

## How works Belgium .

Created in 1830, Belgium remains a unitary State characterized by decentralization of competences towards provinces and boroughs. Five reformations ( 1970, 1980, 1988, 1993,2001) conduced our country to be organized as a federal State.

Belgium is therefore a federal State constituted by communities and regions. ( Art. 1 – constitution ). In addition, Belgium is member of the European Union.

### **Some explanations to understand our country :**

Belgium is composed of 4 linguistic regions . The French speaking region, i.e Walloon, the Dutch speaking region, i.e Flanders, the bi-linguistic region of Brussels-Capital Town and the German region.

Some buroughs situated in the Dutch speaking region grant the French speaking with “facilities” and on the opposite some boroughs situated in the French speaking region grant facilities to Dutch speaking people. Among others facilities, people can get administrative documents in their own language...

### Belgium is composed of three communities.

The **French Community**, including the territory of the Walloon region ( except German linguistic region ) and the French speaking institutions located on the territory of Brussels-Capital Town. The **Flemish Community includes** the territory of the Flemish region and the Dutch speaking institutions located on the territory of Brussels-Capital Town. The **German speaking region** corresponding to the German region.

**The three Communities have their own competencies** : education, culture ( patrimony, libraries, radio, television...), family policy, health policy and preventive medicine, help to the youth, the infancy...the use of languages ( administrative matters, official documents, employer/employee relationships) ...

### **Each Community owns its proper Parliament and Government.**

- The **French Community Parliament** composed of 94 members ( 75 Walloons, 19 from the French Brussels-Capital Town ). The French Community Government is represented by 7 Ministers .
- The **German Community Parliament** with 25 members. Its Government is composed of 3 Ministers.
- The **Dutch Community and the Dutch region** have similar institutions. The Parliament with 124 members ( 118 from Flanders and 6 Dutch speaking from Brussels –Capital Town ). The Government is composed of 11 Ministers.

### Belgium is composed of 3 regions :

The **Walloon Region** including the French speaking region and the German speaking one . The **Dutch region** equal to the Dutch speaking region. The **Brussels-Capital Town** is the bi-linguistic region of Brussels.

**The three regions dispose of their own competences** : territory fittings, agriculture, environment, housing, economy, employment...

**Each of these Federated entities has at his disposal one Parliament and one Government.**

- The **Walloon Region** the Parliament of which ( in Namur ) counts 75 deputies elected by direct suffrage. Its Government is composed of 9 members.
- The Parliament of **Brussels-Capital Town** counts 75 deputies ( 2 linguistic groups ). By the next election, they will be 89. The Brussels Government is composed of 5 ministers and 3 State secretaries.
- The **Dutch Region** shares institutions with the Dutch Community.

### **Belgium includes 10 provinces**

Since 1993 Belgium was composed of 10 provinces.

In the Walloon region (5) : Liège, Namur, the Hainaut, the Luxembourg and the Walloon Brabant.

In the Dutch region (5) : Antwerp, East Flanders, West Flanders, the Limburg and the Dutch Brabant.

The ward of Brussels-Capital Town is no part of any province.

Each province owns its legal instrument (**Provincial Council**) and one executive one (**Permanent Deputation**) . Each province is directed by a governor , president of the permanent deputation and in charge of the application of the federal department and regional legislations. Brussels has its own governor and vice-governor.

The Brussels governor is in charge of order keeping in addition to the other governor's charges. The vice-governor is in charge of linguistic legislation application.

### **Belgium includes 589 boroughs.**

The borough level is the power level closest to the citizen. Its competences are "daily life" ones : local policy, tidiness, security, common law... Every borough has its Borough Council (legislative ) and its Body of Burgomasters and Deputy-mayors (executive). Every borough is led by the Burgomaster.

The **Federal Parliament** is located in Brussels.

It includes the House of Parliament ( 150 deputies by direct suffrage ) and the Senate ( 71 senators : 40 by direct suffrage, 21 from Communities, 10 by cooptation ).

The **Federal Government** counts 15 ministers ( 7 French speaking, 7 Dutch speaking and the Prime Minister ).

The **Federal State** competency deals with justice organization, finance and budget, public forces and national defence , labour rights and social security...