



## Europe :: Belgium

### Introduction :: Belgium

#### Background:

Belgium became independent from the Netherlands in 1830; it was occupied by Germany during World Wars I and II. The country prospered in the past half century as a modern, technologically advanced European state and member of NATO and the EU. Tensions between the Dutch-speaking Flemings of the north and the French-speaking Walloons of the south have led in recent years to constitutional amendments granting these regions formal recognition and autonomy. Its capital, Brussels, is home to numerous international organizations including the EU and NATO.

### Geography :: Belgium

#### Location:

Western Europe, bordering the North Sea, between France and the Netherlands

#### Geographic coordinates:

50 50 N, 4 00 E

#### Map references:

Europe

#### Area:

**total:** 30,528 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 141

**land:** 30,278 sq km

**water:** 250 sq km

#### Area - comparative:

about the size of Maryland

#### Land boundaries:

**total:** 1,385 km

**border countries:** France 620 km, Germany 167 km, Luxembourg 148 km, Netherlands 450 km

#### Coastline:

66.5 km

#### Maritime claims:

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** geographic coordinates define outer limit

**continental shelf:** median line with neighbors

#### Climate:

temperate; mild winters, cool summers; rainy, humid, cloudy

**Terrain:**

flat coastal plains in northwest, central rolling hills, rugged mountains of Ardennes Forest in southeast

**Elevation extremes:**

**lowest point:** North Sea 0 m

**highest point:** Botrange 694 m

**Natural resources:**

construction materials, silica sand, carbonates

**Land use:**

**arable land:** 27.06%

**permanent crops:** 0.72%

**other:** 72.22%

**note:** includes Luxembourg (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

233.5 sq km (2007)

**Total renewable water resources:**

18.3 cu km (2011)

**Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):**

**total:** 6.22 cu km/yr (12%/88%/1%)

**per capita:** 589.8 cu m/yr (2007)

**Natural hazards:**

flooding is a threat along rivers and in areas of reclaimed coastal land, protected from the sea by concrete dikes

**Environment - current issues:**

the environment is exposed to intense pressures from human activities: urbanization, dense transportation network, industry, extensive animal breeding and crop cultivation; air and water pollution also have repercussions for neighboring countries; uncertainties regarding federal and regional responsibilities (now resolved) had slowed progress in tackling environmental challenges

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Air Pollution, Air Pollution-Nitrogen Oxides, Air Pollution-Persistent Organic Pollutants, Air Pollution-Sulfur 85, Air Pollution-Sulfur 94, Air Pollution-Volatile Organic Compounds, Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Seals, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling  
**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

**Geography - note:**

crossroads of Western Europe; most West European capitals within 1,000 km of Brussels, the seat of both the European Union and NATO

**People and Society :: Belgium**

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**Nationality:**

**noun:** Belgian(s)

**adjective:** Belgian

**Ethnic groups:**

Fleming 58%, Walloon 31%, mixed or other 11%

**Languages:**

Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%, legally bilingual (Dutch and French)

**Religions:**

Roman Catholic 75%, other (includes Protestant) 25%

**Population:**

10,444,268 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 84

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 15.7% (male 835,569/female 801,959)  
**15-24 years:** 11.8% (male 629,753/female 603,550)  
**25-54 years:** 40.6% (male 2,145,075/female 2,100,014)  
**55-64 years:** 13.2% (male 681,946/female 695,188)  
**65 years and over:** 18.7% (male 819,694/female 1,131,520) (2013 est.)

#### **Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 53.8 %  
**youth dependency ratio:** 26.1 %  
**elderly dependency ratio:** 27.7 %  
**potential support ratio:** 3.6 (2013)

#### **Median age:**

**total:** 42.8 years  
**male:** 41.5 years  
**female:** 44.2 years (2013 est.)

#### **Population growth rate:**

0.05% (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 188

#### **Birth rate:**

10 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 195

#### **Death rate:**

10.7 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 42

#### **Net migration rate:**

1.22 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 54

#### **Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 97% of total population (2010)  
**rate of urbanization:** 0.4% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

#### **Major urban areas - population:**

BRUSSELS (capital) 1.892 million; Antwerp 961,000 (2009)

#### **Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.05 male(s)/female  
**0-14 years:** 1.04 male(s)/female  
**15-24 years:** 1.04 male(s)/female  
**25-54 years:** 1.02 male(s)/female  
**55-64 years:** 0.98 male(s)/female  
**65 years and over:** 0.72 male(s)/female  
**total population:** 0.96 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

#### **Mother's mean age at first birth:**

28  
*note:* Data refer to first birth within current marriage. (2008 est.)

