

Economic & business news from Belgium – September 2015

This newsletter was prepared by the Federal-Regional Liaison Unit for Foreign Investment. The Liaison Unit was created in 1995 as a result of the Cooperation Agreement "Foreign Investments" of 7 February 1995.

Its mission is to raise important issues concerning the investment climate in Belgium to policy makers, and create synergies between all the Belgian authorities involved in the attraction of foreign investments.

The following authorities are represented in the Cell: FPS Foreign Affairs, FPS Economy, FPS Finance, the Chancery of the Prime Minister, Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT), Agence wallonne à l'Exportation et aux Investissements Etrangers (AWEX) and Brussels Invest & Export (BIE).

Its chair is held by the Regions on a rotating basis and its secretariat is ensured by the FPS Economy.

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1. Foreign investments in Belgium

Riwal opens new site in Antwerp

Netherlands-based access equipment supplier [Riwal](#) announces the opening of its new company site in Wommelgem, near Antwerp. The goal is to further expand the company's presence in Belgium.

At the moment, Riwal is already supplying machinery to expand the Total refinery in the port of Antwerp. With this new site, the company aims to further improve its services in the northwestern part of Belgium. "Our brand-new Antwerp branch will bring us closer to our customers," explains Olaf Sterkenburg, Country Manager of Riwal Benelux. "In this way, we can strengthen our position on the national market."

The expansion program is accompanied by the introduction of a new rental fleet of platforms, tele-handlers and forklifts, and eight new full-time jobs. In its search for the ideal location to conquer the Belgian market, Riwal could count on the support of government agencies Enterprise Flanders (Agentschap Ondernemen) and Flanders Investment & Trade.

Nissha Printing acquires AR Metallizing

Japanese industrial group Nissha Printing has acquired Genk-based company [AR Metallizing](#), the world market leader in metallized paper. The deal is worth almost EUR 120 million.

The investment fund HIG Capital, the previous owner of AR Metallizing, started looking for a buyer last year. Eventually, Nissha Printing emerged as the most suitable candidate.

AR Metallizing specializes in metallized paper, mainly for the production of beverages, food and cigarette labels. The Genk company claims to be the global market leader in this niche.

Nuscience builds factory in Belgium

Dutch company [Nuscience](#) invests EUR 35 million in a new factory for forage additives in Drongen, near Ghent.

"The expertise is here, even more than in China or Brazil," claims CEO Patrick Keereman. "Moreover, Belgium is ideally situated, logistically speaking."

Nuscience has built a 55-meter high production tower in Drongen, near the E40 motorway. "We are building the best factory in our business in Drongen," Keereman continued. "From Drongen, we can deliver faster to Algeria than from our factory in Madrid. Thailand and the Philippines are being supplied from here as well and not from China. Transportation facilities are simply excellent here."

Only 10 to 15% of production in Drongen is intended for the Benelux market, the rest is for export. In Belgium, 110 people are employed by Nuscience. Worldwide, the company has a little over 1,000 employees. Nuscience produces 651,000 tonnes of additives a year for forage and animal nutrition. The company is active in over 80 countries.

Sligro invests EUR 30 million in Belgium

Over the next three to four years, Dutch wholesaler for the hospitality sector [Sligro](#) will be plowing EUR 30 million into the expansion of its activities in Belgium. The first branch will open its doors in 2016.

During the initial phase, Sligro aims to establish two branches in Belgium. The eventual goal is to become a top 3 supplier to the Belgian hospitality sector. In the past few months, the company thoroughly examined its market opportunities, planning to capitalize on it through a combination of self-service and deliveries. The company expects to obtain a profitable position in Belgium within three years after opening the first branch.

In addition, a small office will be opened in Belgium to support local commercial activities. Because of the synergy opportunities, the central systems and back office in the Netherlands will be used.

Canudilo to own fashion house Bikkembergs

Chinese clothing group Canudilo will be acquiring the majority share (51%) of fashion house Dirk [Bikkembergs](#), founded by the eponymous designer from Diepenbeek (Belgium). The current Italian owners — Zeis Excelsa and Sinv — will keep the remaining 49% of the shares.

Canudilo is said to be paying up to EUR 40.68 million for the transaction. It is not yet clear whether Dirk Bikkembergs himself — currently Creative Director — will continue to play a role in the further development of the fashion house, once the acquisition is completed.

With its flashy designs, the iconic Bikkembergs brand is mainly popular in southern Europe and Asia.

