

BELGIUM

MARKET PROFILE

EMEE Music Market Study
2025

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1. General Context

[Belgium](#) is situated in the west of Europe, bordering Germany, the Netherlands, France and Luxembourg. Despite being a small country with a surface area of 30 688 km², Belgium's location has made it the economic and urban centre of Europe. There are three regions in Belgium - Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital region. Belgium is also organised into three cultural communities with a significant degree of autonomy - the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities.

Flanders is situated in the northern part of Belgium, sharing a border with France, the Netherlands and Germany. It has 5 provinces, each with its own capital:

- The province of Antwerp - the city of Antwerp
- The province of Limburg - the city of Hasselt
- The province of East Flanders - the city of Gent
- The province of West Flanders - the city of Bruges
- The province of Flemish Brabant - the city of Leuven

Wallonia is the southern part of Belgium, bordering France, Luxembourg, and Germany. It has 5 provinces, each with its own capital:

- The province of Hainaut - the city of Mons
- The province of Liège - the city of Liège
- The province of Luxembourg - the city of Arlon
- The province of Namur - the city of Namur
- The province of Walloon Brabant - the city of Wavre

The Brussels-Capital region is located at the centre of the country and is entirely surrounded by Flanders. It consists of 19 municipalities, the City of Brussels being the most prominent one. Unlike Flanders and Wallonia, Brussels has no provinces. It is not only the capital of Belgium, but also the administrative heart of the European Union and home to institutions like NATO.

