

THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT



GENERAL

- Country: Belgium (11 million residents (2014), 30,326 km²)
- Region: Flanders (6.4 million residents (2014), 13,500km²)
- The Flemish Parliament is the parliament of the Belgian federated entity of Flanders. It is competent for regional and community matters
- Headquarters: Brussels (Hertogsstraat 6, 1000 Brussels)
- Language: Dutch
- The Flemish Parliament was founded on 7 December 1971
- Budget of Flanders: 39.5 billion € (2015)
- Website: www.vlaamsparlement.be

FLEMISH PARLIAMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Flemish Parliament is the legislative and democratic mainstay of Flanders. It is responsible for the creation of Flemish Parliament Acts and for approving the Flemish budget. The Flemish Parliament appoints the Government of Flanders and ensures that the Government of Flanders implements Flemish Parliament Acts.

The Flemish Parliament aims to be the centre of democratic Flanders and to closely involve citizens with political decision-making. To this end, it strives for maximum transparency and optimal communication. It aims to function as a modern parliament that is decisive, far-sighted and dynamic and is based on the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and value-for-money.

By projecting and encouraging a sense of public responsibility, the Flemish Parliament aims to raise democratic support within society and profile Flanders as a modern, pioneering, tolerant and caring European region.

FLEMISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The Flemish Parliament has 124 members.

- 118 members of the Flemish Parliament are elected in the 5 Flemish provinces
- 6 members of the Flemish Parliament are elected in Brussels

- 69 (55,6%) members of parliament are male and 55 (44,4%) are female
- Their average age is 45 (2015).

The seats are proportionately divided among the parties in each province and in Brussels according to the D'Hondt system. There is an electoral threshold of 5% in each province.

The Flemish Parliament is a legislature parliament. The members are elected for a 5-year term. There is a tendency for elections to be organized together with elections for the European Parliament.

Voting conditions:

- Belgian nationality
- aged 18 or older
- living in Flanders or Brussels (compulsory voting !)

Conditions for eligibility:

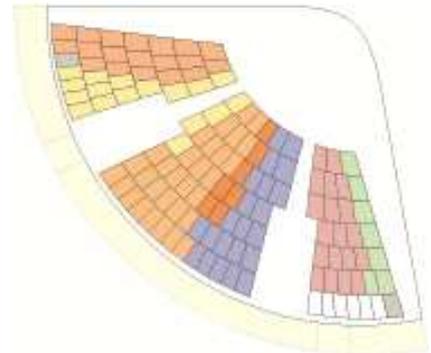
- Belgian nationality
- aged 18 or older
- living in Flanders or Brussels
- having all civil and political rights
- no involvement in cases of exclusion or suspension as defined in the Electoral Laws



The 'Koepelzaal' in the Flemish Parliament

COMPOSITION AS A RESULT OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 25 May 2014

- N-VA (New Flemish Alliance [nationalists]): 43 seats
- CD&V (Flemish christian democrats): 27 seats
- Open Vld (liberal democrats): 19 seats
- sp.a (socialists): 18 seats
- Groen (ecologists): 10 seats
- Vlaams Belang (Flemish nationalists): 6 seats
- UF (Union des francophones): 1 seat



POLITICAL FRACTIONS IN THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT (01.11.2014)

If a party has three or more members, they can form a political group. Each political group chooses a chairman. A political group is 'recognised' if it has a minimum of 5 members. A recognised political group is granted resources to set up a secretariat with the required personnel.

N-VA political group

- Nationalists
- Chairman: Matthias Diependaele
- Members: 43

Contact:

- nico.moyaert@vlaamsparlement.be
- +32 (0)2 552 42 10



CD&V political group

- Christian democrats
- Chairman: Koen Van den Heuvel
- Members: 27

Contact:

- Yves.degrave@vlaamsparlement.be
- +32 (0)2 552 43 13



Open Vld political group

- Liberals
- Chairman: Bart Somers
- Members: 19

Contact:

- Herman.devos@vlaamsparlement.be
- +32 (0)2 552 43 61



sp.a political group

- Socialists
- Chairman: John Crombez
- Members: 18

Contact:

