Business demographics in the Brussels-Capital Region

Statistical note – 1st half of 2025

Cumulative monthly data from 31/12/2024 to 30/06/2025 for companies subject to VAT (Statbel)



hub .brussels
our business is to help yours

Colophon

Statistical note by hub.brussels

Coordinated by Romy Guillaume – hub.brussels

Page layout by klar.graphics

Completion date November 2025

Contact rguillaume@hub.brussels

Responsible Editor Isabelle Grippa, General Manager – hub.brussels – Chaussée de Charleroi, 110 – 1060 Brussels

For more information:

hub.brussels

analytics.brussels

Reproduction permitted referencing the source.

Key figures

Enterprises in the Brussels-Capital Region

June 2025	**124,450** Enterprises subject to VAT	**7,960** Enterprise creations	**5,872** Enterprise closures	**2,088** Net enterprise creations	**1.7%** Entrepreneurial dynamic
June 2025 vs. June 2024	**+1.4%** Enterprises subject to VAT	**-1.4%** Enterprise creations	**+3.1%** Enterprise closures	**-12.2%** Net business start-ups	**-0.3pp.** Entrepreneurial dynamic

Enterprises in Belgium

June 2025	**1,182,373** Enterprises subject to VAT	**62,787** Enterprise creations	**50,387** Enterprise closures	**12,400** Net enterprise creations	**1.1%** Entrepreneurial dynamic
June 2025 vs. June 2024	**+1.1 %** Enterprises subject to VAT	**-0.4%** Enterprise creations	**-0.1%** Enterprise closures	**-1.6 %** Net enterprise creations	Entrepreneurial dynamic remained stable

Bankruptcies

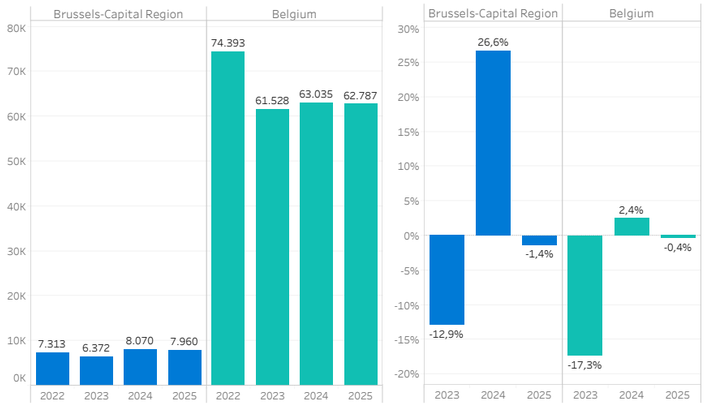
	Brussels-Capital Region	Belgium
2025	**1,062** Bankruptcies	**6,012** Bankruptcies
2025 vs. 2024	**+7.3%**	**+3.4%**

In the first half of 2025, the **number of companies** in the Brussels Region continued to grow, **rising by 1.4%** between December 2024 and June 2025, slightly above the increase seen at national level (+1.1%). This dynamic continued the trend seen in 2024, when the Region already experienced sustained growth in its entrepreneurial fabric (+3.1%), significantly higher than that recorded for the country as a whole (+1.7%). Almost half of companies in the region were active in three sectors: professional, scientific and technical activities1 (26.8%; BEL 20.3%), retail (13.5%; BEL 14.6%) and construction (12.2%; BEL 13.6%).

This increase can be explained in part by **business start-ups**, which rose sharply in 2024 (+26.6% in the BCR vs. +2.4% in Belgium) and tended to stabilise in the first half of 2025. Despite a **slight decline** compared to June 2024 (-1.4%), they nevertheless remained at a **relatively high level** (7,960 start-ups) in the BCR, and also remained stable at national level (-0.4%) compared to the previous year. The rate of start-ups in Brussels (6.4%) also remained higher than the national rate (5.3%). This positive trend was, however, partly offset by the continued rise in the **number of closures**, which reached a **record high** in the BCR: 5,872 in the first half of 2025, or an increase of +3.1%, comparable to that seen in the previous year (+3.4%). They remained stable on a national scale (-0.1%), and while the Brussels closure rate was stable at 4.7%, it was still slightly higher than that of the country as a whole (4.3%).

Creations were highest in professional, scientific and technical activities (23.8%; BEL 18.9%), construction (12.3%; BEL 11.8%) and retail (7.7%; BEL 9.8%).

