

2018-04-20

PRESS RELEASE

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2003-2015: Annual average growth in the volume of labour higher in Flanders and Wallonia than in Brussels

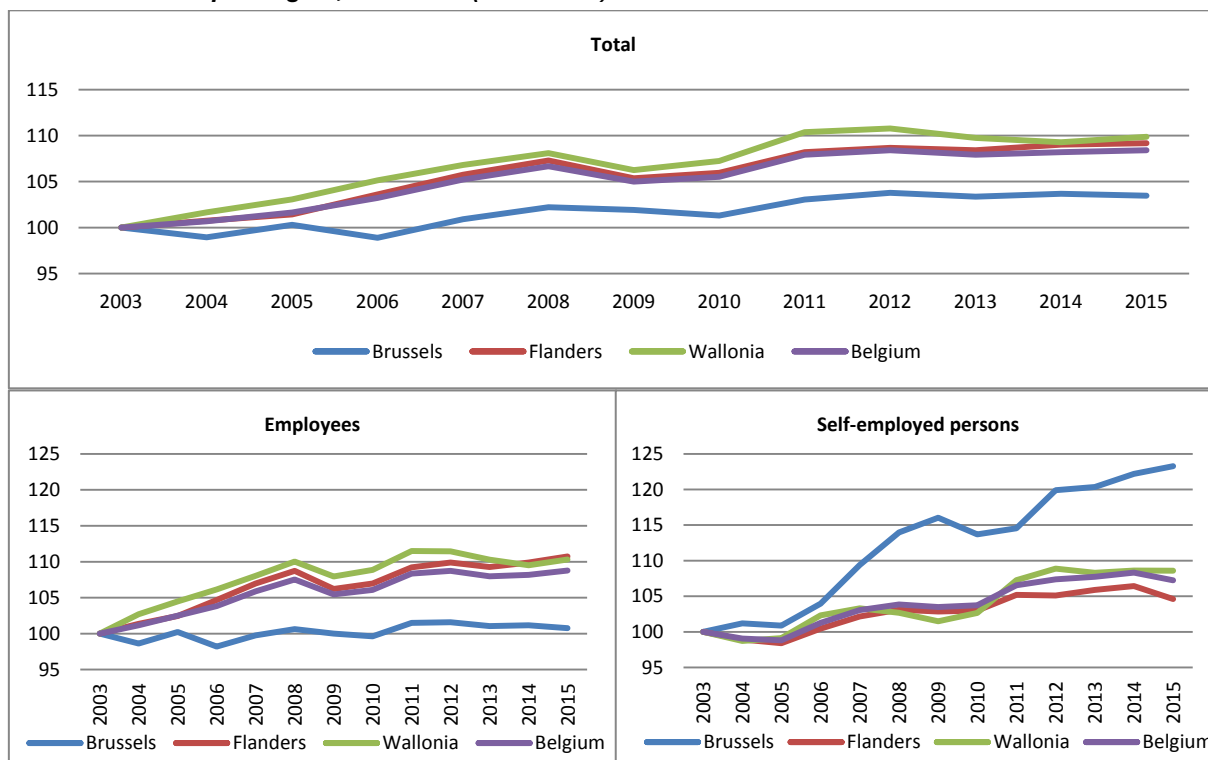
- In the period 2003-2015, the volume of labour increased by an annual average of 0.3 % in Brussels, 0.7 % in Flanders and 0.8 % in Wallonia.
- On the other hand, the number of hours worked per person declined by an annual average of 0.2 % in Brussels and Flanders, and 0.1 % in Wallonia.
- Annual average productivity growth per hour worked in Flanders (+1.1 %) was more than double the figure for Brussels (+0.5 %) or Wallonia (+0.4 %).
- Growth of labour costs per hour worked was very similar in the three Regions (averaging between +2.3 and +2.4 % per annum).

In this press release, the NAI is publishing for the first time regional data on hours worked (labour volume) by employees and self-employed persons for the period 2003-2015. The results are consistent with the national accounts data published in October 2017.

