Belgium's trade relations with

FRANCE

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

1.1 Exports

Total exports of goods from the European Union (EU-27) to France accounted for about €474.5 billion in 2025. **Belgium represented a 13.8% share of this, making it the 3rd most important EU exporter of goods to France.** Germany was by far the leading exporter of goods to France among all EU countries, with a 24.7% share and an export value of €117.3 billion. In addition, the Netherlands claimed second place in this ranking, with a share of 15.0%.

While the value of European exports (EU-27) to France in 2025 was 0.3% (€+1.6 billion) higher than a year earlier, Belgian exports were down by 4.4% (€-3.0 billion). Consequently, Belgium's share of EU goods exports to France decreased in 2025.

German exports of goods to France witnessed a rise of 2.0% (€+2.2 billion) in 2025 due partly to higher values for the subcategories 'parts of aeroplanes, helicopters or unmanned aircraft' and 'aeroplanes and other aircraft, of an unladen weight exceeding 15,000 kg'. Furthermore, goods exported by the Netherlands to France dropped by 1.4% (€-1.0 billion), in part because of decreased exports of 'smartphones', 'medium and heavy oils' and 'machines for the reception, conversion and transmission or regeneration of voice, images or other data, including switching and routing apparatus'.

Table 1: Evolution of exports to France

In million €		2024	2025	Variation (in %)	Share (in %)
1	**Germany**	115,094.8	117,340.3	2.0	24.7
2	**Netherlands**	72,039.6	71,002.3	-1.4	15.0
3	**Belgium**	68,349.1	65,342.1	-4.4	13.8
	…				
	Total EU-27	**472,934.0**	**474,533.2**	**0.3**	**100.0**

1.2 IMPORTS

Total EU imports of goods from France amounted to about €329.1 billion in 2025. **Belgium was the 2nd largest EU importer of goods from France in 2025 with a 14.6% share.** Germany was not only the number one exporter to France, but also the largest EU importer of goods from this country with a share of 23.9%, which corresponds to an amount of roughly €78.5 billion. Italy claimed the third place in this ranking with a share of 14.4%.

While European Union (EU-27) imports of goods from France increased by 3.3% (€+10.4 billion) in 2025, Belgian imports from the country were down by 3.1% (€-1.6 billion). As a result, Belgium's share of EU goods imports from France decreased in 2025.

Partly due to a rise in imports of 'parts of aeroplanes, helicopters or unmanned aircraft' and 'medicaments', German imports of goods from France increased by 8.6% (€+6.2 billion) in 2025. Meanwhile, the growth of Italian imports was 7.3% (€+3.2 billion), which resulted in part from higher values for 'live bovine animals', 'non-monetary gold in semi-manufactured forms' and 'electrical energy'.