Sonic Healthcare buys lab in Flanders

Australian medical diagnostics company Sonic Healthcare has acquired the Belgium-based medical lab [Klinisch Laboratorium Declerck](#) (KLD). The deal is part of the multinational's strategy to strengthen its European presence.

On average, KLD performs around 1 million tests every year. In 2014, the company's 40 employees generated a turnover of ca. EUR 13.76 million. For co-founder Dominique Declerck, the acquisition opens new upscaling opportunities for the company. KLD will become part of Sonic Healthcare Benelux, which also operates labs in Antwerp (AML), Bruges (Van Waes) and Mouscron (Woestyn).

Sonic Healthcare has an annual turnover of USD 3.9 billion and employs about 26,000 people. Five years ago, the company already acquired the Antwerp-based laboratory group Medhold. Both deals illustrate the international evolution towards bigger and more cost-effective labs, with the ability to invest in ICT and automation.

Evonik expands in Antwerp

German chemical concern [Evonik](#) is investing over EUR 100 million in a new butadiene production plant in Antwerp. The proximity of the Port of Antwerp makes it the best location for Evonik's first butadiene plant outside of Germany.

Butadiene is a colorless inflammable gas. It is used for the production of synthetic rubber in tires, diving suits, medical gloves, certain glues, etc. No less than 90% of Evonik's butadiene production is destined for worldwide export.

Evonik's investment will create 26 jobs at its Antwerp site, which currently employs 1,100 people. "Antwerp is a genuine success story," comments Christian Kullmann, Head of Strategy at Evonik. "We thrive here, and it is our firm intention to stay."

In Antwerp, Evonik also expanded its installation for the production of MBTE, a lead replacer in fuels. In 2005, the company also invested EUR 350 million in a new installation at its Antwerp-based methionine plant. This factory is the largest of its kind worldwide.

Air Liquide commissions production unit in Antwerp

Chemical concern [Air Liquide](#) recently commissioned a second unit for the production of carbon monoxide at its plant in Antwerp. The French group has invested around EUR 50 million, so far, in the installation.

The new unit — developed by Air Liquide's Engineering & Construction team using the most advance technologies — is located on the BASF site in the Port of Antwerp. That way, it is integrated into a broad network of suppliers, thus enabling Air Liquide to meet the requirements of the local industry and the companies connected to its 2,225-kilometer pipeline network — the largest in the world.

"The commissioning of this second production unit is an important step to strengthen our position in the Port of Antwerp and the Benelux in general", explains Ronnie Chalmers, Managing Director of Air Liquide Benelux Industries. With this new project, Air Liquide shows its willingness to invest in Belgium to meet growing customer demand and support development and competitiveness. To operate the new unit around ten new jobs will be created.

Samsonite moves design center from Italy to Belgium

Global luggage manufacturer and retailer [Samsonite](#) is moving its design center from Italy to the European headquarters in Oudenaarde (Belgium). In addition, the R&D department at the site will be enhanced as well.

“The goal is to realize double-digit growth in Europe,” says Samsonite CEO Ramesh Tainwala. “How? By putting more brands in the market and opening new shops. Recently, we opened the first of at least 150 new European shops in Antwerp.

The main focus, however, lies on the headquarters in Oudenaarde. Tainwala: “Not only is Oudenaarde one of our largest production sites, it’s also our center for product development. Here, new models and technologies are conceived. An important asset in this is our close collaboration with Belgian universities and the presence of partner companies in the region.” At the moment, Samsonite’s design center is being transferred to Belgium as well. “Designers produce better results when they collaborate directly with the production department.”

Xtratherm: New Manufacturing and Distribution Facility in Feluy



At an official ceremony in Feluy, Mr. Jean Claude Marcourt, Wallonia Minister of Economy, Foreign Trade, Research and Higher Education officially opened Irish insulation manufacturer [Xtratherm’s](#) new manufacturing and distribution facility.

The new location will be responsible for the manufacturing of Xtratherm’s high performance rigid board insulation products. The initial phase of the investment comprises production and warehousing facilities of approximately 20,000m², with capacity for

future expansion.

Jay Hynes, Director Xtratherm commented: “Xtratherm has ambitious growth plans and key mainland European markets such as Benelux, Germany and France are central to our future growth and expansion. The new site in Belgium, close to the city of Charleroi, is ideally located, with excellent access to our main markets. We are delighted to be at the forefront of new insulation technology and to be opening a new state-of-the-art facility in Belgium. The demand for high performance insulation boards continues to rise, driven by building regulations requiring better energy efficiency, and the realisation that a well-insulated property can reduce energy costs significantly.”

