

**ENSURE EFFICIENT PERMITTING PROCESSES, COMPETITIVE ENERGY SUPPLY
AND STRONG LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES**

- **Set swift and efficient permitting processes.**
- **Secure (sustainable and renewable) energy supply at competitive costs.**
- **Position Belgium and its regions as logistics gateway to EU, implement infrastructure updates.**

As our member companies aspire to innovate, digitize, and meet robust sustainability ambitions, the Chamber urges Belgium and its regions to seize this transformative opportunity. The goal is to attract future investments by securing essential prerequisites and shaping a forward-looking landscape. Empower the investors with a true “license to operate”:

- **Set swift and efficient permitting processes**, saving both time and resources. Permitting processes are currently a source of major concern for many businesses across industries. Industries regret the lack of consultation. Accelerating environmental permit approvals not only fosters investment but also promotes sustainable growth. Waiting times of up to six months are detrimental to these objectives.
- **Position Belgium and its regions as logistics gateway to Europe** as part of an overall value chain. Belgium serves as a logistical hub for several industries thanks to its central geographic location. As a component of a wider value chain, we must continue to capitalize on this advantage and progressively position Belgium and its regions as a hub for European logistics. Accordingly, Belgium should capitalize on its advantageous location, but it should also increase its investments in infrastructure which should be future proof. Investing in sustainable fuel and charging infrastructure is crucial to support green logistics initiatives. The regional governments should allocate investments and ensure that the electricity grid is capable of supporting electric logistics operations. The same attention should be given to hydrogen refueling stations. The development of public charging and refueling infrastructure, especially for heavy logistics, will be essential in meeting the growing demand for sustainable transportation.
- **Secure (sustainable and renewable) energy supply** – the beating heart of our economy – at competitive costs compared to neighboring countries. We are convinced that policy can play a crucial role in stimulating key technologies. We advocate for Belgium to establish itself as a central hub for pioneering pilot projects in the field of energy transition. To achieve this goal, Belgium’s comprehensive set of tax incentives to support R&D should be extended to energy transition, decarbonization and ESG. An attractive tax environment is essential to put Belgium on the map for investments in this area.

REFRAIN FROM IMPOSING MORE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS COMPARED TO EU PEERS

- **Refrain from introducing additional obligations which are not part of the framework of the EU.**
- **Steer from unilaterally adopting new legislation during ongoing EU-level discussions.**

As Belgium seeks to differentiate itself as a prime investment destination, it is critical to refrain from imposing more stringent requirements than those prevalent in other EU countries. Frequently, local management finds itself vying for investments in a competitive landscape that involves other European countries, especially neighbors. The preservation of equitable conditions necessitates avoiding gold-plating.

ESTABLISH A PREDICTABLE AND STABLE FRAMEWORK TO ATTRACT LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

- **Gain upfront insights into the implications through dialogue with the corporates.**
- **Set stability and legal certainty as a top priority.**
- **Stay clear from retroactive implementation, grant sufficient time to adapt.**
- **Invest in the digital infrastructure of the administrations.**

- **Gain upfront insights into the implications through dialogue with the corporates.** A realistic, reliable and stable investment climate is required an environment that can only be fostered through dialogue. Policymakers can gain insights into the practical implications of their decisions, allowing for more informed and well-crafted legislation that strikes a balance between regulatory objectives and the ease of implementation. Cultivating such constructive relationship with government administrations, including an ongoing dialogue between the tax services and businesses, is crucial. Engaging in discussions with small and large multinational companies – in the sense of companies active in more than one country – empowers policymakers to leverage their international knowledge to identify opportunities for shaping an investment environment that positions Belgium as a top-tier destination for investments spanning diverse sectors.
- **Set stability and legal certainty as a top priority.** Even if Belgium and its regions boast strong assets, local management cannot persuade their headquarters to commit to long-term investments without a predictable and stable framework. The extent of the disturbance caused when corporate headquarters become aware of new legislative proposals being considered by the government, especially when they apply retroactively, should not be underestimated. Even if these are mere speculative ideas, they pose a significant threat to potential investments. Belgium faces a mounting challenge in creating a distinctive attractive legal and taxation framework as international tax harmonization gains traction. Establish a competitive tax system for businesses, emphasizing broader fiscal stability and legal certainty as a top priority. Ensuring stable, long-term conditions over a period of 5-10 years enhances business confidence in our economy and offers clarity.
- **Stay clear from retroactive implementation and grant sufficient time to adapt.** The Chamber believes that companies must be given sufficient time to adapt to legislative changes and that frequent changes to legislation do not contribute to legal certainty. Realistic implementation timelines are particularly important to avoid causing unnecessary disruptions.
- **Invest in the digital infrastructure of the administrations.** Besides the mere need for practical and manageable laws, these objectives should be reinforced through continuous investments in the digital infrastructure of the administrations, as well as the automation and standardization of information flow. Aim for a straightforward and transparent tax return process and foster open communication. Embrace digitization, conduct tax audits promptly after the fiscal year's conclusion, and ensure efficient execution in alignment with the demands of the digital age.