1.1. Society, economy and communication

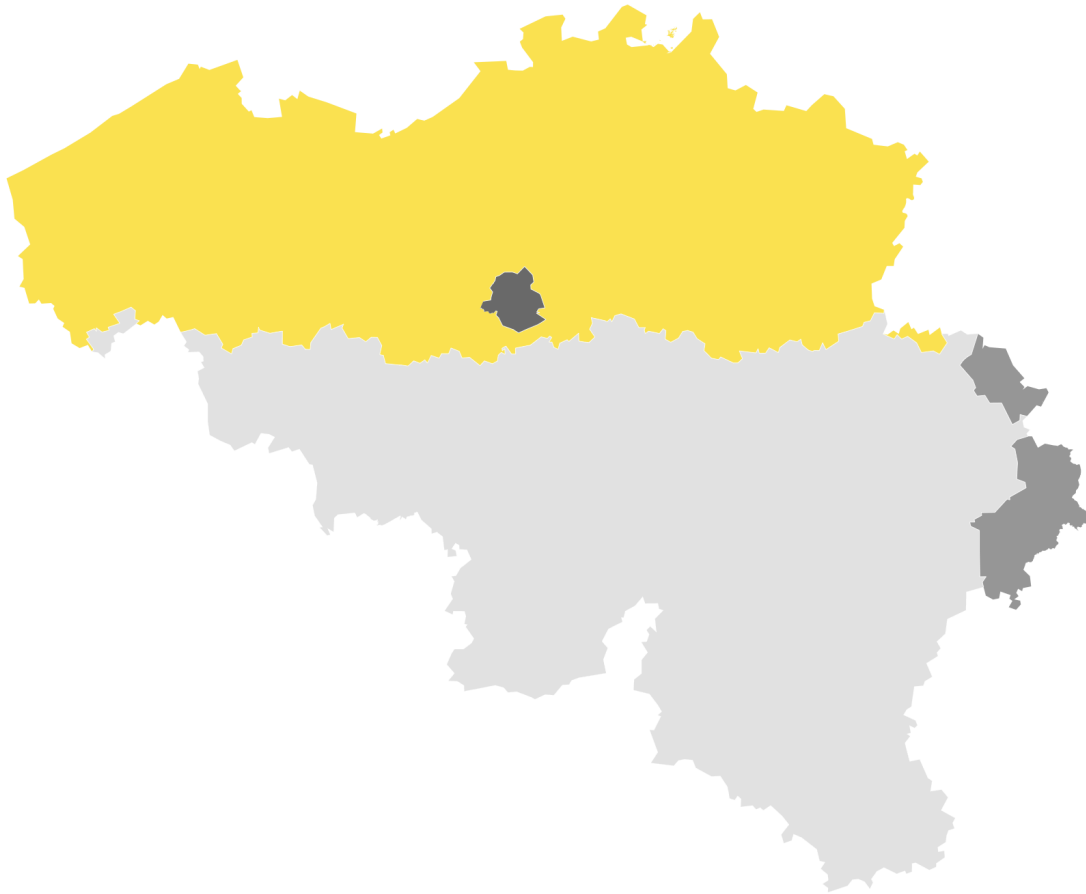
1.1.1. Society

The population of Belgium, as of January 2024, was 11,7 mln, with 6,7 mln in Flanders, 3,6 mln in Wallonia, and 1,83 mln in Brussels. The population size is fairly stable, growing slightly more than 0,5% annually over the past 10 years. The population density in Flanders is more than twice that of Wallonia (497 vs 218 inhabitants/km²). Brussels is the capital and the biggest city in Belgium with 1,83 mln inhabitants. See more information on [STATBEL](#) (population).

The average age of the entire population in Belgium is 42 years, slightly more than in 2011 (just under 41 years). The average age in the Brussels-Capital Region remains stable at 37,7 years, making it the youngest region. See more information on [STATBEL](#) (age).

De 4 taalgebieden

■ Duitse taalgebied ■ Franse taalgebied ■ Nederlandse taalgebied ■ Tweektalige gebied Brussel-Hoofdstad



Gecreëerd met [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 1. Map of Belgium. Source: [Vlaanderen.be](#) (2024). Language areas in Belgium.”

Official languages and speaking English in Belgium

Belgium has three official languages:

- Dutch: in Flanders and spoken by 15% of Brussels' inhabitants.
- French: in Wallonia and Brussels.
- German: in the Eastern Cantons.

The Brussels Region is an officially bilingual enclave within the Flemish Region.

English is widely spoken in Belgium, both by Belgians and internationals. Some surveys show that 55% of the Belgian population speak conversational English, while 33% of Brussels residents speak it fluently.

There are lots of multinational companies in Belgium that hire English-speaking staff, especially in the capital city. However, the employment market is competitive, and most companies prefer to hire multilingual candidates. Speaking a foreign language besides English can help, but being able to speak French or Dutch increases the chance of finding work in Brussels and elsewhere in Belgium ([Bruxelles, J'Arrive, 2025](#)).

1.1.2. Economy

Belgium is a founding member of the European Union and one of the first countries to adopt the euro on 1 January 1999. The Belgian currency is the EURO (€), just as in 19 other European countries. It's possible to pay cash in most places, as well as with all major debit or credit cards (Visa, American Express, Diners Club and Eurocard). Cash can be withdrawn in banks or at a widespread network of ATMs. Foreign exchange traffic is not regulated ([VISITFLANDERS](#)).

The GDP of Belgium in 2024 was *ca* €665 bln and is expected to grow less than 1% in 2024 ([Trading Economics](#) based on World Bank). The estimated GDP per capita in 2024 is highest in the Brussels-Capital Region (€76 300), mainly due to the establishment of important administrative and business headquarters that give an additional boost to the GDP. The Flemish Region reaches €47 300 and the Walloon Region €33 400 per capita. In Belgium, many Flemish and Walloon residents commute to the Brussels-Capital Region. By doing so, they contribute to the GDP of the Brussels region. In contrast to many other countries, commuting in Belgium is much more common between the distinctive regions. This is because the Brussels-Capital Region is relatively small compared to other capital regions ([Vlaanderen.be](#), 2024).

More information [here](#).

1.1.3. Digital & communication

The use of the Internet has continued to increase. In 2024, 96% of Belgians aged 16 to 74 used the Internet, compared to 89% in 2018 and 82% in 2013 ([Statbel](#), 2024).

The smartphone has become the main device for Internet access. 92% of Internet users use their smartphone or mobile phone. They are almost always in the hands of 16-24-year-olds (99%), but their use decreases with age, with only 76% of Internet users aged 65-74 using them. The other most commonly used devices are the laptop (69%) and the tablet (35%), which have supplanted the desktop, which is now only used by 32% of internet users ([Statista](#), 2024).