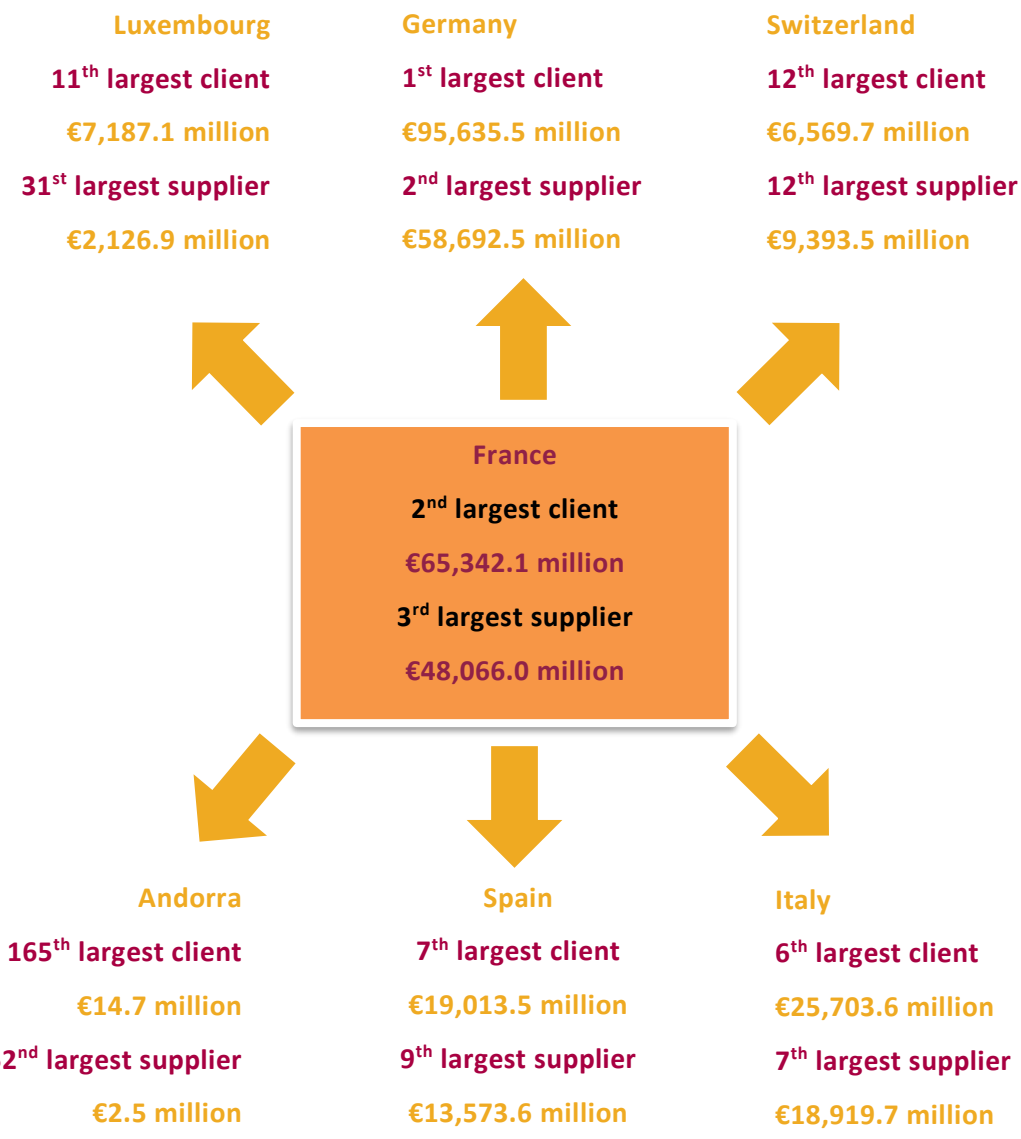
TABLE 2: EVOLUTION OF IMPORTS FROM FRANCE

In million €		2024	2025	Variation (in %)	Share (in %)
1	**Germany**	72,314.9	78,526.8	8.6	23.9
2	**Belgium**	49,620.0	48,066.0	-3.1	14.6
3	**Italy**	44,119.8	47,356.3	7.3	14.4
	…				
	Total EU-27	**318,737.6**	**329,129.8**	**3.3**	**100.0**

2 Importance of France 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, France ranked **2nd** among Belgium's main clients, before the Netherlands, but after Germany.

Total Belgian **exports** of goods to France amounted to about **€65.3 billion** in 2025, which is **4.4%** (€-3.0 billion) less than the previous year. In 2025, exports to France represented **13.0%** of the total amount of Belgian goods exported.

France was Belgium's **3rd** largest supplier of goods in 2025, ranking after the Netherlands and Germany, but preceding the United States.

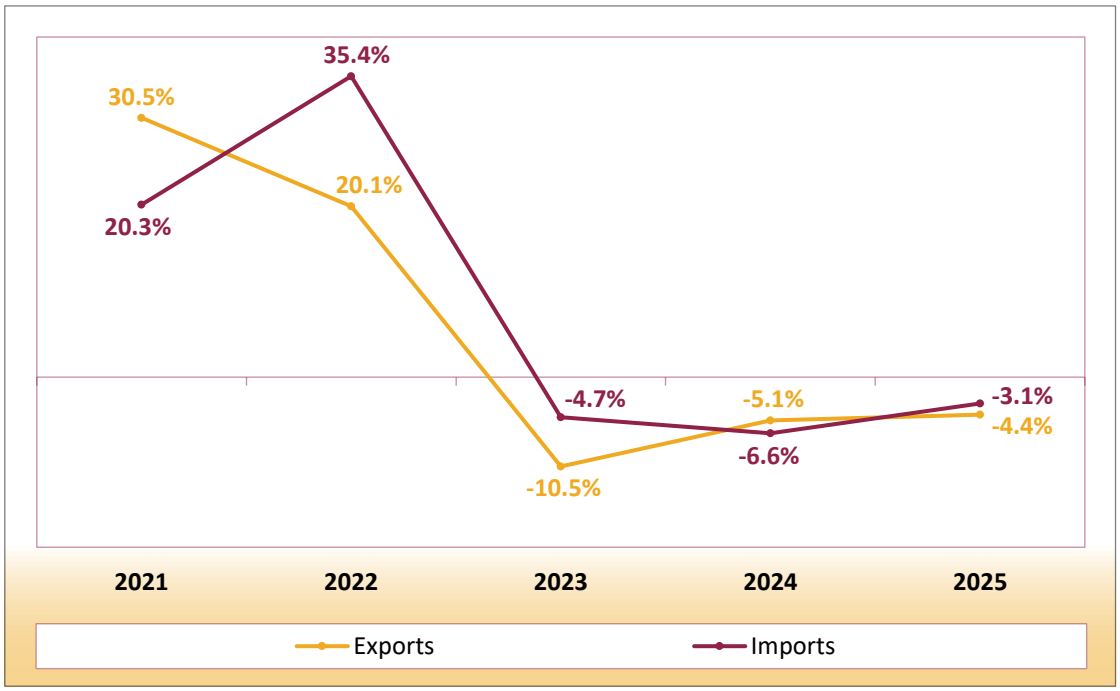
Total Belgian **imports** of goods from France were down by **3.1%** (€-1.6 billion), falling to around **€48.1 billion** in 2025. France accounted for **10.1%** of total Belgian imports of goods.

