Four years after we started tracking around 600 EU industry associations’ use of social media, there is still room to grow. Our latest results show that 75% of associations are now active on at least one social media channel, compared to the initial 58%. Are the newcomers late to the party or is the music still going strong?

Since year one, Twitter and LinkedIn have remained on top both showing a surprising 9% growth in the last year. While fewer associations have decided to open a YouTube channel, the ones who already had one stayed busy producing new videos in 2018. Has anything changed for Facebook? Is Instagram going to hit the virtual streets of Brussels anytime soon?

### Social Media Adoption

**Number of channels per association**

The percentage of associations with at least one active channel has gone from 67% to 76% since 2017. 25% still don’t use any social media.

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Since 2015, 11% more associations have at least 4 channels. The European Travel Commission and The European Copper Institute remain the only two associations with 6 channels.

### Most Used Platforms

- **Twitter**: 59%
- **LinkedIn**: 53%
- **YouTube**: 52%
- **Facebook**: 41%
- **Wikipedia**: 2%

After a slight slow-down in 2016-2017, the use of both Twitter and LinkedIn grew by 9% between 2017-2018. YouTube is now the third most popular platform even if it grew only by 2% last year. Facebook keeps growing steadily but slowly: 4% in the last year. Use of Instagram remains marginal with a 2% growth. Pinterest grew by 1%. A large majority of associations are still not featured on Wikipedia.

### Methodology

Data was collected in September 2018. The 598 associations were extracted from DODS’ European Public Affairs Directory in the category ‘European Trade and Professional Associations’.

For this research we excluded non-European and international trade associations, NGOs and other non-industry bodies.
Despite all the signs indicating Twitter and LinkedIn adoption may have plateaued they have both grown by 9% in 2018. This was particularly noticeable in the Energy sector. Some of the lagging associations seem to just be waking up to the potential benefits of using social media. Are they investing and hiring professionals who understand this new environment?

While Twitter keeps its top spot, LinkedIn is not far behind. At the same time, it’s worth noting most associations use several platforms. When they finally decide to make the jump, they embrace more than one channel. The power of crosspollination!

YouTube’s 2% growth rate can seem small compared to other platforms, but this number can be deceiving: the number of videos uploaded by the channel’s users has increased substantially. EU associations uploaded more than 2,000 videos last year, which increased the total number of views to 9 million – 2 million more than in 2017. Video is here to stay. Perhaps those who just started using Twitter and LinkedIn this year will join YouTube in 2019. Stay tuned!

Are associations spending more on paid advertising to grow their audiences across platforms? Our experience says yes - and that can be a good thing! Ads help target a wider audience and gain new followers.

Is Facebook ever going to take off? Is it even the right platform for industry associations to be on? Like in previous years, it is still used mostly to promote campaigns rather than to engage with citizens and politicians.

Wikipedia has remained almost unchanged since 2015 with the same number of associations being represented on it. Is industry afraid of meddling with the almighty online encyclopedia?

Can Instagram be the next social media champion or, as it is the case with Facebook, will it will never be suitable for the large majority of associations unless they have specific campaigns? How does this compare to the uptake by politicians? While this platform is booming for personal use and political campaigning, associations are yet to grasp its potential.
The Association for Electrical, Electronic and Information Technologies replaced Europe Active in position no.5, and the International Fragrance Association made it this year to position no.6.
TOP 10 DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

**TWITTER**

1. **WindEurope** 35,992 followers (32,300 in 2017 — 24,500 in 2016 — 19,700 in 2015); joined May 2009
2. **InvestEurope** 35,166 followers (27,700 in 2017 — 5,364 in 2016 — 2,627 in 2015); joined May 2012
3. **European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)** 28,883 followers (21,800 in 2017 — 12,500 in 2016 — 8,491 in 2015); joined August 2009
4. **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** 19,160 followers (16,200 in 2017 — 13,100 in 2016 — 9,714 in 2015); joined April 2009
5. **European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)** 18,642 followers (16,400 in 2017 — 12,800 in 2016 — 9,954 in 2015); joined June 2009
6. **EuropaBio** 13,596 followers (12,700 in 2017 — 8,272 in 2016 — 6,551 in 2015); joined June 2009
7. **Digital Europe** 12,053 followers (7,441 in 2017 — 5,241 in 2016 — 2,994 in 2015); joined October 2010
8. **MedTech Europe** 11,355 followers (9,304 in 2017 — 6,415 in 2016); joined August 2010
9. **European Banking Federation (EBF)** 10,999 followers (9,145 in 2017 — 6,061 in 2016 — 1,603 in 2015); joined October 2012

**LINKEDIN**

1. **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** 12,666 followers (9,775 in 2017 — 7,481 in 2016 — 5,710 in 2015)
3. **European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)** 9,545 followers (9,888 in 2017 — 5,318 in 2016 — 4,376 in 2015)

**FACEBOOK**

2. **Friends of Glass - Campaign from European Container Glass Federation (FVE) FEVE** 108,283 followers (100,540 in 2017 — 91,043 in 2016 — 56,000 in 2015)
3. **European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)** 91,753 followers (89,502 in 2017 — 73,461 in 2016 — 52,000 in 2015)
4. **European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)** 22,112 followers (17,798 in 2017 — 12,194 in 2016 — 8,657 in 2015)
5. **Association for Electrical, Electronic and Information Technologies (VDE)** 16,700 followers (10,060 in 2017 — not active in previous years)
8. **Europe Active** 12,483 followers (12,069 in 2017 — 8,024 in 2016 — not active in previous years)

**YOUTUBE**

1. **International Sweeteners Associations (ISA)** 1,258,089 views (1,254,423 in 2017 — 1,244,226 in 2016 — 1,238,432 in 2015)
2. **European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)** 1,120,943 views (1,040,486 in 2017 — 689,206 in 2016 — 649,704 in 2015)
10. **Silicones Europe (CES)** 160,457 views (110,037 in 2017 — 10,254 in 2016 — not active before)