



# BELGIUM

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### FACTSHEET 2018



Total population

**11 351 727**

Median age

**41.5** YEARS

GDP per capita

**34 400** €

% of GDP for health: **7.4**

% of GDP for education: **6.4**

% of GDP for sports: **0.4**



Population **MALE**

**49.2%**

Population **FEMALE**

**50.8%**

Life expectancy, **MALES**

**79.0** YEARS

Life expectancy, **FEMALES**

**84.0** YEARS

Sources: Eurostat (2016)

#### Success story

The **"10 000 Steps Flanders challenge"** for municipalities (10.000 stappen clash) is a campaign to raise awareness about physical activity based on a community approach and various promotional materials. The challenge includes media strategies and an online registration tool for citizens with which they can monitor their steps and step goals and visualize the rankings of different municipalities. 10 000 Steps Flanders is the most widely, continuously implemented community project for health-enhancing physical activity in Flanders; it has been in place since 2009. The initiative has large population coverage, and three quarters of all municipalities will participate in the 2018 campaign. [www.10000stappen.be](http://www.10000stappen.be)

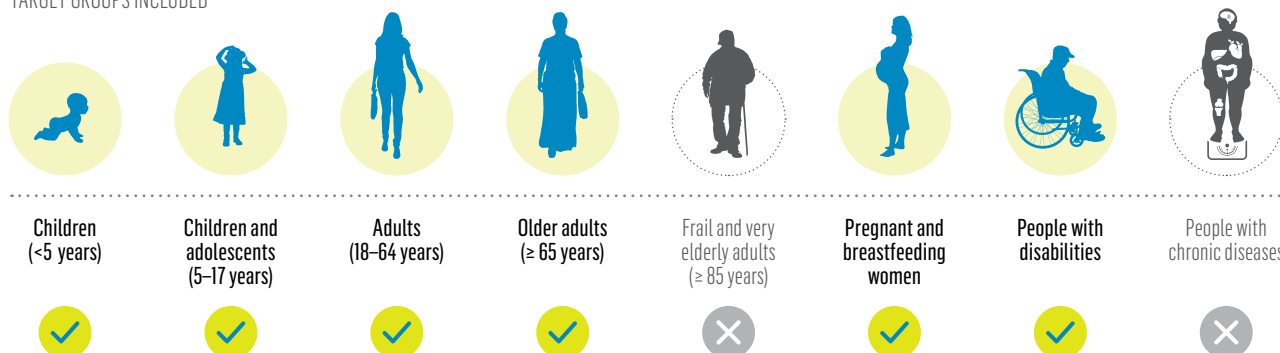


In the French community, television and radio channels are required by law to provide free broadcasting time for the Government to deliver health promotion messages, of a duration equivalent to that for alcoholic beverages, medicines and medical treatment. Both public and private broadcasting organizations are covered by the legislation. Since 2005, five physical activity-related health promotion campaigns have been broadcast for free. Through cooperation between the ministries of Sports and Health Promotion, a new physical activity promotion campaign will benefit from this system in September 2018. Seven television channels and 12 radio stations will broadcast messages three times a day over three weeks, with at least one during daily prime time.

# MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

## National recommendations on physical activity for health

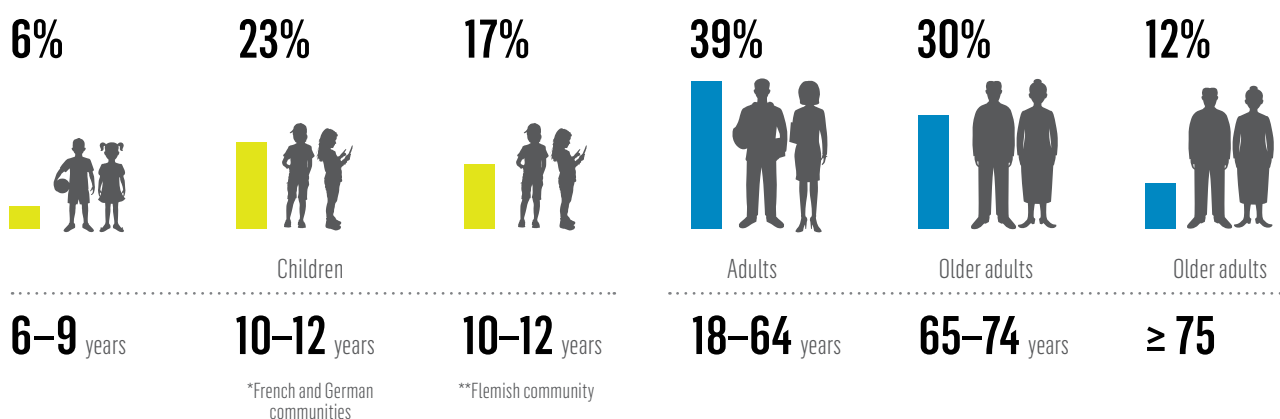
TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED



