



Belgium

National developments in 2024



Migration and asylum featured prominently in the agenda of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2024, during which the Pact on Migration and Asylum was finalised and adopted.¹ Several high-level meetings were organised, for example to re-iterate the need for greater convergence in laws and practices across Member States,² to discuss the operationalisation of the Pact,³ multistakeholder models in the context of reception,⁴ building an effective identity management in the field of migration, and returns and reintegration.⁵

Belgium proactively initiated the process of drafting a National Implementation Plan for the Pact. The Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration established a national Steering Group in April 2024, bringing together stakeholders at the federal level and reaching out to regional administrations on an ad hoc basis for issues related to their competencies. The draft of the new Migration Code was presented in January 2024 under the previous government,⁶ and the way forward on aligning the provisions with the Pact and adopting the draft is to be decided by the new government.

The number of applications increased again in 2024 and secondary movements remained a major issue for national authorities. Secondary movements consist of a large number of applicants covered under the Dublin III Regulation and applicants who already have an international protection status in another Member State. The latter group accounted for 14% of all applicants in Belgium in 2024. Against this background, one of the objectives of the Proactive Return Policy Law was to increase the efficiency of returns and Dublin transfers, for example by creating special return and Dublin places in reception, establishing in law proactive coaching to prepare for a transfer or return, the duty to cooperate in the transfer or return, and clarifying the responsibility for taking a decision for extending the transfer period in Dublin cases. The law also underlines that children cannot be detained.⁷

Each organisation involved in the asylum procedure pursued its efforts for increased efficiency and quality. The Immigration Office moved registrations to a new location and developed a new brochure and website to provide information on the application process.⁸ The CGRS finalised and evaluated its project (Tabula Rasa) on increasing efficiency and quality in its workflow and, at the beginning of 2025, launched a new project (Prisma) based on the lessons learnt, recruited new staff and implemented a fast-track procedure for a number of specific nationalities. Fedasil launched a new public tender framework for reception.⁹ CALL increased its capacity with asylum appeals by assigning cases to judges and legal professionals who worked previously on migration cases.

A new law established a specific procedure to apply for admission with the Immigration Office to stay on the grounds of statelessness, which impacted the organisation of the CGRS, its tasks (for example within the COI unit) and added specific tasks on appeals for CALL.¹⁰

Despite the heavy workload, the CGRS made it a priority to continue with its projects on applicants with special needs, including applicants with physical and mental vulnerabilities, training on gender and children, issuing new guidelines on applications due to sexual violence and establishing a new follow-up procedure for FGM/C cases.

The reception system continued to be saturated, despite efforts to create more capacity and reaching a new record of 36,000 reception places in 2024.¹¹ The Belgian state had been condemned for more than 10,000 instances in several court rulings when single males could not be accommodated immediately,¹² with litigation on various aspects ongoing throughout the year. The EUAA provided support in reception through its operational plan.¹³ Fedasil continued with its project on making reception facilities and support more child-friendly through AMIF-funded projects.¹⁴ Due to the pressure on the asylum and reception systems, the State Secretary decided to pause the country's resettlement programme in June 2024. Several legislative changes were enacted to address aspects that contribute to saturating the reception system. For example, the end of the right to material reception conditions is now linked to a final negative decision on an asylum application and not to the notification of an order to leave the territory (which was taken at a later stage).¹⁵ Applicants with a professional income in a reception facility must contribute to the reception costs, and a new Royal Decree established stronger monitoring and sanctions mechanism for the implementation of this rule.¹⁶

The rules for family reunification were also amended, allowing parents to reunite with their accompanied minor child with international protection under certain conditions, expanding family reunification for people with a residence permit on the grounds of statelessness and adjusting the determination of minority to recent CJEU case law.¹⁷

For further reading:

- [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)
- [European Network on Statelessness](#)
- [Group for the Abolition of Female Sexual Mutilation | Groupe pour l'Abolition des Mutilations sexuelles Féminines | Groep voor de afschaffing van vrouwelijke genitale verminking](#)

Belgium

Key indicators for 2024



Rank by number of
asylum applications

6

Rank per capita (applications
per 1M inhabitants)

