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Interim Management In Europe: Making Great Progress

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Imagine the freelance revolution as a Swiss Army Knife. There are few more useful tools. A typical penknife has one or two blades. Helpful and, of course, limited. The Swiss Army Knife delivers more options. In fact, the largest of the knives has a variety of functional blades – from wood saw to corkscrew – and is perfect

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for a wide range of chores or projects.

These days more organizations need a Swiss Army Knife approach to resourcing. The penknife – fulltime employees in every role – is neither sufficient nor affordable. According to [Fiverr](#), over 80% of companies have found independent professionals an essential source of additional talent. Why? The variety and complexity of skill needs has grown. Competition is accelerating. Tech innovation in key areas like AI is rewiring and transforming entire industries. Experts in many areas are few and far between, and often too costly on a fulltime basis for many organizations. Acceptance of remote and hybrid work has opened up new channels of obtained expertise. And as companies try to keep up with burgeoning demands, talent is often the scare resource. Having the right skills, at the right time, “on demand,” is essential not optional.

One of the newer “blades” in the freelance Swiss Army Knife is interim and fractional resourcing. And it is a pleasure to share the results of the 2024 survey of European interim professionals, the work of [INIMA](#), the International Network of Interim Manager Associations, and its member organizations: [DOIM Austria](#), [AE-CMT France](#), [CAIM Czech Republic](#), [DDIM Germany](#), [Leading Network Italy](#), [VRIM Liechtenstein](#), [SIM Poland](#), [AIM Portugal](#), [AIME Spain](#), [DSIM Switzerland](#), and [IIM the UK](#). Also gratefully acknowledged is the excellent support of INIMA’s Jonathan Selby in preparing this report.

What have we learned from the 2024 survey of European interim managers?

Who are interim managers? The survey results point out that a typical European interim manager, is likely to be male, in their

mid-50s, with 5-12 years of interim experience.

Interims varied in experience. Germany (10.3 years), Switzerland (12.4) and the UK (11.4) are particularly active and mature interim markets. France (6.0), Portugal (6.8) and Spain (5.2) were less active and mature markets. Analysis by the INIMA also notes an increase in the age of interims, “reflecting a trend towards more seasoned professionals in the sphere.”

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In fact, the average interim manager in this survey made the transition from permanent employment to interim around the age of 48.

Women are a growing segment of interims. INIMA notes the participation of female interims as an important focus. Most markets maintained or increased the percentage of women interims over the past few years, but still lower than desirable at a European average of 14%. But markets vary. Poland (30%), France (20%) and the UK (20%) are at the high end of women interim participation. The Czech Republic (8%), Italy (9%), Liechtenstein (8%) and Spain (5%) are toward the low end.

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Female interim participation varies for several reasons. For example, France's female participation in interim roles has been encouraged by laws promoting gender inclusion, and by demand in areas like finance and HR where women are well represented. Poland maintains a larger female workforce than other countries and this supported female interim participation.

The market for interim managers remains strong. The average utilization of European Interim managers remained high, similar to 2023, at 69%. INIMA members reported a shortage of available interim managers in many member countries. The Czech Republic (73%), Germany (70%), Italy (85%) and Switzerland (70%) were highest in interim utilization, but countries clustered fairly tightly. At the low end were 54% (Spain) and 58% (Liechtenstein).

Overall, growth over the past four years has been impressive. Austria participation increased from 48% in 2020 to 67% in 2023. Markets other than the Czech Republic (which was quite high initially) have increased the involvement of interims by an average of over 14% since the 2020 INIMA report.

As the INIMA report notes, "Full-time assignments dedicated 100% to one company was the typical way of working in Northern Europe whilst part-time was more frequent in Spain and Italy, which reduced the financial burden on the smaller company clients." As the data indicate, Italy (52%) and Spain (38%) were

highest in the percentage of part-time interim roles, while other markets varied between 16% (France) and 27% (Austria). As the INIMA report mentions:

