



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### German Business Owners Increasingly Pessimistic While Switzerland Remains More Resilient

Zurich, Switzerland – 19 May 2026 – Connect4B’s latest Business Monitor data points to a growing divergence in business sentiment across German-speaking Europe, with Germany continuing to show the weakest business sentiment profile in the region.

German business owners report significantly weaker expectations regarding:

- export demand
- investment intentions
- earnings outlook
- and employment conditions.

By contrast, Swiss business owners continue to report comparatively greater operational stability, while Austrian firms remain under pressure but materially less negative than Germany.

The findings suggest that the German economy continues to lose momentum, while Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, Austria remain comparatively more resilient. Swiss firms continue to appear considerably more constructive overall despite rising geopolitical and export-related concerns. Compared with Germany, Swiss business owners currently report materially stronger operating stability, greater confidence regarding domestic demand and significantly less deterioration in earnings expectations.

The latest Connect4B data further suggests that the next Business Climate Index is likely to remain weak following April's sharp deterioration in German business sentiment.

In April, Connect4B estimated the German Ifo Business Climate Index at 85.7 points, compared with the official published reading of 84.4 points. While the final decline proved materially sharper than expected, the Connect4B forecast correctly anticipated renewed weakness in German business sentiment and a significant deterioration in forward-looking expectations.

Based on interviews conducted during May 2026, Connect4B currently estimates the next Ifo Business Climate Index at approximately 85.1 points, following 84.4 in April. While this would represent a modest improvement compared with April's exceptionally weak reading, the overall level would still remain historically weak and consistent with a continued negative business environment in Germany.

## **Commentary**

"Germany clearly continues to stand out as the weakest business sentiment profile within the region," said. "While the extreme deterioration observed in April may be stabilising somewhat, overall business sentiment in Germany remains weak. Switzerland, by contrast, continues to show materially greater operational resilience and a significantly more stable business environment."

## **Why This Matters**

Germany, Austria and Switzerland represent one of Europe's most interconnected industrial and export regions. Diverging business sentiment trends across the region may therefore provide important early signals regarding broader European economic momentum.

## **Methodology**

The Connect4B Business Monitor is based exclusively on ongoing interviews with business owners across Germany, Austria and Switzerland and provides a high-frequency view of real-time business sentiment within the region.

## **About Connect4B**

Connect4B is an independent research institute based in Switzerland specialising in business sentiment and bank brand strength across 18 European markets. Business sentiment and business-owner loyalty to banks are closely connected.

## **Media Contact**

Stefan James Lang  
Managing Partner  
Connect4B AG  
Zurich, Switzerland  
[www.connect4b.net](http://www.connect4b.net)  
[stefan.lang@connect4b.net](mailto:stefan.lang@connect4b.net)  
<https://www.connect4b.net/publications>  
T +41 44 422 36 64