

Press release

ESSEC Business School presents the second edition of the Geopolitics & Business Barometer, conducted with OpinionWay and unveiled by L'Express

A strategic awakening is taking place among French business leaders: 55% now consider geopolitics a key priority alongside sustainability and artificial intelligence, up from 36% in 2025.

Paris, September 29th, 2026 - The Geopolitics & Business Barometer is an annual study led by ESSEC Business School, conducted for the first time in September 2025 with the assistance of OpinionWay and L'Express, a French weekly magazine. The barometer measures the perception and level of readiness of French business leaders facing geopolitical threats.

Geopolitical shocks are intensifying and multiplying, with a growing impact on both the economy and French businesses. This study, conducted during the summer of 2026 among a representative sample of executives from companies with over 250 employees, shows how their perspectives are evolving.

The [2026 barometer](#) shows that a strategic awakening has begun among business leaders. 55% now rank geopolitical issues as being at least on the same level of importance as the AI boom or sustainability when it comes to their company's strategy (a 19% increase compared to 2025). A sizable majority of business leaders now feel ready to act or already committed (62%) to dealing with geopolitical shocks, whereas this concern dominated the previous edition of the barometer.

This change has been accelerated by the Trump 2.0 shock. Thirty percent of executives view the United States as the primary threat to the economic security of European companies, far ahead of Putin's Russia (8%) or Xi Jinping's China (4%). The trade war triggered by Donald Trump (19%) and the Israeli-American attack on Iran causing the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz (36%) are the main geopolitical risks monitored by French companies.

The results show that there is still work to be done. Currently, only 13% of business leaders have incorporated geopolitical risk into their strategy and operations. The ESSEC Institute for Geopolitics & Business provides several recommendations to help companies remain competitive in a more complex and uncertain world. This involves developing a corporate geopolitical culture structured around three principles:

- Greater vigilance, using scenario analysis and corporate foresight to integrate geopolitical shocks into strategy design.
- Greater resilience, using stress-testing to assess ability to withstand geopolitical disruptions.
- Reduced dependencies, using specialized audits to identify vulnerabilities throughout the value chain, determine their criticality, and explore potential alternatives.

"The Geopolitics & Business Barometer shows that French business leaders are gradually emerging from a state of shock caused by geopolitical disruption. To help them take action, the ESSEC Institute for Geopolitics & Business provides concrete recommendations to build a corporate geopolitical culture so they can remain competitive in a more complex and uncertain world," stated **Vincenzo Vinzi**, Dean and President of ESSEC Business School.



*"We are proud to unveil this Barometer conducted by ESSEC. Its findings are fascinating: the level of awareness is rising. Under Trump, the world's leading economic power has definitively put an end to happy globalization, but there is still a long way to go for French companies to be fully equipped against an ever-worsening landscape of threats," said **Sébastien Le Fol**, Managing Editor of **L'Express**.*

*"From the MEDEF's REF conference to the upcoming budget cycle, the signal is clear everywhere: business leaders expect public authorities to fully address geopolitical risks and economic security challenges. The second edition of the Barometer conducted for ESSEC proves it once again: a new culture of public-private cooperation will be necessary as economic warfare rages on," stated **Frédéric Micheau**, Deputy CEO of OpinionWay.*

The results of the 2026 Barometer are available [here](#).

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About ESSEC Business School

ESSEC Business School has been a prestigious institution for higher learning since its foundation in 1907, set apart by its humanist approach. In light of current and future economic, environmental, social and geopolitical challenges, ESSEC is committed to transforming its teaching, research, and campuses to train inclusive, influential and multicultural leaders. With 8 534 students in pre-experience programs and 5000 participants in executive education across four campuses in Cergy, La Défense, Rabat and Singapore, ESSEC offers programs recognized as some of the best in the world. ESSEC's exceptional faculty, composed of 171 professors (including 25 emeritus professors), 240 partnerships with prestigious international universities and an alumni network of over 79 000 members, showcases ESSEC's commitment to excellence and academic innovation. For more information, please visit www.essec.edu.

About the ESSEC Institute for Geopolitics & Business

Created in 2024 by ESSEC, the ESSEC Institute for Geopolitics & Business examines how geopolitical shocks reshape companies' economic models. Based across ESSEC Business School's campuses in France, Morocco, and Singapore, it brings a tri-continental perspective to what drives corporate competitiveness in the post-globalization era: more vigilance, more resilience and less dependance. It feeds into ESSEC's degree programs, executive education, and research to foster a new generation of geopolitics-proof business leaders capable of steering and growing companies amid an increasingly brutalized world. Rooted in ESSEC's academic excellence, the Institute draws on 4 flagship centers: the IRENE Center for Negotiation & Mediation (established in 1996), the Center for Geopolitics, Defense & Leadership (established in 2021), The Center for European Law & Economics (established in 2008), and the Chair Business & Industry in Africa (established in 2024). For more information, please visit <https://institute-geopolitics-business.essec.edu/>

About L'Express

L'Express delivers sharp analysis and in-depth reporting to inform, challenge and connect Europeans, shedding light on the forces redefining the continent and its role in the world.

About OpinionWay

Founded in 2000 and a pioneer in the digitalisation of research, OpinionWay has been a forerunner in the renewal of market research practices. The OpinionWay Group has grown constantly since its creation, and in 2022 it became part of the Les Echos-Le Parisien Group (LVMH), with the aim of accelerating its development and internationalisation in order to better serve its clients.