











Belgium - Low



Belgium Country Map

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-  MARITIME AND PIRACY
-  HEALTH
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-  TRANSPORTATION

Last Published: 09 October 2025

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall risk rating in Belgium is low, with no significant security threats to travellers. The most prominent security concern is petty crime, which is most common at transport hubs, popular tourist hotspots and busy urban centres.

The threat posed by terrorism is low, however, there is a heightened threat globally of terrorist attacks against Western interests and citizens. Terror attacks in Belgium are most likely to be carried out by extremists linked to the Islamic State (IS) and self-radicalised individuals using low-tech means such as knives and vehicles. Travellers should maintain a high degree of situational awareness and vigilance at all times.

Protests and demonstrations are commonplace in Brussels, often taking place near transport hubs and the Schuman area as well as government and foreign embassy buildings.

Travellers must ensure they carry some form of identification with them at all times. Travellers should also be aware that it is illegal to wear face-covering clothing such as burkas in public places.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Cultural Tips

- Flemish (Dutch) is the official language of the northern region (Flanders), and French is the official language of Wallonia in the south. Approximately 58 percent of the population speak Dutch, 32 percent speak French, and 10 percent speak German. Approximately 60 percent of Dutch speakers also speak French, but fewer than 20 percent of French speakers also speak Dutch. English speakers are more common in northern Belgium.
- Travelers should note that French and Dutch names for the same cities and streets are sometimes extremely different, and almost all streets are marked in both languages.
- Prices for taxis, restaurants and hotels in Belgium are generally quoted as "all inclusive;" no additional tipping is necessary. However, it is common to round up bills to provide a small gratuity.
- Smoking is banned in public areas throughout the country, including rail stations and airports.
- Homosexuality and same-sex marriage are legal in Belgium.
- The address "Mademoiselle" is used for young girls, and may be seen as condescending in any other context.

KEY FACTS	
CAPITAL	Brussels
CAPITAL CITY PHONE CODE	2
COUNTRY PHONE CODE	+32
CURRENCY	Euro
GMT	+1
LANGUAGES	Dutch, French, German
LEADERSHIP	Chief of State: King Philippe; Head of Government: Prime Minister Bart De Wever
OFFICE WORK WEEK	Monday - Friday
OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME	Kingdom of Belgium
PLUG STYLES	Type C and E
RELIGION	Roman Catholic 57.1%, Protestant 2.3%, other Christian, 2.8%, Muslim 6.8%, other 1.7%, atheist 9.1%, nonbeliever/agnostic 20.2%
TIME ZONE OFFSET	UTC + 1 (Daylight Saving Time Observed)
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT	Federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

RISK SUMMARY

Political - Low

Belgium is a federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy. King Philippe serves as head of state, while executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister and the federal government. Legislative authority lies with a bicameral Parliament, made up of the Chamber of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house).

In the June 2024 federal elections, the results reflected Belgium's regional divisions. The Reformist Movement (MR) won unexpectedly in the traditionally left-leaning Walloon region, while in Flanders, the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) remained the largest party, ahead of the far-right Vlaams Belang. Hopes for an efficient coalition were short-lived, as budget disputes repeatedly stalled negotiations. After several failed attempts and deadline extensions, King Philippe set a final deadline, instructing party leaders to form a government by 31 January 2025 or face new federal elections.

On 3 February 2025, Bart De Wever was sworn in as Prime Minister, becoming the first Flemish nationalist and Eurosceptic to lead Belgium's federal government. A coalition was formed by the parties collectively known as the Arizona parties, comprising the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA), Christian Democratic and Flemish party (CD&V), Vooruit (Flemish socialists), Reformist Movement (MR), and Les Engagés (Francophone centrists).

Belgium remains a stable democracy and continues to host major international organisations, including the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) headquarters in Brussels.

Armed Conflict - Negligible

As a NATO member surrounded by other alliance members, there is no foreseeable risk of conflict within Belgium. Although the Belgian army participates in mul-

tilateral international military operations, the government is likely to prefer to resolve any inter-state disputes via diplomatic channels.

Terrorism - Low

The threat posed by terrorism in Belgium is low, although the risk of an attack is considered slightly elevated compared to other Western European nations.

There is a heightened threat of terrorist attacks globally that could target Western interests and travellers. The principal terror threat stems from self-radicalised Islamist extremists, usually motivated by conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Such attacks would likely be perpetrated by a lone wolf, utilising low-capability methods, such as knives and vehicles to inflict casualties. Therefore, travellers are advised to maintain a high degree of situational awareness and vigilance at all times.

Extensive security is often found around transport hubs and stations due to previous Islamic State-inspired attacks targeting airports and metro stations. Raids and arrests are common across Belgium, although travellers are unlikely to be affected.

Brussels hosts several international institutions (EU and NATO) and government and foreign embassy buildings, which are sensitive locations and could be considered high-value targets by would-be terrorists.

On 16 October 2023, Belgium raised its terrorism alert level after two people were shot and killed in Brussels. The terrorism alert level was increased to level four, the highest level, in Brussels and level three nationwide.

Crime - Low

Petty theft is common throughout Belgium and there has been a recent uptick of theft from vehicles. Opportunistic criminals operate in the vicinity of transport hubs and popular tourist areas. In addition, instances of petty theft occur regularly in and around the stations of Gare du Midi, Zuidstation, Gare du Nord, and Schuman. There is an increased crime rate in Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent. It is advisable not to leave luggage unattended.

