The 2014 social balance sheet

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Introduction

With the exception of non-profit organisations, foundations and other legal entities governed by private law employing less than 20 FTE workers, all companies with staff and trading in Belgium are required to fill out a social balance sheet. The information contained in this document make it possible to analyse the composition of the staff of companies that complete it, to measure the volume of hours worked and the amount spent on staff costs, as well as the extent of employee movements during the course of the year. The social balance sheet is also an important source of statistics on the efforts that companies make each year to arrange training for their workers.

The first chapter of this article is devoted to changes in (the composition of) the volume of employment between 2000 and 2014. For the first time since the social balance sheet findings have been published each year in the Economic Review, the analysis covers all the social balance sheets filed – i.e. 85 572 companies for 2014[1] –, which makes it possible to put the results for this year into their historical context, even though there were some breaks in the series during the period under review.

The second chapter returns to the question of wage gaps between men and women. It has become possible to measure this gap for firms filing a full format following the introduction, in the social balance sheet, of the breakdown by gender of staff numbers, hours worked and staff costs for the financial years starting with effect from 1 January 2012. Results have now been available for three years, which has made it possible to measure changes in the wage gap. The study is based on a sample population of just under 2 000 firms, while around 13 500 full formats were filed for the year 2014. Certain data are lacking because, for personal data privacy purposes, the legal framework gives firms the right not to fill out these headings when they only concern three or less workers. Others cannot even be used because the quality of the reporting leaves much to be desired. The consequences are regrettable both for economic analysis – the results are not very representative – and for policy-making too, missing one of the points of the law which was to enable a comparison of the social profile of declarants.

The third and last chapter takes a brief look at the consequences, for the social balance sheet, of the Law of 18 December 2015, which transposes into Belgian law the new Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings.

The article also includes a methodological annex which explains how the analysis populations are made up, as well as a series of tables showing historical trends in the most interesting variables and ratios calculated from the social balance sheets.

1. Volume of employment: main changes between 2000 and 2014 based on the social balance sheets

The social balance sheet enables us to gain an insight into the volume of employment in different ways.

The table referring to persons employed[2] during the accounting year includes two headings that measure the

(1) The analysis population comprises the social balance sheets meeting the quality criteria set out in Annex 1.

(2) Employed persons refer to workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register.

volume of employment. Heading 1003 measures the average number of FTEs[1] employed during the 12-month period. Heading 1013 lists hours actually worked and remunerated during the year under consideration, that is, without taking account of unpaid overtime, holidays, sick leave, short absences and hours lost through strikes or for other reasons. This latter concept is much closer to the reality of the company's activity, which makes it a very valuable indicator. These two headings are broken down by staff work regimes and are therefore available separately for full-time employees and for part-timers. For firms filing full-format accounts, there has also been a breakdown by gender since 2012.

The table referring to persons employed on the date of the end of the financial year, identical for abbreviated and full formats, also contains a variable which provides insight into the volume of employment: this is heading 1053, which measures the number of FTEs at the end of the accounting year. This is the counterpart, on the closing date, to heading 1003 giving the average for the year. There can still be differences between the variable measured as an annual average and that measured at the end of the financial year. These differences can be due to the seasonal nature of the activity for some firms whose peak business period falls outside the date of the end of the financial year[2]. They may also reflect (occasional or structural) opportunities or difficulties inherent in the development of the company. And lastly, more broadly, differences may appear depending on the position of the branch of activity, or even the whole economy, in the business cycle: in the event of a cyclical upturn, the volume of employment measured at the end of the year is higher than the annual average, while the opposite is observed in a downturn. Heading 1053 has a clear advantage for analytical purposes: it is available by type of contract, gender, occupational category and, since 2008, education level, both for full-time workers and those employed on a part-time basis. So, this variable helps to refine the analysis and measure changes in the composition of the volume of employment.

The personnel for whom the company has submitted a DIMONA declaration, referred to by the information reported in the two aforementioned tables, is not the reporting companies' only source of labour: agency workers make up an appreciable additional labour force, whose volume can be easily adapted to the needs of the company. Firms that use the full format are required to record temporary agency staff in an ad-hoc table[3]. The declaring firm has to mention not only the number of FTEs but also the number of hours worked. Since these headings are not completed by firms filing an abbreviated format and those that do file full-format balance sheets do not always fill them out systematically and correctly, the volume of temporary agency work recorded in the social balance sheets only account for a fraction – 50 % in 2014 – of that registered by Federgon, the Federation of HR service providers.

For the analysis of the volume of employment, heading 1053 was chosen, giving the volume of employment expressed in FTEs at the end of the financial year, because it is broken down by various interesting characteristics. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that this volume is calculated on the basis of contractual working time, and that the actual working hours may deviate from this at certain times, for the various reasons mentioned earlier.

1.1 Analysis population

1.1.1 Selection of firms

As is customary with the annual social balance sheet publication, the population of firms taken into consideration for the analysis is a cleaned-up sample population compared with the total group of firms that file a social balance sheet with the Central Balance Sheet Office.

For the sake of uniformity and consistency of the findings, only social balance sheets relating to a twelve-month accounting period ending on 31 December are taken into consideration. Requiring an accounting year corresponding to the calendar year puts a considerable limitation on the population. For the financial year 2014, 15 % of the declarants – taking up the same proportion of workers – actually ended their accounting year on a different date from 31 December. These proportions vary considerably between branches of activity: almost one-third of the volume of employment is excluded from the analysis population in trade and transport, while the proportion drops to less than 3 % in the health and social work branch.

Companies also have to meet certain criteria regarding business activity (they must be from the private sector[4]; their economic activity must be clearly identified; they may not be in NACE-BEL branches 84 – public administration

(1) For the purposes of calculating this heading, a full-time employee is counted as one unit, while a part-time worker is recorded in proportion to his/her working time, by comparison with a full-time employee in the firm or doing the same job as the worker concerned. The proportion is calculated in accordance with the part-time worker's employment contract.

(2) This is why many firms in the distribution sector close their accounting year in September, outside the (pre-)sales and Christmas shopping periods. On the other hand, many farming sector companies close their financial year at the end of the calendar year, a quieter business period.

(3) This also registers the number of people seconded to one company by another firm. A worker from a company seconded to another firm, both of them filling a social balance sheet, is recorded twice: on the one hand in heading 1003 of the 'lending' company and, on the other hand, in heading 1502 of the user company. This leads to double-counting.

(4) Employment in the private sector is defined as employment recorded in the total economy (S.1), from which employment in the public sector (S.13) and the household sector (S.14) is subtracted.

and defence, compulsory social security –, 85 – education – and 78 – employment-related activities), size (they need to employ at least one FTE worker) and quality (no differences are allowed between the data notified in the social balance sheet and the annual accounts[1]: they may not show any outliers in terms of staff costs per hour or working time).

The selection procedure leads to some companies systematically being left out of the analysis population for the entire period covered, for example those that closed their accounting period each year on a different date from the end of the calendar year or those that carry out business activities falling outside the scope of the analysis, while others are excluded occasionally, for instance because they have changed the end date for their accounts or have not filled up some sections properly, so that the resultant ratios are not accurate for a particular reporting year.

1.1.2 A non-uniform analysis population

The selection procedure is applied in exactly the same way for each of the accounting years considered, which is the years 2000 to 2014. In 2000, the analysis population covered 69 939 companies, but by 2014 this figure had risen to 85 572, that is another 15 600 firms. The representation rate expressed in terms of jobs[2] came to 76.4 % in 2014. This figure has risen during the course of the period under review, gaining 3.4 percentage points since 2000.

The change of accounting requirements for large non-profit organisations and foundations from the year 2006 partly explains this increase: these entities have effectively now been required to use a structured reporting format, with an annex including the social balance sheet. Even though they were already subject to the obligation to file a social balance sheet before this date, in practice, some of these entities were not doing so. The requirement to submit structured annual accounts led to a marked increase in the number of social balance sheets filed by these associations and foundations – mainly active in health and social work – in the subsequent years; the number of declarants has exceeded 3 500 units annually since the beginning of the last decade. Coverage in terms of jobs has widened considerably, as they generally tend to be entities employing a large number of salaried workers.

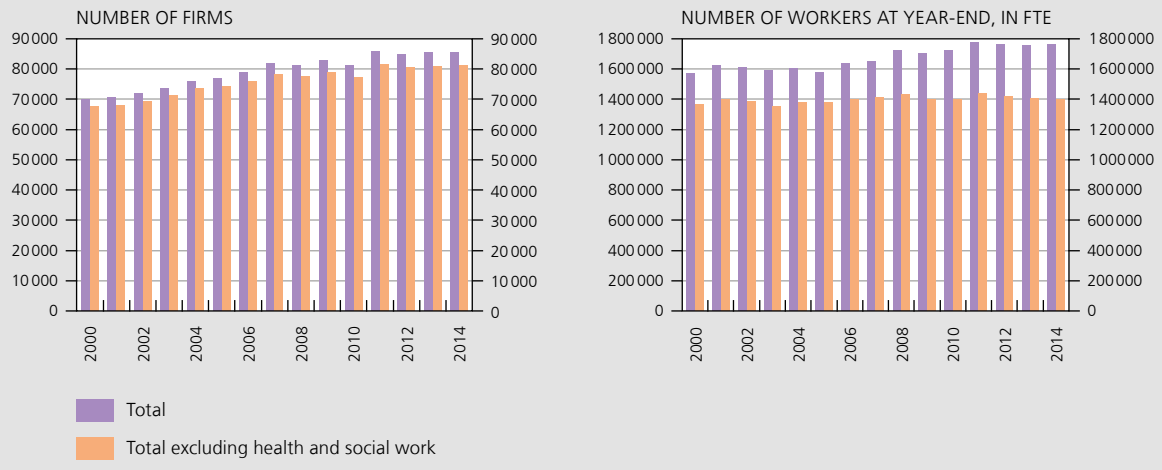
During the period under review, new firms have been set up, while others have gone bankrupt, bringing changes in the composition of the analysis population. Out of the 69 939 firms present in 2000, only 31 266 were still there in 2014, which works out at 45 % of the starting population and 37 % of the ending population. Over the fourteen years separating the start and the end of the analysis period, these existing firms have themselves also possibly gone through major changes, for example following restructuring, disposal of part of their business activity or the takeover of (part of) another entity.

(1) This is tantamount to excluding firms that have some employees working abroad or not recorded in the staff register (statutory personnel).

(2) The representation rate is calculated by comparing the number of workers employed by companies in the analysis population with corresponding employment – in terms of institutional sectors and branches of activity – in the national accounts.

CHART 1 CHANGES IN ANALYSIS POPULATIONS BETWEEN 2000 AND 2014

(units)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

The analysis populations cannot therefore be considered as one and the same entity whose changes over time could actually be measured. So, we will focus more on examining the changes in the breakdown of the volume of employment between branches – if necessary excluding health and social work – and between the different categories of workers.

1.2 Changes in (the structure of) the volume of employment

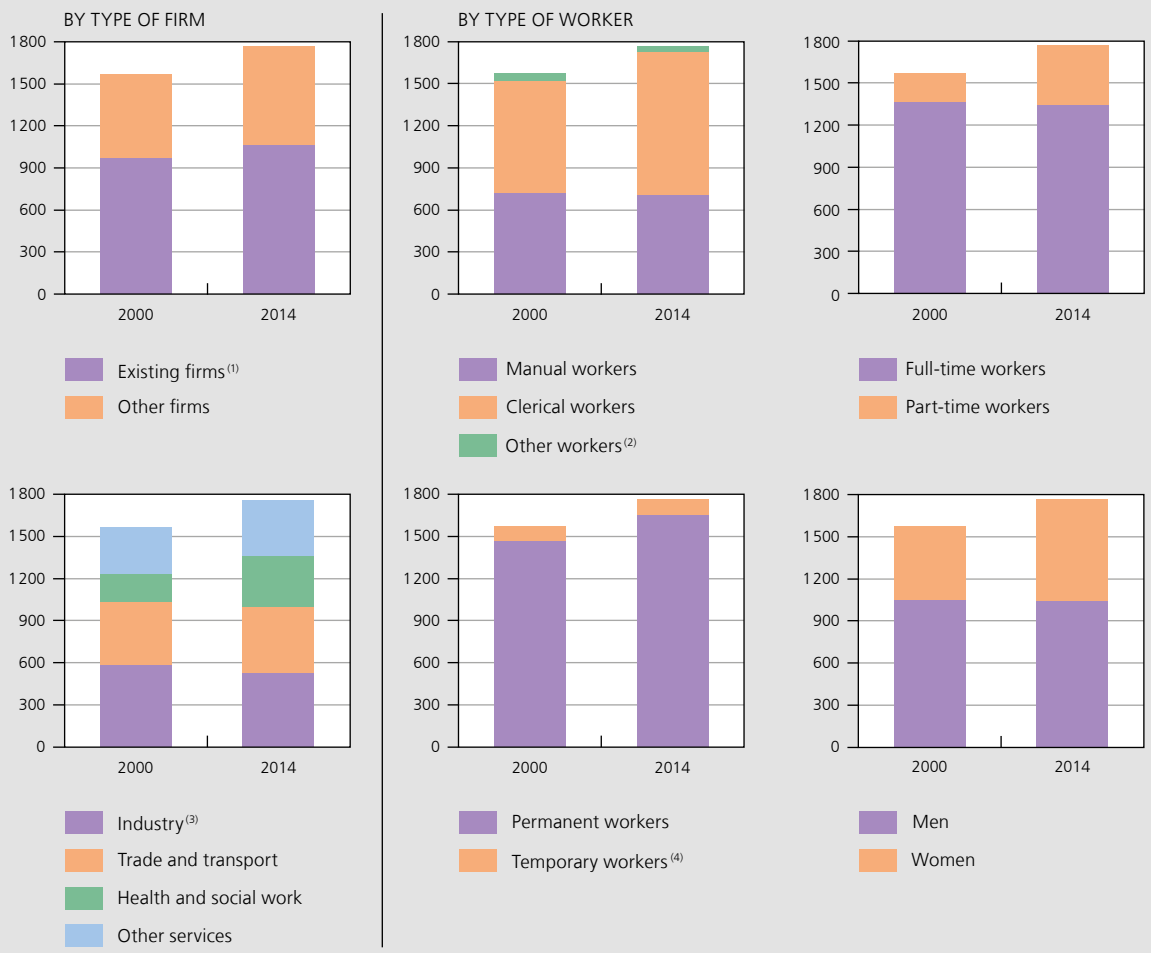
Between 2000 and 2014, the number of social balance sheets considered increased by more than 15 600 units; at the same time, the volume of employment grew by more than 193 000 FTEs. Over half of this increase is attributable to existing firms that were in the sample in both the year 2000 and 2014, which corresponds to a 10 % expansion of the volume of employment over fourteen years.

