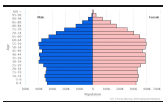
Belgium Country Summary



Introduction

Background

Belgium became independent from the Netherlands in 1830. The country prospered as a modern, technologically advanced European state and member of NATO and the EU. The capital city of Brussels is home to numerous international organizations, including the EU and NATO.

Geography

Area

total: 30,528 sq km
land: 30,278 sq km
water: 250 sq km

Climate

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

Natural resources

construction materials, silica sand, carbonates, arable land

People and Society

Population

total: 11,977,634
male: 5,909,057
female: 6,068,577 (2024 est.)

Ethnic groups

Belgian 75.2%, Italian 4.1%, Moroccan 3.7%, French 2.4%, Turkish 2%, Dutch 2%, other 10.6% (2012 est.)

Languages

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

Religions

Roman Catholic 57.1%, Protestant 2.3%, other Christian, 2.8%, Muslim 6.8%, other 1.7%, atheist 9.1%, nonbeliever/agnostic 20.2% (2018 est.)

Population growth rate

0.53% (2024 est.)

Government

Government type

federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

Capital

name: Brussels

Executive branch

chief of state: King PHILIPPE (since 21 July 2013)
head of government: Prime Minister Alexander DE CROO (since 1 October 2020)

Legislative branch

description: bicameral Parliament consists of:
Senate or Senaat (in Dutch), Senat (in French) (60 seats; 50 members indirectly elected by the community and regional parliaments based on their election results, and 10 elected by the 50 other senators; members serve 5-year terms)
Chamber of Representatives or Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers (in Dutch), Chambre des Representants (in French) (150 seats; members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote; members serve 5-year terms)

Economy

Economic overview

high-income, core EU and eurozone economy; slow but steady growth supported by household consumption and energy shock recovery; high public debt and structural deficits linked to social spending; aging workforce with weak productivity growth and participation rates

Real GDP (purchasing power parity)

$622.704 billion (2022 est.)
$604.509 billion (2021 est.)
$565.749 billion (2020 est.)

Real GDP per capita

$53,300 (2022 est.)
$52,200 (2021 est.)
$49,000 (2020 est.)

Agricultural products

sugar beets, milk, potatoes, wheat, pork, lettuce, maize, chicken, barley, pears (2022)

Industries

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

Exports

$558.271 billion (2022 est.)
$527.746 billion (2021 est.)
$413.773 billion (2020 est.)

Exports - partners

Germany 19%, France 15%, Netherlands 14%, US 6%, Italy 5% (2022)

Exports - commodities

natural gas, vaccines, refined petroleum, packaged medicine, cars (2022)

Imports

$567.164 billion (2022 est.)
$516.8 billion (2021 est.)
$403.359 billion (2020 est.)

Imports - partners

Netherlands 19%, Germany 12%, France 9%, US 6%, China 6% (2022)

Imports - commodities

natural gas, refined petroleum, cars, packaged medicine, vaccines (2022)

Exchange rates

euros (EUR) per US dollar -
Exchange rates:
0.95 (2022 est.)
0.845 (2021 est.)
0.876 (2020 est.)
0.893 (2019 est.)
0.847 (2018 est.)

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