

PRESS RELEASE

US manufacturers are strong in Belgium

Brussels, December 1, 2016 – US companies play an outsized role in Belgium’s manufacturing sector, according to a [new report](#) released today by the American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium).

“Nothing demonstrates US companies’ commitment to Belgium more than their decision to locate production facilities here – these are substantial, long-term investments, which create a large number of good jobs,” said Marcel Claes, Chief Executive of AmCham Belgium.

US companies account for **12.1% of manufacturing employment in Belgium**. In fact, they are three times more present in manufacturing than in the private sector on the whole, where US companies’ share of employment is 4.3%.

In addition to direct jobs, manufacturing companies also generate a significant amount of **indirect employment**, often at local SMEs, through their supply chains and distribution channels. “Yes, Coca-Cola is a global brand, but our business model is outspokenly local. Annually, we buy €322 million worth of commodities and ingredients from Belgian companies. Each job at Coca-Cola supports 6 others, totaling almost 17,000 Belgian jobs,” said Jean Eylenbosch, VP European Government Relations, Coca-Cola European Partners Belgium, and Jeroen Langerock, Belux Communications Director, Coca-Cola Services.

Advanced automation and other new technologies are, however, contributing to the long-term decline of manufacturing employment in Belgium – and around the world. Industrial output continues to grow, but factories employ less people than in the past. This is a global trend, but “high labor costs are clearly accelerating the drive towards automation in Belgium,” added Claes.

Between digitalization and changing trade patterns, manufacturing is going through a period of transformation, and AmCham Belgium would like to encourage an open discussion about **the future of industry** in Belgium and the associated opportunities. The Chamber’s new report includes a showcase of 13 US companies with industrial operations in Belgium, some of which, like Pfizer, have recently renewed their commitment to the country with new investments and hiring plans.

“Pfizer has invested over €400 million over recent years in its aseptic manufacturing and packaging site in Puurs. Since 2010, we have hired 1,000 colleagues, and we will employ a workforce of 2,000 people by the end of 2016 at our site. Pfizer is planning to invest about €100 million in Puurs in 2017, confirming its trust in our site and its skilled workforce,” said Luc Van Steenwinkel, Managing Director, Pfizer Puurs.

American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium)

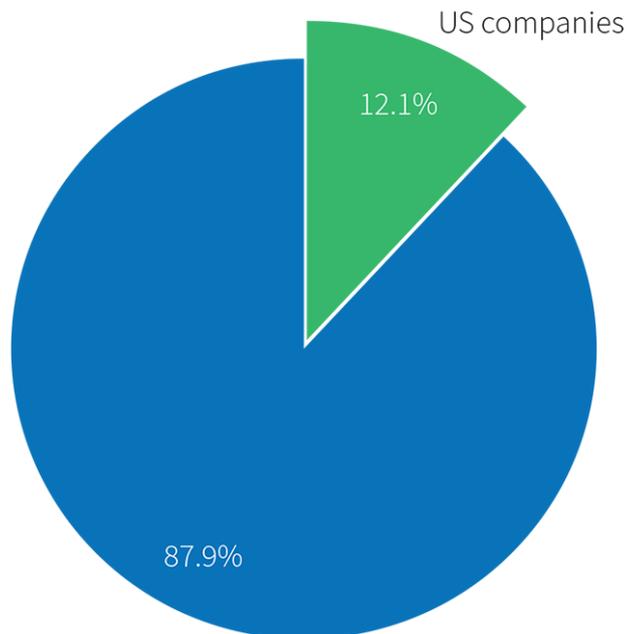
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FIGURE 1: MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT IN BELGIUM

Manufacturing employment in Belgium



2013 data. Source: National Accounts Institute, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Download [The Importance of US Companies in Belgium: Manufacturing](#) 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.

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