Thieves tend to target items which are small and of high value such as jewellery, money, and identification documents. The secure car park of Brussels Zaventem airport is also a regular target for thieves who target prestige vehicles for their wheels, mirrors, and electronics. Thieves often work in teams of two or three and distract the victim by asking them a question or spilling food or drink. Petty crime is common on trains along the Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam and the Brussels-London routes.

The risk of violent crime remains comparatively low, on par with the rest of Western Europe. Care should be taken in urban areas after dark and particularly in the vicinity of clubs and bars. Travellers should walk in groups if possible or use an officially registered taxi with a quoted price.

Organised crime is mostly present in Brussels and Antwerp, but criminal groups also operate in other major urban areas. Criminal gangs often use Belgium as a crossroads at the centre of Europe, for instance for trafficking people and drugs to other destinations.

Civil Unrest - Low

Police approval is required to hold demonstrations; however, protests may occur spontaneously in response to world events, political developments and socio-economic grievances. These are generally peaceful and do not escalate into violence.

Protests have been organised throughout Belgium in response to the Israel-Hamas war, with major developments in the conflict often being a catalyst for demonstrations. Pro-Palestine protests have been organised outside major government buildings, on university campuses and outside the US and Israeli embassies.

Events can be expected to occur near local or national government buildings or near the sites of international institutions such as the EU Commission or NATO headquarters.

There has been an increased number of reports of anti-Muslim sentiment and incidents of harassment and assault following previous terrorist attacks and arrests

in the country. Many right-wing organisations have begun anti-Muslim demonstrations in the wake of Islamic State-inspired attacks in Europe.

Public sector workers occasionally stage protests and general strikes over job cuts, pension reductions and the withdrawal of welfare benefits. Farmers, truck drivers, rail workers and taxi drivers have on occasion blocked major road routes in and around Brussels in protest at government policies. As previously mentioned, the principal concern stemming from such incidents is associated with travel disruption.

Maritime and Piracy - Low

The West Hinder Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) is crucial for Belgium due to its strategic location in the southern North Sea, near major maritime routes between the English Channel and the North Sea. As one of the busiest shipping areas globally, this TSS directly influences maritime traffic entering and leaving Belgium's key ports, such as Antwerp (Europe's second largest port after Rotterdam), Zeebrugge, Ghent, and the inland ports of Brussels and Liege. The facilities at these ports are up to standard and the equipment is modern. Given that Belgium's economy heavily relies on maritime trade, the TSS is crucial for minimising delays, reducing the risk of collisions, and preventing costly disruptions.

In terms of navigational hazards, the coast of Belgium and the English Channel are heavily trafficked. Belgian ports made security improvements in 2023 to combat organised crime. The law covers six ports and 198 port facilities. Not only are ports and ships safeguarded against drug trafficking, but also against the threat of terrorism, foreign interference, economic espionage and cybercrime.

The emergency number for the Belgian Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) is +32 59 70 10 00. For general enquiries, contact +32 59 34 10 20.

Health - Negligible

There are no significant health threats in Belgium. Medical facilities are of an excellent standard and staff are well-trained. The healthcare system is heavily state

subsidised; however, this is typically only available to citizens. EU travellers will benefit from these subsidised rates provided they carry their EHIC card, whilst non-EU travellers are strongly advised to carry proof of medical insurance whenever possible.

Environmental - Low

There are no significant environmental threats in Belgium. Occasional, seasonal flooding can occur, which may result in hazardous driving conditions and delays to public transport services.

In July 2021, significant flooding occurred in the eastern regions of the country. Some 20 people were killed and the Belgian military was deployed to assist with evacuation and rescue efforts.

Transportation - Low

The accident rate on Belgian roads is high, mostly due to a disregard for speed limits. Do not exceed the speed limit and give priority to trams, regardless of how local drivers behave. Road conditions are to a high standard. The priority to the right system is in effect in Belgium so drivers must give way to vehicles approaching from the right at intersections.

Railway services are widely available and popular. Stations are well connected and both domestic and international links are available. Trams and underground services are frequent and fast serving, despite this, they can be overcrowded. Metro services are currently only available within Brussels.

Bus services are well developed and often cover a wider network than most other public transport. Popular among commuters and the local communities there have been some reports of petty theft.

Taxi services are metered and additional chargers are rare, taxi ranks typically operate outside airports and major train stations however fake taxis do target these areas.

Hop-on-and-off boat services are available for visiting Liege and Antwerp. Some long-distance boats do operate towards Brussels and canal boats are a popular

tourist attraction across cities.

EMERGENCY DETAILS	
<p>SOLACE GLOBAL 24 HOUR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM: +44 (0)1202 795801.</p> <p>ALL LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICES CAN BE CONTACTED BY DIALING 112.</p> <p>BRITISH EMBASSY BRUSSELS:- +32 2 287 62 11, U.S EMBASSY BRUSSELS:- +32 2 811 4000. SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY BRUSSELS:- +32 2 675 57 77.</p>	
POLICE NUMBER	112
AMBULANCE NUMBER	112
FIRE NUMBER	112
EMERGENCY DETAILS	

TRAVEL

TRAVEL ADVICE

Travellers must ensure they carry some form of identification with them at all times and be aware that it is illegal to wear face-covering clothing such as Burkha's in public places.

