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PRESS RELEASE

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2016: Regional distribution of Belgian imports and exports of goods and services

- **Brussels:** Decline in total imports and exports despite growth of international trade in services
- **Flanders:** Strongest import and export growth since 2011, but export surplus under pressure
- **Wallonia:** Higher exports and lower imports drive up the export surplus
- **Between 2011 and 2016 net exports of Belgium rose from €-1.9 billion to €+5.6 billion, but this improvement was the result of very different developments in the three regions: €-11.8 billion in Brussels, €8,3 billion in Flanders and €+0,1 billion in Wallonia.**

The regional breakdown of Belgian imports and exports of goods and services is made in close collaboration between the NBB and the regional Statistical Authorities. This press release contains the first regional results for 2016 and revised figures for 2014 and 2015. They are consistent with the national accounts published in October 2018.

Brussels

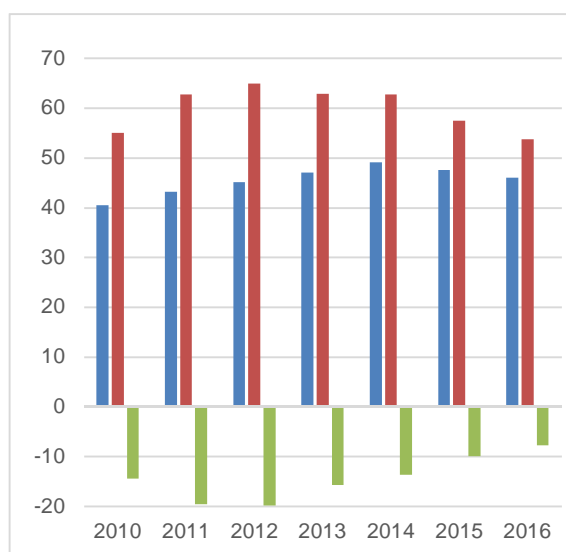
The decline in total Brussels **exports** (-3.2 %) in 2016 was due entirely to exports of goods (-8.4 %), while exports of services increased slightly (+0.9 %).

The decline in total **imports** (-6.4 %) was also attributable entirely to trade in goods (-11.7 %), whereas imports of services increased in 2016 (+1.9 %).

The decline in international trade in goods was due mainly to oil refining and production and distribution of gas and electricity.

For the fourth consecutive year, there was a fall in the Brussels **import surplus** in 2016, down by over a fifth this time (from -€10.0 to -€7.8 billion). That improvement was due entirely to the reduction in the import surplus in trade in goods (-€2.3 billion). In services, the export surplus was down slightly (-€0.2 billion).

Total imports, exports and net exports of Brussels, 2010-2016 (€ billion)



Source: NAI

Growth of imports and exports of Brussels, 2011-2016 (in %)



Flanders

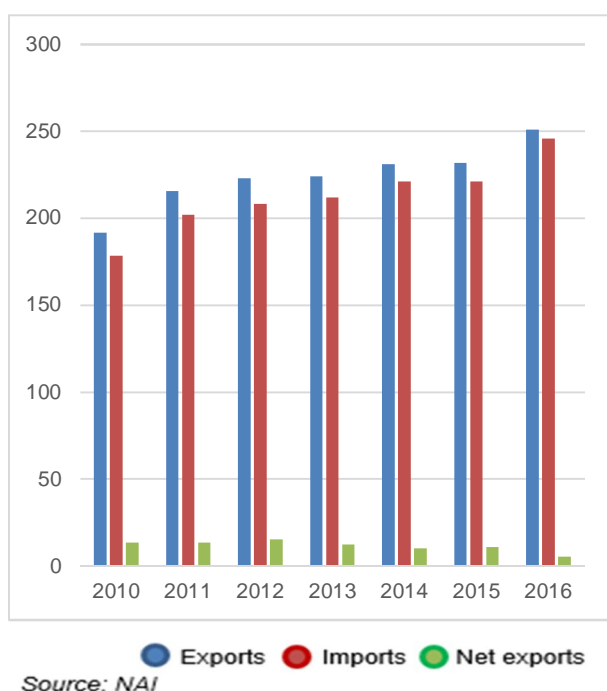
The rise in total Flemish **exports** (+8.2 %) was almost entirely due to exports of goods, which expanded by 10.4%, the strongest growth since 2011. In services, exports grew by 1.5 %.

The increase in total **imports** (11.1 %) was also generated mainly by goods (+12.9 %), although imports of services also recorded significant growth (+5.7 %).

