

September 2025 Report

How Belgium Govt Undermined the Work of European Institutes



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Introduction

The Belgian government and Belgium-based organisations have exerted significant influence within European institutions, often undermining their work through strategic and deliberate actions. Leveraging Belgium's unique position as host to key EU institutions in Brussels, Belgian actors have used their political and cultural influence to advance national interests, at times at the expense of European integration goals. This has involved promoting policies that prioritise domestic concerns, delaying or obstructing the implementation of EU regulations, and resisting transparency measures that facilitate cross-border collaboration.

Belgium's approach includes bureaucratic slowdowns and selective enforcement of rules, which complicate the functioning of European institutions and challenge the harmonisation of standards across member states. Specific cases highlight Belgium's reluctance to fully adhere to freedom-of-movement legislation and its cautious stance on research openness, revealing a pattern of protectionism cloaked as national sovereignty. These actions create tensions within the EU framework, undermine institutional trust, and weaken the collective capacity for coordinated policy-making and innovation.

The consequences of such undermining are multifaceted. They introduce legal uncertainty, delay critical European initiatives, and erode the credibility of European institutions, fostering scepticism about the EU's effectiveness. This environment may encourage other member states to adopt similar defensive postures, further fragmenting the union.

To address these challenges, the report recommends enhancing compliance mechanisms, promoting greater transparency in appointment and policy processes, and strengthening EU oversight of national adherence to shared norms. Building a culture of cooperation over competition and emphasising the mutual benefits of integration are vital to safeguarding the integrity and effectiveness of European institutions. These steps are essential to counteract undermining behaviours and sustain the EU's foundational goals.

Executive Summary

European institutions serve as foundational pillars for the political, economic, and social integration of member states across the continent, shaping policies, forging cooperation, and advancing the collective interests of the Union. These institutions, including the European Commission, European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union, exercise significant influence over legislative, regulatory, and strategic frameworks that impact the lives of millions across Europe. Their decisions direct areas spanning from economic policy and justice to security and innovation, reinforcing the importance of a cohesive, transparent, and effective governance structure to promote European unity.

Belgium holds a unique and pivotal role as the host country to many of these institutions, primarily centred in Brussels, which is widely regarded as the de facto capital of the European Union. This geographical and institutional centrality situates Belgium at the crossroads of European decision-making. With approximately 38 EU organisations, headquartered there and Belgian nationals occupying numerous staff and parliamentary positions, Belgium enjoys a heightened level of access and influence. The presence of other prominent international organisations, such as NATO and the United Nations, further enhances Belgium's status as a global diplomatic hub. This unique position provides Belgium with privileged opportunities to shape discussions, policy agendas, and institutional priorities within the EU framework.

Strategic Objectives of Influence

Belgium's motivations for exerting influence within European institutions are multifaceted. Primarily, these include shaping policy to align with national interests while balancing the broader goals of European integration. By influencing regulatory and legislative processes, Belgium aims to maintain competitive advantages for its economy and protect key sectors. Additionally, Belgium seeks to bolster its international image as a constructive and indispensable player within the EU, reinforcing its identity as a founding member committed to European unity. Protecting national sovereignty and ensuring favourable outcomes in negotiations remain core drivers of Belgium's strategic efforts, especially in areas where EU policies may impact domestic governance, social policies, or economic regulations.

Scope and Methodology

This report encompasses a comprehensive investigation into the political, non-governmental, lobbying, and media dimensions of Belgium's influence on European institutions. The scope includes an analysis of how Belgium's government, affiliated organisations, and interest groups interact with EU bodies to assert their objectives, alongside the methods employed to advance or, at times, undermine collective European initiatives. The research approach integrates

qualitative and quantitative methods, employing document analysis, case study reviews, and expert interviews, supplemented by media content evaluation and lobbying activity assessments. This multifaceted methodology ensures a robust and balanced exploration of

Belgium's role within the EU, capturing both explicit and nuanced strategies of influence and their implications on European governance.

Belgium as the Seat of EU Power

Brussels became the de facto capital of the European Union due to a combination of geographic, political, and historical factors. In the post-World War II era, European leaders sought a neutral, centrally located city to host the emerging European institutions aimed at fostering peace and cooperation. Brussels was strategically positioned halfway between France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, the major powers whose reconciliation was pivotal for European integration. As a medium-sized capital of a smaller country, Brussels was seen as a neutral ground that would not dominate or exert undue pressure over larger member states.

Additionally, practical considerations such as Brussels' status as an active metropolis with excellent communications, ample housing for civil servants, and a robust international business sector influenced the choice. The city gradually attracted key institutions like the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Council, becoming the EU's political heart despite the lack of a formal capital designation. This evolution was reinforced over decades through legal and political agreements, including the establishment of permanent summits and headquarters for European bodies.

Early Influence

Belgium's early influence over EU decision-making stemmed from its role as a founding member of the European Communities and its privileged position as host nation. Belgian diplomats and politicians were actively involved in the formative treaties and institutional designs that shaped the EU's governance. The rotating presidency system initially favoured Belgium, which chaired the first period of the European Economic Community, providing an opportunity to set agendas and steer early negotiations. Belgium's multilingual and multicultural society offered diplomatic agility within the multilingual EU environment, enabling it to act as a mediator and bridge-builder in continental affairs. The presence of international organisations like NATO in Brussels further entrenched Belgium's status as a hub of political influence and facilitated close interaction between EU actors and Belgian officials.

Past Controversies

Despite Belgium's constructive role, there have been documented allegations and controversies related to Belgian bias and manipulation within European institutions. Critics have pointed to occasions where Belgium used its hosting position to prioritise national interests over collective EU goals, particularly in bureaucratic appointments and policy enforcement. Notably, legal challenges arose when Belgium was accused of imposing nationality requirements in certain EU-related positions, constituting a breach of EU principles on free movement and non-discrimination.

Such episodes revealed a pattern where Belgium sometimes leveraged procedural delays and selective regulation enforcement to protect domestic preferences. These controversies have periodically stirred debates about the balance between Belgium's duties as host and its own political ambitions within the EU. This duality underscores ongoing tensions in Belgium's relationship with European integration, reflecting broader challenges faced by member states in balancing sovereignty with supranational commitments.

Methods of Influence and Undermining

The Belgian government exercises substantial political influence within European Union institutions, leveraging its position as host country to promote national interests and shape EU decision-making. Belgium's political actors employ lobbying tactics tailored to the complex EU legislative and regulatory environment, engaging directly with European Commissioners, MEPs, and Council officials to advocate Belgian policy preferences. These lobbying efforts often involve strategic coalition-building among member states and interest groups, enabling Belgium to amplify its voice by aligning with allied actors on issues of importance.

For example, Belgian diplomats have historically used Belgium's rotating Council presidency to guide agendas towards sectors favourable to Belgian economic and political priorities. In addition, Belgium's multilingual and multicultural competence gives it a diplomatic edge in brokering compromises, allowing it to position itself as a consensus-builder that can mediate between larger powers within the EU framework. This political influence is reinforced by Belgium's dense network of connections with EU institutions, stemming from the country's hosting status, which facilitates informal channels and privileged access for lobbying efforts.

Legal & Institutional Mechanisms

Belgium's status as the host nation to key European institutions grants it legal and institutional leverage that transcends typical member state interaction. The country has utilised national legal frameworks and hosting powers to influence EU policies and procedures. Examples include the imposition of nationality requirements in public service jobs linked to EU institutions, a practice challenged by the European Commission as being discriminatory and contrary to EU freedom of movement principles.

Belgium has also been accused of exploiting procedural delays within institutional operations, using administrative bottlenecks to slow down or modify policy implementation perceived as detrimental to national interests. Hosting privileges afford Belgium a unique interface with EU institutions, as it manages security, infrastructure, and logistical frameworks critical to the day-to-day functioning of EU bodies. This position enables Belgium to exert subtle forms of control or resistance, modulating compliance with EU mandates to suit domestic agendas while maintaining outward commitments to European integration.

Belgian-Based Institutions Influencing European Union Governance and Policy

Belgium, particularly through its federal and regional governments, plays a pivotal role in shaping the governance and policy of the European Union. Belgian institutions actively coordinate their positions within EU bodies, representing the country's diverse linguistic and regional communities. Through permanent representations, advisory committees, and interministerial coordination, Belgium ensures its interests and policy priorities are effectively communicated and defended in EU decision-making processes. Additionally, Belgium's hosting of key EU institutions enhances the influence of its national and regional bodies in both legislative and administrative EU affairs.

Organisation Name	Type	Main Focus/Activities
Belgian Federal Government Representation to the EU	Government Office	http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/policy-areas/highlighted/brussels-international-capital-city-asset-our-country
Belgian Permanent Representation to the EU	Government Representation	http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/policy-areas/highlighted/brussels-international-capital-city-asset-our-country
VOKA (Flemish Chamber of Commerce and Industry)	Business Association	https://seap.be/lobbying/
UNIZO (Union of Self-Employed Entrepreneurs)	Business Association	https://transparency.eu/mep-led-lobby-organisations-where-to-draw-the-line/
FEB (Federation of Enterprises in Belgium)	Business Association	https://seap.be/lobbying/
Agoria (Belgian Technology Industry Federation)	Trade Association	https://seap.be/lobbying/
Brussels Regional Government EU Representation	Regional Government Office	http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/policy-areas/highlighted/brussels-international-capital-city-asset-our-country
Walloon Government Representation to EU	Regional Government Office	https://www.linklaters.com/en/knowledge/publications/alerts-newsletters-and-guides/2024/july/04/belgian-and-eu-lobbying-regulations-in-the-spotlight

Belgium-Based NGOs & Organisations

Belgium-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and advocacy groups contribute both constructively and controversially to the EU policy landscape. Certain NGOs headquartered in Belgium have been accused of bias or infiltration, aligning closely with national interests under the guise of civil society engagement. These organisations often participate in EU consultations, policy forums, and advisory committees, thereby shaping legislative discussions in ways that can favour Belgian political or economic goals. For instance, some Belgian NGOs active in social and labour rights have faced scrutiny for their selective framing of issues that align with regional or linguistic divides within Belgium, potentially introducing internal national biases into EU policymaking. In other cases, organisations funded by Belgian corporate or governmental sources have been reported to exercise covert influence by steering research, policy recommendations, and agenda-setting towards outcomes benefiting Belgian stakeholders. This blending of civil society activism with national advocacy complicates the transparency and impartiality of EU policy development.

Here is the list of 100 Belgian-Registered Lobby Groups/law firms/consultancies Lobbying for Belgium in EU with the mention of country they are lobbying for:

No.	Organisation Name	Type	Country/Region Represented/Focus
1	APCO Worldwide	Consultancy	Belgium & International
2	FleishmanHillard Brussels	Consultancy	Belgium & EU-wide
3	Brunswick Group	Consultancy	Belgium & Global Interests
4	ESL & Network	Consultancy	Belgium & EU Interests
5	Ecorys Brussels	Consultancy	Europe & Belgium
6	Waggener Edstrom Worldwide	Consultancy	Belgium & International
7	Rohde Public Policy	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
8	Public Relations Partners	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
9	EUtop Brussels	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
10	Avisa Partners	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
11	Acumen Public Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
12	Gellis Communications	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
13	Whyte Corporate Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
14	Policy Action	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
15	Schuman Associates	Consultancy	Belgium & EU

16	ZN	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
17	Corporate & Public Strategy Advisory Group	Consultancy	Belgium
18	Landmark Europe	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
19	Lear	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
20	Shungham Information (EU Issue Tracker)	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
21	Fipra	Consultancy	Belgium & International
22	MHP Communications	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
23	Kern European Affairs (Kea European Affairs)	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
24	Outsource Communications	Consultancy	Belgium
25	EPPA	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
26	Aspect	Consultancy	Belgium
27	Havas Worldwide Brussels	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
28	Publicis	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
29	Roland Berger Strategy Consultants	Consultancy	Belgium & International
30	Athenora Consulting	Consultancy	Belgium
31	Hanover Communications	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
32	Pact European Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
33	Mindshake PR	Consultancy	Belgium
34	The Brussels Office	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
35	Interface Europe	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
36	BXL Consulting	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
37	Soluzione Settembrini	Consultancy	Belgium
38	Bell Pottinger Private	Consultancy	Belgium
39	InterRecherche	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
40	Europe Analytica	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
41	Fairvalue Corporate and Public Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium
42	Furrer.Hugi & Partner	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
43	Anna MacDougald EU Public Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium

44	ISC Intelligence in Science	Consultancy	Belgium
45	Stefan Scheuer	Consultancy	Belgium
46	Stenstrom Consulting	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
47	Zenab	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
48	Orpheus Public Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium
49	Clean Fuels Consulting	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
50	Alonso & Asociados	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
51	Brussels Direct	Consultancy	Belgium
52	Cannegieter Consultancy	Consultancy	Belgium
53	Project Europa	Consultancy	Belgium & EU
54	Glocal Communications	Consultancy	Belgium
55	RJI Capital	Consultancy	Belgium
56	Electus	Consultancy	Belgium
57	Euro P.A. Consulting	Consultancy	Belgium
58	Eurocity	Consultancy	Belgium
59	Euro Top Co-operation Partners	Consultancy	Belgium
60	EU Ventures European Affairs & Strategies	Consultancy	Belgium
61	Icoda European Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium
62	Ioneurope	Consultancy	Belgium
63	JKL	Consultancy	Belgium
64	PDC EU Affairs	Consultancy	Belgium
65	Pinnacle PR	Consultancy	Belgium
66	Prime	Consultancy	Belgium
67	PvanL	Consultancy	Belgium
68	2MPublicaffairs	Consultancy	Belgium
69	The European Consulting Company	Consultancy	Belgium
70	TGG & Partners	Consultancy	Belgium
71	Wider EU	Consultancy	Belgium
72	Clifford Chance Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
73	Bird & Bird Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium

74	DLA Piper Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
75	Freshfields Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
76	Linklaters Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
77	Baker McKenzie Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
78	Hogan Lovells Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
79	Covington & Burling Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
80	Norton Rose Fulbright Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
81	Allen & Overy Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
82	CMS Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
83	Latham & Watkins Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
84	White & Case Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
85	Debevoise & Plimpton Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
86	Mayer Brown Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
87	Sidley Austin Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
88	Shearman & Sterling Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
89	WilmerHale Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
90	Quinn Emanuel Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
91	Paul Hastings Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
92	Gibson Dunn Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
93	Dechert Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
94	Kirkland & Ellis Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
95	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
96	Covington & Burling Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
97	White & Case Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
98	Clifford Chance Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
99	Linklaters Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium
100	DLA Piper Brussels	Law Firm	Belgium

1. APCO Worldwide



APCO Worldwide is a global advisory and advocacy firm with a significant presence in Brussels, the heart of the European Union. Since 1995, APCO has been providing strategic counsel and stakeholder engagement services, helping clients navigate the complex EU policy landscape. The firm assists Belgian interests by creating compelling campaigns that build trust, foster reputations, and influence key debates and decisions within the EU. With a diverse, multicultural team and deep expertise in public affairs, APCO helps Belgium and its clients shape legislation, regulatory policies, and international trade discussions vital to the EU's functioning, thereby effectively lobbying and influencing the European Union for Belgium's benefit.

