

Logistics Indicator in Q1 2013

Controlled momentum at the start of 2013

Dampening effect of eurocrisis and energy and raw material prices

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200 decision-makers from industry, trade and the service sector paint a clear picture: the logistics sector has started the new year with controlled momentum – driven by a consistently optimistic mood. The logistics service providers view the current business situation and future expectations positively; the logistics managers in industry and trade share this optimism for the future but their assessment of the current business situation is more in line with the reserved expectations recorded in the previous quarter.

On the whole, all the components of the Logistics Indicator are back up well above the normal line, which means that the business outlook for the logistics sector is trending more favourably once again. The proximity of the assessment scores for current business and future expectations suggests we will see a continuation of the current trends, but for all the current optimism the weakness within the eurozone indicates that caution is still the order of the day.

Both sides of the market predict a further modest expansion of physical resources, which are currently being used to near-full capacity. Developments on the personnel front are more restrained, but the respondents expect natural fluctuation rather than workforce downsizing. If the macroeconomic framework, which is essentially determined by European and international monetary and fiscal policy, becomes more dependable in the coming months, this would be cause for longer-term optimism.

Until then, around 90 percent of respondents say the euro crisis and the development of energy and raw material prices are the biggest influencing factors on the expectation scores of the Logistics Indicator, followed by the economic trend in the USA and China. The logistics managers are less concerned about a potential downturn in domestic consumer spending, inflationary trends and the development of interest rates.

The IMF says that global trade is currently growing at a rate of 3.2 percent and forecasts a further increase. At four to eight percent a year, growth in all the BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India, China) is many times higher than that in the established economies. This is good news for Germany as an exporting nation. While the logistics industry does not predict any new records in 2013, it does expect a stable side-step with turnover and staffing figures in a par with 2012.