SEVR2026 Country Profile: Belgium (based on the information available in April 2026)

Belgium presents a well-developed formal volunteering framework. A 2005 Volunteer Law covers all volunteers, a High Council advises the government, liability insurance is compulsory, and recognition and accessible information points are established at national and local level. Despite this the law is "not enough known or respected", the High Council is "often ignored", and participatory decision-making is "not always respected" and "not effective".

Strategy is only beginning to take a coordinated, cross-sectoral form, chiefly in Flanders, and service learning remains a theory-based method rather than with embedded volunteering as a practical activity. Funding for the regional support centres is precarious, and volunteer time is not used to co-finance grants. Belgium's position therefore is one of solid structures paired with a persistent implementation and recognition-in-practice gap. Belgium stakeholders have instrumentalisation of volunteers as an ethical red line rather than a mere efficiency question, insisting that treating volunteers as free labour is "always a negative practice", even where institutions benefit. Increased commercialisation and flexibility in volunteering can be seen to benefit businesses while challenging associative and public organisers, making business/associative tension a key feature of the volunteering landscape. Public-sector strain is framed as fewer resources and a shift in responsibility (the "socialisation" of care and security), points to capacity rather than unwillingness as the binding constraint.

	Indicator	SEVR2026 Country Profile: Belgium
Emerging Volunteering Patterns **Source: Trends section of CFS**	Flexible/short-term/episodic engagement	Increasing prominence of flexible, short-term, episodic volunteer engagement, benefiting businesses while challenging associative and public organisers.
	Digitalisation/online/e-volunteering	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Rise/dominance of informal volunteering	Rise of informal, community-based volunteering, engaging people outside formal labels.
	Decline/falling volunteer numbers	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Ageing/loss of older volunteers	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Professionalisation/skills-based management	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Widening inequality barriers to access	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Corporate / employee / CSR volunteering	Increased commercialisation and corporate volunteering, seen to benefit businesses while challenging associative and public organisers.
	Rising youth/student participation	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Skills/employability-driven motivation	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Crisis-driven engagement	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Recruitment & retention difficulty	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
	Public-institution partnership/socialisation	Public-institution partnership and the "socialisation" of care and security, shifting responsibility toward the public sector.

	Formalisation/legal recognition	No evidence of this trend has been recorded.
BEV2030 indicators 1.3.2 Volunteer time that does not replace paid jobs can be used for the co-financing/ co-resourcing of grants.	1.3.2 Co-financing with volunteer time	**Absent.** Co-financing "is not a requirement for most grant schemes", so use of volunteer time as an in-kind contribution is "not widely developed".
1.4.1 Not for profit volunteer centres and platforms receive sufficient public funding.	1.4.1 Sufficient funding	**Partial/emerging.** Regional support centres (Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, Plateforme Francophone du Volontariat) exist, but they lack dedicated, stable funding.
1.5.2 The co-creation of public policies becomes the norm and the opportunities offered by participatory decision making processes are fully explored and exploited.	1.5.2 Co-creation of public policies	**Partial/emerging.** Consultation mechanisms and the High Council exist, but mandatory consultation is not always respected and dialogue is not effective, with decision-makers avoiding co-creation.
2.1.4 Suitable and sufficient public support is provided to volunteer infrastructure organisation to have the capacity to support and guide these **new forms** of volunteering.	2.1.4 Suitable & sufficient support to 5 volunteering contexts: informal groups, local administrations, national public authorities, educational institutions, business sector actors.	**Partial/emerging.** Support is documented for local administrations, education and business. Support provided to the five contexts is unevenly developed and documented.
2.3.3 Every volunteer has a suitable and accessible point of information or reference point to channel their questions and suggestions.	2.3.3 Accessible point of information	**Established.** National support centres in all three communities plus a High Council contact point. Regional/local provision growing as municipalities add contact points.
3.1.1 Civic education and Service Learning are introduced more widely into the formal education systems to increase awareness of volunteering and civil society not only for children and young people but also their wider networks of families and friends.	3.1.1 Education: Civic / Service Learning	**Partial/emerging.** Service learning is increasingly offered, particularly in higher education, but remains a methodology, often mandatory, not yet systematically embedded.
3.3.2 Suitable volunteering development strategies that are crosscutting and transversal for different policy fields and sectors are developed.	3.3.2 Strategy	**Partial/emerging.** Flanders has a framework for a coordinated strategy and some municipalities integrate approaches, but transversal strategies are not yet the norm.
3.4.1 Legal frameworks for volunteering are adapted and evolve to take this, and other societal and behavioural changes into account. In this way, in addition to the more formal and structured engagement that legal frameworks are frequently focused on, they will be more suitable to facilitate and enable different forms of voluntary engagement, rather than restrict engagement as can be currently the case, unlocking further potential.	3.4.1 Legal framework	**Established.** A dedicated Volunteer Law (2005) covers all volunteers and organisations, plus the advisory High Council, though it is not sufficiently known or respected, with misuse and an often-ignored council.
4.1.2 Opportunities for public recognition for the action of volunteers, citizens and associations through awards, volunteer weeks and festivals etc. are provided and increased.	4.1.2 Recognition	**Established.** Documented awards, volunteer weeks and festivals provide public recognition across communities.

5.2.1 Volunteering is included as an integral part of the community planning for crisis prevention and response.	5.2.1 Crisis prevention & response	**Established.** Red Cross-led volunteer corps in Flanders and francophone initiatives with provinces/municipalities react to crises, embedded via civil-protection actors.
5.4.2 Volunteers are provided with the necessary support and protection through suitable accident and third party liability insurance.	5.4.2 Insurance	**Established.** A legal obligation on organisations to hold liability insurance, with a free volunteers' insurance available to small organisations.