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Vlaanderen
is divers



EN/NL

Welcome to Flanders

This brochure will provide answers to
your initial questions in Belgium

Welcome to Flanders

You recently came to live in Flanders. Maybe this is all new to you, maybe you are already familiar with some things. “Where can I learn to speak Dutch? How can I find a job?” This brochure will provide answers to your initial questions in Belgium. The information is organised by theme.



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Would you like to read this brochure in another language?
See welkombrochure.inburgering.be.





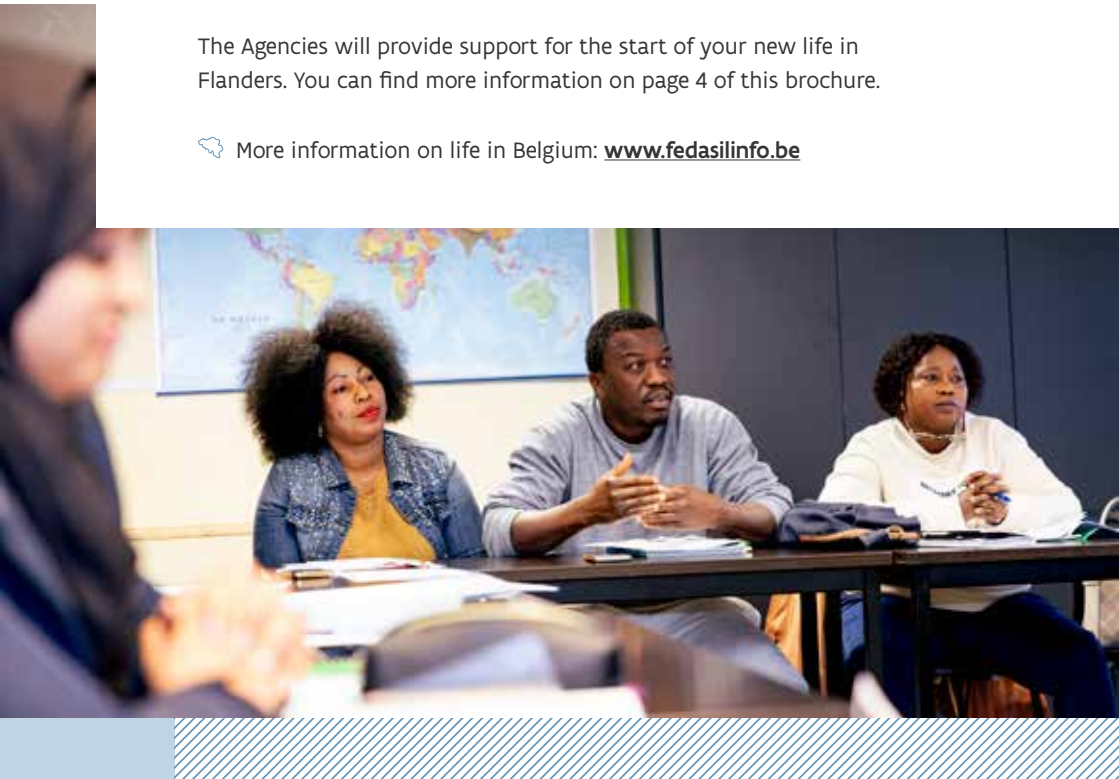
If you would like to know more about these topics and life in Belgium

You can enrol for a **civic integration programme** with the Agentschappen Integratie en Inburgering [social and civic integration agencies]. The programme will help you feel at home faster. For example, you will attend classes on life in Flanders and Belgium and you will receive counselling in your own language or a language you understand well. You can find more information on page 5 of this brochure.

If you want more information, make an appointment with the Agency in your area.

The Agencies will provide support for the start of your new life in Flanders. You can find more information on page 4 of this brochure.

 More information on life in Belgium: www.fedasilinfo.be



Do you want more information about the civic integration programme?



Amal

Do you live in Ghent?

Make an appointment with Amal
www.amal.gent/contact



atlas

Do you live in Antwerp?

Make an appointment with Atlas
www.atlas-antwerpen.be/nl/contact



Bon

Do you live in Brussels?

Make an appointment with Bon
www.bon.be/contact



AGENTSCHAP
INTEGRATIE &
INBURGERING

Do you live elsewhere in Flanders?