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

In million €	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Exports	67,013.5	80,461.6	71,994.2	68,349.1	65,342.1
Imports	41,189.0	55,767.0	53,134.7	49,620.0	48,066.0
Trade balance	25,824.5	24,694.6	18,859.5	18,729.1	17,276.1
Exports: variation (in %)	30.5	20.1	-10.5	-5.1	-4.4
Imports: variation (in %)	20.3	35.4	-4.7	-6.6	-3.1

Belgium's **trade balance for goods** with France traditionally shows a surplus in favor of our country. This surplus, which stood at €25.8 billion in 2021, decreased to €24.7 billion a year later as imports grew more strongly than exports. After both trade flows increased by double digits in 2021 and 2022, their values declined over the following two years. Since exports decreased to a greater extent than imports during 2023 and 2024, the surplus on the Belgian trade balance for goods with France was reduced to €18.9 billion and €18.7 billion, respectively. This downward trend continued into 2025, with the value of exports once again declining more than that of imports. Consequently, the surplus fell even further to around €17.3 billion - the lowest level of the period under review.

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



Driven by increased exports of mineral products, base metals, and chemical and pharmaceutical products, growth in Belgium's total **exports** of goods to France rebounded to 30.5% in 2021, following a decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The subsequent rise in exports of these three product groups contributed to a further 20.1% growth in total exports in 2022. In 2023, however, a sharp drop in the value of both mineral products and chemical and pharmaceutical products contributed to a 10.5% decline in total Belgian goods exports to France. While the chemical and pharmaceutical products category posted a modest recovery in 2024, mineral products remained caught in a downward spiral; combined with a significantly lower value for base metals, this led to a 5.1% decline in total exports that year. This downward trend persisted into 2025, when the value of mineral products fell for the third consecutive year. Combined with a decrease in exports of machinery and equipment, among other items, this led to another disappointing year for Belgian goods exports to France, which dropped by 4.4%.

Chemical and pharmaceutical products, transport equipment, mineral products, machinery and equipment, and base metals all recorded growth in both 2021 and 2022, driving total Belgian goods **imports** from France up by 20.3% and 35.4% in those two consecutive years. In 2023, despite the fact that the value of chemical and pharmaceutical products, machinery and equipment, and transport equipment - the three main categories in total Belgian goods imports from France - continued to rise just as they had in the previous two years, total imports still declined by 4.7%, primarily due to the lower value of mineral products. Finally, in 2024 and 2025, contractions in the chemical and pharmaceutical products, transport equipment, and machinery and equipment categories were the root cause of further 6.6% and 3.1% drops in imports from France, respectively.

3.1.1 Exports

In 2025, **chemical and pharmaceutical products** held on to the top position in total Belgian exports of goods to France. At around €11.7 billion, this group of products represented a 17.8% share of total exports. This section was mainly composed of 'biodiesel and mixtures thereof, not containing or containing less than 70% by weight of petroleum oils or oils obtained from bituminous minerals', 'immunological products' and 'medicaments'.