1.2.1 By firms' branch of activity

In 2014, the total volume of work at the end of the accounting year measured in FTEs in the 85 572 firms making up the sample analysis population came to 1 764 819 units. Workers in the manufacturing industry – plus those employed in construction – provided 30 % of the total volume of labour, while those in the trade

CHART 2 CHANGES IN (THE STRUCTURE OF) THE VOLUME OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN 2000 AND 2014

(in thousands of FTE)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Existing firms are those that were in the analysis population in both 2000 and 2014.

(2) Management staff, other (workers), notably interns.

(3) Including the construction branch.

(4) Workers with a fixed-term contract, substitution contract or contract concluded for a specific project.

and transport branch accounted for 26.4 %, and those in health and social work 20.7 %. The remainder, i.e. 22.6 % of total employment, was provided by the other services branches, the main ones being business-related services (10.2 % of the volume of employment) and financial and insurance activities (5.4 %).

Since a growing number of hospitals have submitted a social balance sheet from the year 2006 onwards, the volume of employment recorded in the health and social work branch has risen sharply, by more than 162 000 units in all. However, almost 72 000 of the extra jobs in this branch (i.e. 44 % of the total) were provided by existing firms, which can be explained by the strong movement towards concentration observed over the period studied, with many small structures having regrouped or been taken over by bigger ones to streamline health spending.

Disregarding health and social work, the change in the volume of employment has been much smaller, not even reaching 32 000 FTEs. Among these, an additional 22 000 FTEs have been registered in existing firms.

The volume of employment has also grown considerably in the business services and other services branches, which most notably feature companies subsidised through the service voucher system, that have largely contributed, since the early 2000s, to the perpetuation of activities that had previously been mainly carried out on the black market. This expansion has more than offset the sharp contraction in the volume of employment (of 12 % of the initial volume) observed in the financial and insurance activities branch and the more moderate reductions recorded in the information and communication and real estate branches.

In trade and transport, a more moderate growth of employment was registered between 2000 and 2014, although this increase has been partly curtailed by the drop in activity following the 2008 recession.

By contrast, industry has seen its labour force contract – although the volume of employment has increased in construction, included in the industry branch for analytical purposes –, with the impact of the recession coming on top of the structural drop in labour supply that was already underway before 2008. Almost 55 000 FTE jobs have been lost in all, which is 9 % of the initial volume of employment, more than three-quarters of which has been post 2008 recession.

TABLE 1 ANALYSIS POPULATION IN 2014: BREAKDOWN BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY

	Number of firms	Employment at year-end, expressed in FTE			Number of firms	Employment at year-end, expressed in FTE
		Levels	Changes between 2000 and 2014			
			Total	of which: In existing firms[1]		
	(units)				(in % of total)	
Industry[2]	22 249	529 991	–54 549	–8 841	26.0	30.0
Trade and transport	33 647	465 563	+18 380	+19 877	39.3	26.4
Health and social work	4 544	364 797	+161 568	+71 708	5.3	20.7
Other services	24 249	399 601	+68 904	+10 921	28.3	22.6
of which:						
Information and communication	2 611	69 686	–3 370	–7 290	3.1	3.9
Finance and insurance	3 660	96 082	–12 889	–6 200	4.3	5.4
Real estate	1 844	11 333	–1 012	+1 474	2.2	0.6
Business services	12 332	180 718	+65 884	+21 161	14.4	10.2
Other services	3 802	41 782	+20 291	+1 775	4.4	2.4
Total [3]	**85 572**	**1 764 819**	**+193 442**	**+93 654**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).
(1) Existing firms are those that were in the analysis population in both 2000 and 2014.
(2) Including the construction branch.
(3) Including agriculture, not elsewhere classified.

1.2.2 By workers' occupational category

The first steps towards harmonising the status of manual and clerical workers were taken in 2014 by standardising the arrangements for giving notice and the first day without paid benefit for sick leave. Some firms took the initiative in offering an employee contract to all their workers. But there are still fundamental differences in most companies between these categories of workers.

In 2000, clerical workers accounted for 50.6 % of the total volume of employment and manual workers provided 46.2 %. The balance of 3.2 % was made up by two other categories of workers recorded in the social balance sheet: management staff and 'other workers' (comprising in particular trainees and apprentices). The number of clerical workers grew by almost 218 000 FTEs over the next fourteen years while at the same time, the number of workers in the three other groups declined by around 24 000 FTEs in all, so that in 2014, clerical workers made up 57.4 % of total labour, while the share of manual workers and of the two other categories of workers taken together came to respectively 40.4 % and 2.1 % of the total.

The fall in the volume of manual labour input has been the most marked in industry where the number of FTE manual workers shrank by more than 71 000 units, bringing the relative share in volume of manual labour down from 70.2 to 63.9 % of the total between 2000 and 2014. There has also been a decline in the relative importance of manual employment in trade and transport – equivalent to 2.3 percentage points –, accounting for no more than 26.9 % of the total volume of employment in 2014. However, the rise in manual employment in the other services branch – no doubt supported by the development of the service voucher scheme – has been higher than that for the volume of clerical labour input; the relative share in the volume of manual labour input has thus risen by 2.1 percentage points, to reach 23.2 % of the total for the branch in 2014.

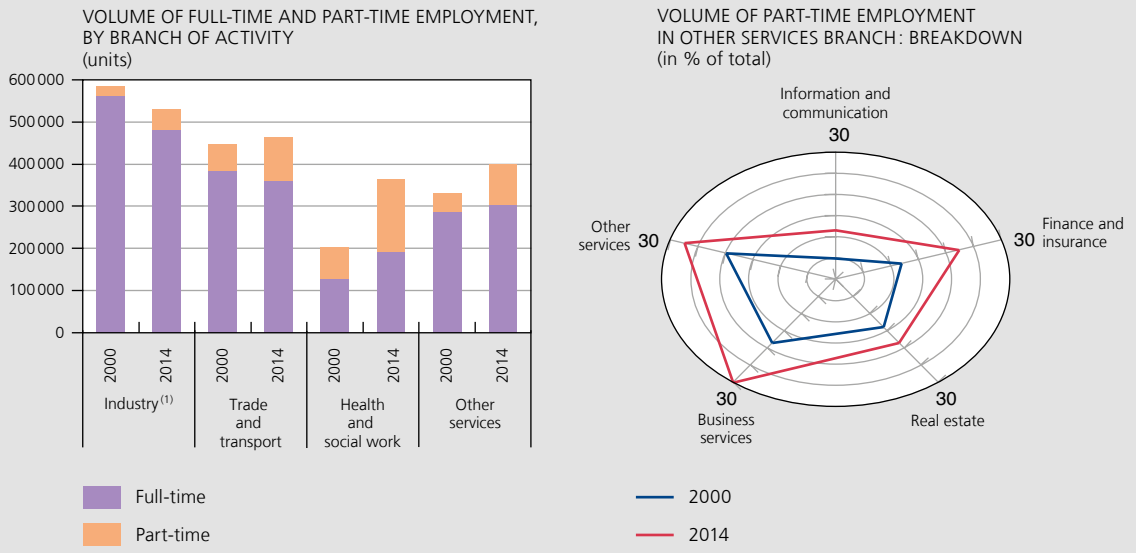
1.2.3 By working-time arrangements

The number of full-time salaried employees fell by almost 23 000 between 2000 and 2014; by contrast, part-time employment expressed in FTE grew by more than a 216 000 units, so that those employed under reduced working-time arrangements made up 24 % of the total volume of employment in 2014, compared with just 13.1 % fourteen years earlier.

The improvement in reporting in the health and social work branch largely influences the trend observed at analysis population level, since the volume of part-time employment has grown by almost 98 000 FTEs, while full-time employment has seen a more moderate rise, of

CHART 3 CHANGES IN VOLUME OF EMPLOYMENT: BREAKDOWN BY WORKING ARRANGEMENT

(units, employment at year-end expressed in FTE)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Including the construction branch.

just under 64 000 FTEs. It should nevertheless be stressed that, in existing firms from this branch, the increase in part-time employment has been much stronger than that for full-time employment – with approximately one extra full-time job for every three new part-time FTEs –, while the opposite has been noted in companies that were not in the starting population.

In industry as well as in trade and transport, the volume of full-time labour has contracted. In industry, the expansion of part-time labour has only partially counteracted this – sharp – decline, while in trade and transport, it has pushed up the global volume of employment. Overall, the relative share of the volume of part-time labour rose by 5.4 percentage points in industry and 7.8 points in the trade and transport branch between 2000 and 2014, to reach respectively 9.3 and 22.2 % in 2014.

And finally, in the branch regrouping all other services, the number of full-time as well as part-time workers has increased, albeit in very different proportions; for every full-time job created, there were actually another 3.5 part-time FTEs. The rise in the relative share of the volume of part-time labour – from 13.3 to 24.4 % of the total between 2000 and 2014 – has been considerable in all sub-branches of activity. Part-time workers thus provided 30 % of the total volume of activity in business services in 2014, compared with 18.6 % fourteen years earlier. The increase was 10.5 percentage points in finance and insurance, and 7.5 points in other services.

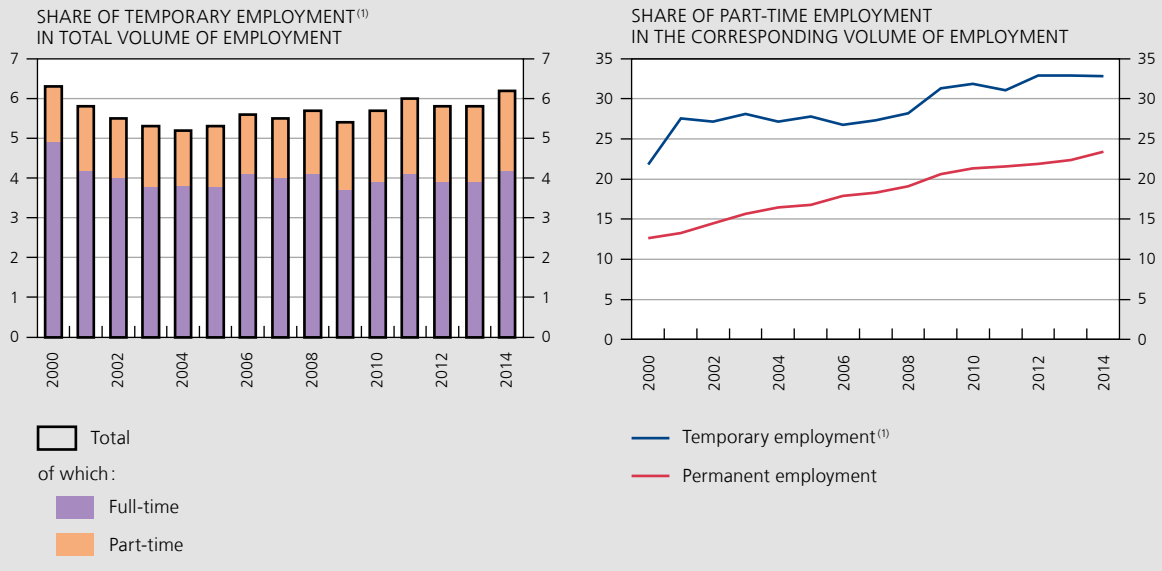
For some firms confronted with a prolonged decline in their activity, redistribution of the workload between existing staff by adjusting working-time arrangements can be a genuine alternative to redundancies. However, the extent of the changes that have been seen in the composition of the volume of labour mean that more structural factors are at play, notably more flexible working-time arrangements decreed by law to take account of employees' desire for a better balance between work and family life or to make an easier transition to retirement, via time-credit or part-time leave for specific purposes. This widening of workers' rights is part of a wider change in working conditions towards greater flexibility: part-time work has become a fully-fledged instrument for adjusting the volume of labour, as employers are not so reluctant to take on staff working reduced hours as soon as their business situation permits. In 2000, 17.2 % of all hirings measured in FTE concerned part-time workers; in 2014, this proportion had risen to 27.2 %.

