



FAIB

be international... in Belgium

Survey 2021



**The Socio-economic state of
European & international associations
based in Belgium**

Project Master and Manager:



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With the support of visit.brussels



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RECOGNITION BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE BRUSSELS CONVENTION BUREAU, visit.brussels	

PREFACE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: TIME TO GO BACK TO LIVE MEETINGS

The general lesson-learned from the past 2 years is that the pandemic provided an opportunity for associations to expand their global reach : the global video conferencing market shows an annual growth rate of around 9.5%. Associations' mass shift to virtual meetings has meant that international members have had easier access than ever before to their association's community, becoming more global than ever. In a landscape altered by the pandemic associations are also more open to expanding their workforce internationally, now that remote work has become more normalised.

The question then arises will we return to the in-person meetings that global members have had a hard time attending during the pandemic. This inevitably requires spending, and the pandemic has forced a lot of belt-tightening at associations: for association boards these costs may look too steep without obvious, immediate benefits.

The pandemic forever changed events for sure. Some associations don't anticipate going back to in-person events until 2023, even 2024, while others have been back since they were allowed by Covid legislation. Some organisations have had only about 50 percent of pre-pandemic attendance, while others have had record-breaking years.

Meeting planners around the globe need to come to terms with the new state of meetings. That is certainly the case in Brussels.

Brussels is an iconic city in the meetings industry and a noted association stronghold thanks to visit.brussels and its partners the Federation of International and European Associations in Belgium (FAIB), the European Society of Association Executives (ESAE), the House of International Associations (MAI) and the Union of International Associations (UIA). Their primary goal is to help associations establish headquarters in the capital of Europe and establish a strong base here in order to offer value and customized services to their members.

Post-pandemic Brussels is more than ever full of help and resources for global associations as all partners involved are more committed than ever to contribute with their respective resources and actions to highlight the wide offer available for international associations wishing to setup or develop their activities in the region.

Although it is crystal clear that live events will now need to be hybrid events, it is also clear that virtual meetings just don't feel the same as their in-person equivalents. Today Brussels is more than ready to return to live events. A large focus of its recovery plan has been put on technological investments in venues, digitalisation within the whole sector, enhancing capacities in organisations and the sustainability and accessibility of facilities.

So, let's meet in Brussels!



Alain Hutchinson
Brussels Commissioner for
Europe and International
Organisations

FOREWORD

This survey is traditionally carried out by the Federation of European and international associations based in Belgium, FAIB, to assess the socio-economic impact of international not-for-profit associations (INPAs), a major part of the not-for-profit sector in Belgium. The survey has been carried out regularly since the first edition in 1983 and aims to provide regulators and other stakeholders with a view on developments relating to INPAs.

This survey aims to underpin FAIB's core goal: to promote every possible initiative and measure to stimulate the establishment of European and international associations in Belgium and to help them operate smoothly and successfully. This has become an even more central theme for FAIB since Brexit has encouraged many INPAs to transfer their headquarters out of the UK to an EU location. Brussels is, therefore, today in competition to attract these INPAs many of which are large employers.

Belgium has since the early 1920s been a forerunner in attracting INPAs to our country and, with the setup of the European Commission and European Parliament, as well as other international bodies, Brussels has grown to become the N°1 centre for advocacy, overtaking both Geneva and Washington. We now have a community of approximately 2.400 international non-governmental associations operating in Belgium – of which over 300 – are members of the FAIB – working on a wide range of issues whether European or international, on advocacy, research, charity activities, sustainable development and much more.

While the core business of INPAs is very diverse and covers a wide range of issues and views, they all have one thing in common: they have elected Belgium as their “home” and therefore the role of FAIB is simple: to inform them about local regulations and requirements and to inform regulators and authorities of the needs of the INPAs hosted here in Belgium and to seek the help of regulators to maintain Belgium as an attractive location for INPAs



The work that FAIB does with regulators and local authorities, for example on the recently adopted Company and Association Code, is essential to preserving the attraction of Belgium and in particular Brussels as a centre for INPAs. We therefore encourage regulators to study this survey and through this to measure the full contribution that our sector makes to Belgium's economy.

Even if the data presented in this survey is – to a large extent – an extrapolation based on answers received to our survey, it is a fact that European and international associations established in Belgium represent an important and increasing segment of the Belgian and notably the Brussels economy, as 94% of them are located in this region.

Let me just conclude by summarising what the INPA sector represents in Belgium and particularly in Brussels: some 36.000 persons directly employed, of which some 20.000 volunteers, estimated income of some 3.2 billion Euros, primarily originating from abroad, but with 84 % of this income is spent in Belgium! The sector moreover generates significant indirect employment through the number of events and meetings organised in Brussels by these INPAS.

Finally, I would like to thank those whose support and hard work has made this survey possible: the teams of visit.brussels and CIFRS and of course FAIB's own team led by our Secretary General Danièle Vranken.



Adrian Harris
President at FAIB

2. METHODOLOGY



The questionnaire

This report covers the latest survey carried out by FAIB between February and March 2019 and – as far as available – includes the key comparisons with the similar survey carried out in 2013.

As for previous surveys, FAIB used the data on the number of international associations operating in Belgium provided by the Union of International Associations (UIA, <http://www.uia.org>) that – since its creation in 1907 – gathers, analyses and publishes a detailed inventory of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non governmental (INGOs) worldwide. UIA data is kept updated on a yearly basis through the input of organizations themselves; to-date 65.400 NGO's and INGOs are listed in the annual edition of the "Yearbook of International Organizations".

The questionnaire was sent to 1000 international associations having their operational headquarters in Belgium, selected on relevance criteria from the UIA database, categories "A" to "F" of the "Yearbook of International Organizations 2012-2013". For the second time, an online survey (via SurveyMonkey, obtained with the help of SOCIAL Ware <http://www.socialware.be>) was used rather than the traditional paper questionnaire.

Several members of FAIB Board of directors, and colleagues from member and sister associations have contributed to the update of the questionnaire and analysis of results. Based on their recommendations, some new questions were added whilst others, considered as obsolete or less relevant, were deleted. This explains that comparisons to previous versions of the FAIB survey were not always possible.

The detailed analysis of members' responses was carried out by CIRFS: European Man-made Fibres Association (www.cirfs.org).

We wish to thank all contributors for their valuable input.

Answers

In view of making a valid comparison between former surveys and the current one, data was extrapolated on the basis of associations consulted and of the total number of associations present in Belgium. Comparison was only possible if the questions were similar in the past and present surveys.

Comparisons were made with the 2013 (and sometimes 2008) surveys, previous editions are however still available for further comparisons. Data received reflect the latest available figures from 2018. Throughout this report, international not-for-profit associations will be referred to as INPAs or IA.

The FAIB also wishes to thank all INPAs that have made this report possible by providing their associations' data in all confidence.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS



The 2018 survey was sent to 1000 INPAs, selected from the 2.265 international non governmental associations operating in Belgium listed in the “Yearbook of International Organizations 2012-2013” of the UIA.

3.1 REPRESENTATIVENESS

	2012 - 2013	2018-2019
Questionnaires sent	1512	1000
Questionnaires received	127	108
Questionnaires returned %	8%	10,8%

108 – out of the 1000 consulted – international associations have replied. Although the number of responses is lower than for previous surveys, it can be considered as representative of the socio-economic situation of INPAs in Belgium and comparable to the 2013 survey by extrapolating these answers to the entire number of INPAs currently operating in Belgium.

3.2 TREND IN DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN BELGIUM

As indicated by the UIA data, the number of international non governmental organizations established in Belgium is constantly increasing.

90% of International Associations (IA) are based in the Brussels-Capital region vs. 94 % in 2013 and 85% in 2008.

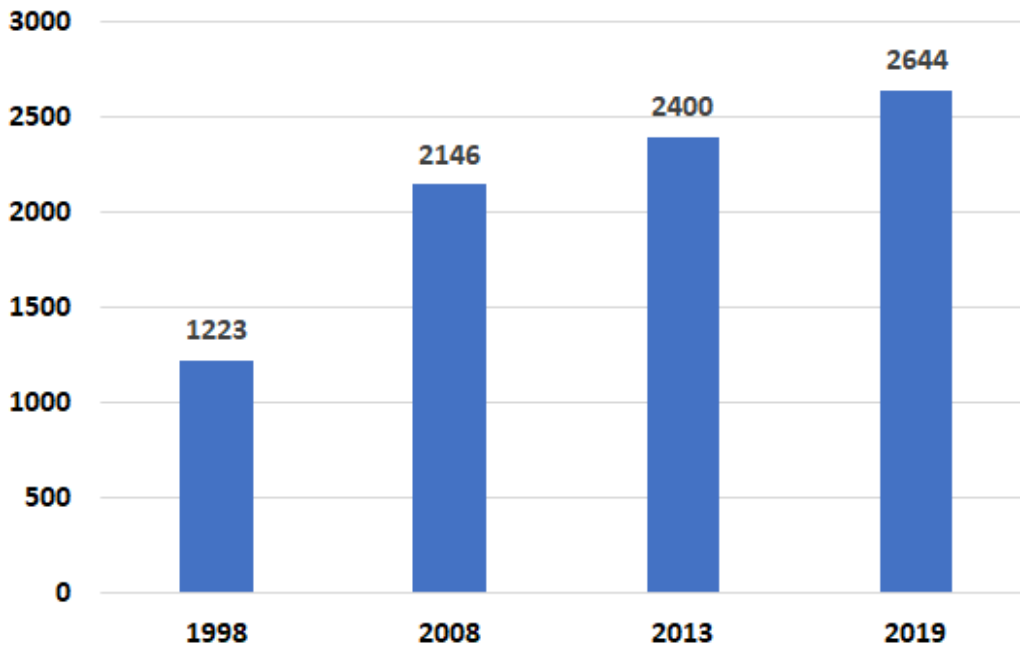
The legal status of “Association Internationale sans but lucratif” (AISBL) - “Internationale vereniging zonder winstooigmerk” (IVZW) was chosen by 80% in 2019 of IA vs. 73% in 2013 and 70% in 2008. The majority of IA has between 10 – 50 years of existence (71%), 18% of them exist for more than 50 years. A further change in the VAT registration appeared between 2013 and 2019, shifting from 67% registration in 2013 to 69% in 2019.

76% in 2019 of IA have registered in the voluntary European Transparency Register (57 % in 2013), increasing furthermore the transparency level of lobbying activities carried out.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN BELGIUM



IA in Belgium



3.3 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Annual income reported ranges between 100.000€ and 250.000€ for 17% of IA, 23% between 250.000€ and 620.000€, a minority of 8% income reported being higher than 5.000.000€.

International associations operating with a budget below 100.000€ have increased vs. 2013 (from 11% to 17% today).

Income mainly originates from Members' contributions (64%), financing by other associations (15%) and EU grants and subsidies (12%).

Expenditure can be split as follows: 53% of this income is spent in Human Resources, 17% if office running costs (12% in 2013) and 18% in projects and studies. One should note that such expenditure is funded both by the budgets of the associations and by direct funding from members attending events or participating in projects.

