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Gateway Policy Explorer: Retirement Series

Belgium

Public Own Old-Age Benefit Plan Details

1992-2023

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Preface

This document is intended for researchers who want to understand the evolution of policy or the policy in place at a particular point in time. This document is not intended for financial advice or to aid in decision-making. The authors have made significant effort to identify and collect historical information pertaining to these policies, to accurately represent these policies, and to communicate how policies may interact to determine legal requirements, eligibility for benefits, and/or benefits levels. The policies presented in this document focus on rules applicable to most individuals aged 50 and older from 1992. Many systems include special policies or alternative eligibility rules for specific groups. We encourage all users to complete their own review of literature in this area depending on the research questions they have in mind.

If you have feedback or questions or identify an error, please contact policy@g2aging.org.

Background — Gateway Policy Explorer: Retirement Series

The *Gateway Policy Explorer* (<http://g2aging.org/policy-explorer>) is part of the Gateway to Global Aging Data (<http://g2aging.org>) project. The *Retirement Series* captures historical policy that affects the birth cohorts of respondents in the surveys covered by the Gateway. It was motivated by the rapid evolution of policies affecting older people across the world. As the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) began in 1992 and many of the international network of studies (HRS-INS) cover more than a decade, understanding the policies in place at the time of the survey has become more demanding for researchers.

Why are we tracking past policy? Individuals make choices based on current policies and the outcomes we see today may reflect responses to past policies. When interpreting the survey responses of individuals, an understanding of the policy environment under which those individuals operate is critical. The collection of contextual information in the *Gateway Policy Explorer* aims to support researchers who want to understand or use policy changes in their research and provide context for longitudinal or cross-country differences. Over the period 2023–2026 the *Gateway Policy Explorer* will be expanded to include information on retirement, long-term care, education, and other policies affecting the life cycle.

The key dimensions to the *Gateway Policy Explorer: Retirement Series* are country and time. We prioritize data collection for each country based on its first interview wave and are continuing to expand our data collection back in time to 1992, the earliest survey date in the HRS-INS.

A separate document, like this one, is developed for each country and each broad category of policies covered in the *Gateway Policy Explorer: Retirement Series*.

Author and Contributor Disclaimers

† The opinions expressed here are those of authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the OECD or of its member countries.

Belgium

Own Old-Age Benefits
Plan details 1992-2023 * †

The Belgium old-age pension system is a defined benefit system based on a person's contribution years and earnings. It is a branch of its social security system and consists of three pension systems based on professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed.

Since 1992, while the main design of the pension system has remained largely the same, there have been several reforms regarding harmonization of eligibility requirements between men and women, gradual increases in benefit eligibility ages and incentives to delay claiming.

Key Dates

First law: 1900

Major changes since 1992: 1996, 2006, 2012, 2015

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* If you have questions or suggestions, please contact policy@g2aging.org.

† Detailed information and definitions are provided in tables, formulas and a glossary at the end of this document. To facilitate switching back and forth, this document is designed with hyperlinks. Most PDF readers have shortcuts that permit a reader to return to the previous location after selecting a hyperlink. In Adobe Acrobat on a PC: "Alt" + "←"; In Adobe Acrobat on a MAC: "command" + "←"; In Preview on a MAC: "command" + "[".

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Chapter 1: Policy enacted 1992-1995

Overview

The Belgian old-age pension system is a branch of its broader social security system which varies across professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed. It is a [defined benefit \(DB\) system](#) based on a person's contribution years and earnings, and it is known as the Statutory Pension (Pension Légale). In addition to the Statutory Pension, an individual can add to their pension benefits through employer-provided supplementary pensions (pension complémentaire), individual voluntary pension savings or insurance plans (épargne pension or assurance pension).

The National Social Security Office (Office National de Sécurité Sociale, ONSS) oversees the financing of social security including contributions from employees and employers and federal government transfers, and the Federal Pension Service (Le Service fédéral des Pensions, SFP) administers the pension benefit payments.

The [Royal Decree n°50 of October 24, 1967](#) on the retirement and survivor's pension for employees forms the legal basis of the current statutory pension system for employees, and the [Royal Decree of December 21, 1967](#) establishing the general regulations regarding the retirement and survivor's pension for employees serves as the implementing law.

Additionally, [Royale Decree of October 30, 1992](#), effective January 1, 1993, changed the requirements for working while claiming pension benefits.

In this document, we define own old-age benefit as the statutory pension for employees. We provide limited information about the plans for civil servants or the self-employed. The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Contributions

- **Employee contribution rate**
13.07% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 7.5% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension ¹
- **Employer contribution rate**
24.92% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 8.86% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension ¹
- **Self-employed contribution rate**
The self-employed pays a combined social security contribution to their registered social insurance fund. The contribution rate is multi-tiered ^{1, 2, 3}

Notes

- ¹ The self-employed's social security contribution includes coverage in medical care, sickness and disability insurance, maternity insurance, pensions, bridging rights, bereavement benefits, informal care benefits, and paternity and childbirth benefits
- ² The self-employed has a minimum and maximum taxable base with regressive rate structure. To see an example of how social security contributions are calculated for the self-employed, see the website of [Group S \(2023\)](#)
- ³ This document does not provide information on the self-employed's own old-age benefit plans

Eligibility

Age requirements to start benefits without penalty

- [Statutory retirement age \(SRA\)](#)
Age 60
- **Does SRA vary by birth year?** Answer: No
- **Does SRA vary by sex?** Answer: No

Contribution requirements to be eligible to receive benefit

The Belgium Statutory Pension (Pension Légale) has two eligibility tracks. An insured worker must satisfy at least one track's age and contribution requirements to be eligible for pension benefits.

Contribution years in Belgium include periods of employment and assimilated periods. Assimilated periods are periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment —see [Box 1](#) for more information about assimilated periods.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged

- Age requirement:
 - Men: Age 65
 - Women: Age 60
- Contribution requirement: 1 day for employees and civil servants, 1 quarter for the self-employed

Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons

- Age requirement: Age 60
- Contribution requirement: 20 contribution years for men and 10 contribution years for women

Alternative eligibility requirements that permit starting benefits early, but with a penalty

- Can an individual start benefits before SRA? Answer: No

Benefits

To receive a benefit, [does an individual have to claim it?](#) Answer: Yes

Payment type

- Payment options (i.e., Annuity, cash balance, or lump sum): Annuitable

Factors effecting computation of benefit entitlement

- Does the formula for computing benefit entitlement differ by birth year? Answer: Yes
- Is the formula for computing benefit entitlement [progressive](#)? Answer: Yes
- Does the benefit entitlement depend on the individual's own contribution/work history? Answer: Yes
- Does the benefit entitlement depend on [national income](#)? Answer: No
- Does an individual receive credits for military service (above any credits normally received for employment)? Answer: Yes, periods of military service are considered [assimilated periods](#) and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- Does an individual receive credits for number of children? Answer: No, however, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, and foster parent leave are considered as [assimilated periods](#) and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- Does an individual receive credits for unemployment? Answer: Yes
- Are future benefit entitlements adjusted for [cost of living](#)? Answer: Yes
- If so, what measure is used for adjustment?

The smoothed health index is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. See [Box 2](#) for more information.

Benefit formula for claiming at SRA

The Belgium statutory pension is a [DB](#) system based on the insured's contribution years and earnings. The insured's own old-age benefit amount is based on the primary insurance amount, which is 60% of the insured's adjusted value of average indexed annual earnings based on their best "computational years" of earnings. Key elements for calculating the primary insurance amount are:

- Computational years: 45 years for men and 40 years for women, including periods of employment and [assimilated periods](#)
- Earnings: Actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subject to an annual salary cap. Annual salary cap depends on types of contribution periods, e.g., period of employment and period of unemployment. If the insured has fewer contribution years than computational years, their earnings for the remaining years are assigned zeros. For example, if an insured female worker has 38 contribution years, the earnings for the remaining 2 years will be assigned zeros during benefit calculation

For employees who satisfy certain contribution requirements, their pension amount will be increased to the minimum pension multiplied by a [career fraction](#). The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Formulas for own old-age benefit calculation include:

- [Formula 1](#): For how the monthly pension benefit is calculated
- [Formula 2](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated

Additional reference tables and example of calculation:

- [Table 1](#): Fictitious salary amount of assimilated periods for pension calculation
- [Table 2](#): Number of “computational years”
- [Table 3](#): Annual salary cap (1992-2023)
- [Table 4](#): Salary cap for different types of contribution periods (as of 2021)
- [Table 5](#): Revaluation factors (effective December 1, 2022)
- [Table 6](#): Amount of minimum pension (1992-2024)

Adjustments for starting benefits before SRA (Early claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits reduced for starting benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits after SRA (Delayed claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits increased for starting benefits after SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits and continuing to work (Earnings Test)

- **Are benefits reduced or eliminated while working?** Answer: Yes
- **Adjustment formula**

If a worker is eligible for and starts receiving their own old-age benefits, then the Federal Pension Service reduces or suspends benefits if the earnings exceed a threshold level in the previous year. The reduction applies to all benefits paid based on a worker's earnings history, which means spousal benefits may also be reduced based on total household income. Reduction or suspension of pension benefit depends on the amount of earnings exceeding the threshold value and changes over time:

- In 1992:
 - * The excess is less than 100% over the threshold value (2.0 times that value): The pension is reduced by the percentage of the excess and is paid up to two-thirds of the original amount
 - * The excess is at least 100% over the threshold value (2.0 times that value): The pension is suspended for a year
—See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time
- From 1993:
 - * The excess is less than 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is reduced by the percentage of the excess
 - * The excess is at least 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is suspended for a year
—See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time

The threshold values for the earnings test depend on various conditions:

- Age
- Years of contribution history
- Pension scheme based on professions, i.e., employee, civil servant, or self-employed
- Entitlement to family allowance, e.g., whether they have dependent children or not
- Year when they receive income
- Source of income
- Year when they start claiming old-age benefit

See [Formula 3](#) for computational details based on individual circumstances. [Table 8](#) summarizes the maximum amount of excess over time. [Box 3](#) provides an example of how the earnings test is applied in the case of a person only entitled to their own benefit.