A total of 11,38 mln cellular mobile connections were active in Belgium in early 2024, with this figure equivalent to 97,3% of the total population. In 2023, 95% of the households in the Flemish Region had an internet connection at home, compared to 80% in 2012, but it has been stable over the last years. There were 11,15 mln internet users in Belgium in January 2024. Belgium's internet penetration rate stood at 95,3% of the total population at the start of 2024 ([Datareportal](#), 2024).

In January 2024, there were 9,17 mln social media users in Belgium. Sending private messages was the most common social media activity in Belgium ([Statista](#), 2024).

1.2. Geography and Getting Around

Belgium has good train connections. Rail maps for the whole country can be found here: [Rail Services in Belgium 2024 – lars' transport maps](#). Belgium is located in the Central European Time Zone (CET). Most shops are open from Monday to Saturday, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, although those hours may vary from store to store. Most shops are closed on Sundays. [VisitFlanders – Good to know about Belgium](#). The electric plugs in Belgium are continental 2-pin round. In case an adaptor is needed, then type AC.220 volts should work.

1.2.1. Brussels

Brussels is the beating heart of Europe. It has countless flight and train connections. London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin are only a short distance away. Brussels is very simple to navigate and

easily accessible. If you want to travel around the capital, it's better to choose soft mobility and public transport. See more information: [Getting around | Visit Brussels](#)

Metro, tram and bus. Public transport in Brussels is operated by [STIB/MIVB](#).

[Collecto](#) is a collective Brussels taxi service available every day, including Sundays, between 23:00 and 6:00 in the morning. From 200 pick-up points at strategic STIB-MIVB stops, passengers are taken to the Brussels address of their choice, for a flat fare of just €6.

[Noctis](#) is the STIB's night bus service. On Friday and Saturday nights, 11 routes are provided. The Noctis buses all leave from Brussels-Central Station. Regular tickets or passes can be used at no extra cost.

For those planning to visit multiple cities in Belgium, SNCB/NMBS provides a transferable 10-trip pass known as [Multi](#). The standard version of this pass is priced at €102, with a reduced cost of €99 when purchased through the Belgian Railways app. Travellers under 26 years of age can opt for the "Multi Youth" pass, available for €62, or €60 on the app. This pass can also be used for group travel. Additionally, a 50% discount is offered on tickets during weekends and public holidays. It is advisable to check the Belgian Railways website for seasonal promotions.

1.2.2. Flanders

Flanders is the northern part of Belgium. It's mainly Dutch-speaking and fairly modest in size. To put things in perspective: it's about the size of the state of Connecticut in the US or the county of Yorkshire in the UK. Because of its compactness, Flanders is an easy place to travel to, both in and around. All of Flanders' cities are within reach of each other and easily accessible by public transport or car. Source and more info: [VisitFlanders – Travelling to, in and around Flanders](#)

By train, it often takes less than an hour to travel between two major cities in Flanders (see more info at the [Belgian Train](#) website). For more information about the public bus services, visit [De Lijn](#). When travelling through Brussels, you can rely on [STIB-MIVB](#) to take you around town by bus, tram and metro.