#### **Maternal mortality rate:**

8 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)  
**country comparison to the world:** 157

#### **Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 4.23 deaths/1,000 live births  
**country comparison to the world:** 194  
**male:** 4.73 deaths/1,000 live births  
**female:** 3.7 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

#### **Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 79.78 years  
**country comparison to the world:** 38  
**male:** 76.62 years  
**female:** 83.08 years (2013 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**

1.65 children born/woman (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 176

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

70.4%

*note:* percent of women aged 18-49 (2010)

**Health expenditures:**

10.7% of GDP (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 23

**Physicians density:**

2.99 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

**Hospital bed density:**

6.5 beds/1,000 population (2010)

**Drinking water source:****improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 100% of population

total: 100% of population (2010 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:****improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 100% of population

total: 100% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

0.2% (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 96

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

14,000 (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 88

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

fewer than 100 (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 126

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

22.1% (2008)

**country comparison to the world:** 83

**Education expenditures:**

6.6% of GDP (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 28

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write

**total population:** 99%

**male:** 99%

**female:** 99% (2003 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 16 years

**male:** 16 years

**female:** 17 years (2010)

**Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 18.7%

**country comparison to the world:** 65

**male:** 18.7%

**female:** 18.7% (2011)

## Government :: Belgium

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### Country name:

**conventional long form:** Kingdom of Belgium

**conventional short form:** Belgium

**local long form:** Royaume de Belgique/Koninkrijk België

**local short form:** Belgique/Belgie

### Government type:

federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

### Capital:

**name:** Brussels

**geographic coordinates:** 50 50 N, 4 20 E

**time difference:** UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**daylight saving time:** +1hr, begins last Sunday in March; ends last Sunday in October

### Administrative divisions:

3 regions (French: regions, singular - region; Dutch: gewesten, singular - gewest); Brussels-Capital Region, also known as Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest (Dutch), Region de Bruxelles-Capitale (French long form), Bruxelles-Capitale (French short form); Flemish Region (Flanders), also known as Vlaams Gewest (Dutch long form), Vlaanderen (Dutch short form), Region Flamande (French long form), Flandre (French short form); Walloon Region (Wallonia), also known as Region Wallone (French long form), Wallonie (French short form), Waals Gewest (Dutch long form), Wallonie (Dutch short form)

**note:** as a result of the 1993 constitutional revision that furthered devolution into a federal state, there are now three levels of government (federal, regional, and linguistic community) with a complex division of responsibilities

### Independence:

4 October 1830 (a provisional government declared independence from the Netherlands); 21 July 1831 (King LEOPOLD I ascended to the throne)

### National holiday:

21 July (1831) ascension to the Throne of King LEOPOLD I

### Constitution:

drafted 25 November 1830; approved by a Belgium National Congress 7 February 1831; entered into force 26 July 1831; amended many times; revised 14 July 1993 to create a federal state; in 1967 an official Dutch version of the constitution was adopted; in 1991 an official German version of the constitution was adopted; in 1993 an official consolidated version of the constitution was adopted

### Legal system:

civil law system based on the French Civil Code; note - Belgian law continues to be modified in conformance with the legislative norms mandated by the European Union; judicial review of legislative acts

### International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

### Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal and compulsory

### Executive branch:

**chief of state:** King PHILIPPE (since 21 August 2013); Heir Apparent Princess ELISABETH, daughter of the monarch

**head of government:** Prime Minister Elio DI RUPO (since 6 December 2011); Deputy Prime Minister Alexander DE CROO (since 22 October 2012); Joelle MILQUET (since 20 March 2008); Laurette ONKELINX (since 30 December 2008); Didier REYNDEERS (since 30 December 2008); Pieter DE CREM (since 5 March 2013)

**cabinet:** Council of Ministers are formally appointed by the monarch  
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [↗](#))

