Belgium's trade relations with

SYRIA

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1 Importance of Belgium and the other EU countries in trade with Syria

1.1 Exports

Total exports of goods from the European Union (EU-27) to Syria accounted for €392.1 million in 2025. **Belgium represented an 8.1% share of this, making it the 5th most important EU exporter of goods to Syria.** Italy was the leading exporter of goods to Syria among all EU countries with a 17.2% share and an amount of €67.3 million. In addition, Germany and Spain claimed the second and third place in this ranking with shares of 14.7% and 12.8%, respectively.

While the value of European exports (EU-27) to Syria in 2025 was 47.9% (€+127.0 million) higher than a year earlier, Belgian exports grew by only 31.4% (€+7.6 million). As a result, our country's share of EU exports of goods to Syria decreased in 2025.

In 2025, Italian exports of goods to Syria witnessed a rise of 40.8% (€+19.5 million), in part because of increased exports of 'crude or roughly trimmed marble and travertine' and 'taps, cocks, valves and similar appliances for pipes, boiler shells, tanks, vats or the like, including pressure-reducing valves and thermostatically controlled valves'. Meanwhile, exports of Germany were up by 37.5% (€+15.8 million) due largely to a higher value for the subcategory 'instruments and appliances used in medical, surgical, dental or veterinary sciences, including scintigraphic apparatus, other electromedical apparatus and sight-testing instruments'. Furthermore, growth in exports from Spain to Syria amounted to 22.2% (€+9.2 million) in 2025.

Table 1: Evolution of exports to Syria

In million €		2024	2025	Variation (in %)	Share (in %)
1	**Italy**	47.8	67.3	40.8	17.2
2	**Germany**	42.0	57.8	37.5	14.7
3	**Spain**	41.2	50.4	22.2	12.8
	…				
5	**Belgium**	24.1	31.6	31.4	8.1
	…				
	Total EU-27	**265.2**	**392.1**	**47.9**	**100.0**

1.2 IMPORTS

Total EU imports of goods from Syria amounted to €165.1 million in 2025. **Belgium was the 8th largest EU importer of goods from Syria last year with a 2.2% share.** Germany was the largest importer of goods from Syria in 2025 among all EU countries with a 35.2% share and an amount of €58.1 million. The Netherlands and Italy claimed the second and third place in this ranking with shares of 20.7% and 18.8%, respectively.

While European (EU-27) imports of goods from Syria increased by 60.2% (€+62.0 million) in 2025, Belgian imports from this country remained more or less unchanged when compared to 2024 (+0.2%, or €+7,700). As a result, our country's share of EU imports of goods from Syria decreased in 2025.

German and Dutch imports of goods from Syria soared by 320.3% (+€44.3 million) and 130.4% (+€19.3 million), respectively. In both cases, this was partly driven by 'light oils and preparations', which neither country imported from Syria in 2024. However, the rise in German imports can also be attributed in part to 'crude petroleum oils and crude oils obtained from bituminous minerals' - another category not imported from Syria in 2024 - as well as increased imports of 'shelled pistachios'. Furthermore, Italy's imports from Syria more than doubled in 2025, rising by 112.7% (€+16.5 million). This surge was due to a higher value for the subcategory 'shelled pistachios' and imports of 'crude petroleum oils and crude oils obtained from bituminous minerals', which Italy had not imported from Syria in 2024.

