

Belgium Sees New Opportunities to Elevate Strategic Partnership with Kuwait

As Belgium prepares to celebrate its National Day on 21 July, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Christian Doms has highlighted the growing strength of Belgium-Kuwait relations, expressing confidence that the longstanding partnership is entering a new phase marked by stronger economic cooperation, innovation, healthcare, education and cultural exchange.

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

Speaking to The Times Kuwait Ambassador Doms described bilateral ties as “excellent,” noting that both nations share a deep commitment to multilateralism, international law and constructive diplomacy.

Six Decades of Strong Relations

Belgium and Kuwait celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2024, reflecting decades of friendship built on mutual respect and shared values.

According to Ambassador Doms, while political relations remain exceptionally strong, there is considerable scope to elevate cooperation further, particularly in trade, investment and commercial partnerships.

A significant milestone is expected later this year when Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Maxime Prévot is scheduled to visit Kuwait on 2-3 November 2026 to lead the Belgian delegation during bilateral political consultations.

The visit is expected to advance discussions on a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding covering multiple areas of cooperation.



become more visible within Kuwait’s increasingly competitive marketplace. He noted that while many Belgian companies already operate successfully across the Gulf region, Kuwait now presents significant new opportunities as the country’s investment climate continues to improve. Recent interest from Belgian businesses reflects growing confidence in Kuwait’s economic reforms and its commitment to attracting foreign investment, although administrative procedures still require streamlining to match the pace seen elsewhere in the GCC.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges Strengthens Regional Links

Belgium’s globally renowned Port of Antwerp-Bruges continues expanding its presence across the Gulf through strategic partnerships. The ambassador highlighted the port’s major involvement in developing Oman’s Port of Duqm, while also emphasizing its longstanding cooperation with the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA).

The partnership includes maritime expertise, port management consultancy and specialized logistics training for Kuwaiti delegations visiting Belgium. Beyond maritime cooperation, substantial Kuwaiti investments in Belgium’s petrochemical sector continue to reinforce the strong economic relationship between both countries.

Belgium Encourages Kuwaiti Investment

Ambassador Doms welcomed greater Kuwaiti investment into Belgium, noting that Kuwait already enjoys a significant commercial presence through more than 500 Q8 fuel stations operating across Belgium.

He encouraged prospective Kuwaiti investors to work closely with the Kuwaiti Embassy in Brussels, the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce and Belgium’s regional investment agencies to explore opportunities across Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels.

Innovation and Healthcare Partnerships

Belgium’s reputation as one of Europe’s leading centres for scientific research and innovation presents another promising avenue for cooperation.

A notable example is the long-standing partnership between Belgium’s internationally acclaimed nanotechnology research institute IMEC and Kuwait University, which focuses on advanced silicon solar cell technologies.

Ambassador Doms expressed hope that similar collaborations could soon emerge in fields such as Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and advanced digital technologies.

Healthcare remains another priority sector.

Belgium is currently exploring closer institutional cooperation between Belgian and Kuwaiti hospitals, building on the country’s internationally recognised medical expertise.

Institutions such as the Jules Bordet Institute, renowned globally for cancer treatment, together with Belgium’s leadership in fertility medicine and bariatric surgery, provide significant opportunities for future collaboration.

Education and Cultural Exchange

Belgium is home to several internationally respected universities offering high-quality programmes in medicine, engineering, science and technology.

The ambassador acknowledged that relatively few Kuwaiti students currently choose Belgium for higher education and said increasing awareness of Belgian universities will become an important priority.

On the cultural front, the Belgian Embassy actively participates in Francophonie Month, organising musical performances and poetry events while also promoting iconic Belgian cultural symbols including Tintin and The Smurfs, which continue to enjoy worldwide popularity.

Kuwait’s Role in Regional Stability

Commenting on regional affairs, Ambassador Doms praised Kuwait’s measured diplomatic approach during periods of regional tension. He said Kuwait continues to demonstrate restraint while



working closely with international partners to prevent further escalation and promote peaceful dialogue.

Although Kuwait often works quietly behind the scenes, he said the country’s diplomatic efforts contribute meaningfully to regional peace and stability.

Belgium Invites Kuwaitis to Discover Its Heritage

For Kuwaiti travellers considering Belgium as their next European destination, Ambassador Doms recommended exploring far more than just Brussels.

