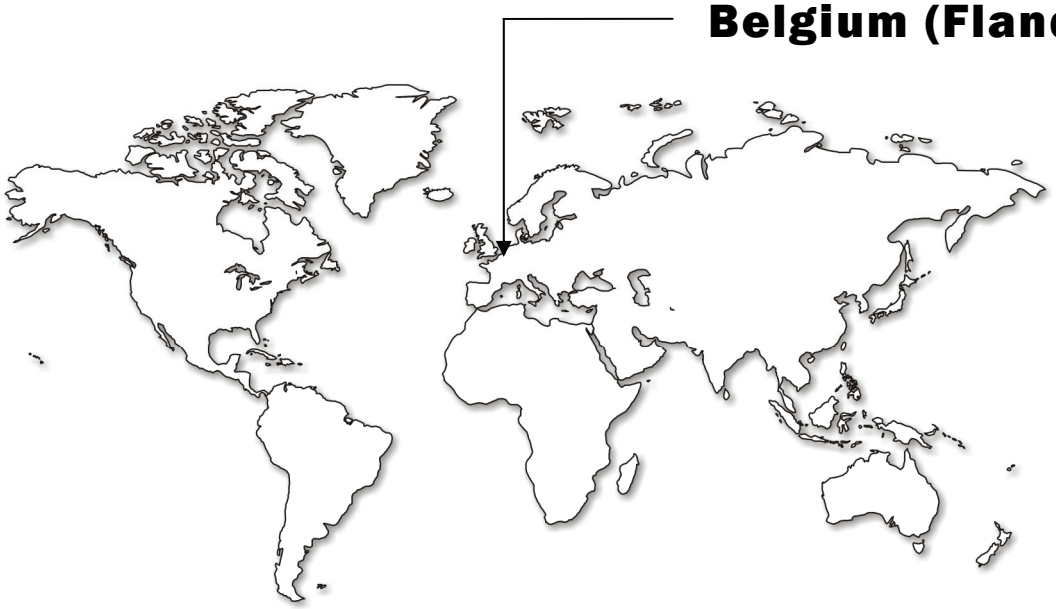
Belgium (Flanders)



Responding institution:
Flemish Library and Archive Association (VVBAD)

The Flemish region of Belgium has supplied information to the World Report since 2001. There are 306 public libraries and 5 university libraries. No statistics were given for school and government-funded research libraries, although the 2005 report mentions that there are altogether 148 research libraries. All libraries offer 81-100% Internet access to their users free of charge, with an average amount of local content in local languages on the Internet. There is a literacy rate of 90%. Filtering software for the protection of children is found in libraries to a certain degree.

The respondent has reported that no anti-terror legislation has been passed, nor have there been any violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years. No explanation is given for the non-involvement of libraries in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. There are also no special programmes to promote women's literacy or to provide access to special kinds of information for women.

A code of ethics for public libraries was adopted in 1994 and a code of ethics for archives in 1997. As in the 2005 report, there are no responses concerning the Internet Manifesto or the Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

User privacy has not been affected since 2005, because no such legislation has been passed.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

No incidents of violation of intellectual freedom during the past two years have been reported.

HIV/Aids awareness

The libraries are not involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes, although no reasons for this have been given.

Women and freedom of access to information

There are no library programmes for women's access to information and for providing special kinds of information to women.

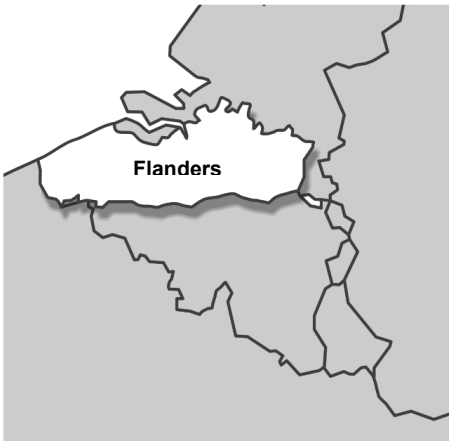
Ethics and IFLA initiatives

A code of ethics for librarians was adopted and is now available on the Internet (see http://vvbad.be/node/55). There is also a code of ethics for archivists. The library association has not adopted the Internet Manifesto or the Glasgow Declaration.

Main indicators

Country name:	Belgium (Flanders)
Population:	10 392 226 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%, legally bilingual (Dutch and French)
Literacy:	99%
Literacy reported by respondent:	90%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the *CIA World Factbook*, 2007 edition (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).



Libraries and Internet access

The Flanders region in Belgium contributed to the World Report series in 2005, 2003 and 2001. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	306 (2005: 306 in Flanders)
Estimated number of school libraries:	No data provided
Estimated number of university libraries:	5
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	No data provided
Source of these numbers:	Vlabidoc (Flemish Library, Archive and Documentation Guide; Annual Report Flemish Government

Internet access

Population online**:	5 100 000 Internet users as of March 2005 (48.5%) (2005: 48.9%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100% (2005: 81-100%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Average
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree – protection of children (2005: Yes, to a certain degree – protection of children)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	Yes, to a certain degree (2005: Yes, to a certain degree)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in all libraries (2005: Yes, in all libraries)
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	No (2005: No)

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.
** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.Internetworldstats.com).
*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.