

# Belgium in a nutshell



brought to you by **Belgian**  **Chambers**

---



# FACTSHEET



---

|                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Capital:            | Brussels                        |
| Surface area:       | 30,528 km <sup>2</sup>          |
| Population:         | 11,099,554 inhabitants          |
| Population density: | 363 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> |
| Currency:           | Euro (€)                        |
| GDP:                | 377bn € (2012)                  |

---

# Official languages

- Dutch
- French
- German

# Neighbouring countries

- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Luxembourg



# Belgium's institutions



- Belgium is a constitutional monarchy: since 2013 the monarch is King Philippe.
- Belgium is a federal state made up of 3 Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) and 3 Regions (Brussels-Capital Region, Flanders and Wallonia).
- Main federal institutions: federal government and parliament. Communities and Regions also have their own legislative and executive bodies.



## Belgium's federal structure

- Main powers of the 3 Communities: education, culture, youth support, health policy.
- Main powers of the 3 Regions: 'territorial issues', public works, agriculture, employment, environment, town and country planning.
- Conflicts about jurisdiction between the bodies are resolved by the Constitutional Court of Belgium. The structure is intended as a compromise to allow different cultures to live together peacefully.

# Belgian society...



- Central location in Europe, at the crossroads of the Latin and Germanic worlds
- Multilingualism
- Migrants from abroad have always been welcome
- Pioneering political, social and religious freedoms



Cosmopolitan character

Tolerant multicultural society

...and cultural heritage





# Belgium's economic structure

○ The country's most developed industries include:

- value added logistics
- chemicals & plastics
- life sciences
- agrifood
- ICT – software development
- aeronautics & space
- textiles & fashion
- industrial automation & mechatronics
- automotive
- building & engineering
- clean technologies
- creative industries



○ Success story: the port of Antwerp is the 2nd largest port and 1st petrochemical complex in Europe; Antwerp is the Diamond Capital (80% of the world's rough diamonds and 50% of the cut diamonds).



# Why should you invest in Belgium?



There are at least 10 compelling reasons that make Belgium the ideal country for your investments:

- 1 Open economy
- 2 Gateway to 500mn European consumers
- 3 Logistics springboard
- 4 Access to European decision-makers
- 5 Top-class human capital
- 6 Belgium generates and attracts brains
- 7 Competitive tax regime
- 8 Ease of setting up a business
- 9 Affordable real estate prices
- 10 A great place to live

# Open economy



12th largest exporting and 13th largest importing country in the world (WTO data); exports more than 80% of national GDP.



5th in the Ernst & Young European Attractiveness Survey for new investment projects in Europe.



According to researchers, Belgium is the most globalised country in the world (KOF Index).





# Gateway to 500mn European consumers

- 80% of Europe's purchasing power lies within 800 km from Brussels, granting diversified export opportunities for your business.



- Consumer test market: if a product is successfully launched in Belgium, similar success can be expected on other European markets.

# Logistics springboard



- Densely interconnected transport network (road, train, sea, waterways, air).
- Worldclass telecommunication and Internet infrastructures.
- Numerous distribution centres.





## Access to European decision-makers

- Belgium hosts the EU and NATO, as well as HQs of many multinationals and major global players.
- More international organisations in Brussels than in Washington DC (120 international government organisations, 181 embassies, over 5,000 diplomats and more than 1,000 lobby groups)!
- No. 1 European conference city.





# Top-class human capital



- One of the highest productivity levels in the EU (key factors: quality education system, multilingualism, flexibility, versatility and eagerness to learn in changing working conditions).
- 35% of the labour force has at least one higher-education degree (> OECD average).





