

India-Belgium Bilateral Relations

Belgium was one of the first European nations to establish diplomatic ties with independent India in September 1947. Our strong bilateral relationship is rooted in shared values, including a commitment to the rule of law, federalism, and pluralism. Belgium also supports India's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council.

High Level Visits

From India:

- President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, undertook a State Visit to Belgium from 2 to 5 October 2013. During the visit, he and the King of the Belgians jointly inaugurated the Europolia-India Cultural Festival. Five MoUs were also signed.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Belgium on 30 March 2016, shortly after the terrorist attacks in Brussels. The two leaders strongly condemned the attacks, reaffirmed their commitment to combat terrorism, and reviewed the bilateral partnership.
- Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu called on His Majesty the King of the Belgians during his visit to Brussels for the 12th ASEM Summit on 18-19 October 2018, and discussed bilateral cooperation and shared global concerns.
- Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, led a 7-member parliamentary delegation to the Belgian Parliament on 23-26 June 2015.
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar has maintained regular high-level engagement with Belgium. During his visit to Brussels in August 2019, he held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence Didier Reynders. He subsequently met Belgian Foreign Minister Philippe Goffin in February 2020 at the EU Foreign Affairs Council.
- In May 2023, he participated in the first Ministerial Meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) and, along with Shri Piyush Goyal and Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, called on Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo. During his visit in June 2025, he met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Prévot and also called on the Belgian Prime Minister and the King. During a subsequent meeting with Maxime Prévot in Brussels on 16 March 2026, the two sides agreed to establish a new Ministerial-level Strategic Dialogue.

- The inaugural Belgium-India Strategic Dialogue was held in Brussels on 15 July 2026, co-chaired by Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Prévot and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. EAM along with CIM and MoS(MEITY) held the third ministerial meeting of the India-EU TTC during this visit.
- Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal has also maintained regular engagement with Belgium. He met Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade Bernard Quintin on 20 January 2025 and, on 1 May 2025, met Defence Minister Theo Francken and Minister-President of Flanders Matthias Diependaele. In July 2026, during the 3rd India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), CIM met with David Clarinval, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Employment and Agriculture. The three ministers also attended a business roundtable event hosted by Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB). CIM and EAM also met Minister-President Matthias Diependaele and Flanders Minister Annick De Ridder.
- An all-party Parliamentary delegation, post Operation Sindoor, met with Mr. Peter De Roover, President of Chamber of Representatives and members of Belgian Parliament on 05 June 2025. They discussed issues related to terrorism.

Telephone Calls:

- On 27 March 2025, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a conversation with His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium, discussing bilateral relations, including the Belgian Economic Mission (2025), as well as trade, investment, and collaboration on innovation and sustainability.
- The previous year, on 26 March 2024, PM Modi spoke with Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, focusing on enhancing bilateral ties, advancing the India-EU partnership during Belgium's EU Council Presidency, and cooperation on regional and global issues.

Other Ministerial Interaction:

- There have been regular ministerial-level exchanges between the two countries. These include visits by Shri Piyush Goyal (June 2022) to launch the India-EU FTA negotiations; Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw (June 2022) to visit IMEC in Leuven; Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey (September 2019) for the Global Vaccine Summit; Shri Nitin Gadkari (November 2014);

and Gen. (Retd.) V. K. Singh (October 2014) for the First World War centenary commemorations.

From Belgium:

- On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of India-Belgium diplomatic relations, the King and Queen of the Belgians, Their Majesties King Philippe and Queen Mathilde, paid a State visit to India on 5-11 November 2017. They were accompanied by H.E. Mr. Didier Reynders, DPM and Minister of Foreign & European Affairs, H.E. Mr. Geert Bourgeois, Minister-President of Flanders region, H.E. Mr. Willy Borsus, Minister- President of Walloon region and H.E. Mr. Rudy Demotte, Minister-President of the Wallonia-Brussels region, and a number of senior officials. A large business and academic delegation also accompanied them. In addition to the official programme, Their Majesties inaugurated an exhibition on 'India's contribution in World War I' and launched a book on "Indians in Flanders Fields". Their Majesties also took part in various business and academic seminars organized during the visit. They also visited Taj Mahal. In Mumbai, His Majesty participated in a remembrance ceremony at the Memorial of the 2008 terrorist attack at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, and visited Oval Maidan for a cricket demonstration.

Economic Mission:

- The Belgian Royal Family has traditionally led economic delegations to India. Princess Astrid headed the second Belgian Economic Mission to India from 1–8 March 2025, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Prévot, Defence and Foreign Trade Minister Theo Francken, and Minister-President of Flanders Matthias Diependaele. The 338-member delegation included representatives from 147 companies, six chambers of commerce, nine academic institutions, and eighteen public sector organisations, resulting in the signing of 38 MoUs. During the visit, Princess Astrid called on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, while External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, and Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal held separate meetings with the Belgian delegation.
- Earlier, King Philippe (then Crown Prince) led an economic mission to India in March 2010. Other notable Belgian visits include those by Alexander De Croo (2017), Pieter De Crem (2015 and 2016), Didier Reynders (2012), and Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (2006).