Make an appointment with the
Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering
[social and civic integration agency] (AgII)
[www.integratie-inburgering.be/
contactpunten](http://www.integratie-inburgering.be/contactpunten)





Feeling at home in Flanders

You are new to Flanders. The **civic integration programme** will help you find your way around in a new country, so you will feel at home faster.

- The social orientation course will teach you about life in Belgium. You can attend classes in your own language or in a language you understand well.
- We will help you find a Dutch language course that suits you. You will also receive tips for practising the Dutch language.
- If you are looking for a job or a course, we will listen to your ambitions. You can register with the VDAB and get support in finding a job or a training course.
- You will meet new people and participate in social activities during the participation programme.

Throughout the programme, you will receive individual counselling and information in your own language or a language you understand well. A programme counsellor will coach you throughout the programme.



www.inburgering.be





Learning to speak Dutch

Do you want to learn to speak Dutch?

Understanding Dutch is important to feel at home in Flanders. Make an appointment with Agli, Amal or Atlas. A staff member will help you determine which course you need.



More information:



How can you practice speaking Dutch?

You can find activities in your area on www.ikdoemee.be.



A few Dutch words:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • I am... | <i>Ik ben ...</i> |
| • I live in ... | <i>Ik woon in ...</i> |
| • I speak ... | <i>Ik spreek</i> |
| • Please | <i>Alsjeblieft</i> |
| • Thank you | <i>Dank u wel</i> |
| • You are welcome | <i>Graag gedaan</i> |
| • Good morning (06:00 till 12:00) | <i>Goedemorgen (06.00 tot 12.00u)</i> |
| • Good afternoon (12:00 till 18:00) | <i>Goedemiddag (12.00 tot 18.00u)</i> |
| • Good evening (18:00 till 24:00) | <i>Goedenavond (18.00 tot 24.00u)</i> |
| • See you (when parting) | <i>Tot ziens/ Dag (voor afscheid)</i> |



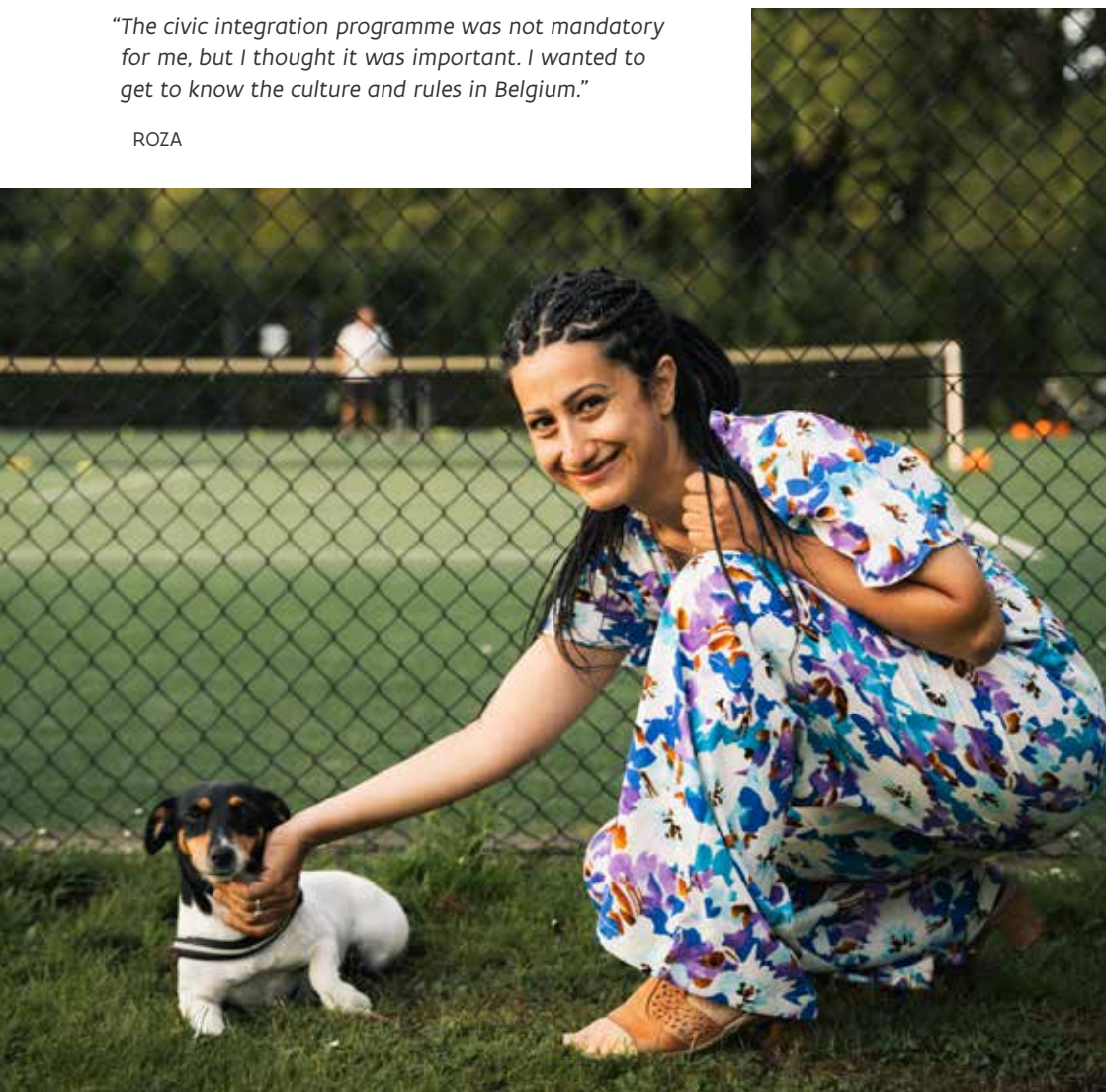
Did you know that in Flanders, you need to speak Dutch to

