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PRESS RELEASE

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BUSINESS AND CONSUMER SURVEYS
September 2026

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE INDICATORS DECREASE

The Consumer confidence indicator declined in August and September[1], after increasing in the previous three months. The decline in September was driven by negative contributions from expectations regarding the future evolution of the country's economic situation and of households' financial situation, as well as from opinions on the past evolution of households' financial situation. In the opposite direction, expectations on the future evolution of major purchases by households registered a positive contribution.

The balance of opinions on past price developments decreased in the last five months, after recording in April its highest rise since May 2008. The balance of expectations on future price developments increased in August and September, following the decreases of the previous four months.

The economic climate indicator[2] decreased in September, after having increased in the previous month. The confidence indicators increased in Manufacturing Industry and in Services, having decreased in Trade and in Construction and Public Works.

In the Manufacturing Industry, the indicator increased in September, after having decreased in the previous month, driven by the positive contributions of assessments of stock of finished products and, more significantly, of production expectations. The confidence indicator of Services also increased in August and September, after having decreased in July, driven by the positive contributions from assessments of the firm's activity and opinions on the evolution of the order books. By contrast, the Trade confidence indicator decreased in the last three months, slightly in September, reflecting the negative contributions from assessments on the current volume of stocks and opinions on the volume of sales. The confidence indicator of Construction and Public Works also decreased in September, after having increased in July and August, reflecting the negative contributions of both components: opinions on current order books and perspectives on employment.

In September, the entrepreneurs' expectations regarding the future evolution of selling prices increased in all sectors, with particularly strong increases in Manufacturing Industry, Services and Trade, and a more moderate increase in Construction and Public Works.

[1] The data collection period (see final notes) of the consumer survey occurred from 01 to 15 of September (working days), and from 01 to 23 of September in the case of business surveys.

[2] The economic climate indicator summarizes the balances of business surveys' (Construction and Public Works, Manufacturing Industry, Trade and Services).

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Figure 1.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDICATOR

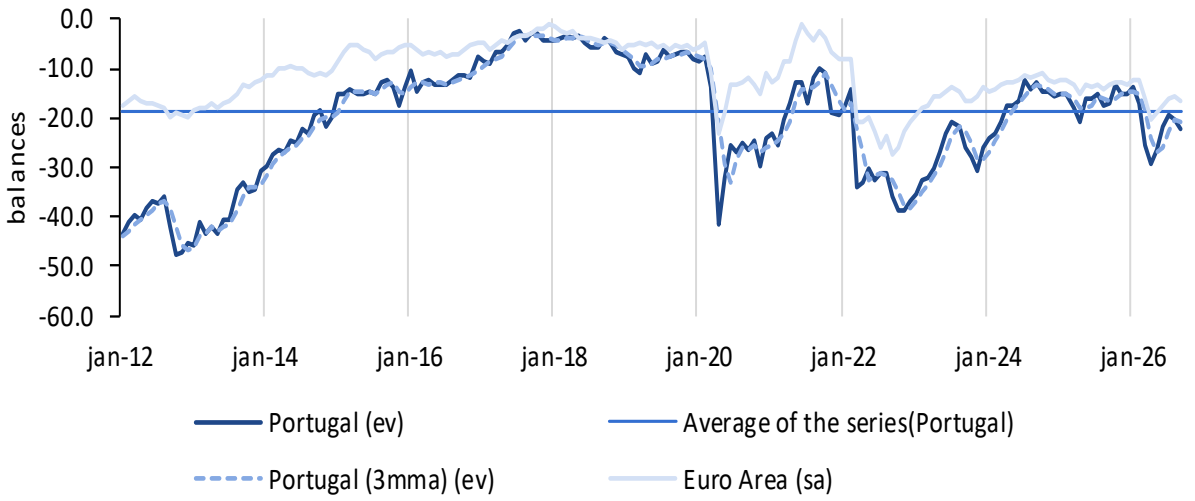


Figure 2.

