BELGIUM – A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU CESAER Board / CESAER Task Force Sustainable Funding





BELGIUM

- Independent from the Netherlands since 1830
- Constitutional Monarchy
- In origin a unitary state
- Currently a federal state
- Gradual development towards regionalisation through a series of constitutional reforms
- First: 1970 \rightarrow Sixth: 2012
- Reforms in origin closely related to the language issue

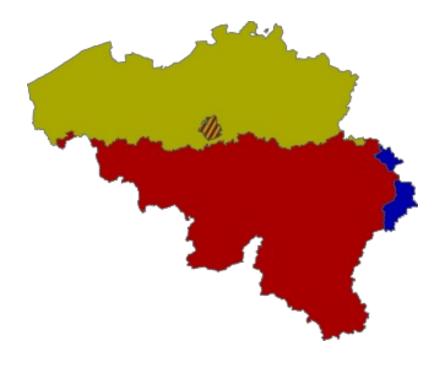




LANGUAGES

- Current official languages ullet
 - Flanders: Dutch (formally the same language as in the Netherlands)
 - Wallonia: French (and in the Ost-Belgien part (Eupen-Malmedy) German)
 - Brussels: officially bilingual ullet
 - Dutch as an official language in Belgium: some milestones •
 - 1898: Equality Law Dutch became an official language
 - 1930: Ghent University to become first Dutch-language University
 - 1962: Agreement on the language borders





CURRENT STATE STRUCTURE (SIMPLIFIED!)

Federal State

 \rightarrow Policy areas such as foreign affairs, defence, finances, social security, interior (maj.), justice (maj.), public health (maj.)

Three Communities

- \rightarrow For matters relating to persons (language and culture): Eg. education, media, culture
 - Flemish Community (Vlaamse Gemeenschap)
 - French Community (Communauté française)
 - German-speaking Community (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft)

Three Regions

 \rightarrow For matters relating to the territory: eg. economy, agriculture, public works

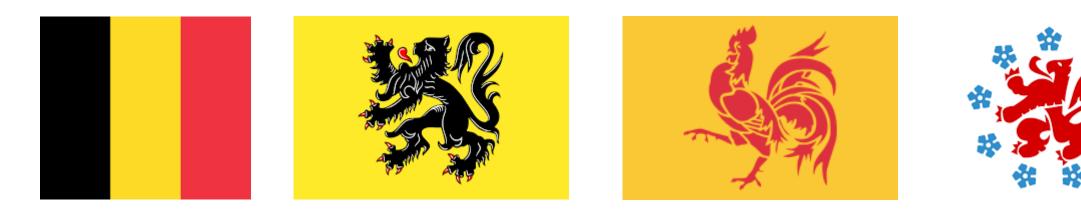
- Flanders (Vlaams Gewest)
- Wallonia (Région Wallonne)
- Brussels (Brussels hoofdstedelijk gewest Région de Bruxelles-Capitale)





CURRENT STATE STRUCTURE (2)

- No hierarchy between the federal state and its components
- A government for each structure, but
 - Unified institutions for the Flemish Community and Region of Flanders
 - A cooperation (not constitutionally formalized) between the French Community and the French Community Committee of the Brussels region under the name 'Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles'











REPRESENTATION AT EU LEVEL

- There is little formal 'Belgium' at federal level when it comes to educational and research policy ulletmatters
 - Intra-Belgian university cooperation is de facto almost equal to an international cooperation
 - Some exceptions: Federal Research Institutes, Royal Military Academy
- However, in the Council context, only the member state is to be represented •
 - Representations from the Regions/Communities to the Belgian Permanent Representation to the EU
 - Communities/regions take turns to represent the country at Council level for the relevant competency
 - This turn-based approach also goes for Presidencies •
 - Settled through a cooperation agreement dating from 1994
- 2024 BE presidency \bullet
 - French Community / Walloon Region in the lead for resp. education and research topics, in coordination • with their peers across the language border





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