- work (in a school, in a childcare facility, in government services ...)?
- rent social housing?
- apply for Belgian nationality?



“The civic integration programme was not mandatory for me, but I thought it was important. I wanted to get to know the culture and rules in Belgium.”

ROZA





"I registered with the VDAB. Before long, they found me a job at a bakery."

RAMAZAN



Your municipality

Town Hall

You must register in the city or town where you live. You can do so at the town hall. Every municipality has a town hall where you can obtain official documents: residence documents, registration in the municipality, change of address, proof of birth, driving license ...

Your residence documents must be in order. In many situations, you will need a valid identity document. For example: to rent a house, to work, to go to the doctor, to start the civic integration programme...

At the town hall, you can also find information about leisure activities, sports, library, etc. For more information, check your municipality's website.



**Do you have financial or other difficulties?
Do you need administrative and social
assistance?**

Go to your municipality's Sociaal Huis (social house) (OCMW). Social services will assess how they can help you.

 More information:





Work and training

How to find a job

If you do not have a job yet, VDAB or the OCMW (if you are on a leefloon [social integration income]) will help you find a job. Register as a job seeker at VDAB. You can do so online or at a VDAB location. You can find an overview at www.vdab.be/contact.



 0800 30 700

 Register online: www.vdab.be/inschrijven

 **Bring your residence documents.**

You need these documents to work in Belgium.

 **TIP** | More information on your rights as an employee

 www.fairworkbelgium.be/workers/your-rights/

During the civic integration programme, you will learn how to look for a job and how to prepare for a job interview, and you will get tips for a good resume. Would you like to work as a self-employed entrepreneur? Or are you wondering what your rights are in case of dismissal? You will learn this too during the lessons on life in Belgium (See page 5).



IF YOU ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE CIVIC INTEGRATION PROGRAMME

you must register with the VDAB within two months (if you have not already done so).





Studying

Where can adults study in Flanders?

- You can attend a course at a Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs [adult education centre] (CVO).
- You can attend a course at Ligo, a Centrum voor Basiseducatie [basic education centre].
- You can pursue higher education at a university college or a university.
What do you need?
 - a secondary education certificate.
 - some universities and university colleges may require a Dutch language test, such as ITNA: www.itna.be.

 More information: www.volwassenenonderwijs.be

 An overview of the possibilities: www.opleidingskompas.be



Diploma recognition

Did you obtain a diploma in another country than Belgium? You can have your diploma recognized in Flanders at NARIC-Vlaanderen (National Academic Recognition Information Centre). The recognition procedure is complex.

If you are participating in a civic integration programme, AgII, Amal or Atlas can assist you with the procedure. A recognized diploma opens more opportunities to find a job or to pursue further studies.

 More information: www.naricvlaanderen.be





Children

Kind en Gezin [child and family], part of the Agentschap Opgroei en [growing up agency], will help you with your questions on



- Day care
- Parenting
- Pregnancy and delivery
- ...

