

## More than half of Romanian SMEs claim there are barriers to digital transformation (analysis)

**Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in Romania are bringing up the rear in the European Union (EU) digital transformation rankings, but overall they are more cautious and willing to take this step than those in countries with more advanced in the digital transformation process, show findings of the specialist analysis "Barriers to digital transformation of the public and private sectors in Romania," published on Wednesday by the Authority for the Digitalisation of Romania (ADR).**

According to the document, for more than half (53%) of the SMEs there are barriers to digital transformation, almost 10% below the European average.

"In terms of regulatory/legislative barriers, Romanian SMEs are close to the European average. That, which is important for state action and for public policy in general - may often be easier to identify and targeted by rapid action - however, it does not seem to be essential for SMEs in Romania, although the fact that it places it much higher in the hierarchy than other neighbouring countries with similar administrative capacities may indicate the importance of the relative perception of this aspect in the community and in relation to digital transformation," the report concludes.

Regarding the adoption of basic digital technologies, over a quarter (27%) of micro-enterprises operating in Romania say they have adopted or will adopt them, talking about technologies such as email or website creation, but that they have not adopted yet advanced technologies. Thus, Romania ranks last in the EU in terms of advanced digital technologies, with only 7% of micro-enterprises having already started adopting them.

The analysis of the barriers to the digital transformation of the Romanian public and private sectors represents an essential document that will be the basis for the substantiation and prioritisation of projects carried out on European funds for the programming period 2021-2027.

The research conducted by ADR for the private sector starts from the conclusions of a Flash Eurobarometer Report "SMEs, start-ups, scale-ups and entrepreneurship," published in September 2020. The analysis also centralised information and benchmarking analysis on the motivations and behaviours of SMEs from different countries of the European Union regarding the process of digital transformation.

For the public sector, the analysis was based on a public policy document on e-government and the experiences of public administration bodies with the implementation of digital transformation projects. Thus, the identified barriers are the four highlighted by public policy in the field of e-government, namely: the lack of an efficient and effective IT architecture for the general management of electronic public services; the lack of information systems necessary for central public bodies to operate electronic public services; a shortage of e-government and human resources specialists in the IT departments of public bodies and authorities and, in correlation, a shortage of skills necessary for the development and maintenance of electronic public services, as well as the lack of a uniform and efficient public electronic legislative and procedural framework to sustain electronic public services.