2003-2015: Labour volume increases everywhere, but more in Flanders and Wallonia than in Brussels

In the period 2003-2015, the number of hours worked by employees and self-employed persons (broken down by workplace) increased from 1 016 to 1 051 million hours in Brussels, from 3 818 to 4 169 million hours in Flanders and from 1 713 to 1 882 million hours in Wallonia. This means that the total volume of labour in the period in question increased by an annual average of 0.3 % in Brussels, 0.7 % in Flanders and 0.8 % in Wallonia.

Volume of labour per Region, 2003-2015 (2003 = 100)



Source: NAI

The lower growth of the total volume of labour in Brussels was due mainly to the much weaker growth of the labour volume of employees (averaging +0.1 % per annum in Brussels, against +0.9 % in Flanders and +0.8 % in Wallonia), further enhanced by their larger share in the total volume of labour (on average 87 % for employees in Brussels) compared to the other two Regions (on average 75 %). The main factors behind this trend were the highly negative contributions of the branches 'financial activities and insurance', 'wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food services' and to a somewhat lesser degree 'information and communication'. In Flanders and Wallonia these same branches had positive or slightly negative contributions to the increase of the number of hours worked by employees.

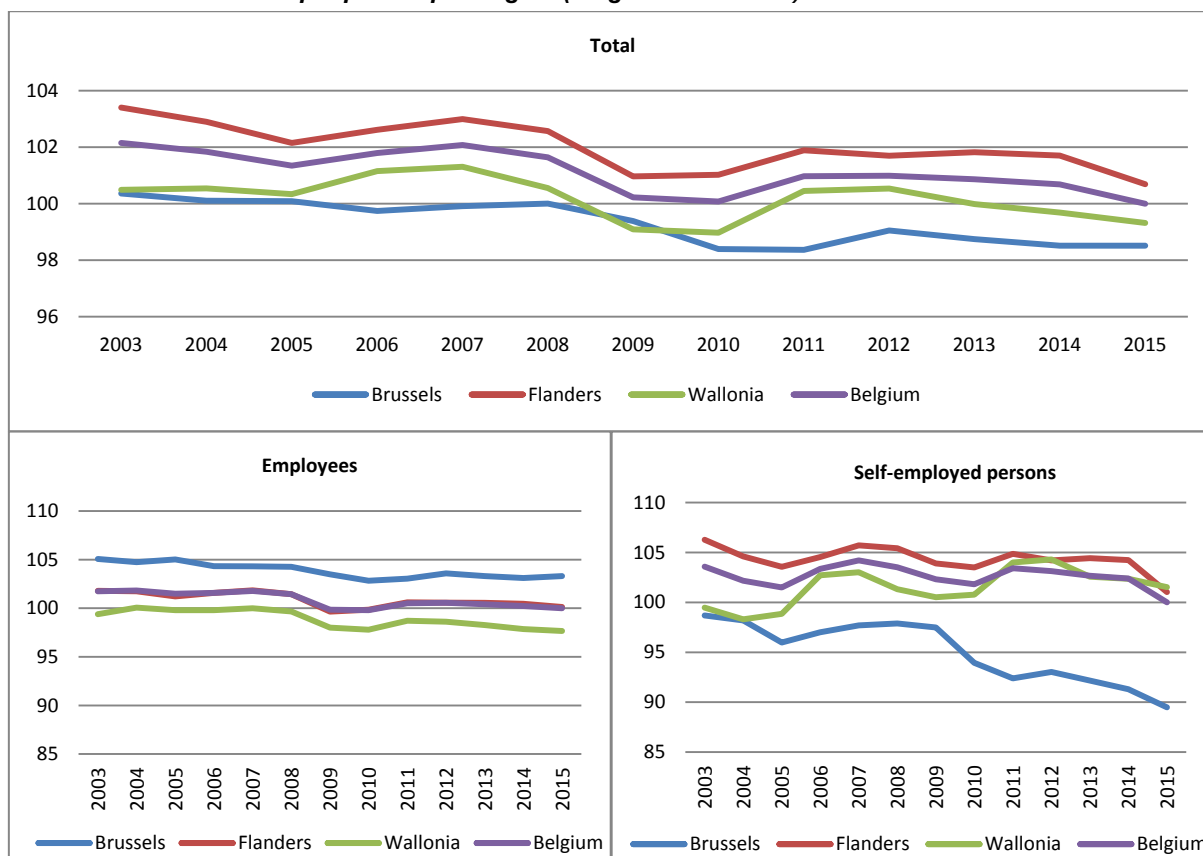
On the other hand, between 2003 and 2015, the annual average rise in the labour volume of self-employed persons was much higher in Brussels (+1.8 %) than in Flanders (+0.4 %) or Wallonia (+0.7 %).

