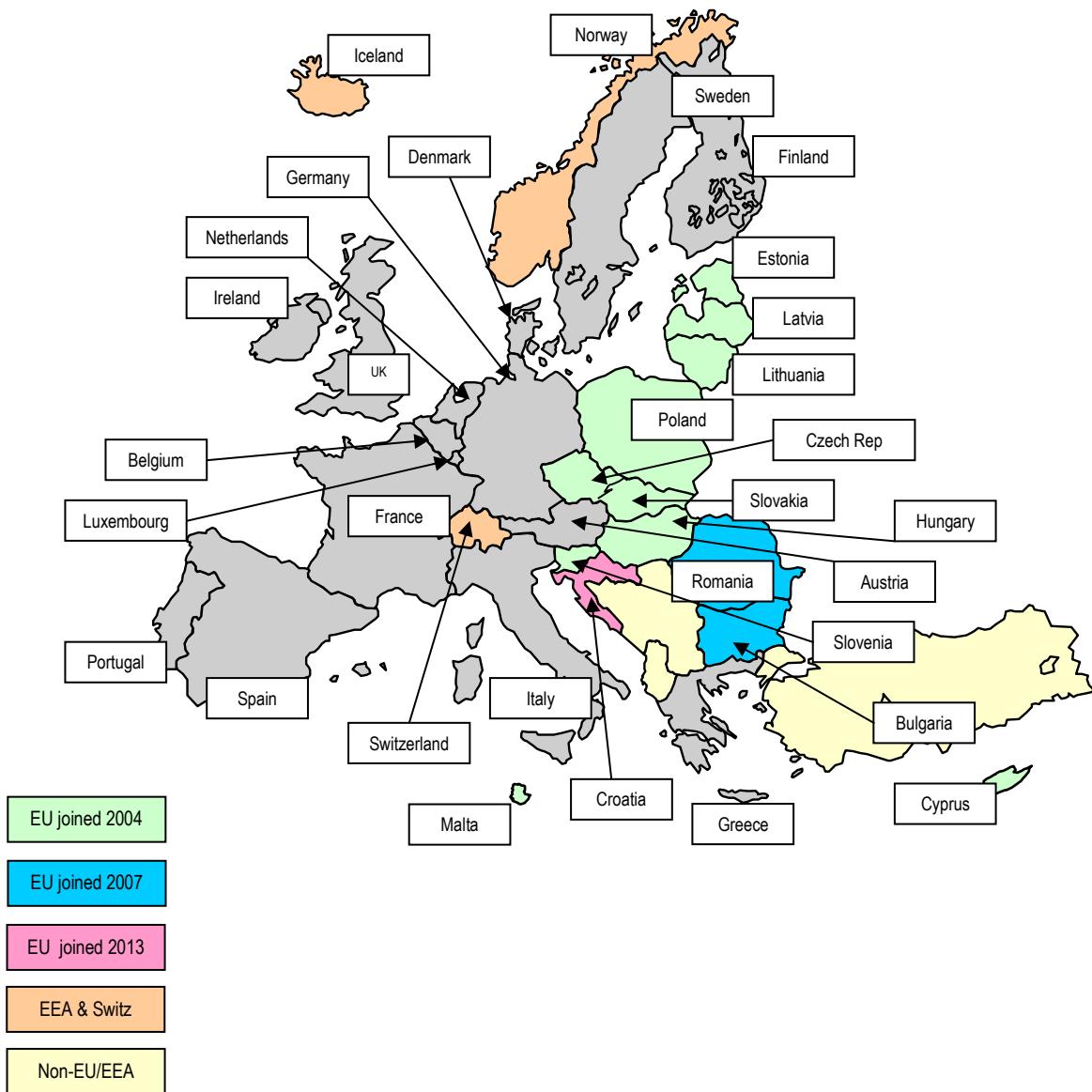


**Council of European Dentists**

# **MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026**

**Belgium**

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## Belgium



Date of last revision: December 2025

In the EU/EEA since	1957
Population (2023)	11 817 096
GDP PPP per capita (2023)	€ 46 156
Currency	Euro (€) (EUR)
Official language(s)	Dutch, French, German

General health care is mainly funded by deductions from salaries which also cover retirement pensions, and a supplementary child tax. The amount contributed depends on income.

