

A CORRESPONDENT'S GUIDE TO
BRUSSELS 2018-2019

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■ BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIDIER REYNDERS



It is my pleasure to welcome you to Belgium. Located at the crossroads of the Latin and Germanic worlds, our country has been for more than 50 years home to the main institutions of the European Union (EU) and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). These have attracted in turn numerous public and private agencies, think tanks, lobby groups and civil society organizations. Their presence, flourishing on our tradition of openness and fast connections to locations all over Europe and further away, have made also of our capital Brussels one of the largest community of foreign journalists in the world.

Your work here is important. From the foundation of our nation in 1830 to today, press freedom has always been a cornerstone of our democracy. Vibrant independent media, both online and offline are essential for the fulfilment of the values which guide our country as well as the EU and NATO.

I hope you will feel at home at the Residence Palace, an iconic Art Deco building in the heart of Brussels' European district which hosts the International Press Centre. Among many other activities, the Press Centre will facilitate your contacts with your colleagues and with the sources necessary for your work. As such, this infrastructure is also a contribution to an independent and well-informed press.

It will not take you long to start exploring the city beyond the Schuman Square. There is so much to discover or enjoy whatever your interests: culture, nature, food, sports, fashion or history. I trust this guide will provide you also with all the useful and practical information that you will need to settle and get going. Belgium has a long-standing tradition of hosting foreigners. Our labour market, medical services and social security provisions

are mindful of your specific needs. You will find out also that our country offers an exceptional high standard of living for expatriates and their families, with first-class healthcare, high-quality housing at affordable prices and an excellent education system with many international schools.

I wish you a fulfilling professional live in Brussels, and count on you to unveil – and why not contribute to? – the many intriguing, creative and charming sides of our country.

Didier Reynders
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

■ BY API-IPA PRESIDENT TOM WEINGÄRTNER



Home to a thousand foreign correspondents, Brussels is a world media hub. European and other international institutions including NATO and numerous multinational companies as well as Belgium itself are clear reasons why we report from Brussels. And as elsewhere, with the financial crisis hitting traditional foreign correspondents working for newspapers, agencies and TV stations, Brussels too has seen an ever growing presence of new media in the so-called capital of Europe. Correspondents from traditional news organisations have been joined by an increasing number of freelance journalists seeking out news stories. The Brussels media scene is busier than ever.

With working conditions becoming tougher for many colleagues, the International Press Association (API-IPA) and the International Press Center Residence Palace as counterpart of the Belgian federal government are providing both newly arrived, visiting and long-standing correspondents with practical information and support. The splendid art nouveau building has important facilities at its disposal to organise the free flow of information: offices to be rented by correspondents, meeting rooms for press conferences and other events, working facilities for journalists such as computers, wireless as well as a comfortable restaurant. API-IPA and the team of Residence Palace have been working together for over 15 years coming up with new solutions and improved working conditions for journalists.

API-IPA is the voice of Brussels-based journalists. We work together closely with the European institutions, NATO and Belgian authorities smoothing out difficulties and making life easier for foreign correspondents, whether as a group or individually. We are part of the ongoing debate on fundamental questions to our profession such as press freedom, relations between media and institutions and reporters' independence. These and other subjects are raised in so-called API Hour meetings taking place in Residence Palace regularly.

This guide will offer you a whole set of essential information, from useful contact details across European institutions, NATO, Belgian institutions and civil society to practical advice on settling, living and working in Brussels.

Thanks to continuing commitment by Belgian federal authorities, who provide API-IPA and the international press corps with the necessary infrastructure, Residence Palace has consolidated its position as the main media home in Brussels. The extensive facilities for journalists are proof of ongoing and encouraging development. We give a special thanks to former ANSA news agency reporter and honorary president of Journalists at Your Service (J@YS) Maria Laura Franciosi for organising the traditional newcomers seminars twice a year, in Spring and Autumn.

If you are a newcomer to Brussels, we hope you take advantage of the next opportunity to follow the newcomers' seminar. Do not hesitate, also, to contact Martine Joos in our office on the second floor of Residence Palace. She is ready to answer your questions and to receive your application for API-IPA membership every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 am to 1 pm.

Tom Weingärtner
API-IPA president



RESIDENCE PALACE

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CENTRE



- 📏 Office space for journalists as of 10 m² up to 1500 m²
- 📅 6 month contract possible
- 📺 Multiple international media organisations and news agencies in the building
- 📍 Close to the European institutions
- 👤 Co-working space for journalists



Jean-Claude Juncker, answering the journalists' questions
 © European Union, 2016, Source: EC - Audiovisual Service, Photo: Etienne Ansotte

Welcome to Brussels. We hope you will find this 'Journalist's Guide to Brussels' a useful tool. Whether you have just arrived or whether you are a hard-boiled veteran of the Brussels press corps, you should find something here to help you in the course of your work.

We take you through such practicalities as getting around town and gaining accreditation through to events of interest to journalists and how to wind down at the end of the day – or even escape for the weekend. At the heart of this guide are our unique, extensive lists of contacts that you may find helpful as you seek to report on the goings on in the city and its many institutions.

■ SETTLING DOWN

When you arrive in Brussels for the first time, there are three things you have to do before you can start your new assignment as a foreign correspondent in the capital of Europe. Find a place to live, register with your 'commune' – your local authority, and arrange your accreditations to the main institutions.

House hunting

In a city with tens of thousands of international eu-ocrats, diplomats, lobbyists, politicians and business people with mostly shortterm contracts, you can

expect a large offering of rental houses and apartments. At any given moment there are hundreds of places available in all price categories, although renting in Brussels on average is not cheap. Expect to pay 750 euros a month for a simple one-bedroom apartment, up to 2000 euros for more spacious and luxurious dwellings. The closer you get to the city centre or the European quarter, the higher the rent. Besides many commercial real estate agents, that can show you around, there are several independent websites giving an overview of what is available. To name a few: *immoweb.be*, *immo.vlan.be*, *xpats.com*, *expatriates.com*. A nice initiative of the Flemish community are special tours by bus or bike with a guide who will show

you the various neighborhoods and the type of housing available there (woneninbrussel.be – only in Dutch).

Registering

As soon as you have found a place to live and have signed the contract you have to register with the local administration. Know that Brussels is not one city, but consists of 19 municipalities, each with its own administration and its own city hall. Only one of them is officially called Brussels, the others each have their own name, like Ixelles, Etterbeek, Schaerbeek or Sint Jans Molenbeek. But for the sake of 'simplicity' (or not...), the whole is still called Brussels. So you have to



go to the townhall of the municipality where your new accommodation is located, and only to the Brussels city hall if you really live in inner Brussels city itself.

You must submit a registration application, after which you will receive an invitation to an appointment at which you can get a residence card. This is important, since you will need this card in order to enter into a contract for the supply of electricity or gas, or to get a phone and internet connection. Registration also has tax implications, since in general you pay tax where you live. And then, a few weeks after you have registered, a neighborhood policemen will come to your new home to check that you indeed live there.

More info on the procedure can be found on www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4945 (for Brussels City, but similar rules apply in all other municipalities – for that visit the website of that commune).

■ ACCREDITATION

In the meantime it is time to get your press accreditations in order, because without them you can not properly work as a correspondent. It may take weeks and sometimes months before you have arranged all accreditations, so it is wise to start on time. Fortunately, most of the work can now be done online, but practically everywhere you are asked for your residence card, so you really need to arrange that first.

Accreditation to the EU

Journalists who want regular access to the EU institutions – the European Commission, the Council

of the European Union and the European Parliament – need to be accredited. These three institutions together issue an inter-institutional press card, the so-called ‘yellow badge’. It gives access to the main buildings of those institutions and identifies the holder as an accredited correspondent.

Occasional visiting journalists can get ad hoc accreditation for a single visit – for instance to attend one ministerial meeting or an EU summit – or for a short extended period. More information about that below.

■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION PERMANENT ACCREDITATION

The inter-institutional card is issued by the European Commission on behalf of the other institutions. The card is valid for one year and is renewable. It provides access to the press areas of the three institutions and their restaurants, with more freedom to move around the European Parliament both in Brussels and Strasbourg. It also allows the press to enter other EU bodies, such as the European Economic and Social Committee or the Committee of the Regions.

For information about the procedure you can contact **Danielle Coulonval** at the accreditation desk of the European Commission.

☎ +32 2 299 01 70
@ COMM-PRESS-ACCREDITATIONS@ec.europa.eu

The application must be done online. Start at this website, where all details are explained:

🌐 https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/contact/press-services/media-accreditation/annual-media-accreditation-eu-institutions_en

Documents needed

- Accreditation letter from the editor-in-chief (from the HQ of the media)
 - Passport or, for EU nationals, identity card
 - National press card
 - Proof of residence in Belgium
 - Two passport photographs
- These documents have to be uploaded online.

Occasional visitors

Journalists who only need access on a specific day can access the Commission press room by contacting the ‘press room’ team by e-mail:
comm-pressroom-team@ec.europa.eu with 24-hours notice.

■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

If you only want access to the European Parliament premises in Brussels and/or Strasbourg and/or Luxembourg, and do not need the inter-institutional card, you can get a special EP accreditation. There is a short term accreditation for single visits, or an annual accreditation. For details about how to apply go to

🌐 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/accreditation>

For more information contact

Efthalia Arvaniti

☎ +32 2 284 25 55

@ media.accreditation@europarl.europa.eu

Photographers and cameramen need a special recording permit to be able to operate within the European Parliament buildings.

■ COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Council of the EU admits journalists accredited to the other EU institutions only to the press area and the restaurant. To gain access to other areas one must be accompanied by a staff member.

Journalists who do not have the inter-institutional card but want to attend a single (ministerial) meeting can apply for a one-day accreditation. That can be obtained from the security desk at the entrance to the press centre. Bring a valid ID or passport, a valid press card or a letter signed by the editor-in-chief of your media organisation that confirms your status as a journalist and states which event you are covering.

Presidency and Summits

Journalists requiring access to European Council summits and other special high-level meetings need a separate accreditation, even if they hold the inter-institutional press card. The application has to be done online. All information about the procedure and the required documents to be uploaded online can be found here: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/accreditation>.

Journalists who need to cover summits in Brussels on a regular basis can apply for a special badge, valid for one year. It makes separate accreditation requests no longer necessary. A security check by the Belgian authorities is part of the procedure. For summits and ministerial meetings that take place in the country that holds the rotating EU-presidency, a special accreditation is needed. Information can be found on a special website of that country, that normally is in operation from one month before the presidency starts.

