

# 2019 SBA Fact Sheet

## FRANCE

### Key points

#### **Past & future SME performance<sup>1</sup>:**

SMEs in the 'non-financial business economy' in France generate 55.8% of value added and 64.1% of employment. This is roughly on a par with the respective EU averages of 56.4% and 66.6%. In 2014-2018, SMEs in France generated steady growth, outperforming large firms in the 'non-financial business economy'. The outlook for SMEs in France is very positive. In 2018-2020, SME value added is expected to rise by 8.8%. SME employment is also expected to increase by 4.5% in the same period, corresponding to around 461,400 new SME jobs.

#### **Implementing the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA):**

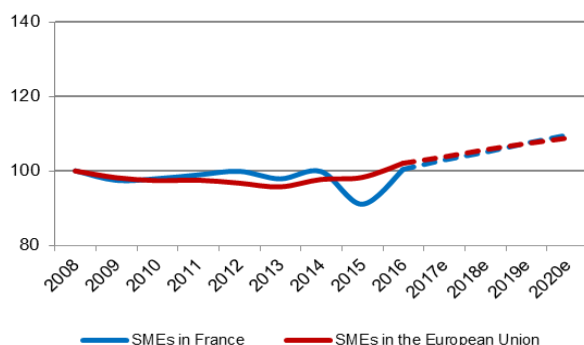
France's SBA profile is mostly aligned with the EU average. The country performs in line with the EU average on all SBA principles with the exception of single market. However, since 2008, many of the SBA principles have been on an upward trend, highlighting the country's progress.

#### **SME policy priorities:**

SMEs need to be reassured about the government's priorities and see current reforms fully implemented. This includes past reforms voted on over the last 20 months and the Action Plan for Business Growth and Transformation (*PACTE – Plan d'Action pour la Croissance et la Transformation des Entreprises*) adopted in April 2019. The law is key for SMEs. It aims to provide companies with more freedom, better funding, more innovation and fairer conditions. The action plan includes measures to simplify thresholds applicable to SMEs, facilitate entrepreneur recovery and enable companies to be set up entirely online. The government should communicate more clearly about the implementation of its activities.

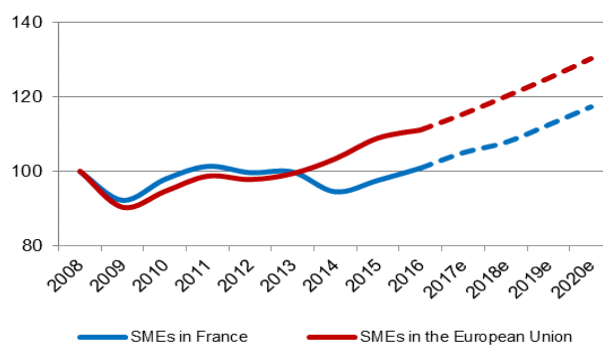
**Number of persons employed in SMEs**

(Index: 2008=100, estimates as from 2017 onwards)



**Value added of SMEs**

(Index: 2008=100, estimates as from 2017 onwards)



#### **About the SBA fact sheets:**

The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) is the EU's flagship policy initiative to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It comprises a set of policy measures organised around 10 principles ranging from entrepreneurship and 'responsive administration' to internationalisation. To improve the governance of the SBA, the 2011 review of it called for better monitoring. The SBA fact sheets, published annually, aim to improve the understanding of recent trends and national policies affecting SMEs. Since 2011, each EU Member State has appointed a high-ranking government official as its national SME envoy. SME envoys spearhead the implementation of the SBA agenda in their countries.

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## 1. SMEs — basic figures

Class size	Number of enterprises			Number of persons employed			Value added		
	France		EU	France		EU	France		EU
	Number	Share	Share	Number	Share	Share	Billion €	Share	Share
Micro	2,924,655	95.5%	93.0%	5,061,793	31.5%	29.7%	240.5	24.1%	20.8%
Small	117,089	3.8%	5.9%	2,945,131	18.3%	20.1%	171.4	17.2%	17.6%
Medium-sized	17,985	0.6%	0.9%	2,293,179	14.3%	16.8%	144.5	14.5%	18.0%
<b>SMEs</b>	<b>3,059,729</b>	<b>99.9%</b>	<b>99.8%</b>	<b>10,300,103</b>	<b>64.1%</b>	<b>66.6%</b>	<b>556.4</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>56.4%</b>
Large	3,837	0.1%	0.2%	5,773,567	35.9%	33.4%	440.0	44.2%	43.6%
Total	<b>3,063,566</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>16,073,670</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>996.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*These are estimates for 2018 published by DIW Econ, based on 2008-2016 figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database (Eurostat). The data cover the 'non-financial business economy', which includes industry, construction, trade, and services (NACE Rev. 2 sections B to J, L, M and N), but not enterprises in agriculture, forestry and fisheries and the largely non-market service sectors such as education and health. The following size-class definitions are applied: micro firms (0-9 persons employed), small firms (10-49 persons employed), medium-sized firms (50-249 persons employed), and large firms (250+ persons employed). The advantage of using Eurostat data is that the statistics are harmonised and comparable across countries. The disadvantage is that for some countries the data may be different from those published by national authorities.*

SMEs in the 'non-financial business economy' in France generate 55.8% of value added and 64.1% of employment, which is roughly on a par with the respective EU averages of 56.4% and 66.6%. Micro-firms create more employment (at 31.5%) and contribute more to value added (at 24.1%) than the average for EU micro-firms. French SMEs are also more productive than the EU average. Value added per person employed is 21.2% higher in France, at €54,000 against the EU average of €44,600. SMEs in France employ an average of 3.4 people, slightly fewer than the EU average of 3.9.

In 2014-2018, SMEs in France generated steady growth, outperforming large firms in the 'non-financial business economy'. In this period, SME employment rose by 5.2%, while the increase was only 1.7% in large firms. SMEs also generated value added growth of 14.1%, against an increase of just 10.5% in large firms. Most recently, in 2017-2018, SME value added rose by 2.7% and SME employment by 2.1%.

In recent years, the information and communication sector has been one of the most dynamic sectors in France. SME value added

in this sector rose by 20.3% in 2014-2018, while SME employment grew by 14.4%. In contrast, growth in large firms was significantly lower, with value added rising by just 12.6% and employment by only 2.8%. In the same period, micro-firms showed the highest increase in value added, at 32.6%, as well as employment growth of 2.2%. These positive developments were partly enabled by the entrepreneurship programme 'French Tech', which aims to help French firms scale up.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the light of Brexit, the French government is endeavouring to lure foreign tech firms and IT experts to France and, in so doing, replace London as the European centre for tech start-ups<sup>3</sup>.

In contrast, the manufacturing sector generated weak SME value added growth of only 0.7% in 2014-2018. SME employment declined by 1.3% in the same period and the fall was even steeper in large firms, at 7.1%. Conversely, the value added of large firms rose by 13.6%. Most recently, in 2017-2018, SME value added dropped by 1.0%, while employment increased by 1.4%. This sluggish overall performance in manufacturing can be explained by a decline in production, most notably in the manufacturing of consumer durables<sup>4</sup>. Most recently, a contributing factor was the crisis of consumer confidence and reduced consumer spending arising from the 'yellow vest' protests. These were protests against the economic reforms of the Macron government and led to the regular closure of numerous shopping streets throughout France in the last quarter of 2018<sup>5</sup>.

Registrations of new companies reached a record high of 691,000 in 2018, an increase of 17% against 2017<sup>6</sup>. The transportation and storage sector was one of the biggest contributors to this strong development, with 68% more new firms registered in 2018. In the same period, the number of deregistrations fell by 1.2% from 54,862 to 54,186<sup>7</sup>.

As per the data collected by the European Startup Monitor 2019 project<sup>8</sup>, 69% of the French startups that responded to the online

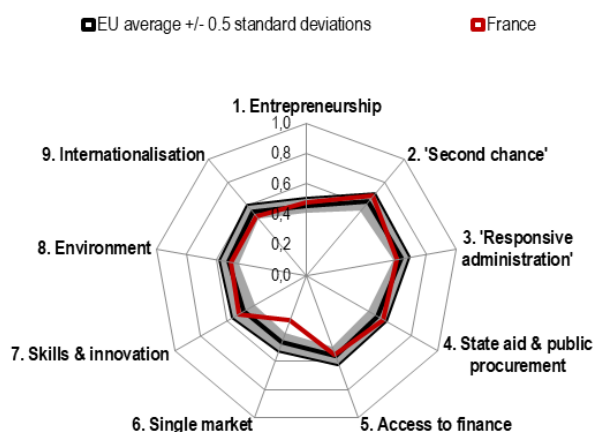
questionnaire were set up by one male founder or an all-male team of founders. 4% were set up by one female founder or an all-female team of founders. The remaining 27% were set up by at least one man and one woman. In terms of their stage of development, 12% are in the pre-seed or seed stage, 31% in the start-up stage, 8% in the steady stage and 50% in the growth stage. Regarding financial aspects, 73% are operating at a loss, 12% currently break-even and 15% are profitable. Of those start-ups that are operating at a loss, 63% expect to break-even in less than 2 years, while 37% expect that it will take them over 2 years to break-even. 62% have a turnover between €1 and €500,000; 4% report having no turnover yet and the remaining 35% have a turnover of over €500,000. They have 20 employees on average, of which around 8% work on a part-time basis. On average they plan to hire 7.8 people within a year.

Many French firms have successfully scaled up their operations in recent years. In 2016, 13,236 firms (8.6% of all firms in the business economy<sup>9</sup> with at least 10 employees) were high-growth firms<sup>10</sup>. This is below the EU average of 10.7%. High-growth firms are particularly prevalent in information and communication, with a percentage share of 17.2%, as well as in administrative and support services, at 14.8%, and electricity and gas, at 12.3%.

In 2018, French SMEs in the specialised knowledge-intensive services and high-tech manufacturing sectors, both of which are usually R&D-intensive, accounted for 33.9% of SME value added in the manufacturing and services sectors. This is slightly higher than the EU average of 33.0%.

The outlook for SMEs in France is very positive. In 2018-2020, SME value added is expected to rise by 8.8%. SME employment is also expected to increase by 4% in the same period, corresponding to around 461,400 new SME jobs.