Same-sex sexual activity and marriage are both legal in Belgium.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

DECEMBER 06, 2025

- **St. Nicholas Day:** Belgium - Observance

DECEMBER 21, 2025

- **December Solstice:** Belgium - Seasonal

DECEMBER 24, 2025

- **Christmas Eve:** Belgium - Observance

DECEMBER 25, 2025

- **Christmas Day:** Belgium - National

DECEMBER 26, 2025

- **Boxing Day:** Belgium - Observance

DECEMBER 31, 2025

- **New Year's Eve:** Belgium - Observance

JANUARY 01, 2026

- **New Year's Day:** Belgium - National

JANUARY 06, 2026

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- **Epiphany:** Belgium - Observance

FEBRUARY 14, 2026

- **Valentine's Day:** Belgium - Observance

MARCH 20, 2026

- **March Equinox:** Belgium - Seasonal

MARCH 29, 2026

- **Daylight Saving Time starts:** Belgium - Clock change

APRIL 03, 2026

- **Good Friday:** Belgium - Observance

APRIL 05, 2026

- **Easter Sunday:** Belgium - National

APRIL 06, 2026

- **Easter Monday:** Belgium - National

MAY 01, 2026

- **Labor Day / May Day:** Belgium - National

RECENT ALERTS

ALL DEPARTURE FLIGHTS CANCELLED AT BRU AIRPORT DUE TO NATIONAL STRIKE



Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate

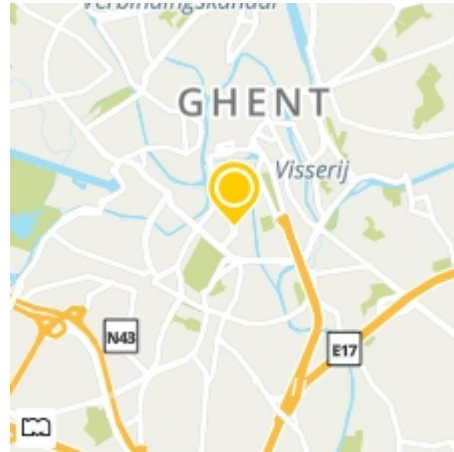


26-Nov-2025 10:23

According to local media sources, all flight departures at Brussels Airport (BRU) have been cancelled today, as well as 110 arrivals, due to the national strike in Belgium. Flights are also experiencing delays at Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL) due to staff shortages. It is not immediately clear when normal operations will resume; however, further disruptions may continue after the strike. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

ONGOING STRIKES THROUGHOUT GHENT AFFECTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



25-Nov-2025 10:15

Local media reports that a protest march has been ongoing in Ghent since 24 November and will continue until 26 November. These strikes are against the De Wever government's reform plans. The procession is from IVAGO to St. Peter's Square. Transportation is experiencing disruption, including train and bus services as well as ports. Public services such as waste collection and parks are also experiencing disruptions. The protests are peaceful, and no clashes have been reported.

STRIKE ACTION EXPECTED TO PROMPT SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS AT BRUSSELS SOUTH CHARLEROI AIRPORT (CRL) THROUGH 26 NOVEMBER

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate



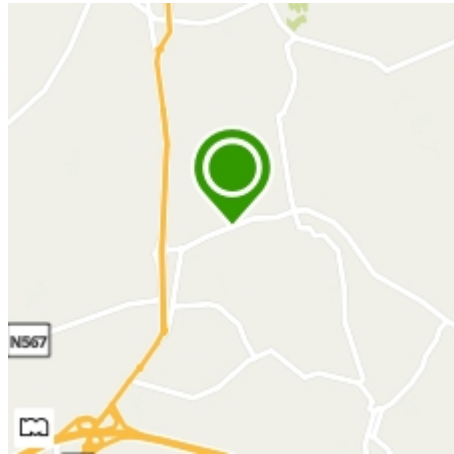
24-Nov-2025 12:06

Local media reports that planned strike action by Belgian transport unions is expected to cause significant disruption at Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL).

The strikes are primarily affecting customs and security staff, with airport officials announcing that all commercial flights on 26 November have reportedly been cancelled due to insufficient staff numbers. The announcement follows wider disruption across Belgium's public transport network, with metro, tram, and bus services in Brussels operating at reduced frequencies during the same period. Further details are presently limited. We will continue to monitor disruptions and update if there are any further developments.

**NATIONAL RAIL STRIKES ACROSS BELGIUM BEGINNING
2200 LOCAL TIME 23 NOVEMBER**

RECENT ALERTS



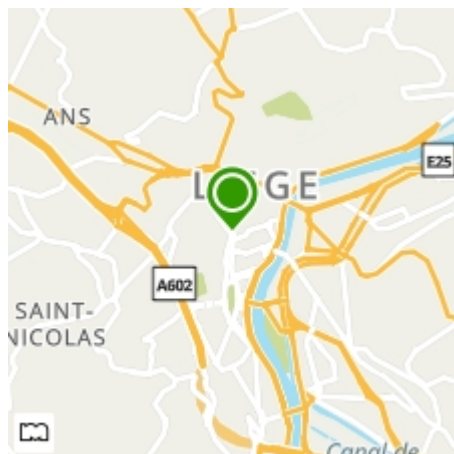
Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Low



23-Nov-2025 03:39

Local media sources report a national rail strike across Belgium beginning at 2200 local time on 23 November. Ground sources report that lines connecting major cities will only be running one out of every two trains. The strike has been reported to last three days, with a significant reduction in services during peak train services. Further information remains limited.