■ CODES OF CONDUCT

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union each have their own Code of Conduct for journalists, detailing what is allowed and what not in the press and non-public areas on their premises. These codes have been drawn up in consultation with API-IPA. You can find them all at www.api-ipa.org under 'What – Quoi'.

■ NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Media representatives with an official residence in Belgium and who are accredited as media by the Belgian authorities or have a valid press card issued by a recognised national professional body of a NATO country, may request a permanent NATO Media Accreditation.

This gives access to the press center and the public spaces of the NATO headquarters in Brussels-Evere. The card is valid for one year and is renewable. There are special conditions for online media.

For all information and to request permanent accreditation go to <http://my.hq.nato.int> to create a profile and provide all the required documents: a letter from your editor-in-chief, your passport/ID, a press card and a photograph.

You can also be accredited for specific NATO events, like ministerial meetings, in which case you have to bring your national press card and passport to the NATO headquarters entrance for daily accreditation. More info about NATO on page 89.

Contact

NATO Press Service

📍 Boulevard Léopold III 1110 Evere

☎ +32 2 707 50 41

@ natoaccreditations@hq.nato.int

■ ACCREDITATION TO THE BELGIAN AUTHORITIES

Obtained through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This procedure can take several months. The accreditation document allows entry into all Belgian institutions.

1. Start with applying for a **temporary press card** (valid for six months) issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Contact the press department to arrange an appointment.

Veerle VAN BEVER

@ Veerle.vanbever@diplobel.fed.be

Foreign Affairs Press Department

📍 Rue des Petits Carmes 15

1000 Brussels

☎ +32 2 501 84 07

@ presse@diplobel.fed.be

🌐 https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/Newsroom/journalists_corner/accreditation

You need to bring

- Passport (+ type D visa) or, for nationals of an EU country, your ID card
- Accreditation document proving that you are appointed as a correspondent to Belgium
- National press card
- Two passport photographs

The temporary press pass is generally valid for six months. It can be renewed when you have applied for registration in your 'commune' (the Belgian local authority) and for the permanent press card at API-IPA, the Association de la Presse Internationale/International Press Association.

2. Permanent Press Card

The permanent press card, valid for five years, is issued by the Ministry of the Interior but your application has to be done through API-IPA.

Contact secretary **Martine JOOS** from 10.00h to 13.00h, only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Please call for an appointment.

📍 Résidence Palace. Room 2224, 2nd floor

Rue de la Loi 155

1040 Brussels

☎ +32 2 235 22 24

@ info@api-ipa.eu.

Documents needed

- Declaration from your director/editor-in-chief certifying that you are appointed as a correspondent in Belgium and a document proving that you have been working as a journalist for at least two years (for freelancers, proof of remuneration in the last two years must be produced).
- Copy of the temporary press pass
- Copy of the residence certificate delivered by the commune (municipality) where you live
- Copy of your passport or the birth certificate from your country
- Two passport photographs

Belgian law stipulates that the permanent accreditation will be granted by the Belgian authorities only to professional journalists. A consultative committee made up of API-IPA delegates under the chairmanship of a Belgian magistrate scrutinizes the applications and gives an advice to a committee made up of Belgian journalists. The final decision is then made by the authorities which causes the whole process to be often quite lengthy.

Press Card benefits

- Members of API-IPA or of the Belgian

journalists' unions can get a special card for the Belgian railways (SNCB/NMBS) which allows for free train travel in second class within Belgium, and enjoy reductions on travel on buses and tramways of TEC, the public transport company in the French speaking part of Belgium. No reductions are provided for journalists on international trains such as Thalys, Eurostar, ICE, etc.

- The card provides up to 24-hours free parking at Brussels National Airport, but you must pay any outstanding amount at the manned ticket office before picking up your vehicle.
- The press card entitles the holder to a 50% reduction on business full fares on Brussels Airlines flights.

- For journalists from non-EU countries the permanent press card serves as working permit, required by the communes, and to be renewed every year.

International Press Card

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) issues an international press card for members of affiliated national journalists organisations. While this card is widely recognised and useful in many countries, it does not give any added benefits to journalists working in Belgium.

Accreditation refused?

If you are refused journalist accreditation, which is fairly rare, contact API-IPA for assistance. In general,

objections tend to come from the Belgian authorities. The European Commission might object only if it has doubts about the media you work for or believes that you do not require regular access to the EU institutions, either because you do not live in Belgium or only enter infrequently. Another reason for refusal might be that the special committee in charge of vetting requests – in which API-IPA also participates –

believes that the applicant is more a lobbyist than a journalist. Bona fide journalists can still access the press facilities on an ad hoc basis after contacting the Commission press service with 24 hours notice and on presentation of a valid press card and passport/ID. API-IPA is trying to make sure the same criteria are applied at both the European and Belgian levels.

■ FACTS ABOUT THE BRUSSELS PRESS CORPS

- Over 1300 media professionals were ultimo 2017 registered as accredited foreign correspondents in Brussels. Of them about 900 are journalists for radio, tv, written and online press. The others are photographers, cameramen, producers and technicians. Not all of them are foreigners: there are around 350 Belgian media personnel working for international news organisations, especially the AV-media.
- These foreign correspondents represent more than 450 news organisations and come from almost 60 countries from all corners of the world, from Kazakhstan to Mexico, from Senegal to Japan, from China to the US, and of course from (almost) every European nation.
- Besides the large Belgian contingent, the biggest group are the Germans with over 150, followed by the British, French, Spanish, Italians and Dutch.
- The biggest foreign news organisation in Brussels are the combined German public broadcasting organisations, followed by US/German Politico, Chinese Xinhua, ThomsonReuters, the BBC and Euronews. The biggest single media employer however is Belgian tv-production company Videohouse which – with over 70 cameramen, producers and AV-technicians provides services for many national and international TV-stations.
- Politico, the Financial Times, the Economist and the BBC are the media most read by EU officials, members of the European Parliament and other 'fonctionnaires', maybe not surprising in these Brexit-times.
- There were at the end of 2017 twice as many male correspondents than female – 68 vs. 32 %
- Over 200 journalists (or 16 %) are freelancers, a percentage that is steadily increasing.
- The Brussels journalist with the largest following on Twitter, is Frenchman Jean Quatremer (Libération), who has almost 140.000 fans.



© European Union, 2015, Source: EC - Audiovisual Service, Photo: Frédéric Latinis

■ **API-IPA (Association de la Presse Internationale/International Press Association)**

API-IPA, co-publisher of this guide, is an independent association of journalists run by journalists. It was founded in 1975. Its main aim is to defend the rights and professional interests of foreign journalists in Brussels. It is the only organisation of foreign correspondents in Belgium recognised by the European institutions, NATO and the Belgian authorities as their interlocutor. API-IPA assists journalists in obtaining the official Belgian press card, and participates in the accreditation procedure of the European institutions. API-IPA has a strong partnership with the International Press Center Résidence Palace (see below), where its office is located, and together they organize

activities like regular 'API Hour' briefings on a variety of current issues. It has established a Solidarity Fund for colleagues in particular distress.

The association is governed by the API Council, consisting of representatives of the various national groups among its members, and the API Bureau for day-to-day business. API-IPA does not receive any public subsidies and depends totally on the contribution of its members; Council and Bureau members work on a voluntary basis. API membership currently costs € 120 a year for full-time journalists and € 70 for freelancers and retired (but still active) correspondents.

📍 **Residence Palace**
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1040 Brussels
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✉ info@api-ipa.org • www.api-ipa.org

President
Tom Weingärtner
@ [president@api-ipa.org](https://twitter.com/president@api-ipa.org)
Secretary-general
Hans de Bruijn
@ [secgen@api-ipa.org](https://twitter.com/secgen@api-ipa.org)
General information
@ info@api-ipa.org
🌐 www.api-ipa.org



■ **RESIDENCE PALACE INTERNATIONAL PRESS CENTRE**

The International Press Centre Residence Palace, the other co-publisher of this guide, is operated by the federal Belgian authorities and is a the main conference venue for journalists, policymakers, researchers and communications experts. It has rental facilities for meetings up to a few hundred people, a press working area, a bar and restaurant. Many international media organisations have their offices in the building.

The Residence Palace will also provide the necessary infrastructure for an International Media Club Lounge which will be operated by API-IPA and should open sometime in 2018.

📍 **Rue de la Loi 155**
1040 Brussels
☎ +32 2 235 21 11
✉ info@residencepalace.be
🌐 www.residencepalace.be



API also runs Journalists At Your Service (J@YS), its subsection that deals with supporting and providing practical information especially to newcomers among the foreign correspondents. Twice a year – usually in april and november – API-IPA and J@YS organise 'newcomers briefings' in which spokespersons from the EU institutions, NATO and other international organisations talk about the workings of their press services and organisations, while experts explain the intricacies of the Belgian fiscal and social security system. Journalists who have been accredited in the previous half year automatically receive an invitation.

■ INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS (IFJ)

The IFJ is the world's largest international umbrella organisation of journalists. First established in 1926, it was relaunched in 1946 and again, in its present form, in 1952. Today, the federation represents more than 600,000 members in 140 countries. The IFJ promotes international action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. It also issues, through its member associations, a worldwide recognized international press card.

📍 **Residence Palace**
Rue de la Loi 155
1040 Brussels
☎ +32 2 235 22 00
@ ifj@ifj.org
🌐 www.ifj.org



■ EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS (EFJ)

The EFJ is the European division of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Its members are unions or associations of journalists, making the EFJ Europe's largest organisation of journalists representing about 250,000 journalists in over 30 countries.

📍 **Residence Palace**
Rue de la Loi 155
1040 Brussels
☎ +32 2 235 22 00
@ efj@ifj.org
🌐 http://europe.ifj.org

■ BELGIAN JOURNALIST UNIONS

The (in Dutch) 'Algemene Vereniging van Beroepsjournalisten in België' (AVBB), or (in French) 'L'Association Générale des Journalistes professionnels de Belgique' (AGJPB) is the umbrella organisation of the two main Belgian unions of journalists.

The **Vlaamse Vereniging van Journalisten** (VVJ) is its Flemish 'wing', defending the rights of the journalists working for Dutch-speaking media. The **Association des Journalistes Professionnels** (AJP) is its French-speaking counterpart. These associations are located in the Huis van de Journalist/Maison des Journalistes.

📍 **Rue de la Senne/Zennestraat 21**
1000 Bruxelles

VVJ
☎ +32 2 777 08 40
@ info@journalist.be
🌐 www.journalist.be
AJP
☎ +32.2 777 08 60
@ info@ajp.be
🌐 www.ajp.be

■ EUROPEAN JOURNALISM CENTRE

The EJC is an independent, non-profit training centre founded in 1992 in Maastricht. It aims to promote the highest standards in journalism. Relying on its extensive network of journalism trainers, experts and media specialists, the EJC offers short, intensive seminars for journalists across Europe and beyond.

