

## The 2021 European Survey



International Network of Interim  
Manager Associations

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## Executive Summary

### The Background

This was the first European Survey conducted by Interim Managers for the primary benefit of Interim Managers. The INIMA survey collected the views of 750 practising professionals who were members of all the leading European Interim Manager Associations. Each INIMA partner prepared and published a national report, which was summarized in the present document.

### The Interim Manager

A typical European Interim Manager in the survey was male, aged 56 years, with more than 7 years of experience as an interim professional and working at C-level role or above. The top five(5) primary functional specialities of Interim Managers were general management, operations, human resources, finance, and sales. Functional expertise reflected the national economy and the national IM associations, so each country had a distinct profile. In 2020 the average utilization of European Interim managers was 56% and there was a considerable spread between countries, but by January 2021 the spread had reduced significantly. The effects of the pandemic in the year 2020 were different for each economy, each sector and each Interim Manager.

### The Clients

The public and non-profit clients were above average in the UK, Poland, Switzerland and France but private industry accounted for 90% of European interim assignments in 2020. The Interim Managers worked in more than 35 distinct activities, the top three(3) were equipment manufacturing-mechanical engineering, automotive and industrial. European Interim Managers had assignments in the full range of enterprises, from the start-

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up with a few employees, to large corporations, In Spain and Italy, over half of the assignments were in companies with less than 100 employees.

### The Assignments

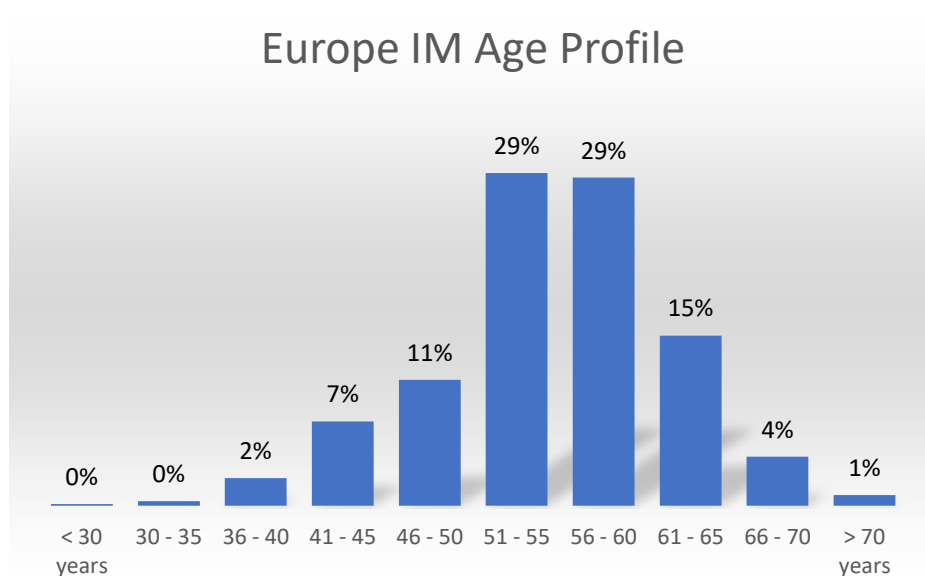
Interim Managers are change-agents by nature so it was no surprise that change management and process optimization were frequent issues addressed during assignments. The average duration of an interim assignment in Europe was 11,4 months and there was a modest variation between the countries, but the outliers were more interesting. Short assignments were popular in the UK, France and Poland whilst long assignments (often part-time) were popular in Italy. The range of the day rates was extremely large, from €300 to above €2000, which showed the diversity of national economies, national IM markets, size of clients and sectors. The main sales channels remained the personal network whilst the percentage of assignments landed through interim providers was less than past European surveys.

In the next six months, the pressure on pricing was predicted to remain high across Europe, but there was optimism for IM business opportunities in 2021.

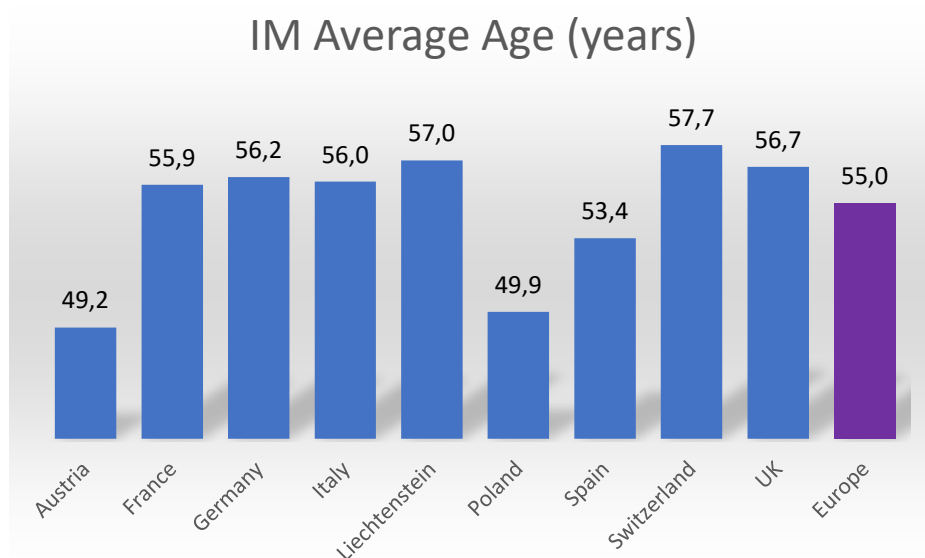
## The Interim Manager

### Demographics

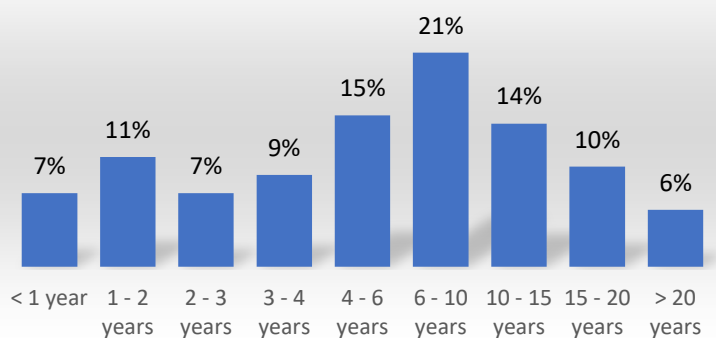
A typical European Interim Manager in the survey was male, aged 56 years, with more than 7 years of experience as an interim professional. The high seniority was also shown by the management levels across Europe, with 55% of the interims covering C-level roles or above.



The youngest respondents were members of the Interim Manager associations from Austria (49yrs), Poland (49yrs) and Spain (53yrs).

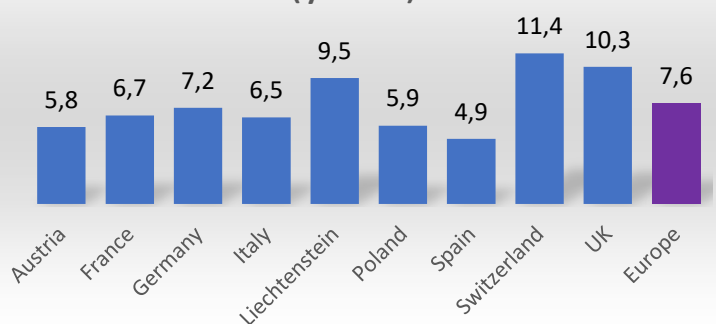


### Europe IM Experience

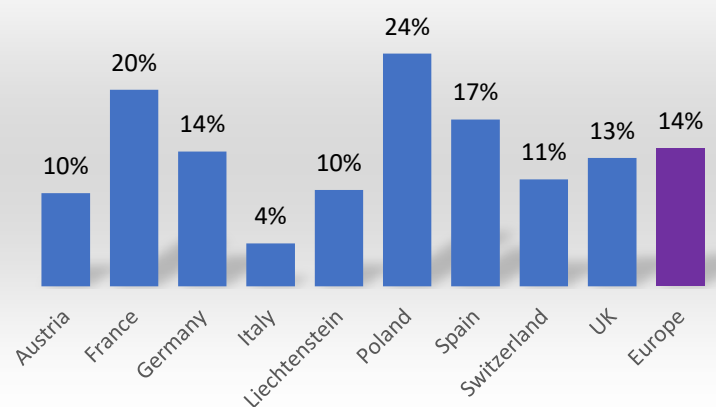


The most experienced Interim Managers were from Switzerland (11 years), the UK (10yrs) and Liechtenstein (9yrs).

