



Country Intelligence Brief

Belgium

Overall Risk Rating

2.25 - Low

Table of Contents

Ratings Overview	3
Factbox	4
Overview	5
Security	5
Infrastructure	8
Environment	12
Health and Medical	13
Political	15
LGBTQ Security	21
Active Alerts	22

Ratings Overview

Security

2.25 - Low

Civil Unrest
Crime
Kidnapping
Terrorism
Armed Conflict
Security Services

● 2.50
● 2.50
● 2.00
● 2.75
● 1.50
● 2.00

Infrastructure

1.25 - Minimal

Ground Transport
Cyber
Maritime
Air Travel
Utilities

● 1.25
● 3.25
● 1.50
● 1.25
● 1.00

Environment

1.75 - Low

Man-Made Hazards
Seismic
Storm Systems
Natural Hazards

● 1.50
● 1.00
● 2.25
● 1.75

Health and Medical

2.00 - Low

Disease and Health Threats
Medical Facilities and Services
Mental Health
Food and Water Safety

● 2.25
● 1.75
● 3.25
● 1.00

Political

2.00 - Low

Corruption
Government Stability
Rule of Law
Sanctions

● 1.75
● 2.00
● 1.00
● 1.50

LGBTQ Security

2.00 - Low

LGBTQ Legal Environment
LGBTQ Enforcement
LGBTQ Social Environment

● 1.00
● 2.00
● 2.00

FactBox

Location	Belgium
Government Type	Federal Parliamentary Democracy - Constitutional Monarchy
Population	11,800,000 (2025)
Languages	Official Languages: Dutch, French, and German. Other languages that are considered official or widely spoken: None. Languages that should be used discreetly: None.
International Country Code	+32
Time Zones	UTC+1
Traffic	Drives on the right
Drinking Water	Safe to Drink

Overview

2.25 - Low

Belgium presents a low security risk, with the main concerns being localized crime, terrorism, and periodic demonstrations and strikes.

- **Trend:** The overall security environment is stable, with no significant deterioration in the country's broader security or operating environment over the past three months.

Current Situation

Belgium remains a stable and permissive operating environment, with strong security institutions and limited risk of widespread unrest or disruption. Petty and opportunistic crime remains the most common security concern for travelers, particularly theft and pickpocketing in busy urban areas and transport hubs.

The terrorism threat remains a persistent but manageable concern. Belgian authorities continue to maintain heightened security around potential targets, although attacks remain unlikely. Demonstrations and strikes occur regularly, particularly in Brussels, and can cause localized road closures, public transport disruption, and increased police presence.

Organized crime and drug-related violence remain concerns in parts of Brussels and Antwerp, but are generally localized and unlikely to significantly affect foreign personnel or broader business operations.

Outlook

Belgium's security environment will likely remain stable and low risk over the next few months. Periodic demonstrations and strikes will continue to cause localized disruption, particularly in Brussels, while terrorism and organized crime will remain persistent but limited threats.

Security

2.25 - Low

Belgium is a low-risk security environment, with crime, civil unrest, and terrorism representing the main security concerns. Petty and opportunistic crime is common in major urban centers and on public transportation, while organized criminal activity and associated violence present more localized risks, particularly in Brussels and Antwerp.

Demonstrations occur regularly, particularly in Brussels, and can occasionally escalate into clashes with police, property damage, or disruption to transportation and business operations.

Belgium also faces a persistent terrorism threat, primarily from Islamist extremists, with potential targets including government and international institutions, transportation hubs, and tourist sites. Brussels faces a heightened exposure due to the presence of the European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, NATO, and other international organizations, as well as its role as a major political and diplomatic center.

The country faces no significant threat of internal or external armed conflict and benefits from stable institutions and its membership in the EU and NATO.

Civil Unrest

● 2.50

Current situation

The risk of civil unrest in Belgium is moderate. Trade unions have continued to organize large-scale demonstrations and nationwide strikes in opposition to the federal government's pension reforms, public spending reductions, and wider labor market policies. Several national days of industrial action since spring 2026 have disrupted rail services, public transport, flights, and public services, with Brussels experiencing the greatest operational impact due to demonstrations around government institutions.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrations have also remained frequent, particularly in Brussels, following developments in the Israel-Hamas conflict. While these protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful, several have resulted in temporary road closures, arrests, and isolated confrontations with police. Separately, smaller demonstrations by students, environmental activists, and farmers have caused localized disruption but have not resulted in sustained unrest.

Authorities have generally permitted demonstrations while deploying a significant police presence around major gatherings. Police have occasionally used water cannon, tear gas, and arrests to disperse protesters who refused orders to leave or attempted to disrupt critical infrastructure. Despite these isolated incidents, protest-related violence has remained limited, with disruption typically confined to transport delays and restricted access to parts of central Brussels.