 More information: www.kindengezin.be

 078 150 100

School for your child

In Belgium, education is compulsory for all children aged 5 till 18. Compulsory education starts on 01 September of the year in which your child turns 5. From that day forward, your child must receive tuition. Most children start school between the ages of 2.5 and 3. You can choose a school yourself.

Preschool	Primary school	Secondary school	Higher Education
Ages 2.5 - 6	Ages 6 - 12	Ages 12 - 18	From 18 years of age



The education system will be fully explained in the lessons on life in Belgium. If you need help finding a school for your child, make an appointment with an Agentschap voor Integratie en Inburgering [Agency for Integration and Civic Integration] (See page 4).

More information:



Groeipakket (growth package)

In Flanders, you receive monthly financial support for the upbringing of your child(ren). This is called the Groeipakket. The amount depends on your personal situation.

More information: www.groeipakket.be



“My son attends school. So, understanding Dutch is important to me. It helps me to communicate better with his teachers and understand what he discusses with his friends.”

MERVE



"I felt lonely. But during my civic integration programme I met other women. We are still friends. In a new country, your friends become your family."

LAURA





Housing

How to find a place to live.

During the civic integration programme (see page 5) you will receive information on:

- which organisations can help you;
- lease agreements;
- what to do if you want to buy a residence;
- how to prepare for a residence visit;
- ...



More information on how to find a residence and what to pay attention to:

www.fedasilinfo.be/nl/zoektocht-naar-een-woning



Housing company

Is renting an apartment or a house financially impossible for you? You can rent a social housing unit. The rent will be lower in that case. There are specific requirements to be eligible for social housing. A housing company will assess your situation.

Do you qualify for a social home? You will be placed on a waiting list.



More information on social housing:



Finding a housing company in your area:



TIP

Do you live in Ghent?

Please contact the woonwyzers [housing pointers]:



Do you live in Antwerp?

Contact a woonkantoor [housing office]:



See if the municipality where you want to live has a woonwinkel [housing shop]:





Finances

Payments

Cash and bank cards are accepted everywhere in Belgium as means of payment.

Did you know that... everyone in Flanders is entitled to a basic bank account including a bank card? This allows you to:

- make electronic payments in stores.
- withdraw and deposit cash in Belgium.
- transfer money.
- request statements from your account.



BEWARE:

- You cannot make deferred payments with the basic bank account.
- You cannot borrow money with the basic bank account.
- If your balance is 0 €, you cannot make payments anymore.

Do you want to open a bank account in Flanders?

You can choose with which bank in Flanders you open your first account.
You have the choice between a basic bank account and a regular bank account.





What do you need to open a bank account?

- your electronic identity card or residence document.
You need to prove your identity.
- a letter from the municipality to pick up your identity card or residence document, or a certificate from the municipality. You must prove your address.

Are you having financial problems?

You can contact your municipality's Social House (OCMW) for financial support. You can apply for a leefloon [social integration income] if you temporarily have no or a limited income. A leefloon is a monthly financial aid. They can also help you with, for example, high energy costs, school expenses...

Can everyone with financial problems receive a leefloon?

No. You must meet specific conditions. You apply at the Social House or the OCMW. They will assess whether you are eligible for a leefloon.

 More information: www.vlaanderen.be/leefloon






Health and Well-being

Are you ill?

See your family doctor. The family doctor (or general practitioner):

- is your primary contact for medical questions;
- manages your medical records;
- examines you;
- can refer you to a specialist.

 Find a family doctor in your area: www.desocialekaart.be

DO YOU NEED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?



Do you need (non-urgent) medical assistance on weekends or holidays?
Call a duty doctor at the number 1733.



Do you need urgent medical care?
Did you have an accident?
Call the toll-free number 112.



TIP | Download the 112 BE app



More information: www.112.be/nl/mobiele-applicatie




If you only need the police, call 101.

Using the app, you can contact the fire department, an ambulance, or the police directly. The app instantly makes your location visible to the emergency responders.



Caution

Health insurance is mandatory in Belgium. This insurance is important as it helps you cover medical expenses.

 **TIP |** With HZIV (Hulpkas voor Ziekte- en Invaliditeitsverzekering) [aid fund for sickness and disability insurance], you can have the mandatory insurance at no extra cost.

 More information: www.caami-hziv.fgov.be/nl/leden/

What is the difference between health insurance and hospitalisation insurance? And what are my patient rights? You will learn this during the civic integration programme (See page 5).