### IM Average Experience (years)



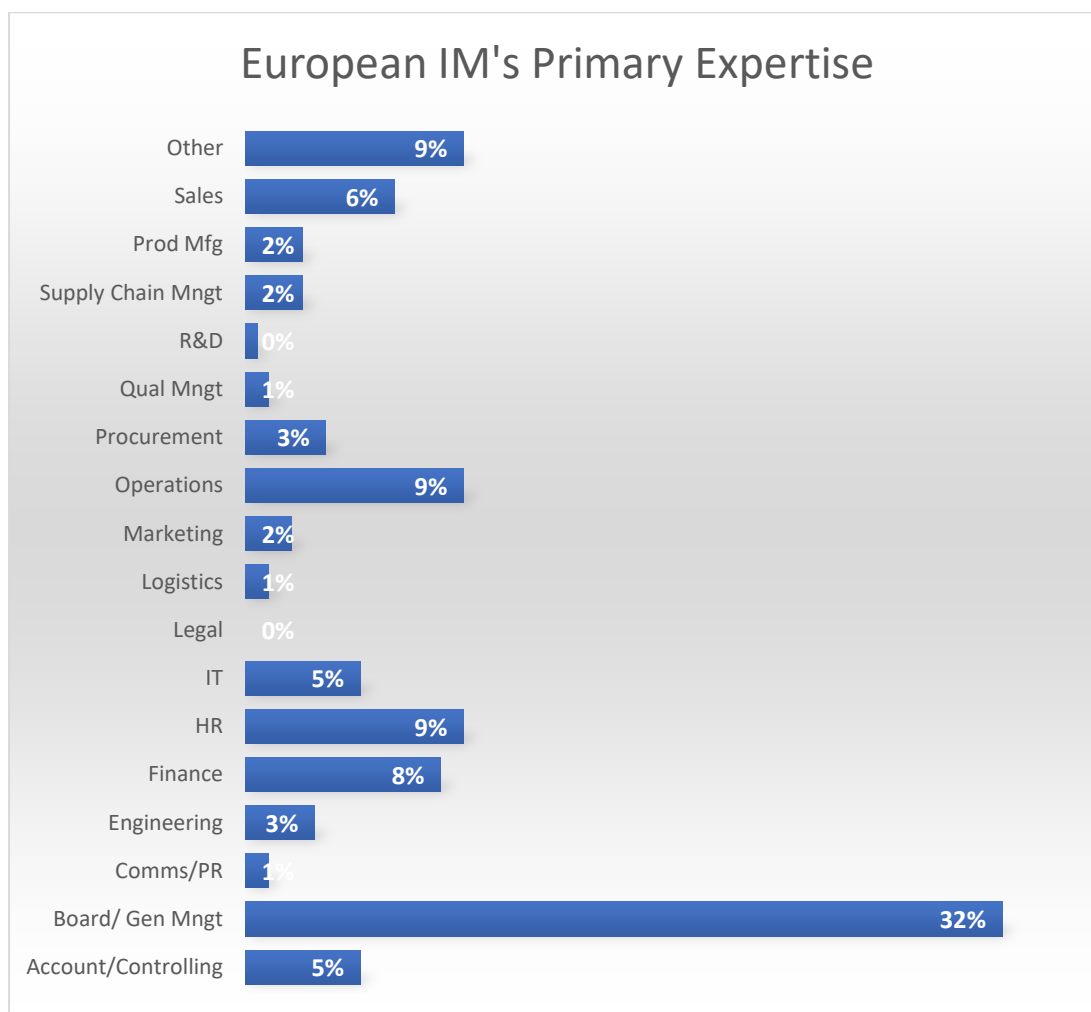
### IM Female Gender



The last Eurostat survey reported 35% of permanent management positions in Europe were occupied by women. Only 14% of the European Interim Managers were women in the INIMA survey.

## Functional Specialities

The top five(5) primary functional specialities of European Interim Managers were general management (32%), operations (9%), human-resources(9%), finance(8%) and sales(6%).

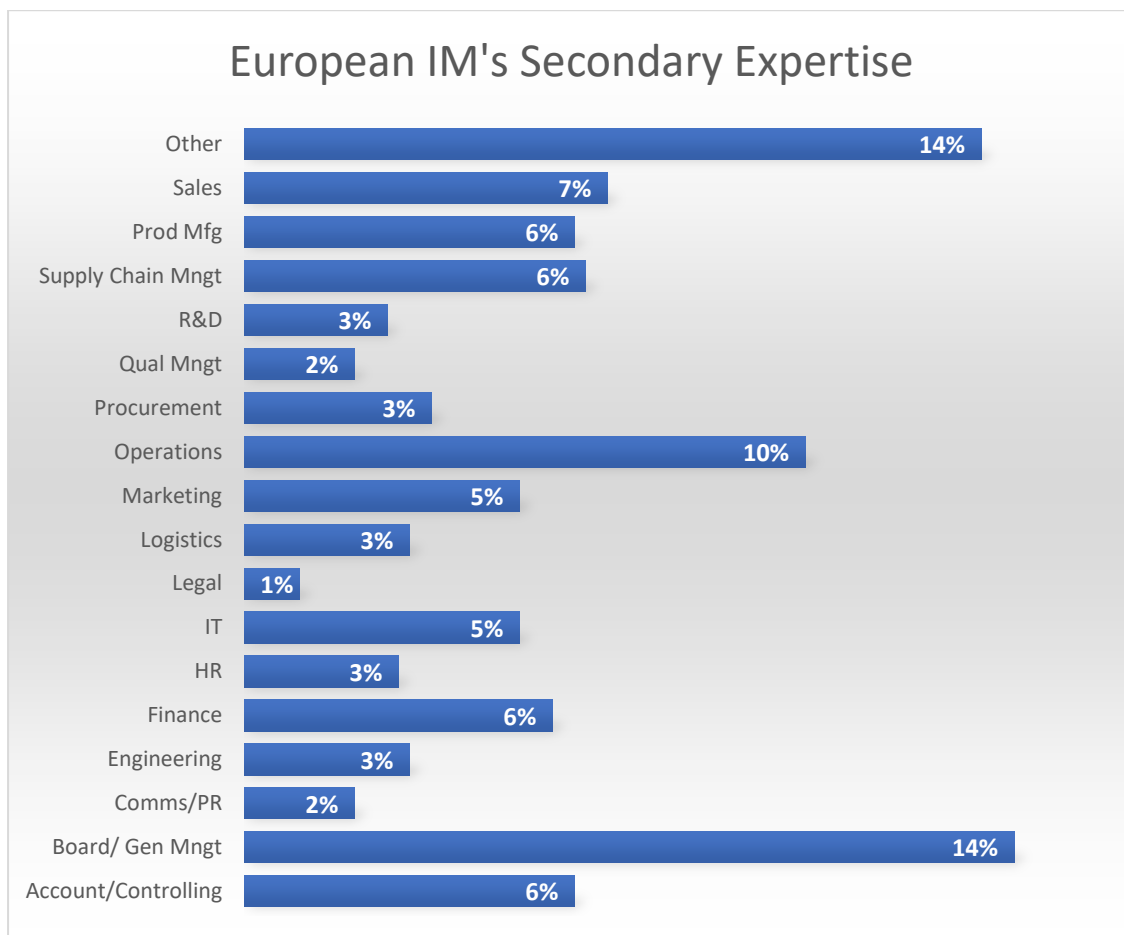


Functional specialities varied between the national interim manager associations and each country had a distinct profile. The top 3 expertise for each association were shown in the following table:

IM Primary Expertise			
	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3
Austria	General Management	Accounting-Controlling	
France	General Management	HR	Finance/ Acc. & Cont/ IT
Germany	General Management	HR/ Operations	Finance
Italy	General Management	Operations	Finance
Liechtenstein	General Management	Finance/ IT	
Poland	General Management	Sales	HR
Spain	General Management	Finance	HR
Switzerland	General Management	Finance/ HR	
United Kingdom	General Management	HR/ IT	Finance
Europe	General Management	Operations/ HR	Finance

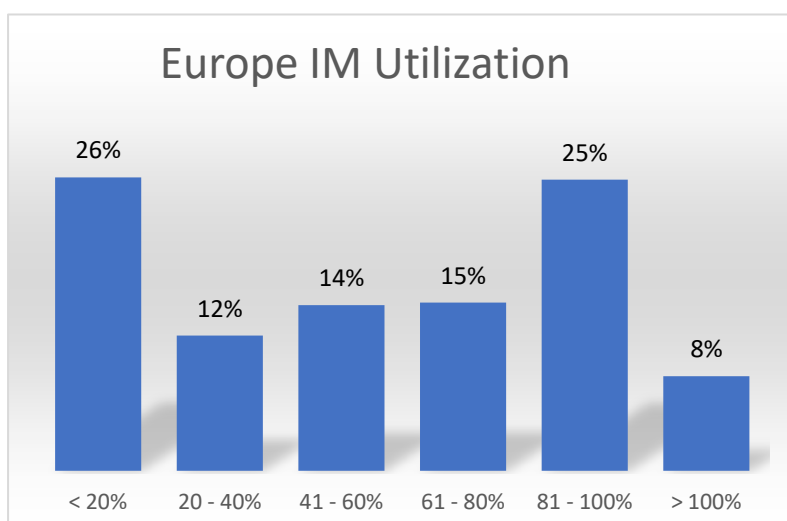
## Secondary Competences

Interim Managers complemented their primary specialities with one or more secondary competences. So for example an interim General Manager also provided sales-marketing guidance, or conversely, an over-qualified COO brought CEO experience to the management team. Generally, European Managers complimented their primary speciality with an at least one<sup>(1)</sup> secondary competence

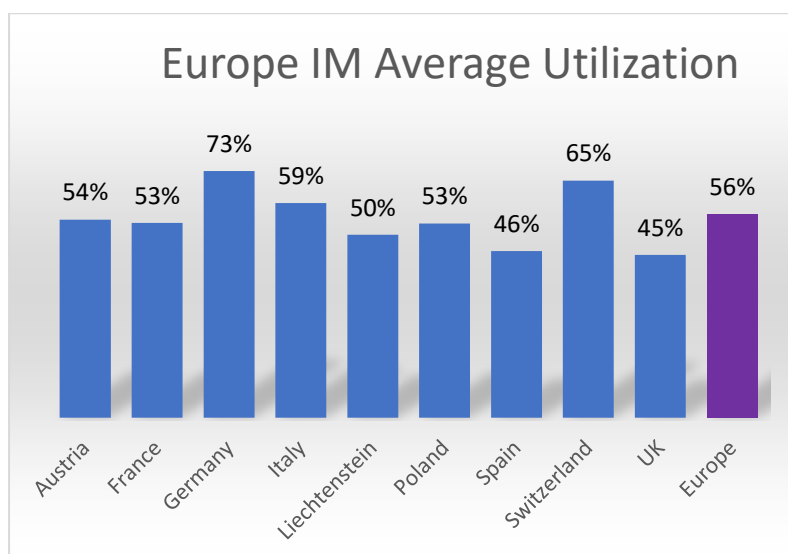


### Interim Manager Utilization

The members of the European Interim Manager Associations were asked to report the proportion of billed days to the total number of working days in 2020.





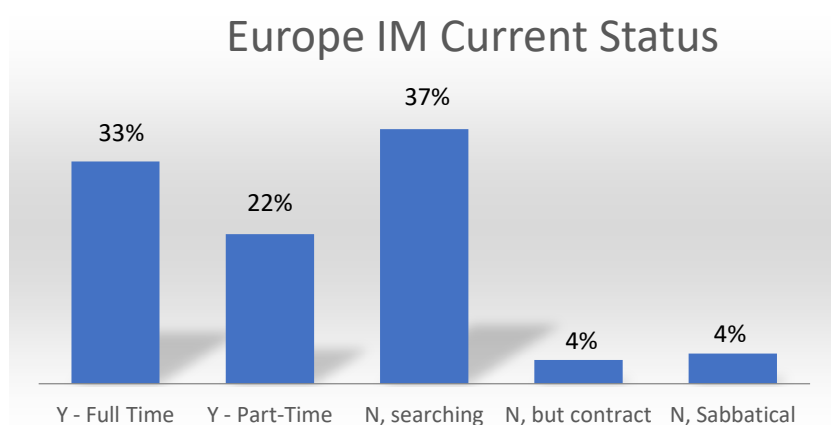


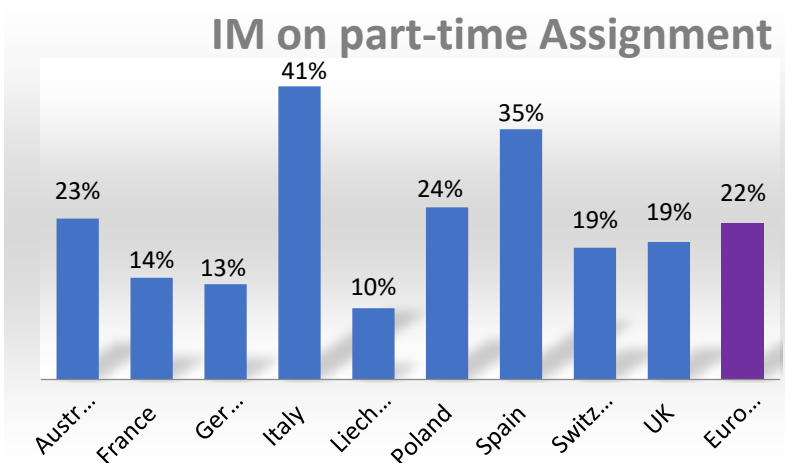
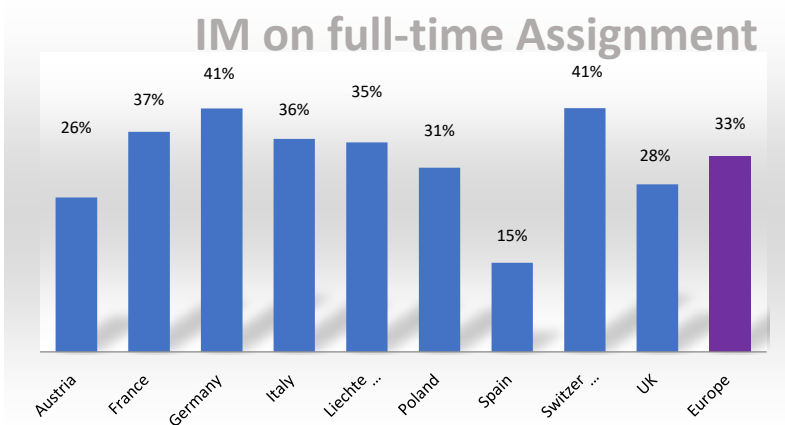
The average utilization of European Interim managers in 2020 was 56%, there was a considerable spread between the highest of Germany (73%) and the lowest the UK (45%).

The effects of the pandemic were different for each economy, each sector and each Interim Manager.