2. FleishmanHillard Brussels



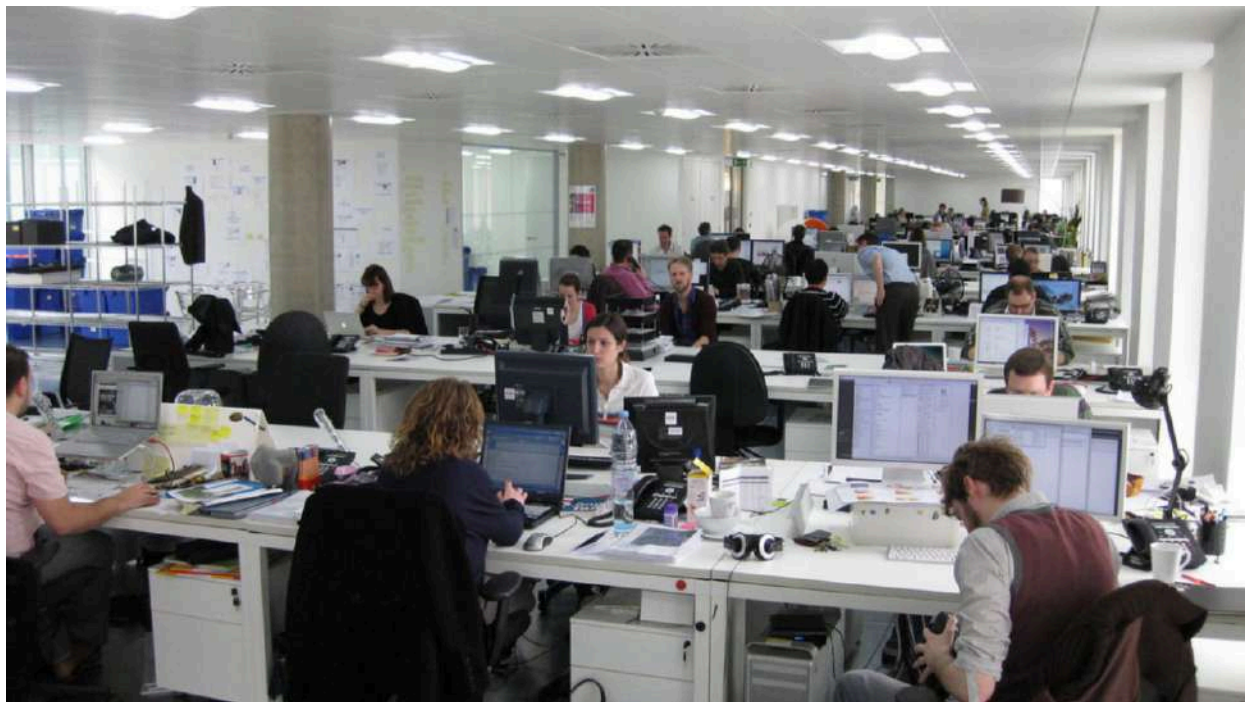
FleishmanHillard Brussels is a leading EU government relations, public affairs, and communications consultancy based in Brussels, specializing in helping clients navigate and influence the complex European Union policy environment. The firm supports Belgium by providing strategic counsel, policy monitoring, reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and innovative communication services that enable Belgian interests to shape legislation, regulatory policies, and public affairs debates effectively. With expertise across multiple sectors including finance, environment, healthcare, and energy, FleishmanHillard plays a crucial role in helping Belgium lobby and influence EU decision-making processes through creative problem-solving and integrated campaigns that resonate with key policymakers and stakeholders across Europe.

3. Brunswick Group



Brunswick Group is a global advisory and lobbying firm with a strong presence in Brussels, specializing in EU public affairs and campaign management on critical business issues. Since establishing its Brussels office in 2000, Brunswick has helped Belgian and international clients navigate the complex EU policy, regulatory, and political landscape by providing strategic advice, media relations, and regulatory engagement across all EU Member States. Their expertise spans multiple sectors including financial services, energy, environment, healthcare, technology, and consumer industries. Through deep technical knowledge and strategic insight, Brunswick enables Belgium to influence legislative developments and regulatory policies effectively within the European Union, leveraging a global network and a multilingual team to build trusted stakeholder relationships and advocate for their interests.

4. ESL & Network



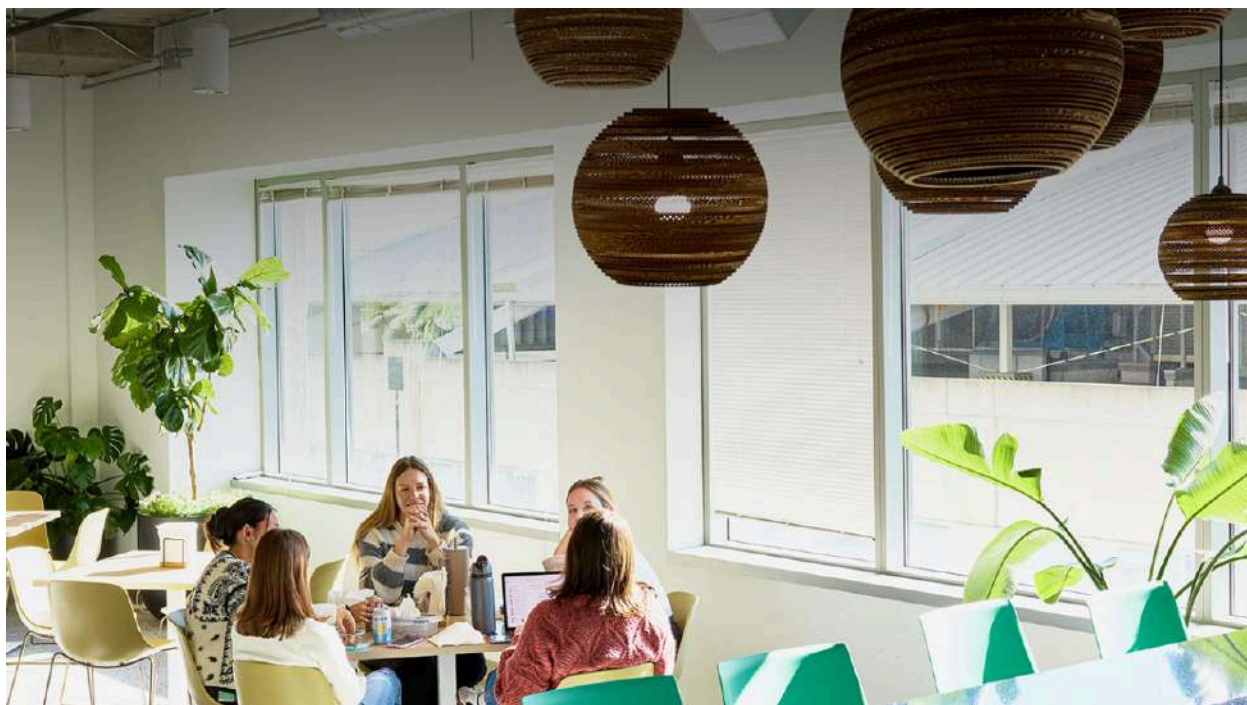
ESL & Network European Affairs is a strategic advisory and lobbying firm based in Brussels, leveraging an extensive network of senior advisors many of whom are former ambassadors and officials of European institutions to help Belgian interests influence decision-making within the EU. Their operations, integrated with the ADIT Group, provide Belgium with advanced capabilities in strategic intelligence, public affairs, political analysis, and business diplomacy, which enable effective navigation of complex regulatory and political landscapes at the European level. By mobilizing institutional and strategic relationships, organizing targeted meetings with influential EU leaders, and implementing high-value communication campaigns, ESL ensures that Belgium's perspectives and priorities are heard and considered within key legislative and regulatory debates. Their deep-rooted connections within Brussels and broad expertise across industries allow Belgian stakeholders to shape important EU outcomes and maximize their lobbying impact in Brussels and beyond.

5. Ecorys Brussels



Ecorys Brussels is a leading research-based consultancy with a strong presence in Belgium, specializing in advising on economic, social, and spatial development policies. With almost a century of experience, Ecorys provides evidence-based research, consulting, programme management, and communication services to support European institutions, governments, and private sector clients. The Brussels office plays a key role in helping Belgium navigate and influence EU policies by conducting impact assessments, policy evaluations, and stakeholder engagement across sectors such as agriculture, industrial development, social policy, and environmental management. Ecorys leverages its extensive European network and multidisciplinary expertise to support Belgium in lobbying efforts, ensuring informed decision-making and positive societal impact within the EU framework.

6. Waggener Edstrom Worldwide



Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, known as WE Communications, had previously opened a public affairs practice in Brussels to connect its global operations, though the Brussels office was closed in 2011. Nevertheless, WE Communications operates globally with offices in multiple countries and regions including Europe, offering expertise in integrated communications, public affairs, reputation management, and strategic counsel. Through its global network and diverse service offerings, WE Communications helps organizations build trust, shape reputation, and influence key stakeholders, which can support Belgium in navigating and influencing EU policymaking and regulatory processes despite the absence of a current Brussels office. Their expertise spans sectors such as health, technology, consumer services, and more, enabling effective lobbying and advocacy at the European level from a broad regional base.

7. Rohde Public Policy



Rohde Public Policy (RPP), founded in Brussels in 2002 by Sebastian Rohde, is a prominent public affairs and advocacy consultancy that specializes in combining science-based policy expertise with strategic communication to influence European Union policymaking. With a strong focus on sectors like healthcare, agriculture, energy, food, and life sciences, RPP supports Belgium by developing innovative, impact-driven public affairs campaigns that foster stakeholder engagement and create win-win partnerships for clients and policymakers. The company is noted for its ethical approach, societal value-driven projects, and expertise in integrating visual communication strategies into political advocacy, making it a key player in lobbying and influencing EU regulatory and legislative processes on behalf of Belgian interests.

8. Public Relations Partner



Public Relations Partner in Brussels is typically a role fulfilled by specialized public affairs and communications consultancies that help clients navigate the complex European Union policy environment. These partners provide expertise in government relations, strategic communications, advocacy, crisis management, media relations, and stakeholder engagement. For example, consultancies like Rud Pedersen and Grayling in Brussels offer tailored public affairs services that support companies, trade associations, and institutions in building and protecting their reputation among policymakers and stakeholders at both Belgian national and EU levels. They help organizations influence legislation, regulatory agendas, and public sentiment through innovative, multi-channel campaigns and political intelligence, fostering trusted relationships with key European decision

9. EUTop Brussels

EUTOP Group is the largest owner-managed governmental relations agency in the European Union, with a Brussels office established since 1990. It acts as a structural process partner for private companies, associations, and organizations, supporting their interests within the EU institutions as well as in selected member states. EUTOP's business model focuses on long-term, structural lobbying based on the principle of "only one interest," providing process structure, perspective change, and process support competences alongside clients' content know-how. The firm is known for its compliance, integrity, and scientifically grounded approach,

maintaining extensive contact with legislative and executive decision-makers across the EU. Through its wide network of consultants and structural advisors, EUTOP helps Belgium effectively present its cases and influence legislative and regulatory processes in Brussels and beyond.

10. Avisa Partners

avisa partners

Avisa Partners is an international risk management and lobbying group with a Brussels office since 2010, specializing in impact-oriented public affairs, online advocacy, corporate diplomacy, and cybersecurity services. The firm supports corporations, institutions, associations, and governments by delivering board-level solutions for sensitive matters, effective advocacy, and regulatory support. Avisa Partners integrates technological, legal, and political expertise to achieve measurable advocacy results and goes beyond traditional public affairs by harnessing digital tools for online influence campaigns. They assist Belgium and other clients in strategic positioning, crisis management, and political brand building, effectively helping to lobby and influence EU policies. The firm's clientele includes major corporations such as Airbus and LVMH, and it is known for handling complex issues like competition, trade, regulatory affairs, and digital technology within the European Union.

11. Acumen Public Affairs



Acumen Public Affairs is a leading independent consultancy based in Brussels, established in 2010 to combine the best of big agency experience with hands-on senior support. The firm provides expert public affairs and strategic communications services to corporations, governments, trade associations, NGOs, and international institutions. Acumen is known for its flexible, integrated approach that blends policy expertise with communications, involving scientists, digital strategists, former journalists, and other professionals to ensure clients effectively influence EU policymaking. They pride themselves on delivering high-quality, sustainable impact through close client partnership and personal supervision from start to finish, making it a trusted partner for Belgium in shaping and influencing European Union policies.

12. Gellis Communications



Gellis Communications is a Brussels-based public affairs and communications consultancy that has been providing high-level communications management and advocacy services to public, private, and voluntary sector clients since 1998. They specialize in helping organizations navigate the complex European Union policy and regulatory environment by offering tailored public affairs strategies, media relations, and stakeholder engagement. Gellis Communications supports Belgian interests and other clients by crafting strategic messaging and campaigns that influence EU decision-making processes, ensuring their clients' voices are effectively heard in Brussels.

13. Whyte Corporate Affairs



Whyte Corporate Affairs is a leading independent communication consultancy based in Brussels, recognized as Belgium's top corporate affairs agency. Founded in 2008, it specializes in public affairs, crisis communication, media relations, stakeholder engagement, financial communication, and change management. The agency prides itself on a stakeholder-oriented, objective-driven approach that combines corporate communication with public affairs to help clients build trust, navigate challenges, and influence decision-making processes effectively. Whyte supports Belgium by leveraging deep insights into the Belgian media, political, business, and social landscape, crafting strategies that target the right audiences with the most appropriate communication channels and messages. The agency is also known for its in-house graphic studio, StudioTokyo, which creates compelling visual content to complement strategic communications. Whyte Corporate Affairs has received prestigious international awards, including being ranked among the top 50 PR agencies in Europe and winning SABRE Awards for excellence in communications.

14. Policy Action



Policy Action, operating under Instinctif Partners, is a well-established European public affairs consultancy with a strong Brussels presence since 2011. The firm specializes in strategic lobbying, government relations, and public policy engagement across a broad range of EU policy areas. Policy Action leverages insights-led approaches integrated with behavioral science, data analytics, and AI-driven intelligence to provide clients with transformational advocacy strategies. Their services include lobbying campaigns, public affairs training, association management, stakeholder engagement, and tailored government relations support. This enables Belgium and other clients to anticipate legislative trends, influence policy debates, and secure access to key EU institutions while maintaining transparency and compliance with the EU lobbying regulations.

15. Schuman Associates



Schuman Associates is a Brussels-based, independent consultancy with over 30 years of experience specializing in European funding and public affairs. Established in 1989, it operates very close to the European Union institutions, providing clients with expert guidance in EU policy, regulation, and public funding opportunities across diverse sectors including ICT, security, energy, environment, education, health, trade, and financial services. Schuman Associates assists Belgian and international client from governments and multinationals to NGOs and SMEs—in influencing EU policy and accessing public sector funding through tailored strategies, early intelligence, stakeholder engagement, and communications. The firm is known for its high professional standards, strong relationships within EU institutions, and a focus on delivering measurable value and long-term partnership benefits.

16. ZN



ZN is a leading strategic, creative, and award-winning digital communication agency based in Brussels, known for helping global organizations adapt their communication strategies to the digital age for maximum impact. Founded in 2003, ZN leverages a unique Hyperthinking approach, combining deep EU insights with digital intelligence and AI-powered tools to deliver smart, targeted campaigns tailored precisely to the audience. The agency is recognized for impactful public affairs storytelling, digital influencer mapping, creative content production, social media campaigns, and event design. With over 25 years of experience guiding EU leaders through complex environments, ZN is trusted by major clients such as Coca-Cola, Pfizer, UPS, and various Brussels-based associations, continuously helping them stay ahead in their communication and lobbying efforts in the EU.

17. Corporate & Public Strategy



Corporate & Public Strategy consultancies in Brussels specialize in guiding organizations through the complexities of EU policymaking and regulatory environments. These consultancies, such as Grayling, Rud Pedersen, and Kreab, provide comprehensive services including political intelligence, lobbying, strategic communications, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy campaigns. They help clients anticipate legislative trends, build influential relationships with EU institutions, and shape policy outcomes. With expertise spanning sectors like energy, health, trade, and technology, these firms deliver tailored strategies to ensure that corporate and public interests are effectively represented and communicated in Brussels and the broader European sphere.