## 2. SBA profile<sup>11</sup>



France's performance was in line with the EU average on all SBA principles with the sole exception of single market where it performs below the EU average.

In 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, the reference period for this year's fact sheet, France implemented 9 measures addressing 4 out of the 10 policy areas under the Small Business Act. The SBA areas where the most progress was made are 'responsive administration' and access to finance. The SBA areas experiencing the least or no progress during the reference period are environment and, to a lesser extent, single market and internationalisation. However, for these last two areas, the government is currently implementing initiatives announced last year.

Overall, SME stakeholders acknowledge that progress in implementing the SBA has been limited. At the same time, there is widespread consensus that the areas that saw the most significant progress during the reference period were 'responsive administration' and access to finance.

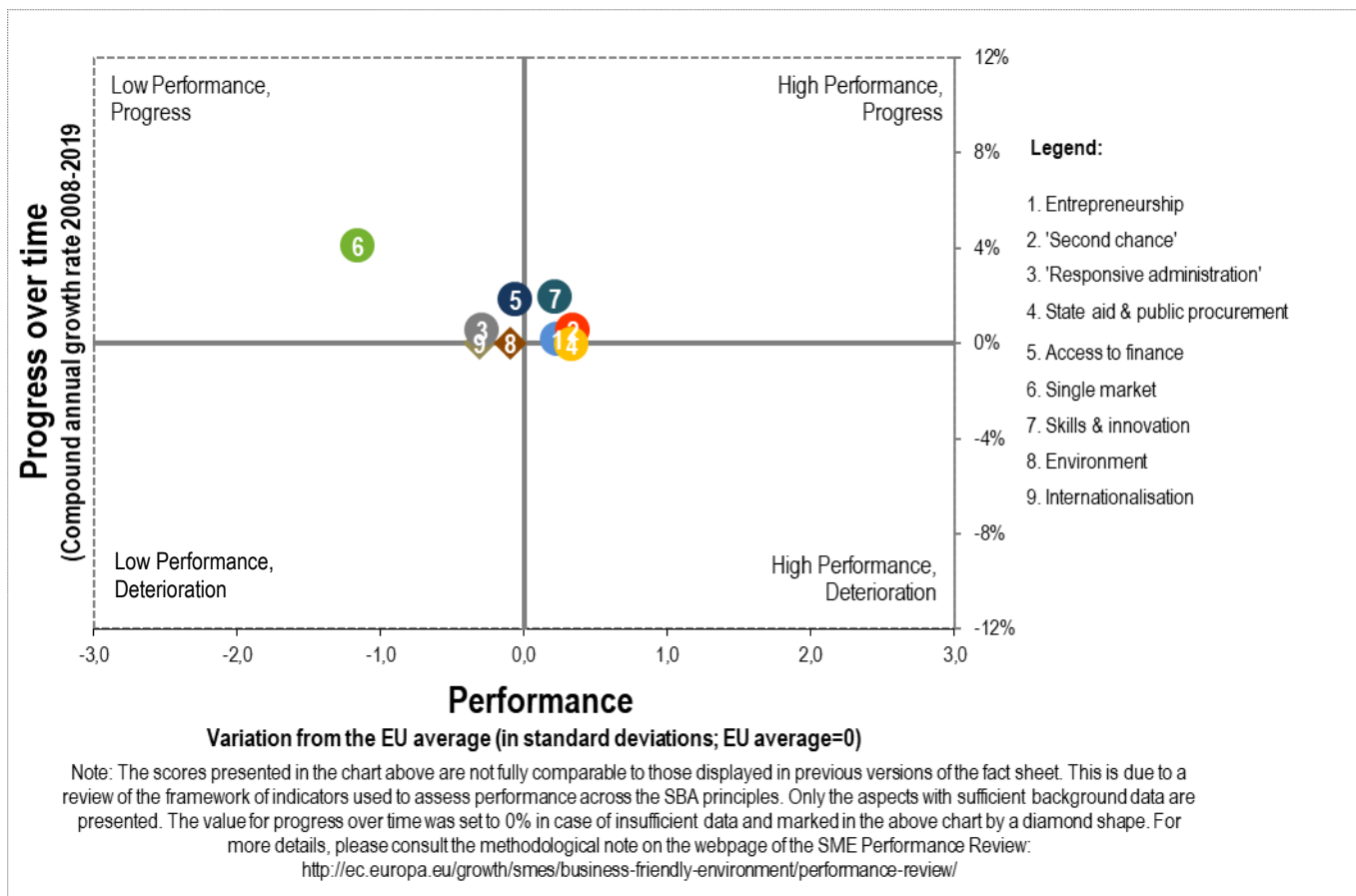
France has adopted policy measures in line with the SBA recommendations and SMEs continue to express positive attitudes in opinion polls on recruitment or investment intentions. This is

despite the 'yellow vests' demonstrations. Over the past 20 months, the new government has guided key reforms through the French parliament and sought to implement them. These include: (i) a significant reform of labour law and clearer redundancy rules (with ceilings for redundancy payments in cases of disputes); (ii) lower taxes and social charges to make French companies more competitive; (iii) vocational and professional training reforms; and (iv) modernising the industrial base to enable it to move up the value chain through an array of initiatives. Such initiatives include the 'Industry for the Future' policy framework, the 'industry territories' policy<sup>12</sup> to better coordinate local measures, and tax incentives to digitalise.

The reform momentum initiated by the new government has had a positive impact on the general mood among SMEs and the business community. Businesses are more widely consulted, as in the case of the draft law on growth and business transformation at the end of 2017<sup>13</sup>. Generally speaking, government officials are being encouraged to adopt and promote a culture of awareness of SMEs and their needs. In turn, SMEs' representatives have noted a more productive dialogue with the government in recent times, particularly on the financial impact of some measures. Despite this, there is still room for improvement. Measures such as a better SME impact assessment framework and more SME consultation during the legislative process would help SMEs keep step with the rapidly changing legal environment and administrative procedures.

Following the positive attitude recorded among SMEs in 2018, entrepreneurs are puzzled about the possible outcomes of the National Debate ('*Grand débat national*') launched after the 'yellow vests' protest<sup>14</sup>. During the previous reference period, the reforms were positive. The current consultation may lead to further taxes (or cancelled tax breaks) due to the cost of the announced reforms. Many of the reforms adopted during the previous reference period have still not been fully implemented. For example, professional training centres currently operate independently. SMEs are also concerned about whether the current reform momentum, and the boost it gives them, can be maintained. They are also concerned about the consequences and way forward if this momentum slows.

## SBA performance of France: state of play and development from 2008 to 2019<sup>15</sup>



## 3. SBA principles<sup>16</sup>

### 3.0 'Think Small First'

The 'Think Small First' principle is meant to be a guiding principle for all policy- and law-making activities. It requires policymakers to take SMEs' interests into account at the early stages of the policy-making process. The principle also calls for new legislation, administrative rules and procedures to be made simple and easy to apply.

Since 2008, France has implemented parts of the 'Think Small First' principle but still needs to put several fundamental elements in place.

The French government consults companies and federations on a regular basis to survey business opinions before a reform is adopted. For example, an internet consultation for some legislative proposals can highlight what companies require to enable them to take full advantage of the new law. Moreover, when the French government is drafting a bill, an inspection unit often carries out a study visit to examine the proposed legislation's potential impact on businesses and, specifically, on SMEs.

The results of these consultations are included in impact assessment reports, which have become mandatory for laws, orders and decrees proposed by the government since 2011. However, there is no independent scrutiny of the quality of impact assessments<sup>17</sup>. Also, impact assessments are rarely produced before a legislative text is drafted; more commonly, these are drawn up in parallel to the drafting process.

Some elements of the SME test are required in these impact assessments. After examining the impact assessment reports, the government's general secretariat can decide to carry out an 'SME test' if it considers that it does not have sufficient information to assess the impact of specific rules on SMEs. The 'SME test'<sup>18</sup> was introduced in 2014. It complements impact studies with additional information from SMEs that is requested through a qualitative assessment when deemed necessary. The 'SME test' is only carried out when a text appears to be complex and will have a strong economic impact on SMEs<sup>19</sup>. Since 2013, only 4 SME tests have been conducted involving 69 companies from 7 regions<sup>20</sup>.

However, no 'SME test' has been carried out recently<sup>21</sup>. France is currently reviewing the SME test to improve its application.

Key measures have been implemented. The threshold for micro-enterprises to be eligible for a streamlined administrative process has been doubled. The social security scheme for self-employed