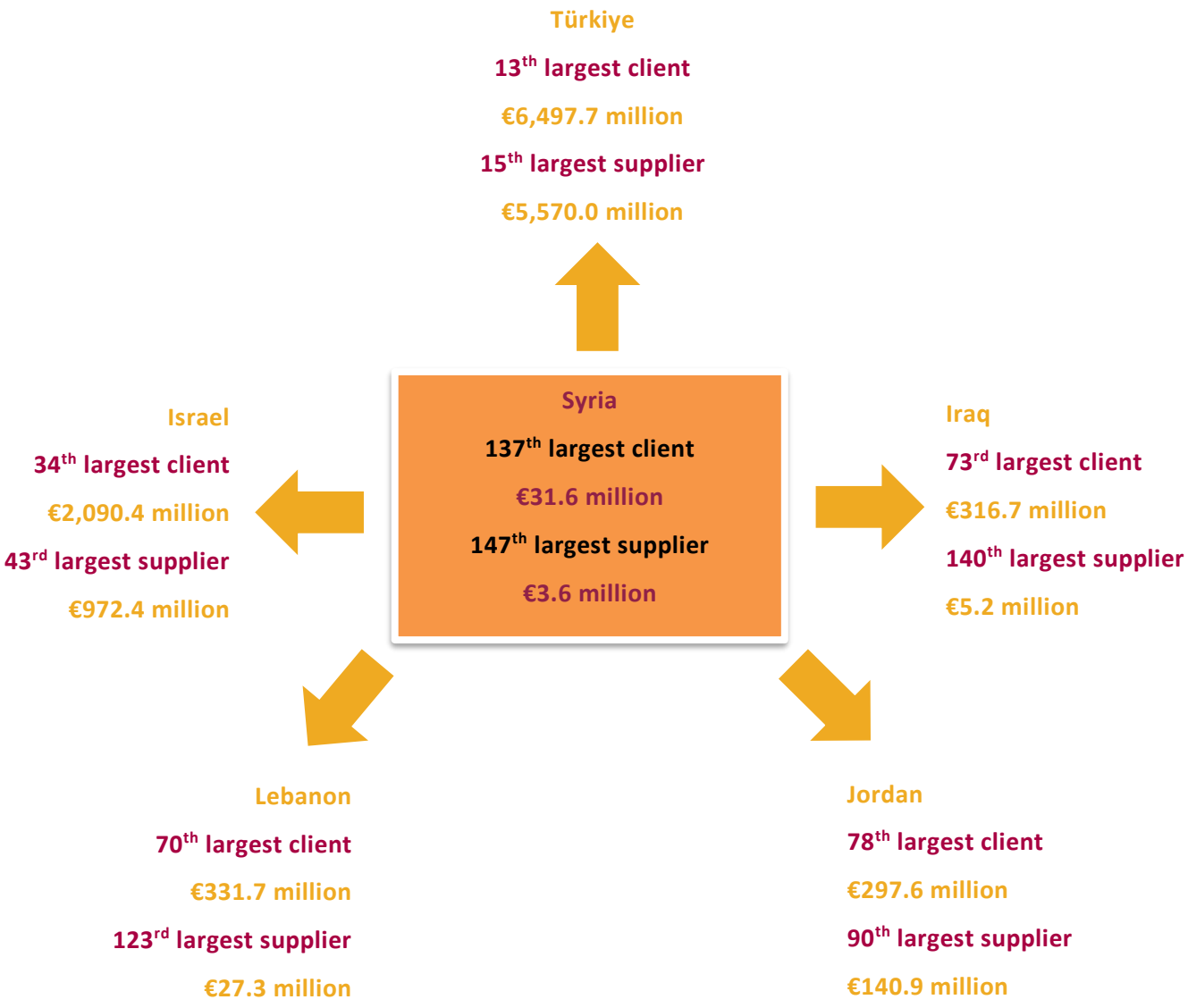
TABLE 2: EVOLUTION OF IMPORTS FROM SYRIA

	In million €	2024	2025	Variation (in %)	Share (in %)
1	**Germany**	13.8	58.1	320.3	35.2
2	**Netherlands**	14.8	34.1	130.4	20.7
3	**Italy**	14.6	31.1	112.7	18.8
	…				
8	**Belgium**	3.6	3.6	0.2	2.2
	…				
	Total EU-27	**103.0**	**165.1**	**60.2**	**100.0**

2 Importance of Syria and its neighbouring countries for Belgium's foreign trade (2025)

Client → Belgian exports

Supplier → Belgian imports



3 BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

3.1 TRADE IN GOODS

In 2025, Syria ranked **137th** among Belgium's main clients, before Afghanistan, but after Malawi.

Total Belgian **exports** of goods to Syria reached **€31.6 million** in 2025, which is **31.4%** (€+7.5 million) more than the previous year.

Syria was Belgium's **147th** largest supplier of goods in 2025, ranking after Burkina Faso, but before Suriname.

