

# The German-speaking Community

## Background

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The Eastern cantons have been part of Belgium since the end of the First World War. At the Versailles peace conference, which lasted from 12 January to 16 May 1919, it was decided to allocate the districts of Malmedy and Eupen to Belgium as reparations for the damage suffered in the war.

## General

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The German-speaking Community is the smallest of the three communities. It has a population of some 80.000 inhabitants and occupies an area (the German-speaking Region) of 854 km<sup>2</sup>. The seat of the community institutions is in Eupen.

The festival of the German-speaking Community is held on 15 November, as set by decree.

The Constitution places the German-speaking Community on an equal footing with other communities: it has the same competences and issues decrees.

The competences have been granted by an ordinary federal law and not by a special law, which can only be changed with a special majority, as is the case for the other communities and regions.

The federal authorities are competent for the use of languages in the German-speaking Region.

With regard to regional matters, the German-speaking Region is part of the Walloon Region.

## Competences transferred by the Walloon Region

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Article 139 of the Constitution stipulates that the bodies of the German-speaking Community can exercise certain competences of the Walloon Region. The law of 7 January 2002 transferred competences of the Walloon Region to the German-speaking Community. Next to monuments and sites, the German-speaking Community is also competent for the election expenditures of the Parliament and the announcements of the government and the additional financing of the political parties.

## The Parliament of the German-speaking Community

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### » Elections

The Parliament is elected every five years, on the same day as the European Parliament. The last elections were held on 9 June 2024, the same day as the elections for the House of Representatives.

As for the federal elections there is an electoral threshold of 5% in each constituency and there must be as many women as men on the electoral lists. The age in order to be eligible for election is 18 years.

### » Legislative parliament

The German-speaking Community Parliament is a legislative parliament, which means that it cannot be dissolved before the end of the period for which it has been elected.

### » Composition

#### Members with voting rights

The Parliament consists of 25 directly elected members from the German-speaking language region. One of them also sits in the Senate as the Senator appointed by the parliament of the German-speaking Community.

#### Members with advisory votes

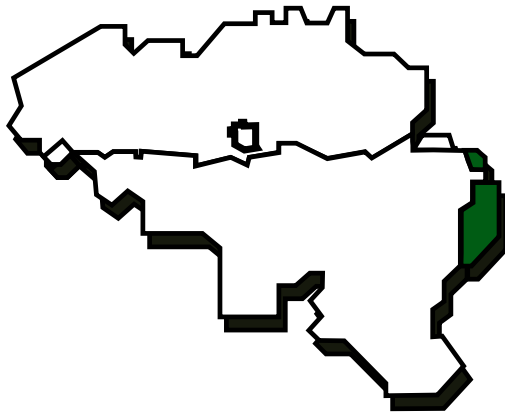
These are certain members of other legislative assemblies. They must however reside in the German-speaking Region and first take the oath in German. They only have an advisory vote.

- Members of the House of Representatives, the European Parliament and the Walloon Parliament elected from the Verviers constituency.
- Members elected in the Eupen district of the Provincial Council.

## » Electoral constituency

The German language region has 9 municipalities within Liège province. They constitute one constituency.

Amel  
Büllingen  
Burg-Reuland  
Büttgenbach  
Eupen  
Kelmis  
Lontzen  
Raeren  
Sankt-Vith



## » Competences

### Legislation

The Parliament issues decrees. These decrees only have the force of law in the German-speaking Region.

### Appointments and political control

The government of the German-speaking Community is appointed by the Parliament. At any time it may adopt a motion of disapproval towards the government or one or more ministers so as to require them to resign. For the motion to be admissible the Parliament must propose a successor (it is thus a constructive motion of disapproval).

### Financial control

Each year the Parliament adopts the Community budget.

## **The government of the German-speaking Community**

The government issues decrees.

It consists of four ministers, including one Minister-President. The decisions are taken by consensus.