Triggers

- Large national trade union strikes opposing pension, labor, or budgetary reforms.
- Government announcements on austerity measures, public-sector restructuring, or social welfare reforms.
- Major developments related to the Middle East conflicts or other international political issues that prompt solidarity demonstrations.
- High-profile police incidents, far-right or anti-racism demonstrations, and politically sensitive judicial decisions.
- EU and NATO summits or other major international meetings held in Brussels, which routinely attract large activist mobilizations.

Background

Belgium experiences demonstrations on a near-daily basis, particularly in Brussels, which hosts the EU and NATO headquarters and is a focal point for both domestic and international activism. Most protests are peaceful and concentrated around the European Quarter, central Brussels, and government institutions. Demonstrations in Antwerp, Liège, Ghent, and Charleroi occur less frequently but can also result in localized transport disruptions.

Trade unions possess significant organizational capacity and regularly conduct nationwide strikes affecting public transportation, airports, ports, education, healthcare, and other public services. These strikes represent the most disruptive form of civil unrest in Belgium and can substantially affect domestic and international travel even when protest activity itself remains peaceful.

While Belgium has a relatively low propensity for violent civil unrest, isolated violence may occur during anti-globalization protests, environmental direct action, or demonstrations involving far-right and far-left groups. Football hooliganism poses a localized but serious risk around high-profile matches, where tensions between rival supporters can quickly escalate into violence, property damage, and public safety concerns. The highest risk is associated with major domestic derbies, Belgian Cup finals, and international fixtures involving the Belgian national team.

Crime

 2.50

Crime poses a moderate risk in Belgium, as petty crime is common in major urban centers, while organized crime and associated violence present more localized risks, particularly in Brussels and Antwerp.

Petty and opportunistic crime, including pickpocketing, theft of unattended belongings, shoplifting, and theft from vehicles, is the most common form of crime in Belgium. The risk is highest in Brussels and Antwerp, particularly around tourist areas, shopping districts, public transportation, airports, and major railway stations. In Brussels, the highest-risk locations include Brussels-Midi and Brussels-North stations and surrounding areas. Crime is generally less prevalent in smaller towns and rural areas.

Violent crime remains relatively uncommon but is a more significant concern in Brussels and Antwerp, where criminal and drug-related disputes can result in shootings and other incidents of violence. In Brussels, such incidents are particularly concentrated in parts of Anderlecht and around Brussels-Midi, including the Clemenceau area. Violence is predominantly directed at members of rival criminal groups rather than at visitors or businesses, although bystanders may be inadvertently exposed when incidents occur in public spaces.

Organized criminal networks are active across Belgium and are primarily involved in drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, and weapons trafficking. Antwerp and its port facilities remain the country's main organized crime hotspot and a major entry point for drug trafficking into Europe. Criminal networks have also expanded their activities in Brussels. Organized crime can affect businesses through drug-related violence, money laundering, extortion, corruption, and the exploitation of legitimate businesses and services.

Kidnapping

 2.00

For most foreign nationals, the threat of kidnapping in Belgium is low. Kidnappings are not a regular occurrence, and kidnappers are more likely to target locals. The most likely types of abductions in Belgium include basic opportunistic kidnap-for-ransom, high-net-worth individual kidnap-for-ransom, and tiger kidnapping. Victims are usually released unharmed and relatively quickly.

Terrorism

 2.75

There is a persistent threat from self-radicalized individuals motivated by the recent US-Israeli bombing of Iran to conduct low-level acts of terrorism against soft targets throughout Belgium in solidarity with Tehran. However, this threat is consistent with the already elevated terrorist threat extant in the country in the wake of the Israel-Hamas, Israel-Hezbollah, and previous Israel-Iran conflicts. Additionally, Belgium continues to face a persistent threat from Iranian agents, Iranian proxies, and Iranian sympathizers, who primarily target Iranian dissidents but may also target US and Israeli interests across the country.

Belgium, given its secular values, its major military involvement against IS and its affiliates, and its large Muslim population, is a target for terrorism. Terrorist attacks can be motivated by domestic, regional, or international developments. In October 2023, two Swedish nationals were killed in a shooting claimed by IS and allegedly motivated by a series of protests desecrating the Quran in Sweden. Additionally, Belgian authorities may increase the terrorism threat alert level in response to developments in the Israel-Hamas conflict. Security forces will continue to be deployed throughout the country to deter attacks and reassure the public. Law enforcement and justice authorities have arrested and prosecuted numerous individuals suspected of recruiting fighters to go to Syria and Iraq. Several terrorist plots have been thwarted. However, further attacks are likely. Highly symbolic targets related to Belgian culture are likely to be attractive targets for attacks by lone actors and organized cells. IS continues to call on supporters and sympathizers in Belgium to conduct low-capability shooting or stabbing assaults and vehicle impact attacks against civilian and security force targets in propaganda releases. French authorities are enforcing heightened checks at their Schengen borders amid an elevated terrorism threat.

