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Chapter 1

25

1.1 25.guide

Texified version of data for Belgium.

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Belgium

1.2 25.guide/Belgium

Belgium

Geography (Belgium)

People (Belgium)

Government (Belgium)

Government (Belgium 2. usage)

Economy (Belgium)

Economy (Belgium 2. usage)

Communications (Belgium)

Defense Forces (Belgium)

1.3 25.guide/Geography (Belgium)

Geography (Belgium)

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Location: Western Europe, bordering on the North Sea, between France and ←
the
Netherlands

Map references:

Arctic Region, Europe, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

30,510 km²

land area:

30,230 km²

comparative area:

slightly larger than Maryland

Land boundaries:

total 1,385 km, France 620 km, Germany 167 km, Luxembourg 148 km,
Netherlands 450 km

Coastline:

64 km

Maritime claims:

continental shelf:

equidistant line with neighbors

exclusive fishing zone:

equidistant line with neighbors (extends about 68 km from coast)

territorial sea:

12 nm

International disputes:

none

Climate:

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

Terrain:

flat coastal plains in northwest, central rolling hills, rugged mountains ←
of

Ardennes Forest in southeast

Natural resources:

coal, natural gas

Land use:

arable land:

24%

permanent crops:

1%

meadows and pastures:

20%

forest and woodland:
 21%
 other:
 34%
 Irrigated land:
 10 km² (1989 est.)
 Environment:
 air and water pollution
 Note:
 crossroads of Western Europe; majority of West European capitals within
 1,000 km of Brussels which is the seat of the EC

1.4 25.guide/People (Belgium)

People (Belgium)

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Population: 10,040,939 (July 1993 est.)
 Population growth rate:
 0.23% (1993 est.)
 Birth rate:
 11.94 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Death rate:
 10.32 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Net migration rate:
 0.7 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Infant mortality rate:
 7.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)
 Life expectancy at birth:
 total population:
 76.72 years
 male:
 73.41 years
 female:
 80.21 years (1993 est.)
 Total fertility rate:
 1.62 children born/woman (1993 est.)
 Nationality:
 noun:
 Belgian(s)
 adjective:
 Belgian
 Ethnic divisions:
 Fleming 55%, Walloon 33%, mixed or other 12%
 Religions:
 Roman Catholic 75%, Protestant or other 25%
 Languages:
 Flemish (Dutch) 56%, French 32%, German 1%, legally bilingual 11% divided
 along ethnic lines
 Literacy:
 age 15 and over can read and write (1980)
 total population:
 99%

male:
 NA%
 female:
 NA%
 Labor force:
 4.126 million
 by occupation:
 services 63.6%, industry 28%, construction 6.1%, agriculture 2.3% (1988)

1.5 25.guide/Government (Belgium)

Government (Belgium)

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Names:
 conventional long form:
 Kingdom of Belgium
 conventional short form:
 Belgium
 local long form:
 Royaume de Belgique local short form:
 Belgique
 Digraph:
 BE
 Type:
 constitutional monarchy
 Capital:
 Brussels
 Administrative divisions:
 9 provinces (French: provinces, singular - province; Flemish: provincien, singular - provincie); Antwerpen, Brabant, Hainaut, Liege, Limburg, Luxembourg, Namur, Oost-Vlaanderen, West-Vlaanderen
 Independence:
 4 October 1830 (from the Netherlands)
 Constitution:
 7 February 1831, last revised 8-9 August 1980; the government is in the process of revising the Constitution with the aim of federalizing the Belgian state
 Legal system:
 civil law system influenced by English constitutional theory; judicial review of legislative acts; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations
 National holiday:
 National Day, 21 July (ascension of King Leopold to the throne in 1831)
 Political parties and leaders:
 Flemish Social Christian (CVP), Herman VAN ROMPUY, president; Walloon ←
 Social
 Christian (PSC) , Melchior WATHELET, president; Flemish Socialist (SP), Frank VANDENBROUCKE, president; Walloon Socialist (PS), Guy SPITAELS; Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD), Guy VERHOFSTADT, president; Walloon Liberal (PRL), Antoine DUQUESNE, president; Francophone Democratic Front (FDF), Georges CLERFAYT, president; Volksunie (VU), Jaak GABRIELS, president; Communist Party (PCB), Louis VAN GEYT, president; Vlaams Blok

