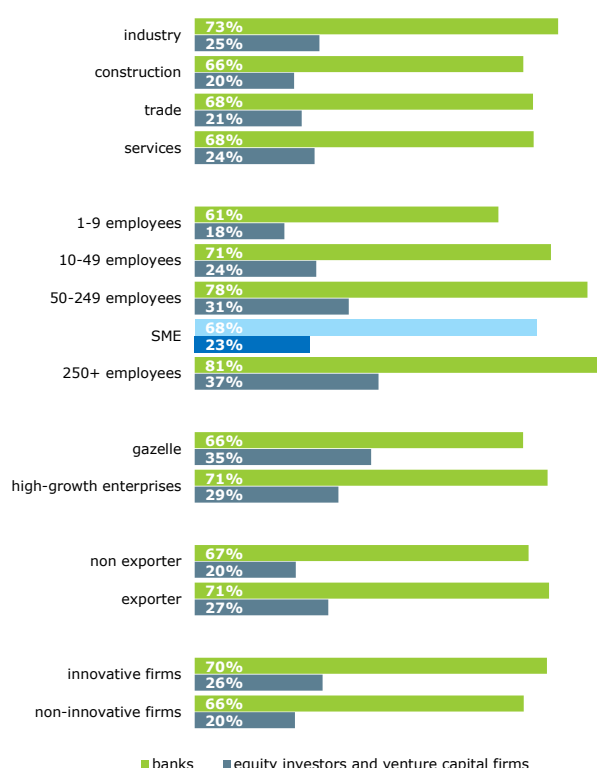
figure 88 Confidence in talking with banks, equity investors and venture capital enterprises about financing and obtaining the desired results for SMEs in the EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q19. Do you feel confident talking about financing with banks and that you will obtain the desired results? And how about with equity investors/venture capital enterprises?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 89 Confidence in talking with banks, equity investors and venture capital enterprises about financing and obtaining the desired results for SMEs in the EU-28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q19. Do you feel confident talking about financing with banks and that you will obtain the desired results? And how about with equity investors/venture capital enterprises?
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

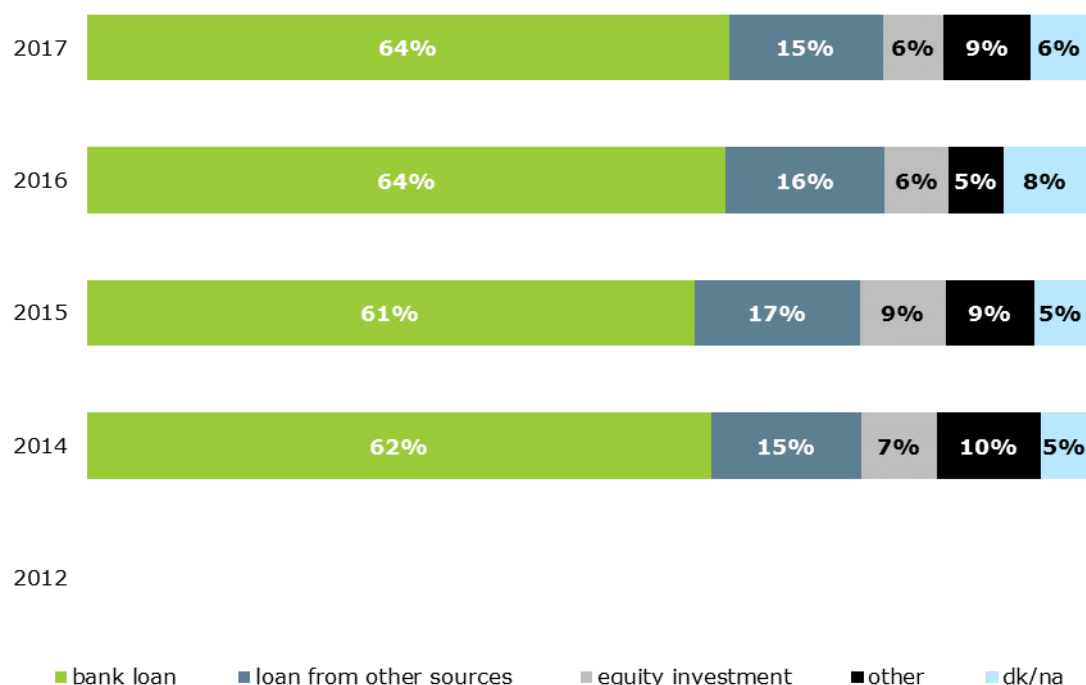
3.4. External financing in the future

This section covers various aspects of external financing for SMEs in the future. It discusses the preferred type (3.4.1), factorings limiting the access to future financing (3.4.2) and size of the external financing (3.4.3).

3.4.1 Preferred type of financing

This subsection covers the type of financing SMEs prefer to realise their growth ambitions, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic of expected growth. Preferred type of external financing is presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 90 and distinguishes between three main types: bank loans, loans from other sources and equity investments. Other sources for loans include trade credit, related enterprises, shareholders and public sources.

figure 90 Types of external financing preferred to realise growth ambitions for SMEs in the EU-28, for the period 2012-2017.



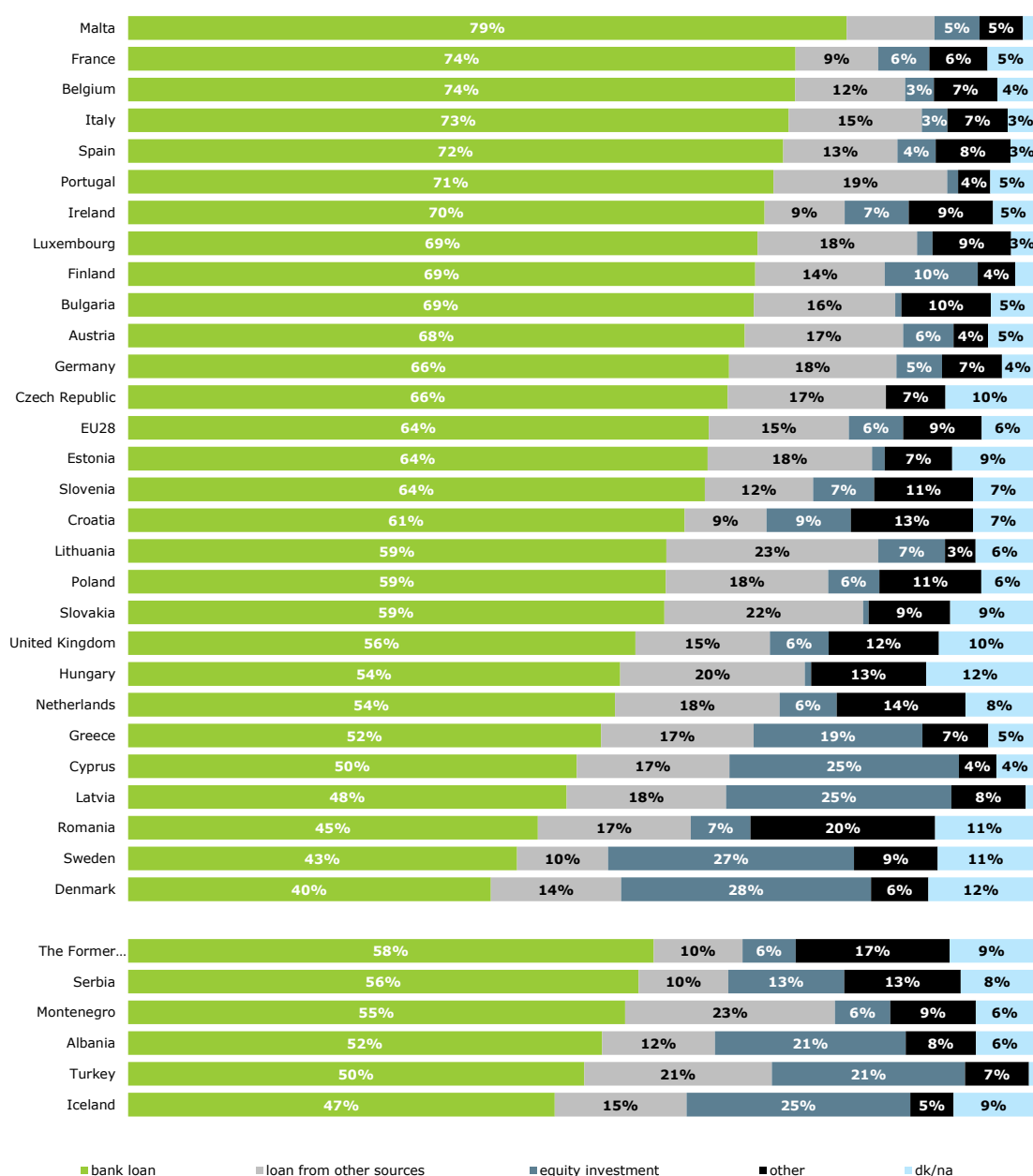
Q20. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions, what type of external financing would you prefer most?

Source: SAFE, 2012-2017; edited by Panteia.

Debt financing in the form of loans is much more popular than financing through equity investments. In 2017, 64% of EU28 SMEs indicates that they prefer bank loans to finance their future growth ambitions and another 15% reported loans from other sources. Equity investment is the preferred type for 6% of SMEs. These proportions vary relatively little over the survey years since 2013.

Figure 91 provides a breakdown of SMEs' preference for type of external financing by country in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. The EU28 proportions correspond to those for 2017 in the graph presenting annual variations. Within the countries of the EU28, Maltese SMEs (79%) have the strongest preference for bank loans and Danish SMEs (40%) have the weakest preference for this type. When taken together, debt financing in the form of loans from both banks and other sources is most popular in Portugal (90%) and least in Sweden (53%). In Denmark equity investments are most popular (28%). Loans from other sources are particularly popular in Slovakia (22%). Other alternatives are most popular in Romania (20%).

figure 91 Types of external financing preferred to realise growth ambitions for SMEs in the EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.

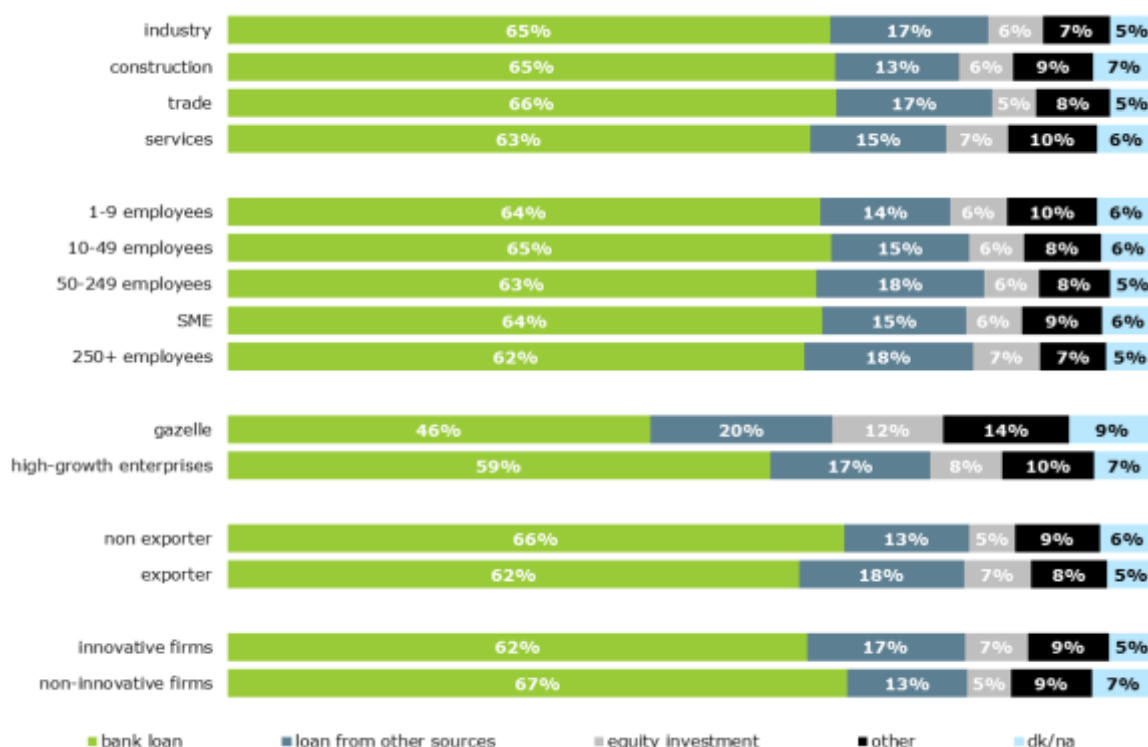


Q20. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions, what type of external financing would you prefer most?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 92 and details how preference for certain financing types varies among different sectors of the economy, size-classes, growth types, exporter status and innovativeness. (Bank) loans are least popular as a type of financing among EU28 SMEs active in services: 63%. There does not appear to be a clear relation between enterprise size and the preferred type of external financing to realise growth ambitions.

figure 92 Types of external financing preferred to realise growth ambitions for SMEs in the EU-28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q20. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions, what type of external financing would you prefer most?

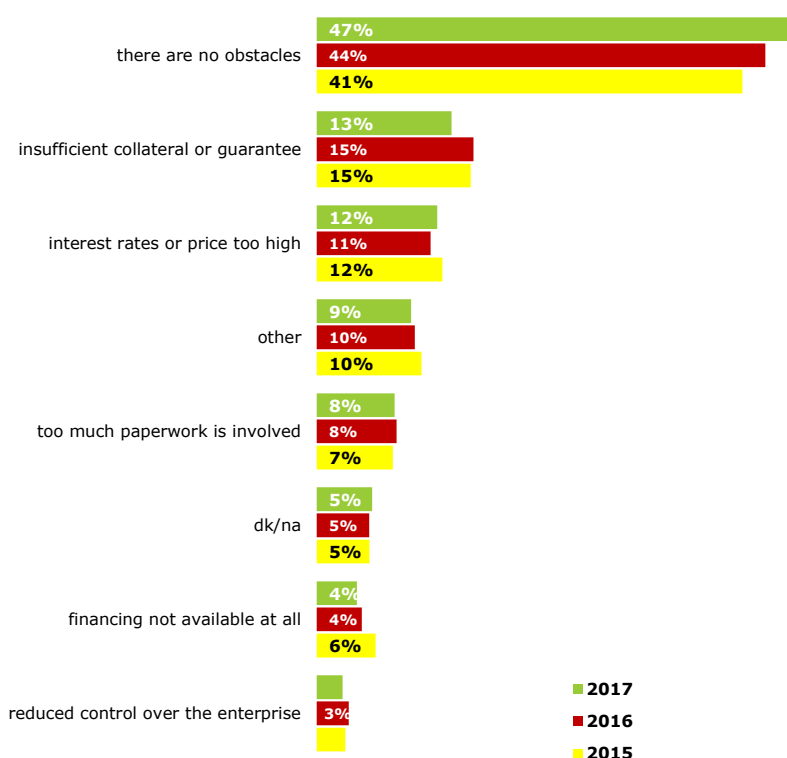
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Gazelles are the SME type that is most likely to make use of equity investments as a source of external financing to realise their growth ambitions: 12% versus the EU28 SME average of 6%. This may be related to the age criterion used to identify this type of enterprise as a similar reliance is not observed for the non-gazelle high-growth enterprises. Young high-growth enterprises are more likely to attract venture capitalists and business angels. Gazelles are also most likely to make use of other alternatives to loans and equity investments: 14%. This translates to a relatively limited reliance on bank loans (46%) by this enterprise type.

3.4.2 Perceived limiting factors to obtaining financing

This subsection covers the perceived limiting factors to obtaining the future financing required by SMEs to realise their growth ambitions, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic of expected growth. Perceived limitations are presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2015-2017 in figure 93 and distinguishes between five main limitations: collateral, costs of the financing, paperwork, availability and control.

figure 93 Perceived factors limiting the access to future financing for SMEs in the EU-28, for the period 2015-2017.



Q22. What do you see as the most important limiting factor to get this financing?

Source: SAFE, 2015-2017; edited by Panteia.

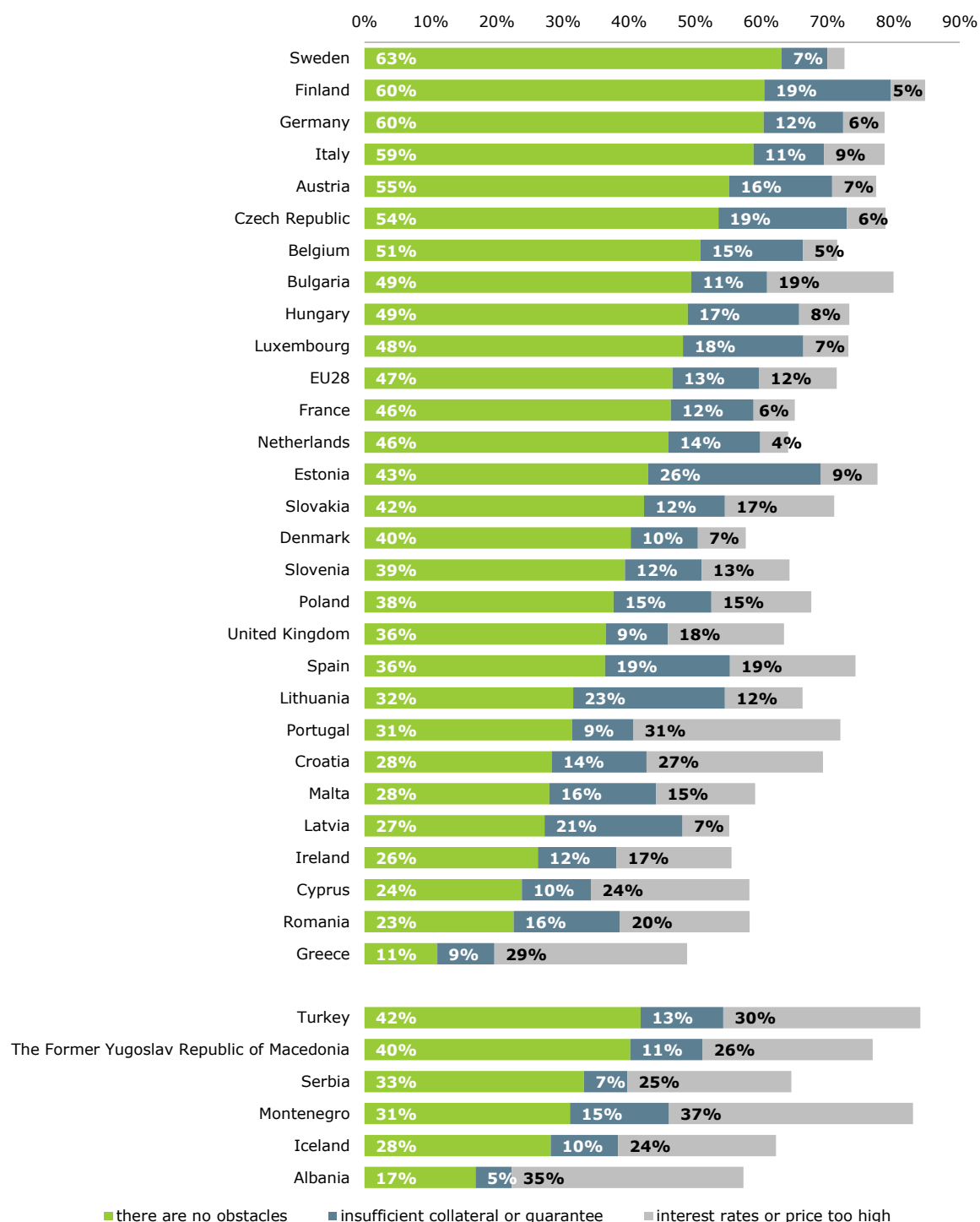
Most SMEs in the EU28 that are looking to obtain external funds to finance their growth ambitions expect to run into no obstacles at all in doing so: 47% in 2017, which is a significant increase respect to 2016, and a large improvement over 2015.

Most of the EU28 SMEs that do feel that there are limiting factors, consider the insufficient availability of collateral or guarantees in their organisation as the prime limitation: 13%. It should be noted that this limitation is only applicable to enterprises that prefer debt financing for future financing. Collateral refers to assets that are pledged as a security for payment of debt in the case of default on this payment.

Costs associated with the financing, including interest rates and price are considered by 12% of EU28 SMEs to be the most important limiting factor, followed by too much paperwork (8%), the unavailability of financing (4%) and reduced control over the enterprise (3%).

Figure 94 provides a breakdown of SMEs' the most cited limiting factors in obtaining future financing for growth ambitions by country in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. The graph is limited to the three most relevant responses. The EU28 proportions correspond to those for 2016 in the graph presenting annual variations (figure 93). Within the countries of the EU28, Swedish SMEs (63%) most often expect to run in no obstacles at all, which is by far least often the case for Romanian (23%) and Greek SMEs (11%). Insufficient collateral or guarantees is most often cited as a perceived limitation in Estonia (26%). Interest rates or the price of financing are most often cited as a limitation by SMEs in Portugal (31%).