18. Landmark Europe



Landmark Europe, now part of Edelman Global Advisory, is an independent international public affairs and strategic communications agency based in Brussels since 2007. They specialize in helping clients engage effectively with decision-makers, stakeholders, opinion formers, and the media to achieve strategic business objectives. Landmark is known for its deep expertise in sectors such as sustainability, digital services, food and drink, media, and transport. Their team, composed of experienced consultants from over 20 countries, delivers tailored, high-quality services including public affairs, strategic counsel, corporate communications, and intelligent execution of advocacy campaigns. Landmark's commitment to commercial awareness, responsiveness, and long-term client partnerships positions them as a trusted partner for Belgium in influencing EU policy and regulatory environments.

19. Lear Corporation



Lear Corporation is a global automotive technology leader specializing in seating and electrical systems for vehicles, with over 100 years of experience. The company designs, manufactures, and delivers advanced automotive components that enhance comfort, safety, and convenience in vehicles worldwide. Lear operates internationally, including a registered office in Belgium (Anderlecht), and is committed to innovation, operational excellence, and sustainability in the automotive industry. The corporation supports the future of mobility with cutting-edge technologies and maintains a strong global presence across multiple countries.

20. Shungham Information (EU Issue Tracker)



Shungham Information, known for its flagship product "EU Issue Tracker," was a Brussels-based provider of systematic regulatory and legislative intelligence focused on European Union issues. Founded in 2010, Shungham developed a strong reputation for delivering highly structured analysis and subject-matter expertise that helped major global brands like Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Siemens, BMW, and L'Oréal track and understand evolving EU regulations across multiple member states. In 2018, Shungham was acquired by FiscalNote, a global technology and regulatory intelligence firm, which integrated Shungham's human-curated intelligence with its AI-powered data platform to offer enhanced legislative and regulatory monitoring, stakeholder management, and issues tracking services for the EU and its member states. FiscalNote's EU Issue Tracker continues to provide actionable insights, enabling organizations to anticipate regulatory risks and strategically engage with policymakers effectively.

21. Fipra



FIPRA is an independent European and international public affairs consultancy based in Brussels since 2000, specializing in navigating complex policy and regulatory landscapes at the intersection of business, politics, and policy. With a team of about 60 public affairs consultants in Brussels and a global network spanning over 50 countries, FIPRA delivers bespoke strategic counsel and advocacy services across sectors such as healthcare, digital technology, energy, environment, competition, and trade. They focus on evidence-based policymaking and coalition building to help clients create sustainable policy change and successfully influence European and national decision-making. FIPRA stands out for its combination of deep political insight, real-time intelligence, flawless execution, and a client-centered approach aiming at creating win-win outcomes for stakeholders in an evolving world.

22. MHP Communications



MHP Communications is a leading UK-based public relations and lobbying company known for its integrated communications services across public affairs, corporate reputation, financial communications, and health communications. In Brussels, MHP strengthened its presence by merging with Cabinet DN, a Brussels-based public affairs agency, to blend local expertise with its global capabilities. The agency uses a data-driven, audience-first approach and employs behavioral science to develop strategic, multi-channel campaigns tailored to varied audiences including policymakers, stakeholders, and consumers. MHP Communications is recognized for delivering impactful advocacy and communication strategies in sectors like transport, energy, infrastructure, and environment, supporting clients in navigating complex regulatory and political landscapes within the EU.

23. Kern European Affairs (Kea European Affairs)



KEA European Affairs (Kern European Affairs) is a Brussels-based strategic consultancy and research center founded by Philippe Kern in 1999, specializing in culture, creative industries, sport, education, and youth policy. The firm provides expert advice and policy design services to public authorities, international organizations, and private entities, focusing on the cultural and creative sectors at both the European and international levels. KEA is renowned for its extensive research, including landmark studies on the economic impact of culture in Europe, and it supports clients with policy recommendations, market research, legal and regulatory analysis, and strategy development. KEA has a strong network and collaborates with entities such as the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe, and various cultural organizations worldwide, emphasizing the multidimensional value of cultural investment for economic and social development.

24. Outsource Communications



Outsource Communications is a Brussels-based data-driven communication agency specializing in reputation management, public relations, corporate communications, and crisis communication. Led by Managing Director Gert Asselman, the agency offers strategic advice, qualitative research, project management, and training in PR, media relations, CEO profiling, social media strategy, and stakeholder and media research. Outsource helps organizations craft and deliver clear, effective messaging to enhance their reputation and stakeholder engagement, often positioning clients as leaders in their field and employers of choice. Their approach combines listening closely to clients' ambitions with strategic communications tailored to complex and evolving environments.

25. EPPA



EPPA is a specialist management consultancy based in Brussels, established in 1987, that helps clients manage alignment and build consensus between business, European Union institutions, and national governments. EPPA focuses on navigating complex regulatory and political processes, offering innovative, out-of-the-box solutions to create sustainable value and competitive advantage. With expertise in public policy, regulatory affairs, political communications, and capacity building, EPPA assists clients in shaping regulations, designing policies, and building effective stakeholder dialogues. They emphasize constructive compromise-building and operate across various sectors including health, environment, trade, and agriculture, supporting both private and public sector clients in achieving their strategic objectives within the European governance framework.

26. Aspect



Aspect is an award-winning, independent corporate events and communications agency specializing in B2B events, AGMs, video production, internal communications, and training. Established over 26 years ago, the female-led agency focuses on delivering outstanding client experiences through creativity, innovation, and a diverse workforce. Aspect is trusted by many global brands and known for crafting powerful stories and immersive experiences across in-person, hybrid, and virtual event formats. The agency also emphasizes corporate social responsibility by supporting youth preparation for the workforce through seminars, mentoring, and training opportunities for underrepresented communities.

27. Havas Worldwide Brussels



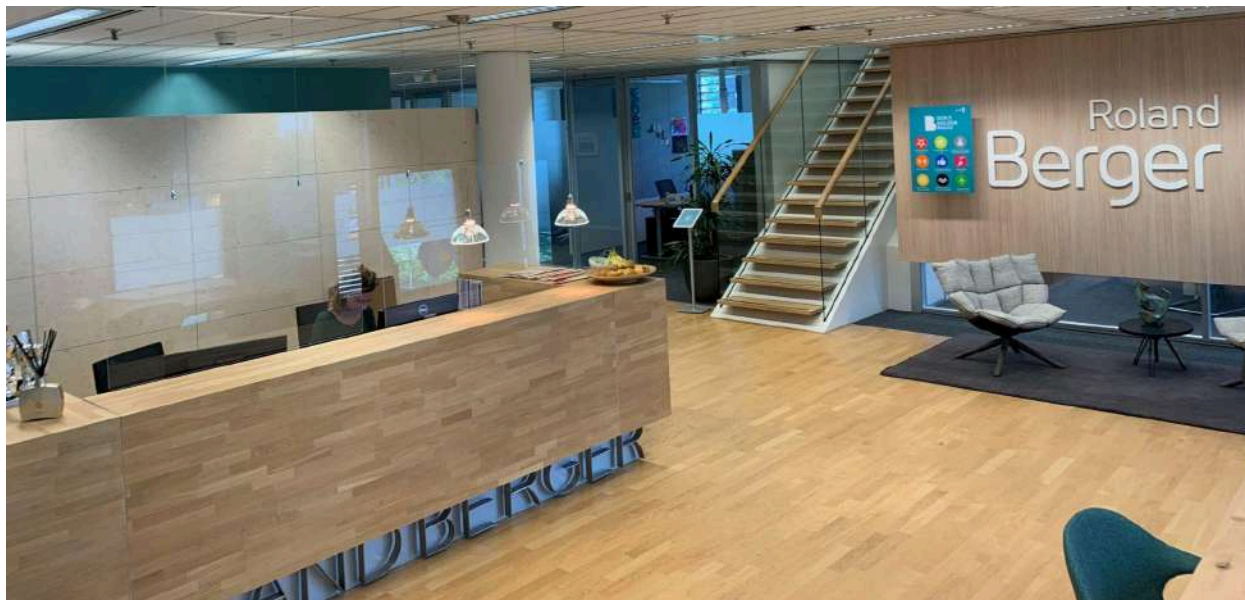
Havas Worldwide Brussels is part of the global Havas Communications network, one of the largest integrated communications groups in the world. Established in Brussels as Havas Village in 2016, the agency combines digital, creative, media, and content expertise under one roof to deliver innovative and meaningful brand communications. The Brussels office emphasizes collaboration and integration across disciplines to meet diverse client needs, helping brands connect deeply with their audiences through creativity, media innovation, and data-driven strategies. Havas Belgium is known for enabling meaningful brand experiences and driving impactful campaigns, serving a wide range of sectors with a strong focus on media, advertising, and digital transformation.

28. Publicis



Publicis Groupe Brussels is a creative communications agency that forms part of the global Publicis Groupe network, one of the world's largest advertising and communications companies. Located at Rue Picard 7 in Brussels, Publicis Groupe Belgium employs between 200-500 people and offers a range of services including marketing, advertising, digital innovation, strategy, and creativity. The agency collaborates with high-profile clients such as BNP Paribas Fortis, Orange, Renault, and Carrefour to deliver impactful brand experiences and communications. Known for fostering collective creativity and driving positive change, Publicis Groupe Brussels integrates data, strategy, media, content, and production to craft tailored campaigns that connect clients with their audiences in meaningful ways.

29. Roland Berger Strategy Consultants



Roland Berger Strategy Consultants is a global management consulting firm with a strong presence in Brussels since 1973, employing around 100 professionals in its Belgian office. The firm specializes in providing strategic advice to clients across multiple sectors including investor support (private equity, public investors, M&A), regulated industries (energy, utilities, transportation, public services), and industrial sectors (FMCG, heavy manufacturing). Known for its entrepreneurial and collaborative culture, Roland Berger supports clients in solving complex business challenges with data-driven, creative, and impactful strategies. Their Brussels office benefits from strong connections with other European and global offices, offering international opportunities and expert insights tailored to clients' needs in the European market.

30. Athenora Consulting



Athenora Consulting is an independent public affairs firm based in Brussels since 2003, specializing in European Union policy influence and regulatory strategy. The firm offers bespoke services including strategic intelligence, narrative crafting, lobbying strategy design, coalition building, and executive training. Athenora helps clients navigate and actively shape EU decision-making processes with tailored communication and advocacy approaches across sectors such as finance, digital services, healthcare, energy, and transport. In addition to consulting, they provide executive coaching and capacity building through their Athenora Coaching and Athenora Academy branches. The company is known for challenging conventions with innovative strategies while maintaining high ethical standards, serving a range of clients including public institutions, companies, and associations.

31. Hanover Communications



Hanover Communications is an award-winning strategic communications consultancy with an office in the heart of the European Quarter in Brussels. Established in 2010 in Brussels, Hanover advises businesses, trade associations, NGOs, and public sector bodies to bridge the gap between their objectives and the complex EU policy environment. The agency offers tailored integrated services across public affairs, corporate communications, and media relations, combining policy expertise with stakeholder engagement to deliver impactful EU and

pan-European advocacy and reputation campaigns. Hanover's Brussels team has extensive experience in sectors such as digital, sustainability, mobility, healthcare, energy, and chemicals, helping clients operate with resiliency and efficiency. The Brussels office is led by Managing Director Barbara Wynne, who brings over 20 years of public policy expertise. Hanover is part of the global AVENIR GLOBAL network, linking it to over 1,000 peers across multiple regions for extensive reach and expertise.

32. Mindshake PR



MindShake PR is a Brussels-based public relations and communications agency founded in 2004, specializing in strategic advice, media relations, B2B and corporate communication, product placement, lifestyle PR, environmental PR, travel and leisure PR, social media, reputation and issues management, crisis communication, media training, and internal communications. The agency prides itself on being results-driven, offering tailor-made services with values of responsiveness, relevance, creativity, and partnership. MindShake's team possesses strong experience in journalism, communication, and press relations, particularly in the mountain tourism, winter sports, and outdoor activities sectors. The agency emphasizes transparency and a collaborative approach to help clients navigate challenges in a fast-changing environment, creating effective communication and marketing tools.

33. The Brussels Office



The Brussels office of Hanover Communications is located at Square de Meeûs 35, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, in the heart of the European Quarter. This office serves as a key hub for Hanover's European operations, providing strategic communications, public affairs, media relations, and advocacy services to businesses, trade associations, NGOs, and public sector bodies operating within the EU policy environment. Hanover Brussels focuses on bridging the gap between clients' business objectives and the regulatory and political landscape of the EU by delivering tailored integrated campaigns, regulatory risk management, and reputation building. The team has extensive expertise across sectors including digital, sustainability, mobility, healthcare, energy, and chemicals, offering insights and solutions to help clients operate with resilience and efficiency in the European market. The office is led by Managing Director Barbara Wynne and is part of the global Hanover Communications network, with connections to offices in Dublin, London, and the Middle East.

34. Interface Europe



Interface Europe is a Brussels-based consultancy specializing in European research and innovation management. Founded in 2004, it provides tailored services to researchers, technology users, SMEs, public authorities, universities, and clusters to enhance the European added value of their projects. Interface Europe's expertise includes research and innovation (R&I) strategy building, European lobbying in R&I, proposal design and writing, project management, financial engineering, legal and intellectual property assistance, and training. The company is staffed by former European Commission officers, senior scientists, experienced R&D project managers, and lawyers. Its mission is to facilitate access to European and national funding, ensuring high-level professional support regardless of the promoter's financial capacity. The company is headquartered in Brussels at Rue du Trone 12.

35. BXL Consulting



Bxl-law is a Brussels-based combined law firm and EU public affairs consultancy specializing in the EU regulatory environment, particularly food and drink law. Founded in 2010 and located near European institutions, it provides comprehensive legal advice and lobbying services related to food safety, labeling, health claims, novel foods, and farm law. The firm helps clients navigate complex EU regulatory processes, including delegated and implementing acts, by offering regulatory intelligence, issue management, stakeholder mapping, and association management. bxl-law assists companies and associations in influencing EU decision-making effectively through its extensive network and expertise in advocacy, ensuring clients stay informed and compliant while focusing on their core business.

36. Soluzione Settembrini

Soluzioune Settembrini is a consultancy firm based in Brussels, specifically located at Rue de Suisse 17, 1060 Saint-Gilles. It is listed among Brussels-based public affairs and consultancy firms, with reported earnings around €0.3 million. The company is part of the diverse landscape of consultancies working within the Brussels policy and regulatory environment, offering services likely related to EU public affairs, advocacy, and strategic advice given its inclusion in listings of similar firms. The firm is relatively small with limited publicly available detailed information.

37. Bell Pottinger Private

Bell Pottinger

Bell Pottinger Private was a major British multinational public relations, reputation management, and marketing company headquartered in London. It specialized in lobbying, reputation management, crisis communications, and political consulting for governments, companies, and high-profile individuals. The firm was founded by Lord Tim Bell, a prominent PR figure who advised Margaret Thatcher. Despite its influence, Bell Pottinger became embroiled in a scandal in South Africa involving a divisive PR campaign that exploited racial tensions, which led to its expulsion from the UK Public Relations and Communications Association in 2017 and subsequent bankruptcy. After the collapse, Hanover Communications acquired Bell Pottinger's Middle East operations, while the original company ceased operations.

38. InterRecherche



InterRecherche is an experienced consulting firm based in Brussels specializing in EU funding and advocacy services. Founded as a spin-off of a large service audit group, the firm focuses on finding tailor-made solutions for EU-related issues, with over 20 years of expertise in European projects and advocacy mandates across sectors such as industry, transport, energy, SMEs, infrastructure, education, and health. InterRecherche offers comprehensive project management, strategic counselling on EU policies, legal support, EU-level studies, and high-level advocacy services. The firm also provides negotiation and dispute management services, including coaching and mediation, aiming to find win-win solutions in complex cross-border business and regulatory challenges. It is staffed by multilingual experts and operates from Avenue Chazal 147, 1030 Brussels, near key EU institutions.