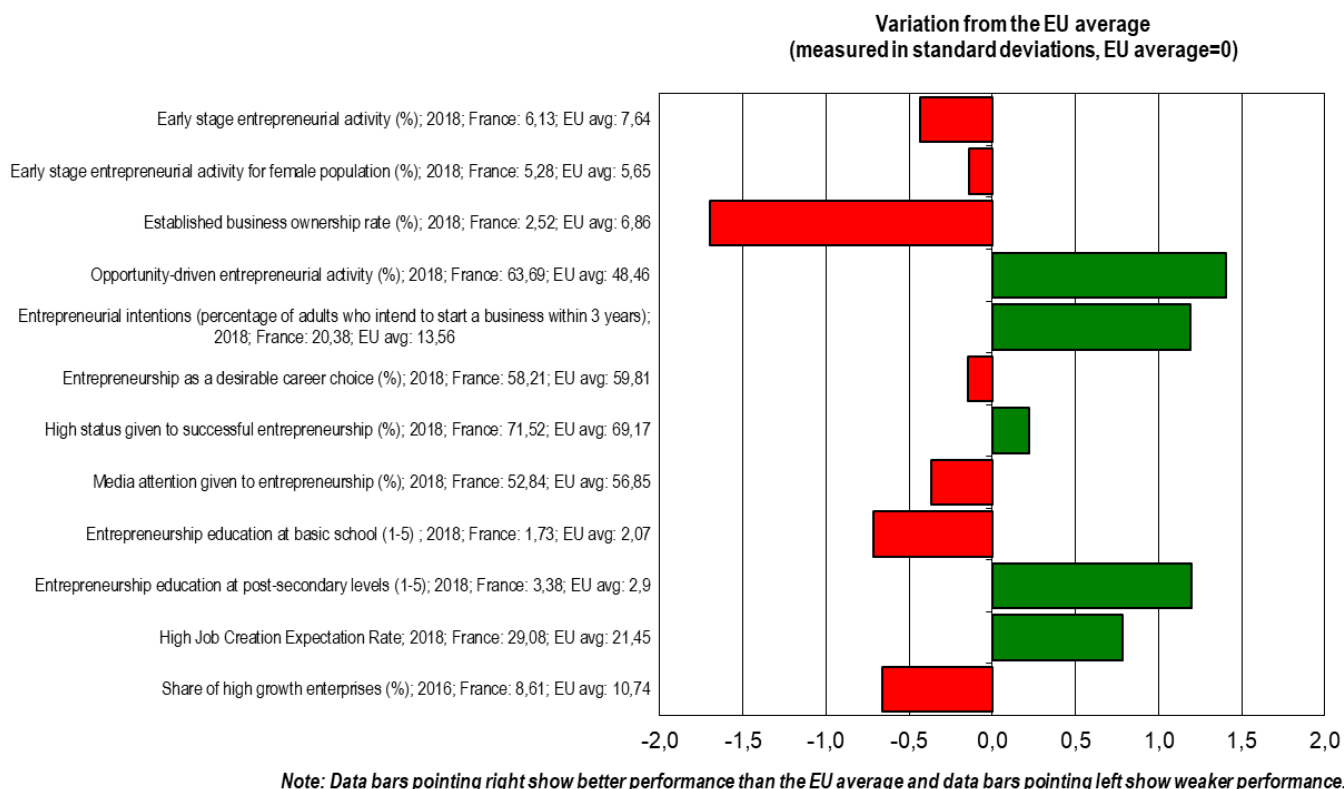
workers has also been merged with the general scheme, eliminating the need for people to move between the two. The timeliness of payments from public services and large companies to their subcontractors has improved, with the current average late payment being 10 days overdue, down from 14. This is thanks to a growing culture of mediation, the application of the 'name and shame' policy and fines for the worst offenders<sup>22</sup>. In April 2018, the government proposed an unemployment insurance scheme for independent and self-employed workers, which was introduced in the law 'for the freedom to choose one's professional future' and adopted by France's parliament. The government also adopted a 'right-to-make-mistakes' approach for companies dealing with public services, abolishing penalties where mistakes are made for the first time and in good faith. Despite the positive measures adopted, SMEs still feel that they must deal with a rapidly changing legal environment and complex administrative procedures resulting from the large number of regulatory changes introduced in the recent years.

Even though several key provisions of the 'Think Small First' principle still need to be implemented, progress was made in applying the principle during the reference period. Following a large consultation of businesses, the law on growth and business transformation (PACTE) was passed on April 2019. It will mean that greater focus is placed on SMEs. For example, SMEs will have 5 years to comply with new tax and social rules in line with employee thresholds, for example when they reach 11 or 50 employees.

On the consultation of SMEs in legislative procedures, SME representatives have noted better and richer exchanges with the government on new and existing measures, including on financial aspects. Early drafts and more internal material and data are shared with stakeholders. The country's Senate has proposed several recommendations to improve the quality of the legislative process and make better use of impact assessments, including an independent body to monitor their quality and application. The Senate has also proposed to improve the quality of existing legislation by assessing its cost to SMEs and setting yearly simplification targets. This is crucial given that the OECD has estimated the existing administrative burden for SMEs to be an annual €60 billion<sup>23</sup>.



## 3.1 Entrepreneurship



France performs in line with the EU average in the area of entrepreneurship, with its overall performance remaining stable since 2008. Some significant progress has been made since 2017 on early stage entrepreneurial activity (increase from 3.9% to 6.1% in 2018), on early stage entrepreneurial activity for female population (increase from 2.4% to 5.3% in 2018) and on entrepreneurial intentions (increase from 17.6% to 20.4% in 2018). However, France still performs significantly less well on established business ownership rate. Meanwhile, some progress is being made to develop an entrepreneurial attitude as part of the education curriculum. This is particularly true in the case of post-secondary levels, with this indicator performing well above the EU average.

Since 2008, the promotion of entrepreneurship has been one of the most active SBA areas. A key policy measure was the creation of a 'micro-entrepreneur' status in 2009 (formerly 'auto-entrepreneur') to encourage self-employment by simplifying administrative requirements. Since 2010, self-employed entrepreneurs have been able to easily separate their personal and business assets with the EIRL status ('individual contractor with limited liability' status), with further simplifications introduced in 2016. This allows them to safeguard their personal assets from business creditors and effectively limit their liability. Since January 2018, the ceilings for the micro-entrepreneur scheme have been raised to €70 000 for service provision activities and €170 000 for sales activities. The current ceilings

for VAT-based exemptions (€35 200 for service activities and €91 000 for sales activities) remain unchanged. Therefore, whether they are craftspeople, traders or professionals, more entrepreneurs can benefit from this scheme to help develop their professional activity. As of June 2018, around 1.35 million micro-entrepreneurs were registered, against 1.1 million in June 2017<sup>24</sup>. This followed the doubling of the caps on the turnover eligible for the status (as of 1 January 2018)<sup>25</sup>.

Start-ups are widely supported. Most cities and higher-education institutions offer facilities (e.g. open labs, incubators and accelerators, and co-working/collaborative spaces) to support start-ups and provide access to counselling and finance<sup>26</sup>. People willing to start or take over a company are also supported by public schemes such as: (i) ARCE/ARE, which provide funds to job seekers who are eligible for benefits; (ii) ACRE, which provides tax breaks; and (iii) NACRE, which provides advice and possibly a 0% interest rate loan. The 'young innovative enterprises' (JEI) status (including 'young university enterprises' - JEU) has also been extended until 31 December 2019 and provides exemption from taxes and social security contributions for enterprises classified as innovative and with identified high-growth potential. For companies to qualify, R&D expenses must account for a minimum of 15% of their expenditure and must have been incurred within the last eight years.

Scale-up remains the chief issue according to stakeholders. Bpifrance is tackling the issue through an array of initiatives,

which show a higher impact every year<sup>27</sup> (see the example of good practice for boosting the number of medium-sized companies mentioned at the end of this fact sheet). In 2018, €3.624 billion in risk capital was raised (€2.563 billion in 2017) through 645 business transactions in France. The average transaction rose from €4.03 million in 2017 to €5.61 million in 2018 with three growth equity transactions (€143 million on average)<sup>28</sup>.

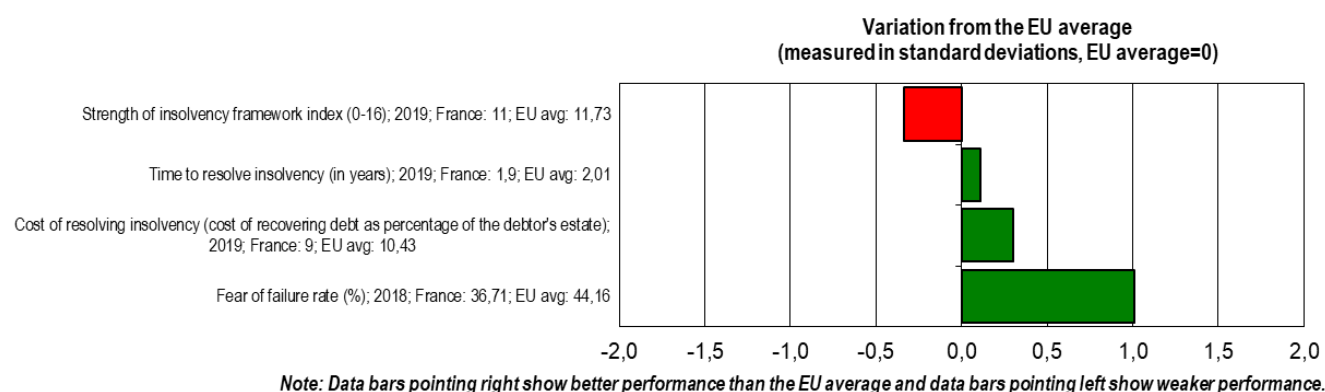
Opened in June 2017, Station F<sup>29</sup> is already the world's biggest start-up campus and Viva Technology conventions dedicated to technological innovation have become a reference for start-ups. More than 125 nationalities, 300 speakers and 9,000 start-ups attended the 2018 edition. Three quarters of these reported positive outcomes<sup>30</sup>.

However, there is still room for improvement – cooperation between educational institutions and SMEs is still weak, even though entrepreneurship has continued to gain prominence among students and workers. Thirty 'student hubs for innovation,

transfer and entrepreneurship' (*PEPITE*) have helped to spread entrepreneurship in higher education to 120,000 students since 2015. Meanwhile, 8,200 students have benefited from the 'national student entrepreneur' status since 2014 and 200 SMEs have been created<sup>31</sup>. A new action plan has been announced for 2019 (*plan Esprit d'entreprendre*).

During the reference period, the government passed a key law in April 2019 entitled the 'Action Plan for Companies' Growth and Investment' (*PACTE – Plan d'Action pour la Croissance et la Transformation des Entreprises*), following a large consultation process. The law will facilitate the registration of companies, replacing multiple physical counters with one online platform. 'Bpifrance Creation'<sup>32</sup> is taking over the tasks of the Agency for Entrepreneurs as well as those of the French Public Bank CDC (Caisse des Dépôts) relating to supporting future entrepreneurs and keeping them informed.

## 3.2 'Second chance'



'Second chance' refers to ensuring that honest entrepreneurs who have gone bankrupt get a second chance quickly. France scores in line with the EU average on this principle and some moderate progress has been made since 2008. There has been very little change over the past five years in terms of the performances on the indicators presented. The only exception is the decrease in the fear of failure rate over recent years, from 40.3% in 2016, to 39.1% in 2017 and 36.7% in 2018.