The average income of an INPA in 2012 was 1.306.250€ vs. 1.316.918€ in 2013, showing apparent stability over the years, but taking into account the above-mentioned increase of below 100.000€ budget IA, a majority of associations have increased their budgets over the period 2013-2019.

Yet expenditure in 2019 was on average 1.596.745€ vs. € 1.286.852€ in 2013, thus an increase of 24%.

3.4 EMPLOYMENT, STAFF AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE



The total employment generated by the IA is estimated at some 36.080, including volunteers, whilst the number of direct paid jobs, all types included, is estimated around 15.400 representing an average of 6 FTE per IA, stable compared to 2013. Without any surprise, the Brussels-Capital Region remains the favorite housing location for IA staff.

Although not easy to assess, some 1.191 indirect jobs per year/association are estimated (in hotels, restaurants, meeting facilities, catering, IT/website services, interpretation, editing/printing services...). This means an estimate of the service professionals impacted by the activities of IAs.

3.5 OFFICES, MEETINGS AND VISITORS

International Associations occupy some 249.000 m² in Belgium of which 19% is dedicated to meeting space, 20% own their premises. With an average of 49% office space below 100 m², the surface occupied by IA has increased compared to 2013 (205.000 m²) with an average of 47 m² now dedicated to meeting space. The number of one day visitors has decreased by 18% compared to 2013, whereas the number of overnight stays has increased by some 21% to the benefit of hotels and restaurants. Most visitors travel from within the EU.

3.6 EVALUATION OF BELGIUM AS A HOST COUNTRY

The assessment of Belgium as a host country is summarised below:

✓ Transport

- International transport to/from Belgium is in vast majority considered as efficient: 49% find it excellent, 45% good. That is an improvement compared to 2013 (23% excellent).
- Domestic train services as well as road infrastructures are less well perceived: 12% consider our roads as in a poor state while 34% find them average.

✓ Employment

- Overall finding staff is perceived as excellent in terms of availability (92%), and qualification (97%). The main satisfaction point is language skills (58% find them excellent – 55% in 2013) while the competitiveness with other countries satisfies 58% of the respondents.

✓ Quality of life

- Housing is very well perceived: 59% find it good, 31% excellent while environment and the availability of green zones show similar results: a fourth of respondents find these average and only a mere 20% find it excellent.
- Air quality is another issue: 31% find it poor and only 30% find it good which is a degradation compared to the 2013 results.
- Schools (67% good) are generally appreciated, sport and shopping infrastructures are generally acclaimed as well as restaurants (55% excellence note) and leisure offer in Brussels or elsewhere in Belgium.

✓ Services

- Accounting and auditing services satisfy IA at 93% and 90% respectively.
- IT & telephone services seem to be lagging behind other countries as 10% find these services poor and 20% average.
- Public administration for professional and resident purposes show similar results: only 3% find it excellent, and majority found it poor or just average.



Role and assessment of FAIB

Our federation is generally well rated by respondents: more than 84% consider the services of FAIB as "good" which encourages us to continue our activities and pay particular attention to our members' suggestions to improve areas such as the website and modern communication tools.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Answers have been analysed, interpreted and are graphs, completed by comments: see pages 28 and next (detailed data analysis).



5. RECOMMENDATION TO BELGIAN AUTHORITIES WHETHER FEDERAL REGIONAL, MUNICIPAL

Given that the vast majority of international associations are based in Brussels (94 %), a stronger involvement of the Brussels-Capital Region would be welcome with more visible support of the activities of international associations and help for them to operate.

This could be achieved by the creation – in addition to the availability of a comprehensive range of practical information in FAIB FAQs – of a « one-stop-shop » operated by regional / municipal administration where associations willing to establish in Belgium would get further guidance from authorities (similar to what is done in some municipalities for enterprises). This would also be beneficial to the region/country's image and demonstrate their recognition of the value of having international associations operating smoothly and efficiently.

5.1 ADMINISTRATIVE FORMALITIES

Once again in this edition of the FAIB survey, difficulties in obtaining identity cards, work and residence permits are underlined, demonstrating the need for formalities to be simplified and accelerated. Providing basic information in English language would help overcome the language barrier that newcomers often face. Obtaining visas for foreign visitors attending INPA events is also an issue.

Many associations have reported the increasingly cumbersome and long procedures to hire postgraduates interns that prevent many of them from implementing this valuable training tool and opportunities for school leavers to find a job in the international association arena. It is recommended to adapt current legislation (based on blue collar apprenticeship at national level) to the specificity of INPAs willing to hire interns and post-graduates coming from EU member states, who have often completed an internship at European Commission or Parliament level.

INPAs also consider that the formalities to obtain the status of expatriate should be alleviated to enable their foreign management staff to benefit from the same status as commercial entities do.

5.2 LEGAL STATUS

Complaints are regularly recorded from AISBL and ASBL (INPAs and NPAs) on the complicated and expensive procedures to register / modify the associations' statutes and by-laws. Also these administrative procedures could be facilitated to encourage INPAs to select this status.



5.3 TAXATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY COSTS

From comments expressed, it is clear that taxes and social security costs on wages negatively impact the hiring of additional staff, in particular when compared to most EU member states where the management (board members) of international associations often operate. Whilst welcoming the clarifications brought in the implementation of the EU VAT regulation by Belgian authorities, associations suffer from varying interpretations by control offices and from the new provisions on invoicing that generate additional administrative work. Anything that could be done to alleviate this burden and provide clearer guidelines would be welcome.

5.4 TRANSPORT, ADMINISTRATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY, SECURITY

From the general comments expressed, it is clear that:

- ✓ Transports and mostly road infrastructures must be improved.
- ✓ At all levels, a better welcome from and far greater efficiency of the administration would help to render Brussels even more attractive to INPAs.
- ✓ Telecommunication costs should be aligned to the level of other neighbouring Member States (France, the Netherlands, Germany, etc.).
- ✓ These general observations from the survey conducted in 2019 are similar to the ones emitted in the 2013 report.
- ✓ Associations find that banking regulations, and in particular compliance requirements, and the charging of negative interest rates on current accounts are a major irritant.

5.5 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Last but not least, in its capacity of representative of the European & international associations operating in Belgium, FAIB wishes to be represented at various levels of the administration for all matters relating to international associations at the onset of discussions – likely to have an impact on their functioning – so as to be in a position to relay its membership's position. This generally does not happen.

6. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY



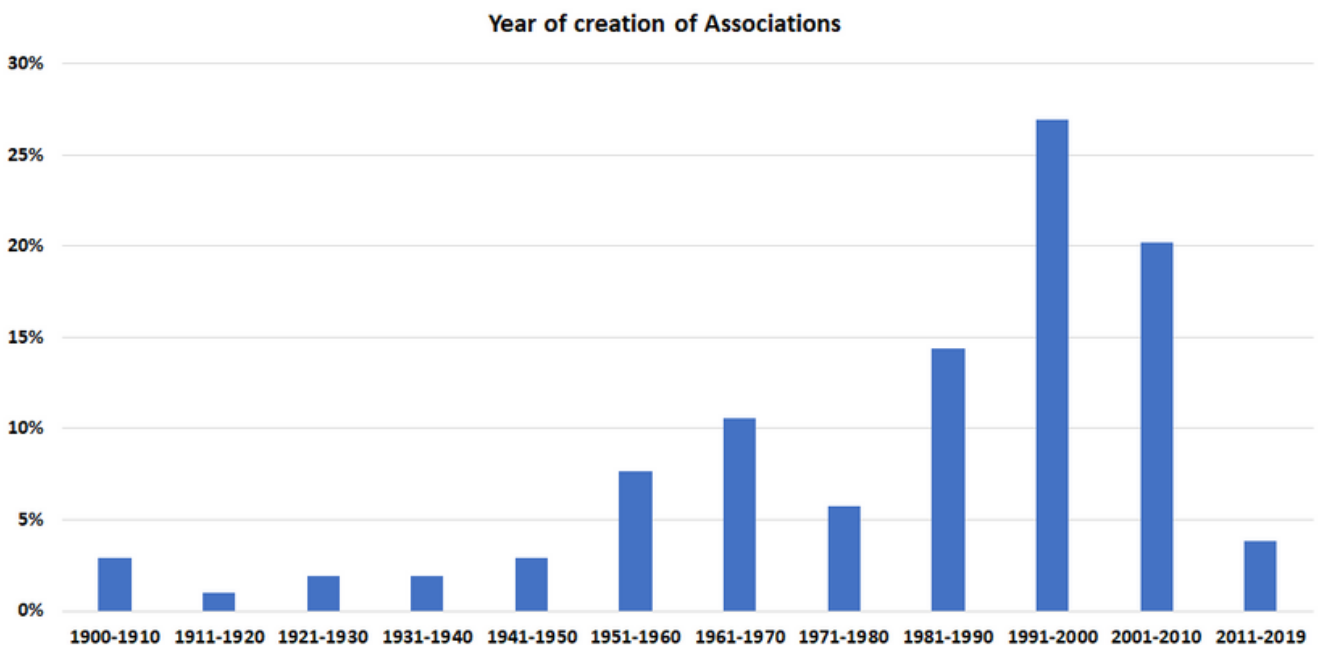
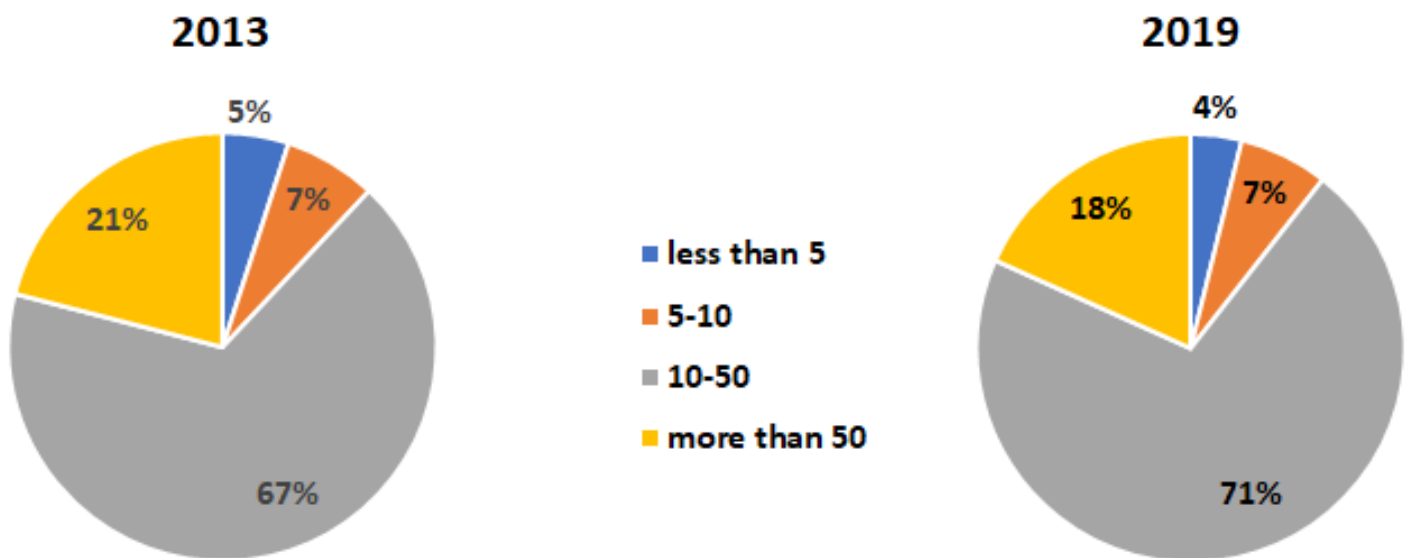
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DETAILED DATA ANALYSIS