📍 **Residence Palace**
Rue de la Loi 155
1040 Brussels
☎ +32 2 235 23 44
🌐 www.ejc.net • info@ejc.net

■ NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS (NUJ)

The Brussels branch of the UK's National Union of Journalists (NUJ) has about 100 members working as staff and freelance journalists, reporters, corre-

spondents, editors, photographers, broadcasters and PR professionals. The branch has an e-mail network that reaches members across Europe, disseminating up-to-the-minute information and work opportunities.
🌐 www.nujcec.org/brussels

■ PRESS CLUB BRUSSELS EUROPE

Although not a media organisation itself, the Press Club Brussels Europe is a meeting place for Belgian and international journalists offering a series of events and cultural activities relevant to the media working in Brussels. It is a member of the International Association of Press Clubs (IAPC). Areas within the club can be hired by members for their own events. The PCBE issues a yearly membership card to resident and visiting foreign journalists.

📍 **Rue Froissart 95**
1040 Brussels
☎ +32 2 201 37 05
@ secretary@pressclub.be
🌐 www.pressclub.be

■ POLITICO

This US based publication has formed a joint venture with the German publishing house Axel Springer and has a Brussels office with the largest staff, covering news from every corner of the European capital. It has a weekly newspaper and a website. Topstories on the website are free, but some content is for subscribers only.

☎ +32 2 540 90 90
 @ editorial@politico.eu
 🌐 www.politico.eu

■ AGENCE EUROPE

Daily update on EU news. Written in a somewhat bureaucratic style, Agence Europe covers everything – from the humblest NGO press release to European Councils. In French and English. Available by subscription only.

☎ +32 2 737 94 94
 @ info@agenceurope.com
 🌐 www.agenceurope.com

■ PARLIAMENT MAGAZINE

Fortnightly magazine about EU affairs, focusing largely on the activities of the European Parliament.
 🌐 www.theparliamentmagazine.com

■ NEW EUROPE

Weekly newspaper with political and business news from all over Europe.

@ info@neweurope.eu
 🌐 www.neweurope.eu

■ WEB-BASED INFORMATION SOURCES

🌐 www.euobserver.com

Launched in 2000, **Euobserver** provides a broad and balanced coverage of EU affairs. Very much an insiders' source, Euobserver has monthly topical sections and investigative reports on issues that are not on the every-day agenda.

🌐 www.euractiv.com

EurActiv.com is a media portal fully dedicated to EU affairs. It provides a good roundup of much Brussels news and links to other sites and background information.

🌐 www.bbc.co.uk/news

Regularly updated and free of charge, the **BBC News** website is the most extensive in the world. It contains a Europe section with a daily European press review.

■ EUROPEAN WIDE NEWS CHANNELS

EURONEWS

Euronews is the only pan-European news station regularly broadcasting news reports and features about the EU. Its half-hourly news bulletin has comprehensive coverage of European affairs. It is managed by one of the main European public broadcasting TV authorities and receives European Commission funding. Headquartered in Lyon, France.

🌐 www.euronews.com/programs/brussels-bureau

EUROPE BY SATELLITE

Covers all main European Union events live, including daily briefings and provides free of charge

photographs, audiovisual material and services for the media.

🌐 http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs

🌐 www.natochannel.tv

NATO's own television channel dedicated to NATO events and briefings.

🌐 www.europartv.europa.eu

The European Parliament's own TV channel, broadcasting all events from the parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg.

Launch of the application developed by the EMM-API for the journalists © European Union, 2014. Source: EC - Audiovisual Service, Photo: Etienne Ansoette



How not to do it: 20 invaluable tongue in cheek tips for your career in EU journalism, from communication professional Andreas Müllerleile (andreas@policylab.eu).

- 1 Not sure how the EU works or what institutions are involved? -> Just write "Brussels".
- 2 Germany is generally seen as important in EU politics and journalists know how to frame it: If Germany is active in a certain policy domain just write something about "German dominance" and if you work for British newspaper add some subtle references to the war. If Germany is passive in a given policy area just write that Germany abandons the EU and it clearly adopted a unilateral strategy, if you work for a British newspaper you could add something about the war.
- 3 Found a short reference in a paper which talks about your country? -> Is is an evil plan to undermine democracy.
- 4 General rule: No need to distinguish between different European institutions and organisations. Who cares whether it is the Council of Europe, the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union or the European Court of Human Rights . -> Just write something about eurocrats and unelected foreign European judges interfering with your beloved country.
- 5 You are in Brussels and there are several events happening at the same time? -> Well, this is a clear sign that the EU does not address the important issues! (Important issue = event you attend).
- 6 Unsure what is happening in the EU? -> Don't bother ringing someone in Brussels. Just make something up about bananas or recycle a story you read half a year ago. If you are ambitious call the press department of one of the parties in your capital or use a recent party pamphlet.
- 7 Did you come across a controversial statement or an opinion of an MEP or any national MP? -> Start your article with "EU plans to..." or "Country X wants to..." Any MEP or committee must be prefaced by "senior," "influential" or "key" as long as he/she/it says something confrontational.
- 8 Facts are overrated. Don't bother checking the original EU policy documents. There is no need to understand differences between white or green papers, a report or a regulation or a directive. It is much easier to write about 'crazy ideas of EU bureaucrats'. If you have an idea for a good EU story don't let facts ruin it. Plus, nobody will check if a EU story is true. Everyone knows that the EU is boring and evil. Moreover, the single aim of the EU is to produce unnecessary regulation (generally known as 'red tape').
- 9 Use "EU bureaucrats" or "Brussels bureaucrats" as often as possible. A more experienced lazy journalist would simply refer to 'Eurocrats'. Useful adjectives in this context include "unelected", "unaccountable", "corrupt", "highly-paid", "highly-pensioned", "lazy". This list is not exhaustive and be adapted to your journalistic needs. You may also use "EU official" or "EU representative" especially if you follow rule 4.
- 10 Don't mention that ministers might have a veto over EU policy -> Just write about how the EU destroys national sovereignty.
- 11 You think that the EU is a bit too complex and everything takes a bit too long? -> Well just focus on zero sum games especially during summits. One country wins, one country loses. That is life. That's the EU. Simple.
- 12 A good headline is key. So always go for the pun or the odd 'eurocrats', 'empire' reference. And the fight is always between europhiles and eurosceptics. Keep that in mind.
- 13 Symbols are more important than substance. Stories about what people had for breakfast or dinner, something about flags or anthems are great examples. Always mix personal stories about EU leaders with national prejudices. You will be surprised: it always works.
- 14 EU funding is always a great story. There is corruption, waste and funny projects. However, do not mention that projects need co-financing. Also do not try to look at the positive examples, it would just spoil the story. Anyway, EU money is by definition a bad thing. So, don't try to explain why EU funding exists in the first place.
- 15 The EU budget as well as the budget negotiations provide many interesting options for lazy journalists. You could write that the EU books have not been signed off for years—without mentioning the auditing rules. Or you could write something about how much money your country pays to be in the EU—without mentioning that it may get something back. Don't make the mistake to link to any official cost-benefit calculation. Because if they exist they are must be wrong, if they don't exist it is generally a conspiracy. Rather use a statement from another newspaper or dodgy think tank. Just don't ask any questions. Never think about what the EU could do with the money, just assume that "Brussels wastes all the money it gets". Budget negotiations are zero sum games, so rule 11 applies. There is no such thing as the "European interest".
- 16 The single market means competition which might include foreign companies winning tenders in your country. If that happens just focus on the foreign element of that company. Make some claims about corruption. Write about how many jobs will be lost. No need to mention that new jobs will be created. If you are an ambitious lazy journalist write about how EU competition laws are made to destroy your local economy.
- 17 Don't bother learning a foreign language. It is not useful in EU journalism. You can always rely on international news agencies.
- 18 Subscribe to all 'think tanks' and 'business associations' which are highly regarded among your colleagues. From time to time, just 'write' (copy/paste) short articles. Don't include links to your sources.
- 19 Context is overrated. Headlines are more important. Just go for the best quotes—no context needed. If you have a great quote from last week, you can still use it. No need to check whether current events have moved on.

■ BASIC MEDIA GROUND RULES

With so many journalists active in Brussels from different countries and media traditions, it is important that everyone (reporters, spokespeople, politicians, officials, audiovisual media and photographers) understands clearly the 'language code' used by the European Commission and other EU institutions, in agreement with API-IPA, to communicate with the press. What is meant by terms such as on/off the record, background and non-attributable? The following definitions apply:

- 1. On the record** – the information may be attributed to a spokesperson or official by name. Normally any statement made in the press rooms fall into this category, unless expressly stated otherwise.
- 2. Off the record** – the speaker must not be quoted; information can be attributed to 'EU officials' or 'sources'. At the Commission, when a spokesperson decides to go "off the record" by pressing a red button in the pressroom, the live coverage of the briefing is suspended for TV and web-watchers (EbS) Photos, videos and sound recordings are not permitted unless otherwise agreed.
- 3. Background** – the information can only be used to clarify events and is non-attributable.

There may also be other ways of going "off the record", which are explained to the press as the occasion arises. Bear in mind that when TV and photographers are allowed to take pictures before the beginning of a meeting, especially at the Council, they are asked to switch off any sound recording, in case they might inadvertently pick up informal conversations between politicians.

Besides these basic ground rules, API-IPA has agreed specific codes of conduct with the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament, detailing rules for the interaction between accredited journalists, those institutions and the people who work there. There are for instance specific rules for access to the buildings, about recording/filming in the European Parliament or about the use of the press facilities. These codes of conduct can be found on the API-IPA website www.api-ipa.org under *'What – Quoi'*.

For more than 40 years now, API-IPA represents the foreign correspondents in Brussels towards the European institutions, the Belgian authorities and NATO.

API-IPA negotiates with them accreditation procedures, facilities and working conditions that should make it easier for the thousand+ foreign correspondents to work in the capital of Europe.

We also organise introduction briefings for newcomers and regularly API Hour events with newsworthy high level guests.

API-IPA helps correspondents to get the official Belgian press card, issued by the Belgian authorities, which also gives right to free train travel in Belgium, free access to museums, events and exhibitions, and other benefits.

So there are many reasons to become a member. API-IPA needs your support, because with more we are stronger. Therefore

Join API!

We are a volunteers organisations, and do not accept any subsidies. Membership fees are our only source of income, needed for the day-to-day operation of the association.