Overall, moderate progress has been made in this area since 2008. Most of the legal procedures to wind up a business in France require less than two years to complete, although according to the EU Justice Scoreboard, in France actual court proceedings on bankruptcy alone last at least 2 years<sup>33</sup>. In 2010, protection against the seizure of individual entrepreneurs' main residence was introduced with the EIRL status and further simplified in 2016. In 2013, the central bank's abolition of the '040' rating (for failed entrepreneurs who are the subject of bankruptcy proceedings over the past 5 years) was a major improvement. However, even though honest entrepreneurs are not penalised in cases where they have been declared bankrupt (previous rating '040'), they still have difficulty securing new

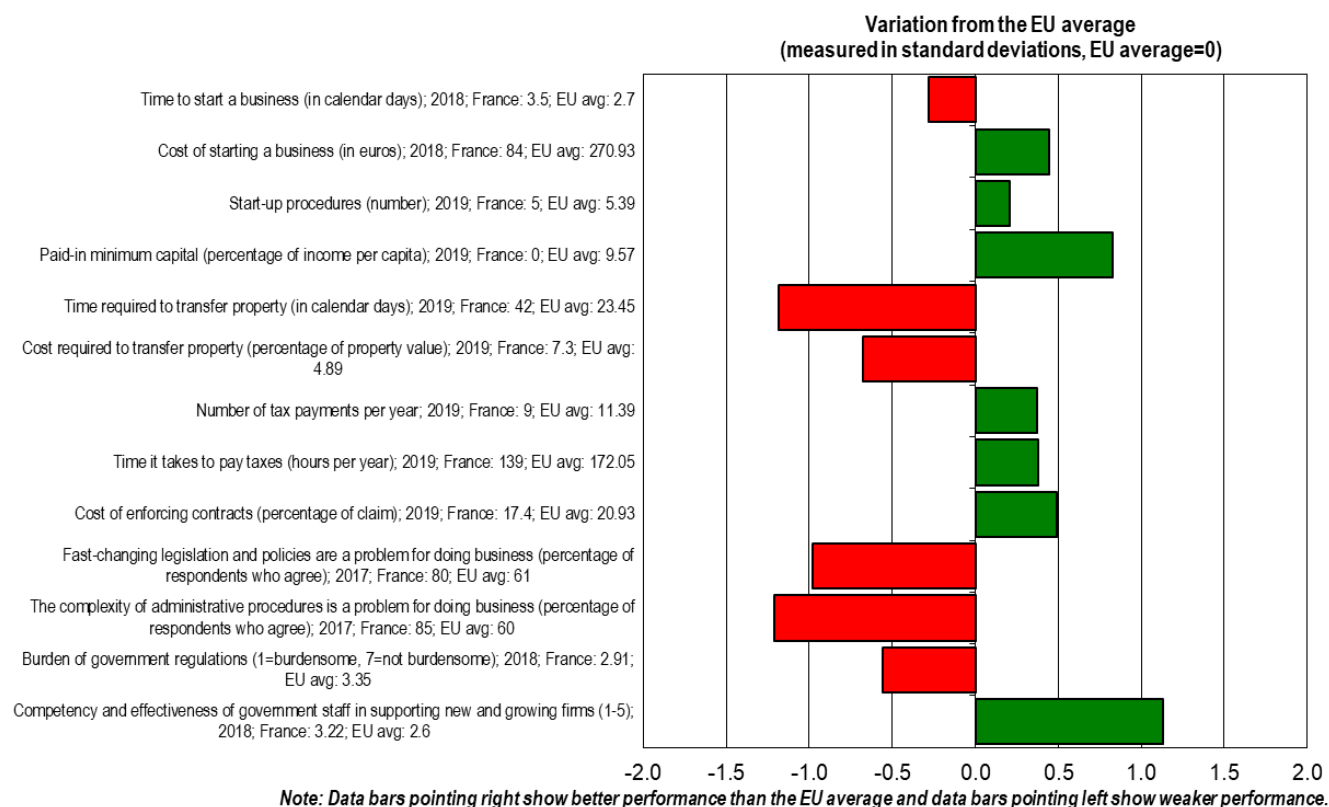
loans. This is because commercial banks maintain their own records of all past incidents, even if the official '040' rating has been expunged. This contributes to negative perceptions of failed entrepreneurs that still prevail in the wider society.

There is also still not enough distinction between the treatment of 'honest' entrepreneurs and those deemed to be committing fraud. For example, if an entrepreneur was in charge of more than one bankrupt company, their name is recorded by the national bank ('Banque de France') for three to five years.

During the reference period, the government abolished the '050' indicator for entrepreneurs who are the subject of two sets of bankruptcy proceedings over a period of 5 years (applied since October 2018). The PACTE law will also reduce the costs and delays of judicial liquidation for all companies with less than five employees whose turnover does not exceed €750,000. Judicial liquidation for firms with no employees holding less than €5,000 in assets may also be abolished. The law will also expand on an experiment to consolidate public data on companies, based on weak signals, to detect entrepreneurs in need of help before it is too late.



### 3.3 'Responsive administration'



'Responsive administration' refers to public administration being responsive to the needs of SMEs. France performs in line with the EU average in the area of 'responsive administration' and minor progress has been achieved since 2008. Most of the indicators have remained constant since last year's SBA fact sheet. The only major improvement was on the time required to transfer a property, which fell from 64 days in 2018 to 42 days in 2019. Additional marginal progress was observed in 2018 against 2017 on the burden of government regulations, as well as on the competency and effectiveness of government staff in supporting new and growing firms.

Since 2008, moderate progress has been made in the area of 'responsive administration'. A company's registration number is now used to share information directly between various administrative bodies. This avoids companies having to provide the information to each body separately. Another important measure is the 'silence is consent' principle, which covers about 1,500 processes. Most requests issued to the government are dealt with within 2 months (albeit with some exceptions, such as the 6-month period applicable to patent applications). Not receiving any reply from the administration after the deadline is considered to be equivalent to an agreement. Many small changes are also improving the daily lives of entrepreneurs even if they go unnoticed once implemented. These include: (i) reforms of labour

law to simplify the collective bargaining process; (ii) the creation of a standard financial scale of damages to provide more visibility and security in the event of workplace disputes; and (iii) and reforms to rules governing dismissal. The government has also doubled the ceiling for self-employed workers in micro-enterprises to benefit from a streamlined administrative process, and merged the social security scheme for the self-employed with the general scheme for company and state employees, eliminating the need to move from one to the other. Finally, the government has adopted a 'right-to-make-mistakes'. This is essentially a measure that allows companies to avoid penalties the first time they make a mistake, provided it was made in good faith and was not an attempt to cheat or circumvent the system.

Despite this progress, the simplification process has been hampered by the large number of new and revised procedures and laws introduced over the past 8 years. SMEs highlight the number and significance of changes to regulatory mechanisms, most of which are not preceded by an 'SME test' assessing possible impacts, mainly due to the sheer number of legislative texts being voted on. Arguably the most anticipated change was to the 'account for arduous work' (*compte pénibilité*), which is a measure that provides employees whose roles involve physically strenuous and repetitive tasks on a daily basis with the opportunity to retire early. The time-consuming compliance

process was streamlined by the new government in 2017, which was a very welcome development for SMEs.

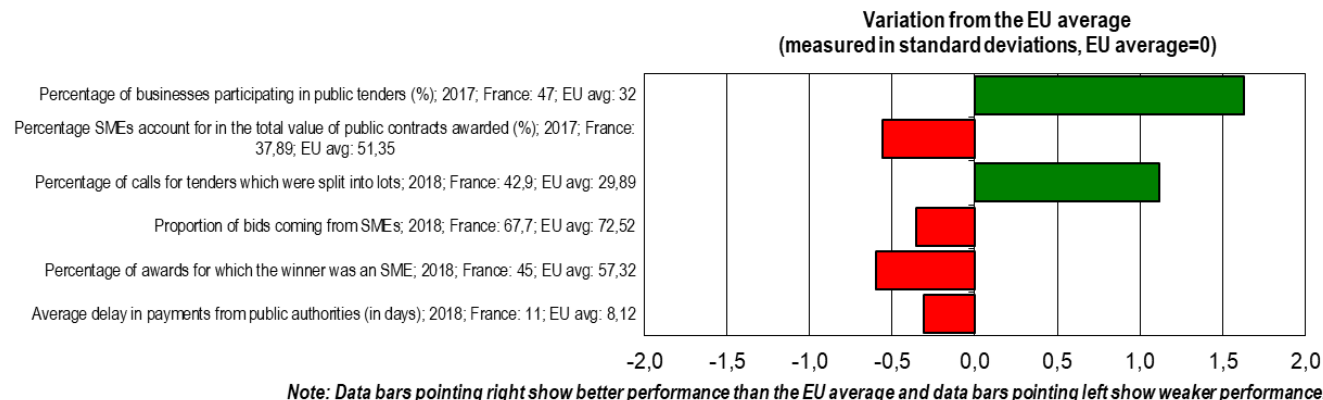
During the reference period, four important policy measures were adopted or announced. The first two of these came under the Action Plan for Business Growth and Transformation (*PACTE – Plan d'Action pour la Croissance et la Transformation des Entreprises*):

- The obligations connected with employee thresholds (an obligation corresponds to compliance with new tax or social legislation) will be significantly reduced and simplified to create a new legal environment more favourable to SME growth. There are currently 199 obligations for SMEs. The number of thresholds has also been reduced to three (11, 50, 250 employees) and the '20' threshold has been abolished. In addition, SMEs will also have 5 years to adapt to the new threshold.
- The obligations connected to entrepreneurs' lives will be simplified with a single online platform for business

formalities, e.g. creating or ending a company and updating its data. Other formalities or obligations will be abolished, such as the traineeship obligation and the obligation for some professionals to have a specific bank account.

- The government has selected 136 territories to benefit from personalised support for SMEs. These territories account for 30% of the geographical area and 48% of industrial jobs in France. Decentralised management (regional councils or cities) will provide a 'basket of services': recruitment (e.g. training the unemployed and territorial volunteering in business), innovation (e.g. industry of the future assessment) and simplifying procedures through better coordination in less developed territories<sup>34</sup>.
- Team France export is pulling together several public services helping SMEs to export. This includes Bpifrance (the public bank for companies), CCI (Chambers of Commerce and Industry), regional authorities and UBIFRANCE.