1. ABOUT ASSOCIATIONS

1.1. Number of years in Belgium

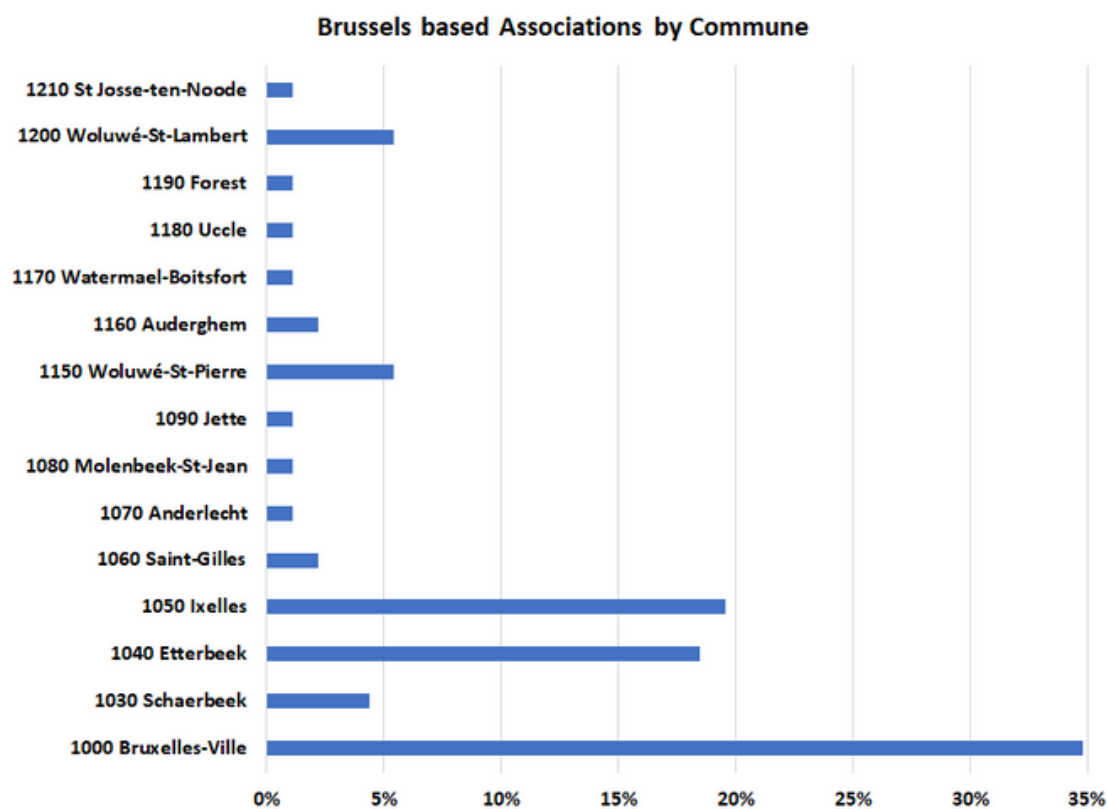
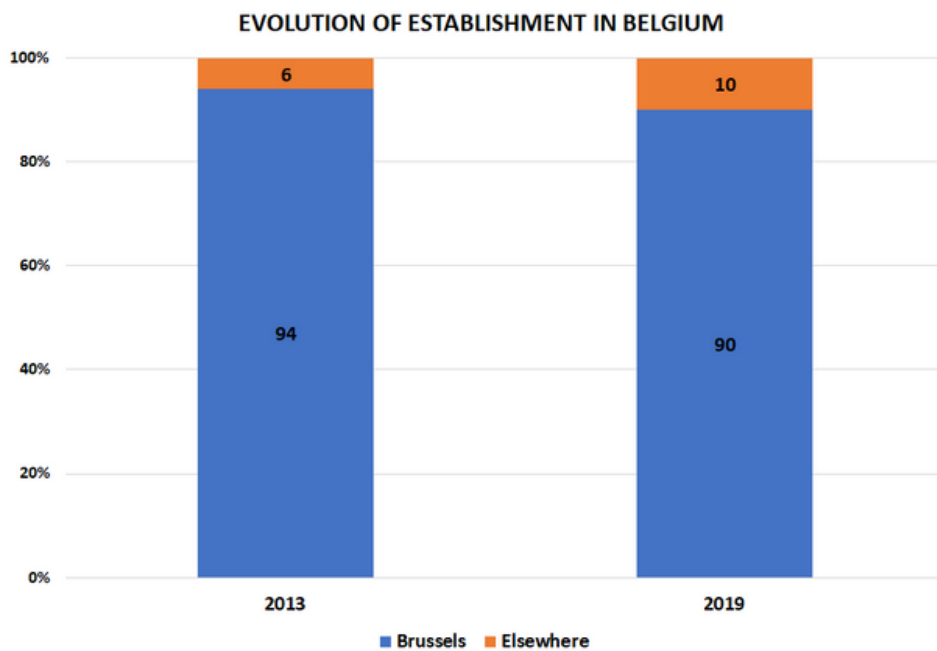
As a sign of the stability of their presence in Belgium, data below shows that 71% of INPAs have been operating in Belgium between 10 and 50 years and that 18% exist for more than 50 years



1.2. Place of establishment

A vast majority of associations prefer to operate in the Brussels-Capital Region. The neighborhood of the EU Institutions and other international decision-making centres, multilingualism of staff and surroundings are certainly at the origin of this choice.

Bruxelles-ville, Schaerbeek and Etterbeek are the Brussels communes which host the most IA (73% altogether).

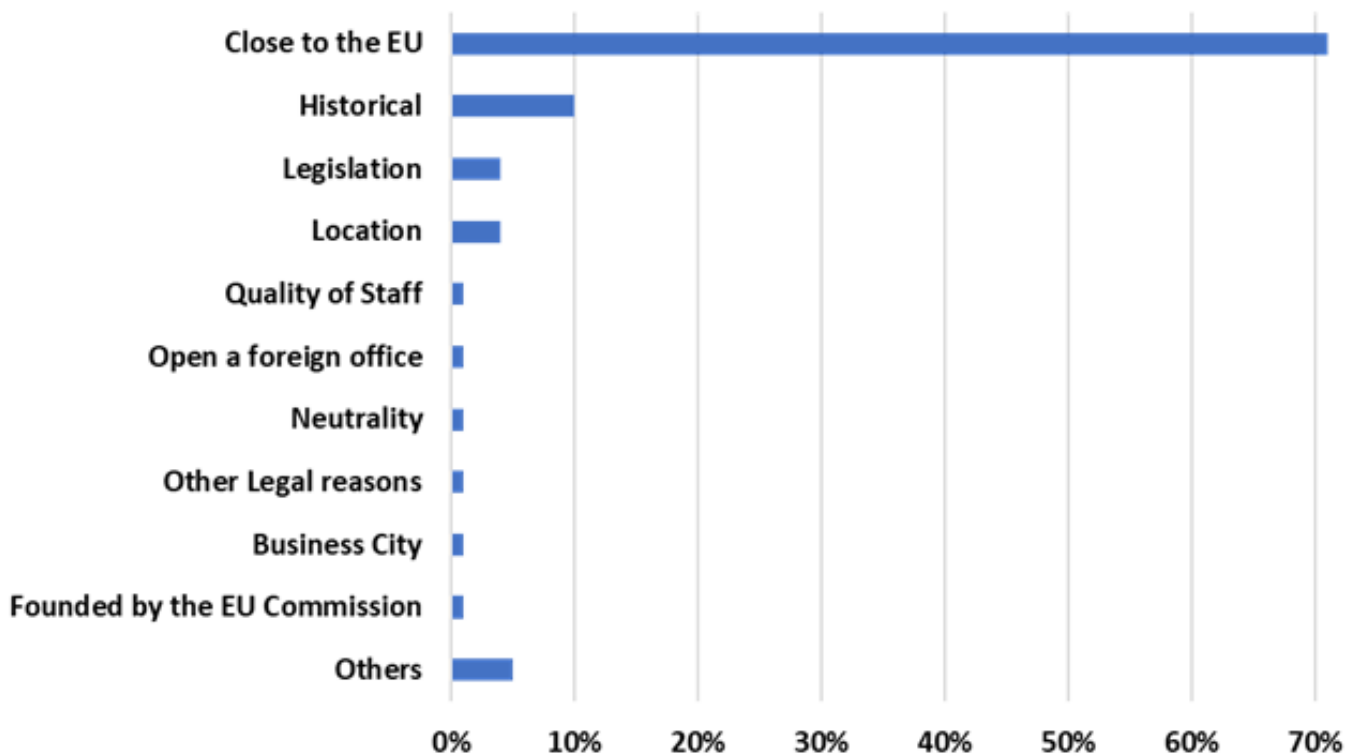


1.3. Reasons for establishing in Belgium

Unsurprisingly, the associations prefer to operate in the Brussels-Capital Region because of the neighborhood of the EU Institutions and other international decision-making bodies.



