

Home>Registers - business, insolvency & land>Business registers in EU countries

Business registers in EU countries

Belgium

This section gives an overview of the Belgian business register.

What does the Belgian business register offer?

The **Belgian business register, the Business Hub Database** (French *Banque-Carrefour des Entreprises* (BCE), Dutch *Kruispuntbank van Ondernemingen* (KBO)), is managed by an office in the [Federal Department of the Economy](#). The register was created in order to simplify administration and provide a way of identifying businesses unambiguously. The database covers all enterprises, and the law requires all enterprises to register. It also lists businesses' establishments (or 'establishment units'): these are the addresses where - or from where - the business conducts its operations. The database also provides links to other databases. It covers not just businesses but other legal persons too. Sole traders, public bodies, and in some cases foreign businesses, are all included.

Is it free of charge to access the Belgian business register?

Everyone can consult the public data concerning businesses free of charge, using the online 'Public Search' function.

This search engine makes it possible to search for businesses or establishments using various search criteria. An 'Open Data' file is also available free of charge: this can be reused by any interested person provided they register. The 'Public Search' function makes it possible to include a large part of the public data in the user's own applications. However, this latter service is provided for a fee.

How can I search the Belgian business register?

The 'Public Search' function allows you to search data on all businesses, whether they are currently active or whether they have ceased trading, and whether they are legal persons or sole traders, and on their establishments.

What data can be found?

At the level of the enterprise:

enterprise registration number
status
legal situation
start date
name
address of head office
telephone number
fax
email
website
legal form of the enterprise
number of establishments
officers
professional skills and basic management knowledge for which evidence has been supplied
qualities
authorisations
activities for purposes of VAT and social security
financial information
links with other businesses
External links (official gazette (*Moniteur belge/Belgisch Staatsblad*)),
central bank (*Banque nationale de Belgique/Nationale Bank van België*),
and the register of employers kept by the social security office (*ONSS/RSZ*)

At the level of the individual establishment:

enterprise registration number
status
number of establishment
start date
name of establishment
address
telephone number
fax
email
website
authorisations
Activities for social security purposes and commercial and non-commercial activities

How reliable is the data in the register?

Companies are required to disclose certain information and documents. The purpose is particularly to ensure that these things can be relied upon in dealings with third parties. In Belgium, such information has to be published in the official gazette; annual accounts have to be published via the Central Balance Sheet Office (*Centrale des bilans/Balanscentrale*) at the central bank. Article 76 of the Companies Code sets out the rules governing when documents and information can be relied upon after disclosure.

Article 76 of the Companies Code stipulates that documents and information that have to be disclosed have effects vis-à-vis third parties only from the date on which they are published in extract form or reported in the annexes to the official gazette, unless the company can demonstrate that these third parties were aware of them earlier.

Third parties may nevertheless rely upon documents that have not been published.

Where a transaction takes place before the 16th day following the date of publication, it has no effect vis-à-vis third parties who can demonstrate that they had no way of knowing about it.

In the event of a discrepancy between the text that was filed and the text that was published in the annexes to the official gazette, the text published cannot be relied upon against third parties. However, third parties themselves may invoke it, unless the company can demonstrate that they were in fact aware of the text that was filed.

In the event of a discrepancy between documents that must be filed in an official language of the country and translations into one or more official languages of the European Union that are filed voluntarily, the translations published voluntarily cannot be relied upon against third parties. But third parties may rely upon such voluntarily published translations, unless the company can show that they were aware of the version referred to in Article 67(1)(2) of the Companies Code, which refers to certified copies of authentic documents, duplicates or originals of private deeds, and statements that must be filed, in electronic form or not, with the registry of the commercial court.

The information regarding enterprises that is accessible via the 'Public Search' function includes direct links to the notice published in the official gazette and to the central bank's Central Balance Sheet Office.

How to search

This link will take you to the [Public Search](#) function:

There are four different search options, separated by tabs:

search by number (if you know the enterprise registration number or the number of the establishment)

search by name

search by address

search by activity

The internet site is available in four languages: English, Dutch, French and German.

You will find general information on the Business Hub Database through the website of the [Federal Department of the Economy](#) (in the section 'Enterprises & Self-Employed' (*Entreprises & Indépendants/Ondernemingen & Zelfstandigen*), under the heading *Banque-Carrefour des Entreprises/Kruispuntbank van Ondernemingen*).

Related links

[European Business Register](#) ; [Federal Department of Justice](#); [Federal Department of the Economy, SMEs, the Self-Employed and Energy](#)

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