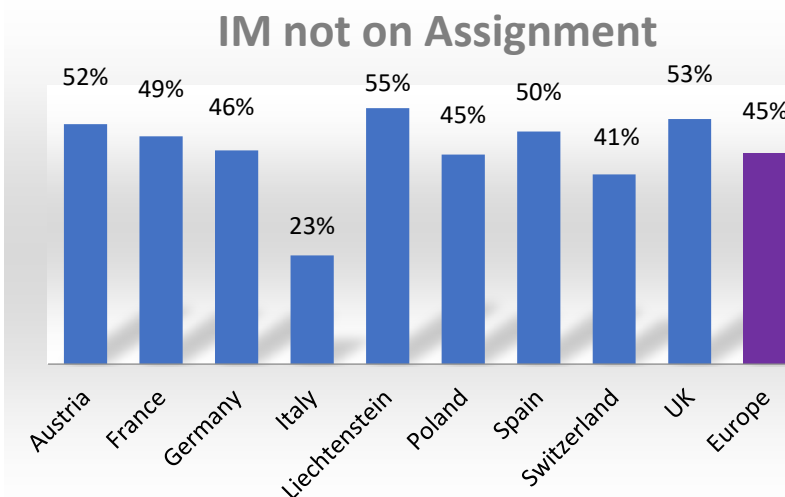
### Status of Interim Managers

The interim managers were asked to give their current status (January 2021) as follows: on full-time assignment, on part-time assignment/s, waiting for the next assignment to start, searching for a new assignment, or on-sabbatical leave. On average 55% of European managers were on-assignment in January 2021.





Italy which had the highest percentage of part-time assignments

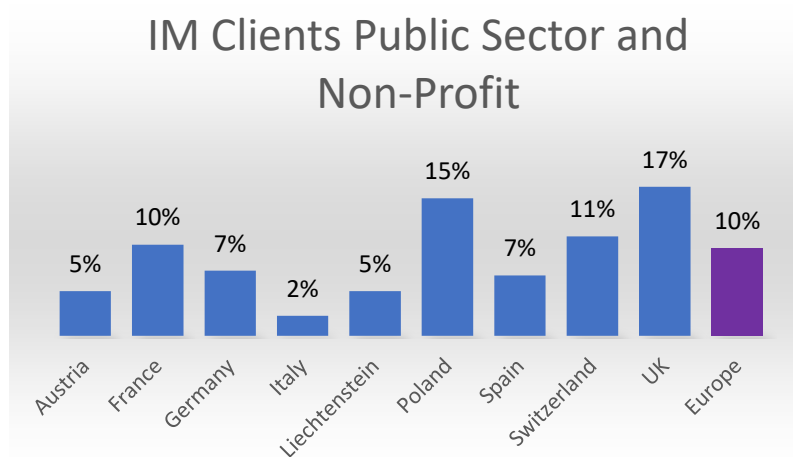


## The Clients

To give an insight into the 2020 IM market the European Interim Managers were asked to report details of their last assignment.

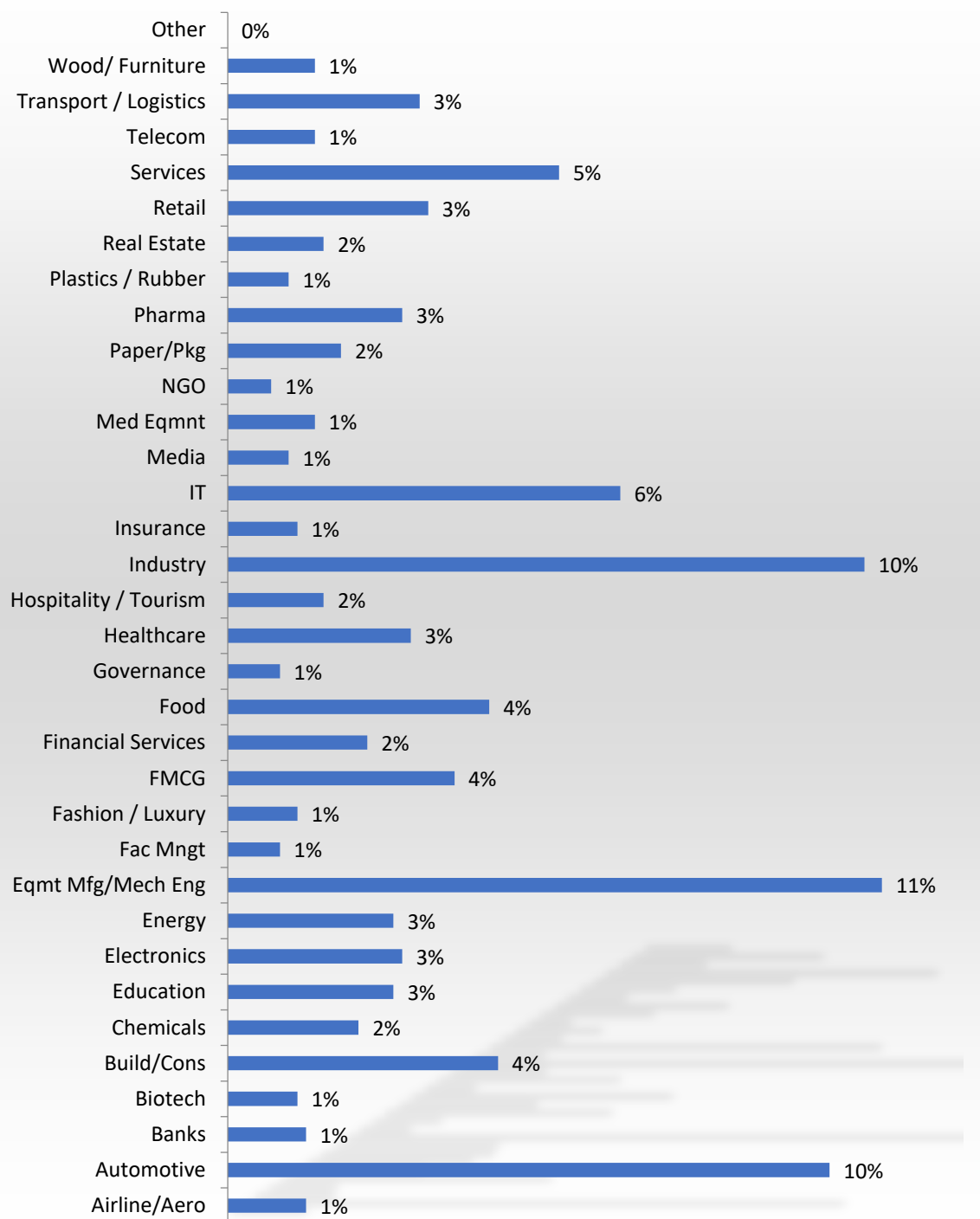
### Sectors of Activity

Private industry accounted for 90% of European interim assignments in 2020, the public and non-profit sectors were above average in the UK(17%), Poland(15%), Switzerland(11%) and France(10%).



European Interim managers covered more than 35 distinct activities in the private sector.

### Europe: Sector of last assignment



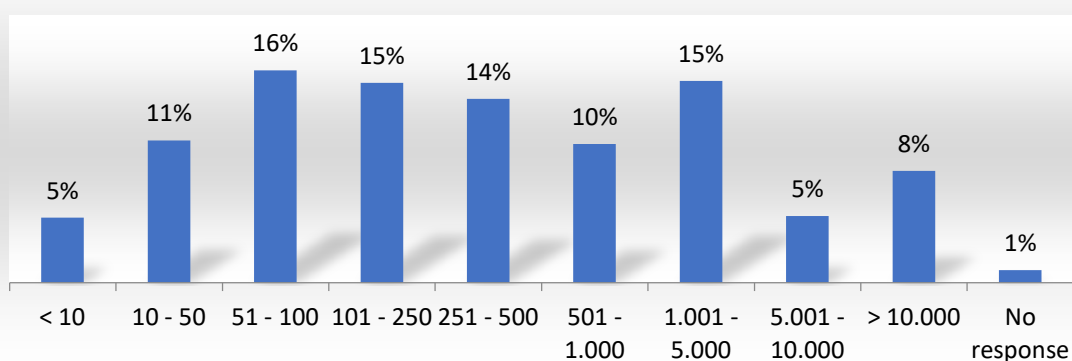
	Sector of Last Assignment		
	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3
<b>Austria</b>	Automotive	Tourism/ Electronics	
<b>France</b>	Services	Industry	
<b>Germany</b>	Automotive	Eqmt.Mfg-Mech. Eng,	Industry
<b>Italy</b>	Eqmt.Mfg-Mech. Eng,	Industry	Automotive
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	Eqmt.Mfg-Mech. Eng,	Industry	
<b>Poland</b>	Industry	Building-cons	FMCQ
<b>Spain</b>	Food	Industry	IT
<b>Switzerland</b>	Industry	Services	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	IT	Eqmt.Mfg-Mech. Eng,/ Fin. services	Education/ Healthcare/ Automotive
<b>Europe</b>	Eqmt.Mfg-Mech. Eng,	Automotive/ Industry	IT