Main reasons for establishing in Belgium



Other main reasons would include the following:

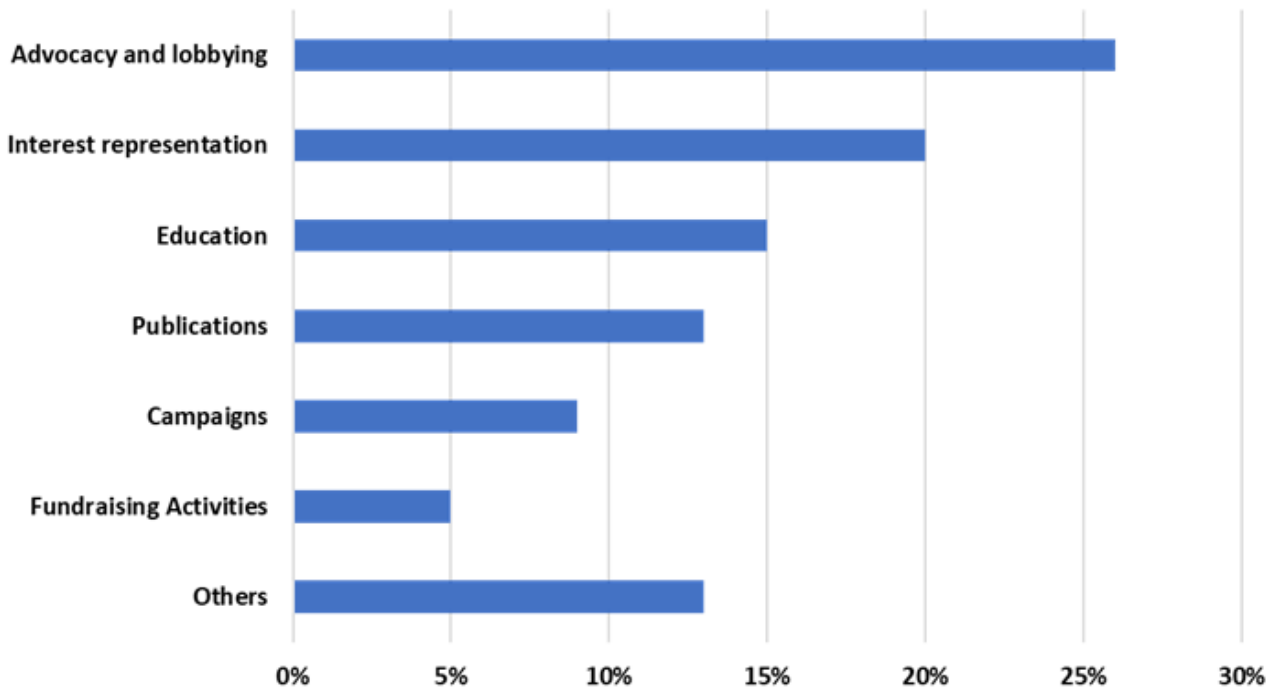
- Historical appeal of Brussels which has welcomed INAPs for one hundred years through initially supportive legislation and local regulations
- Multiculturalism of Brussels city
- Cultural activities based in Brussels

1.4. Field of activities

Advocacy, lobbying and interest representation are the main activities of the associations and account for 46 % altogether.

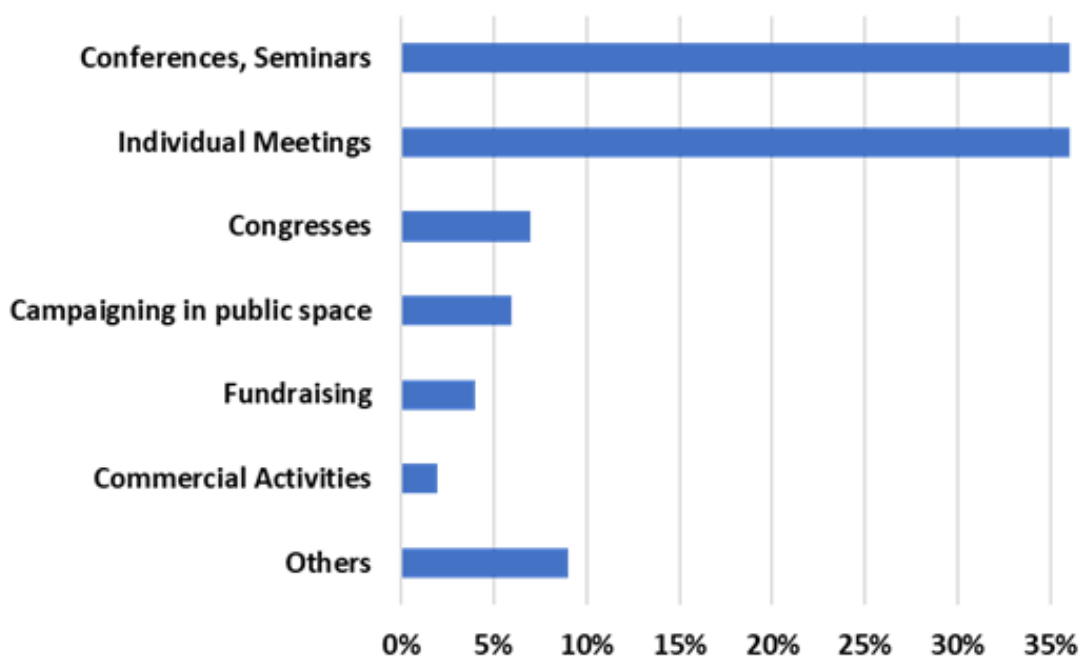


Major field of Activities of the associations

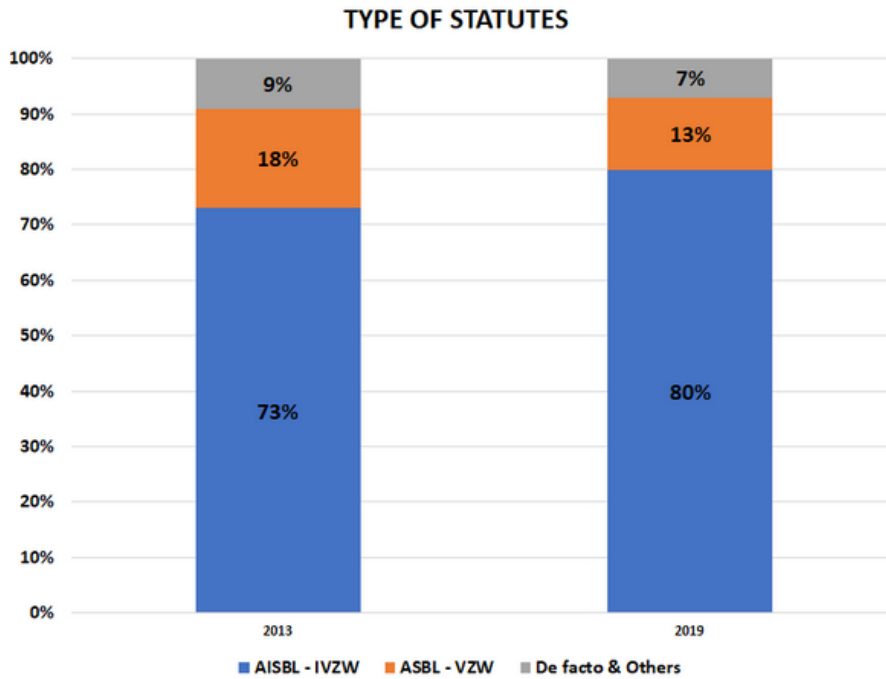


Organising conferences, seminars, congresses and individual meetings represents 80 % of the activities undertaken in Belgium. It is generating more added value to Belgium and the Brussels Region in particular.

Major Activities undertaken in Belgium



1.5. Type of Statutes

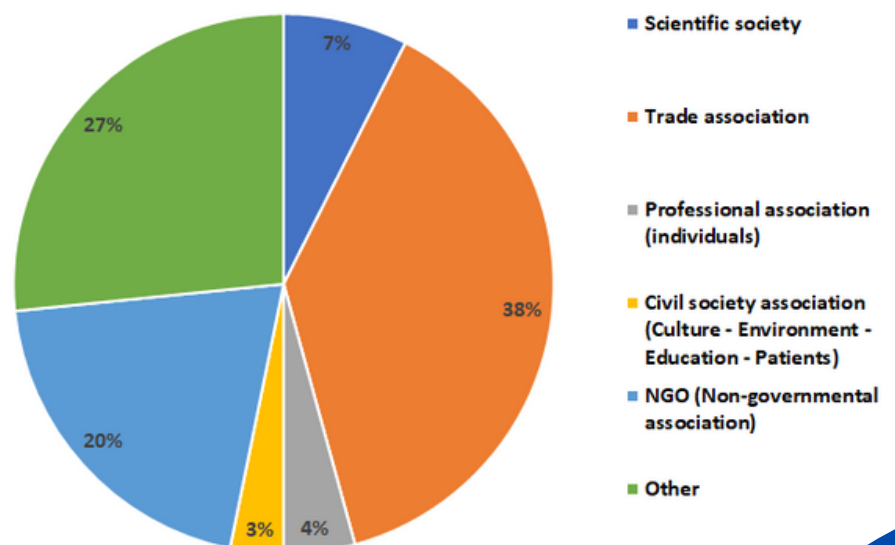


The majority of international associations continue to select the status of “aisbl” – “ivzw” (international not-for-profit association) falling under the specific legislation developed together with FAIB over the years.

1.6. Type of organisations

The trend of previous years is confirmed that an increasing number of associations prefer to operate in the Brussels-Capital Region. The neighbourhood of the EU Institutions and other international decision making centres, multilingualism of staff and surroundings are certainly at the origin of this choice.

Type of Organisation

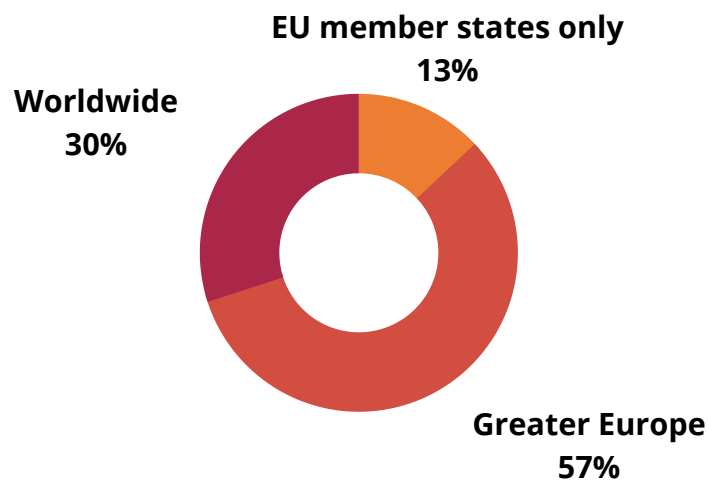
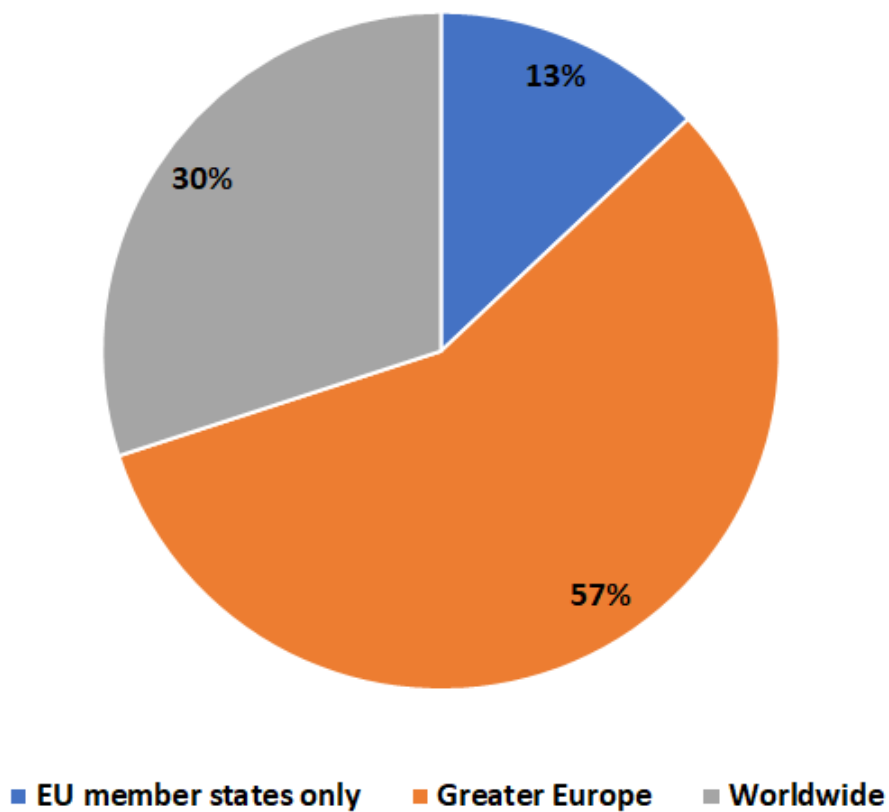