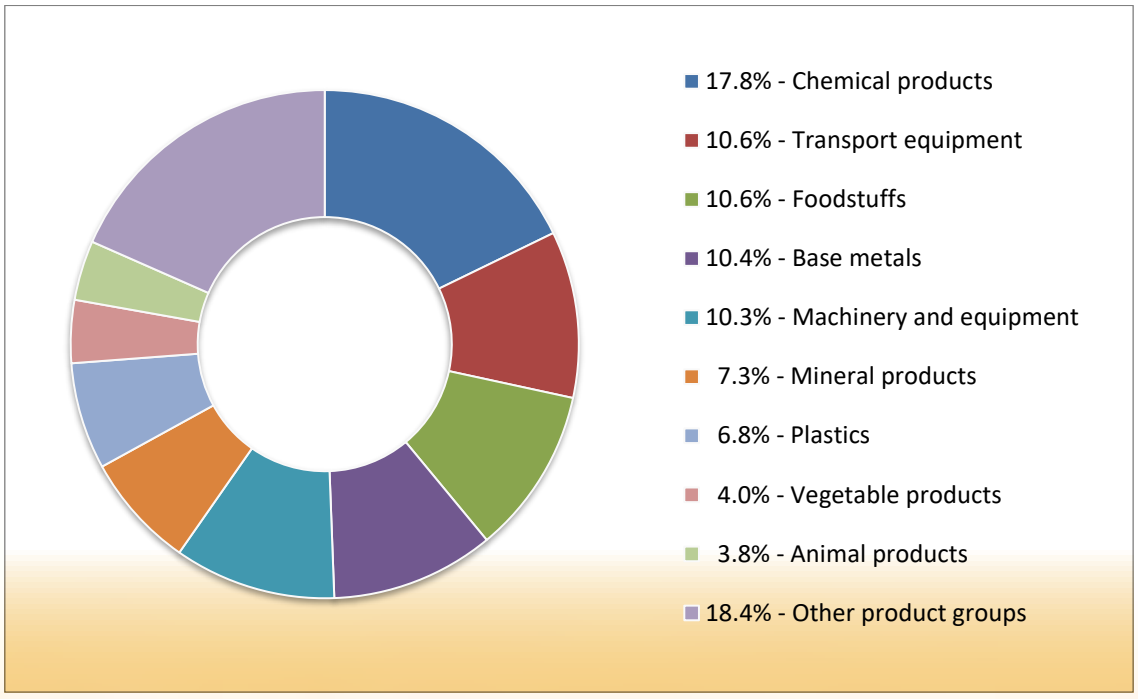
Exports of **transport equipment** (main subsections: 'vehicles with only an electric motor for propulsion' and 'vehicles with both an internal combustion piston engine and an electric motor as motors for propulsion') amounted to around €6.9 billion, representing a 10.6% share.

Foodstuffs (main subsections: 'beer made from malt', 'potatoes' and 'cocoa beans, whole or broken, raw or roasted') completed the top three of largest sections in exports of goods to France with a share of 10.6% and an export value of roughly €6.9 billion.

There were four other product groups that also accounted for a share of more than 5.0% of Belgian exports of goods to France. These sections were:

- **base metals**: €6.8 billion, corresponding to a share of 10.4%;
- **machinery and equipment**: €6.7 billion, corresponding to a share of 10.3%;
- **mineral products**: €4.8 billion, corresponding to a share of 7.3%; and
- **plastics**: €4.5 billion, corresponding to a share of 6.8%.

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



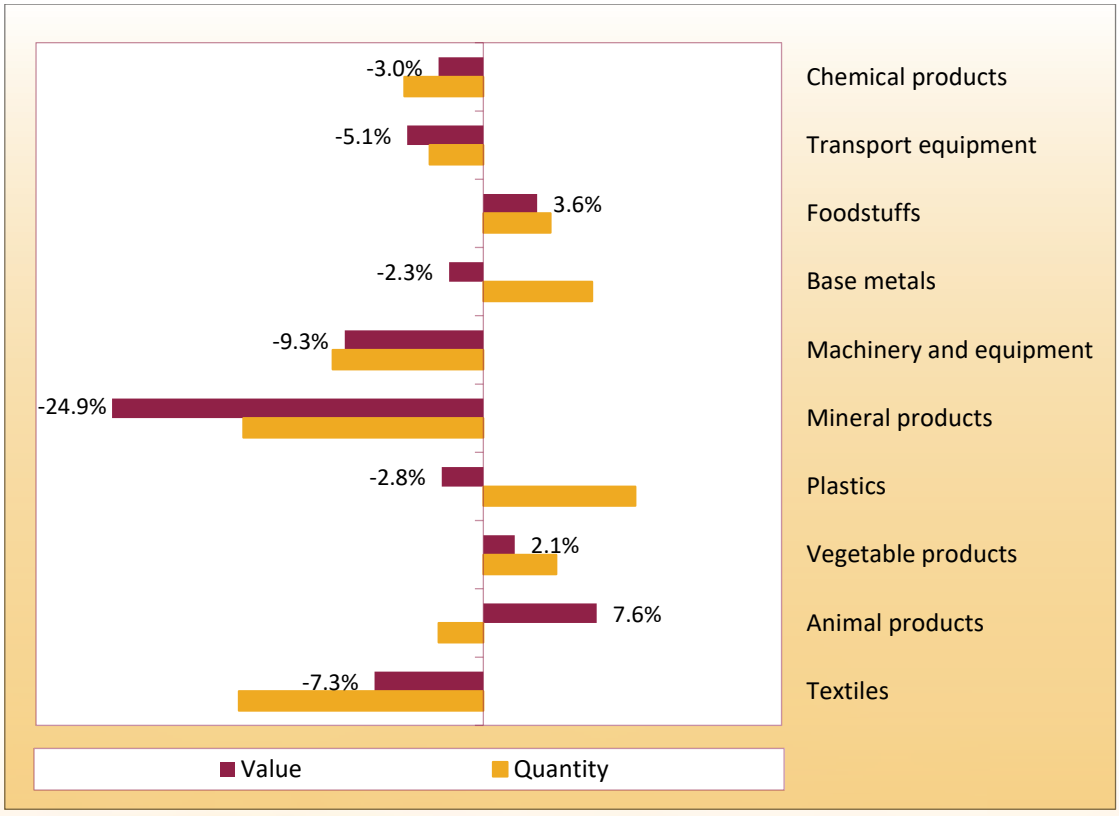
The main reasons for the 4.4% decrease in total Belgian exports of goods to France were the lower values of **mineral products**, as well as **machinery and equipment**. Exports in the former category were down by around €1.6 billion (-24.9%) in 2025, which can be attributed to lower values for 'medium and heavy oils', 'natural gas in gaseous state' and 'light oils and preparations'. Meanwhile, the value of machinery and equipment dropped by 9.3% (€-694.0 million) due to lower exports of 'smartphones' and 'combine harvester-threshers'.