(VB), Karel VAN DILLEN, chairman; ROSSEM, Jean Pierre VAN ROSSEM; National Front (FN), Werner van STEEN; Live Differently (AGALEV; Flemish Green party), Leo COX; Ecologist (ECOLO; Francophone Green party), NA; other ← minor parties

Other political or pressure groups:

Christian and Socialist Trade Unions; Federation of Belgian Industries; numerous other associations representing bankers, manufacturers, middle-class artisans, and the legal and medical professions; various organizations represent the cultural interests of Flanders and Wallonia; various peace groups such as the Flemish Action Committee Against Nuclear Weapons and Pax Christi

Suffrage:

18 years of age, universal and compulsory

Elections:

Senate:

last held 24 November 1991 (next to be held by November 1996); results - percent of vote by party NA; seats - (184 total; of which 106 are directly elected) CVP 20, SP 14, PVV (now VLD) 13, VU 5, AGALEV 5, VB 5, ROSSEN 1, ← PS 18, PRL 9, PSC 9, ECOLO 6, FDF 1

1.6 25.guide/Government (Belgium 2. usage)

Government (Belgium 2. usage)

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Chamber of Representatives:

last held 24 November 1991 (next to be held by November 1996); results - ← CVP 16.7%, PS 13.6%, SP 12.0%, PVV (now VLD) 11.9%, PRL 8.2%, PSC 7.8%, VB ← 6.6%, VU 5.9%, ECOLO 5.1%, AGALEV 4.9%, FDF 2.6%, ROSSEM 3.2%, FN 1.5%; seats - (212 total) CVP 39, PS 35, SP 28, PVV (now VLD) 26, PRL 20, PSC 18, FB 12, VU 10, ECOLO 10, AGALEV 7, FDF 3, ROSSEM 3, FN 1

Executive branch:

monarch, prime minister, three deputy prime ministers, Cabinet

Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament consists of an upper chamber or Senate (Flemish - Senaat, French - Senat) and a lower chamber or Chamber of Representatives (Flemish - Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers, French - Chambre des Representants)

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court of Justice (Flemish - Hof van Cassatie, French - Cour de Cassation)

Leaders:

Chief of State:

King BAUDOUIN I (since 17 July 1951); Heir Apparent Prince ALBERT of Liege (brother of the King; born 6 June 1934)

Head of Government:

Prime Minister Jean-Luc DEHAENE (since 6 March 1992)

Member of:

AG (observer), ACCT, AfDB, AsDB, Australian Group, Benelux, BIS, CCC, CE,

CERN, COCOM, CSCE, EBRD, EC, ECE, EIB, ESA, FAO, G-9, G-10, GATT, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, IDA, IEA, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, INMARSAT, INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, LORCS, MTCR, NACC, NATO, NEA, NSG, OAS (observer), OECD, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNMOGIP, UNOSOM, UNPROFOR, UNRWA, UNTAC, UNTSO, UPU, WCL, WEU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

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Flag:

three equal vertical bands of black (hoist side), yellow, and red; the design was based on the flag of France

1.7 25.guide/Economy (Belgium)

Economy (Belgium)

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Overview:

This small private enterprise economy has capitalized on its central geographic location, highly developed transport network, and diversified industrial and commercial base. Industry is concentrated mainly in the populous Flemish area in the north, although the government is encouraging reinvestment in the southern region of Walloon. With few natural resources Belgium must import essential raw materials, making its economy closely dependent on the state of world markets. Over 70% of trade is with other EC countries. The economy grew at a strong 4% pace during the period 1988-90, but economic growth slowed to a 1% pace in 1991-92. The economy is expected to turn in another sluggish 1% performance in 1993. Belgium's public debt remains high at 120% of GDP and the government is trying to control its expenditures to bring the figure more into line with other industrialized countries.

