



News release:

**CUSTOMER AND SUPPLIER PAYMENT PERIODS
OF NON-FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS IN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

2025 October

News release: CUSTOMER AND SUPPLIER PAYMENT PERIODS OF NON-FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are those of authors and do not necessarily represent those of the ECCBSO or those of the national central banks. The financial cost indicator used in this study was calculated with a harmonized definition. Nevertheless, it reflects national charts of accounts, which may not be completely harmonized.

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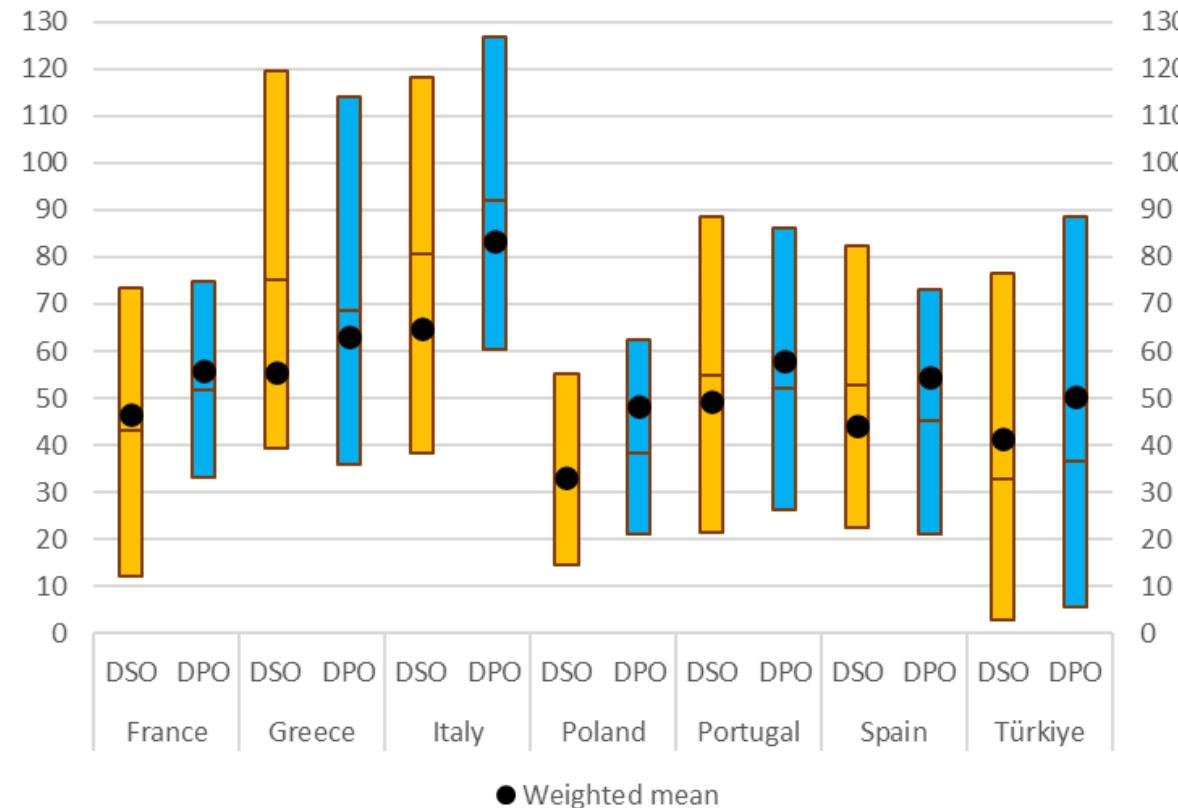
Executive Summary

- Over the past decade, payment practices have shifted towards shorter payment periods across all countries in the FSA WG (France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye). This trend is evident in both Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) and Days Payables Outstanding (DPO) across countries and firm sizes. A downward trend in the trade credit balance (TCB) has also been observed.
- As in the previous year, in 2023 large companies recorded the shortest average DSO in every country, while the differences between small and medium-sized firms were less pronounced. The heterogeneity across size classes is less clear-cut for DPO; however, in most countries, large companies had the shortest average DPO, while small firms had the longest. Comparing weighted mean and median for both DSO and DPO shows that size heterogeneity narrows.
- Construction had the longest DSO and DPO in almost all countries, while trade the lowest ones. Comparing weighted mean and median DSO and DPO by sector of activity indicates especially long payment periods for larger construction firms.
- Dispersion, as measured by interquartile ranges (IQR), was heterogeneous across countries. However, in most cases, it was greater for DSO than for DPO, higher for small companies compared to larger ones, and showed a declining trend over time across all company sizes.
- Over the past six years, resilient firms exhibited strong persistence in lower levels of DPO across all countries. Conversely, vulnerable firms were more prevalent in the higher DPO categories.

The country ranking in 2023 remained practically unchanged from the previous year: Greece and Italy recorded the highest median values, while Türkiye and Poland had the lowest ones.

On average, DPO values exceeded DSO. In some countries (like Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) DSO weighted mean was lower than the median, suggesting that larger companies tend to collect payments from their customers more quickly than smaller ones. At the same time, in most countries (with exception of Greece and Italy) DPO weighted mean is above the median, suggesting that larger companies took longer to pay their suppliers.

Figure 1. Distribution of DSO and DPO by country in 2023
(interquartile range box; in days)



Over the past decade, payment habits have shifted towards shorter payment periods. This trend is evident in both DSO and DPO across all countries. Since 2022, the effects of the pandemic appear to have been fully absorbed and the downward trend in payment periods has resumed almost everywhere.

Figure 2a. DSO quartiles by country over time
(in days)