2003-2015: Number of hours worked per person declines in all Regions; differences in growth per Region mainly for self-employed

Between 2003 and 2015, the number of hours worked per person dropped from 1 550 to 1 522 hours in Brussels, from 1 597 to 1 555 hours in Flanders and from 1 552 to 1 534 in Wallonia. For all the years concerned, the number of hours worked per person was at its highest in Flanders and lowest in Brussels. On an annual average, the number of hours worked per person declined by -0.2 % in Brussels and Flanders and -0.1 % in Wallonia. This means that the rise in the total labour volume was due mainly to an increase in the number of persons.

Taking into account the status of the persons working, the number of hours worked per employee declined in the three Regions (-0.1 % on an annual average) as well as the number of hours worked per self-employed person in Brussels (-0.8 % on an annual average) and Flanders (-0.4 % on an annual average). On the contrary, in Wallonia they slightly increased (+0.2 % on average per year). This means that, in Wallonia, the rise in the self-employed labour volume was due not only to an increase in the number of self-employed persons, but also to a higher number of hours worked per self-employed person.

Number of hours worked per person per Region (Belgium 2015 = 100)



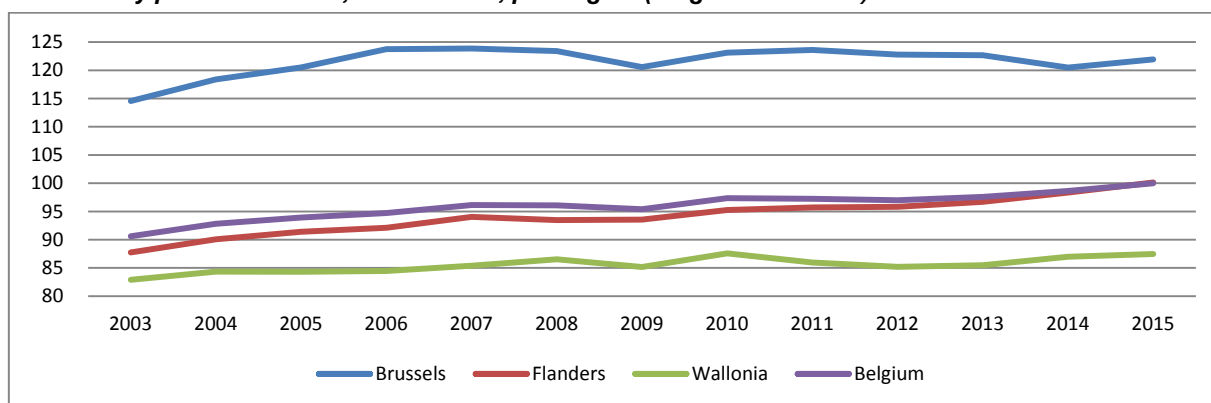
Source: NAI

By combining the new labour volume series with the existing variables at regional level, such as value added in volume and compensation of employees, it is possible to calculate other secondary variables such as productivity per hour worked and labour costs per hour worked.

2003-2015: The average annual growth of productivity per hour worked was over twice as high in Flanders compared to the figure for Brussels and Wallonia.