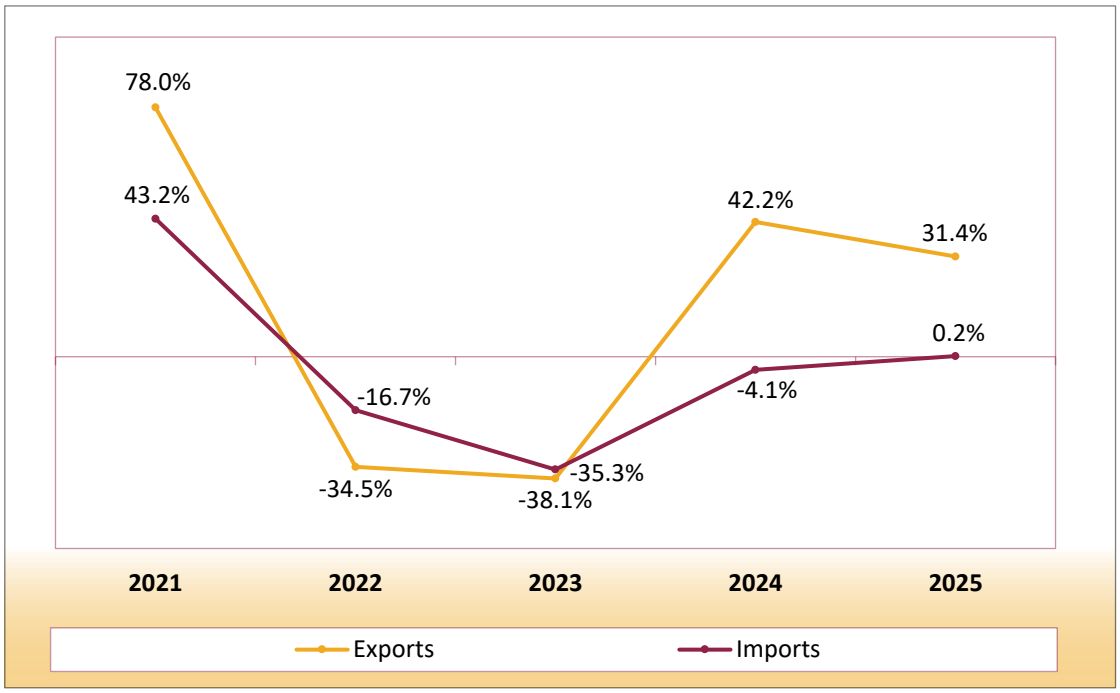
Total Belgian **imports** of goods from Syria were up marginally by **0.2%** (€+7,700), reaching **€3.6 million** in 2025.

TABLE 3: EVOLUTION OF BELGIUM'S TRADE IN GOODS WITH SYRIA

In million €	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Exports	41.7	27.3	16.9	24.1	31.6
Imports	6.9	5.7	3.7	3.6	3.6
Trade balance	34.8	21.6	13.2	20.5	28.0
Exports: variation (in %)	78.0	-34.5	-38.1	42.2	31.4
Imports: variation (in %)	43.2	-16.7	-35.3	-4.1	0.2

Belgium's **trade balance in goods** with Syria recorded a surplus each year from 2021 to 2025. The surplus stood at €34.8 million in 2021 but decreased over the next two years, dropping to €21.6 million in 2022 and €13.2 million in 2023 because exports fell more sharply than imports. While exports started to recover in 2024 from their slump in the two previous years, imports declined for the third consecutive year. As a result, the surplus grew to €20.5 million. This trade surplus continued to expand in 2025 to €28.0 million as exports grew by nearly a third, while imports increased only marginally.

FIGURE 1: VARIATION OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (IN %)



Driven by surging exports of chemical and pharmaceutical products, total Belgian **exports** of goods to Syria rose by 78.0% in 2021. However, a subsequent decline in the value of this same product category contributed to an export decrease of 34.5% in 2022. Because the values of base metals, chemical and pharmaceutical products, and paper and paperboard - the three largest sections - were all down in 2023, total exports declined by another 38.1%. In 2024 and 2025, total Belgian exports of goods to Syria rebounded, increasing by 42.2% and 31.4%, respectively, largely due to higher exports of base metals.

Driven by higher values for foodstuffs, vegetable products, and textiles - the three largest import categories - total Belgian **imports** of goods from Syria grew by 43.2% in 2021. However, imports of each of these product categories declined in 2022, leading to a 16.7% drop in total imports that year. Foodstuffs and textiles continued to post lower values in 2023, contributing to a further 35.3% decrease. In 2024, although foodstuffs (the largest import category) recorded an increase, declines in imports of vegetable products and textiles drove total Belgian imports from Syria down for the third consecutive year, this time by 4.1%. Even though imports of foodstuffs, the largest product category, were down by a fifth in 2025, higher values for vegetable products and chemical and pharmaceutical products, among others, balanced this out; as a result, total imports rose marginally by 0.2%.

3.1.1 Exports

In 2025, **base metals** held on to the top position in total Belgian goods exports to Syria. Amounting to €10.3 million, this group represented a 32.6% share of total exports. This section consisted mainly of 'flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel'.

