

DOING BUSINESS ABROAD

NOT JUST BELGIAN CHOCOLATE

Population: 10.3 m

Main Imports into Belgium : Road vehicles, chemicals, metal products (£11.96m)

Main Exports from Belgium: Machinery and electrical equipment, chemicals, vehicles, metals, diamonds, food & drink (£10.6bn)

Belgium is a highly competitive growing market with opportunities for trade in all sectors, especially for small and medium-sized business. Almost anything that sells well in the UK can be sold in Belgium, provided you are prepared to be flexible.

Belgium place a high premium on non-price factors such as design, quality and delivery and after sales service. Companies whose products are genuinely competitive and who are prepared to be flexible and adapt their products if necessary will find a market there.

Brussels is at the heart of the EU Commission, the European Parliament, and NATO. Some 1500 multinational companies are located there. Belgium lends itself to the first time exporter. It is easy to get to, with good air and sea links and of course the Channel Tunnel.

The British are well thought of, and UK goods and services are generally held in high regard; but must be of high quality and competitively priced.

English is widely spoken in Brussels and in the Dutch-speaking north of the country. As with other markets within the European Union, trade with Belgium is increasingly an extension of a company's domestic market

Every prudent business carries out market research and evaluation before attempting to break into a market. Acquiring knowledge of local laws, regulations and trading practices is an important element in order to obviate potential risk.

Gilson de Rouvreur, de Bluts et Associes lawyers of Brussels work closely with Temple & Co Commercial, Solicitors in Daventry, (who were awarded the East Midlands Business News Legal Services Award 2004) in assisting UK businesses capturing the Belgian market by winning investment support from the Belgian authorities, as well as in employment, finance, distribution, property investment and joint venture issues.

*Contact Euan Temple at Temple & Co Commercial Solicitors , Daventry eft@templesols.com
www.templesols.com*