

Business confidence rising, but challenges remain

Brussels, September 7, 2016 – International companies are more confident about doing business in Belgium than they were two years ago, according to a new [Business Barometer](#) released today by the American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium), in collaboration with A.T. Kearney.

“The results of the survey, which was conducted in the month following the attacks in Brussels earlier this year, are clear: Belgium remains attractive and benefits from positive momentum,” said **Yvan Jansen**, Partner at A.T. Kearney. Based on a survey of international companies in Belgium conducted this Spring, the second edition of AmCham Belgium’s *Business Barometer* reveals:

- 51% of respondents plan to **expand their Belgian-based operations** within the next three years, more than double the figure from 2014;
- 60% of those companies planning to invest expect to **create jobs**; and
- 71% of respondents anticipate their **sales in Belgium will increase** over the next three years.

While international companies remain attracted by Belgium’s historic strengths – location and talent – survey respondents rather credited company or industry-specific factors for their optimistic outlook. By the same token, it is possible that sector-specific issues and concerns (market development, specific taxes or costs, etc.) may also lead some companies to different conclusions concerning their activities in Belgium or other countries.

Despite this growing business confidence, less than one-fifth of respondents (17%) believe that Belgium’s investment climate is improving in comparison to neighboring countries. “The competition is not standing still, and Belgium is struggling to keep pace with its neighbors,” said **Marcel Claes**, Chief Executive of AmCham Belgium. Belgium’s less competitive position is reflected in the relatively low share of greenfield investments the country attracts, which is a clear opportunity and invitation to do better. “We encourage the Belgian Government to continue down the path of reform and work on an ambitious program to attract new investors,” added Claes.

In particular, the surveyed companies cited labor costs, fiscal and regulatory unpredictability and administrative burdens as investment deterrents. AmCham Belgium will present new policy recommendations to address these concerns and improve Belgium’s competitiveness in the next edition of our *Priorities for a Prosperous Belgium*, scheduled for release in early 2017.

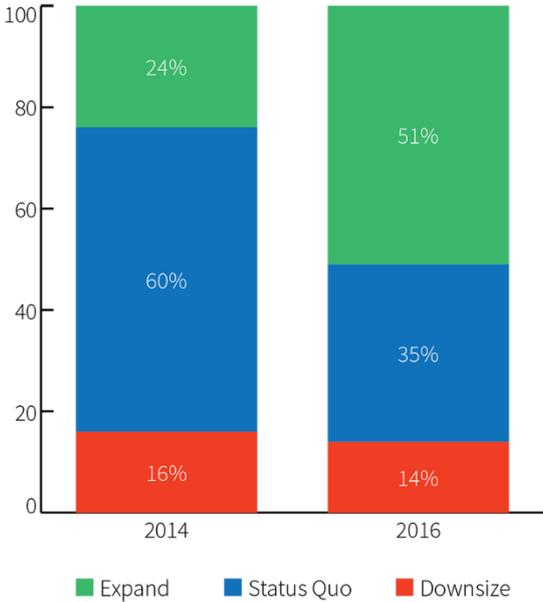
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FIGURE 1: INVESTMENT PLANS IN NEXT THREE YEARS



Download the [Business Barometer](#) from our website.

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About AmCham Belgium

The American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium) is a dynamic non-profit organization dedicated to improving business and investment opportunities for the US-Belgian business community. With approximately 900 US groups active in Belgium, AmCham Belgium plays a pivotal role in an evolving business environment by focusing on three key areas: advocacy, networking and knowledge-sharing. To learn more about AmCham Belgium, visit www.amcham.be.

About A.T. Kearney

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