For more details go to www.api-ipa.org, or to sign up fill out the form at <http://www.api-ipa.org/home/index.php/how-comment/api-membership-form>
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The office is open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning from 9:30-13:00h.



“EUROPE WILL NOT BE MADE ALL AT ONCE, OR ACCORDING TO A SINGLE PLAN. IT WILL BE BUILT THROUGH CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH FIRST CREATE A DE FACTO SOLIDARITY”

SCHUMAN DECLARATION, 1950



© European Union, 2017, Source: EC - Audiovisual Service, Photo: Mauro Bottaro

The EU is a yet incomplete political and economic union. It was initiated during the aftermath of the Second World War. Its origins lay in the earlier European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), that was proposed by French foreign minister Robert Schuman in 1950. In his famous ‘Schuman Declaration’ he proposed to merge some crucial economic and industrial interests of France and Germany, the historically enemy powers in continental Europe, in order

to make war “*not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible*”. The Treaty of Paris in 1951 instituted the ECSC with Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and West-Germany as founding members.

The EU in its current form was born with the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which founded the European Economic Community (EEC), with the objective to

build a ‘common market’ based on a single tariff area (Customs Union) and gradually integrate the member states’ economies, working towards the free movement of people, goods, capitals and services between Member States. The Union has since expanded (see box) from 6 to 28 members.

In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty changed the EEC’s name to the ‘European Union’. The dropping of the

word ‘economic’ also hinting at the broader unfolding nature of the alliance as did the creation of three pillars: (1) the economic, social and environmental, formerly the domain of the European Community – the ECSC, the European Atomic Energy Agency and the EEC, (2) common foreign and security policy, and (3) police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. The Maastricht Treaty also laid the foundations for monetary union. The euro was launched (as an ac-



counting currency initially) in 1999 in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. In 2001 Greece joined and in 2002 euro notes and coins entered circulation. Subsequently Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have joined the eurozone.

The contemporary EU allows for the free movement of people, goods, services and money and its citizens are free to live and work in any Member State. The Schengen Agreement of 1985 started a process that led to free movement of EU citizens across borders of countries in the Schengen area (currently all EU countries except Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the UK – plus EFTA members Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) without the need for a passport. The last major reform of the EU was the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, discussed in detail in the next section.

■ EU INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE LISBON TREATY

The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on December 1st 2009, has modified the EU's structure. It increased the number of areas where the European Parliament shares legislative decision-making with the Council of the European Union.

It has also led to more extensive use of *qualified majority voting* in areas where unanimity was previously required, and in particular justice and home affairs, including the common policy on immigration and

asylum. Moreover, the new treaty has changed the method for calculating the qualified majority. Since November 2014, decisions by the Council require a 'double majority' to be approved, with the support of 55 percent of the Member States, representing at least 65 percent of the European population.

The Lisbon Treaty has also introduced a so-called '*passerelle*' clause, which makes it possible to move other policy areas from unanimity to qualified majority voting, if every Member State and the European Parliament agree and unless one or more national parliaments in the member states oppose the decision.

Finally, the treaty has created two new prominent roles in the EU institutions: a) the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (currently the former Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini), who is also Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the foreign policy portfolio and heads a more than 3000-strong EU diplomatic service; and b) the new permanent president of the European Council.

In 2014, the heads of state and governments of the 28 Member States elected as president of the European Council the former prime-minister of Poland, Donald Tusk. He started his new job on 1st December 2014, and was re-elected (notwithstanding the opposition of his own country) in March 2017 for a second two and a half year term.

For more information on the Lisbon Treaty: http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm

■ TIMELINE From 6 to 28 members the EU timeline

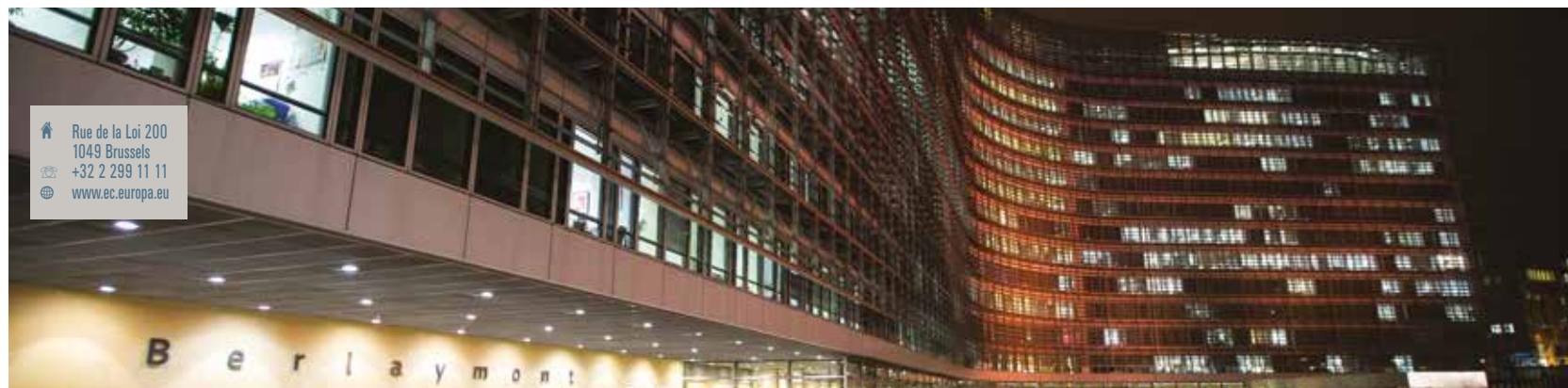
Today the EU has more than 508 million citizens, 75 percent of whom live in urban areas and who live for an average of 80 years. GDP is \$ 18 trillion (2017), with GDP per capita roughly \$35,000.

Here is how it evolved

- 1951:** Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg the Netherlands and West-Germany establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)
- 1957:** the same six countries sign the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)
- 1973:** Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom join
- 1979:** the first direct elections of the European Parliament
- 1981:** Greece joins
- 1986:** Spain and Portugal join
- 1992:** the European single market becomes a reality
- 1993:** the Treaty of Maastricht establishes the European Union (EU)
- 1995:** Austria, Finland and Sweden join
- 2002:** the euro comes into circulation
- 2004:** the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join.
- 2007:** Bulgaria and Romania join
- 2009:** the Lisbon Treaty, signed in 2007, enters into effect
- 2013:** Croatia joins
- 2016:** a majority of the UK electorate votes in a referendum for the UK to leave the EU (Brexit)



© European Union, 2015. Source: EC - Audiovisual Service, Photo: Etienne Ansotte



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The European Commission is the driving force behind the EU policy, and usually the first port of call for journalists wanting to find out what is happening in the EU. It is, in principle, the only EU institution that can propose new legislation (right of initiative). However, the European Council, the European Parliament and a number of EU citizens (through the citizens' initiative mechanism) may also ask the Commission to present a legislative proposal. During the legislative negotiations, the Commission acts as a mediator between the member states and the European Parliament to build compromise solutions, taking into account also stakeholders' interests. In doing so, however, it must aim to protect and promote the general interest of the Union and its citizens and the integrity of EU law.

The Commission is the 'Guardian of the Treaties': it monitors member states' application and implementation of EU legislation and, when necessary, it can open infringement procedures against member states that violate Union law. It can also intervene if EU law is violated by any natural or legal person, imposing penalties. Moreover, the Commission represents the Union in the international organizations.

Last but not least, the Commission is an executive body. This is particularly evident in the competition policy area, where the Commission has all the powers it needs as Europe's antitrust authority, including the possibility to impose penalties. Furthermore, the 'EU executive', as it is often called, oversees the Un-

ion's budget and monitors the execution of EU programs in areas such as cohesion and structural funds or R&D projects.

The European Council's appointment of Jean-Claude Juncker as President of the European Commission (with the opposition of Hungary and the UK) was ratified by the European Parliament in the summer of 2014.

The new college of commissioners, chosen by Juncker on the basis of nominees proposed by the Member States, was officially approved by the Parliament in October 2014, after a series of public hearings with the candidates, held by relevant EP committees.

■ WHOISWHO

The European Union publishes its own 'Who is who?', a guidebook containing the names, addresses and contact details of all European institutions, agencies and departments in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, including those of thousands of fonctionnaires, as well as maps and access details to all EU buildings in the three cities. A 550-page very useful reference guide in all 24 EU languages that can be consulted online or downloaded in pdf-format for free, or bought as a paper copy for 24 euros.
<http://europa.eu/whoiswho/whoiswho.html>



■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION SPOKESPERSONS SERVICE

The Spokesperson's Service (SPP) is conceived as the official voice of the European Commission vis-à-vis the media. The service provides information about the Commission's political priorities and decisions to the press. It organises press events and issues press releases and other press material.

The service is an integral part of DG Communication, under the authority of the President. The Chief Spokesperson (currently Margaritis Schinas) is Head of the SPP and is assisted by two Deputy Chief Spokespersons, two Coordinating Spokespersons, up to 12 portfolio Spokespersons who are responsible for one or more policy areas – like agriculture and rural development, climate action and energy, competition, digital single market, environment, financial services, foreign and security policy and so on – and up to 30 Press Officers. There is a unit in charge of multimedia editing, speeches and liaison with the Commission's representations in the member states.

The spokespersons are the only Commission officials – apart from the commissioners and Directors-General – allowed to speak to the press 'on the record' for the institution. Civil servants working in one of the Commission's directorates, the Press Officers who assist the spokespersons, and the Communication Advisors in the cabinets of the individual commissioners are not allowed to speak on the record, unless they are authorised to do so, but the information

they provide can usually be used on a background or off-the-record basis, according to the source's request.

Midday briefing

The spokesperson's service runs a midday briefing every working day in the press room of the Berlaymont building for accredited members of the Brussels media corps and visiting journalists. Non EU accredited journalists holding a valid press card can have access to the press area of the Berlaymont by obtaining a daily pass at the entrance, as long as they request it at least one day in advance (*press-room-team@ec.europa.eu*). The Commission is responsible for running the Europa web server (www.europa.eu). All the Commission briefings (as long as they are on the record) and press conferences are broadcast live on the EbS (Europe by Satellite) channels.

Regularly European Commissioners attend the press room to explain their latest legislative proposals or decisions, or to present reports to the media and answer journalists' questions. In general, the daily briefing lasts between half an hour and one hour, with a short introduction to the day's offerings from the chief spokesperson or his deputy and the other spokespersons. The daily briefing is accompanied at times by a series of more technical, usually off the record briefings on specific Commission decisions or legislative proposals.

Since November 2014, a Commissioner, occasionally more than one, presents the main results of the

weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners to the press.