1.2.4 By employment contract

Expansion of part-time work, if not voluntarily chosen, risks trapping workers in vulnerable situations, having to accept such a regime because they cannot find a full-time job. When working reduced hours is coupled

CHART 4 CHANGE IN VOLUME OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

(in % of total, employment at year-end expressed in FTE)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Workers with a fixed-term contract, substitution contract or contract concluded for a specific project.

with a temporary employment contract, the risk of job insecurity goes up a notch, with workers often having to put off certain lifestyle plans requiring a regular or high income.

Between 2000 and 2014, the volume of temporary work – undertaken by people under fixed-term or substitution contracts, or contract concluded for a specific project – has grown at the same pace as that provided by permanent staff, so the share of temporary employment has remained virtually unchanged, at respectively 6.3 and 6.2 % of the total in 2000 and 2014. This proportion has not actually remained as stable as the levels observed at the beginning and end of the period might have led one to believe: they in fact represent the peaks of the period under review, while the lowest levels – of around 1 percentage point – were observed in the mid-2000s.

Part-time work is more common among temporary workers than among permanent staff, but the job insecurity trap affects both categories of workers, even though it is a more recent and less widespread phenomenon for temporary staff. During the first half of the 2000s, the share taken up by part-time work in temporary employment actually remained stable, fluctuating around 27 or 28 %, but by the end of the decade, temporary part-time work had grown steadily and continuously, rising from roughly 23 500 FTEs on average in the first half of the 2000s to almost 36 000 FTEs by the end of 2014, which is one-third of the volume of temporary labour. The number of workers under a part-time temporary employment contract is nevertheless still only 2 % of the total volume of labour in 2014. Over the same period, the number of permanent part-time employees had risen sharply, climbing from 185 000 FTEs in 2000 to 387 000 in 2014, while the number of permanent full-time employees had fallen back slightly, so the share of part-time work in the volume of permanent employment rose rapidly throughout the period, from 13 % of the total at the beginning of the 2000s to 23 % in 2014.

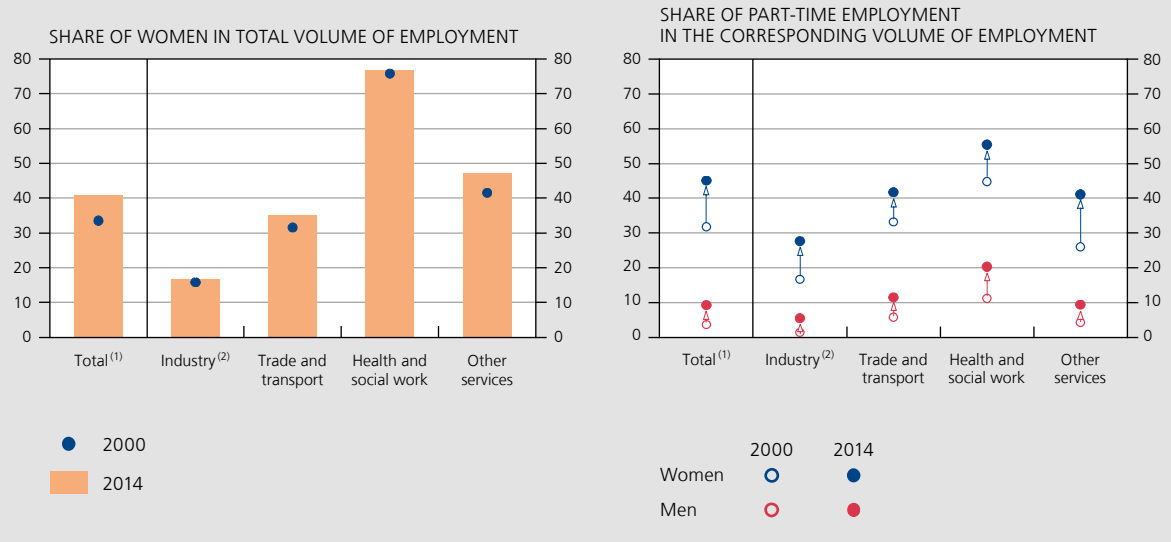
1.2.5 By workforce gender

The rise in the total volume of labour between 2000 and 2014 has not worked in favour of male staff, whose numbers expressed in FTE have dropped by more than 4000 units. At the same time, the female workforce has expanded by some 198 000 units; it therefore accounted for 41 % of the volume of labour in 2014, or 7.5 percentage points more than in the year 2000.

Two-thirds of the growth in numbers of female workers can be explained by the widening of the sample population among firms active in health and social work, but this enlargement has also benefited the male labour force, so the share of women in this branch – around 77 % – remained unchanged between 2000 and 2014.

CHART 5 CHANGE IN VOLUME OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

(in % of total, employment at year-end expressed in FTE)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Including agriculture, not elsewhere classified.

(2) Including the construction branch.

Outside health and social work, the volume of male labour has fallen by 39 000 FTEs. It has declined by 51 000 units in industry and by around 5 000 units in trade and transport, which is more than the increase of almost 18 000 FTEs registered in other services. By contrast, a rise in employment among women has been observed, except in industry, where the decline has nevertheless remained fairly small (about –3 600 FTEs). In the latter branch, the female labour force provided 17 % of the total volume of labour in 2014, which is barely more than in 2000. In trade and transport, the contribution of women rose from 31 to 35 % of the total and it grew from 42 to 47 % in other services.

The expansion of part-time work has above all helped limit job losses among male workforces. Among women, on the other hand, it has been a real vector of development, because 81 % of the growth in the volume of female labour is based on employees working reduced hours. All in all, in 2014, 9.3 % of the volume of male labour was accounted for by part-time workers (against 3.7 % in 2000), whereas the proportion for women was 45.1 % (13.3 percentage points more than in 2000).

In industry, the volume of employment is still predominantly male-based : men provided 80 % of the volume of labour in 2014, a figure that has scarcely dipped since 2000. A structural change in the workforce profile can nevertheless be observed : the volume of full-time male employment has dropped, while that of part-time employment has risen. Among the female workforce, also in decline, a shift from full-time employment towards reduced working time can also be seen. So, while 96.2 % of the volume of labour was still made up of full-time workers in 2000 (83 % of men and 13.2 % of women), 9.2 % of the volume of labour was provided by part-time workers fourteen years later, half of whom were men.

Employment of women in trade and transport was already a lot more widespread than in industry at the beginning of the period under review : 31.5 % of the volume of work was done by women in the year 2000, a third of whom were part-timers. By 2014, the share of women had grown even further, to reach 35.3 % of the total, largely attributable to sustained growth of part-time employment. Among the men, too, part-time work has expanded while full-time work has declined, so that, in 2014, the latter only accounted for 57.2 % of the volume of labour in this branch, compared with 64.5 % at the beginning of the period surveyed.

In the health and social work branch, the widening of the analysis population in the end had only very little impact on the breakdown by gender. Women provided roughly three-quarters of the total volume of employment in 2000 as in 2014, and in existing firms from the starting population just as the others. However, the branch did not escape the trend towards substitution between full-time and part-time. In 2000, 63.3 % of the volume of employment was provided by full-time workers, two-thirds of whom were women ; in 2014, barely more than half (52.7 %) of this volume was still based on full-time workers. The share of male part-timers almost doubled (up from 11.2 to 20.3 % of the male workforce), but was still lower than that observed for women (55.4 % in 2014).

The volume of part-time work by women has expanded most particularly in the other services branch, thanks to the development of jobs paid for by service vouchers, while among male workers, the increase has remained more modest. In this branch, 41 % of the volume of female labour was carried out by part-time workers (compared with just over a quarter of the total in 2000) ; for men, this proportion was still below 10 % in 2014.

1.2.6 By worker education level

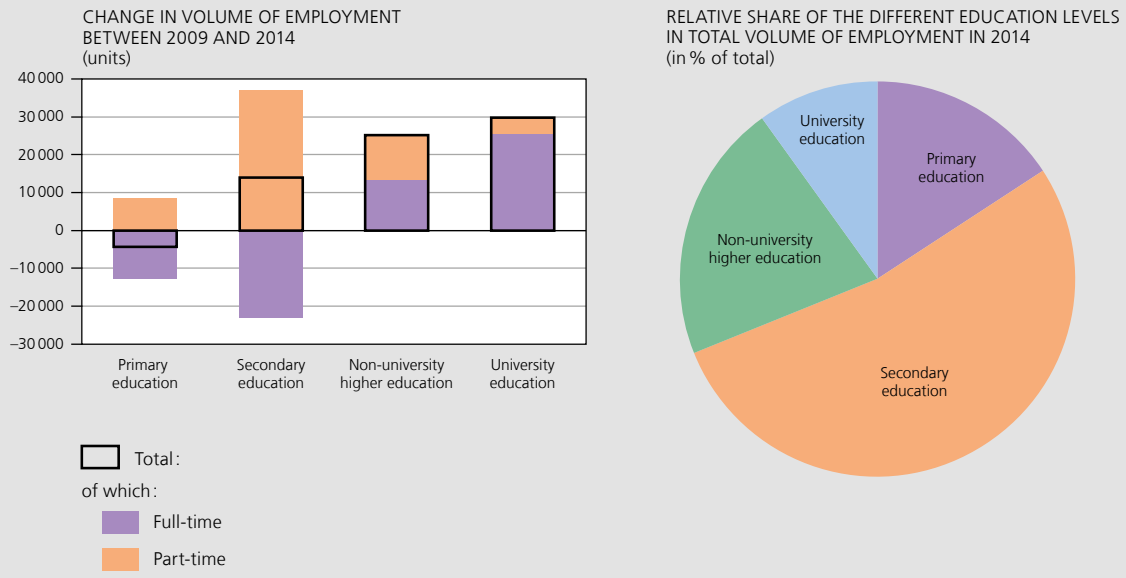
The breakdown of workforces by educational level has only been available since the 2008 financial year. Moreover, data for the first year of reporting are hard to use, as is often the case with the introduction of a new statistic requiring companies to set up the necessary instruments for recording new information. It is therefore only possible to measure changes in (the structure of) employment by level of education over a five-year period, between 2009 and 2014, which is relatively short, especially for a variable that is not very likely to change over time, unlike the work regime or employment contract, the nature of which can vary even in the short term depending on cyclical (following hirings and firings) or structural factors (such as changes in the law).

The volume of labour provided by workers with qualifications of at most a certificate of primary education – that are traditionally referred to as 'low-skilled', regardless of their actual competence level and the job they do – fell between 2009 and 2014, while the volume attributable to workers with secondary – so-called 'medium-skilled' – or higher education diplomas – the 'highly-skilled' – has risen. An increase in the volume of labour provided by part-time employees can be observed for all skill levels – with the rise being particularly strong for the medium-skilled –, while the volume of work by full-timers has only risen for highly-skilled employees.

These trends, although limited in scale, have led to a shift in the distribution of the volume of labour in favour of highly-skilled workers, as older workers – who generally tend to be less skilled – were gradually replaced by

CHART 6 VOLUME OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION LEVEL

(employment at year-end expressed in FTE)



Source : NBB (social balance sheets).

a workforce that had left school later. The proportion of the volume of labour provided by low-skilled workers actually contracted by 1.7 percentage points in five years, to account for 15.8 % of the total in 2014. The share held by medium-skilled workers has also shrunk slightly, dropping from 54.3 to 53.1 %. By contrast, the volume of labour provided by highly-skilled staff has expanded, from 20.5 to 21.2 % for workers with non-university higher education qualifications, and from 8.5 to 9.9 % for university graduates.

2. Wage differences between men and women based on social balance sheet data

The increasing role of women in the labour market – and their over-representation in part-time jobs – justifies paying particular attention to the gender issue. Going beyond the differences between the sexes, which concern objective and static physical characteristics, the gender differences are largely of a cultural and social nature, acquired through education and therefore liable to diverge over time and even space. They determine the respective functions and responsibilities of men and women, and thus the involvement of them both in the various aspects of daily life, whether in education, the dividing line between domestic and professional work or sharing out family, social or community responsibilities. These practices affect access by men and women to resources and thus condition their financial and economic autonomy.

In Belgium, the Law of 22 April 2012 designed to tackle the wage gap aims to put in place a neutral gender policy, by introducing a series of obligations, some of which are imposed at collective level, as part of the inter-professional negotiations or collective employment agreements, while others are applied at individual company level. Two new requirements have thus been imposed on large firms : more detailed annual reporting – providing for a breakdown by gender of the headings concerning the number of workers, hours actually worked and staff costs [1] – in the social balance sheets of firms using the full format and filing, every other year, a report on the pay structure for companies with more than 50 workers. This document, available in an abbreviated version (from 50 to no more than 100 workers) or full-format (more than 100 workers) breaks down the various components of wage costs [2], by cross-matching gender with seniority and education level.

