

Atradius Payment Practices Barometer

B2B payment practices trends Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) 2025



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About the Atradius Payment Practices Barometer

The Atradius Payment Practices Barometer is an annual survey of business-to-business (B2B) payment practices in markets across the world.

Our survey gives you the opportunity to hear directly from businesses trading on credit with B2B customers about how they are coping with evolving trends in customer payment behaviour. Staying informed about these trends is vital because it helps to identify emerging shifts in customer payment habits, allowing businesses to address potential liquidity pressure and maintain smooth operations.

Businesses operating in – or planning to enter – the markets and industries covered by our survey can gain valuable insights from our reports, which also shed light on the challenges and risks companies anticipate in the coming months, as well as their expectations for future growth.

In this report, you will find the survey results for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Markets surveyed: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Türkiye. Insights into topics by market and local sectors can be found in the individual reports that form the 2025 edition of the Atradius Payment Practices Barometer for Central and Eastern Europe.

The survey was conducted between the end of Q1 and mid- Q2 2025. Survey findings should therefore be viewed with this in mind.

All reports highlighting market and sector specific findings of the 2025 edition of the Atradius Payment Practices Barometer for **Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)** are available for download from the Atradius website <https://group.atradius.com/publications/results>

B2B payment practices trends

B2B customer payment risks remain major challenge for CEE companies

Our survey finds clear signs of a worsening trend of B2B customer payment behaviour across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). More companies report a deterioration in late payments than improvement. Overdue invoices remain a pressing issue, accounting for an average of 53% of all B2B sales on credit in the region. Customer liquidity constraints and broader economic uncertainty are the main drivers behind payment delays. Bad debts stand at an average 8% of all B2B invoices, with the Czech Republic reporting the most severe impact.

Companies are adopting cautious, risk-aware credit practices in B2B trade in response to late payment concerns. On average only 45% of B2B sales are transacted on credit, reflecting a preference for upfront payments as businesses try to protect themselves against a rising threat of customer insolvencies. To offset exposure to payment risks most CEE firms have kept payment terms steady. Where changes were made, more extended terms than shortened them. Average payment terms typically range between 30 and 60 days.

Many businesses across the CEE region are struggling to unlock liquidity from working capital. Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) is mostly unchanged, while inventory levels have either stagnated or increased for a significant number of companies, with stock build-ups further limiting access to liquid funds. These trends point to a constrained cash flow environment, where capital is increasingly trapped in unpaid invoices or unsold goods. To preserve liquidity, most companies have kept Days Payable Outstanding (DPO) steady.

Bank loans, supplier credit and invoice financing are the main methods for bridging cash flow gaps among CEE companies. Supplier credit plays a particularly vital role for smaller firms seeking to extend operational flexibility. To mitigate payment risks, most businesses adopt a combined approach of in-house provisioning alongside outsourced risk solutions involving insurance. The growing uptake of blended risk practices reflects both the complexity of today's payment landscape and the need to safeguard financial health in unpredictable times.

Key figures and charts on the next page

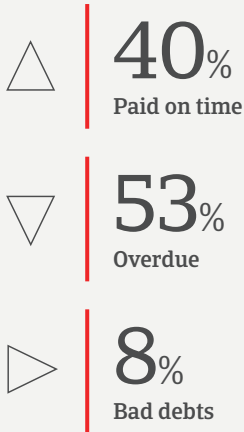


Key figures and charts

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

% of the total value of B2B invoices paid on time, overdue and bad debts

(change vs. 2024)



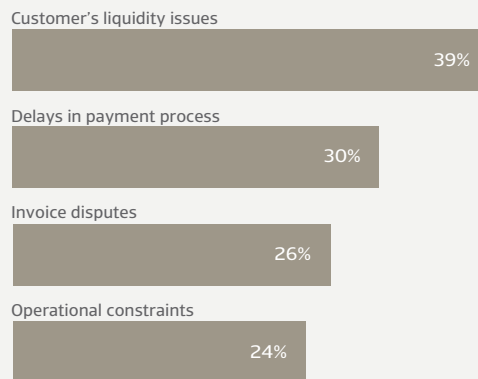
Sample: all survey respondents

Source: Atradius Payment Practices Barometer Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – 2025

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

What are the top 4 reasons your B2B customers pay invoices late?