Number of dentists (active)	8 479
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	71.7
Members of Dental Association	Varies

The specialties of Orthodontics and Periodontics are recognized in Belgium. Dental auxiliaries include dental technicians, dental chairside assistants, and the recent emergence of dental hygienists. Continuing education for dentists is mandatory since 2016, by a minimum number of hours carried out every six years. Four dental associations are present with two French-speaking and two Dutch speaking.

## Government and healthcare in Belgium

Belgium is an independent parliamentary monarchy, founded in 1830. The land area is just over 30,000 sq km. There is a well-established system of regional as well as national government. It is also a country with three languages (59% of Flemish speakers, 40% of French speakers, and 1% of German speakers). This affects dentistry because a distinction exists between Flemish and French Dental Schools and Dental Associations (see later).

The capital is Brussels. The bicameral Federal Parliament consists of a Senate or *Senaat* in Dutch, *Senat* in French. There are three levels of government (federal, regional, and linguistic community) with a complex division of responsibilities; six governments each have its own legislative assembly.

The *Institut National d'Assurance de Maladie et d'invalidité* (INAMI)/*Rijksinstituut voor Ziekte en Invaliditeits Verzekering* (RIZIV) is the Federal body responsible for managing the health system. The *Institut* acts as the adviser to the Minister of Social Affairs, who makes decisions on behalf of the King. The King is required to sign every application for new laws.

National compulsory social health insurance covers 99% of Belgian residents. Healthcare is mainly funded by deductions from salaries which also cover retirement pensions, and a supplementary child tax. The amount contributed depends on income. Prevention is a regional responsibility, incumbent on federated entities (three regions based on territory and three communities based on language: Dutch, French and German).

Individuals can choose to belong to one of the sick funds operating in ten major groups. For all sick funds central co-ordination ensures that the rules, fees and reimbursements are the same.

Although the total budget for healthcare is decided by the government, it is divided between the five groups using a formula which takes into account social and economic factors, the number of people in each scheme, and occupational differences in health risk. Every six months, the budget of all of the sectors are examined to determine what measures must be taken to control any expected overspend.

Current health expenditure (CHE) in Belgium amounted to 10.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021, with a budget of 4168 EUR per capita (PPP) in 2023. Out-of-pocket payments made up 17.9% of the overall health spending in 2021, with 11.5% of this share related to dental care.

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	10.9	2023 OECD
% of this spent by government	72	2023 KCE <sup>1</sup>
% of health insurance spent on oral healthcare coverage	4%	2023 RIZIV/INAMI

The following ministers are responsible for different aspects of health care:

1. Minister of Social Affairs decides treatment tariffs and oversees relations with sick funds
2. Minister of Health decides registration, and how many dentists are required
3. Ministers of Education control the basic education of dental students in each region

<sup>1</sup> KCE, or Belgium Health Care Knowledge Centre is an independent federal research institute in Belgium. It carries out research and institutional scientific advice on all healthcare related topics. Find out more here: <https://kce.fgov.be/en>

## Education, Training and Registration

### Undergraduate Education and Training

There are five dental schools, three French-speaking (Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL), Université de Liège, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)) and two Flemish-speaking (KU Leuven, Ghent University). The possible opening of a sixth dental school at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) is under discussion for 2025. Dental schools are part of the Faculties of Medicine in universities. All universities are public and are shared between Catholic and secular institutes.

In Flanders there is an entrance examination before entering the first year of training. This is common to medical, veterinary and dental studies. In the French speaking universities, the initial two-step selection procedure after the first year of training (Examen d'Entrée Medicine et Dentaire) has been replaced by an entrance examination with a limited number of places before entering the first year of training. The exam is joint for dental and medical studies.