(1) This breakdown comes on top of the existing decomposition by working time arrangement, which means that the three variables (workers, hours, costs) are available separately for men and women employed on a full-time and part-time basis.

(2) Namely, remuneration and social benefits on the one hand, and non-statutory benefits additional to wages, on the other hand.

For the full-format forms, there is also a breakdown cross-checking gender and function. The companies must also state whether an action plan in favour of a gender-neutral remuneration policy has been put in place. If necessary, this plan must be annexed to the report and subject to an assessment in the next report.

The amendment of the full-format social balance sheets has applied from financial years approved after 7 September 2012. The first report on pay structure was introduced later: exceptionally, it can only cover one single accounting year, i.e. 2014. Unlike the report on pay structure, which is an internal document whose contents remain confidential even though it is submitted to the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue, the contents of the social balance sheet, filed with the Central Balance Sheet Office at the same time as the annual accounts, are made public, which enables it to be used for the analysis.

An examination of differences between staff costs incurred for female staff and those related to the male workforce in large enterprises in Belgium in 2012 had been covered in a chapter of the article on "The 2012 social balance sheet", which appeared in the Bank's December 2013 Economic Review. The following sections set out the findings for the year 2014. The chapter differs from the 2012 study on several points. As section 1 will show, the analysis population is much smaller, owing to the many reporting errors and approximations noted in the individual social balance sheets. The macroeconomic findings presented in section 2 concern all workers, regardless of their working arrangements, even if this information is available, because the quality of the observations is even less reliable when smaller groups of workers are concerned. Section 3 underlines the dispersion of the individual results and differences in behaviour observed on the basis of firm size and branch of activity.

The social balance sheet headings that are used to calculate the wage gap are respectively heading 1023 on staff costs and heading 1013 on hours actually worked, broken down by gender.

Staff costs comprise not only remuneration and direct social benefits paid out (such as luncheon vouchers) but also employers' social security contributions, employers' premium payments for non-statutory insurance (group insurance, hospital insurance, etc.), other staff costs (notably clothing and food expenses, corporate gifts or staff parties) and employers' payments for retirement and survivors' pensions, as well as supplementary occupational pensions[1]. So, this variable covers a lot more than gross salaries paid out to staff. However, benefits additional to wages, included in heading 1033 of the social balance sheet, have not been taken into consideration here, because they are not systematically reported by companies, making it difficult to estimate how representative they are.

The number of hours actually worked includes the total hours effectively worked and remunerated during the year, that is, without taking account of unpaid overtime, holidays, sick leave, short absences and hours lost through strikes or for other reasons.

There may be some deviations between staff costs borne by employers and hours actually worked by employees, for example when salaries continue to be paid to employees on sick leave despite their absence from work. On the whole, these gaps are small, so the comparison between hours worked and expenses incurred is still valid.

The indicator used in this study measures the difference between the pay situation for the whole female workforce and for all male workers using the following formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{hourly wage costs observed for women}}{\text{hourly wage costs observed for men}} \right) \text{x } 100$$

A positive gap indicates that the figure observed for women is below that observed for men.

It should be noted that a gap, whether positive or negative, is not necessarily a sign of different treatment between men and women. At macroeonomic level, it in fact partly reflects structural differences, for instance, the fact that women are more often employed in branches of activity where wages are below average, or that they are more likely to opt for a part-time working arrangement, which could slow up their salary progression and their access to better paid, higher functions. At microeonomic level, it may simply reflect the fact that male and female staff are not on the same seniority or education scales or do not do the same jobs.

2.1 Analysis population

2.1.1 Selection of firms

In 2014, 13 547 firms had submitted a full-format balance sheet of the quality required for inclusion in the population selected for analysis (see detailed methodology in Annex 1). However, the wage gap analysis

(1) Benefits paid out in addition to wages – which are included in heading 1033 and are also broken down by gender but not by work regime – are not taken into consideration in this analysis. These concern social benefits allocated for a specific social purpose or with a view to improving relations between staff members or strengthening their ties with the company. Among these benefits are, most notably, wedding and christening presents, services provided by a crèche or sports or cultural facilities, a medical centre or a central purchasing office.

described here is based on a much smaller population totalling just under 2 000 firms. Various filters were used to obtain that selection.

The gender breakdown of the items relating to personnel, hours and costs is compulsory for all firms submitting a full-format balance sheet, but the Law of 2012 specifies that where the number of workers concerned is no more than three, the item need not be broken down, the purpose being to safeguard the privacy of the workers. The data from the many firms taking that option cannot be used for the analysis because the breakdown is missing or incomplete. Consequently, the analysis only took account of companies with at least three persons in each of the four groups of workers for which the gender breakdown is stipulated, namely full-time male employees, part-time male employees, full-time female employees and part-time female employees. As a result, the companies considered have at least twelve workers.

The second selection criterion concerns reporting quality: the statistics are still relatively new and there are many errors in the gender breakdowns, leading to discrepancies between the reported totals and the sum of the individual items, or to anomalous results. Firms exhibiting such problems were discarded.

Finally, a great many firms – in this case around a quarter of them – used the same formula for the breakdown of hours worked and staff costs between the said four categories of workers, so that the average hourly costs are exactly the same for these four groups and the wage gap between women and men is zero. At individual level, the aim is to ensure "equal pay for equal work", but in practice that equality is likely to be found in only a very small number of companies. In the case of the firms selected – employing twelve or more workers –, it would in fact mean that the characteristics of the four groups of workers are exactly the same in terms of seniority, skills and functions, or that on average the results are down to luck. Firms reporting exactly the same staff costs per hour worked for the four groups of workers were therefore contacted by post[1]. A few of them submitted revised data; the rest were excluded.

On completion of this refinement process the analysis population comprised 1 959 companies for 2014. Together they employed 870 558 workers, or 43.1 % of the workforce of firms whose social balance sheets were used in the study presented in chapter 1.

(1) More than 800 companies were thus contacted in order to improve the representativeness of the analysis. Fewer than 100 answered the letter sent to them. Around 60 firms sent revised data.

2.1.2 Characteristics of the analysis population

The firms selected were grouped according to their branch of activity and their size. Firms in the industry branch, which also include those in the construction sector, are the most numerous (equivalent to 32.4 % of the total) while there are fewer firms in health and social work (barely 16.1 % of the total); trade and transport and the other services branch each account for just over 20 % of companies. Nonetheless, in terms of personnel employed, firms in the health and social work branch are larger on average than those in the other branches. In the analysis population they employ just under one in three of the workers (30.1 %), while industrial firms employ just over one in four of the workers (27.2 %); the other two branches each employ roughly one in five. Whatever their activity, "small" firms as defined for this analysis (i.e. those with fewer than 250 FTEs) are twice as numerous as "large" firms (employing 250 FTEs or more), but the latter account for approximately 80 % of workers in each branch. It should be noted that women predominate in health and social work, where they represent around 80 % of employees, while men make up the majority of the workforce in industry. In the other two branches, around four out of ten workers are women.

The analysis population varies from year to year, even over the brief 3-year period for which the gender breakdown allowing to calculate the wage gap is available. In 2012, some firms did not fulfil their reporting obligations, while in other cases the quality of the gender breakdowns proved inadequate, so that the coverage of the analysis population in terms of both firms and employment improved considerably between 2012 and 2014. The 1 713 firms examined in 2012 employed around 735 000 workers, whereas the 1 959 firms selected in 2014 employed just over 870 000 people, an increase of 246 firms and 135 000 employees. Some very large companies – notably bpost and Delhaize, which together totalled around 47 000 jobs in 2014 – could not be taken into consideration in 2012.

To remove this bias, the results are also presented for a constant population, namely a total of just over a thousand firms which submitted social balance sheets meeting the selection criteria for all three years: 2012, 2013 and 2014. In 2014, they employed just under 530 000 workers.

2.2 Average wage gap: macroeconomic measurement

At macroeconomic level, the wage gap measures the difference between the average hourly labour cost

CHART 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANALYSIS POPULATION IN 2014

(total population)

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Including the construction industry.

(2) Small firms have fewer than 250 FTEs, while large firms employ 250 FTEs or more.

calculated for all women and the figure for all men. The data are globalised at the level of the population as a whole or for a group of companies. The figure is weighted since the relative size of each firm is taken into account in both the numerator and the denominator.

In 2014, in the analysis population, an hour worked by a female employee cost on average € 39.3, compared to € 45.6 for a man. The wage gap therefore came to 13.9 %. That is similar to the size of the gap in 2013 (13.6 %), but considerably smaller than the figure recorded in 2012 (16.9 %).

The development may be due to changes in pay conditions within the firms considered and/or a change in the structure of employment. It may also reflect changes in the population considered. The influence of that factor can be eliminated by use of a constant population. In the 1 020 companies present in all three years, the wage gap declined by 1.4 percentage points between 2012 and 2014, dropping from 15.6 to 14.2 %. That relative improvement in women's pay conditions is due to differential movements in hourly labour costs (up by 2.4 % for men and 4.1 % for women). It should be viewed in the context of a change in the gender distribution of the volume of labour in the analysis population. The total volume of hours worked was down by 1.1 % between 2012 and 2014, but only male workers were affected. The volume of work performed by women remained stable, so that women's share in the total increased slightly, from 42.9 to 43.4 %. The change in the structure of activity by branch – decline in industry and other services, growth in trade and transport and in health and social work – is also part

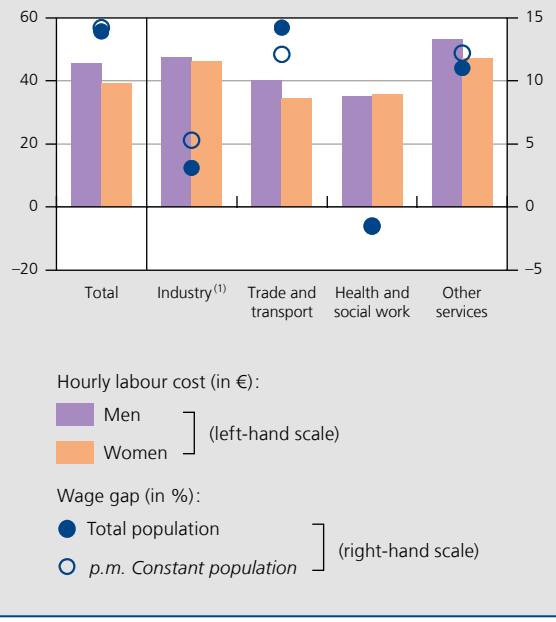
TABLE 2 AVERAGE WAGE GAP

	2012	2013	2014
Total population			
p.m. Number of firms (units)	*1 713*	*1 828*	*1 959*
Hourly labour cost (in €)			
Men	44.9	45.8	45.6
Women	37.3	39.6	39.3
Wage gap (in %)	16.9	13.6	13.9
Constant population between 2012 and 2014			
p.m. Number of firms (units)	*1 020*	*1 020*	*1 020*
Hourly labour cost (in €)			
Men	45.4	46.4	46.5
Women	38.4	39.3	39.9
Wage gap (in %)	15.6	15.3	14.2

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

CHART 8 AVERAGE WAGE GAP IN 2014: BREAKDOWN BY BRANCHES OF ACTIVITY

(total population)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).
(1) Including the construction industry.

of the reason for this, since the relative positions of men and women in regard to pay are considerably different in those branches.

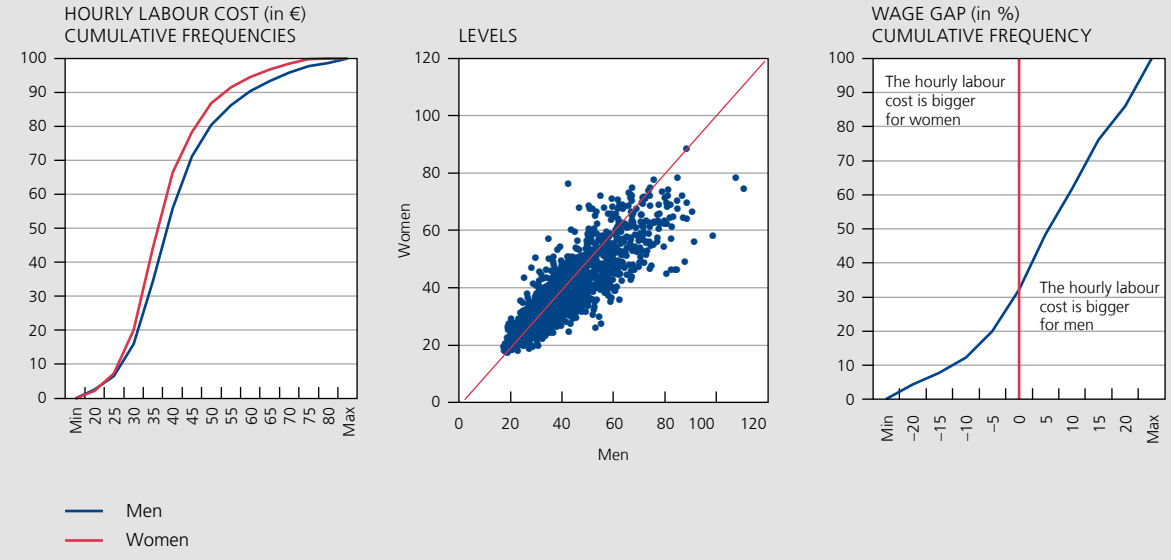
In the total population, the biggest average hourly wage gaps were recorded in the trade and transport branch in 2014 (14.2 % overall, the gap approaching 23 % in trade considered on its own) and in the other services branch (12.2 % overall, with higher levels in the finance and insurance branch (16.8 %) and in business services (14.8 %)). Conversely, the gap was smaller in industry (3.1 %), where there are fewer women but their jobs are on average more skilled than those of the men. The gap was actually negative in health and social work (–1.6 %), which means that the hourly labour costs relating to female staff there were slightly higher, on average, than for male employees.

