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Belgium's human rights policy under review in Geneva

On 6 May 2026, Belgium's human rights policy will be reviewed during the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The FPS Foreign Affairs plays a crucial role, both in coordinating the recommendations for improvement made by other countries and in promoting human rights abroad.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot will represent Belgium at this Universal Periodic Review in Geneva. This is the fourth time since 2011 that Belgium's human rights policy will be reviewed.

The UPR provides for a regular review of the human rights situation in all 193 UN member states. Three UPR sessions take place each year, with 14 countries being reviewed at each session. In this way, all 193 UN member states are reviewed every five years. For Belgium, this was the case in 2011, 2016 and 2021. During this fourth cycle, our country is the 160th member state to be reviewed.

The UPR fosters an open dialogue between all UN member states, based on the collective understanding that no country has a perfect human rights record, and that there is therefore always room for improvement. At the same time, the UPR offers a rare opportunity to raise states' awareness of legislation or practices at national level that may have negative consequences for human rights within their borders.

Human rights are part of Belgium's DNA. The universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, which reinforce one another, are the guiding principles of Belgium's actions, both within our own country and on the international stage. Promoting human rights abroad is one of the policy priorities of the FPS Foreign Affairs, something to which our diplomats are committed on a daily basis.

The UPR review is based on three reports. The first is the Belgian national report. This report is the result of close cooperation between all relevant policy levels of the federal and federated entities. In December 2025, the FPS Foreign Affairs also organised a consultation with civil society on the draft text of the report. This concerns the follow-up to the 251 recommendations from 119 different countries that Belgium accepted during its previous UPR in 2021.

The other two reports contain, on the one hand, a summary of the information available to the United Nations itself and, on the other hand, a summary of the many contributions from (national and international) *stakeholders*.

Thanks to the UPR and the recommendations made by other Member States, Belgium keeps a close eye on the human rights situation in Belgium, and together with all Member States of the United Nations, we ensure that we pursue a stronger and more universal human rights policy. The FPS Foreign Affairs actively contributes to this, day in, day out.

Practical information

Belgium's Universal Periodic Review will take place on 6 May 2026 in Geneva, within the Human Rights Council. The interactive dialogue will last approximately three and a half hours. Following the session, the United Nations Secretariat will draw up a report containing all the recommendations made. The Human



Rights Council will adopt a resolution on that report in September. Belgium may accept or reject the recommendations.

The interactive dialogue can be followed live via the livestream on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

<https://media.un.org/en/search/categories/meetings-events/human-rights-council/universal-periodic-review>. Documents relating to Belgium's UPR are available at

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/be-index>. Information on media accreditation can be found at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/media-information>.

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