1.7. Operational geographic areas of INPAs' membership

Obviously, INPAs based in Belgium (or their membership) operate within the EU but also notably in directly bordering countries (Turkey, Switzerland) and globally. On average, INPAs (or their membership) are operating in the following areas:



GEOGRAPHICAL MEMBERSHIP LOCATION

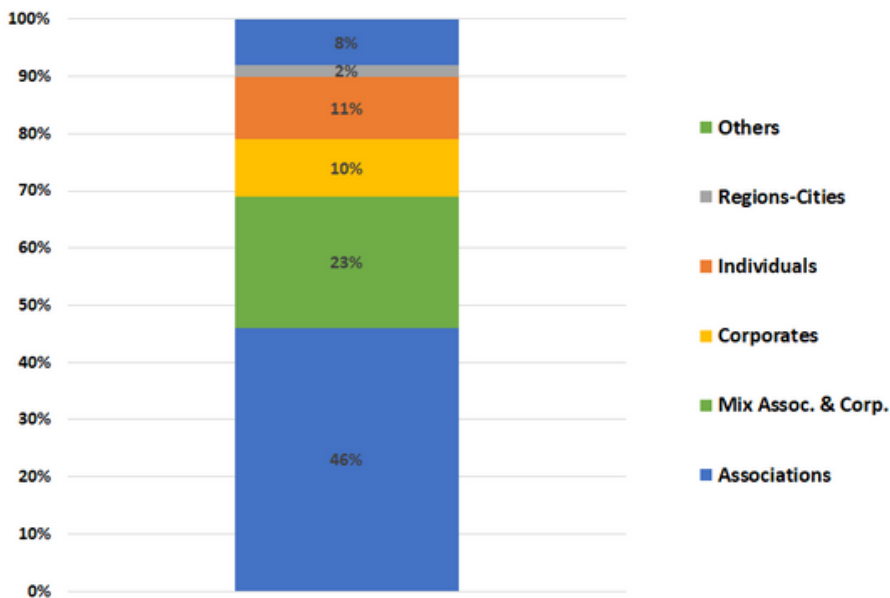


1.8. Members of associations by category

On average, INPAs have 87 members, and extrapolated data shows that activities of INPAs are impacting over 225.000 people worldwide.



Membership type



1.9. Number of members per INPAs by category

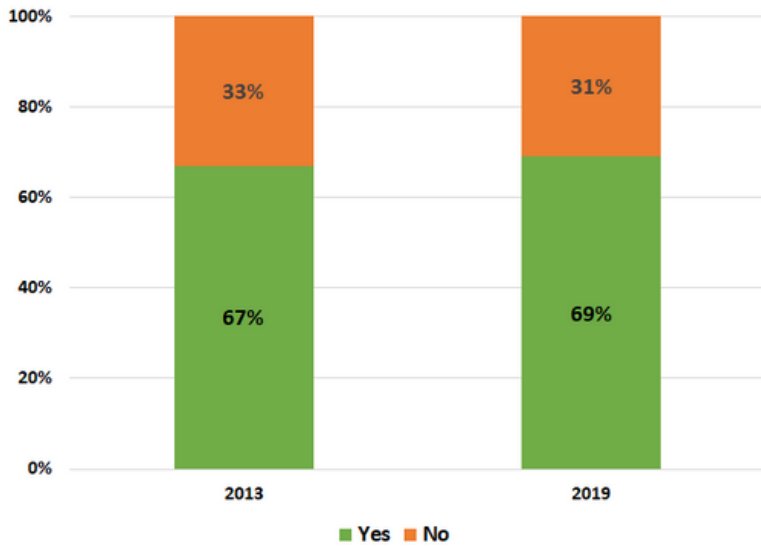
ASSOCIATIONS	103,832
MIX ASSOCIATIONS & CORPORATES	51,916
CORPORATES	22,572
INDIVIDUALS	24,829
REGIONS & CITIES	4,514
OTHERS	18,058
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS	225,722

1.10. VAT Registration & Statutes

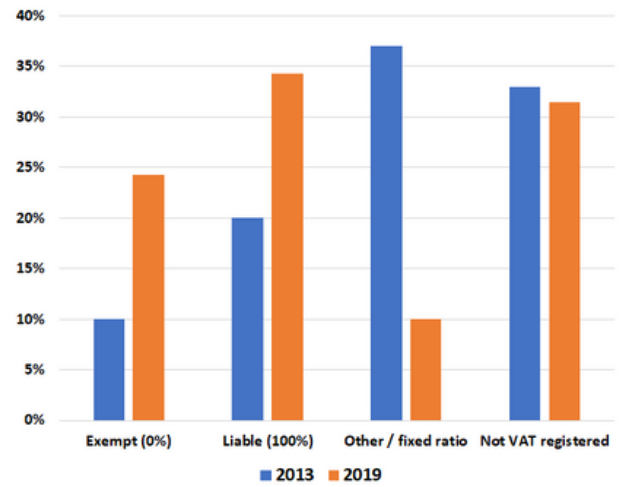
An increasing number of INPAs apply for VAT registration



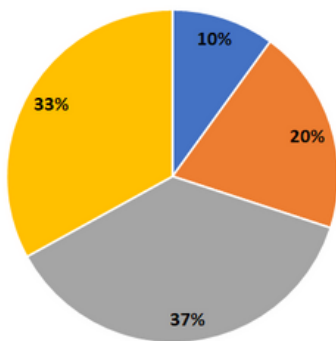
ARE YOU VAT REGISTERED ?



VAT STATUTES

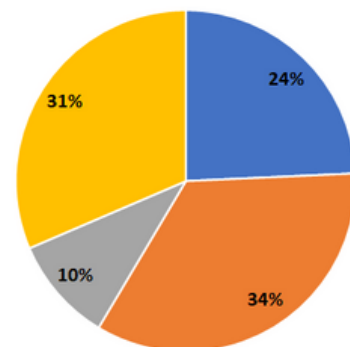


2013



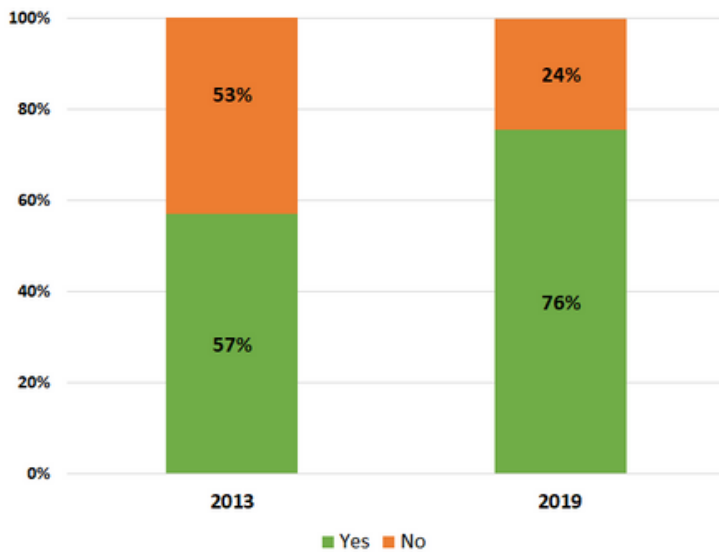
■ Exempt (0%) ■ Liable (100%) ■ Other / fixed ratio ■ Not VAT registered

2019



■ Exempt (0%) ■ Liable (100%) ■ Other / fixed ratio ■ Not VAT registered

1.11. European Transparency Register (E.T.R.)

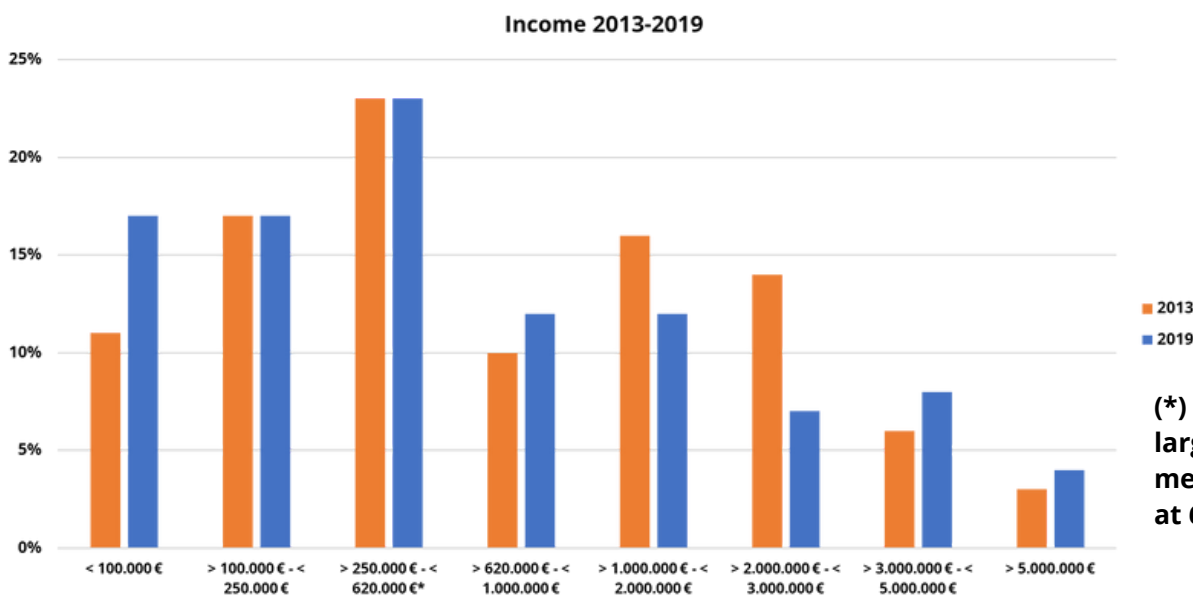


A wide majority of associations is registered in the E.T.R. The sharp increase shows the “professionalization” of associations and their will to be as transparent as possible.

2. ANNUAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE

2.1. Percentages per range of income and comparison with 2013 data

An increase of INPAs with income below 100.000 € is reported (17% vs. 11% in 2013). Interestingly, the higher categories >3.000.000 € and above have increased as well. Extrapolated data indicates a total income of ca 3.5 billion €.

