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MANPOWERGROUP EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY – MEOS Q2 2019

Nearly one in ten Belgian employers plan to create jobs in the second quarter of 2019

Employment prospects remain encouraging in Belgium despite a climate of increasing uncertainty, notably linked to Brexit

- *Belgian Net Employment Outlook shows an encouraging value (+6) for the third consecutive quarter*
- *Employers in Flanders (+8) report their strongest Outlooks in more than three years*
- *Job gains are anticipated in nine out of 10 industry sectors during Q2 2019*
- *Large and Medium-size employers report healthy hiring intentions with Net Employment Outlooks of +20 and +14, respectively*
- *Payroll gains are expected in 40 of 44 countries and territories surveyed in the world and in 23 of 26 countries in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa)*
- *Download or read the full, latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook report in our new ManpowerGroup Knowledge Center. Also download our infographic (www.manpowergroup.be).*

Brussels, 12th March 2019 – According to ManpowerGroup's Employment Outlook published today, Belgian employers will continue to create jobs in the second quarter of 2019. At national level, 9% of the 751 Belgian employers interviewed by ManpowerGroup at the end of January expect to increase staffing levels between now and the end of June, whereas only 2% plan to reduce staff. 83% of employers included in the survey forecast no change. After seasonal adjustment, the Net Employment Outlook – the difference between the percentage of employers expecting to hire staff and the percentage of those planning to reduce staff – stands at an encouraging +6, the same level for the third consecutive quarter. When compared with this time one year ago, employers report an improvement of 3 percentage points.

«The results of our survey indicate that Belgian employers are sticking to their recruitment intentions, despite a climate of increasing uncertainty, linked in particular to Brexit», explains Philippe Lacroix, Managing Director of ManpowerGroup BeLux. «In the short term, the daily challenge for companies is to try to fill their vacancies, whatever their level. Despite progress made, our labor market in Belgium still has structural weaknesses with several key indicators that remain below the European average, as highlighted by the National Bank in its annual report.»



Strongest Outlooks in more than three years in Flanders

Employers in all three regions expect to add to payrolls in the forthcoming quarter. In Flanders, the Net Employment Outlook stands at its strongest level (+8) since the fourth quarter of 2015. Employers are also quite optimistic in Wallonia (+7) and Brussels (+5).

Positive Outlooks in nine of 10 industry sectors

Employers in nine of the 10 industry sectors expect to grow staffing levels during the second quarter of 2019. The strongest hiring prospects are reported in the Electricity, Gas & Water sector, where the Net Employment Outlook stands at +16. Transport, Storage & Communications sector employers also report steady hiring prospects with an Outlook of +13, and Outlooks of +11 are reported in three sectors – the Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing sector, the Mining & Quarrying sector and the Public & Social sector. Hiring is expected to continue at the same pace as in the previous quarter in Construction (+10), while it is expected to increase in the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services sectors (+8).

Meanwhile, employers in the Manufacturing sector are more cautious (+4), whilst those in the Wholesale and Retail Trade (+1) and in the Restaurants & Hotels sector plan to maintain their workforce at the same level (0).

In comparison with the previous quarter, hiring prospects strengthen in six of the 10 industry sectors and in seven in comparison with Q2 2018.

Growing confidence in line with company size

The results of the survey show that employer confidence is increasing according to the size of the company: Net Employment Outlook stands at +5 in the Micro-employer segment (<10 employees), +13 in the Small employers segment (10-49 employees), +14 in the medium-sized employers segment (50-249 employees) and +20 in the Large employers segment (≥ 250 employees).

Positive hiring intentions in 40 of 44 countries and territories surveyed

ManpowerGroup interviewed over 59,000 employers across 44 countries and territories to forecast labour market activity in Quarter 2 2019.

- *Outlooks are positive 40 of 44 countries and territories in the period up to the end of June.* Employers in 15 of 44 countries and territories surveyed report stronger hiring plans when compared with the prior quarter, while weaker hiring intentions are reported in 18 and no change is expected in 11. When compared with the second quarter of 2018, Outlooks improve in 13 countries and territories, but decline in 27 and are unchanged in four.
- *Strongest and weakest hiring plans:* Second-quarter hiring confidence is strongest in Croatia (+34), Japan (+27), Greece (+21), U.S. (+19), Hong Kong (+19) and Taiwan (+18), while the weakest labor markets are forecast for Argentina, Hungary, Spain and Turkey (all these countries at 0). Hiring intentions remain stable in India (+13), while they decrease slightly in China (+7).
- *An increase in payrolls is forecast for 23 of 26 Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA) region countries during the second quarter.* Hiring intentions improve in 10 countries when compared with the previous quarter but decline in eight. In comparison with this time one year ago, employers report stronger hiring plans in 10 countries but Outlooks weaken in 15. In the EMEA region, the strongest Outlooks are reported in Croatia (+34), in Greece (+21) and in Portugal (+13). Employers in all four of Europe's largest economies expect to add to payrolls in the coming quarter. German employers report the group's most confident Outlook (+9), ahead of France (+5), Italy (+4) and the United Kingdom (+4). Forecasts remain stable in the Netherlands (+4), while Hungary, Spain and Turkey have the lowest Net Employment Outlooks (all at 0).



The next Manpower Employment Outlook Survey will be released on 11th June 2019 to report hiring expectations for the third quarter of 2019.

(*) Net Employment Outlook.” This figure is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting to see a decrease in employment at their location in the next quarter. The result of this calculation is the Net Employment Outlook. Net Employment Outlooks for countries and territories that have accumulated at least 17 quarters of data are reported in a seasonally adjusted format unless otherwise stated.

(**) Commentary is based on seasonally adjusted data where available. Data is not seasonally adjusted for Croatia or Portugal.

Presentation of the Survey

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey for the first quarter of 2019 was conducted between 16th and 29th January 2019 by interviewing a representative sample of employers from more than 59,000 private companies and public organizations in 44 countries and territories around the world (751 in Belgium). The aim of the survey is to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. All survey participants were asked the same question: “How do you anticipate total employment at your location to change in the three months to the end of June 2019 as compared to the current quarter?” It is the only forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in its size, scope, longevity and area of focus. The Survey has been running for more than five decades and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. It is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

Note that in Quarter 2 of 2008, the survey adopted the TRAMO-SEATS model for seasonal adjustment of data. As a result, you may notice some seasonally adjusted data points change slightly from previous reports. This model is recommended by the Eurostat department of the European Union and the European Central Bank and is widely used internationally.

Note to Editors

Full survey results for each of the 44 countries and territories included in this quarter's survey, plus regional and global comparisons, can be found in the Manpower Press Room at www.manpower.com/meos. In addition, all tables and graphs from the full report are available to be downloaded for use in publication or broadcast from the ManpowerGroup Online Visual Library, also located in the Press Room on <http://www.manpowergroup.com/library>

Results for all 44 countries can be viewed in the new interactive Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Explorer tool at <http://manpowergroupsolutions.com/DataExplorer/>.

About ManpowerGroup®

ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills. Our expert family of brands – Manpower®, Experis®, ManpowerGroup® Solutions, FuturSkill®, Proservia™ et Right Management® – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across 80 countries and territories and has done for 70 years. In 2019, ManpowerGroup was named one of Fortune's Most Admired Companies for the seventeenth year and one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the ninth year in 2018, confirming our position as the most trusted and admired brand in the industry. In Belgium, ManpowerGroup Belgium wins HR Excellence Award 2018 in the category 'Best Staffing, Sourcing & Contingent Workforce Management Company'.

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