The €30 million investment is expected to create up to 100 local jobs in the next five years and should have a considerable economic impact in the local region.

Inauguration of the new Google Data Center



[Google's](#) second Data Center located at Baudour (Saint-Ghislain) has just been officially inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and Google representatives.

Google established itself in Belgium in 2009 with the creation of a business office in Brussels, and the following year started up its first Data Center at Baudour, the first center built outside the United States, and a major part of Google's European product distribution infrastructure. In addition, this Data Center has the special ability to use water from the Nimy-Blaton canal to cool its Google servers.

The second center was built in order to meet increasing demand for computing and data storage, in particular the explosion of data and storage requests, and demand in the area of 'mobiles' (mobile phones, tablets, etc.). Indeed, planning permission is being sought to construct a 3rd building at Baudour.

The inauguration of the new Data Center provided an opportunity for financial consultants Copenhagen Economics to reveal the figures from their report on the economic impact of Google's investments in Belgium, (250 million euros between 2007 and 2014), or a contribution of some 900 million euros (110 million euros per year) to Belgian GDP, and 1,500 direct, indirect (sub-contractors, suppliers, etc.) and induced (restaurants, hotels, shops, etc.) jobs. "A number of jobs generated by Google Baudour are local", indicated a Google spokesperson, confirming the deep roots in the local community, amongst others, in partnership projects with local bodies, such as the 'Mundaneum' in Mons.

Forecasts for 2020, based on an estimated doubling of business, point to prospects of 3,900 jobs and a 1.3 billion euro contribution to Belgium's GDP, which would bring the total contribution to the Belgian economy to 2.2 billion euros.

2. Belgian companies

Schröder launches a new company in Australia

[Schröder](#), the leading provider of lighting solutions, continues to expand its global presence around the world with the opening of a new office in Perth, Australia.

With the opening of the new company and the office in Perth, Schröder is significantly

increasing its presence in the region. The Perth office will be run by the State Manager of Western Australia, Mike Huyerman.

Schröder lighting solutions can already be found in the Eastlink tunnels in Melbourne, the West Coast Highway walkway in the City of Stirling precinct, the roads in the Karratha Housing Estate, the car park of the Sorrento Beach Life Saving Club in the City of Joondalup, on the walkway and internal roads of the Admin Office in the City of Belmont as well as in a large number of urban decorative projects in several Australian cities.

Etex acquires Lafarge Gypsum South Africa

[Etex](#) announces the acquisition of Lafarge's South African gypsum business.

Firmly established in both Europe and Latin America since 1905 and 1937 respectively, Etex aims to strengthen its position in Africa, with the Southern African region and Nigeria as its main drivers of growth.

In South Africa, the demand for housing has been on the rise, driven by growing population and an emerging middle class. In addition, the market is becoming increasingly regulated. Consequently, alternative building methods, such as dry construction, are gradually replacing traditional construction.

Lafarge Gypsum South Africa and Etex's local company Marley Building Systems, two complementary businesses of equal size, will team up to create a unique and competitive.

Ageas and EastWest Bank establish a life insurance joint venture in the Philippines

"EastWest Ageas Life" will be a start-up company in which [Ageas](#) and EastWest Bank will both have an equal shareholding of 50%¹. It was further agreed that EastWest Bank and EastWest Ageas Life will enter into a 20-year exclusive distribution agreement.

The ambition is to build the premier bancassurance business in the Philippines offering tailor-made insurance solutions to the customers of EastWest Bank supported by high quality service and state-of-art technology. The insurance business will benefit from EastWest Bank's fast growing customer base. With more than 400 branch stores, the bank has the 7th largest distribution network amongst banks in the Philippines..

Solvay Acquires Cytec

Making a push into advanced composites for the aerospace and automotive industries, the specialty chemical maker [Solvay](#) has agreed to acquire New Jersey-based Cytec Industries for \$5.5 billion.

Solvay, which expects the deal to be finalized by year-end, will pay \$75.25 per Cytec share, a premium of 28.9% over Cytec's closing price on July 28, the day before the deal was announced.

IBA to install three proton therapy centres in the United Kingdom



Louvain-la-Neuve based company [IBA](#), the world leader in proton therapy, has announced the signature of three letters of intent to sell three compact proton therapy centres to private clinics in the United Kingdom.