There are two titles awarded for general clinical dentists graduating from Belgian dental schools, after a 5-year course:

1	Flemish	<i>Master (of Science) in de tandheelkunde</i>
2	French	<i>Master en sciences dentaires</i>

Year of data	2023
Number of schools	5
Student intake (Flemish students)	223
Student intake (Francophone students)	177
Flemish graduates (per year)	151
Francophone graduates (per year)	102
Gender balance (% of female students)	61 %
Duration of studies	5

### Registration

Before being able to practise a dentist must register with the Federal Ministry of Health. No fee is required to be paid.

To register to work in the INAMI/RIZIV (National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance) as general dentists, graduates must complete a mandatory 1-year vocational training (VT) following the completion of their 5-year undergraduate studies. This vocational training year is provisional to being granted the right to practice under the Belgium social security system.

This year of vocational training is composed of a minimum of 250 hours of theoretical training (seminars) and a minimum of 1250 hours of clinical practice.

3 years of postgraduate specialist training are required for periodontology and 4 years for orthodontics.

Despite the absence of a *numerus clausus* (by the Department

of Education) for the intake of students into the universities, a federal decree has limited the number of places for vocational training to 170.

#### Language requirements

To register with the Ministry of Health a dentist should be able to communicate in at least one of the three national languages – Dutch, French or German.

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

General dentists are required to undertake mandatory continuing professional development courses to maintain their dental registration.

Continuing education spreads over all aspects of the profession (general medicine, radiology, prevention, practice management, conservative dentistry, orthodontics, prosthodontics, ...).

This comprises of a minimum of 60 hours of CPD training to be carried out over a period of 6 years, with a minimum of 20 hours carried out every two years.

The 6-year cycle is initiated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July following the calendar year in which the title of general dentist was awarded.

### Specialist training requirements

#### Specialist Training

The main degrees which may be included in the register are:

- 1 *Algemeen Tandarts, Dentiste Généraliste*
- 2 *Tandarts specialist in de Orthodontie, Dentiste Spécialiste en orthodontie*
- 3 *Tandarts Specialist in de Parodontologie / dentiste Spécialiste en Parodontologie.*

Specialist training is undertaken at the universities - for general dentists 1 year, orthodontics 4 years, for periodontics 3 years (including the vocational training). Trainees are paid by their respective dental practitioner and tutor, through a compensation from the RIZIV/INAMI national insurance scheme.

Oral maxillo-facial surgery is a medical specialty, which requires 6 years basic training and qualification in medicine, a 3-year combined bachelor's and master's degree in dentistry, and a 2-year specialisation in stomatology, and then a further training in oral maxillo-facial surgery for a further 2 years.

Additionally, non-recognised university certificates, under the INAMI/RIZIV register, can be carried out following the completion of generalist training: in conservative dentistry and endodontics, paedodontics and prosthodontics (respectively 3 years after completion of the master's degree).

## Workforce

### Dentists

Most dentists practice in general practice – although some also work in hospitals and dental faculties.

Year of data	2023
Total Registered*	12 145
In active practice	8 479
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	71.7
Percentage female	61%
Qualified overseas	1 200

\*Includes stomatologists

#### Movement of dentists across borders

There is a small movement of dentists from Belgium to its neighbouring countries (especially the Netherlands), and a small number from the Netherlands into Belgium. Additionally, an existing movement of French speaking dentists holding a dental diploma from an EU country, remains, within the European francophone community. A recorded average of 150 dentists moves in or out of Belgium every year.

### Specialists

Three specialist titles are recognised in Belgium, general practice, orthodontics, and periodontics. Maxillo-facial surgery is recognised as a medical specialty, accessible through medical studies.

Patients may go directly to a specialist, without referral.

Year of data	2022	Registered	Active
Orthodontics	642	514	
Periodontics	236	205	
Oral and maxillo-facial surgeons (OMFS)	418	336	

This data are all for active specialists only.

Stomatologists, who are reducing in number, are usually undertaking general dentistry. They train for 6 years in medicine, then 3 years as the third year and master's in dentistry, finally 2 years specialisation in stomatology.