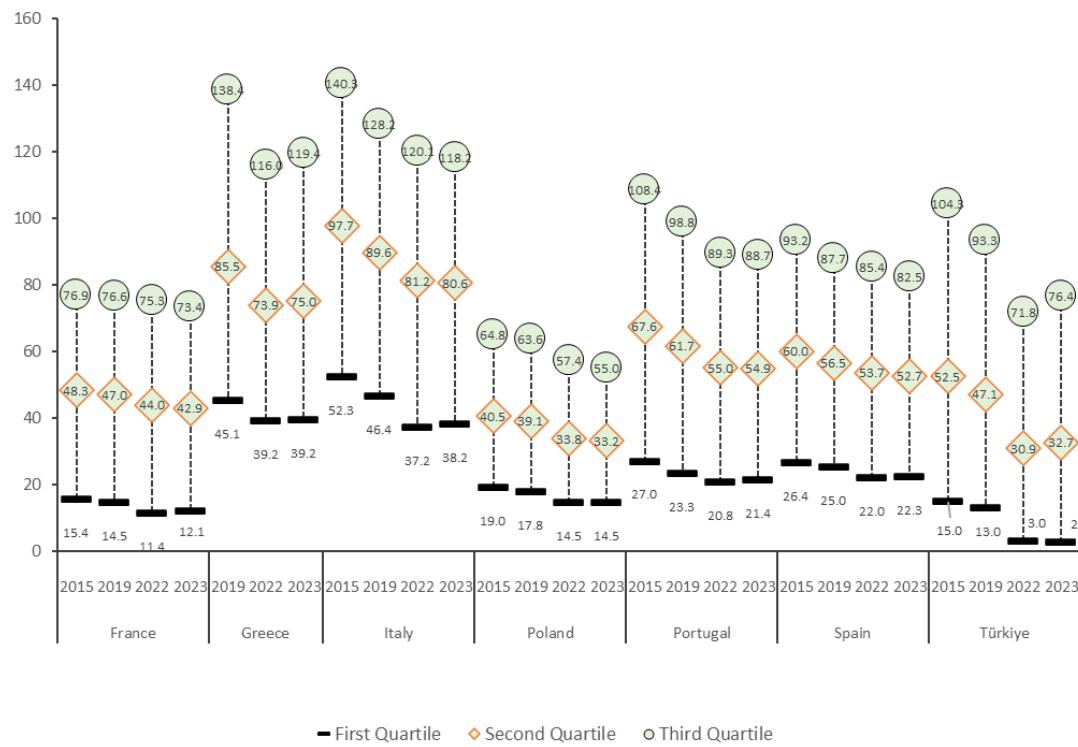
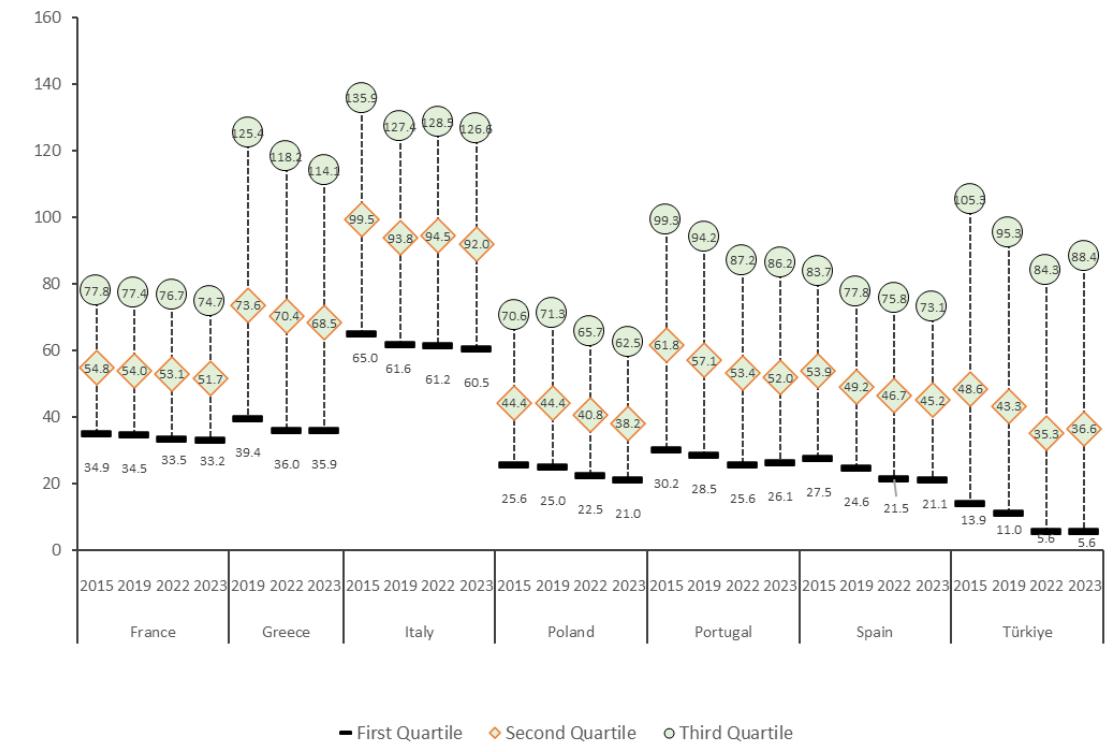
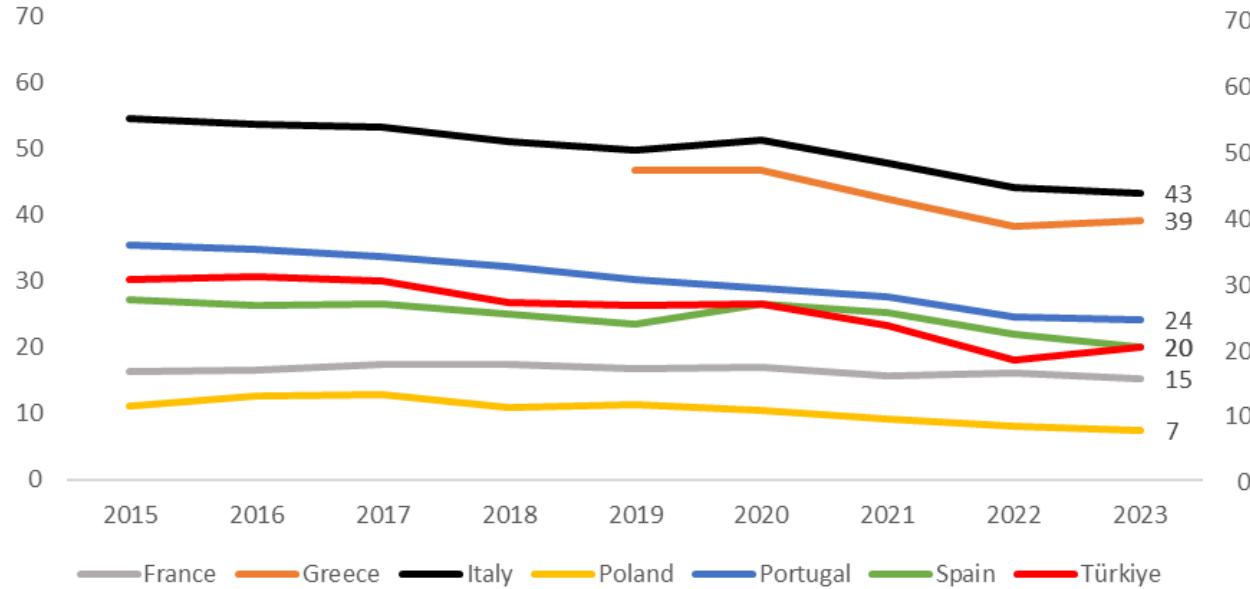


Figure 2b. DPO quartiles by country over time
(in days)

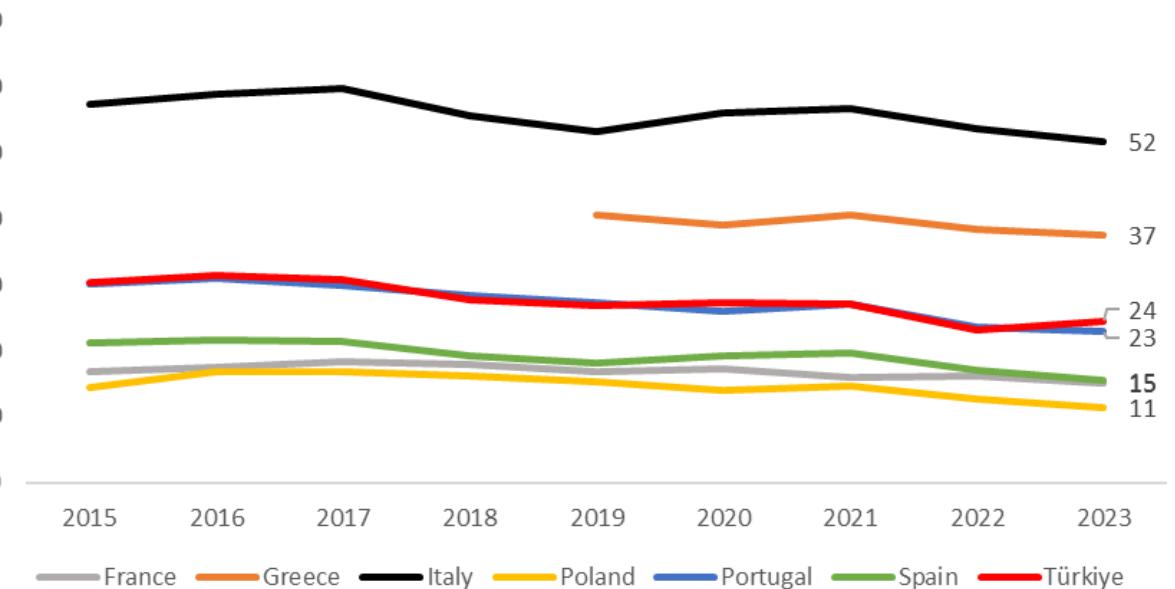


The percentage of companies with DSO and DPO exceeding 90 days exhibited a downward trend. Poland recorded the lowest percentage of firms with DSO over 90 days, followed by France, while the highest was observed in Italy, followed by Greece. Similar patterns were observed for DPO.

**Figure 3a. Companies with DSO over 90 days
(per cent)**



**Figure 3b. Companies with DPO over 90 days
(per cent)**



When looking at weighted averages in 2023, the shortest DSO characterized large companies across all countries, while differences between small and medium-sized firms were less pronounced. The largest gaps between large companies and other size classes were found in Greece, followed by Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Regarding DPO, size-related differences were more subtle. However, except for Poland and Spain, large companies had the shortest average, whereas small firms experienced the longest ones.

Figure 4a. DSO weighted mean by firm size in 2023
(in days)