Foreign Office Consultations

- The 3rd round of India-Belgium Foreign Office Consultations took place on November 4, 2025, in Brussels. The consultations were co-chaired by India's Secretary (West), MEA, Mr. Sibi George, and the President of the Board, MFA, Ms. Theodora Gentzis.
- The 2nd Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi on 10 April 2024, with Mr. Pavan Kapoor, Secretary (West), MEA, representing India and Ms. Theodora Gentzis, Secretary General and President of the Board, MFA, representing Belgium. They reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international matters. Ms. Gentzis also called on External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Economic and Commercial Relations

- The India-BLEU Joint Economic Commission (JCM), established in 1997, is the primary platform for discussing bilateral economic and commercial relations. The 18th India-BLEU JCM was held in New Delhi on 9 April 2024.
- **India-Belgium bilateral trade amounted to USD 13.01 billion in 2025-26.** Major Indian exports include diamonds, tobacco, shrimp, medicaments and steel, while key imports to India are diamonds, pharmaceutical products, machinery and mechanical appliances and aluminum scrap. Trade in diamonds is a significant component of bilateral trade.
- FDI inflows to India, from April 2000 to December 2025, amounted to USD 4.2 billion, positioning Belgium as the 18th largest contributor to India's FDI. Around 175 Belgian companies operate in India, while several Indian companies, particularly in IT and software (e.g., TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HCL), have established a presence in Belgium to serve both the Belgian and European markets.

Sectoral Cooperation

Science & Technology

- India and Belgium collaborate in Science and Technology under an MoU signed during the Belgian Prime Minister's visit to India in November 2006, with a Joint Committee on S&T established. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Belgium on 30 March 2016, both leaders remotely activated a 3.6-meter optical telescope at Devasthal, Uttarakhand. In March 2023, the world's largest Liquid Mirror, built by Belgian space company Amos, was inaugurated at the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) in Nainital. India and Belgium collaborate in specific areas of Science and Technology under several MoUs: the 1998 MoU on Cooperation in Space Technology, the 2014 MoU

between TERI India and VITO-Belgium, and the 2012 MoU between BARC and SCK-SEN (Belgian Nuclear Research Centre).

- Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, participated in the 1st Nuclear Energy Summit co-organized by the Government of Belgium and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Brussels on 21 March 2024.
- Recently, Flanders Minister President Matthias Diependaele visited India to represent Belgium at the AI Impact Summit in February 2026.

Other areas of bilateral cooperation

- An MoU on Renewable Energy cooperation between India and Belgium (at both federal and regional levels) was signed on 29 September 2015. The 3rd Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on Renewable Energy was held virtually on 28 October 2021.
- A MoU on ICT cooperation was signed on 7 November 2017 during the Royal Mission to India, with the 1st JWG on ICT meeting in Brussels in September 2019.
- An MoU between India's Ministry of Shipping and Antwerp Port Authority facilitates training for Indian port officials was signed in February 2020.

Education

- Around 1,131 Indian students are currently studying at universities in Belgium, including those in Ghent, Leuven, Antwerp, and Brussels.
- During the 2013 State visit of Rashtrapatiji, five MoUs on education were signed: a) JNU and University of Ghent; b) Delhi University and University of Ghent; c) Delhi University and University of Leuven; d) DU and Free University of Brussels (ULB); and e) University of Hyderabad and University of Ghent.
- During Belgian Economic (2025) 6 MoUs were signed between IIFT and APEC-Antwerp Port Training Centre, University of Antwerp and XLRI, the University of Antwerp and SP Jain Institute of Management, Hasselt University and IIS Bangalore, Hasselt University and IIT Bombay, as well as Vlerick Business School and IMT Ghaziabad.

Culture

- India and Belgium have had a Cultural Agreement since 1973. An MoU for cultural cooperation was signed between ICCR and BOZAR (Center for Fine Arts, Brussels) on 4 February 2021.

- In October 2020, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled on his 151st birth anniversary by the Governor and Mayor of Antwerp, with the Indian Ambassador present. Installed in front of the Antwerp Courthouse, the statue was a gift from the Indian government. Additionally, a bust of Gandhi has been in the Antwerp Governor's office complex since January 2013.
- On 7 May 2015, a bust of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was inaugurated at the Literary Garden of the Catholic University of Leuven on his 154th birth anniversary.
- More than 9,000 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives in Flanders during World War I. To honor them, an Indian Memorial Pillar was re-installed at Menin Gate, Ypres, on 12 March 2011. A memorial concert is held in their memory at Knokke Heist.

Indian Diaspora

- The number of Indians in Belgium include: NRIs-18,283 and PIOs-16,717 (Total- 35,000 including 1,131 students as per the data shared by IBZ, Belgium). Diaspora includes Sikh Diaspora-15,000, Diamond Business Professionals-8,000, IT Professionals-9,000 and others-3,000

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