



Federation of European Accountants  
Fédération des Experts comptables Européens

# **FEE Qualification and Market Access Working Party**

## **Structure and Organisation of the Accountancy Profession**

### **Key features**

### **Belgium**

Status: February 2012

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# Belgium

**Flag:**



**Population:**

approx. 11,000,000

**Capital:**

Brussels

**Languages:**

Dutch, French, German

**In the EU since:** Founder



IBR-IRE - Institut des Revisers d'Entreprises: <http://www.accountancy.be/fra/>

IEC-IAB - Institut des Experts-Comptables et des Conseils Fiscaux: <http://www.iec-iab.be/fr/Pages/default.aspx>

BIBF-IPCF - Institute of Accounting professionals and Tax Experts: <http://www.ipcf.be/Default.aspx?language=EN>

<b>Professions</b>	<b>Expert-comptable (FR) Accountant (NL)</b>	<b>Conseil fiscal (FR) Belastingconsulent (NL)</b>	<b>Réviseur d'entreprises (FR) Bedrijfsrevisor (NL)</b>	<b>Boekhouder / Boekhouders-fiscalist (NL) Comptable / comptable-fiscaliste (FR)</b>
<b>Protected title</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Reserved activities</b>	Activities regarding the issuance of financial statements, for example review of financial statements, valuation, forensic accounting, special assignments stated in company law or other specific laws	No reserved activities	Statutory Audit and activities regarding the issuance of financial statements	Activities regarding bookkeeping, establishment of financial statements
<b>Included authorisations</b>	Bookkeeping Tax services (not a reserved activity),	Tax services (not a reserved activity)	Related assignments stated in specific laws	Tax services (not a reserved activity), other assignments stated in specific laws

	<b>Expert-comptable (FR) Accountant (NL)</b>	<b>Conseil fiscal (FR) Belastingconsulent (NL)</b>	<b>Réviseur d'entreprises (FR) Bedrijfsrevisor (NL)</b>	<b>Boekhouder / Boekhouders-fiscalist (NL) Comptable / comptable-fiscaliste (FR)</b>
<b>Regulated profession</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Supervision</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Competent authority</b>	<p>High Council for the Economic Professions (CSPE) (appointed by the State - gives advices which are eventually mandatory for all standards and recommendations to be taken by the IEC-IAB)</p> <p>Disciplinary courts</p> <p>Professional body (Institut des Experts-comptables et des Conseils fiscaux – IEC (FR))</p> <p>Instituut van de Accountants en de Belastingconsulenten – IAB (NL)</p> <p><i>(Institute of Chartered Accountants and Tax Advisors)</i></p>	<p>High Council for the Economic Professions (CSPE) (appointed by the State - gives advices which are eventually mandatory for all standards and recommendations to be taken by the IEC-IAB)</p> <p>Disciplinary courts</p> <p>Professional body (Institut des Experts-comptables et des Conseils fiscaux – IEC (FR))</p> <p>Instituut van de Accountants en de Belastingconsulenten – IAB (NL)</p> <p><i>(Institute of Chartered Accountants and Tax Advisors)</i></p>	<p>Minister of Economy</p> <p>Public Prosecutor</p> <p>High Council for the Economic Professions (CSPE)</p> <p>Chamber of Disciplinary Transfer and Indictment (CRME)</p> <p>Advisory and Supervisory</p> <p>Disciplinary authorities</p> <p>Committee on the independence of the statutory auditor (ACCOM)</p>	<p>High Council for the Economic Professions (CSPE) (appointed by the State – gives advices which are eventually mandatory for all standards and recommendations to be taken by the BIBF-IPCF)</p> <p>Disciplinary courts (EN)</p> <p>Beroepsinstituut van erkende Boekhouders en Fiscalisten –BIBF (NL)</p> <p>Institut Professionel des Comptables et Fiscalistes agréés – IPCF (FR)</p> <p><i>(Institute of Accounting professionals and Tax experts)</i></p>

	<b>Expert-comptable (FR) Accountant (NL)</b>	<b>Conseil fiscal (FR) Belastingconsulent (NL)</b>	<b>Réviseur d'entreprises (FR) Bedrijfsrevisor (NL)</b>	<b>Boekhouder / Boekhouders-fiscalist (NL) Comptable / comptable-fiscaliste (FR)</b>
<b>No. of qualified professionals</b>	+/- 5300 (of which +/- 3.800 professionals in practice) 3.765 of them are also qualified as tax advisor	+/- 5050 (of which +/- 3400 professionals in practice) 3.765 of them are also qualified as accountant	+/- 1000	+/- 6007 (including +/- 1.000 trainee's)
<b>No. of new trainees per year</b>	1270 (all the 3 years of the training considered)	400 (all the 3 years of the training considered)	+/- 125	+/- 350