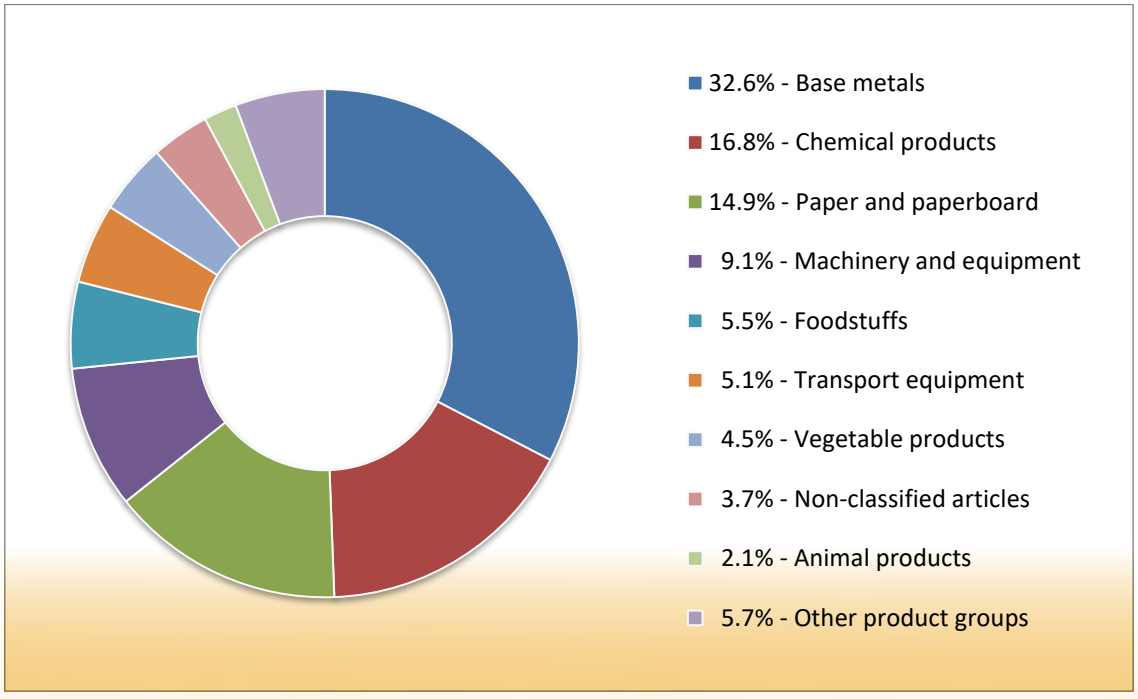
Exports of **chemical and pharmaceutical products** (main subsection: 'mineral or chemical fertilizers containing two or three of the fertilizing elements nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium') reached €5.3 million, corresponding to a 16.8% share.

Paper and paperboard (main subsections: 'uncoated paper and paperboard, in rolls or sheets, not further worked or processed' and 'paper and paperboard, coated on one or both sides with kaolin (China clay) or other inorganic substances, with or without a binder, and with no other coating, whether or not surface-coloured, surface-decorated or printed, in rolls or rectangular (including square) sheets, of any size') completed the top three of largest sections in goods exports to Syria with a share of 14.9% and an export value of €4.7 million.

There were a further eight product groups with a share of more than 1.0% of total Belgian goods exports to Syria, namely:

- **machinery and equipment**: €2.9 million, corresponding to a 9.1% share;
- **foodstuffs**: €1.7 million, corresponding to a 5.5% share;
- **transport equipment**: €1.6 million, corresponding to a 5.1% share;
- **vegetable products**: €1.4 million, corresponding to a 4.5% share;
- **non-classified articles**: €1.2 million, corresponding to a 3.7% share;
- **animal products**: €678,600, corresponding to a 2.1% share;
- **plastics**: €674,100, corresponding to a 2.1% share; and
- **optical, precision and medical instruments**: €463,800, corresponding to a 1.5% share.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Belgian exports to Syria by principal commodities (in %) — 2025