2.3 Wage gap within firms: microeconomic measurement

In their social balance sheets, employers provide data which can be used to calculate the average hourly labour cost separately for male and female staff. Comparison of these two figures shows the wage gap for the firm in question. The data presented in this section are unweighted: each firm is given the same weighting, regardless of the number of workers that it employs and the gender breakdown of its workforce.

CHART 9 HOURLY LABOUR COST OF WOMEN AND MEN AND WAGE GAP: DISTRIBUTION OF OBSERVATIONS IN 2014

(total population)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

2.3.1 Total population

The distribution [1] of hourly labour costs by gender shows that the figures recorded for women were lower overall than those for men in 2014. In fact, although the figures recorded in the 5th percentile are fairly similar for men and women (around € 23) – which is due, of course, to the minimum wage applicable in Belgium – they diverge fairly quickly after that. Thus, the median value of the distribution is € 36.5 for women and € 38.6 for men, a gap of € 2.1. In the 95th percentile, the figure for men is € 67.7 or € 6.4 more than for women. These differences in the distribution can be expressed in another way: the average hourly labour cost for female staff was less than € 35 in 44 % of firms in the analysis population, while only 34 % of firms recorded such figures for male staff; 20 % of firms paid their male employees, on average, more than € 50 per hour worked, but for female workers that threshold was only exceeded in 13.3 % of firms.

In firms in the analysis population, the wage gap is highly variable: 90 % of the observations range between –18.7 % (percentile 5) and 27.6 % (percentile 95), the extreme values being –79.5 % and 51.1 % respectively. The hourly labour costs attributable to female staff are lower than those relating to male personnel – and the wage gap is therefore positive – in 69 % of firms in the population. The wage gap is 15 % or more in one in four firms. However, almost 30 % of firms record a small (positive or negative) gap of between –5 % and 5 %.

Microeconomic analysis of the results per branch of activity confirms the findings at macroeconomic level. The largest wage gaps are seen in trade and transport and in other services, although pay conditions differ quite considerably in these two groups of firms.

Companies in the other services branch have higher hourly labour costs overall than firms in the other branches, regardless of the workers' gender. However, their female staff generally cost less than their male employees. In this group of companies, 25 % of firms incur labour costs exceeding € 59.8 per hour worked by their male staff; the threshold for female staff is € 50.9, while the figures for the population as a whole are € 46.5 and € 43.2 per hour respectively. In this branch, pay conditions are generally more favourable in large firms than in small ones, the figures recorded in percentiles 25 and 75 being € 4 to € 5 higher in large entities. Nonetheless, the distribution of the observed values for the wage gap is very similar, whether the firms are small or large. The values recorded in percentiles 5 and 95 are close to – 15 % and 30 % respectively. In percentile 25 the figure is close to 0 in both groups, which means that around 75 % of firms in the branch report higher hourly costs for their male staff than for their female employees.

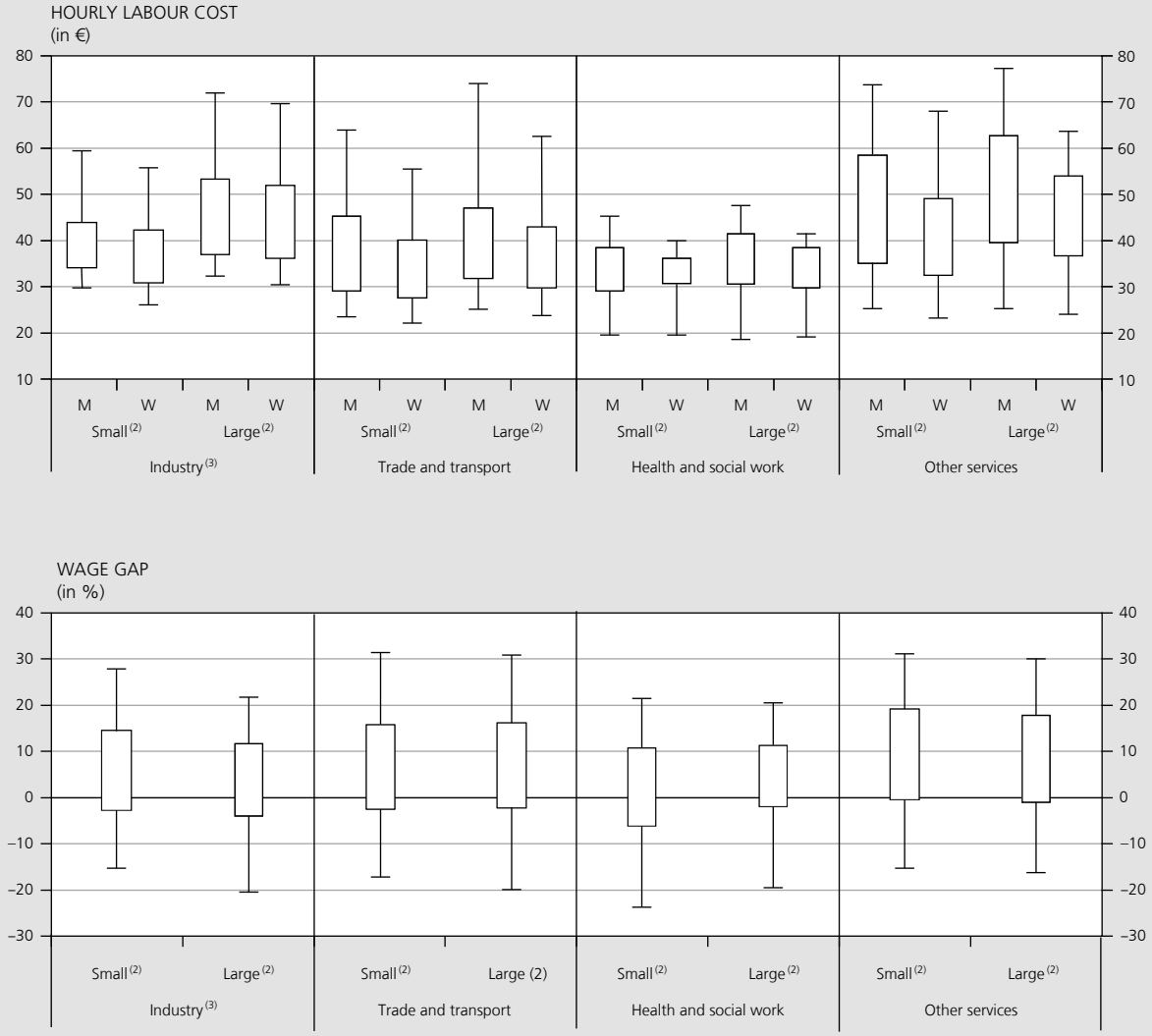
Hourly labour costs are more moderate in trade and transport than in other services, so that the distribution of this variable is more concentrated for both men and women. However, the asymmetry between the top and bottom of the distribution is more marked, especially in large firms, implying that pay conditions differ more in firms that pay high wages than in those with low hourly labour costs. Yet the distribution of the wage gap varies little between large and small firms. Taking all sizes together, this is the branch with the widest range of values observed between percentiles 5 and 95: the difference between the values observed for these two statistical indicators in trade and transport is around 50 percentage points, or 3 points higher than for the population as a whole; 5 % of firms here recorded a wage gap of more than 31.6 %, 4 percentage points in excess of the value for the population as a whole.

It is in the health and social work branch that labour costs are lowest and most uniform, especially as regards female staff. Thus, 13 % of firms in this branch spend less than € 25 per hour worked by women, and 90 % of them pay their female workers less than € 40, while for the population as a whole the figures are 7.3 % and 66.4 % respectively. The hourly labour cost of male workers is slightly higher than that of females: 76 % of firms report hourly labour costs of less than € 40 for their male workforce. As a result of this greater uniformity, the wage gap is also smaller overall. The distribution centres around a lower median of 2.9 %, compared to around 5 % in industry and in trade and transport, and almost 11 % in other services. In health and social work, the distribution of the wage gap is more concentrated for large firms than for small ones: the interquartile gap – i.e. the difference between the values observed in percentiles 25 and 75 - comes to 13 points in large firms compared to almost 17 points in small firms, the value recorded in percentile 25 being considerably higher in large firms. It is also in small firms that we find the largest proportion of companies recording a negative wage gap: more than four in ten small firm have this characteristic, compared to fewer than three in ten large ones.

(1) Various statistical measures are used to study the dispersion of the observations: arithmetical mean, median, quartiles, percentiles, and interquartile intervals. The arithmetical mean relates the sum of the recorded values for any quantitative variable to the number of observations. It is therefore an unweighted average; each firm has the same weight, whether it is large or small. For a given variable, the median is the value that divides the distribution of observations ranked in ascending order into two equal parts, while the values associated with the 1st and 3rd quartiles (corresponding to percentile 25 and 75 respectively) are the one which respectively separate the first quarter of the distribution from the second and the third from the fourth. Consequently, 25 % of firms record a figure below the value in the 1st quartile, and 25 % record a figure higher than the value for the 3rd quartile. The analysis can be further refined by adding the values associated with the percentiles which, as their name indicates, are the values which subdivide the distribution into a hundred groups of equal size.

CHART 10 HOURLY LABOUR COST OF WOMEN (W) AND MEN (M) AND WAGE GAP: DISTRIBUTION OF OBSERVATIONS BY SIZE AND BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY IN 2014 (1)

(total population)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) The box plots are read as follows: the lower and upper extremities of the box correspond respectively to the 1st and 3rd quartiles; the lower and upper extremities of the vertical lines correspond respectively to percentiles 5 and 95.

(2) Small firms have fewer than 250 FTEs, while large firms employ 250 FTEs or more.

(3) Including the construction industry.

In industry, pay conditions differ significantly between small and large companies, although the distributions of the observations display the same asymmetry towards the top of the range. In small industrial firms, 75 % of firms report hourly labour costs of less than € 44.1 for men and € 42.7 for women. In large firms, these figures are considerably higher, at € 53.4 and € 52.1 respectively. The wage gap distribution centres around a lower median in large firms (3.5 %) than in small ones (5.9 %). There are also more firms recording a negative wage gap in large firms (36.1 % of observations) than in small ones (31.1 % of the total).

2.3.2 Constant population

Since data on hourly labour costs for women and men have been available since 2012, it is possible to examine the changes in these staff costs and the wage gap in firms submitting data of adequate quality for the various financial years.

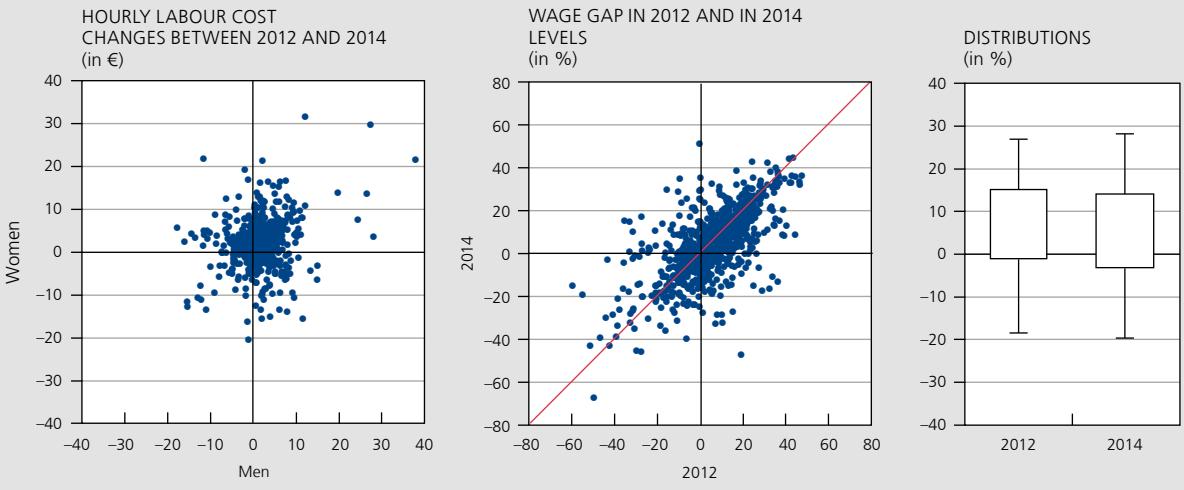
Of course, there were changes in hourly labour costs between 2012 and 2014 in the 1 020 firms studied. In fact, all other things being equal, the automatic application of the wage indexation mechanisms causes wages to increase. Even over a short period, other factors such as the changing structure of employment in firms, adjustments to corporate remuneration policies, or changes in the relevant regulations can influence the level of staff costs. Moreover, as 2012 was the first reporting year, it is possible that some firms may have detected methodological errors which they corrected in the social balance sheets submitted subsequently. In any case, the figures that some firms reported for 2014 were very different from those for 2012 in regard to the average hourly costs relating to their male and/or female staff, as is evident form the dispersion of the variations in euros shown in the left-hand panel of chart 11. Just over 60 % of the observations fall within the first quadrant, which means that the two variables increased, while 7 % of firms recorded a reduction for both men and women (third quadrant); consequently, 23 % of firms reported opposing changes for men and women (second and fourth quadrants).

