

## **Global business optimism points to growth in 2013**

LONDON, March 18 (Xinhua) -- The latest global business outlook survey released by Markit on Monday revealed rising business confidence pointing to an economic upturn across the world. Confidence among businesses across the world has revived from the post-financial-crisis low seen in the latter half of 2012, with expectations of revenue, new business, and business activity all rising to their highest since the beginning of last year. The latest Markit Global Outlook Survey drew statistics from 11,000 companies across the world, and showed the number of companies expecting their business activity to rise over the next 12 months exceeded those expecting a decline by 39 percent. This is an improvement from the figure of 30 percent in the last survey, in October. The upturn was seen across all main developed nations with Japan and the Eurozone seeing the largest increase in confidence. Germany led the way in the Eurozone, with businesses in Italy and Spain also recording renewed optimism. Among the emerging economies of the BRICs nations, only China saw an improvement in business mood, with companies more optimistic than at any time for two years. It was in the United States, however, where the highest levels of business optimism among any developed nation were found. Markit chief economist Chris Williamson told Xinhua on Monday afternoon, "We had a very downbeat final quarter of 2012. In the United States, the first quarter should see an upturn. There are signs that businesses are getting more confident -- this survey indicates that manufacturers and service sector companies are feeling more upbeat about the future." Williamson went on, "We are seeing mixed retail data. Consumers seem to be holding up fairly resiliently in the face of tax hikes and other fiscal pressures, so we are over the worst in the United States. The fiscal cliff did not happen; there was a lot of scare-mongering going on. The scene is set for 2013 to be a better year than 2012." On renewed optimism in the Eurozone area, Williamson commented, "The Eurozone has been the main drag on economic activity. This includes China, the United States and the UK -- all of those economies have shown signs of disappointing economic growth because of weak exports to the Eurozone and because of the extent to which the ongoing Eurozone crisis has dampened business confidence globally. The Eurozone is key to seeing a sustained and more robust economic pick-up for the world economy over the next year, said Williamson. Williamson added, "This is especially encouraging in countries like Italy and Spain where businesses have turned round quite considerably from late last year in their outlook. Last year they were negative in outlook, and there has been a big improvement." In the Eurozone, German firms were the most upbeat. This indicated real optimism, said Williamson, as German firms tended to be more sanguine about business prospects when answering surveys. "It really does indicate that the Eurozone upturn is going to be led by the Germans," said Williamson. German growth will be accompanied by a turnaround in growth in Spain and Italy, and German growth will be reviving by the

middle of the year, he added. A lack of optimism in the French economy was worrying however, said Williamson, because it was not mirroring the renewed optimism shown among firms in its Eurozone neighbor Germany.