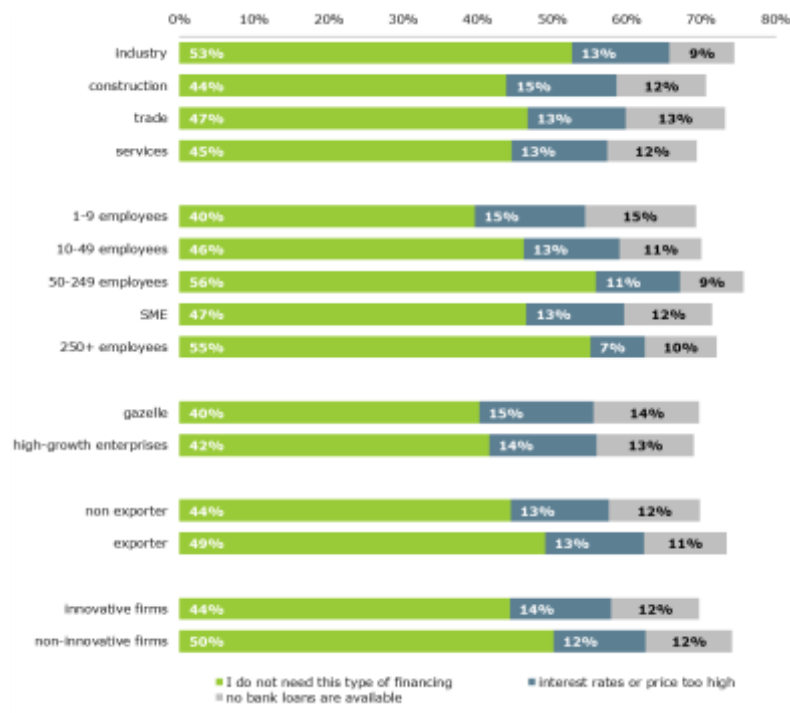
figure 94 Three most cited perceived factors limiting the access to future financing for SMEs in the EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q22. What do you see as the most important limiting factor to get this financing?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 95 Three most cited perceived factors limiting the access to future financing for SMEs in the EU-28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q22. What do you see as the most important limiting factor to get this financing?

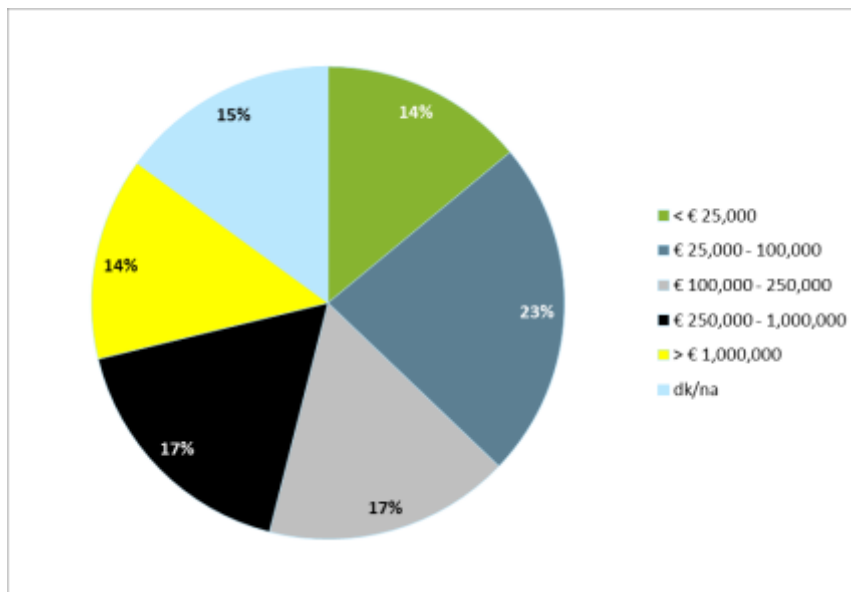
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Gazelles are both most likely to see obstacles (40% expect there to be *no* obstacle) and most likely to feel that their enterprises do not contain sufficient collateral or guarantees.

3.4.3 Amount of financing

This subsection covers the amount of future financing SMEs require to realise their growth ambitions, detailing a breakdown by five classes of financing size, followed by a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic. The amount of external financing required is presented for SMEs in the EU28 for 2017 in figure 96.

figure 96 Amount of external financing needed to realise growth ambitions over the next two to three years for SMEs in the EU-28, 2017.



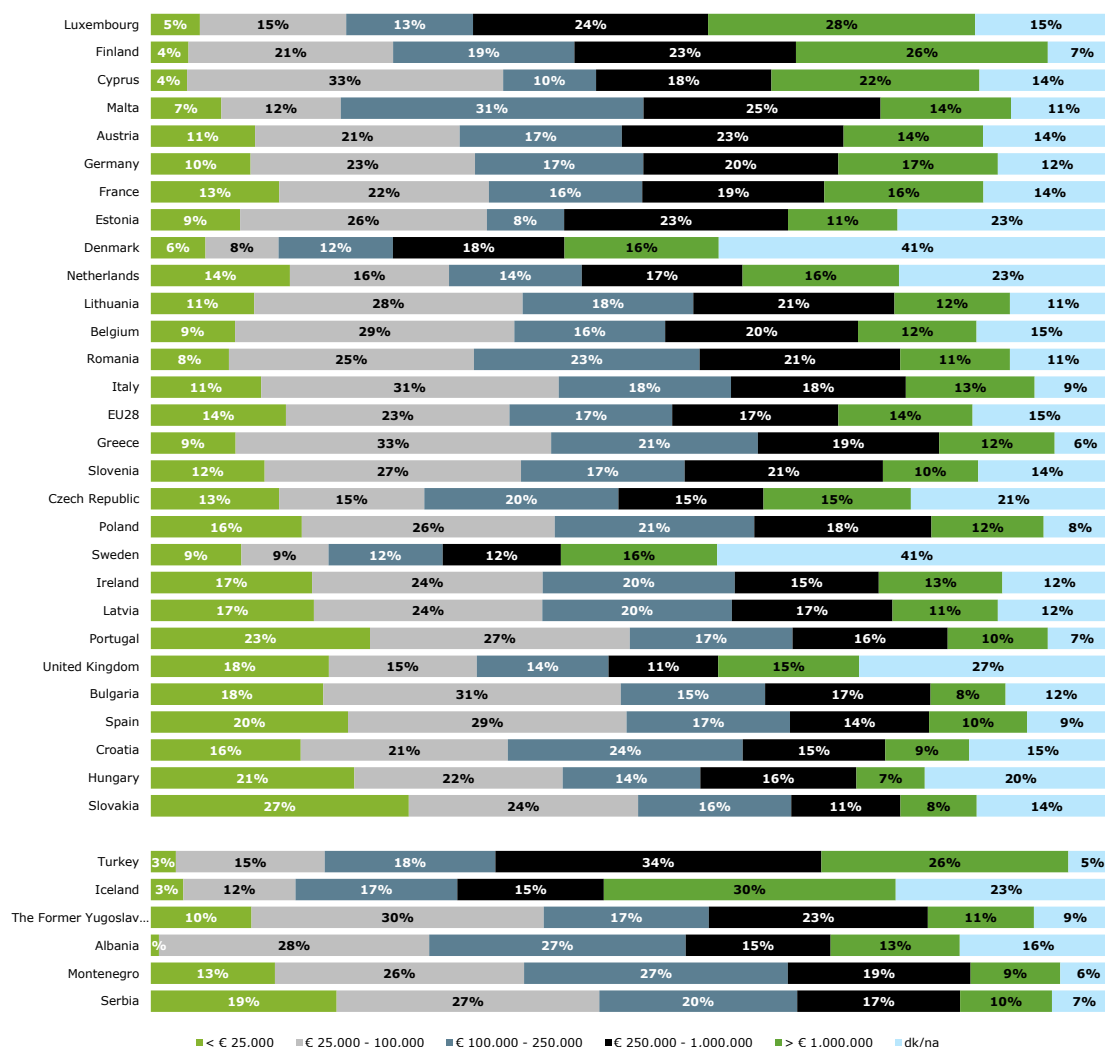
Q21. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions over the next two to three years (2016-2018), what amount of financing would you aim to obtain?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

The largest proportion of EU28 SMEs is looking to obtain future external financing in the range of EUR 25,000 to EUR 100,000 in size to realise their growth ambitions for the next two to three years: this is the size-class in which the amount falls for 23% of EU28 SMEs. The smallest proportion of SMEs looks to obtain financing in the range over EUR 1,000,000 and the range below 25,000: 14%. These amounts are mostly suitable only to large enterprises.

Figure 97 provides a breakdown of the amount of external financing SMEs seek to finance their future growth ambitions by country in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. The EU28 proportions correspond to figure 96. Within the countries of the EU28, SME's in Luxembourg has the largest proportion seeking financing amounts over EUR 250.000: 56%. This proportion is smallest in Hungary, for which it is only 17%. Future financing needs seem to be smallest in Denmark: 36% of SMEs indicates that they external financing to realise growth ambitions is not relevant to them (or they do not know). SME's in Spain (21%) have the largest proportion of SMEs seeking future financing no greater than EUR 25.000.

figure 97 Amount of external financing needed to realise growth ambitions over the next two to three years for SMEs in the EU-28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



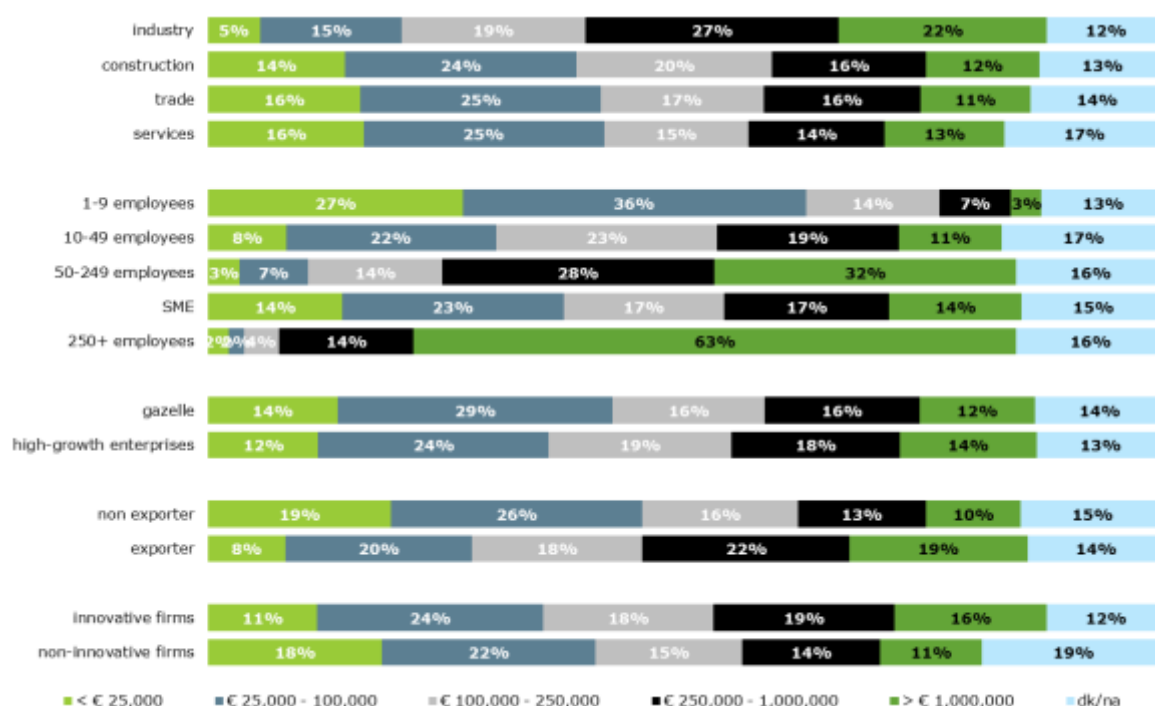
Q21. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions over the next two to three years (2016-2018), what amount of financing would you aim to obtain?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 98 and details how the amount of future financing varies among different sectors of the economy, size-classes, growth types, exporter status and innovativeness. The largest financing amounts are needed by EU28 SMEs active in industry: 22% needs an amount greater than EUR 1,000,000 and another 27% needs an amount in the range from EUR 250,000 up. The size of future financing needed is relatively similar among SMEs that operate in construction, trade and services.

There appears to be a clear positive relation between enterprise size and the amount of future external financing needed to realise growth ambitions: the larger enterprises are, the larger the proportions for the larger financing size-classes. While only 3% of micro-sized enterprises requires a financing amount greater than EUR 1 million, 63% does so among large enterprises.

figure 98 Amount of external financing needed to realise growth ambitions over the next two to three years for SMEs in the EU-28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q21. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions over the next two to three years (2016-2018), what amount of financing would you aim to obtain?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

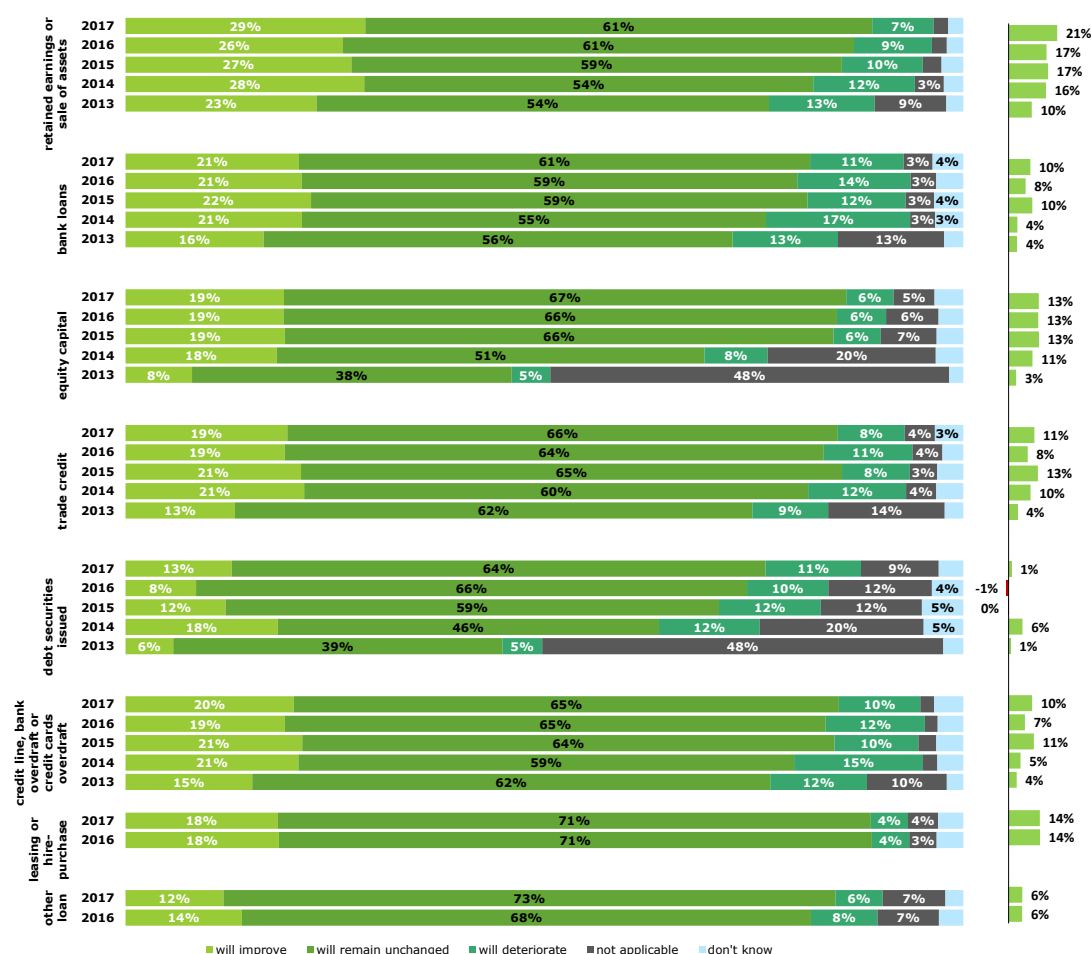
Gazelles generally need smaller amounts of future financing to realise their growth ambitions than non-gazelle high-growth SMEs. Gazelles are high-growth SMEs that are no more than five years old and are hence more likely to be smaller in size than high-growth SMEs in general.

SMEs that generate part of their turnover from exports are more likely to require external funds sized EUR 250,000 and over (41%) than non-exporting SMEs (23%). Innovative SMEs (35% needs an amount over EUR 250,000) also need more funds to realise their ambitions than non-innovative SMEs (24%).

3.5. Expected availability of internal funds and external financing

SMEs prefer to finance their expected growth mostly using debt, either originating from banks or other sources (section 3.4.1). This section covers expected changes in the availability of eight types of external financing, detailing changes over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic of the confidence SMEs have in bringing these talks to a successful close. The eight types are internal finance, bank loans, other loans, equity capital, trade credit, debt securities, credit line and leasing. Expected changes in availability are first presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 99. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases. When years are excluded, the particular financing type was only first included in a later survey year.

figure 99 Changes in the availability of types of financing available in the next six months (October 2017 to March 2018) for SMEs in the EU28, for the period 2013-2017.



Q23. Looking ahead, for each of the following types of financing available to your enterprise, please indicate whether you think their availability will improve, deteriorate or remain unchanged over the next six months. Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

SMEs in the EU28 report the highest net improvement in retained earnings or sale of assets, *i.e.* in internally generated equity. A bit over one in four SMEs (29%) expects an improvement in the availability of this type of financing and 7% expects a deterioration, resulting in a rounded net improvement of 21%. In the survey years since 2013, EU28 SMEs never expected a net deterioration and the size of the net improvement they expect has been increasing each time.

Out of the external sources of financing, the availability of equity capital is expected to improve most. SMEs expect a net improvement in equity capital, the source of external equity (versus the source of internal equity in retained earnings or sale of assets), of 13%. The expected net improvement for the availability of trade credit is 11%. The two types of financing do differ in their nature: the former is equity financing, the second a type of debt financing. Furthermore, SMEs have always expected a non-negative net effect for the availability of equity capital, whereas they expected a net deterioration for trade credit in 2013. The financial crisis put the possibilities of enterprises to extend trade credit in those years under pressure.

EU28 SMEs expect the availability of financing via a credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft to improve (20%) more often than to deteriorate (10%), resulting in a net improvement of 10%. After the deterioration in 2016 in comparison to previous years, the net effect has improved in 2017.

The availability of bank loans is also expected to improve: more EU28 SMEs expect an improvement of availability (21%) than do a deterioration (11%) for a net change of 8%. This is a slight deterioration compared to 2016, but it marks still a doubling of the expected net improvement when compared to 2013 and 2014, when the net change was only 10%.

SMEs expect a slight improvement in the availability of debt securities (net change of 1%) as the proportion that expects an improvement is a bit smaller in size than the proportion that expects a deterioration. The net effect has been varied over the years. Of particular interest, however, is that this type of external financing has become more relevant to EU28 SMEs.

Leasing or hire-purchases are explicitly distinguished as a separate type of financing for the second time in 2017. Of the EU28 SMEs, 18% expects an improvement in the availability of this type of financing, while 4% expects a deterioration, for a rounded net improvement of 14%.

The other loan category has been included only for 2016 and 2017 in the figure, even though it was part of earlier surveys. The reason for this choice is that leasing or hire-purchase was an implicit part of this type of financing in the previous waves, rendering temporal comparisons moot.

3.6. Important factors in future financing

This section covers six factors affecting future financing: tax incentives, public measures, guarantees, business support services, measures facilitating equity investments and export credits or guarantees. Average grades are presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 100.

Both tax incentives and making existing public measures easier to obtain are considered by EU28 SMEs to be the most (and equally so) important factors for their financing in the future. Each factor scores an average OF 5.9 and 6.0 respectively on a one to ten scale. For tax incentives there is a slight decrease in the average grade when compared to preceding survey years. For making existing public measures easier to obtain, the average did not experience any change. Business support services (4.9 EU28 average) and guarantees for loans (4.8) are considered to be similarly important factors in SMEs' future financing. Again, these averages represent a further decline in importance of these factors in comparison to earlier survey years. The two least important factors for SMEs' future financing based on their average grade are measures to facilitate equity investments (3.3 EU28 average) and export credits or guarantees (2.5).

figure 100 Factors affecting future financing for SMEs in EU-28, weighted average of grades on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means that it is extremely important, sorted from high to low based on the grade received in 2017, for the period 2013-2017



Q24. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not important at all and 10 means it is extremely important, how important are each of the following factors for your enterprise's financing in the future?

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia

4. CHARACTERISTICS AND CURRENT STATE OF ENTERPRISES

This chapter presents background information on the characteristics and the current state of enterprises. It serves as a comparative framework against all of the other tables and figures may be viewed as a means to help explain part of the differences that are observed between years, countries and types of enterprises. The chapter covers the financial state of enterprises (4.2), the most pressing problems experienced by enterprises (4.3) and a set of enterprise characteristics that consists of innovativeness, growth and exports (4.4 to 4.6).

4.1. Key findings

In general, the financial state of SMEs in the EU28 has improved in the period between 2011 and 2017. SMEs more often report net increases in turnover (28% of SMEs in 2017) and profits (6%). Interest expenses remained stable in 2017, labour costs saw a net increase (51%) which was slightly larger than the increase reported in the preceding year. On the other hand, more EU28 SMEs report increases in fixed investments (net 14%), in inventories and working capital (9%), and in the number of employees (14%). A larger proportion of the SMEs reported the debt to asset ratio to fall rather than to increase.

Overall, large enterprises of at least 250 employees, reap these benefits of an improving economy more strongly than SMEs do. They more often report increases in turnover and profits. On the other hand, the labour costs increase more strongly.

Finding customers is the most pressing problem experienced by SMEs in the EU28. It is the most urgent problem according to 24% of SMEs and has been so in all of the survey years. The next most urgent problem is the availability of skilled staff and experienced managers, which has become a more pressing problem over the years. On the other hand, the access to finance for SMEs has fallen in importance as a problem. By 2015 it had become the least important problem. Nonetheless, it remains a major issue to SMEs in Greece.

Out of the EU28 SMEs, 55% can be considered as innovative, with Finnish SMEs being the most innovative (75%). SMEs in industry (65%) are decidedly more innovative than the average SME, as are exporting SMEs (63%).