The category of **chemical and pharmaceutical products**, the leading section in exports of goods to France, saw its value drop by €366.8 million (-3.0%) due to declining exports of 'medicaments' and 'immunological products, unmixed, not put up in measured doses or in forms or packings for retail sale'.

The four other product groups from the top ten whose export value decreased recorded negative growth ranging from 2.3% for **base metals** to 7.3% for **textiles**. The fall of €193.8 million in the latter product group can partly be attributed to the lower values of 'jerseys, pullovers, cardigans, waistcoats and similar articles, knitted or crocheted of cotton', 'bedlinen, table linen, toilet linen and kitchen linen of cotton' and 'T-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted of cotton'.

In contrast, **vegetable products** (+2.1%, or €+55.5 million), **foodstuffs** (+3.6%, or €+237.6 million) and **animal products** (+7.6%, or +€176.6 million) were the three 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 'milk and cream, not concentrated nor containing added sugar or other sweetening matter', 'butter' and 'grated or powdered cheese, of all kinds'.

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



3.1.2 Imports

In 2025, the **chemical and pharmaceutical products** category, which was composed mainly of 'medicaments' and 'lactams' - a chemical compound used in medicine (specifically to fight bacterial infections) and industrial polymer manufacturing - took the top position in total Belgian imports of goods from France with around €8.3 billion, giving this group of products a share of 17.2%.

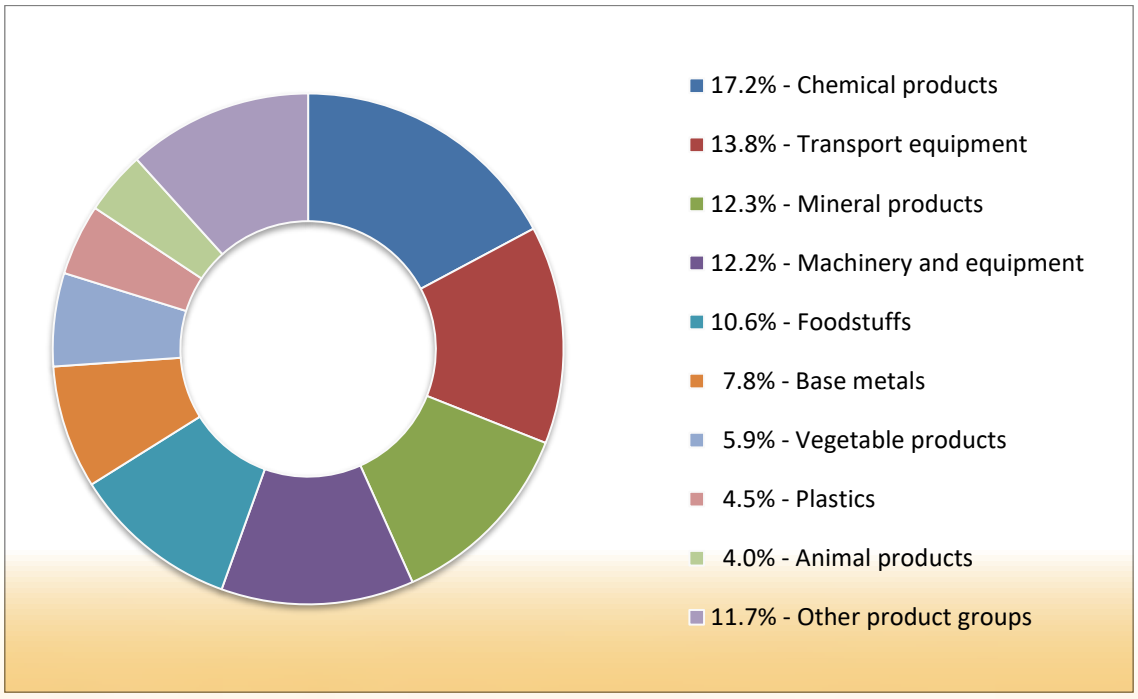
Transport equipment (main subsections: 'vehicles, with both a spark-ignition internal combustion piston engine and an electric motor as motors for propulsion, other than those capable of being charged by plugging to an external source of electric power', 'vehicles with only an electric motor for propulsion' and 'vehicles for the transport of goods with only a compression-ignition internal combustion piston engine (diesel or semi-diesel) of a gross vehicle weight not exceeding 5 tonnes') accounted for a 13.8% share of total imports, totalling around €6.6 billion.

