



## Key points

- In 2016, 33.4% of the professionally active nurses in Belgium were over 50 years of age (34.1% in Flanders, 31.3% in Wallonia, 35.2% in Brussels), while 18.4% was aged 55 years or above (18.3% in Flanders, 17.9% in Wallonia, 20.5% in Brussels).

## References

1. Vivet V, Durand C, De Geest A, Delvaux A, Jouck P, Miermans P-J, et al. PlanCad Infirmiers 2016. Rapport final sur le couplage des données PlanCad pour la profession infirmière. Bruxelles: Cellule Planification des professions de soins de santé, Service Professions des soins de santé et pratique professionnelle, DG Soins de santé, SPF Santé publique, Sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire et Environnement; 2018. Available from: [https://organesdeconcertation.sante.belgique.be/sites/default/files/documents/plancad\\_infirmiers\\_2016.pdf](https://organesdeconcertation.sante.belgique.be/sites/default/files/documents/plancad_infirmiers_2016.pdf)

## 8.10. Share of foreign-trained nurses (S-16)

### 8.10.1. Documentation sheet

<b>Description</b>	<p><b>Main indicator:</b> Share of foreign-trained nurses</p> <p><b>Secondary indicator:</b> Share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market</p>
<b>Calculation</b>	<p><b>Main indicator: Share of foreign-trained nurses</b> is defined as nurses who have obtained a recognised qualification in nursing in another country and have obtained a nursing “visa/visum” to practice in Belgium (“licence to practice” at the end of the year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerator: Number of foreign-trained nurses (Stock)</li> <li>• Denominator: Total number of nurses licensed to practice (Belgian-trained nurse and foreign-trained nurses)</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary indicator: Share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market</b> is defined as nurses who have obtained a recognised qualification in nursing in another country and are professionally active on the Belgian labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerator: Number of nurses with a foreign diploma who are professionally active on the Belgian labour market</li> <li>• Denominator: Total number of professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Nurses play a critical role in providing health care in hospitals and long-term care institutions, but also in primary care and in the home care setting. In addition, they are in most countries the largest group of healthcare professionals. Monitoring the number of foreign-trained nurses is therefore important in light of the accessibility and sustainability of the healthcare system. These are essential figures for workforce planning.<sup>1</sup> Some European countries also opt for strong recruitment strategy to recruit foreign-educated nurses.<sup>1</sup> The World Health Assembly adopted in May 2010 “The Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel”<sup>2</sup> to promote a more ethical recruitment of health personnel and to encourage countries to achieve greater “self-sufficiency” in the training of health workers.</p>



<b>Data source</b>	<p><b>Main indicator:</b> Federal database of health care professionals (“Cadastre/Kadaster”), Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment; OECD Health statistics</p> <p><b>Secondary indicator:</b> Results from “PlanCAD” 2016, Federal database of health care professionals, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment<sup>3</sup></p> <p>It should be noted that data from the PlanCAD slightly differ from the workforce statistics (HWF STATAN 2017), also published by the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, because of another extraction period and a larger selection in the PlanCad (e.g. inclusion of people with a midwife diploma registered as nurse in the cadastre).</p>
<b>Technical definitions</b>	<p><b>Main indicator:</b> The number of foreign-trained nurses is based on the number of “visa/visum” delivered by the Federal Public Service Public Health, registered in the federal registry (“Cadastre/Kadaster”). Only the first “visa/visum” delivered to practise nursing is taking into account.</p> <p><b>Secondary indicator:</b> The share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market is based on the number of professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market (not only in the health sector). A nurse is considered as active when s/he is registered as self-employed person into INASTI database or registered into ONSS+ database (i.e. ONSS + ONSSAPL) with at least 0.1 full time equivalent (FTE) per year. The threshold (i.e. 0.1 FTE per year) was set up by the Planning of Healthcare professionals Cell, in order to harmonize the definition of professionally active practitioners among health professional groups.<sup>3</sup></p>
<b>Limitations</b>	<p>The main indicator, which allows an international comparison, refers to foreign-trained nurses with license to practice and not practising nurses or professionally active nurses.</p>
<b>International comparability</b>	<p>International comparability is partially limited due to methodological differences (some countries refer to practising nurses and others to holders of a licence to practice).</p>
<b>Dimension</b>	<p>Sustainability of the health system</p>
<b>Related indicators</b>	<p>Number of practising nurses Number of practising nurses above 50+ years old</p>



### 8.10.2. Results

#### Share of foreign-trained nurses (based on “licence to practice”)

In 2017, around 3.5% of all nurses licensed to practice have a foreign diploma (7 248 foreign-trained nurses). The share of foreign-trained nurses is increasing over the time in Belgium (see Table 86). There is a higher proportion of female foreign-trained nurses than male (respectively 79.9% and 20.1%, see Table 87) and almost 90% of them have less than 55 years old. Around 84% of foreign-trained nurses does not have the Belgian nationality and 63% of foreign-trained nurses have their place of residence in Belgium.