Among his top recommendations are: Bruges, famous for its fairy-tale medieval architecture, Antwerp, celebrated for shopping, diamonds and vibrant city life, Brussels, offering world-famous gastronomy, history and the magnificent Grand Place, Ghent, praised for its medieval beauty, lively cultural atmosphere and exceptional cuisine, The Ardennes, known for breathtaking natural landscapes and outdoor experiences.

The ambassador also highlighted Belgium’s spectacular Ommegang Festival, a historic pageant in Brussels featuring around 1,400 participants in elaborate period costumes recreating the ceremonial entry of Emperor Charles V and the future King Philip II.

Direct Flights Remain a Priority

One of the embassy’s major objectives is securing direct air connectivity between Kuwait and Brussels. Ambassador Doms said the absence of non-stop flights places Belgium at a competitive disadvantage compared to other European destinations and expressed optimism that progress could be achieved on this important initiative.

Celebrating Belgium’s National Day

Belgium celebrates its National Day annually on 21 July, commemorating the historic moment in 1831 when Leopold I took the constitutional oath as the country’s first King following Belgium’s independence.

National Day celebrations include military parades, aerial displays by the Belgian Armed Forces, cultural performances, public festivities throughout Brussels and a spectacular fireworks display that brings the celebrations to a memorable close.

For Belgians, the day represents not only national independence but also the resilience of a nation whose history has been shaped by perseverance, unity and democratic values.

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Expanding Economic Cooperation

Belgium sees enormous potential for collaboration in several strategic sectors including: Healthcare, Infrastructure development, Port management, Defence industries, Artificial Intelligence, Renewable energy and Advanced technology

Ambassador Doms said Belgian companies possess world-class expertise in these sectors but acknowledged they need to

Celebrating unity, democracy and a proud European legacy

• *A nation built on constitutional values, cultural diversity and global engagement* • As Belgium celebrates another National Day, it does so with confidence in its future and pride in its remarkable journey. It is far more than an anniversary of independence. It is a celebration of nearly two centuries of constitutional stability, democratic governance and national resilience. • *The occasion honors a nation that has transformed historical challenges into lasting strengths through openness, innovation and respect for diversity.*

Every year on July 21, the Kingdom of Belgium celebrates Belgium National Day, commemorating the birth of the modern Belgian state, reaffirming the nation's enduring commitment to constitutional democracy, national unity and international cooperation.

The occasion marks 21 July 1831, when King Leopold I took the constitutional oath as Belgium's first monarch following the country's independence from the Netherlands in 1830. His accession established Belgium as a constitutional monarchy and laid the foundations of a democratic system rooted in the rule of law, accountable governance and the protection of individual rights.

Nearly two centuries later, the Belgium National Day stands as a powerful expression of national identity, celebrating a country that has successfully blended its rich historical heritage with modern innovation, economic resilience and international influence.

A Celebration of Unity in Diversity

Across Belgium, the National Day is observed with official ceremonies, military displays, cultural programs and public festivities that bring together citizens from the country's Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking communities.

In the capital, Brussels, members of the Belgian Royal Family join government leaders, parliamentarians, diplomats and distinguished guests for official ceremonies that reflect the nation's constitutional traditions.

Military parades, concerts, cultural performances and family-oriented events animate the city throughout the day, culminating in a spectacular fireworks display.



Located at the crossroads of Western Europe, the country has long served as a meeting point for cultures, commerce and diplomacy.

Brussels, home to the European Union and NATO headquarters, has earned its reputation as the political capital of Europe and one of the world's foremost centers for international decision-making.

From European integration to global security and multilateral cooperation, Belgium continues to play a pivotal role in shaping international policy and promoting dialogue, peace and collective action.

An Economy Driven by Innovation and Trade

Belgium is among Europe's most diversified and competitive economies, underpinned by advanced manufacturing, high-value industries and a globally connected services sector.

International trade, logistics, pharmaceuticals,

chemicals, engineering, financial services and technology remain key pillars of economic growth. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges, one of Europe's largest and busiest maritime gateways, plays a strategic role in connecting European markets with the global economy.

Belgium is equally renowned for its world-class diamond industry centered in Antwerp, while its internationally celebrated chocolates, specialty beers, waffles and fine cuisine have become enduring symbols of Belgian craftsmanship and quality. With sustained investment in biotechnology, healthcare, renewable energy, digital transformation and scientific research, Belgium continues to strengthen its position as one of Europe's leading knowledge-based economies.

A Trusted Voice in International Affairs

Belgium has consistently championed diplomacy, international law, sustainable development and humanitarian cooperation.