These binding letters of intent, drawn up with Proton Partners International, involve the supply of compact proton therapy appliances and their maintenance for a period of 10 years.

"The usual price for a Proteus ONE with a maintenance contract of this length is between 35 and 40 million euros. These three centres will be the eighth, ninth and tenth installations in the world of IBA's compact single-room proton therapy solution, and they are expected to treat the first patients in 2017", explains IBA in a press release.

The centres will be installed in Newport (Wales), and in Newcastle. The location of the third centre was not specified.

Techspace Aero invests 110 million in Milmort

This Herstal based company returned from the Paris Air Show at Bourget (Paris) with an order book filled with orders for six or seven years.



9,500 firm orders for low pressure compressors for aeroplanes to be supplied from the end of 2016 – this is the immense task that [Techspace Aero](#) (formerly FN Moteurs), located à Milmort, is happy to be taking on.

Thanks to its continuous investment in the research and development of new engines, Techspace Aero was able to present to the aeronautical market four new low pressure compressors, which are 15% more environmentally-friendly than the old versions. And in these days of very high fuel prices and respect for nature, they are worth their weight in gold.

Amongst them, is the famous LEAP engine, which will be installed in every new Boeing B-737 Max and half of the Airbus A-320 neos. Namely 75% of the largest global aviation market!

“In total, between now and 2020, we expect to supply four times more low pressure compressors to our clients”, confirms company spokesperson Joëlle Wathelet. “And our presence at Bourget last week led to more than 600 additional orders. It’s a real pleasure to manage such strong growth, but it’s quite a challenge!”

Which is why Techspace Aero decided to invest 110 million euros in Milmort, in order to expand its production facilities (which date from their arrival at the site in 1978) and to purchase new machines in order to handle demand.

“Yes, this investment will be spread over 3 to 5 years”, confirms Joëlle Wathelet. “It has already begun, because we must be ready to start production at the end of 2016.”

A large portion is for buildings, namely the construction of a 5,000 m² extension to the logistic building and an office building measuring 2,000 m², at the rear of the site.

However, investment is also being made in equipment, such as new production lines, this new machine for universal friction welding (12 million euros) and another for 3D printing in titanium.

And this investment in equipment is accompanied by investment in personnel. “In order to operate all of this, for the last two years, per year, we have taken on around 130 young people, who we are training ourselves”, continues Joëlle Wathelet. “And that is set to continue for the next two years.”

After deduction of natural wastage, this still amounts to about one hundred extra employees each year. Indeed, over the last two years, the staff of Techspace has expanded from 1200 to 1400 people at the Herstal site.

The future largest bridge in the world, designed by Belgians

The Liège based firm of engineering consultants [Greisch](#) is going to create the biggest bridge in the world. The ‘Yavuz Sultan Selim’ will link the Bosphorus Strait with Istanbul, thereby linking Europe and Asia. This exceptional structure is planned to open in a little over a year’s time.

55,000 hours of calculations. That is the amount of time the engineers of the Liège firm of engineering consultants Greisch spent studying the architectural constraints of the ‘Yavuz Sultan Selim’ suspension bridge, which will connect the Bosphorus Strait to Istanbul.

Its four lanes in each direction (a total width of 8 vehicles), as well as two railway tracks and lateral passages for cyclists and pedestrians will make it possible to travel from Europe to Asia on foot, by bike, by car and also by train. This suspension bridge is due to open to traffic in October 2016.

Ablynx signs deal with Taisho and Merck

Ghent-based biopharmaceutical firm [Ablynx](#) has entered an exclusive license agreement with its Japanese industry peer Taisho Pharmaceutical. Taisho will be commercializing Ablynx's anti-TNFa Nanobody — ozoralizumab — in Japan.

Ozoralizumab is a next-generation therapeutic molecule for the treatment of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Taisho will develop, register and commercialize anti-TNFa Nanobody therapeutics in Japan. As part of the deal, Ablynx will receive an upfront payment of USD 3 million, development and commercial milestone payments, and royalties based on annual net sales of anti-TNFa Nanobody therapeutics generated in Japan.

Recently, Ablynx announced another important international license agreement, expanding the 2014 deal for its immune-oncology collaboration with American pharmaceutical company Merck & Co. As part of that agreement, the company from Ghent receives a EUR 13 million upfront payment, regulatory and commercial milestone payments of up to EUR 40 million for every of the 12 additional Nanobody programs, and royalties based on annual net sales of all Nanobody products.