Armed Conflict

 1.50

Belgium does not face a significant threat of conventional armed conflict. As a NATO and EU member, Belgium benefits from collective defense and maintains strong security relationships with its European neighbors. However, the country's extensive political, financial, and military support for Ukraine has increased its exposure to Russia-linked hybrid activity.

Belgium has experienced repeated suspicious drone activity over military installations and civilian airports, while authorities have also identified cyberattacks and other activity consistent with broader hybrid threats. Belgium's role in managing frozen Russian assets held by Euroclear and its continued military support for Ukraine further increase its potential exposure to Russian pressure and covert activity. Consequently, while a direct conventional conflict remains unlikely, the risk of conflict-related hybrid activity affecting Belgian territory has increased.

Security Services

 2.00

Security services in Belgium are generally reliable. Responsiveness is good and overall security capabilities are robust. Police in Belgium typically speak Dutch, French, German depending on the region; many are likely to speak English.

Belgium has a number of security forces, the local police are likely to be the most relevant for foreign nationals and local staff.

Interaction with Travelers

In Belgium, travelers in need of assistance should contact their diplomatic mission if possible, but may also rely on security forces.

Law Enforcement Reliability

The threat that security forces pose is generally low.

Infrastructure

 1.25 - Minimal

Belgium has a robust critical infrastructure network with reliable roads, rail, and telecommunication systems, capable of supporting commercial operations and domestic travel. Infrastructure standards are high in urban areas, while multi-modal transport is less developed in rural areas.

Road networks remain the country's primary transportation infrastructure, but rail services operate efficiently for personal and professional travel between cities and towns. Periodic labor strikes and protests may temporarily disrupt rail services, airports, or public transport. However, overall, infrastructure reliability poses low operational risk for travelers and businesses.

Air travel in Belgium is generally safe and reliable, with extensive international connectivity. Occasional disruptions may occur due to labor strikes, security concerns, adverse weather conditions, or air traffic congestion.

Belgium's utilities and telecommunications infrastructure are reliable. Electricity, gas, water, and telecommunications networks provide consistent service with low rates of disruption. District heating remains relatively underdeveloped. Overall, the country's utility infrastructure presents minimal operational risk for travelers and businesses.

Cybersecurity risks remain elevated. Belgian government institutions, democratic processes, and critical national infrastructure will continue to face cyberattacks by politically motivated hacktivist groups, mainly through Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks. Belgium is committed to advancing its cyber protection capabilities through the Center for Cybersecurity Belgium.

Maritime infrastructure in Belgium is reliable, with commercial ports and ferry services supporting domestic and international trade through the North Sea. Operations may experience occasional disruptions due to labor strikes and adverse weather.

Ground Transport

 1.25

Belgium's ground transportation infrastructure is generally reliable and well-developed, with an extensive road and rail network supporting domestic and cross-border movement. Road infrastructure is generally well-maintained and capable of supporting commercial and passenger traffic, although congestion can cause delays around major urban centers, particularly Brussels and Antwerp.

The rail network provides extensive national and international connectivity but is vulnerable to operational disruptions from strikes, labor disputes, infrastructure works, and technical issues. Rail strikes can result in widespread cancellations and delays, with potential knock-on effects for business operations and supply chains. Overall, ground transportation presents a low security risk but a moderate operational disruption risk, primarily due to congestion and periodic rail disruptions.

Local Buses

● Unrated

Belgium's intercity and urban bus networks are generally reliable and provide broad coverage. Bus services face a low security risk, with no persistent threat of attacks targeting bus networks, while petty crime remains a limited concern.

Operational disruptions are more relevant, particularly during strikes, labor disputes, severe weather, road congestion, and major demonstrations, which can cause delays or temporary service suspensions in urban areas. Disruptions are likely to have the greatest impact in Brussels and other major cities where bus networks are more exposed to congestion and protest activity.

Mass Transit

● Unrated

Belgium's mass transit infrastructure presents a low security risk, with the Brussels Metro providing generally reliable urban connectivity. Accidents and major infrastructure failures are uncommon, although service disruptions can occur due to technical faults, maintenance, strikes, demonstrations, and security incidents. Petty crime, particularly theft, remains a routine concern on metro services and at stations. The network also remains a potential terrorism target, given its use by large numbers of passengers and its previous exposure to terrorist attacks, although the likelihood of an attack remains low.

Taxis

● Unrated

Taxi services are generally safe and reliable in Belgium, with licensed taxis widely available in major cities and at airports and railway stations. App-based ride-hailing services are also available, providing an alternative to traditional taxis. Availability and journey times can be affected by traffic congestion, particularly in Brussels and other major urban centers.

Train Travel

● Unrated

Train Safety

Trains in Belgium have a good safety record. Derailments and rail accidents involving passenger trains rarely occur. Incidents involving petty theft are rare on trains in Belgium. Rail stations in Belgium are generally safe. Petty crime poses a minimal threat at rail stations.