YELLOW WEATHER WARNING FOR SNOW AND ICE ISSUED IN SOUTHWESTERN BELGIUM



RECENT ALERTS

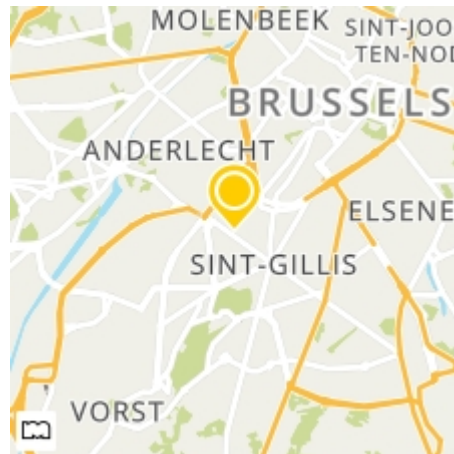
Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Low



19-Nov-2025 19:15

The Belgian Royal Meteorological Institute (RMI) has issued a yellow weather warning for snow and ice in the southwestern provinces of Liège and Luxembourg. The warning is in effect from 1800 to 2200 local time and warns of slippery road conditions due to snowfall. This comes as large parts of the United Kingdom are experiencing the same conditions.

ONGOING FAR-LEFT PROTEST OUTSIDE MR PARTY CONFERENCE IN BETHLEHEM SQUARE, SAINT-GILLES



Category: Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



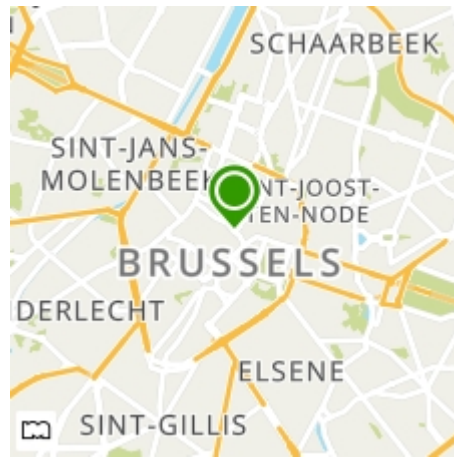
19-Nov-2025 18:13

Local media reports an ongoing far-left protest outside the Mouvement Réformateur (MR) Party conference in Bethlehem Square, Saint-Gilles. 150 demonstrators of the Brussels Antifascist Front gathered at around 17:30 local time to protest the 'Arizona government' and recent government policy. There is

RECENT ALERTS

a large police presence at the scene; however, there have been no confirmed reports of violence at this time. The conference is set to begin at 19:30 local time. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as necessary.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNINGS ACTIVE ACROSS CENTRAL REGIONS, INCLUDING BRUSSELS



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Low



16-Nov-2025 07:54

Belgium's Royal Meteorological Institute (RMI) has issued heavy rainfall warnings for central regions, including Brussels, Antwerp, Mons and Charleroi. The warnings remain in place until 12:00 local time. Authorities caution that the rainfall may cause travel disruptions and possible infrastructure damage. Further information remains limited.

WATER CANNONS DEPLOYED AND ARRESTS MADE AT PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTS IN ANTWERP

RECENT ALERTS



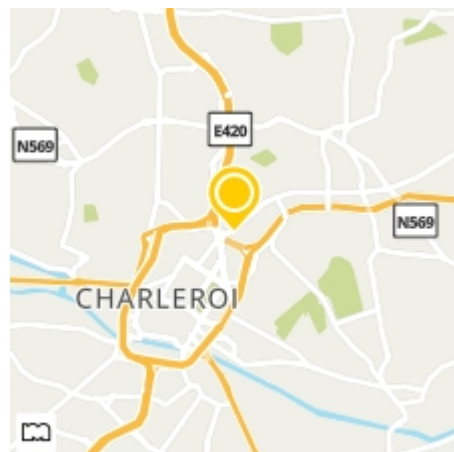
Category: Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



10-Nov-2025 19:46

Local media has reported that water cannons have been deployed and arrests have been made at a Pro-Palestine protest in Antwerp. The incident is occurring at Steenplein and Suikerrui with previous plans to protest at the City Hall denied by the City of Antwerp. It is unclear where the protests are heading to now and if there are any further arrests. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates when necessary.

AT LEAST ONE DEAD FOLLOWING SHOOTING IN NOTRE-DAME HOSPITAL IN CHARLEROI



RECENT ALERTS

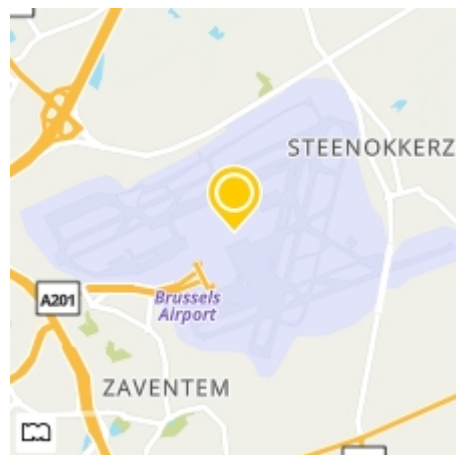
Category: Caution - **Risk:** Moderate



06-Nov-2025 20:20

Local media sources report at least one dead following a shooting in Notre-Dame Hospital in Charleroi. The incident occurred early evening on 06 November, and the emergency services are responding to the situation. Local authorities have secured the Notre-Dame site; however, the perpetrator is still at large. Ground sources report a heavy security presence as they actively work to capture the perpetrator. Further information remains limited at this time.