ECONOMIC CLIMATE INDICATOR
- CONSTRUCTION AND PUBLIC WORKS, MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES -

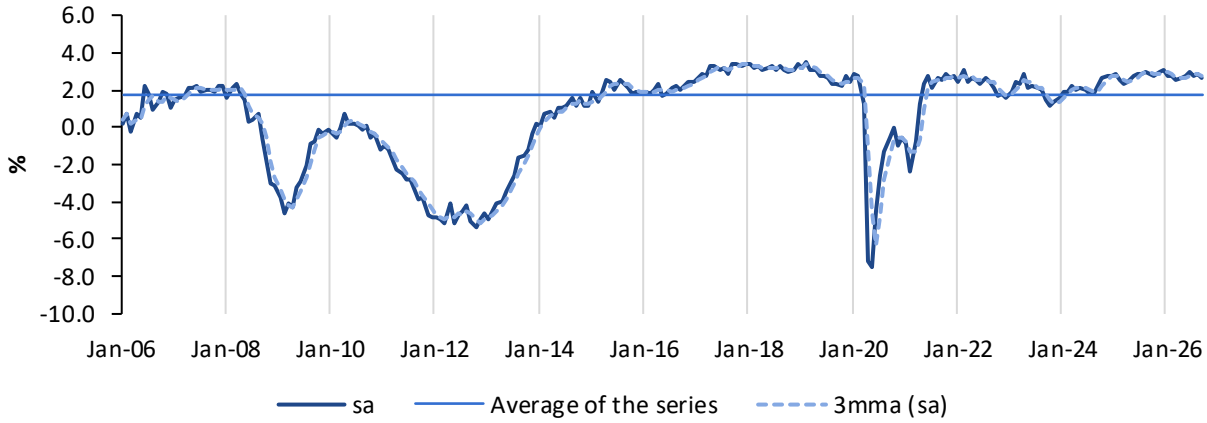


Figure 3.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE INDICATOR

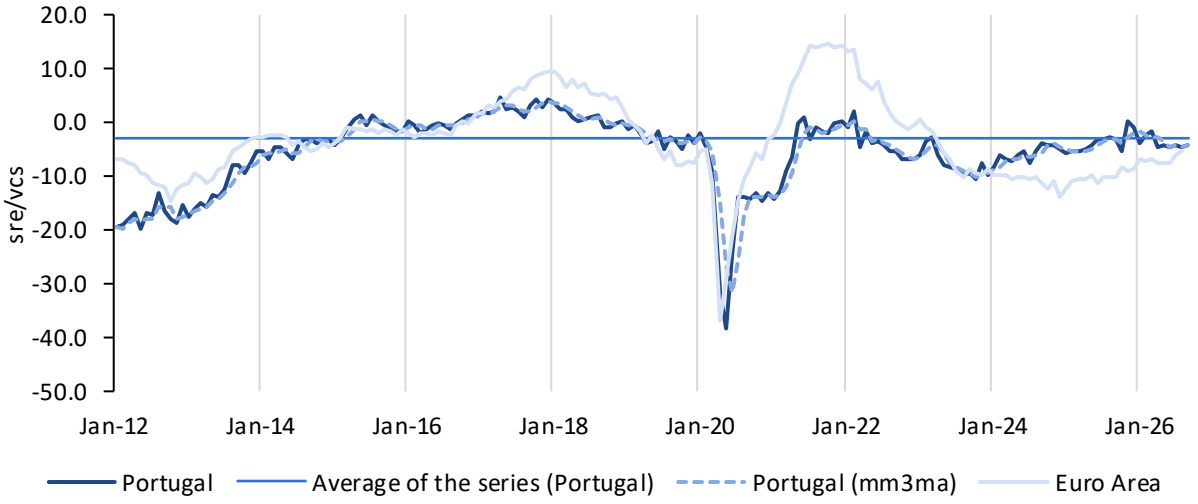


Figure 4.