The Juncker Commission also reduced the number of spokespeople and centralized more strictly the service under the control of the Commission Presidency, which decides the communication line and priorities. Whereas previously the rule 'one commissioner, one spokesperson' prevailed, now you will also find spokespeople responsible for several commissioners or portfolios. Furthermore, the Commission created 'Communication Advisors' within each of the cabinets of the 28 Commissioners. They are not allowed to speak 'on the record' to the press, but can be a valuable source of information for journalists.

Paper copies of press releases and background material can be found outside the press room. The same material will be available on the Europa website after the midday briefing. News agencies are eager to get the press releases as soon as they come out, so as to be the first to announce the news, if any.

The Berlaymont press area includes a bar and a workroom for both visiting and resident journalists. It offers desks, phones (calls within Belgium are free), free Wi-Fi internet access and a few pc-workstations.

The daily Commission press conferences at midday are held in English or French during the working week and in most of the 24 official EU languages on Wednesdays – the day the 28 Commissioners meet when they are not in Strasbourg for the European Parliament's plenary session – or on special occasions such as press conferences by Commissioners.

Spokespersons usually reply in the language of the question asked (French or English during the midday briefing). Most questions in the press room are asked in English and French, but the use of other official languages is possible when wider interpretation is available. Press releases and other Commission papers should be available at least in English and French; however, often the French version is not immediately available and is published later. There is a growing tendency to make available also German versions.

Each Commissioner has his or her own website. They can be accessed via https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019_en

■ TIP

Commission spokespersons are busy people but on the whole they try to respond to your calls. If a spokesperson does not get back quickly and you have a deadline approaching, do not be afraid to contact their secretary or press officer again.

And whether you like it or not – spokespeople, but also a number of Commissioners and Commission officials tend to use Twitter and other online channels to release informations, which cannot be retrieved via the traditional channels.

The following list of spokespersons reflects the situation in January 2018. The latest updated version can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/list_spp_en.pdf

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Banking, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union





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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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The European Parliament is the most accessible of the EU's main institutions. Most of its meetings are held in public and its members – *MEPs* – are usually happy to speak on the record to reporters. The European Parliament has well-equipped press rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg that visiting reporters can also use.

Twelve of the Parliament's plenary sessions per year are held in Strasbourg, while the bulk of the parliamentary work in the committees and the political groups, as well as one 'mini plenary' per month, takes place in Brussels. Transport and accommodation costs can make it harder for some Brussels-based journalists to cover the institution from Strasbourg. However, live broadcasts of plenary sessions and press conferences on Europe by Satellite (Ebs) have made the task of reporting on the Parliament easier. The European Parliament is offering to cover travelling expenses for up to 20 Brussels-based journalists per month, to attend the plenary sessions in Strasbourg. For information check with the EP press service and contact API-IPA (info@api-ipa.org).

The Parliament's own television channels (www.europartv.europa.eu) are designed to increase information and communication about its activities. While journalists' organisations have welcomed efforts to increase the information available, they have also raised concerns that the Parliament has begun producing 'ready-made' programmes in competition with traditional media without offering sufficient guarantees on editorial independence.



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The Parliament has no daily briefing, but it organises a pre-session press conference in its Brussels building at 11:00am on the Friday before the monthly meeting in Strasbourg. A 'last-minute' press briefing is held in Strasbourg at 16:00h – half an hour before the start of the sitting – on the Monday of each session week.

A full list of MEPs and the committees on which they sit can be found on the Parliament's website: www.europarl.europa.eu

MEPs are their own best spokespersons. Some are highly knowledgeable, most are able to speak in 'sound bites', and all are keen to be quoted on the record. However, if you cannot get hold of a politician, the Parliament's press officers or the MEP's assistants are excellent sources to explain the details of legislation, groups' positions or resolutions being discussed or their background.

For big picture issues, contact the spokesperson of the Parliament president, the European Parliament's

press service. There are 'institutional' press officers for each of the official languages of the EU, and one press officer attached to each EP committee. The political groups have their own press officers, and usually there is a press attaché in each national delegation within the groups. Moreover, good information sources for journalist are often the so called 'rapporteurs' and 'shadow rapporteurs' dealing with a particular legislative text, as they play an important role in the negotiations within the Parliament and with the Council and the Commission.

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The European Parliament has a brand new **Multimedia Centre**, a single platform for audiovisual material. It offers video news footage, audio sound bites, video/audio replays and images. It also hosts ready to broadcast videos. A state of the art search engine, thematic packages and the schedule of daily Parliament production will help you easily find the media you are looking for. You can watch, download and share media with just a click, without having to register. However, registration will give you free access to a number of special.

<https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/home>

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It is worth knowing that you can book a camera/cameramen in the European Parliament for free for one hour, and other facilities like studios and stand up positions are available too. There are also five free of charge radio studios. And the Parliament's photo service provides on request free photographers and stock photos.

You will need to book these services in advance. Details can be found via <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Page.aspx?id=38&menu=booking>

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The Council of the European Union brings together the governments of the 28 EU Member States. to discuss and negotiate EU decisions, policies and legislation. It has the role of EU co-legislator, which it shares with the European Parliament. The Council also coordinates the economic policies of the member States. The EU Council, as it is usually called by the press, is not to be confused with the European Council – see below – or with the Council of Europe, which is an international organisation based in Strasbourg and entirely separated from the European Union.



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■ NOTE

The Council of the European Union, also known as “the Council” or “Council of Ministers”, meets in Brussels most of the year. However, due to a legal obligation enshrined in the EU treaties, all ministerial meetings in April, June and October are held in Luxembourg.

Media contact with the Council occurs mainly on the occasion of ministerial meetings. Background briefings and documents are provided before these meetings, flash press releases and Council conclusions are issued during them, and they are followed by a press conference.

The Council press office is also available for background information about Council preparations, which occur notably in the weekly meetings of Coreper 2, the forum for national permanent representatives, or Coreper 1 for their deputies. Coreper 2 deals with

General Affairs and External Relations (including Security and Defence policy), Justice and Home Affairs and Economic and Financial Affairs, also including the EU budget. Coreper 1 deals with all other issues.

There are no regular daily briefings by the Council’s press officers, although briefings are always given before ministerial meetings, and technical or thematic background briefings are also frequently scheduled.

Pre-Council briefings are usually given by the six-monthly rotating Council presidency supported by

the Council Secretariat. The spokespersons for the presidency are also important contacts.

Informal ministerial meetings are held in the country holding the presidency, providing an opportunity for reporters based outside Brussels and notably in the country of the presidency to report on European issues. Permanent representations of the Member States also organise meetings for their country’s media, which can be open to media from other countries. Their press officers can be contacted for information about the respective national positions.

■ ROTATING PRESIDENCIES

The presidency of the Council changes twice a year: on January 1st and July 1st. During its six-month term, the presidency chairs Council meetings in all configurations except for the Foreign Affairs Council, which is chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Eurogroup, which is an informal meeting of the ministers of finance of the eurozone member states, since January 2018 chaired by the Portuguese minister Mario Centeno.

Informal ministerial meetings are held in the country holding the presidency.

The presidencies for the next years are:

Bulgaria	January-June	2018
Austria	July-December	2018
Romania	January-June	2019
Finland	July-December	2019
Croatia	January-June	2020
Germany	July-December	2020
Portugal	January-June	2021
Slovenia	July-December	2021
France	January-June	2022
Czech Republic	July-December	2022
Sweden	January-June	2023
Spain	July-December	2023
Belgium	January-June	2024
Hungary	July-December	2024

■ EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The European Council is composed of the heads of state or government of the European Union and the president of the Commission. It takes policy decisions, setting the general political guidelines and priorities of the EU action. It cannot take legislative decisions itself, but it can issue instructions for the Commission and the Council of Ministers. The European Council is often called to try to solve, at the highest political level, problems arisen in negotiations among the member states, unblocking decisions stuck in the Council at the ministerial level

The Lisbon Treaty turned the European Council (often called 'EU summit'), which previously had a less definite status, into an EU institution in its own right. In addition, it created the position of the permanent 'President' of the European Council, nominated for two-and-a-half years, with the possibility of renewing his/her nomination to a maximum of five years. The main tasks of the President of the European Council are to prepare and chair its meetings, to make sure that decisions are subsequently put into practice and to represent the European Union abroad at his level,

■ TIP

Special accreditation is necessary for journalists wanting to cover these European Council sessions. Details can be found here: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/accreditation/>

together with the President of the Commission. The current president of European Council is Donald Tusk.

The European Council meets at least four times a year, in Brussels. In practice, it has tended in recent years to meet more frequently than that, sometimes in informal or extraordinary settings.

Summits with third countries (e.g. EU-Russia, EU-US, EU-China, etc.) are also held in the Council building when they take place in Brussels.

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■ PRESS OFFICE OF THE EU COUNCIL

As a one-stop-shop for finding out what is happening in the Council, its press service is a good place to start. Council press officers generally speak on background or off the record. There are press officers responsible for specific Council policy areas, who have a great knowledge of those areas that they are always willing to share.

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The Eurogroup is an informal body where the ministers of the euro area member states discuss matters relating to the euro. Its main task is to coordinate economic policies among the euro area member states.

The Eurogroup is also responsible for preparing the Euro Summit meetings and for their follow-up.

The Eurogroup usually meets once a month, on the eve of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting.

In December 2017 Portuguese minister of finance Mario Centeno was elected as the new chairman of the Eurogroup, succeeding Dutch minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

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■ **EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS)**

The European External Action Service (EEAS) serves since 2010 as a foreign ministry and diplomatic corps for the EU. It is under the authority of the High

Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), currently Federica Mogherini, who is also a vice-president of the European Commission and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council.

The EEAS manages the EU's response to crises, has intelligence capabilities and cooperates with the Commission in areas with which it shares competence. The High Representative can propose and implement policy, but does not make policy as that is left to the Foreign Affairs Council. The EEAS, formed by a merger of the external relation departments of the Council and the European Commission, is unique and independent from other EU institutions, sits outside those institutions and has its own independent budget.

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**Brussels
is home to
the EU, NATO
and more than
5,000
diplomats.**

**Oh,
and 1.2 million
friendly
inhabitants.**

Apart from the European Commission, Parliament and Council there are many other institutions, some based outside Brussels, which provide news. The **Court of Justice**, in particular, is a treasure-trove of good stories for reporters willing to invest their time and energy in covering Europe's 'Supreme Court'. Its press service is very helpful and ready to explain subtle legal issues to clarify the meaning of rulings. The **European Central Bank** has become increasingly relevant since the introduction of the euro, the single currency of 19 EU member states. The president of the ECB, currently Italian Mario Draghi, regularly gives press conferences from its Frankfurt headquarters, which can be followed online.