If a beneficiary is entitled and continues working during claiming, then reductions to spousal benefits are applied, which takes into account both the beneficiary's and the spouse's income. See policy document *Belgium: Old-Age Spousal Benefits Plan Details* for additional information on eligibility for spousal benefits and computational details.

- **If benefits are reduced while working, does it effect future benefits?** Answer: No

Chapter 2: Policy enacted 1996-2005

Policy change in 1996

Law of July 26, 1996 on the modernization of social security and ensuring the viability of statutory pension schemes, effective August 11, 1996, together with its implementing law, Royal Decree of December 23, 1996, made the following changes to the statutory pension system:

- Standardized the retirement age between men and women for [Eligibility Track 1](#) by gradually increasing women's retirement age from age 60 if born before July 1937 to age 65 for those born after February 1964
- Increased women's total number of contribution years taken into account for pension calculation to the same level as men by increasing the number of computational years from 40 to 45 for women
- Increased the age and contribution requirements for [Eligibility Track 2](#)
- Introduced the guaranteed minimum wage for benefit calculation

Overview

The Belgian old-age pension system is a branch of its broader social security system which varies across professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed. It is a [defined benefit \(DB\) system](#) based on a person's contribution years and earnings, and it is known as the Statutory Pension (Pension Légale). In addition to the Statutory Pension, an individual can add to their pension benefits through employer-provided supplementary pensions (pension complémentaire), individual voluntary pension savings or insurance plans (épargne pension or assurance pension).

The National Social Security Office (Office National de Sécurité Sociale, ONSS) oversees the financing of social security including contributions from employees and employers and federal government transfers, and the Federal Pension Service (Le Service fédéral des Pensions, SFP) administers the pension benefit payments.

The [Royal Decree n°50 of October 24, 1967](#) on the retirement and survivor's pension for employees forms the legal basis of the current statutory pension system for employees, and the [Royal Decree of December 21, 1967](#) establishing the general regulations regarding the retirement and survivor's pension for employees serves as the implementing law.

In this document, we define own old-age benefit as the statutory pension for employees. We provide limited information about the plans for civil servants or the self-employed. The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Contributions

- **Employee contribution rate**
13.07% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 7.5% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Employer contribution rate**
24.92% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 8.86% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Self-employed contribution rate**
The self-employed pays a combined social security contribution to their registered social insurance fund. The contribution rate is multi-tiered ^{1, 2, 3}

Notes

- ¹ The self-employed's social security contribution includes coverage in medical care, sickness and disability insurance, maternity insurance, pensions, bridging rights, bereavement benefits, informal care benefits, and paternity and childbirth benefits
- ² The self-employed has a minimum and maximum taxable base with regressive rate structure. To see an example of how social security contributions are calculated for the self-employed, see the website of [Group S \(2023\)](#)
- ³ This document does not provide information on the self-employed's own old-age benefit plans

Eligibility

Age requirements to start benefits without penalty

- **Statutory retirement age (SRA)**
Age 60
- **Does SRA vary by birth year?** Answer: No
- **Does SRA vary by sex?** Answer: No

Contribution requirements to be eligible to receive benefit

The Belgium Statutory Pension (Pension Légale) has two eligibility tracks. An insured worker must satisfy at least one track's age and contribution requirements to be eligible for pension benefits.

Contribution years in Belgium include periods of employment and **assimilated periods**. Assimilated periods are periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment —see [Box 1](#) for more information about assimilated periods.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged

- Age requirement:
 - Men: Age 65
 - Women: Age 60, and gradually increasing to age 65 based on birth date —see [Table 9](#) for changes over time
- Contribution requirement: 1 day for employees and civil servants, 1 quarter for the self-employed

Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons

- Age requirement: Age 60
- Contribution requirement: 20 contribution years, gradually increased to 35 years by 2005 —see [Table 10](#) for changes over time

Alternative eligibility requirements that permit starting benefits early, but with a penalty

- **Can an individual start benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Benefits

To receive a benefit, **does an individual have to claim it?** Answer: Yes

Payment type

- **Payment options (i.e., Annuity, cash balance, or lump sum):** Annuitable

Factors effecting computation of benefit entitlement

- **Does the formula for computing benefit entitlement differ by birth year?** Answer: Yes
- **Is the formula for computing benefit entitlement **progressive**?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on the individual's own contribution/work history?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on **national income**?** Answer: No
- **Does an individual receive credits for military service (above any credits normally received for employment)?** Answer: Yes, periods of military service are considered **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for number of children?** Answer: No, however, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, and foster parent leave are considered as **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for unemployment?** Answer: Yes
- **Are future benefit entitlements adjusted for **cost of living**?** Answer: Yes
- **If so, what measure is used for adjustment?**
The smoothed health index is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. See [Box 2](#) for more information.

Benefit formula for claiming at SRA

The Belgium statutory pension is a **DB** system based on the insured's contribution years and earnings. The insured's own old-age benefit amount is based on the primary insurance amount, which is 60% of the insured's adjusted value of average indexed annual earnings based on their best "computational years" of earnings. Key elements for calculating the primary insurance amount are:

- Computational years: 45 years for men. 40 years for women, increased to 41 years for women from July 1, 1997. These include periods of employment and [assimilated periods](#) —see [Table 2](#) for changes over time
- Earnings: Actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subject to an annual salary cap. Annual salary cap depends on types of contribution periods, e.g., period of employment and period of unemployment. If the insured has fewer contribution years than computational years, their earnings for the remaining years are assigned zeros. For example, if an insured female worker has 38 contribution years and the number of computational years is 40 (value of 1996) or 41 starting July 1, 1997, the earnings for the remaining 2 or 3 years will be assigned zeros during benefit calculation

For employees who satisfy certain contribution requirements, their pension amount will be increased to the minimum pension multiplied by a [career fraction](#). The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Effective January 1, 1997, for employees with at least 15 years (at least 104 days per year) of employment history, if their actual wage in a year is below a guaranteed minimum wage, the actual wage of that year will be replaced by the guaranteed minimum amount for pension calculation. For persons who benefit from the guaranteed minimum wage, their pension benefit amount is capped at a maximum amount multiplied by their career fraction.

Formulas for own old-age benefit calculation include:

- [Formula 1](#): For how the monthly pension benefit is calculated
- [Formula 2](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated
- [Formula 4](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated when the guaranteed minimum wage applies

Additional reference tables and example of calculation:

- [Table 1](#): Fictitious salary amount of assimilated periods for pension calculation
- [Table 2](#): Number of “computational years”
- [Table 3](#) and [Table 11](#): Annual salary cap (1992-2023)
- [Table 4](#): Salary cap for different types of contribution periods (as of 2021)
- [Table 5](#): Revaluation factors (effective December 1, 2022)
- [Table 6](#): Amount of minimum pension (1992-2024)
- [Table 11](#): Amount of guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2023)
- [Table 12](#): Maximum amount of pension calculated with the guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2024)
- [Box 4](#): Example of application of the guaranteed minimum wage

Adjustments for starting benefits before SRA (Early claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits reduced for starting benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits after SRA (Delayed claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits increased for starting benefits after SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits and continuing to work (Earnings Test)

- **Are benefits reduced or eliminated while working?** Answer: Yes
- **Adjustment formula**

If a worker is eligible for and starts receiving their own old-age benefits, then the Federal Pension Service reduces or suspends benefits if the earnings exceed a threshold level in the previous year. The reduction applies to all benefits paid based on a worker’s earnings history, which means spousal benefits may also be reduced based on total household income. How much the own old-age benefit is reduced depends on the amount of earnings exceeding the threshold value:

- The excess is less than 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is reduced by the percentage of the excess
- The excess is at least 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is suspended for a year
—See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time

The threshold values for the earnings test depend on various conditions:

- Age
- Years of contribution history
- Pension scheme based on professions, i.e., employee, civil servant, or self-employed

- Entitlement to family allowance, e.g., whether they have dependent children or not
- Year when they receive income
- Source of income
- Year when they start claiming old-age benefit

See [Formula 3](#) for computational details based on individual circumstances. [Table 8](#) summarizes the maximum amount of excess over time. [Box 3](#) provides an example of how the earnings test is applied in the case of a person only entitled to their own benefit.

If a beneficiary is entitled and continues working during claiming, then reductions to spousal benefits are applied, which takes into account both the beneficiary's and the spouse's income. See policy document *Belgium: Old-Age Spousal Benefits Plan Details* for additional information on eligibility for spousal benefits and computational details.

- **If benefits are reduced while working, does it effect future benefits?** Answer: No

Chapter 3: Policy enacted 2006-2011

Policy change in 2006

Law of December 23, 2005 on the Solidarity Pact between Generations, effective January 1, 2006, made the following changes:

- Introduced pension bonus for delaying the start of benefits past initial benefit eligibility
- Introduced a lower salary cap for certain types of contribution periods such as period of unemployment for benefit calculation to better account for changes in career

Overview

The Belgian old-age pension system is a branch of its broader social security system which varies across professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed. It is a [defined benefit \(DB\) system](#) based on a person's contribution years and earnings, and it is known as the Statutory Pension (Pension Légale). In addition to the Statutory Pension, an individual can add to their pension benefits through employer-provided supplementary pensions (pension complémentaire), individual voluntary pension savings or insurance plans (épargne pension or assurance pension).

The National Social Security Office (Office National de Sécurité Sociale, ONSS) oversees the financing of social security including contributions from employees and employers and federal government transfers, and the Federal Pension Service (Le Service fédéral des Pensions, SFP) administers the pension benefit payments.