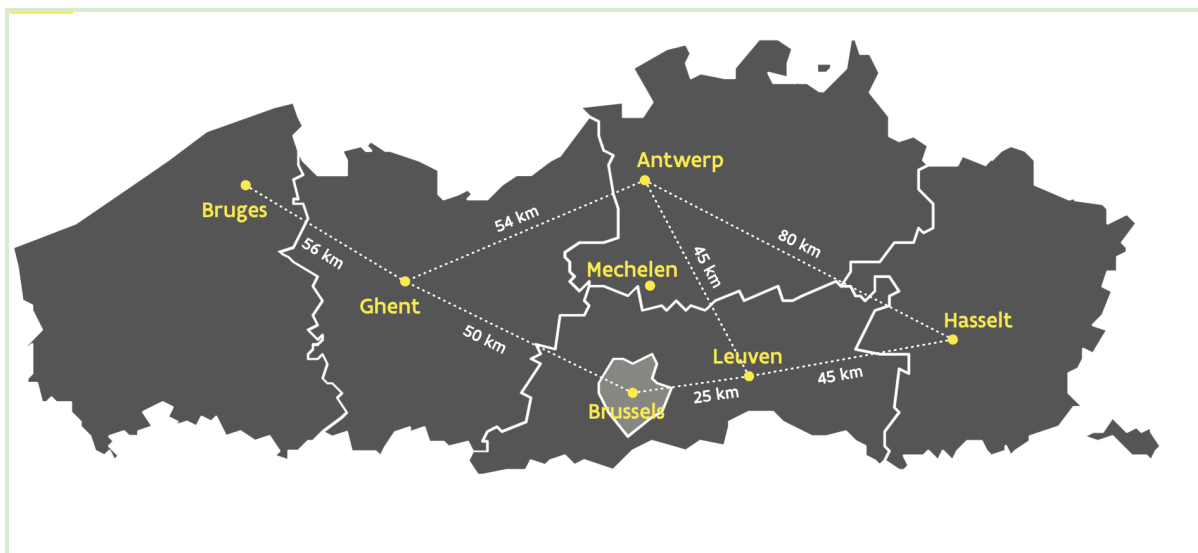


Figure 2. Map of Flanders. Source: [Visit Flanders](#).

Source: [Visit Flanders](#).

1.2.3. Wallonia

Wallonia is the southern part of Belgium. It is mainly French-speaking, with a small German-speaking area in the east. The region is larger and more rural than Flanders, with rolling hills, forests and charming towns. Travelling around Wallonia is straightforward thanks to a strong railway network linking major cities like Liège, Namur, Mons and Charleroi, as well as regional bus services run by TEC. There are various other ways to get around in Wallonia. For cyclists, Wallonia offers extensive routes, including scenic river paths and converted railway lines. With its mix of cities and countryside, Wallonia combines easy connections by train or car with opportunities for slower, more scenic travel.

Belgium has a dense and multimodal transport system that makes travelling across and into the country straightforward. Accessibility for travellers with reduced mobility is increasingly supported across all regions.

- **By air:** Belgium is well-connected internationally. Brussels Airport (Zaventem) is the main hub, with direct train and bus links to Brussels and other cities. Brussels South Charleroi Airport serves many low-cost airlines, while smaller airports in Antwerp, Ostend-Bruges and Liège cover short-haul and charter flights. All airports provide assistance services and facilities for passengers with reduced mobility.
- **By train (NMBS/SNCB):** The rail network connects all major cities and towns. Travellers with limited mobility can book assistance in advance, making train travel one of the easiest and most accessible ways to move between regions.
- **By bus, tram and metro:**
 - **In Flanders:** De Lijn runs buses and trams, with many vehicles adapted for wheelchair access.
 - **In Brussels:** STIB/MIVB operates buses, trams and metro, supported by lifts and assistance at stations.
 - **In Wallonia:** TEC provides regional bus services and is expanding accessible infrastructure.
- **By bike:** Belgium is a cycling country with extensive routes across all regions. Adapted bikes (handbikes, tandems, tricycles) can be rented in Flanders, while Wallonia promotes “bike-friendly” lodgings and rental systems like Blue-bike.
- **By car, taxi and adapted transport:** Car rental is widely available, and adapted taxis or minibuses operate in all regions. Parking for people with disabilities is recognised EU-wide and regulated locally.

Flying might be the main entry point to Belgium, but once inside the country, trains form the backbone of mobility, supported by regional buses, trams, metro and extensive cycling networks. Accessibility and sustainable travel options are continuously improving across all regions.

1.3. Artist status, copyright, tax and Legal

1.3.1. Artist status & business identity management

A **professional artist** is a recognised status in Belgium. An artist is someone who has a remunerated professional practice in one of the eight arts listed in the law: the audiovisual arts, the visual arts, music, literature, spectacle, theatre, choreography and comic strips. The law defines work in the arts as not only artistic activities in the strict sense of the word, but also the technical and supporting activities that are necessary for an artistic creation or performance ([RSVZ](#)).