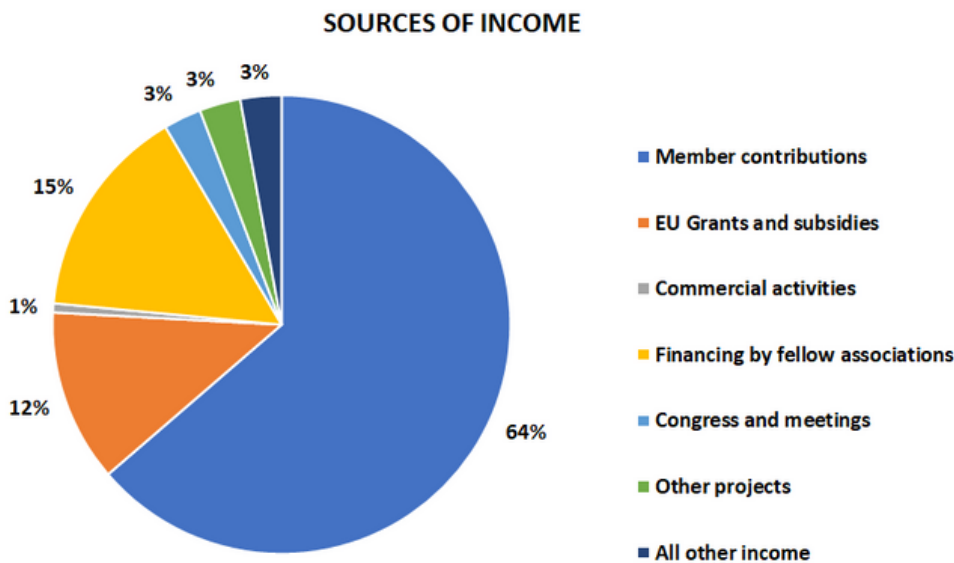


(*) Threshold for FAIB large associations membership fee fixed at 620.000 €

2.2 Source of income

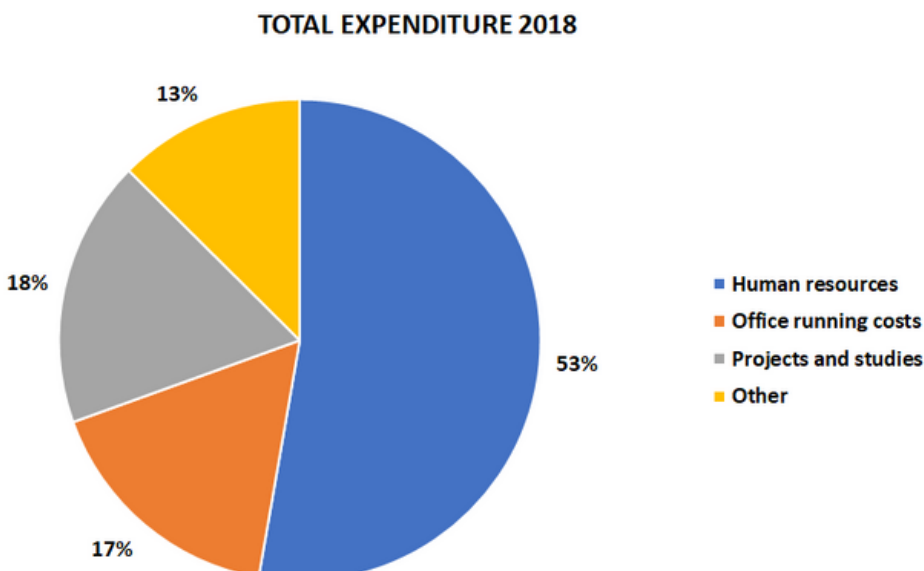
No change on the origin of INPAs' income occurred over the given period (2013 – 2019) indicating 84% coming from "abroad"(EU or elsewhere) and the Belgian source of revenue (11%) remains well above that of EU funding (5%). This important source of revenue for Belgium should not be underestimated.

Better knowledge of EU funding possibilities, procedures and easier access could help INPAs – in particular smaller ones – to increase their income and improve their services.



2.3 Expenditure

The estimated total expenditure – based on extrapolation of data reported – also lies above € 3.5 billion, with an average of € 1.6 million per association. The breakdown of expenditure is reported as follows, of which it is estimated that 84% is spent in Belgium:



One could consider that personnel and office running costs are mainly spent in Belgium and are an important source of income for the Brussels-Capital Region and Belgium at large. Events and meetings, in particular events above 2.500 delegates, are often organised abroad but a very large number of INPAs' conferences, annual general assemblies, congresses and working group meetings generally take place in Belgian venues (hotels, conference centre, academic venues, etc.) or headquarters of the association. Studies and projects are often managed and followed-up in Belgium with collaboration of member associations / experts abroad. The presence and value of INPAs in Belgium is a very positive factor for the Belgian economy, but felt as not always duly acknowledged by Belgian authorities.



3. EMPLOYMENT

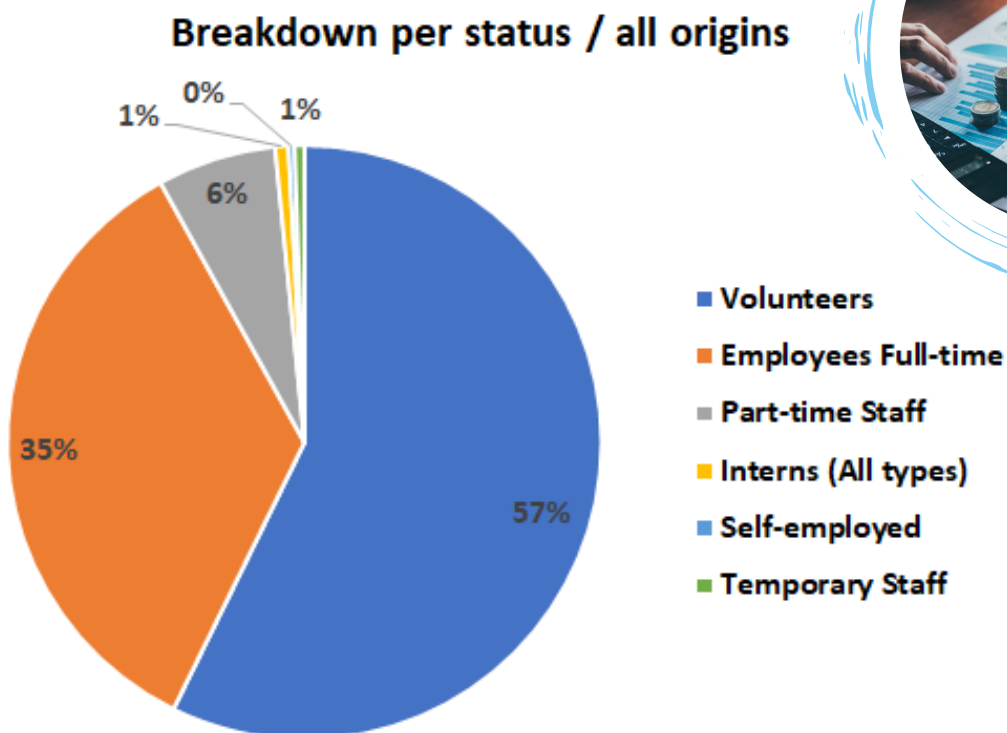
3.1. Direct employment

Extrapolated data on individuals employed on 31/12/2018 or 2019:

All origins		
Volunteers (unpaid)	20668	57%
Employees full-time	12508	35%
Part-time Staff	2335	6%
Interns all types/ with or without limited payment	262	1%
Self-employed	119	0%
Temporary Staff: whatever the duration	191	1%
TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT 2019	36082	100%

Excluding volunteers, the estimated number of employees (part time and interns included) amounts to roughly 12.500 individuals, i.e. an average of 5 per association. One could assume that if INPAs had additional income they would hire additional permanent staff members rather than rely upon volunteers. The number of volunteers involved with INPA activities is a significant token of their added value to society as a whole.

3.1.1. Breakdown per status /origin



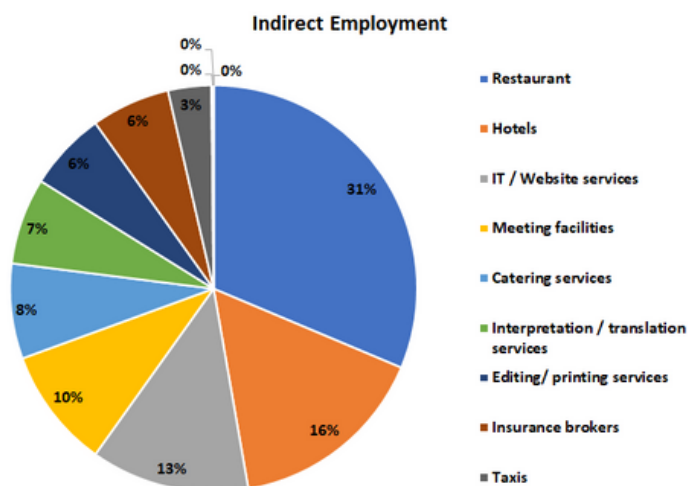
3.1.2. Country of origin of staff

BELGIAN NATIONALS	
Volunteers	37%
Employees full-time	50%
Part-time Staff	11%
Interns all types	0%
Self-employed	0%
Temporary Staff	1%

OTHER EU NATIONALS	
Volunteers	66%
Employees full-time	28%
Part-time Staff	5%
Interns all types	1%
Self-employed	0%
Temporary Staff	0%

NON EU NATIONALS	
Volunteers	70%
Employees full-time	24%
Part-time Staff	5%
Interns all types	1%
Self-employed	0%
Temporary Staff	0%

3.2. Indirect employment



Respondents were asked to report the estimated number of indirect employment (staff of service providers) generated by their association's activities in Belgium in the following services (yearly average):

This extrapolation results in an estimated number of 1.191 indirect employments per association /year and demonstrates again the importance of INPAs' activities to the overall economy.