Out of the EU28 SMEs, 17% experienced high-growth and 1% can be categorised as a gazelle, due to having experienced high-growth rates and being no more than five years old. Romanian SMEs most often experience high-growth (36%). The prevalence of high-growth enterprises does not vary much amongst micro, small, medium-sized and large enterprises.

In the EU28, 42% of SMEs engage in exports, with SMEs in Luxembourg (67%) and Slovenia (65%) exporting most often. SMEs in industry (75%) export decidedly more often than the average SME, as do large enterprises (65%) and medium sized enterprises (59%).

4.2. The financial state of enterprises

This section covers the financial state of enterprises, detailing changes in indicators over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for each of these indicators. These more detailed breakdowns are presented for a selected set of key indicators. Changes in company indicators in the six months preceding the survey are presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2013-2017 in figure 101. The financial state of enterprises is detailed using changes in turnover, labour costs, other costs, interest expenses, profits, fixed investments, inventories and working capital, the number of employees and the ratio of debt compared to assets.

figure 101 Changes in company indicators in the past six months for SMEs in the EU28 in the period 2011-2016.



Q2. Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2013-2017; edited by Panteia.

Turnover or sales or revenues are an important indicator of the financial state of enterprises and the economy in general. In 2017, 45% of all SMEs in the EU28 reported that their turnover had increased in the preceding six months, while 17% reported a decrease in turnover. The net effect is a 28% increase in turnover. Changes in turnover have improved over the years. The percentage of SMEs reporting an increase is in most years since 2013 stable on approximately 41%, while the percentage of SMEs reporting a decrease.

The costs of inputs to the production process increased in the six months from April to September in 2017. The proportion of SMEs in the EU28 that reported increased costs was far greater than the proportion of SMEs that reported decreases for both labour costs (including social contributions) and other costs (consisting among others of materials and energy costs). On balance 50% of EU28 SMEs reported increase in other costs and 51% reported an increase in labour costs. From 2013 onward, there have been net increases in costs for each survey year. In terms of the proportion of SMEs reporting them, these increases in costs outweigh the increases in turnover.

Interest expenses have increased for a proportion of EU28 SMEs greater than the proportion that reported decreases. The net effect over the period from April to September 2017 is therefore a slightly positive one of 1%. This marks a change from the previous survey year where SMEs reported a negative net effect (i.e. a larger proportion reporting a decrease rather than an increase). The interest rates charged to enterprises consist of a base interest and a risk mark-up. The base follows the Euribor (Euro interbank offered rate), which is a benchmark rate on the money market. The Euribor peaked in October 2008, which was followed by a very strong and continuing drop. From April 2010 to October 2011 it increased, after which it again dropped and reached a consistent rate close to zero percent. The net changes reported by enterprises partially reflect these movements in the Euribor. Starting from 2011, the positive net effect has been decreasing resulting in a net decrease in interest expenses in 2015 and 2016, which has changed in 2017.

Investments in fixed assets (property, plant and equipment) are means for enterprises to grow, to expand the scale of their operations and to introduce new methods of production. Investments in fixed assets have a higher rate of return than inventories and working capital, which are necessary in the day-to-day operation of an enterprise. Managers will want to keep the size of stock and highly liquid funds to a minimum. Both investments in fixed assets and inventories and working capital experienced net increases in 2016 and 2017. The net increases in fixed investments are greater, which suggests that enterprises have been able to apply their funds to the higher yielding corporate assets.

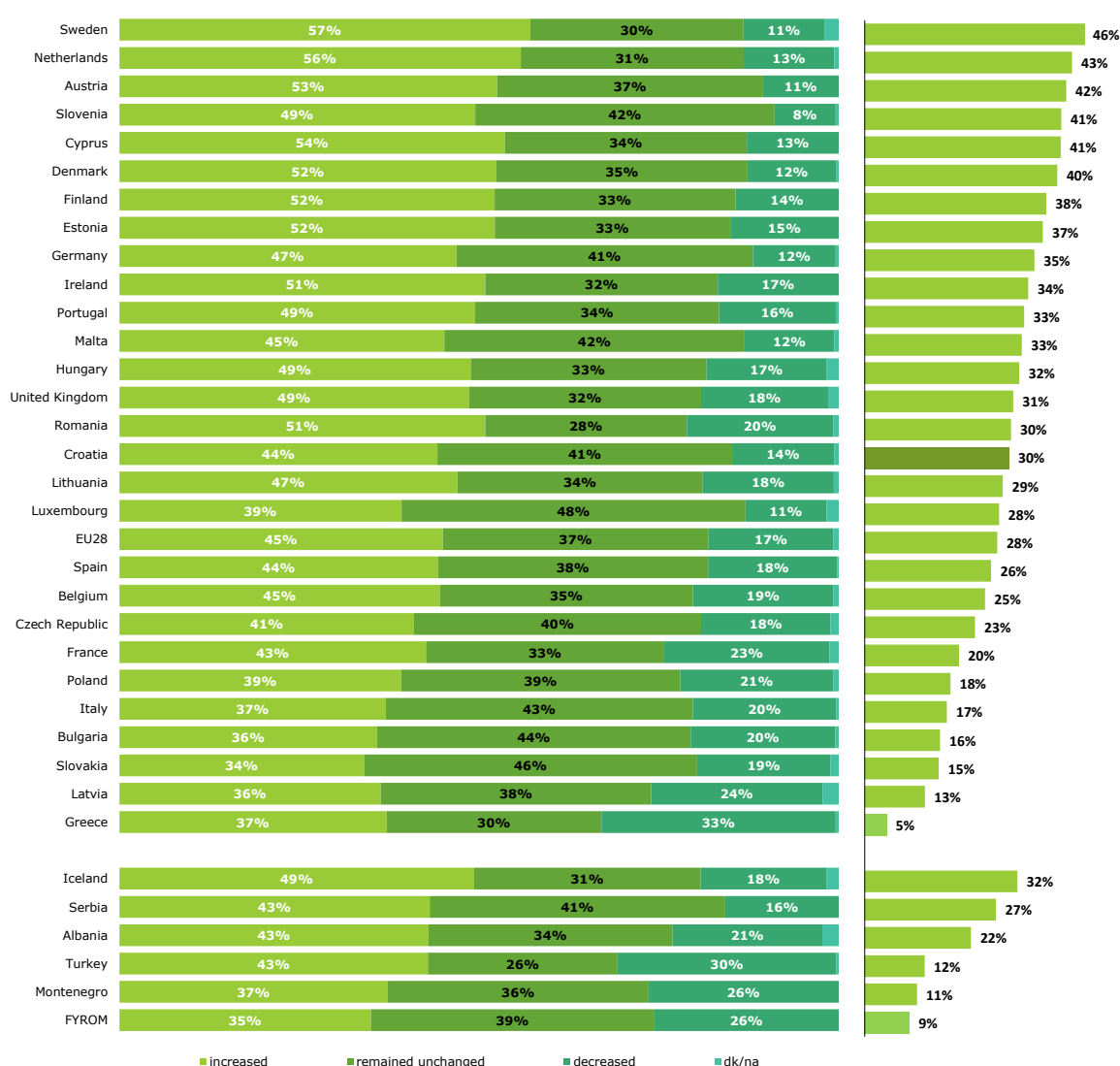
On balance, a larger proportion of EU28 report an increase in the number of employees rather than a decrease in both 2016 and 2017. This reflects the good performance of the SMEs regarding turnover.

EU28 SMEs' assets increase in size from investments in fixed assets and net increases in inventories and working capital. At the same time, they report net decreases in the ratio of debt to their assets.

4.2.1 Turnover

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in turnover. A breakdown by country in figure 102 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 103 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

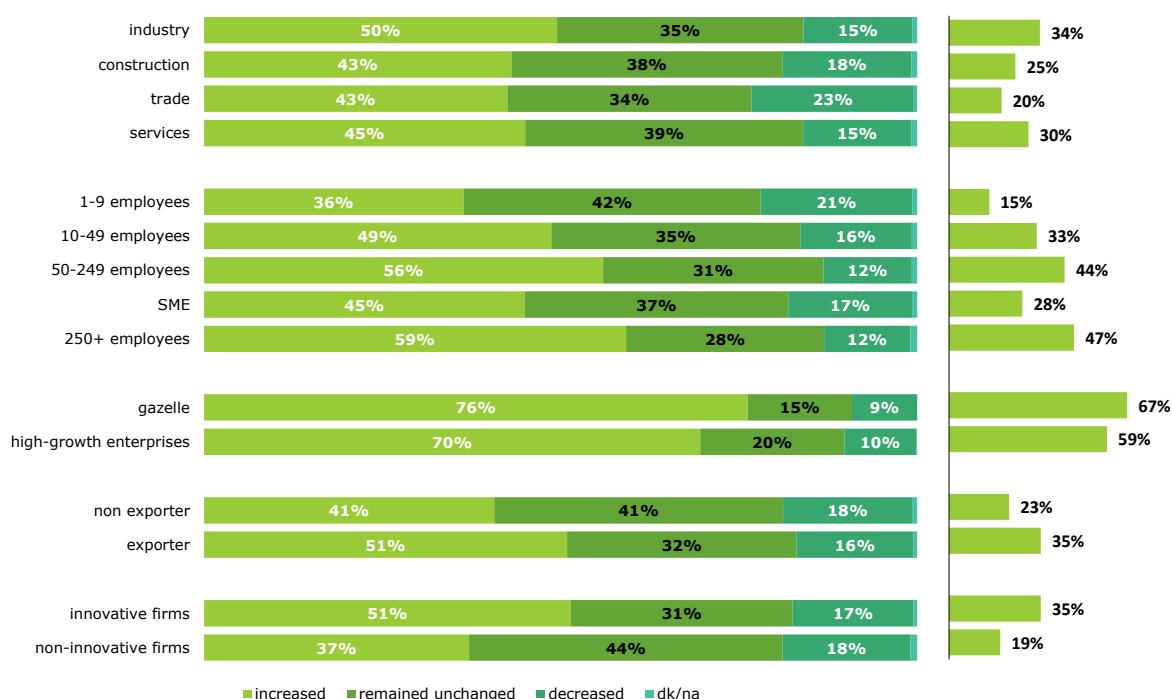
figure 102 Changes in turnover in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q2a. Turnover – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 103 Changes in turnover in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q2a. Turnover – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in turnover are reported by 45% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 17% having experienced decreases in turnover, resulting in a rounded net positive change of 28%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Sweden reported the largest positive net change and SMEs in Greece the lowest change. A third of Greek SMEs indicates that their turnover has decreased in the six months from April to September 2017.

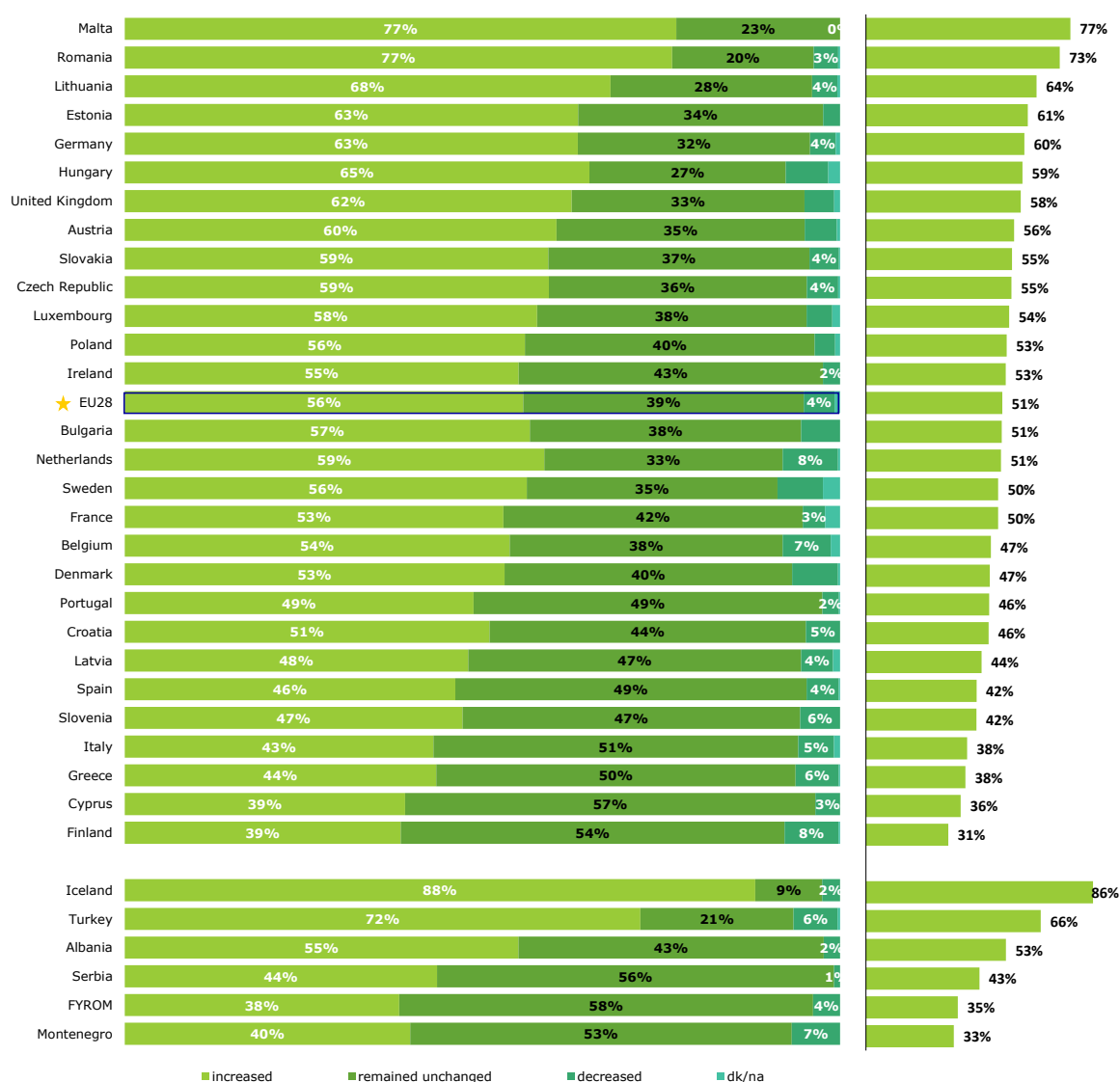
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the groups identified report positive net changes in turnover in 2017. Among the various sectors, enterprises in industry report the largest net positive change (34%) and trade the smallest net positive change (20%). There exists a clear relation between the enterprise size and changes in turnover. Large enterprise of at least 250 employees have experienced the most increases in turnover (net 47%), micro enterprises of no more than 9 employees the least (net 15%).

By virtue of their definition as high-growth enterprises, gazelles have experienced the largest positive net changes among all groups identified: 67% on balance. Exporting enterprises more often report turnover increases than non-exporting enterprises. Innovative enterprises experienced increases in turnover more often than those that are not identified as being innovative.

4.2.2 Labour costs

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in labour costs (including social contributions). A breakdown by country in figure 104 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 105 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

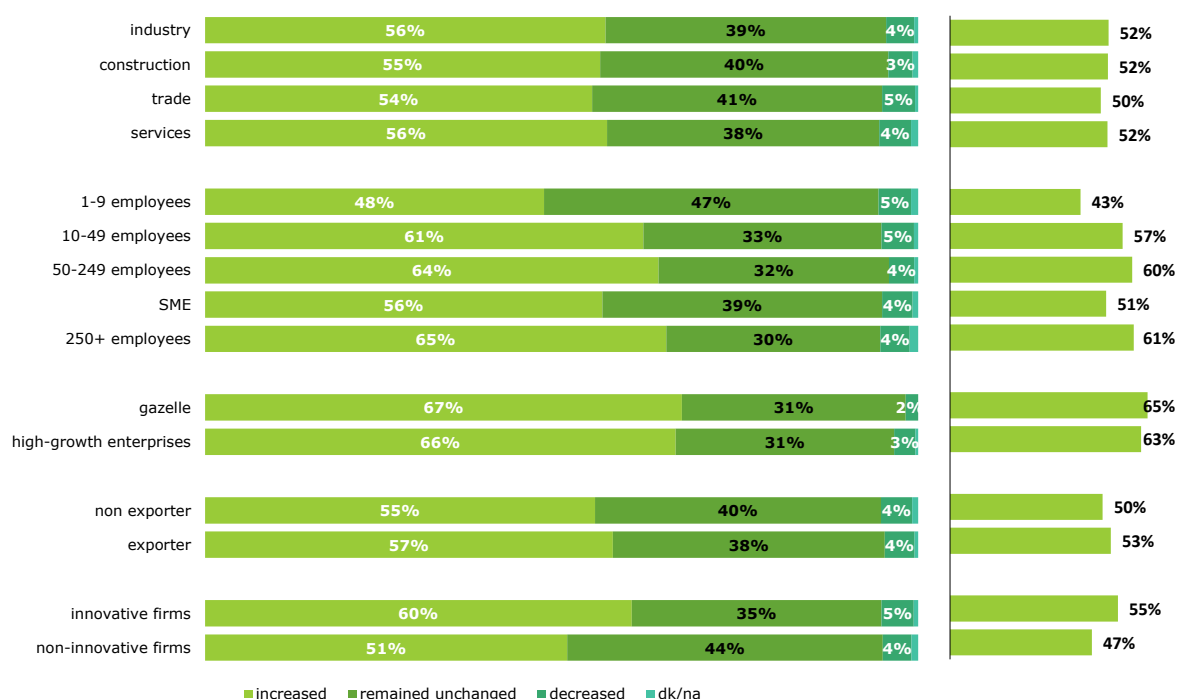
figure 104 Changes in labour costs (including social contributions) in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q2b. Labour costs (including social contributions) – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 105 Changes in labour costs (including social contributions) in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q2b. Labour costs (including social contributions) – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in labour costs are reported by 56% of all EU28 SMEs, with another 4% having experienced decreases in labour costs, resulting in a rounded net increase in costs of 51%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in Malta and Romania report the largest net increases and SMEs in Finland and Cyprus the smallest net increases. There are no countries in which SMEs report an average net decrease. Of the non-EU countries, Iceland reports the strongest net increase with 86%.

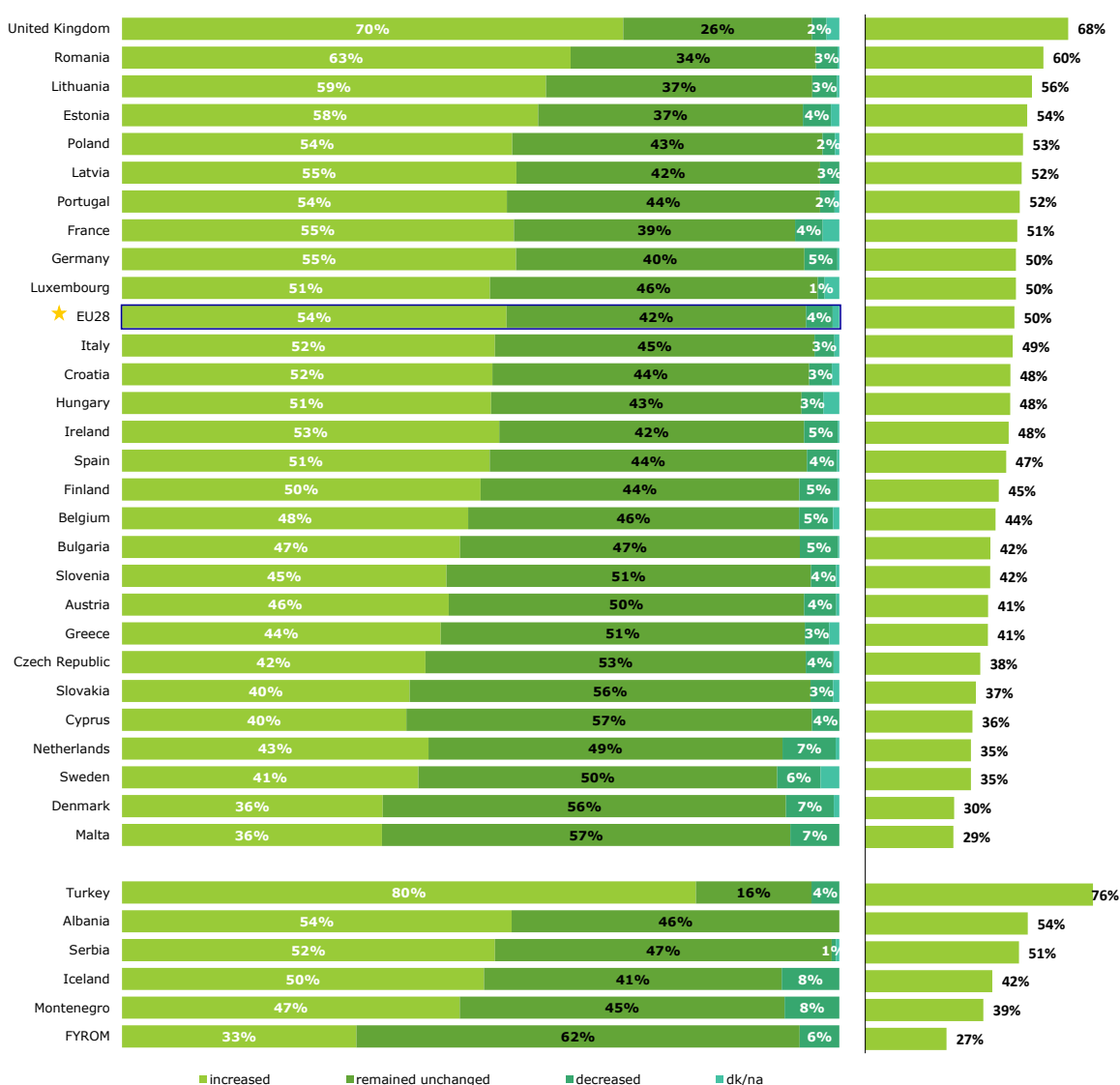
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the groups identified report net increases in labour costs in 2017. Among the various sectors, SMEs in trade report the smallest net increase (50%). The differences among the sectors are relatively limited. There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in labour costs. Large enterprise of at least 250 employees have experienced the most increases labour costs (net 61%), micro enterprises of no more than 9 employees the least (net 43%), both of which are higher than seen in 2016.