In the period 2003-2015, productivity per hour worked in real terms, defined as the ratio between gross value added in volume and the total number of hours worked, was highest in Brussels and lowest in Wallonia. The difference between the two Regions was fairly stable. The difference in productivity between Wallonia and Flanders was smaller, but the gap has widened somewhat in recent years. Productivity per hour worked increased in all Regions: in Flanders, annual average growth (+1.1 %) was twice as high as in Brussels (+0.5 %) or Wallonia (+0.4 %).

Productivity per hour worked, in real terms, per Region (Belgium 2015=100)

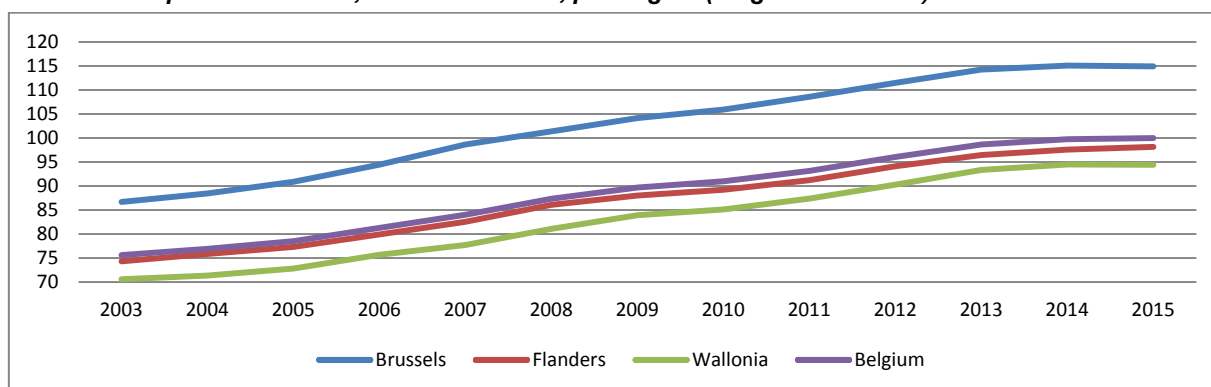


Source: NAI

2003-2015: Annual average growth of labour costs per hour worked displayed a very similar trend in the three Regions

Labour costs per hour worked¹ (in nominal terms) in the period 2003-2015 were highest in Brussels and lowest in Wallonia. Here, too, the difference between Flanders and Wallonia was smaller. During the period considered, annual average growth was very similar in the three Regions at between 2.3 % and 2.4 %. From 2014 onwards, a marked slowing of the rise in labour costs per hour worked was noticed in all three Regions. In 2015, hourly labour costs even declined slightly in Brussels and Wallonia.

Labour costs per hour worked, in nominal terms, per Region (Belgium 2015=100)



Source: NAI

The table on the next page summarises the new variables for labour volume and the variables derived from them for each Region. Apart from the absolute figures and ratios for the year 2015, it shows the changes between 2003 and 2015 and for two sub-periods.

¹ Labour costs per hour worked are calculated on the basis of the employer's total labour costs, i.e. compensation of employees. The individual components (among which gross wages) are not known in the regional accounts.

Summary: Absolute figures, shares and growth per Region (broken down by workplace)