5

Share of applications
in EU+

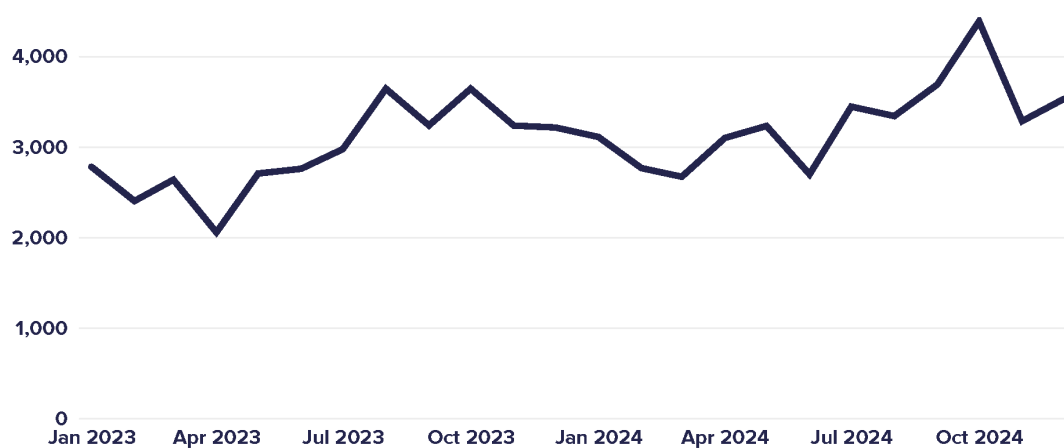
3.9%

Recognition
rate

49%

Indicator	2024	2023	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	39,206	35,248 ↑	11%	Palestine (15%), Syria (14%), Afghanistan (9%)
Pending cases (Dec '24)	43,093	39,429 ↑	9%	Palestine (14%), Syria (11%), Türkiye (8%)
First instance decisions	29,135	25,613 ↑	14%	Afghanistan (16%), Palestine (12%), Syria (11%)
Refugee status	13,823	11,054 ↑	25%	Palestine (22%), Syria (18%), Eritrea (15%)
Subsidiary protection	512	382 ↑	34%	Yemen (44%), Syria (31%), Sudan (5%)
Negative	14,800	14,177 →	4%	Afghanistan (19%), Congo (DR) (5%), Colombia (5%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2023-2024



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2025](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





Sources

¹ Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. (2024, June 28). [The Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU concludes with significant achievements](#).

² European Migration Network (EMN). (2024, March 18). [Greater convergence of asylum practices is needed to achieve a Common European Asylum System](#).

³ European Migration Network (EMN). (2024, June 26). [EMN Belgium and its partners bring together a wide variety of stakeholders to discuss the operationalization and implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum](#).

⁴ Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2024, May 22). [European conference on reception](#).

⁵ Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2024, March 20). [Expert conference Return and reintegration](#).

⁶ European Migration Network (EMN). (2024, January 10). [Nicole de Moor presents new migration code to replace and clarify outdated legislation](#).

⁷ [Loi du 12 mai 2024 modifiant la loi du 15 décembre 1980 sur l'accès au territoire, le séjour, l'établissement et l'éloignement des étrangers et la loi du 12 janvier 2007 sur l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile et de certaines autres catégories d'étrangers sur la politique de retour proactive](#) [Law of 12 May 2024 amending the law of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, stay, establishment and removal of foreigners and the law of 12 January 2007 on the reception of asylum seekers and certain other categories of foreigners on the proactive return policy], 12 May 2024.

⁸ Immigration Office | Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken | Office des étrangers. (2024). [Information brochure: International protection in Belgium](#). Immigration Office | Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken | Office des étrangers. [Asylum registration](#).

⁹ Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2024, July 29). [Appel aux opérateurs privés](#) [Call to private operators].

¹⁰ [Loi du 10 Mars 2024 modifiant la loi du 15 décembre 1980 sur l'accès au territoire, le séjour, l'établissement et l'éloignement des étrangers concernant la demande d'admission au séjour pour apatridie \(1\)](#) [Law of 10 March 2024 amending the law of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, stay, establishment and removal of foreigners concerning the application for admission to stay for statelessness (1)], 10 March 2024.

¹¹ Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers | L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile | Federaal agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers. (2025, January 22). [Reception of asylum seekers: Key figures of 2024](#).

¹² Federal Institute for the protection and promotion of Human Rights | Institut Fédéral pour la protection et la promotion des Droits Humains | Federaal Instituut voor de bescherming en de bevordering van de Rechten van de Mens. (2025, February 6). [L'Institut fédéral des droits humains appelle le nouveau gouvernement fédéral à faire des droits humains une priorité](#) [The Federal Institute for Human Rights calls on the new federal government to make human rights a priority].

¹³ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). (2024). [Country Operations: Belgium](#).

¹⁴ Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) | Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile. (2024, November 20). [Des centres mieux adaptés aux enfants](#) [Better-adapted centres for children].

¹⁵ [Loi du 14 mars 2024 modifiant la loi du 12 janvier 2007 sur l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile et de certaines autres catégories d'étrangers](#) [Law of 14 March 2024 amending the law of 12 January 2007 on the reception of asylum seekers and certain other categories of foreigners], 14 March 2024.

¹⁶ [Arrêté royal du 16 avril 2024 relatif à l'octroi de l'aide matérielle aux demandeurs de protection internationale bénéficiant de revenus professionnels et autres catégories de revenus](#) [Royal Decree of 16 April 2024 relating to the granting of material assistance to applicants for international protection receiving professional income and other categories of income], 16 April 2024.

¹⁷ [Loi du 10 Mars 2024 modifiant la loi du 15 décembre 1980 sur l'accès au territoire, le séjour, l'établissement et l'éloignement des étrangers concernant la demande d'admission au séjour pour apatridie \(1\)](#) [Law of 10 March 2024 amending the law of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, stay, establishment and removal of foreigners concerning the application for admission to stay for statelessness (1)], 10 March 2024.