

**Embassy of India**  
**Brussels**  
\*\*\*

**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 Europalia-India Cultural Festival. Five MoUs were also signed.

Vice President 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.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Belgium on 30 March 2016, just a few days after a deadly terrorist attack in Brussels. Both leaders, strongly condemned the attack, pledged to combat terrorism and reviewed the bilateral partnership.

Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, led a 7-member parliamentary delegation to the Belgian Parliament on 23-26 June 2015.

On 9 June 2025, External Affairs Minister, had a bilateral meeting with Belgian DPM and FM Mr. Maxime Prevot. Next Day (10 June 2025) he called on Belgian PM and King separately.

External Affairs Minister, along with Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles and Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MOS (E&IT) called on Prime Minister of Belgium, Mr. Alexander De Croo on 15 May 2023 on the sidelines of the first Ministerial meeting of India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) in Brussels.

On 17 February 2020, Dr. S. Jaishankar met Belgian Foreign Minister Mr. Philippe Goffin at the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. Earlier, during his visit to Brussels on 29-30 August 2019, EAM Jaishankar held detailed talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Mr. Didier Reynders, covering a range of bilateral and regional issues

Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, held a meeting with Mr. Bernard Quintin, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, and Foreign Trade, on 20 January 2025. He also met with Mr. Theo Francken, Minister of Defence and in charge of Foreign Trade, along with Mr. Matthias Diependaele, Minister-President of the Flanders Region, on 1 May 2025.

An all party Parliamentary delegation 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 interactions between the two countries. These include visits by: Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, from 17-18 June 2022 to launch the EU-India FTA negotiations; Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw on 16 June 2022 to visit the headquarters of IMEC (international research & development organization, active in the fields of nanoelectronics and digital technologies) at Leuven; MoS for Health, Shri. Ashwini Kumar Choubey in September 2019 for the Global Vaccine Summit 2019; Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari in 19-20 November 2014; and MoS for External Affairs Gen (Retd) V K Singh in October 2014 for WW I centenary commemoration.

### **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 led a second economic mission (last mission was in 2013) from 1-8 March 2025 to India. She was accompanied by H.E. Maxime Prevot, Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Theo Francken, Minister of Defence and Foreign Trade and H.E. Matthias Diependaele, Minister President Flanders Region. Economic Mission comprised of 147 companies, 6 chamber of commerces, 9 academic institutions and 18 public sector organisations. Econo Total delegation strength was 338 and during the Mission 38 MoUs were signed. During her visit, Princess called on Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi on 04 March 2025. Earlier King Philippe (as Crown Prince) led an economic delegation to India on 20-27 March 2010.

On the sidelines of the Belgian Economic Mission (2025) EAM had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Maxime Prevot, Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs Belgium. Minister of Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh and Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry also met with Princess Astrid and accompanying official delegation respectively.

Mr. Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda and Telecom visited India from 6-7 February, 2017.

Mr Pieter de Crem, Secretary of State for Foreign Trade of Belgium visited India on 13-18 January 2015 and later on 15-19 February, 2016. Belgian Foreign Minister Mr. Didier Reynders visited India in August 2012. Prime Minister Mr. Guy Verhofstadt visited India on 2-7 November 2006.

### **Foreign Office Consultations**

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**

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 15.074 billion in 2023-24, making Belgium 5<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner in EU. Major Indian exports include precious metals and stones, chemicals, and base metals, while key imports are precious metals and stones, base metals, chemicals, textiles, and machinery. Trade in diamonds is a significant component of bilateral trade.

FDI inflows to India, from April 2000 to September 2024, amounted to USD 3.94 billion, positioning Belgium as the 18<sup>th</sup> largest contributor to India's FDI. Notably, between September 2023 and September 2024, FDI grew by USD 1.1 billion (39%). 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 1<sup>st</sup> Nuclear Energy Summit co-organized by the Government of Belgium and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Brussels on 21 March 2024.

### **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. Additionally, an 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.

### **Education**

Around 1100 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**

According to the latest estimates, there are around 35,000 members of the Indian Diaspora in Belgium of these, 18,920 are Non-Resident Indians (NRI) which includes around 1,100 Indian students & around 2,000 IT Professionals, and around 17,690 are Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

\*\*\*\*\*

*July 2025*