OMFS do two years supplementary training in addition to that. They are registered under the Medical Directives.

### Auxiliaries

Year of data	2024
Hygienists	452
Dental technicians	NA
Dental Chairside assistants	NA

There are three types of auxiliaries in Belgium, dental hygienists, dental technicians and dental chairside assistants.

#### Dental hygienists

Dental hygienists are subject to a legal framework and have a recognised diploma, delivered by professional Universities (Haute Ecoles) after the completion of a 3-year bachelor's programme. Continuing professional development is mandatory for maintaining registration.

Dental hygienists in Belgium specialise in preventative oral health care and are responsible for dental care prevention and oral health education.

Dental hygienists may carry out shared responsibilities with dentists, but their role and scope of practice concentrates on providing preventative oral care, patient education, early detection of dental problems and monitoring oral health.

They are registered by the Ministry of Health with the appropriate regulatory body.

#### Dental technicians

Dental technicians have a protected title, under the governance of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and receive undergraduate training in technical schools (3 years) or in the dental laboratories ("patronal training").

Dental technicians oversee the fabrication of custom-made dental devices and of carrying out laboratory work for the dentist. They are allowed to practice in an office under the supervision of a dentist, or in an external office on behalf of a dentist.

They are registered by the Ministry of Health.

#### Chairside assistants

Dental chairside assistants undergo one year's formal training in a vocational training centre or specialised school. No Federal body regulates the practice of chairside assistants.

Chairside assistants support the dentist in all his/her tasks, manages patients' medico-administrative files and administrative tasks, manages the risk of infection as well as provides technical assistance.

## Other Useful Information

### Main national associations

<b>Dental Associations:</b>	
<i>Flemish (Dutch)-speaking:</i>	<i>Flemish (Dutch)-speaking:</i>
<p><b>Vlaamse Beroepsvereniging Tandartsen (VBT)</b> Burgemeester Maenhautstraat 64 9820 Merelbeke - Gent BELGIUM Tel: +32 9 395 24 25 Email: <a href="mailto:vragen@vbt.be">vragen@vbt.be</a> Website: <a href="https://www.vbt.be">https://www.vbt.be</a></p>	<p><b>Verbond der Vlaamse Tandartsen (VVT)</b> Vrijheidslaan 61, 1081 Brussels, BELGIUM Tel: +32 2 413 00 13 Email: <a href="mailto:info@vvt.be">info@vvt.be</a> Website: <a href="https://vvt.be/">https://vvt.be/</a></p>
<b>French-speaking</b>	
<p><b>Chambre de Médecine Dentaire (CMD)</b>, previously Chambres Syndicales Dentaires (CSD) <u>Administrative headquarters</u> : Avenue de la Renaissance, 1 1000 Bruxelles <u>Head office</u> : Boulevard Tirou 25 bte 9 6000 Charleroi BELGIUM Tel: +32 71 31 05 42 Fax: +32 71 32 04 13 Email: <a href="mailto:info@lacmd.be">info@lacmd.be</a> Website: <a href="https://www.lacmd.be/">https://www.lacmd.be/</a></p>	<p><b>Société de Médecine Dentaire (SMD) ASBL</b> Av. des Courses 20 bte 16 1050 Brussels BELGIUM Tel: +32 2 375 81 75 Fax: +32 2 375 86 12 Email: <a href="mailto:info@dentiste.be">info@dentiste.be</a> Website: <a href="http://www.dentiste.be">www.dentiste.be</a></p>
<b>Publications:</b>	
<p><b>VBT</b>: ConsulTand (3-Monthly) Burgemeester Maenhautstraat 64 9820 Merelbeke - Gent BELGIUM Tel: +32 9 395 24 25  Email: <a href="mailto:guido.lysens@tandarts.be">guido.lysens@tandarts.be</a> Website: <a href="http://ConsulTooth - VBT">ConsulTooth - VBT</a></p>	<p><b>VVT</b>: Vvtmagazine (Bi-monthly) Editor: Guy Kefel  Vvtnieuws (Bi-monthly) Editor: Guy Kefel Vrijheidslaan 61 1081 Brussels BELGIUM  Tel: +32 2 413 00 13 Email: <a href="mailto:redactie@vvt.be">redactie@vvt.be</a></p>
<p><b>CMD</b> : <i>L'Incisif</i> (quarterly) Editor : Stéphane Demol Boulevard Tirou 25 bte 9 6000 Charleroi BELGIUM Tel: +32 71 31 05 42 Fax: +32 71 32 04 13 Email: <a href="mailto:CMD@lacmd.be">CMD@lacmd.be</a> Website: <a href="http://www.lacmd.be/lincisif">www.lacmd.be/lincisif</a></p>	<p><b>SMD</b>: <i>Le Point</i> (monthly) Editor: Bruno Gonthier Maison des Dentistes Avenue des Courses, 20 – 1050 Bruxelles Tel: +32 2 375 81 75 Fax: +32 2 375 86 12 Email: <a href="mailto:info@dentiste.be">info@dentiste.be</a> Website : <a href="http://www.dentiste.be">www.dentiste.be</a></p>