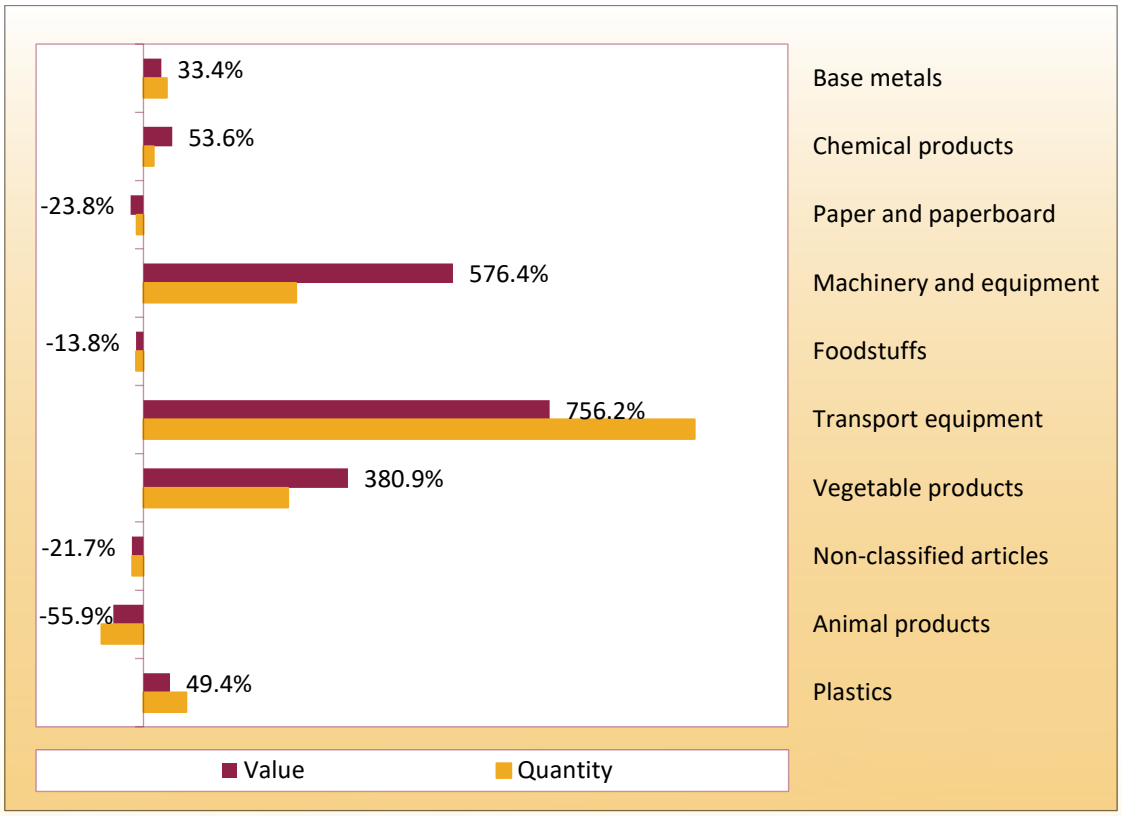
Higher values for **base metals** and **machinery and equipment** were part of the reason why total Belgian exports of goods to Syria were up by 31.4% in 2025. Exports in the former category grew by €2.6 million (+33.4%) in 2025, which can be attributed to the subcategory 'flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel'. Meanwhile, the value of machinery and equipment rose by 576.4% (€+2.4 million) to just under €2.9 million due to higher exports of 'front-end shovel loaders' and 'machinery with a 360° revolving superstructure'. The fact that the value of the latter was up significantly more than its exported quantity, indicates that the unit price for these types of goods were higher in 2025 than the previous year.

However, the largest percentage increase among the ten largest categories in exports to Syria was recorded by **transport equipment**. The value of this group of products increased by 756.2% (€+1.4 million) to just over €1.6 million, which can be attributed to the subcategories 'tractors' and 'vehicles with only a spark-ignition internal combustion piston engine of a cylinder capacity exceeding 1,500 cm³, but not exceeding 3,000 cm³'.

Plastics (+49.4%, or €+223,000), **chemical and pharmaceutical products** (+53.6%, or €+1.9 million) and **vegetable products** (+380.9%, or €+1.1 million) were the three remaining product groups from the top ten whose exports were up. The increase in exports of the latter group can mainly be attributed to the subsections 'seed potatoes' and 'peas'.

In contrast, the four headings whose export value decreased in 2025 recorded negative growth rates ranging from 13.8% for **foodstuffs** to 55.9% for **animal products**. The fall in the latter section, by €861,800, was due to a lower value for, among others, 'cuts and offal, of poultry, frozen'.

FIGURE 3: VARIATION OF EXPORTS TO SYRIA BY PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES (IN VALUE AND QUANTITY) — 2025/2024



3.1.2 IMPORTS

In 2025, **foodstuffs** remained in first place in Belgian imports of goods from Syria, accounting for a share of 57.1%. Imports in this category - consisting mainly of 'sugar confectionery (including white chocolate), not containing cocoa' and 'prepared foods obtained by the swelling or roasting of cereals or cereal products (for example, corn flakes); cereals (other than maize (corn)) in grain form or in the form of flakes or other worked grains (except flour, groats and meal), pre-cooked or otherwise prepared' - amounted to €2.0 million.