If hourly costs move in the same direction and at the same pace for men and women, then all other things being equal the wage gap remains the same. The comparison of the individual wage gaps for 2012 and 2014 – shown in the central panel of chart 11 – reveals that considerable changes occurred in some companies, though the causes cannot be determined. However, at the level of the distribution of this variable – in the right-hand panel of chart 11 – there is little difference between 2012 and 2014, except for a slight downward shift in the values recorded for percentiles 5 to 75. The median value thus declined from 6.8 % to 5.9 % between 2012 and 2014. Conversely, the value for percentile 95 remained unchanged between those two years, and the overall range of values observed became wider, the minimum value recorded in 2014 being lower than in 2012, and the maximum value being higher.

Altogether, 57.5 % of firms in the constant population saw their wage gap diminish between 2012 and 2014. The decline was less than 5 percentage points in 29 % of companies. Conversely, the wage gap widened by less than 5 percentage points in 23.5 % of companies. Substantial adjustments (more than 15 percentage points) upwards or downwards applied in around 15 % of companies. Fairly marked differences are evident here between the companies grouped according to branch and size. For instance, the changes are smaller in large firms than in small ones, regardless of the branch of activity: overall, a maximum difference of between –5 and 5 percentage points was seen in 63 % of large firms (that figure actually peaking at 77.2 % in health and social work) and in 46.7 % of small firms. It is likely that changes in the structure of employment or pay conditions have had a bigger impact on the hourly labour costs of small companies as they have a smaller wage bill. Bigger

CHART 11 HOURLY LABOUR COST OF WOMEN AND MEN AND WAGE GAP: DISTRIBUTION OF OBSERVATIONS IN 2012 AND IN 2014[1]

(constant population)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

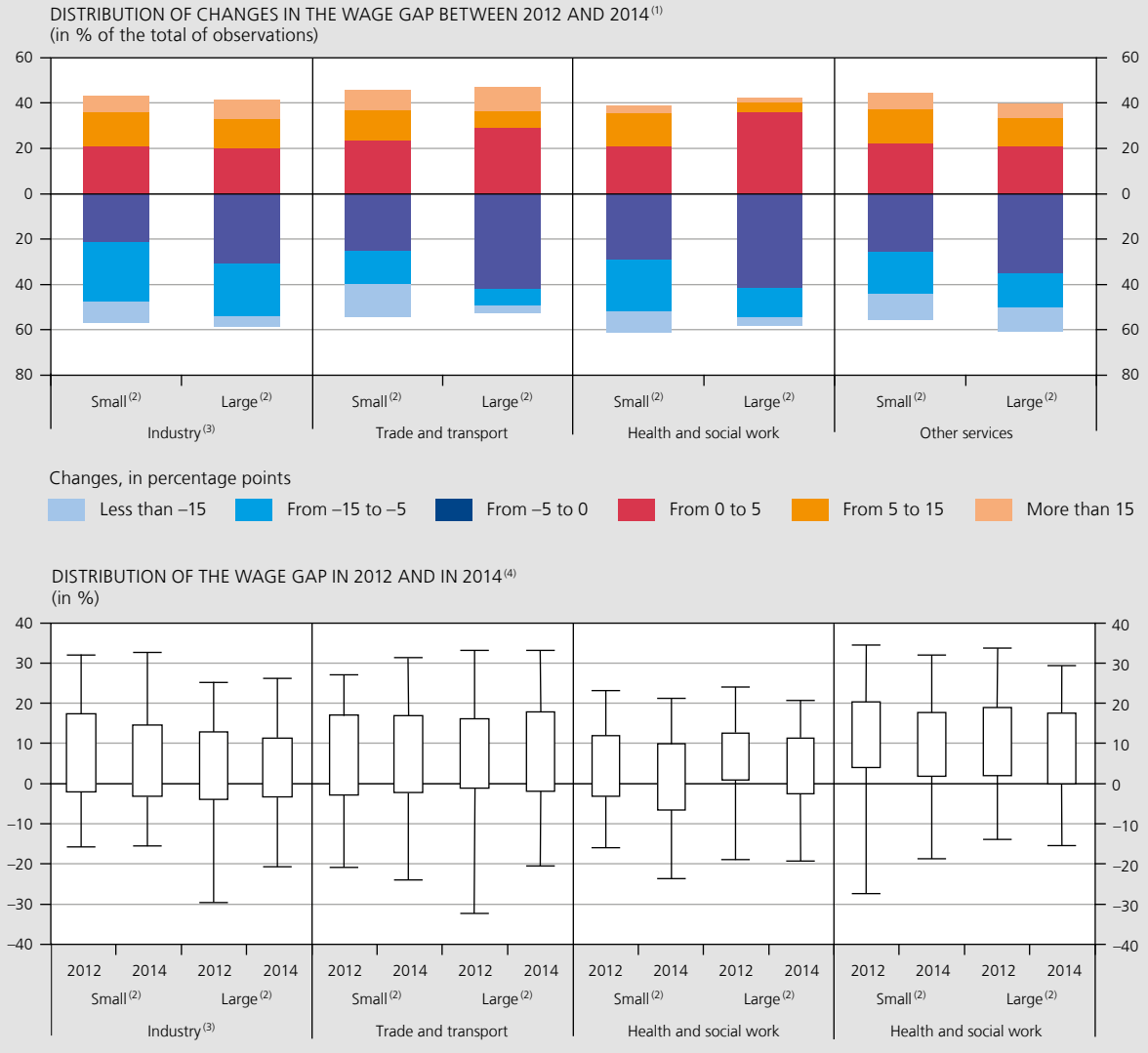
(1) The box plot (right-hand panel) is read as follows: the lower and upper extremities of the box correspond respectively to the 1st and 3rd quartiles; the lower and upper extremities of the vertical lines correspond respectively to percentiles 5 and 95.

changes (more than 15 percentage points up or down) were recorded in small firms in the trade and transport branch and in other services.

These individual changes resulted in a reduction in the interval of the values observed between percentiles 5 and 95 for all groups of firms except for small companies in trade and transport and those in health and social work (where it increased) and those in industry (where it remained unchanged). In industry, health and social work and other services, there is a downward shift in the values observed in percentile 75, in the case of both small and large firms, indicating a reduction in the gap between the hourly costs relating to female and male personnel. The proportion of firms for which a positive wage gap is recorded declined from 72.3 % to 68 % between 2012 and 2014, but it nevertheless remains very high.

CHART 12 WAGE GAP IN 2012 AND IN 2014: BREAKDOWN OF FIRMS BY SIZE AND BRANCH OF ACTIVITY

(constant population)



Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) The total of each cylinder equals 100. Firms which recorded an increase in the wage gap between 2012 and 2014 are placed above the horizontal x axis (in red and orange); those which recorded a reduction are placed below it (in blue).

(2) Small firms have fewer than 250 FTEs, while large firms employ 250 FTEs or more.

(3) Including the construction industry.

(4) The box plots are read as follows: the lower and upper extremities of the box correspond respectively to the 1st and 3rd quartiles; the lower and upper extremities of the vertical lines correspond respectively to percentiles 5 and 95.

3. Changes in the accounting legislation: what is the impact on the social balance sheet?

The Law of 18 December 2015 and the implementing Royal Decree dated 18 December 2015 transpose into Belgian law the changes resulting from the new European financial reporting requirements pursuant to Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings. That directive, which is based on the principle "Think small first", aims to reduce the administrative burdens on SMEs. It provides for a change in the size criteria so that a greater number of firms can now be considered small and qualify for reduced reporting obligations. It also draws up an exhaustive list of the information which may be contained in the annex to the accounts filed by small companies; any addition to that list is formally prohibited. Consequently, the social balance sheet which used to form an integral part of the annex to the annual accounts can no longer be included.

The Law of 18 December 2015 makes different arrangements for collecting data which no longer appear in the annex to the annual accounts. The list of documents to be filed with the NBB together with the annual accounts (see Article 100 of the Company Code) has been extended and now includes the social balance sheet. All these documents are still subject to the disclosure obligation and will be made available to third parties on the National Bank's website together with the annual accounts.

The new accounting legislation introduces changes in the method of recording certain items in the annual accounts; those changes will be set out in detail in the yearly article on the results of non-financial corporations, to be published in the December 2016 Economic Review. On the other hand, the content of the social balance sheet, which has no equivalent in European law and is based solely on Belgian legislation, remains unchanged in the case of both the – more detailed – full-format model and the abbreviated version.

The change in the size criteria and the new rules on thresholds will nevertheless cause a break in the series of statistics collected, because the number of firms required to submit a full-format report – i.e. a more detailed social balance sheet – will be smaller than before. Up to now, a firm was classed as small – and therefore permitted to use an abbreviated format – if it had not exceeded more than one of the following limits in the last two financial years:

- annual average number of workers employed: 50 FTEs;
- turnover (excluding VAT): € 7 300 000;
- balance sheet total: € 3 650 000;

unless the annual average number of staff exceeded 100 FTEs, in which case the firm was automatically classed as large.

In the new legislation, the 100 FTE threshold that automatically entailed the submission of a full-format report disappears altogether, while the thresholds applicable to the criteria concerning the balance sheet total and the turnover have been revised upwards. In future, any firm is classed as small if, on the date of the latest year-end closure, it did not exceed more than one of the following limits:

- annual average number of workers employed: 50 FTEs [1];
- turnover (excluding VAT): € 9 000 000;
- balance sheet total: € 4 500 000.

The Law of 18 December 2015 also introduces into Belgian law the term "micro companies", a concept which did not previously exist. Micro companies are small firms – as defined by the size criteria mentioned earlier – having legal personality, not being linked to any subsidiary or parent company, and not exceeding more than one of the following limits:

- annual average number of workers employed: 10 FTEs;
- turnover (excluding VAT): € 700 000;
- balance sheet total: € 350 000.

TABLE 3 FIRM SIZE: CRITERIA FOR DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN LARGE AND SMALL COMPANIES

	Financial years beginning		*p.m. Micro companies*
	before 1 January 2016	on or after 1 January 2016	
	(units)		
Balance sheet total (in €)	3 650 000	4 500 000	*350 000*
Turnover excluding VAT (in €)	7 300 000	9 000 000	*700 000*
Average number of FTEs (units)	50	50	*10*

Source: NBB.

(1) The concept of workers employed has been extended to include company staff working in other countries. Consequently, the number of workers employed is equal to the average number of workers expressed in FTEs registered in the DIMONA data bank at the end of each month in the year, or if the employment is outside the scope of DIMONA the average number of workers expressed in FTEs entered in the general staff register or in an equivalent document at the end of each month in the year in question.

Micro companies can opt for a special "micro format" for submitting their annual accounts. This micro format comprises a balance sheet and profit and loss account identical with the ones filed by small firms, together with an annex which is even smaller than the one applicable to small companies. On the other hand, they are required to submit a social balance sheet in accordance with the same abbreviated format as other small firms.

If the thresholds are exceeded occasionally, that will not affect the model used: exceeding more than one of the criteria has implications only if the situation persists for two consecutive financial years. The obligation to submit a full-format balance sheet will therefore only apply from the year following two consecutive years in which at least two thresholds have been exceeded. Conversely, a firm cannot use the abbreviated format unless it has not exceeded more than one of the three thresholds for at least two consecutive years.

The new accounting legislation applies to financial years beginning on or after 1 January 2016. Companies will be eligible for the new thresholds from the first financial year, as a transitional arrangement specifies that size will be determined on the basis of the data from the latest financial year beginning before 1 January 2016. Since any subsequent change of size requires companies to fall below the thresholds or to exceed them in two consecutive years, the first changes of size compared to the 2016 financial year will not be apparent until the year 2018.

At the time of going to press, there had been no change in the case of large and very large NPIs and foundations, even though their accounting rules are based largely on the ones applicable to companies[1]. The social balance sheet still forms an integral part of the annex to their accounts. The situation likewise remains unchanged for banks and insurance companies, and for companies filing a social balance sheet on its own.

It is hard to calculate how the application of the new thresholds and the ways in which they are exceeded will affect the collection of data. In a static situation, on the basis of the data for 2013, the Central Balance Sheet Office calculated that the number of non-financial companies required to submit their annual accounts in the full format could decline from around 24 000 large companies as defined by the old legislation to around 12 000 if the criteria of the new regulations are applied. That would reduce the proportion of large firms from 6 % to 3 % of the total declarants. Also, more than eight in ten small firms would be eligible to use the micro format for submitting their annual accounts. The impact on the submission of social balance sheets, which only concerns companies employing staff in Belgium, was not estimated.