Reliability and Availability

Belgium has an extensive intercity passenger rail network. Rail travel is available between all major cities and many smaller cities and towns. High-speed rail services is available between some major cities. Trains in Belgium are prone to delays.

International Rail Travel

Belgium has international rail connections with France, the UK, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Connections between Belgium and France, the UK, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands are subject to border controls, and passengers may be required to present rail passes. France authorities are enforcing heightened checks at their Schengen borders.

Vehicles and Roads

 Unrated

Road safety conditions in Belgium are generally good. Traffic in Belgium drives on the right. Roads in cities are generally paved and well-maintained. Drivers generally follow traffic laws. Police rigorously enforce traffic laws. Foreigners planning to drive in Belgium must have a valid driver's license. Car rentals are available in most major cities.

International Road Travel

Belgium has international road connections with the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and France. France authorities are enforcing heightened checks at their Schengen borders.

Cyber

 3.25

Geostrategic Concerns

Belgium is a moderate-high threat location for cyber-attacks. The risk is disproportionately high in Brussels due to the concentration of EU and NATO institutions, the associated diplomatic and military delegations, and the numerous high-profile politically-sensitive summits and conferences. Hackers will regularly target these high-level bodies and events, and the frequency and severity of cyber-attacks have increased since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

However, the Belgian governments, and the hosted institutions of the EU and NATO, invest heavily in cyber-security and cooperate effectively to mitigate the heightened threats.

Belgium has a very high level of connectivity, and any potential security breach would have a high impact on the local economy and infrastructure. The Belgian government introduced the Center for Cyber Security (CCB), under the Prime Minister's authority, which is tasked with coordinating private and public efforts to mitigate the risk of cybercrimes and cyber-attacks.

Internet censorship and surveillance are minimal, reflecting strong protection of user rights and digital freedoms. Belgium implements EU measures such as the GDPR and NIS2 Directive, which impose strict obligations on data protection, breach reporting, and resilience in critical sectors. Regulatory enforcement is consistent and reliable.

Cybercrime

Common cybercrime threats include phishing, ransomware, and credential theft, with small and medium-sized enterprises facing greater vulnerability due to more limited cybersecurity resources. Multinational firms in the logistics and energy sectors may be indirectly exposed through supply chain compromise. Belgium's law enforcement is well-resourced, proactive, and effective in prosecuting cybercrime, with close collaboration between government and private industry.

Maritime

 1.50

There are no maritime concerns.

Air Travel

 1.25

International and domestic air travel in Belgium is generally safe. The country meets ICAO standards, and Belgian airlines meet the EU standards. Strikes and labor-protests at airports do occur and can lead to flight delays and cancelations.

As a result of an EU ban in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Belgian airspace is closed to all Russian aircraft and flights.

Utilities

1.00

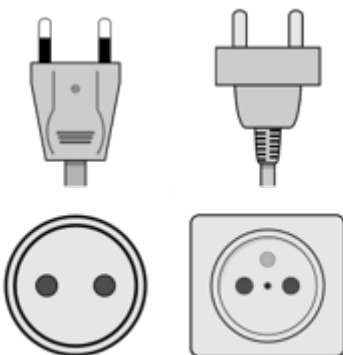
Belgium's utility infrastructure presents a low security and operational risk. Belgium has a reliable and resilient electricity and telecommunications network, with nationwide coverage and limited disruption under normal conditions. Severe weather can cause localized power outages, particularly in affected regions, but disruptions are generally short-lived, and restoration capacity is strong. Telecommunications services are similarly reliable, with widespread mobile network coverage and limited risk of prolonged outages.

Electricity

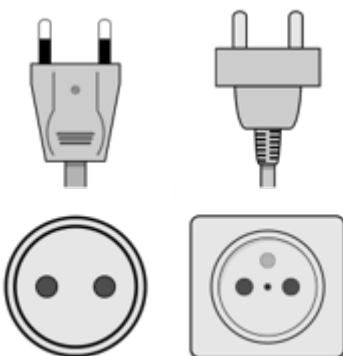
Unrated

Electricity in Belgium is supplied at 230 V, 50 Hz. Belgium uses Type C and E plugs.

Plug Types



Types de prises



Internet and Telecommunications

Unrated

Internet service in Belgium is readily available in most public and private accommodations, and in internet cafes. Internet activity is considered private and secure in most areas - see Information Security advice sheet.

Environment

1.75 - Low

The climate in Belgium does not generate any substantial operational or safety risks. However, periodic storms can lead to temporary travel and service disruptions, especially June-November. Heavy rains periodically result in localized floods. Higher than normal temperatures sporadically increase health and safety concerns during the summer months.