39. Europe Analytica



Europe Analytica is a Brussels-based independent public affairs consultancy founded in 1999, specializing in the cultural and creative industries, media policy, digital transformation, data privacy, advertising, copyright, competition, innovation, and sustainability. The firm offers tailored monitoring, mapping, analysis, strategic advice, and client representation in EU policy matters. Led by Director and Chairman Angela Mills Wade, it combines over 30 years of experience with a dynamic multicultural team to provide bespoke solutions with a strong ethical foundation. Europe Analytica has an extensive influential network in Brussels and internationally, supporting clients such as the European Publishers Council and the News Media Coalition, and has won awards for its in-house team and effective lobbying of the European Parliament.

40. Fairvalue Corporate & Public Affairs

The logo for Fairvalue Corporate & Public Affairs is displayed on a solid red rectangular background. The word "FAIRVALUE" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "CORPORATE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, with an ampersand symbol between the two words.

Fairvalue Corporate & Public Affairs is an independent European global strategy consultancy with offices in Paris, Brussels, Rome, London, and Warsaw, specializing in public affairs, corporate communication, crisis management, and international business development. Founded in 2005 by Anne Mazoyer-Jankowska, the firm focuses on supporting mid-sized and larger human-scale companies with tailored, responsive strategies at national, European, and international levels. Fairvalue is recognized for its expertise in crisis management, especially in handling corporate restructurings and complex industrial crises, and places strong emphasis on anticipation and planning in volatile environments. Its diverse client base spans industries including automotive, gold mining, legal services, and family employment sectors, and it is committed to fostering strong economic ties across Europe despite geopolitical challenges like Brexit.

41. Furrer.Hugi & Partner



Furrer.Hugi & Partner is one of Switzerland's largest and leading owner-managed public affairs and corporate communications agencies, with an office in Brussels. Founded in 2006, it specializes in public affairs, corporate communication, lobbying, and campaign management. The agency connects people and ideas at the intersection of business, politics, and society, offering customized communication strategies and proactive engagement with technological trends. With offices in Bern, Zurich, Lausanne, Lugano, and Brussels, Furrer.Hugi emphasizes interdisciplinary work, high ethical standards, and quality certification (CMS IV). It is part of the Leading Swiss Agencies network and collaborates internationally via ICCO, serving national and international companies, associations, charities, political parties, and public bodies.

42. Anna MacDougald EU Public Affairs



Anna MacDougald EU Public Affairs is a Brussels-based consultancy comprising independent multilingual professionals with backgrounds in law, economics, and politics, offering tailored public affairs services. With over 30 years of experience within the Brussels EU policy environment, the firm is well-versed in navigating EU legislation and decision-making processes to provide effective advocacy and strategic advice. It operates from 195 Rue Louis Hap, 1040 Brussels and is recognized as a smaller consultancy in terms of earnings but respected for its expertise and network.

43. ISC Intelligence in Science (ISC)



ISC Intelligence in Science (ISC) is a Brussels-based advisory consultancy specializing in science public relations, dissemination of scientific information, and science and R&D policy analysis. ISC supports scientific and technology communities by building understanding of their research and innovation activities among policymakers and decision-makers at the international, EU, and member state levels. The firm provides services such as policy monitoring, identifying opportunities in EU legislation, early-stage identification of funding calls and tenders, as well as designing and implementing communication strategies and awareness campaigns targeted at scientists, journalists, and policy actors. ISC is also experienced in managing communication channels, science events, and press conferences to effectively promote R&D and scientific capabilities. The firm is located at Square de Meeus 37, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels, and its staff includes experts with significant backgrounds in science policy and R&D analysis.

44. Stefen Scheuer



Stefan Scheuer is a Brussels-based policy director and public affairs consultant specializing in environmental and energy policies within the EU. He serves as Policy Director at the European Environmental Bureau, Europe's largest environmental federation, and has over 20 years of experience analyzing EU environmental legislation, advising NGOs, Members of the European Parliament, and other stakeholders on sustainable development and regulatory matters. Stefan is particularly recognized for his expertise in chemicals regulation, including the REACH directive, advocating for responsible and precautionary EU chemical policies. His consultancy delivers strategic advice, management services, training, and advocacy in environmental and energy-related EU policies, working closely with a wide network of civil society organizations and policymakers to promote safer and sustainable practices across Europe.

45. Stenstrom Consulting



Stenström Consulting is a Brussels-based EU public affairs consultancy founded and led by Kajsa Stenström, who has over 25 years of experience providing strategic advice on EU regulatory and policy issues. The firm offers precise, tactful, and comprehensive services including lobbying, monitoring, trade association support, awareness campaigns, and European Union training, serving clients from various sectors such as healthcare, technology, finance, and energy. Known for its client retention and discreet yet effective approach, Stenström Consulting also collaborates internationally with partners in key countries. Kajsa Stenström, who launched the EU lobbying team at the international law firm DLA Piper before founding the consultancy, is recognized as a top consultant in Brussels, valued for her deep knowledge and strategic, lateral thinking.

46. Zenab

Zenab is a smaller Brussels-based consultancy registered at 46 Avenue Vanderaey, 1180 Brussels, focused on EU public affairs. According to the European Transparency Register, Zenab reports a modest turnover of approximately €0.1 million. The consultancy is part of a broad ecosystem of small to mid-sized firms in Brussels providing policy monitoring, advocacy, and strategic advice on EU legislative and regulatory matters.

47. Orpheus Public Affairs

Orpheus Public Affairs is a smaller Brussels-based public affairs consultancy focusing on EU policy monitoring, advocacy, and representation. It is listed among numerous independent consultancies and boutiques operating in Brussels with specialized expertise in navigating EU legislative and regulatory processes, providing strategic advice and support to clients from various sectors. Although detailed specific information and financial data about Orpheus Public Affairs is limited, it is recognized as part of the broader Brussels ecosystem of public affairs firms committed to effective stakeholder engagement at the European level.

48. Clean Fuels Consulting

Clean Fuels Consulting is a Brussels-based environmental consultancy dedicated to facilitating the commercialization and adoption of clean fuels and technologies, with a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and advancing the energy transition in the transport sector. Led by Jeffrey Seisler, the firm provides research, policy analysis, advocacy, and public relations services targeting U.S., European, and international institutions including the United Nations. Clean Fuels Consulting supports clients such as governments, manufacturers, suppliers, and non-governmental organizations to promote regulations and investments that foster renewable and alternative fuels, aligning with the EU's climate neutrality goals for 2050. They emphasize sustainable development, competitive industry frameworks, and effective regulatory standards to protect health and the environment, contributing actively to campaigns such as Clean Fuels for All.

49. Alonso & Associates



Alonso & Associates is an international legal consultancy founded in 1986 with offices in Brussels and Madrid, specializing in regulation, lobbying, and advocacy in European Union and United Nations affairs. The firm provides expert advice, representation, and interest management across diverse sectors including transport, energy, construction, agrifood, chemicals, environment, and the circular economy. Alonso & Associates boasts a deep understanding of EU decision-making processes, maintains excellent contacts with institutions, embassies, European federations, and companies, and supports clients in navigating Brussels by offering services such as institutional relations, advocacy, legal consultancy, access to EU grants and funding, and crisis management. The consultancy has notable achievements including securing EU funding, obtaining regulatory exemptions, managing food crises, and facilitating trade and export solutions, serving an international clientele from Europe, Asia, the Americas, and beyond.

50. Brussels Direct

Brussels Direct is a specialized EU Affairs Consultancy based in Brussels that plays a significant role in representing its clients' interests before the European Union institutions. By leveraging its expertise in navigating the complex EU policymaking landscape, Brussels Direct assists Belgian organizations and companies in effectively lobbying and influencing EU legislation and regulations. This consultancy works closely with policymakers, stakeholders, and member state representatives to ensure that their clients' positions are clearly communicated and considered in EU decision-making processes, thereby helping Belgium assert its interests at the heart of European governance. Through strategic advocacy and stakeholder engagement, Brussels Direct supports Belgium in shaping EU policies favorable to its economic and political priorities.

51. Cannegieter Consultancy

Cannegieter Consultancy is a Brussels-based public affairs consultancy that plays an active role in supporting Belgian interests within the EU lobbying ecosystem. It provides strategic advice and communication services to help its clients navigate the complexities of EU policymaking and effectively engage with EU institutions. By facilitating dialogue and representation before European decision-makers, Cannegieter Consultancy helps Belgian businesses and organizations influence the development of EU policies and regulations that impact Belgium's economic and political priorities. Its presence in Brussels ensures Belgian stakeholders have the necessary advocacy support to advance their positions at the heart of European governance.

52. Project Europa



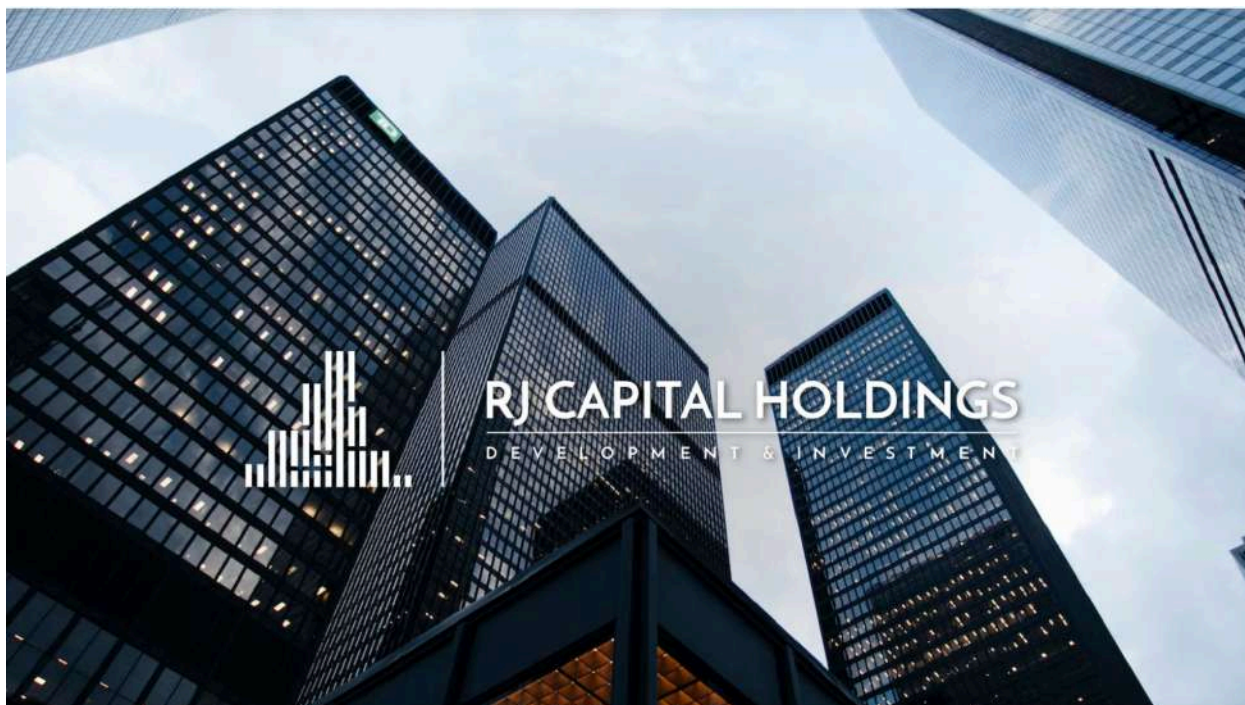
Project Europa is recognized as a Belgian legal entity registered on the EU Transparency Register, functioning as a lobby organization with strong ties to the European People's Party (EPP) group. Operating at the intersection of former Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and interest representation, Project Europa works to facilitate engagement and advocacy efforts that directly influence EU policymaking. By organizing dialogues and debates aligned with the priorities of the EPP and broader EU legislative agenda, Project Europa helps Belgium navigate and shape EU regulations and directives. This organization exemplifies the blurred line between political institutions and lobbying entities in Brussels, leveraging its strategic position to foster Belgium's interests within EU governance structures effectively.

53. Glocal Communications



Glocal Communications is a Brussels-based consultancy specializing in strategic communication and public affairs. It supports clients in navigating the complex EU policymaking environment by developing effective communication strategies, building alliances, and contributing to EU policy and legislative processes. By offering services such as advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and public affairs, Glocal Communications helps Belgian organizations amplify their voice and influence decisions at the EU level, thereby promoting Belgium's interests within the European Union framework. Their expertise in crafting compelling messages and political advice makes them a valuable partner for clients seeking to engage with EU institutions effectively.

54. RJI Capital



RJI Capital is a global financial services and strategic advisory firm with a strong track record in emerging markets and international transactions. Founded in Washington, D.C., the firm has evolved into an international business with offices worldwide, including in major financial hubs such as Zurich, London, and Dubai. RJI Capital offers a broad range of services including deal origination, transaction structuring, project finance, and strategic market entry advisories. While not specifically focused on EU lobbying, its expertise in navigating complex markets and regulatory environments enables it to support client interests that may intersect with EU policies and regulations, thereby indirectly contributing to Belgium's global business presence and market influence. Ready for the next company name to provide a similar result.

55. Electus

Electus is a Brussels-based consultancy engaged in EU lobbying activities, although publicly available financial figures are not found in national authorities or transparency registers. Positioned at 1, boîte 2 Boulevard Charlemagne, Brussels, Electus operates within the dense ecosystem of lobbying firms that influence EU policymaking. The firm supports clients, potentially including Belgian interests, by navigating the EU's complex legislative and regulatory framework to advocate for favorable policy outcomes. While specific details on their lobbying

practices are scarce, Electus exemplifies the many smaller firms contributing to Belgium's efforts to engage and influence decisions at the EU level through strategic advocacy and representation.

56. Euro P.A. Consulting



Euro P.A. Consulting, also known as PA Europe, is a well-established Brussels-based public affairs and lobbying firm founded in 1993. The company specializes in providing strategic political advice, public affairs consulting, lobbying, and communication services to a wide range of clients, including governments, multinational corporations, and NGOs. With a strong presence in Brussels, PA Europe helps Belgian and European clients navigate the complexities of the EU legislative process by engaging with key EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European Parliament. By leveraging its deep understanding of political and regulatory dynamics, PA Europe effectively supports Belgium in shaping EU policies, ensuring that its clients' interests are well-represented and influential in the decision-making process.

57. Eurocity



Eurocity is a Brussels-based consultancy specializing in providing niche consultancy and resourcing solutions primarily for sectors such as aerospace, defense, security, telecommunications, and logistics. Established in 1991, Eurocity has developed a strong reputation for delivering experienced professionals who integrate with project teams to enhance project delivery and execute knowledge transfer. Although not primarily a lobbying firm, Eurocity supports Belgian and European clients by offering expert consultancy services that indirectly assist in navigating regulatory environments and complex public procurement processes. Its presence in Brussels and expertise in niche domains contribute to Belgium's broader capacity to engage effectively with the EU institutions and influence policy implementation through specialized consultancy support. Ready to receive the next company name for the requested paragraph.

58. Euro Top Co-operation Partners



Euro Top Co-operation Partners, based in Brussels since 1990, is a corporate management and communication consultancy known for its proactive and innovative approach. The firm offers a comprehensive array of services including European project management, strategic communication, marketing, web development, and administration of international and European Commission-financed projects. Euro Top helps Belgian and European clients by guiding them through the entire project lifecycle—from needs analysis to partner identification, application preparation, regulatory compliance, and commercial implementation—thereby facilitating successful collaboration within European consortia and cooperative ventures. Their expertise in project management and communication supports Belgium's ability to effectively participate in and influence EU-funded projects and policies.