# Belgium generates and attracts brains

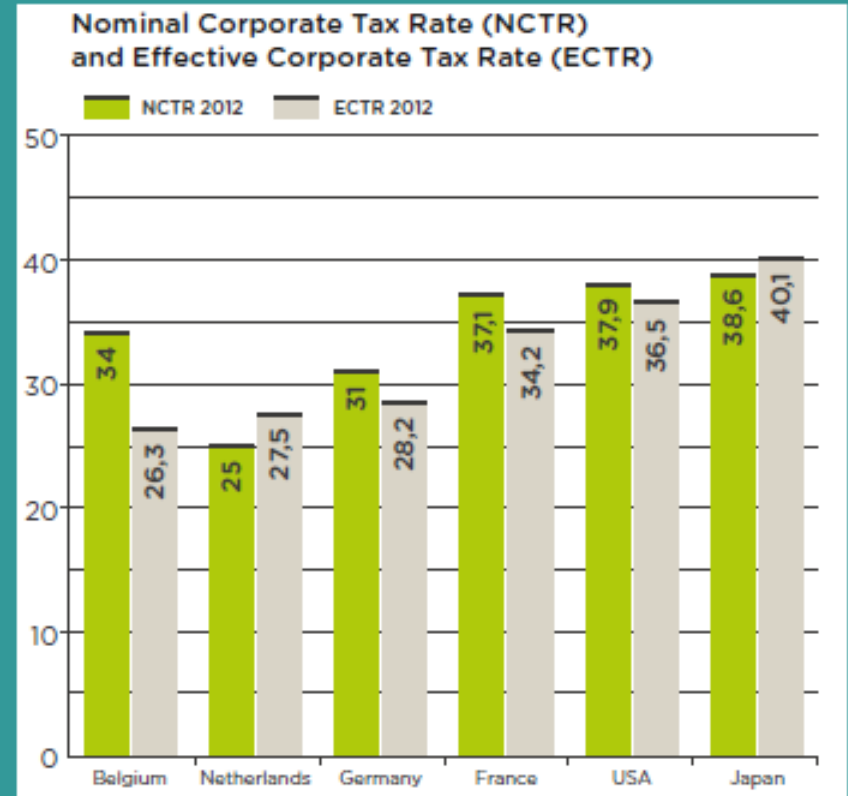
- 16 high-level universities, among the best for higher education and training, maths and science education, management schools and propensity for on-the-job training.
- Overall high capacity to innovate (Global Competitiveness Report).
- Quality of university-industry collaboration ranked 6th worldwide. Spin-offs and incubators boosted by the network of distinguished university research centres.
- Centre of excellence in life sciences, nanotechnology, biotechnology and renewable energy.



# Competitive tax regime



- Corporate tax deductions (e.g. notional interest, patent income).
- Very favourable taxation system for expat employees.
- Effective corporate tax rate can be significantly lower than the nominal rate and lower than in many other countries.
- Advanced tax ruling system provides legal certainty for investors.







# Ease of setting up a business

⦿ Belgium is the fastest place in Europe to establish a business!



⦿ The Federal-Regional Liaison Unit for Foreign Investment ensures smooth cooperation between all the partners involved.



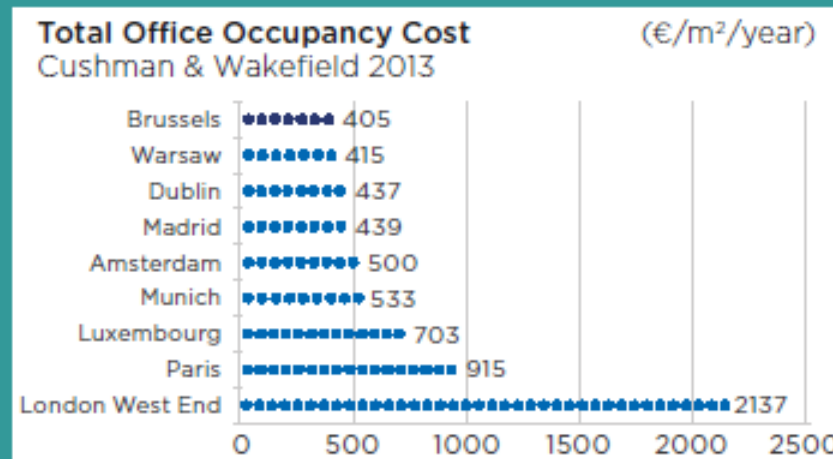
⦿ Each of the three regions has its own agency to assist you with practical matters related to your investment (see links later).



# Affordable real estate prices



- Belgian cities offer less expensive real estate than neighbouring European cities and Brussels is significantly cheaper than other international centres such as Paris, London and Frankfurt.
- There is no other business city in Western Europe that offers such affordable office space as Brussels (Global Occupancy Cost Survey).





## A great place to live

- Belgium has one of the best quality of life standards in Europe (key factors: household living space, advanced healthcare system, social services, green areas and education).
- And also... longstanding world-class festivals and cultural events; a wide variety of landscapes and opportunities for enjoying nature; a delightful dining-out experience.



# Useful resources

---

🕒 [www.belgium.be](http://www.belgium.be)

🕒 [www.business.belgium.be](http://www.business.belgium.be)

🕒 [www.abh-ace.be](http://www.abh-ace.be)



🕒 [www.blcca.org](http://www.blcca.org)

🕒 [www.investinbrussels.com](http://www.investinbrussels.com)

🕒 [www.investinlanders.be](http://www.investinlanders.be)

🕒 [www.investinwallonia.be](http://www.investinwallonia.be)



🕒 [www.belgianchambers.be](http://www.belgianchambers.be)

Thank you for your attention!

---



 Belgium  
is waiting  
for your  
company!