



## The Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics

Min Reuchamps (ed.) et al.

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FRONT MATTER

## Foreword

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THE idea of a comprehensive volume on Belgian politics in English had been circulating for some time among political scientists in Belgium, across both language communities. Scholars of and on Belgian political dynamics, from many different research fields, have increasingly published the results of their work in English. The time was ripe for a *Handbook of Belgian Politics*. Thanks to the unwavering support of Dominic Byatt, publisher at Oxford University Press, this idea swiftly evolved into what is now the *Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics*.

From the first contact with Oxford University Press in August 2022, the entire process took no more than three years, with the actual writing completed in less than a year—an achievement that, by both Belgian and international standards, is remarkable (and, one might argue, faster than the average government formation in Belgium). This success was made possible by an exceptionally dedicated team of editors who drafted the *Handbook* proposal, responded to three insightful reviews, assembled a highly diverse line-up of authors, and held three online workshops to kick off the writing phase. They meticulously shaped each contribution to fit an innovative format, balancing a state of the art with future research directions in just 8,500 words including references. Throughout the process, they read and commented on several drafts of each chapter and—above all—enforced a rigorous but supportive schedule with both discipline and collegiality.

The editorial team sought to create a volume that would not only synthesize existing scholarship on most facets of Belgian politics but also set the research agenda for the coming decades. Achieving this ambitious goal required the collective efforts of one hundred authors, spanning all fields of political science as well as other disciplines. The authors' line-up is a mix of established scholars and emerging researchers, Belgians and non-Belgians, affiliated with the country's ten universities, spread across its three regions, as well as institutions outside Belgium. This *Oxford Handbook of Belgian Politics* comprises forty chapters, most of them co-authored. While some teams had a long history of collaboration, many were formed specifically for the occasion. Beyond the authors directly involved in the forty contributions, this endeavour benefited greatly from the discussions and feedback from many other colleagues in Belgium and abroad.

The result is an impressive and enduring contribution to the study of Belgian politics—one that may even influence Belgian politics itself. Gratitude is due to everyone who made this project a reality. All authors and editors worked tirelessly to refine each chapter. Emma Collet did a stunning job of providing the final editorial polish before the big package was handed over to Oxford University Press. There, Vicki Sunter from the UK office oversaw the initial stages of the publication process, before Holly Mitchell from the New York office guided it into the production process, which was highly efficiently supervised by Hemalatha Subramanian and her team. ↵

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