The current national recommendations are based on WHO's global recommendations on physical activity for health (2010) as well as a review of the literature and recommendations in other countries. These were implemented in 2006 and updated in 2017 in the Flemish community, implemented in 2004 in the German-speaking community, and are part of the Health Prevention Plan – 2030 Horizon and Strategic Plan for Promotion of Health 2018–2022 in the French community. The Belgian Daily Mobility Survey was last conducted in 2014, in which the time and distance spent each day walking and cycling for transport was estimated.

## Level of physical activity

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS



The ongoing national health survey (2018) will be conducted with a new method to improve the quality and comparability of the data collected. It will be based on self-administered and face-to-face interviews and the European Health Information Survey Physical Activity Questionnaire.

## Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

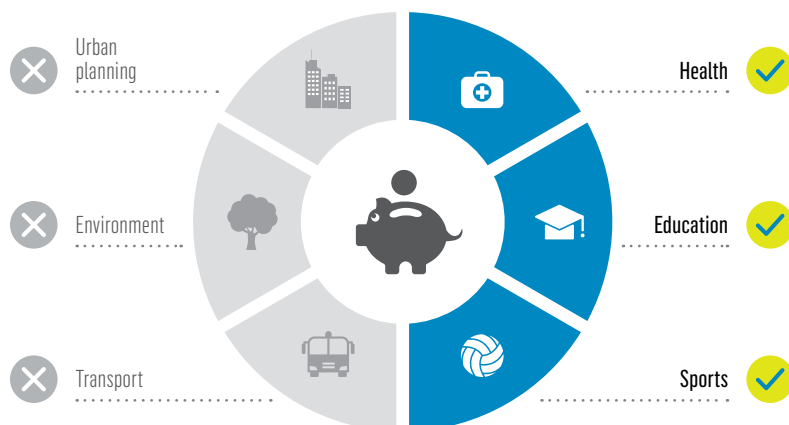
Physical activity levels are monitored through: (1) the Health Interview Survey, established in 1997 and coordinated by the Scientific Institute of Public Health; (2) the Belgian Food Consumption Survey, coordinated by the Scientific Institute of Public Health; (3) a questionnaire developed in the context of the European ToyBox study, which also includes use of accelerometers to measure the physical activity of children and adolescents; and (4) the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study.



# POLICY RESPONSE

## Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector

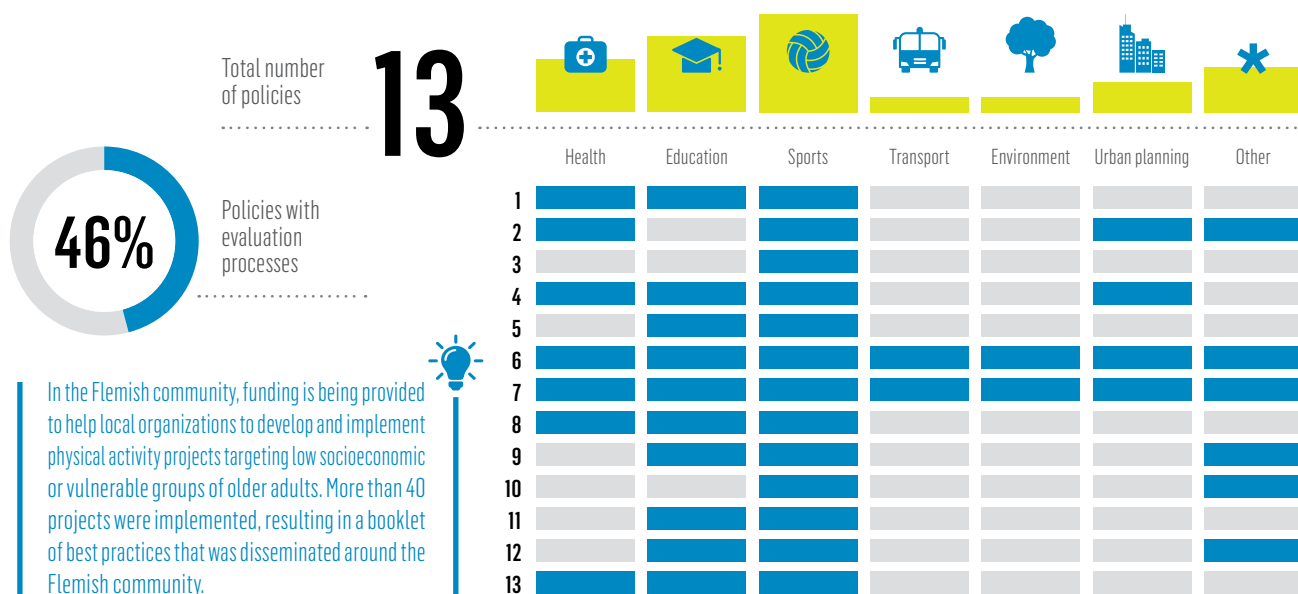
Since 2015, the Belgian Health-enhancing Physical Activity Coordination team, led by the Ministry of Sports, has held informal meetings to organize collection of data, share information and good practices and prepare for international meetings. In the Flemish community, the working group on nutrition and health-enhancing physical activity provides advice on intersectoral coordination and advice for Government physical activity policy. It is a formal, officially recognized body, which has been meeting several times a year since 2010. It is now being separated into several groups by sector (e.g. work, education, local government). In the French community, the Risk Prevention Commission brings together doctors, representatives of universities and the sports sector to advise the Government on promotion of health through sports.