There exists only a marginal difference in the changes in labour costs between high-growth enterprises and gazelles with net increases of 63% and 65% respectively. Non-exporting enterprises report increases in labour costs slightly more often than exporting enterprises. Innovative enterprises experienced increases in labour costs more often than those that are not identified as being non-innovative.

4.2.3 Other costs

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in other costs (materials, energy and other). A breakdown by country in figure 106 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 107 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

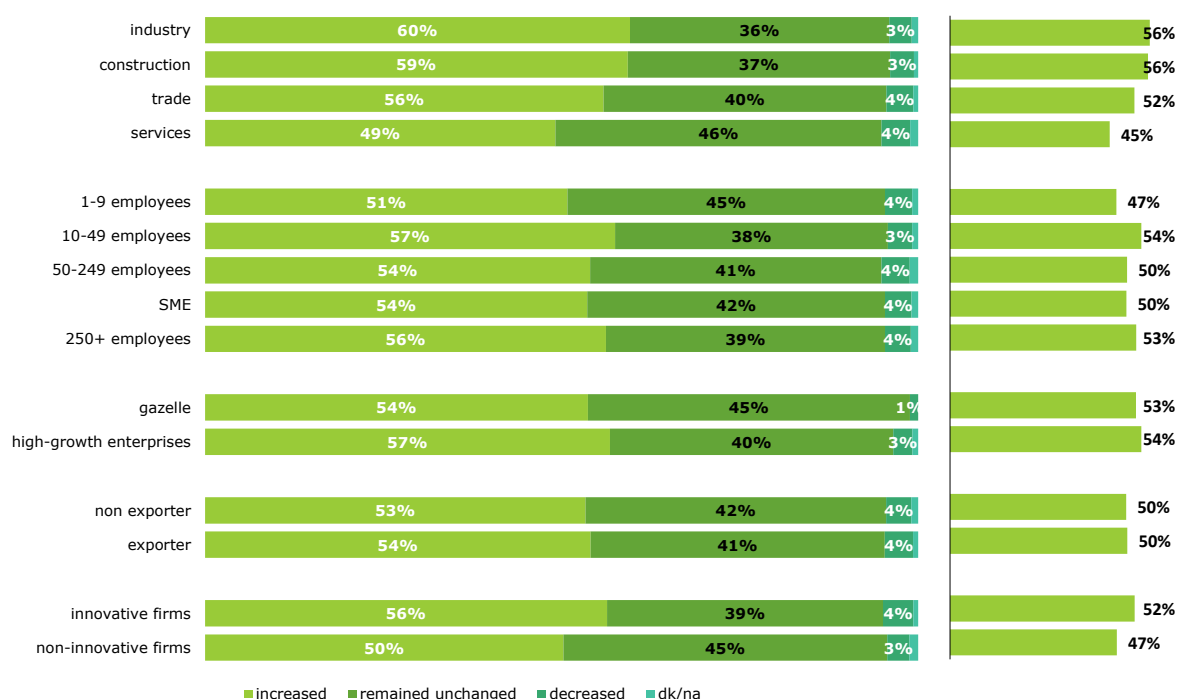
figure 106 Changes in other costs (materials, energy, other) in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q2c. Other costs (materials, energy, other) – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 107 Changes in other costs (materials, energy, other) in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q2c. Labour costs (including social contributions) – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in other costs are reported by 54% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 4% having experienced decreases in other costs, resulting in a rounded net increase in costs of 50%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in the United Kingdom and Romania report the largest net increase and SMEs in Malta the smallest net increase. There are no countries in which SMEs report an average net decrease.

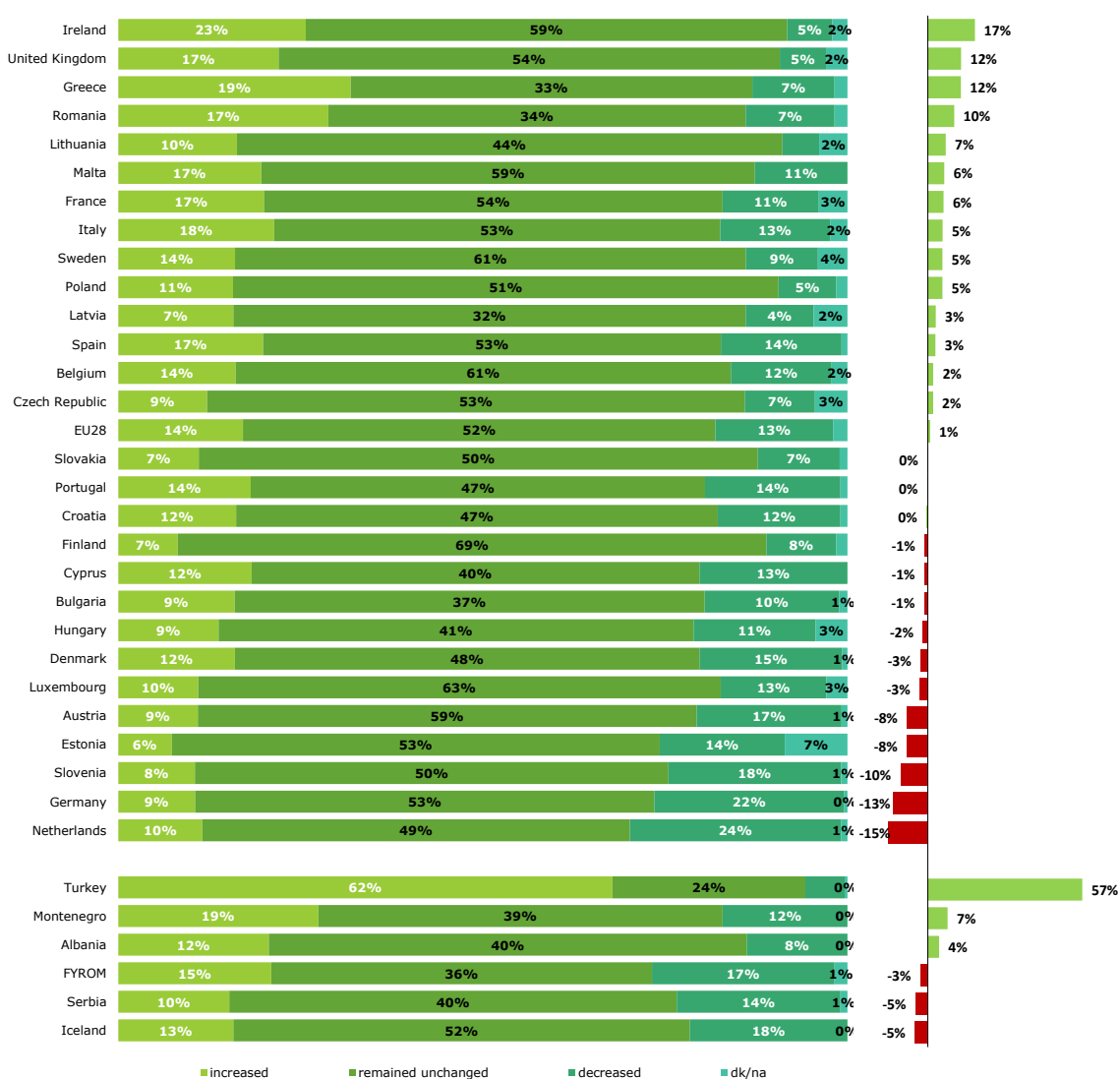
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, all of the groups identified report net increases in other costs in 2016. Among the various sectors, the industry and construction have the largest net increase (56% each) and services the smallest net increase (45%). The differences among the sectors are relatively limited. Enterprises of 10-49 employees have experienced the biggest increases other costs (net 54%), micro enterprises of no more than 9 employees the least (net 47%).

There exists almost no difference in the changes in other costs between high-growth enterprises and gazelles with net increases of 54% and 53% respectively. Non-exporting enterprises and exporting enterprises have the same net increase (50%). Innovative enterprises experienced increases in other costs more often than those that are not identified as being innovative.

4.2.4 Interest expenses

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in interest expenses. A breakdown by country in figure 108 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 109 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

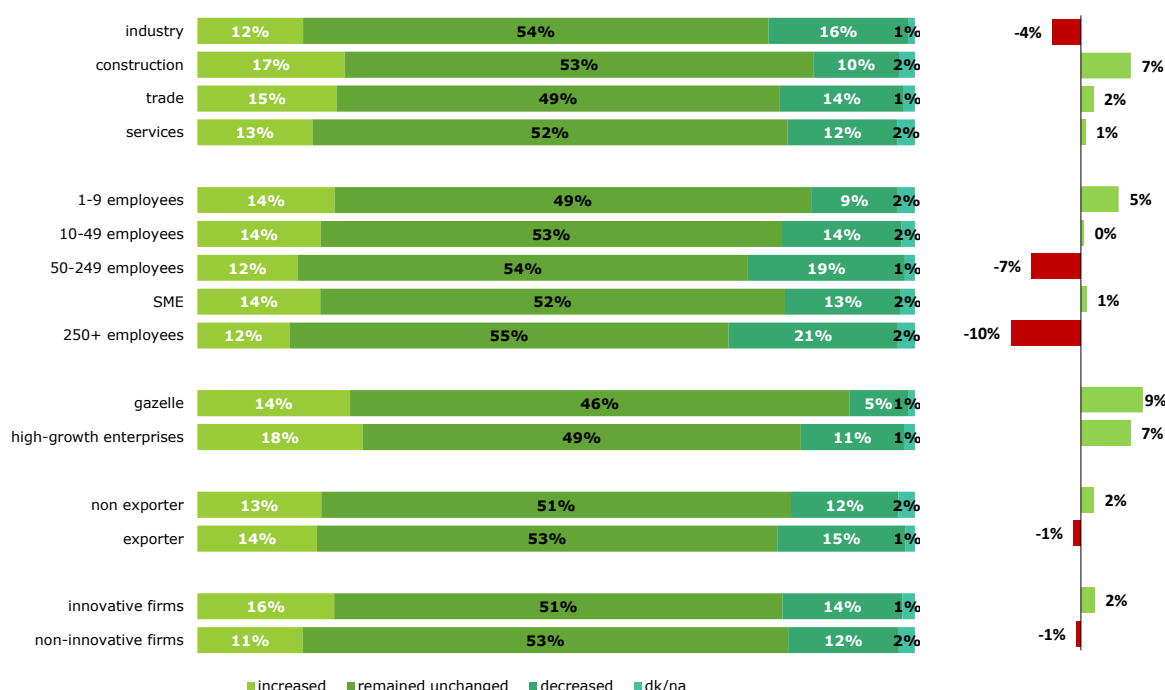
figure 108 Changes in interest expenses in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q2d. Interest expenses – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 109 Changes in interest expenses in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q2d. Interest expenses – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in interest expenses are reported by 14% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 13% having experienced decreases in interest expenses, resulting in a rounded net increase in costs of 1%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in The Netherlands report the largest net decrease and SMEs in Ireland the largest net increase. In other words, the interest costs of financing have increased most strongly in Ireland. While the Irish net increase is high when compared to the EU28 average, the net increase is nearly four times larger in Turkey.

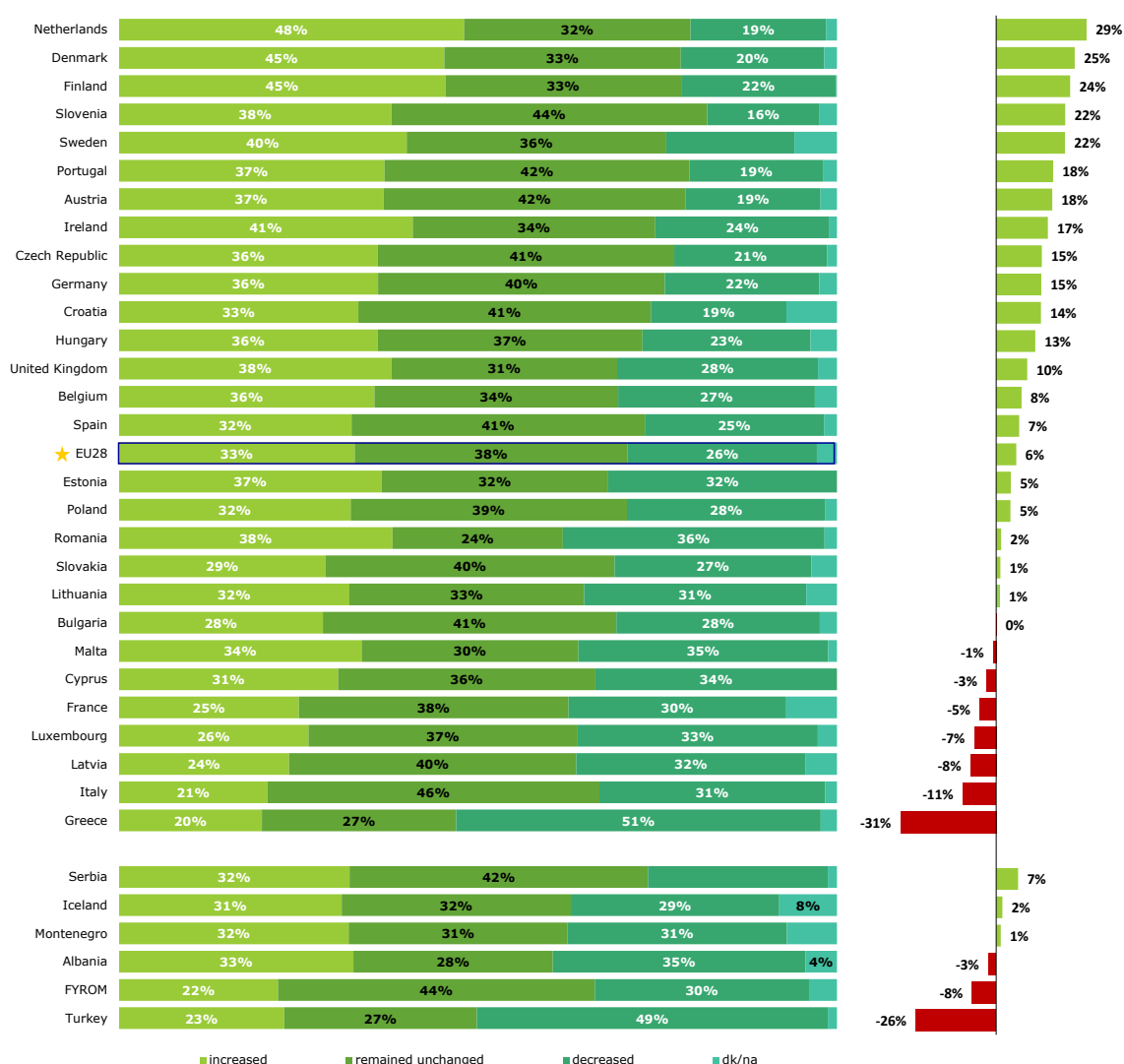
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, there exist some more distinct variations in net effects between the groups identified. Among the various sectors, construction is the only one to have experienced a net increase of interest expenses (7%). The largest net decrease is experienced by the industry (-4%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in interest expenses. Large enterprise of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest net decreases in interest expenses (net -10%), micro enterprises of no more than 9 employees the largest increases in interest expenses (net 5%).

High-growth SMEs experienced a net 7% increase in interest expenses. Gazelles, which are high-growth SMEs no more than five years old, are more risky to financiers due to their young age and report increases in interest expenses slightly more often: 9%. Non-exporting enterprises report a net increase of 2% and exporting enterprises report a net decrease of -1%.

4.2.5 Profit

This section presents more detailed breakdowns of changes in profits. A breakdown by country in figure 110 presents results for SMEs in each country of the EU28 and Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM. A breakdown by enterprise characteristic in figure 111 presents these results by sector of the economy, enterprise size, type of growth, exporter status and innovativeness. Net changes are reported which correspond to the net effect of reported increases minus decreases.

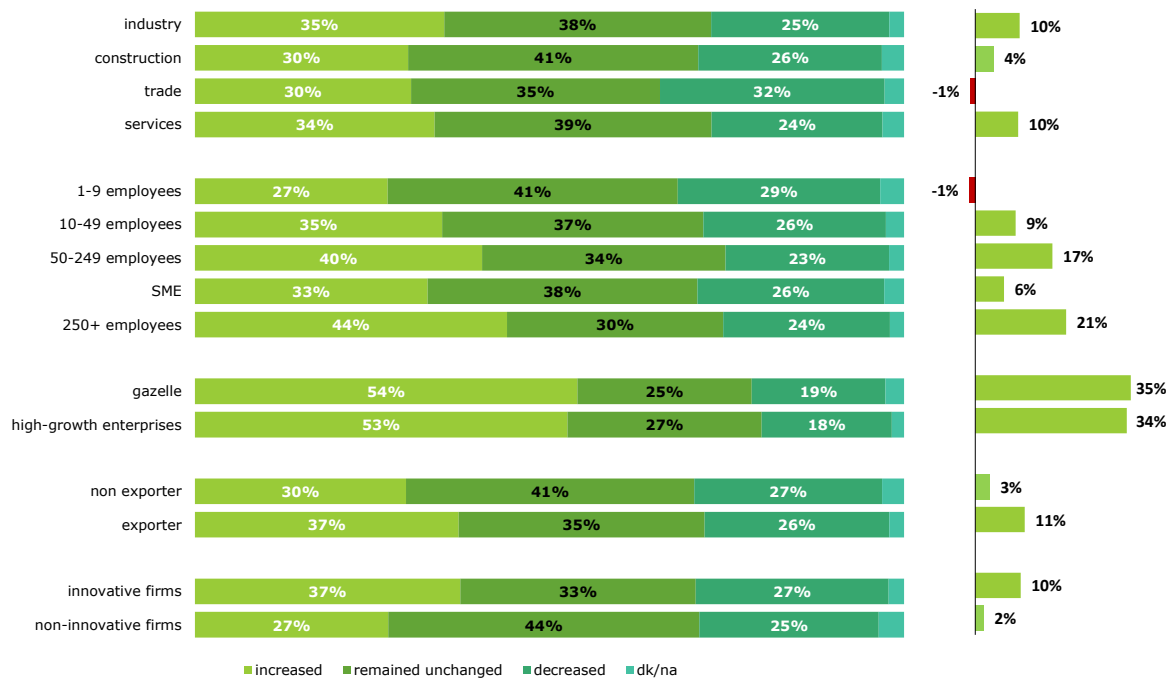
figure 110 Changes in profit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q2e. Profit – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 111 Changes in profit in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristics.



Q2e. Profit – Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Increases in profits are reported by 33% of all SMEs in the EU28, with another 26% having experienced decreases in profits, resulting in a rounded net positive change of 6%. Among the countries of the EU28, SMEs in the Netherlands report the largest positive net change and SMEs in Greece the largest negative change. 51% of Greek SMEs indicates that their profits have decreased in the six months from April to September 2017.

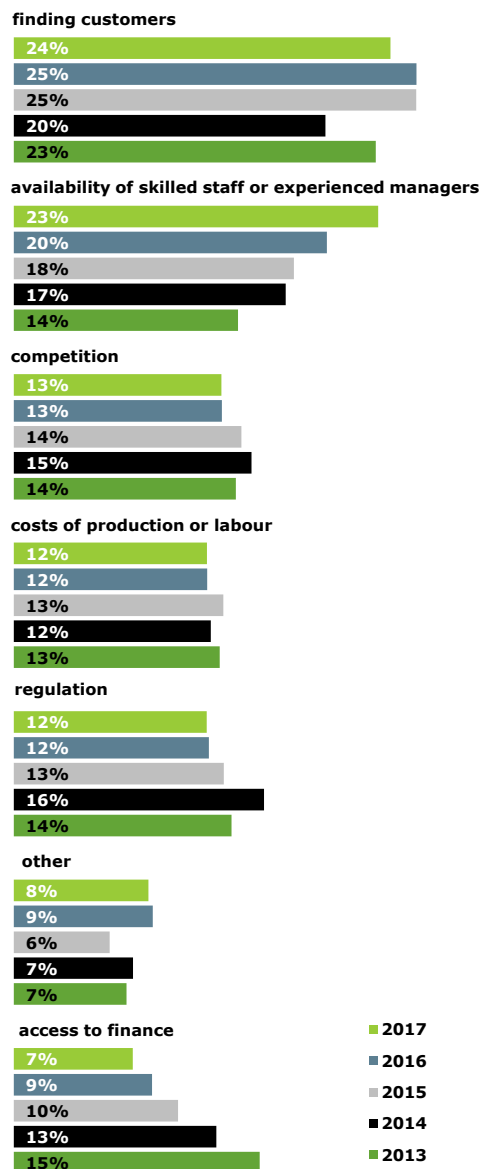
Broken down by enterprise characteristic, there exist some distinct variations in net effects between the groups identified. Among the various sectors, trade is the only one to have experienced a net decrease of profits (-1%). The largest net increase is experienced by the services industry and industry (both 10%). There exists a clear relation between the size of an enterprise and changes in profits. Large enterprise of at least 250 employees have experienced the largest net increases in profits (net 21%), micro enterprises of no more than 9 employees the largest decreases in profits (net -1%).