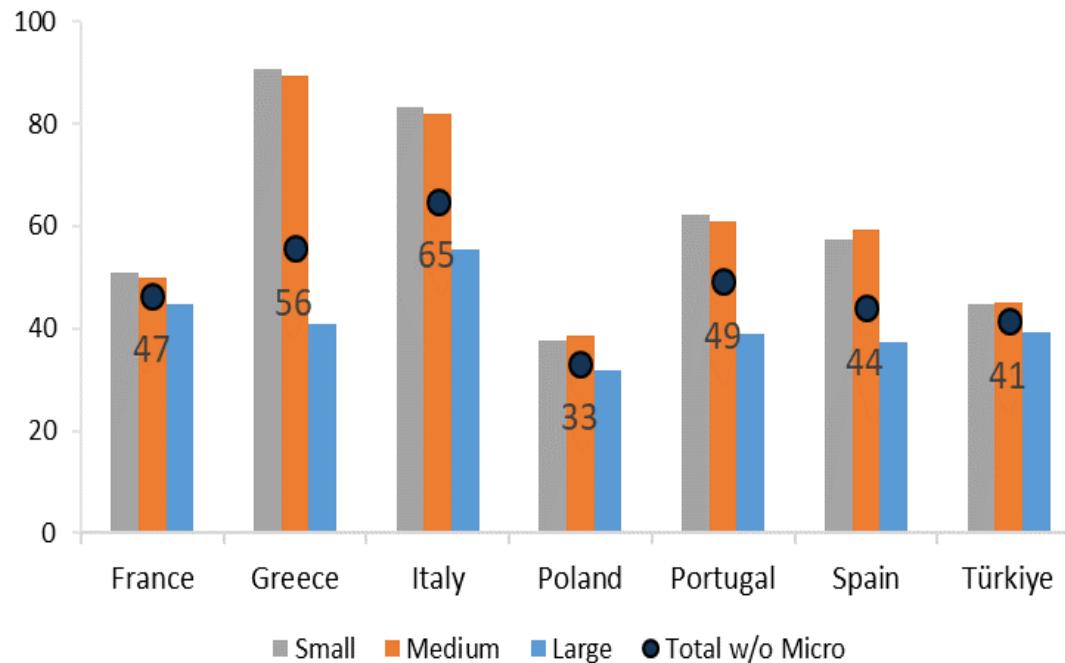
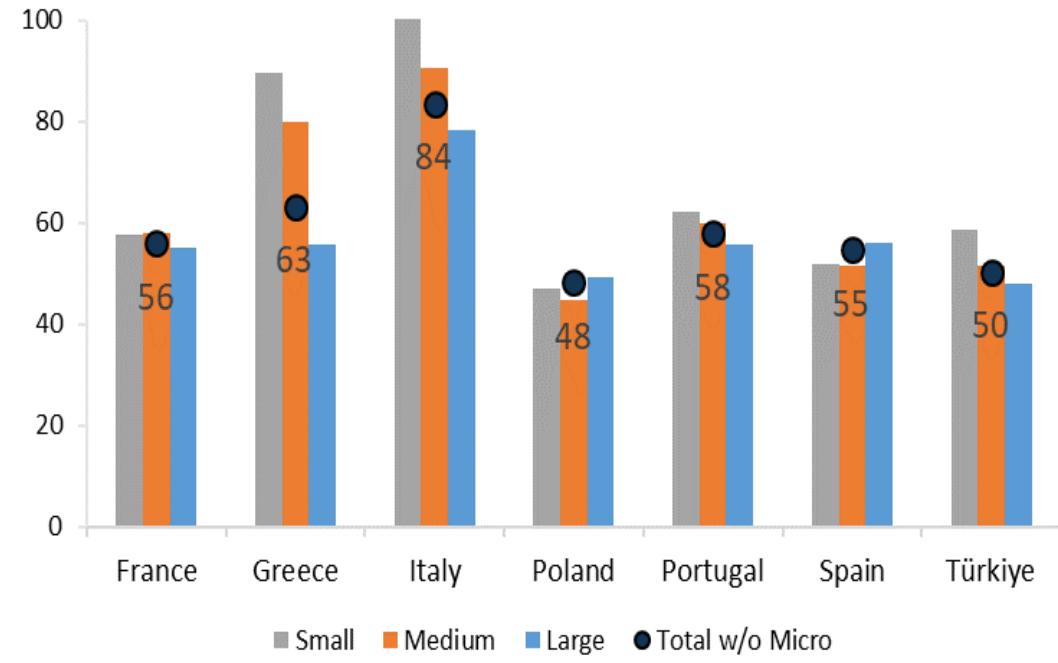
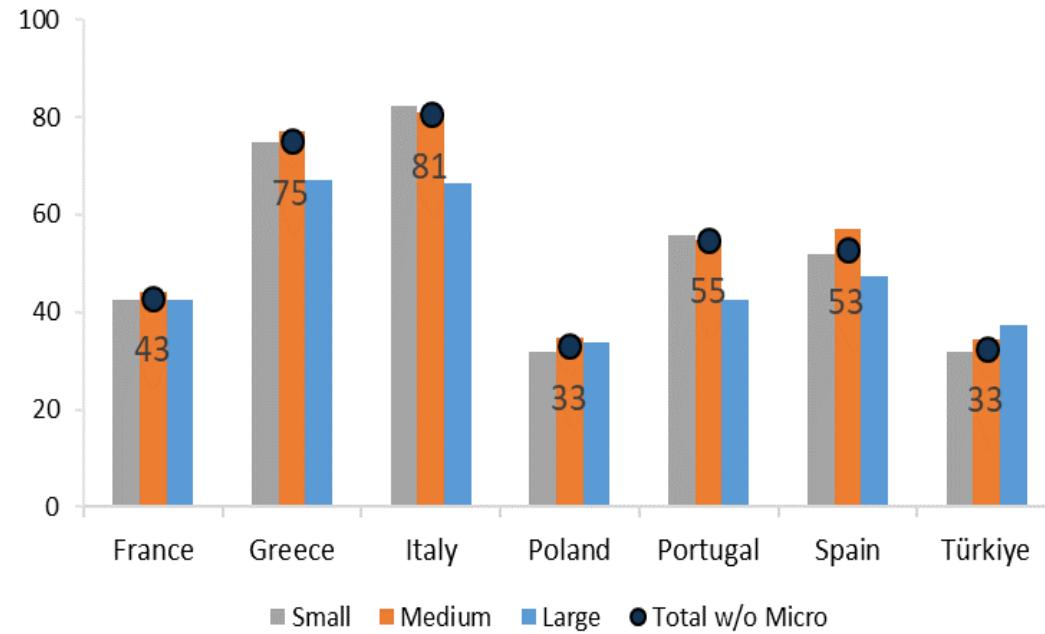


Figure 4b. DPO weighted mean by firm size in 2023
(in days)

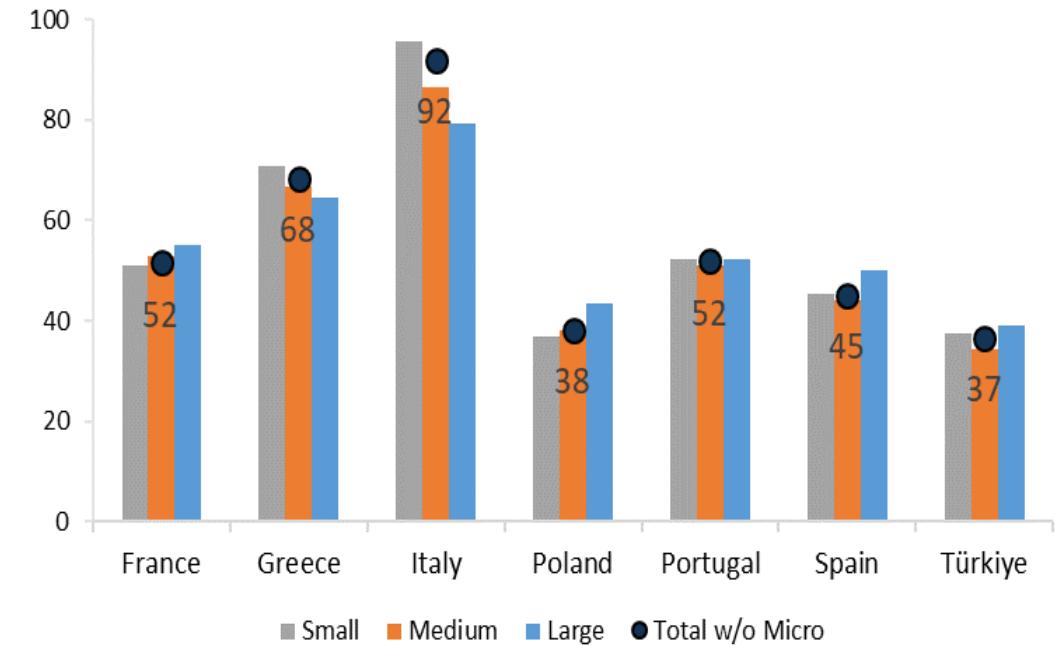


The difference between large enterprises and other sizes narrowed—and in some cases even reversed—when considering medians instead of weighted averages. This suggests that longer receivables and payables mainly characterized larger enterprises within each size category.

**Figure 5a. DSO median by firm size in 2023
(in days)**

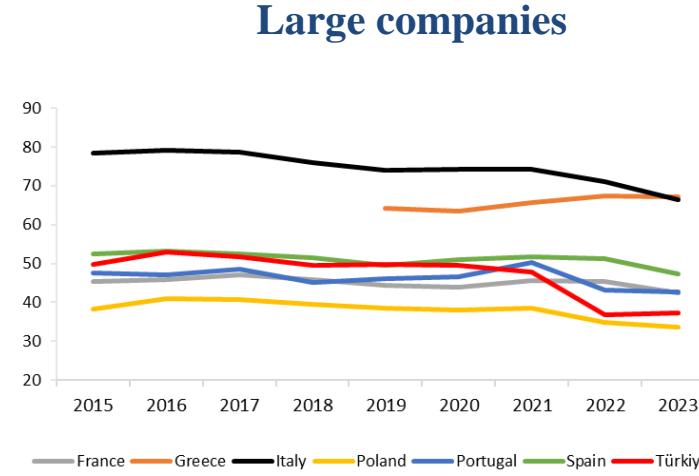


**Figure 5b. DPO median by firm size in 2023
(in days)**

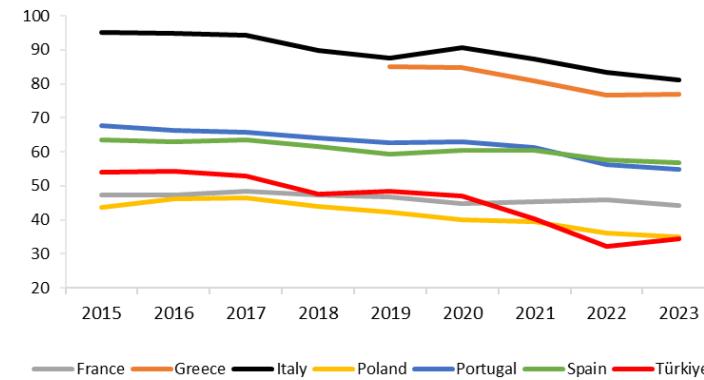


A downward trend is observed across firms of all sizes over the 2015-2023 period.
 This decline appears more pronounced among small and medium-sized enterprises.