Wellbeing

Do you need psychological support?

Contact the Centrum Algemeen Welzijnswerk [general welfare centre] (CAW).

 0800 13 500

 www.caw.be

Have you been a victim of discrimination?

 Contact Unia on the toll-free number 0800 12 800.

If you have questions on abuse, violence, or child abuse, call 1712.

 1712

 www.1712.be/nl





Mobility

Public transport

In Flanders, you can take trains, trams, and buses to get around. Always buy a ticket before getting aboard. Validating your ticket is mandatory. Scan your ticket every time you board a tram or a bus. If you do not have a valid ticket, you will get a fine.

Where can you buy a ticket? You can buy your ticket at a counter in the railway station, from a ticket vending machine or using your mobile phone. On trams and buses, you can also pay by bank card.



More information on bus and tram:



www.delijn.be



More information on train:



www.nmbs.be

Mobib card

The MoBIB card is a card for subscriptions and tickets for all types of public transport in Belgium.



More information: www.mobib.be





"I did not know anyone. The first thing I had to do was to learn the language. I did this by volunteer work, borrowing a book or listening to podcasts."

HAKAN, HASSELT






Driving licence

You need a valid Belgian or international driving licence to drive in Belgium. Do you have a valid European national driving licence? You can use it to drive in Belgium. You do not need to exchange it for a Belgian driving license (as long as it remains valid).

Do you have a driving licence from a non-EU country? You can only drive in Belgium for 185 days with that license. After that, you can use it to apply for a Belgian driving licence.

 **BEWARE:** Not all driving licences can be converted into a Belgian driving licence. Here is the list of recognized non-EU countries:



Where can you apply for a Belgian driving licence?

You can apply for a driving licence at your town hall (See page 9). The procedure takes several weeks or months.

You do not have a driving licence yet?

You will have to take a driving test.



More information:



What are the traffic rules? What is the best way to get around? Or how do I plan my route?

You will get answers to these questions in the lessons about life in Belgium of your civic integration programme (see page 5).

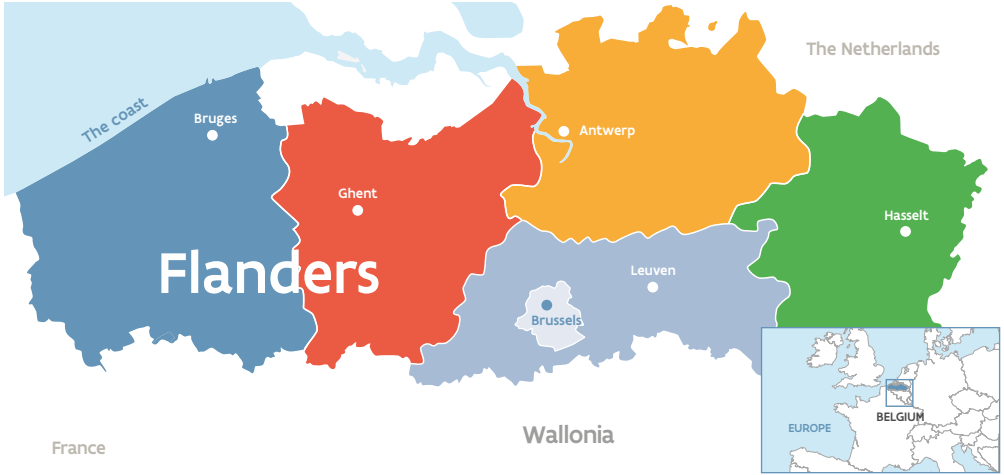


"I recommend the civic integration programme to all newcomers. It is the best way to integrate."

FATOU



Welcome to Flanders



Did you know this?



Brussels is the capital of Belgium. Belgium has 3 regions: Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels.



In Belgium, you pay in **Euros**.



The official languages in Belgium are **Dutch, French, and German**.



Belgium is a **kingdom**. The head of state is **King Filip**. His wife is Queen Mathilde.



Belgium is a **democracy**. People in Belgium can have a say in policy decisions.



Belgium has **freedom of religion**. You choose whether you profess a religion, and you choose which religion you profess.



“In the beginning, you miss family and friends. That is why you need a network. You need someone to talk to when you have a problem, when you are happy or when you are sad. You need friends.”

VONNY & ANDREEA