By virtue of their definition as strongly-growing enterprises, both high-growth SMEs and gazelles have experienced the largest positive net changes among all groups identified (34% and 35% respectively). Exporting enterprises report a bigger net increase than non-exporting enterprises. Innovative enterprises also experienced better changes in profits than those that are not identified as being innovative.

4.3. The most important problems

This section covers the most pressing problems to SMEs, detailing changes in various sources of problems over the years and a breakdown by country and enterprise characteristic for each of these indicators. Changes in problems in the six months preceding the survey are presented for SMEs in the EU28 for the period 2011-2016 in figure 112. The problems identified are finding customers, the availability of skilled staff, competition, regulation, costs of production or labour and access to finance.

figure 112 Most pressing problems in the past six months (April to September 2016) for SMEs in the EU28. Percentages in the figure indicate the percentage of SMEs that consider a specific problem to be the most urgent problem.



Q0b. How important have the following problems been for your enterprise in the six past months? Please answer on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important. Source: SAFE, 2009-2016; edited by Panteia.

From the varied set of potential problems enterprises may encounter, SMEs in the EU28 most often cite finding customers for their products or services as the most pressing problem (figure 112). This ranking is calculated based on grades respondents were asked to assign to a fixed set of problems: the problem given the highest importance is then designated the most pressing problem. The urgency of finding customers as a problem saw a steady decline until 2015, when there was an increase to 25% which has remained consistent until 2017. In each of those years, however, it was consistently the most pressing problem to SMEs.

The second most pressing problem is the availability of skilled staff or experienced managers: the problem is most urgent to 23% of SMEs in the EU28. The urgency of this skilled labour deficit has seen a steady increase from 2013. It seems that with economic stabilisation and growth it becomes more difficult for enterprises to fill these vacancies.

The third most pressing problem is competition: the problem is most urgent to 13% of SMEs in the EU 28 and has remained almost constant around that proportion ever since 2013. The persistence of this proportion is interesting in the light of improving turnover and profits in the same period (see section 4.2). While these performance indicators improve, competition remains an important problem in the experience of SMEs. There might be a relation to the constantly increasing costs of labour and inputs to the production process (see also section 4.2), which raise the competitive pressure internally.

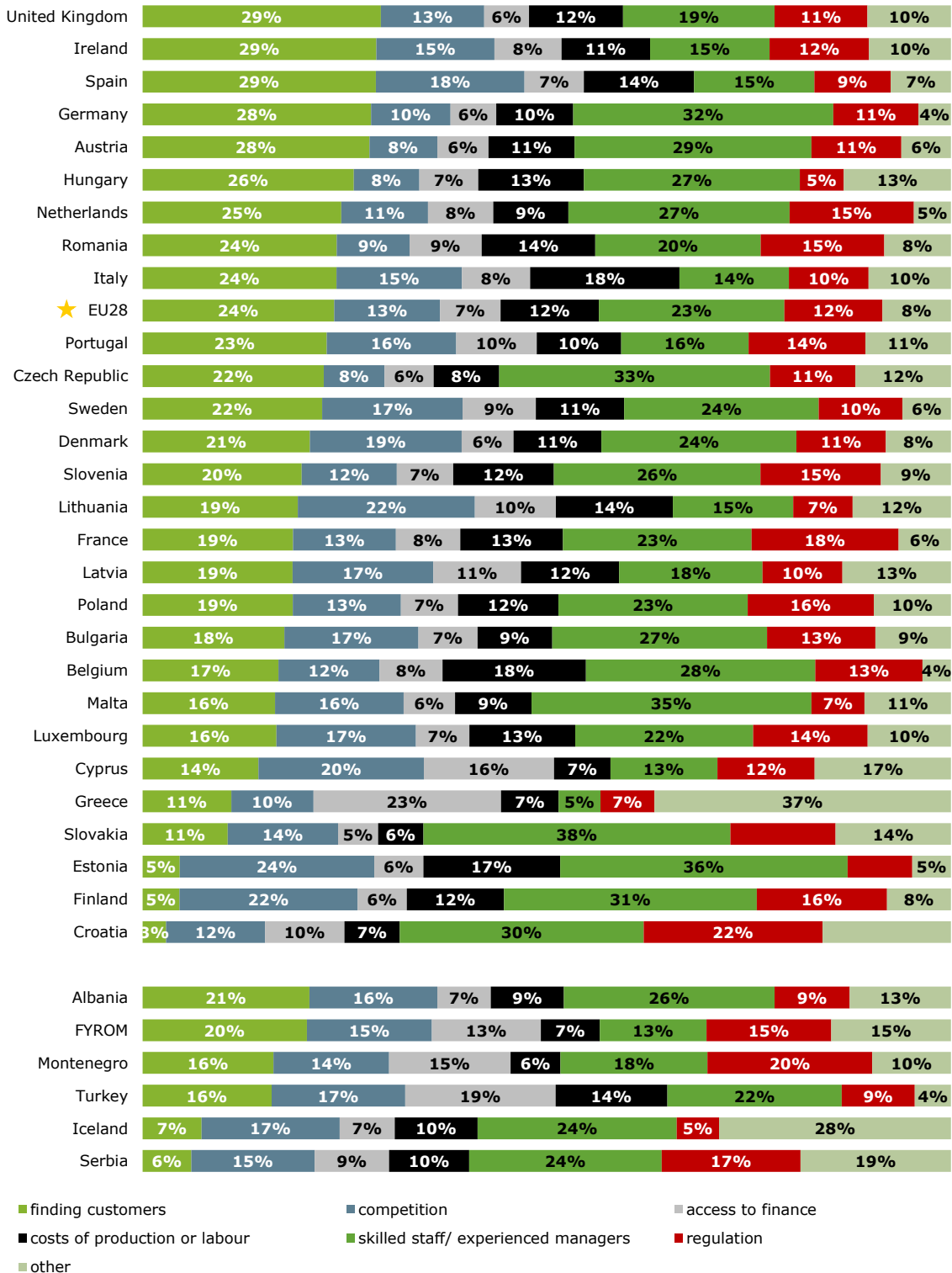
Regulation and the costs of production or labour share a fourth place among the most pressing problems: these problems are most urgent to 12% of SMEs in the EU28. Regulation consists of European and national laws and industrial regulations. It shows little variation throughout the 2013 to 2017 period and has fallen slightly as a problem in 2015 and in 2016. Labour costs include wages, employee benefits and payroll taxes paid by an employer. These costs remain a problem to a relatively constant proportion of EU28 SMEs.

Finally, the access to finance has dropped to be the least pressing of the identified problems: it is the most pressing problem to 7% of SMEs in the EU28 in 2017, dropping from 9% in 2016. This means that access to finance has steadily declined in importance throughout the survey years. In 2013 it was the second-most important problem. In 2014 it became the fourth most pressing problem and in 2015, 2016 and 2017 it is the least urgent problem SMEs in the EU28 experience. The map (figure 114) presents for all EU28 countries the proportion of SMEs for which access to finance is the most important problem.

Figure 113 provides a breakdown of the most pressing problems SMEs face in specific countries. The EU28 proportions correspond to those for 2017 in figure 112. It follows that among the countries in the EU28, finding customers is most urgent as a problem to SMEs in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Spain and least to SMEs in Croatia.

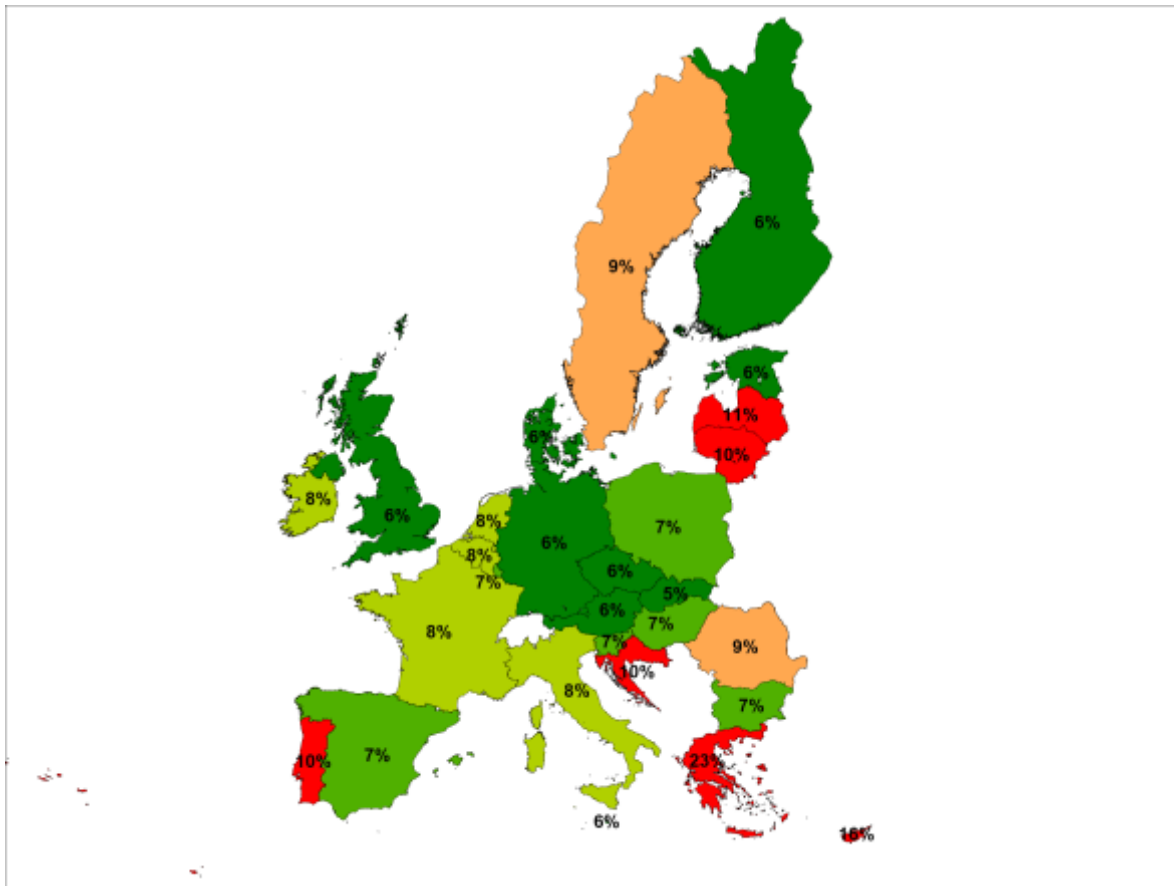
Some further distinct deviations from the EU28 average are as follows. Competition is much more of an urgent issue to SMEs in Finland and Estonia (22% and 24% respectively) and relatively little so in the Czech Republic and Hungary (8%). Access to finance is a very pressing problem to SMEs in Greece (23%) and least so in Slovakia (5%). The cost of labour and production is a more urgent issue in Italy (18%) and relatively little so in Slovakia (6%), Cyprus, Croatia and Greece (7% each). The availability of skilled staff or experienced managers is a relatively big issue in Slovakia and Estonia (38% and 36% respectively), while regulation is most pressing in Croatia (22%).

figure 113 Most pressing problems in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country. Percentages in the figure indicate the percentage of SMEs that consider a specific problem to be the most urgent problem.



Q0b. How important have the following problems been for your enterprise in the six past months? Please answer on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important. Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

figure 114 Proportion of SMEs that indicated access to finance as the most important problems in the past six months (April to September 2016), EU28 by country

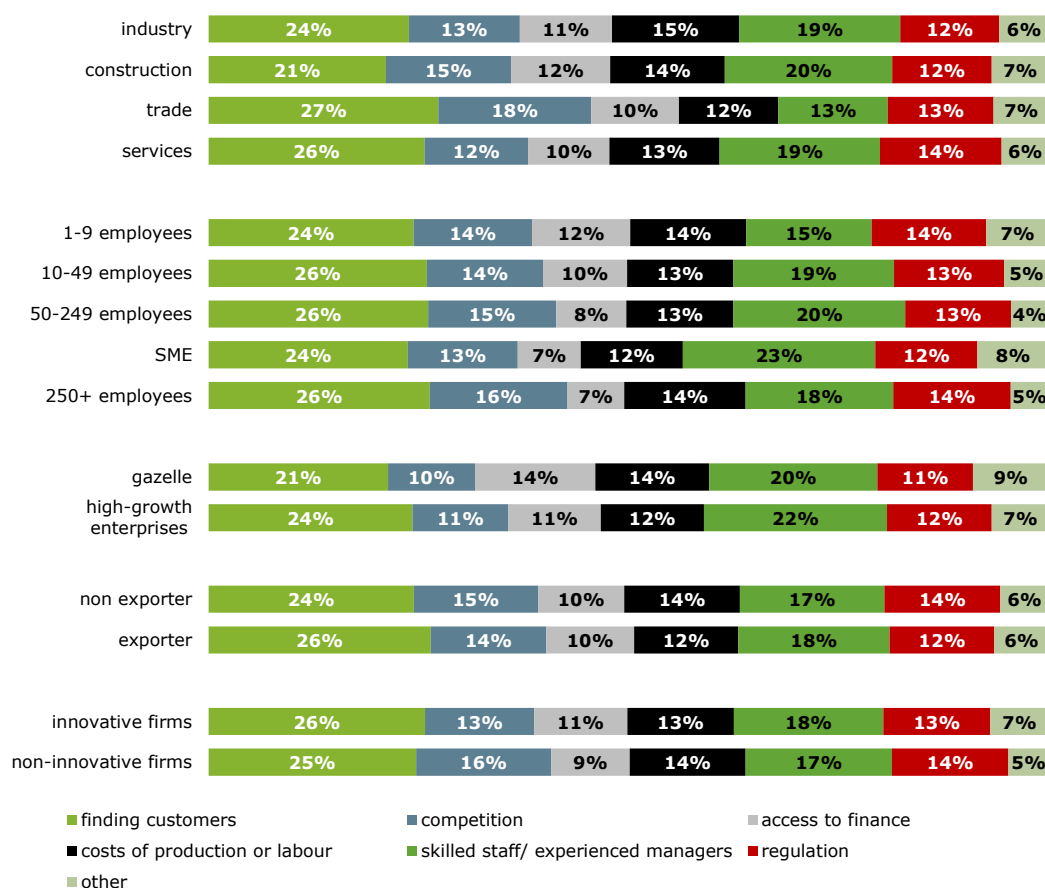


Q0b. How important have the following problems been for your enterprise in the six past months? Please answer on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important. Source: SAFE, 2009-2016; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 115. Comparing the problems identified among the various characteristics to the SME average reveals that enterprise characteristics account for much less of the variation in the urgency of problems that enterprises experience than differences at a national level do.

A selection of interesting deviations from the EU28 SME base: finding customers is somewhat less of a problem in construction. Access to finance is least pressing to SMEs in general, but is considered almost double the problem in gazelles. Overall, the deviations in percentage points from the EU28 SME base by enterprise characteristic are seldom very pronounced.

figure 115 Most pressing problems in the past six months (April to September 2017) for SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic. Percentages in the figure indicate the percentage of SMEs that consider a specific problem to be the most urgent problem.

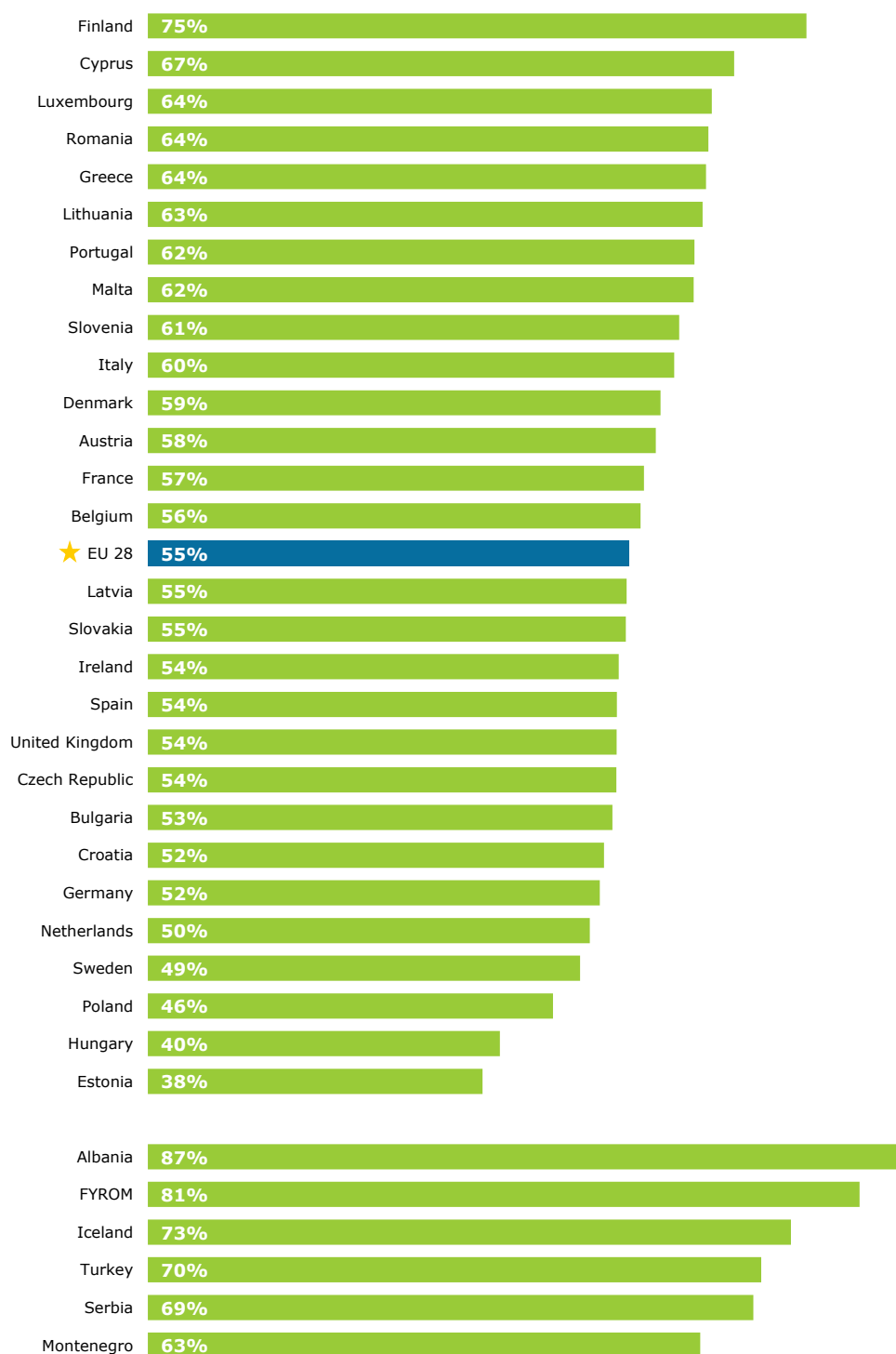


Q0b. How important have the following problems been for your enterprise in the six past months? Please answer on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important. Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

4.4. Innovativeness

This section is the first of three to cover variations in background details by country and enterprise characteristic as a means to help interpret and explain the variations in the access to finance uncovered by the preceding chapters. The section focuses on the innovativeness of enterprises. A breakdown by country is presented in figure 116.

figure 116 Share of innovative enterprises among SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q1. During the past 12 months have you introduced...

... a new or significantly improved product or service to the market?

... a new or significantly improved production process or method?

... a new organisation of management?

... a new way of selling your goods or services?

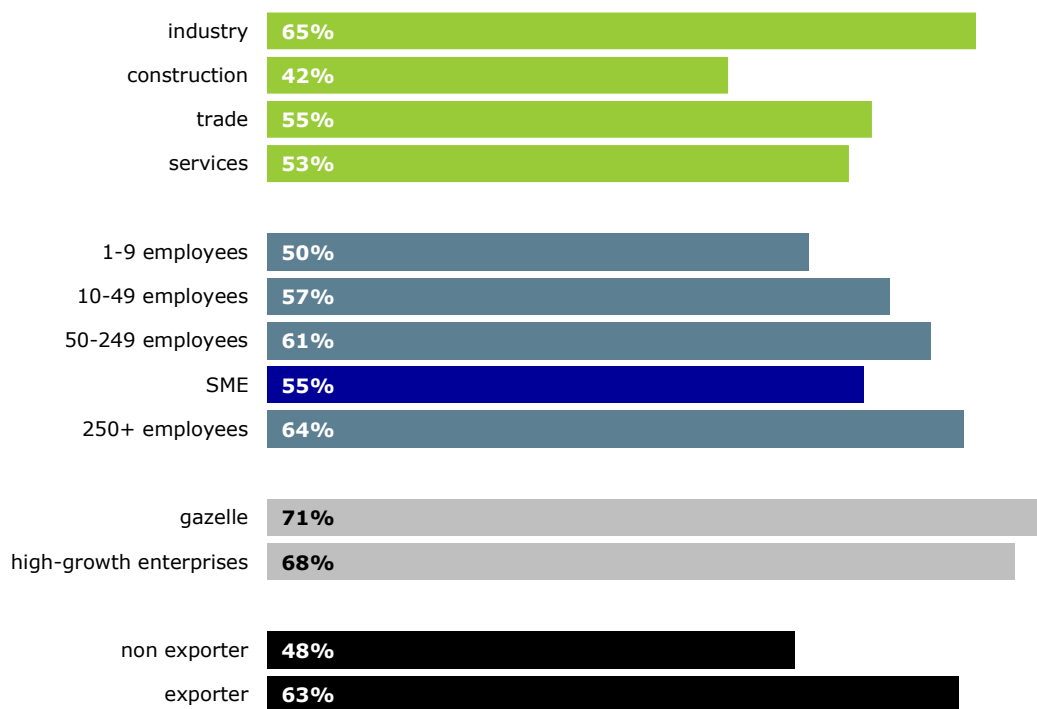
An enterprise is considered innovative when it has answered "yes" to at least one of these questions.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

An enterprise is considered innovative when it has introduced either a new or significantly improved product, service, production process, organisation of management or way of selling goods or services in the past twelve months. Innovation is an important source of improvements in labour productivity and hence of economic growth. Additionally, it has the potential to increase consumer welfare and to increase the efficiency of the production process. In 2017, 55% of all SMEs in the EU28 were considered innovative. Among the EU28 countries, Finnish SMEs are most innovative (75%) and Estonian SMEs least (38%). Overall, there is not a very strong degree of variation between countries. SMEs in most of these countries are positioned in a range from 50% to 65%: 22 out of 28. More SMEs are innovative in Cyprus. Less SMEs are innovative in Sweden, Poland and Hungary.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 117. Enterprises active in construction are least innovative (42%), enterprises in industry are most innovative (65%). Process innovation is likely to be an important source of innovation in industry when compared to the other sectors of the economy. There exists a clear relationship between enterprise size and innovativeness. Among micro-sized enterprises with no more than nine employees, 50% are innovative. Among large enterprises the proportion equals 64%. The highest percentage on innovative SMEs can be found in gazelles (71%).

figure 117 Share of innovative enterprises among SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q1. During the past 12 months have you introduced...