A more detailed breakdown of the active sectors for Interim Managers of each economy were gathered in the national survey reports, available on the INIMA website([www.inima.management](http://www.inima.management))

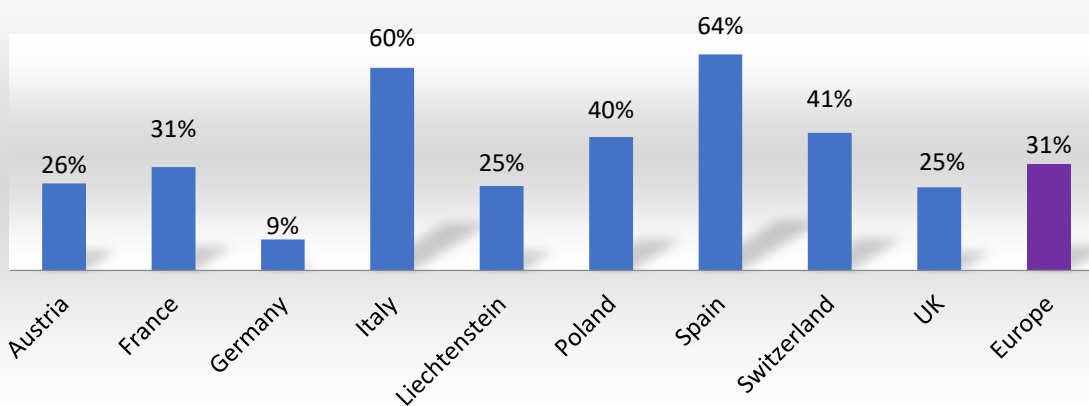
## Size of company

European Interim Managers had assignments in the full range of enterprises, from the start-up with a few employees, to large corporations, In Spain and Italy over half of the assignments were in companies with less than 100 employees.

### Europe: Company Size (employees)



### Companies with less than 100 employees

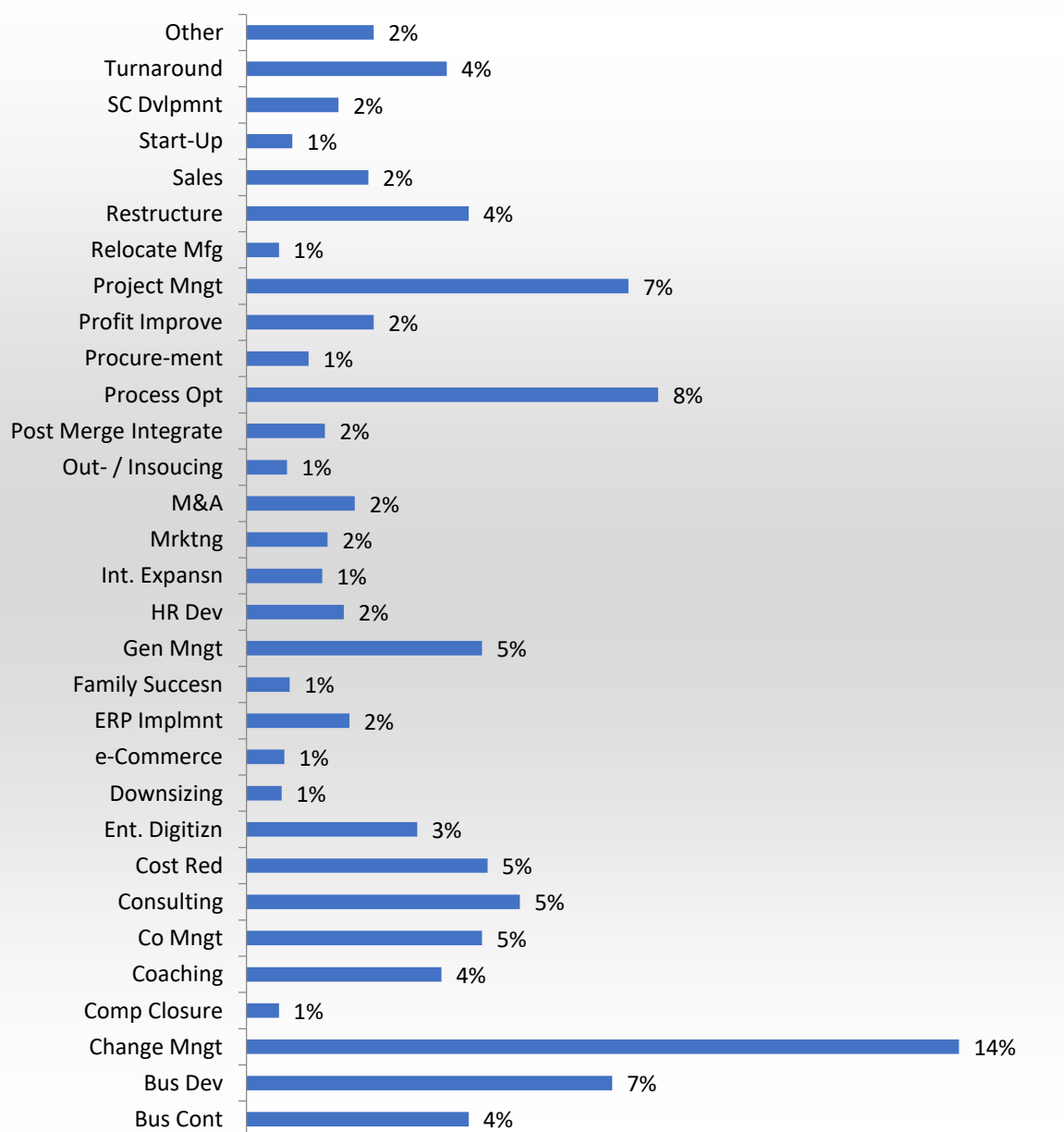


## The Assignments

### Key Issues

Interim Managers are change-agents by nature so it was no surprise that change management was the most frequent issue, with 14% of the total responses. All the issues addressed by managers in their last assignments are shown in the following graph.

### Europe: Business Issues on Last Assignment

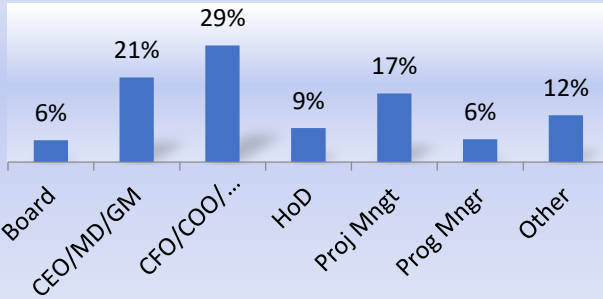


Respondents across Europe reported that change management and process optimizations were common issues in the last assignment.. Other issues addressed by interim managers were “project management” and “business continuity” (as part of a main-role or as gap-assignments).