FLIGHTS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED AT BRUSSELS AIRPORT DUE TO DRONE SIGHTINGS



Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate



04-Nov-2025 21:51

Personnel at Brussels Airport (BRU) have announced that flights have been temporarily suspended due to drone sightings around the airport. Planes have been diverted to nearby airports, with departures and arrivals halted for a sec-

RECENT ALERTS

ond time this evening following drone activity. It is currently unclear when normal operations will resume, as authorities are still investigating the incident. We will continue to monitor the situation and update as necessary.

FCDO SUMMARY

Last updated: 11/19/2025 12:38:08

Warnings and insurance

National strike action

Strikes are planned for Monday 24, Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 November. This is expected to affect airports, public transport and some public services, including schools. Public transport will be affected from 10pm on Sunday 23 November. A demonstration is planned for central Brussels on Wednesday 26 November.

Strike action is an ongoing issue that can cause travel disruption. General strikes took place on 31 March, 29 April and 14 October. Strike action may be announced at short notice.

Monitor local news and check with your provider regarding potential delays and closures. Read more information about demonstrations and strikes on the [Safety and security page](#).

Before you travel

No travel can be guaranteed safe. Read all the advice in this guide. You may also find it helpful to:

- see [general advice for women travellers](#)
- read our [guide on disability and travel abroad](#)
- see [general advice for LGBT+ travellers](#)
- read about [safety for solo and independent travel](#)
- see [advice on volunteering and adventure travel abroad](#)

Travel insurance

If you choose to travel, research your destinations and [get appropriate travel insurance](#). Insurance should cover your itinerary, planned activities and expenses in an emergency.

About FCDO travel advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) provides advice about risks of travel to help you make informed decisions. Find out [more about FCDO travel advice](#).

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this advice is updated.

Follow FCDO:

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)
- [Travel Aware on Instagram](#)

Entry requirements

This information is for people travelling on a full [‘British citizen’ passport](#) from the UK. It is based on the UK government’s understanding of the current rules for the most common types of travel.

The authorities in Belgium set and enforce entry rules. If you’re not sure how these requirements apply to you, contact the [Belgian Embassy in the UK](#).

Travelling through Calais

If you’re travelling through Calais, check the [travel advice for France](#).

Passport validity requirements

Belgium follows [Schengen area rules](#). Your passport must:

- have a ‘date of issue’ less than 10 years before the date you arrive – if you renewed your passport before 1 October 2018, it may have a date of issue that is more than 10 years ago
- have an ‘expiry date’ at least 3 months after the date you plan to leave the Schengen area (the expiry date does not need to be within 10 years of the date of issue)

Check with your travel provider that your passport and other travel documents meet requirements. [Renew your passport](#) if you need to.

You will be denied entry if you do not have a valid travel document or try to use a passport that has been reported lost or stolen.

Visa requirements

You can [travel without a visa to the Schengen area](#), which includes Belgium, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel:

- as a tourist
- to visit family or friends
- to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events
- for short-term studies or training

The [requirements for working in Belgium](#) are different.

If you're travelling to other Schengen countries as well, make sure your whole visit is within the 90-day visa-free limit. Visits to Schengen countries in the 180 days before you travel count towards your 90 days. If you overstay the 90-day visa-free limit, you may be banned from entering Schengen countries for up to 3 years.

Until the Entry-Exit System (EES) is fully rolled out, make sure you get your passport stamped on entry and exit (read 'New Schengen entry requirements').

If you're a visitor, border guards will look at your entry and exit stamps to check you have not overstayed the 90-day visa-free limit for the Schengen area.

If your passport is missing a stamp, show evidence of when and where you entered or left the Schengen area (for example, boarding passes or tickets) and ask the border guards to add the date and location in your passport.

At Belgian border control, you may also need to:

- show a return or onward ticket
- show you have enough money for your stay

Staying longer than 90 days in a 180-day period

To stay longer, you must meet the Belgian government's entry requirements. Check which type of visa or work permit you need with the [Belgian Embassy in the UK](#).

If you are in Belgium with a residence permit or long-stay visa, this does not count towards your 90-day visa-free limit.

Read about [entry processes if you live in Belgium](#).

New Schengen entry requirements

From 12 October 2025, the European Union's (EU) new Entry/Exit System (EES) will begin roll out.

This means that when you travel into the Schengen area for short stays, you may need to register your biometric details, such as fingerprints and a photo. You do not need to take any action before you arrive at the border, and there is no cost for EES registration.

On your first visit into a Schengen country from 12 October onwards, you may be asked to register your details at a special booth before proceeding to the immigration desk. Follow directions from your travel operator or the staff at your port of entry. You may also need to provide either your fingerprint or photo when you leave the Schengen area. Children aged 11 or younger will not have their fingerprints scanned but can be required to have their photo taken.