Fig. 6a.
DSO median
by firm size
 (in days)



Medium companies



Small companies

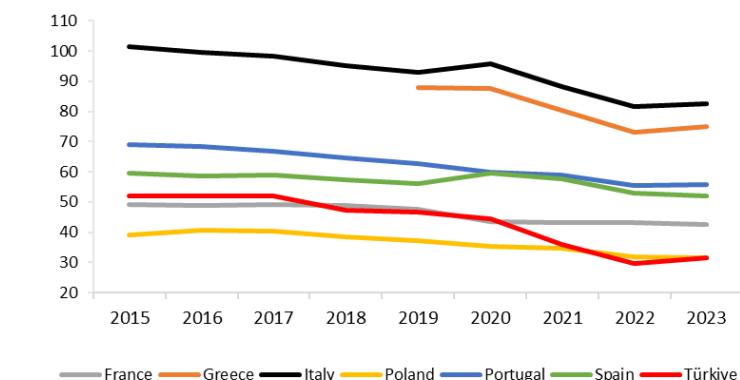
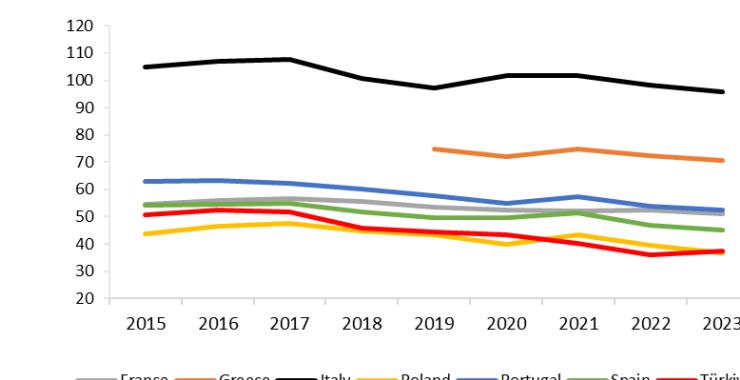
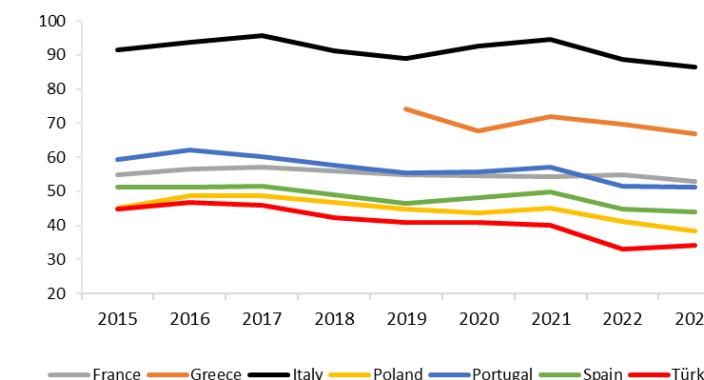
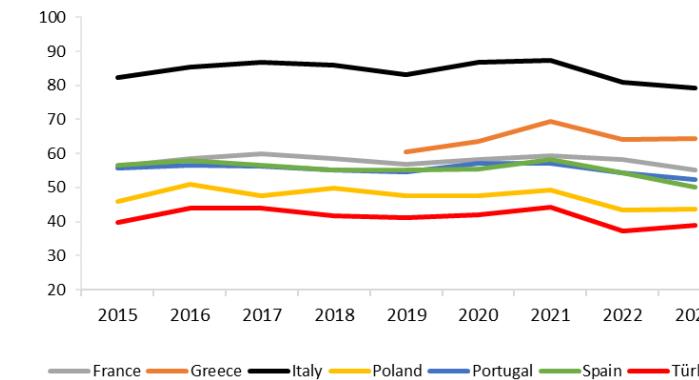
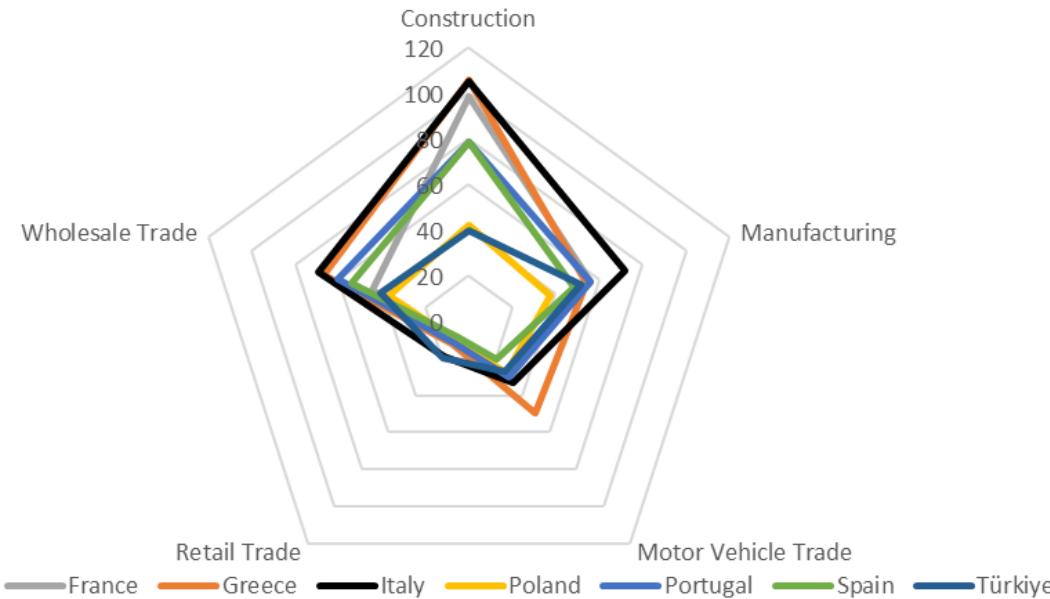


Fig. 6b.
DPO median
by firm size
 (in days)

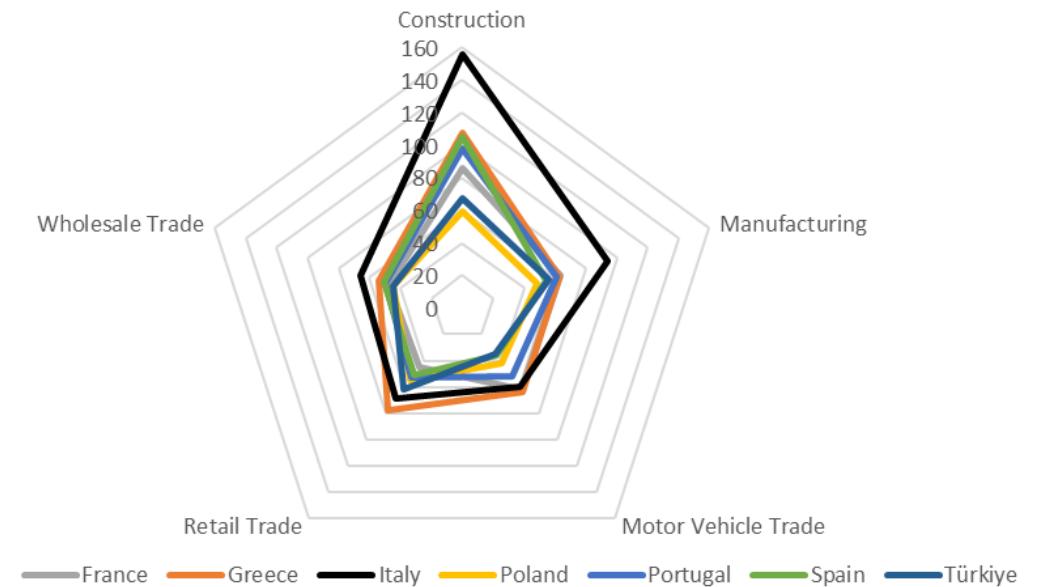


Evaluating sector-specific customer and supplier payment periods through weighted averages, the construction sector exhibited the longest DSO and DPO across nearly all countries in 2023, whereas the trade sector recorded the shortest. This pattern likely reflects liquidity dynamics specific to each sector.