**Table 86 – Percentage of foreign-trained nurses (2012-2017)**

Year (SPF)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% of foreign-trained nurses	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%

Source: SPF-FOD Cadastre

**Table 87 – Foreign-trained nurses by personal characteristics (2017)**

		2017
<b>Foreign-trained nurses in Belgium</b>		7 248 (3.5%)
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	5 789 (79.9%)
	<b>Male</b>	1 456 (20.1%)
	<b>Unknown</b>	3 (0%)
<b>Age group</b>	<b>&lt;35</b>	3 034 (42.1%)
	<b>35-44</b>	2 171 (30.1%)
	<b>45-54</b>	1 276 (17.7%)
	<b>55-64</b>	538 (7.5%)
	<b>65-74</b>	196 (2.7%)
	<b>&gt;74</b>	33 (0.5%)
<b>Belgian nationality*</b>	<b>Yes</b>	1 185 (16.3%)
	<b>No</b>	6 063 (83.7%)
<b>Place of residence (at the end of the visa year)</b>	<b>Residence in Belgium</b>	4 549 (62.8%)
	<b>Residence abroad</b>	2 278 (31.4%)
	<b>Unknown</b>	421 (5.8%)

Source: SPF-FOD Cadastre; \*Belgian nationality at the time of the data extraction



### Share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market

The group of professionally active nurses in Belgium is much smaller than the group of nurses licensed to practice (around 70% of all nurses licensed to practice). In 2016, there were 143 470 professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market in Belgium (see Table 88). There were 10 199 professionally active nurses with a foreign diploma or a diploma with unknown origin in 2016, which represents 7.1% of all professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market.

**Table 88 – Professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market, per type of diploma (2016)**

		N	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>in Belgium</b>	143 470	100%
<b>Type of diploma</b>	Bachelor (A1)	79 357	55.3%
	Diploma (A2)	50 290	35.1%
	Assistant in hospital care***	3 624	2.5%
	Foreign diploma or diploma with unknown origin	10 199	7.1%

Source: PlanCAD nurses 2019.<sup>3</sup> \*\*\*This training and related diploma were interrupted in 1996.

**Table 89 – Share of foreign-trained nurses in Belgium (2000-2017)**

Year (OECD)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Share of foreign-trained nurses (%)</b>	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.5

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018<sup>w</sup>

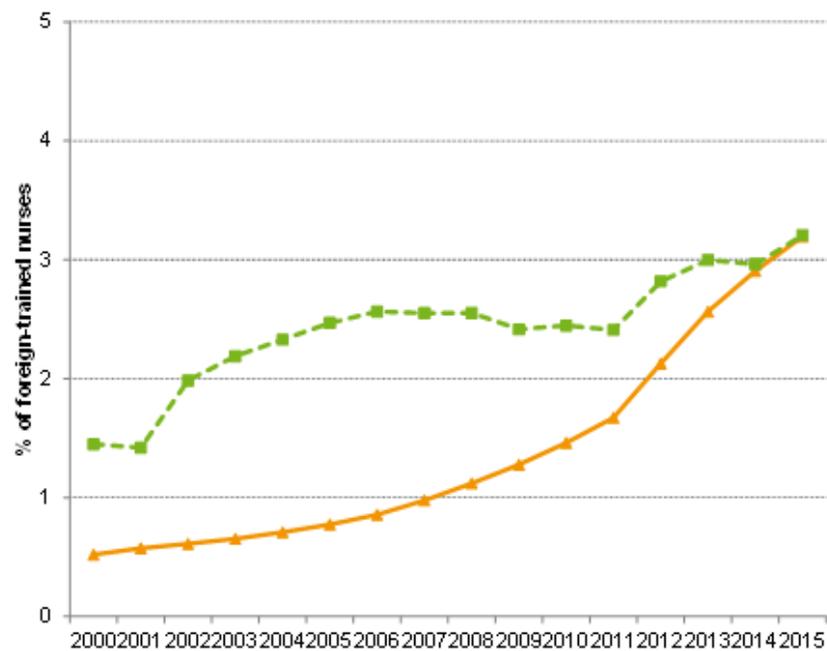
### International comparison - Share of foreign-trained nurses (based on “licence to practice”)

When coming back to the whole stock of registered nurses (whatever their professional activity) in Belgium, the proportion of foreign-trained nurses is much lower than the proportion of foreign-trained doctors (3.5% in 2017 compared to 12% for foreign-trained doctors, see Table 89). However, absolute numbers are quite similar (7 248 foreign-trained nurses versus 7 606 foreign-trained doctors in 2017, see Table 89). The share of foreign-trained nurses in Belgium is similar to the European average in 2015 (based on 8 countries, see Figure 119). Since 2000, the trend of registered nurses with a foreign-diploma has gradually increased (from 0.5% in 2000 to 3.2% in 2015).