Figure 1: Number of business start-ups and annual change (%), June 2022-2025, BCR and Belgium.



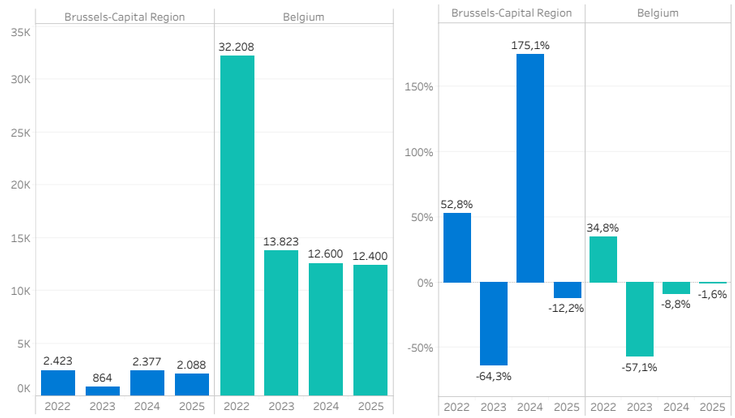
Source : Statbel

The share of net creations was highest in professional, scientific and technical activities (15.1%; BEL 22.4%), construction (11.0%; BEL 0.6%), healthcare (7.1%; BEL 9.4%), and administrative and support activities (7.0%; BEL 9.0%).

The combination of sustained new business creation and a high level of closures was reflected in **net creations** (creations – closures), **down** on the first half of 2024 (-12.2%). However, this decline should be qualified: 2024 was an exceptional year (+175% over 12 months) – thanks in particular to the influx of new start-ups encouraged by the reform in access to the profession (which abolished the obligation to prove basic management skills) – and Brussels' share of national net creations remained high, reaching 18.6% compared to just 6% to 7% two years earlier. **Entrepreneurial momentum was down slightly** (1.7%, or 0.3 percentage points less than in the first half of 2024), but remained higher than both its 2023 (0.7%) and 2021 (1.4%) levels, and the national average (1.1%).

1 Legal and accounting activities, activities of head offices and management consultancy activities, architecture and engineering, R&D, advertising and market research, veterinary activities.

Figure 2. Number of net business creations and annual change (%), June 2022-2025, BCR and Belgium.

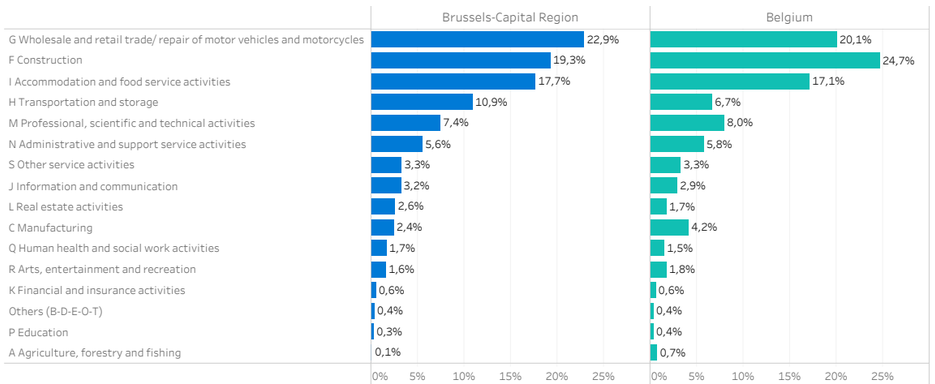


Source : Statbel

Bankruptcies, meanwhile, continued to rise, but at a **much slower pace** than in 2024. With 1,062 bankruptcies in the first half of the year, the Region recorded its **highest level** for the same period in recent years, as did Belgium (6,012). However, this increase was more moderate (+7.3% vs. +23.6% a year earlier), a slowdown also seen at national level (+3.4% in 2025, vs. +9.4% in 2024). The sectors most affected were retail (22.9%; BEL 20.1%), construction (19.3%; BEL 24.7%) and hospitality (10.9%; BEL 17.1%). At the same time, **job losses due to bankruptcies rose particularly sharply** in the BCR (+59.5%), in contrast to the decline seen in Belgium. However, this interpretation needs to be qualified by the effect of the head offices, which can distort the regional attribution of job losses.