- Thierry.vanderkindere@vlaamsparlement.be
- +32 (0)2 552 42 33



<p>Groen political group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecologists - Chairman: Björn Rzoska - Members: 10 <p>Contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johan.malcorps@groen.be - +32 (0)2 552 48 03 	
<p>Vlaams Belang political group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationalists - Chairman: Chris Janssens - Members: 6 <p>Contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wim.vanosselaer@vlaamsparlement.be - +32 (0)2 552 41 47 	

THE COMPETENCES OF THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT

- culture, media, tourism and sports
- use of language
- person-based matters (youth protection, family policy and child care, policy on disabled and elderly persons, equal opportunities policy and integration of immigrants)
- education
- economy, employment opportunities and energy policy
- urban planning, housing and land-use planning, conservation of nature
- environment and water policy
- civil engineering and traffic
- agriculture and fisheries
- municipalities, provinces and inter-municipal bodies (allocation of financial resources and administrative supervision)
- international affairs
- science policy

THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS

The Government of Flanders, which needs a majority in the Flemish Parliament, is formed on the basis of the election results. It is accountable to parliament. The current government, which comprises the Minister-President and 8 ministers, is a coalition between N-VA (New Flemish Alliance), CD&V (christian democrats), and Open Vld (liberal democrats).

THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT

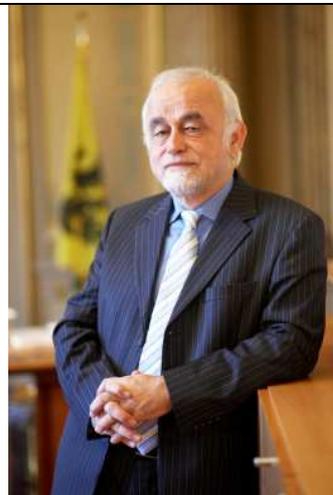
Speaker

The Flemish Parliament is chaired by the Speaker, who is appointed every year during the opening of the Parliamentary term. The Speaker is traditionally a member of the majority, but this is not necessarily the case.

The Speaker chairs the plenary sessions and ensures that the meetings are held in an orderly manner. The Speaker also heads up meetings of the Bureau and the Extended Bureau and is responsible for the implementation of decisions taken by the Bureau and during plenary sessions. In this context, he/she is supported by the Secretary-General (Clerk) and the General Secretariat of the Flemish Parliament. The Speaker does not take an active part in discussions. He/she sits, as it were, above the political groups. The Speaker represents Parliament to the outside world and also functions as a spokesperson for Parliament. This does not detract from the fact that the different Speakers are able to push their particular issues to the fore.

The current Speaker of the Flemish Parliament is Mr Jan Peumans (Maastricht, 6 January 1951). Mr Peumans is a member of the N-VA and was elected to office by the province of Limburg in 2004, 2009 and 2014. Mr Peumans was already Speaker from 2009 to 2014. The Speaker holds a Master's degree in political and social sciences.

(jan.peumans@vlaamsparlement.be,
+32 (0)2 552 11 06)



The Permanent Bureau of the Flemish Parliament

Day-to-day management of Parliament is carried out by the Permanent Bureau. The Permanent Bureau is elected by the Flemish Parliament during the opening of each term. It comprises the chairman, four deputy chairmen and three secretaries. Parliament can amend the number of people concerned. The Permanent Bureau meets every two weeks. It takes all of the decisions that are required to manage the Flemish Parliament. The Permanent Bureau is especially responsible for finance, infrastructure and HR policy for the Parliament and all aspects that correspond to these matters. Since the General Secretariat of the Flemish Parliament has been handed responsibility, a number of the Permanent Bureau's tasks have been delegated to the Secretary-General, the most senior Civil Servant in the General Secretariat, and to the Management Board. The Management Board, which accounts for the various tasks of the civil servant organisation, prepares decisions for the Permanent Bureau. The general principle is that the policy priorities are established by the Permanent Bureau and that the Management Board takes on responsibility for implementing them. Meetings of the Permanent Bureau are attended by the Secretary-General/Clerk on behalf of the General Secretariat, and the staff officer responsible for the Permanent Bureau's secretariat.

