

Directorate-General for the Presidency  
Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

## Factsheet: The Belgian Senate






















### 1. At a glance

Belgium is a federal state with a federal Parliament consisting of two chambers, the House of Representatives (Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants) and the Senate (Senaat/Sénat). The regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and the communities (Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking) have their own elected assemblies.

The 2014 elections were the first ones without a direct election of senators. Based on the sixth State reform of October 2011, the 71-Member Senate, which comprised 40 directly elected Members, was transformed into a 60-Member indirectly elected body, comprising 50 senators of the federal entities designated by Community and Regional Parliaments and 10 co-opted senators, selected by the 50 senators. Six Dutch-speaking Members and four French-speaking Members will be co-opted based on the election results of the House of Representatives.



The **Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs** is composed of 30 Members: 10 Members of the Senate, 10 Members of the House of Representatives and 10 Members of the European Parliament elected in Belgium.

### 2. Composition

Results of the Senate renewal on 3 July 2014					
	Party	EP affiliation	Community & Regional	Co-opted	TOTAL
	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) New Flemish Alliance		10	2	12
	Parti Socialiste (PS) Socialist Party - Walloon		8	1	9
	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V) Christian Democratic and Flemish		7	1	8
	Mouvement Réformateur (MR) Movement for Reform		7	1	8
	Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Open Vld) Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats		4	1	5
	Socialistische Partij Anders (sp.a) Socialist Party–Differently (Flemish)		4	1	5
	Centre démocrate humaniste (cdH) Humanist Democratic Centre		3	1	4
	Groen Flemish Green Party		2	1	3
	Ecolo Greens-Walloon		2	1	3
	Vlaams Belang (VB) Flemish Interest	Non-attached	2	0	2
	German-speaking Senator	Not affiliated	1	0	1
	<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

The next Senate renewal will take place in 2019.

### 3. Officeholders

<b>President of the Senate</b>  Ms Christine Defraigne (MR/ALDE), since 14 October 2014	<b>Chairperson of the Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs</b>  Mr. Philippe Mahoux (PS/S&D) <i>(The Committee is chaired alternatively and for the duration of a full legislature by the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Chairman of the delegation of the Belgian Senate.)</i>
<b>Secretary General of the Belgian Senate:</b> Mr Hugo Hondequin, since 1 January 2011.	

### 4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

<b>Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in plenary sittings</b>	No
<b>Participation rights for Belgian MEPs in committee meetings</b>	In the committee meetings the MEPs can neither take part in the debate nor vote.
<b>Availability of videoconferencing system in Belgian Senate</b>	No

### 5. Information links

Official website: <http://www.senate.be>

[Rules of procedure in French](#)

[List of committees](#)

[Recent documents submitted by the Senate to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange \(IPEX\)](#)

[European Parliament Information Office in Brussels](#)

### 6. Contacts

<b>Factsheet author and contact in the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments:</b>  Ms Diana Ciuche Office WIE 05U046, 1047 Brussels Phone +32 2 28 41197 <a href="mailto:diana.ciuche@ep.europa.eu">diana.ciuche@ep.europa.eu</a>	<b>Contact of the Belgian Senate:</b>  Mr Tim De Bondt Office WIE 06U046, 1047 Brussels Phone +32 501 74 26 <a href="mailto:tim.debondt@natparl.ep.europa.eu">tim.debondt@natparl.ep.europa.eu</a>
---	---

Last updated on 19/01/2016. Photo credits: Belgian Senate.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl>  
[relnatparl@ep.europa.eu](mailto:relnatparl@ep.europa.eu)