Flanders' Bike Valley project results in four 'Tour de France' wins

Euregional Bike Valley, an Interreg GCS project initiated by [Flanders' Bike Valley](#), has led to the use of particle image velocimetry (PIV) to optimize cycling gear. André Greipel won four stages in the Tour de France with this equipment.

Euregional Bike Valley brings together Belgium-based companies [BioRacer](#), [Ridley](#), [Voxdale](#) and [Lazer Sport](#), as well as Trento (the Netherlands), Ila (Germany) to stimulate innovation. Flanders' Bike Valley united all this expertise to release a new measurement system based on laser technology: particle image velocimetry.

As a result, bike, helmet and clothing manufacturers can optimize their products' aerodynamics. Parts of cyclist André "the Gorilla" Greipel's bike made by Ridley Bikes and his helmet (Lazer Sport) were analyzed using the PIV system. Development engineers of both companies used these results to further improve Greipel's performance, contributing to four stage wins in the last edition of the Tour de France.

New China flights for Liege Airport



After Shenyang, Tianjin and Xian, U-Tour is launching new charter flights to [Liege Airport](#) from three new cities: Nankin, Kunming and Changsha via

Moscow. This flight programme will be launched this summer.

The flights will arrive on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. In total, there will be six flights per week between China and Liege.

Nankin is the capital of the Province of Jiangsu and has more than 8 million inhabitants. Kunming is the capital of the Province of Yunnan in the south of China and has more than 6.5 million inhabitants. Changsha is the capital of the Province of Hunan and has 7 million inhabitants.

The Chinese tourists will travel aboard a Boeing 777 offering a capacity of 364 seats.

From Liege, Chinese tourists will be able to visit Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Scandinavia. These new connections confirm that Liege is the new gateway to the European continent for Chinese tourists.

“The quality of service offered by our teams and partners has convinced U-Tour to ramp up its offering. They have a positive evaluation of the operation’s first weeks. We are working constantly to adapt our terminal to these new passengers in order to meet their needs to the best of our ability”, explains Luc Partoune, Director General of Liege Airport, who also adds: “Major work has been carried out which has allowed us to triple the surface of the duty free area, adapt baggage sorting, improve customs clearance and administrative formalities, etc. In addition to signposting in Chinese, Mandarin-speaking staff also offer Chinese tourists an excellent welcome.”

Brussels Airport wins “World Air Cargo Award” for second year in a row

[Brussels Airport](#) was voted best cargo airport of 2015 at the Shanghai World Air Cargo Awards, the prestigious awards ceremony of the cargo industry. With more than 700,000 tonnes of cargo a year, Brussels Airport plays a key role in international cargo traffic and in the success of major logistics sectors.

The World Air Cargo Award ceremony for the air cargo industry is organized every year and is the most prestigious in the world. Cargo airlines, airports and cargo companies are nominated in different categories. Everyone who is active in the cargo industry can vote for a company, carrier or airport that in their view offers the most excellent service.

Brussels Airport was praised for the strong development of the cargo department Brucargo, its excellent service and its efficient organization. The air cargo activities at Brucargo constitute an important part of Brussels Airport’s activities. Every year, Brussels Airport, the cargo airlines and logistics partners invest tens of millions of euros resulting in new activities and additional job creation. This continuous investment is now again internationally praised by awarding it the World Air Cargo Award.

3. General economic information about Belgium

Belgium has 10th best reputation

Belgium has risen two places in Reputation Institute's 'Country RepTrak' ranking for countries with the best reputation. The country completes the top 10 this year.

"Belgium is perceived positively as an ethical and safe country that functions well, is progressive on an economic and social level, and assumes its responsibilities in the international community," dicit Reputation Institute's communication partner Akkanto. "The presence of European institutions and the NATO undoubtedly plays a big role in this positive reputation." Belgium scores a total of 72.3 points.

The ranking is based on a survey of 50,000 inhabitants in G8 countries, asking for their opinion on 55 other countries. Canada, Norway and Sweden have the best reputation, followed by Switzerland, Australia, Finland, New Zealand, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. Germany, which was ranked tenth last year, drops five places.

Belgium improves its position in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking

Belgium climbs up five spots in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2015. Out of 61 countries, Belgium now takes up the 23rd spot compared to the 28th position in 2014. This demonstrates the fact that Belgium's major efforts to improve its business climate certainly paid off, realizing such a great improvement in only one year time.