**elections:** the monarchy is hereditary and constitutional; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition usually appointed prime minister by the monarch and then approved by parliament

### Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament consists of a Senate or Senaat in Dutch, Senat in French (71 seats; 40 members directly elected by popular vote, 31 indirectly elected; members serve four-year terms) and a Chamber of Deputies or Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers in Dutch, Chambre des Représentants in French (150 seats; members directly elected by popular vote on the basis of proportional representation to serve four-year terms)

**elections:** Senate and Chamber of Deputies - last held on 13 June 2010 (next to be held no later than June 2014)

**election results:** Senate - percent of vote by party - N-VA 19.6%, PS 13.6%, CD&V 10%, SP.A 9.5%, MR 9.3%, Open VLD 8.2%, VB 7.6%, Ecolo 5.5%, CDH 5.1% Groen! 3.9%, other 7.7%; seats by party - N-VA 9, PS 7, CD&V 4, SP.A 4, MR 4, Open VLD 4, VB 3, Ecolo 2, CDH 2, Groen! 1; Chamber of Deputies - percent of vote by party - N-VA 17.4%, PS 13.7%, CD&V 10.9%, MR 9.3%, SP.A 9.2%, Open VLD 8.6%, VB 7.8%, CDH 5.5%, Ecolo 4.8%, Groen! 4.4%, List Dedecker 2.3%, the Popular Party 1.3%, other 4.8%; seats by party - N-VA 27, PS 26, CD&V 17, MR 18, sp.a 13, Open VLD 13, VB 12, CDH 9, Ecolo 8, Groen! 5, List Dedecker 1, the Popular Party 1

**note:** as a result of the 1993 constitutional revision that furthered devolution into a federal state, there are now three levels of government (federal, regional, and linguistic community) with a complex division of responsibilities; this reality leaves six governments, each with its own legislative assembly

#### **Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** Constitutional Court or Grondwettelijk Hof in Dutch and Cour constitutionnelle in French (consists of 12 judges - 6 Dutch-speaking and 6 French-speaking); Supreme Court of Justice or Hof van Cassatie in Dutch and Cour de Cassation in French (court organized into 3 chambers: civil and commercial; criminal; social, fiscal, and armed forces; each chamber includes a Dutch division and a French division, each with a chairperson and 5-6 judges)

**judge selection and term of office:** Constitutional Court judges appointed by the monarch from candidates submitted by Parliament; judges appointed for life with mandatory retirement at age 70; Supreme Court judges appointed by the monarch from candidates submitted by the High Council of Justice, a 44-member independent body of judicial and non-judicial members; judges appointed for life

**subordinate courts:** Courts of Appeal; regional courts; specialized courts for administrative, commercial, labor, and audit issues; magistrate's courts; justices of the peace

#### **Political parties and leaders:**

##### **Flemish parties:**

Christian Democratic and Flemish or CD&V [Wouter BEKE]

Flemish Liberals and Democrats or Open VLD [Gwendolyn RUTTEN]

Groen! [Wouter VAN BESIEN] (formerly AGALEV, Flemish Greens)

Libertarian, Direct, Democratic or LDD (formerly Dedecker's List) [Jean-Marie DEDECKER]

New Flemish Alliance or N-VA [Bart DE WEVER]

Social Progressive Alternative or SP.A [Bruno TOBBACK]

Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) or VB [Gerolf ANNEMANS]

##### **Francophone parties:**

Ecolo (Francophone Greens) [Olivier DELEUZE, Emily HOYOS]

Humanist and Democratic Center or CDH [Benoit LUTGEN]

Popular Party or PP [Mischael MODRIKAMEN]

Reform Movement or MR [Charles MICHEL]

Socialist Party or PS [Paul MAGNETTE]

other minor parties

#### **Political pressure groups and leaders:**

Federation of Belgian Industries

**other:** trade unions; numerous other associations representing bankers, manufacturers, middle-class artisans, and the legal and medical professions; various organizations represent the cultural interests of Flanders and Wallonia; various peace groups such as Pax Christi and groups representing immigrants