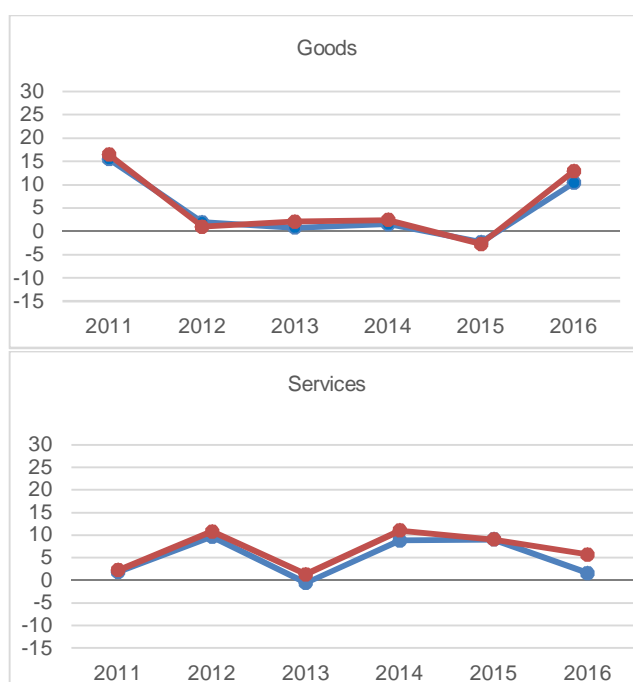
The strong expansion of international trade in goods was driven mainly by trade, substantially by the transfer of foreign trade activities to Belgium by a major pharmaceutical group. The purchase of a large vessel also had a significant impact on import growth.

Although total exports still exceeded total imports, the **export surplus** has been declining slowly since 2012, dropping by half in 2016 (from € 10.8 billion to € 5.1 billion). The goods surplus was down by € 3.4 billion and the services surplus declined by € 2.2 billion.

Total imports, exports and net exports of Flanders, 2010-2016 (€ billion)



Growth of imports and exports of Flanders, 2011-2016 (in %)



Wallonia

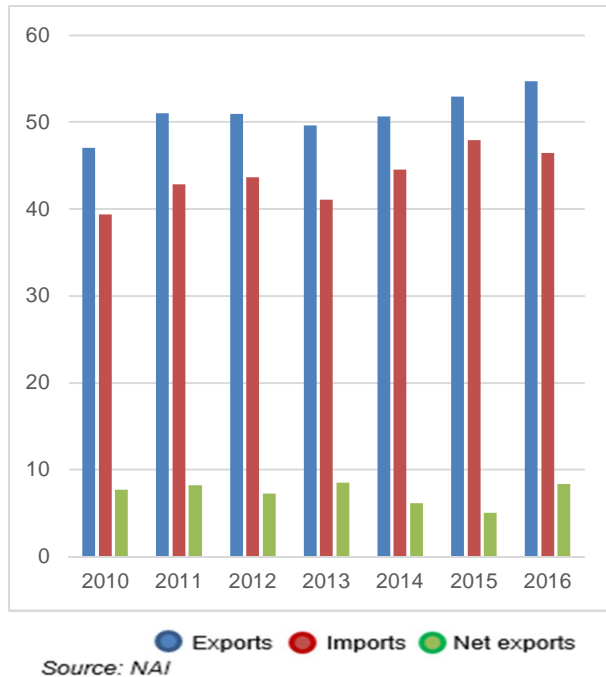
In 2016, the increase in total Wallonian **exports** (+3.4 %) was attributable entirely to goods (+5.7 %). Exports of services were down slightly (-1.3 %).

The decline in total Wallonian **imports** (-3.1 %) was due to the substantial fall in exports of services (-13.1%), after two successive years of very strong growth. However, goods imports increased in 2016 (+3.6 %).

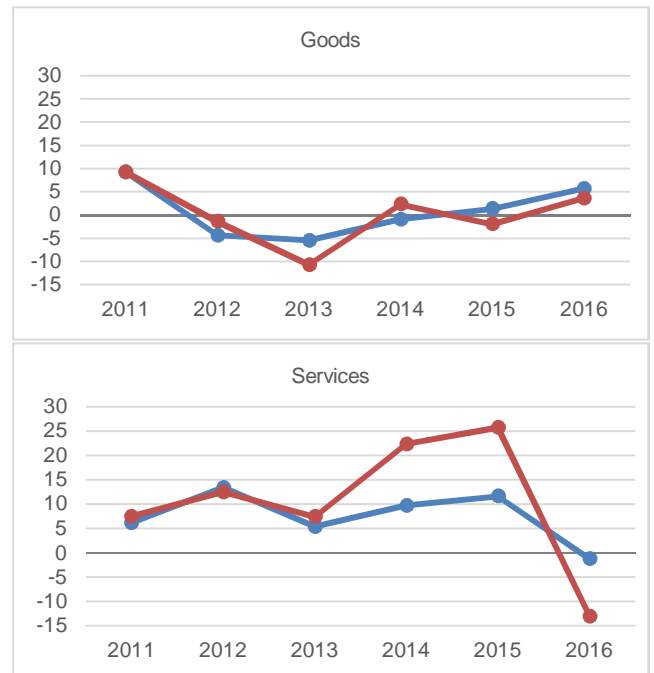
The notable decline in imports of services in 2016 was due mainly to substantial purchases of property rights by the pharmaceutical branch in 2014 and 2015.