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook ranks and analyzes the ability of nations to create and maintain an environment in which enterprises can compete. It divides the national environment in four main factors: economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency and infrastructure. In all four of these domains, Belgium significantly improved its position in comparison with 2014.

Some of the main assets of the Belgian national environment which come forward in this scoreboard are its educational system, its workforce productivity, the ease of starting up a business with a limited number of start-up procedures and a limited number of days to start up and its exports of goods.

Brussels to build its Mediapark

The François Leclercq architectural and town-planning bureau has been commissioned to draw up a master plan for the establishment of a [Mediapark](#) on the Brussels Boulevard Reyers ring road.

The underlying aim is to bring together the various players and create greater synergies by having the media rub shoulders with the design teams, advertising agencies and video producers that serve them.

Currently it is estimated that the Brussels-Capital Region provides jobs for some 15,000 specialists, 8,000 of them working in the media industry and another 7,000 in the advertising/publicity sector. The Mediapark, which will comprise housing facilities and a cinema in addition to offices, is expected to provide a home for at least 5,000 of them.

The most visible feature of the Mediapark is already there – the 89 meters-high Tour Reyers Transmission tower which serves Belgium’s public broadcasters.

Brussels performs well in Mercer rankings

According to the latest Mercer cost-of-living index, the European capital is becoming increasingly competitive as a location for business. From its 56th ranking in last year’s results, Brussels has now moved to 102th position in this year’s update, a significant improvement.

The Mercer study, designed to help companies and public administrations in their location strategies, evaluates the local costs of a list of 200 goods and services. These include housing costs, transport, foodstuffs, clothing, household goods and leisure activities.

The favourable euro-dollar exchange rate has contributed to the competitive performance of Brussels and other Eurozone cities. Other European countries, such as the UK and Switzerland, have not followed this competitive trend.

The cost-of-living study follows on the Mercer 'Quality of Living 2015' index which assessed the 'liveability' of no less than 440 cities around the globe.

Brussels dominates the international associations meetings market

According to the latest UIA (Union of International Associations) report, Brussels ranks first in Europe and second in the world as a destination for international meetings.

Compared with 2013 the European capital, with 787 meetings in 2014, showed a remarkable growth rate of 80%. The city even surpasses Singapore in leading the world in meetings of international associations and organizations with more than 50 participants.

Thanks to this huge jump, Brussels on its own now represents 7.3% of the global market, according to the UIA’s independent research institute. The Belgian capital ranks just behind Singapore (850) and well ahead of Vienna (396) and Paris (325), its main European competitors.

These stellar results further solidify the city’s reputation and credibility as a meeting destination with international association leaders.

Income tax declaration for non-residents 2015 – Register

If an individual is working but not living in Belgium, he has to file an income tax declaration for non-residents in Belgium. In order to do so non-resident tax payers have to register in advance at the Foreign service of FPS Finances, using the [registration form](#) .

They will receive a non-resident income tax declaration during the month of September. The tax declaration will have to be filed during the month of November 2015. The declaration can only be filed using the official form (so not by using a pdf copy) or through [Tax-on-web](#) .

The tax administration cannot deliver any declaration forms before September.

More information on the website of the Federal Public Service Finance under the heading '[Internationaal](#)'.

The Belgian customs administration launches a free app with information for travelers.

The Belgian customs administration developed an app that lets you see at a glance the do's and don'ts when traveling.

The free app 'Belgian Customs' can be downloaded in the App Store, Google Play and the Windows store.

The app provides answers to these questions: how many tobacco products, alcohol, etc. may I enter without having to pay import duties and taxes? How much cash can I carry with me? Which endangered animals and plants may I not transport? What about counterfeited goods? What should I do when I travel with a pet?

Budget control 2015 – tax measures

In the Belgian Official Journal of august 18th 2015, the Program Law containing the budget control 2015 measures was published.

Favorable measures were taken for start-ups and concerning the investment deduction.

A tax-shelter for start-ups was created to give a tax deduction (PIT) for the acquisition of qualifying new shares in start-ups. Partial withholding tax exemption is applicable on remunerations paid by qualifying start-ups and there is a partial exoneration of interest income from qualifying loans when crowdfunding start-up SME's.

Increased investment deduction for SME's is possible for investments in the security of information- and communication technology and for digital payment- or invoicing systems.