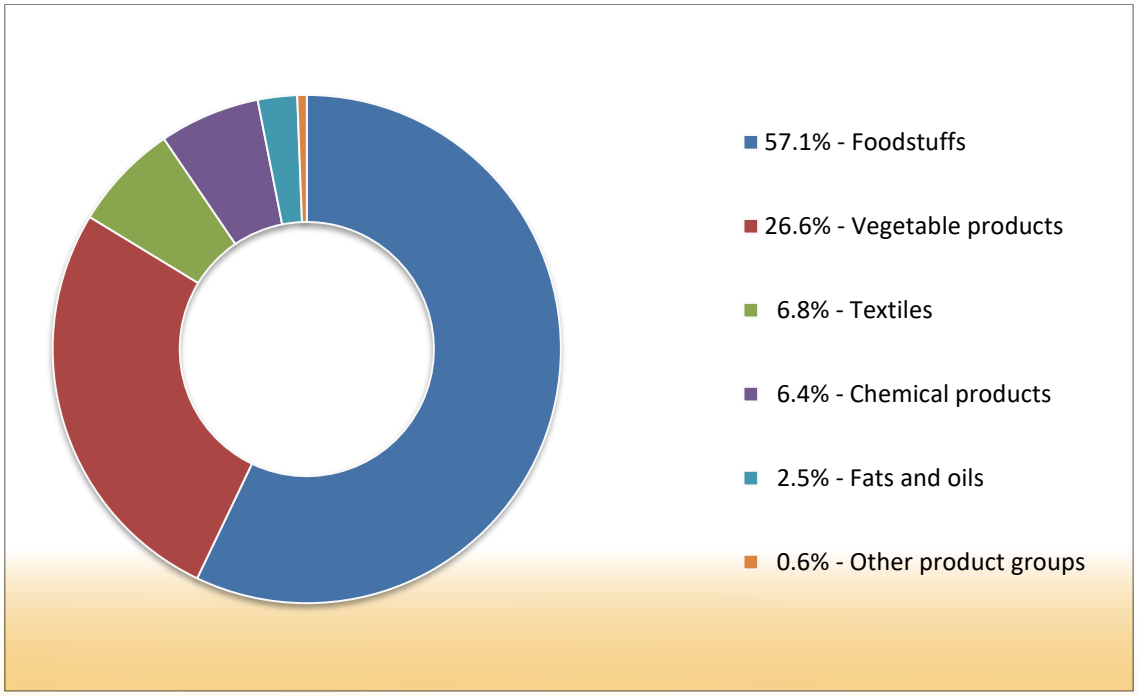
Vegetable products (main subsections: 'cereal grains otherwise worked (for example, hulled, rolled, flaked, pearled, sliced or kibbled); germ of cereals, whole, rolled, flaked or ground', 'guavas, mangoes and mangosteens' and 'coffee, roasted but not decaffeinated') accounted for 26.6% of total imports, with a value of €948,400.

Textiles completed the top three of largest sections in Belgian goods imports from Syria with an amount of €241,400. This section, made up mainly of 'pantyhose, tights, stockings, socks and other hosiery, including graduated compression hosiery (for example, stockings for varicose veins) and footwear without applied soles, knitted or crocheted', represented a share of 6.8%.

There were only two other product groups with a share of more than 1.0% of total Belgian goods imports from Syria, namely:

- **chemical and pharmaceutical products**: €229,000, corresponding to a 6.4% share; and
- **animal or vegetable fats and oils**: €88,400, corresponding to a 2.5% share.

FIGURE 4: BREAKDOWN OF BELGIAN IMPORTS FROM SYRIA BY PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES (IN %) — 2025