59. EU Ventures European Affairs & Strategies



EU Ventures European Affairs & Strategies is a Brussels-based boutique public affairs consultancy that specializes in providing strategic advice and advocacy services to clients navigating the complex European Union policy and regulatory landscape. Founded by experts with extensive experience in EU institutions, the consultancy focuses on amplifying clients' voices at the heart of EU policymaking through tailored lobbying and communication strategies. EU Ventures supports Belgian organizations and stakeholders by fostering effective engagement with EU decision-makers, ensuring their interests are represented and influential in shaping EU legislation and policies that impact Belgium and Europe.

60. I coda European Affairs



I coda European Affairs is a leading public affairs consultancy based in Brussels since 1992, specializing in European public affairs, lobbying training, EU coaching, and organizing EU seminars and events. With over 30 years of experience, I coda offers strategic advice to help clients influence legislative processes within the EU, keeping them informed about relevant legislation and guiding them through EU decision-making. Their multilingual team possesses expertise across various sectors including healthcare, education, financial services, and insurance. This combination of policy knowledge and practical lobbying experience allows I coda to effectively represent Belgian interests, fostering strong communication and advocacy connections with EU institutions, thereby significantly contributing to Belgium's influence within the EU.

61. JKL



JKL is one of the numerous Brussels-based consultancies engaged in European public affairs and lobbying, although specific detailed financial or operational data for JKL is not readily available in standard public listings. Like many boutique firms in Brussels, JKL likely supports Belgian and European clients by helping them understand and navigate the EU's legislative and regulatory environment. Through tailored lobbying strategies and engagement with EU institutions, JKL assists in advancing its clients' interests within the complex policymaking processes of the European Union, contributing to Belgium's influence in EU affairs.

62. PDC EU Affairs



PDC EU Affairs is a Brussels-based public affairs consultancy focused on providing strategic advice and advocacy services to clients aiming to influence EU policies and decisions. The firm specializes in navigating the EU institutional landscape, offering political intelligence, monitoring, and tailored lobbying strategies. By working closely with policymakers and stakeholders within the European Commission and Parliament, PDC EU Affairs helps Belgian organizations articulate their interests and have a meaningful impact on legislative processes. Their expertise spans various policy areas, enabling clients to manage regulatory challenges and capitalize on opportunities within the EU framework, thereby enhancing Belgium's presence and influence at the EU level.

63. Pinnacle PR



Pinnacle PR is a public relations consultancy based in Brussels that specializes in communications and public affairs. The firm excels in crafting strategic media relations and communication campaigns to enhance the visibility and reputation of its clients. Pinnacle PR works closely with organizations to identify their communication objectives, delivering tailored and effective PR solutions that help shape public narratives and influence key stakeholders. While it primarily focuses on media relations, its strategic communication efforts also support Belgian and European clients in engaging with policymakers, thereby indirectly contributing to lobbying and influence within the EU framework.

64. Prime

Prime is a Brussels-based public affairs consultancy providing clients with practical and strategic advice to help achieve their business objectives within the EU policy environment. The firm offers comprehensive services including political monitoring and intelligence, stakeholder engagement programs, policy research, event management, and public affairs training. With a dedicated interdisciplinary team, Prime supports Belgian and European clients in navigating the complexities of EU institutions, ensuring effective representation and influence in the policymaking process. Its expertise in managing coalition-building, trade associations, and advocacy campaigns makes Prime a valuable partner in enhancing Belgium's lobbying capabilities at the EU level.

65. Pvanl

PvanL is a Brussels-based public affairs consultancy that provides specialized advocacy support, political and regulatory risk assessment, and strategic communications. The firm assists Belgian and European clients in navigating EU policymaking by offering integrated communication strategies, event management, and policy monitoring services. PvanL's expertise extends to managing trade and industry associations and supporting clients in accessing and managing EU-funded research and innovation projects. By combining technical knowledge with coalition-building skills, PvanL helps Belgium's organizations engage effectively with EU institutions and influence policy outcomes to match their interests.

66. 2MPublicaffairs

2MPublicaffairs is a Brussels-based public affairs consultancy that offers a comprehensive range of services including policy monitoring, intelligence gathering, lobbying, and strategic communication. Since its establishment in 1992, the firm has developed a deep understanding of the EU decision-making process and specializes in representing the interests of companies and organizations to European institutions and member states. 2MPublicaffairs helps Belgian and European clients navigate the complexities of EU policymaking, delivering tailored advocacy and communication strategies to influence policy outcomes effectively. Their experienced team includes professionals with backgrounds in EU institutions, media, NGOs, and the private sector, ensuring they provide well-rounded advice and impactful public affairs solutions.

67. The European Consulting Company (ECCO)



The European Consulting Company (ECCO), established in 1975 and based in Brussels, is a leading specialist consultancy offering food regulatory and policy intelligence alongside association management solutions tailored to the food and ingredient sectors. ECCO is recognized for its deep expertise in EU food law, science, nutrition, international trade, and public affairs, providing clients with comprehensive support to navigate complex regulatory environments and influence policymaking. The company builds strategic advocacy approaches and facilitates collaboration among associations, helping Belgian and European food-related businesses engage effectively with the EU institutions. ECCO's long-standing reputation is built on integrity, professionalism, and proactive communication strategies that strengthen client reputations and influence at the EU level.

68. TGG & Partners



TGG & Partners appears to be a company providing management consultancy services rather than a traditional Brussels-based public affairs or lobbying consultancy. Incorporated in January 2024 and registered in the UK, TGG Partners specializes in management consultancy activities other than financial management. Their services focus on connecting visionary companies with strategic partnerships, offering interim Chief Relationship Officer (CRO) consulting, investor introductions, business development, and guidance on positioning for sustainable growth. They emphasize facilitating high-value introductions, cultivating collaborations, and helping companies expand their influence globally, particularly in sectors such as sustainable agriculture, food security, economic empowerment, and healthcare.

69. Wider EU



The Wider EU refers to the European Union's community of 27 member states as of 2025, including countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, and Belgium, among others, collectively representing over 450 million people and comprising one of the largest economies in the world. The EU operates as a unique political and economic union allowing free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, governed by common policies on trade, agriculture, environment, and more. It continues to pursue integration and enlargement, with several candidate countries like Albania, Serbia, and Ukraine in the process of joining. The EU also works collaboratively in areas of foreign policy, security, and climate action to maintain unity and influence on the global stage. This "wider" perspective includes both current members and those on the path to membership, reflecting the EU's evolving nature and expansion ambitions.

70. Clifford Chance Brussels



Clifford Chance's Brussels office is a prominent part of this leading global law firm, combining a high-profile Belgian law practice with a pre-eminent competition and international trade law group. The office, located at Avenue Louise 149, employs over 40 lawyers and 11 partners specializing in a diverse range of fields including competition/antitrust, corporate/M&A, banking, finance, capital markets, real estate, tax, and litigation. It serves both domestic Belgian clients and international organizations, advising on high-profile and complex transactions across multiple jurisdictions. The firm is known for its expertise in cross-border M&A, private equity, real estate, banking, and regulatory matters, and is highly ranked in major legal directories. Recent highlights include advising on significant acquisitions, IPOs, financing rounds for Belgian unicorn companies, and major syndicated credit facilities, reflecting their influential role in Belgium's corporate and legal landscape.

71. Bird & Bird Brussels



Bird & Bird's Brussels office is a part of this major international law firm with over 45 multilingual lawyers specializing in areas such as commercial, corporate, competition, intellectual property, privacy, regulatory, tax, and trade law. Serving both local and international clients, the office has particularly strong expertise in technology, communications, life sciences, energy, automotive, and food sectors. Located centrally on Avenue Louise, the Brussels team offers full-service legal support tailored to the needs of businesses operating in regulated markets and rapidly evolving industries. The firm is recognized for combining deep sector knowledge with legal expertise to help clients navigate complex regulatory and commercial challenges in Belgium and across the EU.

72. DLA Piper Brussels



DLA Piper's Brussels office, established in 2007, is part of a global law firm with over 4,200 lawyers across more than 90 offices worldwide. The Brussels team specializes in areas such as government affairs, competition and antitrust, trade, digital services, healthcare, agriculture, and technology hardware. With around 8 public affairs consultants based in Brussels, the office delivers integrated legal and policy services covering corporate, employment, finance, intellectual property, litigation, regulatory, tax, and technology law. It serves a wide range of clients, including multinational corporations, governments, and public sector bodies, providing strategic advice on EU regulatory developments and cross-border transactions. The firm is known for its pragmatic approach, combining global reach with deep local expertise to support clients in navigating complex legal and policy challenges within Belgium and the EU.

73. Freshfields Brussels



Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's Brussels office is a leading international law firm with a strong presence since 1989, located in Bastion Tower at Place du Champ de Mars. The office comprises over 120 lawyers representing 23 nationalities and offers comprehensive legal services including antitrust, competition and trade law, M&A, corporate advisory, banking, finance, dispute resolution, employment, and tax. Freshfields is renowned for its expert antitrust team, one of the largest and most highly regarded in Brussels, advising on complex transactions, investigations, and litigation risks. The firm supports clients in navigating EU regulatory and legal frameworks, focusing on globally coordinated strategies and providing tailored, commercially minded advice. Freshfields maintains a high standard of client service and a commitment to staying ahead of emerging EU policy trends, ensuring strong advocacy for Belgian and international clients.

74. Linklaters Brussels



Linklaters' Brussels office is a major component of this global law firm, known for its top-tier expertise in areas such as antitrust and competition, corporate/M&A, banking and finance, tax, and dispute resolution. Located at Rue Brederode 13, the office is highly regarded for its pragmatic, commercial approach and strong connections with EU decision-makers, particularly in antitrust and foreign investment cases. The Brussels team is integrated into Linklaters' extensive global network spanning 30 offices in 21 countries, enabling them to handle complex multi-jurisdictional transactions and regulatory matters efficiently. With more than 140 lawyers across Belgium (including Antwerp), Linklaters Belgium serves a broad client base of multinational corporations, financial institutions, and governments, delivering strategic legal counsel on Belgian and EU law.

75. Baker McKenzie Brussels



Baker McKenzie's Brussels office, established in 1957, is a key part of this global law firm with over 70 lawyers in Belgium across their Brussels and Antwerp offices. The Brussels team specializes in European and competition law, corporate finance, banking, real estate, employment, intellectual property, environmental law, public and administrative law, tax, and healthcare law. They provide expert legal and commercial advice to multinational corporations, financial institutions, and other organizations, combining local market knowledge with global expertise. The office is known for supporting clients through complex regulatory and cross-border transactions, particularly in EU law and policy matters, and is committed to diversity, inclusion, and continuous professional development for its legal professionals.

76. Hogan Lovells Brussels



Hogan Lovells Brussels office offers comprehensive legal services focused on EU regulations, competition law, finance, international trade, life sciences, data privacy, environmental law, and Belgian and pan-European finance transactions. Located in Brussels, the office provides crucial support for businesses operating within the EU's complex regulatory landscape, advising Belgian, EU, and global clients on antitrust investigations, merger controls, financial services regulation, foreign direct investment, and other key areas. Hogan Lovells combines deep legal expertise with a strong understanding of EU institutions and client industries, delivering pragmatic, imaginative solutions. The Brussels office emphasizes a collaborative working environment and offers career development opportunities for lawyers interested in EU law and policy.

77. Covington & Burling Brussels



Covington & Burling's Brussels office is a leading international law firm with a large integrated public policy team, combining legal, political, and regulatory expertise to assist clients in highly regulated sectors such as technology, media, communications, life sciences, energy, and the environment. Established in Brussels since 1990, the office employs a multicultural team of lawyers and advisors who provide comprehensive advice across competition law, regulatory compliance, privacy and data security, and policy and public affairs. Covington is known for its deep knowledge of EU institutions and policy processes, as well as for having former high-ranking policymakers among its senior advisors. The office tackles complex cross-border challenges, emphasizing innovative legal solutions, strategic advocacy, and strong litigation capabilities, making it highly regarded by clients and market commentators alike.

78. Norton Rose Fulbright Brussels



Norton Rose Fulbright's Brussels office is a key part of its global antitrust and regulatory practice, recognized for providing comprehensive legal services in competition law, merger filings, regulatory investigations, and civil litigation including class and group actions. The office serves a diverse client base, including multinational corporations and government organizations, delivering strategic advice on antitrust, competition, trade law, and regulatory compliance within the EU and beyond. With a multinational team that operates in several languages, Norton Rose Fulbright Brussels combines deep legal expertise and an insider's understanding of policymaking to offer pragmatic and commercially focused solutions. The firm has a strong reputation for client responsiveness and detailed knowledge of European regulatory frameworks, supporting clients throughout the legislative and enforcement processes.

79. Allen & Overy Brussels



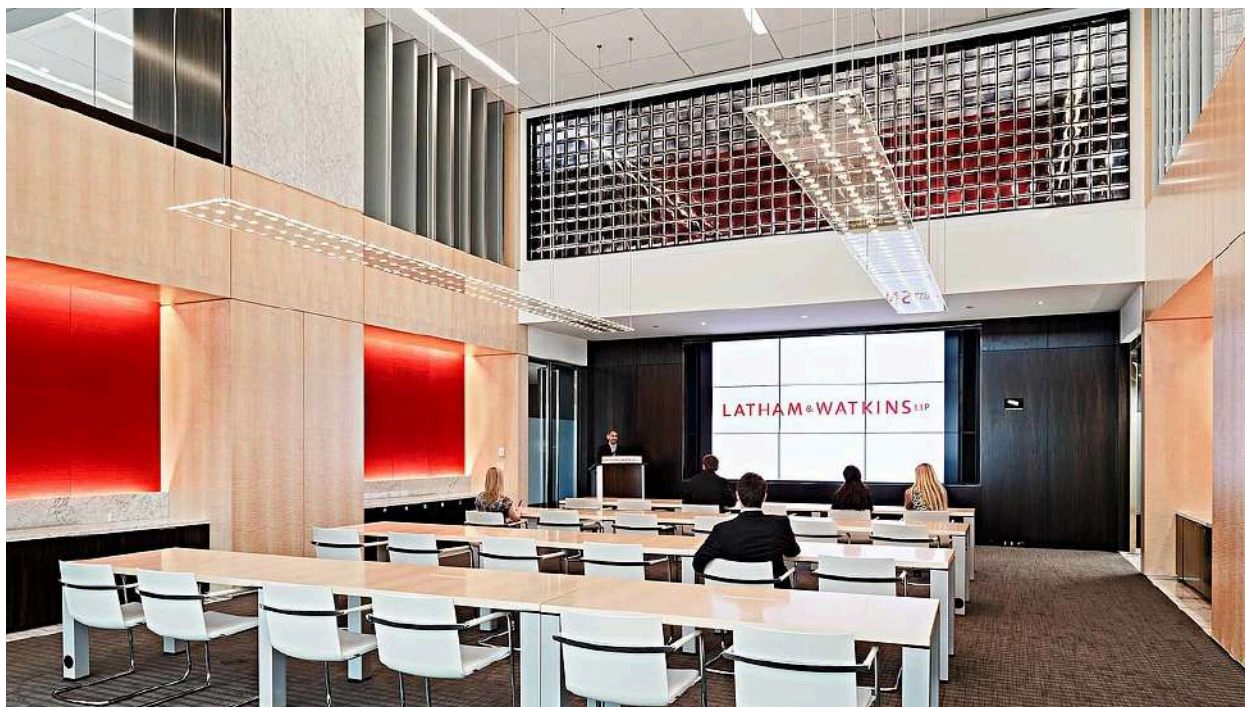
Allen & Overy's Brussels office is part of the newly formed global law firm A&O Shearman, created by the 2024 merger of Allen & Overy and Shearman & Sterling. With over 120 lawyers in Brussels and Antwerp, the firm offers comprehensive legal services including M&A, corporate finance, disputes, employment, IP, data protection, tax, antitrust, EU and public law, and environmental regulation. The Brussels office is renowned for delivering innovative solutions to complex legal challenges and supports both domestic and international clients, including corporations, financial institutions, and EU bodies. The firm also emphasizes continuous professional development, exemplified by its EU Law Academy for junior lawyers, and offers a dynamic, highly collaborative environment with extensive global resources.

