

12 Belgium

This country profile for Belgium presents recent trends in entrepreneurship and self-employment for women, youth, seniors, immigrants and people with disabilities, including benchmarks against the European Union average. It also highlights new policy developments and current inclusive entrepreneurship policy issues.

Recent trends in inclusive entrepreneurship activities

The overall conditions for entrepreneurship are similar to the European Union (EU) average. The overall self-employment rate has been stable over the last decade at about 13%, in-line with the EU average. In 2022, youth (18-30 years old) (9%) and immigrants (12%) were slightly more likely to be self-employed than the EU averages (7% for youth and 11% for immigrants). However, the self-employed were less likely to have employees compared to the EU average in 2022 (26% vs. 32%), including for women, seniors (50-64 years old) and immigrants. Self-employed youth (20-29 years old), however, were slightly more likely than the EU average to employ others in 2022 (19% vs. 17%).

Recent policy developments

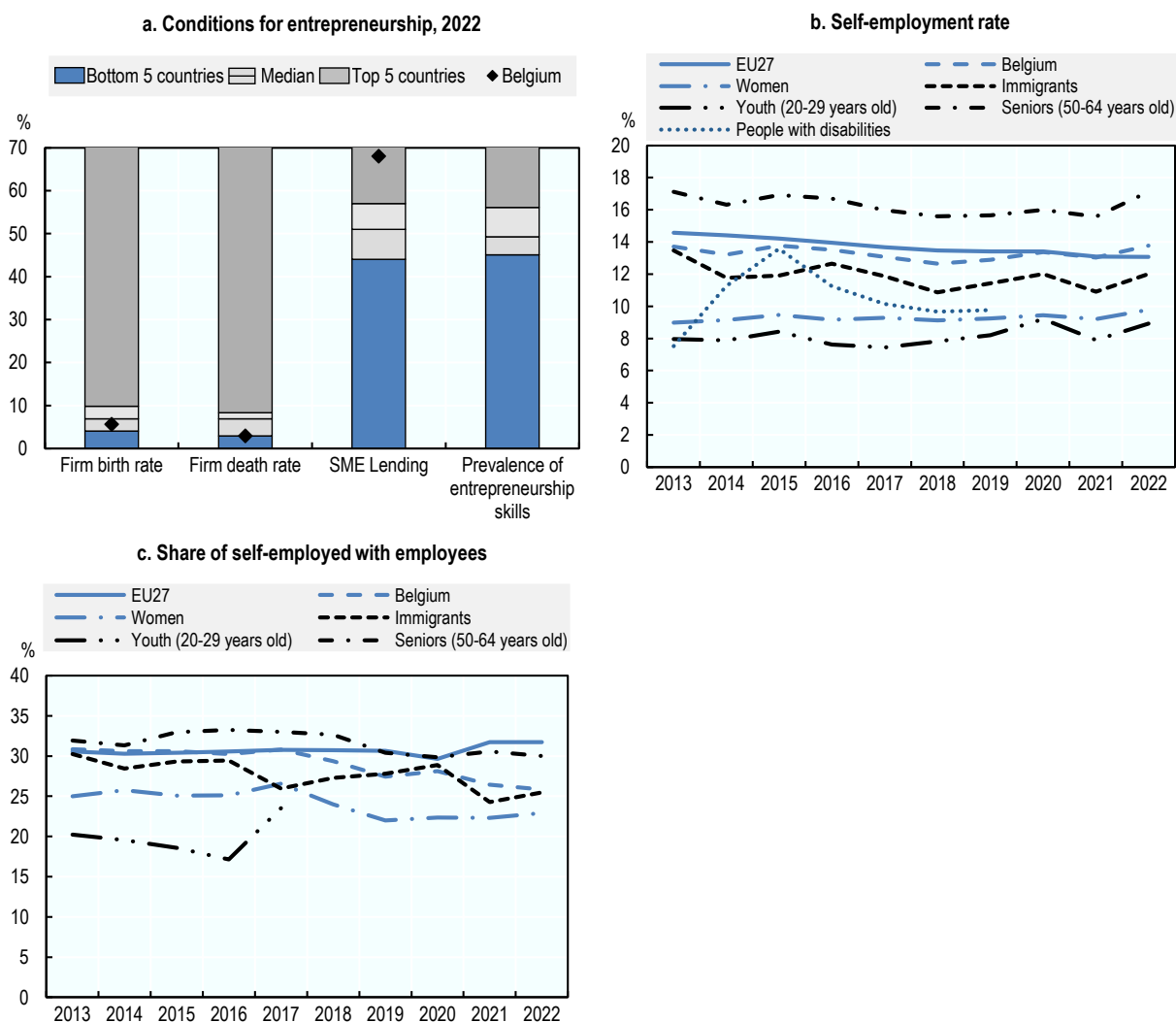
In the Brussels Capital Region, the regional government has proposed a new ordinance to stimulate business creation, specifically referencing the need for more inclusion in entrepreneurship. The reform aims to simplify regulations and administrative procedures related to entrepreneurship. One major development is that entrepreneurs and the business owners will no longer be mandated to have a business management certificate (*le diplôme de gestion de base*), following a similar change in Flanders. This change will likely help entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups who had difficulty obtaining the business management certificate due to the inability to recognise education from other countries, language barriers in the training courses, time and resource commitments among other challenges. However, the business management certificate remains mandatory in Wallonia.

Hot policy issue

Youth entrepreneurship is a priority across all Regions with each implementing a range of initiatives to support young entrepreneurs. In Brussels, the Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (YET) initiative provides training programmes, networking opportunities and other supports to young people. Several youth-dedicated incubators exist, including StartLAB.Brussels, Boost Your Project, Start Lab ICHEC and *EPHEC Entreprendre*. Youth entrepreneurs who are still studying can also benefit from a special status, which offers zero or reduced social contributions and tax exemptions. In Wallonia, there are many different publicly-led or publicly-funded initiatives available for youth entrepreneurs, including the VentureLab.

Inclusive entrepreneurship indicators

Figure 12.1. Entrepreneurship and self-employment data for Belgium



Note: In Panel a, the data for the EU median for SME lending excludes the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and Romania. The EU median for the entrepreneurship skills indicator excludes: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia and Malta. Please see Chapter 10 for detailed notes on the figures.

Source: (Eurostat, 2023; OECD, 2023). Please see Chapter 10 for full citations.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/x7osjz>



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