	<b>Expert-comptable (FR)</b> <b>Accountant (NL) – Conseil fiscal (FR)</b> <b>Belastingconsulent (NL)</b>	<b>Réviseur d'entreprises (FR)</b> <b>Bedrijfsrevisor (NL)</b>	<b>Boekhouder /</b> <b>Boekhouders-fiscalist (NL)</b> <b>Comptable / comptable-</b> <b>fiscaliste (FR)</b>
<b>General initial education steps (without possible exemptions)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Academic degree (master or bachelor) or a similar degree (higher economic education)</li> <li>➤ Admission test</li> <li>➤ Traineeship (at least 3 years but reduction is possible under conditions)</li> <li>➤ Final examination (written and oral, before a jury of 5 members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Academic degree (Master – at least 4 years)</li> <li>➤ Admission exam</li> <li>➤ Traineeship (at least 3 years but exemptions possible if professional experience)</li> <li>➤ Final examination (written and oral, before a jury of 5 members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Academic degree (master or bachelor) in accounting or a degree of higher economic education in accounting</li> <li>➤ Traineeship (at least 1 year up to 3 years)</li> <li>➤ Final examination (written and oral, before a jury of 5 members)</li> </ul>

# Market access *resident professionals*

	<b>Expert-comptable (FR) Accountant (NL)</b>	<b>Conseil fiscal (FR) Belastingconsulent (NL)</b>	<b>Réviseur d'entreprises (FR) Bedrijfsrevisor (NL)</b>	<b>Boekhouder / Boekhouders- fiscalist (NL) Comptable / comptable- fiscaliste (FR)</b>
<b>Registration required</b>	Yes	Only for the use of the title	Yes	Yes
<b>Competent authority for registration</b>	IEC - IAB	IEC - IAB	Institut des Réviseurs d'Entreprises (IRE) Instituut van de Bedrijfsrevisoren (IBR)	BIBF-IPCF
<b>Cost of appointment/ registration</b>	No registration fee, only annual membership fee	No registration fee, only annual membership fee	No registration fee, only annual membership fee	Registration fee (125,00€ - only at the beginning of the traineeship ) and annual membership fee
<b>Oath required</b>	Yes (before the Commercial Court)	Yes (before the Commercial Court)	Yes (before the Court of Appeal)	No
<b>Insurance required</b>	Yes - contractual limitation of liability allowed	Yes - contractual limitation of liability allowed	Yes – cap on liability for legal engagements – contractual limitations required	Yes - contractual limitation of liability allowed
<b>Professional address required</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

# Market access

## *professionals from other EU Member States*

### Temporary provision of non-audit services\*

	IEC – IAB / IRE - IBR	BIBF-IPCF
<b>Pro-forma declaration</b>	➤ Required – to be renewed after one year	➤ Required – to be renewed after one year
<b>Requested data</b>	➤ Not decided yet (royal decree not published yet)	➤ personal data, professional registration and liability insurance
<b>Requested documents</b>	➤ Not decided yet (royal decree not published yet)	➤ Identity-card, proof of registration as professional (declaration competent authority or by equivalent)
<b>Competent authority</b>	➤ IEC – IAB / IRE - IBR	➤ BIBF-IPCF
<b>Factual checks</b>	➤ Not yet decided	➤ registration as professional – coverage liability insurance
<b>Standard form</b>	➤ Not yet available	➤ available on <a href="http://www.bibf.be">www.bibf.be</a> / <a href="http://www.ipcf.be">www.ipcf.be</a>
<b>Compliance with host Member State rules</b>	➤ Yes – cooperation with home country authority on request	➤ Yes – cooperation with home country authority on request

\* Not relevant for statutory audit services nor for the profession of tax adviser (no professional requirements apply on the provision of tax services in Belgium)



# Market access

## *professionals from other EU Member States*

### Establishment of Statutory Auditors

<b>Required procedure</b>	➤ Aptitude test, oath, registration
<b>Infrastructure</b>	➤ Yes in European Union Member State (EU MS)
<b>Professional address</b>	➤ Yes in European Union Member State (EU MS)
<b>Competent authority</b>	➤ IRE - IBR