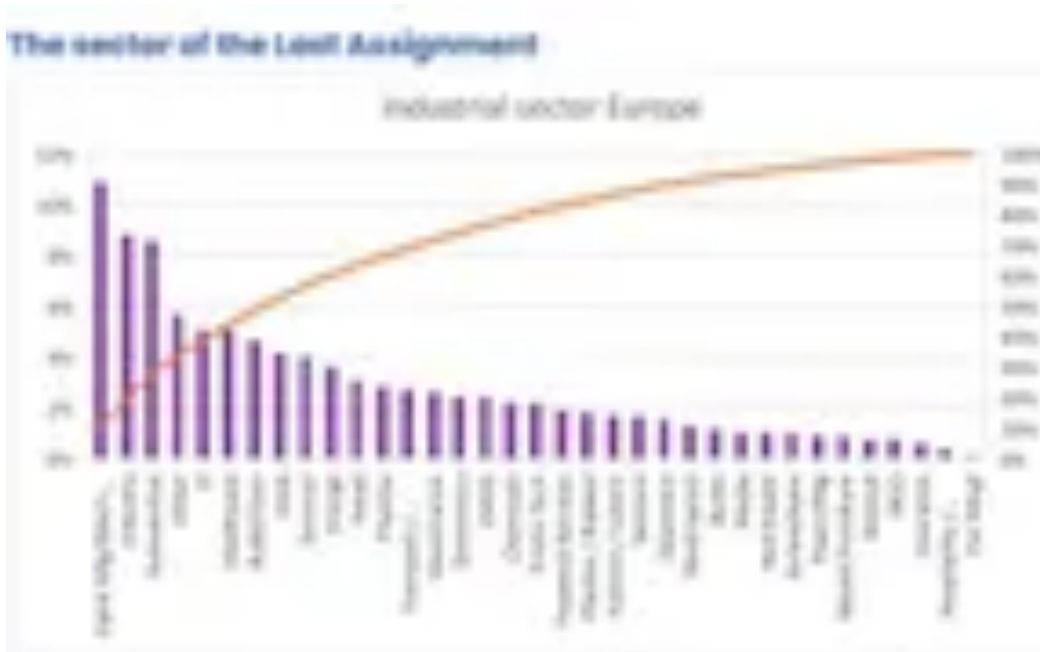
“Most companies in Spain are small and family-owned and that implies two things: a lower capacity to invest in projects and a more traditional culture. This means that Interim Managers must earn the trust of the owners and demonstrate the additional value we can provide.”

Markets differ in demand for specific roles. General management and board roles are the largest segment of interim management. This year’s survey found an average of 30% of interims operating as interim GMs or board members. Among functional management roles, interims were represented in Sales (4.4%), Operations (10.1%), IT (5.6%), HR (8.8%), and Finance (11.4%). However, as these data point out, market requirements for interims vary. The findings for specific markets are given below (all charts are supplied by INIMA):



Interims generally play executive roles. Interim roles are largely executive level. Across markets, the 2024 average is 60%: 35% were department heads or directors, and 21% CEO or equivalent (MD or GM). Austria and the UK had the lowest percentage of C-level interims at 37% and 46% respectively, while Poland and Spain were highest at 77% and 75%.

The sectors most utilizing interim managers. There are few industrial or service sectors across Europe and the UK that aren't dependent on interim managers. The data on interim managers' last assignment is illustrative and shows how interim is contributing to most areas of European business. The top 5 sectors for European interim managers were equipment/mechanical manufacturing, industry, automotive, IT and healthcare.