Man-Made Hazards

1.50

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) remain a potential threat to travelers and those operating in the country. During the First and Second World Wars, Belgium experienced some of the most intense fighting in Western Europe. As such, local residents and construction workers periodically unearth unexploded bombs and shells. This can trigger large-scale evacuations and travel disruption. Belgium implements stringent legislation concerning safety and health procedures to be observed in work-related activities and industrial operations. Fatalities in the workplace are rare and are generally linked to human errors and specific episodes of an individual lack of attention to rules.

Seismic

1.00

Seismic activity in Belgium is moderate, with numerous earthquakes of low to hardly noticeable intensity. Activity is generally higher in the east and in the west around the city of Mons. The earthquakes typically do not cause any significant damage or casualties. However, based on historical data, earthquakes of magnitude-6.0 and above remain possible.

Storm Systems

2.25

While the country is not exposed to any cyclone, hurricane or tornado systems, intense rain and wind storms have the potential to disrupt travel and threaten property. The country's northern coastal regions, as well as rural and forest areas, are those most likely to be endangered by such phenomena. These events are generally forecast in advance, and local meteorological officials have a reliable and efficient early warning system.

Natural Hazards

1.75

Belgium has a moderate climate is influenced by the country's presence along the Atlantic Ocean. Temperatures during winter seldom go below 0 C (32 F), except in the country's southern forest and mountain regions. However, periodic heavy snow and frost can lead to temporary travel disruptions. During summer, heat waves periodically occur. Temperatures seldom pass 35 C (95 F), but abnormally high temperatures can occur in July.

Air Quality

Unrated

Air Quality

Air pollution routinely exceeds recommended thresholds in urban areas, especially in Brussels, Charleroi, Liege, and Ghent. Individuals with asthma or chronic cardiorespiratory conditions should consult with a healthcare provider prior to travel and carry sufficient medications. On days when air quality is particularly poor, affected individuals should take personal precautions to reduce respiratory stress ([map](#)).

Health and Medical

2.00 - Low

The country does not face any outstanding health risks. High-quality medical facilities are widely available, and large university hospitals can handle almost every medical situation. Medical care is extensively available, and there are no concerns regarding the acquisition of pharmaceuticals. Tap water is considered safe for drinking unless otherwise specified.

Disease and Health Threats

2.25

- **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If they occur, symptoms appear two to six weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Low risk in Belgium.
- **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids, and effectively prevented with vaccination. An unexpected medical or dental emergency could place the unvaccinated traveler at risk. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Low risk in Belgium.
- **Hepatitis E:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Symptoms appear two to eight weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Within two to four weeks of HIV infection, many people, but not all, experience influenza-like illness including fever, swollen glands, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, and headache. These symptoms, also called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), can last from days to weeks. The infection later progresses to a clinical latency stage, and in the late stage, to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- **Rabies:** Transmitted through the saliva of infected wild or domesticated mammals, usually by a bite or scratch. Do not approach unfamiliar animals. No known risk.
- **Tick-borne Encephalitis (TBE):** Transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Bite prevention is essential. In rare cases, people can become infected through the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products. Early symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, myalgia, and nausea. These symptoms generally appear two to 10 days after exposure. In some cases, infection can progress to encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which can be life-threatening. Low risk in Belgium.
- **Traveler's Diarrhea:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. This is the most common illness in travelers. People who become ill by an infectious agent that causes traveler's diarrhea most often experience nausea, vomiting, fever, bloody stools, and/or the urge to constantly pass stools despite an empty gastrointestinal tract. Low risk in Belgium.
- **Tuberculosis:** Transmitted through respiratory droplets released by coughing or sneezing. Individuals planning an extended stay should consider obtaining a PPD skin test to reference against future suspected infections. Symptoms commonly include chest pain, bad cough lasting three weeks or longer, and coughing up blood and/or sputum. Some people also experience chills, weight loss, fever, weakness, night sweats, and loss of appetite. Low risk in Belgium.

Health Requirements

Unrated

Yellow Fever: Vaccination Not Required

There are no recommendations or requirements for yellow fever vaccination in Belgium. There is no risk of yellow fever.

HIV Testing

No known restrictions.

Health Recommendations

● Unrated

Recommended Immunizations for Travel to Belgium

Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. You should visit a healthcare professional at least four to six weeks before the trip. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the annual flu vaccine. Travelers should consider obtaining COVID-19 vaccination where available, even if the destination country does not require it.

- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Two doses, administered at least six months apart, are required for long-lasting protection. It is recommended that all susceptible people traveling for any purpose, frequency, or duration to countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity be vaccinated or receive immune globulin before departure. A booster is recommended for partially vaccinated travelers.
- **Hepatitis B:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Widely used formulations require three doses administered over the course of six to 18 months, depending on the recipient's age and vaccination history. Booster doses after a complete series are usually not required to maintain immunity. If exposed before finalizing the full series, individuals may receive a special booster within 24 hours for short-term protection.
- **Rabies:** Unless contraindicated, the WHO and CDC recommend vaccination for individuals who will be performing occupational or recreational activities that increase the risk for exposure to potentially rabid animals, such as animal handlers, field biologists, cavers, missionaries, veterinarians, and some laboratory workers. It is also recommended for travelers who might have difficulty getting prompt access to safe post-exposure prophylaxis. Belgium has not reported any rabies cases thus most travelers are at low risk. Bats are likely to carry bat rabies.
- **Tick-borne Encephalitis:** Recommended for individuals trekking, working, or engaging in outdoor activities in high-risk, endemic areas, particularly heavily forested areas where the disease occurs and ticks are likely to be found. Currently, a tick-borne encephalitis vaccine is available in many countries. The initial vaccine consists of three doses and requires six months or more for completion. Tick bite prevention is also essential.

Medical Facilities and Services

● 1.75

Private and public medical facilities are of excellent quality, and medical professionals are well-trained and abide by the highest international standards. Medical care is available nationwide. Large generalist private and public hospitals with hundreds of beds are available in major cities, and specialist facilities can be easily found. Ambulance services are readily available. All EU citizens covered by Schengen public health insurance can use the system in Belgium. Non-EU citizens may need to buy travel insurance prior to their arrival in Belgium in order to cover any health expenses.

Medications and Pharmacy

● Unrated

Pharmacies across Belgium are readily available. Supply of most medicines needed by travelers is high. Prior to travelling confirm the status of your "over the counter" medicines with accredited foreign government offices of Belgium in your country. Always carry your prescription medication in its original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription and any other relevant documentation.

Mental Health

 3.25

Mental health service availability is limited and conditions are moderately managed.

Food and Water Safety

 1.00

Drinking water is generally safe in Belgium. However, officials still recommend drinking bottled or otherwise purified water whenever possible to reduce the risk of traveler's diarrhea or other gastrointestinal illnesses. Ensure that food is properly handled and prepared. Wash raw produce before eating. Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Consider avoiding street vendors and unregulated food establishments.

Political

 2.00 - Low

Belgium's political environment presents a low risk to businesses and operations. Political fragmentation and regional divisions can contribute to coalition disputes, policy delays, and periods of government deadlock, but these are unlikely to significantly disrupt the operating environment.

Regional tensions between Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels can occasionally complicate decision-making and intergovernmental coordination. Strong institutions, an independent judiciary, and effective public administration mitigate the risk of significant political instability or adverse impacts on businesses.

Corruption

 1.75

Corruption presents a low risk to businesses and operations in Belgium. The country has relatively strong institutional safeguards and enforcement mechanisms, and bribery is not generally considered a systemic obstacle to conducting business or accessing public services. However, concerns remain over transparency in public procurement, conflicts of interest, and the effectiveness of integrity controls, with European assessments continuing to call for stronger transparency and accountability measures. These issues can create localized compliance and reputational risks, particularly for businesses interacting with public authorities or participating in government contracts.

Government Stability

 2.00

Government stability presents a low risk. Belgium is a stable parliamentary democracy with strong institutions, established political processes, and a history of peaceful transfers of power. However, the country's fragmented political landscape and persistent political and linguistic divisions between Flanders and Wallonia make coalition governments necessary and can complicate policymaking and government formation.

The current federal government, led by Prime Minister Bart De Wever of the Nationalist Party (N-VA), relies on a multi-party coalition spanning several ideological and regional constituencies, creating a risk of internal disagreements and policy delays. Although prolonged political deadlock remains possible following future elections, the risk of significant instability or disruption to business operations remains low.

Rule of Law

 1.00

Rule of law presents a minimal risk. Belgium has strong judicial independence, effective law enforcement, and well-established legal and institutional safeguards. Political and linguistic divisions can occasionally slow policy implementation, but these do not materially undermine the rule of law or the functioning of state institutions. The police force in Belgium is modern, well-equipped, and capable of providing rapid and effective assistance in cases of crime and other incidents.

Sanctions

1.50

Sanctions pose a low risk in Belgium, as it is closely integrated into the EU and international sanctions regimes and faces no credible risk of being subject to international sanctions. EU sanctions on Russia and Belgium's own restrictive measures on foreign actors may create limited economic or political impacts, but these are unlikely to materially affect overall stability or business operations.

Russian sanctions against Belgium, as in the rest of the EU, are negatively affecting the country's agricultural export sector. Belgium farmers and food producers faced significant losses due to Russia's ban on the import of EU agricultural products. Key exports such as fruits, vegetables, pork, and dairy products have been significantly impacted.

Legal

Unrated

Visitors to Belgium are subject to local laws, which may not mirror, either in whole or in part, those of their home country. Those deemed to be in violation, even unknowingly, may be fined, detained, imprisoned, temporarily or permanently expelled, or tried *in absentia* depending on the nature of the offense. Those convicted of possessing, using, or trafficking illegal drugs may be subject to large fines or sentenced to jail. Home-country consular officers are not typically systematically informed of a detention but are permitted to provide support services at the request of their detained citizens. When there is no treaty in force, notification and access depend on whether the two countries have direct or indirect diplomatic relations. Consular officers cannot interfere with local judicial proceedings, nor provide legal advice or representation at trial, and are unable to pay legal fees or fines with government funds. The status of dual nationals will be determined by local officials, with all attendant ramifications for access and support.

