

Europe needs investment to grow. Investors are choosing carefully.

Europe's growth is slowing and relies more on labor rather than investment.

2.6%

Poland, growth per year since 2020
EU27: 1.2%

4×

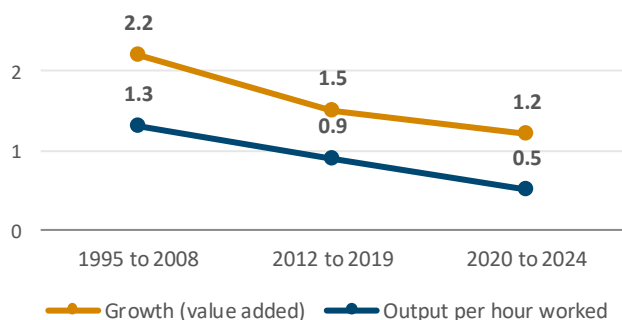
Poland's productivity growth
vs the EU average since 2020

+45%

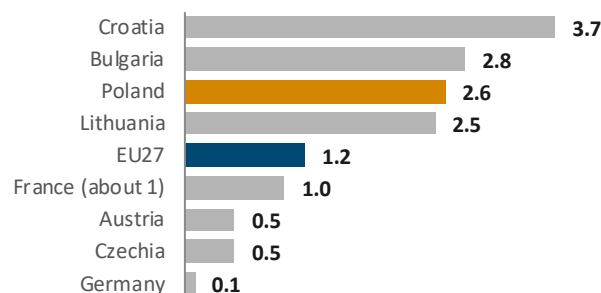
Romania, FDI inflows in 2025
almost on par with Czechia

GROWTH · CEE LEADS SINCE 2020 (%)

EU27, average growth per year

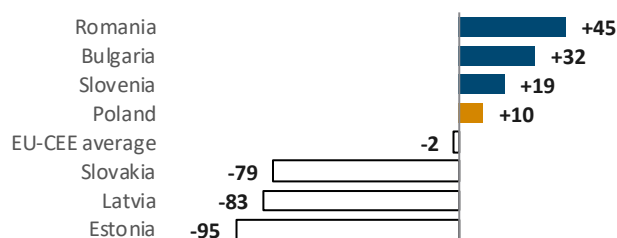


Growth per year, 2020 to 2024



FOREIGN INVESTMENT · WHERE IT GREW (%)

FDI inflows, change 2025 vs 2024



New greenfield investment into CESEE

Indicator	wiiw
Projects announced, Q1 2026 vs Q1 2025	-44%
Capital committed, same period	-35%
Committed by China, last four quarters (largest new investor)	€16.5bn
China, previous four quarters	€9bn
Share of the region's FDI stock from EU countries	≈70%

FROM MACRO TO BOARDROOM

wiiw research	Executive Benchmark	Peer Exchange Quotes
Growth relies more on people working; capital per hour is shrinking in 12 of 27 EU countries.	Upskilling 35% and automation 25% lead the response to labor shortages, ahead of recruitment (14%).	After Brexit, one logistics firm digitalized customs. The next EU rule change needs "four, maybe six" extra staff, not 130. <i>Prague, Feb 2026</i>
New greenfield project announcements into CESEE fell 44% in Q1 2026, a six year low.	67% plan to expand their CEE footprint over the next three years; 10% plan to consolidate or relocate.	"If you wait, that means you are going behind." <i>Financial services executive, Prague, Feb 2026</i>
Rising wages move manufacturers away from the "extended workbench" model; in Czechia, efficiency gains turned negative.	69% report labor costs up 10% or more in two years; only 16% respond mainly by repricing, 31% by accelerating automation.	"We are seeing quantity moving into quality." <i>Real estate and logistics executive, Prague, Feb 2026</i>

Sources: wiiw, "EU growth remains weak and is increasingly labour-driven," 1 Oct 2026 (wiiw Growth and Productivity Database); wiiw, "Investors are increasingly shying away from Eastern Europe," 16 Jun 2026, on wiiw Monthly Report 05/2026. Executive Network surveys: CEE Labor & Productivity Benchmark 2026 (n=170 board level executives, March to May 2026) and Supply Chain Strategy in CEE (n=230, February 2026). Quotes from Executive Network meetings, unattributed.

The data tells you what happened. wiiw tells you what it means.

A condensed excerpt from the wiiw Executive Network data suite, trusted by senior leaders across 25 CEE markets.

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