

The image shows the interior of the Belgian Senate chamber, a grand, ornate hall with a high, vaulted ceiling. The room is filled with people seated at long, dark wooden desks arranged in a semi-circle. The walls are decorated with numerous framed portraits of historical figures. The floor is covered in a red carpet with a circular pattern. The lighting is warm and focused on the seating area.

The SENATE

BELGIUM

The background of the slide features a row of ornate, dark wood chairs with pink upholstered seats and backs. Each chair has a gold-colored lion rampant crest embroidered on the backrest. The setting appears to be a formal chamber or a historical building with wood-paneled walls.

Discover the role and
the composition of the Senate

The Senate follows the evolution of the federal state



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1831 Belgium is a unitary state. Senators are directly elected, but only those who pay a higher property tax are eligible. The Senate is the conservative counterpart of the House of Representatives.

The two assemblies have the same powers.

1894 Senators from the provinces are now also part of the Senate.

1993 Belgium officially becomes a federal state. The Senate follows this evolution and the senators from the provinces disappear.

The Senate is now composed of 40 directly elected senators, 21 senators from the Communities, named by the parliaments of the communities, and 10 co-opted senators.



Specific competencies are assigned to the Senate: it involves the federated entities in federal politics, it deliberates on broad society issues, and it monitors legislative quality.

2014

The Senate is again remodelled with the sixth State reform. The directly elected senators disappear. Most senators are now appointed by and within the parliaments of the federated entities. The Senate then becomes, at the federal level, *the assembly of the federated entities.*

60 SENATORS

★ 50 senators from federal entities

★ 10 co-opted senators



Belgium is a federal state

Belgium is a *federal state*, consisting of 3 *Communities* (the French-speaking Community, the Flemish Community, and the German-speaking community) and three *Regions* (the Walloon Region, the Flemish Region and the Brussels-Capital Region).

Just like the federal state, each one of these *federated entities* has its own competencies and for these issues wields their own decisional power. In a federal state, some laws are promulgated for the whole country, but the different federated entities also pass their own regulations.

3 Communities

- ◆ The Flemish community
- ◆ The French-speaking community
- ◆ The German-speaking community



3 Regions

- ◆ The Flemish Region
- ◆ The Walloon Region
- ◆ The Brussels-Capital Region



The federal assembly of federated entities

In Belgium, there are two federal legislative assemblies: The House of Representatives and the *Senate*.

The House of Representatives has 150 directly elected members, and embodies democratic legitimacy.

House of representatives
DEMOCRATIC Legitimacy
 representation of all **CITIZENS**

The *Senate* is the *assembly of federated entities* (namely, the Communities and the Regions). At the Senate, the elected representatives from the federated entities participate in *the decisional process* or take a stand in this matter.

The Senate has 60 members and embodies *federal legitimacy*.

Senate
FEDERAL Legitimacy
 representation of all **FEDERATED ENTITIES**

Senate

Flemish Parliament

Parliament of the French-speaking
Community

Parliament of the Walloon region

Brussels Parliament

Parliament of the German-speaking
Community



Composition

The Senate has *60 senators*.

The *parliaments of the federated states* delegate a total of *50* of their *members* to the Senate: 29 for the Flemish Parliament designated within itself or within the Dutch-speaking group of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region, 10 for the Parliament of the French Community, 8 for the Walloon Parliament, 2 for the French-speaking group of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region and one for the Parliament of the German-speaking Community.

The results of the regional and community elections determine the allocation of seats.

It is through *these senators* that the federated entities can *communicate* with each other and with the federal authority.

These 50 *senators of the federated entities* appoint 10 senators, on the basis of the election results for the House of Representatives. These are the *co-opted senators*.

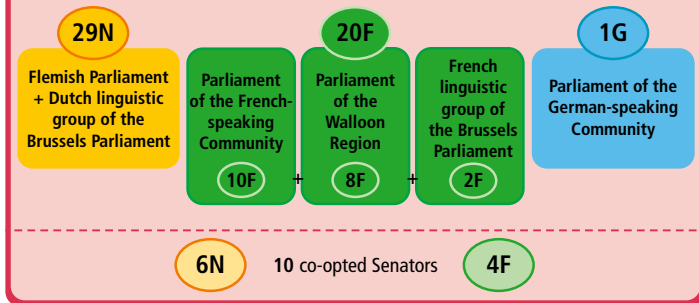
Certain laws require a special majority. For this purpose, senators are divided in a French-speaking group and a Dutch-speaking group.

A maximum of two thirds of the senators are of the same gender.



60 SENATORS

50 Senators from the federated entities



N: Dutch-speaking

F: French-speaking

G: German-speaking

Linguistic group **N**: 35

● 29 senators from the federated entities

● 6 co-opted senators



Linguistic group **F**: 24

● 20 senators from the federated entities

● 4 co-opted senators

The senator appointed by the parliament of the German-speaking Community is not part of a linguistic group.

Competencies



The Senate, on a par with the House, is *fully competent* for the *Constitution* and *for legislation on the organization and functioning of the institutions of the federal state and the federated entities.*

The Senate drafts *information reports*, particularly in matters where impacts are possible between the laws at different levels of government (State, Regions, Communities). These information reports are used to examine how collaboration should work, for instance regarding the reinforcement of gender equality, a smoother transposition of European legislation into Belgian law, the regulation of co-parenting in the law, the fight against child poverty, or the harmonization of public transportation.

Also within the federal framework, the Senate *intervenes* in possible *conflicts of interest* between the different parliamentary assemblies of the country.

Moreover, thanks to the representatives they have appointed to the Senate, the federated entities have access to *international parliamentary organizations.*

Like other parliamentary assemblies, the Senate will ensure that the EU takes no action on a topic that would be better handled at another level. This is called the principle of *subsidiarity.*



Senators participate in the *federal decision-making process*, while defending the *interests* of the *federated entities*.

Thanks for your visit

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