**Figure 7a. DSO weighted mean by firm sector in 2023
(in days)**

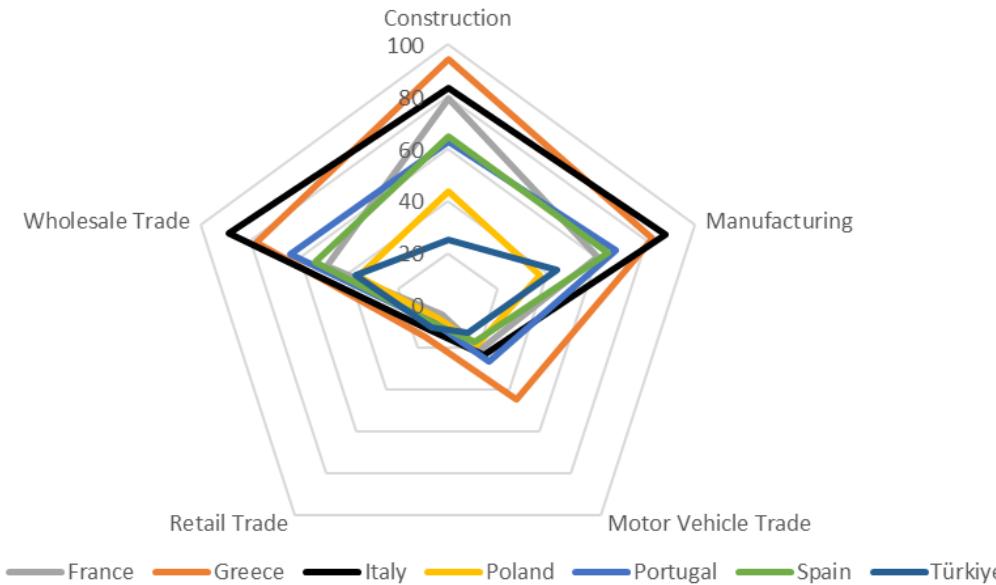


**Figure 7b. DPO weighted mean by firm sector in 2023
(in days)**

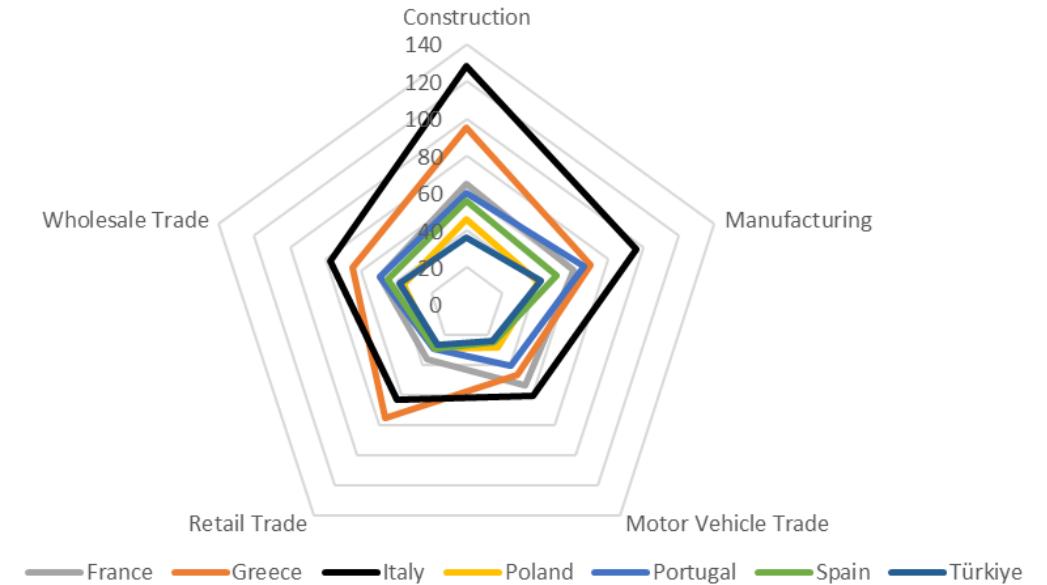


When examining sector-specific customer and supplier payment periods using median values, the DSO and DPO for construction were often lower than the weighted average values and closer to those observed in manufacturing and wholesale trade. This suggests particularly long payment periods among larger construction firms.

**Figure 8a. DSO median by firm sector in 2023
(in days)**



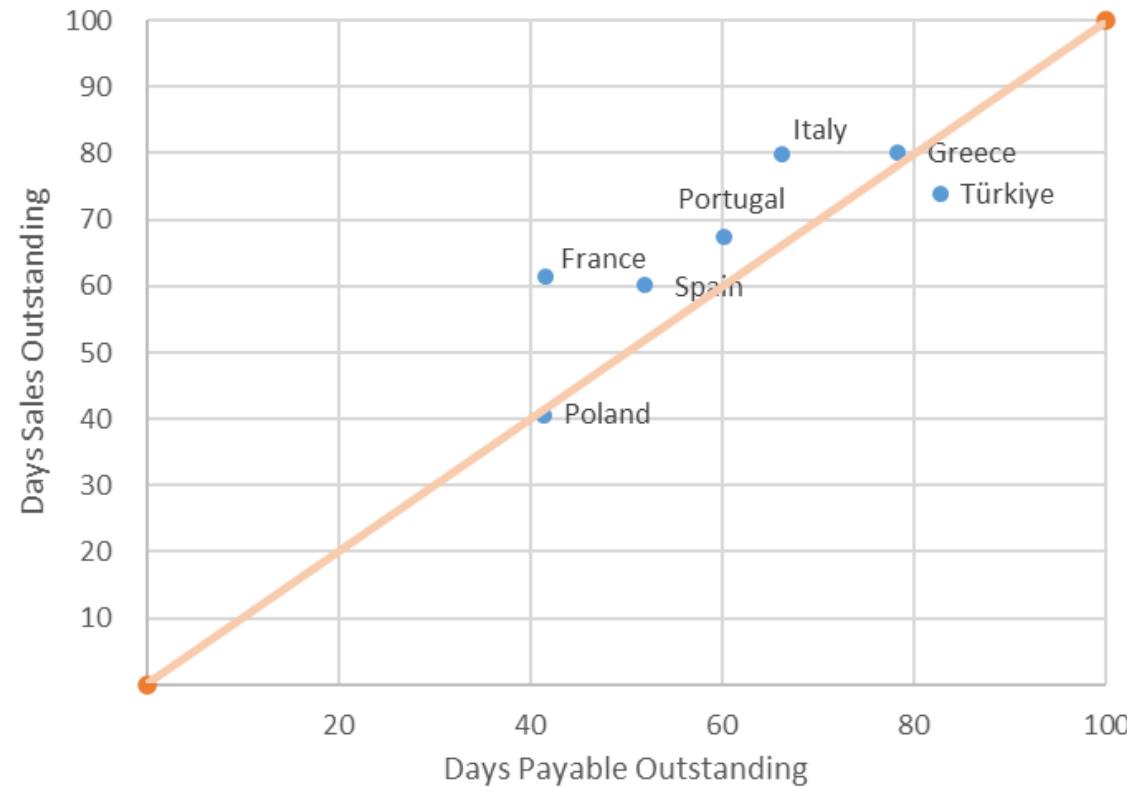
**Figure 8b. DPO median by firm sector in 2023
(in days)**



In terms of dispersion, measured by interquartile ranges (IQR), in 2023 the largest values were observed in Italy, Greece, and Türkiye, while Poland had the lowest.

Poland and Greece also exhibited nearly identical dispersion for DSO and DPO (aligned along the 45-degree line). In most other countries—such as France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal—dispersion was greater for DSO than for DPO, whereas the opposite held true for Türkiye.

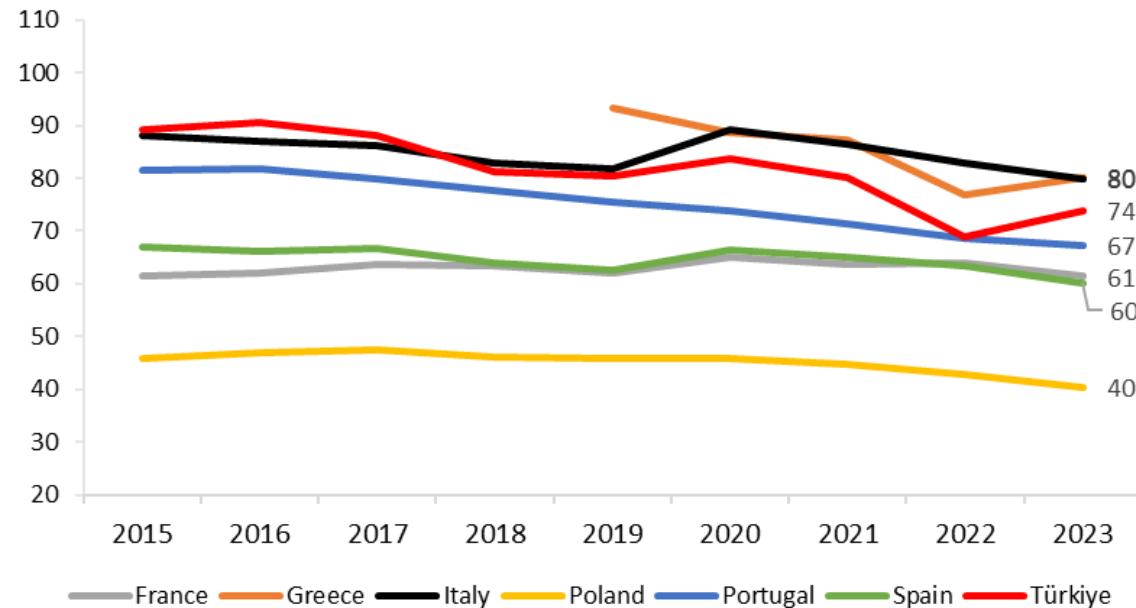
Figure 9. DSO and DPO IQR in 2023
(in days)



