

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Presentation



If a member of your family is living in Brussels and you wish to rejoin him/her, this is possible thanks to the family reunification procedure. According to the law of 15 December 1980, non EU nationals can settle in Belgium with other family members (UE or non UE), under certain conditions.

The conditions of family reunification vary according to the nationality of the person who is joining and the nationality of the person already living here.

A. First situation: A non EU citizen rejoins a EU citizen



Who is considered to be a family member ?

- A spouse;
- A partner (being at least 21 years old);
- ascendants and those from the partner, in their care ;
- descendants under 21 years or in their care, and those from the partner

Important! If you are a family member of an EU civil servant click here.

Where to lodge the procedure?

A.1. From your home country via the Belgian Embassy:



STEP 1: Ask for an A.S.P or temporary residence permit in your home country “D visa in the frame of a family reunification”

Make sure to present the embassy with the following documents

- a travel document (national passport) valid for at least 12 months and in which a visa may be affixed;
- 2 visa application forms filled out and signed + 2 passport photos in color;
- a certificate of good conduct (or an equivalent document recognised by the Belgian authorities) not older than 6 months and covering the preceding year;
- a medical certificate issued by a doctor recognised by the Belgian embassy or consulate;
- other documents according to your family's status (table);
- a translation of these documents by a certified translator, unless they are already in French or Dutch;
- a legalization of these documents in the country of origin;
- If the country from which the document originates has signed up to the Apostille Convention, the competent foreign authority will apply the apostille stamp. A summary of all competent authorities per country (in English) that can provide an apostille stamp can be found [here](#);
- a small fee will be asked.

Required documents to present at the embassy:

For everyone :

- Belgian residence permit from the person living here ;
- proof of sufficient means of the person living here;

- health insurance ;
- proof of sufficient housing in Brussels (registered lease contract).

If you register as	You need to prove	by
A spouse	The marriage link	A marriage certificate or a registered partnership equivalent to marriage (made in Germany, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, UK or Sweden)
A partner	<p>- The partnership link</p> <p>and</p> <p>- The long-term relationship which is proved by one of the following criteria</p>	<p>- A legal partnership made abroad or in Belgium (Déclaration de cohabitation légale/ Verklaring van wettelijk samenwonen) ;</p> <p>- An uninterrupted cohabitation for at least 1 year in Belgium or abroad prior to reunification demand;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>- Have known each other for at least 2 years; have regular contacts with each other by telephone, regular mail or email; have met 3 times at least during these past 2 years, for at least 45 days;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>- Having a child together.</p>
As an ascendant	Relationship link	Birth certificate + proof of entrust
As a descendant	Relationship link	Birth certificate, proof of the custody + proof of entrust

STEP 2: Report to the municipality to obtain an appendix 15

- After arrival in Belgium, future residents must register within 8 working days of arrival with the population or aliens department of the municipality of residence.
- Make sure to present the municipality with the following documents:
 - a valid passport with the D visa issued by the Belgian embassy in your home country;
 - your lease contract;
 - some ID passport photos.
- Your municipality will then issue an "application for a registration" or Appendix 15.
- Expect a control of residence by the police after which you will be registered in the aliens register and will get a national number.

STEP 3: You receive a residence permit: APPENDIX 9 (F CARD)

- After +-2 months you will be called by the commune to receive your residence permit.
- Your municipality will hand you the Appendix 9 which is an electronic format F Card and has the same validity as the residence permit of the family member already living here.

A.2. From Belgium via the municipality



If you are already in Belgium you can introduce your request for a family reunification permit directly at the municipality of your place of residence.

STEP 1: report to the municipality to obtain a certificate of registration application called APPENDIX 19 ter

Present yourself within a period of 3 months from the date of arrival in Belgium to the municipal authority in your place of residence (the sooner the better!)

Bring the following documents:

- a valid passport or a declaration of arrival (Appendix 3) or a valid Belgian residence permit (A card);
- your lease contract;
- a health insurance;
- specific documents depending on your family's status (tableau);
- some passport photographs;
- you will be charged to pay a small fee.

Your municipality will then issue an "application for a registration" or Appendix 19 ter, which is valid for 3 months. This period of 3 months will permit you to gather all the required documents.

Expect a control of residence by the police, after which you will be registered in the aliens register and will obtain a national number.

