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International Human Rights Day: Belgium reaffirms its commitment and looks back on its mandate in the UN Human Rights Council

On International Human Rights Day, Foreign Affairs emphasises its ongoing commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights remain a core priority of Belgian foreign policy. This message comes at a symbolic moment: Belgium's mandate in the UN Human Rights Council has just come to an end.

This year also marks the 80th anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter – a milestone in which the people reaffirm their belief in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in equal rights for men and women. *'Significant progress has been made with regards to human rights over the past 80 years,'* says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot. *'But despite clear progress, fundamental rights remain out of reach for many. I have seen this for myself during my meetings and visits over the past year.'*

Over the past three years, Belgium has played an active role as a member of the Human Rights Council and has succeeded in translating its principles into concrete diplomatic action. Belgium has continued to successfully advocate for the abolition of the death penalty and was one of the initiators of two resolutions on this issue. Gender equality and the fight against discrimination, with a particular focus on women and girls, were another important priority. Thanks to Belgium, a resolution on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls was adopted, receiving broad support from no fewer than 74 countries. In addition, Belgium also actively worked to improve the human rights situation in specific contexts, ranging from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Sudan and Russia.

Belgium remains committed to ensuring coherence between domestic and foreign policy. In this context, Belgium will once again participate in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) next year. Through the Universal Periodic Review, the Human Rights Council subjects each UN Member State to an evaluation of the human rights situation in the country, on a completely equal footing. Belgium is also preparing a new candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the period 2031 - 2033.





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