... a new or significantly improved product or service to the market?

... a new or significantly improved production process or method?

... a new organisation of management?

... a new way of selling your goods or services?

An enterprise is considered innovative when it has answered "yes" to at least one of these questions.

Source: SAFE, 2009-2017; edited by Panteia.

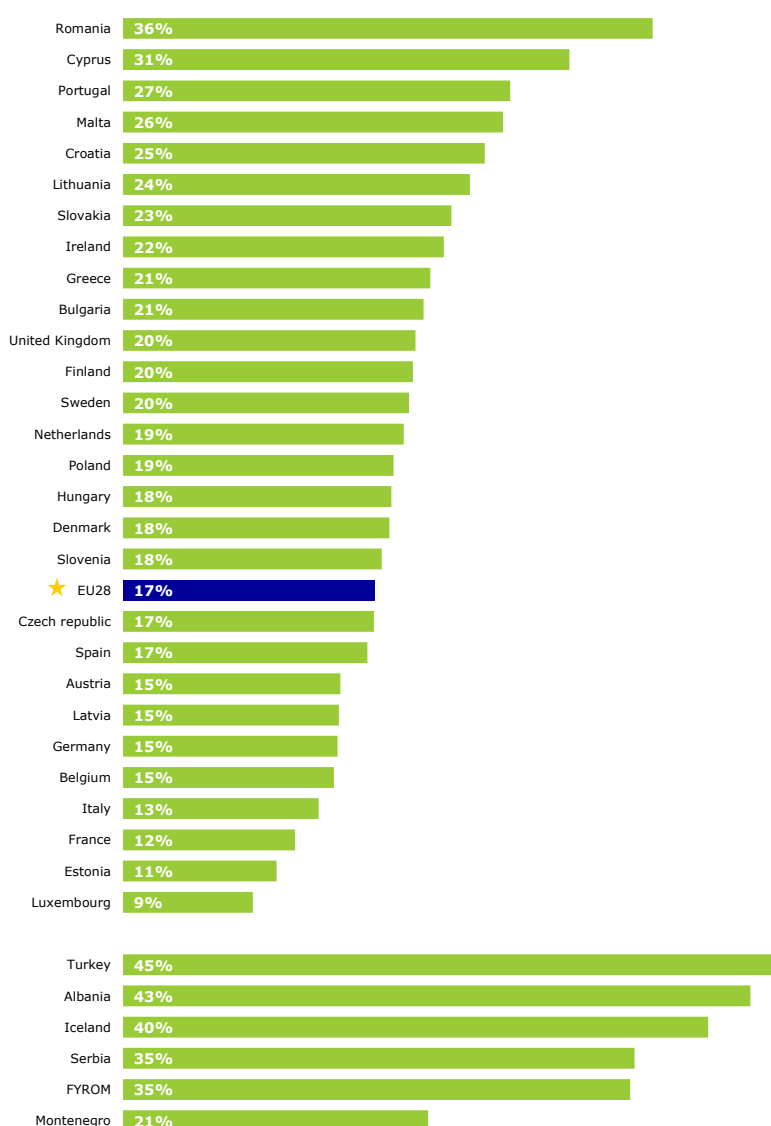
4.5. High-growth enterprises and gazelles

This section is the second of three to cover variations in background details by country and enterprise characteristic as a means to help interpret and explain the variations in the access to finance uncovered by the preceding chapters.

4.5.1 High-growth enterprises

The section focuses on the growth of enterprises. A breakdown by country for high-growth enterprises is presented in figure 118.

figure 118 Share of high-growth enterprises among SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.

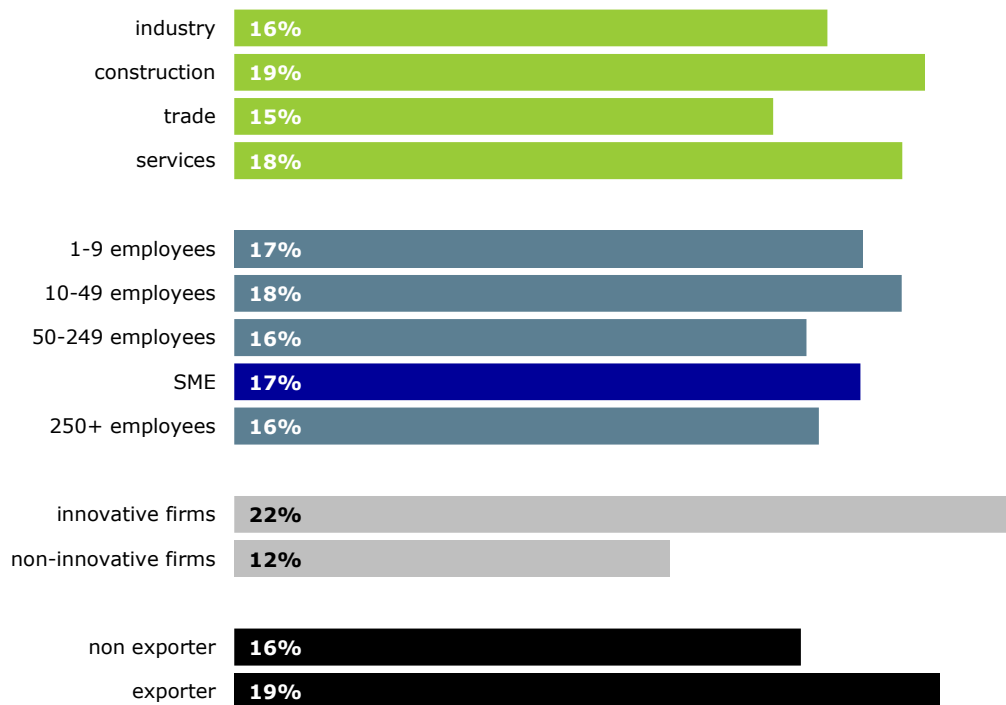


Q16. Over the past three years (2015-2017), how much did your enterprise grow on average per year? An enterprise is considered to have experienced high-growth if it experienced average annualised growth of 20% per annum over a three-year period.
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

An enterprise is considered a high-growth enterprise when it has experienced average annualised growth of 20% per annum over a three-year period. The fast growth these high-growth enterprises experience make them an important source of employment but also of special policy interest as certain conditions have to be in place to facilitate this degree of enterprise growth. In 2017, 17% of all SMEs in the EU28 were considered a high-growth enterprise. Among the EU28 countries, Romanian SMEs most often experience high-growth (36%) and Luxembourg SMEs least often (9%). Overall, there is not a very strong degree of variation between countries.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 119. Enterprises active in the trade least often experience high-growth (15%), enterprises in construction most often do so (19%). Enterprises with 10-49 employees most often experience a high rate of growth (19%). Exporter SMEs saw more growth than non-exporter SMEs.

figure 119 Share of high-growth enterprises among SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q16. Over the past three years (2015-2017), how much did your enterprise grow on average per year?

An enterprise is considered to have experienced high-growth if it experienced average annualised growth of 20% per annum over a three-year period.

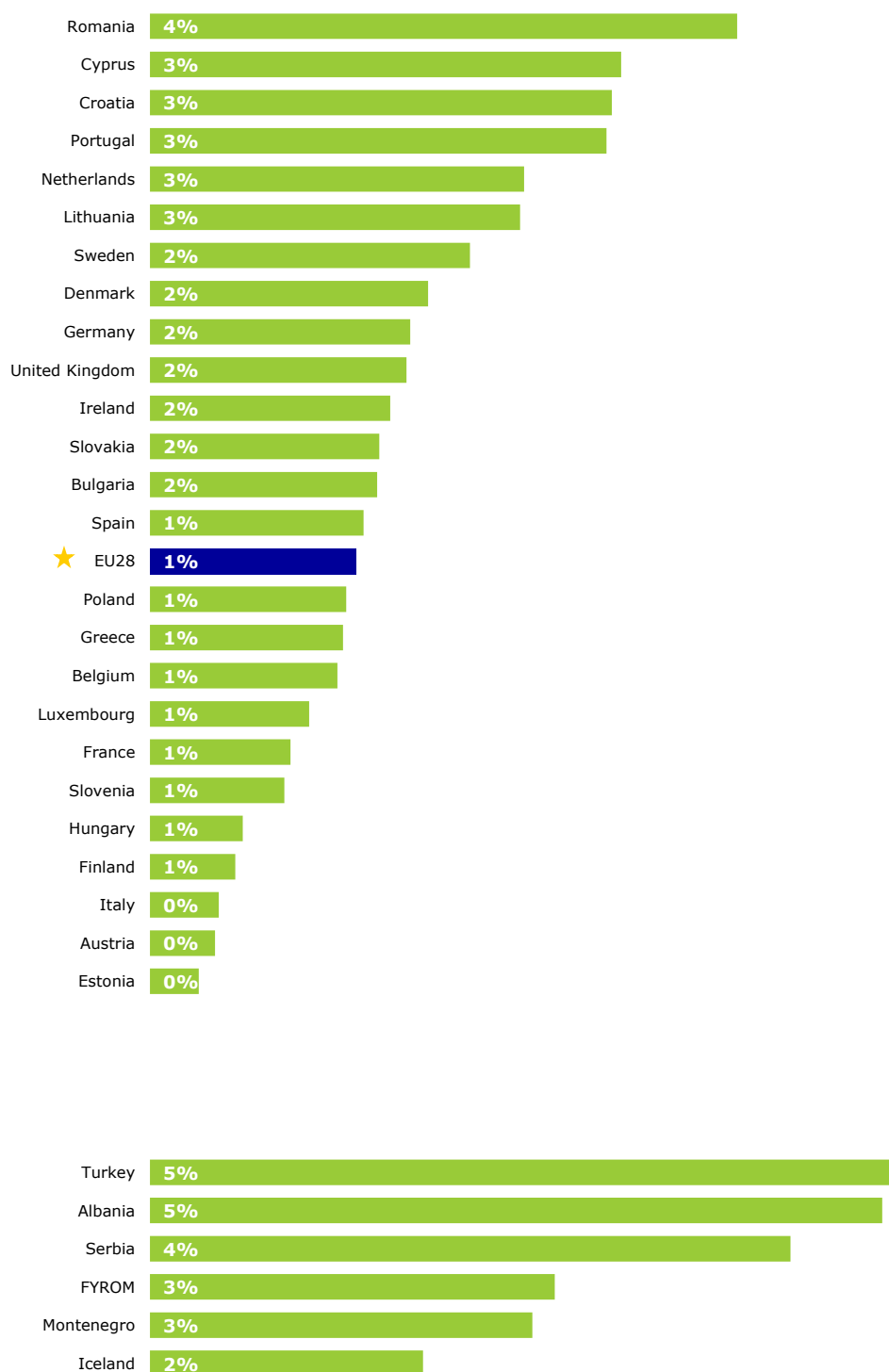
Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

4.5.2 Gazelles

A breakdown by country for gazelles is presented in figure 120.

An enterprise is considered to be a gazelle when it experiences high-growth and is no more than five years old. Hence, it is a subset of high-growth enterprises: 11% of all high-growth enterprises is a gazelle. In addition to requiring conditions to facilitate such rates of growth, gazelles also face the additional challenges related to starting and expanding a business. In 2017, 1% of all SMEs in the EU28 were considered a gazelle. Among the EU28 countries, Romanian SMEs can most often be labelled gazelles (4%) and SMEs in Italy, Austria and Estonia least often (all 0%).

figure 120 Share of gazelles among SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



Q16. Over the past three years (2015-2017), how much did your enterprise grow on average per year?

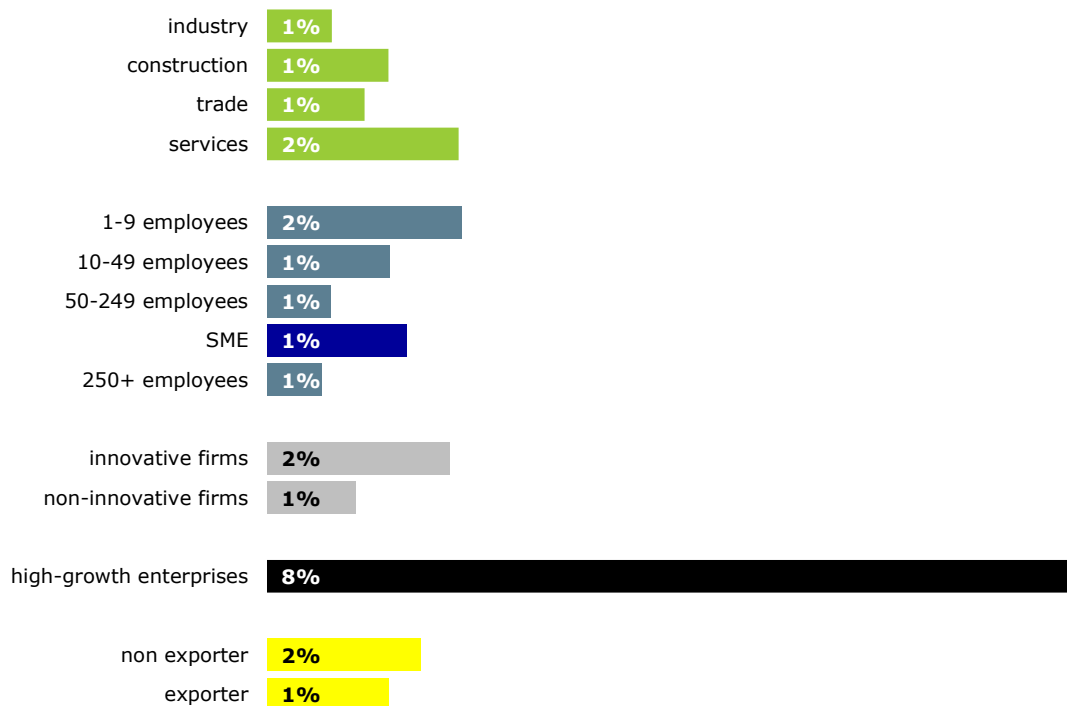
D5. In which year was your enterprise first registered?

An enterprise is considered to be a gazelle if it experienced average annualised growth of 20% per annum over a three-year period and is up to five years old.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 121. Due in part to the relatively small number of gazelles, variation among the group is not particularly pronounced. Gazelles occur slightly more often among enterprises active in services. It is easier for smaller enterprises to experience a high rate of growth within their first five years of existence: this makes sense as the age criterion practically excludes large enterprises with at least 250 employees from being characterised as a gazelle.

figure 121 Share of gazelles among SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic.



Q16. Over the past three years (2015-2017), how much did your enterprise grow on average per year?

D5. In which year was your enterprise first registered?

An enterprise is considered to be a gazelle if it experienced average annualised growth of 20% per annum over a three-year period and is up to five years old.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

High-growth and young enterprise age seem to be positively related to innovativeness. Innovative enterprises are more often a gazelle than non-innovative enterprises. This relation is not observed for internationalisation, perhaps due to the age criterion, assuming that it requires a number of years active as a business to penetrate foreign markets.

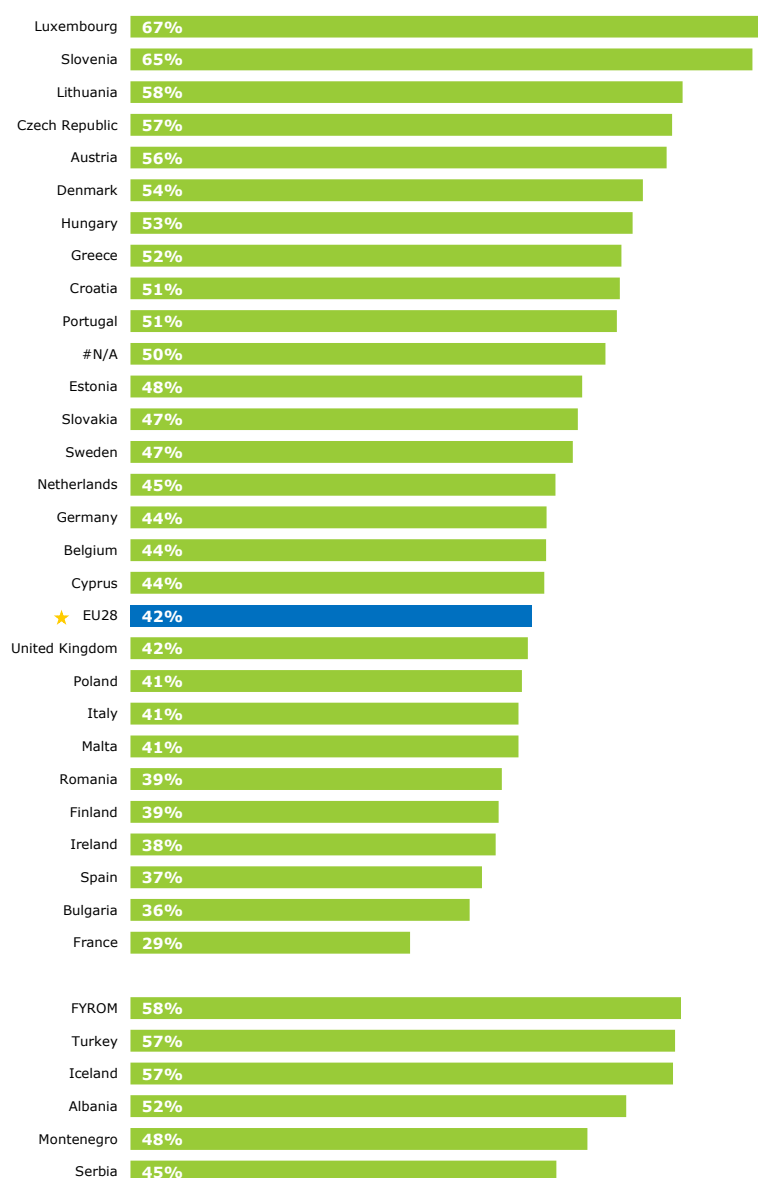
4.6. Exporters

This section is the third of three to cover variations in background details by country and enterprise characteristic as a means to help interpret and explain the variations in the access to finance uncovered by the preceding chapters. The section focuses on the exporting enterprises. A breakdown by country is presented in figure 122.

An enterprise is considered to be an exporter when at least some percentage of its turnover is accounted for by exports of goods or services. In 2017, 42% of all SMEs in the EU28 were exporting enterprises. Among the EU28 countries, SMEs in Luxembourg

are most often exporters (67%) and French SMEs least often (29%). Large proportions of exporting SMEs seem to concentrate in relatively small-sized countries, such as Slovenia, Lithuania and Luxembourg.

figure 122 Share of exporters among SMEs in the EU28, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM, by country.



D7. What percentage of your company's total turnover in 2017 is accounted for by exports of goods and services?

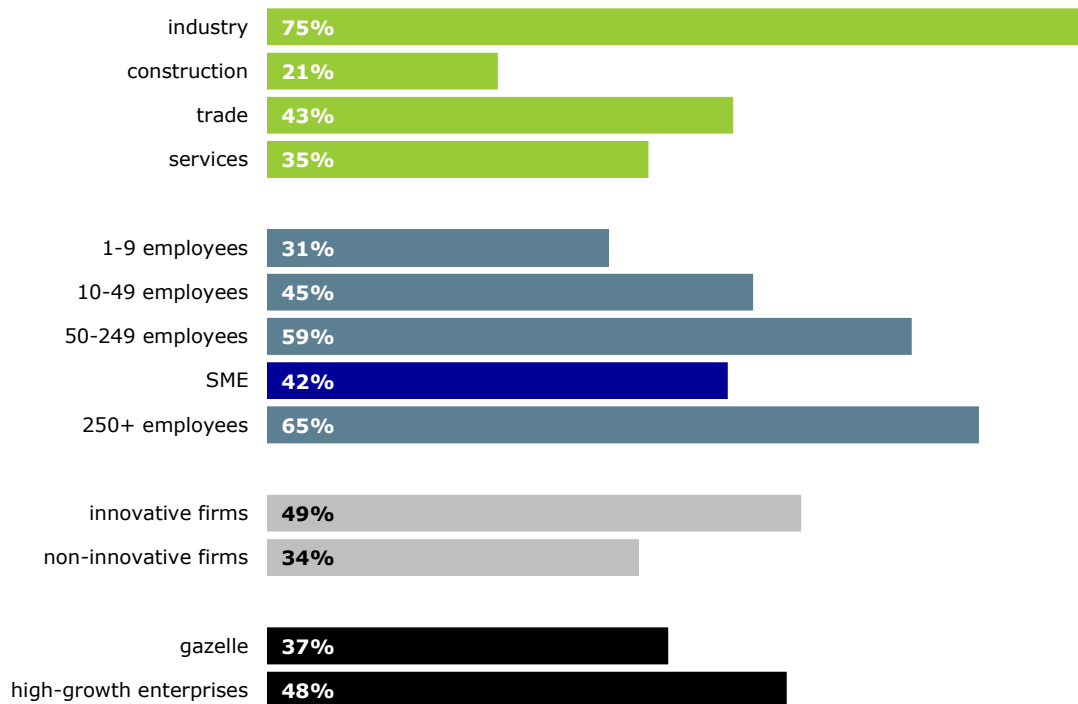
An enterprise is considered to be an exporter if any share of its total turnover is accounted for by exports.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

A breakdown by enterprise characteristic is presented in figure 123. There exist very strong variations in the proportion of exporting SMEs by sector in the economy. Export is a relatively rare activity among enterprises active in construction (21%). The largest proportion of exporting SMEs are active in industry: 75%. There exists a clear relationship between enterprise size and internationalisation. Among micro-sized

enterprises with no more than nine employees, 31% exports. Among large enterprises the proportion equals 65%.

figure 123 Share of exporters among SMEs in the EU28, by enterprise characteristic.