Receive a temporary document, **Orange card** called "Attestation d'immatriculation-Attest van immatriculatie". This Orange card put together with the Appendix 19 ter allows the non UE family member to work without a work permit before obtaining the final residence permit. However this orange card does not allow you to travel outside Belgium. Be aware that a family reunification procedure from Belgium takes time and will keep

you stuck in Belgium. Return visas are only granted in very specific cases, for medical, family or business-related reasons but not for holidays!

STEP 2: you receive a residence permit : APPENDIX 9 (F CARD)

- After maximum 6 months you will be called by the commune to receive your residence permit.
- Your municipality will give you the Appendix 9 which is an electronic format: F Card and has the same validity as the residence permit of the family member already living here.

STEP 3: Ask your permanent stay F+ CARD

- After 5 year of residence and just before the expiration of your F card, report to the municipality and ask a permanent stay. This is mandatory!
- Receive an Appendix 22.
- Receive after maximum 5 months, an F+ CARD, valid for 5 years and renewable.
- You will be registered in the population register instead of the aliens' register. The fact of being registered in the population register gives you the right to social integration.

A.3. When travelling



The orange card itself is not a residence permit and indeed you cannot travel with this document. However the following Directive can apply: DIRECTIVE 2004/38/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. You will have to bring a little file with you, when you travel, gathering the wedding certificate, copy of the Belgian residence permit of your partner, copy of his/her employment contract, your orange card and appendix 19 ter, a document concerning the purpose of your trip, ... Of course if you are travelling with your EU partner it's easier. But indeed you might face questions at the border.

B. Second situation: A non EU citizen rejoins a non EU citizen



Who is considered to be a family member?

- A spouse; (being at least 21 years old);
- A partner (being at least 21 years old);
- descendants under 18 years, and those of the partner.

Important to know!

- A non EU ascendant can not rejoin for instance his non EU son working in Belgium !
- The non EU citizen living in Belgium must be holder of a residence permit with a limited stay period (A card) or with an unlimited and permanent stay period (B, C, D card). However in this last case, the B, C, or D card must have been issued since at least 1 year (except for certain specific cases).

Where to lodge the procedure?

B.1. From your home country via the Belgian Embassy:



STEP 1: Ask for an A.S.P or temporary residence permit in your home country "D visa in the frame of a family reunification"

Make sure to present the embassy with the following documents:

- a travel document (national passport) valid for at least 12 months and in which a visa may be affixed;
- 2 visa application forms filled out and signed + 2 passport photos in color;
- a certificate of good conduct (or an equivalent document recognised by the Belgian authorities) not older than 6 months and covering the preceding year;
- a medical certificate issued by a doctor recognised by the Belgian embassy or consulate;
- other documents according to your family's status (table);
- a translation of these documents by a certified translator, unless they are already in French or Dutch;
- a legalization of these documents in the country of origin.

If the country from which the document originates has signed up to the Apostille Convention, the competent foreign authority will apply the apostille stamp. A summary of all competent authorities per country (in English) that can provide an apostille stamp can be found here.

- a fee between, 60 and 215€ will be charged.

Required documents to present at the embassy:

For everyone :

- a Belgian residence permit from the person already living here ;
- proof of sufficient means of the person living here
- health insurance ;
- proof of sufficient housing in Brussels (a registered lease contract).

If you register as	You need to prove	by
A spouse	The marriage link	A marriage certificate or a registered partnership equivalent to marriage (made in

		Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, UK or Sweden.)
A partner	The partnership link and The long-term relationship which is proved by one of the following criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A legal partnership made abroad or in Belgium (Déclaration de cohabitation légale/ Verklaring van wettelijk samenwonen) • An uninterrupted cohabitation for at least 1 year in Belgium or abroad prior to reunification demand; OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have known each other for at least 2 years; have regular contacts with each other by telephone, regular mail or email; have met 3 times at least during these past 2 years, for at least 45 days; OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having a child together.
As an ascendant	Relationship link	Birth certificate
As a descendant	Relationship link	Birth certificate, proof of the custody

STEP 2: Report to the municipality to obtain an appendix 15

- After arrival in Belgium, future residents must register within 8 working days of arrival with the population or aliens department of the municipality of residence.
- Make sure to present the municipality with the following documents:
 - a valid passport with the D visa issued by the Belgian embassy in your home country;
 - your lease contract;
 - some ID passport photos.
- Your municipality will then issue an “application for a registration” or Appendix 15.
- Expect a control of residence by the police after which you will be registered in the aliens register and will get a national number.