CONSTRUCTION AND PUBLIC WORKS CONFIDENCE INDICATOR

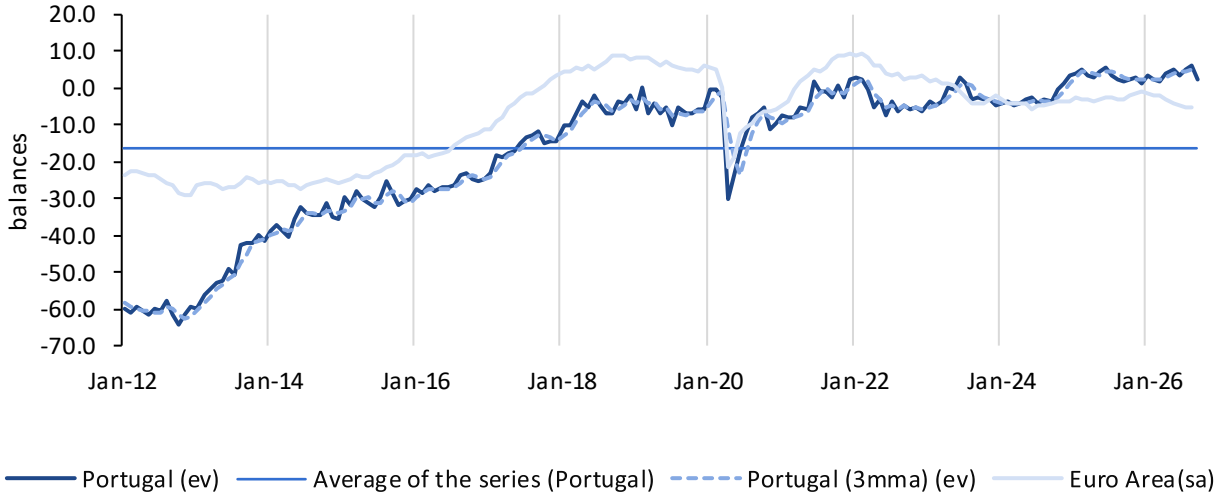


Figure 5.

TRADE CONFIDENCE INDICATOR

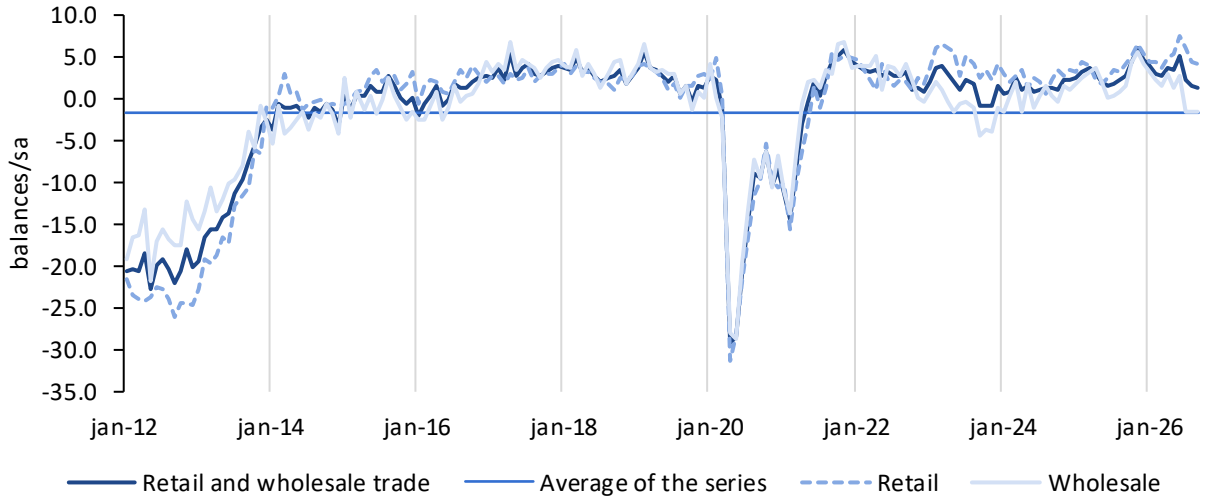
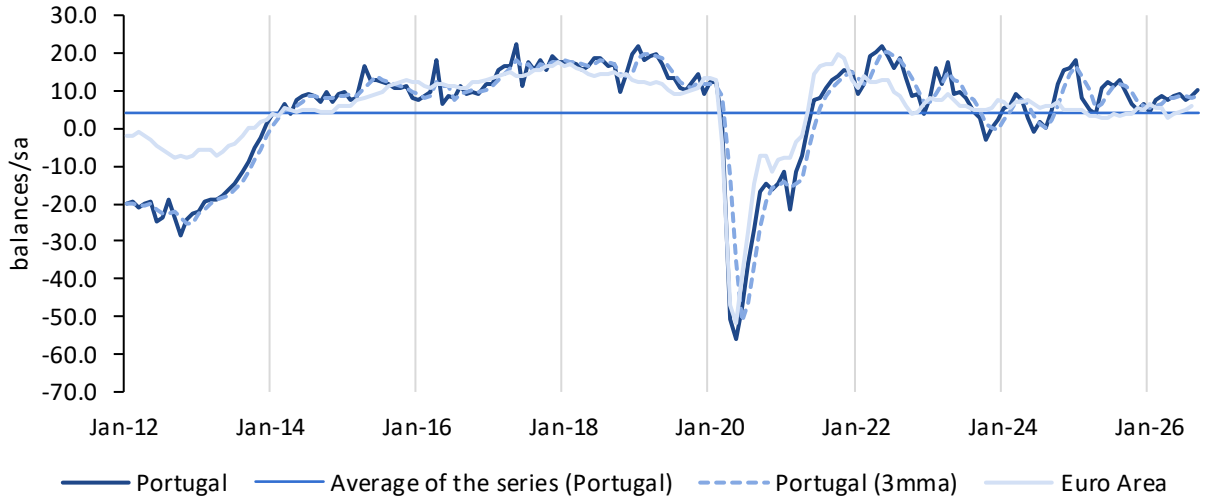


