

Summit for Democracy Written Statement Belgium

Belgium, in all the components of its unique federal structure¹, remains strongly committed to multilateralism and to an international order based on the rule of law.

At the **multilateral level**, Belgium will

- Remain committed to promoting and protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through inter alia the Belgian fiduciary fund, established in the Council of Europe in 2018 and provided with additional funding in December 2020 (2 million EUR)
- As a member of the Team Europe Democracy Initiative, promote democracy and human rights worldwide in a common European endeavor. Together with the European Commission and its European Union partners, strengthen networks and joint programming of European democracy support and increase the availability of expertise and data on democratic backsliding and effective democracy support activities in the coming years
- Launch, through its development cooperation, a call for proposals to enhance civic space in Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda (1,95 million EUR)
- Increase, through its development cooperation, the multi-annual core funding for 2021-2024 to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) by 25% (compared to 2017-2020) (10 million EUR). In addition, provide earmarked funding for 4 OHCHR country

¹ The Belgian federal State is composed of communities and regions and is unique in the sense that the communities and regions are not subordinate entities, like the provinces and communes, but have the same standing as the federal authority. In terms of their jurisdiction, they have the same power as the federal authority, since their legislation, in the form of decrees and ordinances, has the force of law.

offices (Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Palestine, and Uganda) (4,75 million EUR)

- Finance, through its development cooperation, international human rights NGOs (1,585 million EUR)
- In 2022, provide earmarked funding, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to OHCHR's Rule of Law and Democracy Section (600,000 EUR) and its project 'Harnessing the digital potential for human rights' (300,000 EUR)
- In addition, the federated entities in Belgium will also continue supporting various multilateral organizations.

Respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy is a guiding principle in Belgium's foreign as well as domestic policy.

At the **domestic** level, Belgium will

- Adopt a national action plan to combat racism
- Implement the new national action plan to combat gender-based violence (adopted on November 26, 2021)
- Launch a participatory process through the creation of an online citizen platform on modernizing, increasing the efficiency and deepening the democratic principles of the State
- Lower the voting age to 16 for the European Parliament elections

- Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (Convention 205)
- Ratify the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (Protocol 207)