#### **International organization participation:**

ADB (nonregional members), AfDB (nonregional members), Australia Group, Benelux, BIS, CD, CE, CERN, EAPC, EBRD, ECB, EIB, EITI (implementing country), EMU, ESA, EU, FAO, FATF, G-9, G-10, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IEA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IGAD (partners), IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MONUSCO, NATO, NEA, NSG, OAS (observer), OECD, OIF, OPCW, OSCE, Paris Club, PCA, Schengen Convention, SELEC (observer), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNRWA, UNTSO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

#### **Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Jan MATTHYSEN  
**chancery:** 3330 Garfield Street NW, Washington, DC 20008  
**telephone:** [1] (202) 333-6900  
**FAX:** [1] (202) 338-4960  
**consulate(s) general:** Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York

#### Diplomatic representation from the US:

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Howard W. GUTMAN  
**embassy:** 27 Boulevard du Regent [Regentlaan], B-1000 Brussels  
**mailing address:** PSC 82, Box 002, APO AE 09710  
**telephone:** [32] (2) 811-4000  
**FAX:** [32] (2) 811-4500

#### Flag description:

three equal vertical bands of black (hoist side), yellow, and red; the vertical design was based on the flag of France; the colors are those of the arms of the duchy of Brabant (yellow lion with red claws and tongue on a black field)

#### National symbol(s):

lion

#### National anthem:

**name:** "La Brabançonne" (The Song of Brabant)

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

**lyrics/music:** Louis-Alexandre DECHET[French] Victor CEULEMANS [Dutch]/Francois VAN CAMPENHOUT  
**note:** adopted 1830; Louis-Alexandre DECHET was an actor at the theater in which the revolution against the Netherlands began; according to legend, he wrote the lyrics with a group of young people in a Brussels cafe

## Economy :: Belgium

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#### Economy - overview:

This modern, open, and private-enterprise-based economy has capitalized on its central geographic location, highly developed transport network, and diversified industrial and commercial base. Industry is concentrated mainly in the more heavily-populated region of Flanders in the north. With few natural resources, Belgium imports substantial quantities of raw materials and exports a large volume of manufactures, making its economy vulnerable to volatility in world markets. Roughly three-quarters of Belgium's trade is with other EU countries, and Belgium has benefited most from its proximity to Germany. In 2011 Belgian GDP grew by 1.8%, the unemployment rate decreased slightly to 7.2% from 8.3% the previous year, and the government reduced the budget deficit from a peak of 6% of GDP in 2009 to 4.2% in 2011 and 3.3% in 2012. Fourth quarter GDP growth in 2012 was at -0.1%, the third consecutive quarter of negative growth. This brought economic growth for the whole of 2012 to negative 0.2%. It also left Belgium on the brink of a possible recession at the end of 2012. However, at year's end, the government appeared close to meeting its 2012 budget deficit goal of 3% of GDP. Despite the relative improvement in Belgium's budget deficit, public debt hovers around 100% of GDP, a factor that has contributed to investor perceptions that the country is increasingly vulnerable to spillover from the euro-zone crisis. Belgian banks were severely affected by the international financial crisis in 2008 with three major banks receiving capital injections from the government, and the nationalization of the Belgian retail arm of a Franco-Belgian bank.

#### GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$427.2 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 33

\$428.1 billion (2011 est.)

\$420.6 billion (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

#### GDP (official exchange rate):

\$484.7 billion (2012 est.)

#### GDP - real growth rate:

-0.2% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 186

1.8% (2011 est.)

2.4% (2010 est.)

#### GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$38,500 (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 31

\$38,900 (2011 est.)

\$38,800 (2010 est.)

*note:* data are in 2012 US dollars

#### **Gross national saving:**

20.2% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 76

21.1% of GDP (2011 est.)

21.8% of GDP (2010 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 52.9%

**government consumption:** 24.9%

**investment in fixed capital:** 20.7%

**investment in inventories:** 0.3%

**exports of goods and services:** 84.8%

**imports of goods and services:** -83.6%  
(2012 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 0.7%

**industry:** 22.3%

**services:** 77% (2012 est.)

#### **Agriculture - products:**

sugar beets, fresh vegetables, fruits, grain, tobacco; beef, veal, pork, milk

#### **Industries:**

engineering and metal products, motor vehicle assembly, transportation equipment, scientific instruments, processed food and beverages, chemicals, basic metals, textiles, glass, petroleum

#### **Industrial production growth rate:**

-0.8% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 141

#### **Labor force:**

5.189 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 73

#### **Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 2%

**industry:** 25%

**services:** 73% (2007 est.)

#### **Unemployment rate:**

7.6% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 85

7.2% (2011 est.)