INIMA 2024 INIMA 2024

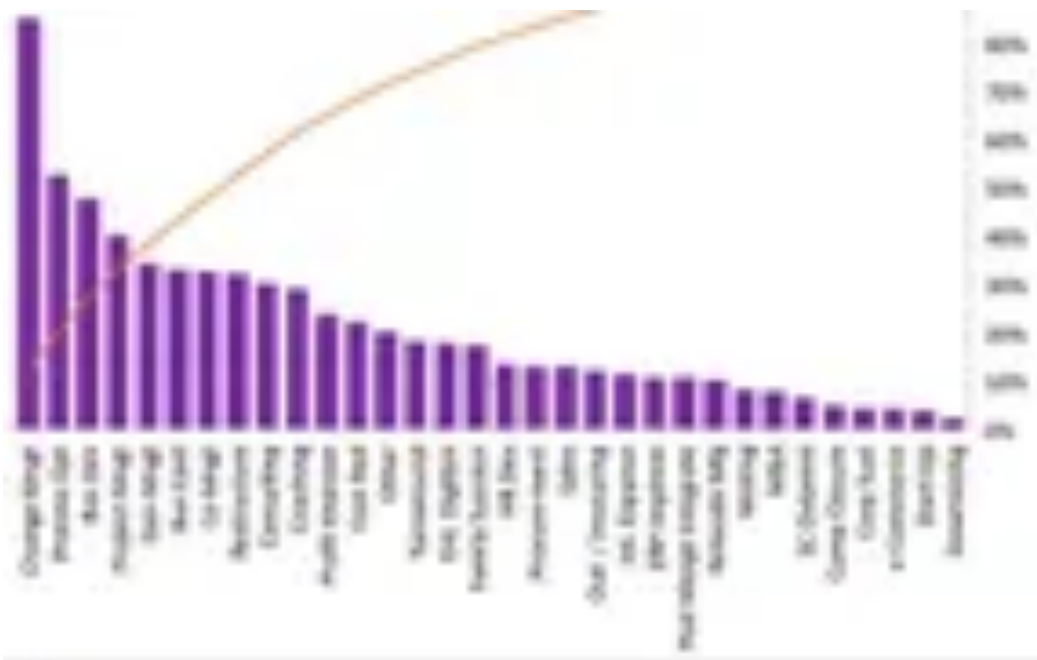
Organizations of all sizes and types are utilizing interims. It's evident that interim resources attract companies of all sizes. 11% of hiring organizations were above 10,000 employees. Companies between 100-1000 employees were most

likely to engage interims, representing 57% of interim assignments. But even companies below 10-50 employees provided 9% of interim assignments.

Three categories of organization represented the lion's share of interim opportunity. Corporations were largest users at 31%. Close behind were SMEs (small and medium enterprises) at 29%. Family or owner managed companies were third (22%). However, there were some interesting variations. In Austria, 22% of interims served public-private Partnerships, and a further 37% supported public sector organizations. UK interim managers were also significantly represented in the public sector (28%). France found interims helpful in startups (21%) while other markets generally did not (0-5%).

Interim management durations. The average duration of an interim management assignment was relatively consistent at 11.5 months, just short of a year. There was some variation by market, with Switzerland (15.3) and Italy (14.7) representing the longest average duration, and Austria (9.9) and Poland (10.5) the shortest.

The challenges set before interims. Without doubt, change management was the most frequent reason to bring interim managers on board. Process optimization, business development, and project management rounded out the top five:



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How interims get work. Interim management firms are responsible much interim opportunity, at an average of 32%: Germany (42%) and France (41%) are the IM engagement leaders among markets, while Spain (18%), Poland (23%) and the UK (25%) are lesser beneficiaries. UK (17%), Italy (15%) and Poland (12%) benefit from interim roles originated with executive search and business consultancies like [Catalant](#), a large and global platform of business experts that frequently provides interims for its clients. But, without doubt the largest contributor to assignment success is personal networks. Overall, 43% of assignments resulted from existing relationships with clients or the assistance of colleagues and networks.

Finally, day rates. As the INIMA report mentions, daily rates for interims varied. The European average is 999€ and day rates increased slightly (~5%). At the lower end of the day rate range are Poland (544€), Spain (618€), Czech Republic (621€) and Portugal (628€). The high end includes Switzerland (1504€), Germany (1318€), and Liechtenstein (1242€).

Key considerations beyond the data. In addition to the data presented above, there were a series of five (5) priorities for 2024, highlighted in the survey:

- **Project acquisition and marketing:** Improving visibility and opportunity
- **Digitalization and AI application:** Building experience in digital tools, AI, big data, and leveraging technologies like ChatGPT
- **Work-life balance:** Balancing workload, health, and managing stress to ensure a healthy work-life balance
- **Crisis and risk management:** Handling economic volatility, managing risks, and addressing supply chain challenges while providing effective crisis management solutions.
- **Professional development and networking:** Continuous learning, building knowledge management systems, expanding networks, and staying updated with industry trends such as AI and digitalization

For more detailed information on the INIMA 2024 survey, the survey results in full are given in <https://www.inima.management/>

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Jon Younger

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