(% of respondents - multiple response)



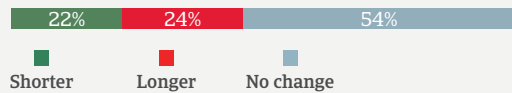
Sample: all survey respondents

Source: Atradius Payment Practices Barometer Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – 2025

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

% of respondents reporting changes in Days Sales Outstanding (DSO)* over the past 12 months

(% of respondents)



*average amount of time to collect payment after a sale

Sample: all survey respondents

Source: Atradius Payment Practices Barometer Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – 2025

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

What are the main sources of financing that your company used during the past 12 months?

(% of respondents - multiple response)

- 48% Trade credit
- 46% Bank loans
- 42% Invoice financing
- 38% Internal funds

Sample: all survey respondents

Source: Atradius Payment Practices Barometer Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – 2025





Looking ahead

Rising liquidity concerns hit CEE firms amid looming economic uncertainty

An increase in B2B customer insolvencies is expected by 54% of companies across the CEE region during the coming months, with many others expressing uncertainty about future insolvency risks. This highlights rising fears around payment defaults and reveals that businesses are bracing for mounting financial pressure ahead. Caution is also found over payment collections, with companies evenly divided between those expecting no significant acceleration and others anticipating slower collections. Such sentiment underscores the challenges faced in maintaining steady cash flows.

Inventory turnover is also a concern. Twice as many companies anticipate a buildup rather than a faster turnover, indicating potential liquidity constraints due to unsold stock. Supplier payment practices mirror this trend. Most businesses plan to maintain their current Days Payable Outstanding (DPO), but among those considering changes a clear majority intend to delay payments to preserve liquidity rather than speeding them up. This approach suggests limited internal reserves and a reliance on extended payment terms to manage cash flow.

Expectations about sales and profitability remain subdued across the region. While CEE businesses adopt a prudent stance on sales forecasts, they are even more cautious regarding profitability, highlighting the pressure on margins from rising input costs and operational expenses. In response to these challenges, companies are increasingly adopting a proactive approach to payment risk management, combining in-house provisioning with outsourced solutions involving insurance.

Looking ahead, companies across CEE express growing concern over their ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving and unpredictable business environment. The combination of unexpected economic shifts, tightening regulations, and mounting environmental pressures is placing additional strain on corporate stability. Rising production input costs are expected to further squeeze profit margins, while the growing need to integrate sustainable practices adds to operational complexity, especially for smaller firms with limited financial flexibility. These concerns reflect widespread anxiety that growing pressure on working capital may lead to increased financial vulnerability in the coming months.



Survey design

Atradius conducts annual reviews of international corporate payment practices through a survey called the Atradius Payment Practices Barometer.

Sample overview – Total interviews = 1,680

Markets

Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania	Slovenia
Czech Republic	Poland	Slovakia	Turkiye

Sectors

Agri-Food	Construction	Pharma
Automotive	Consumer Durables	Steel-Metals
Chemicals	Energy and fuel	Transport

Business sector	Interviews	%
Manufacturing	736	44
Wholesale trade	499	30
Retail trade/Distribution	295	18
Services	150	8
TOTAL	1,680	100
Business size	Interviews	%
SME: Small enterprises	308	18
SME: Medium enterprises	571	34
Medium Large enterprises	535	32
Large enterprises	266	16
TOTAL	1,680	100

Survey scope

- Basic population: Companies from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) were surveyed and the appropriate contacts for accounts receivable management were interviewed.
- Sample design: The Strategic Sampling Plan enabled us to perform an analysis of country data crossed by sector and company size.
- Selection process: Companies were selected and contacted by use of an international Internet panel. A screening for the appropriate contact, and for quota control, was conducted at the beginning of the interview.
- Sample: N=1,680 people were interviewed in total. A quota was maintained according to four classes of company size.
- Interview: Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) of approximately 15 minutes duration.
- The survey was conducted between the end of Q1 and the beginning of Q2 2025. The findings should therefore be viewed with this in mind.

This is part of the 2025 edition of the Atradius Payment Practices Barometer available at

<https://group.atradius.com/knowledge-and-research>



Interested in finding out more?

Please visit the [Atradius](#) website where you can find a wide range of up-to-date publications. [Click here](#) to access our analysis of individual industry performance, detailed focus on country-specific and global economic concerns, insights into credit management issues, and information about protecting your receivables against payment default by customers.

To find out more about B2B receivables collection practices in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and worldwide, please visit atradiuscollections.com.

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Atradius

David Ricardostraat
11066 JS Amsterdam
Postbus 8982
1006 JD Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 20 553 9111

info@atradius.com
atradius.com