Through its active engagement in multilateral institutions and unwavering support for rules-based international order, Belgium has earned recognition as a reliable and constructive partner in addressing global challenges. Its commitment to dialogue, consensus-building and peaceful cooperation continues to shape its role on the international stage.

Looking Ahead with Confidence

Belgium National Day is far more than an anniversary of independence. It is a celebration of nearly two centuries of constitutional stability, democratic governance and national resilience.

The occasion honors a nation that has transformed historical challenges into lasting strengths through openness, innovation and respect for diversity.

It also reaffirms the principles that continue to guide Belgium's future, unity in diversity, democratic values, economic dynamism and meaningful international partnership.

As Belgium celebrates another National Day, it does so with confidence in its future and pride in its remarkable journey.

Standing at the heart of Europe, Belgium continues to demonstrate that diversity, dialogue and democratic institutions remain the strongest foundations for lasting prosperity and peace.



More than a national celebration, the occasion embodies Belgium's ability to preserve unity while embracing its linguistic and cultural diversity, an achievement that remains central to the country's democratic character.

Although modest in size, Belgium occupies a position of exceptional international importance.





Where Medieval Charm Meets Modern Europe

From the Timeless Streets of Bruges to the Diamond Capital of Antwerp

Nestled in the heart of Western Europe, Belgium is a country where centuries of history blend effortlessly with contemporary sophistication. Despite its relatively small size, Belgium offers an astonishing variety of experiences from UNESCO-listed medieval towns and world-famous chocolates to vibrant cultural festivals, breathtaking architecture, Formula One racing, and cosmopolitan city life.

Bordered by France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, Belgium serves as the political heart of Europe, hosting the headquarters of the European Union and NATO. Yet beyond its international importance lies a country rich in art, heritage, gastronomy and timeless traditions that continue to captivate millions of visitors every year.

Whether strolling along the romantic canals of Bruges, admiring Antwerp's sparkling diamond district, experiencing the pageantry of Brussels' Ommegang Festival or hearing the roar of Formula One engines at Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium offers unforgettable experiences for every traveller.



Brussels – Europe's Vibrant Capital

Belgium's capital, Brussels, is often described as Europe's living room. As the administrative centre of the European Union, the city welcomes diplomats, business leaders and tourists from across the globe while preserving its rich Belgian identity.

At the heart of the city lies the magnificent Grand Place, widely regarded as one of Europe's most beautiful squares. Surrounded by ornate guild houses, the Gothic Town Hall and the King's House, the square has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Throughout the year it hosts flower carpets, Christmas markets, concerts and cultural celebrations that transform it into a vibrant public gathering place.

Just a short walk away stands the iconic Manneken Pis, a tiny bronze statue that has become one of Belgium's most famous symbols. Despite its modest size, the statue attracts thousands of visitors daily and boasts an impressive wardrobe of ceremonial costumes from around the world.

Modern Brussels is equally represented by the futuristic Atomium, originally built for the 1958 World's Fair. Rising 102 metres high, the stainless-steel structure offers panoramic views across the Belgian capital while hosting exhibitions that celebrate science, architecture and innovation.

Royal Palace of Brussels - Symbol of the Belgian Monarchy

The elegant Royal Palace of Brussels serves as the official administrative residence of Belgium's King and remains one of the



capital's architectural masterpieces.

Although the Belgian royal family lives at the Royal Castle of Laeken, the Royal Palace continues to host state receptions, diplomatic ceremonies and official functions. During the summer months, portions of the palace are opened to visitors, allowing them to admire its magnificent halls, grand staircases and beautifully decorated ceremonial rooms.

Directly opposite the palace lies the tranquil Brussels Park (Parc de Bruxelles) the city's oldest public park. Designed in classical French style, it offers manicured gardens, fountains, sculptures and tree-lined pathways where locals and tourists alike gather for leisurely walks and outdoor concerts.

Nearby attractions include the Belgian Parliament, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts and the historic Mont des Arts cultural district, making this area one of Brussels' most elegant and culturally rich neighbourhoods.

Bruges – Belgium's Fairytale City

Often described as the "Venice of the North," Bruges is one of Europe's best-preserved medieval cities. Its picturesque canals, cobblestone streets and Gothic architecture transport visitors back several centuries.

The city's historic centre, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, features charming bridges, market squares and beautifully preserved merchant houses reflecting Bruges' prosperity during the Middle Ages.

Visitors can climb the iconic Belfry Tower for spectacular panoramic views, enjoy peaceful canal cruises, explore artisan chocolate boutiques or simply wander through quiet alleyways



lined with centuries-old buildings.