D7. What percentage of your company's total turnover in 2017 is accounted for by exports of goods and services?

An enterprise is considered to be an exporter if any share of its total turnover is accounted for by exports.

Source: SAFE, 2017; edited by Panteia.

Innovative enterprises are more often exporters than the average EU28 SME. The difference with non-innovative enterprises is particularly pronounced: 49% versus 34%. This suggests a relation between innovativeness and internationalisation. High-growth SMEs are more often exporters than gazelles. This may again be related to the age criterion inherent to gazelles as discussed in the previous section (less than 5 years old).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The survey sample was selected randomly according to three criteria:

- Country: 28 EU members states, Iceland, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia and FYROM.
- Enterprise size: micro (1-9 employees), small (10-49 employees), medium-sized (50-249 employees) and large (250 or more employees).
- Sector of industry. The following industries have been taken into account²:
 - Industry (NACE B, C, D, E).
 - Construction (NACE F).
 - Trade (NACE G).
 - Services (NACE H, I, J, L, M, N, R, S).

The number of completed interviews is summarised in table 1.1.

The fieldwork has been done between 19 September and 27 October 2016 (United Kingdom: 31 October). An unexpected outlier has been the United Kingdom, where the response rate and strike rate (average expected number of completed interviews per hour) were lower than expected from other projects with comparable respondent types and companies. Various measures have been taken to avoid these gaps.

The distribution of interviews across countries, sectors of industry and enterprise size-classes is not the same as the distribution of the population of enterprises along these dimensions. Hence, calibrated weights were used with regard to company size and economic activity. Since the economic weight of the companies varies according to their size, weights that restore the proportions of the economic weight of each size class, economic activity and country. The number of persons employed is used as a proxy for economic weight.

The calibration targets were derived from the latest figures from Eurostat's structural business statistics (SBS) in terms of the number of persons employed, economic activity, size class and country, with figures from national accounts and different country-specific registers used to cover activities not included in the SBS regulations, as well as from figures from the European Commission's SME Performance Review.

The questionnaire has been included in Appendix 2. Since the 9th wave, some questions have been changed. Specifically, question Q4 was reformulated so that first the respondent is asked if a particular instrument is relevant, *i.e.* the enterprise used it in the past or considered using it in the future. If yes, the follow-up question is asked whether the instrument had been used in the past 6 months. Such reformulation caused an increase in the category "not relevant" and a drop in category "relevant", and introduced a structural break in the series so the past data are not directly comparable. The filter based on Q4 also affected questions Q5, Q7A, Q7B, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q8A and Q23.

² The NACE Rev. 2 classification of economic activities has been used.

For consistency reasons and to avoid structural breaks in the time series, past aggregated data were revised accordingly. The impact on the time series is minimal to small in most cases, and is only visible when the sample sizes are small. In all cases, the changes are within the confidence intervals of the survey. In particular, to enable comparison over time, the past aggregated results were aligned by excluding the responses from the enterprises for which a specific instrument was not relevant. Such ex-post filter was applied to the questions Q5, Q9, Q7A, Q11 (items f, g, h) and Q23, having also an indirect impact on questions Q7B and Q10 since they are based of the newly filtered question Q7A. It also affects the question Q12, which was replaced by the question Q8A, now filtered by the question Q7B.

Detailed methodological information can be found on the ECB's website (<https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/money/surveys/sme/html/index.en.html>).

Table 1.1 sample size by country

<i>country</i>	<i>number of completes</i>	<i>country</i>	<i>number of completes</i>
Austria	500	Netherlands	801
Belgium	500	Poland	1 305
Bulgaria	501	Portugal	503
Croatia	302	Romania	502
Cyprus	100	Slovakia	475
Czech Republic	268	Slovenia	201
Denmark	506	Spain	1 301
Estonia	100	Sweden	499
Finland	502	United Kingdom	1 070
France	1 502	total EU countries	16 656
Germany	1 505	Albania	76
Greece	502	Iceland	100
Hungary	502	Turkey	300
Ireland	503	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	100
Italy	1 503	Serbia	200
Latvia	201	Montenegro	100
Lithuania	302	total non-EU countries	876
Luxembourg	100		
Malta	100	grand total	17 532

Source: GDCC/Panteia

APPENDIX 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

European Commission and European Central Bank Survey on the access to finance of enterprises, April to September 2017

[INTRODUCTION TO THE ONLINE SURVEY]

Welcome to the Survey on the access to finance of enterprises: a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

Your business has been selected to participate in this Europe-wide survey, which aims to assess the financing needs and the availability of financing among companies like yours. We very much appreciate your participation.

Your answers to this voluntary survey will be treated in strict confidence, used for statistical or policy research purposes and published in aggregate form only.

Please click 'next' to continue.

[INTRODUCTION TO THE TELEPHONE SURVEY]³

Hello, my name is <interviewer> and I am calling from <survey company> on behalf of the European Commission and the European Central Bank. Your business has been selected to participate in a Europe-wide survey on the financing needs and the availability of financing among companies like yours.

European policy-makers want to have a better understanding of the issues and circumstances faced by small, medium-sized and large non-financial enterprises when it comes to accessing finance from banks and other institutions. This survey is now being conducted across Europe and your input is of the utmost importance: the responses to the survey will help shape policy decisions by the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

[IF RESPONDENT IS FROM PANEL: You may remember that we spoke to you about <INSERT CORRECT TIME PERIOD (e.g. six months, one year, one and a half years)> ago and you kindly said that you would be willing to participate again in the survey at around this time.]

[READ IF NECESSARY (IF RESPONDENTS ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT): The results of the survey will help the European Commission in its evidence-based policy-making to improve the access to finance for businesses and in the monetary policy of the European Central Bank. Can I e-mail you some more information about the survey?]

May I speak with the most appropriate person – the person best able to provide information on how your company is financed?

[READ IF NECESSARY: This person could be the owner, a finance manager, the finance director or the chief financial officer (CFO).]

Your answers to this voluntary survey will be treated in strict confidence, used for statistical or policy research purposes and published in aggregate form only.

[READ IF NECESSARY: Would you prefer to participate in the survey by phone or online?]

D0. Can you please confirm that the name of your company is correct? If not, please indicate the correct company name.

SECTION 1: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTERPRISE (DEMOGRAPHIC PART, COMMON)

[FOR PANEL MEMBERS:] First a few demographic questions – you may have already answered these, but it would be good to confirm that the details are still correct.

D2. NEW RESPONDENTS: How would you characterise your enterprise? Is it...

D2. PANEL MEMBERS: Can you confirm that your enterprise is <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct category?]

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- a subsidiary of another enterprise [READ IF NECESSARY: a separate, distinct legal entity that is part of a profit-oriented enterprise]4
- a branch of another enterprise [READ IF NECESSARY: branches are controlled by a parent company and are not separate legal entities]5
- an autonomous profit-oriented enterprise, making independent **financial** decisions [READ IF NECESSARY: in the sense of making independent management decisions; this includes partnerships and cooperatives]2
- a non-profit enterprise [READ IF NECESSARY: foundation, association, semi-government]3
- [DK/NA]9

[IF 3 (NON-PROFIT) → STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID]

³ Used formatting:

- TEXT IN CAPITAL LETTERS refers to the instructions and should never be read;
- <text in brackets and italics> refers to the parameters – the dynamic text which should be adapted based on the respondent's information.

[IF 4 (SUBSIDIARY) → MAKE THE FOLLOWING REQUEST]

In your replies to all the following questions, please respond on behalf of the subsidiary.

[IF 5 (BRANCH) → ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION]

Are you knowledgeable about the finances of the whole enterprise, that is, the head office and all branches?

[IF NO → STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID]

[IF YES: **Please respond on behalf of the whole enterprise, that is, the head office and all branches.**]

[FILTER: IF D2 FEATURES 4 OR 5]

D2A. NEW RESPONDENTS: In which country is the parent company of your enterprise located?

D2A. PANEL MEMBERS: Can you confirm that the parent company of your enterprise is located <in STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct country?]

[DO NOT READ OUT – USE ISO COUNTRY CODES]

[LIST OF MAIN COUNTRY CODES]

EURO AREA COUNTRIES

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
CY	Cyprus
EE	Estonia
FI	Finland
FR	France
DE	Germany
GR	Greece
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
LU	Luxembourg
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PT	Portugal
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia
ES	Spain

OTHER EU MEMBER STATES

BG	Bulgaria
HR	Croatia
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
HU	Hungary
PL	Poland
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

OTHER COUNTRIES

AL	Albania
CN	China
MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IS	Iceland
JP	Japan
ME	Montenegro
NO	Norway
RS	Serbia
RU	Russian Federation
CH	Switzerland
TR	Turkey
US	United States
-99	Don't know

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

D1. How many people does your enterprise currently employ either full or part-time at all its locations <in your country>? Please do not include unpaid family workers and freelancers working regularly for your enterprise.

[READ IF NECESSARY: Full-time and part-time employees should each count as one employee. Employees working less than 12 hours per week are to be excluded.]

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

NUMERICAL ANSWER [1-999999]

[DK/NA]

[READ IF 1 EMPLOYEE: The business must have at least one employee beyond the owner(s). Can you confirm that the employee is not the owner?]

[IF 0 EMPLOYEES → STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID]

D1_rec. [IF NA/DK → ASK ABOUT APPROXIMATE NUMBER IN BRACKETS – ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE → IF STILL NA/DK → STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID]

What is the approximate number?

- from 1 employee to 9 employees 1
- from 10 employees to 49 employees 2
- from 50 employees to 249 employees 3
- 250 employees or more 4
- [DK/NA] 9

D1_C. PANEL MEMBERS: [IF THE NEW CATEGORY DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY (I.E. BY MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY) FROM THE PREVIOUS WAVE, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.]

The last time your enterprise was interviewed, it had <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE> employees. Can you confirm that the number <has increased/decreased> to <STATE ANSWER FROM CURRENT WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct number?]

D3. What is the main activity of your enterprise?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- construction 2
- industry [READ IF NECESSARY: it includes manufacturing, mining and electricity, gas and water supply] 12
- wholesale or retail trade 4
- transport 5
- agriculture [STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID] 8
- public administration [STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID] 9
- financial services [STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID] 10
- other services to businesses or persons [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, hotels and restaurants, IT services] 13
- [READ IF NECESSARY: If none of these, please specify.]
- [IF RECODING IS NOT POSSIBLE, STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID] 11
- [DK/NA] [STOP INTERVIEW → INTERVIEW NOT VALID] 99

D3_C. PANEL MEMBERS: [IF SECTOR DIFFERS FROM THE PREVIOUS WAVE, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.]

The last time your enterprise was interviewed, it was active in <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>. Can you confirm that it is involved in <STATE ANSWER FROM CURRENT WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct category?]

D6. NEW RESPONDENTS: Who owns the largest stake in your enterprise?

D6. PANEL MEMBERS: Can you confirm that the largest stake in your enterprise is still owned by <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct category?]

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE. IF RESPONDENT CLASSIFIES THE ENTERPRISE IN ONE OF THE FIRST CATEGORIES, THERE IS NO NEED TO READ ALL THE CATEGORIES]

[READ IF NECESSARY (NOTE ON THE REFERENCE TO THE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY): A limited liability company is a legal form of an enterprise that provides protection against personal liability to its owners. The owners can be natural persons or other enterprises. To which category would you classify the owner with the largest stake in your enterprise? READ THE CATEGORIES]

- one owner only, that is yourself or another natural person5
- family or entrepreneurs [READ IF NECESSARY: more than one owner]2
- other enterprises or business associates3
- public shareholders, as your enterprise is listed on the stock market1
- venture capital enterprises or business angels [READ IF NECESSARY: individual investors providing capital or know-how to young innovative enterprises].....4
- other.....7
- [DK/NA]9

D4. What was the annual turnover of your enterprise in 2016? [READ IF NECESSARY: Please include all locations of your enterprises, both <in your country> and abroad.]

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

[For non-euro area countries, the amounts in euro will be converted to national currency.]

- up to €500,000 5
- more than €500,000 and up to €1 million 6
- more than €1 million and up to €2 million..... 7
- more than €2 million and up to €10 million..... 2
- more than €10 million and up to €50 million..... 3
- more than €50 million 4
- [DK/NA] 9

D4_C. PANEL MEMBERS: [IF THE NEW CATEGORY DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY (I.E. BY MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY) FROM THE PREVIOUS WAVE, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.]

The last time your enterprise was interviewed, the turnover was <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>. Can you confirm that it is now <STATE ANSWER FROM CURRENT WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct category?]

D7. What percentage of your company's total turnover in 2016 is accounted for by exports of goods and services? [READ IF NECESSARY: Exports comprise sales of goods or the provision of services to non-residents, including to foreign tourists visiting the relevant country.]

NUMERICAL ANSWER IN PERCENTAGES [0-100]

[DK/NA: -99]

D7_rec. [IF (NA/DK) → ASK WHETHER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES WOULD APPLY – ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

Which of the following categories apply?

- 0% – my enterprise did not export any goods and services last year 1
- less than 25% 2
- between 25% and 50% 3
- over 50% 4
- [DK] 9

D7_C. PANEL MEMBERS: [IF THE NEW CATEGORY DIFFERS SIGNIFICANTLY (I.E. BY MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY) FROM THE PREVIOUS WAVE, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.]

The last time your enterprise was interviewed, the share of total turnover accounted for by exports was <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>. Can you confirm that it is now <STATE ANSWER FROM CURRENT WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct number?]

D5. NEW RESPONDENTS: In which year was your enterprise first registered? [READ IF NECESSARY: In the case of a past acquisition, please refer to the year when the acquiring enterprise was registered or, in the case of a merger, to the largest enterprise involved (in terms of employees)].

D5. PANEL MEMBERS: Can you please confirm that your enterprise was registered in <STATE ANSWER FROM PREVIOUS WAVE>? [READ IF NECESSARY: If not, what is the correct year?]

NUMERICAL ANSWER [1700-2017] <FOUR DIGITS, LESS OR EQUAL THAN YEAR OF SURVEY>

[DK/NA]

[THE AGE OF THE ENTERPRISE IS CALCULATED AS 2017 MINUS THE YEAR OF REGISTRATION.]

D5_rec. [IF NA/DK → ASK WHETHER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES WOULD APPLY – ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

Approximately, how old is your enterprise?

- 10 years or more 1

- 5 years or more, but less than 10 years 2
- 2 years or more, but less than 5 years 3
- less than 2 years 4
- [DK/NA] 9

SECTION 2: GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE TYPE AND SITUATION OF THE ENTERPRISE

We will now turn to your enterprise's current situation. When asked about the changes experienced by your enterprise over the past six months, please report just the changes that have occurred between April 2017 and now.

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

Q0b. How important have the following problems been for your enterprise in the past six months? Please answer on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important.

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE. DK/NA (CODE 99) OPTION PERMITTED]

1. Finding customers 2
2. Competition 3
3. Access to finance [READ IF NECESSARY: Financing of your business – bank loans, trade credit, equity, debt securities, other external financing] 4
4. Costs of production or labour [READ IF NECESSARY: If your company does not have production costs, please refer only to labour costs. Labour costs include wages, employee benefits and payroll taxes paid by an employer.] 5
5. Availability of skilled staff or experienced managers 6
6. Regulation, for example European and national laws, industrial regulations 7
7. Other, please specify [WRITE DOWN THE VERBATIM ANSWER. USE THE FOLLOWING CODES, IF THE ANSWER CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES: 11 - Taxes, 12 - Cash flow / liquidity, 13 - Bureaucracy, 14 - Exchange rate fluctuations, 15 - Political instability / economic crisis, 16 - Brexit] 9

Q2. Have the following company indicators decreased, remained unchanged or increased over the past six months?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Increased 1
- Remained unchanged 2
- Decreased 3
- [NOT APPLICABLE, ENTERPRISE HAS NO DEBT] 7
- [DK/NA] 9

[AS REGARDS ITEM (d) and (j), IF THE COMPANY HAS NO DEBT, CODE 7 (NOT APPLICABLE) SHOULD BE USED.]

- a) Turnover 1 2 3 9
- b) Labour costs (including social contributions) 1 2 3 9
- c) Other costs (materials, energy, other) 1 2 3 9
- d) Interest expenses [READ IF NECESSARY: what your company pays in interest for its debt] 1 2 3 7 9
- e) Profit [READ IF NECESSARY: net income after taxes] 1 2 3 9
- g) Investments in property, plant or equipment [READ IF NECESSARY: fixed investment] 1 2 3 9
- h) Inventories and other working capital [*READ IF NECESSARY: Inventories are the goods and materials that a business holds for the ultimate purpose of resale. *READ IF NECESSARY: Working capital is the difference between current assets, such as inventories and invoices, and current liabilities, that is, debt or other obligations coming due within a year.] 1 2 3 9
- i) Number of employees [READ IF NECESSARY (IF RESPONDENTS GIVES THE NUMBER): Please indicate if it increased or decreased in the past six months] 1 2 3 9
- j) Debt compared to assets [READ IF NECESSARY: that is the ratio of all kinds of debt to total assets] 1 2 3 7 9

SECTION 3: FINANCING OF THE ENTERPRISE

We will now turn to the financing of your enterprise.

Q4. Are the following sources of financing relevant to your enterprise, that is, have you used them in the past or considered using them in the future? Please provide a separate answer in each case.

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE IS POSSIBLE (CODE 3, 7 OR 9)]

- Yes, this source is relevant to my enterprise [READ FOR THE FIRST TWO ITEMS, AFTERWARDS IF NECESSARY: that is, I have used it in the past or I considered using it in the future] 3
- No, this source is not relevant to my enterprise 7
- [DK] 9

[FOR EACH FINANCING SOURCE, IF THE ANSWER IS "YES" (CODE 3), ASK THE RELEVANT FOLLOW-UP QUESTION – ONE ANSWER PER LINE IS POSSIBLE (CODE 1, 2 OR 99)]

- Yes 1

- No.....	2
- [DK]	99
c) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft. [*READ IF NECESSARY: A credit line is a pre-arranged loan that can be used, in full or in part, at discretion and with limited advance warning. *READ IF NECESSARY: The difference between a bank loan and a credit line is that in the case of a bank loan, the precise amount of loan and the dates of repayments are usually fixed, while in the case of a credit line, the borrower can draw only part of the money at discretion up to an agreed maximum balance, and interest is charged only on money actually withdrawn. *READ IF NECESSARY: A bank overdraft is the negative balance on a bank account with or without specific penalties. *READ IF NECESSARY: A credit card overdraft is a negative balance on a credit card.]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you drawn on such types of credit in the past six months?	1 2 99
b) Grants or subsidised bank loans [READ IF NECESSARY: involving, for example, support from public sources in the form of guarantees or reduced interest rate loans.]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?	1 2 99
d) Bank loan (excluding subsidised bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines) [*READ IF NECESSARY: both short and long-term. *READ IF NECESSARY: The difference between a bank loan and a credit line is that in the case of a bank loan, the precise amount of loan and the dates of repayments are usually fixed, while in the case of a credit line, the borrower can draw only part of the money at discretion up to an agreed maximum balance, and interest is charged only on money actually withdrawn.]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you taken out a new loan or renewed such a loan in the past six months?	1 2 99
e) Trade credit [READ IF NECESSARY: that means paying your suppliers at the later agreed date, usually 30, 60 or 90 days after the delivery of the purchased goods or services]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you obtained trade credit from your business partners in the past six months?	1 2 99
f) Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit.....	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you taken out or renewed such a loan in the past six months?	1 2 99
m) Leasing or hire-purchase [READ IF NECESSARY: obtaining the use of a fixed asset (for example, cars or machinery) in exchange for regular payments, but without the immediate ownership of the asset]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you obtained new financing of this type in the past six months?	1 2 99
h) Debt securities issued [READ IF NECESSARY: short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by your enterprise]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you issued any debt securities in the past six months?	1 2 99
j) Equity capital [*READ IF NECESSARY: Equity capital refers to raising capital through the sale of shares in your enterprise. It is usually associated with the financing of companies listed on an exchange via public offerings. It can also involve a private sale, in which the transaction between investors and the enterprise takes place directly. *READ IF NECESSARY: Equity capital includes quoted and unquoted shares or other forms of equity provided by the owners themselves or by external investors, including venture capital or business angels. *READ IF NECESSARY: Venture capital enterprises or business angels are individual investors providing capital or know-how to young innovative enterprises.]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you issued equity in the past six months?	1 2 99
r) Factoring [READ IF NECESSARY: selling your invoices to a factoring company; this company gets your debt and has to collect it; it will make a profit by paying you less cash than the face value of the invoice]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you used factoring in the past six months?	1 2 99
a) Retained earnings or sale of assets [READ IF NECESSARY: internal funds like cash or cash equivalent, resulting for instance from savings, retained earnings or sale of assets]	3 7 9
IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you retained earnings or sold assets in the past six months?	1 2 99

- p) Other sources of financing, for example subordinated debt instruments, participating loans, peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding [*READ IF NECESSARY: Subordinated debt is repayable only after other debts have been satisfied.
- *READ IF NECESSARY: A participating loan gives the lender the right to convert the loan into an ownership or equity interest in the company under specified clauses and conditions.
- *READ IF NECESSARY: Peer-to-peer lending consists of lending money to an unrelated individual or enterprise without a traditional financial intermediary, usually via dedicated online lending portals.
- *READ IF NECESSARY: Crowdfunding involves raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, typically via the internet] 3 7 9

IF "YES" (CODE 3) → Have you obtained such sources of financing in the past six months? 1 2 99

[FILTER: IF ITEM Q4.d) (BANK LOANS) IS "NOT RELEVANT" (CODE 7)]

Q32. You mentioned that bank loans are not relevant for your enterprise. What is the main reason for this?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- Insufficient collateral or guarantee 1
- Interest rates or price too high 2
- Reduced control over the enterprise 3
- Too much paperwork is involved 6
- No bank loans are available 4
- I do not need this type of financing 8
- Other 5
- [DK] 9

[FILTER: FOR EACH Q4 ITEMS THAT IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99), NAMELY Q4.c), Q4.d), Q4.b), Q4.e), Q4.h) AND Q4.j), FILL THE RELEVANT ITEM IN Q5]

Q5. For each of the following types of external financing, please indicate if your needs increased, remained unchanged or decreased over the past six months.