The **mineral products** heading completed the top three of main sections in Belgian imports of goods from France. This group of products, which was mainly composed of 'natural gas in gaseous state', 'light oils and preparations' and 'medium and heavy oils', accounted for a share of 12.3% and an amount of €5.9 billion.

Four other product groups also accounted for a share of more than 5.0% of Belgian imports of goods from France. These sections were:

- **machinery and equipment**: €5.9 billion, corresponding to a share of 12.2%;
- **foodstuffs**: €5.1 billion, corresponding to a share of 10.6%;
- **base metals**: €3.7 billion, corresponding to a share of 7.8%; and
- **vegetable products**: €2.8 billion, corresponding to a share of 5.9%.

Figure 4: Breakdown of Belgian imports from France by principal commodities (in %) — 2025



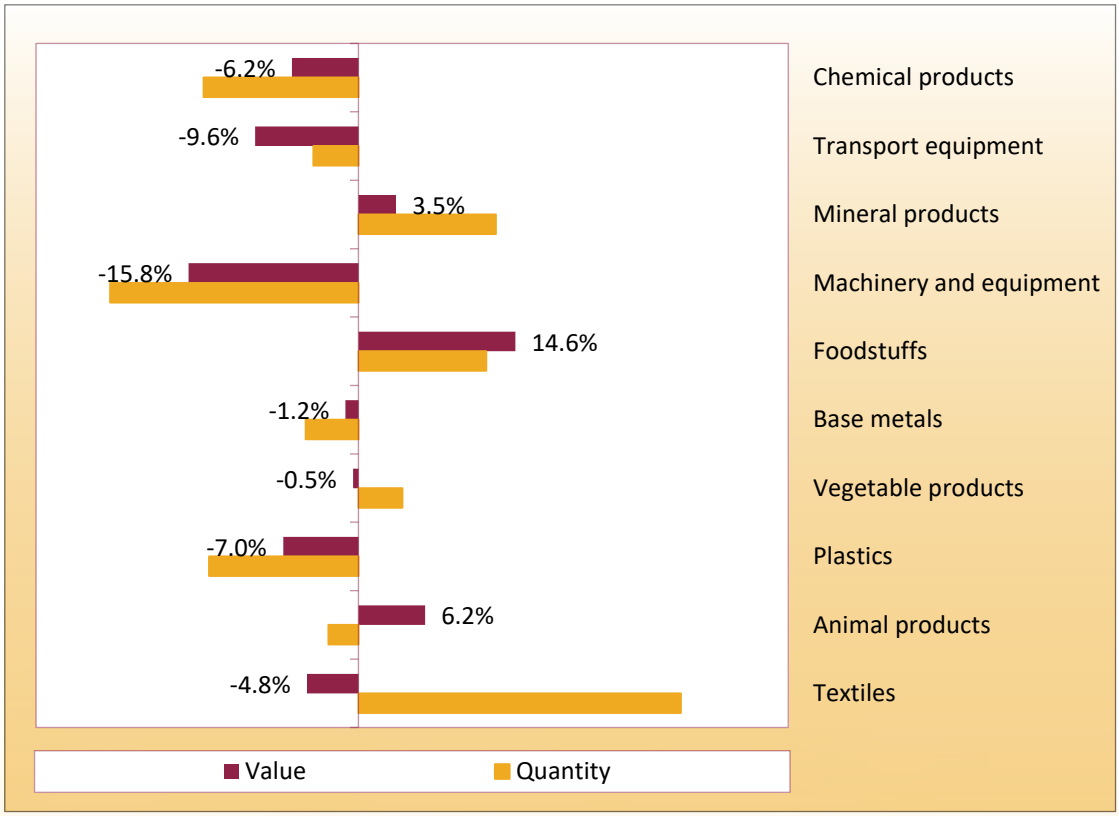
The main reasons for the 3.1% decrease in total Belgian imports of goods from France were the lower values of **machinery and equipment**, as well as **transport equipment**. Imports in the former category were down by around €1.1 billion (-15.8%) in 2025, which can be attributed partly to a lower value for 'electronic integrated circuits'. Meanwhile, the value of transport equipment dropped by 9.6% (€-705.6 million) due to lower imports of 'vehicles for the transport of goods with only a compression-ignition internal combustion piston engine (diesel or semi-diesel) of a gross vehicle weight not exceeding 5 tonnes' and 'vehicles with only a spark-ignition internal combustion piston engine'.