The Extended Bureau of the Flemish Parliament

The Extended Bureau coordinates the political functions of the Flemish Parliament. The Extended Bureau includes the Permanent Bureau and the chairmen of the recognised political groups. The Extended Bureau meets every week on Monday. The Extended Bureau sets the agenda for the plenary session, among other things, and regulates the Flemish Parliament's political functions. In the context of this task, it also determines the admissibility of interpellations. These are either referred to the competent committee or the plenary session. Interpellation requests that are assessed by the Extended Bureau as not of a general nature are rejected and can then be converted by the submitting party into verbal or written questions. The Extended Bureau also coordinates the functions of the committees. To this end, consultation meetings are held with the committee chairmen three times a year. The Extended Bureau also coordinates and debates initiatives that are taken to improve the Flemish Parliament's political effectiveness. Meetings of the Extended Bureau are attended by the Secretary-General on behalf of the General Secretariat, the director Legislation and the staff officer responsible for the Permanent Bureau's secretariat.



The Permanent Bureau



The Extended Bureau

The plenary session of the Flemish Parliament

The plenary session is the Flemish Parliament's highest body. It incorporates the 124 members of the Flemish parliament and meets on Wednesday afternoon in the 'Koepelzaal' in the Flemish Parliament building. The members of the Government of Flanders also take part in the plenary session but do not have voting rights. The plenary session can insist on their attendance.

The plenary session is called and chaired by the Speaker of the Flemish Parliament. The agenda is prepared by the Extended Bureau. Every member of the Flemish Parliament can use a point of order to add to the agenda, adjourn a point, amend the order of tasks, refer a point to the committee and so on. Such points of order must first be approved by the plenary session.

The members of the Flemish Parliament have regulated, set discussion times for dealing with the items on the agenda. Within the available time, the Speaker gives each MP an opportunity to contribute. The ministers have an absolute right to speak: they must be given an opportunity to speak if they have requested this. After the debates, the plenary session votes the laws. Minutes are taken of every plenary session; these must be signed by the Speaker, a secretary and the Secretary-General and retained in the Flemish Parliament's archives. Reports are drawn up for the public and the media; these provide an edited report of what has been said during the session.

In principle, the plenary session is public and can thus be attended by both the public and media. For the past few years, the plenary sessions have also been broadcast live via the internet.

The committees of the Flemish Parliament

- The committees of the Flemish Parliament comprise 15 permanent members and 15 deputies. The committee members are appointed by the political groups (proportionately according to strength of political group in parliament). The committees autonomously determine their agenda and tasks. Each committee has a bureau that comprises the chairman and two deputy chairmen. Each committee is supported by an committee clerk from the General Secretariat. The committee meetings are open to the public and reports are made of every meeting.
- The committee's most important task is preparing the Flemish Parliament's work in terms of issuing laws. Proposals and topics for Flemish Parliament Acts are first extensively debated in committee. The text of the documents can be amended if the majority of the members agree. A committee can also organise hearings in order to gain further information on all aspects of a proposal or topic. The committee appoints a rapporteur who issues a report of the committee's deliberations to the plenary session. Policy memoranda, policy letters, cooperation agreements, resolution proposals and so on are all initially dealt with in some depth by the committee.
- Each committee also checks the Government of Flanders' policy. They have a number of control options. A member of parliament can ask a minister a question about current and specific issues. A member of parliament who would like to debate a more comprehensive problem of general interest can also hold an interpellation. Interpellations can give rise to the submission of a motion of no-confidence or a motion with justification that will be voted on during the plenary session. The annual budget debates also form an important moment of political control.

The standing committees of the Flemish Parliament

- Committee for General Policy, Finance and Budget
- Committee for Public Governance, Local and Provincial Government, Civic Integration and Urban Policy
- Committee for Brussels and Periphery
- Committee for Foreign Policy, European Affairs, International Cooperation, Tourism and Immovable Heritage
- Committee for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media
- Committee for Economy, Work, Social Economy, Innovation and Scientific Policy
- Committee for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Policy
- Committee for the Environment, Nature, Urban Planning, Energy and Animal Wellbeing
- Committee for Mobility and Public Works
- Committee for Education
- Committee for Wellbeing, Public Health and Family Affairs
- Committee for Housing Policy, Poverty Policy and Equal Opportunities

The specialised committees of the Flemish Parliament

- Committee for Regulation and Cooperation
- Ethics Committee
- Control committee for Government Announcements

- Control Committee for Election Publications
- Monitoring Committee for Capital and Mandate Declaration
- Committee for Legal Proceedings
- Inter-parliamentary Committee for the Dutch Language Union
- Advisory Inter-parliamentary Benelux Council

ADMINISTRATION – GENERAL SECRETARIAT

General

Personnel: 206 FTE (01/03/2015)

- 61,8 A (master)
- 59,1 B (bachelor)
- 85,1 C + D (higher secondary education + no degree)

Mission statement

"We provide top quality and results-focused support to the day-to-day functioning of the Flemish Parliament and faithfully work on the implementation of specific policy objectives from the Flemish Parliament.