EES may take each passenger a few extra minutes to complete so be prepared to wait longer than usual at the border.

EES will not be rolled out to all ports of entry at once, the numbers of passengers being registered at each port of entry will vary, and some destinations may take up to 6 months to fully roll out the new process.

Until EES is fully rolled out your passport will continue to be stamped, even if you've already been registered for EES. Once EES is fully rolled out, it will replace the current system of manually stamping passports when visitors arrive in the Schengen area for short stays and you will input biometric details every time you enter or exit.

If you enter the Schengen area through the Port of Dover, Eurotunnel at Folkestone or Eurostar at St Pancras International and you are asked to register for EES, the information will be taken at the border before you leave the UK.

Read more [information on the EU Entry/Exit System and to understand which countries are in the Schengen area](#) and consult the [Belgian Immigration Office](#)

[Website on EES.](#)

Additional Border Controls in Belgium

Belgium has introduced additional entry checks until December 2025. Checks may be carried out on major roads leading into Belgium, motorway car parks, international bus services, international trains and on intra-Schengen flights. Checks may involve verifying travel documents and identification, as well as screening for illegal substances. In Belgium you must carry your passport with you at all times.

Border controls at Germany's land borders

There are temporary border controls in place to travel into Germany. Check the [entry requirements for Germany](#).

Border controls at the Netherlands' land and air borders

The Netherlands has reintroduced temporary border controls at its land borders as well as additional checks on some international trains and specific flights, for a period of six months. See information from [Royal Netherlands Marechaussee](#).

Children aged 17 and under

Adults, including parents and guardians, who are travelling to or from Belgium with children aged 17 or under may have to provide proof of their relationship to the children they are accompanying. Carry a birth certificate or court order, particularly if you have a different surname to the children.

Vaccine requirements

For details about medical entry requirements and recommended vaccinations, see [TravelHealthPro's Belgium guide](#).

Customs rules

There are strict rules about [goods that can be brought into and taken out of Belgium](#). You must declare anything that may be prohibited or subject to tax or duty.

Taking food into Belgium

You cannot take [meat, milk or products containing them into EU countries](#). There are some exceptions such as powdered baby milk, baby food and special foods or pet feed required for medical reasons.

Taking money into or out of Belgium

You must [complete a disclosure form](#) at customs if you're carrying currency worth 10,000 euros or more.

Safety and security

Terrorism

There is a high threat of terrorist attack globally affecting UK interests and British nationals, including from groups and individuals who view the UK and British nationals as targets. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

UK Counter Terrorism Policing has information and advice on [staying safe abroad](#) and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Find out [how to reduce your risk from terrorism while abroad](#).

Terrorism in Belgium

Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Belgium.

Terrorism attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreign nationals such as:

- public transport
- national and international transport hubs
- music, sporting and cultural events
- entertainment establishments and nightlife venues
- government buildings and international institutions
- places of worship and religious sites

You should be vigilant in public places and follow the advice of local authorities.

There have been some high-profile terrorist attacks across Belgium. The main threat is from extremists linked to Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL). Previous incidents have included fatal attacks against civilians and law enforcement:

- on 16 October 2023, 2 people were killed and one seriously injured in a terrorism-related shooting incident in Brussels
- in 2022, a police officer was killed and another injured in a suspected terrorist incident in Brussels

The Belgian authorities have successfully disrupted various attack plans, making a number of arrests in recent years. The Belgian government has set the national threat level at 3 'Serious'. You can expect to see an increased police presence, and additional safety measures may be in place. Be aware of your surroundings and follow the advice of local authorities.

Demonstrations and strikes

Demonstrations and strikes often take place in major cities, particularly in transport hubs and around the Schuman area (EU quarter) in Brussels.

Most demonstrations are peaceful, but there is a risk of unrest or violence. There has also been violence following major sporting fixtures. Demonstrations by farmers can block major roads and delay traffic. Demonstrations in the Schuman area can affect access to the British Embassy and the British Consulate General.

Strike action is an ongoing issue that can cause severe travel disruption across the country and affect international travel. Strike action may be announced at short notice and planned strike action may be extended at short notice. Strikes can coincide with demonstrations and protests.

For regular updates on any disruption, check local news and follow advice given by your travel provider. If you are in areas where large gatherings are taking place, remain vigilant and move away quickly if there are signs of disorder. Avoid protests, expect delays on some major roads and follow the advice of the authorities.

For information on travel in Belgium, visit:

- [Belgian Railways](#) (train and metro travel)
- [Brussels, Walloon](#) and [Flemish](#) (regional public transport)
- [HERE map](#)

For international travel, visit:

- [Brussels Airport Zaventem](#)
- [Charleroi Airport](#)
- [Antwerp Airport](#)

Security awareness

In the event of a security incident or any emergency, or if police carry out security operations at short notice, follow the instructions of the Belgian authorities.

You can:

- find information on the [Belgian Crisis Centre website](#)
- follow the Crisis Centre accounts on [X](#) or [Facebook](#) to follow official information in the event of a major national incident
- sign up to [BE-Alert](#) to receive emergency alerts on SMS
- look for the official communication and social media channels of local police for the area you are in

Crime

Protecting yourself and your belongings

Theft and pickpocketing are common in crowded areas. Take care of your baggage and passports and beware of any attempts to distract you.