80. CMS Brussels



CMS Brussels office, headquartered on Chaussée de La Hulpe 178, is a well-established full-service law firm with more than 80 lawyers providing a wide array of legal and tax solutions. Active since 1987 and strengthened by a 2017 merger, CMS Belgium combines deep local knowledge with a global CMS network of over 5,000 legal and tax professionals across 40 countries. The Brussels office serves local and international clients, offering expertise in sectors such as corporate/M&A, competition and EU law, banking and finance, dispute resolution, employment, intellectual property, environmental law, tax, real estate, and technology, among others. The firm is valued for its sector-focused approach, combining thorough market understanding with a practical, future-oriented legal perspective designed to meet clients' complex cross-border needs.

81. Latham & Watkins Brussels



Latham & Watkins' Brussels office serves as the hub for the firm's highly regarded European antitrust and competition practice, as well as its broader European regulatory practice. The multilingual team in Brussels specializes in complex competition issues, regularly representing clients before the European Commission, national competition authorities, and EU courts. They provide expert advice on antitrust, merger control, the Digital Markets Act, foreign direct investment, foreign subsidies regulation, and broader EU regulatory advocacy. Known for their pragmatic and business-oriented approach, the office handles cross-border matters efficiently by working closely with Latham's global offices. The Brussels office also actively engages in pro bono work and contributes to the community, maintaining a high standard of legal and ethical commitment.

82. White & Case Brussels



White & Case's Brussels office, located in the heart of the EU quarter, is a prominent international law firm known for combining deep local expertise with a strong global network. The office specializes in European Union law, competition law, mergers and acquisitions, banking and finance, dispute resolution, intellectual property, tax, and regulatory matters. Their EU law team advises clients on substantive policy areas such as competition, state aid, customs, environmental, energy, and telecommunications law, and actively shapes policy through litigation and advocacy before European institutions. The firm supports major cross-border transactions and complex disputes, serving multinational corporations, financial institutions, and governments, and is recognized for responsive, commercially focused advice and sector-specific knowledge.

83. Debevoise & Plimpton Brussels



Debevoise & Plimpton does not currently have a dedicated office in Brussels. The firm's main European offices are in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, and other key financial centers. Debevoise & Plimpton is a premier global law firm renowned for handling high-stakes corporate matters such as mergers and acquisitions, private equity, finance, litigation, international arbitration, and regulatory work. It is known for its collaborative culture, deep industry knowledge, and high-quality legal advice, serving clients worldwide through a strategically located global network. For matters related to Belgium or EU policy in Brussels, Debevoise typically serves clients through its nearby European offices, especially London and Paris.

84. Mayer Brown Brussels



Mayer Brown's Brussels office, established in 1992 and recently relocated in June 2025 to the prestigious "The Louise" tower on Avenue Louise 149, serves as the firm's hub for European Union law, policy, and regulatory matters. With over 20 lawyers and professionals, the office advises companies, industries, and trade associations in areas including antitrust and competition, government affairs, product regulatory issues, ESG, and trade and customs. The team combines diverse professional backgrounds, including experience in institutions like the European Commission and World Trade Organization, and is highly recognized in legal directories for its expertise. The modern office environment supports collaboration and innovation, strategically positioned close to European institutions and other key stakeholders.

85. Sidley Austin Brussels



Sidley Austin's Brussels office, established in 2003 and located in the Neo Building on Rue Montoyer, is a key center for the firm's European competition, regulatory, trade, and antitrust practices. The office is home to more than 30 legal professionals providing expert guidance on EU competition law, merger control, trade policy, and regulatory matters. It serves multinational corporations, industry associations, and governments, helping clients navigate the complexities of EU institutions and policies with innovative and strategic legal solutions. The managing partner of the Brussels office, Ken Daly, is highly regarded for his expertise in competition law and has won numerous accolades for his client-focused and practical approach. Sidley also has significant global reach with 21 offices worldwide, enabling cross-border collaboration and insight.

86. Shearman & Sterling Brussels



Shearman & Sterling's Brussels office merged with Allen & Overy in 2024 to form the new global law firm A&O Shearman. Prior to the merger, Shearman & Sterling was known for its strong finance and high-end corporate work, including major cross-border M&A and capital markets transactions. The Brussels team was active in EU and competition law but experienced some partner departures leading up to the merger. Now as part of A&O Shearman, the Brussels office combines over 120 lawyers from both legacy firms across Brussels and Antwerp, offering comprehensive legal services spanning corporate, finance, disputes, intellectual property, tax, environmental regulation, EU and public law, and more. The merged firm leverages the deep expertise and global reach of both predecessors to provide innovative solutions to complex, cross-border legal challenges.

87. WilmerHale Brussels



WilmerHale's Brussels office is located in Bastion Tower, Place du Champ de Mars 5, 1050 Brussels. Established in 1990, the office is highly regarded for its expertise in EU competition law, including major mergers, cartel investigations, state aid, and related litigation. The Brussels team handles a wide range of multijurisdictional competition cases and litigation, working closely with colleagues in other global offices such as Berlin, Frankfurt, London, Boston, and New York. Additionally, the office has deep experience in key EU regulatory areas including aviation, logistics, data protection, energy, financial services, and life sciences. WilmerHale's Brussels lawyers are admitted in multiple European jurisdictions as well as the United States, reflecting a strong pan-European and transatlantic orientation. They serve multinational companies and their Belgian subsidiaries on corporate, regulatory, and business transactions across Europe.

88. Quinn Emanuel Brussels



Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan's Brussels office is located at Blue Tower, Avenue Louise 326, 5th Floor, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. Established in 2014, it is the firm's seventh European office and focuses primarily on EU and Member State competition litigation and investigations. The Brussels team is led by Managing Partner Miguel Rato and includes specialists in complex competition matters such as investigations, litigation, and regulatory advice, with a strong focus on industries like high tech, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, financial services, and transportation. The office is part of Quinn Emanuel's global network of 35 offices, providing clients with integrated expertise for multijurisdictional competition disputes and related matters.

89. Paul Hastings Brussels



Paul Hastings' Brussels office is located at Avenue Louise 222, Brussels 1000, Belgium. The office is a key part of Paul Hastings' European presence and works closely with their London and Paris offices to advise clients throughout Europe. Its practice areas include global merger control cases, representation before the European Commission, state aid matters, and litigation in complex cases before the EU courts in Luxembourg. The Brussels team is recognized for its expertise in competition and antitrust law, corporate law, and regulatory matters, serving a wide range of multinational clients across sectors.

90. Gibson Dunn Brussels



Gibson Dunn's Brussels office, established in 2003, is the center of the firm's competition law practice in Europe. Located at Avenue Louise 149, 1050 Brussels, the office represents global and European clients on a full spectrum of EU and national competition law matters. It handles complex merger filings, foreign direct investment investigations, behavioral and cartel investigations, and regulatory policy issues including the Digital Markets Act and EU Foreign Subsidies Regulation. The Brussels team is highly experienced across diverse sectors such as high technology, pharmaceuticals, financial services, chemicals, consumer electronics, and transport infrastructure. The lawyers are qualified in multiple European jurisdictions and work closely with Gibson Dunn's offices in London, Paris, and Munich to deliver integrated competition and regulatory advice.

91. Dechert Brussels



Dechert's Brussels office, opened in 1968, was one of the first U.S. law firms to establish a presence in the heart of the European Union's administrative and regulatory hub. Located at IT Tower, 480 Avenue Louise, Box 13A, 1050 Brussels, the office specializes in complex competition and EU law, corporate transactions, regulatory compliance, government investigations, and litigation. Dechert's Brussels lawyers represent multinational and domestic clients before the European Commission and various European and Belgian courts and regulatory bodies. The team is noted for its expertise in merger control, cartel investigations, state aid, privatization matters, and advising regulated industries such as energy, telecommunications, healthcare, and financial services. The firm is praised for offering innovative, practical legal solutions and has a client-focused approach with strong multilingual capabilities across English, French, Dutch, and German.

92. Kirkland & Ellis Brussels



Kirkland & Ellis' Brussels office is located at Kunstlaan/Avenue des Arts 6-9, 1210 Brussels, Belgium. Since opening in 2021, the office has developed a strong antitrust and competition law team known for handling high-profile global merger control and Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) clearance mandates. The Brussels team advises multinational clients on complex pan-European antitrust issues, including cartel investigations, foreign direct investment, and regulatory compliance. They work closely with Kirkland & Ellis' well-established London office to provide integrated legal support across Europe. The firm's global network and expertise enable it to guide clients through innovative cross-border M&A transactions and evolving regulatory landscapes.

Financial & Corporate Leverage

Belgium's corporate sector and financial institutions wield considerable economic leverage to influence European institutions through funding streams and strategic partnerships. Belgian companies, often through industry associations or sector-specific federations, engage in well-coordinated lobbying campaigns aimed at shaping EU regulations on trade, taxation, digital markets, and environmental standards.

Conflicts of interest arise when corporate funding supports research or think tanks with close institutional ties to EU policymakers, blurring the boundaries between private profit motives and public policy objectives. Additionally, Belgian enterprises benefit from proximity to decision-makers, facilitating influence over resource allocation and regulatory approvals within the EU. This financial leverage extends to lobbying expenditures, sponsorships of EU events, and contributions to partisan advocacy groups, consolidating economic power into political influence. Such dynamics create challenges for maintaining fair and balanced policy outcomes reflective of the broader European public interest.

Media & Think Tank Ecosystem

The Belgian media and think tank ecosystem plays a critical role in shaping EU policy narratives and public perceptions. Brussels hosts a vibrant landscape of policy research institutes, advocacy think tanks, and news outlets, many of which operate with funding or ideological support linked to Belgian political and economic actors. These entities craft narratives that can influence legislative debates by framing issues in ways advantageous to Belgian priorities, often emphasising themes like regional autonomy, economic competitiveness, or regulatory cautiousness.

For example, Belgian think tanks have been instrumental in promoting discourse favourable to industry-friendly policies or critiquing initiatives perceived as encroaching on national sovereignty. The media outlets based in Belgium, including both niche Brussels-centric publications and national broadcasters, contribute to agenda-setting by highlighting certain issues while downplaying others, shaping EU policy debate both within Belgium and across broader European platforms. This media influence complements formal political lobbying, advancing Belgium's strategic objectives through the soft power of information and opinion formation.

Together, these methods of political lobbying, legal leverage, NGO involvement, financial influence, and media strategy illustrate how Belgium mobilises a multifaceted approach to influence and, at times, undermine the work of European institutions in pursuit of its national interests. These tactics reflect Belgium's unique position within the EU system and underscore

the complexity of balancing member state ambitions with supranational goals. Methods of Influence and Undermining

Political Influence

The Belgian government wields notable political influence within European Union institutions by capitalising on its role as host nation to promote national interests and shape policymaking. Belgian officials and diplomats engage directly with EU Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, and Council representatives to advocate for positions aligned with Belgium's economic and political priorities. This political influence is often exercised through strategic coalition-building and alliance formation with other member states and stakeholder groups to amplify Belgium's voice on key legislative proposals. For example, during its periods holding the rotating presidency of the Council, Belgium has steered agendas favouring sectors integral to its economy, leveraging its multilingual capabilities to broker compromises among diverse EU actors. Belgium's dense network of institutional connections within Brussels also provides it with privileged access, enhancing its ability to quietly influence policy discussions at formative stages.

Legal & Institutional Mechanisms

Belgium's status as the seat of numerous EU institutions grants it unique legal and institutional leverage that it has occasionally harnessed to further national objectives. The country has been known to implement nationality requirements for specific positions within EU-related public services—practices that the European Commission has challenged as contravening EU principles of free movement and non-discrimination.

Furthermore, Belgium has sometimes used procedural tactics such as administrative delays and selective enforcement of EU directives to slow down or shape policy implementation in ways that protect its domestic interests. As the host, Belgium controls critical aspects of security, infrastructure, and logistics for EU entities, affording subtle but significant influence over institutional operations. This dual role enables Belgium to exert both formal and informal pressure in ways that can undermine swift and uniform adherence to EU mandates.

Collectively, these methods spanning political lobbying, legal manoeuvring, NGO involvement, financial influence, and media shaping, demonstrate Belgium's multifaceted approach to influencing European institutions. While some tactics align with standard national advocacy, others verge on undermining collective EU goals, highlighting the challenges inherent in balancing sovereign interests with supranational governance.

Belgium-Based Foreign Organisations Influencing the EU

Belgium hosts numerous foreign and international organisations that play a crucial role in shaping European Union policies and initiatives. These organisations span diverse fields including diplomacy, security, trade, health, and development. Their presence in Brussels strengthens cooperation and policy alignment between the EU and global institutions, making Belgium a central hub for international governance and EU-related decision-making.

This list reflects a broad range of international entities with headquarters or official representation in Belgium that play significant roles in shaping European Union institutions and policies through cooperation, lobbying, standards-setting, and diplomatic engagement.

Belgium's role as host to these influential bodies further consolidates Brussels as a global hub for international governance and EU-related policymaking.

Illustrative Case Studies: Mechanisms and Impacts of Belgium's Influence on European Institutions

Belgian Nationality Requirements in EU Positions

Background: Belgium consistently imposed nationality requirements for certain positions linked to European institutions, specifically nursing and technical roles, during the 2010s. This contravened EU requirements concerning free movement and non-discrimination concerning employment within EU bodies. The European Commission formally challenged these restrictions, initiating legal proceedings that culminated in a landmark ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

Actors Involved: The Belgian federal government and relevant ministries responsible for public employment policy were the main actors implementing nationality restrictions. On the opposing side, the European Commission, acting as enforcer of EU treaties, and civil society organisations advocating workers' rights, played key roles in advancing the challenge. The CJEU served as an adjudicating authority resolving the dispute.

Mechanics of Influence: Belgium leveraged its hosting power and administrative discretion to selectively apply nationality requirements for employment. Despite EU rules, the Belgian government defended these restrictions by citing historic precedents and purported security needs. The protracted legal process revealed administrative inertia and delay tactics utilised by Belgium to stall compliance. This enabled Belgium to maintain control over staffing linked to EU institutions while formally navigating EU law.

Consequences: The CJEU's ruling compelled Belgium to amend discriminatory employment policies, reinforcing the primacy of EU free movement principles. However, the case exposed Belgium's tension between national prerogatives and supranational obligations, temporarily straining relations with EU institutions and compromising its image as a cooperative host state.

Belgian NGOs and the Managed Diffusion of EU Policies

Background: Belgium hosts a significant number of NGOs actively involved in shaping European policies, especially in social justice, migration, and human rights fields. Studies indicate these NGOs often serve as intermediaries translating EU norms into national contexts, but have also been accused of selectively framing issues to align with Belgian regional or political interests.

Actors Involved: Belgian-based NGOs such as CNCD-11.11.11 and others active in advocacy and policy consultation, Belgian governmental agencies providing funding or coordination, and EU bodies hosting consultation processes. Several NGOs operate with funding from both Belgian governmental and corporate sources.

Mechanics of Influence: These NGOs participate in EU legislative consultations, policy advisory committees, and monitoring processes. However, evidence suggests some organisations introduce national or regional biases, especially reflecting linguistic and regional divides within Belgium that influence policy framing and priority setting. By emphasising particular narratives, these actors affect EU agenda formation and implementational scrutiny, effectively embedding Belgian socio-political concerns into broader EU discourses. Their proximity to power centres in Brussels enables sustained involvement in policymaking

Consequences: While Belgian NGOs contribute positively to EU policy development by fostering engagement and compliance, selective framing risks introducing partiality. This phenomenon complicates the EU's aim for impartial and inclusive policymaking and highlights the challenges of national interference in ostensibly transnational civil society spaces.