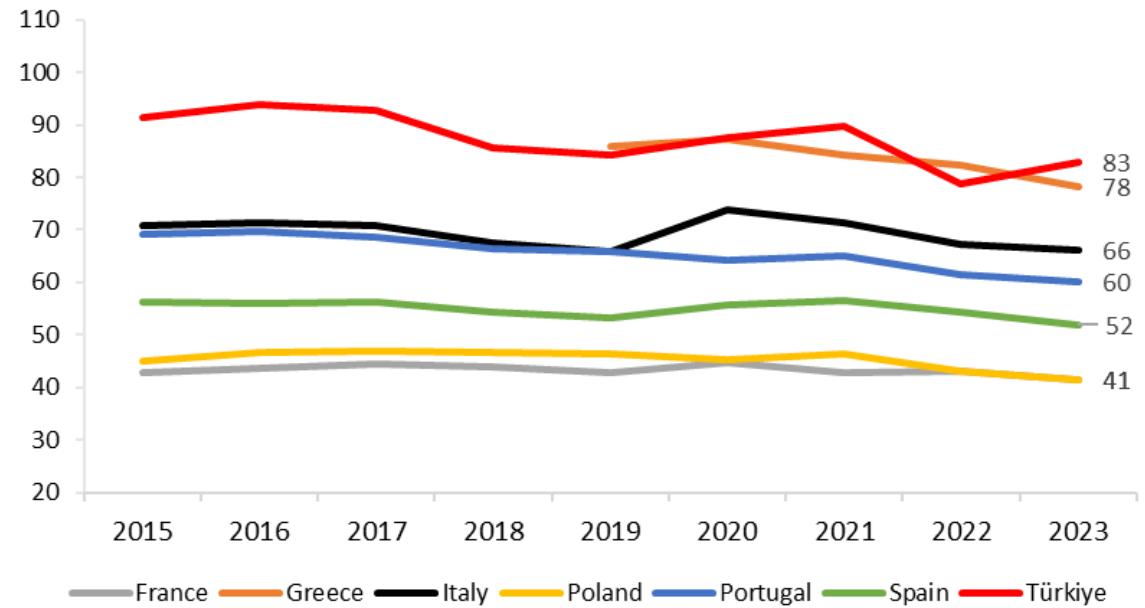
Over time, dispersion exhibited a downward trend, though to a lesser extent in France. A reduction in the IQR indicates that the payment periods become less dispersed.

In 2023, however, an increase in the IQR for both DSO and DPO was observed in Türkiye, and only for DSO in Greece.

**Figure 10a. DSO IQR by country over time
(in days)**



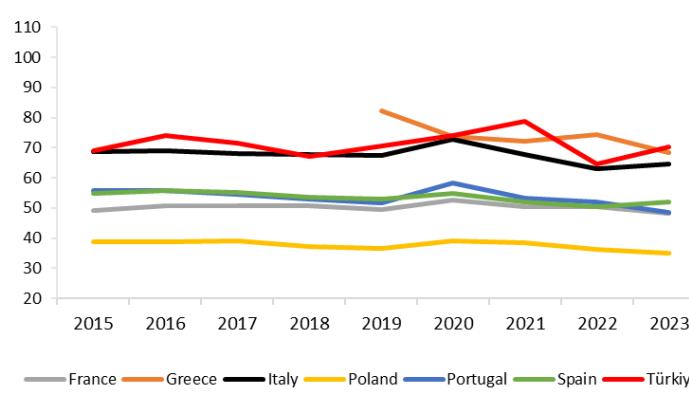
**Figure 10b. DPO IQR by country over time
(in days)**



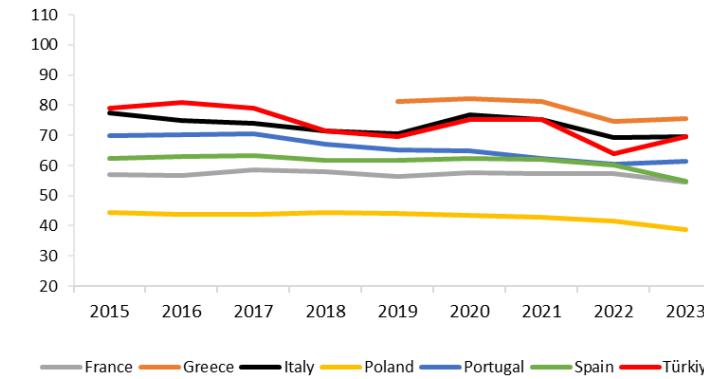
The downward trend in IQR is consistently observed across all firm sizes.

The IQR is larger for small firms across all countries for both DSO and DPO, except for DPO in France.

Fig. 11a.
DSO IQR
by firm size
(in days)



Medium companies



Small companies

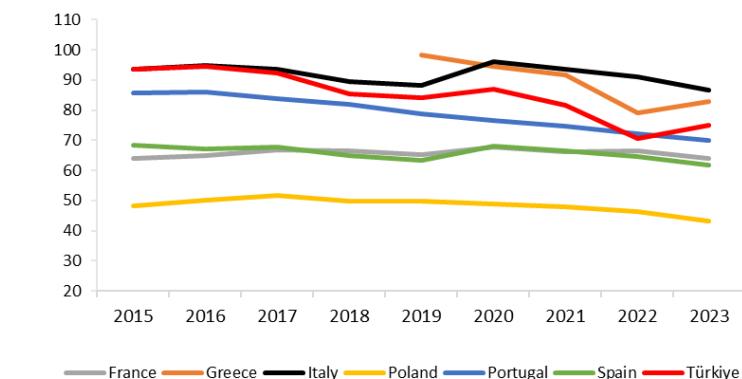
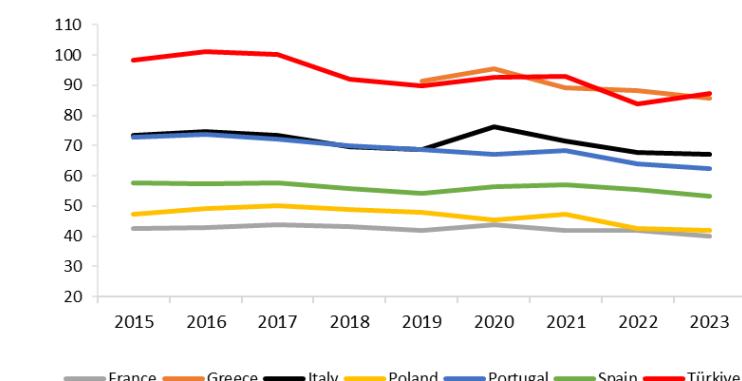
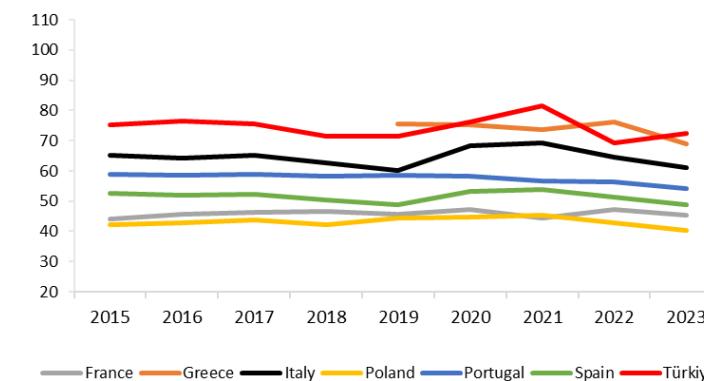
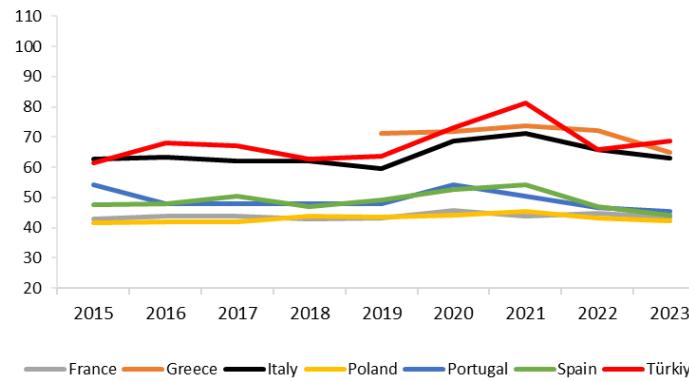


Fig. 11b.
DPO IQR
by firm size
(in days)



The trade credit balance (TCB), proxying the liquidity advantage, decreased over time, except in Spain.

The reduction became more pronounced after 2020 in most countries.

The fact that the weighted mean is lower than the median values (and even negative in some countries) indicates that larger firms tend to manage their liquidity more effectively.