Conclusion

Between 2000 and 2014, the volume of employment measured in FTEs increased significantly in firms submitting a social balance sheet. This rise was due largely to the greater number of social balance sheets filed by companies in the health and social work branch as a result of the obligation to submit standardised accounts, imposed on large and very large NPIs and foundations with effect from 2006. The volume of employment also expanded in trade and transport, and to a greater extent in other services. Conversely, it contracted in industry.

Apart from the overall increase in the volume of labour, the social balance sheet reveals substantial changes in the structure of employment. For instance, the contribution of personnel employed as clerical staff rose sharply between 2000 and 2014 (up from 50.6 to 57.4 % of the total) while that of manual workers declined. These developments naturally originate from the change in the structure of activity per branch, since the decline in the volume of labour in industry is the outcome of an even steeper fall in manual jobs accompanied by a small rise in the number of clerical staff. In the other branches of activity, the volume of labour provided by clerical workers also increased.

Part-time workers now account for a larger proportion of the activity (24 % of the total volume of employment in 2014, as opposed to 13.1 % fourteen years ago). On the other hand, the number of permanent staff has grown at much the same rate as the number of temporary workers, so that the proportion of staff employed on temporary contracts stood at around 6.2 % of the volume of labour in both 2000 and 2014. Consequently, the decline in job security is attributable more to the type of working arrangement rather than the workers' employment contracts. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the percentage of workers combining a temporary contract with reduced hours is rising, although they still only represented a small proportion of the total volume of labour in 2014.

Women have become a major driving force in activity; their contribution to the volume of labour increased from 33.5 % to 41 % of the total between 2000 and 2014. The relative proportion of female labour increased in all branches, but the growth is most evident in trade and transport and in the other services branch. The volume

(1) The FPS Justice is responsible for transposing to NPIs and foundations the changes applicable to non-financial corporations.

of employment represented by male workers was down slightly over that period, as the expansion in health and social work and in other services was insufficient to offset the decline in industry and in trade and transport.

The higher proportion of female labour explains the simultaneous growth of part-time work. That is still largely the preserve of women, although it is a useful means of achieving a balance between work and family/social life for both men and women. That situation has an impact both on women's career development and on their opportunities for salary progression. The social balance sheet data show that, on average, female staff are less expensive than male employees, both in the analysis population as a whole and in the majority of firms, although the situation is far from uniform.

The aggregate data for almost 2 000 firms submitting a full-format balance sheet show that the cost of an hour's labour is 13.9 % higher, on average, for men than for women. There are wide variations in the respective situations of women and men depending on the branch : a larger than average positive gap is recorded in trade and transport and in other services ; in industry, the gap is considerably smaller ; conversely, in health and social work the wage gap is negative.

The firms' individual results show that, on average, hourly costs are higher for men than for women in 69 % of firms. The gap is 15 % or more in one in four firms. Analysis by branch of activity confirms that the wage gaps are largest in trade and transport and in other services, although the wage dispersion is narrower in the first branch than in the second.

The movement in the wage gap over time was measured on the basis of a constant population of just over a thousand firms which reported the data necessary for calculating the wage gap for 2012, 2013 and 2014. Some companies recorded wide individual variations in the hourly labour costs of men and women and in the wage gap ; nevertheless, there was little change in the dispersion of the wage gap observations between 2012 and 2014. Overall, the gap only increased moderately – by less than 5 percentage points – in 23.5 % of companies, while 57 % of firms saw a reduction in the wage gap. Consequently, firms recording a positive wage gap were proportionately fewer in 2014, though they still represent a large share of the total (68 % in 2014, compared to 72 % in 2012).

It is a great pity that the analysis of the wage gap is based on a very small number of firms compared to the potential population of firms submitting a full-format report. The legislation, whereby firms need not complete the *ad-hoc* data if they concern no more than three workers – in an understandable desire for privacy protection –, is partly responsible for this situation. But the data quality is often inadequate so that the wage gap cannot be calculated or is meaningless. However, the social balance sheet is not just a statistical obligation ; it is also a social policy tool in that it provides information on the real situation in firms and therefore offers a good guidance for policy decisions. All parties concerned have a responsibility to contribute actively towards improving the reporting on the subject.

The transposition into Belgian law of Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings will lead to changes in reporting with effect from the 2016 financial year. However, there is no change in the social balance sheet : its content is completely preserved and it will still be filed together with the annual accounts. Nevertheless, the new regulations do alter the thresholds determining the size of firms : in future, a larger number of companies should be classed as small firms, or even as micro companies, and will therefore use the abbreviated social balance sheet format, so that less detailed information will be available on staff for a larger proportion of the population of firms.

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Annex 1 – Methodological Annex

1. Classification of firms by branch of activity

The classification of the firms by branch of activity is based on the activity code listed in the directory of firms drawn up by the National Bank for the compilation of the national accounts; the directory contains a range of administrative data on firms active during a given year. The 2014 directory, based on the NACE-BEL 2008 nomenclature, was chosen as the reference to determine the classification by sector and branch of activity of firms for all financial years from 2000 to 2014. Firms not listed in the 2014 directory retain the activity code which they were given in previous directories, or failing that, the code assigned to them by the Central Balance Sheet Office.

In the article and its annexes, the population of firms is broken down by branch of activity on the basis of the NACE-BEL sections and divisions given in table 1. For the reader's convenience, the branch titles have been simplified.

TABLE 1 CLASSIFICATION USED FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL BALANCE SHEETS AND LIST OF SECTIONS AND DIVISIONS IN THE NACE-BEL 2008 NOMENCLATURE OF ACTIVITIES

Title	Abbreviated title	Section	Division
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Agriculture	A	01-03
Mining, industry, energy, water and waste management	Industry	B-E	05-39
Mining and quarrying		B	05-09
Manufacturing		C	10-33
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply		D	35
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities		E	36-39
Construction	Construction	F	41-43
Trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities	Trade and transport	G-I	45-56
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles		G	45-47
Transport and storage		H	49-53
Accommodation and food service activities		I	55-56
Information and communication	Information and communication	J	58-63
Financial and insurance activities	Finance and insurance	K	64-66
Real estate activities	Real estate	L	68
Business-related services[1]	Business services	M-N	69-82
Professional, scientific and technical activities		M	69-75
Administrative and support service activities[1]		N	77-82
Human health and social work activities	Health and social work	Q	86-88
Culture, recreation and other services	Other services	R-S	90-96
Arts, entertainment and recreation		R	90-93
Other service activities		S	94-96

(1) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agency activities.

2. Composition of analysis populations

2.1 Methodological principles

The methodological principles that governed the composition of the populations of firms used in the analysis of the social balance sheets are described in detail in Annex 1 to the article "The social balance sheet 2005", which appeared in the December 2006 Economic Review and is available on the National Bank of Belgium's website (www.nbb.be).

In order to have reliable and consistent data, the analysis only considers the social balance sheets of firms which meet a number of criteria. In particular:

- the financial year must comprise twelve months and end on 31 December;
- firms must be in the private sector[1], employ at least one full-time equivalent worker, and their economic activity and location must be clearly identified[2];
- the data reported in the social balance sheet must tally exactly with the data in the annual accounts[3];
- firms submitting abnormal or mistaken figures for hourly staff costs or average working time are left out.

Application of these methodological principles means that the number of social balance sheets included in the analysis for the purposes of this article is considerably smaller, each year, than the total number of social balance sheets filed with the Central Balance Sheet Office. At the end of the selection process, the total population for 2014 comprised 85 572 firms employing an average of 2 018 700 salaried workers.

2.2 Characteristics of the analysis population in 2014

In 2014, the number of workers employed in the firms in the analysis population came to 76.4 % of the corresponding private sector employment recorded in the national accounts.

Representativeness according to the employment criterion varies from one branch of activity to another. In some branches, the end-date criterion for closing the accounts has a big influence on the representativeness rate. For instance, in trade and transport, this rate is 70.4 % if the sample is limited to those firms closing their accounts on 31 December, but it goes up to 93.5 % if all closing dates are considered[4].

Moreover, certain categories of firms or jobs do not appear in the analysis population. This is true of non-profit-making organisations employing fewer than 20 FTE workers, which are not required to file a social balance sheet. Similarly, employees working for an employer who is not incorporated as a company are not included since the obligation to file a social balance sheet only applies to companies. Consequently, the representativeness of the analysed population expressed as a percentage of the salaried employment recorded in the national accounts is particularly low in the branches where there are proportionally more of these firms or workers. This is the case in agriculture and in the other services branch (which covers for instance art, culture and recreational activities).

Overall, workers in the trade and transport branch represent 26.6 % of the staff in the sample population, those employed in health and social work 22.7 % and those in industry 20.6 %. The other branches are relatively less important, at 10.6 % for business services, 7.1 % for construction, and 5.2 % for the finance and insurance branch. The branches covering information and communication (3.6 %), other services (2.6 %) and especially agriculture (0.3 %) are more marginal.

(1) Private sector employment is defined as employment recorded in the total economy (S.1), less employment in the public sector (S.13) and in the household sector (S.14). This concept also excludes workers employed in NACE-BEL divisions 84 (public administration and defence; compulsory social security) and 85 (education). NACE-BEL division 78 (employment activities), which includes in particular temporary employment agency activities, is also excluded.

(2) Firms whose activity or address is unknown are excluded from the population.

(3) This amounts to excluding firms in which some of the employees work abroad or are not entered in the staff register (statutory staff).

(4) For all branches taken together, the choice of just those firms that close their accounts at the end of the calendar year brings the representativeness rate back down from 90.3 % (all closing dates) to 76.4 % (31 December as end of the financial year).

TABLE 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE ANALYSIS POPULATION IN 2014

	Number of workers employed (units)		Representativeness (in %)
	In the national accounts[1]	In the social balance sheets[2]	
	(1)	(2)	(3) = (2) / (1)
Total	**2 641 353**	**2 018 700**	**76.4**
Agriculture	14 742	6 865	46.6
Industry	525 619	415 252	79.0
Construction	196 318	143 095	72.9
Trade and transport	763 553	537 608	70.4
Information and communication	91 138	73 405	80.5
Finance and insurance	116 685	105 570	90.5
Real estate	17 780	12 703	71.4
Business services[3]	318 251	213 014	66.9
Health and social work	499 938	458 531	91.7
Other services	97 329	52 658	54.1

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Private sector salaried employment, i.e. salaried employment recorded in the total economy (S.1), less salaried employment in the public sector (S.13) and in the household sector (S.14). This concept also excludes workers employed in NACE-BEL divisions 84 (public administration and defence; compulsory social security) and 85 (education).

(2) Average number of workers, i.e. the sum of items 1001 (full-time workers) and 1002 (part-time workers).

(3) Excluding employment-related activities (NACE-BEL division 78), which comprise in particular activities of temporary employment agencies.

TABLE 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANALYSIS POPULATION IN 2014

(in % of the total, unless otherwise stated)

	Number of firms	Number of workers employed[1]
p.m. Units	*85 572*	*2 018 700*
Breakdown by branch of activity		
Agriculture	1.0	0.3
Industry	10.8	20.6
Construction	15.2	7.1
Trade and transport	39.3	26.6
Information and communication	3.1	3.6
Finance and insurance	4.3	5.2
Real estate	2.2	0.6
Business services[2]	14.4	10.6
Health and social work	5.3	22.7
Other services	4.4	2.6

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Average number of workers, i.e. the sum of items 1001 (full-time workers) and 1002 (part-time workers).

(2) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL division 78), which comprise notably temporary employment agencies.

Annex 2

EMPLOYMENT[1] IN ANALYSIS POPULATIONS

(units)

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
In FTE							
as at 31 December	1 571 377	1 573 786	1 724 043	1 772 850	1 759 207	1 757 180	1 764 819
as annual average	1 552 914	1 572 490	1 715 747	1 768 781	1 768 801	1 769 177	1 774 325
In number of persons							
as at 31 December	1 724 729	1 756 669	1 952 066	2 006 371	1 992 430	1 991 911	2 004 473
as annual average	1 707 902	1 758 907	1 944 992	2 007 019	2 006 587	2 010 744	2 018 700
of which:							
Breakdown by working arrangement							
Full-time workers	1 352 194	1 301 898	1 337 925	1 375 158	1 369 487	1 364 285	1 356 586
Part-time workers	355 707	457 009	607 066	631 861	637 101	646 458	662 114
Breakdown by branch of activity							
Agriculture	4 843	6 065	6 318	6 939	6 854	6 693	6 865
Industry	461 188	447 886	430 181	434 731	429 587	425 032	415 252
Construction	131 695	133 639	143 396	149 829	149 381	145 840	143 095
Trade and transport	499 935	539 026	535 879	549 030	544 337	538 667	537 608
Information and communication	72 869	71 362	73 666	74 653	74 447	73 842	73 405
Finance and insurance	114 165	112 297	109 953	109 001	109 161	106 558	105 570
Real estate	13 924	12 616	12 841	13 143	12 665	12 447	12 703
Business services[2]	130 840	157 750	177 949	192 912	198 512	205 801	213 014
Health and social work	250 352	251 290	409 833	430 509	434 619	446 421	458 531
Other services	25 939	26 975	44 976	46 272	47 024	49 444	52 658

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register.

(2) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.