Take extra care in major railway stations and on public transport, particularly at night. Thieves, pickpockets and muggers operate in busy areas, and there have been cases of violent robbery. Be aware of your surroundings particularly:

- at Brussels Gare du Midi/Zuidstation (Eurostar terminal) and Brussels Gare du Nord
- on international trains, mainly Paris-Brussels and Amsterdam-Brussels
- in busy areas of central Brussels, including Schuman (the EU quarter)

Never leave luggage unattended. Luggage has been stolen from the racks at the end of carriages in high-speed trains (TGV and Thalys), usually just before the doors close.

Thieves, usually on motorbikes, can break a car window and snatch valuables from the front or back passenger seat when a vehicle is stationary at traffic lights.

If you see anything suspicious, report it to [local police authorities](#).

Additionally, be aware that drug use may be seen openly in train and metro stations across Brussels.

Taxis

Only use official, licensed taxis. Do not get into taxis that stop to offer rides.

Organised crime

There are regular incidents of violent crime among organised crime gangs involved in drug trafficking, particularly in Brussels, Antwerp and other large cities. Confrontations between rival gangs have led to violent incidents including shootings, stabbings, and use of homemade explosives. The risk mostly affects those involved in drug crime, but there is always the risk of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Remain vigilant if you suspect illegal activity. Follow the advice of local authorities.

There have been reports of truck and van drivers being approached at parking lots or service stations by organised crime groups and asked to smuggle products to the UK ('window tapping'). If you see anything suspicious, report it to [local police authorities](#).

Laws and cultural differences

Personal ID

You must carry your passport with you at all times.

Laws on clothing

It is illegal to wear clothing that hides your face partially or completely (for example, the burka and niqab) in public places. You risk a fine of up to 137 euros and detention for up to 7 days. There is no exemption for tourists.

Illegal drugs

Possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs, including cannabis, are serious offences and can lead to a minimum 3-month prison sentence, long jail terms, or

heavy fines. You should expect severe penalties even when transiting through the airport.

Airports in Belgium have excellent technology and security for detecting illegal items. This is also used to scan the baggage of transiting passengers.

Visiting battlefields

When visiting WW1 battlefields in north-west Belgium, stay on the footpaths and be cautious if you see anything that looks like shells or munitions. Unexploded shells have recently been uncovered. Move away from the site and report incidents to the police.

Transport risks

Road travel

If you are planning to drive in Belgium, see [information on driving abroad](#). Read the [government information on driving laws in Belgium](#) (in Flemish and French).

When driving in Belgium, always carry:

- your driving licence
- your car registration documents
- your insurance paper
- your MOT ('contrôle technique') certificate
- your passport and your passengers' passports

If you are visiting Belgium, you may be able to use your [Blue Badge](#) in some circumstances. Check local parking rules.

If you live in Belgium, see [driving requirements for residents](#).

Driving regulations

Driving laws differ from those in the UK. Be aware that:

- police use speed traps, cameras and unmarked vehicles
- speeding can result in an on-the-spot fine
- using a mobile phone while driving is illegal, unless you are using hands-free equipment

Belgium's accident rate is high, mainly due to speeding.

If you get a fine, you can consult the [federal justice service](#) for information.

Low emission zones

There are low emission zones in Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp. You need to pre-register foreign vehicles on the [Brussels](#) , [Ghent](#) or [Antwerp](#) websites.

Electric scooter regulations

The maximum speed limit for riding an electric scooter is 25kph and riding with a passenger is illegal. Riding a scooter on the pavement is prohibited with the exception of people with reduced mobility using a mobility scooter.

It is illegal for people aged under 16 to use electric scooters, except in a few designated areas.

Health

Before you travel check that:

- your destination can provide the healthcare you may need
- you have [appropriate travel insurance](#) for local treatment or unexpected medical evacuation

This is particularly important if you have a health condition or are pregnant.

Emergency medical number

Dial 112 and ask for an ambulance.

Contact your insurance or medical assistance company quickly if you're referred to a medical facility for treatment.

Vaccine recommendations and health risks

At least 8 weeks before your trip:

- check the latest [vaccine recommendations for Belgium](#)

- see where to get vaccines and whether you have to pay on the [NHS travel vaccinations page](#)

See [what health risks you'll face in Belgium](#).

Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or bought in the UK can be different in other countries.

Read [best practice when travelling with medicines on TravelHealthPro](#).

For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, contact the [Belgian Embassy in the UK](#).

Healthcare in Belgium

[ECDC](#) has a list of [medical providers in Belgium](#) where some staff will speak English.

There is a fee for non-emergency medical consultations and prescriptions. You may be able to recover this money through your travel insurance.

Health insurance cards

To get medically necessary state healthcare in Belgium, you need a Global Health Insurance Card ([GHIC](#)) or a European Health Insurance Card ([EHIC](#)).

The NHS's [getting healthcare abroad webpage](#) has details about:

- how to apply for a [GHIC](#)
- how to get temporary cover if you lose your card or it does not arrive in time
- who qualifies for a new [EHIC](#) instead of a [GHIC](#)
- what treatment counts as medically necessary

A [GHIC](#) or [EHIC](#) is not an alternative to travel insurance. You may have costs your [GHIC](#) or [EHIC](#) does not cover, including:

- changes to travel and accommodation bookings
- additional standard costs for treatment
- medical repatriation to the UK
- treatment that is ruled non-urgent

- private healthcare
- private clinics

There is also [guidance on healthcare if you're living in Belgium](#).