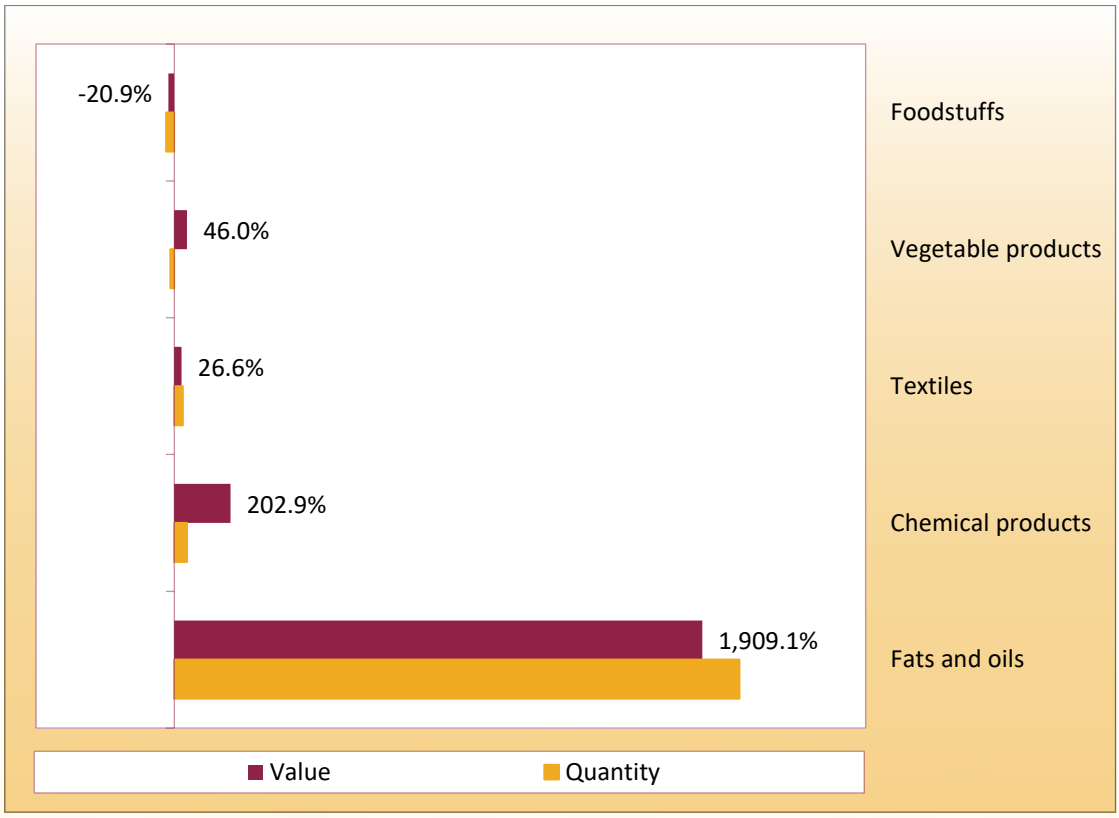


The value of **foodstuffs**, the largest product category in Belgian imports of goods from Syria, fell by 20.9% (€-537,400) in 2025. This decline can be partly attributed to the subcategories 'waters, including mineral waters and aerated waters, containing added sugar or other sweetening matter or flavored'; 'bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits and other bakers' wares, whether or not containing cocoa; communion wafers, empty cachets of a kind suitable for pharmaceutical use, sealing wafers, rice paper and similar products'; and 'prepared foods obtained by the swelling or roasting of cereals or cereal products'.

The fact that total Belgian imports from Syria overcame this drop in its largest category to grow marginally by 0.2% was due in part to the **vegetable products** section. Imports in this category rose by €298,900 (+46.0%), driven by higher values for 'cereal grains otherwise worked (for example, hulled, rolled, flaked, pearled, sliced or kibbled); germ of cereals, whole, rolled, flaked or ground'; 'guavas, mangoes and mangosteens'; and 'coffee, roasted but not decaffeinated'.

Textiles (+26.6%, or €+50,700), **chemical and pharmaceutical products** (+202.9%, or €+153,400) and **animal or vegetable fats and oils** (+1,909.1%, or €+84,000) were the remaining three product groups with a market share greater than 1.0% that saw import growth. The surge in the latter group was mainly driven by the subcategories 'virgin olive oil' and 'extra virgin olive oil'.

FIGURE 5: VARIATION OF IMPORTS FROM SYRIA BY PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES (IN VALUE AND QUANTITY) — 2025/2024



3.2 TRADE IN SERVICES

The value of Belgian **exports** of services to Syria was up by 10.9% (€+93,000) in 2025, increasing to **€946,000**. This made Syria Belgium's **202nd** largest client, after Saint Lucia, but before Cuba.

Belgian **imports** of services from Syria accounted for a value of **€156,000** in 2025, corresponding to a 13.0% (€+18,000) increase compared to the year before. Syria was Belgium's **225th** largest supplier in 2025, ranking before Samoa, but after South Sudan.

TABLE 4: EVOLUTION OF BELGIUM'S TRADE IN SERVICES WITH SYRIA

X €1,000	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Exports	560	962	885	853	946
Imports	542	2,139	115	138	156
Trade balance	18	-1,177	770	715	790
Exports: variation (in %)	-28.8	71.8	-8.0	-3.5	10.9
Imports: variation (in %)	54.4	294.9	-94.6	20.4	13.0

During the 2021-2025 period, Belgium recorded a positive services trade balance with Syria in four out of the five years. Only in 2022 did Belgium import more services from Syria than it exported.

In 2021, the surplus in Belgium's **services trade balance** with Syria stood at €18,000, as imports grew by more than half while exports fell by nearly one-third. Although exports recovered in 2022, imports increased by a wider margin, shifting the trade surplus into a deficit of just under €1.2 million. In 2023, imports plummeted while exports declined more modestly, reversing the deficit back into a surplus of €770,000. In 2024, imports increased while exports declined, narrowing Belgium's services trade surplus with Syria to €715,000. Finally, in 2025, exports outperformed imports, driving the services trade surplus to €790,000 - the highest level of the period under review.

The services balance mirrored the goods balance in 2021 and from 2023 to 2025, as Belgium's trade in goods with Syria is traditionally positive.

3.2.1 EXPORTS

In 2025, the **telecommunications, computer and information services** section led total Belgian **exports** of services to Syria with a value of €624,000 and a 65.9% share. **Transportation services** occupied second place with 14.1%, while the **other business services** section completed the top three with a 9.9% share. The latter category includes 'merchanting', 'operational leasing services', 'legal services', 'accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, and tax consultancy services', 'advertising, market research, and public opinion polling' and 'waste treatment and depollution'.

The higher values for **telecommunications, computer and information services** and to a somewhat lesser extent **other business services** were the main reasons why total Belgian exports of services to Syria were up 10.9% in 2025. Exports of the former section increased by 26.6% (€+131,000), while the value of the latter group of services grew from only €1,000 in 2024 to €94,000 last year.