Business Issues Last Assignment			
	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3
<b>Austria</b>	Change Management	Project Management	
<b>France</b>	Change Management	Process Optimization	Project Management
<b>Germany</b>	Change Management	Process Optimization	Project Management/
<b>Italy</b>	Change Management	Gen. Mgmt/ Business Dev.	Process Optimization
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	Change Management	Process Optimization	
<b>Poland</b>	Commercial Management	Change Management	Bus. Dev/Process Optimization
<b>Spain</b>	Business Development	Change Management	Process Optimization
<b>Switzerland</b>	Change Management	Business Development	Process Optimization
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Change Management	Project Management	Process Optimization
<b>Europe</b>	Change Management	Process Optimization	Bus. Dev/ Project Management



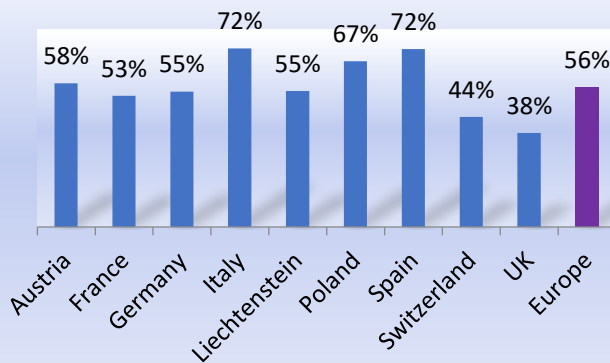
### European IM Management Level



### Management Level

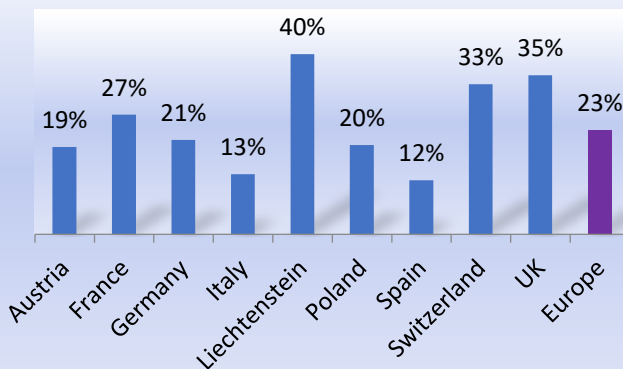
Over 56% of European Interim managers had completed assignments in positions at C-level or above.

### C-Level or above



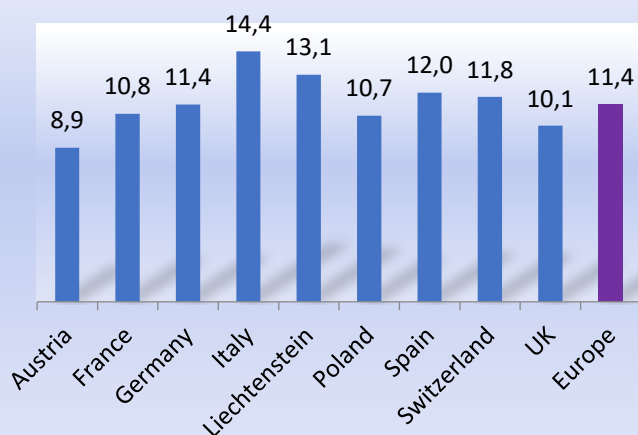
The largest proportions of Interims at C-level and above were in Italy and Spain, countries with predominantly SMEs as clients.

### Project/Prog. Management



A considerable proportion of interims had completed assignments as project and program managers in Liechtenstein (40%), the UK (45%) and Switzerland (33%).

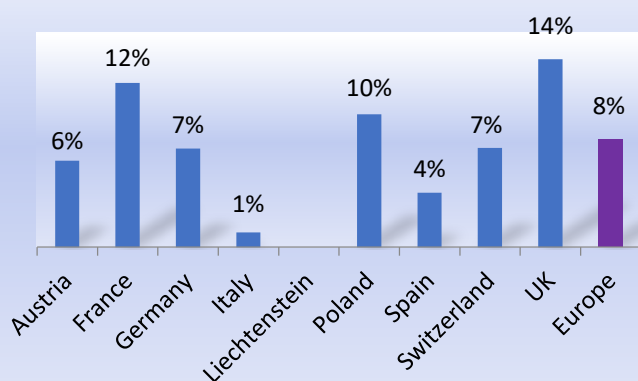
### Average Assignment Duration (months)



### Duration

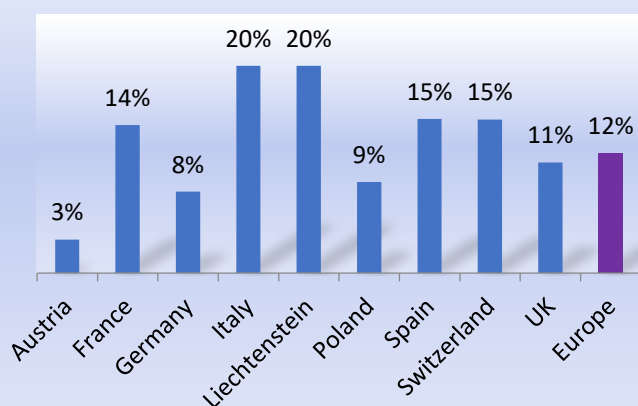
The average duration of an interim assignment in Europe was 11,4 months and there was a modest variation between the countries, but the outliers, were more interesting.

### Short Duration Assignments (less than 3 months)



Short assignments of less three(3) months were popular in the UK(14%), France(12%) and Poland(10%).

### Long Duration Assignments (more than 24 months)

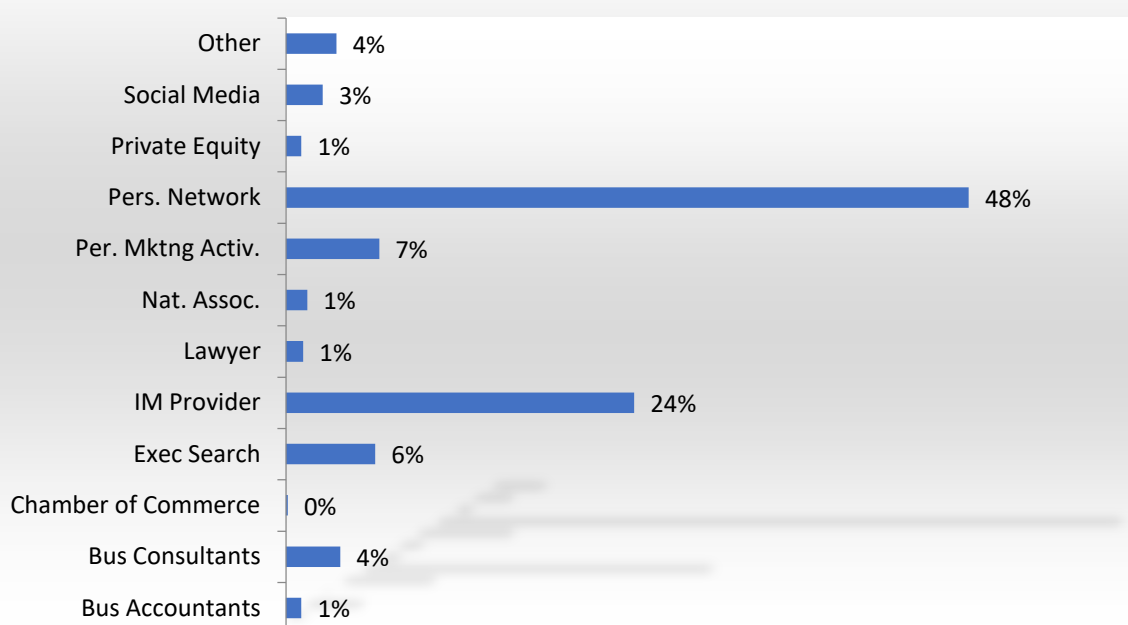


Long assignments of more than two(yrs) were popular in Italy, and were often part-time.