The [Royal Decree n°50 of October 24, 1967](#) on the retirement and survivor's pension for employees forms the legal basis of the current statutory pension system for employees, and the [Royal Decree of December 21, 1967](#) establishing the general regulations regarding the retirement and survivor's pension for employees serves as the implementing law.

In this document, we define own old-age benefit as the statutory pension for employees. We provide limited information about the plans for civil servants or the self-employed. The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Contributions

- **Employee contribution rate**
13.07% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 7.5% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Employer contribution rate**
24.92% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 8.86% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Self-employed contribution rate**
The self-employed pays a combined social security contribution to their registered social insurance fund. The contribution rate is multi-tiered ^{1, 2, 3}

Notes

- ¹ The self-employed's social security contribution includes coverage in medical care, sickness and disability insurance, maternity insurance, pensions, bridging rights, bereavement benefits, informal care benefits, and paternity and childbirth benefits
- ² The self-employed has a minimum and maximum taxable base with regressive rate structure. To see an example of how social security contributions are calculated for the self-employed, see the website of [Group S \(2023\)](#)
- ³ This document does not provide information on the self-employed's own old-age benefit plans

Eligibility

Age requirements to start benefits without penalty

- **Statutory retirement age (SRA)**
Age 60
- **Does SRA vary by birth year?** Answer: No
- **Does SRA vary by sex?** Answer: No

Contribution requirements to be eligible to receive benefit

The Belgium Statutory Pension (Pension Légale) has two eligibility tracks. An insured worker must satisfy at least one track's age and contribution requirements to be eligible for pension benefits.

Contribution years in Belgium include periods of employment and **assimilated periods**. Assimilated periods are periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment —see [Box 1](#) for more information about assimilated periods.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged

- Age requirement:
 - Men: Age 65
 - Women: Age 64, and gradually increasing to age 65 based on birth date —see [Table 9](#) for changes over time
- Contribution requirement: 1 day for employees and civil servants, 1 quarter for the self-employed

Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons

- Age requirement: Age 60
- Contribution requirement: 35 contribution years

Alternative eligibility requirements that permit starting benefits early, but with a penalty

- **Can an individual start benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Benefits

To receive a benefit, **does an individual have to claim it?** Answer: Yes

Payment type

- **Payment options (i.e., Annuity, cash balance, or lump sum):** Annuitable

Factors effecting computation of benefit entitlement

- **Does the formula for computing benefit entitlement differ by birth year?** Answer: Yes
- **Is the formula for computing benefit entitlement **progressive**?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on the individual's own contribution/work history?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on **national income**?** Answer: No
- **Does an individual receive credits for military service (above any credits normally received for employment)?** Answer: Yes, periods of military service are considered **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for number of children?** Answer: No, however, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, and foster parent leave are considered as **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for unemployment?** Answer: Yes
- **Are future benefit entitlements adjusted for **cost of living**?** Answer: Yes
- **If so, what measure is used for adjustment?**

The smoothed health index is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. See [Box 2](#) for more information.

Benefit formula for claiming at SRA

The Belgium statutory pension is a **DB** system based on the insured's contribution years and earnings. The insured's own old-age benefit amount consists of two components:

- **Primary insurance amount:** 60% of the insured's adjusted value of average indexed annual earnings based on their best "computational years" of earnings. Key elements for calculating the primary insurance amount are:

- Computational years: 45 years for men. 44 years for women from 2006-2008, increased to 45 years effective January 1, 2009. These include periods of employment and [assimilated periods](#) —see [Table 2](#) for changes over time
- Earnings: Actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subject to an annual salary cap. Annual salary cap depends on types of contribution periods, e.g., period of employment and period of unemployment. If the insured has fewer contribution years than computational years, their earnings for the remaining years are assigned zeros. For example, if an insured female worker has 38 contribution years and the number of computational years is 44 from 2006-2008 or 45 since 2009, the earnings for the remaining 6 or 7 years will be assigned zeros during benefit calculation
- Pension bonus: Additional pension amount accumulated for insured persons who meet certain age and contribution requirement —see section *Adjustment for starting benefit after SRA* for more details

For employees who satisfy certain contribution requirements, their pension amount will be increased to the minimum pension multiplied by a [career fraction](#). The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Additionally, for employees with at least 15 years (at least 104 days per year) of employment history, if their actual wage in a year is below a guaranteed minimum wage, the actual wage of that year will be replaced by the guaranteed minimum amount for pension calculation. For persons who benefit from the minimum wage, their pension benefit amount is capped at a maximum amount multiplied by their career fraction.

Formulas for own old-age benefit calculation include:

- [Formula 1](#): For how the monthly pension benefit is calculated
- [Formula 2](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated
- [Formula 4](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated when the guaranteed minimum wage applies

Additional reference tables and example of calculation:

- [Table 1](#): Fictitious salary amount of assimilated periods for pension calculation
- [Table 2](#): Number of “computational years”
- [Table 3](#) and [Table 11](#): Annual salary cap (1992-2023)
- [Table 4](#): Salary cap for different types of contribution periods (as of 2021)
- [Table 5](#): Revaluation factors (effective December 1, 2022)
- [Table 6](#): Amount of minimum pension (1992-2024)
- [Table 11](#): Amount of guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2023)
- [Table 12](#): Maximum amount of pension calculated with the guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2024)
- [Table 13](#): Pension bonus —see subsection *Adjustment Formula for Delayed Claiming* for more details
- [Box 4](#): Example of application of the guaranteed minimum wage

Adjustments for starting benefits before SRA (Early claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits reduced for starting benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits after SRA (Delayed claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits increased for starting benefits after SRA?** Answer: Yes, pension bonus is effective from 2006-2014.
- **If so, what is the latest claiming age where benefits are adjusted?** Answer: Age 65
- **Adjustment formula**

Effective January 1, 2006, the insured is granted a pension bonus for every day of effective employment or assimilated periods (up to 30 days per year) if they reach age 62 or have a contribution history of 44 years. The bonus amounts to 2.8654 € (value as of 2023) per day of employment. The accumulation of pension bonus ends if the insured satisfies one of the following conditions:

- They begin receiving pension benefit
- They reach age 65

Adjustments for starting benefits and continuing to work (Earnings Test)

- **Are benefits reduced or eliminated while working?** Answer: Yes
- **Adjustment formula**

If a worker is eligible for and starts receiving their own old-age benefits, then the Federal Pension Service reduces or suspends benefits if the earnings exceed a threshold level in the previous year. The reduction applies to all benefits paid based on a worker’s earnings history, which means spousal benefits may also be reduced based on total household income. How much the own old-age

benefit is reduced depends on the amount of earnings exceeding the threshold value:

- The excess is less than 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is reduced by the percentage of the excess
- The excess is at least 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value): The pension is suspended for a year
—See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time

The threshold values for the earnings test depend on various conditions:

- Age
- Years of contribution history
- Pension scheme based on professions, i.e., employee, civil servant, or self-employed
- Entitlement to family allowance, e.g., whether they have dependent children or not
- Year when they receive income
- Source of income
- Year when they start claiming old-age benefit

See [Formula 3](#) for computational details based on individual circumstances. [Table 8](#) summarizes the maximum amount of excess over time. [Box 3](#) provides an example of how the earnings test is applied in the case of a person only entitled to their own benefit.

If a beneficiary is entitled and continues working during claiming, then reductions to spousal benefits are applied, which takes into account both the beneficiary's and the spouse's income. See policy document *Belgium: Old-Age Spousal Benefits Plan Details* for additional information on eligibility for spousal benefits and computational details.

- **If benefits are reduced while working, does it effect future benefits?** Answer: No

Chapter 4: Policy enacted 2012-2014

Policy change in 2012

Law of December 28, 2011, effective January 1, 2012, increased the age and contribution requirements for [Eligibility Track 2](#).

Other reforms during this period include:

- [Royal Decree of May 28, 2013](#), effective January 1, 2013, changed the requirements for working while claiming pension benefit by increasing the maximum income allowance
- [Royal Decree of October 24, 2013](#), effective January 1, 2014, changed the requirements and amount of pension bonus to incentivize delaying the start of benefits past initial benefit eligibility

Overview

The Belgian old-age pension system is a branch of its broader social security system which varies across professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed. It is a [defined benefit \(DB\) system](#) based on a person's contribution years and earnings, and it is known as the Statutory Pension (Pension Légale). In addition to the Statutory Pension, an individual can add to their pension benefits through employer-provided supplementary pensions (pension complémentaire), individual voluntary pension savings or insurance plans (épargne pension or assurance pension).

The National Social Security Office (Office National de Sécurité Sociale, ONSS) oversees the financing of social security including contributions from employees and employers and federal government transfers, and the Federal Pension Service (Le Service fédéral des Pensions, SFP) administers the pension benefit payments.

The [Royal Decree n°50 of October 24, 1967](#) on the retirement and survivor's pension for employees forms the legal basis of the current statutory pension system for employees, and the [Royal Decree of December 21, 1967](#) establishing the general regulations regarding the retirement and survivor's pension for employees serves as the implementing law.

In this document, we define own old-age benefit as the statutory pension for employees. We provide limited information about the plans for civil servants or the self-employed. The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Contributions

- **Employee contribution rate**
13.07% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 7.5% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Employer contribution rate**
24.92% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 8.86% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Self-employed contribution rate**
The self-employed pays a combined social security contribution to their registered social insurance fund. The contribution rate is multi-tiered ^{1, 2, 3}

Notes

- ¹ The self-employed's social security contribution includes coverage in medical care, sickness and disability insurance, maternity insurance, pensions, bridging rights, bereavement benefits, informal care benefits, and paternity and childbirth benefits
- ² The self-employed has a minimum and maximum taxable base with regressive rate structure. To see an example of how social security contributions are calculated for the self-employed, see the website of [Group S \(2023\)](#)
- ³ This document does not provide information on the self-employed's own old-age benefit plans

Eligibility

Age requirements to start benefits without penalty

- **Statutory retirement age (SRA)**
Age 60
- **Does SRA vary by birth year?** Answer: No
- **Does SRA vary by sex?** Answer: No

Contribution requirements to be eligible to receive benefit

The Belgium Statutory Pension (Pension Légale) has two eligibility tracks. An insured worker must satisfy at least one track's age and contribution requirements to be eligible for pension benefits.

