

# Belgium now has **more than a million self-employed**

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The **annual NISSE report** indicates a slight growth in the number of self-employed which, for the first time, has now reached over one million. This is a development that has been continuing for several years now in all regions of the country.

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In 2013, more than 12,000 workers became self-employed, either as their main form of employment or as a secondary occupation. And now the number of self-employed in Belgium has risen above one million for the first time. For around 5,000 of these new self-employed – including nearly 4,000 women – this represents a secondary activity. Those self-employed in a secondary activity account for a little under a quarter of the country's self-employed.

The bulk of the self-employed workforce is still to be found in commerce, the liberal professions and industry, although there has been a slight downward trend in new self-employed in industry.

## **NEARLY 500,000 COMPANIES**

The number of companies is also on the increase: at the end of 2013, there were 484,231 reporting companies in Belgium. The number of new companies (start-ups) was, however, lower: 91,137 were formed in 2013, compared with 93,241 in 2012. The vast majority of companies are located in Flanders (299,617 companies), compared with just 11,458 and 72,071 in Wallonia and Brussels respectively.

The number of companies going bankrupt is, unfortunately, also on the rise: 8,660 companies filed for bankruptcy in 2013, a rise of over 11% compared with the previous year. This statistic that needs to be taken in context, however, as the number of companies being formed remains substantially higher than this figure.