The category of **chemical and pharmaceutical products**, the leading section in imports of goods from France, saw its value drop by €548.4 million (-6.2%) due to declining imports of 'vaccines for human medicine', 'medicaments' and 'biodiesel and mixtures thereof'.

The four other product groups from the top ten whose import value decreased, recorded negative growth ranging from 0.5% for **vegetable products** to 7.0% for **plastics**. The fall of €165.3 million in the latter product group can partly be attributed to the lower values of 'articles of vulcanized rubber (excl. hard rubber)' and 'polypropylene, in primary forms'.

In contrast, **mineral products** (+3.5%, or +€202.1 million), **animal products** (+6.2%, or +€112.2 million) and **foodstuffs** (+14.6%, or +€650.6 million) were the three product groups from the top ten whose imports were up. The increase in imports of the latter group can mainly be attributed to the subsection 'cocoa butter, fat and oil'.

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



3.2 TRADE IN SERVICES

The value of Belgian exports of services to France was down by **2.7%** (€-417.1 million) in 2025, decreasing to about **€15.3 billion**. This made France Belgium's **2nd** largest client, after the Netherlands but before the United States with a share of **11.1%** of total Belgian exports of services.

Belgian imports of services from France accounted for a value of roughly **€18.4 billion** in 2025, corresponding to a **0.1%** (€-16.5 million) decrease compared to the year before. France was Belgium's **2nd** largest supplier in 2025 with a share of **12.4%** of our country's total imports of services, ranking before the United States, but after the Netherlands.

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

In million €	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Exports	12,764.5	15,020.9	15,300.5	15,686.2	15,269.1
Imports	14,788.2	16,820.8	18,198.7	18,393.9	18,377.4
Trade balance	-2,023.7	-1,799.9	-2,898.2	-2,707.7	-3,108.3
Exports: variation (in %)	9.4	17.7	1.9	2.5	-2.7
Imports: variation (in %)	5.8	13.7	8.2	1.1	-0.1

Since imports of services from France consistently exceeded exports to this country from 2021 to 2025, the services trade balance with France recorded a deficit every year during this period, to the detriment of Belgium.

The deficit in Belgium's **services trade balance** with France, which amounted to approximately €2.0 billion in 2021, decreased by €223.8 million one year later to just under €1.8 billion, as exports grew more strongly than imports. In 2023, however, the situation reversed, with imports increasing more strongly than exports, causing the deficit to widen again to just under €2.9 billion. In 2024, exports once again outperformed imports, reducing the deficit to around €2.7 billion. Finally, in 2025, both imports and exports declined for the first time since 2020. As exports fell by more than imports, the deficit in Belgium's services trade balance with France increased to approximately €3.1 billion, the highest level during the period under review.

Belgium's services trade balance with France contrasted with its goods trade balance from 2021 to 2025, as the latter remained in Belgium's favor throughout the entire period.

3.2.1 Exports

In 2025, the **other business services** section led Belgian exports of services to France with a value of around €5.6 billion and a 36.6% share. This 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'. **Transportation services** took second place with a 22.0% share, while the **travel services** section completed the top three with an 11.6% share.

The lower values for **other business services** and **travel services** were the main reasons why total Belgian exports of services to France decreased by 2.7% in 2025. Exports of the former section recorded a 6.6% (€-394.5 million) drop. Meanwhile, the value of the latter category fell by 17.3%, from more than €2.1 billion to around €1.8 billion, indicating lower spending during their stays by French tourists and businesspeople visiting Belgium.

