

Official Starting Links

Professional card and self-employment in Flanders and Brussels-Capital

Find the right official source before you act.

This is a free navigation guide for non-EU nationals considering self-employment in Belgium.

What this guide does

It shows you which official authority owns which part of the process, what each source is useful for, and the questions it cannot answer for you. It is not personal legal advice and should not be used to guess your individual route.

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Government websites and procedures can change. ANKA will review and update this resource when material information changes.

Start with the right authority

Belgium's self-employment route is not owned by one single office. The professional card is regional; long-stay/residence matters are federal; business-registration and VAT steps sit elsewhere. The order that applies to you depends on your personal starting position.

Use the official pages to understand the process. Do not use them to self-diagnose a legal situation.

If your residence position, exemption, employment status, previous refusal or work authorisation is unclear, obtain qualified legal advice.

1. Professional card: Flanders

Use this source if the activity will genuinely be established in the Flemish Region.

It explains the Flemish professional-card framework, requirements and application information for foreign entrepreneurs.

[Open the official Flemish professional-card page](#)

What to look for: whether the Flemish route is relevant to the planned activity, the current conditions and the current application information.

2. Professional card: Brussels-Capital

Use this source if the activity will genuinely be established in Brussels-Capital.

It explains the Brussels professional-card framework for non-European nationals and the information used to assess a proposed self-employed activity.

[Open the official Brussels professional-card page](#)

What to look for: the regional criteria, the current process and the project information Brussels asks applicants to demonstrate.

The federal immigration information

3. Professional card and authorisation to stay

The Belgian Immigration Office explains the federal immigration side. The professional card is an authorisation for a self-employed activity; a person's permission to stay is a separate legal matter. The exact process depends on individual circumstances.

[Open the Immigration Office professional-card page](#)

What to look for: general federal information, exemptions and the distinction between the professional card and authorisation to stay.

If you are applying from outside Belgium, also check the Belgian embassy or consulate responsible for your country of residence. It is the official place to confirm local submission and document instructions.

4. Long-stay information

The Immigration Office also provides general information about national long-stay entries. Use this only to understand the official landscape; do not assume that a general page answers the facts of your own situation.

[Open the Immigration Office long-stay information](#)

5. Starting and registering a business

Once the necessary authorisations are in place, a business may still need enterprise, VAT, social-security and other start-up formalities. The federal business portal explains the standard procedures for self-employed workers.

[Open the FPS Economy business-start procedures](#)

What to look for: enterprise number, VAT identification where applicable, employer registration if staff are hired, and links to related formalities.

How to use these links without getting lost

Use the links in this order:

1. Read the relevant regional professional-card page.

First understand whether your business will genuinely operate in Flanders or Brussels-Capital.

2. Read the federal Immigration Office page.

Understand the distinction between authorisation for the activity and the separate authorisation-to-stay question.

3. Check your embassy or consulate if you are outside Belgium.

Use the official Belgian post responsible for your country of residence, not a generic blog or agent.

4. Read the business-start formalities only after the route makes sense.

Do not rush into company registration or VAT activation before you understand what you need to build and why.

Do not confuse official information with individual advice.

The official sources explain rules and procedures. They cannot decide how your nationality, residence position, exemption, work history, business structure or proposed activity applies in your specific case.

Where ANKA fits

This free directory helps you find the right authority. ANKA's paid tools and future templates help you organise what sits around the route: your business idea, evidence, customer logic, market positioning, financial assumptions and practical next questions.

The **Professional Card Eligibility & Route Tool** is designed for people who need structured help understanding their own starting position and gaps. It is not a legal opinion or an approval prediction.

Where the question is legal, seek advice from a qualified legal professional.

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