Yearly average of individuals impacted by INPAs activities	Extrapolated amount	%
Restaurants	960.670	31%
Hotels	488.159	16%
IT/ Website services	386.104	13%
Meeting facilities	293.290	10%
Catering services	231.911	8%
Interpretation/translation services	210.783	7%
Editing/ Printing Services	192.061	6%
Insurance brokers	191.765	6%
Taxi	105.286	3%
Travel/Incentive/Team Building	153	0%
Sight-seeing & shopping	98	0%
TOTAL estimated indirect employment	3.065213	100%

4. OFFICE & MEETING SPACE

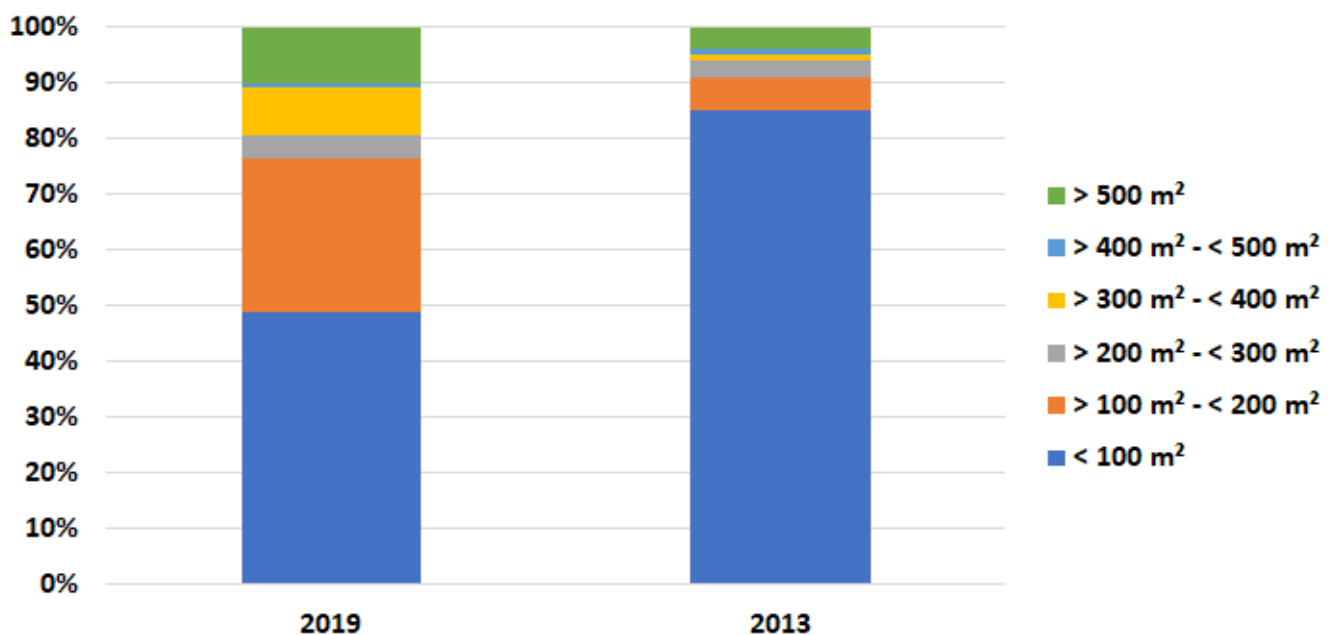
4.1. Office space

The total office space (including meeting rooms) occupied by INPAs in Belgium is estimated at 637.000 m² representing some 247 m² per association, of which 120.000 m² are allocated to meeting space, i.e. an average of 47 m² per association.



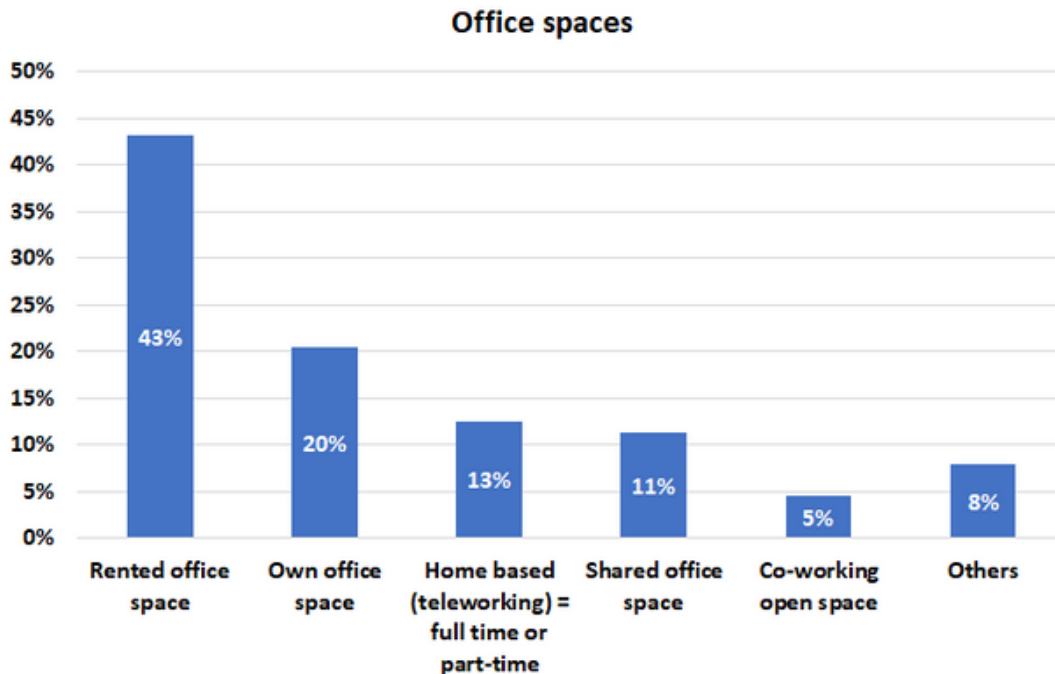
OFFICE SPACE	2013	2019
< 100 m ²	85%	49%
> 100 m ² - < 200 m ²	6%	27%
> 200m ² - < 300 m ²	3%	4%
> 300 m ² - < 400 m ²	1%	9%
> 400 m ² - < 500 m ²	1%	1%
> 500 m ²	4%	10%

Office Space



4.2. Details on office space

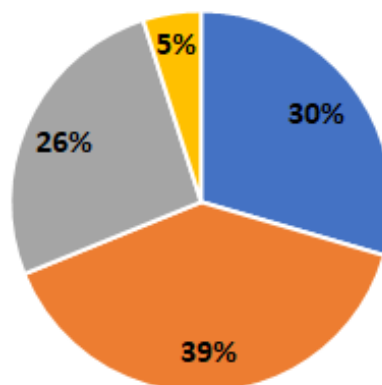
In 2013, 16 % owned their own office space. The situation improved and it amounts to 20% in 2019. This can be interpreted as more members of INPAs providing more funds to purchase office space.



4.3. Meetings

4.3.1. Number and length of stay

Meetings - length of stay

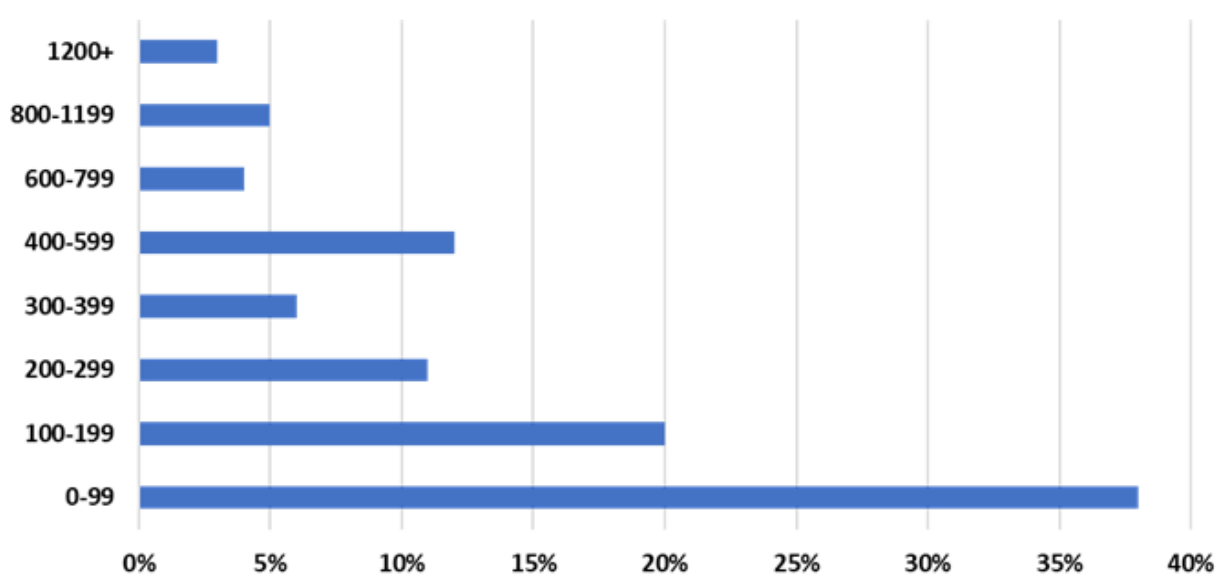


- One day only - No overnight stay
- One day including overnight stay
- Two days including overnight
- More than two days



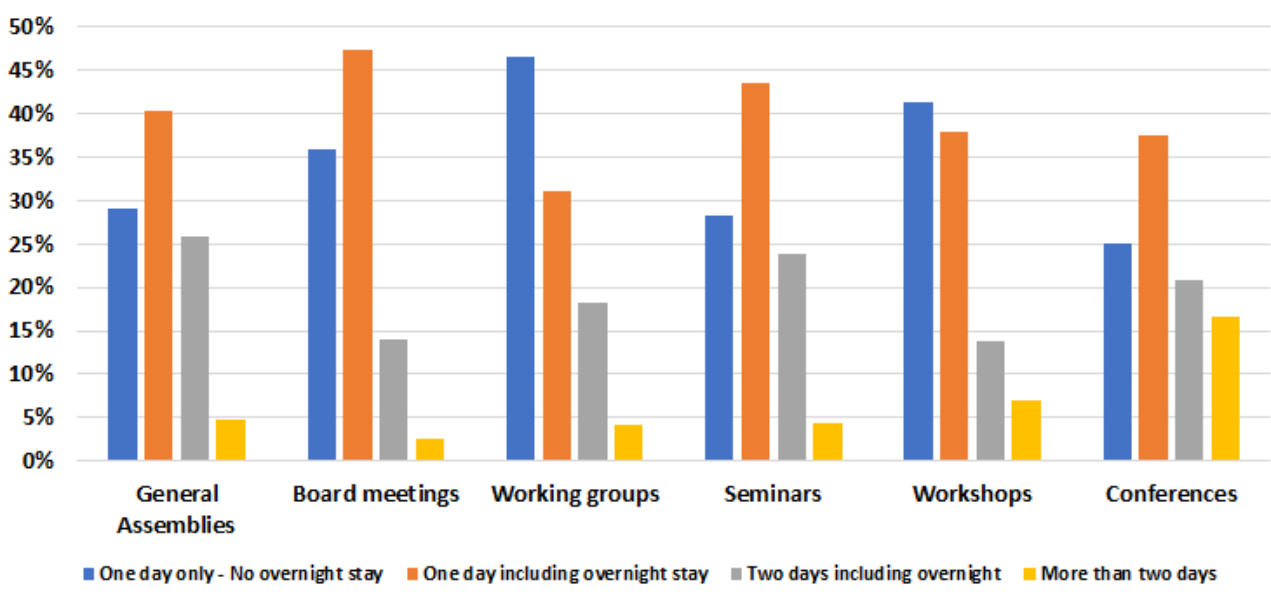
4.3.2. Number of visitors from abroad welcomed in Belgium

Number of visitors from abroad welcomed in Belgium



4.3.2. Number of visitors from abroad welcomed in Belgium

Types of meetings organized



The total number of visitors staying overnight has decreased since 2008 (+17%). However, the number of one day visitors has increased by some 20%, evidence of the change in meeting organization limiting the length and social programmes of meetings to allow delegates to plan a return journey on the same day. The use of modern communication tools such as tele- & video-conferences could also have an impact on the number of visits involving travel and of overnight stays.