Furthermore, exports of **telecommunications, computer and information services** were down by 5.8% (€-93.5 million).

The negative evolution of these three service categories, together with the **other remaining services** (-1.4%, or €-34.7 million), offset the rise in exports among the two other service groups from the top five. While the increase of **transportation services** was limited to 1.4% (€+44.7 million), exports of **maintenance and repair services** grew by 196.9% (€+430.5 million). This category includes maintenance and repair work by residents on goods that are owned by non-residents (and vice versa). The repairs may be performed at the site of the repairer or elsewhere. Maintenance and repairs on ships, aircraft and other transport equipment are included in this item.

Table 5: Belgian exports to France by principal services

In million €	2024	2025	2025/2024 Var. (in %)	2025 Share (in %)
Other business services	5,980.2	5,585.6	-6.6	36.6
Transportation services	3,309.8	3,354.6	1.4	22.0
Travel services	2,142.8	1,773.1	-17.3	11.6
Telecommunications, computer and information services	1,615.4	1,521.9	-5.8	10.0
Maintenance and repair services	218.6	649.1	196.9	4.3
Other remaining services	2,419.5	2,384.8	-1.4	15.6
Total	**15,686.2**	**15,269.1**	**-2.7**	**100.0**

3.2.2 IMPORTS

The **travel services** section was the largest category in Belgian **imports** of services from France, with a value of €5.8 billion and a 31.6% share. **Other business services** and **transportation services** completed the top three with shares of 31.2% and 16.8%, respectively. The latter includes sea transport, air transport, rail transport, road transport and inland waterway transport.

The lower value for **telecommunications, computer and information services** contributed to the 0.1% decrease in total Belgian imports of services from France. Imports in this particular category fell by 9.9% (€-164.2 million) to just under €1.5 billion in 2025.

Meanwhile, imports of **manufacturing services on inputs owned by others**, which were good for €484.3 million in 2024, dropped by 4.0% in 2025 to €464.7 million. These services include activities such as processing, assembly, labelling and packing that are undertaken by enterprises that do not own the goods. Examples include oil refining, liquefaction of natural gas and assembly of clothing and electronics.

The decrease in imports of each of the two aforementioned services categories and the **other remaining services** (-8.3%, or €-162.6 million) was more significant than the rise in imports among the three other service groups from the top five. While the increase of **transportation services** was limited to 1.4% (€+41.6 million), imports of **travel services** grew by 1.8% (€+103.1 million), indicating increased spending during their stays by Belgian tourists and businesspeople visiting France. Furthermore, the value of **other business services** in imports from France rose by 3.3% (€+185.4 million).

TABLE 6: BELGIAN IMPORTS FROM FRANCE BY PRINCIPAL SERVICES

In million €	2024	2025	2025/2024 Var. (in %)	2025 Share (in %)
Travel services	5,699.2	5,802.3	1.8	31.6
Other business services	5,549.1	5,734.5	3.3	31.2
Transportation services	3,044.8	3,086.3	1.4	16.8
Telecommunications, computer and information services	1,654.4	1,490.2	-9.9	8.1
Manufacturing services	484.3	464.7	-4.0	2.5
Other remaining services	1,962.0	1,799.4	-8.3	9.8
Total	**18,393.9**	**18,377.4**	**-0.1**	**100.0**

4 Economic indicators for France

Economic structure (2025 - estimates)	
GDP	€2,920.0 billion
GDP growth rate	0.9%
Inflation rate	0.9%
Exports of goods (FOB)	€591.3 billion
Imports of goods (FOB)	€687.9 billion
Trade balance	€-96.6 billion
Population	68.9 million
Unemployment rate	7.6%
Main clients (2025): % of total	
Germany	13.5
Italy	8.1
United States	7.9
Main suppliers (2025): % of total	
Germany	12.6
China	10.7
United States	8.0
Main exports (2025): % of total	
Aircraft (for example, helicopters, aeroplanes), except unmanned aircraft; spacecraft (including satellites) and suborbital and spacecraft launch vehicles	5.2
Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic uses, put up in measured doses (including those in the form of transdermal administration systems) or in forms or packings for retail sale	5.1
Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines	4.3
Main imports (2025): % of total	
Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons, including station wagons and racing cars	5.4
Crude petroleum oils and crude oils obtained from bituminous minerals	3.6
Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic uses, put up in measured doses (including those in the form of transdermal administration systems) or in forms or packings for retail sale	3.0

Sources: IMF + International Trade Centre

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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Credendo — www.credendo.com

CIA World factbook — www.cia.gov

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

World Trade Organization — www.wto.org

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