## 3.4 State aid & public procurement



Important methodological changes have been introduced for this principle in this year's fact sheet. Three new indicators from the Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) database have been added and refer to procurement above EU thresholds:

- percentage of awards for which the winner was an SME;
- proportion of bids by SMEs;
- percentage of calls for tenders which were split into lots.

In addition, the indicator on e-procurement has been removed. Therefore, the overall performance in this area cannot be compared to last year's.

France is performing in line with the EU average, with its performance decreasing against the previous year when it was above the average. However, the overall performance has remained stable since 2008 in this area. France is the second top performing country in the EU with its high proportion of

businesses participating in public tenders. However, the average delay in payments from public authorities increased from 9 days in 2017 to 11 days in 2018.

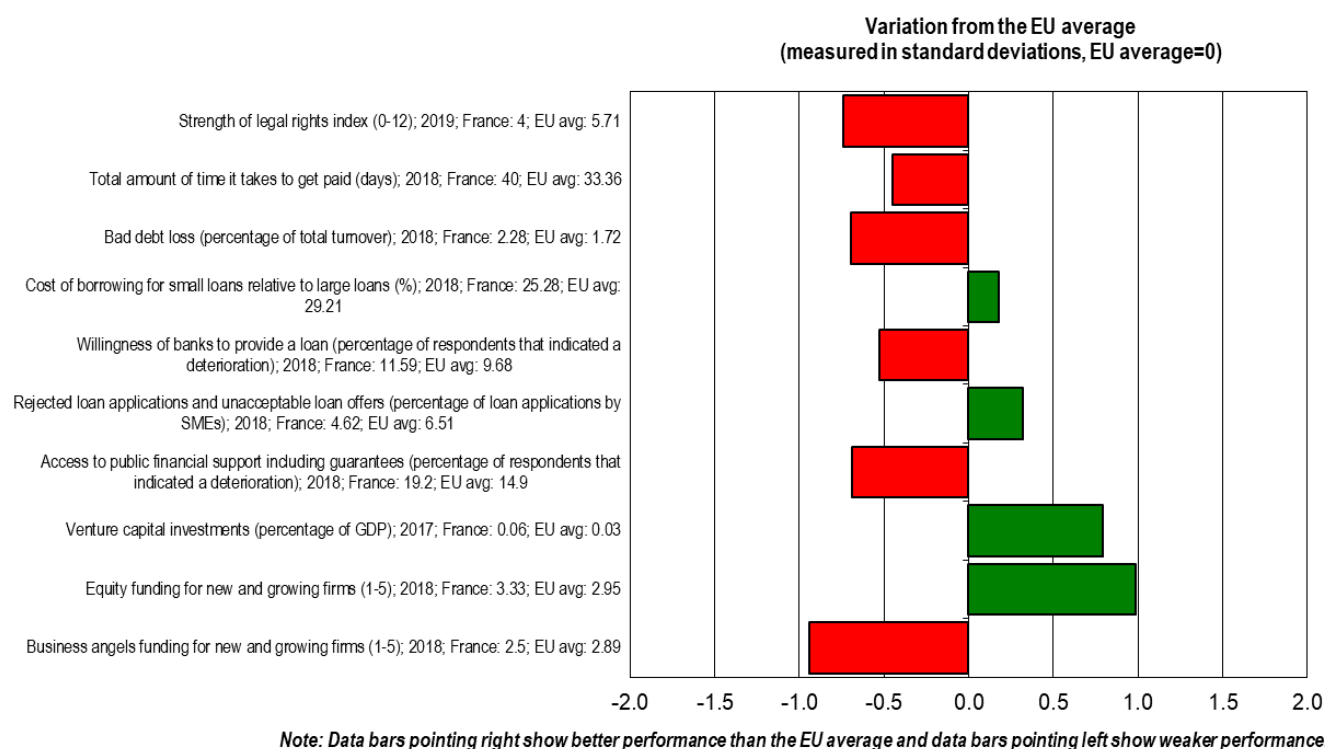
Overall, moderate progress on the policy side has been made in this area since 2008. One of the most significant policy measures involved changes to public procurement laws to make it easier for SMEs to participate in public tenders. Since the simplified public procurement procedure (*MPS — marché public simplifié*) was introduced in 2014, it has been used more than 75,831 times<sup>35</sup>. Rules to further simplify and modernise public procurement practices entered into force in April 2016 (as provided for by the three EU public procurement directives of February 2014). These are being implemented by local, regional and national authorities, albeit slowly. Moreover, the new legal framework is leading to changes in buyer behaviour. This is thanks to 'innovation partnerships' between suppliers and buyers and the possibility for buyers to meet with companies upstream in the competitive

bidding process. These meetings are facilitated by a specific platform where buyers are able to request innovative services and suppliers with innovative solutions (less than 2 years old or not yet commercialised) that are not yet technically on the market<sup>36</sup>. Two ombudsmen have been appointed: one to mediate between SMEs and their banks or credit insurance companies and the other to improve relations between public services, large companies and their subcontractors<sup>37</sup>. Both also share best practices to help SMEs participate more in public procurement. The efforts of the ombudsman for subcontractors have led to positive results across several indicators. Late payments (by law considered to be late after more than 45 days) from large or public entities to SME suppliers were reduced on average from 14 to 11 days<sup>38</sup> in 2018 (10 in 2017, adding the equivalent of €4 billion in cash flow<sup>39</sup> for SMEs). The intervention of the ombudsman actually strengthens links between customers and suppliers by creating a culture of

mediation (with a 75% success rate) rather than litigation or other costly dispute-resolution mechanisms.

During the reference period, the government continued to implement policy measures on State aid & public procurement. The government applied existing laws for late payments more strictly. As a result, the government published a list of worst offenders, including public sector companies<sup>40</sup>. Public procurement practices will be further simplified with: (i) a new public code adopted at the end of 2018, which entered into force in April 2019 and replaced 15 decrees and laws; (ii) full electronic procedures and invoicing; and (iii) reducing the level of the financial guarantee and increasing the minimum level of prepayment for contracts<sup>41</sup>.

### 3.5 Access to finance



France continues to perform in line with the EU average in this area, with good progress achieved since 2008. Improvements have been made since last year on the willingness of banks to provide loans. Indeed, the percentage share of respondents indicating a deterioration for this indicator fell from 14.1% in 2017 to 11.6% in 2018. Other indicators, such as the total amount of time it takes to get paid and the equity funding for new and growing firms, also improved against last year. In contrast, according to the respondents, access to public financial support deteriorated, with 19.2% indicating a deterioration in 2018

against 13% in 2017, while the activity of Bpifrance significantly increased in 2018. Finally, the bad debt loss and the cost of borrowing for small loans also increased significantly in 2018 against 2017.

Since 2008, access to finance has significantly improved. Measures addressing this include the 2008-2009 recovery plan and the 2010-2015 'national loan' ('*grand emprunt*') of €57 billion<sup>42</sup> (including €10 billion for the period 2017-2022). Such measures have boosted French competitiveness by investing

in research, higher education and vocational training, industry and SMEs, sustainable development and the development of sectors such as digital technology. A new €57 billion 'Big Investment Plan' for 2018-2022 will accompany structural reforms and address four issues. It will: (i) accelerate the transition to carbon neutrality; (ii) improve access to employment by increasing skills; (iii) increase competitiveness through innovation (the €10 billion announced above); and (iv) build the digital state. Other measures included here are the introduction of funding for unemployed people starting businesses, which has seen a strong uptake, and the creation of Bpifrance, a public bank for entrepreneurs. The lending capacity of Bpifrance has been strengthened several times since its inception, both for guaranteed loans and equity investment.

The 'Industry for the Future' policy framework adopted in May 2015 is a major step towards modernising France's industrial base and turning traditional business models into more disruptive ones. In 2018, more than 4,000 SMEs were supported by this policy framework through a mix of professional advice, loans and tax incentives to accelerate their transformation<sup>43</sup>. Several tools are also available for start-ups and innovative firms under the 'French Tech' and the 'French Fab' initiatives<sup>44</sup>. These include funding for business incubators and accelerators and the special status of 'young innovative enterprise' (*JEI*).

SMEs are also benefiting from a gradual reduction in the corporate tax rate from 33.3% in 2017 to 25% in 2022 and from better access to finance through simplified inter-company loans, fiscal incentives for corporate ventures and an innovative SME account that provides tax breaks if capital gains are reinvested.

A series of tax reductions has also been gradually introduced. The competitiveness and employment tax credit (CICE) was introduced in 2013, reducing labour costs for SMEs. This was later

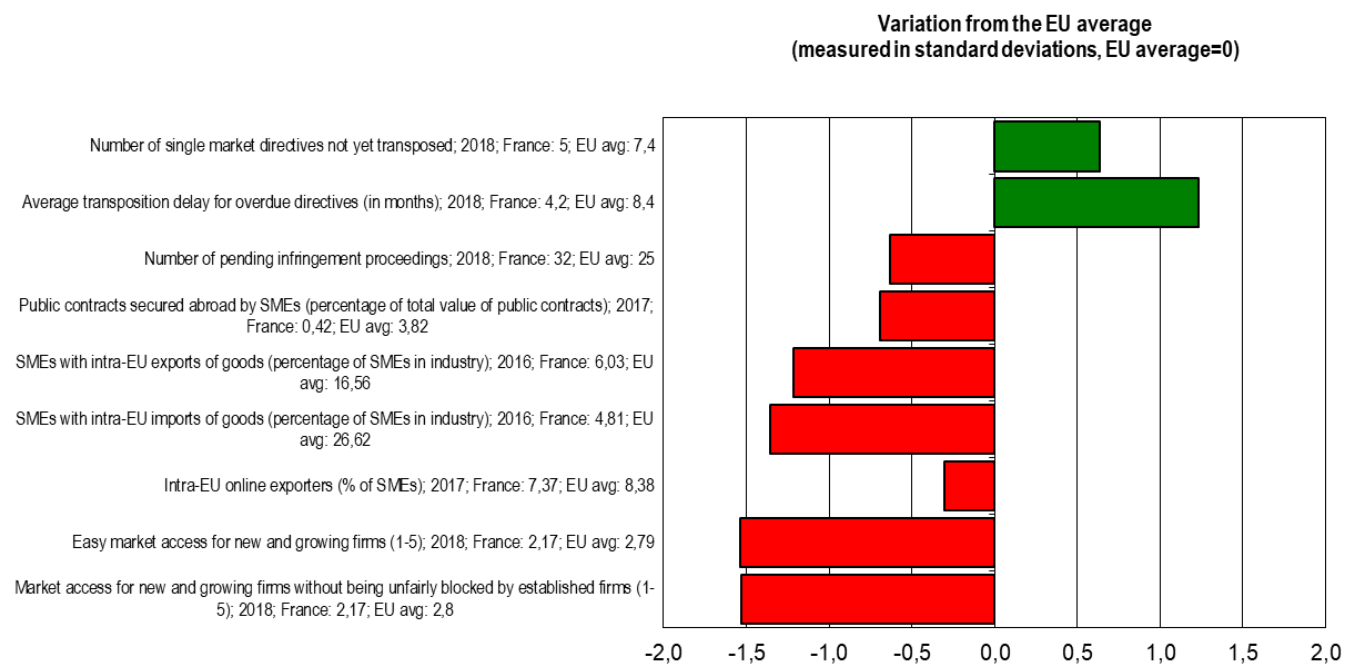
transformed into a permanent reduction of payroll taxes in 2019. A flat tax rate of 30% on all capital income, which is lower than in the past, was set in 2018. Unemployment and sickness insurance contributions, previously paid by employees, are also due to be eliminated in 2019, thus lowering labour costs to improve competitiveness and increase employee pay. This elimination of employee contributions is offset by an increase in social contributions (*CSG – contribution sociale généralisée*).