Travel and mental health

Read [ECDC guidance on travel and mental health](#). There is also [mental health guidance on TravelHealthPro](#).

Getting help

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) cannot provide tailored advice for individual trips. Read this travel advice and carry out your own research before deciding whether to travel.

Emergency services in Belgium

Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police)

You can also download the [112 Where Are U app](#), the official European emergency number app, which helps the emergency services identify your location.

Contact your travel provider and insurer

Contact your travel provider and your insurer if you are involved in a serious incident or emergency abroad. They will tell you if they can help and what you need to do.

Refunds and changes to travel

For refunds or changes to travel, contact your travel provider. You may also be able to make a claim through insurance. However, insurers usually require you to talk to your travel provider first.

Find out more about [changing or cancelling travel plans](#), including:

- where to get advice if you are in a dispute with a provider
- how to access previous versions of travel advice to support a claim

Support from **FCDO**

FCDO has guidance on staying safe and what to do if you need help or support abroad, including:

- finding English-speaking [lawyers](#), [funeral directors](#) and [translators and interpreters](#) in Belgium
- dealing with a [death in Belgium](#)
- being [arrested or imprisoned in Belgium](#)
- getting help if you're a [victim of crime](#)
- what to do if you're [in hospital](#)
- if you are [affected by a crisis](#), such as a terrorist attack

Contacting **FCDO**

Help abroad

See [how to get help from the UK government abroad](#) including in a crisis.

Help in the UK

You can call **FCDO** in London if you need urgent help because something has happened to a friend or relative abroad.

Telephone: 020 7008 5000 (24 hours)

[Find out about call charges](#)

Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated. when this travel advice is updated.

Follow **FCDO**:

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)

Risk information for British companies

The Overseas Business Risk service offers [information and advice for British companies operating in Belgium](#) on how to manage political, economic, and

business security-related risks.

PACK SMART

Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Carry a duplicate wallet with small denomination notes and old cards that you could relinquish if threatened by robbers. Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Always check the destination restrictions regarding medications when planning your trip.

STAY SAFE: Hotels



Request a hotel room between the third & seventh floor. Ground floor rooms should always be avoided as they are easily accessible from the outside. Higher levels mean in the event of a fire there are many stairs to navigate and in some countries firefighters may not have ladders capable of reaching higher than the seventh floor.



Check your room phone works in case you need to call reception for help.



Know where your fire exits are. Count the number of doors to the fire exit from your room so you can feel your way in the event of a fire and a smoke-filled corridor.



To prevent unauthorised entry into your hotel room, make sure the windows and doors lock. Bolt the deadbolt and use the door wedges you've brought with you from home to wedge the main door closed.

TRAVEL SAFE: Out & About



When you are out and about, be aware of your surroundings - don't display obvious wealth, such as expensive jewellery, watches and mobile phones.



Use ATMs inside banks and shopping centres, where there is greater security and CCTV. Safety in numbers. If you are travelling with colleagues, stay together for meals and trips out. If you are alone, avoid quiet areas and trust your instincts.

Road traffic accidents are still the greatest threat to travel safety.



- Use licensed taxis.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Keep doors locked & windows up.
- Avoid night-time driving.

- If the driver is using a phone or driving dangerously, insist they slow down/stop using their phone.

Check in regularly. Use the 'Check In' button on the Solace Secure app so your location can be monitored and you can view all intelligence alerts within your vicinity.

SAFE TRAVEL: Health Tips

See a medical travel specialist at least 4 weeks before travel.

Ask about recommended vaccines for specific destinations.

First aid kit with regular & special medication for trip - carry in hand luggage.

Evacuation & travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.



Take an extra month of prescribed medication for pre-existing conditions.

Risk of malaria - take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and take malaria pills as advised.



Avoid drinking alcohol and becoming dehydrated.

Verify & consume safe water and food. Have a supply of medicine for self-treatment of diarrhoea.



Excessive sun exposure should be minimised by the use of sunscreen - sun can be more intense over water, snow and at altitude.

Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies.

THINK SAFE: Know Your Destination

Understand the culture of your destination. Dress and behave so as not to cause offence or draw attention.



Know if the tap water is suitable to drink if not; only accept water from a sealed bottle.

Avoid ice in your drinks & salad washed in tap water.

Research where you are travelling to. Make a note of the local emergency services number. Know the current security and medical threats and advice. See the FCO website for general information ([gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)).

DOCUMENT SAFE: Know Your Destination

Take photos/scans of your essential documents and email them to yourself. You can then access them remotely if your belongings are stolen:

- Passport
- Driver's Licence
- Travel Insurance Document
- Visa
- Medical Certificates

For 24/7 travel risk advice and emergency assistance contact Solace Global Risk operations: + 44 (0)1202 795 801

The Solace Secure desktop and app provide up-to-the-minute alerts, providing latest information on your travel location even when you are there.

CONTACT SOLACE GLOBAL RESPONSE TEAM

This report has been prepared for you by Solace Global Risk Ltd.

If you need urgent help, advice or assistance at any time please contact the 24/7 Response and Assistance Team.

If you have a question about this travel advice or any other location please email SGR@solaceglobal.com for further safety and security information.

For support using your Solace Secure platform or app please contact support@solaceglobal.com.

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