We adhere to the Flemish Parliament's Civil Servant Code of Ethics and are led by the principles of cooperation, customer-focus, continual improvement and dependability.

We handle the resources that are provided to us in an effective, efficient and economical manner.

We create a pleasant, open working environment, based on trust and respect for one another's competencies and within which creativity and self-development are central."

The Secretary-General/Clerk

The General Secretariat is headed by a clerk with the rank of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General is appointed by the plenary session after an objective selection procedure.

The Secretary-General functions, on the one hand, as the official secretary to the Flemish Parliament and, on the other, is also responsible for the general management of the Flemish Parliament.

As official secretary, the Secretary-General attends the meetings of the Flemish Parliament and signs off all of the Flemish Parliament's decisions along with the Speaker. The Secretary-General also attends the meetings of Flemish Parliament's executive bodies and the Flemish Parliament's Bureau and Extended Bureau.

In his/her capacity for the general management of the Flemish Parliament, the Secretary-General is responsible for preparing and implementing the decisions of the Bureau and the Extended Bureau. The Secretary-General is also responsible for service provision to the Flemish members of parliament and for contact between the Flemish Parliament and citizens. On behalf of the Bureau, he/she supervises the personnel and services for the Flemish Parliament.

In the task of principal Civil Servant of the Flemish Parliament, the Secretary-General is supported by the Management Board which he/she chairs.

The current Secretary-General is Mrs **Martine Goossens** (Kalmthout, 12 August 1962). Mrs Goossens was appointed by the plenary session on 10 May 2006 and is fulfilling her second mandate of 6 years. Mrs Goossens is a Doctor of History and Master of Public Management. Mrs Goossens has been working for the Flemish Parliament in a variety of roles since 1990. She has written a range of articles and books on the Flemish Parliament including 'Dertig jaar Vlaams Parlement: historiek & dynamiek van een parlementaire instelling, 1971-2001' (Thirty years of Flemish Parliament: history and dynamic of a parliamentary institution).

(martine.goossens@vlaamsparlement.be, +32 (0)2 552 11 29)

The Secretariat-General (6 FTE)

The Secretary-General is supported in her tasks by the Secretariat-General. The Secretariat-General comprises the Secretary-General, 2 staff officers, and 3 administrative employees.

The Management Board

The Management Board is made up of the Secretary-General and the directors of the General Secretariat's 4 directorates. The Management Board is chaired by the Secretary-General. The Management Board prepares and implements decisions for the Permanent Bureau and the Extended Bureau. It manages administration for the Flemish Parliament and is responsible for day-to-day management. The Management Board meets every two weeks.

Directorate Legislation (50,26 FTE)

The Directorate Legislation is tasked with providing intrinsic and administrative support in relation to the daily political functioning of the Flemish Parliament.

In reality, this includes the following tasks:

- providing professional support for the plenary sessions and committee meetings
- drawing up and publishing reports from the plenary sessions and for the questions and interpellations in committee
- administrative processing of interpellations, current interpellations, current questions, requests for explanation and written questions
- drawing up draft reports
- providing professional support for appointments and nominations by the plenary session in a range of settings
- drawing up legislative advice about proposals for Flemish Parliament Acts and amendments on formal demand of the committee
- language advice for parliamentary initiatives and the provision of a language advice in general
- quality monitoring, supervising printing processes and publication of printed documents within the time period set by the regulations and the political agenda; drawing up parchments and promptly handing these over to the Government of Flanders
- managing the parliamentary database.

The Directorate Legislation is led by Mr **Gerit Vermeylen**.