Travel services, which ranked fifth in exports of services to Syria in 2025, recorded a rise of 13.8% (€+2,000) as exports increased to €16,000, implying that Syrian tourists and businesspeople visiting Belgium spent marginally more during their stays here.

The positive evolution of the aforementioned services categories and the **other remaining services** (+118.7% or €+16,000) was more significant than the decrease in exports of **transportation services** (-11.0%, or €-17,000) and **financial services** (-72.3%, or €-133,000). The latter category covers financial intermediation and auxiliary services, except those of insurance enterprises and pension schemes. These services include those usually provided by banks and other financial intermediaries and auxiliaries.

TABLE 5: BELGIAN EXPORTS TO SYRIA BY PRINCIPAL SERVICES

X €1,000	2024	2025	2025/2024 Var. (in %)	2025 Share (in %)
Telecommunications, computer and information services	493	624	26.6	65.9
Transportation services	150	133	-11.0	14.1
Other business services	1	94	14,612.2	9.9
Financial services	183	51	-72.3	5.4
Travel services	14	16	13.8	1.7
Other remaining services	13	29	118.7	3.0
Total	**853**	**946**	**10.9**	**100.0**

3.2.2 Imports

In 2025, the top position in Belgium's imports of services from Syria was held by the **telecommunications, computer and information services** category, amounting to €67,000 and accounting for 42.8%. **Transportation services**, which include sea transport, air transport, rail transport, road transport and inland waterway transport and **travel services** completed the top three with shares of 26.3% and 26.1%, respectively.

The higher value of **telecommunications, computer and information services** was the main reason why total Belgian imports of services from Syria increased by 13.0% in 2025. Imports of this particular category were up by 58.4%, from €42,000 in 2024 to €67,000 in 2025.

Furthermore, imports of **other business services** rose by €6,000 (+458.7%) in 2025, having accounted for just €1,000 in 2024. Meanwhile, the value of **travel services** remained unchanged at €41,000, implying that Belgian tourists and businesspeople visiting Syria spent the same amount during their stays as they did the previous year.

In contrast, two of the five largest categories in Belgian imports of services from Syria displayed declining values in 2025. Imports of **personal, cultural, and recreational services** fell from €2,000 to €1,000, while **transportation services** recorded a decline of 15.6% (€-8,000). This latter category includes all services provided by residents of one economy to residents of another that involve the transport of passengers, the movement of goods (freight), the rental (charter) of vehicles with crew, and related support services.

Table 6: Belgian imports from Syria by principal services

X €1,000	2024	2025	2025/2024 Var. (in %)	2025 Share (in %)
Telecommunications, computer and information services	42	67	58.4	42.8
Transportation services	49	41	-15.6	26.3
Travel services	41	41	0.0	26.1
Other business services	1	7	458.7	4.2
Personal, cultural and recreational services	2	1	-50.0	0.3
Other remaining services	5	0	-100.0	0.2
Total	**138**	**156**	**13.0**	**100.0**

4 Economic indicators for Syria

Economic structure (2024 - estimates)	
GDP	$21.4 billion
GDP growth rate	-1.5%
Inflation rate	57.0%
Exports of goods (FOB)	$1.1 billion
Imports of goods (FOB)	$3.9 billion
Trade balance	$-2.8 billion
Population	24.7 million
Unemployment rate	13.4%
Main clients (2024): in million USD	
Türkiye	438
Saudi Arabia	182
Lebanon	134
India	62.6
Main suppliers (2024): in million USD	
Türkiye	2,180
China	386
Egypt	327
Saudi Arabia	149
Main exports (2024): in million USD	
Pure olive oil	310
Calcium phosphates	87
Nuts	55.8
Main imports (2024): in million USD	
Rice	135
Seed oils	125
Raw Sugar	104

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC)

5 INDEX OF THE UNIT PRICE FOR IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The table below gives an overview of the development of the index of the unit price for imports and exports for Belgium (with the world).

This index facilitates an analysis of the general development of the price of goods. This makes it possible to consider the global development of Belgian imports and exports in perspective by determining the part that is caused by price developments (and hence which part is caused by a change in quantity).

The table has to be interpreted as follows:
If a given product had an export value of €100 in the year 2021, then this product had an average value of €122.2 in 2025. The same principle applies to imports. If a particular product had an import value of €100 in 2021, the same product then had an import value of €122.2 in 2025.

TABLE 7: INDEX OF THE UNIT VALUE OF TOTAL BELGIAN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (2021=100)

	Export	Import
2016	80.3	78.1
2017	84.7	83.8
2018	87.9	88.7
2019	89.9	91.2
2020	89.9	89.0
2021	100.0	100.0
2022	126.9	129.2
2023	119.6	118.6
2024	119.5	120.0
2025	122.2	122.2

6 Sources

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Eurostat, European Commission — http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat

World Trade Organization — www.wto.org

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