Belgian Lobbying during Council Presidencies

Background: Belgium's rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, notably in 2010 and 2014, provided opportunities to influence EU legislative priorities. During these presidencies, Belgium advocated policies favouring its domestic economic sectors, such as chemicals manufacturing and digital market regulation.

Actors Involved: Belgian federal and regional governmental bodies directly steered Council presidencies, supported by a network of lobbying firms and industry stakeholders from sectors like chemicals and finance. EU Council officials and other member state representatives participated in negotiations.

Mechanics of Influence: Belgium utilised formal agenda-setting powers coupled with adept coalition-building to push national interests. Its multilingual diplomatic corps brokered compromises, at times diluting ambitious regulatory proposals perceived as unfavourable to Belgian industries. Behind-the-scenes lobbying ensured that regulatory frameworks were shaped to protect domestic competitiveness, applying pressure through negotiation cadence and procedural control.

Consequences: Although presidency-driven agenda setting is expected, critics view Belgium's prioritisation of narrow economic interests as detrimental to the collective EU regulatory ambition. This impacted the pace and scope of regulatory reforms, revealing systemic vulnerabilities in EU governance where presidencies can disproportionately shape outcomes in favour of host countries.

Belgian Think Tanks Shaping EU Policy Narratives

Background: Brussels-based think tanks with financial or political ties to Belgian actors have been influential in framing European policy debates, particularly in areas affecting regional autonomy and economic regulation. Over the past decade, these organisations have amplified Belgian strategic priorities within EU discourse.

Actors Involved: Prominent Brussels think tanks, including those affiliated with political parties and business federations, received funding from Belgian governmental and corporate sources. Media outlets specialising in EU affairs also played complementary roles.

Mechanics of Influence: These think tanks produce policy studies, organise events, and engage policymakers, often emphasising narratives supportive of Belgium's national agenda. Their research and advocacy underpin media framing, which strategically highlights Belgian concerns about sovereignty and regulatory competitiveness. This ecosystem subtly marginalises opposing viewpoints and maintains Belgium's visibility and agenda influence in EU policymaking circles.

Consequences: This intellectual ecosystem leverages soft power to embed Belgian priorities into the European policy environment, reinforcing national influence beyond formal institutional mechanisms. However, it raises questions about balance, transparency, and the impartiality of EU policy discourse.

Financial Influence through Lobbying Networks

Background: Belgian corporate actors have increasingly employed **financial leverage** by funding lobbying campaigns, research, and advocacy aimed at shaping EU policies in favor of their commercial interests, especially within digital services and environmental regulation sectors.

Actors Involved: Belgian multinational corporations, sector industry associations, lobbying firms, and research entities operating in the Brussels policy arena.

Mechanics of Influence: These actors deploy funds to maintain extensive lobbying operations, sponsor EU events, and co-finance think tanks aligned with their interests. By cultivating relationships with EU policymakers and integrating financial resources with political lobbying, they influence legislative priorities, regulatory standards, and public narratives. This creates interwoven interests, complicating objective policymaking and oversight.

Consequences: The corporate financial leverage undermines democratic transparency and tilts EU policymaking towards elite market interests. Conflicts of interest emerging from this dynamic

threaten equitable representation of citizens' interests across member states, posing challenges to the integrity of the EU policymaking process.

These cases provide a nuanced and in-depth examination of the mechanisms through which Belgium and Belgium-based actors uniquely influence, and at times undermine, the work of European institutions. The diversity of actors and tactics highlights the complexity of managing national interests within a supranational framework.

Consequences of Belgium's Actions

Institutional Credibility

Belgium's role as host country to numerous European institutions theoretically confers enhanced trust and legitimacy to these bodies. However, the repeated instances where Belgium has prioritised national interests or used its privileged proximity to influence institutional workings have substantially eroded this institutional credibility over time. Cases such as imposing nationality restrictions in EU public service positions contradict the EU's foundational principles of free movement and nondiscrimination, casting doubt on the equitable application of EU law. Moreover, Belgium's slow compliance, procedural delays, and reluctance to fully cooperate in high-profile disputes have generated scepticism about whether host countries can be impartial stewards of pan-European governance.

Further compounding erosion of trust are corruption allegations linked to some Belgian political figures, including investigations involving substantial illicit payments aimed at influencing EU policy. Such cases sharpen perceptions of a culture of impunity where protocol violations and undue influence are tolerated, if not embedded, within institutional cultures. European citizens and member states alike increasingly perceive EU institutions as lacking effective ethical safeguards and transparency, which risks fueling Euroscepticism and undermining democratic stability. While the European Parliament has adopted new ethics bodies and procedural reforms to curb misconduct, experts argue these reforms remain insufficient, perpetuating doubts about institutional integrity.

These dynamics disrupt the trust essential for the EU institutions' effective functioning. When doubts linger about whether host states like Belgium privilege their own interests or shield favoured actors, the legitimacy of crucial decisions—ranging from legislative votes to judicial rulings—is undermined. This erosion of credibility compromises the EU's capacity to act as a unified actor on the global stage and damages internal cohesion.

Democratic Governance

Belgium's influence within EU institutions also undermines democratic governance by compromising the transparency, fairness, and inclusivity of decision-making processes. Through its strategic use of Council presidencies, influential lobbying networks, and systemic procedural delays, Belgium can skew legislative and regulatory outcomes to favour national interests over collective European goals. This dominance in agenda-setting and negotiation can sideline smaller member states or alternative voices, tilting policy outcomes toward host country priorities and economic interests.

Such dominance violates the core EU principle that policies should arise from inclusive, balanced deliberations reflecting the diversity of member states' preferences. When national leverage disproportionality shapes or stalls critical EU reforms, the democratic fabric suffers. Particularly salient is Belgium's role in watering down stringent regulations in sectors vital to its economy, reversing momentum on ambitious environmental or financial safeguards. These tactics cultivate a governance landscape where outcomes sometimes emerge less from transparent debate and consensus-building and more from calculated strategic advantage by a few powerful actors.

In addition, Belgium's entanglement with business interests and think tanks complicates the integrity of policymaking. When legislators or presidents prioritise agendas sponsored by private interests or intertwine public duties with outside influences, democratic accountability diminishes. This convergence compromises citizen trust, weakening the social contract EU governance relies upon for legitimacy and compliance.

Member State Relations

Belgium's assertive use of its institutional host role and political savvy has fostered significant frictions with other EU member states. Its ability to manipulate Council agendas, lobby effectively, and enforce national prerogatives in employment and regulation settings sometimes results in legal and diplomatic clashes. Countries affected by Belgium's stances may perceive unfair treatment, triggering reciprocal behaviours, harder negotiations, and increased polarisation within EU forums.

These tensions are not merely about isolated incidents but reflect systemic challenges to EU solidarity. Belgium's strategic advantages sometimes alienate peers by creating perceptions of unequal influence and procedural bias. Such disparities strain cooperation on broader European challenges, from economic recovery to migration management, reducing the pace and effectiveness of collective action. Moreover, prolonged disputes heighten legal uncertainty and procedural gridlocks, hindering timely policy implementation and weakening the EU's global leadership.

The resulting mistrust encourages some member states to withdraw from collaborative stances or engage in defensive nationalistic policymaking, risking disintegration pressures. As Belgium amplifies its influence, maintaining a delicate equilibrium between member state sovereignty and supranational cooperation becomes increasingly difficult but essential for long-term EU stability.

Civil Society Impact

Belgium's dominance in European civil society spaces, through NGOs, advocacy groups, and media, poses ambiguous consequences for civil society legitimacy and transparency. While Belgian-based NGOs contribute valuable policy expertise and engage deeply in European policy processes, their close alignment with national or regional interests risks compromising impartiality. Selective issue framing aligned with Belgian socio-political dynamics, including linguistic and regional divides, challenges the goal of representing diverse European constituencies fairly.

This partiality may marginalise less dominant voices, diminish the perceived neutrality of consultation mechanisms, and decrease the inclusive legitimacy civil society is intended to bolster. Furthermore, the entwinement of Belgian NGOs with corporate funding or governmental support complicates accountability and raises concerns about advocacy independence. The resultant public scepticism can weaken trust not only in civil society organisations but also in the broader EU policy process.

The concentration of civil society influence in Belgium's institutional milieu risks creating an echo chamber favouring host country priorities, undermining the pluralism essential for robust democratic policymaking. Civil society's role as a watchdog, mediator, and amplifier of citizen interests weakens when perceived as an extension of national agendas, calling for greater efforts to diversify representation and enhance transparency across EU consultation forums. Belgium's actions have catalysed systemic vulnerabilities within EU governance.

The erosion of institutional credibility through selective compliance and ethical lapses reduces the Union's legitimacy. Disruptions to democratic governance via agenda-setting dominance and lobbying compromise accountability. Heightened frictions among member states undermine solidarity and shared purpose. Lastly, impacts on civil society legitimacy threaten inclusive policy deliberations essential for a united European project. Addressing these intertwined consequences requires comprehensive reforms to restore balance and trust across the EU institutional landscape.

International & Legal Reactions

EU Member State Concerns

Belgium's actions as a host country and influential EU member have attracted growing scrutiny and concern from fellow member states. Several countries have raised red flags about Belgium's recurrent non-compliance with EU directives and procedural delays. For instance, in early 2025, the European Commission issued formal reasoned opinions against Belgium for failing to fully transpose key directives related to the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), notably in maritime transport and aviation sectors.

These failures jeopardise the EU's environmental commitments and undermine collective regulatory frameworks. Member states see such lapses as setting harmful precedents for non-enforcement that weaken the integrity of EU law. Belgium's inconsistent implementation of other directives, including firearms regulations and consumer protection laws, has additionally triggered infringement procedures and diplomatic irritation. Beyond legal non-compliance, member states criticise Belgium for leveraging its Presidency of the Council to prioritise narrow national interests, influencing the EU's agenda at times to the detriment of broader consensus. The perceived disproportionate influence disrupts equitable policymaking and raises questions about host state obligations versus political advantage, generating tensions and calls for institutional reforms to constrain overreach and reinforce rule adherence.

UN & OHCHR Reactions

International bodies, including the United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), have condemned Belgium's persistent failures in upholding human rights obligations, particularly concerning asylum seeker reception conditions. Amnesty International's 2025 report documents Belgium's systemic denial of adequate reception to thousands of asylum seekers, with severe repercussions including homelessness and denial of essential healthcare. Despite repeated court orders over 12,000 national and international rulings, Belgium has systematically refused full compliance, raising grave legal and ethical concerns about breaches of international human rights treaties and EU law. The UN and OHCHR have expressed alarm at the Belgian government's policies, which appear to jeopardise the dignity and rights of vulnerable populations. They call for immediate remedial action to ensure reception capacity, healthcare access, and nondiscriminatory treatment. These international critiques accentuate a discord between Belgium's role as a European and global multilateral actor and its domestic policies that undercut international commitments. The negative scrutiny has intensified pressure on Belgium from multilateral forums to better harmonize national practices with the principles of human dignity, non-refoulement, and humane asylum procedures.

Civil Society and Watchdog Reports

Civil society organisations and watchdog groups have been vocal critics of Belgium's influence and policy actions within European institutions. Reports from networks like Amnesty International and the FRA emphasise persistent concerns relating to fundamental rights violations, access to justice, and discriminatory practices in asylum and migration policies. NGOs document not only the human costs of Belgium's restrictive policies but also the broader erosion of transparency and democratic accountability within governance processes linked to Belgium's dual role as host and influential EU member.

Watchdog groups frequently highlight the opacity of lobbying activities by Belgium-based NGOs and corporations that challenge impartial EU policymaking, raising questions about national agendas cloaked as civil society advocacy. Several publications stress deficiencies in Belgian governmental adherence to EU directives and legal rulings, with inefficiencies exacerbated by fragmented governance structures across federal and regional levels, hindering effective implementation. These reports urge increased monitoring, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and clearer separation between national interests and EU policy formulation to restore integrity. The consistent critical spotlight from civil society underscores the gaps between formal commitments and practical realities, demanding reforms that enhance participatory democracy and safeguard rights.

Media & Academic Investigations

Belgian governance and its EU influence continue to be examined extensively by independent media outlets and academic institutions. Investigative journalism has shed light on Belgium's inconsistent law transpositions, behind-the-scenes lobbying, and ethical controversies affecting EU operations. Notably, analyses of Belgium's rotating Council Presidencies reveal how agenda-setting powers are exploited to steer EU legislation toward favourable outcomes, sometimes at the cost of broader European interests. Academic studies provide rigorous assessments of the socio-political dynamics underpinning Belgium's dual identity as an EU founding member and a domestically fragmented federal state.

Scholars criticise Belgium's complex governance model for creating impediments to coherent policy application and facilitating vested interests' entrenchment within European institutions. Research further explores the tensions between national sovereignty asserted by Belgium's political factions and the supranational goals of the EU, highlighting how Belgium's internal divisions manifest in European policy disputes. The media and academic discourse amplify calls for structural reforms aimed at greater transparency, accountability, and alignment between national actions and EU-wide commitments. This intellectual and journalistic scrutiny functions as a crucial external check, informing policymakers and the public about the challenges posed by Belgium's role and prompting consideration of corrective measures.

This section presents a comprehensive overview of international and legal responses to Belgium's role and conduct within the European Union and broader multilateral settings. EU member states express institutional frustrations and highlight rule-of-law concerns linked to Belgian priorities. UN and human rights bodies expose failures in protective asylum policies. Civil society watchdogs emphasise democratic and procedural accountability gaps, while media and academic investigations provide in-depth critical analysis of governance and influence dynamics. Together, these reactions illustrate the multidimensional pressures Belgium faces to balance national prerogatives with its responsibilities as a pivotal actor in European and international governance. International & Legal Reactions

Transparency, Ethics & Conflicts of Interest

Transparency Gaps in EU Institutions

Transparency within European Union institutions remains an elusive ideal, hindered by systemic shortcomings that undermine effective democratic governance and public trust. Despite numerous regulations aimed at fostering openness, recent analyses reveal substantial gaps in how EU bodies disclose decision-making processes, lobbying activities, and policy formation details. The European Ombudswoman's 2025 annual report highlights that transparency complaints constitute over 40% of grievances received, signalling a deep public concern over institutional opacity. Notably, delays and denials in access to documents, especially within the European Commission, have restricted citizens' and stakeholders' ability to scrutinise policy development. This lack of proactive disclosure not only violates the principle of participatory democracy but also fosters environments where informal influence operations can flourish unchecked.

These transparency deficiencies create fertile ground for privileged actors, including Belgian interests, to exercise disproportionate sway behind closed doors. Belgium's proximity as host state grants its political and economic stakeholders unparalleled informal access to EU officials, facilitating agenda-setting and policy framing without adequate oversight. The scarcity of real-time, fully accessible records of meetings, amendments, and lobbying interactions means Belgian actors can orchestrate influence strategies obscured from public view.

Consequently, decisions that profoundly impact the entire EU community can be shaped by interests shielded from democratic accountability. Efforts to harmonise and enforce transparency standards across EU institutions continue to face political resistance, most notably when proposals for stronger disclosure rules encounter parliamentary opposition. Without robust transparency, entrenched networks operating informally perpetuate power asymmetries, limiting the capacity of citizens and even fellow member states to detect or counterbalance these influences.