## Sales channel

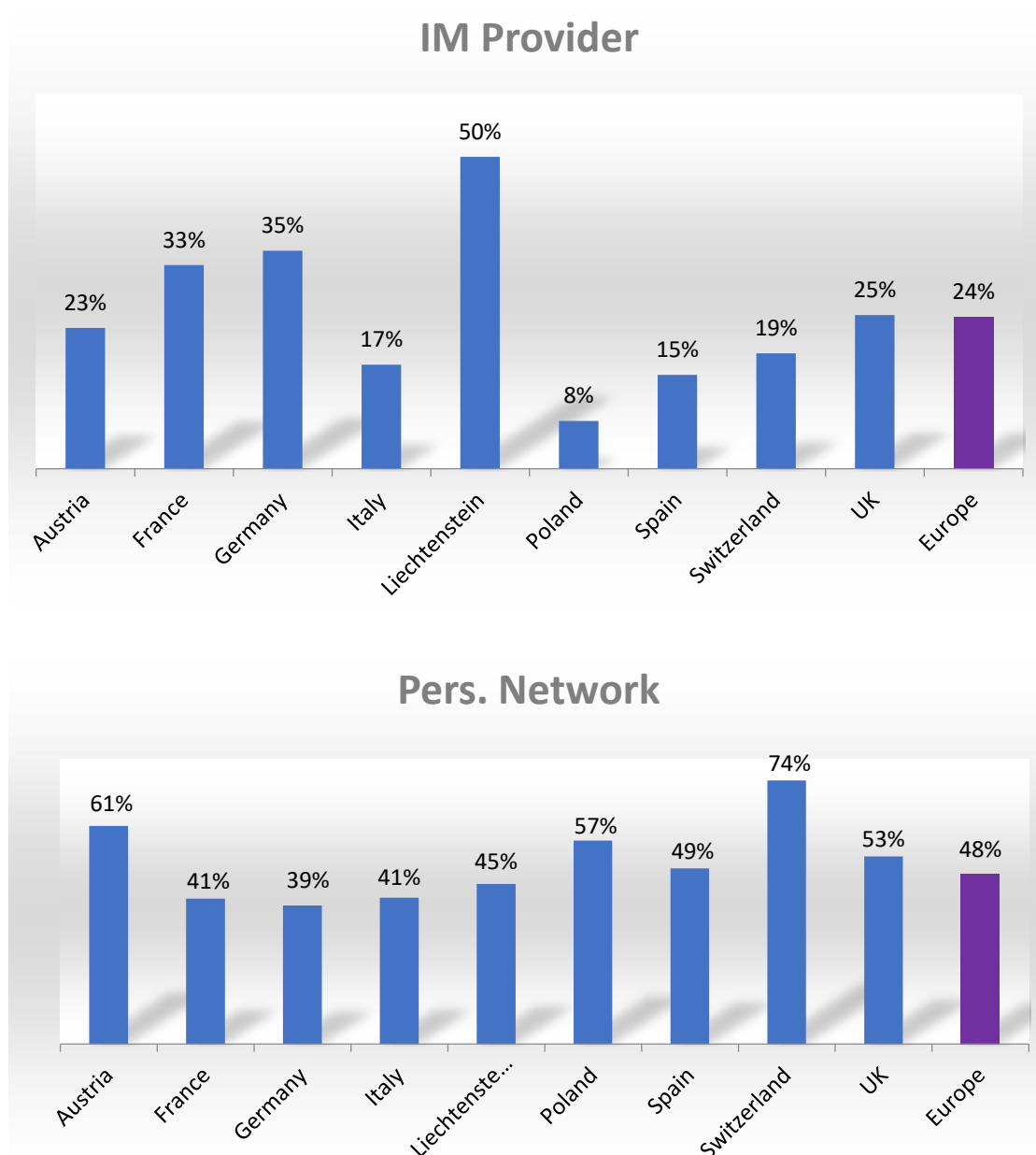
Traditionally Interim Managers have relied on two main sales channels, the personal network and the Interim Service Providers, It was reasonable to assume that the way of landing new assignments had changed due to pandemic and the diffusion of new technology, so more detail was gathered in respect to past European surveys. The survey considered the sales channels of a total number of 750 assignments across Europe.

### European Sales Channels



Throughout Europe, the main sales channels remained the personal network(48%) and the Interim Providers(24%), but a significant number of assignments came through personal marketing(7%). In past surveys, IM providers have been an effective sales channel for many National IM markets. The INIMA survey showed a reduction in the number of assignments through IM providers by two-digit percentages in comparison with past European surveys

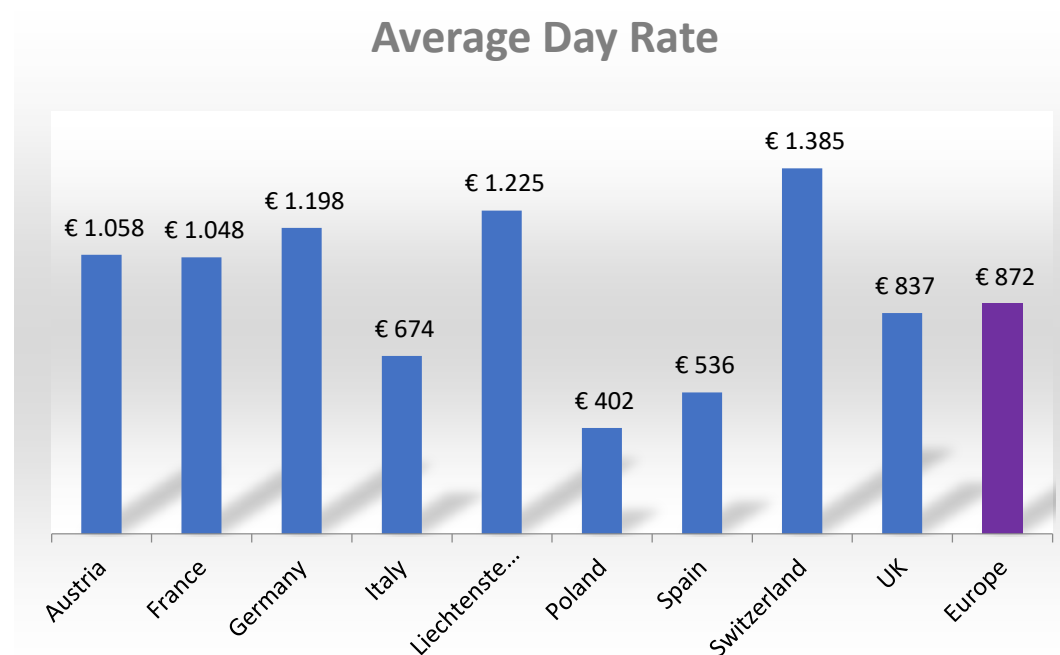
In Poland there was the lowest percentage (8%) of assignments coming through providers, which showed the relative immaturity of the Polish IM market. The effectiveness of the provider sales channel was also low in Spain and Italy.



## Day Rates

As with the “utilization, the harmonization of the various national surveys permitted an easy data-comparison, but inevitably introduced a new standard for the measurement and calculation of the “average day rate”, another sensitive parameter. Managers were asked to provide the day rate that they billed on their last assignment (the net price, excluding expenses and VAT). This response was preferred as it was more objective than a yearly average or other formats.

The range of the day rates was extremely large, from €300 to above €2000, which showed the diversity of national economies, national IM markets, size of clients and sectors.



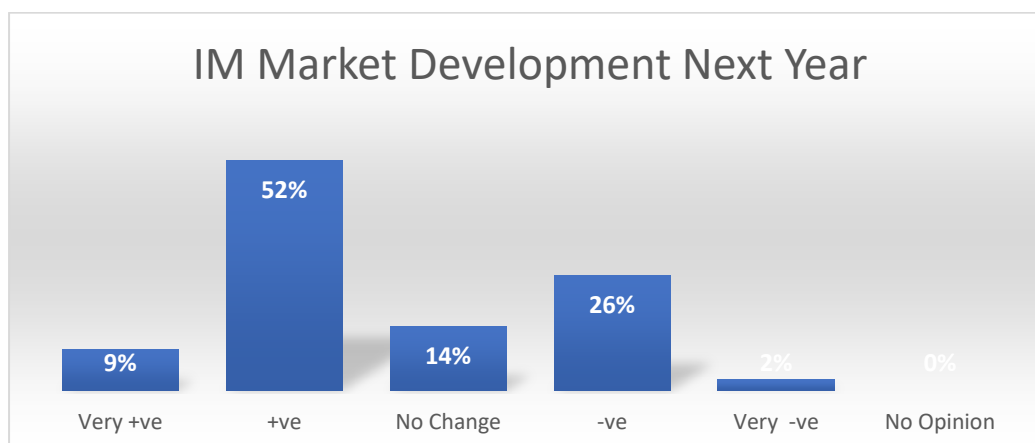
As previously illustrated, the services and expertise provided by the Interim Managers were reasonably aligned between countries. The estimated average daily rate had limited practical meaning because there was no “average interim”, but it was useful to indicate the differences between countries. A discussion on each country was presented in the national reports of the INIMA partners.

