



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2025

# Belgium

**96**  
/100

FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	<b>39</b> /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	<b>57</b> /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

**96 /100**    **Free**

A country or territory's Freedom in the World status depends on its aggregate Political Rights score, on a scale of 0–40, and its aggregate Civil Liberties score, on a scale of 0–60. See the methodology.



## Overview

Belgium is a stable electoral democracy with a long record of peaceful transfers of power. Political rights and civil liberties are legally guaranteed and largely respected. Major concerns in recent years have included the threat of terrorism, corruption scandals, and rising xenophobia.

## Key Developments in 2024

- Elections took place at the national, regional and European levels. Although there were no landslide victories, the seat allocations reflected a rise among parties right of center. The polls were held in accordance with democratic standards, and stakeholders accepted the results. Negotiations for the formation of a new national government were ongoing at year's end.
- In December, Guy D'haeseleer of the Vlaams Belang party was sworn in as mayor of the town of Ninove, marking the first time in the postwar period that the far right had secured a Belgian mayorship.
- Drug trafficking and associated violence remained a problem, particularly in Brussels and Antwerp, where a number of related shootings took place.
- In September, the minister of media in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Jacqueline Galant, made several posts on social media criticizing the French-language broadcaster RTBF as biased. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) called on political leaders to refrain from interfering in editorial content, and reaffirmed the supervisory role of the Belgian media's independent regulatory and self-regulatory bodies.

*This report has been abridged for Freedom in the World 2025 due to ongoing budget constraints. Freedom in the World is entirely funded by nongovernmental sources such as private foundations, corporations, and individuals like you. Please consider making a [donation](#) to support future editions of this vital resource.*

*For additional background information, see last year's [full report](#).*

## Political Rights

### A. Electoral Process

**A1** 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

4/4

**A2** 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

4/4

**A3** 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

4/4

## B. Political Pluralism and Participation

**B1** 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

4/4

**B2** 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

4/4

**B3** 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

4/4

**B4** 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

4/4

## C. Functioning of Government

**C1** 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

4/4

**C2** 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

3/4

**C3** 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

4/4

## Civil Liberties

## D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

**D1** 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?

4/4

**D2** 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?

3/4

**D3** 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

4/4

**D4** 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

4/4

## **E. Associational and Organizational Rights**

**E1** 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?

4/4

**E2** 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work?

4/4

**E3** 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

4/4

## **F. Rule of Law**

**F1** 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

4/4

**F2** 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

4/4

**F3** 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

4/4

**F4** 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

3/4

## G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

**G1** 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

4/4

**G2** 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

4/4

**G3** 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

4/4

**G4** 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

3/4



### On Belgium

See all data, scores & information on this country or territory.

See More >

### Country Facts

Population

**11,690,000**

Global Freedom Score

**96/100** Free

### Other Years

2024

**Be the first to know  
what's happening.**

Subscribe

Join the Freedom House weekly  
newsletter

ADDRESS

1850 M St. NW Floor 11  
Washington, DC 20036

GENERAL INQUIRIES

[info@freedomhouse.org](mailto:info@freedomhouse.org)

PRESS & MEDIA

(202) 296-5101

[press@freedomhouse.org](mailto:press@freedomhouse.org)

@2025 FreedomHouse