<sup>w</sup> Data extracted from OECD Health Statistics 2018 are slightly different from original data source from SPF-FOD Cadastre.

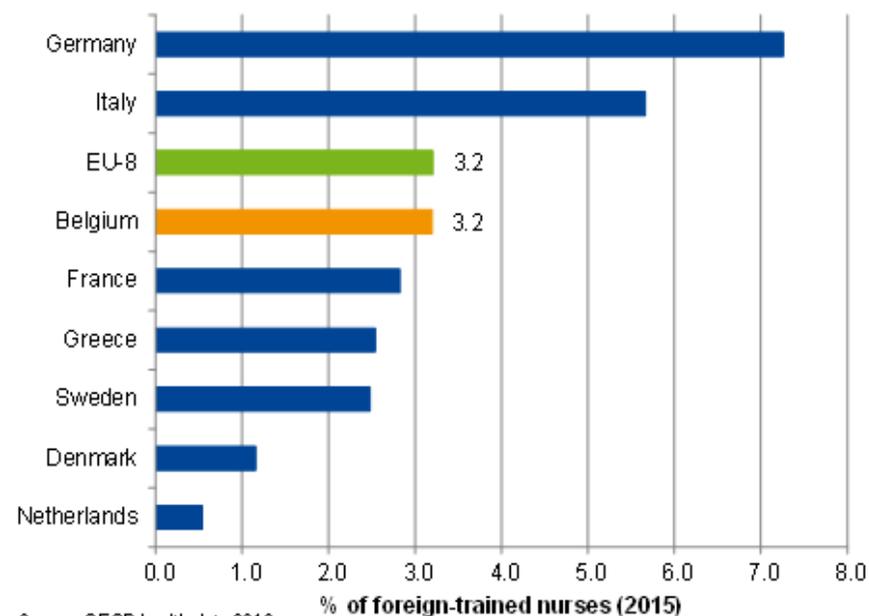


Figure 119 – Share of foreign-trained nurses: international comparison (2000-2015)<sup>ww</sup>



Source: OECD health data 2018

—▲— Belgium —■— EU-8



Source: OECD health data 2018

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018; UK was not taken into account in the analysis because data were available only for 3 years (2006, 2014 and 2015). For information, the share of foreign-trained nurse account for 14.4% in the UK in 2015.

<sup>ww</sup> Because of the lack of data from other European countries, 2015 is taken as the reference in the calculation.



### Key points

- **Among all nurses in Belgium, the share of foreign-trained nurses is increasing over the time (from 0.5% in 2000 to 3.5% in 2017)**
- **In 2015, the share of foreign-trained nurses is similar to the EU-8 average.**

### References

- [1] OECD. Health at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators. Paris: 2017.
- [2] WHO. Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel World Health Organization (WHO); 2010.
- [3] Vivet V, Durand C, De Geest A, Delvaux A, Jouck P, Miermans P-J, *et al.* PlanCad Infirmiers 2016. Rapport final sur le couplage des données PlanCad pour la profession infirmière. Bruxelles: Cellule Planification des professions de soins de santé, Service Professions des soins de santé et pratique professionnelle, DG Soins de santé, SPF Santé publique, Sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire et Environnement; 2018.

## 8.11. Curative care bed-days (number per capita) (S-11)

### 8.11.1. Documentation sheet

<b>Description</b>	Number of days spent in curative (acute care) beds in acute care hospitals (number per capita)
<b>Calculation</b>	Numerator: total number of days of inpatient stays spent in curative care (acute care) beds Denominator: total Belgian population.
<b>Rationale</b>	The number of curative care bed days per capita gives an idea about the population's need for acute care beds, and thus about the needed infrastructure. This indicator gives an idea about how this need is met (sustainability). This indicator combines results from two other indicators: number of hospital admission per capita, and average length of hospitalisation.
<b>Data source</b>	RHM-MZG (FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment)
<b>Technical definitions</b>	Day hospitalizations are not counted. <b>OECD definition:</b> beds indexes included in the data are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (B) treatment department "TBC", (C) diagnosis and surgical treatment department, (D) diagnosis and medical treatment department, (E) paediatrics, (CD) mixed hospitalisation, (L) contagious diseases, (M) maternity, (NIC) intensive neonatal care, (G) geriatrics in acute hospitals;</li> <li>• Data also include psychiatric care beds: (A) neuropsychiatry for observation and treatment, (A2) night care in neuropsychiatry, (K) infant neuropsychiatry, (K2) night care in infant neuropsychiatry, (TG) day and night care for geriatric patients needing neuropsychiatry treatment, (IB) intensive treatment of psychiatric patients, (T) neuropsychiatry for treatment, (T2) night care in neuropsychiatry for treatment</li> </ul>