## Trends

### Market Development

“How would you rate the development of the Interim Market next year?”

Interim managers were asked to give a rating from “very negative” to “very positive”, there was a common sense of optimism for 2021. Across Europe 61% of Interim managers thought “positively” or “very positively” towards the IM business development in 2021.



## Future View and key issues facing Interim Executives

Finally, an open question was posed to European Interim Managers, “What are the biggest challenges for the Interim Manager in 2021?” Here follows a synthesis of replies from across Europe (in no particular order):

Challenges for the IM	What the challenge looks like
Increased IM supply	ex-permanents entering the IM market, over-supply
Reduced IM demand	Lower % utilization, travel restrictions, shorter duration of assignments, bookable days lost to reduced mobility
Pressure on pricing	The flexibility of “price offering”, shorter duration, part-time, reduced prices for remote-working
Landing a new assignment	state of the general economy, clients reluctance to engage, travel restrictions, age discrimination could become a factor, no “face to face” meeting
Remote working	Create the home office, get new IT skills, grow trust “virtually”
Competences	Train for new skills: digital “know-how” and transformation, soft-skills, more competences increase flexibility,
Networking	grow personal networks, perfect the positioning, increase awareness of the personal brand
Personal health	Stay healthy
General market	Covid, Brexit, market visibility, delay of customers, governmental regulations, new tax regimes for IM, company liquidations, turn-around and M&A.

The INIMA partners summarized the comments of their members as follows:

### France

*“Finding an assignment at their usual daily rate becomes on the major questions marks for many. The COVID-19 health crisis has made it difficult to integrate client*

*sites and manage new teams when mobility is limited (no logistics on site with hotels & restaurants closed) and sometimes obliged to telework. There is no certainty on the length of assignment, despite the signed contracts. At the next potential lockdown, those contracts can be ended in one day. The current COVID-19 vaccination strategy in France does not seem to allow an immediate economic recovery and withholds many interim managers from getting a clearer visibility on the future market, which is guesswork for some sectors. The length and depth of the economic crisis is at this stage unknown, everyone is expecting assignments from market better described as a “moving target”. This situation requires agility and flexibility from all our interim managers, regardless of function, experience or age. In these economic uncertain times, developing its own network, finding other activities or take some time for training, becomes not only more important but may be a future gamechanger and provide a competitive advantage on the market.”*

AE-CMT

## Germany

*“In the survey, the managers were asked about their three biggest issues for the new business year. The top issues named were: Project Acquisition, Personal Positioning/Personal Marketing and Digitization. This reflects both the need for active acquisition of assignments by the managers as well as their strong desire to serve company clients as change agents with an emphasis on digital.”*

DDIM

## Italy

*“Covid will continue to change the “way of working” of the Interim Manager, during the acquisition of the assignment and its execution. Permanent Managers released by companies are looking at interim management as a short-term solution. There is a concern of an over-supply of managers and pressure on day-rates. Practising interim managers express that the response to this challenge is to make professionalism the distinguishing*



*factor and to extend personal networks. The Interim Manager must become more oriented to short term results and be flexible to adjust to changing situations. There is an opportunity for the manager to acquire new technical competences and develop soft skills, that add value to the IM service.”*

Leading Network

## Spain

*“On the one hand, the search for new projects and / or clients, the difficulty of linking assignments and that it is common to spend a lot of time searching for the next one. If, in addition, we combine this with the sales channels, in which almost 60% use their personal network of contacts or personal marketing activities, it makes it clear that the search for the next project requires time from our professionals. You could say that it is a mission in itself. On the other hand, the other great challenge that Interim Managers face is the visibility and dissemination of the profession with the Public Administration and potential clients (official certification). Undoubtedly, it is a matter closely related to the previous one, but this requires greater institutional efforts”*

AIME

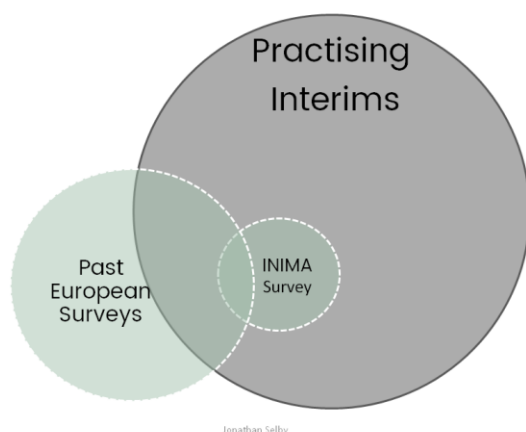
## United Kingdom

*“Unsurprisingly, UK IMs consider the impact of COVID-19 and the most recent change to the UK TAX regulations referred to as IR35 leading to concerns about securing their next assignment and the potential pressure on day rates.”*

IIM

## Background

This was the first European Survey conducted by Interim Managers for the primary benefit of Interim Managers. Past European surveys have been



performed mostly by Interim Service Providers and have been appreciated by the community. However, this survey was more objective as it introduced peer review of the findings, was not biased by commercial interests and restricted the respondents to members of National IM

Associations. This assured that data was only collected from practising Interim Managers who could give an objective view of their last assignment and the state of the profession. A survey open to respondents outside of our associations would have increased the sample size but at the expense of the sample reliability, as illustrated in the Venn chart. The downside of restricting the field was that some national associations returned data from a modest number of respondents. Some smaller nations also had a limited number of professional interim managers, their opinions were no less valuable.

The INIMA survey team developed a standardized questionnaire that measured the essential key issues for European Interim Managers. Harmonization of the various national surveys permitted an easy data-comparison, but inevitably introduced a new standard for the measurement and calculation of sensitive parameters, such as day-rate, utilization and current status. The INIMA survey was optimized to compare countries, whilst the national association remained the authoritative source for objective data in that nation. Then the survey was translated into the

local languages, deployed in January 2021 and was completed by 750 Interim Managers. Each partner reviewed the data and prepared a national report, which was summarized in the present document.

## Our Mission.



“INIMA aims to be an International Network of Interim Manager Associations as a “non-profit organization” whose partners share common principles, values and a code of conduct.

INIMA supports cross border collaboration to advance the Interim Management profession and facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the members of the INIMA partner

associations. INIMA shall encourage communication, and share experiences, best practices and competencies.”

## The Partner Associations



The umbrella organisation Austrian Interim Management – DÖIM (AAIM) is a national platform for professionals in the field of Interim Management.



The French alumni association of the Transition Management Certificate (AE-CMT)



DDIM, Dachgesellschaft Deutsches Interim Management e.V., is the leading association for professional Interim Management in Germany.



Leading Network was founded in Verona in 2009 and is the largest association of Interim Managers in Italy.



Rheintal Interim is a professional association of self-employed interim managers from Liechtenstein, Eastern Switzerland, Vorarlberg and Southern Germany.



The Polish Interim Managers Association (SIM - Stowarzyszenie Interim Managers) was founded in 2009. SIM is the only non-profit IM association in Poland



Interim España is the Interim Management Association of Spain, a socially responsible, private venture promoted by individuals and businesses tasked with the professional future of management talent



DSIM (Dachverband Schweizer Interim Manager) is the umbrella organization for Interim Managers in Switzerland.



The Institute of Interim Management (IIM) is the UK's dedicated professional body for all independent professionals in business on their own account

## Thanks

The INIMA board would like to thank the great work of the Survey Team :

- Austria: DÖIM, Robert Eichinger
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- Italy: Jonathan Selby (INIMA Board Chairman)
- Italy: Leading Network, Fabio Montefiori
- Liechtenstein: Rheintal Interim, Kurt Schädler
- Poland: SIM, Grzegorz Sobiecki
- Spain: Interim Espania, Mar Sánchez Bergua & Gianpiero Brozzi
- Switzerland: DSIM, Bruno P. Baumberger
- UK: IIM, Mark Walsh

## Further Reading

Further details of the INIMA European IM survey can be found on the website ( [www.inima.management](http://www.inima.management)). This report together with selected reports from the partner nations are available for download, Also INIMA partners' websites may have national surveys in the local languages