Annex 3

EMPLOYMENT[1]: BREAKDOWN BY EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT, GENDER, EDUCATION LEVEL AND OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

(in % of total, employment in persons as at 31 December)

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
By employment contract							
Permanent contract	93.2	93.9	93.5	93.1	93.3	93.1	92.7
Fixed-term contract	5.3	5.0	5.4	5.7	5.6	5.8	6.1
of which:							
Agriculture	7.1	5.9	10.5	8.3	11.2	10.3	11.4
Industry	5.2	3.9	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.7	3.9
Construction	3.2	3.0	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5
Trade and transport	4.6	6.2	6.8	7.3	7.4	7.9	8.6
Information and communication	4.9	4.4	2.3	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.4
Finance and insurance	4.6	2.9	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.9
Real estate	5.2	4.0	4.6	4.9	5.4	5.3	5.6
Business services[2]	4.9	3.7	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.8
Health and social work	8.5	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.2
Other services	7.6	6.9	11.6	11.3	10.9	11.9	12.1
Substitution contract	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Contract concluded for a specific project	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
By gender							
Men	62.8	60.9	56.5	56.2	55.7	55.2	54.8
Women	37.2	43.5	43.5	43.8	44.3	44.8	45.2
By education level							
Primary education	n.	n.	17.0	16.7	16.7	16.5	16.3
Secondary education	n.	n.	54.1	54.2	54.0	53.8	53.6
Non-university higher education	n.	n.	20.6	20.6	20.5	20.6	20.8
University education	n.	n.	8.3	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.3
By occupational category							
Manual workers	46.2	44.3	41.5	41.6	41.2	40.8	40.6
Clerical workers	50.7	53.3	56.4	56.3	56.8	57.1	57.3
Management staff	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Other workers[3]	1.4	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register.

(2) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.

(3) Residual category, comprising inter alia trainees and apprentices.

Annex 4

VOLUME OF EMPLOYMENT IN FIRMS FILING FULL-FORMAT ACCOUNTS: BREAKDOWN BY WORKER STATUS

(annual averages)

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Hours worked (in millions)							
Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register	1 853.0	1 779.9	1 902.8	1 946.8	1 946.3	1 952.5	1 959.0
Staff on secondment[1]	14.6	21.5	22.4	25.1	21.6	22.5	22.0
Agency staff	68.2	76.1	83.0	94.0	86.5	84.0	88.4
Full-time equivalents (in thousands)							
Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register	1 170.8	1 171.2	1 269.4	1 298.0	1 303.7	1 307.3	1 314.2
Staff on secondment[1]	8.7	13.2	13.8	15.6	13.5	13.7	13.5
Agency staff	36.5	40.6	44.0	49.3	45.3	44.0	46.4
Full-time equivalents (in % of total)							
Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register	96.3	95.6	95.6	95.2	95.7	95.8	95.6
Staff on secondment[1]	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Agency staff	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.4
of which:							
Agriculture	8.4	5.9	5.3	4.6	5.9	6.3	7.6
Industry	5.0	5.3	5.5	6.0	5.4	5.3	5.5
Construction	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.0
Trade and transport	2.9	3.8	4.3	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.9
Information and communication	2.3	2.6	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0
Finance and insurance	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0
Real estate	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.3	1.6	1.8	2.0
Business services[2]	3.1	3.1	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.5	3.6
Health and social work	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3
Other services	3.1	3.5	4.3	4.1	3.4	3.1	2.8

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Workers recorded in a firm's staff register and seconded to another firm which is obliged to file a social balance sheet are counted twice.

(2) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.

Annex 5

AVERAGE HOURS WORKED [1] [2]

(hours worked per employee per year)

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Agriculture	1 566	1 546	1 625	1 651	1 643	1 615	1 637
Industry	1 534	1 513	1 492	1 499	1 490	1 490	1 491
Construction	1 464	1 445	1 418	1 466	1 440	1 423	1 450
Trade and transport	1 678	1 581	1 559	1 557	1 557	1 563	1 556
Information and communication	1 646	1 624	1 609	1 601	1 609	1 605	1 601
Finance and insurance	1 532	1 427	1 440	1 441	1 444	1 443	1 440
Real estate	1 598	1 585	1 556	1 559	1 560	1 567	1 557
Business services [3]	1 631	1 584	1 570	1 566	1 549	1 542	1 549
Health and social work	1 551	1 498	1 467	1 456	1 448	1 449	1 439
Other services	1 560	1 572	1 569	1 567	1 564	1 557	1 555
Total	**1 584**	**1 532**	**1 510**	**1 513**	**1 506**	**1 505**	**1 504**
p.m. Full-time workers [4]	*1 579*	*1 534*	*1 512*	*1 519*	*1 510*	*1 508*	*1 512*
Part-time workers [5]	*916*	*904*	*936*	*931*	*936*	*936*	*934*

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).
(1) Item 1013 / sum of items 1001 and 1002, unless otherwise stated.
(2) Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register.
(3) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.
(4) Item 1011 / item 1001.
(5) Item 1012 / item 1002.

Annex 6

STAFF COSTS PER HOUR WORKED [1] [2]

(in €)

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Agriculture	18.9	20.2	20.1	20.1	21.1	21.7	22.0
Industry	28.9	34.2	40.0	41.5	42.6	43.9	44.6
Construction	22.9	26.3	30.2	30.9	32.3	33.1	33.4
Trade and transport	22.2	27.2	31.3	32.1	32.9	33.5	33.9
Information and communication	31.0	37.5	43.7	45.1	45.3	46.4	46.5
Finance and insurance	40.9	48.2	54.7	56.2	58.4	59.1	59.6
Real estate	22.7	26.7	31.2	32.3	33.0	34.1	34.2
Business services [3]	27.0	31.4	33.8	34.2	35.2	35.6	35.2
Health and social work	21.9	26.7	30.5	31.7	32.5	33.6	33.9
Other services	19.1	22.7	28.5	28.7	30.3	31.3	32.1
Total	**26.1**	**31.0**	**35.1**	**36.0**	**37.0**	**37.9**	**38.1**
p.m. Full-time workers [4]	*26.7*	*31.6*	*36.1*	*37.0*	*38.1*	*38.9*	*39.4*
Part-time workers [5]	*22.0*	*27.9*	*31.7*	*32.5*	*33.3*	*34.3*	*34.1*

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).
(1) Item 1023 / item 1013, unless otherwise stated.
(2) Workers for whom the firm has submitted a DIMONA declaration or who are recorded in the staff register.
(3) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.
(4) Item 1021 / item 1011.
(5) Item 1022 / item 1012.

Annex 7

TRAINING

	2008[1]	2009[1]	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Participants in training activities[2] (in % of average employment)							
Formal training[3]	34.0	35.2	36.8	37.2	39.2	40.2	40.7
of which:							
Agriculture	5.9	4.4	6.0	3.6	5.4	6.2	9.1
Industry	39.8	40.9	44.0	44.5	46.2	48.6	50.5
Construction	16.6	19.0	19.3	17.9	20.7	22.3	22.8
Trade and transport	26.4	28.1	28.4	28.7	30.9	31.5	29.6
Information and communication	46.5	45.3	48.8	50.3	51.9	49.3	48.7
Finance and insurance	55.1	54.3	55.3	60.0	62.8	63.3	67.7
Real estate	10.2	10.9	12.1	14.9	13.3	16.9	18.0
Business services[4]	24.3	24.5	26.7	25.8	28.0	27.9	29.6
Health and social work	43.5	45.9	47.2	47.9	49.7	50.9	51.9
Other services	13.0	15.8	15.0	17.8	16.1	17.6	17.4
Informal training[5]	18.9	18.4	20.6	20.8	23.3	23.0	23.0
Initial training[6]	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.5

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) The introduction of a new social balance sheet form applicable to financial years ending on or after 1 December 2008 causes a break in the series between data for years from 2008 onwards and those relating to previous years.

(2) Owing to double counting because the same person may have followed more than one type of training, no total is calculated here.

(3) Courses and practical classes designed and given by training staff responsible for their organisation and content, intended for a group of trainees in premises separate from the workplace.

(4) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.

(5) Other apprenticeship activities of which the organisation and content are largely determined by the learners according to their own needs, directly connected with the work or workplace. These activities also include attending conferences or trade fairs as part of the learning process.

(6) Training of a minimum duration of six months, given to workers under schemes alternating training and practical work experience, with a view to acquiring a diploma.

TRAINING (continued)

	2008[1]	2009[1]	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Hours devoted to training activities (in % of hours worked)							
Formal training[2]	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.73	0.78	0.82	0.82
of which:							
Agriculture	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.07
Industry	0.79	0.78	0.83	0.81	0.85	0.86	0.94
Construction	0.24	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.34	0.38	0.36
Trade and transport	0.71	0.76	0.64	0.61	0.71	0.71	0.70
Information and communication	0.90	0.80	0.84	0.96	0.98	1.01	0.98
Finance and insurance	1.34	1.10	1.18	1.33	1.27	1.15	1.31
Real estate	0.21	0.16	0.21	0.25	0.22	0.25	0.25
Business services[3]	0.58	0.59	0.56	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.53
Health and social work	0.83	0.92	0.94	0.96	1.02	1.21	1.11
Other services	0.30	0.31	0.36	0.37	0.37	0.40	0.37
Informal training[4]	0.37	0.36	0.42	0.42	0.46	0.47	0.47
Initial training[5]	0.28	0.29	0.30	0.29	0.35	0.36	0.39
Total	**1.39**	**1.40**	**1.45**	**1.45**	**1.59**	**1.66**	**1.68**
Net training costs[6] (in % of staff costs)							
Formal training[2]	1.15	1.06	1.11	1.13	1.17	1.19	1.15
of which:							
Agriculture	0.13	0.12	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.18
Industry	1.26	1.09	1.30	1.31	1.40	1.39	1.44
Construction	0.36	0.40	0.41	0.42	0.46	0.49	0.45
Trade and transport	1.22	1.18	1.08	1.04	1.12	1.15	1.10
Information and communication	1.33	1.22	1.31	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.32
Finance and insurance	2.22	1.86	1.97	2.20	2.02	1.90	2.06
Real estate	0.20	0.19	0.22	0.25	0.29	0.31	0.29
Business services[3]	0.74	0.75	0.73	0.82	0.79	0.77	0.72
Health and social work	0.80	0.87	0.90	0.93	0.97	1.14	0.95
Other services	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.52	0.49	0.58	0.53
Informal training[4]	0.40	0.38	0.44	0.43	0.47	0.47	0.47
Initial training[5]	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.09
Total	**1.63**	**1.51**	**1.61**	**1.64**	**1.72**	**1.76**	**1.71**

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) The introduction of a new social balance sheet form applicable to financial years ending on or after 1 December 2008 causes a break in the series between data for years from 2008 onwards and those relating to previous years.

(2) Courses and practical classes designed and given by training staff responsible for their organisation and content, intended for a group of trainees in premises separate from the workplace.

(3) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.

(4) Other apprenticeship activities of which the organisation and content are largely determined by the learners according to their own needs, directly connected with the work or workplace. These activities also include attending conferences or trade fairs as part of the learning process.

(5) Training of a minimum duration of six months, given to workers under schemes alternating training and practical work experience, with a view to acquiring a diploma.

(6) Gross costs less subsidies and other financial benefits. The net costs of formal training also include contributions and payments to collective funds.

Annex 8

TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2014 IN FIRMS OFFERING TRAINING [1]

	Participants in training activities (in % of average employment)			Hours devoted to training activities (average per participant and per year, in hours)			Net training costs [2] (average per hour of training, in €)		
	Formal [3]	Informal [4]	Initial [5]	Formal [3]	Informal [4]	Initial [5]	Formal [3]	Informal [4]	Initial [5]
Agriculture	53.1	62.7	46.3	12	38	166	48	34	6
Industry	63.2	45.4	10.3	27	39	195	68	43	18
Construction	49.7	44.5	11.4	22	31	631	39	35	6
Trade and transport	52.7	46.2	11.0	32	27	395	53	34	5
Information and communication	63.6	32.6	16.0	31	27	194	63	38	13
Finance and insurance	77.1	53.4	6.0	26	26	374	94	44	8
Real estate	48.0	50.6	40.3	19	24	214	38	32	8
Business services [6]	50.4	56.7	9.3	23	20	255	48	35	9
Health and social work	59.9	47.5	4.6	24	19	368	29	30	12
Other services	45.2	42.2	33.7	27	24	323	45	31	5
Total	**58.8**	**47.1**	**8.9**	**27**	**27**	**344**	**53**	**38**	**9**

Source: NBB (social balance sheets).

(1) Firms reporting at least one worker in training.

(2) Gross costs less subsidies and other financial benefits. The net costs of formal training also include contributions and payments to collective funds.

(3) Courses and practical classes designed and given by training staff responsible for their organisation and content, intended for a group of trainees in premises separate from the workplace.

(4) Other apprenticeship activities of which the organisation and content are largely determined by the learners according to their own needs, directly connected with the work or workplace. These activities also include attending conferences or trade fairs as part of the learning process.

(5) Training of a minimum duration of six months, given to workers under schemes alternating training and practical work experience, with a view to acquiring a diploma.

(6) Excluding employment activities (NACE-BEL 78), which comprise in particular temporary employment agencies.