The government is also pushing hard for stronger sanctions for late payments to SME subcontractors by large and/or public entities. The ombudsman for subcontractors also helps to recover late payments from large companies by encouraging a culture of mediation and spreading good practices.

Several additional measures were implemented or announced during the reference period. The government implemented two measures in January 2019:

- Tax incentive for encouraging companies to invest. Companies can depreciate 40% on top of the regular depreciation (140% in total) for productive investment on an approved list<sup>45</sup> and deduct it from their taxes. The number of robots installed in France increased for the second year running (4,658 in 2018 against about 4,400 in 2017, and 3,600 in 2016). However, France is still ranked 18th in terms of number of robots per employees<sup>46</sup>.
- Sustained mitigation of charges through the transformation of the CICE into a permanent reduction of payroll taxes in 2019. As the CICE is a tax credit, it will still apply in 2019 for the year 2018.

## 3.6 Single market



*Note: Data bars pointing right show better performance than the EU average and data bars pointing left show weaker performance.*

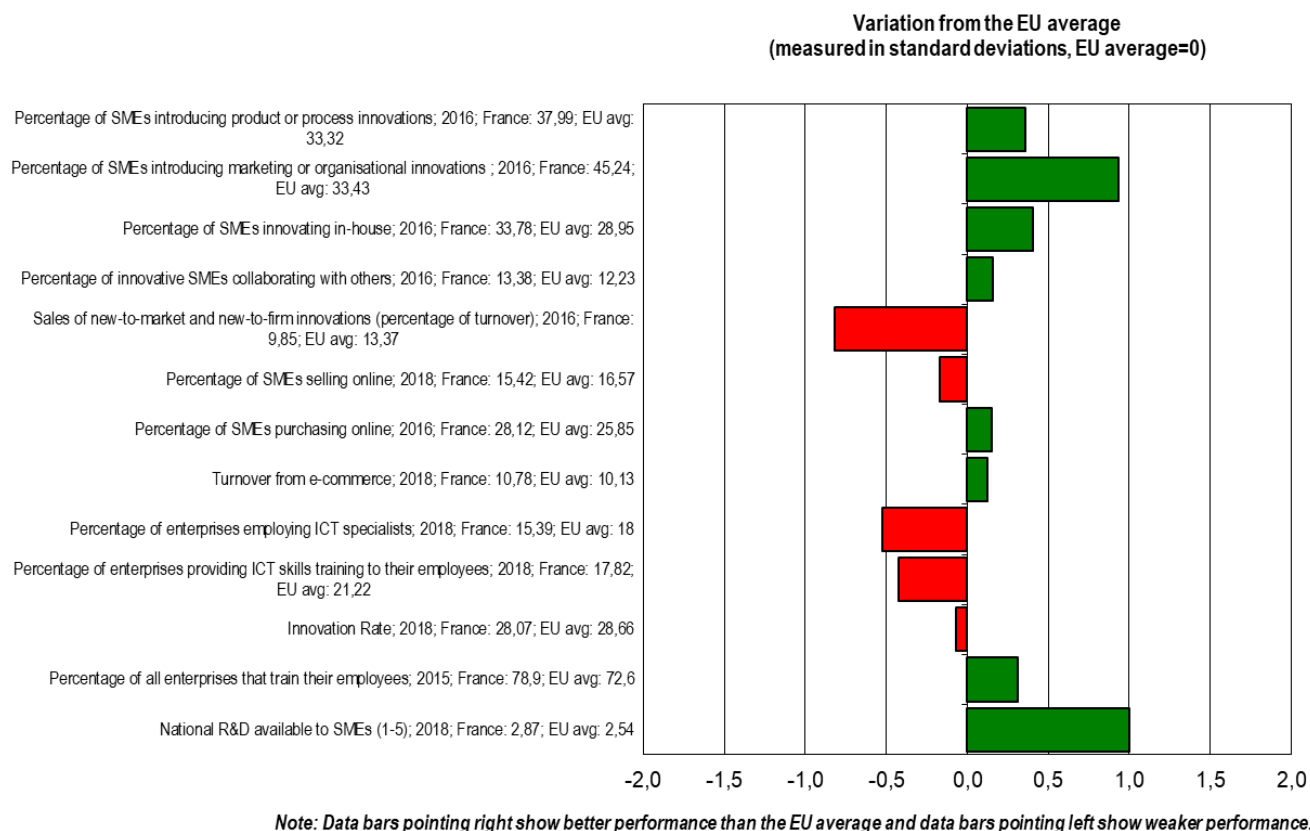
France scores below the EU average in this area, although significant progress has been achieved since 2008. While the number of directives not transposed in good time and the average transposition delay for overdue directives were better than the EU average in 2018, most of the indicators deteriorated compared to the last SBA fact sheet. The most significant decline is on the number of single market directives not yet transposed (5 in 2018 against 2 in 2017). The number of infringement proceedings fell by 2 (from 34 in 2017 to 32 in 2018) but remains high compared to the EU average. In addition, France is the second worst performer on easy market access for new and growing firms and market access for new and growing forms without being unfairly blocked by established firms.

Since 2008, the single market is the SBA area that has seen the least policy progress. A number of administrative services exist to help SMEs expand across national borders. However, the duplication and number of administrative services, and lack of coordination among them, has resulted in a suboptimal and complex supporting environment that makes it harder for SMEs to engage in cross-border business than for large companies.

Following the strategy<sup>47</sup> announced by the foreign minister in February 2018 for foreign markets, several operators<sup>48</sup> supporting SMEs have merged at regional level under the banner of 'team France export' (depending on the region, mainly Business France and Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The regional authority is the leading organisation. Following this restructuring, the services have been updated and staff members are now specialised and trained. The aim is to increase the number of exporting companies from 125,283 in 2018<sup>49</sup> to 200,000 by 2022<sup>50</sup> (against 360,000 in Germany<sup>51</sup> and 240,000 in Italy in 2018). This consolidation should lead to economies of scale and better regional support for SMEs and help boost the number of exporting companies.

No significant new single market policy measures were implemented in the reference period.

## 3.7 Skills & innovation



France performs in line with the EU average and some progress has been achieved since 2008 in this area. Substantial improvements have been made in the proportion of SMEs introducing marketing or organisational innovation, from 41.6% in 2014 to 45.2% in 2016. On the other hand, the sales of new-to-market and new-to-firms innovations fell significantly, from 15% in 2014 to 9.9% in 2016. Two indicators are performing below the EU average (sales of new-to-market and new-to-firms; percentage of enterprises employing ICT specialists). This had not been the case for any indicators in last year's fact sheet.

Since 2008, moderate progress has been made on skills & innovation. Substantial funding for research and innovation was provided through: (i) the 2010-2015 'Investment for the Future' plan of €47 billion (increased by €10 billion for 2017- 2022); (ii) the public investment bank 'Bpifrance'; (iii) the 2000 'tax research credit'; (iv) the 2004 'status of young innovative companies' (*JEI*); and (v) the Innovation and Industry Fund (€10 billion). SMEs can also find support from 'competitiveness clusters' to form innovation partnerships. The 'Investment for the Future' plan has supported structured investment in research and innovation, involving 14 larger, more professional innovation incubators (called SATT<sup>52</sup>, equivalent to the Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany) and 38 thematic research networks known as '*Instituts Carnot*'

that sign about 3,000 contracts with SMEs per year<sup>53</sup>. The 'research tax credit' and the 'status of young innovative companies' are also increasingly used by SMEs. The research tax credit is equivalent to €6 billion or three fifths of all public funding for innovation<sup>54</sup>. The government has also put in place a strategy on deep tech technologies to strengthen links between research and innovation, The Innovation and Industry Fund will thus support deep tech technologies, as well as start-ups and their industrialisation (€250 million per year). The government is pursuing the 'Industry for the Future' policy framework launched in May 2015 to modernise the industrial base and encourage disruptive new business models.

The 'French Tech' initiative has achieved scale, with seed funds equivalent to other advanced nations. However, the number of 'unicorn' firms (i.e. those valued above €1 billion), although increasing, is limited to seven<sup>55</sup>. For example, start-ups only account for 0.1% of the amount spent by major companies on purchases in 2017<sup>56</sup>.