Contribution years in Belgium include periods of employment and **assimilated periods**. Assimilated periods are periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment —see [Box 1](#) for more information about assimilated periods.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged

- Age requirement: Age 65
- Contribution requirement: 1 day for employees and civil servants, 1 quarter for the self-employed

Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons

- Age and contribution requirements:
 - 2012: Age 60 and 35 contribution years
 - 2013-2014: Age 60 and 40 contribution years, with contribution years rising gradually to 44 years by 2019; Alternatively, an individual may qualify for full benefits at an older age with fewer contribution years: In 2013, age 60.5 with 38 contribution years —between 2013 and 2014, the combination of age and contribution years for full benefit eligibility are changing every year, see [Box 5](#) for more details

Alternative eligibility requirements that permit starting benefits early, but with a penalty

- **Can an individual start benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Benefits

To receive a benefit, **does an individual have to claim it?** Answer: Yes

Payment type

- **Payment options (i.e., Annuity, cash balance, or lump sum):** Annuitable

Factors effecting computation of benefit entitlement

- **Does the formula for computing benefit entitlement differ by birth year?** Answer: Yes
- **Is the formula for computing benefit entitlement **progressive**?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on the individual's own contribution/work history?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on **national income**?** Answer: No
- **Does an individual receive credits for military service (above any credits normally received for employment)?** Answer: Yes, periods of military service are considered **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for number of children?** Answer: No, however, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, and foster parent leave are considered as **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for unemployment?** Answer: Yes
- **Are future benefit entitlements adjusted for **cost of living**?** Answer: Yes
- **If so, what measure is used for adjustment?**
The smoothed health index is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. See [Box 2](#) for more information.

Benefit formula for claiming at SRA

The Belgium statutory pension is a **DB** system based on the insured's contribution years and earnings. The insured's own old-age benefit amount consists of two components:

- Primary insurance amount: 60% of the insured's adjusted value of average indexed annual earnings based on their best "computational years" of earnings. Key elements for calculating the primary insurance amount are:
 - Computational years: 45 years, including periods of employment and [assimilated periods](#)
 - Earnings: Actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subject to an annual salary cap. Annual salary cap depends on types of contribution periods, e.g., period of employment and period of unemployment. If the insured has fewer contribution years than computational years, their earnings for the remaining years are assigned zeros. For example, if an insured female worker has 38 contribution years, the earnings for the remaining 7 years will be assigned zeros during benefit calculation
- Pension bonus: Additional pension amount accumulated for insured persons who meet certain age and contribution requirement —see section *Adjustment for starting benefit after SRA* for more details

For employees who satisfy certain contribution requirements, their pension amount will be increased to the minimum pension multiplied by a [career fraction](#). The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Additionally, for employees with at least 15 years (at least 104 days per year) of employment history, if their actual wage in a year is below a guaranteed minimum wage, the actual wage of that year will be replaced by the guaranteed minimum amount for pension calculation. For persons who benefit from the minimum wage, their pension benefit amount is capped at a maximum amount multiplied by their career fraction.

Formulas for own old-age benefit calculation include:

- [Formula 1](#): For how the monthly pension benefit is calculated
- [Formula 2](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated
- [Formula 4](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated when the guaranteed minimum wage applies

Additional reference tables and example of calculation:

- [Table 1](#): Fictitious salary amount of assimilated periods for pension calculation
- [Table 2](#): Number of "computational years"
- [Table 3](#) and [Table 11](#): Annual salary cap (1992-2023)
- [Table 4](#): Salary cap for different types of contribution periods (as of 2021)
- [Table 5](#): Revaluation factors (effective December 1, 2022)
- [Table 6](#): Amount of minimum pension (1992-2024)
- [Table 11](#): Amount of guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2023)
- [Table 12](#): Maximum amount of pension calculated with the guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2024)
- [Table 13](#): Pension bonus —see subsection *Adjustment Formula for Delayed Claiming* for more details
- [Box 4](#): Example of application of the guaranteed minimum wage

Adjustments for starting benefits before SRA (Early claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits reduced for starting benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits after SRA (Delayed claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits increased for starting benefits after SRA?** Answer: Yes, pension bonus is effective from 2006-2014.
- **If so, what is the [latest claiming age](#) where benefits are adjusted?** Answer: From 2006 - 2013, age 65. Since 2014, there is no benefit to delayed claiming.
- **Adjustment formula**

January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2013

Effective January 1, 2006, the insured is granted a pension bonus for every day of effective employment or assimilated periods (up to 30 days per year) if they reach age 62 or have a contribution history of 44 years. The bonus amounts to 2.8654 € (value as of 2023) per day of employment. The accumulation of pension bonus ends if the insured satisfies one of the following conditions:

- They begin receiving pension benefit
- They reach age 65

January 1, 2014 - December 31, 2014

Effective January 1, 2014, the insured is granted a pension bonus for every day of effective employment if they satisfy one of the following conditions:

- They meet the age and contribution requirements for [Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons](#)
- They reach age 65 and have 40 years of contribution

The amount of pension bonus depends on the duration of extended employment period —see [Table 13](#) for details. Pension bonus is accumulated until the insured starts receiving pension benefit.

Adjustments for starting benefits and continuing to work (Earnings Test)

- **Are benefits reduced or eliminated while working?** Answer: Yes

- **Adjustment formula**

If a worker is eligible for and starts receiving their own old-age benefits, then the Federal Pension Service reduces or suspends benefits if the earnings exceed a threshold level in the previous year. The reduction applies to all benefits paid based on a worker's earnings history, which means spousal benefits may also be reduced based on total household income. How much the own old-age benefit is reduced depends on the amount of earnings exceeding the threshold value:

- The excess is less than 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value), which is increased to 25% (1.25 times that value), effective January 1, 2013: The pension is reduced by the percentage of the excess
 - The excess is at least 15% over the threshold value (1.15 times that value), which is increased to 25% (1.25 times that value), effective January 1, 2013: The pension is suspended for a year
- See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time

The threshold values for the earnings test depend on various conditions:

- Age
- Years of contribution history
- Pension scheme based on professions, i.e., employee, civil servant, or self-employed
- Entitlement to family allowance, e.g., whether they have dependent children or not
- Year when they receive income
- Source of income
- Year when they start claiming old-age benefit

Effective January 1, 2013, exceptions apply if the worker satisfies the following conditions:

- They reach the statutory retirement age, i.e., age 65. Exemption starts to apply on January 1 of that year
- They have a contribution history of at least the length of “computational years”, i.e., 45 years
- They receive a transitional benefit, i.e., a temporary survivor's benefit

See [Formula 3](#) for computational details based on individual circumstances. [Table 8](#) summarizes the maximum amount of excess over time. [Box 3](#) provides an example of how the earnings test is applied in the case of a person only entitled to their own benefit.

If a beneficiary is entitled and continues working during claiming, then reductions to spousal benefits are applied, which takes into account both the beneficiary's and the spouse's income. See policy document *Belgium: Old-Age Spousal Benefits Plan Details* for additional information on eligibility for spousal benefits and computational details.

- **If benefits are reduced while working, does it effect future benefits?** Answer: No

Chapter 5: Policy enacted 2015-2023

Policy change in 2015

There were three major reforms between December 2014 and August 2015:

- [Law of December 19, 2014](#), effective January 1, 2015, abolished the new pension bonus. Only those who meet the age and contribution requirements and start accruing pension bonus before December 1, 2014 are entitled to this benefit
- [Royal Decree of January 20, 2015](#), effective January 1, 2015, changed the requirements for working while claiming pension benefits
- [Law of August 10, 2015](#), effective January 1, 2016, increased the age and contribution requirements for [Eligibility Track 1](#) and [Eligibility Track 2](#)

Overview

The Belgian old-age pension system is a branch of its broader social security system which varies across professions: employees, civil servants, and the self-employed. It is a [defined benefit \(DB\) system](#) based on a person's contribution years and earnings, and it is known as the Statutory Pension (Pension Légale). In addition to the Statutory Pension, an individual can add to their pension benefits through employer-provided supplementary pensions (pension complémentaire), individual voluntary pension savings or insurance plans (épargne pension or assurance pension).

The National Social Security Office (Office National de Sécurité Sociale, ONSS) oversees the financing of social security including contributions from employees and employers and federal government transfers, and the Federal Pension Service (Le Service fédéral des Pensions, SFP) administers the pension benefit payments.

The [Royal Decree n°50 of October 24, 1967](#) on the retirement and survivor's pension for employees forms the legal basis of the current statutory pension system for employees, and the [Royal Decree of December 21, 1967](#) establishing the general regulations regarding the retirement and survivor's pension for employees serves as the implementing law.

