

## Historic places of worship: basic information by country

This up-to-date background information will be used to provide comparative data and a policy overview that will be shared with other delegates at the forum in November and before the event on the website.

We aim to have only one form per country, so ask that delegates from the same country share information and return it to [lhockley@tcct.org.uk](mailto:lhockley@tcct.org.uk) when all parties are all satisfied with the overview. Please avoid abbreviations and explain any country specific terms. Thank you.

Country	BELGIUM
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Brief country context to explain current situation.	Until the 1960 Belgium was a nearly monoreligious catholic country: not only parishes covered the territory, but catholic organisations structured all the components of the society (education, health care, youth movements, socio-professional associations, etc.). Other cults are officially recognized by the State (Anglican, Lutheran, Jewish, since the 19 <sup>th</sup> c.; more recently Orthodox and Islam). Catholic religious practice and vocations decreased slowly, and other religions appeared, especially in the towns (Islam, Orthodox, Buddhist etc.). Presently the Catholic Church reaches a nadir due to the scandals of paedophile priests and bishop (2010).
Current situation. Number of places of worship by religion/denomination and religious attendance.	In Belgium, the relationships between the State and the Church still are in accordance with the Concordate of 1801-1802. There are 3948 catholic parishes in Belgium and about 150 recognised "parishes" of other religions. The attendance in Catholic churches is evaluated between 10% (rural) and 5% (urban) of the population. Precise statistics date from 2008. Besides the parishes, there are hundreds of religious houses with an aging population. Many houses of local congregations as well as international orders were recently closed or are closing.
Predicted future national situation/direction it is heading	Present deep crisis within the Church will be fatal for many precarious situations. Perspectives are quit pessimistic. Otherwise, the political division of Belgium in 3 regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) does affect the religious landscape: some church matters still are federal (salaries of the ministers of the cult), while other (including material aspects of churches) were transferred to the regions in 2002. Heritage policy is a regional matter too.
Rural/urban issues	Belgium is a small and very densely populated country with few remote areas (in the South). Urbanization is very developed and rural parish churches are not yet closing. In the cities, like everywhere in Western Europe, some neighbourhoods are completely dechristianised. In Brussels, which is becoming a cosmopolitan city-region problems are specific
Where does funding come from? (State funding, Church tax...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) public cult: parish churches belong to church fabrics depending on the communes; ministers of the cult are paid by the State</li> <li>b) private cults are self supporting: private Christian religious houses and religions which are not recognised by the State</li> <li>c) listed buildings, both public and private receive subsidies from the regions</li> </ul>
What support organisations exist (to help	The diocesan structures and platform organisations of religious orders are dealing with most problems. In Flanders, two centres

<p>a church or other organisation when there is a problem?)</p>	<p>exist for saving the archives and libraries (KADOC at Leuven): <a href="http://kadoc.kuleuven.be/eng/index.php">http://kadoc.kuleuven.be/eng/index.php</a> as well as objects and furniture (CRKC at Leuven): <a href="http://www.crkc.be/">http://www.crkc.be/</a></p>
<p>Have any surveys been compiled recently? (Please attach link or if not on web email document to lhockley@tcct.org.uk)</p>	<p>KADOC and CRKC (see above) are making surveys and inventories in Flanders. Inventories of buildings in Flanders are online: <a href="http://inventaris.vioe.be/">http://inventaris.vioe.be/</a>  An inventory of churches in Wallonia was started in 2006 but is only partially published: <a href="http://www.crhhab.be/pages/missions_invent_egpar.html">http://www.crhhab.be/pages/missions_invent_egpar.html</a>  In the 1970's a visual survey of parish church furniture was done by the State and is available online: <a href="http://www.kikirpa.be/EN/45/63/Photolibrary.htm">http://www.kikirpa.be/EN/45/63/Photolibrary.htm</a>  here also can be mentioned the open churches foundation: <a href="http://www.openchurches.be/">http://www.openchurches.be/</a></p>
<p>Which are the areas that could be helped by working together at a European level</p>	<p>A better collaboration (in fact there is nearly no collaboration) between different regional institutions in Belgium would be highly appreciable. Sure that Europe could help for it. Further exchange of expertise from other countries with similar heritage problems certainly would be helpful.</p>
<p>Any other comments</p>	<p>The problem of redundant churches in Belgium is quite recent in comparison with other countries such as the Netherlands, England or Québec.</p>