In the French community, grants are provided for the organization of neighbourhood sports activities to promote physical activity, social inclusion and personal fulfilment through participation in sports in one or more local communities. In addition, Infraspports provides financial and technical support to local authorities and organizations to help them build, acquire, renovate or equip their sports, recreation or leisure facilities.

## National policies by sector

Sectors that are involved in each of the national policies or action plans to promote physical activity



## Target groups addressed by national policies

- ✓ Low socioeconomic groups
- ✓ Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- ✓ Ethnic minorities
- ✗ People deprived of liberty
- ✓ Migrants
- ✓ Older people
- ✗ People with disabilities
- ✗ People with chronic diseases

In the Flemish community, a "physical activity triangle" educational model was tested among physically inactive citizens to help them reach the minimum recommended levels of physical activity. In the triangle, guidelines for physical activity and sedentary behaviour are not quantified or illustrated in minutes. Rather, sedentary behaviour and light, moderate and intensive physical activity are given as proportions, from every day to every week. The emphasis is that every step counts. This approach appeared to provide more motivation during the testing phase. In the second phase, citizens are directed to the official physical activity guidelines, which are given in minutes. The physical activity triangle, implemented at the end of 2017, involves stakeholders in many sectors, including health, education, work and sports. [www.bewegingsdriehoek.be](http://www.bewegingsdriehoek.be).

## Physical activity promotion in the health sector

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH



Medical doctors



Mandatory

Nurses



Mandatory

Physiotherapists



Mandatory

Others



Mandatory



In the Flemish community, general practitioners can refer patients to a physical activity coach, who has a Bachelor or Master's degree in physical activity and has taken part in an intensive 3-day training course. The cost of this service is covered almost fully by the Flemish community, with additional support for disadvantaged groups.



## Physical activity in schools

Total hours of physical education per week in **PRIMARY SCHOOLS**



French community  
Flemish community  
German-speaking community

**2** All mandatory



Total hours of physical education per week in **SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



French community

**2-3** All mandatory



Flemish community  
German-speaking community

**2** All mandatory



Physical activity during school breaks



Physical activity during lessons



Physical activity programmes after school



Active travel to and from school



Sport Flanders leads a project in which schools can apply for financial support to open their sport infrastructure after school hours, on the weekends and during holidays. Local sports clubs or other organizations can then use the facilities, and the costs of their use and any infrastructure development costs are covered by the Government.



The quality of physical education is monitored as part of school inspection services.

## Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

Active travel to and from the workplace



Physical activity at the workplace



In the French community, the **"Bike to Work"** ("Tous vélo-actifs") scheme engages companies to increase the number of employees who cycle to work. Over 6 years, 29 private and public companies have been selected on the basis of criteria that include the potential for employees to cycle to work, accessibility and the company's mobility policy. The infrastructure needs of the companies are assessed before the development and implementation of an action plan to increase the modal share of cycling. The programme has increased the number of mobility policies that favour cycling.



## National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

The European Week of Sports was implemented nationwide in 2015 in Belgium. Additionally, an annual Sports Day was established in the French community in 2018, and the "Sportersbelevenmeeror (Sports) Active People Experience More" initiative has been running in the Flemish community since 2016.



Television



Radio



Newspapers



Social media



Public events



Public figures



Other

