

Press release

Digitisation in SMEs is progressing very slowly

IfM Bonn: ICT know-how still primarily represented in large companies

Bonn, 3 June 2022. The proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with online sales of at least one per cent of total turnover has risen by two percentage points compared to 2020 (2021: 19 %). In comparison to large enterprises, SMEs sell their products and services less frequently online. However, compared to the EU average, online sales are more common in German SMEs. Nevertheless, there are also some countries where the share of SMEs generating at least one per cent of turnover with online sales is higher. These countries include, among others, Denmark (38%), Ireland (33%), Sweden (33%) and Lithuania (32%).

Significant decline in ICT training courses

Large enterprises employ specialists from the information and communication technology sector (ICT) more often (78%) than SMEs. Only 17 % of all SMEs had ICT staff in 2020.

At the same time, the proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises that offered their employees further training in ICT fell by 8% in the first pandemic year 2020 compared to 2019 (30%). Nevertheless, the share was still above the EU average (18 %).

Low digital intensity among SMEs

The digital intensity degree also depends on the company's size, measured by how many of the 12 specified technologies are represented in a company. According to this fact, small and medium-sized enterprises in Germany have a slightly lower digital intensity than the EU average. Large companies in Germany, in contrast, are in line with the EU average.

Institut für
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