Emergency Contacts

Unrated

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance 112

Fire 112

Police 101

Embassies and Consulates

Unrated

Australian Embassy

Address Avenue des Arts/Kunstlaan 56, Brussels 1000

Telephone Number +32 2 286 05 00

Email austemb.brussels@dfat.gov.au

Web Site <https://belgium.embassy.gov.au/>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0830-1700

Canadian Embassy

Address Avenue des Arts 5, 1000 Brussels

Telephone Number +32 2 741 06 11

Email bru@international.gc.ca

Web Site <https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/belgium-belgique/brussels-bruxelles.aspx?lang=eng>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 09:00 - 12:00 and 13:30 - 17:00

Austrian Embassy

Address Avenue de Cortenbergh 4-10, B-1040 Brussels

Telephone Number +32 2 289 0700

Email bruessel-ob@bmeia.gv.at

Web Site <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/oeb-bruessel>

Opening Hours Monday and Tuesday: 0900-1130 Wednesday and Thursday: 0900-1130 and 1300-1500

French Consulate

Address 42 Boulevard du Régent, 1000, Brussels

Telephone Number +32 2 620 0520

Email admin-etrangers.bruxelles-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Web Site <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en/belgique>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0900-1140 and 1400-1510

US Embassy

Address 27 Boulevard du Regent, 1000 Brussels

Telephone Number +32 2 811 4000

Email uscitizenbrussels@state.gov

Web Site <https://be.usembassy.gov/>

Opening Hours Monday to Thursday: 0800-1200, 1400-1600 Friday: 0800-1200

German Embassy

Address 8-14, rue Jacques de Lalaingstraat, 1040 Brussels

Telephone Number +32 2 787 18 00

Email info@bruessel.diplo.de

Web Site <https://bruessel.diplo.de/>

Opening Hours Monday and Wednesday: 0830-1200 and 1300-1530 Tuesday and Thursday: 0830-1200 and 1330-1500 Friday: 0830-1200 and 1300-1400

Entry/Exit

Unrated

Travelers can obtain specific information about visas and other entry-exit requirements at: <https://entry-exit.crisis24horizon.com/>.

Pre-Departure

● Unrated

- Travelers should provide friends and family a copy of travel itinerary, and make a copy of important travel and identification documents.

On Arrival

● Unrated

- There are no significant measures to undertake when arriving in country.

In Transit

● Unrated

- Public transport is generally safe, and self driving may be conducted.

At Your Hotel

● Unrated

- There are no significant measures to undertake at hotels in Belgium.

In the Street

● Unrated

- Crime rates are low, although travelers are sometimes targeted by opportunistic theft. Travelers should avoid overt displays of wealth, which is especially important in more crowded areas. Travelers should use only small denominations of currency, and keep large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on your person. Reduce the contents of your wallet or purse contents, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships and accounts. Do not use credit or debit cards unless absolutely necessary and then only at respected, well-known retail and service establishments.

- Travelers should exercise increased vigilance in crowded areas. If travelers observe anything suspicious they should leave the area immediately and subsequently report their concerns to the authorities.

- Demonstrations and protests occur periodically. Although generally peaceful, travelers should avoid demonstrations, protests and rallies, which may attract security forces and law enforcement officers and present a dynamic and volatile environment. Travelers should also be advised that such incidents disrupt local transport networks.

Culture

Unrated

Standard Hours of Operation

Business: Monday-Friday, 0830-1730

Government: Monday-Friday, 0830-1730

Banking: Monday-Friday, 0900-1200 and 1400-1600; Saturday 0900-1200

Business attire is generally semi-formal.

Appointments are best scheduled Monday through Friday between 0900 and 1700. Arriving on time to meetings or social engagements is a common practice. Informal or personal discussions are uncommon. Scheduled meetings will typically end on time. If a meeting includes dining out, the host offers to pay the check. Alcohol taken during lunch and dinner meetings is considered normal.

English is commonly used for business purposes. Attempts by visitors to use phrases in the native language are well-received but not expected. Business cards are widely used. Always use Mr./Ms. or a local honorific/title until the host indicates that using first names is appropriate. Addressing the host by their official title is considered a sign of respect. When beginning and departing a business meeting, shake hands with everyone.

Gestures

● Unrated

Business cards are widely used; when in use, they are presented in Dutch or French on the reverse side.

When beginning the meeting, shake hands with everyone. When departing the meeting, shake hands again.