Figure 6.

SERVICES CONFIDENCE INDICATOR



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METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The Business and Consumer Qualitative Surveys published by Statistics Portugal are developed in the framework of the harmonized Business and Consumer Surveys Programme of the European Commission (EC) DG-ECFIN (Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs) and are financially supported in the framework of the agreement signed between these two institutions. The questionnaires are harmonized among the European countries, as well as the respective confidence indicators' methodology. The surveys' results are sent to the EC in effective values, and, therefore, the seasonally adjusted values published by the EC are computed by this entity. The seasonal adjustment method used by the EC is available on the user guide, accessible in: Methodological User Guide.

The seasonal adjustment uses the X13-Arima method (combination of moving averages process and auto-regressive integrated moving average models) developed in the JDemetra+[3], software provided by Eurostat. This application relies on the use of probabilistic models to correct seasonal effects from the original series. The seasonal treatment is updated for monthly and quarterly series in May, which might result on a revision of the series previously published.

The use of moving averages smoothes out the series by removing the irregular movements, allowing the detection of the short-term trends. Since the average is not centered (the information is used to analyze the evolution of the last month) there is a small lag compared with the trend that is supposed to detect. In order to compare the difference between original and moving average series, the graphical representation of the confidence indicators presents both types of series.

The balances of the questions are the difference between the positive and negative answers, that is Balance = %answer(+) - %answer(-). In the Consumer Survey, there are questions with more than one option of positive/negative answer. In these cases, to the most positive/negative answers is given the weight 1 and to the others the weight 0.5, that is Balance = [%answer (++)*1+ %answer (+)*0.5] - [%answer (--)*1 +%answer (-)*0.5]. The percentage of answers that correspond to "equal" is not considered.

The analysis of this press release is based on monthly series of effective values (raw or seasonally adjusted data), which allows for a clearer identification of very short-term movements, particularly relevant in the context of worsening impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The monthly series in three-months moving average (3mma) and the quarterly series in two-quarters moving averages (2qma) are available in the excel file that supports this press release.

[3] JDemetra+ is free and open-source software, available at: JDemetra+ documentation.

INFORMATION ON DATA COLLECTION

In September 2026, the data collection period for the Consumer Survey occurred between the 1st and 15th (business days), with 1199 responses obtained (telephone interviews), and from the 1st to 23th for business surveys (Webinq) with 1234 responses in the Trade sector, 649 responses in the Construction sector, 1400 responses in the Industry sector and 1373 responses in the Services sector.

The response and weighted response rates for business surveys were:

Table 1.

RESPONSE AND WEIGHTED RESPONSE RATES

Business Surveys	Response Rate				Weighted Response Rate(2)			
	2025(1)	July 2026	August 2026	September 2026	2025(1)	July 2026	August 2026	September 2026
Manufacturing Industry	77.6%	76.3%	73.6%	75.5%	90.9%	91.2%	91.3%	90.2%
Construction and Public Works	74.6%	74.5%	72.5%	74.5%	87.4%	88.4%	87.5%	88.3%
Trade	76.5%	71.4%	73.6%	74.1%	92.3%	93.0%	94.3%	92.3%
Services	76.3%	75.1%	73.7%	74.8%	91.4%	91.4%	91.0%	92.9%

(1) Annual average.
(2) Corresponds to the ratio between the turnover of the firms that answered to the survey and the turnover of all the firms in the sample.

It should also be noted that the representativeness of the branches of activity is covered by the Business Surveys. considering the Gross Added Value (GVA) at current prices (Final Annual National Accounts) as the economic variable. is as follows:

Table 2.

