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MANPOWERGROUP EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY – MEOS Q4 2019

Belgian employers plan to add more staff during the fourth quarter

Hiring intentions remain positive in all 3 regions and in 9 out of 10 sectors surveyed by ManpowerGroup

- *The Net Employment Outlook stands at an optimistic +6%, up 3 percentage points from the previous quarter and unchanged compared to the 4th quarter of 2018.*
- *Hiring forecasts are encouraging in Flanders (+7%) and Wallonia (+6%) and more cautious in Brussels (+4%).*
- *Workforce gains are forecast for nine of the 10 industry sectors during the fourth quarter of 2019.*
- *Employers in large (+29%) and medium-size (+20%) firms report the most optimistic recruitment intentions.*
- *Globally, employment prospects are positive in 43 of the 44 countries and territories surveyed worldwide and in 25 of the 26 countries surveyed in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East, Africa).*
- *Complete results are available on the ManpowerGroup Knowledge Center. Download also our infographic (www.manpowergroup.be).*

Brussels, 10th September 2019 – According to ManpowerGroup's Employment Outlook published today, hiring pace is expected to accelerate during the fourth quarter of 2019 in Belgium. Of the 751 Belgian employers surveyed at the end of July by ManpowerGroup, 7% plan to increase their workforce by the end of 2019 and only 1% plan to make cuts. Nine out of ten do not anticipate any changes. After seasonal adjustment, the Net Employment Outlook (*) – the difference between the percentage of employers expecting to hire staff and the percentage of those planning to reduce staff – stands at an encouraging +6%. Hiring prospects improve by 3 percentage points when compared with the previous quarter, while remaining unchanged in comparison with the third quarter of 2018.

"Despite political and economic uncertainty at both national and international levels, Belgian employers are quite confident and plan to accelerate their hiring pace by the end of the year," explains Philippe Lacroix, Managing Director of ManpowerGroup BeLux. "According to the latest report from the Higher Council of Employment, 61,000 net jobs should be created in Belgium in 2019, a similar increase to last year (62,000 net jobs). But the report rightly warns that this growth is likely to weaken in 2020 and 2021 if different levels of government fail to take measures to close the gap between supply and demand in the labor market. In our business, we face these recruiting challenges daily in a job market where qualified candidates dictate the terms."

Encouraging forecasts in Flanders and Wallonia

Employers in all three regions expect to add to payrolls in the forthcoming quarter. Employers in Flanders are the most optimistic, reporting a Net Employment Outlook of +7%, up 2 percentage points in both quarterly and annual comparisons. Recruitment activity should remain favorable in Wallonia at +6% for the third consecutive quarter. Employers are more cautious in Brussels, where the Net Employment Outlook is +4%, up 3 percentage points compared to the previous quarter but down 2 percentage points compared to the fourth quarter of 2018.



Positive Outlooks in nine out of 10 industry sectors

Workforce gains are forecast for nine of the 10 industry sectors during the third quarter of 2019. Employers in Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing (+14%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (+10% - the strongest Outlook in eight years) and Electricity, Gas and Water (+10%) sectors report the strongest Outlooks. Hiring pace is expected to be strong in Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services (+8%), moderate in the Public and Social sector (+6%) and in Manufacturing (+5%) and cautious in the Transport and Logistics sector (+4%). Conversely, hiring is expected to be relatively stable in the Mining & Quarrying (+1%) and Construction (0%) sectors, whilst it is expected to decline in the Restaurants & Hotels sector (-6%) where employers report a negative Net Employment Outlook for the third consecutive quarter and the weakest in six years.

On a quarter-over-quarter basis, Net Employment Outlook improved in five sectors and deteriorated in three sectors. On a year-over-year basis, recruitment intentions increased in four sectors and declined in six.

Job creation in large and medium enterprises.

According to the Survey, job creation will be mainly in large companies (≥ 250 employees), and medium-sized businesses (50-249 employees), with Net Employment Outlooks of +29% and +20% respectively. Employers in small businesses (10-49 workers) anticipate positive recruitment activity with a Net Employment Outlook of +11%. On the other hand, employers in the micro-enterprise segment (<10 employees) are much more cautious, reporting a Net Employment Outlook of +4%.

Positive hiring intentions in 43 of 44 countries and territories surveyed

ManpowerGroup interviewed over 59,000 employers across 44 countries and territories to forecast labor market activity in Quarter 4 2019.