The proportion of bankruptcies was highest in the retail (22.9%; BEL 20.1%), construction (19.3%; BEL 24.7%) and hospitality (10.9%; BEL 17.1%) sectors.

Figure 3: Breakdown of bankruptcies by sector of activity (%), January to June 2025, BCR and Belgium.

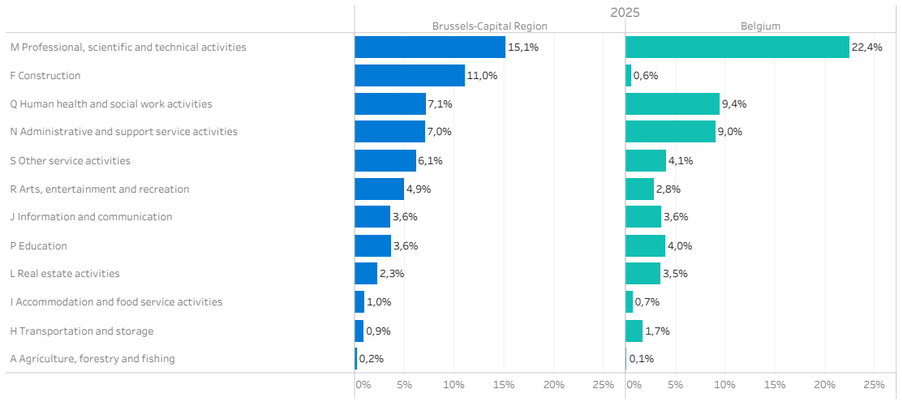


Source : Statbel

These trends nonetheless conceal **contrasting sectoral trajectories**. The construction sector continued to post a high volume of start-ups (12.3%; BEL +11.8%), despite a sharp decline (-36.3%; BEL -18.4%) compared to the significant increase recorded the previous year (probably linked to the reform in access to the profession). While remaining highly exposed to closures (including bankruptcies) (12.4%; BEL 14.5%), this sector saw a high level of net start-ups (253, or 11% of net start-ups in the BCR), well above the national level (85, or 0.6% of net start-ups in the country). Brussels' construction sector was thus characterised by a more favourable dynamic than that of the country as a whole, where, proportionally, there was a higher number of bankruptcies (BCR 19.3%; BEL 24.7%).

Hospitality in Brussels presented a mixed picture, with a sharp rise in start-ups – well above the growth seen national level (+25.8%; BEL +1.2%) – but a high proportion of closures (6.7%; BEL 6.6%), bankruptcies (10.9%; BEL 17.1%) and job losses (37% of job losses in the BCR), illustrating the sector's continuing fragility. The **retail** sector experienced a marked decline in new business start-ups (-30.4%; BEL -28.7%), a high level of closures, although these were down slightly (-8.8%; BEL -4.8%), and a significant drop in net start-ups (-202 in 2025 vs. -12 in the first half of 2024; BEL: -2,500 in 2025 vs. -460 in 2024). After a significant rebound in 2024, the **transport** sector saw its start-ups decline (-19.7%; BEL -4.7%) and its closures increase (+16.2%; BEL +9.3%), leading to a contraction in net start-ups (21 in 2025 vs. 164 in 2024 in the BCR; BEL 256 in 2025 vs. 498 in 2024). Bankruptcies in this sector were also on the rise, much faster than at national level (+31.8%; BEL +8.9%).

Figure 4: Breakdown of positive net créations (créations - closures) by sector of activity (excluding manufacturing, financial and insurance activities, retail), January to June 2025, BCR and Belgium.



Finally, an analysis of **company relocations** reveals a deficit of -363 units in the first half of 2025, while Flanders and Wallonia recorded a positive balance (48 and 270 companies, respectively). By way of comparison, net relocations in Brussels the previous year was -425 companies, half the figure seen in 2023 (-851).

Overall, the Brussels Region's growth in the number of companies was therefore more dynamic than the national average, underpinned by a relatively high level of start-ups compared to previous years. This positive trend was nonetheless mitigated by a rise in the number of closures, bankruptcies and associated job losses, as well as by a declining but persistent relocation deficit.

Browse our online publications to learn more about this subject:

- Business demographics in the BCR based on monthly data - Statistical note 2024
- Monthly update of the data using the analytics.brussels platform:
  - Monthly monitoring of businesses in the BCR
  - Monthly monitoring of bankruptcies in the BCR


hub
.brussels
our business is to help yours