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🌐 https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2009-02/en_accreditation.pdf

🌐 https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7053/en/

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The Court of Auditors carries out enquires and publishes reports on the way the EU budget is spent in different areas. The results are usually presented in press conferences in Brussels and can provide interesting stories for the press.

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The **European Stability Mechanism** is a permanent financial stability fund whose role is to safeguard financial balance in the euro area by providing support to member states in economic difficulty. Nevertheless the ESM is not an EU institution, as it is based on an intergovernmental treaty, which not

all EU member states have signed. The ESM was set up in 2012 as a replacement for the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), temporary organisms created in 2010 in response to the European debt crisis. In July 2013 the EFSF handed all its functions and responsibilities to the ESM, though it continued to handle, together with the ESM, the already approved bailouts for Greece, Portugal and Ireland.

It is located in Luxembourg. Its Board of Governors is composed by the Ministers of Finance of each Member State.

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The EIB, based in Luxembourg, is the EU's 'home bank', a nonprofit long-term lending institution, whose shareholders are the member states. As a 'policy-driven bank', it collects funds on the market to support investments and projects which further

EU policy goals, within and outside the EU. It has acquired even more importance with the launch of the so-called 'Juncker Plan' for strategic investments for Europe. Its press service can be very helpful for journalists who need information and details on the Bank's policy and the projects it supports.

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Overshadowed in the daily news by the European institutions, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (www.nato.int) is for most Brussels' correspondents a secondary interest, unless there is an international security crisis going on.

Although thousands of diplomats and officials from the 29 member states and several so-called partner nations fill the headquarters in Evere on the north side of town, NATO does not provide the daily information stream like the EU does. There are no daily midday briefings, partly because NATO is not a supra-national organisation as the EU is, and can only talk on behalf of its members when a consensus is reached.

The highest policy-making and decision-taking body is the NATO Council, meeting every Wednesday in Brussels at the level of permanent representatives (ambassadors) and chaired by the secretary-general. The council meets also at least two times a year in Foreign Ministers format, and at least two times at the level of Ministers of Defense. Once every two years a NATO Summit of heads of state and government is held, mostly in one of the member states.

There are no press conferences after the weekly Council meetings, but from time to time briefings are organised about current events. When the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Defense meet at NATO headquarters, a press center is available to accredited correspondents, with press conferences given by the secretary-general and ministers. Ministerials are often preceded by background briefings by the NATO



spokesperson and high-ranking officials. The national delegations have their own media arrangements.

NATO is unique in Brussels in that all national delegations are housed in the same complex along the Boulevard Leopold III since 1967, including that of Russia – a partner nation – although Russian diplomats and military personnel do not have the same access as those of the member states.

Journalists with an accreditation can visit the 'public' wing of the headquarters – with a media center,

restaurant, shops, a bank and a post office. Access to the strictly secured official part of the complex and the national delegations offices is restricted, and only possible on invitation and escorted by an official or diplomat.

On the other side of the Boulevard Leopold III a totally new NATO headquarters has been built that should be operational in spring 2018.

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■ COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Not to be confused with the Council of the European Union or the European Council. It is the continent's main human rights organization, with 47 member states, including Russia, Ukraine and Turkey.



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It can seem at times that almost everyone in Brussels is lobbying for or against something. The lobbying industry is one of the city's fastest growing sectors, with a virtual explosion of lobbying and consultancy firms with an estimated 15,000 lobbyists. Besides hosting receptions for EU professionals, the bigger lobbying companies sponsor many of the public debates and exhibitions that make Brussels such a stimulating place to be for reporters. However their communications should always be checked against other sources.

A full list of lobby firms and political consultancies can be found in the European Public Affairs Directory (available from www.dodonline.co.uk) and in the EU stakeholder directory (www.stakeholder.eu). A few big ones are:

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■ CER – Community of European Railways

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Tobias Schwarz/AFP/Getty Images

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■ THINK TANKS

Originally imported into Brussels from countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, think tanks have expanded in number over recent years. They can be a godsend to EU journalists because their policy experts really do know their stuff. But a word of caution: many Brussels-based ones are funded by the European institutions, making objectivity difficult.

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Name:	Kingdom of Belgium
Form of Government:	Constitutional parliamentary monarchy
King:	Philippe of Belgium
Prime minister:	Charles Michel
Inhabitants:	11.491.346 (2017)
Area:	30.528 km ²
National anthem:	Brabançonne
Languages:	Dutch (60%), French (39%), German (0,7%)

Welcome in the Kingdom of Belgium, a country with 11 million inhabitants at the heart of Europe. Belgium has three official languages, Dutch, French and German. Most Belgians also have a good knowledge of English.

The capital of Belgium is Brussels. That city also hosts the European institutions and the seat of NATO, the defense organization of the West.

The composition of a federal layer, three regions and three communities makes Belgium a complex country. In these pages we try to guide you through the different structures of governance.

■ FEDERAL

The federal state retains important powers in the area of foreign policy, national defense, justice, finance, social security, and parts of health and domestic affairs. The supervision of the police force, decisions on nuclear energy and state-owned companies are also a federal task.

The federal government executes these competences. The current government, led by prime minister Charles Michel, is composed of four political parties, three Dutch-speaking (the Flemish nationalist N-VA,

the liberal Open VLD and the center right CD&V) and only one French-speaking, the liberal MR. To keep the language parity intact, the MR has half of the ministerial posts.

The federal parliament is composed of two chambers. The Chamber of Representatives exercises the main legislative power: proposing and voting laws, parliamentary control of the government. The Senate is responsible for the Constitution. It has evolved since 2014 to a 'contemplation chamber' and a place where the different regions and communities meet and talk.

The Chamber of Representatives has 150 members, elected directly by universal suffrage. The members of the 60-seat strong Senate are not elected. Fifty of them are appointed by the regional parliaments through a fixed key to make sure that the different parliaments and language groups are represented; the other ten are appointed by the political parties on the basis of the election results for the Chamber (six Dutch-speaking and four French-speaking).

■ REGIONAL

The redistribution of power in Belgium occurred along two lines: language and economic interests. The language-line resulted in three 'communities'; the economic division of power resulted in three 'regions'.

Part of the Belgian decision making has gradually been transferred to the three regions: the Flemish

Region, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Capital Region. The regions are responsible for their own economy, agriculture, transport, energy, environment, public infrastructure and foreign trade.

The three communities are organized across language lines (Dutch, French and German) and are responsible for matters like education and culture.

■ SEVEN PARLIAMENTS

The result of this federal structure are that Belgium has seven parliaments and governments, including the Senate and the Chamber. The laws regional parliaments adopt are called decrees.

In Flanders, the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region are merged. Therefore there is only one Flemish Parliament and one Flemish government, seated in Brussels.

The Walloon region also has a parliament and an executive, with their seat in Namur.

The Brussels Capital Region has its own parliament and executive.

There is also a separate parliament for the French-speaking community, formed by the 75 elected members of the Walloon parliament and 19 French-speaking members of parliament of the Brussels Region.

The small German-speaking Community has its own government and parliament in Eupen in the east of Belgium.

■ NO HIERARCHY

The communities and the regions have the power to establish and maintain foreign relations. Unlike in other federal states, there is no hierarchy in Belgium between the different levels of government.





A full list of all federal ministries, departments, agencies and institutions and their spokespersons can be found at <http://presscenter.org/en/contacts?tid=All>

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Belgium has five regional or language-oriented governments: one each for Flanders, Wallonia-Brussels, the Brussels Capital Region, the French speaking community and the German speaking community. Each has a prime-minister, ministers, cabinets and its own bureaucracy.



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■ ARRIVING IN BRUSSELS



© Brussels Airport Company

■ AIRPORT

Brussels National Airport (BRU) offers air travel to destinations across Europe and the globe. The airport is located in Zaventem, about 10 kms east of the city. Its main user is Brussels Airlines, which is no longer Belgian but a subsidiary of Germany's Lufthansa.

Express trains take you from the airport's underground station to the city center – six times an hour in 15 minutes to the Brussels-Nord, Brussels-Central and Brussels-Midi stations, and three times an hour in the same time to Brussels-Schuman – the station right underneath the European Commission and European Council headquarters.

A ticket to town will cost you € 9. Included is a special € 5,25 surcharge (called Diabolo) for travellers to and from the airport. This surcharge was introduced in 2009 and was then and is now still highly controversial, but unavoidable if you need to travel by train to the airport.

There are also much cheaper direct bus connections to various city locations. A ticket on buses from De Lijn will cost you between € 2,00 (online) or € 3,00 (on the bus). A special STIB/MIVB express busline (#12)

connects the airport with the European quarter for double those amounts. A 25-minute taxi ride to the city will set you back a staggering € 45 to € 50, and even more the other way.

Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL) is located 60 kms south of Brussels and is almost exclusively served by low-cost airlines, like Ryanair and Wizz. A shuttle bus leaves every half hour from the Midi-station to the airport.

■ PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Brussels has a pretty decent public transport system, run by STIB-MIVB. It is fully integrated, so that you can travel seamlessly by metro, tram or bus. Single tickets start at € 2,10 if bought before travel, € 2,50 if bought onboard trams or busses, roundtrip tickets are double that. There are several kinds of multiple-travel ticket formulas, and 24/48/72 hours tickets especially interesting for tourists (for € 7,50/€ 14/€ 18). All information and timetables can be found on www.stib-mivb.be.

■ TAXIS

Official, licensed taxis charge a fixed rate of € 2,40 (€ 4,40 after 22:00h) and € 1,80 per kilometer within the Brussels district boundaries, or € 2,70 outside that.

■ DRIVING

Driving by car in Brussels can be a nightmare. It is by far the most congested city in Belgium, with traffic jams everywhere, especially in the inner city and during rush hours – but the latter are starting earlier and ending later more and more. Within the inner city ring you may not drive faster than 30 kms/hour, but that is hardly enforced. Since January 1st 2018 a low-emission law is in place, banning older diesel powered cars (Euro1-norm) from entering the city 24 hours a day. In 2019 this will be extended to Euro2 cars.

■ CYCLING

Traveling the city by bicycle can be challenging, not only because of the differences in altitude, but also because of the lack of proper bicycle paths and the aggressive driving style of the Belgian car drivers. If you don't have your own bike you can rent city bikes at many locations all over town. The Villo!-scheme is the most widely available (www.villo.be). You can return the bike to any location. The first half hour is free-of-charge.



