Belgium

February 2026

According to the Immigration Office, Belgium has received **34,439 applications** for international protection in 2025, a 13 per cent decrease compared to 2024. The total recognition rate at first instance stands at 30 per

According to the Immigration Office, between January - November 2025, a total of 8,157 people were granted temporary protection, bringing the number of **beneficiaries of temporary protection in Belgium** to **99,963.**

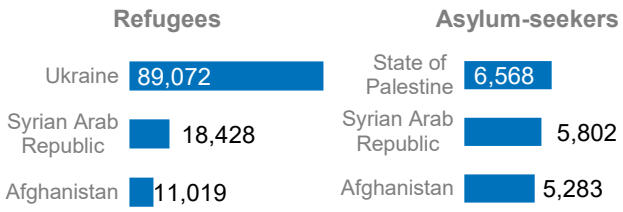
The **reception system** remains overstrained in Belgium and thousands of asylum-seekers have been squatting or sleeping in the streets. UNHCR continues to call for adequate reception conditions.

POPULATION STATISTICS (as of mid-2025)*

Refugees	**186,406**
Asylum-seekers	**56,786**
Stateless people**	**824**

**Figures include both displaced & non-displaced stateless people

Top three countries of origin*



*UNHCR *Refugee Data Finder*

Protecting forcibly displaced and stateless people in Belgium

Impact of funding cuts

As a result of funding reductions, UNHCR is prioritizing strategic interventions that contribute to long-term protection and advocacy outcomes in Belgium, including supporting national legislative developments related to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, advocating for improved reception conditions and contributing to fair asylum procedures. At the same time, UNHCR is refocusing or limiting engagement in areas including complementary and legal pathways, community-based protection, child protection, and individual casework, and certain communications activities.

Shelters operated by refugee committees

In the past years, UNHCR has supported the creation of 10 refugee committees, primarily in Brussels, to enhance community-based empowerment, representation and inclusion of refugees. The refugee committees currently manage three emergency shelters for refugees from Ukraine and asylum-seekers.

HIGHLIGHTS

Family reunification

In June 2025, UNHCR issued comments on the draft law on family reunification, noting that the proposed changes risk significantly limiting access to family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection.

EU Pact on Asylum and Migration

UNHCR has analysed the impact of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum at national level and is engaged with authorities and civil society on its implementation, highlighting the importance of upholding international protection standards.

Reception

In July 2025, UNHCR issued comments on the draft law on reception expressing concern that some proposed measures could further deteriorate the already precarious conditions faced by asylum-seekers, increasing the risk of homelessness.



Santa, Doris and Mouna at the Triomphe shelter offering asylum-seekers a safe place to sleep and integration services. © UNHCR/Ine Martens

Refugee-run shelters in Brussels offer safety and integration support

In Brussels, refugee-led committees are part of the solution to the lack of reception in Belgium with shelters that provide housing and integration support for asylum-seekers and refugees. Read how this initiative has transformed former office buildings into refugee-run reception centres.

Key Priorities

- **Asylum procedures:** Between January - December 2025, Belgium has received 34,439 applications for international protection, a 13 per cent decrease compared to 2024. Asylum instances are facing a backlog both in first instance and appeal.
- **Reception:** The reception system remains saturated. UNHCR continues to call for adequate reception conditions for all applicants as insufficient reception opportunities impact the health of asylum-seekers, as well as fair and efficient asylum procedures. To assess the impact on the asylum procedure, UNHCR is finalizing a SAFE research project (Secure Accommodation for Everyone).
- **Temporary protection:** Belgium remains welcoming towards refugees from Ukraine. Some 99,963 individuals have been granted temporary protection since February 2022.
- **Family reunification**: Access to family reunification is subjected to strict criteria. Challenges include short deadlines, submission of requests abroad, long waiting times and costs associated. UNHCR continues to advocate for flexibility and supports applicants, including with project partner Myria.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways**: In February 2025, the government suspended the resettlement programme until pressure on reception capacity eases and the asylum requests lower. In 2025, the education pathway to Belgium continued thanks to a national community of practice (6 universities). Despite the withdrawal of support from the Belgian government, two of these universities still welcomed students in 2025.
- **Community empowerment and self-reliance:** Refugee representation in Brussels has expanded to ten refugee-led organizations (RLOs). These entities serve as participatory bodies, supporting relevant stakeholders in optimizing refugee inclusion.
- **Detention monitoring**: Detention of asylum-seekers upon arrival at the border remains quasi systematic. UNHCR's partner Nansen provides legal assistance to asylum-seekers in detention. UNHCR takes part in an observer capacity in meetings of MOVE, an immigration detention focused NGO consortium.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works closely with authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, lawyers, and academia. UNHCR signed partnerships with Nansen, which provides legal support to lawyers and asylum-seekers, and Myria, the Federal Migration Centre, that provides legal support to beneficiaries of international protection, lawyers, and case workers to facilitate family reunification.
- **External engagement:** To raise awareness of the situation of people forced to flee, UNHCR regularly engages with the media. On the occasion of World Refugee Day (20 June 2025), UNHCR High Profile Supporter and dancer Jeny BSG spoke with Euronews on the #Dance4Refugees challenge – and her call to stand in solidarity with refugees.

Statelessness

- Belgium is party to the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness, and the nationality law contains relevant safeguards. Statelessness is determined by the judiciary. Residence permits are not automatically granted to recognized stateless people, leaving many without rights. A new law on this matter entered into force in September 2024.

UNHCR Presence in Belgium (Multi-country Office and Representation for EU Affairs)

Staff:

17 National Staff

14 International Staff

Offices:

1 Multi-country Office in Brussels

Financial information* (as of 28 February 2026)

**Information relates to UNHCR's Belgium Multi-Country Office, which covers Belgium, Ireland, Luxemburg and Portugal.*

Financial requirements for 2026:

$ 10.6 M



Funding gap 57%
$ 6.1 M

Funded 43%
$ 4.5 M

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UNHCR is also grateful for the generous contributions from the private sector and individuals.