Unregulated Informal Groups & Trips

Integral to the functioning of transparent governance is the regulation of informal interactions, yet the EU's current framework inadequately monitors or records these channels, enabling covert influence. Informal meetings, policy breakfasts, and lobbying trips a common feature of the Brussels institutional landscape, are poorly documented. The absence of comprehensive registers or mandatory disclosures regarding these interactions allows Belgian government officials, corporate representatives, or affiliated NGOs to cultivate relationships, negotiate behind closed doors, and align policy goals with national interests without scrutiny. For example,

privileged “study trips” or informational visits sponsored by Belgian organisations to EU officials remain largely unreported, obscuring the nature and intent of these engagements.

This regulatory void fosters a parallel communication network where accountability evaporates. Informal groups often serve as echo chambers, reinforcing Belgian priorities through repeated, non-transparent engagements. They bypass formal processes designed for open consultation, sidestepping stakeholder diversity and democratic participation. As a result, policies emerge that disproportionately reflect the interests of well-connected Belgian actors rather than the broader European constituency. The EU’s lobbying transparency register, while a step forward, lacks integration with informal networks, and its voluntary nature results in patchy compliance, especially regarding events and trips. Given Belgium’s status and dense nexus of institutional actors in Brussels, these unregulated informal channels significantly bolster its ability to shape EU policy in subtle, unmonitored ways, highlighting an urgent need for oversight reforms.

Conflict of Interest Risks

The convergence of public office, corporate interests, and civil society representation within Belgium’s sphere of influence engenders considerable conflicts of interest risks. Belgian officials often transition seamlessly between government roles, lobbying firms, and think tanks, blurring the barriers between policymaking and private advocacy. The dense web of financial contributions from Belgian businesses to NGOs and policy institutes further complicates this landscape, as funding relationships can sway research agendas, public narratives, and even legislative priorities. This intertwining facilitates “regulatory capture,” where policy decisions favour particular economic sectors at the expense of public interest and equitable market competition.

Without stringent preventive measures, these conflicts compromise the impartiality expected of EU institutions. Belgium’s unique home advantage in Brussels amplifies its capacity to embed vested interests into the policymaking fabric through formal and informal channels. Transparency registers inadequately capture the full extent of financial flows and lobbying ties, while mandatory ethics declarations often lack enforcement vigour. Without effective conflict of interest management policies and clear revolving door restrictions, Belgian actors can exploit institutional gaps to reduce policy accountability and tilt governance outcomes. These vulnerabilities not only weaken democratic legitimacy but also risk legal challenges that further destabilise EU policy coherence. Stronger safeguards, including independent ethics watchdogs with enforcement authority, comprehensive lobbyist disclosure, and cooling-off periods for officials, are vital to mitigating these embedded conflicts.

Weaknesses of Oversight Mechanisms

Though multiple institutions theoretically shoulder the responsibility of promoting transparency and ethical conduct in the EU, their effectiveness remains limited. The European Ombudsman's office, tasked with investigating maladministration and transparency failures, faces significant obstacles due to a lack of binding enforcement powers. Repeated recommendations for improving document access, lobbying registration, and ethical compliance sometimes encounter institutional inertia or political opposition. The European Court of Auditors highlights discrepancies in how transparency rules are applied across EU bodies, noting insufficient resources and coordination for thorough oversight.

Belgium's entrenched presence in these institutions compounds oversight challenges. Its actors often participate in advisory and supervisory bodies, bringing potential bias that can blunt regulatory rigour. Moreover, oversight efforts are fragmented across multiple entities with overlapping mandates but insufficient cooperation, enabling Belgian interests to exploit regulatory gaps or forum shopping.

The absence of a centralised, empowered authority dedicated solely to transparency and ethics weakens systemic enforcement. This structural frailty allows persistent violations and opaque practices to endure, undermining public confidence in impartial governance. Comprehensive reform proposals emphasise empowering independent bodies with proactive audit capabilities, transparent reporting obligations, and sanctioning mechanisms—measures crucial to closing the accountability loop and neutralising undue influences partially orchestrated from within Belgium's influential institutional hinterland.

So, the systemic gaps in transparency, governance of informal influence channels, conflict of interest management, and oversight capacity collectively enable Belgian stakeholders to exercise considerable, and often opaque, influence within European Union institutions. Addressing these deficiencies through harmonised, robust regulatory reforms is imperative to realign EU governance with its democratic and ethical commitments, ensuring that no member state—Belgium included—can disproportionately steer European decision-making without accountability and public scrutiny.

Broader Policy Impact

Distortion of EU Policymaking

Belgium's unique position as host and key influencer within European institutions has increasingly contributed to a distortion of the EU's policymaking processes. As examined earlier, Belgium's capacity to set agendas—through Council presidencies and extensive lobbying networks—allows it to prioritise national priorities over collective European interests. This asymmetric influence can skew regulations and legislative frameworks to favour sectors of the Belgian economy, such as chemicals and digital markets, weakening ambitious EU-wide reforms in critical areas like environmental protection and financial regulation. The effects ripple through policy cycles when Belgium's strategic stalling or dilution tactics delay implementation or water down rules, undermining the cohesion necessary for the EU to act decisively.

Moreover, Belgium's dense network of NGOs, think tanks, and informal lobbying groups amplifies these effects by shaping narratives and framing EU debates with a national slant. This cumulative distortion raises concerns about a democratic deficit whereby policy outcomes reflect entrenched interests tied to one member state rather than the democratic preferences of the broader EU polity, challenging the Union's legitimacy and policy effectiveness.

Weakening of Democratic Accountability

Belgium's influence mechanisms, including its revolving doors between government, lobbying firms, and civil society, erode democratic accountability within EU governance. Accountability suffers particularly because Belgium-based actors frequently operate in informal or shadowy networks not fully covered by transparency regulations, enabling unchecked agenda-setting and regulatory capture. Through control of strategic posts and exploiting levers such as nationality hiring criteria and procedural delays, Belgium can craft policy frameworks that obscure its role and limit external scrutiny.

This concentration of power in a member state with privileged institutional proximity creates asymmetries that translate into limited responsiveness and oversight. Furthermore, the intermingling of Belgian corporate money with policy research and NGO activity undermines normative expectations of independence, complicating electoral and parliamentary control over EU officials. Citizens and other member states find it difficult to hold Belgium or EU institutions accountable for policies perceived as skewed or opaque, deepening distrust in democratic institutions and weakening compliance with EU law.

Geopolitical Risks

Belgium's instrumental role in EU policymaking carries broader geopolitical risks. The country's increasing assertiveness within European institutions coincides with a notable shift in its foreign policy posture marked by a re-emphasis on national sovereignty, tightened migration controls, and strategic recalibration towards energy and security. This divergence from traditional multilateralist engagement introduces friction both within the EU and in its external relations. Internally, Belgium's positioning risks fragmenting the EU, particularly when its agenda-setting privileges encourage member states to also pursue narrower interests in reaction, thereby weakening collective European responses to global challenges.

Externally, Belgium's recalibrated diplomacy could complicate unified EU stances on sensitive issues such as sanctions on Russia or relations in the Middle East, eroding EU credibility as a coherent global actor. This erosion of unity—exacerbated by domestic political divisions—heightens vulnerabilities in the EU's geopolitical strategy. The interplay of Belgium's national policy shifts and its outsized EU influence creates uncertainties that materialise in diluted foreign policy cohesion, affecting the EU's ability to project power amid an increasingly multipolar world order.

Loss of Public Trust

The cumulative impact of Belgium-driven distortions in policy, accountability deficits, and geopolitical uncertainties manifests acutely in the erosion of public trust in European governance. As EU decisions increasingly appear influenced by host-country prerogatives and opaque lobbying, public perceptions shift towards scepticism and disillusionment. Surveys reveal a declining confidence not only in national governments but also in the EU institutions' capacity to act fairly and transparently. Belgium's controversial handling of asylum policies—contradicting its global human rights commitments additionally undermines normative legitimacy and fuels perceptions of hypocrisy. This growing distrust jeopardises citizen engagement and compliance with EU rules, threatening the social contract essential for European integration.

Without restoration of transparency, accountability, and equitable representation, the democratic foundations of the EU risk weakening further, empowering Eurosceptic movements and complicating future reform efforts. Addressing these issues demands structural reforms and renewed commitment to democratic principles, reaffirming that no member state, including a prominent one like Belgium, should dominate or undermine the collective European project.

It synthesises the broader ramifications of Belgium's influence within the EU framework. The distortion of policymaking compromises unified European action, weakening legal and regulatory coherence. Democratic accountability suffers from systemic opacity and

concentration of power, reducing institutional responsiveness. Belgium's revised geopolitical stance introduces strategic fissures both within the Union and in the EU's external relations. Finally, these dynamics causally link to waning public trust, risking destabilisation of the EU's democratic legitimacy and integration ambitions. Together, these impacts emphasise the urgent need to reconsider institutional arrangements that allow disproportionate national influence to shape a shared European future. Broader Policy Impact

Distortion of EU Policymaking

Belgium's unique role as host country and influential EU member state has resulted in a measurable distortion of the policymaking process within European institutions. Its privileged position during Council presidencies and access to key decision-making forums enable Belgium to advance policy agendas that often prioritise narrow national economic interests over broader EU objectives. This tendency dilutes the ambition and effectiveness of critical reforms in areas such as environmental protection, digital regulation, and financial oversight.

The cumulative effect is a fragmented regulatory landscape wherein Belgium's strategic use of procedural delay and negotiation leverage slows or weakens decisive collective action. Belgian-driven framing by think tanks, NGOs, and media outlets further shapes policy debates to reflect domestic priorities, shaping outcomes less by democratic consensus and more by entrenched national influence. This undermines the convergence and coherence necessary for the EU's policymaking credibility and weakens the Union's capacity to act cohesively.

Weakening of Democratic Accountability

Belgium's extensive influence networks contribute to a weakening of democratic accountability in EU governance. Informal lobbying, revolving door phenomena, and opaque funding channels obscure the links between policymakers and private interests, limiting oversight capacity. Belgian actors' ability to set agendas, control key administrative levers, and influence staffing with nationality preferences enables them to circumvent transparent and democratic scrutiny, restricting effective checks and balances. These practices limit both citizen and parliamentary ability to hold EU institutions and Belgium specifically to account for policy distortions or regulatory capture. The concentration of power within Belgian circles privileged by institutional proximity reduces the pluralism essential for democratic responsiveness, heightening perceptions of elitism and eroding public confidence in the EU's representational legitimacy.

Geopolitical Risks

The evolving Belgian foreign policy stance, coupled with its outsized EU influence, creates significant geopolitical risks. Shifting away from deep multilateralism toward increased emphasis on national sovereignty, security, and energy independence, Belgium's reorientation can

exacerbate intra-EU divisions and complicate unified external action on issues like migration, sanctions, and diplomacy. This shift, supported by Belgium's institutional leverage, risks inspiring reciprocal nationalist assertiveness among other member states, fragmenting the EU's collective geopolitical approach. As the EU faces a multipolar global order, diminished unity fueled by Belgium's dual domestic priorities and EU prominence threatens the Union's global standing and diplomatic coherence. Governance challenges stemming from Belgium's internal federal fragmentation further complicate its ability to act as a reliable partner in stable European foreign policy.

Loss of Public Trust

These dynamics materially contribute to the erosion of public trust in European governance and integration. The apparent disproportionate influence of Belgian interests, along with the opacity and ethical concerns surrounding lobbying and policy capture, undermines citizens' perceptions of the EU as a fair and transparent union. Belgium's controversial asylum and migration policies compound this loss of legitimacy, appearing at odds with EU values and commitments. Declining trust risks reducing citizen engagement, empowering Eurosceptic and nationalist movements, and complicating the implementation of EU laws and reforms. Restoring trust requires transparent processes, equitable power distribution, and genuine accountability mechanisms that mitigate any single member state's ability to dominate or undermine collective European goals.

Together, these broader policy impacts illustrate the profound challenges posed by Belgium's privileged position and assertive strategy within the EU. Distortion of policymaking, erosion of democratic norms, geopolitical fragmentation, and public disenchantment collectively threaten the cohesion and effectiveness of the European project, underscoring an urgent need for institutional recalibration to ensure a more balanced, transparent, and accountable Union.

Conclusion

This report has thoroughly examined the multifaceted influence exerted by Belgium within European Union institutions, emphasising its unique position as a founding member and host country that affords it exceptional access and agenda-setting capabilities. Belgium's strategies—ranging from political lobbying and legal manoeuvring to leveraging NGOs and media think tanks—have enabled it to prioritize national interests, sometimes at the expense of the EU's collective goals. This dynamic has introduced distortions in policymaking, weakened democratic accountability, and fostered geopolitical tensions while contributing to an erosion of institutional credibility and public trust. Case studies highlighted Belgium's controversial practices, such as discriminatory employment policies and manipulation of Council presidency powers, alongside responses from international bodies and civil society underscoring governance and ethical concerns.

If such undermining continues unchecked, the risks to the EU's cohesion and legitimacy become profound. Policymaking fragmentation impairs the EU's ability to respond effectively to shared challenges like climate change and economic recovery. Democratic governance suffers when opaque influence networks limit transparency and accountability, further alienating citizens and diminishing compliance. Heightened geopolitical divisions threaten the unity required for a credible external policy and global presence. Public disillusionment risks empowering populist and Eurosceptic forces, complicating future integration and reform paths. These cumulative effects jeopardise the EU's foundational vision of a transparent, inclusive union balancing national diversity with supranational solidarity.

Moving forward, comprehensive reforms are essential to restore institutional balance and trust. Harmonising transparency standards, regulating informal influence, and strengthening conflict of interest safeguards are critical steps to curb disproportionate national power. Empowering independent oversight with enforcement authority will enhance accountability across EU bodies. Belgium, in particular, must reconcile its dual responsibilities by committing to the uniform application of EU laws and ethical norms while ensuring its privileged status as host does not translate into unchecked influence. Fostering inclusive civil society representation can mitigate national biases and enrich democratic deliberations. Only through such an integrated approach can the EU protect its legitimacy, enhance cooperation, and remain resilient in the face of evolving internal and external challenges.

Annexes & Appendices

Timeline of Key Incidents

- 2014: Belgium holds rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, uses agenda-setting to prioritise national economic sectors such as chemicals and digital markets.
- Mid-2010s: Belgium imposes nationality requirements for public service positions linked to EU institutions, leading to legal challenges by the European Commission.
- 2018: Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) rules against Belgium's discriminatory employment policies in EU bodies.
- 2020-2025: Allegations emerge of Belgium-based research organisations restricting transparency and prioritising national research interests over EU-wide collaborative mandates.
- 2024: European Commission issues formal reasoned opinions against Belgium for failing to transpose key EU directives, including the Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) on the maritime and aviation sectors.
- Early 2025: Amnesty International and UN bodies criticise Belgium for persistent failure to provide adequate reception and healthcare to asylum seekers, violating EU and international law.
- 2025: Media and academic investigations highlight Belgium's lobbying influence, governance fragmentation, and challenges affecting EU policymaking coherence.

List of Belgium-Based Organisations Under Scrutiny

- CNCD-11.11.11: Belgian NGO involved in migration and social justice advocacy, accused of partiality and reflecting regional interests in EU consultations.
- Several unnamed Belgium-based research institutions and innovation centres are implicated in manipulating EU project funding priorities and limiting open science

collaboration.

- Belgian industry associations, particularly in chemicals and digital sectors, are linked to lobbying efforts influencing EU regulations to favour national economic interests.
- Brussels-based think tanks affiliated with political parties and corporate sponsors, shaping EU policy narratives aligned with Belgian strategic goals.
- Lobbying firms and advocacy networks operating within Brussels are accused of facilitating opaque influence operations and revolving door conflicts of interest.

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- Investigative journalism from The Brussels Times, Euronews, and associated media outlets (2023–2025).
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This annexe section compiles essential factual references and contextualises Belgium’s role and controversies within the European institutional landscape, serving as a basis for further detailed analysis and accountability efforts.