In this document, we define own old-age benefit as the statutory pension for employees. We provide limited information about the plans for civil servants or the self-employed. The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Contributions

- **Employee contribution rate**
13.07% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 7.5% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Employer contribution rate**
24.92% of earned income for a general-purpose basic social security contribution, out of which 8.86% of earned income is devoted to the statutory pension
- **Self-employed contribution rate**
The self-employed pays a combined social security contribution to their registered social insurance fund. The contribution rate is multi-tiered ^{1, 2, 3}

Notes

- ¹ The self-employed's social security contribution includes coverage in medical care, sickness and disability insurance, maternity insurance, pensions, bridging rights, bereavement benefits, informal care benefits, and paternity and childbirth benefits
- ² The self-employed has a minimum and maximum taxable base with regressive rate structure. To see an example of how social security contributions are calculated for the self-employed, see the website of [Group S \(2023\)](#)
- ³ This document does not provide information on the self-employed's own old-age benefit plans

Eligibility

Age requirements to start benefits without penalty

- **Statutory retirement age (SRA)**
Age 60
- **Does SRA vary by birth year?** Answer: No
- **Does SRA vary by sex?** Answer: No

Contribution requirements to be eligible to receive benefit

The Belgium Statutory Pension (Pension Légale) has two eligibility tracks. An insured worker must satisfy at least one track's age and contribution requirements to be eligible for pension benefits.

Contribution years in Belgium include periods of employment and **assimilated periods**. Assimilated periods are periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment —see [Box 1](#) for more information about assimilated periods.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged

- Age requirement: Age 65, increasing to 66 on January 1, 2025, and then to 67 on January 1, 2030. See [Table 9](#) for changes in statutory retirement age over time
- Contribution requirement: 1 day for employees and civil servants, 1 quarter for the self-employed

Eligibility Track 2: Long-term insured persons

- Age requirement: Age 60
- Contribution requirement: 41 contribution years (values of 2015) —see [Table 10](#) for changes over time
—Alternatively, an individual may qualify for full benefits at an older age with fewer contribution years: In 2015, age 61.5 with 40 contribution years —between 2015 and 2019, the combination of age and contribution years for full benefit eligibility are changing every year, see [Box 5](#) for more details

Alternative eligibility requirements that permit starting benefits early, but with a penalty

- **Can an individual start benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Benefits

To receive a benefit, **does an individual have to claim it?** Answer: Yes

Payment type

- **Payment options (i.e., Annuity, cash balance, or lump sum):** Annuitable

Factors effecting computation of benefit entitlement

- **Does the formula for computing benefit entitlement differ by birth year?** Answer: Yes
- **Is the formula for computing benefit entitlement **progressive**?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on the individual's own contribution/work history?** Answer: Yes
- **Does the benefit entitlement depend on **national income**?** Answer: No
- **Does an individual receive credits for military service (above any credits normally received for employment)?** Answer: Yes, periods of military service are considered **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for number of children?** Answer: No, however, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, and foster parent leave are considered as **assimilated periods** and count towards pension calculation —see [Table 1](#) for more details
- **Does an individual receive credits for unemployment?** Answer: Yes
- **Are future benefit entitlements adjusted for **cost of living**?** Answer: Yes
- **If so, what measure is used for adjustment?**
The smoothed health index is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. See [Box 2](#) for more information.

Benefit formula for claiming at SRA

The Belgium statutory pension is a **DB** system based on the insured's contribution years and earnings. The insured's own old-age benefit amount consists of two components:

- Primary insurance amount: 60% of the insured's adjusted value of average indexed annual earnings based on their best "computational years" of earnings. Key elements for calculating the primary insurance amount are:
 - Computational years: 45 years, including periods of employment and [assimilated periods](#)
 - Earnings: Actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subject to an annual salary cap. Annual salary cap depends on types of contribution periods, e.g., period of employment and period of unemployment. If the insured has fewer contribution years than computational years, their earnings for the remaining years are assigned zeros. For example, if an insured female worker has 38 contribution years, the earnings for the remaining 7 years will be assigned zeros during benefit calculation
- Pension bonus: Additional pension amount accumulated for insured persons who meet certain age and contribution requirement —see section *Adjustment for starting benefit after SRA* for more details

For employees who satisfy certain contribution requirements, their pension amount will be increased to the minimum pension multiplied by a [career fraction](#). The policy details associated with eligibility and benefit of minimum pension are covered in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Additionally, for employees with at least 15 years (at least 104 days per year) of employment history, if their actual wage in a year is below a guaranteed minimum wage, the actual wage of that year will be replaced by the guaranteed minimum amount for pension calculation. For persons who benefit from the minimum wage, their pension benefit amount is capped at a maximum amount multiplied by their career fraction.

Formulas for own old-age benefit calculation include:

- [Formula 1](#): For how the monthly pension benefit is calculated
- [Formula 2](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated
- [Formula 4](#): For how the average indexed annual earnings are calculated when the guaranteed minimum wage applies

Additional reference tables and example of calculation:

- [Table 1](#): Fictitious salary amount of assimilated periods for pension calculation
- [Table 2](#): Number of "computational years"
- [Table 3](#) and [Table 11](#): Annual salary cap (1992-2023)
- [Table 4](#): Salary cap for different types of contribution periods (as of 2021)
- [Table 5](#): Revaluation factors (effective December 1, 2022)
- [Table 6](#) and [Table 14](#): Amount of minimum pension (1992-2024)
- [Table 11](#): Amount of guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2023)
- [Table 12](#): Maximum amount of pension calculated with the guaranteed minimum wage (1997-2024)
- [Table 13](#): Pension bonus —see subsection *Adjustment Formula for Delayed Claiming* for more details
- [Box 4](#): Example of application of the guaranteed minimum wage

Adjustments for starting benefits before SRA (Early claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits reduced for starting benefits before SRA?** Answer: No

Adjustments for starting benefits after SRA (Delayed claiming or retirement)

- **Are benefits increased for starting benefits after SRA?** Answer: Yes, in 2022, the government reached an agreement on pension reform and pension bonus will be reintroduced. But the legislation implementing these policy decisions has not yet been published. Details of this reform will be included in the next version of this document.
- **If so, what is the latest claiming age where benefits are adjusted?** Answer: From 2006 - 2013, age 65. Since 2014, there is no benefit to delayed claiming.
- **Adjustment formula**
Effective January 1, 2015, pension bonus is abolished. Only those who meet the age and contribution requirements and start accruing pension bonus before 2015 are entitled to this benefit. Please see previous chapters for more information about pension bonus.

In 2022, the government reached an agreement on pension reform and pension bonus will be reintroduced. But the legislation implementing these policy decisions has not yet been published. Details of this reform will be included in the next version of this document.

Adjustments for starting benefits and continuing to work (Earnings Test)

- **Are benefits reduced or eliminated while working?** Answer: Yes

- **Adjustment formula**

If a worker is eligible for and starts receiving their own old-age benefits, then the Federal Pension Service reduces or suspends benefits if the earnings exceed a threshold level in the previous year. The reduction applies to all benefits paid based on a worker's earnings history, which means spousal benefits may also be reduced based on total household income. How much the own old-age benefit is reduced depends on the amount of earnings exceeding the threshold value:

- The excess is less than 100% over the threshold value (2.0 times that value): The pensioner is reduced by the percentage of the excess
- The excess is at least 100% over the threshold value (2.0 times that value): The pension is suspended for a year
—See [Table 7](#) for values of earning thresholds over time

The threshold values for the earnings test depend on various conditions:

- Age
- Years of contribution history
- Pension scheme based on professions, i.e., employee, civil servant, or self-employed
- Entitlement to family allowance, e.g., whether they have dependent children or not
- Year when they receive income
- Source of income
- Year when they start claiming old-age benefit

Exceptions apply if the worker satisfies one of the following conditions:

- They reach the statutory retirement age, i.e., age 65. Exemption starts to apply on January 1 of that year
- They have a contribution history of at least the length of “computational years”, i.e., 45 years
- They receive a transitional benefit, i.e., a temporary survivor's benefit

See [Formula 3](#) for computational details based on individual circumstances. Additionally, a summary of earning thresholds in 2022 is available in [Table 15](#). [Table 8](#) summarizes the maximum amount of excess over time. [Box 3](#) provides an example of how the earnings test is applied in the case of a person only entitled to their own benefit.

If a beneficiary is entitled and continues working during claiming, then reductions to spousal benefits are applied, which takes into account both the beneficiary's and the spouse's income. See policy document *Belgium: Old-Age Spousal Benefits Plan Details* for additional information on eligibility for spousal benefits and computational details.

- **If benefits are reduced while working, does it effect future benefits?** Answer: No

Tables and Formulas

Box 1: Examples of Assimilated Periods

Assimilated periods consist of two major components:

- Periods of inactivity, including —
 - Unemployment
 - Part-time work
 - Military service
 - Time credit and career break
 - Sick leave due to accident at work or occupational disease
 - Maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, foster parent leave
 - Vacation
 - Strike
 - Continued insurance
 - Work redistribution
 - Palliative care leave and medical assistance leave
 - Parental leave
- Time credit and career break for a maximum of 12 months, exceptions apply if —
 - Up to 60 months if the insured reduces working time by 20%
 - Up to 24 months if the insured reduces working time by 50% and that they receive child benefits

In addition to these assimilated periods, certain periods of inactivity are taken into account for pension calculation if the insured pays voluntary contributions:

- Study period
- Time credit or career break periods over maximum duration
- Periods when the employer did not pay contributions

Table 1: Assimilated Periods and Fictitious Salary for Pension Calculation (1992-present)

Type of Assimilated Periods	From 2017	2016-2012	2011-1992
Involuntary unemployment			
– 1st period	Normal	Normal	Normal
– 2nd period	Minimum	Normal	Normal
– 3rd period	Minimum	Minimum	Normal
Unemployment scheme with company supplement (RCC)	Minimum	After age 59: Normal Before age 59: Minimum	Normal
Pseudo-prepension	Minimum	After age 59: Normal Before age 59: Minimum	Normal
Part-time work with maintenance of rights			
- with income guarantee allowance	Normal	Normal	Normal
- without income guarantee allowance	Minimum	Minimum	Minimum
Time credit and career break	Normal or minimum	Normal or minimum	Normal or minimum
Other cases:	Normal	Normal	Normal
– Sickness, invalidity or disability			
– Accident at work or occupational disease			
– Maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, foster parent leave, parental leave			
– Annual vacation			
– Strike			
– Continued insurance			
– Reduction of benefits due to redistribution of work			
– Palliative care leave and medical assistance leave			
– Military service			

Source: [Federal Pension Service \(2023\)](#)**Note:**

1. The notional salary for an assimilated period is based on the total salary of career year preceding the assimilated period. If not applicable, the notional salary is based on the actual salary of the period, the actual salary following the period, or the fixed salary rate as of 1967.
2. Minimum notional salary is the applicable annual minimum salary cap, which is the same amount as the guaranteed minimum wage —see [Table 11](#) for values over time.