#### **Population below poverty line:**

15.2% (2007 est.)

#### **Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** 3.4%

**highest 10%:** 28.4% (2006)

#### **Distribution of family income - Gini index:**

28 (2005)

**country comparison to the world:** 122

28.7 (1996)

#### **Budget:**

**revenues:** \$245.9 billion

**expenditures:** \$265.5 billion (2012 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

50.7% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 14

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

-4% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 139

**Public debt:**

99.6% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 16

97.8% of GDP (2011 est.)

*note:* data cover general government debt, and includes debt instruments issued (or owned) by government entities other than the treasury; the data include treasury debt held by foreign entities; the data include debt issued by subnational entities, as well as intra-governmental debt; intra-governmental debt consists of treasury borrowings from surpluses in the social funds, such as for retirement, medical care, and unemployment; debt instruments for the social funds are not sold at public auctions; general government debt is defined by the Maastricht definition and calculated by the National Bank of Belgium as consolidated gross debt; the debt is defined in European Regulation EC479/2009 concerning the implementation of the protocol on the excessive deficit procedure annexed to the Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Maastricht) of 7 February 1992; the sub-sectors of consolidated gross debt are: federal government, communities and regions, local government, and social security funds

**Fiscal year:**

calendar year

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

2.6% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 69

3.4% (2011 est.)

**Central bank discount rate:**

1.5% (31 December 2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 121

1.75% (31 December 2010)

*note:* this is the European Central Bank's rate on the marginal lending facility, which offers overnight credit to banks in the euro area

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

3.62% (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 170

3.93% (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$185.5 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 20

\$170.4 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

*note:* see entry for the European Union for money supply in the euro area; the European Central Bank (ECB) controls monetary policy for the 17 members of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU); individual members of the EMU do not control the quantity of money circulating within their own borders

**Stock of broad money:**

\$543.2 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

\$547.2 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$574.3 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 23

\$559.2 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$229.9 billion (31 December 2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 29

\$269.3 billion (31 December 2010)

\$261.4 billion (31 December 2009)

**Current account balance:**

-\$4.8 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 165**

-\$3.709 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports:**

\$315.4 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 18**

\$332.3 billion (2011 est.)

**Exports - commodities:**

machinery and equipment, chemicals, finished diamonds, metals and metal products, foodstuffs

**Exports - partners:**

Germany 18%, France 16.1%, Netherlands 13%, UK 7.3%, US 5.3%, Italy 4.4% (2012)

**Imports:**

\$322 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 18**

\$342.3 billion (2011 est.)

**Imports - commodities:**

raw materials, machinery and equipment, chemicals, raw diamonds, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, transportation equipment, oil products

**Imports - partners:**

Netherlands 20.9%, Germany 14.2%, France 10.6%, US 6.1%, UK 5.5%, Ireland 4.4% (2012)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$30.77 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 50**

\$29.43 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Debt - external:**

\$1.424 trillion (31 December 2012)

**country comparison to the world: 14**

\$1.417 trillion (31 December 2011)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$1.082 trillion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 7**

\$992.9 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$1.024 trillion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 8**

\$987.5 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**Exchange rates:**

euros (EUR) per US dollar -

0.7778 (2012 est.)

0.7185 (2011 est.)

0.755 (2010 est.)

0.7198 (2009 est.)

0.6827 (2008 est.)