(gerit.vermeylen@vlaamsparlement.be, +32 (0) 2 552 13 70)

Communication, Information & External Relations Directorate (38,3 FTE)

The Communication, Information and External Relations Directorate comprises the following services:

- Parliamentary Information Centre: Information on the Flemish Parliament's areas of competence and the provision of information on community and regional matters in order to support the parliamentary community.
- Archive and Biographical Service: Long-term management and improved access to the administrative and historical/scientific archive, digital archive, management of the biographical dossiers for the members of parliament.
- Legal Services: Legal Services Team, primarily dealing with public and administrative law.
- Europe and International Relations: Information and training on the EU, with a view to the Flemish Parliament's controlling role; taking care of international relations (CALRE, ...)
- Communication: Internal and external communication: press, website, intranet, publications, brochures, annual reports and campaigns.
- External Relations: Events and protocol
- Public relations: organizing tours, managing the visitors center in 'De Loketten' and the Parliamentary store.
- Educational service 'De Kracht van je Stem' (the power of your voice): day-programmes for youngsters, teacher days, teaching materials...

The Communication, Information and External Relations Directorate is led by Ms **Julie Clément** (Julie.clement@vlaamsparlement.be, +32 (0)2 552 41 96)

Administration Directorate (67,86 FTE)

The Administration Directorate encompasses three important areas: accounting, human resources and practical support for the Flemish Parliament.

- Accounting includes bookkeeping, the budget and general affairs
- HR is responsible for the full package of personnel policy and management, including the role of social secretariat for the members of parliament and their employees.
- Practical support is provided by the reception service (counters, post distribution, logistical support for all meetings and events in parliament), drivers and the catering service.

The Administration Directorate is led by Mr **Bart Martens** (Bart.martens@vlaamsparlement.be, +32 (0)2 552 40 80)

Purchasing, Infrastructure and IT Directorate (43,6 FTE)

The task of this Directorate is to support the various sections of the Flemish Parliament within the areas of IT, Purchasing, Technology, Printing and Building Management; this includes ad hoc tasks as well as structural solutions.

The IT-department of the Flemish Parliament develops tailor-made applications such as the comprehensive parliamentary database and supports the mail environment and the website.

The directorate also provides technical support to the voting machine, the cameras and the sound recording equipment and is responsible for the maintenance of all the technical systems in the premises of the Flemish Parliament.

The Purchasing department is responsible for purchasing for all Directorates, taking into account the public procurement law.

The Printing department takes care of printing work, parliamentary printing and other publications. Layout work is also included within their range of tasks.

The Logistics & Infrastructure department is responsible for the facilities, the offices and meeting rooms, taking care of the day to day maintenance and of the larger infrastructure projects.

Finally the Directorate also provides the helpdesk which functions as a unique point of contact for reporting all technical and IT problems.

This Directorate is led by Mr **Kurt De Vriendt**

(Kurt.devriendt@vlaamsparlement.be, +32 (0)2 552 42 90)

THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT'S BUDGET

Total: 105,3 million € (draft budget 2015)

- Remuneration, social charges and pensions: 66.1 million €
 - o Members of parliament: 25.2 million €
 - o Political personnel: 19.6 million €
 - o General Secretariat: 20.5 million €
 - o Unexpected personnel payments: 0.7 million €

CONTACT

International Relations & CALRE:

Dries Bergen

Flemish Parliament European Office

1011 Brussels

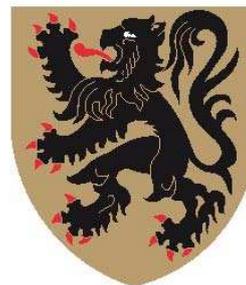
Tel: +32 (0)2 552 45 69

E-mail: dries.bergen@vlaamsparlement.be

LOGO



COAT OF ARMS



THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

The Flemish Parliament building (Hertogsstraat 6, 1000 Brussels)

A former post office building that was converted into the parliament building. It encompasses the Koepelzaal, where the Flemish Parliament meets for plenary sessions, and which, in terms of scale and the desired appearance, did not fit into the structure of the building and therefore had to be built in the inner court. Alongside the ten committee rooms, the building also includes a reading room and a café for the Flemish members of parliament, representative reception rooms, the offices of the Speaker and the Secretary-General, office space for the members of the Bureau and their employees, a press room and a work space for journalists.



The House of Flemish Members of Parliament (Leuvenseweg 86, 1000 Brussels)

A former bank building that comprises two wings. In the southern wing, there are offices for employees of the General Secretariat and 3 para-parliamentary institutions. In the northern wing there are the offices of the 124 members of parliament and their employees, the parliamentary information centre, a restaurant, self-service and De Loketten.