Vocational training is a solution for providing SMEs with the qualified employees they are looking for but also to reduce unemployment. Between 2015 and 2017, the government created 700,000 additional training opportunities, significantly

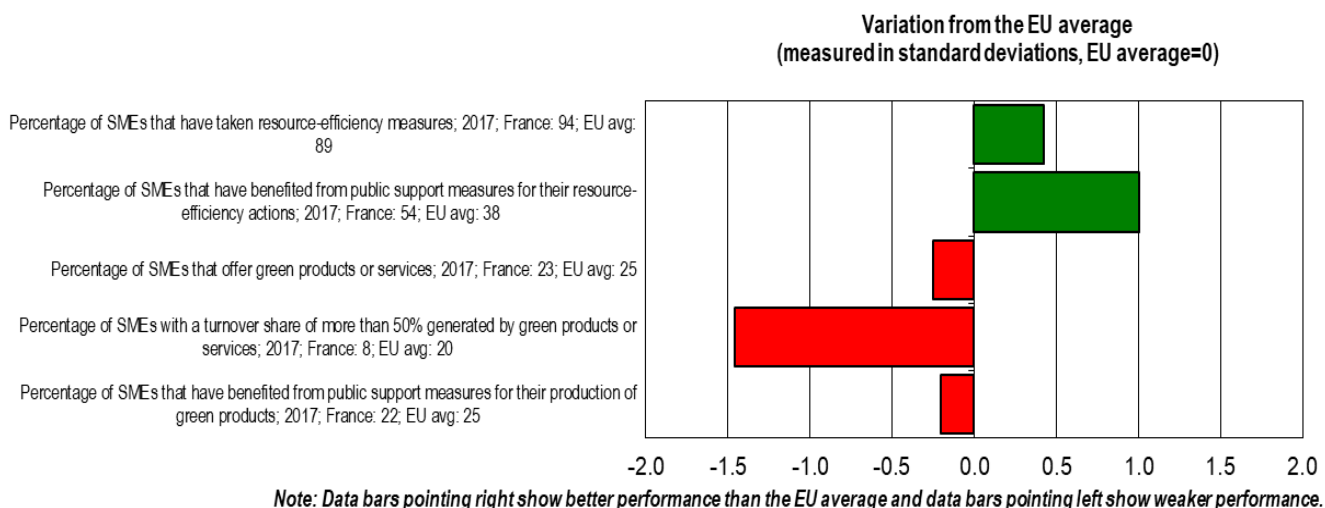


increasing the annual access rate to training for job seekers. The plan reached its quantitative objectives with 1,013,000 training entries recorded in 2016 and 356,060 training course entries for long-term or low-skilled jobseekers. However, the rapid set-up of the plan implied a focus on short-term training without any clear strategic vision of the needs that would have to be fulfilled to return to work.<sup>57</sup> In September 2017, the new government announced an important plan for vocational training in conjunction with a deep reform of both continuous vocational training and apprenticeships (*Réforme de la formation professionnelle et de l'apprentissage*), to be complemented by measures on school-based initial vocational education. In 2016, SMEs still accounted for close to 82% of new apprenticeship contracts. Providing the adequate skills is key, as many companies are still affected by skilled labour shortages: 57 % of business leaders say they lack skilled workers to grow their company. Of these, 83% experience some difficulties in recruiting, while 49% experience serious difficulties<sup>58</sup>. The government will spend €15 billion over 5 years (see the 'Big Investment Plan' for 2018-2022) on vocational training, initiatives targeting 1 million young people not in education, employment or training and 1 million low-qualified and long-term job seekers. The skills investment plan is

being gradually implemented, in line with the law 'for the freedom to choose one's professional future' passed in September 2018<sup>59</sup>.

During the reference period, the government passed several initiatives on innovation under the PACTE law. Better incentives for innovation will facilitate the mobility of researchers who wish to set up or work with a company (e.g. the number of years allowed to work for the private sector while safeguarding keeping their research position, etc.). Procedures will be simplified with a view to revitalising links between public research and the private sector. Public researchers wishing to create or get involved in the life of a company will have a simpler process for obtaining an authorisation. This is no longer done via an ethics committee (as for public servants) but rather via a simpler request to the institution employing the researcher. Researchers will also be able to keep a stake in the capital of their company, up to 49%, after they rejoin the public research organisation. They will be able to devote 50% of their time to the company, alongside their public research work.

## 3.8 Environment



France performs in line with the EU average. The country is ranked third on the percentage of SMEs that have taken resource-efficiency measures. This might be explained by the high percentage of SMEs that have benefited from public support measures for their resource-efficiency action, which increased from 31% in 2015 to 54% in 2017. However, the country is the second worst performer on the proportion of SMEs with a turnover share of more than 50% generated by green product or services.

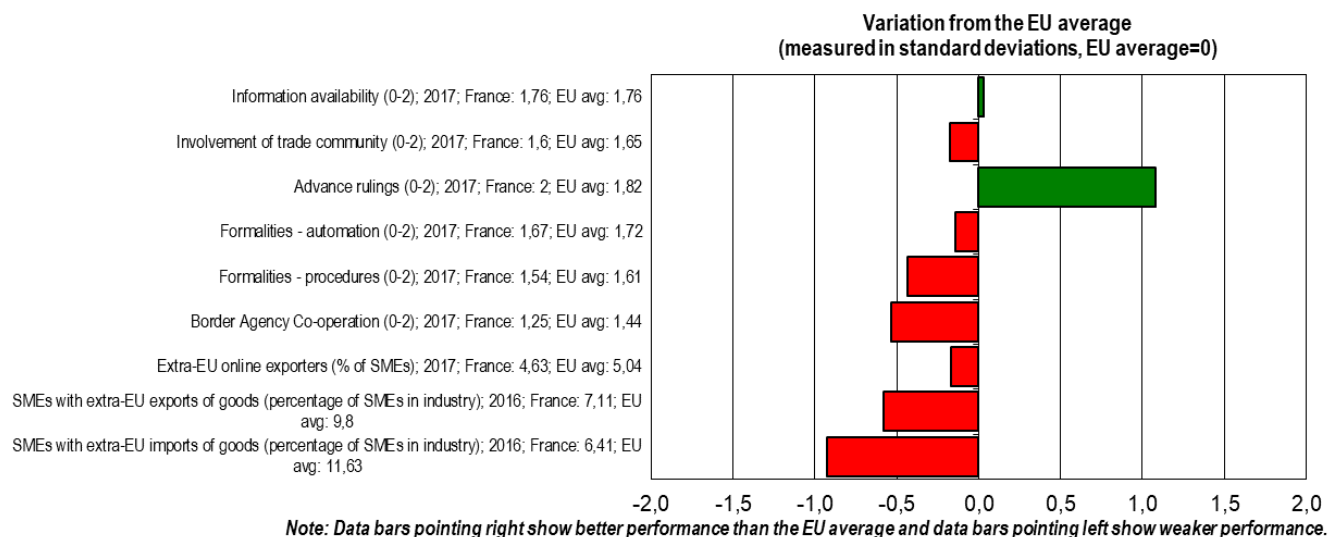
Policy progress on the environment principle has also been limited by the lack of measures taken for the benefit of SMEs, although the 'Grenelle 1' and 'Grenelle 2' laws have provided some momentum for environmental initiatives. The 'Grenelle 2' law, adopted in 2010, aims to stimulate green growth by supporting sustainable development activities. The 'Ecotech Ambition 2012' programme was set up to encourage the growth of environmentally friendly industries by providing funding and advice to green SMEs. The programme was complemented by the 'Law on Energy Transition for Green Growth', adopted in August 2015 and based on goals set out by the EU for the 2015 United

Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. SMEs in the construction sector are expected to benefit from this law's incentives to renovate buildings, while SMEs in the circular economy will also benefit from new obligations to collect used materials.

In 2017, the government announced an ambitious climate plan to reach the energy and climate transition targets in the Paris Agreement. The plan includes carrying out the transition to a carbon-neutral economy and making France a leading provider of green technology and green finance. Some of the measures announced include a vehicle conversion premium, energy cheques replacing tax breaks, and energy saving certificates for modest households. Others are due to follow but it does not look like SMEs will benefit significantly yet.

No significant new environmental policy measures were implemented in the reference period.

### 3.9 Internationalisation



France performs in line with the EU average on internationalisation. The percentage of extra-EU online exporters dropped between 2015 and 2017, from 5.2% to 4.6%. This was in line with the slight decrease in the percentage of SMEs with extra-EU exports of goods, which fell from 7.4% in 2015 to 7.1% in 2016.

Since 2008, the main French agency for promoting exports, 'Business France', has been given additional funding. The agency merged with similar departments located abroad from the Ministry of the Economy (in 2011) and with the French Agency for International Investment (in 2015). These mergers were designed to streamline the various smaller agencies and bring them under one umbrella. In 2018, the Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed creating a single 'helpdesk' or contact point under the banner of 'team France export'. The regional authorities are the leading organisations as the economy falls under their responsibility<sup>60</sup> (NOTRe law of 2015). Several operators supporting SMEs have merged at regional level depending on the region. In most cases, Business France and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) offices work together. Business France staff (about 40 advisors and 10 regional coordinators) are located in regional ICC offices. Following the restructuring, the services provided have been updated, the IT system has been modernised, and the staff are trained and categorised by field of expertise instead of geographical area. The IT system will analyse business cycles, help to monitor SMEs, and propose services. 'Team France export' will become fully operational in summer 2019, together with the communication and IT systems. It will provide 250 advisors located in France, 750 located in foreign markets and 50 sectorial communities<sup>61</sup>.

Bpifrance, the public bank for entrepreneurs, took over responsibility for the public export guarantee from COFACE in

2016. This consolidation of agencies and responsibilities has increased efficiency and enabled financial resources previously consumed by administrative processes to be reallocated to more productive uses. The overall number of companies exporting to foreign markets remained relatively low at 125,283 in 2018 against 132,000 in 2000<sup>62</sup>, and the net trade balance deteriorated in 2018 (close to €60 billion) after improving over several years<sup>63</sup>. While it is not all good news, SMEs are certainly playing a growing role in internationalisation efforts. SME exports improved in 2018 (+ 1.1%), in line with the number of other companies exporting (+ 1.2%). SMEs represent more than 95% of the total number of exporting companies but they export only 13% of the total amount<sup>64</sup>. Micro-enterprises are increasingly contributing to the rise in exports<sup>65</sup>.

