

Country Snapshot: Belgium



Overcoming Workforce Management
Obstacles in Belgium

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Regulatory compliance key

Working hours

- Typical maximum working hours = eight hours per day, occasionally 10 hours
- Working week = 38 hours
- Complimentary hours is the term used to describe additional hours worked by part-time co-workers
- Overtime calculations vary depending on the overall amount of overtime a co-worker has worked

Employee representatives

- Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and employment agreements must be provided in the appropriate language
- CBA are commonly agreed by vertical or state

Holiday entitlements

- Entitlement based on hours worked in preceding year; full-time co-worker entitled to four weeks paid holiday in following year
- During holiday, a co-worker receives holiday bonus of three weeks and three days' additional pay

Partnership between employee and employer

Social partners

Working time

- Entitled to double pay for holidays
- End-of-year premium is very common in most sectors

- Maximum workweek is 38 Hours
- Maximum day is eight hours
- This can be lower based on CBA
- Minimum day is three hours
- Sundays and holidays are allowed under strict legal conditions

Required leave

- Holidays and annual leave
 - 10 official public holidays
 - The number of days of annual leave is based on the hours worked during the preceding calendar year
 - Generally, for a full holiday reference year, employees have the right to between 20 and 24 days of annual leave
- Maternity, paternity, and sick leave
 - Up to 15 weeks of maternity leave (possible two-week extension for multiple births)
 - At least nine weeks must be taken after the birth
 - Paternity leave is up to 10 days following the birth (must be taken within four months following the birth)
 - Sick leave: guaranteed salary

Business and government¹

Business ethics

- By international standards, Belgium has very low corruption
 - Belgium is a country with many rules, and an unspoken rule is to look for an exception to or a loophole in the rule
- Gift-giving is not common in Belgian business
- There may be cases of favoritism in the awarding of public contracts or funds

¹ *GlobeSmart Culture Guides*, GlobeSmart, (April 21, 2020), found at www.globesmart.com/products/culture-guides/.

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Attitude toward business

- Understand that while Belgians are hard workers who strive to achieve, they also believe that life is meant to be enjoyed
- As a manager, do not infringe on employees' personal time as that is reserved for family



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