Welcome in Brussels, the Belgian capital and the de facto capital of Europe. When we say 'Brussels' we mean officially the 'Brussels Capital Region'. This region consists of nineteen municipalities. One of these 'communes' is Brussels, the heart of the old town. Each of the nineteen municipalities has its own mayor and council.

Brussels is a multilingual and multicultural city, with French and Dutch as 'official languages'. The Brussels region is split into six police zones. The demarcation of these zones does not coincide with

municipal frontiers. Consider this a typical Belgian way of surrealism.

The most famous painting of Belgian surrealist artist René Magritte pictures a pipe while writing in the legend underneath the image 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' – this is not a pipe.

Strolling into Brussels you will find very diverse towns, villages and neighborhoods. You can discover them slowly, on foot or bike, by tram or bus. You can rent a bike at Villo: you never have to walk more than 450 meters to find a terminal. Or you can cross

the city from north to south on a tramway. The Tram museum (Avenue de Tervueren 364, 1150 Woluwe-Saint-Pierre) offers a glimpse of life in Brussels a century ago. In the summer and on special occasions historic 'open' trams with wooden seats are pressed back into service and offer enjoyment to kids and their parents.

The 44 tram, for example, takes you from Square Montgomery to Tervuren at the Royal Museum for Central Africa. The museum reopens in 2018 after a lengthy renovation. Also the surrounding park in Ter-

vuren is a popular destination. It is part of the densely wooded Forêt de Soignes (Zoniënwoud in Dutch).

■ THE CAPITAL CITY

The grandeur of the city is easy to discover walking along the Rue de la Loi. Start uphill at the Parc Cinquantenaire (Jubelpark), only a few steps away from the European quarter around 'Rond Point Schuman'. Rond point means roundabout.

Next to the roundabout there are two large buildings, the Y-shaped European Commission building, known

as the Berlaymont (the name of the destroyed nunnery at that place) and on the opposite side the pink granite building of the Council of Ministers, where decisions are taken. This building is often called 'Ceausescu' because it is big and unattractive, like the palace of the former Romanian communist leader. Far more beautiful is the new 'Europa' building of the European Council, next to the council building. This architectural highlight is shaped in the form of a giant lamp, inside, and finished with small wooden parts on the outside. Next to this brand new Europa

Building is the Residence Palace, a beautiful Art Nouveau monument, now serving as the international press center.

Walking further down the Rue de la Loi, there is the metro station Maalbeek, which was partly destroyed in the Brussels terror attack in march 2016. During this walk you already get a glimpse of the buildings of the European Parliament, on your left side. To head to the European Parliament, walk to the Parc du Luxembourg, or to the Belliard Street. There

you find the stairs of the Esplanade. This big open walking space connects different buildings of the European Parliament with the Place de Luxembourg. This nice old place is a neighborhood with lots of cafés and restaurants. Many of the people working in the European institutions gather there for a drink, especially on Thursday evening. This is where you can meet everybody!

Back in the Rue de la Loi, you can walk to the 'Belgian' center around the 'Parc de Bruxelles'. Around this geometrical Park you will find the Belgian parliament on one side and the Royal Palace on the other. In this Parc Belgians celebrate National Day on July 21st. The day starts with a military parade and a flypast. In the park there is a fancy fair with amusement for young and old and at the end of the day there are fireworks.

The Rue Royale, longing the Park, leads to the Place Royale. In this neighborhood are located the most important museums in the city. A must is the new BELvue museum, that illustrates the history of Belgium and the royal family. On the opposite side of the Place Royale there is the recently opened Magritte Museum, with its rich selection of paintings and artefacts of the surrealist artist.

Almost adjacent is the Old Masters Museum, with many masterpieces. Few steps further away there is also the Modern Art Museum and the Fin-de-siècle Museum dedicated to the 1900s. In the middle of the Place Royale stand the statue of Geoffroy of Bouil-

lon. He led the first crusade to the Holy Land in 1099. Another pearl nearby is the Musical Instruments Museum (Rue Montagne de la Cour, 2), located in a magnificent Art Nouveau building of glass and cast iron, that was formerly the Old England department store. On the top floor there is an airy restaurant with a large terrace from which there are breathtaking views.

■ PLACES TO SEE IN BRUSSELS

The area around Place Sainte Catherine (there is a metro station).

The church of Sainte Catherine has recently been renovated. This restoration entailed the disappearance of the last 19th century urinal in the city of Brussels, a green metal and marble construction attached to the side of the church. Don't worry, there are plenty of nice cafés and meeting places around. There are many fish restaurants in this area. The Quai aux Briques and the Quai du Bois for instance have a more popular name: the fish market. It is a very large street with ponds in the middle.

In the 19th century, soon after the creation of the Belgian state, Brussels built an **extensive network of canals**, of which the ponds around Sainte Catherine are leftovers. This water network made transport of goods efficient and popular. The heavy polluted river Senne (Zenne) was also at that time 'buried' underground. These canals gave Brussels a direct link with the port of Antwerp.



The fountain at one end of the ponds commemorates mayor Anspach, who was responsible for putting the polluted river Senne underground. At the other end of the fish market, Square des Blindés, is a monument for **'The Soldier Pigeon'**, pigeons used in the first world war to carry messages. Many of these pigeons died on duty. Some of them were even awarded military medals. The monument has been restored on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War. The monument for a pigeon is – again – typically Belgian surrealism.

The **industrial past** of the area is palpable in many of the houses around the canals. Le Laboureur (the

ploughman) is an 'estaminet' or drinking place for workers. The interior is relatively unaltered and often used for period film locations. They offer typical food, like cheese with celery salt or 'croquettes de crevettes'. The Greek Strofilia restaurant (Rue du Marché aux Porcs 11-13) is housed in an old 17th century wine depot, with storage in specially built cellars.

In the neighborhood of Place Sainte Catherine there was also a **'beguinage'**, beginjnhof in Dutch, a medieval 'walled' quarter for women, who vowed to remain chaste and to obey their mother superior. But unlike nuns they lived in their own small houses and were allowed to work and earn a living. They sold

handworks and helped in hospitals. Belgium has 24 of such béguinages. The most famous are in Bruges, Ghent and Lier. In Brussels only the church of Saint John the Baptists of the béguinage survived.

■ GRAND PLACE

The center of old Brussels is of course the central square or **Grand Place**. The place is breathtaking, with the gilded baroque decoration of the guild houses of butchers, brewers, bakers and candle-makers. All the buildings around the Grand Place are packed with fascinating historical and architectural detail. The place is big, always full of life and beauty. Every year in July, the 'Ommegang' is celebrated here, a commemoration of the triumphant entry of emperor Charles V in Brussels. Even today descendants of the nobility participate in the event, dressed in period clothes.

One house requires special attention: the **Maison du Cygne** (Swan House). Nowadays it is an upmarket restaurant. In the nineteenth century, it was a popular drinking place where Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels debated and sketched out the ideas that resulted in their Communist Manifesto.

Near the Grand Place, **Manneken Pis** requires an obligatory visit. Tourists flock every day to see him dressed in every conceivable uniform. All these clothes are donated.

Walk to the Place de la Monnaie, where the Brussels Opera house was rebuilt after a fire in 1855. The Opera House can be visited every Saturday at 12 from September to June. On your way you pass by



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the café Le Cirio, with its 19th century interior. From La Monnaie head up Rue de l'Ecuyer to a historical pub, **A la Mort Subite** ('sudden death') in the Rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères. This pub sells local beers and is very popular.

Cross the street and enter the **Galerias Royales Saint Hubert**, a beautiful indoor gallery with exquisite shops, an art cinema, the art deco Taverne du Passage and the Museum of Letters and Manuscripts.

The city center around the nineteenth century Stock Exchange, **La Bourse**, is now pedestrianized. There are playgrounds and tables in the middle of the road. Nearby, the Halles Saint Géry, formerly a meat market, is now a café and exhibition space. The whole area has been re-urbanised by the cosmopolitan young crowd.

In the Rue Dansaert, chic boutiques, exotic restaurants and specialist shops emerged. It is also here that in the 1990s the first shop of Le Pain Quotidien

started, a bread restaurant and snack where guests share one big table. The Boulevard D'Anspach is peppered with second hand record and CD shops. Rue du Midi remains a haven for collectors – whether of stamps, coins, postcards or toy soldiers.

Opposite the Gare Centrale, you reach Mont des Arts with the **Bibliothèque Royale**, the Royal Library. Nearby, at the Grand Sablon (Grote Zavel in Dutch) there is a market for antique or other objects every Saturday and Sunday.

■ GREEN SPACE

The Forêt de Soignes (Zoniënwoud), to the south of Brussels, was once an exclusive hunting reserve for the nobility. It is the largest beech forest in Europe and is today a vital green space where people love to go for walks, to run, horse ride, meet their friends or eat out.

Another green space is the Bois de la Cambre (Terkamerbos), with massive trees and a lake. The restaurant Chalet Robinson is an attractive place to be, especially in the sunshine.

The Parc du Cinquantenaire was created on the 50th anniversary of Belgium. It is dominated by the triumphal 'arc' from where the long avenue lined with chestnut trees leads to Tervuren.

Near the Royal Palace in Laken there is a large park area open to public. The Royal Greenhouses are opened for the public a few days in spring.

■ THEATRES

La Bellone
Maison du Spectacle
▲ Rue de Flandre 46
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 513 33 33
@ infos@bellone.be
🌐 www.bellone.be

Beursschouwburg
▲ Rue Orts 20-28
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 550 03 50
🌐 www.beursschouwburg.be

Les Brigittines
▲ Petite Rue des Brigittines
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 213 86 10
@ info@brigittines.be
🌐 www.brigittines.be

Bronks Theater
▲ Rue du Marché aux Porcs 15-17
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 219 99 21
@ info@bronks.be
🌐 www.bronks.be

Center for Fine Arts (BOZAR)
▲ Rue Ravenstein 23
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 507 82 00
🌐 www.bozar.be

Cultural centre Riches-Claires
▲ Rue des Riches-Claires 24
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 548 25 80
@ accueil@lesrichesclaires.be
🌐 www.lesrichesclaires.be

Kaaithheater
▲ Square Saintelette 19
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 201 59 59
@ info@kaaitheater.be
🌐 www.kaaitheater.be

Le jardin de ma sœur
▲ Rue du Grand Hospice
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 217 65 82
🌐 www.lejardindemasoeur.be

Royal Flemish Theatre (KVS)
▲ Quai aux Pierres de Taille 7
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 210 11 12
@ info@kvs.be
🌐 www.kvs.be

Théâtre National de la Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles
▲ Bld Jacquain 111-115
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 203 41 55
@ info@theatrenational.be
🌐 www.theatrenational.be

Théâtre de Poche
▲ Chemin du Gymnase 1A
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 649 17 27
@ info@poche.be
🌐 www.poche.be

Théâtre de la Place des Martyrs
▲ Place des Martyrs 22
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 223 32 08
🌐 www.theatre-martyrs.be

■ A PRESS WALK

There is a special 'press walk' in Brussels, starting at La Monnaie, the Brussels Opera House. The Belgian revolution started here in 1830. The tour ends at the museum of comic books, in the company of the Belgian comic hero en journalist Tintin.