An artist is expected to draw an important part of their income from artistic activities as well as investing an important share of their time in it. Belgian social security offers a number of schemes specifically for workers. Artists gain access to these favourable arrangements with the artwork certificate, awarded by the Works of Art Commission. The artwork certificate (KunstwerkAttest - KWA - Attestation du Travail des Arts - ATA) provides access to many social benefits that have been specifically developed for artists. Only artists can receive such a certificate ([Workinginthearts.be](#) and [Cultuurloket](#)). Besides artists, also people who perform artistic-technical or artistic-supporting work also have access to specific social benefits (e.g. lighting and sound technicians).

There is also an arrangement for **amateurs**. An amateur arts allowance (or AKV / IAA) allows amateur artists to provide an artistic performance for a limited fee. Amateur artists do not have to pay taxes on that compensation. And those hiring such an artist do not pay normal social contributions in this system for that artist's performance. More information [Oriëntatiepagina | Working in the arts](#).

Freelancers are increasingly common in the cultural sector. For example, currently, about a quarter of all journalists are freelancers. Freelancing in Belgium can be done in two ways:

1. Freelancing through intermediaries such as SBAs (Social Bureau for Artists, (e.g. [Amplo](#)), employment organisations (e.g. [Smart](#)) or payroll services (e.g. [Tentoo](#)), who employ freelancers as employees, ensuring the payment of salaries, withholding of social security contributions and taxes, etc., while providing clients with invoices.
2. Freelancing as a self-employed person, either as a main occupation or in certain cases also as a secondary occupation. The status of self-employed is not unambiguous. It can be exercised in combination with a company (for example, as a director, manager or working partner), as a main or secondary occupation. There are a few mandatory steps to get started. Every self-employed person is obliged to register with a [recognised business counter](#) for registering one's activities in the Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (CBE). Self-employed persons will receive a unique business number, which, after activation, also works as the VAT number. Every self-employed person must also join a social insurance fund before starting the self-employed activity.

It may be important to emphasise that self-employed status is not easy for Belgian artists because they are faced with high provisional contributions, even in periods when their income is lower. Therefore, Belgian artists often start freelancing through intermediaries, also because they build up more social security rights as an employer this way.

Relevant further information:

- [Financieringsmogelijkheden voor cultuur | Cultuurloket](#)
- [Culture.be](#)
- [Cultuurkrediet | Cultuurloket](#)

1.3.2. Copyright and related rights

Belgium, like other European Union member states, has a well-established copyright regime that aligns with EU directives and international treaties while maintaining certain unique characteristics. The primary legislation governing copyright in Belgium is the [Belgian Copyright Act of 1994](#) (officially titled the Law of June 30, 1994, on Copyright and Neighbouring Rights). This law has been amended multiple times to incorporate EU directives and address emerging issues in the digital environment ([Economie](#)). Additionally, copyright is referenced in the [Belgian Economic Law Code](#) (Book XI, Title 5), which provides a general framework for intellectual property rights.

The Belgian Copyright Act protects original literary, artistic, and scientific works, including books, music, films, software, and databases. It grants authors both moral and economic rights, similar to other EU jurisdictions. As in other EU countries, copyright protection for works lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years after their death. Performers' rights, such as those of musicians and actors, are protected for 70 years from the date of the performance. If a performance is recorded, the protection lasts for 70 years from the date it is published or made available to the public, whichever comes first. Producers of sound recordings (phonograms) are protected for 70 years from the date of publication. If the recording is unpublished, protection lasts for 70 years from the date it was created (Belgian Copyright Act of June 30, 1994, Articles 2, 2ter, 38, 43, 46, and 47). See a brief summary [HERE](#).

Belgium is a signatory to several key international copyright treaties ([WIPO](#)), including:

- Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886, revised multiple times, member since 1887).
- Rome Convention (1961, member since 1999), which protects the rights of performers, producers of phonograms, and broadcasting organisations.
- WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) (1996) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) (1996), which address digital copyright issues (member in both since 2006).

Belgium is also a signatory of the TRIPS Agreement (1994), under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which sets minimum standards for intellectual property protection. Belgium has transposed EU Copyright Directives, including the InfoSoc Directive (2001/29/EC), the Term Directive (2006/116/EC), and the Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive (2019/790).