National product:

GDP - purchasing power equivalent - \$177.9 billion (1992)

National product real growth rate:

0.8% (1992)

National product per capita:

\$17,800 (1992)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.6% (1992 est.)

Unemployment rate:

9.8% (end 1992)

Budget:

revenues \$97.8 billion; expenditures \$109.3 billion, including capital expenditures of \$NA (1989)

Exports:

\$118 billion (f.o.b., 1991) Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union

commodities:

iron and steel, transportation equipment, tractors, diamonds, petroleum products

partners:

EC 75.5%, US 3.7%, former Communist countries 1.4% (1991)

Imports:

\$121 billion (c.i.f., 1991) Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union

commodities:

fuels, grains, chemicals, foodstuffs

partners:

EC 73%, US 4.8%, oil-exporting less developed countries 4%, former Communist countries 1.8% (1991)

External debt:

\$31.3 billion (1992 est.)

Industrial production:

growth rate 1.6% (1992 est.)

Electricity:

17,500,000 kW capacity; 68,000 million kWh produced, 6,790 kWh per capita (1992)

Industries:

engineering and metal products, motor vehicle assembly, processed food and beverages, chemicals, basic metals, textiles, glass, petroleum, coal

Agriculture: accounts for 2.3% of GDP; emphasis on livestock production - beef, veal, ←

pork, milk; major crops are sugar beets, fresh vegetables, fruits, grain, tobacco; net importer of farm products

Illicit drugs:

source of precursor chemicals for South American cocaine processors; increasingly important gateway country for cocaine entering the European market

1.8 25.guide/Economy (Belgium 2. usage)

Economy (Belgium 2. usage)

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Economic aid:

donor - ODA and OOF commitments (1970-89), \$5.8 billion

Currency:

1 Belgian franc (BF) = 100 centimes
 Exchange rates:
 Belgian francs (BF) per US\$1 - 33.256 (January 1993), 32.150 (1992), 34.148 (1991), 33.418 (1990), 39.404 (1989), 36.768 (1988)
 Fiscal year:
 calendar year

1.9 25.guide/Communications (Belgium)

Communications (Belgium)

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Railroads:

Belgian National Railways (SNCB) operates 3,568 km 1.435-meter standard gauge, government owned; 2,563 km double track; 2,207 km electrified

Highways:

103,396 km total; 1,317 km limited access, divided autoroute; 11,717 km national highway; 1,362 km provincial road; about 38,000 km paved and ←
 51,000
 km unpaved rural roads

Inland waterways:

2,043 km (1,528 km in regular commercial use)

Pipelines:

petroleum products 1,167 km; crude oil 161 km; natural gas 3,300 km

Ports:

Antwerp, Brugge, Gent, Oostende, Zeebrugge

Merchant marine:

23 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 96,949 GRT/133,658 DWT; includes 10 cargo, 5 oil tanker, 2 liquefied gas, 5 chemical tanker, 1 bulk

Airports:

total:

42

usable:

42

with permanent-surface runways:

24

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

14

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

3

Telecommunications: highly developed, technologically advanced, and ←
 completely automated

domestic and international telephone and telegraph facilities; extensive cable network; limited microwave radio relay network; 4,720,000 telephones; broadcast stations - 3 AM, 39 FM, 32 TV; 5 submarine cables; 2 satellite earth stations - Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT and EUTELSAT systems; nationwide mobile phone system

1.10 25.guide/Defense Forces (Belgium)

Defense Forces (Belgium)

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Branches:

Army, Navy, Air Force, National Gendarmerie

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 2,556,189; fit for military service 2,133,051; reach
military age (19) annually 63,532 (1993 est.)

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$4 billion, 2% of GDP (1992)