



Press Release

Foreign companies back France more strongly than ever as a European business location

Paris, April 3, 2018. “The 2017 Annual Report: Foreign investment in France – The international development of the French economy” released today provides confirmation of the renewed confidence foreign investors have in France as a business location. The figures were revealed at a press conference held at the headquarters of Cisco in Issy les Moulineaux, near Paris, by the Minister for the Economy and Finance, Mr. Bruno Le Maire, and the CEO of Business France, Mr. Christophe Lecourtier.

A total of **1,298 investment decisions** in 2017 – up 16% year-on-year, **at an average of 25 decisions per week** – created or maintained **33,489 jobs** (compared with 1,117 decisions and 30,108 jobs in 2016). No fewer than **412 new companies** decided to expand their business by investing in France, making up 32% of all investment projects recorded.

Fifty percent of decisions led to investments at new sites (up 14% from 2016), while **42% involved expanding operations at existing locations** (up 22% from 2016).

“The growing numbers of investment decisions in France, and the jobs they generate, highlight the renewed confidence that decision-makers now have in a country on the move. France’s business image is improving markedly: according to a survey conducted by Kantar Public on behalf of Business France, 84% of foreign investors now consider the French economy to be attractive, up 10 percentage points from 2016,” said Christophe Lecourtier, CEO of Business France.

Foreign companies invested primarily in **production/manufacturing operations, with 343 investment decisions in 2017**, creating 16,123 jobs, amounting to 26% of all foreign investments in France, **up 23% from 2016**. Decisions made by companies from Germany (the leading foreign investor in French industry), the United States, Italy and Belgium amounted to nearly half of all foreign production/manufacturing investments.

R&D, engineering and design projects accounted for 10% of all foreign investments, with 125 decisions recorded, up 9% year-on-year. France’s standing as one of the most innovative countries in the world can be seen in various international rankings, including the 2017 Deloitte Technology Fast 500 EMEA, where France once again came out on top. The 2017 Kantar Public survey also highlights France’s prowess, with 81% of foreign investors seeing innovation as one of France’s competitive advantages.

European countries remained the leading sources of foreign investment, with 58% of all investment decisions in France, followed by North America (23%) and then Asia (13%), whose share remained stable, except for India, which recorded the biggest rise among emerging economies (+73%).

The United States regained the top spot it had conceded to Germany in 2016, with 230 projects generating 7,047 jobs and accounting for 18% of all investments in France, while Germany (208 projects) was second. Companies from the United States also accounted for more than one-quarter of all inward R&D investments throughout the year.

Many countries posted higher project numbers than the previous year, with the largest increases in investment decisions involving companies from the United States (+26%), Switzerland (+40%), Canada (+37%), the Netherlands (+47%) and Sweden (+76%).

The diversity of France's regions continues to drive their attractiveness to investors. Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand Est, Hauts de France and Occitanie were attractive destinations for **production/manufacturing operations** in 2017, while 45% of all jobs generated by foreign investment in **logistics activities** were in Ile de France (Paris region), and investments in **R&D operations** were particularly buoyant in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Bretagne (Brittany) and Hauts de France.

“Innovation and manufacturing stand out in these results, in addition to France’s established structural advantages. In recent months, a new image of the country has emerged, attracting foreign investors here to pursue their projects in Europe. Everyone at Business France works day in day out to convince these investors that France is an attractive destination. Their support and guidance, provided in conjunction with our regional partners, helped secure 677 investment decisions in France in 2017, or nearly half of all projects attracted to the country,” said Christophe Lecourtier, CEO of Business France.

Business France is the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, responsible for fostering export growth by French businesses, as well as promoting and facilitating international investment in France.

It promotes France’s companies, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location, and also runs the VIE international internship program.

Business France has 1,500 personnel, both in France and in 64 countries throughout the world, who work with a network of public- and private-sector partners.

For further information, please visit: www.businessfrance.fr

Media contacts:

cynthia.odsi@businessfrance.fr

severine.decarvalho@businessfrance.fr

presse@businessfrance.fr

Tel.: +33 1 40 74 73 88