WEIGHT OF BRANCHES' GVA

Qualitative Business Surveys	Weight of the GVA of the branches of each survey in the total GVA of the economy 2024
Manufacturing Industry	13.4%
Construction and Public Works	5.1%
Trade	11.8%
Services	39.7%

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ECONOMIC CLIMATE INDICATOR

Synthetic Indicator estimated using balances from the questions of the Manufacturing Industry, Trade, Construction and Public Works and Services Surveys. This indicator's methodology is based on factor analysis and the estimated series (the common component) is calibrated using GDP's rates of change. The questions that integrate the indicator are:

Manufacturing Industry Qualitative survey

- How has your production developed over the past 3 months? It has… 1. + increased; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - decreased.
- Do you consider your current overall order books to be...? 1. + more than sufficient (above normal); 2. = sufficient (normal for the season); 3. – not sufficient (below normal).
- Do you consider your current export order books to be...? 1. + more than sufficient (above normal); 2. = sufficient (normal for the season); 3. – not sufficient (below normal).
- How do you expect your production to develop over the next 3 months? It will... 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. - decrease. (seasonally adjusted)

Trade Qualitative survey

- How has (have) your business activity (sales) developed over the past 3 months? It has… (They have...) 1. + improved (increased); 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - deteriorated (decreased). (seasonally adjusted)
- How do you expect your orders placed with suppliers to change over the next 3 months? They will... 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. - decrease. (seasonally adjusted)
- How do you expect your business activity (sales) to change over the next 3 months? It (They) will... 1. + improve (increase); 2. = remain unchanged 3. – deteriorate (decrease). (seasonally adjusted)

Construction and Public Works Qualitative survey

- How has your building activity developed over the past 3 months? It has...; 1. + increased; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - decreased.
- Do you consider your current overall order books to be…?: 1. + more than sufficient (above normal); 2. = sufficient (normal for the season); 3. – not sufficient (below normal).
- How do you expect your firm's total employment to change over the next 3 months? It will...; 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. - decrease.

Services Qualitative survey

- How has your business situation developed over the past 3 months? It has… 1. + improved; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - deteriorated. (seasonally adjusted)

- How has demand (turnover) for your company's services changed over the past 3 months? It has… 1. + increased; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - decreased. (seasonally adjusted)
- How do you expect the demand (turnover) for your company's services to change over the next 3 months? It will…1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. – decrease. (seasonally adjusted)

SECTORIAL CONFIDENCE INDICATORS

The confidence indicators (CI) are the result of the arithmetic average of balance of the following questions:

Manufacturing Industry confidence indicator

- Do you consider your current overall order books to be...? 1. + more than sufficient (above normal); 2. = sufficient (normal for the season); 3. – not sufficient (below normal).
- How do you expect your production to develop over the next 3 months? It will... 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. - decrease.
- [Inverted Sign] Do you consider your current stock of finished products to be...? 1. + too large (above normal); 2. = adequate (normal for the season); 3. – too small (below normal).

Trade confidence indicator

- How has (have) your business activity (sales) developed over the past 3 months? It has… (They have...) 1. + improved (increased); 2. = remained unchanged; 3. – deteriorated (decreased).
- How do you expect your business activity (sales) to change over the next 3 months? It (They) will... 1. + improve (increase); 2. = remain unchanged 3. – deteriorate (decrease).
- [Inverted Sign] Do you consider the volume of stock you currently hold to be...? 1. + too large (above normal); 2. = adequate (normal for the season); 3. – too small (below normal).

Construction and Public Works confidence indicator

- Do you consider your current overall order books to be…?: 1. + more than sufficient (above normal); 2. = sufficient (normal for the season); 3. – not sufficient (below normal).
- How do you expect your firm's total employment to change over the next 3 months? It will...; 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. - decrease.

Services confidence indicator

- How has your business situation developed over the past 3 months? It has… 1. + improved; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - deteriorated.
- How has demand (turnover) for your company's services changed over the past 3 months? It has… 1. + increased; 2. = remained unchanged; 3. - decreased.