France's industrial base must modernise if it is to move up the value chain and become more competitive. Initiatives supporting this outcome include the 'Industry for the Future' policy framework, the 'French Tech' programme for innovative companies, the 'French Fab' programme for industrial companies, and the 'Living Heritage Industries'<sup>66</sup> ('industries du patrimoine vivant') programme that recognises French companies exhibiting expert craftsmanship and industrial excellence. The government is also reinforcing the industry with the 'industry territories' policy<sup>67</sup>, vocational and professional training reforms, tax incentives to digitalise and decreases in existing taxes. Major obstacles to internationalisation remain and include lack of fluency in foreign languages, production costs and unfavourable regulation in foreign markets<sup>68</sup>.

No significant new international policy measures were implemented in the reference period.

## 4. Interesting initiative

Below is an example of an initiative from France to show what governments can do to support SMEs.

### Accelerator programme - Growing SMEs into mid-sized companies (*Transformation des PME en ETI*)

In 2015, the government and Bpifrance launched a programme to help SMEs grow into mid-sized companies. Various studies have shown that mid-sized companies are key to developing innovation, growth and employment. However, the number of mid-sized companies is lower in France than in other countries, at around 5,800 companies. This is almost three times less than in Germany (12,500) and half as much as in Britain.

The accelerator programme aimed to support groups of 60 SMEs per year over two year periods. Today, Bpifrance is pursuing the programme at national level and at regional level for regions willing to implement the programme, as well as for particular sectors of the economy, such as aeronautics, with the French Association for Aeronautics and Spatial Industries (GIFAS). The financial support from the government was only for setting up the programme in 2015.

The selection is based on a diagnostic. The programme identifies priority areas for growth, enhances the skills of the management committee, provides advice via an experienced manager who has had similar issues, and provides a strong network of SME leaders. The programme is based on three tools: (i) tailor-made collective training programmes for entrepreneurs; (ii) individualised audit and support, including a 360° diagnosis of the company carried out by senior consultants experienced in SME practices; and (iii) the network. The network accelerates the exchange of good practices and creates business links to progress together in a joint spirit. Entrepreneurs having participated in the accelerator programme join the wider accelerated community.

To date, 600 SMEs have been supported by the programme. The results after 24 months are encouraging. Out of 60 SMEs supported in the first wave, 20 became mid-sized companies. Following growth of 25% on average during the programme, the three first waves of SMEs supported by the programme have been growing by 10% on average in 2019.

References:

<https://www.bpifrance.fr/A-la-une/Dossiers/Accelerateur-PME>

<https://www.bpifrance.fr/A-la-une/Dossiers/Les-Accelerateurs-PME-regionaux>

<https://www.economie.gouv.fr/entreprises/accelerateur-pme-et-si-vous-passiez-a-vitesse>

<https://www.bpifrance.fr/A-la-une/Dossiers/Accelerateur-PME/Accelerateur-PME-quel-bilan>

## Important remarks

The European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) produces the SBA fact sheets as part of the SME Performance Review (SPR), its main vehicle for economic analysis of SME issues. They combine the latest available statistical and policy information. Produced annually, they help to organise the available information to facilitate SME policy assessments and monitor SBA implementation. They take stock and record progress. They are not an assessment of Member State policies. Rather, they should be regarded as an additional source of information to improve evidence-based policy-making. For example, they cite only policy measures national SME policy experts consider relevant. They do not and cannot reflect all measures the government has taken over the reference period. There is more policy information on a database accessible from the SPR website.

SME Performance Review:

<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/performance-review/>

[grow-spr@ec.europa.eu](mailto:grow-spr@ec.europa.eu)

Small Business Act:

[http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/small-business-act/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/small-business-act/index_en.htm)

Entrepreneurship and SMEs:

<https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The two graphs below present the trend over time for the variables. They consist of index values for the years since 2008, with the base year 2008 set at a value of 100. As from 2017, the graphs show estimates of the development over time, produced by DIW Econ on the basis of 2008-2016 figures from Eurostat's Structural Business Statistics Database. The data cover the 'non-financial business economy', which includes industry, construction, trade and services (NACE Rev. 2 sections B to J, L, M and N). They do not cover enterprises in agriculture, forestry and fisheries or largely non-market service sectors such as education and health. A detailed methodology can be consulted at: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/performance-review/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.presse-citron.net/french-tech-bat-record-mais-semble-chercher-second-souffle/>;  
<https://venturebeat.com/2019/01/31/la-french-tech-faces-its-next-challenge-how-to-go-big/>; last accessed 5.6.2019.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20190413-france-paris-macron-brexit-tech-capital-european-station-f>; last accessed 5.6.2019.

<sup>4</sup> <https://think.ing.com/snaps/france-the-lost-year-of-industrial-production/>; last accessed 5.6.2019.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; <https://think.ing.com/articles/exports-saved-french-gdp-from-stagnation-in-4q18/#a2>;  
<https://www.europe1.fr/economie/gilets-jaunes-perde-de-01-point-de-croissance-sur-lannee-2018-pour-la-france-avance-le-maire-3817340>; <https://www.la Tribune.fr/economie/france/gilets-jaunes-les-craintes-sur-la-croissance-se-multiplient-800502.html>; last accessed 1.7.2019.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/4137616>; last accessed 5.6.2019.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2015359#graphique-figure1>; last accessed 5.6.2019.

<sup>8</sup> [www.europeanstartupmonitor2019.eu](http://www.europeanstartupmonitor2019.eu)

<sup>9</sup> Due to data availability, the data on high-growth firms refer to the 'business economy' only, which covers sections B-N, including section K (financial activities, except activities of holding companies). The 'non-financial business economy' excludes section K.

<sup>10</sup> In line with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 439/2014, high-growth enterprises are defined as firms with at least 10 employees in the beginning of their growth and average annualised growth in number of employees greater than 10% per annum, over a 3-year period. The proportion of high-growth enterprises is the number of high-growth enterprises divided by the number of active enterprises with at least 10 employees. The source of the data on high-growth enterprises is Eurostat: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/bd\\_9pm\\_r2](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/bd_9pm_r2), last accessed 15.4.2019).

<sup>11</sup> The 2019 SBA fact sheets benefited substantially from input from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra, Italy. The JRC made major improvements to the methodological approach, statistical work on the dataset and the visual presentation of the data.

<sup>12</sup> 141 « Territoires d'industrie », fers de lance de la réindustrialisation des territoires: <https://www.cget.gouv.fr/dossiers/territoires-dindustrie>; last accessed on 5.6.2019.

<sup>13</sup> The PACTE law adopted by the French Parliament, available at: <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/plan-entreprises-pacte>; last accessed on 5.6.2019.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.cci.fr/web/presse/actualite-fiche/-/asset\\_publisher/9FDf/content/gce-janvier-2019](https://www.cci.fr/web/presse/actualite-fiche/-/asset_publisher/9FDf/content/gce-janvier-2019)

<sup>15</sup> The quadrant chart combines two sets of information. Firstly, it shows current performance based on data for the latest available years. This information is plotted along the X-axis measured in standard deviations of the simple, non-weighted arithmetical average for the EU. Secondly, it shows progress over time, i.e. the average annual growth rates from 2008 to 2019. These are measured against the individual indicators which make up the SBA area averages. Hence, the location of a particular SBA area average in any of the four quadrants provides information not only about where the country is located in this SBA area relative to the EU average at a given point in time, but also about the extent of progress made between 2008 and 2019. All SBA principles, with the exception of the 'think small first' principle for which there is not enough statistical data available, are calculated as composite indicators following the OECD/JRC Handbook guide. A detailed methodology can be consulted at: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/performance-review/>

<sup>16</sup> The policy measures presented in this SBA fact sheet are only a selection of the measures the government took in 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. The national SME policy expert that PwC (DG GROW's lead contractor for the 2019 SBA fact sheets) contracted made the selection. The experts were asked to select only the measures they considered the most important, i.e. the ones expected to have the highest impact in the SBA area in question. The complete range of measures the experts compiled in producing this year's fact sheets will be published alongside the fact sheets in the form of a policy database on the DG GROW website.

<sup>17</sup> <http://simplification.modernisation.gouv.fr/mesures/entreprises/echanger-avec-ladministration/simplifier-la-production-normative-par-la-conduite-de-tests-pme/> and <https://www.ifrap.org/emploi-et-politiques-sociales/mise-en-place-dun-test-pme-francois-hollande-doit-tenir-parole>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions\\_services/dgcis/consultation-publique/guide-pratique-consultation-entreprises.pdf](https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions_services/dgcis/consultation-publique/guide-pratique-consultation-entreprises.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions\\_services/dgcis/consultation-publique/guide-pratique-consultation-entreprises.pdf](https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/files/files/directions_services/dgcis/consultation-publique/guide-pratique-consultation-entreprises.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://simplification.modernisation.gouv.fr/mesures/entreprises/echanger-avec-ladministration/simplifier-la-production-normative-par-la-conduite-de-tests-pme/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://simplification.modernisation.gouv.fr/mesures/entreprises/echanger-avec-ladministration/simplifier-la-production-normative-par-la-conduite-de-tests-pme/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf/sanctions-delaies-paiement>

<sup>23</sup>

[https://www.senat.fr/espace\\_presse/actualites/201702/trois\\_questions\\_a\\_elisabeth\\_lamure\\_et\\_olivier\\_cadic\\_auteurs\\_du\\_rapport\\_simplifier\\_efficacement\\_pour\\_liberer\\_les\\_entreprises.html](https://www.senat.fr/espace_presse/actualites/201702/trois_questions_a_elisabeth_lamure_et_olivier_cadic_auteurs_du_rapport_simplifier_efficacement_pour_liberer_les_entreprises.html) and <https://www.senat.fr/notice-rapport/2016/r16-433-notice.html> (see pp. 96-100).

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.acoss.fr/home/observatoire-economique/publications/acoss-stat/2019/acoss-stat-n283.html>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.impots.gouv.fr/portail/actualite/relevement-des-seuils-dapplication-des-regimes-micro-bic-et-micro-bnc-modalites-dooption>

<sup>26</sup> <https://presse.bpi.france.fr/%E2%80%8Bcreer-et-innover-en-france-le-role-des-plateformes-dinnovation-dans-les-ecosystemes-regionaux/>

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