European Parliament

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

Factsheet:

The Belgian House of Representatives

1. At a glance

Belgium is a federal state consisting of three communities and three regions.

The three communities are the Flemish-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking community. The three regions are Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels.

Belgium has a Federal Parliament consisting of two chambers, the House of Representatives (Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants) and the Senate (Senaat/Sénat).

In principle, the communities and the regions have their own elected assemblies.

In 1980, however, the Flemish-speaking community and the Flemish region merged their parliaments into one single Flemish Parliament.

In Brussels, community matters are managed by community committees. These consist of representatives from the different communities in Brussels. Firstly, there is CoCoF (Commission communautaire française) or the consultative body for community matters of the French-speaking inhabitants of the Brussels Region and, secondly, there is the Joint Community Commission (GGC), which also acts a consultative body in order to achieve maximum coherence between the policies of the Flemish-speaking and the French-speaking Communities in the Brussels Region.

As a result, the Belgian parliamentary system consists of nine fully-fledged parliamentary assemblies.

The 150 representatives of the House of Representatives are directly elected under a proportional voting system from 11 electoral districts. Belgium has compulsory voting and thus maintains one of the highest rates of voter turnout in the world.

After the 2019 elections, Belgium had a Federal Government in current affairs from 27 October 2019 to 16 March 2020, led by Ms Sophie WILMÈS (MR/Renew Europe). Following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the so-called Wilmès-II-government with emergency powers took the oath on 17 March 2020. On 1 October 2020, a fully-fledged federal government, led by Alexander DE CROO (OpenVLD/Renew Europe), was established.

The House's Advisory Committee for European Affairs was established in 1985. It is composed of ten representatives and ten Belgian members of the European Parliament.

In October 1995, it was decided to set up a Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs, which consists of the Advisory Committee of the House and a delegation of ten senators. The Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs represents the Belgian Federal Parliament at COSAC meetings.

Traditionally, the Federal Advisory Committee is co-chaired by the President of the House of Representatives and the Chairperson of the delegation of the Senate.

2. Composition

Results of the House of Representatives elections on 26 May 2019				
	Party	**EP affiliation**	**%**	**Seats**
	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) New Flemish Alliance	ECR	**16,03%**	**25**
	Parti Socialiste (PS) Socialist Party - Walloon	S&D	**9,46%**	**20**
	Vlaams Belang (VB) Flemish Interest	ID	**11,95%**	**18**
	Mouvement Réformateur (MR) Movement for Reform	renew europe.	**7,56%**	**14**
	Ecolo Greens-Walloon		**6,14%**	**13**
	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V) Christian Democratic and Flemish	epp	**8,89%**	**12**
	Partij van de Arbeid van België/ **Parti du Travail de Belgique (PVDA-PTB)** Workers' Party	GUE/NGL	**8,62%**	**12**
	Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Open Vld) Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	renew europe.	**8,54%**	**12**
	Socialistische Partij Anders (sp.a) Socialist Party–Differently (Flemish)	S&D	**6,71%**	**9**
	Groen Flemish Green Party		**6,1%**	**8**
	Centre démocrate humaniste (cdH) Humanist Democratic Centre	epp	**3,7%**	**5**
	DéFI Challenge	Not affiliated	**2,22%**	**2**
	Others		**4,08%**	**0**
			100%	**150**
Turnout: 88.38%. The next elections should take place in 2024.				

3. Officeholders

President of the House of Representatives	Chairperson of the Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs
 Ms Éliane TILLIEUX (PS/S&D) since 13 October 2020	 Ms Éliane TILLIEUX (PS/S&D) since 13 October 2020 *(The Committee is chaired alternatively and for the duration of a full legislature by the President of the House of Representatives or the Chairperson of the delegation of the Belgian Senate.)*
Secretary General of the House of Representatives: Mr Marc VAN DER HULST, since 1 October 2016	

4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in plenary sittings	No, in principle MEPs are not allowed to participate in a plenary meeting. However, there are precedents during which MEPs presented their report (drafted on behalf of the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs).
Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in committee meetings	In the Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs, MEPs can take part in the debate and also vote, while in other Committees MEPs can only take part in the debate but not vote. The Chairperson of the Committee has to give them permission in advance.
Availability of videoconferencing system in Belgian House of Representatives	Zoom is available for legislative and non-legislative work

5. Information links

Official website: www.dekamer.be ; www.lachambre.be
Rules of procedure in English
List of committees
Recent documents submitted by the House of Representatives to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange (IPEX)
European Parliament Information Office in Brussels

6. Contacts

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