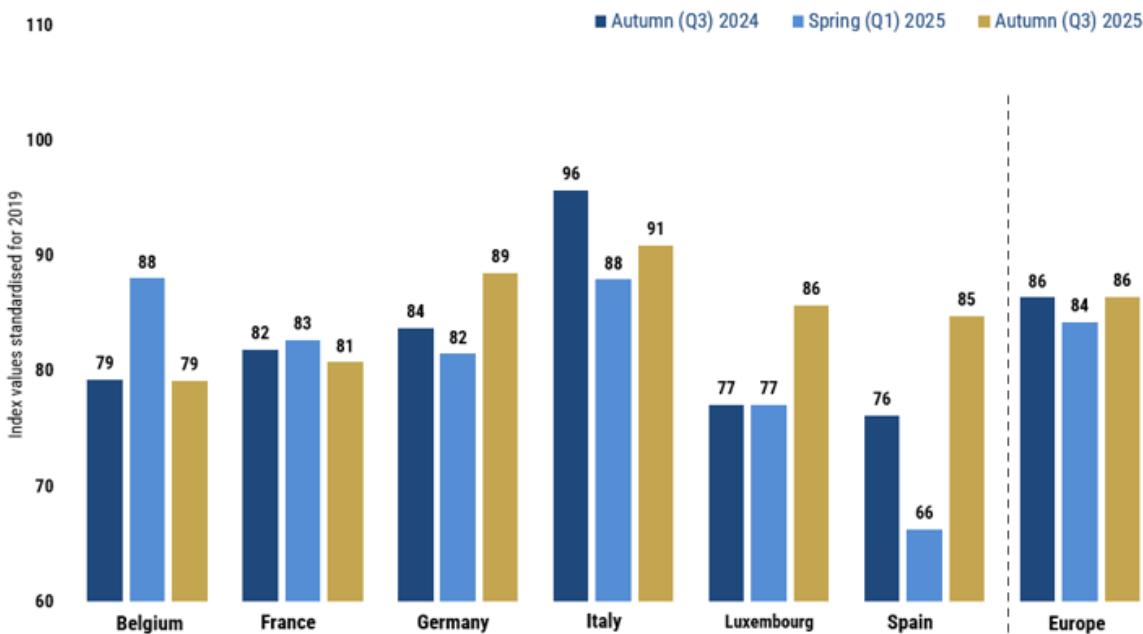


European Executive Search Market: Recovery Gains Traction in the second half of 2025, but National Paths Continue to Diverge

Brussels, January 2026 – Following a subdued start to the year 2025, the European Executive Search and Selection market shows a noticeable improvement in the last months of the year. The latest State of the Industry Barometer published by the European Confederation of Search and Selection Associations (ECSSA) indicates that overall market sentiment and confidence have strengthened, with the European index rising to 86.5 points and returning to the level observed one year ago.

The recovery is driven by a number of national markets, albeit at different speeds. Germany records a clear rebound after several weak quarters, while Italy reaches the highest index level among all countries surveyed. Spain shows the most dynamic development, rebounding sharply from a very low starting point earlier in the year. Luxembourg also records a significant improvement, supported by more favourable business assessments and stronger sales performance. At the same time, not all markets participate equally in the upswing. Belgium experiences a marked decline after its strong performance in the first quarter, and France continues to show limited movement, remaining under pressure from persistently weak current business conditions.



The respective index values are standardised to the average for 2019. An index value of 100 means that the current business climate index, i.e. the mood in consulting, is at exactly the same level as in 2019.

"The figures of the second half of 2025 show that confidence is gradually returning to the European Executive Search market," says Valerie Schena Ehrenberger, President of ECSSA. "At the same time, the Barometer makes clear that this recovery is far from uniform. While some markets are regaining momentum, others continue to face restrained demand. It will be important to closely monitor the impact that the current geopolitical situation may have on confidence and future market developments. The coming months will show whether this renewed optimism can translate into lasting market activity."

Taken together, the results point to a market that is stabilising but not yet fully recovered. In several countries, improved expectations contrast with still challenging operational indicators, such as assignment volumes and sales development, highlighting the uneven nature of the current development.

About ECSSA State of the Industry Barometer

The ECSSA Barometer, published twice a year, is based on survey responses from member associations in six European countries. It reflects perceptions, expectations and confidence levels of market participants and does not represent economic performance data of the sector. Both, the current business situation and short-term expectations of Executive Search and Recruitment consultancies are tracked, combining these into a consolidated index.

The index methodology is based on the widely used German Ifo model and has been in use since 2010.

About ECSSA

The European Confederation of Search and Selection Associations (ECSSA) is the umbrella organization for national executive recruitment and search associations in Europe. Founded in 2004, ECSSA currently unites six national member associations from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Spain. The federation's mission is to promote professional standards and ethics across the industry, facilitate transnational cooperation and dialogue, and represent the sector's interests in relation to European institutions and stakeholders.

Press Contact

Valerie Schena-Ehrenberger (Chairman)

Email: info@ecssa.org

www.ecssa.org