

17 Oct 2025 -16:19

State visit Italy

From 20 to 22 October 2025, His Excellency Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic of Italy, will pay a state visit to Belgium. The President will be accompanied by his daughter, Laura Mattarella. Their Majesties the King and Queen will receive the President in a programme that, in keeping with tradition, will visit the three regions of the country and reflect the richness of our nation.

Belgium and Italy share a long-standing and close relationship, which is reflected in their cooperation within the European Union and on the international stage. As founding members of both the European Union and NATO, Belgium and Italy share a common vision of peace, stability and solidarity. The historic contribution of Belgian and Italian founding fathers such as Paul-Henri Spaak, Alcide De Gasperi and Altiero Spinelli played a decisive role in the success of the European project.

Today, our countries continue to work together to deepen European cooperation, in line with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2024 and with a view to the Italian Presidency in 2028. Both countries complement each other and have important assets at their disposal to further deepen their bilateral cooperation and joint action at the global level in an era of great changes.

Our economic relations are as strong as they are multifaceted. In 2024, Italy was our sixth largest client and our seventh largest supplier worldwide. The chemical industry lies at the heart of these relations, but cooperation is also developing strongly in the areas of energy and environmental transition, smart cities and ports, defence capabilities, logistics, biotechnology, digital innovation and the aerospace sector. Northern Italy, particularly Lombardy and Piedmont, has the highest concentration of Belgian companies. At the same time, large Italian companies are active in Belgium in the energy, infrastructure, defence and food industries, with iconic brands that have found their way to Belgian consumers.

The roots of these economic and cultural ties go back a long way, to Roman times even. Italian merchants and bankers settled in Bruges in the late Middle Ages and contributed to the city's prosperity, where masterpieces such as Michelangelo's Madonna and Child still remind us of this shared heritage. This historical cross-fertilisation illustrates the early cultural dynamics between our two countries.

Art and culture therefore feature prominently during this state visit. The Renaissance marked an era of mutual influence between artists from our regions and Italy – a lively dialogue that continues today. The programme offers the opportunity to discover emblematic works together, including the art treasures of Bruges and one of the oldest manuscripts of Dante Alighieri's Divina Commedia in the Royal Library of Belgium.

The Belgian-Italian friendship is also rooted in a strong human dimension. The Italian migration wave after the Second World War and the Bois du Cazier mining disaster on 8 August 1956 – almost seventy years ago – remain part of our collective memory. The commemoration of this tragedy is a moving part of the visit.

Today, around 300,000 Italians live in Belgium, while more than 8,700 Belgians reside permanently in Italy and almost a million compatriots visit the country every year. This dynamic interaction reflects the vitality of our bilateral ties, bringing tangible outcomes in politics, economics, science and culture.



President Mattarella's state visit illustrates the willingness of both countries to work together on the challenges of our time and to open up new avenues of cooperation within the European and multilateral framework.

The programme of the state visit reflects both the official and the cultural and historical nature of the relations between Belgium and Italy.

On Monday 20 October, after the official welcome at the Royal Palace, the President will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This will be followed by a visit to the Federal Parliament. In the afternoon, the President will meet with Prime Minister De Wever. The day will end with a state banquet hosted by Their Majesties.

The following day, President Mattarella and his daughter will be received at Brussels City Hall. The King and Queen will then join them at the Royal Library of Belgium, where one of the oldest manuscripts of Dante's Divina Commedia will be presented. Later that day, a ceremony will be held at Bois du Cazier to commemorate the 1956 mine tragedy. In the evening, the Italian side will organise a concert at the La Monnaie as a symbol of cultural connectedness.

The last day of the state visit, Wednesday 22 October, will take place in Bruges. After the official welcome by the Governor of West Flanders, the President will visit the town hall, followed by the Church of Our Lady and the Groeninge Museum – places that bear witness to the deep artistic ties between Belgium and Italy.

With this richly filled programme, both countries confirm their commitment to close cooperation, based on a shared history and a common future within Europe.

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