Avoid using the following gestures or habits, as they are deemed offensive or insulting:

- Pointing with your index finger
- Snapping the fingers of both hands
- Placing hands in pockets when speaking to someone
- Making excessive noise

Religions

● Unrated

Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant and other Christian 2%, Muslim 5%, atheist 9%, none 33%

Ethnicities

● Unrated

Belgian 75%, Italian 4%, Moroccan 4%, French 2%, Turkish 2%, Dutch 2%, other 11%

Significant Dates

● Unrated

2026 Significant dates

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
April 5	Easter Sunday
April 6	Easter Monday
May 1	Labor Day
May 8	Iris Day (Brussels Region)
May 14	Ascension Day
May 24	Whit Sunday
June 9	Whit Monday (observed)
July 11	Day of the Flemish Community (Antwerp, East Flanders, Flemish Brabant, Limburg, West Flanders)

July 21	Independence Day (National Day)
Aug. 15	Assumption of Mary
Sept. 21	Day of the Walloon Region (Namur)
Sept. 27	Day of the French Community (Hainaut, Liege, Luxembourg, Namur, Walloon Brabant)
Nov. 1	All Saints' Day
Nov. 2	All Soul's Day
Nov. 11	Armistice Day
Nov. 15	Day of the German-speaking Community (Liege)
Dec. 25-26	Christmas

Financial

Unrated

Financial systems can differ considerably by jurisdiction. Acceptance of cash, debit, and credit cards also varies across the country. Some locations may only accept cash due to the absence of card-processing machines. Banks or legal money changers typically offer the official exchange rates. While the import and export of both local and foreign currency are authorized, sums should not exceed the amount declared upon arrival.

Currency

Unrated

Currency Name/Code

The official currency of Belgium is the Euro (EUR). One Euro is made up of 100 cents.

Currency Convertibility

Banks or legal money changers offer the best exchange rates in Belgium. Belgium forbids foreigners from exiting without declaring currency in amounts greater than EUR 10,000.

Credit Card

Unrated

Major credit cards are widely accepted in shops, restaurants, and hotels.

Taxes and Tipping

Unrated

Although tipping is not required in Belgium, it is common to tip hotel personnel, wait staff in restaurants, and taxi drivers. Tip around 10 to 15 percent for good service in restaurants or for any service provided.

Bank and ATM

Unrated

ATM Availability

Automated teller machines are widely available throughout Belgium. Always choose a machine located in a secure area, preferably within hotels or other populated, well-lit locations.

Bank Availability

Banking hours are generally Monday through Friday 0900-1730. Cash advances on major credit cards issued by foreign banks are permitted.

LGBTQ Security

2.00 - Low

The security environment in Belgium is low. Human rights monitoring notes episodic violence and harassment targeting LGBTQ individuals, particularly in nightlife districts of major cities such as Brussels and Antwerp, and in the context of far right mobilization. ILGA Europe and national organizations report increasing use of anti-LGBTQ language by some political actors, which can correlate with spikes in online abuse and isolated street assaults. Nevertheless, large pride events proceed with substantial participation and security, and most travelers experience no direct incidents beyond occasional verbal harassment.

LGBTQ Legal Environment

1.00

The legal environment in Belgium is minimal threat and among the strongest in Europe. Same-sex sexual acts have long been legal, with marriage equality since 2003 and joint adoption rights for same-sex couples since 2006. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited in employment, housing, and access to goods and services, and hate-crime and hate-speech provisions explicitly cover these grounds. Belgium allows legal gender recognition without sterilization and has introduced an "X" gender marker option on some documents, though implementation details continue to evolve. Asylum law recognizes persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and Belgium actively supports LGBTQ rights within European institutions.

LGBTQ Enforcement

2.00

The legal enforcement environment in Belgium is low threat. Authorities maintain specialized equality bodies and anti-discrimination mechanisms. Reportedly, labor and criminal law protections related to sexual orientation and gender identity are generally enforced. Prosecutors and courts make use of hate-crime aggravating circumstances, and police participate in dedicated liaison programs with LGBTQ communities in several cities. Civil society organizations continue to call for more systematic data collection and faster handling of online hate-speech cases, but there is no evidence of systemic refusal to investigate anti-LGBTQ crime.

LGBTQ Social Environment

2.00

The social environment in Belgium is characterized as low threat and broadly supportive, although polarization is increasing around gender identity issues. ILGA Europe's Rainbow Index ranks Belgium among the top EU countries for LGBTQ equality, and pride events are widely attended with cross-party representation. However, reports in recent years highlighted that extreme nationalist parties have used anti-LGBTQ narratives during electoral campaigns, contributing to a louder but still minority opposition to LGBTQ rights. Day-to-day social risk for LGBTQ travelers is limited, particularly in urban centers, though transgender individuals and same-sex couples may still encounter occasional staring or comments in smaller towns. Corporate diversity initiatives, LGBTQ employee resource groups, and inclusive hospitality venues are well established, providing numerous safe spaces for visitors.

Active Alerts

No Alerts

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