**Energy :: Belgium**

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**Electricity - production:**

89.25 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 36**

**Electricity - consumption:**

78.53 billion kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 35**

**Electricity - exports:**

11.84 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 16

**Electricity - imports:**

12.41 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 14

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

17.5 million kW (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 40

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

46.4% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 162

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

33.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

0.6% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

11.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

**Crude oil - production:**

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 109

**Crude oil - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 80

**Crude oil - imports:**

624,500 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 16

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 107

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

693,500 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 25

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

644,400 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 28

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

353,000 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 22

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

370,800 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 17

**Natural gas - production:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 100

**Natural gas - consumption:**

13.46 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 41

**Natural gas - exports:**

2.511 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 37

**Natural gas - imports:**

15.94 billion cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 18

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 110

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

127.2 million Mt (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 34

## Communications :: Belgium

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**Telephones - main lines in use:**

4.631 million (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 33

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

12.541 million (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 62

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** highly developed, technologically advanced, and completely automated domestic and international telephone and telegraph facilities

**domestic:** nationwide mobile-cellular telephone system; extensive cable network; limited microwave radio relay network

**international:** country code - 32; landing point for a number of submarine cables that provide links to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia; satellite earth stations - 7 (Intelsat - 3) (2007)

**Broadcast media:**

a segmented market with the three major communities (Flemish, French, and German-speaking) each having responsibility for their own broadcast media; multiple TV channels exist for each community; additionally, in excess of 90% of households are connected to cable and can access broadcasts of TV stations from neighboring countries; each community has a public radio network co-existing with private broadcasters (2007)

**Internet country code:**

.be

**Internet hosts:**

5.192 million (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

**Internet users:**

8.113 million (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 36

## Transportation :: Belgium

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**Airports:**

41 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 102

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 26  
**over 3,047 m:** 6  
**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 9  
**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 2  
**914 to 1,523 m:** 1  
**under 914 m:** 8 (2013)

#### **Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 15  
**under 914 m:**  
15 (2013)

#### **Heliports:**

1 (2013)

#### **Pipelines:**

gas 3,139 km; oil 154 km; refined products 535 km (2013)

#### **Railways:**

**total:** 3,233 km  
**country comparison to the world:** 55  
**standard gauge:** 3,233 km 1.435-m gauge (2,950 km electrified) (2008)

#### **Roadways:**

**total:** 154,012 km  
**country comparison to the world:** 31  
**paved:** 120,514 km (includes 1,756 km of expressways)  
**unpaved:** 33,498 km (2010)

#### **Waterways:**

2,043 km (1,528 km in regular commercial use) (2012)  
**country comparison to the world:** 42

#### **Merchant marine:**

**total:** 87  
**country comparison to the world:** 56  
**by type:** bulk carrier 23, cargo 15, chemical tanker 5, container 4, liquefied gas 23, passenger 2, petroleum tanker 8, roll on/roll off 7  
**foreign-owned:** 15 (Denmark 4, France 7, Russia 1, UK 2, US 1)  
**registered in other countries:** 107 (Bahamas 6, Cambodia 1, Cyprus 3, France 7, Gibraltar 1, Greece 17, Hong Kong 26, Liberia 1, Luxembourg 11, Malta 7, Marshall Islands 1, Mozambique 2, North Korea 1, Panama 1, Portugal 8, Russia 4, Saint Kitts and Nevis 1, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 7, Singapore 1, Vanuatu 1) (2010)

#### **Ports and terminals:**

**major seaport(s):** Oostende, Zeebrugge  
**river port(s):** Antwerp, Gent (Schelde River); Brussels (Senne River); Liege (Meuse River)  
**container port(s) (TEUs):** Antwerp (8,664,243), Zeebrugge (2,207,257) (2011)

### **Military :: Belgium**

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#### **Military branches:**

Belgian Armed Forces: Land Operations Command, Naval Operations Command, Air Operations Command (2012)

#### **Military service age and obligation:**

18 years of age for male and female voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 1994 (2012)

#### **Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 2,359,232  
**females age 16-49:** 2,291,689 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 1,934,957  
**females age 16-49:** 1,877,268 (2010 est.)

#### **Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 59,665  
**female:** 57,142 (2010 est.)

**Military expenditures:**

1.3% of GDP (2005 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 108

**Transnational Issues :: Belgium**

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**Disputes - international:**

none

**Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**stateless persons:** 3,898 (2012)

**Illicit drugs:**

growing producer of synthetic drugs and cannabis; transit point for US-bound ecstasy; source of precursor chemicals for South American cocaine processors; transshipment point for cocaine, heroin, hashish, and marijuana entering Western Europe; despite a strengthening of legislation, the country remains vulnerable to money laundering related to narcotics, automobiles, alcohol, and tobacco; significant domestic consumption of ecstasy