Figure 12a. TCB weighted mean by country

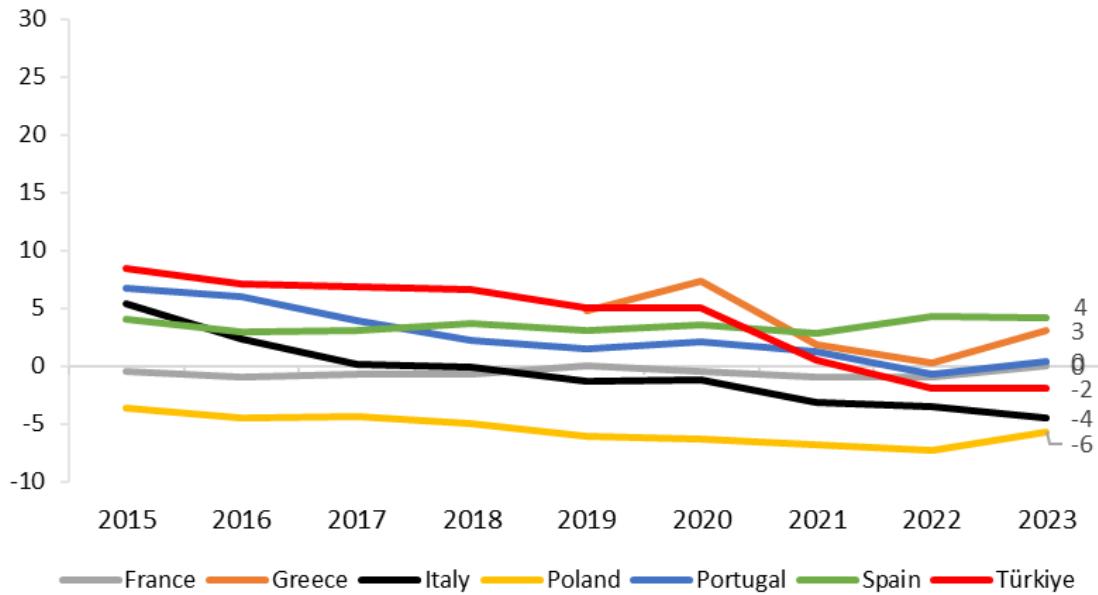
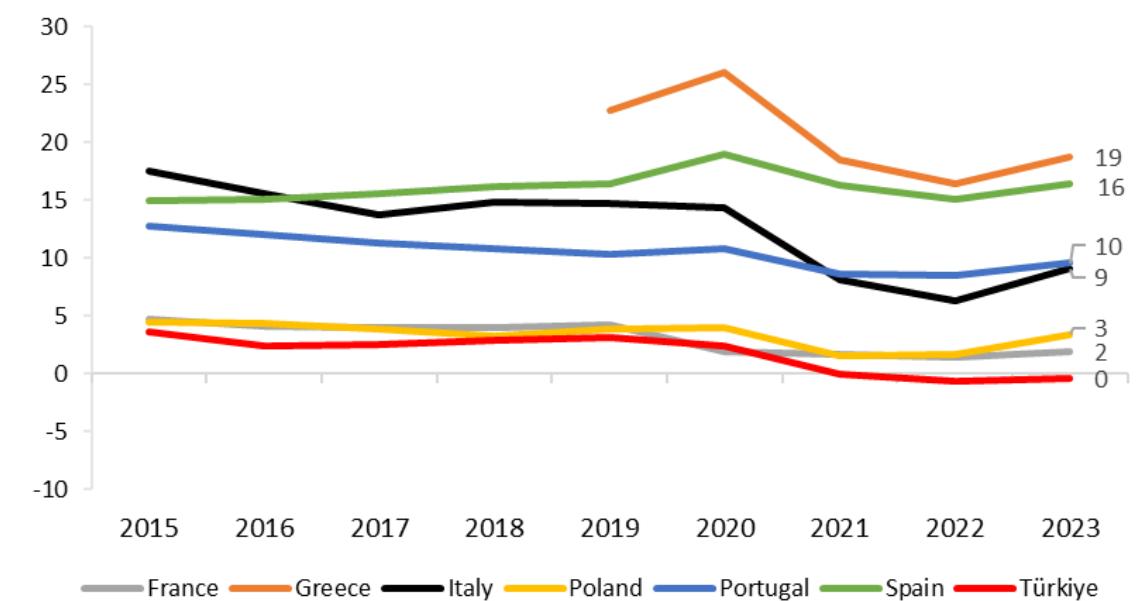


Figure 12b. TCB median by country



In 2023, weighted averages indicate that the Trade Credit Balance (TCB) in the overall trade sector was negative in nearly all countries, primarily driven by the motor trade and retail trade sectors.

When looking at weighted means, the TCB in trade shifted to positive values in Portugal and Spain, and approached zero in Italy, Poland, and Türkiye.

Furthermore, TCB levels for manufacturing were significantly lower than the medians. These differences suggest that larger enterprises tend to utilize more receivables (or have fewer payables), at least within certain sectors.

Figure 13a. TCB weighted mean by sector in 2023

	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Portugal	Spain	Türkiye
Construction	36	19	-10	-3	7	27	-20
Manufacturing	6	2	-1	1	7	12	6
Trade	-8	2	-6	-14	-5	-5	-6
Motor Vehicle Trade	-27	-4	-23	-10	-18	-7	-4
Wholesale Trade	3	20	10	-2	16	10	0
Retail Trade	-26	-47	-40	-35	-34	-33	-30

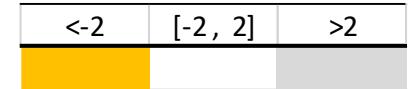
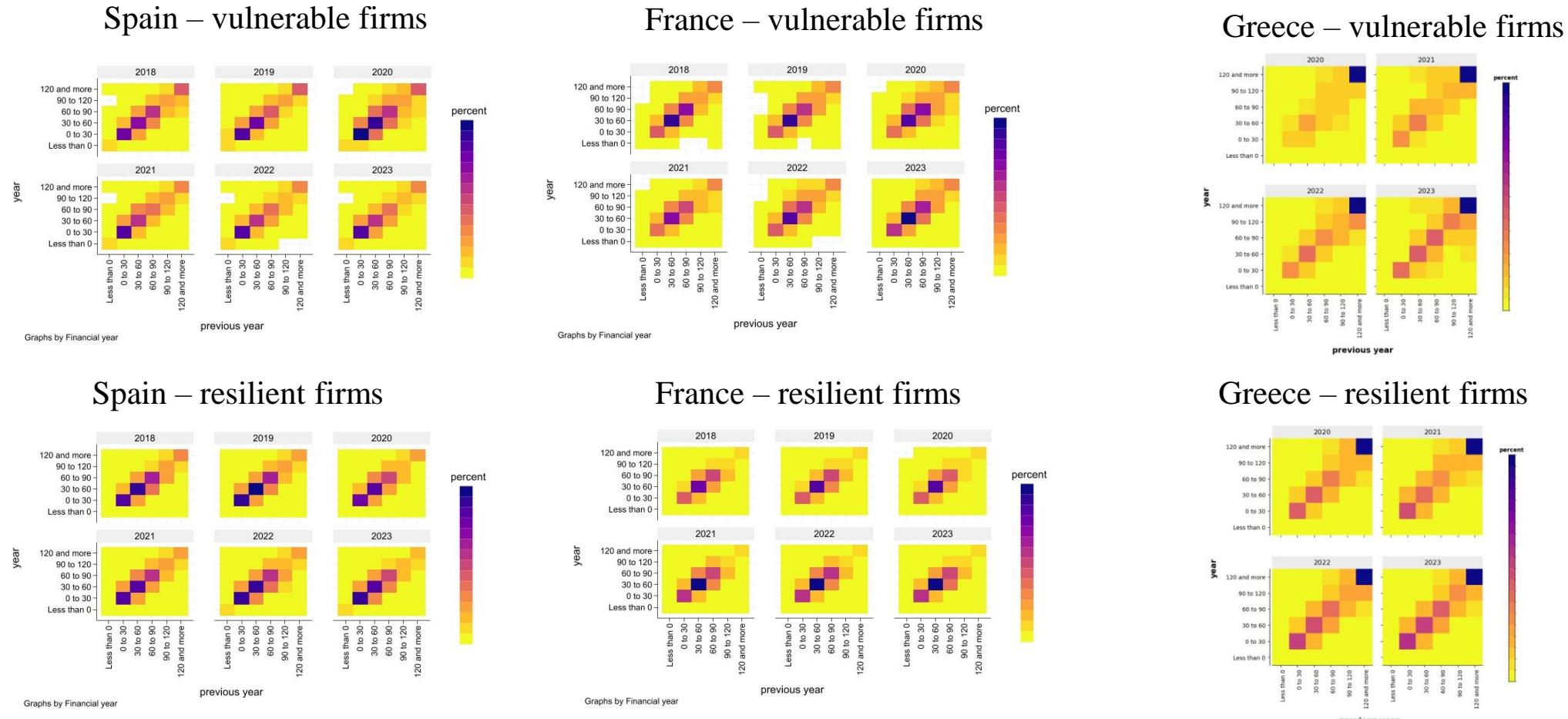


Figure 13b. TCB median by sector in 2023

	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Portugal	Spain	Türkiye
Construction	34	20	-5	10	16	28	-4
Manufacturing	18	25	19	8	20	31	3
Trade	-12	16	0	-2	3	7	-1
Motor Vehicle Trade	-13	2	-12	-1	-2	3	-1
Wholesale Trade	8	24	17	5	17	15	0
Retail Trade	-22	-32	-30	-15	-8	-5	-7

Across all countries, resilient firms—defined as those with an interest coverage ratio (ICR) greater than 2—exhibited stronger persistence in lower DPO categories (i.e. under 60 days). Conversely, vulnerable firms were more concentrated in upper classes of DPO (over 90 days). This is consistent with the intuition that firms may delay their payments to suppliers when facing a situation of vulnerability, expectation that companies heavily reliant on trade credit and struggling to pay their suppliers may experience a negative impact on their credit rating, thereby limiting access to other forms of financing and indirectly affecting their ICR.