The romantic atmosphere makes Bruges especially popular among honeymooners, photographers and cultural travellers seeking an authentic European experience.

Belgian lace-making traditions also flourish here, with local workshops continuing centuries-old craftsmanship that has earned worldwide admiration.

Ommegang Festival – A Living Medieval Spectacle

Each summer, Brussels comes alive with one of Europe's most spectacular historical celebrations the Ommegang Festival.

Dating back to the 16th century, the festival recreates the grand ceremonial entry of Emperor Charles V into Brussels in 1549.

Hundreds of performers dressed in authentic medieval costumes parade through the streets accompanied by knights on horseback, crossbow guilds, musicians, dancers, flag bearers and traditional marching bands.



The highlight takes place in the magnificent Grand Place, where dramatic performances, historical pageantry and breathtaking visual displays transport spectators into Belgium's rich Renaissance past. Recognised as an important part of Belgium's cultural heritage, the Ommegang Festival attracts visitors from around the world and remains one of Europe's finest historical reenactments.

Antwerp – The Global Diamond Capital

Belgium's second-largest city, Antwerp, combines commercial dynamism with artistic heritage.

Globally recognised as the world's diamond capital, Antwerp handles an estimated 80 percent of the world's rough diamonds through its internationally renowned Diamond District. The city's expertise in diamond trading has made it a global centre for jewellery, luxury goods and precious stones.

Antwerp is equally celebrated for fashion, earning international recognition through the famous "Antwerp Six" designers who helped establish the city as one of Europe's leading fashion capitals.

Where Medieval Charm Meets Modern Europe

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The magnificent Cathedral of Our Lady dominates the skyline and houses several masterpieces by the celebrated Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens. Nearby, the historic Grote Markt showcases beautifully restored guild houses surrounding an impressive Renaissance fountain.

Another architectural marvel is Antwerp Central Station, frequently ranked among the world's most beautiful railway stations due to its grand dome, marble interiors and magnificent ironwork.

The city's revitalised waterfront, museums and vibrant café culture make Antwerp one of Belgium's most exciting urban destinations.

Spa-Francorchamps – The Cathedral of Formula One

Located amidst the rolling Ardennes forests lies Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, regarded by racing enthusiasts as one of the greatest motor racing circuits ever built.

Home to the prestigious Belgian Formula One Grand Prix, the circuit is renowned for its dramatic elevation changes, unpredictable weather and legendary corners, particularly the famous Eau Rouge and Raidillon sequence.

Constructed in 1921, Spa has challenged generations of the world's greatest drivers and continues to be one of the most respected venues in international motorsport.

Beyond Formula One, the circuit hosts endurance racing, GT championships, motorcycle events and driving experiences throughout the year, making it a pilgrimage site for motorsport fans worldwide.

Belgium's Culinary Delights

No visit to Belgium is complete without indulging in its celebrated cuisine.

Belgian chocolates are regarded among the world's finest, crafted by renowned chocolatiers using centuries-old techniques.

Belgium is equally famous for its golden waffles, crispy fries (which Belgians proudly claim originated in their country), artisanal cheeses and more than 1,500 varieties of beer, many brewed in



historic Trappist monasteries.

Restaurants throughout the country serve traditional dishes such as moules-frites (mussels with fries), Flemish beef stew and fresh North Sea seafood alongside contemporary European cuisine.

Art, Heritage and Culture

Belgium has produced some of Europe's greatest artistic masters, including Peter Paul Rubens, René Magritte and Pieter Bruegel the



Elder. Museums across Brussels, Antwerp and Bruges celebrate their extraordinary contributions, while numerous galleries showcase both classical and contemporary Belgian art.

The country's multilingual culture—where Dutch, French and German are official languages adds further richness to its identity, reflected in regional traditions, architecture and cuisine.

A Destination for Every Traveller

Belgium effortlessly combines medieval history, royal heritage, modern European institutions, world-class gastronomy and exciting contemporary attractions.



Whether exploring the romantic canals of Bruges, shopping in Antwerp's diamond district, admiring the grandeur of Brussels' Royal Palace, relaxing in Brussels Park, witnessing the medieval splendour of the Ommegang Festival or experiencing the thrill of Formula One at Spa-Francorchamps, visitors discover a nation whose charm far exceeds its size.

Rich in history yet unmistakably modern, Belgium continues to stand among Europe's most rewarding destinations offering culture, elegance and unforgettable experiences at every turn.


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