For information on timing and price of the guided tour, look at La Fonderie.
<https://tinyurl.com/yakf547a>

Théâtre des Galeries

📍 Galerie du Roi 32
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 512 04 07
🌐 www.trg.be

Théâtre du Rideau de Bruxelles

Théâtre en rénovation
Administration :
📍 Rue Thomas Vinçotte 68
1030 Brussels
☎ +32 2 737 16 00/01

Théâtre La Montagne Magique

📍 Rue du Marais 57
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 210 15 90
@ info@montagnemagique.be
🌐 www.theatremontagnemagique.be

Théâtre La Samaritaine

📍 Rue de la Samaritaine 16
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 511 33 95
🌐 www.lasamaritaine.be

Théâtre Les Tanneurs

📍 Rue des Tanneurs 75
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 512 17 84
@ info@lestanneurs.be
🌐 www.lestanneurs.be

Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie/De Munt

📍 Place de la Monnaie
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 229 12 00
🌐 www.lamonnaie.be

Théâtre Royal De Toone

📍 Rue Marché aux Herbes 66
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 511 71 37

@ woltje@skynet.be
🌐 www.toone.be

Théâtre Royal du Parc

📍 Rue de la Lois 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 505 30 30
@ info@theatreduparc.be
🌐 www.theatreduparc.be

Le Botanique

📍 Rue Royale 236
1210 Brussels
☎ +32 2 218 37 32
@ info@botanique.be

Ancienne Belgique

📍 Boulevard Anspach 110
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 548 24 84
@ cr@abconcerts.be

Forest National

📍 Avenue Victor Rousseau 208
1190 Brussels
☎ +32 3 400 69 70
@ info@sportpaleisgroep.be
🌐 www.forest-national.be

MUSEUMS**The Brussels Museum Council**

🌐 www.brusselsmuseums.be

Old masters Museum

📍 Rue de la Régence 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 508 32 11
🌐 fine-arts-museum.be/en/museums/musee-oldmasters-museum



© Steve Spiering

Modern Art Museum

📍 Rue de la Régence 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 508 32 11
🌐 fine-arts-museum.be/en/museums/musee-modern-museum

Magritte Museum

📍 Rue de la Régence 3
Place Royale 1-2
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 508 32 11
🌐 www.musee-magritte-museum.be/

Fin de Siècle Museum

📍 Rue de la Régence 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 508 32 11
🌐 fine-arts-museum.be/en/museums/musee-fin-de-siecle-museum

Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique

📍 Librarium (Entrance Mont des Arts)
Bld de l'Empereur 2
1000 Brussels

☎ +32 2 519 53 11
🌐 www.kbr.be/librarium/

Printing Museum – Imprimerium

📍 Bld de l'Empereur 2
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 519 53 56

Musée royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire militaire

📍 Parc du Cinquantenaire 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 737 78 11
🌐 www.klm-mra.be

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

📍 Rue des Sables 20
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 219 19 80

Musée Horta

📍 Rue Américaine 25
1060 Brussels
☎ +32 2 543 04 80

Autoworld Brussels

📍 Parc du Cinquantenaire 11
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 736 41 65
🌐 autoworld.be

Cinquantenaire Museum

📍 Parc du Cinquantenaire 10
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 741 73 31
🌐 www.kmkg-mrah.be

CINEMATEK

📍 Rue Baron Horta 8
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 511 19 19
🌐 www.cinematek.be

Archives and the Museum of Modern Architecture

📍 Rue de l'Ermitage 55
1050 Ixelles
☎ +32 2 642 24 62
🌐 <http://aam.be/en/>

La Loge

📍 Kluisstraat 86
1050 Brussels
☎ +32 2 644 42 48
@ info@la-loge.be
🌐 www.la-loge.be

Musée des Sciences Naturelles

📍 Rue Vautier 29
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 627 42 11
🌐 www.naturalsciences.be

Train World

📍 Place Princesse Elisabeth 5
1030 Scharbeek
☎ +32 2 224 74 98
🌐 www.trainworld.be

Coudenberg – Ancien Palais de Bruxelles

📍 Place des Palais 7
☎ +32 2 500 45 54
🌐 www.coutenberg.brussels

Musée Marc Sleen

📍 Rue des Sables 33-35
1000 Brussels
🌐 www.marc-sleen.be

Ixelles Museum

📍 Rue Jean van Volsem 71
1050 Brussels
☎ +32 2 515 64 21
🌐 www.museedixelles.irisnet.be

De Markten

📍 Oude Graanmarkt 5
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 512 34 25
@ demarkten@demarkten.be
🌐 www.demarkten.be

David and Alice Van Buuren Museum

📍 Avenue Leo Errera 41
1180 Brussels
☎ +32 2 343 48 51
🌐 www.museumvanbuuren.be

■ CINEMAS

UGC DE BROUCKERE

📍 Place De Brouckere 38
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 78 15 43 21

ACTORS STUDIO

📍 Petite Rue des Bouchers 16
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 512 16 96

AVENTURE

📍 Galerie du Centre
Rue des Fripiers 57
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 219 92 02

NOVA

📍 Rue d'Arenberg 3
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 511 24 77
🌐 www.nov-cinema.org

■ GUIDED TOURS OF BRUSSELS

GGB GUIDES

📍 Rue Paul Hankar 17
1180 Brussels
☎ +32 477 02 02 30
@ guides@guidesbrussels.be
🌐 www.guidesbrussels.be

Brussels Sight-Jogging

🌐 www.brusselsightjogging.com

Cactus&Co – unusual bike rides

🌐 www.cactus.brussels

Once Upon a Time in Brussels

☎ +32 2 850 60 90
@ info@onceinbrussels.be
🌐 www.onceinbrussels.be

ARAU – Atelier de Recherche et d'Action Urbaines

📍 Bld Adolphe Max 55
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 219 33 45
@ info@arau.org

Arkadia

📍 Rue de Namur 10
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 319 45 60

ProVelo

📍 Rue de Londres 15
1050 Brussels
☎ +32 2 502 73 55
@ info@provolo.org
🌐 www.provolo.org

The Chatterbus

📍 Rue des Tanneurs 58-62
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 673 18 35
🌐 www.bruxellesbavard.be

Voir et Dire Bruxelles : Explore Brussels

📍 Avenue Brugmann 405
1180 Brussels
☎ +32 2 319 50 01
@ info@explore.brussels
🌐 www.explore.brussels

La Fonderie

📍 Rue de Ranfort 27
1080 Brussels
☎ +32 2 410 99 50
🌐 www.lafonderie.be

Brussels by Water

📍 Quai des Péniches 2bis
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 203 64 06
🌐 www.brusselsbywater.be

Rivertours Brussels

📍 Bld d'Ypres 84
1000 Brussels
☎ +32 2 218 54 10

Hop on/ Hop off

@ info@citysightseeingbrussels.be
🌐 www.citysightseeingbrussels.be

Belgium is a compact country and so there are many interesting destinations within easy reach of Brussels.



© Sarah Banniers

■ BRUGES

One of the most beautiful and archetypical towns in Europe, with its numerous canals and historic buildings which bear witness to it having been an important commercial and artistic city. Particularly important are the City Hall, a 14th century gothic masterpiece, the cathedral, the Groeninge Museum dedicated to Flemish painting and the museum in the former Sint Janshospitaal, with an entire wing dedicated to the 15th century painter Hans Memling.

■ GHENT

Once a city-state in the Middle Ages, Ghent is an important city for art and tradition as well as a modern industrial centre. Lying at the confluence of two rivers, Ghent is in turn linked to the sea by a major canal and is an important port. Visit Sint Baafs Cathedral, the Gravensteen Castle, the Belfort and the scenic medieval masterpiece that is the waterfront.



© Francisco Antunes

■ ANTWERP

Belgium's second largest city, the principal port of the country and a major centre for industry, commerce and higher education. Its cathedral, besides being the largest, is also one of the most important in Belgium. It contains numerous works of art, especially several masterpieces by Rubens. Well worth visiting is the Grote Markt, the main square with the renaissance Town Hall. No visit to Antwerp is complete without visiting the house of Rubens, which the artist amplified and decorated lavishly in the Flemish baroque style.



© Lucievic

■ LEUVEN

Leuven, about 25 kilometres east of Brussels, is home to a prestigious university – one of the oldest in Europe, founded in 1425 – and to a dynamic high-tech industry, some of it spun off from academic research, as well as the headquarters of the world's largest brewers. The 15th century late gothic Town Hall is particularly noteworthy.



© David Jonck



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■ BOUILLON

Just on the Belgian side of the border with France, Bouillon is a popular tourist destination and a base for exploring the Ardennes. Its most prominent feature is the castle, construction of which began in 733. Its most illustrious occupant was Godefroid de Bouillon, commander of the first Crusade.

■ IEPER/YPRES

The small town of Ieper (Ypres) is western Belgium was almost completely rebuilt after the devastation of the First World War. The cemeteries, monuments and war museums in and around Ieper are the major attraction for visitors seeking to gain insight into the magnitude of that conflict. Every evening of the year at exactly 8pm buglers sound the 'Last Post' symbolic of a final farewell to fallen comrades (www.lastpost.be).

Located in the faithful reconstruction of the 14th century textile market hall that was razed during the

war is the In Flanders Fields Museum, presenting the history of the First World War in the Flanders front region.

kenhal
Grote Markt 34
8900 Ieper
☎ +32 57 23 92 20
✉ flandersfields@ieper.be
🌐 www.flandersfields.be

■ WATERLOO

Waterloo lies 20 kilometres south of Brussels and is the site of the Battle of Waterloo of June 1815, when the army of Napoleon was defeated by a coalition of British, Dutch and German forces. The major attraction is the Butte du Lion, rising 40 meters above the countryside, topped with a massive bronze statue of a lion. You can climb to the top for a panoramic view of the battle site. At the foot of the mound is the Panorama de la Bataille, a 360-degree painting from 1912 in a circular building, recreating the battle. Interesting is also the Musée Wellington in the former headquarters of the victorious British commander the Duke of Wellington.



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