

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata. India-Belgium Bilateral Relation

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 27.08.2025 depicting the Embassy of Belgium.

2. Belgium was among the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with independent India in September 1947. Our close bilateral relationship is based on shared commonalities and commitment to the rule of law, federalism and pluralism. Belgium supports India's aspiration for permanent membership of the UNSC.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

3. India is Belgium's 14th largest export destination and 16th largest importer to Belgium. India is Belgium's seventh largest export destination outside the EU and the sixth largest trade partner outside the EU. The focus of our bilateral relations has traditionally been on trade and investment. Trade in diamonds dominates our bilateral trade. As a trading country partner of India, and as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Belgium during 2024-25 was recorded at 6320.10 million USD and India's imports from Belgium during the same reference period stood at 6877.94 million USD. India's exports to Belgium were significantly high in 2021-22. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are as under.

Export-Import statistics from 2020-21 to 2024-25

(USD Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2020-21	12176.42	6940.68	5235.74
2021-22	20036.18	9951.65	10084.53
2022-23	18041.87	9177.67	8864.20
2023-24	15079.41	7240.21	7839.20
2024-25	13198.04	6877.94	6320.10

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

4. Major Indian exports: Precious metals & stones, Chemicals, Base metals, Drug formulation & Biologicals, Iron & steel and Marine Products etc. and Indian imports: Precious metals & stones, Chemicals, Machinery and equipment etc.

5. There are around 160 Belgian companies present in India. Several Indian companies, particularly in the IT and software sectors, such as TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HCL, etc. have established base in Belgium to cater to the Belgian as well as European markets. FDI flows from Belgium to India from April 2000 to March 2022 stood at USD 2.556 Billion.

6. India's Joint Economic Commission Meeting (India-BLEU JCM) with the Belgium- Luxembourg Economic Union, established in 1997, is the main vehicle for discussing the bilateral economic and commercial issues. The 17th India-BLEU JCM was held virtually on 16th September 2021.

C. Other Major Areas of Co-operation:

- Several bilateral agreements/MoUs have been signed with Belgium both at inter-government level as well as between institutions, providing the framework for wide-ranging cooperation.
- India and Belgium cooperate in the field of Science and Technology under the framework of an MoU signed during the visit of the Belgian PM to India in November 2006. A Joint Committee on S&T has been established based on the agreement.
- The remote technical activation of a 3.6 metre optical telescope located at Devasthal in Uttarakhand was jointly carried out by the Prime Ministers of India and Belgium during PM's visit to Belgium on 30th March 2016. India and Belgium cooperate in dedicated fields in Science and Technology under the frameworks of MoU on Cooperation in Space Technology (1998); MoU between TERI India and VITO-Belgium (2014); and MoU between BARC and SCK – SEN (Belgian Nuclear Research Centre, 2012). India and Belgium have co-funded 16 projects in the area of life-sciences, exact sciences, astronomy etc. The 4th call for joint projects was launched after the 5th meeting of COMMIX held on 18th January, 2021. A new 2.5m telescope for the Mount Abu was virtually inaugurated on 16th Oct 2020. AMOS also designed, manufactured, assembled and installed Multi Application Solar Telescope (MAST), a 50 m diameter class telescope for the Udaipur Solar Observatory (USO) in India. A 4m Liquid Mirror Telescope (ILMT) installed at Devasthal is also ready.
- An MoU for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy between India and Belgium (Federal/Regional level for Energy) was signed on 29th September, 2015. It is under active discussion for renewal. The 3rd meeting of the JWG on Renewables was held on 28th Oct, 2021 in the virtual mode.
- An MoU for cooperation in the field of ICT was signed on 7th November, 2017 during the Royal Mission to India and a Joint Working Group on ICT met in Brussels in September 2019 and identified potential areas for collaboration such as cyber security, fintech, Internet of Things (IoT), big data, block chains, AI etc. that are also aligned with the EU's digital agenda and priorities. It is under active discussion for renewal.
- An MoU between the Ministry of Shipping of India and Antwerp Port Authority training of Indian Port officials is being facilitated. The MoU was renewed in February 2020.
- Around 764 Indian students are pursuing their studies in Belgium Universities in Ghent, Leuven, Antwerp and Brussels. Five MoUs on education were signed during the State visit of Rashtrapati in 2013, namely: a) MoU between JNU and University of Ghent; b) MoU between Delhi University and University of Ghent; c) MoU between Delhi University and University of Leuven; d) MoU between DU and Free University of Brussels (ULB); and e) MoU between the University of Hyderabad and University of Ghent.
- India and Belgium have a Cultural Agreement in place since 1973. India was the partner country for the Europalia-India Cultural Festival held from 4th October, 2013 to 26th January, 2014 in Belgium. The festival was jointly inaugurated by Rashtrapati and the King of the Belgium. The festival included nearly 300 events showcasing Indian art and antiquities, music and dance performances, cinema, theatre, literature, as well as cuisine, hosted by about 200 partner venues

across Belgium.

- There are 4 statues/busts of Mahatma Gandhi in Belgium. The External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in the office complex of the Governor of the Antwerp province on 30th January, 2013. On the 151st Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a statue of the Rashtrapita was inaugurated by the Governor and Mayor of Antwerp along with the Ambassador of India in October 2020. This statue is installed in front of the Antwerp Court house, a prominent legal and architectural landmark of Antwerp. The statue is a gift of the Indian government. In Brussels, there is a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in park Moleenbeek and the embassy premises.
- An MoU was signed between ICCR and BOZAR (Center for Fine Arts –Brussels) for cooperation in the field of culture on 4th February, 2021.
- Yoga has also become a major bridge of culture between India and Belgium. Every year, International Day of Yoga is celebrated in several cities and towns of Belgium, including Brussels, Antwerp, Leuven, Durbuy, Mons, Enghien and Kortrijk.
- People to people contact between India and Belgium has also been further strengthened in the recent years through successful twinning initiatives - the Belgian city of Leuven is now connected to the Indian cities of New Delhi and Gwalior.
- The cities of Leuven and Ghent, which already host numerous Indian students and researchers in their renowned Universities, celebrated a Festival of Indian Culture in Leuven and Ghent in November 2021.
- According to the latest estimates, there are around 24,732 members of the Indian Diaspora in Belgium – of these, 14286 are Non-Resident Indians (NRI) which includes around 764 Indian students & around 2000 IT Professionals, and around 10446 are Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)

Source: www.mea.gov.in