While Belgian copyright law largely aligns with EU standards, there are some notable differences:

In Belgium, **moral rights** are recognised as perpetual, inalienable, and non-transferable under the Belgian Copyright Act of 1994 (Article 1(2) and Article 6). These rights are considered fundamental to the protection of authors' personal and reputational interests, in line with the Berne Convention and EU copyright directives. However, Belgian law provides a degree of flexibility by allowing authors to waive the exercise of certain aspects of their moral rights in specific contexts, as outlined in Article 6(2) of the Copyright Act. This does not constitute a general waiver of moral rights but rather permits contractual arrangements that limit their practical application in particular situations, such as commissioned works, collaborative projects, or software development.

While the inalienability of moral rights is a core principle in Belgian law, the ability to negotiate their exercise in specific contexts distinguishes Belgium from some other EU countries, where moral rights are often interpreted more rigidly. For example, in industries like film or software, authors may agree to modifications or adaptations of their work without fully relinquishing their moral rights. These arrangements are carefully framed to respect the fundamental nature of moral rights while accommodating practical needs.

Belgium has a unique system of **Collective Management Organisations** (CMOs), such as SABAM, which manage copyright and related rights for creators. Unlike some EU countries, Belgium allows competition among CMOs, giving rights holders options for managing their rights (Belgian Copyright Act; [Directive 2014/26/EU](#)). This competitive approach aligns with EU principles of market efficiency and consumer choice, preventing monopolistic practices and encouraging innovation ([European Commission, 2016](#)). The system is regulated by the Belgian Copyright Act and EU directives, ensuring transparency and accountability, while the Belgian Competition Authority oversees compliance to prevent anti-competitive behaviour.

In Belgium, there are two other CMOs besides Sabam: PlayRight and SIMIM. Sabam manages authors' rights for songwriters, composers and music publishers. PlayRight collects and distributes neighbouring rights for performing artists (such as musicians). SIMIM handles neighbouring rights for master owners (such as record labels). For the record, Unisono is the Belgian platform where these three CMOs collaborate, offering a single portal for businesses (such as radio stations, shops, bars and event organisers) to obtain the necessary licenses to legally use music.

When transposing the EU Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive (2019/790) into Belgian law, Belgium added the so-called **equitable remuneration** clause, which aims to ensure that performers receive fair remuneration for the use of their works on digital platforms. This means that performers, in addition to their initial contractual payments, are entitled to a share of the revenue generated by their performances on platforms like Spotify, YouTube, and others. The Belgian government emphasised the importance of fair compensation for performers, recognising their contributions to the cultural and creative industries. However, it has also been met with criticism from various trade associations representing producers (for example, [IMPALA](#)), who argue that the clause could create administrative burdens and disrupt existing contractual agreements.

In late 2024, the Belgian courts referred a key question regarding the interpretation of the equitable remuneration clause to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) (see [Kluwer](#)). The referral arose from a dispute between performers' rights organisations and digital platforms over the scope and implementation of the clause. Specifically, the courts sought clarification on whether the clause applies retroactively to pre-existing contracts and how revenue shares should be calculated in cases where multiple rights holders are involved. The ECJ's decision is expected to have significant implications not only for Belgium but also for other EU member states implementing similar provisions under the DSM Directive. This development underscores the ongoing tension between protecting performers' rights and ensuring a balanced framework for digital platforms and producers. See more on [Complete Music Update](#) and [Musically](#).

Which licences are granted collectively by the CMOs vs negotiated individually

USAGE	AUTHOR'S RIGHTS	NEIGHBOURING RIGHTS
Public Performance	Collective	Collective
Broadcasting in Radio and TV	Collective	Collective
Reproduction and Distribution (Physical)	Collective	Collective
Background Music	Collective	Collective
Making Available Online	Collective	Individual
Licensing to Film Production	Individual	Individual
Licensing to TV Production	Individual for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the opening or closing credits of a programme; films and (fiction) series; Otherwise, collective for broadcasters with general licence agreements	Individual

Licensing to Advertisements	Individual for synch. SABAM collects royalties for public performance from ads.	Individual
Licensing for Video Games Production	Individual for synch, no secondary collection.	Individual
Private Events	Collective: Licensing for music played at private events (e.g., weddings).	Collective

Table 1: Collective and individual licensing of authors' rights and neighbouring rights in Flanders, Belgium

1.3.3. Taxes

Belgium's tax system operates on both federal and regional levels, and artists and music professionals working in Belgium need to understand both to navigate their fiscal obligations. While federal laws govern the core income and corporate tax rates, each of Belgium's three regions—Flanders, Wallonia, and the Brussels-Capital Region—possesses fiscal autonomy, allowing for specific regional taxes, deductions, or incentives.