Formula 1: Own Old-Age Benefit (1992-present)

$$B_{OA,i,t,t_c} = \frac{1}{12} \times \left\{ PIA_{i,t} + Bonus_{i,t} \right\}$$

- $B_{OA,i,t}$ = Individual i 's monthly own old-age pension benefit at time t if claiming at time $t_c \leq t$
- $PIA_{i,t}$ = Individual i 's primary insurance amount at time t (annual value), which is the best of:

$$\begin{cases} 0.6 \times AIAE_{i,t} & \text{Standard formulation} \\ CF_{i,t} \times MinPen_{i,t} & \text{Minimum pension} \\ \min \{ 0.6 \times AIAE_{i,t}^{MinWage}, CF_{i,t} \times MAX_{i,t} \} & \text{Guaranteed minimum wage} \end{cases}$$

where $AIAE_{i,t}$ is the individual i 's average indexed annual earnings at time t , based on their best “computational years” of earning (e.g., 45 years for own old-age benefits).

An individual is eligible for a minimum pension if they satisfy certain contribution requirements —see policy document *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*. Effective January 1, 1997, for those not qualifying for the minimum pension, their average indexed annual earnings may be computed using a guaranteed minimum wage in each period ($AIAE_{i,t}^{MinWage}$). If the insured benefits from the guaranteed minimum wage for pension calculation, their primary insurance amount must not exceed a maximum amount, $MAX_{i,t}$, multiplied by their career fraction, $CF_{i,t}$.

- $AIAE_{i,t}$: [Formula 2](#)
- $AIAE_{i,t}^{MinWage}$: [Formula 4](#)
- $CF_{i,t}$ = Individual i 's career fraction, i.e., contribution years as a full-time employee compared to the best “computational years” of earning (e.g., 45 years for own old-age benefits, effective January 1, 2009 —see [Table 2](#) for historical values):

$$CF_{i,t} = \begin{cases} FTE_{i,t} \div 45 & , \text{ if } FTE_{i,t} \geq 30 \\ ED_{i,t} \div (45 \times 312) & , \text{ if } FTE_{i,t} < 30 \end{cases}$$

- * $FTE_{i,t}$ = Individual i 's contribution years as a full-time employee
- * $ED_{i,t}$ = Individual i 's total contribution days as an employee, including full-time and part-time periods where part-time employment days are converted to full-time

- $MinPen_{i,t}$ = The minimum pension amount at time t —see [Table 6](#) for values applicable to employees satisfying full-time contribution requirements from 1992-2024, and [Table 14](#) for values applicable to employees satisfying part-time contribution requirements from 2017-2024
- $MAX_{i,t}$ = The maximum amount of pension calculated with the guaranteed minimum wage, see [Table 12](#) for values from 1997-2024

- $Bonus_{i,t}$ = The pension bonus for individual i at time t , only available for people who have met the eligibility requirements by December 1, 2014 —see section *Adjustments for starting benefit after SRA (delayed claiming)* for more details. Pension bonus is accumulated on a daily basis, up to 312 days per year, and the amount of pension bonus depends on various conditions —see [Table 13](#) for details

Source: Abschnitt 2 of [Moniteur Belge, 1990, as amended](#), [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Note: The policy details associated with minimum pension are covered in greater details in the separate policy document: *Belgium Public Old-Age Social Assistance Plan Details*.

Formula 2: Average Indexed Annual Earnings Calculation (1992-present)

$$AIAE_{i,t} = \frac{1}{45} \sum_{s=45} \left(\min \{ EARN_{i,s}, MAXEARN_{i,s} \} \times r_{i,s,t} \right)$$

- $AIAE_{i,t}$ = Individual i 's average indexed annual earnings at time t , based on their best “computational years” of earning (e.g., 45 years for own old-age benefits)
- $EARN_{i,s}$ = Individual i 's annual earning in year s , e.g., actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during [assimilated periods](#), and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subjected to an annual salary cap depending on types of contribution periods. If the insured has less than 45 years of contribution, their earnings for those unworked years are assigned zeros
- $r_{i,s,t}$ = The revaluation coefficient for year s at time t to adjust for inflation —see [Table 5](#) for values effective from December 1, 2022
- $MAXEARN_{i,s}$ = The annual wage ceiling at time t —see [Table 3](#), [Table 4](#), and [Table 11](#) for values over time

Source: Abschnitt 2 of [Moniteur Belge, 1990, as amended](#), [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Table 2: Computational Years for Own Old-Age Benefit Calculation (1992-present)

Policy Period	Men	Women
From Jan 1, 2009	45	45
Jan 1, 2006 - Dec 31, 2008	45	44
Jan 1, 2003 - Dec 31, 2005	45	43
Jan 1, 2000 - Dec 31, 2002	45	42
Jul 1, 1997 - Dec 31, 1999	45	41
Before Jul 1, 1997	45	40

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Table 3: Annual Salary Cap for Pension Calculation (1992-2023)

Year	Normal Salary Cap	Low Salary Cap
2023	73,225.86 € (estimated)	67,371.57 € (estimated)
2022	71,519.98	65,808.31
2021	63,944.74 (if pension starts in 2022)	58,833.17 (if pension starts in 2022)
2021	61,232.16 (if pension starts in 2021)	57,465.49 (if pension starts in 2021)
2020	60,026.75	56,334.23
2019	58,446.94	55,784.07
2018	57,602.62	54,978.21
2017	55,657.47	54,024.76
2016	54,648.70	53,045.58
2015	53,528.57	51,958.31
2014	52,972.54	51,418.58
2013	52,760.95	51,213.21
2012	51,092.44	50,585.52
2011	49,773.66	49,279.82
2010	47,960.29	47,816.83
2009	47,171.84	47,030.73
2008	46,895.18	46,754.91
2007	44,994.88	44,860.29
2006	44,081.27	-
2005	43,314.93	-
2004	41,564.11	-
2003	40,898.30	-
2002	39,367.70	-
2001	38,678.50	-
2000	36,835.37	-
1999	36,155.20	-
1998	34,808.09	-
1997	34,371.26	-
1996	33,923.29	-
1995	33,371.67	-
1994	32,859.53	-
1993	32,580.35	-
1992	31,707.02	-

Source: Federal Pension Service (2023)**Table 4: Annual Salary Cap for Different Types of Contribution Periods for Year 2022**

Category	Salary Type	Salary Cap	Amount
Period of Employment	Real wage	Normal	71,519.98 €
Normal Cap for Assimilated Contribution Period (e.g., sickness leave)	Normal notional salary	Normal	71,519.98
Low Cap for Assimilated Contribution Period (e.g., unemployment period after age 58)	Low notional salary	Low	65,808.31
Minimum Cap for Assimilated Contribution Period (e.g., the 3rd period of unemployment from 2012)	Minimum notional salary	Minimum	30,269.27

Source: Federal Pension Service (2023)**Note:**

1. The notional salary for an assimilated period is based on the total salary of career year preceding the assimilated period. If not applicable, the notional salary is based on the actual salary of the period, the actual salary following the period, or the fixed salary rate as of 1967.
2. Minimum notional salary is the same as the guaranteed minimum wage for pension calculation —see [Table 11](#) for values over time.

Table 5: Revaluation Coefficient for Pensions (effective from December 1, 2022)

Year of Earnings	Revaluation Coefficient	Year of Earnings	Revaluation Coefficient
2023	1.025218	1995	1.720849
2022	1.025218	1994	1.747648
2021	1.120072	1993	1.762611
2020	1.142564	1992	1.811186
2019	1.153832	1991	1.855185
2018	1.170745	1990	1.914756
2017	1.191407	1989	1.980781
2016	1.213399	1988	2.042336
2015	1.238790	1987	2.066048
2014	1.226758	1986	2.056982
2013	1.231677	1985	2.083642
2012	1.246961	1984	2.142236
2011	1.279999	1983	2.233536
2010	1.319162	1982	2.404662
2009	1.341211	1981	2.614519
2008	1.349123	1980	2.813912
2007	1.406102	1979	3.000997
2006	1.430951	1978	3.135285
2005	1.456268	1977	3.275345
2004	1.487854	1976	3.508073
2003	1.512076	1975	3.829547
2002	1.534048	1974	4.318403
2001	1.561393	1973	4.866044
2000	1.604228	1972	5.204465
1999	1.634393	1971	5.488178
1998	1.649817	1970	5.726649
1997	1.670813	1969	5.949929
1996	1.692842	1968	6.172873

Source: [Federal Pension Service \(2023\)](#)**Note:** Earnings from each year are multiplied by the revaluation coefficient for that year while calculating pension amount.

