



# The many faces of LBC-NVK



LBC-NVK VAKBOND VOOR MORGEN

[WWW.LBC-NVK.BE](http://WWW.LBC-NVK.BE)

**Belgium** is a small country with a rich history located in the heart of Europe. The French, German and Dutch influences are still evident: these three languages are officially recognised as national languages. This also has an effect on a political level. In addition to a federal structure, the country also has three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels), each with their own powers.





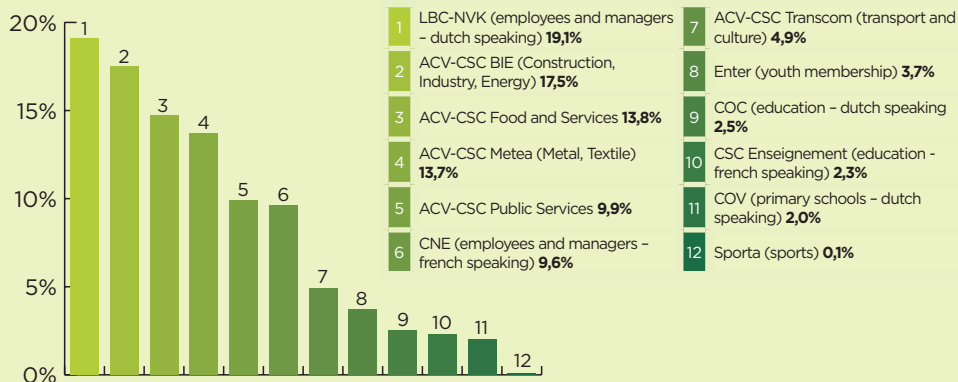
## Trade union landscape

Belgium has one of the highest rates of unionization in the world: some 54% of private-sector workers belong to a trade union. Remarkably, more than half are affiliated to the Christian trade union ACV (1.7 million members). The country also has two other officially recognised trade union confederations: the socialist ABVV (1.2 million members) and the liberal ACLVB (240,000 members). These three trade union confederations occupy a key position within the socio-economic consultations on a national, sectoral and company level. Where possible, they endeavour to present themselves as a collective trade union front.

ACV comprises various federations that defend their members' professional interests in different sectors and professional groups. Within the sectors, they devote themselves to increased job opportunities, greater purchasing power and better conditions of employment.

**LBC-NVK** is the largest trade union federation within the ACV. It represents employees and managers from the private sector in Flanders and Brussels, as well as the interests of workers in most non-profit sectors. Its sister organisation CNE (Centrale Nationale des Employés) focuses on the same French-speaking target group in Wallonia and Brussels.

### MEMBERSHIP PERCENTAGE WITHIN ACV

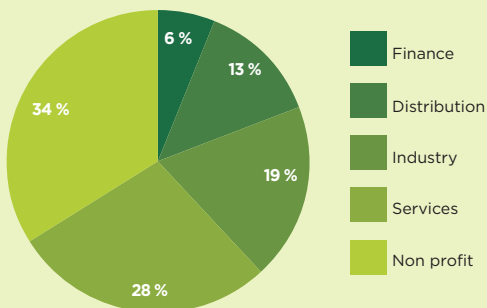






With 320,000 members, LBC-NVK is the largest federation within ACV. Around 60% of its members are female. The federation's activities are divided into five collective sectors. The **non-profit** sector (34%) has recently become the largest collective sector. The growing **services sector** is slightly lower (28%). The **industry sector** (19%) has endured some severe knocks in recent years. The **distribution sector** continues to hover around 13% while the **finance sector** remains the little brother with only 6%.

#### MEMBERSHIP PERCENTAGE PER SECTOR WITHIN LBC-NVK



LBC-NVK also defends the interests of **managers** from various sectors. In addition to advice on labour law, LBC-NVK also offers managerial staff an educational trade union network. With the help of workshops and discussion sessions, LBC-NVK provides a network for establishing contact with others, for learning, and for acquiring an insight into legal and social frameworks. Managerial members often occupy a separate place due to their management position. The managerial activities of LBC-NVK take into account the specific situation of managerial members and their concerns, but always integrate these with the general activities of the trade union.

## Collective consultation

The outlines for the evolution of wages and conditions of employment in Belgium are laid down in an inter-professional agreement every two years. That national framework is then fleshed out further on a sectoral level – often with significant differences. This results in sectoral collective labour agreements that are binding for the entire sector.

The sectoral consultation occurs in approximately 100 sectoral joint committees. Employer and employee representatives have equal mandates within these committees. The committees also mediate during conflicts within companies from the sector.

At **company level**, employers and employee representatives conclude agreements about wages and conditions of employment in consultation. Employee representatives are elected by their colleagues during social elections held every four years. In terms of the number of elected representatives, ACV is also the largest trade union in Belgium, with roughly 55% of mandates. The socialist trade union ABVV is next with approximately 35%.



Within LBC-NVK, elected representatives determine the direction. These committed volunteers are represented up to the highest bodies of LBC-NVK. From the trade union reality of their company, they move through to sectoral interest groups, the Governing Council, the Committee or the Daily Management Board. This allows LBC-NVK to keep a finger on the pulse of the work floor. The president of LBC-NVK is also a volunteer.

## Individual interests

In addition to providing collective services via the social dialogue, LBC-NVK also represents the **individual interests** of its members. They can contact employee representatives for advice and assistance either within their company or in the regional and local offices of LBC-NVK and the umbrella organisation ACV.

The problems of individual members are resolved in consultation with the employer where possible. If necessary, however, LBC-NVK can also offer **legal as-**

**sistance** to settle disputes before a court of law.

Members are not required to pay anything extra for this service. Everything is included in their monthly contribution.

Members can also contact LBC-NVK about issues that are less urgent. The activities of a trade union extend beyond the resolution of problems. Thinking about the direction you want your career to take is something LBC-NVK can also assist you with, which is why it established the Centre for Career Development. The Centre welcomes anyone eager to consider his or her career. The staff members of the Centre for Career Development coach employees, showing them how to make career choices or prepare for a job application.



## International activities

Solidarity between trade unions is essential in a globalised economy. This is not an empty word for LBC-NVK. We wish to deliver a constructive contribution and are therefore working on a range of **international trade union initiatives**.

On a European level, we are actively participating in and supporting the expansion of European Works Councils. LBC-NVK is also an active member of several European sector trade unions. This allows us to have an effective say in the European social dialogue and to defend a social Europe that acknowledges workers' interests.

- UNI Europa (distribution, ICT and consultancy, telecom, temping agencies, finance)
- IndustriALL (metal, non-ferrous, steel, chemical, petroleum, gas and electricity, paper, textile, clothing, leather and footwear)
- EFFAT (food)
- ETF (logistics, maritime)
- Eurocadres (managerial staff)
- EPSU (non-profit)





On a global level, we also participate in the development of international framework agreements and social rights. We do this as a fellow player in several important global trade union confederations.

- UNI Global Union
- IndustriALL (metal, non-ferrous, steel, chemical, petroleum, gas and electricity, paper, textile, clothing, leather and footwear)
- IUF (food)

In cooperation with UNI Global Union and World Solidarity (WSM), LBC-NVK helps foreign trade unions expand their activities. We are currently supporting the Arab Workers Union in Israel, the Alliance of Health Workers in the Philippines, the textile trade union Garteks in Indonesia, GK in Bangladesh and NDW in India.

Moreover, we are a committed partner in international organisations such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, which fights for concrete employee demands within the textile industry in low-wage countries.

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