The export growth combined with the decline in imports boosted the **export surplus** by two-thirds in 2016 (from € 5.0 to € 8.3 billion). The goods surplus was up by € 1 billion and the services surplus rose by € 2.3 billion.

Total imports, exports and net exports of Wallonia, 2010-2016 (€ billion)



Growth of imports and exports of Wallonia, 2011-2016 (in %)



The table on the next page shows the key variables for the past four years relating to the regional distribution of Belgian imports and exports by working place.

Technical note

Since the 2002 data year, monthly import and export figures for goods per region according to foreign trade have been published on the National Bank of Belgium's website. These results – both the total figure at national level and the shares of each region – differ from the figures published in the national and regional accounts according to the ESA 2010. At national level, the figure deviates for conceptual reasons (such as a difference in the treatment of the transit of natural gas and electricity, and the flows relating to contract work, repairs and triangular trade). The differences in the shares per region are due to the variations in methodological principles applied to the actual regional distribution

For a detailed description of the method used, see the separate publication "Regional distribution of Belgian imports and exports of goods and services, Methodological note", available on the National Bank of Belgium's website.

KEY VARIABLES OF THE REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF THE BELGIAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES

	In absolute numbers (in € million)	Share of each region in the total for the country (in %)	Share of goods and services (in %)	Percentage change compared to the previous year (in %)		
	2016	2016	2016	2014	2015	2016
Exports of goods and services						
Brussels	45.927,6	13,1	100,0	4,3	-3,2	-3,2
Flanders	250.669,2	71,4	100,0	3,1	0,3	8,2
Wallonia	54.690,2	15,6	100,0	2,1	4,5	3,4
Belgium	351.287,0	100,0	100,0	3,1	0,4	5,8
Exports of goods						
Brussels	19.215,5	7,7	41,8	-2,9	-10,9	-8,4
Flanders	191.721,3	77,2	76,5	1,5	-2,3	10,4
Wallonia	37.434,2	15,1	68,4	-0,9	1,3	5,7
Belgium	248.371,0	100,0	70,7	0,7	-2,6	7,9
Exports of services						
Brussels	26.712,1	26,0	58,2	12,0	4,0	0,9
Flanders	58.947,9	57,3	23,5	8,8	9,0	1,5
Wallonia	17.256,0	16,8	31,6	9,7	11,6	-1,3
Belgium	102.916,0	100,0	29,3	9,8	8,1	0,9
Imports of goods and services						
Brussels	53.739,4	15,5	100,0	-0,2	-8,4	-6,4
Flanders	245.520,8	71,0	100,0	4,3	0,0	11,1
Wallonia	46.386,8	13,4	100,0	8,4	7,5	-3,1
Belgium	345.647,0	100,0	100,0	3,9	-0,6	6,0
Imports of goods						
Brussels	31.162,1	12,5	58,0	-6,3	-10,8	-11,7
Flanders	187.502,1	75,5	76,4	2,4	-2,7	12,9
Wallonia	29.663,8	11,9	63,9	2,3	-2,0	3,6
Belgium	248.328,0	100,0	71,8	0,9	-4,0	8,0
Imports of services						
Brussels	22.577,3	23,2	42,0	12,4	-4,2	1,9
Flanders	58.018,7	59,6	23,6	11,0	9,1	5,7
Wallonia	16.723,0	17,2	36,1	22,3	25,7	-13,1
Belgium	97.319,0	100,0	28,2	13,2	8,5	1,0
	In absolute numbers (in € million)					
	2016	2015	2014			
Net exports of goods and services						
Brussels	-7.811,8	-9.963,4	-13.650,0			
Flanders	5.148,4	10.803,4	10.090,7			
Wallonia	8.303,4	5.023,7	6.096,1			
Belgium	5.640,0	5.863,7	2.536,8			
Net exports of goods						
Brussels	-11.946,6	-14.286,7	-15.999,3			
Flanders	4.219,2	7.660,0	7.179,6			
Wallonia	7.770,4	6.787,2	5.740,6			
Belgium	43,0	160,5	-3.079,1			
Net exports of services						
Brussels	4.134,8	4.323,3	2.349,3			
Flanders	929,2	3.143,4	2.911,1			
Wallonia	533,0	-1.763,5	355,5			
Belgium	5.597,0	5.703,2	5.615,9			

Source: NAI