



## The MAX research cards

# BELGIUM

## Migrants' contribution to the Belgian economy

Migration contributes to the economic development of Belgium in many ways:

- One of the great benefits of migration is the change in the variety of goods available to consumers. The food industry is a sector that appears particularly praised: there are many examples of migrants opening restaurants or importing gourmet products for specialized food stores.
- Plus, many migrants are entrepreneurs and create their own jobs. In 2016, around 16.1% of immigrants were self-employed, compared to 13.1% of native residents. This entrepreneurship generates jobs for native Belgian workers: approximately 30% of self-employed migrants born outside of the EU have employees.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS

Belgium has a long history of migration: this has played an essential role in the political and cultural development of the country.

Migrants are part of the political establishment, improving people's view of integration and creating a better understanding.

Among the countries who had marked positive sentiment towards welcoming migrants, Belgium scored the highest.

Belgium has very strong legislation protecting migrants, the so-called Immigration Act, based on the Belgian Constitution.





## THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS

Many initiatives are taking place in Belgium to increase the cultural contribution and integration of migrants:

- ✓ Several artists contribute and influence to the **Belgian art and music scene**, such as the Italian-origin singer Adamo or the Rwandese-origin singer Stromae amongst others.
- ✓ In the **national football team**, the “**Red Devils**”, there are several players of foreign origin among its top players. This confirms the ability of migrants and their children to shape the country’s cultural and social identity.
- ✓ **Diaspora associations** have proven to play an important role in cultural integration, as they set up their own social and cultural institutions for migrants. Besides the social and cultural activities, they also provide many services to help migrants to learn the languages of the country and with other important services needed in their daily life.
- ✓ “**Refugees Got Talent**” : the founders of this idea considered art as universal, this is why they created a meeting place for migrants to come together and practice their art in their new country. Communities from various backgrounds come together twice a week to share their ideas and work together.

### #KeyMessage: Migrants are us!

To learn more about Belgium and the integration of newcomers, as well as these initiatives, be sure to look at the [research reports of the MAX project](#)!

If you would like to do your bit in supporting a welcoming multicultural society, follow like/share/contact [European Professionals Network](#) and the [MAX project](#) !