- **Outlooks are positive in 43 of 44 countries and territories in the period up to the end of December 2019.** In a comparison with the previous quarter, employers in 15 of 44 countries and territories report stronger hiring intentions, while employers in 23 expect a weaker hiring pace, with no reported change in six. When compared with the fourth quarter of 2018, hiring plans also strengthen in 15 countries and territories, decline in 23 and are unchanged in six.
- **Strongest and weakest hiring plans:** The strongest hiring prospects are reported in Japan (+26%), Taiwan (+21%), the U.S. (+20%), India (+19%) and Greece (+18%), while the weakest hiring activity is expected in Spain (0%), the Czech Republic (+2%), Argentina (+3%), Costa Rica (+3%), and Switzerland (+3%). Chinese employers (+4%) expect a cautious hiring climate in the coming quarter, reporting their weakest Outlook in two years.
- **Employers expect to add to payrolls in 25 of 26 Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA) region countries surveyed during the coming quarter,** while employers in Spain expect a flat labor market (0%). In a comparison with the previous quarter, hiring plans strengthen in 10 countries but weaken in 12. When compared with last year at this time, Outlooks improve in eight countries, but decline in 14. The strongest hiring intentions for the coming quarter are reported in Greece (+18%) and Slovenia (+17%), while employers in Spain (+0%), the Czech Republic (+2%) and Switzerland (+3%) report the weakest hiring sentiment. German employers report relatively stable hiring plans when compared with the previous quarter, forecasting moderate workforce gains for 4Q 2019 (+6%). A fair hiring pace is also expected in France (+6%). Despite ongoing Brexit uncertainty, UK employers anticipate an increase in payrolls during the next three months with a slightly stronger Outlook than reported for the previous quarter (+5%). In Italy, employers expect slow-paced payroll gains (+4%), with improvements in comparison with the prior quarter and the same period last year. Finally, in the Netherlands, employers report stable hiring plans in comparison with the previous quarter (+5%).

The next Manpower Employment Outlook Survey will be released on 10th December 2019 to report hiring expectations for the first quarter of 2020.



(*) Net Employment Outlook.” This figure is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting to see a decrease in employment at their location in the next quarter. The result of this calculation is the Net Employment Outlook. Net Employment Outlooks for countries and territories that have accumulated at least 17 quarters of data are reported in a seasonally adjusted format unless otherwise stated. Commentary is based on seasonally adjusted data where available. Data is not seasonally adjusted for Croatia or Portugal.

(**) [Report Higher Council of Employment](#) (Belgium, 2018)

Presentation of the Survey

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey for the fourth quarter of 2019 was conducted between 17th and 30th July 2019 by interviewing a representative sample of employers from more than 59,000 private companies and public organizations in 44 countries and territories around the world (751 in Belgium). The aim of the survey is to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. All survey participants were asked the same question: "How do you anticipate total employment at your location to change in the three months to the end of December 2019 as compared to the current quarter?" It is the only forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in its size, scope, longevity and area of focus. The Survey has been running for more than five decades and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. It is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

Note that in Quarter 2 of 2008, the survey adopted the TRAMO-SEATS model for seasonal adjustment of data. As a result, you may notice some seasonally adjusted data points change slightly from previous reports. This model is recommended by the Eurostat department of the European Union and the European Central Bank and is widely used internationally.

Note to Editors

Full survey results for each of the 44 countries and territories included in this quarter's survey, plus regional and global comparisons, can be found in the Manpower Press Room at www.manpower.com/meos. In addition, all tables and graphs from the full report are available to be downloaded for use in publication or broadcast from the ManpowerGroup Online Visual Library, also located in the Press Room on <http://www.manpowergroup.com/library> results for all 44 countries can be viewed in the new interactive Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Explorer tool at <http://manpowergroupsolutions.com/DataExplorer/>.

About ManpowerGroup®

ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills. Our expert family of brands – Manpower®, Experis®, ManpowerGroup® Solutions, FuturSkill®, Proservia™ et Right Management® – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across 80 countries and territories and has done for 70 years. In 2019, ManpowerGroup was named one of Fortune's Most Admired Companies for the seventeenth year and one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the ninth year in 2018, confirming our position as the most trusted and admired brand in the industry. In Belgium, ManpowerGroup Belgium wins HR Excellence Award 2018 in the category 'Best Staffing, Sourcing & Contingent Workforce Management Company'.

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