- How do you expect the demand (turnover) for your company's services to change over the next 3 months? It will… 1. + increase; 2. = remain unchanged; 3. − decrease.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDICATOR

The consumer confidence indicator is calculated as the arithmetic average of the balances of the following questions:

- How has the financial situation of your household changed over the last 12 months? It has...1. + + got a lot better; 2. + got a little better; 3.= stayed the same; 4.− got a little worse; 5. − − got a lot worse; 6. N don't know.
- How do you expect the financial position of your household to change over the next 12 months? It will...1. + + get a lot better; 2. + get a little better; 3.= stay the same; 4.− get a little worse; 5. − − get a lot worse; 6. N don't know.
- How do you expect the general economic situation in this country to develop over the next 12 months? It will... 1. + + get a lot better; 2. + get a little better; 3.= stay the same; 4.− get a little worse; 5. − − get a lot worse; 6. N don't know.
- Compared to the past 12 months. do you expect to spend more or less money on major purchases (furniture. electrical/electronic devices. etc.) over the next 12 months? I will spend...1. + +much more; 2. + a little more; 3.− a little less; 4. − − much less; 5. N don't know.

UNCERTAINTY INDICATOR

The indicator “Uncertainty about the future evolution of activity – Balance” is part of the European Commission’s harmonised survey programme. It is an indicator directly associated with measuring economic uncertainty, introduced in 2021 when the Commission began including in its qualitative surveys of businesses and consumers a specific metric designed to capture the perceived difficulty economic agents have in forecasting the future evolution of their activity.

This indicator does not directly ask about the “level of uncertainty.” Instead, consumers or business managers are surveyed in a way that evaluates the objective difficulty of forecasting, whether they anticipate an unfavourable or favourable scenario.

The wording of the question is identical across all business surveys (Manufacturing, Services, Retail Trade, and Construction):“Do you consider that the future evolution of your company’s activity is currently: 1.Easy to predict (++); 2.Reasonably easy to predict (+); 3.Reasonably difficult to predict (-); 4. Difficult to predict (--).”

In the case of the consumer survey, the question is as follows: “The future financial situation of your household is…: 1.Easy to predict (++); 2. More or less easy to predict (+); 3. More or less difficult to predict (-); 4.Difficult to predict (--).”

The indicator results from the weighted average of the different response options, as follows:

$$\text{Balance} = [\%(\text{"--"}) + 0.5 \times \%(\text{"-"})] - [\%(\text{"++"}) + 0.5 \times \%(\text{"+"})]$$

Thus, a positive indicator value suggests greater uncertainty, indicating greater difficulty in forecasting the future evolution of activity, while a negative value indicates lower uncertainty, signalling greater ease of prediction.

LABOUR HOARDING INDICATOR

The Labour Hoarding Indicator (LHI) aims to measure the accumulation of the labour factor, to monitor this phenomenon throughout the economic cycle. Labour-factor accumulation can be understood as the portion of the labour input that is not fully used by a company in its production process at a given moment, particularly during periods of reduced economic activity.

The LHI is a monthly indicator and is calculated from firm-level microdata, combining responses from business managers to two questions from qualitative surveys, namely expectations regarding the future evolution of employment and production.

The formulation of the employment question is identical across all business surveys:

"Do you expect that, over the next 3 months, the number of persons employed in your company will: 1. Increase; 2. Remain stable; 3. Decrease."

Regarding production expectations, the questions differ slightly in formulation across the four surveys. The industry survey asks about production expectations, the services survey about demand (turnover), and the trade survey about business activity (sales). The response options are essentially the same in these three questions: 1. Increase; 2. Remain the same; 3. Decrease. In the construction survey, the question refers to opinions about the order book, with the following options: 1. Above normal; 2. Normal; 3. Below normal.

The construction of the indicator is based on the idea that labour-factor accumulation occurs when companies expect their production to decrease, but their employment to remain stable or even increase.[4]

ABBREVIATIONS

Bal: Balances correspond to weighted difference between the percentages of positive and negative responses.

DG-ECFIN: Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs.

EC: European Commission.

EV: Effective Values.

GVA: Gross Added Value.

SA: Seasonally Adjusted values.

3MMA: Three-Months Moving Average.

2QMA: Two-Quarters Moving Average

[4] For further information on the construction of the indicator, please consult the special issue on the December 2023 press release.

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METHODOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS (ONLY IN PORTUGUESE VERSION)

Consumer survey

Trade survey

Construction survey

Manufacturing industry survey

Services survey

INDICATORS AVAILABLE AT STATISTICS PORTUGAL OFFICIAL WEBSITE

Indicators are published in the Dissemination Database on the INE.

Attached to this press release is an excel file containing the analyzed indicators and additional information.

Next monthly press release – October 29th 2026