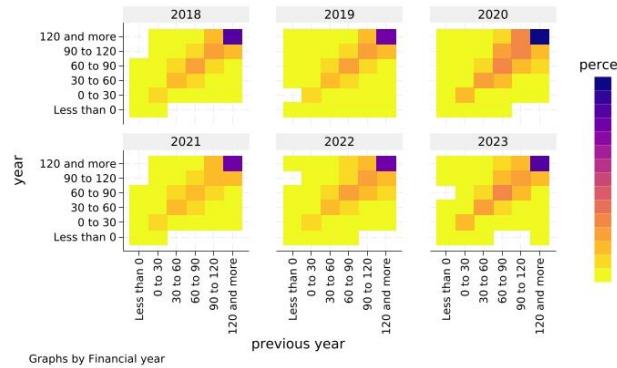
Figure 14. Heat map of the DPO transitions for vulnerable and resilient firms, by country



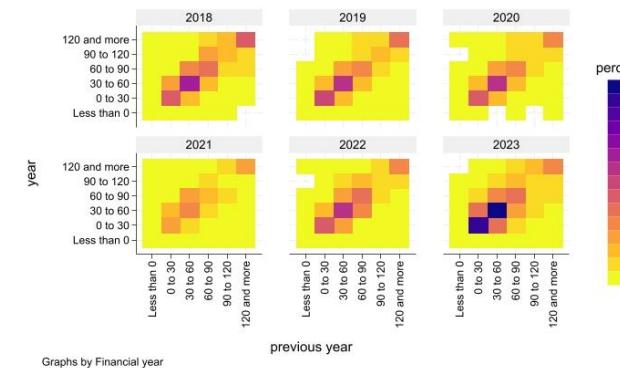
The shift to longer periods seems consistent with the intuition that firms experiencing vulnerability delay their payments to suppliers.

Figure 14 (cont.). Heat map of the DPO transitions for vulnerable and resilient firms, by country

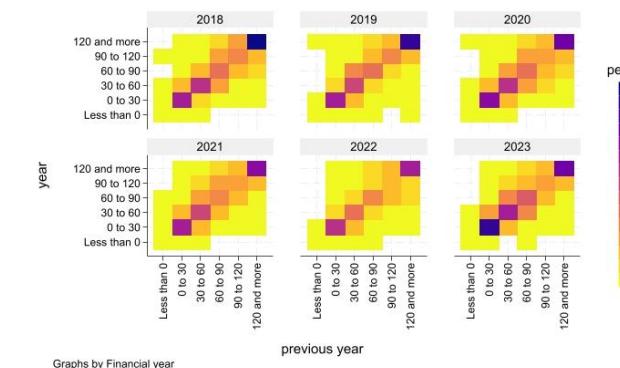
Italy – vulnerable firms



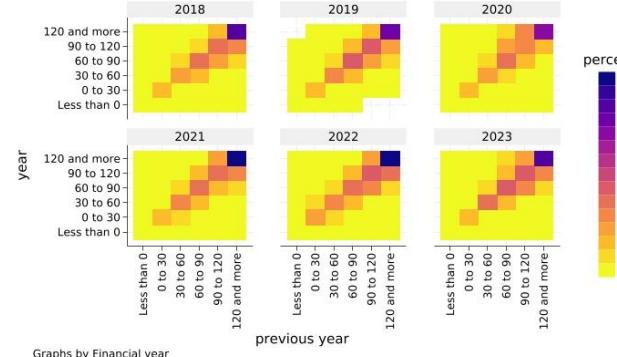
Poland – vulnerable firms



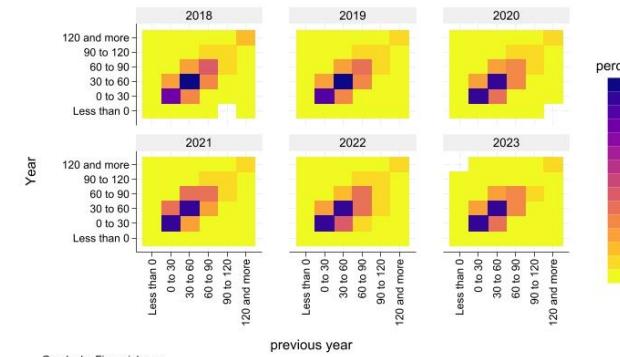
Portugal – vulnerable firms



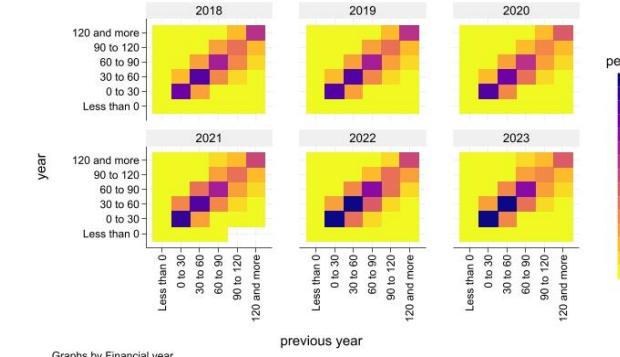
Italy – resilient firms



Poland – resilient firms



Portugal – resilient firms



Annex I - Methodology and definitions

Ratio Definitions

Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) is the average number of days the customer receivables are “on the books”.

Numerator	360 X (Trade receivables-customer prepayments)
Denominator	Net turnover

Days Payables Outstanding (DPO) is the average number of days a company takes before paying its suppliers.

Numerator	360 X (Trade payables-advances to suppliers)
Denominator	Purchases

Trade Credit Balance (TCB) is the difference between days sales and days payables outstanding.

Numerator	360 X [(Trade receivables-customer prepayments)- (Trade payables-advances to suppliers)]
Denominator	Net turnover

This study follows the EU Commission Recommendation concerning the definition of firm size, by using the turnover criterion. Micro-corporations have been excluded from the analysis, because the coverage of these firms is extremely heterogeneous across countries.

	Sales Thresholds* in millions of Euros
Micro	Sales \leq 2
Small	2 $<$ Sales \leq 10
Medium	10 $<$ Sales \leq 50
Large	Sales $>$ 50
Total without Micro	Sales $>$ 2

*2015 base year, deflated by HICP (Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices) in each year

Number of companies by country and size in 2023

Country	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total w/o micro
France	80,525	64,557	19,477	5,872	89,906
Greece	1,901	2,345	981	271	3,597
Italy	100,101	47,410	18,752	5,122	71,284
Poland	6,493	8,585	4,926	2,138	15,649
Portugal	120,087	11,489	2,830	678	14,997
Spain	198,641	26,899	6,313	1,243	34,455
Türkiye	353,400	69,781	20,225	4,974	94,980

Annex II - Regulation

The maximum supplier payment period (in days) permitted by law (B2B).

Country	Legislation	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 and onwards
France (1)	Law LME 2008-776	60	60	60	60	60	60
Greece (2)	Law 166/2003	30/60	30/60	30/60	30/60	30/60	30/60
Italy (3)	Law 1/2012 Law 192/2012						60 60
Poland (4)	Law 139/2003 Law 403/2013	30	30	30	30	30	30/60
Portugal (5)	Law 62/2013						60
Spain (6)	Law 3/2004 Law 15/2010	60	60	85	85	75	60
Türkiye	Law 6102/2011				60	60	60

(1) The maximum legal payment period is 30 days for road freight transport and car rental, in accordance with the Law n. 2006-10 enacted in 2006. It is 30 and in some cases 20 days for perishable goods.

(2) Law 1/2012 applies to food retailers vs. food producers. Law 192/2012 is the adoption of Directive 2011/7/EU.

(3) From 2013 and onwards, for public companies, the payment period is 60 days, and for private it is 30 days.

(4) Despite the 60 days rule, the Portuguese Law (like the Directive 2011/7/EU) says that there may be circumstances in which undertakings require more extensive payment periods. It should therefore remain possible for the parties expressly agree on payment periods longer than 60 calendar days, provided, however, that such extension is fair to the creditor.

(5) Modified in 2010 response to the economic crisis with high levels of late payments, since it had a low applicability in the business reality.

(6) It should be possible for the parties to expressly agree on payment periods longer than 60 calendar days, if such extension is fair to the creditor. However, the payment period shall not exceed 60 days in cases where the creditor is a small or medium enterprise or an agricultural or animal producer.