

Directorate-General for the Presidency
Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

Factsheet: The Belgian Senate






















1. At a glance

Belgium is a federal state with a federal Parliament consisting of two chambers, the House of Representatives (Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants) and the Senate (Senaat/Sénat). The regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and the communities (Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking) have their own elected assemblies.

The 2014 elections were the first ones without a direct election of senators. Based on the sixth State reform of October 2011, the 71-Member Senate, which comprised 40 directly elected Members, was transformed into a 60-Member indirectly elected body, comprising 50 senators of the federal entities designated by Community and Regional Parliaments and 10 co-opted senators, selected by the 50 senators. Six Dutch-speaking Members and four French-speaking Members will be co-opted based on the election results of the House of Representatives.



The **Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs** is composed of 30 Members: 10 Members of the Senate, 10 Members of the House of Representatives and 10 Members of the European Parliament elected in Belgium.

2. Composition

Results of the Senate renewal on 3 July 2014					
	Party	EP affiliation	Community & Regional	Co-opted	TOTAL
	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) New Flemish Alliance		10	2	12
	Parti Socialiste (PS) Socialist Party - Walloon		8	1	9
	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V) Christian Democratic and Flemish		7	1	8
	Mouvement Réformateur (MR) Movement for Reform		7	1	8
	Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Open Vld) Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats		4	1	5
	Socialistische Partij Anders (sp.a) Socialist Party–Differently (Flemish)		4	1	5
	Centre démocrate humaniste (cdH) Humanist Democratic Centre		3	1	4
	Groen Flemish Green Party		2	1	3
	Ecolo Greens-Walloon		2	1	3
	Vlaams Belang (VB) Flemish Interest	Non-affiliated	2	0	2
	German-speaking Senator	Not affiliated	1	0	1
	Total		50	10	60

The next Senate renewal will take place in 2019.

3. Officeholders

President of the Senate  Ms Christine Defraigne (MR/ALDE), since 14 October 2014	Chairperson of the Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs  Mr. Philippe Mahoux (PS/S&D) <i>(The Committee is chaired alternatively and for the duration of a full legislature by the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Chairman of the delegation of the Belgian Senate.)</i>
Secretary General of the Belgian Senate: Mr Gert Van der Biesen since 1 May 2016.	

4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in plenary sittings	No
Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in committee meetings	In the committee meetings the MEPs can neither take part in the debate nor vote.
Availability of videoconferencing system in Belgian Senate	No

5. Information links

Official website: <http://www.senate.be>

[Rules of procedure in French](#)

[List of committees](#)

[Recent documents submitted by the Senate to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange \(IPEX\)](#)

[European Parliament Information Office in Brussels](#)

6. Contacts

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