Table 6: Minimum Pension for Employees Satisfying Full-Time Contribution Requirements(1992-2024)

Time Period	Amount for Own Old-Age Benefit	Amount for Survivor's Benefit
2024	12,037.88 €/year	11,877.00 €/year
2023	11,727.37	11,570.64
2022	11,424.63	11,271.96
Jul 1, 2021 - Dec, 31, 2021	11,129.70	10,980.96
Jan 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021	10,911.47	10,765.65
Jul 1, 2019 - Dec 31, 2020	10,629.78	10,487.73
Sep 1, 2017 - Jun 30, 2019	10,524.53	10,383.89
Sep 1, 2015 - Aug 31, 2017	10,420.33	10,256.50
Sep 1, 2013 - Aug 31, 2015	10,216.01	10,055.39
Jun 1, 2009 - Aug 31, 2013	9,892.05	9,736.52
Jul 1, 2008 - May 31, 2009	9,603.93	9,452.93
Jan 1, 2007 - Jun 30, 2008	9,415.62	9,267.58
Apr 1, 2003 - Dec 31, 2006	9,231.00	9,085.86
Jan 1, 2002 - Mar 31, 2003	8,893.80	8,748.66
Jul 1, 2000 - Dec 31, 2001	194,179 F/year	191,010 F/year
Feb 10, 1981 - Jun 30, 2000	171,765	168,881

Source: Moniteur Belge, 1980, as amended

Note: The amounts were linked to the pivot index of 132.13 (as of 1981) and varied in accordance with the provisions of the [Law of August 2, 1971, as amended](#). Effective January 1, 2002, they are linked to the pivot index of 103.14 (base 1996 = 100).

Box 2: Smoothed Health Index

The smoothed health index is derived from the health index and is used as a basis for the indexation of old-age pension, other social security allowances and salaries for civil servants. The health index has been calculated since January 1994 and is determined by removing a number of products from the consumer price index product basket, including alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, and motor fuels (except for liquefied petroleum gas, LPG).

Public wages and social benefits are increased by 2% as soon as the smoothed index reaches a given value, called the pivot index. See formula below for how the smoothed health index is calculated:

$$\text{Smoothed Health Index}_t = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=t-3}^t \text{Health Index}_i & , \text{January 1, 1994 - March 31, 2015} \\ 100.66 & , \text{April 1, 2015 - April 30, 2016} \\ \frac{1}{4} \sum_{i=t-3}^t \text{Health Index}_i \times 98\% & , \text{From May 1, 2016} \end{cases}$$

where $\text{Smoothed Health Index}_t$ is the smoothed health index at time t and Health Index_i is the health index at time i . Health index has been published monthly since 1994 and is available on the website of the Belgian Statistical Office.

As of March 9, 2023, the health index was 174.31 (base 1996 = 100) in February 2023, 175.87 (base 1996 = 100) in January 2023, 175.72 (base 1996 = 100) in December 2022, and 175.10 (base 1996 = 100) in November 2022. The smoothed health index is therefore:

$$\frac{1}{4} \times (175.10 + 175.72 + 175.87 + 174.31) \times 98\% = 171.745$$

If the smoothed health index exceeds the pivot index linked to the social benefits and salaries, they will be subject to an adjustment. More information can be found on the website of the Wages Service of the Federal Pension Service Finances at <https://persopoint.be/fr/services/administration-des-salaires/principes-generaux-de-l-index>.

Source: Moniteur Belge, 1994, as amended, Belgian Statistical Office (2023)

Table 7: Earnings Test for Own Old-Age Benefit (1992-2023)

Time Period	Maximum Income (Employee)	Maximum Income (Employee with Entitlement to Family Allowance)
2023	9,236 €	13,854 €
2022	8,634	12,951
2021	8,496	12,744
2020	8,393	12,590
2019	8,172	12,258
2018	8,022	12,033
2017	7,856	11,784
2016	7,797	11,582.02
2015	7,793	11,578.02
2014	7,718	11,503.02
2013	7,570	11,355.02
2002-2012	7,421.57	11,132.37
1993-2001	276,586 F (= 6856.39 €)	414,879 F (= 10284.58 €)
1992	163,560 F (= 4054.55 €)	245,340 F (= 6081.82 €)

Source: Article 64 of [Moniteur Belge, 1967, as amended](#)

Note:

1. These maximum income rates apply to employees, or employees with entitlement to family allowance (e.g., with dependent children).
2. The conversion rate between euros and francs is: 1€ = 40.3399F.
3. The rates applicable to employee are 1.25 times the rates for those with mixed income.

Formula 3: Earnings Test for Own Old-Age Benefit

$$B_{OA(work),i,t,t_c} = \begin{cases} B_{OA,i,t,t_c} & , \text{ if } EARN_{i,t-1} \leq T_{t-1} \\ B_{OA,i,t,t_c} \times (1 - RED_{i,t}^{Work}) & , \text{ if } T_{t-1} < EARN_{i,t-1} < (1 + N_t) \times T_{t-1} \\ 0 & , \text{ if } (1 + N_t) \times T_{t-1} \leq EARN_{i,t-1} \end{cases}$$

- $B_{OA(work),i,t,t_c}$ = Individual i 's monthly own old-age benefit at time t if claiming at time $t_c \leq t - 1$ and continuing to work. Additionally, in 1992, this amount is limited to two-thirds of B_{OA,i,t,t_c} .
- B_{OA,i,t,t_c} = Individual i 's monthly own old-age benefit at time t if claiming at time $t_c \leq t - 1$ and not working —see [Formula 1](#) for computational details
- $RED_{i,t}^{Work}$ = Individual i 's average monthly reduction percentage in old-age benefits while working at time t :

$$RED_{i,t}^{Work} = (EARN_{i,t-1} - T_{t-1}) \div T_{t-1}$$

- $EARN_{i,t-1}$ = Individual i 's annual earnings in year $t - 1$. Income from different professional activities are added. All sources of professional income are taken into account except for family allowances and income from scientific or artistic creations. 80% of the gross income as an employee or civil servant and 100% of the net income as a self-employed are considered.
- T_{t-1} = Annual earnings threshold —see [Table 15](#) for different threshold values in 2023 and [Table 7](#) for historical values
- N_t = The maximum amount of excess relative to the annual earnings threshold at time t before suspension of own old-age benefit —see [Table 8](#) for values over time

Source: Abschnitt 2 of [Moniteur Belge, 1990, as amended](#), [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Table 8: Maximum Amount of Excess for Earnings Test (1992-present)

Time Period	Maximum
From 2015	100%
2013-2014	25%
1993-2013	15%
1992	100%

Source: Article 64 of [Moniteur Belge, 1967](#), as amended

Box 3: Example of Earnings Test for Own Old-Age Benefit

Klein is under age 65 and does not have 45 years of contribution history. He is claiming old-age benefit while working both as an employee and a self-employed. He has a dependent child. The applicable annual earnings threshold is 10,360 € (value of 2022).

His income in 2022 includes:

- 4,000 € of gross income as an employee
- 10,000 € of net income as a self-employed

The average monthly reduction percentage in old-age benefits for Klein is:

$$RED_{i,t}^{Work} = (EARN_{i,t-1} - T_{t-1}) \div T_{t-1} = (0.8 \times 4000 + 10000 - 10360) \div 10360 = 27.41\%$$

Therefore, Klein's pension benefit will be reduced by 27.41% in 2023. The pension benefit Klein receives would be 72.59% of the original pension benefit amount.

Table 9: Eligibility Track 1's Retirement Age for Men and Women

Birth Month and Year	Retirement Age (Men)	Retirement Age (Women)
From February 1964	67	67
February 1960 - January 1964	66	66
January 1945 - January 1960	65	65
January 1943 - December 1944	65	64
January 1941 - December 1942	65	63
January 1939 - December 1940	65	62
July 1937 - December 1938	65	61
Before July 1937	65	60

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 1997](#), as amended

Note: [Law of August 10, 2015](#), effective January 1, 2016, increased the statutory retirement age for men and women from 65 to 66 on January 1, 2025, and then to 67 on January 1, 2030 based on birth dates.

Table 10: Contribution Requirement for Eligibility Track 2: Long-term Insured Persons (1992-present)

Year	Contribution Years
From 2019	44
2018	43
2017	43
2016	42
2015	41
2014	40
2013	40
2005-2012	35
2004	34
2003	32
2002	30
2001	28
2000	26
1999	24
1998	22
1997	20
1992-1996	20 Years for Men or 10 Years for Women

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Formula 4: Average Indexed Annual Earnings Calculation with Guaranteed Minimum Wage (1997-present)

$$AIAE_{i,t}^{MinWage} = \frac{1}{45} \sum_{s=45} \left(\max \left\{ \min \{ EARN_{i,s}, MAXEARN_{i,s} \} \times r_{i,s,t}, MinWage_{i,t} \right\} \right)$$

- $AIAE_{i,t}^{MinWage}$ = Individual i 's average indexed annual earnings at time t , based on their best “computational years” of earning (e.g., 45 years for own old-age benefits). Effective January 1, 1997, if the individual has at least 15 years of contribution as an employee (at least 104 days per year), annual earnings are increased to the guaranteed minimum wage for benefit calculation
- $EARN_{i,s}$ = Individual i 's annual earning in year s , e.g., actual wages earned during periods of employment, notional wages during assimilated periods, and flat-rate wages applicable for professional career years before 1955 for laborers or before 1958 for employees. Earnings are adjusted for inflation and subjected to an annual salary cap depending on types of contribution periods. If the insured has less than 45 years of contribution, their earnings for those unworked years are assigned zeros
- $r_{i,s,t}$ = The revaluation coefficient for year s at time t to adjust for inflation —see [Table 5](#) for details
- $MAXEARN_{i,s}$ = The annual wage ceiling at time t —see [Table 3](#), [Table 4](#), and [Table 11](#) for values over time
- $MinWage_{i,t}$ = The minimum wage at time t —see [Table 11](#) for values over time

Source: Abschnitt 2 of [Moniteur Belge, 1990, as amended](#), [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#), [Federal Pension Service \(2023\)](#)

Table 11: Guaranteed Minimum Wage (1997-2023)

Time Period	Amount of Minimum Wage
2022-2023	18,450.12 €/year
2020 - 2021	18,088.35
2019	17,662.47
2015 - 2018	17,367.23
Sep 1, 2013 - Dec 31, 2014	17,026.70
Sep 1, 2009 - Aug 31, 2013	16,486.75
Jan 1, 2002 - Aug 30, 2009	13,151.04
1997 - 2001	509,916 F/year

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Note: The amounts were linked to the pivot index of 405.55 (base 1966 = 100) and varied in accordance with the provisions of the [Law of August 2, 1971, as amended](#). Effective January 1, 2002, they are linked to the pivot index of 103.14 (base 1996 = 100).

