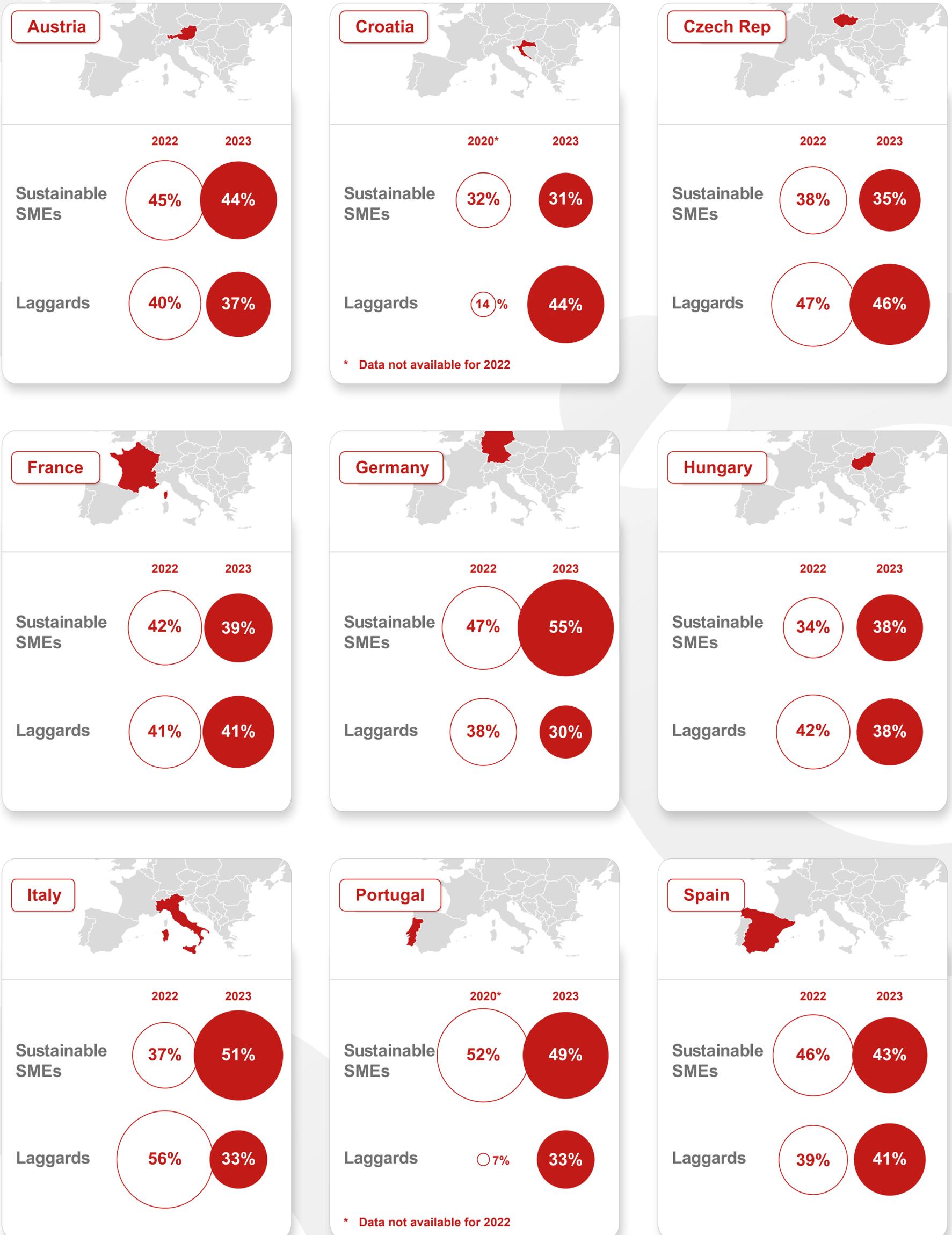


## THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY OF EUROPE'S SMEs

% of SMEs surveyed

Compared to 2022, the number of SMEs that have adopted an ESG approach ("Heroes") or are about to do so ("Soon-to-be") has remained substantially stable or increased. However, at the same time the number of SMEs expressing no interest in any ESG strategy ("Laggards") has also doubled. SMEs from various countries are progressing at varying rates in their sustainable transition, with Germany taking the lead, followed by Italy, Portugal, Austria, Spain, and France.