	Absolute figures ¹	Share ¹ or ratio compared to Belgium (in %)	Growth (in %)					
			2015	2015	Annual average			2015
					2003-2015	2003-2008	2009-2015	
Number of hours worked by employees (thousand hours)								
Brussels	900 885	16.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	-0.4		
Flanders	3 155 608	57.8	0.9	1.7	0.3	0.8		
Wallonia	1 395 936	25.6	0.8	1.9	0.0	0.7		
Belgium	5 456 653	100.0	0.7	1.5	0.2	0.6		
Number of hours worked by self-employed persons (thousand hours)								
Brussels	150 121	9.1	1.8	2.7	1.1	0.9		
Flanders	1 013 263	61.4	0.4	0.6	0.2	-1.7		
Wallonia	485 786	29.5	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.0		
Belgium	1 649 170	100.0	0.6	0.8	0.5	-1.0		
Total number of hours worked (thousand hours)								
Brussels	1 051 006	14.8	0.3	0.4	0.2	-0.2		
Flanders	4 168 871	58.7	0.7	1.4	0.2	0.2		
Wallonia	1 881 722	26.5	0.8	1.6	0.2	0.5		
Belgium	7 105 823	100.0	0.7	1.3	0.2	0.2		
Number of employees (persons)								
Brussels	612 886	16.0	0.2	0.3	0.1	-0.6		
Flanders	2 215 236	57.8	1.0	1.8	0.5	1.1		
Wallonia	1 004 642	26.2	1.0	1.9	0.3	0.9		
Belgium	3 835 331	100.0	0.8	1.5	0.4	0.8		
Number of self-employed (persons)								
Brussels	77 837	10.2	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.9		
Flanders	465 298	60.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.4		
Wallonia	221 979	29.0	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.8		
Belgium	765 114	100.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.4		
Total employment (persons)								
Brussels	690 723	15.0	0.4	0.5	0.4	-0.2		
Flanders	2 680 534	58.3	1.0	1.6	0.5	1.2		
Wallonia	1 226 621	26.7	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.9		
Belgium	4 600 445	100.0	0.9	1.4	0.5	0.9		
Hours worked per employee (hours/year)								
Brussels	1 470	103.3	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.2		
Flanders	1 425	100.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3		
Wallonia	1 389	97.7	-0.1	0.1	-0.3	-0.2		
Belgium	1 423	100.0	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2		
Hours worked per self-employed person (hours/year)								
Brussels	1 929	89.5	-0.8	-0.2	-1.3	-2.0		
Flanders	2 178	101.0	-0.4	-0.2	-0.6	-3.1		
Wallonia	2 188	101.5	0.2	0.4	0.0	-0.8		
Belgium	2 155	100.0	-0.3	-0.0	-0.5	-2.3		
Hours worked per person (hours/year)								
Brussels	1 522	98.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	0.0		
Flanders	1 555	100.7	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-1.0		
Wallonia	1 534	99.3	-0.1	0.0	-0.2	-0.4		
Belgium	1 545	100.0	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.7		

	Absolute figures ¹	Share ¹ or ratio compared to Belgium (in %)	Growth (in %)					
			2015	2015	Annual average			2015
					2003-2015	2003-2008	2009-2015	
Gross value added in volume (€million, chained euros, reference year = 2015)								
Brussels	66 273.3	18.0	0.8	1.9	-0.0	1.0		
Flanders	215 857.5	58.7	1.8	2.7	1.2	2.0		
Wallonia	85 110.7	23.2	1.2	2.4	0.4	1.1		
Belgium	367 471.7	100.0	1.5	2.5	0.8	1.6		
Compensation of employees (€million)								
Brussels	39 192.2	19.0	2.4	3.3	1.8	-0.5		
Flanders	117 255.7	56.8	3.2	4.7	2.2	1.4		
Wallonia	49 887.0	24.2	3.3	4.8	2.2	0.7		
Belgium	206 541.8	100.0	3.1	4.4	2.1	0.8		
Productivity per hour worked (chained euros, reference year = 2015)								
Brussels	63.1	121.9	0.5	1.5	-0.2	1.2		
Flanders	51.8	100.1	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.8		
Wallonia	45.2	87.5	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.5		
Belgium	51.7	100.0	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.4		
Labour costs per hour worked (€ nominal terms)								
Brussels	43.5	114.9	2.4	3.2	1.8	-0.1		
Flanders	37.2	98.2	2.3	3.0	1.9	0.6		
Wallonia	35.7	94.4	2.5	2.8	2.2	-0.1		
Belgium	37.9	100.0	2.4	2.9	1.9	0.3		

¹ The difference between the sum of the three Regions and Belgium concerns the extra-regional territory.

Source: NAI.