STEP 3: Receive a Certificate of Registration in the Register of Foreigners (C.I.R.E) for a limited time (A card)

- After +-2 months you will be summoned by the commune to retrieve your residence permit.
- The municipality will issue a so-called A Card, comprising a Certificate of Registration in the Register of Foreigners, which permits or admits aliens **for a limited time**. It is generally valid for 1 year and may be extended, unless the "temporary residence permit" stipulates a limit on the length of stay. This document allows foreigners to travel in the Schengen countries but always with a valid passport.

B.2. From Belgium via the municipality



STEP 1: Check if you are entitled to lodge the procedure from Belgium

If you are already in Belgium you can introduce your request of family reunification directly at the municipality of your place of residence **only in the following situations**:

- You hold a temporary Belgian residence permit (A Card)
- You hold a valid residence permit issued by a member state of the European Union.
- You are exempted from a C visa for a short stay [click here](#) to have access to the list of third countries whose nationals **are subjected** to a visa procedure.
- You came with a C Visa in order to get married or to make a legal partnership in Belgium and you married or entered your legal cohabitation contract before the expiration of your visa.

STEP 2: report to the municipality to obtain a certificate of registration application called APPENDIX 15 bis or APPENIDX 41 bis

Present yourself within 8 working days of arrival with the population or aliens department of the municipality of residence.

Bring the following documents:

- a valid passport or a declaration of arrival (Appendix 3) or a valid Belgian residence permit (A card);
- your lease contract;
- specific documents depending on your family's status (tableau);
- some passport photographs;
- a fee of 160€ will be charged.

Your municipality will issue an Appendix 41 bis if your partner already living here is holder of a residence permit with a limited stay period (A card).

Your municipality will issue an Appendix 15 bis if your partner already living is holder of a residence permit with an unlimited and permanent stay period (B, C, D card).

Expect a control of residence by the police, after which you will be registered in the aliens register and will obtain a national number.

Receive a temporary document, **Orange card** called "Attestation d'immatriculation-Attest van immatriculatie". This Orange card does not allow you to travel outside Belgium. Be aware that a family reunification procedure from Belgium takes time and will keep you stuck in Belgium. Return visas are only granted in very specific cases for medical, family or business-related reasons but not for holidays!

STEP 3: Receive a Certificate of Registration in the Register of Foreigners (C.I.R.E) for a limited period (A card)

After maximum 6 months you will be called by the commune to receive your residence permit.

The municipality will issue a so-called A Card, comprising a Certificate of Registration in the Register of Foreigners, which permits or admits aliens **for a limited time**. It is generally valid for 1 year. This document allows foreigners to travel in the Schengen countries but always with a valid passport.

B.3. When travelling

When a non EU partner of a non EU resident in Belgium plans to travel outside the country before the obtention of his Residency Permit, he might have to ask for a re-entry Visum, that will be granted under certain conditions.

For more information, please refer to: <https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/FR/Guidedesprocedures/Pages/Visaderetour.aspx>

LEGALLY REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP

A registered partnership allows two persons living as a couple to register their union at the relevant authorities of the country in which they reside.

A **registered partnership** abroad is **equivalent to marriage** in Belgium if it was registered in compliance with legislation in one of the following countries: Germany, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, UK or Sweden. In this case, it gives the same immigration rights to both partners.

In Belgium, registered partnership is called "legal cohabitation." A declaration of legal cohabitation can only be signed if the signatories are legally competent to conclude a contract, are not married and do not legally cohabit with another person. Registered partnership allows two people living as a couple to register their union with the relevant authorities of their country of residence. This doesn't only apply for heterosexual and homosexual couples; one can legally cohabite with a family member.

Conditions:

- Partners must be unmarried (proved by an official document or certificate of celibacy) or legally divorced;
- They must be minimum 18 years old (proved by a birth certificate);
- They must be cohabiting (both partners must be registered as living at the same address);
- They have to declare their cohabitation to the civil register (burgerlijke stand/état civil) in the municipality of residence;

Foreign certificates must be legalised in accordance with the Minister of Justice's circular of 17 February 1993 on the authentication of foreign certificates. This amounts to dual legalisation by the Belgian consulate and the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs (19 rue des Petits Carmes, 1000 Brussels, tel: 02 501 89 00, fax: 02 501 37 90).

More information

Service Public Fédéral des Affaires étrangères:
diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium/
Portail des Services publics belges:
www.belgium.be/en/family/residence_documents_for_belgium/
Office des étrangers :
dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Pages/home.aspx

USEFUL LINKS

Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs

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Diplomatie.belgium

Belgium.be

Immigration Office