### Competent authority

<b>Competent Authority and Information Centre:</b>
<p>FOD Volksgezondheid/SPF Santé publique, Conseil de l'art dentaire Gezondheidszorg/Soins de santé Avenue Galilée 5/2 1210 Bruxelles BELGIUM Online contact form: <a href="https://www.health.belgium.be/fr/service-center-sante">https://www.health.belgium.be/fr/service-center-sante</a> Website: <a href="http://www.health.fgov.be">www.health.fgov.be</a></p>

**Dental Schools:**

<p><b><u>Louvain-La-Neuve (French)</u></b></p> <p><b>Université Catholique de Louvain</b> Faculté de médecine et médecine dentaire Rue de Neerveld 109, 5e étage 1200 Brussels BELGIUM Tel: +32 2 7645752 Fax: +32 2 7645722 Email: website: <a href="https://uclouvain.be/fr/facultes/mede/mden">https://uclouvain.be/fr/facultes/mede/mden</a></p>	<p><b><u>Brussels (French)</u></b></p> <p>Université Libre de Bruxelles Hôpital Universitaire Erasme Route de Lennik 808 1070 Bruxelles BELGIUM Tel: +32 2 555 6118 Fax: +32 2 555 6798 Email: Website: <a href="http://www.ulb.be">www.ulb.be</a> Dentists graduating each year: 50 Number of students: 312</p>
<p><b><u>Liège (French)</u></b></p> <p>Université de Liège Faculté de Médecine, Avenue de l'Hôpital, 1, CHU du Sart Tilman B-4000 Liège BELGIUM Tel: +32 4 343 43 3 Fax: Email: Website: <a href="http://www.ulg.ac.be">http://www.ulg.ac.be</a></p>	<p><b><u>Leuven (Flemish)</u></b></p> <p>KU Leuven School voor Tandheelkunde Kapucijnenvoer 7 3000 Leuven BELGIUM Tel: +32 16 33 24 07 Fax: +32 16 33 24 84 Email: Website: <a href="http://www.kuleuven.ac.be">www.kuleuven.ac.be</a> Number of students: 90</p>
<p><b><u>Gent (Flemish)</u></b></p> <p>Universiteit Gent Dienst voor Mond-Tand-en Kaakziekten De Pintelaan 185 B-9000 Gent BELGIUM Tel: +32 9 240 40 01 Fax: Email: Website: <a href="http://www.rug.ac.be">http://www.rug.ac.be</a> Number of students: 61</p>	<p><b><u>Brussels (Flemish)</u></b> (Dental school to be opened shortly)</p> <p>Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) Etterbeek Pleinlaan 2 1050 Elsene</p> <p><u>Estimated capacity:</u> 36 dental students a year</p> <p><u>Current facilities:</u> University Dental Centre (UTC), a patient-centred dental practice, training and research centre on the VUB Health Campus in Jette. VUB Health Campus Jette Laarbeeklaan 103 1090 Jette Brussels</p>