Table 12: Maximum Amount of Pension Calculated with Guaranteed Minimum Wage (1992-2024)

Time Period	Amount of Minimum Pension
2024	12,895.40 €/year
2023	12,596.17
2022	12,302.96
2021	11,781.33
2020	11,507.45
2019	11,236.52
2015 - 2018	11,048.69
2002 - 2014	10,832.05
1992-2001	420,000 F/year

Source: [Source: Moniteur Belge, 1997, as amended](#)

Note: The amount was linked to the pivot index of 405.55 (base 1966 = 100) and varied in accordance with the provisions of the [Law of August 2, 1971, as amended](#). Effective January 1, 2002, they are linked to the pivot index of 103.14 (base 1996 = 100).

Box 4: Example of Application of the Guaranteed Minimum Wage

A person worked 300 days in 1977 with a salary of 8,000 €. The revaluation coefficient for 1977 is 3.148004 in 2022. First, we adjust the amount of minimum wage, 18,450.12 € in 2022, for cost of living by multiplying the published figure with the current index (169.23 from December 1, 2022) and dividing it by the linked pivot index (103.14):

$$18,450.12 \times 169.23 \div 103.14 = 30,269.27\text{€}$$

We convert the guaranteed minimum wage to the level in 1977 by dividing the minimum wage by the revaluation coefficient:

$$30,269.27 \div 3.148004 = 9,615.39\text{€}$$

Second, we adapt the guaranteed minimum wage according to days of employment in 1977 and compare it to the actual wage earned in 1977:

$$9,615.39 \times \frac{300}{312} = 9,245.57\text{€} > 8,000\text{€}$$

Since the actual wage is lower than the minimum wage, their wage will be replaced by this minimum amount for pension calculation.

Source: [Federal Pension Service \(2023\)](#)

Note: The euro banknotes and coins were introduced in Belgium on January 1, 2002, in place of the Belgian franc. The conversion rate between euros and franc is: 1€ = 40.3399F.

Table 13: Pension Bonus for Employment after Retirement Age (value as of 2023)

Year	Bonus Amount	Duration
2014	1.8651	First 12 months after retirement age
	2.1138	From the 13th to the 24th month
	2.3625	From the 25th to the 36th month
	2.6111	From the 37th to the 48th month
	2.8598	From the 49th to the 60th month
	3.1085	From the 61st month
2006-2013	2.8564 €/day	-

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 2005, as amended](#), [Moniteur Belge, 2013, as amended](#), [Federal Pension Services \(2023\)](#)

Box 5: Summary of Age and Contribution Requirements for [Eligibility Track 2: Long-term Insured Persons \(2013-present\)](#)

Effective January 1, 2013, an individual may qualify for full benefits at an older age with fewer contribution years and the combination of age and contribution years for full benefit eligibility are changing every year:

- 2013:
 - Age 60 and 40 contribution years
 - Age 60.5 and 38 contribution years
- 2014:
 - Age 60 and 40 contribution years
 - Age 61 and 39 contribution years
- 2015:
 - Age 60 and 41 contribution years
 - Age 61.5 and 40 contribution years
- 2016:
 - Age 60 and 42 contribution years
 - Age 61 and 41 contribution years
 - Age 62 and 40 contribution years
- 2017:
 - Age 60 and 43 contribution years
 - Age 61 and 42 contribution years
 - Age 62.5 and 41 contribution years
- 2018:
 - Age 60 and 43 contribution years
 - Age 61 and 42 contribution years
 - Age 63 and 41 contribution years
- From 2019:
 - Age 60 and 44 contribution years
 - Age 61 and 43 contribution years
 - Age 63 and 42 contribution years

Table 14: Minimum Pension for Employees Satisfying Part-Time Contribution Requirements (2017-2024)

Time Period	Amount for Own Old-Age Benefit	Amount for Survivor's Benefit
2024	12,290.68 €/year	12,126.42 €/year
2023	11,973.64	11,813.62
2022	11,664.55	11,508.67
Jul 1, 2021 - Dec, 31, 2021	11,363.42	11,211.56
Jan 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021	11,140.61	10,911.73
Jul 1, 2019 - Dec 31, 2020	10,853.01	10,707.96
Sep 1, 2017 - Jun 30, 2019	10,597.48	10,455.85

Source: [Moniteur Belge, 1981, as amended](#)

Note: The amounts are linked to the pivot index of 103.14 (base 1996 = 100) and vary in accordance with the provisions of the [Law of August 2, 1971, as amended](#).

Table 15: Earnings Test for Own Old-Age Benefit (value as of 2023)

Conditions	Entitlement to Family Allowance (e.g., with dependent children)	Maximum Income (Employee)	Maximum Income (Mixed Income Employee and Self-employed)
Age 65+	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited
	No	Unlimited	Unlimited
45+ Years of Contribution	Yes	Unlimited	Unlimited
	No	Unlimited	Unlimited
Otherwise	Yes	13,854 €	11,083 €
	No	9,236 €	7,389 €

Source: [Federal Pension Service \(2023\)](#), Article 64 of [Moniteur Belge, 1967, as amended](#)

Note: The rates applicable to employee are 1.25 times the rates for those with mixed career.

Sources

This section records key sources consulted when we collected the institutional details reported in this document. Archived versions of these sources are available at the Gateway Policy Explorer website (<http://g2aging.org/policy-explorer>).

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Glossary of terms

This section summarizes key definitions from the main text. To facilitate switching back and forth, this document is designed with hyperlinks. Most PDF readers have shortcuts that permit a reader to return to the previous location after selecting a hyperlink. In Adobe Acrobat on a PC: "Alt" + "←"; In Adobe Acrobat on a MAC: "command" + "←"; In Preview on a MAC: "command" + "[".

Annuitable System: A pension system that provides a periodic payment for life after the benefit begins.

Assimilated Periods: Periods of inactivity that, without necessarily paying contributions, are equated to periods of employment such as periods of unemployment, sickness leave, maternity leave, and military service.

Career Fraction: Contribution years as a full-time employee compared to the best "computational years" of earning (e.g., 45 years for own old-age benefits in 2023)

Cash Balance System: A pension system that provides each individual an account that is drawn down over time.

Claimable benefit: A benefit where the beneficiary must actively file a claim for benefits with the government's administering authority.

Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA): Adjustments after an individual begins receiving benefits that increase benefit payments, typically in line with consumer prices or average earnings.

Defined Benefit system (DB): An old-age benefit system where a worker's benefits paid at retirement are based on a defined formula typically consisting of contribution years, a measure of final average earnings and a multiplier (sometimes known as an accrual factor).

Earliest Eligibility: Earliest age and/or years of contributions required to be eligible to start receipt of a particular type of benefit. Earliest eligibility is the same as statutory eligibility in countries where there is no benefit penalty for claiming before the statutory retirement age.

Eligibility Track 1: Aged: An eligibility track for regular old-age benefits that is based primarily on age with a minimal number of required contribution years, i.e., age 65 and at least 1 day of contribution for employees in 2023.

Eligibility Track 2: Long-Term Insured Persons: An alternative eligibility track for unreduced regular old-age benefits that is based primarily on age with a minimal number of required contribution years, which allows people to retire before statutory retirement age.

European Economic Community (EEC): A regional organization created by the Treaty of Rome of 1957, aiming to foster economic integration among its member states, which was later renamed the European Community (EC).

Full Career: Number of years considered for pension calculation, i.e., 45 years in 2023.

Latest claiming age: Latest age where a benefit may be claimed such that benefit payments are increased as an incentive for delaying the start of benefits past the statutory retirement age. Latest claiming age is the same as statutory retirement age in countries where there is no benefit to delayed claiming. Not applicable for non-claimable benefits.

Lump Sum Benefit: A pension system that provides an individual with a one-time or limited number of payments. Lump sum benefits are distinct from annuitable or cash balance benefits because they do not continue past a specified time frame. Lump sum benefits use varies by country, but they are sometimes used as death benefits, incentives to delay claiming, or payments to individuals with an insufficient contribution history to be eligible for annuitable benefits.

National Income Measure: In some pension systems, the benefit is dependent on a national income measure, such as average wages. We indicate a pension system depends on the national income measure if the benefit paid is determined by a national income measure (as opposed to an individual's earnings history). For example, the benefit level for the United Kingdom Basic State Pension depends on a level set by the government and does not depend on an individual's earnings. This distinction does not include systems that adjust annual benefits based on a national income measure or index past earnings using a national income measure.

Progressive Benefit: A benefit is progressive if people with lower earnings have a greater replacement rate for their contributions.

Qualified benefit: A benefit is qualified if an individual must continue to meet certain standards, such as a means test, to continue receipt of benefits.

Statutory Retirement Age (SRA): The age at which individuals are eligible to receive their full own old-age benefit. In the United States, this is known as the normal retirement age. In the United Kingdom, this is known as the state pension age.

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- 1.0 (August 2023): First version

Additional resources

The following resources provide additional details for the interested reader:

Service fédéral des Pensions [Federal Pensions Service].

Available at: <https://www.sfpd.fgov.be/fr>

Features: Provides summary and details of current version of Belgium pension system.

Other papers of interest include:

- OECD (2019). Pensions at a Glance: Country Profiles- Belgium.
Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/els/public-pensions/PAG2019-country-profile-Belgium.pdf>

- Anne-Lore Fraikin, Alain Joustien, and Mathieu Lefebvre (2018). Social Security Incentives in Belgium: An Analysis of Four Decades of Change.
Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w25375>