



## 1. The facts

### A rising tide

Belgium's economy is expected to **grow by 1.8% in 2018** (1,7% in 2017). As an open economy, Belgium benefits from the revival of world trade and the recovery in the euro area. The export of goods and services accelerated by 0.8 percentage points. Belgium has weathered the crisis relatively well and is now again **growing at pre-crisis rate**.

### Jobs, jobs, jobs

This economic growth translates into **job creation**, thanks to the reduction of the labour cost and activation measures of the unemployed and +55-year-olds. The number of jobs in 2017 increased by 66,000 and the unemployment rate dropped to 7.2%. Over the period 2014-2020, the National Bank expects the **creation of 309,000 jobs**.

### A positive investment climate

The reduction of labour costs, the rise in employment and the high quality of education boost our **competitiveness**. The corporate income tax rate will be reduced from 33 to 25% by 2020. Together with increased profitability and flexible credit conditions, this will also ensure a positive investment climate in 2018, with a **predicted volume growth of 4.3%**. These investments carry further growth.

### Good to know

Belgium is the **10<sup>th</sup> largest exporting country**; it ranks third in the list of most globalized countries.

Belgium is a **world class innovation centre**, scoring particularly well on healthcare (3<sup>rd</sup> worldwide), higher education (5<sup>th</sup>) and research institutes (6<sup>th</sup>).



## 2. The figures

Sources: National Bank of Belgium, Eurostat, IMF and the World Bank

|   | 2014    | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    | 2018<br>(Prediction) |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| <b>Population (M)</b>                   | 11,209  | 11,268  | 11,322  |         |                      |
| <b>GDP (bn €)</b>                       | 400,288 | 410,435 | 423,048 |         |                      |
| <b>GDP/capita (€)</b>                   | 35 800  | 36 500  | 37 500  |         |                      |
| <b>Growth (% GDP)</b>                   | 1,4     | 1,4     | 1,5     | 1,7     | 1,8                  |
| <b>Inflation (Average %)</b>            | 0,34    | 0,56    | 1,97    | 2,13    |                      |
| <b>Import (community concept) (M €)</b> | 341 427 | 338 571 | 342 480 | 360 173 |                      |
| <b>Export (community concept) (M €)</b> | 355 288 | 357 753 | 359 543 | 381 021 |                      |
| <b>Trade balance (M €)</b>              | 13 861  | 19 183  | 17 063  | 20 848  |                      |
| <b>Debt ratio (% GDP)</b>               | 106,8   | 106     | 105,7   | 102,8   | 102,1                |
| <b>Budgetary deficit (% GDP)</b>        | 3,1     | 2,5     | 2,6     | 1,13    |                      |
| <b>Unemployment (%)</b>                 | 8,5     | 8,5     | 7,8     | 7,2     |                      |