### Aptitude test

<b>Competent authority</b>	➤ IRE - IBR
<b>Frequency</b>	➤ By appointment
<b>Form</b>	➤ Written and oral exam (jury of 2 Board Members)
<b>Main Subjects</b>	➤ Specific knowledge of Belgian law (e.g. company law, tax law, professional law,...)
<b>Language</b>	➤ French, Dutch or German
<b>Repetition</b>	➤ 3 chances
<b>Statistics</b>	➤ 0 in 2010 (other years average of 3 applicants/year with 1 or 2 successful)

# Market access

## *professionals from other EU Member States*

### Establishment of other accountants not providing statutory audit and of tax advisers

<b>Compensation measure</b>	Oral aptitude test	Written and/or oral aptitude test
<b>Competent authority</b>	IEC - IAB	BIBF-IPCF
<b>Procedure</b>	Application, aptitude test, oath, registration	Application, aptitude test, registration

# Market access

## *professionals from Third Countries*

### Establishment of Statutory Auditors

<b>Required procedure</b>	➤ Aptitude test, oath, registration – reciprocity agreement with home country of the professional is required
<b>Infrastructure</b>	➤ Yes, in EU MS
<b>Professional address</b>	➤ Yes, in EU MS
<b>Competent authority</b>	➤ IRE - IBR

### Aptitude test

<b>Competent authority</b>	➤ IRE - IBR
<b>Frequency</b>	➤ By appointment
<b>Form</b>	➤ Written and oral exam (jury of 2 Board Members)
<b>Main Subjects</b>	➤ Specific knowledge of Belgian law (e.g. corporate law, tax law, professional law,...)
<b>Language</b>	➤ French, Dutch or German
<b>Repetition</b>	➤ 3 chances
<b>Statistics</b>	➤ 0 in 2010

# Market access

## *professionals from Third Countries*

### Establishment of accountants not providing statutory audit and of tax advisers

<b>Compensation measure</b>	No facilitated access, but reduction of the length of the traineeship is possible	No facilitated access.
<b>Competent authority</b>	IEC-IAB	BIBF-IPCF
<b>Procedure</b>	Application to the 'Commission de Stage'/'Stage Commissie' of IEC-IAB	Standard traineeship application procedure

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<b>Professional bodies</b>	➤ IEC-IAB	➤ IEC-IAB	➤ IRE-IBR	➤ BIBF-IPCF

	<b>IEC - IAB</b>	<b>IRE - IBR</b>	<b>BIBF-IPCF</b>
<b>Membership</b>	Mandatory for accountants, optional for tax advisors (mandatory for the use of the title)	Mandatory	Mandatory
<b>No. of members</b>	+/- 6800	+/- 1000	+/- 6.000
<b>Institute staff</b>	~ 23	~ 40	18
<b>Date of establishment</b>	1985	1953	1992
<b>Local branches</b>	No	No	No
<b>Subject to public oversight</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Oversight authority</b>	High Council of the Economic Professions	Minister of Economy Public Prosecutor High Council of the Economic Professions Chamber of Disciplinary Transfer and Indictment Disciplinary authorities ACCOM	High Council of the Economic Professions

Involvement in Qualification and Market Access	IEC – IAB	IRE - IBR	BIBF-IPCF <i>(not a FEE member body)</i>
Initial education	Yes	Yes	Yes
Examination	Yes	Yes	Yes
Approval and registration	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continued Professional Development	Yes - plus supervisor of other CPD providers	Yes	Yes - plus supervisor of other CPD providers

Activities	IEC - IAB	IRE - IBR	BIBF-IPCF <i>(not a FEE member body)</i>
Standard setting	Yes, shared with High Council of the Economic Professions	Yes, under the oversight of the CSPE and the Minister of Economy	Yes, shared with High Council of the Economic Professions, Commission for Accounting Standards
Quality assurance	Limited (control of the continued professional development and review of specific reports)	Yes, under the oversight of the CRME	Limited (control of the continued professional development and review of specific reports)
Disciplinary measures	No final decision competence	Yes, under the oversight of the disciplinary authorities (the Disciplinary Commission and the Commission of Appeal)	No final decision competence
Representation of interests	Yes	Yes	Yes