## HOW SMEs ASK TO BE SUPPORTED

SMEs ask for access to more favourable credit conditions tied to ESG ambitions, SME-targeted public incentives, and a boost for sustainable products and services.

Tax incentives to promote sustainable products or services

73%



EU subsidized funds to finance the green transition

67%



Promotion of demand for sustainable solutions

64%



Education, capacity-building, and transfer of competences

63%



Source: SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab survey for SME EnterPRIZE (May 2023) Total N. 1,212

## THE IMPACT OF HIGH ENERGY PRICES, INFLATION, AND CONFLICT

% of SMEs declaring that the following negatively affected approach and priorities on sustainability

6 out of 10 European SMEs stated that energy prices and inflation have negatively affected their approach towards sustainability. The conflict in Ukraine also emerged as significant. NextGenerationEU funds have had a positive influence on slightly more than 1 out of 3 SMEs.

### Negative influence

Energy price rise

59%



Inflation

58%



War in Ukraine

47%



### Positive influence

NextGenerationEU

34%



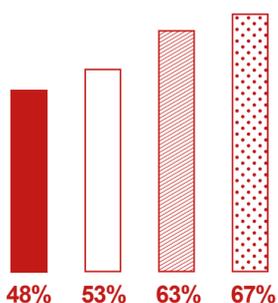
Source: SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab survey for SME EnterPRIZE (May 2023) Total N. 1,212

## SUSTAINABLE SMEs ARE MORE RESILIENT TO EXTERNAL SHOCKS

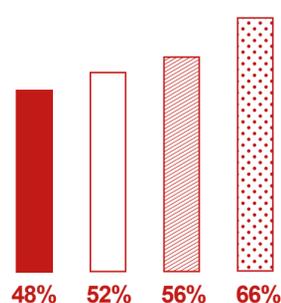
Agreement with the following statements - % of SMEs very much + very

The negative effects of escalating energy prices, inflation, and the conflict in Ukraine on sustainability approaches are more pronounced among “Laggards”. In contrast, NextGenerationEU funds have had a positive impact primarily on “Heroes”.

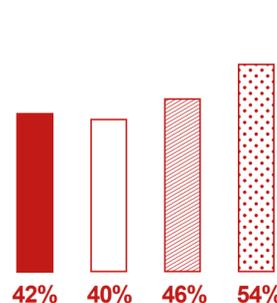
Negative influence of energy price rise



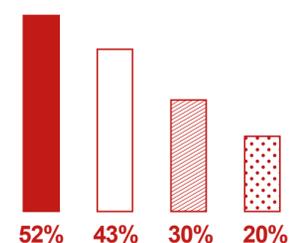
Negative influence of inflation



Negative influence of war in Ukraine



Positive influence of NextGenerationEU funds



■ Heroes

□ Soon-to-be

▨ Undecided

▤ Laggards

Source: SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab survey for SME EnterPRIZE (May 2023) Total N. 1,212

## INCREASED BARRIERS TO ADOPTION OF ESG APPROACH

Barriers to the sustainable transition according to SMEs - % of SMEs very important / important

Since last year, the percentage of European SMEs perceiving significant barriers hindering their sustainable transition has risen across various domains, including lack of institutional support, absence of a clear legislative framework, and insufficient internal resources (economic, financial, skills).

	Lack of institutional support (regulation, bureaucracy)	Lack of sustainable finance for SMEs	Lack of internal resources (skills and competences)
2022	25%	26%	25%
2023	50%	48%	38%

Source: SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab survey for SME EnterPRIZE (May 2023) Total N. 1,212

## BENEFITS FROM ADOPTING AN ESG APPROACH

The business case for ESG is clearer than ever: our latest data reaffirm that SMEs that have adopted an ESG approach are reaping benefits across all domains, showcasing an increase compared to the already positive results of last year's survey.

82%

Better Environmental Impact



75%

Customers' Satisfaction



64%

Reputation and Dialogue with Stakeholders



Source: SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab Survey for SME EnterPRIZE (May 2023). Total N. 530