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE IS POSSIBLE]

- Increased 1
- Remained unchanged 2
- Decreased 3
- [INSTRUMENT NOT APPLICABLE TO MY ENTERPRISE] 7
- [DK] 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.c) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- f) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.d) OR Q4.b) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- a) Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.e) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- b) Trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.j) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- c) Equity capital [READ IF NECESSARY: including venture capital or business angels] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.h) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- d) Debt securities issued [READ IF NECESSARY: short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by your enterprise] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.m) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- g) Leasing or hire-purchase [READ IF NECESSARY: obtaining the use of a fixed asset, for example, cars or machinery, in exchange for regular payments, but without the immediate ownership of the asset] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.f) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- h) Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: FOR EACH Q4 ITEM THAT IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99), NAMELY Q4.c), Q4.d), Q4.b) AND Q4.e), FILL THE RELEVANT ITEM IN Q7A]

Q7A. Have you applied for the following types of financing in the past six months? [READ IF NECESSARY: Please also take into account renewal of the existing contracts.]

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE IS POSSIBLE]

- Applied 1
- Did not apply because of possible rejection 2
- Did not apply because of sufficient internal funds 3
- Did not apply for other reasons 4
- [DK/NA] 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.c) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

d) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft 1 2 3 4 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.d) OR Q4.b) FEATURE CODE 1, 2, 3 OR 99]

a) Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) 1 2 3 4 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.e) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

b) Trade credit [READ IF NECESSARY: It covers not only an explicit request for trade credit to the business partners, but also if you have received a trade credit within a standard business practice] 1 2 3 4 9

[FILTER: IF AT LEAST ONE OF THE Q4 ITEMS Q4.f), Q4.h), Q4.j), Q4.m), Q4.r) OR Q4.p) IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99)]

c) Other external financing [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, loans from a related company, shareholders or family and friends, leasing, factoring, grants, subordinated debt instruments, participating loans, peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding, and issuance of equity and debt securities] 1 2 3 4 9

[FILTER: FOR EACH Q7A ITEM THAT IS "APPLIED" (CODE 1), FILL THE RELEVANT ITEM IN Q7B]

Q7B. If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome? Please provide a separate answer in each case.

[ONLY ONE ANSWER PER LINE IS POSSIBLE]

- Received everything 1
- Received 75% and above [DO NOT READ: received most of it] 5
- Received below 75% [DO NOT READ: only received a limited part of it] 6
- Refused because the cost was too high 3
- Was rejected 4
- Application is still pending 8
- [DK] 9

[FILTER: IF Q7A.d) FEATURES CODE 1]

d) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft 1 3 4 5 6 8 9

[FILTER: IF Q7A.a) FEATURES CODE 1]

a) Bank loan (excluding overdraft and credit lines) 1 3 4 5 6 8 9

[FILTER: IF Q7A.b) FEATURES CODE 1]

b) Trade credit 1 3 4 5 6 8 9

[FILTER: IF Q7A.c) FEATURES CODE 1]

c) Other external financing [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, loans from a related company, shareholders or family and friends, leasing, factoring, grants, subordinated debt instruments, participating loans, peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding, and issuance of equity and debt securities] 1 3 4 5 6 8 9

[FILTER: IF Q7B.a) FEATURES CODE 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 OR 8]

Q8A. What is the size of the last bank loan that your enterprise...

[IF Q7B. a) FEATURES CODE 1, 5 or 6]

...obtained or renegotiated in the past six months?

[IF Q7B. a) FEATURES CODE 3, 4 or 8]

...attempted to obtain in the past six months?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

[For non-euro area countries, the amounts in euro will be converted into national currency.]

- up to €25,000 1
- more than €25,000 and up to €100,000 2
- more than €100,000 and up to €250,000 5
- more than €250,000 and up to €1 million 6
- over €1 million 4
- [DK/NA] 9

[FILTER: IF Q7B.d) FEATURES CODE 1, 3, 5 OR 6]

Q8B. TYPE. What interest rate was charged for the credit line or bank overdraft for which you applied? Was it fixed or variable rate? [READ IF NECESSARY: variable interest rates are generally characterised by the reference rate and the spread, for example 6-month EURIBOR plus 1.5%.]

- fixed 1
- variable 2

[FILTER: IF Q8B. TYPE IS "FIXED" (CODE 1)]

Q8B. FIX. Please indicate the interest rate.

NUMERICAL ANSWER IN PERCENTAGES [0-100],

UP TO FOUR DECIMAL PLACES, SEPARATED BY DECIMAL POINT, FOR EXAMPLE:

12.5988%, 0.5%

[DK/NA: -99]

[FILTER: IF Q8B_TYPE IS "VARIABLE" (CODE 2)]

Q8B_VAR. Please indicate the name of the reference rate and the spread [READ IF NECESSARY: variable interest rates are characterised by the reference rate, the maturity of the reference rate and the spread, for example 6-month EURIBOR plus 1.5%. The most frequently used reference rate in the euro area is EURIBOR, the euro interbank offered rate. The maturity of the reference rate usually varies from 1 week to 12 months. The spread is a fixed percentage over the reference rate]

Q8B_VAR_REFERENCE RATE

What was the reference rate?

DROP-DOWN LIST:

- EURIBOR – 1 week 1
- EURIBOR – 2 weeks..... 2
- EURIBOR – 1 month..... 3
- EURIBOR – 2 months 4
- EURIBOR – 3 months 5
- EURIBOR – 6 months 6
- EURIBOR – 9 months 7
- EURIBOR – 12 months 8
- EURIBOR – unknown maturity 9
- EONIA [READ IF NECESSARY: euro overnight index average] 10
- Other, please specify 11
- [DK] -99

[FILTER: IF Q8B_REF_RATE FEATURES CODE 11]

Q8B_VAR_OTHER. What was the reference rate?

VERBATIM ANSWER [0-30 CHARACTERS]

[DK/NA: -99]

[FILTER: IF Q8B_TYPE IS "VARIABLE" (CODE 2)]

Q8B_VAR_SPREAD. What was the spread?

NUMERICAL ANSWER IN PERCENTAGES [0-100],

UP TO FOUR DECIMAL PLACES, SEPARATED BY DECIMAL POINT, FOR EXAMPLE:

12.5988%, 0.5%

[DK/NA: -99]

[FILTER: IF Q8B_VAR_REF_RATE IS "DK" (CODE -99)]

Q8B_VAR_TOTAL. If you do not know the reference rate, what was the final interest rate charged by the bank? [READ IF NECESSARY: that is the sum of reference rate and the spread]

Final interest rate:

NUMERICAL ANSWER IN PERCENTAGES [0-100],

UP TO FOUR DECIMAL PLACES, SEPARATED BY DECIMAL POINT, FOR EXAMPLE:

12.5988%, 0.5%

[DK/NA: -99]

[IF Q8B_FIX, Q8B_VAR_SPREAD OR Q8B_VAR_TOTAL IS HIGHER THAN 25%, THEN READ: The interest rate charged is relatively high. Could you confirm that it was indeed <STATE ANSWER OF THE RESPONDENT> percent?]

[IF Q8B_FIX OR Q8B_TOTAL IS EQUAL TO 0%, THEN READ: Could you confirm that no interest rate was indeed charged?]

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

Q6A. For what purpose was financing used by your enterprise during the past six months? [READ IF NECESSARY:

Financing could have been obtained both from the external sources and from funds generated by your enterprise.]

- Yes 1
 - No 2
 - [DK/NA (NOT APPLICABLE TO MY ENTERPRISE - I HAVE NOT USED ANY FINANCING)] 99
- 1) Investments in property, plant or equipment [READ IF NECESSARY: fixed investment] 1 2 99
 - 2) Inventory and other working capital..... 1 2 99
 - 3) Hiring and training of employees 1 2 99
 - 4) Developing and launching of new products or services..... 1 2 99

- 5) Refinancing or paying off obligations 1 2 99
 6) Other 1 2 99

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

SECTION 4: AVAILABILITY OF FINANCE AND MARKET CONDITIONS

In this part of the survey, we would like to ask about your enterprise's experiences and views on the availability of finance and market conditions.

Q11. For each of the following factors, would you say that they have improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated over the past six months?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Improved 1
- Remained unchanged..... 2
- Deteriorated 3
- [NOT APPLICABLE TO MY ENTERPRISE - ONLY FOR b), e), f), g), h)] 7
- [DK] 9
- a) General economic outlook, insofar as it affects the availability of external financing 1 2 3 9
- b) Access to public financial support, including guarantees 1 2 3 7 9
- c) Your enterprise-specific outlook with respect to your sales and profitability or business plan [READ IF NECESSARY: insofar as it affects the availability of external financing for you] 1 2 3 9
- d) Your enterprise's own capital [READ IF NECESSARY: capital provided by the owners or shareholders of the enterprise] 1 2 3 9
- e) Your enterprise's credit history [READ IF NECESSARY: in other words, your credit worthiness, that is your track record of repaying past debts] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF THE ITEM Q4.c) (CREDIT LINE, BANK OVERDRAFT, CREDIT CARD OVERDRAFT), Q4.d) (BANK LOAN) OR Q4.b) (SUBSIDISED BANK LOAN) IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99)]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.d), OR Q7A.a)]

- f) Willingness of banks to provide credit to your enterprise [READ IF NECESSARY: lender's attitude] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF THE ITEM Q4.e) (TRADE CREDIT) IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 3)]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.b)]

- g) Willingness of business partners to provide trade credit [READ IF NECESSARY: business partners' attitude] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF ONE OF THE Q4 ITEMS Q4.f) (OTHER LOAN), Q4.h) (DEBT SECURITIES), Q4.j) (EQUITY CAPITAL) OR Q4.p) (OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCING) IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99)]

- h) Willingness of investors to invest in your enterprise [READ IF NECESSARY: investors' attitudes towards, for example, investing in equity or debt securities issued by your enterprise] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: FOR EACH OF THE Q4 ITEMS THAT ARE "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99), NAMELY Q4.c), Q4.d), Q4.b), Q4.e), Q4.h) AND Q4.j), FILL THE RELEVANT ITEM IN Q9]

Q9. For each of the following types of financing, would you say that their availability has improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated for your enterprise over the past six months?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Improved 1
- Remained unchanged..... 2
- Deteriorated 3
- [NOT APPLICABLE TO MY ENTERPRISE]..... 7
- [DK] 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.c) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.d)]

- f) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.d) OR Q4.b) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.a)]

- a) Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.e) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.b)]

- b) Trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.j) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- c) Equity capital [READ IF NECESSARY: including venture capital or business angels] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.h) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- d) Debt securities issued [READ IF NECESSARY: short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by your enterprise] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.m) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- g) Leasing or hire-purchase [READ IF NECESSARY: obtaining the use of a fixed asset (for example, cars or machinery) in exchange for regular payments, but without the immediate ownership of the asset] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.f) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- h) Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: Q7A.A) OR Q7A.D) IS "APPLIED" (CODE 1) (BANK LOANS, AND CREDIT LINES, BANK OVERDRAFT AND CREDIT CARD OVERDRAFTS)]

Q10. We will turn now to the terms and conditions of bank financing, such as bank loans, overdrafts and credit lines. Please indicate whether the following items increased, remained unchanged or decreased in the past six months.

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Was increased by the bank 1
- Remained unchanged 2
- Was decreased by the bank 3
- [DK/NA] 9

Price terms and conditions:

- a) Level of interest rates 1 2 3 9
- b) Level of the cost of financing other than interest rates, such as charges, fees, commissions 1 2 3 9

Non-price terms and conditions:

- c) Available size of loan or credit line 1 2 3 9
- d) Available maturity of the loan 1 2 3 9
- e) Collateral requirements [READ IF NECESSARY: the security given by the borrower to the lender as a pledge for the repayment of the loan] 1 2 3 9
- f) Other, for example, required guarantees, information requirements, procedures, time required for loan approval, loan covenants [READ IF NECESSARY: an agreement or stipulation laid down in loan contracts under which the borrower pledges either to take certain action or to refrain from taking certain action] 1 2 3 9

[FILTER: FOR EACH Q4 ITEM THAT IS "RELEVANT" (CODE 1, 2, 99), NAMELY Q4.c), Q4.d), Q4.e), Q4.h), Q4.j) and Q4.a), FILL THE RELEVANT ITEM IN Q23]

Q23. Looking ahead, for each of the following types of financing available to your enterprise, please indicate whether you think their availability will improve, deteriorate or remain unchanged over the next six months.

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Will improve 1
- Will remain unchanged 2
- Will deteriorate 3
- [INSTRUMENT NOT APPLICABLE TO MY ENTERPRISE] 7
- [DK] 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.c) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.d)]

- g) Credit line, bank overdraft or credit cards overdraft 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.d) OR Q4.b) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.a)]

- b) Bank loans (excluding overdraft and credit lines) 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.e) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES HAVING "APPLIED" (CODE 1) IN Q7A.b)]

- d) Trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.j) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- c) Equity capital [READ IF NECESSARY: including venture capital or business angels] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.h) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- e) Debt securities issued [READ IF NECESSARY: short-term commercial paper or longer-term corporate bonds issued by your enterprise] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.a) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- a) Retained earnings or sale of assets [READ IF NECESSARY: internal funds] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.m) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- i) Leasing or hire-purchase [READ IF NECESSARY: obtaining the use of a fixed asset (for example, cars or machinery) in exchange for regular payments, but without the immediate ownership of the asset] 1 2 3 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q4.f) FEATURES CODE 1, 2 OR 99]

- j) Other loan, for example from family and friends, a related enterprise or shareholders, excluding trade credit 1 2 3 7 9

SECTION 5: FUTURE, GROWTH AND OBSTACLES TO GROWTH

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about the longer-term prospects for your enterprise.

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

Q1. During the past 12 months have you introduced...?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Yes1 2
- No 9
- [DK/NA] 1 2 9
- ... a new or significantly improved product or service to the market 1 2 9
- ... a new or significantly improved production process or method [READ IF NECESSARY: not applicable if the enterprise does not produce anything] 1 2 9
- ... a new organisation of management [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, re-organisation of different parts of the enterprise or reporting hierarchy to increase efficiency or reduce costs] 1 2 9
- ... a new way of selling your goods or services 1 2 9

Q16. Over the past three years (2014-2016), how much did your enterprise grow on average per year ...?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Over 20% per year 1
- Less than 20% per year 2
- No growth 3
- Got smaller 4
- [NOT APPLICABLE, THE ENTERPRISE IS TOO RECENT] 7
- [DK] 9

[CODE 7 IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ENTERPRISES REGISTERED BEFORE 2014 (QUESTION D5)]

- A. ...in terms of employment regarding the number of full-time or full-time equivalent employees ? 1 2 3 4 7 9
- B. ...and in terms of turnover? 1 2 3 4 7 9

Q17. Considering the turnover over the next two to three years (2017-2019), how much does your enterprise expect to grow per year?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- Grow substantially – over 20% per year in terms of turnover 1
- Grow moderately – below 20% per year in terms of turnover 2
- Stay the same size 3
- Become smaller 4
- [DK/NA] 9

Q19. Do you feel confident talking about financing with banks and that you will obtain the desired results? And how about with equity investors/venture capital enterprises?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE]

- Yes 1
- No 2
- [NOT APPLICABLE] 7
- [DK] 9
- A. with banks 1 2 7 9
- B. with equity investors/venture capital enterprises 1 2 7 9

[FILTER: IF Q17 FEATURES CODE 1 OR 2 (ENTERPRISE EXPECTS TO GROW)]

Q20. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions, what type of external financing would you prefer most?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- Bank loan 1
- Loan from other sources, for example, trade credit, related enterprise, shareholders, public sources 2
- Equity capital [READ IF NECESSARY: including venture capital or business angels] 3
- Other 5
- [DK/NA] 9

[FILTER: IF Q17 FEATURES CODE 1 OR 2 (ENTERPRISE EXPECTS TO GROW)]

Q21. If you need external financing to realise your growth ambitions over the next two to three years [READ IF NECESSARY: that is, 2017 to 2019], what amount of financing would you aim to obtain?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

[For non-euro area countries, the amounts in euro will be converted to national currency.]

- up to €25,000 1
- more than €25,000 and up to €100,000 2
- more than €100,000 and up to €250,000 5
- more than €250,000 and up to €1 million 6
- over €1 million 4
- [DK/NA] 9

[FILTER: IF Q20 FEATURES A BANK LOAN, A LOAN FROM OTHER SOURCES OR EQUITY INVESTMENT RESPECTIVELY (CODE 1, 2 OR 3)]

Q22. What do you see as the most important limiting factor to get this financing?

[ONLY ONE ANSWER IS POSSIBLE]

- There are no obstacles 8
- Insufficient collateral or guarantee [NOT TO BE USED IF Q20 FEATURES EQUITY CAPITAL (CODE 3)] 1
- Interest rates or price too high 2
- Reduced control over the enterprise 3
- Too much paperwork is involved 6
- Financing not available at all 4
- Other 5
- [DK/NA] 9

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

Q24. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is extremely important, how important are each of the following factors for your enterprise's financing in the future?

[ONE ANSWER PER LINE. DK/NA (CODE 99) OPTION PERMITTED]

- a) Guarantees for loans [READ IF NECESSARY: a commitment by a third party to pay the debt of borrowers when the latter cannot pay it themselves. The guarantor is liable to cover any shortfall or default on the borrower's debt]
- b) Measures to facilitate equity investments in your company [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, support for venture capital or business angel financing]
- c) Export credits or guarantees [READ IF NECESSARY: types of protection for an exporter against non-payment by an importer]
- d) Tax incentives [READ IF NECESSARY: deductions or exemption from a tax, usually offered by the government to encourage specific activities]
- e) Business support services, for example, advisory services, training, business networks, credit mediation, match-making services
- f) Making existing public measures easier to obtain [READ IF NECESSARY: for example, through the reduction of administrative burdens]

[FILTER: ALL ENTERPRISES]

C1/ Would you like to receive a copy of the published results? [READ IF NECESSARY: In addition to the public report, you will receive also a report that is made available only to the survey respondents.]

[SINGLE CODE]

- Yes 1 → READ: Please provide your e-mail address and we will send you the link for the publication. WRITE IN E-ADDRESS. CONFIRM E-MAIL ADDRESS.
- No.. 2

C3/ This survey will be repeated in around six months. Your input constitutes an important part of the findings that the European Central Bank and the European Commission use to inform their policies that contribute to smoothing businesses' access to finance. Are you willing to be contacted on this topic again?

[SEVERAL ANSWERS POSSIBLE (NOT IN COMBINATION WITH CODE 2)]

- Yes, via telephone [→ CONFIRM AND MAKE A NOTE OF THE RESPONDENT'S FULL NAME] 3
- Yes, via e-mail (for web-based survey) [→ CONFIRM AND MAKE A NOTE OF THE RESPONDENT'S FULL NAME AND E-MAIL ADDRESS] 4
- No 2

For quality control purposes, may I please note down your name and job title?

Name: [VERBATIM]

Telephone: [VERBATIM]

E-mail: [VERBATIM]

Job title

- Owner 1
- Finance manager..... 2
- Finance director 3
- Chief financial officer (CFO) 4
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) 6
- Managing director 7
- Other, please specify [WRITE DOWN THE VERBATIM ANSWER] 5

C4/ Do you agree to share your contact details with the European Central Bank and the European Commission in order to complement other information already present in business registers? Please note that any information you may provide will be used solely for scientific and policy research purposes.

[SINGLE CODE]

- Yes 1
- No 2

Those are all the questions. Thank you for your time.

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