

## Looking for work in *Belgium*

Looking for work in another country requires more than just the obvious CV translation. You will be confronted with issues that probably didn't even cross your mind when you decided to go for an international career, but don't underestimate the big impact they can have on the outcome of your adventure! Think for example about the different rules and habits regarding immigration, job application procedures, the selection procedures and the management culture.

Expertise in Labour Mobility has prepared practical factsheets to support you in your job hunting abroad. A thorough preparation will give you a head start in the country of your choice. Here is some info on Belgium:

### Work permits in Belgium

- EEA citizens are free to move and work wherever they want to, within the EEA (the EEA includes Belgium).
- However, as a EU citizen, you do need to apply for a residence permit. This is valid for five years and should be issued within six months of your arrival.
- Contact the Belgian embassy in your home country for more information.

### The application procedure in Belgium

- One of the most successful ways of finding work in Belgium is through speculative application.
- Be aware of the language difference in Belgium. Walloons do not like to be addressed in Dutch and the Flemish do not like to be addressed in French. Please note that there is also a German-speaking region.
- A Belgian interviewer will pay most attention to experience, motivation and social interpersonal skills.

### Writing a CV in Belgium

- The key focus of your CV should be to persuade the prospective employer to invite you for an interview. Therefore, your CV is a marketing tool, which should be adapted to the market in which you intend to use it.
- The most common format for a Belgian CV is reversed chronological (i.e., most recent activity first).
- Belgian CVs used to be quite long, nowadays they are usually about two pages.
- Educational results need only be given if there is a direct reference to the job.

### The application letter in Belgium

- An important aspect of the application letter in Belgium is the language. Closely follow the instructions given in the job advertisement/description.
- Especially in the French part of Belgium, a handwritten letter is considered common, in the Flemish part, typewritten letters are more often used.
- Extracurricular activities are considered of great importance in Belgium.
- References are usually verified, so inform your references in advance.

### Do's

- Prepare some good questions to ask in an interview to ensure you leave a good impression.
- Mention you linguistic abilities, they are considered of great importance.
- Look interested – ask questions.
- Provide examples to illustrate your achievements.
- Ask if you don't understand the question you have been asked.

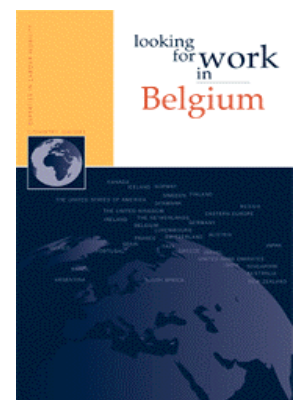
### Don'ts

- Consider a Flemish CV similar to a Walloon. There are huge differences involved.
- Call the language issue a 'problem'. Just keep the differences in mind and "handle with care".
- Sit until invited to do so.
- Criticise former employers.
- Go over the top – stay calm and stick to the facts.

### Management culture in Belgium

- The ever-present duality between Flanders and the Walloon region is also reflected in Belgian organisations.
- Management authority rests on competence rather than on hierarchy in Belgium.
- Belgians always want to come to a compromise, especially when it concerns business.
- Belgian employees have a high work ethos.
- In Belgium you should always back up your ideas with clear facts and figures.
- Since Belgians appreciate personal contact they do not like to do business over the phone or e-mail.

This information is based on the *Looking for work in Belgium* guide (ISBN 90-5896-003-X), written by Expertise in Labour Mobility. This one-pager is one step to making your international career aspirations become reality. The full Looking for work in Belgium guide tells you everything you need to know. If you want to order or more information about our services, have a look at [www.labourmobility.com](http://www.labourmobility.com).



Good luck with your application in Belgium!