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Hack the Government 2026: record participation for the third edition

The Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium (CCB) is hosting the closing event of Hack the Government (HTG) 2026 . The initiative invites vetted ethical hackers to test the systems of Belgian public institutions under legally controlled conditions, with the aim of detecting and reporting vulnerabilities before malicious actors find them.

A record edition. In just one week, this year's edition received nearly twice as many vulnerability submissions as last year's did over the full two weeks. Besides the support of AI, the increase is explained by the participation of four additional public bodies.

77 participants, 12 systems. HTG 2026 brings together 45 professional ethical hackers and 32 students, who are testing 12 government systems, up from 4 in 2024 and 8 in 2025. Participating organisations include FPS Justice, the Federal Police, FAMHP, Belnet and Defence. This growth reflects an increasingly mature relationship between public institutions and the ethical hacking community.

Why it matters. The PHP2Shell incident in October 2026 showed what happens when coordinated disclosure fails: the embargo was effectively lifted before patches were deployed, forcing emergency maintenance across banks, public services and hosting providers. With AI now accelerating exploit development, proactively finding and fixing flaws through trusted researchers is more important than ever.

A pioneering legal framework. The NIS2 law of 26 April 2024 protects ethical hackers who disclose vulnerabilities in good faith. The CCB ensures national coordination and acts as mediator with the organisations concerned.

> "Hack the Government illustrates what the CCB stands for: security is strengthened through collaboration. This year, the CCB again put its own systems to the test alongside those of the other institutions. The number of reports received reflects the commitment of the ethical hacking community and the growing maturity of public institutions. It is better for a flaw to be found by a trusted researcher than by a malicious actor."
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> Miguel De Bruycker
> Director-General, Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium

What next? Validated vulnerabilities are shared only with the organisations concerned and with the CCB, which monitors their remediation. Final results will be published at the close of the event.

> "At a time when our online services play an ever more important role, it is crucial to keep putting our applications to the test. That is why FPS Justice took part in Hack the Government for the first time this year. This valuable initiative gives us an external, critical look at our security and helps us uncover potential vulnerabilities, so that we can proactively strengthen our systems against future cyber threats. It also allows us to showcase FPS Justice as a modern, accessible public service and to attract new IT talent."
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> Marc Duforez
> Adviser-General – Director of ICT, FPS Justice

Press info – Quartier Papier, Fabrieksstraat 55/59, 1930 Zaventem.

Miguel De Bruycker, Director-General of the CCB, will be available for interviews from 12:30 to 13:30. Journalists are welcome until the awards ceremony.

Press file

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