5. Evaluation of Belgium as host country

This segment of the survey reflects views expressed on the overall “quality of professional and private life” in Belgium, especially Brussels. It could be seen as a kind of “attractivity barometer”.

The variety of items and the number of questions allowed respondents to express a clear opinion on their host country. Their responses also give a clear indication of progress made and further steps to be taken by investors (promoters, hotels), service providers (outsourced activities) and at political level. Three scores (excellent, adequate, poor) were used to collect a global appreciation.

In a nut-shell, Belgium scores quite low in several areas under the responsibility of public authorities:

- national public transport with bad notes for national public transport and road infrastructure;
- fiscal aspects, with notably social charges for employers and income tax for individuals;
- effectiveness of the administration, be it municipal, regional or federal;
- aspects linked to the environment: cleanliness of streets and – to a lesser extent – air quality and availability of green zones.

As a rule, private partners do better than public players. However, INPAs are less positive about:

- the availability of outsourced services;
- the quality of telecommunications;
- the value-for-money of housing (for sale and for rent);
- the value-for-money of office space for rent and the availability of office space for sale;

However the general opinion prevailing for Belgium/Brussels as a host is not excessively negative, but there is room for further efforts and improvements.

Data below is the transcript of answers received to the respective questions of the questionnaire:



TRANSPORT	INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT TO/FROM BELGIUM	RAILWAY SERVICES	ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE	TAXI SERVICES	LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT
POOR	1%	6%	12%	11%	8%
AVERAGE	4%	26%	34%	27%	19%
GOOD	45%	47%	46%	50%	58%
EXCELLENT	49%	21%	7%	11%	15%

EMPLOYMENT	AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL	GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS	LANGUAGE SKILLS	HIRING COSTS	COMPETITIVENESS WITH STAFF IN OTHER COUNTRIES	CONSULTANTS FOR SPECIFIC POSITIONS OR PROJECTS
POOR	0%	1%	0%	21%	6%	0%
AVERAGE	8%	1%	0%	31%	36%	19%
GOOD	53%	58%	42%	39%	42%	56%
EXCELLENT	39%	39%	58%	8%	15%	25%

QUALITY OF LIFE	HOUSING	ENVIRONMENT	AVAILABILITY OF GREEN ZONES	AIR QUALITY	SCHOOLS	SPORT INFRASTRUCTURES VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY
POOR	1%	8%	5%	31%	0%	1%
AVERAGE	8%	24%	24%	34%	21%	29%
GOOD	59%	51%	50%	30%	67%	58%
EXCELLENT	31%	17%	20%	5%	11%	11%



LEISURE	SHOPPING INFRASTRUCTURES VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY	CULTURAL EVENTS VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY	RESTAURANTS	LEISURE ACTIVITIES OFFER IN THE CITY WHERE YOUR ASSOCIATION IS BASED	LEISURE ACTIVITIES OFFER IN BELGIUM
POOR	5%	0%	0%	0%	1%
AVERAGE	23%	7%	3%	12%	13%
GOOD	53%	53%	43%	64%	63%
EXCELLENT	18%	41%	55%	23%	24%

SERVICES	ACCOUNTING SERVICES	AUDITING SERVICES	LEGAL SERVICES	NOTARIAL SERVICES
POOR	0%	0%	0%	0%
AVERAGE	7%	10%	7%	14%
GOOD	63%	59%	55%	60%
EXCELLENT	30%	30%	38%	25%

OTHER SERVICES	IT & TELECOMM.	POST & DELIVERY SERVICES	E-COMMERCE & RELATED SERVICES	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FOR RESIDENT PURPOSES
POOR	10%	15%	3%	12%	13%
AVERAGE	20%	29%	26%	48%	45%
GOOD	49%	49%	55%	38%	39%
EXCELLENT	21%	7%	16%	3%	3%

6. FAIB RATING



RATING OF FAIB	FIRST CONTACT WITH FAIB	FAIB NEWSLETTER	FAIB DIGEST	FAIB LUNCH-DEBATE
POOR	3%	2%	2%	0%
AVERAGE	12%	12%	21%	15%
GOOD	84%	77%	77%	85%
EXCELLENT	0%	0%	0%	

RATING OF FAIB	ADVICE	PRACTICAL GUIDE FAIB	INFORMATION ON FAIB WEBSITE
POOR	0%	2%	2%
AVERAGE	28%	24%	34%
GOOD	72%	74%	64%
EXCELLENT	0%	0%	0%

6.1. General considerations on FAIB membership and services

6.1.1. Main reasons for joining FAIB

Networking, professional information, VAT issues, assistance in association matters and legal issues, training, study tours, lunch debate, monitoring of national issues of relevance for aisbl etc.

6.1.2. Suggestions to improve FAIB activities & services

Shared services and templates more workshops on the best practices and experience at EU level, more support to EU Funding.



PRESENTING THE FAIB

FAIB is the Federation of European and International Associations established in Belgium. It is a not-for-profit organization that has no political objectives.

ITS PURPOSES

- To take and to pursue every initiative to encourage European and international associations to be established and to remain in Belgium.
- To study, to further and to defend the interests – both moral and material – of its members, without being involved in their activities. FAIB represents its members to third parties and defends their interests, notably to all public and private bodies.
- To obtain, by concerted action, official legal recognition of associations and the associative movement by Belgian, European and international authorities.
- To help obtain every possible measure likely to facilitate the activities of its members.
- To assist its members in the organization of their activities, especially by setting up joint studies, administrative and auxiliary services, etc.
- To keep its members informed of developments in legal and administrative spheres which affect them

FAIB was founded in 1949 as an initiative of the leaders of the UIA (Union of International Associations) who wished to draw the attention of authorities to the existence in Belgium of international associations and to the need to facilitate their activities.

FAIB is directed by its General Assembly and managed by a Board of directors composed of representatives of member associations. FAIB is mainly financed by its members' subscriptions.

MEMBERSHIP

FAIB membership includes several categories:

1. **Full members:** European and international organizations legally or effectively based in Belgium that have a truly European or international character and are not-for-profit.

2. **Associate members:** individuals or corporate entities whose activities are in line with the interests of FAI members to whom they can offer tailor-made support.

3. **Honorary members:** persons on whom the General Assembly confers this title in recognition of their special competence or the valued service they have rendered to the Federation.

4. **Sponsors:** persons or corporate entities willing to extend financial support to the Federation

5. **Corresponding members:** Associations that are NOT established in Belgium but want to follow legal developments in Belgium.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Amongst its past activities, FAIB took part in the creation, in 1983, with the Belgian government, of an International Association Centre (IAC) located in: MAI (Maison des Associations Internationales), 40, rue Washington, 1050 Brussels where FAIB is located.

It contributed to the modification, in December 1954, of the law of October 25th 1919, governing international associations with scientific aims, in order to extend this law to international associations with philanthropic, religious, artistic and pedagogic aims. It also closely collaborated to the drawing up of the new law of 2 May 2002 on non-profit associations, international nonprofit associations and foundations.

Within the constraints imposed by its limited financial resources and the priorities fixed by the members, FAIB carries out the following activities:

- Following up the application of certain clauses of the law of May 2nd 2002;
- The study of legal and fiscal issues in general and continuing the regular series of lunch debates on subjects of common interest to INPAs with the support of FAIB Associate Members;

- Establishing and maintaining relationships with social partners in Belgium and with the services of the European Union;
- Establishing and maintaining relations with federations of European and international associations based in other countries;
- Benchmark of remuneration packages applied by international associations (by category);
- Socio-economic Survey on the value of international associations based in Belgium (publication of the 2012 survey end of May 2013);
- Organization of study tours to cities and conference centres in all parts of the world.
- Publication of a quarterly newsletter, FAIB NEWS for members and its Digest for non-members.

For further details and membership conditions, contact:



faib@faib.org
dvranken@faib.org

RECOGNITION

RECOGNITION BY THE BRUSSELS CONVENTION BUREAU, VISITBRUSSELS

We welcome the release of the latest socio-economic survey of the FAIB, which shows the great variety of international associations and their commitment to continue dealing with the immense diversity of issues relevant to society.

Since the last survey, which was published in 2013, the world has changed, and Brussels has kept up with the rapid evolution of its demography, activities, mobility, service offerings, and overall urban dimension.

A fresh dimension that may also be found in the community of international associations present in Brussels. In 2022, we celebrated 10 editions of the European Association Summit, an event that has also moved from a regional conference into a global event thanks to a hybrid format allowing onsite and online presence.

With an increasing number of thematic summits and conferences organized by international organizations, associations, and the corporate and academic world, Brussels has also strengthened its role at the global level. The value of networks is also present in the Global Association Hubs Partnership alliance, where Brussels teams up with Dubai, Singapore, and Washington DC as key regional hubs for international associations' headquarters and their events.

The significant role of Brussels as a headquarters city is clearly identified in the survey. We see the clear value identified in the responses and strive towards creating the best conditions for association services and activities. A benchmarking exercise like the one conducted by FAIB provides us with a good overview of all the positive aspects as well as the challenges that remain. Working together with association representatives will lead us to be stronger on both sides: the city and the associations. The Visit Brussels Convention and Association Bureau is a privileged partner to carry out that mission.

Associations are part of Brussels' DNA. The city has evolved steadily and has always been home to local craftsmen's guilds, social organizations, and scientific societies. For over a century, it has also benefited from a special legal status for international associations, and its vital force continues to shape the character of our districts in parallel to the activities and discussions of the highest importance at European and global level.

We look forward to reinforcing that strength that makes Brussels and associations the source of new ideas and actions for a sustainable, better world.

Patrick Bontinck
CEO visit.brussels

Elisabeth Van Ingelgem
Director, Strategy & International, visit.brussels





5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE BRUSSELS FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

HERE'S WHY BRUSSELS IS THE PLACE TO BE:

- 1 NUMBER ONE CITY FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**
Brussels is the natural home for international associations, with over 2400 of them having their headquarters in the city.
- 2 DECISION-MAKING HEART OF EUROPE**
Brussels-based institutions provide the infrastructure for much of business and everyday life. You will be at the regulatory heart of Europe, where key decisions are made.
- 3 A COSMOPOLITAN CITY**
Having over 180 nationalities on its ground – Brussels is the most international city in Europe.
- 4 COMPETITIVE REAL ESTATE**
Commercial and residential property availability and rates make Brussels a prime location for international businesses and employees.
- 5 TALENT POOL**
With its highly skilled multilingual workforce and depth of support services Brussels is the best spot for building membership, enhancing networks and creating new projects.

COME AND JOIN THE FABULOUS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ECOSYSTEM IN BRUSSELS! YOU'LL BE IN GOOD COMPANY!