Federal level

The most relevant tax considerations for international artists and music professionals are largely determined at the federal level:

- **Income Tax:** Belgium employs a progressive income tax system, but a portion of income is typically exempt from taxation through a tax-free allowance.¹
- **Cultural Workers and Freelancers:** Self-employed individuals, including musicians and other cultural workers, are required to report their professional income annually. It is crucial to maintain meticulous records of all income and eligible business expenses, as these can be deducted to reduce taxable income.
- **Companies:** Cultural enterprises structured as companies (e.g., LLCs) are subject to corporate income tax on their profits. The standard corporate income tax rate in Belgium is 25%. However, qualifying small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may benefit from a reduced rate of 20% on the first €100 000 of taxable income, provided certain conditions are met (e.g., paying a minimum annual salary to a director). For the notice: many artists, but also collectives and management companies, set up a non-profit organisation (vzw/asbl) as a legal structure. This allows them to invoice with a VAT number (which they often cannot do as individuals) and, at the same time, build up a kind of untaxed reserve or savings buffer within the vzw. It's also a convenient framework for applying for subsidies as a group of people.
- **Foreign Touring Artists (Withholding Tax):** Performance fees earned by foreign artists in Belgium are generally subject to a **final withholding tax of 18%**. This tax is typically withheld directly by the Belgian promoter.
 - **Expense Deductions:** The 18% withholding tax is usually applied to the gross amount after a lump-sum deduction for expenses. These flat-rate costs include amounts for travel, food, accommodation, and a per-day allowance for performances (e.g., €400 for the first day, €100 for subsequent days, up to an annual maximum of 10 days per artist per organiser).

¹ For example, for the 2025 income year (tax year 2026), the basic tax-free allowance in Belgium is €10 910 (PwC).

- **Tax Treaties:** Double taxation treaties between Belgium and the artist's country of residence can significantly impact this withholding tax, potentially reducing or eliminating it. It is essential to consult the specific treaty applicable to your situation.
- **Tax Shelter:** This federal incentive scheme aims to stimulate investment in the Belgian cultural sector. It allows companies (including non-profit organisations subject to corporate tax) to invest in eligible cultural projects (such as films, TV series, live performances, and video games) and receive a significant tax deduction on their corporate income tax. For the time being, not applicable to pop music and related genres, but applicable to performing arts, circus and classical music.

Relevant further information:

- [The Principle of Tax Shelter](#)
- [Belgian Tax Shelter](#)

Regional Specificities

While the core income and corporate tax frameworks are federal, Belgium's three regions exercise their fiscal autonomy in various ways:

- **Flanders** can implement its own region-specific tax rates and offer tax deductions or credits. This can lead to variations in overall tax liabilities compared to other Belgian regions, though the fundamental progressive income tax system remains federal.
- **Wallonia and Brussels-Capital Region** largely adhere to the federal income and corporate tax regulations. However, they impose their own regional taxes on specific business activities, professional establishments, or property. For artists, these regional taxes may not directly alter their personal income tax rates, but could apply to their business operations or property ownership within the region.

Due to the complexity of tax regulations, seeking guidance from a tax advisor specialising in cultural work or international taxation is advisable. More information on taxes is available on: [FPS Finance](#)

More information: [Cultuurloket](#) provides an overview (in Dutch) of the most common taxes for cultural enterprises in Flanders, so does [l'Union des Artistes](#) in French. [PwC](#) provides information on personal income tax for residents and non-residents.

1.3.4. Visa and mobility info

Belgium is part of the European Union and the Schengen Area. People from the 27 European states in that area only need a valid ID or passport to travel to Belgium; [no visa is required](#). US and Canadian citizens in possession of a valid passport don't need a visa for stays up to 90 days within a six-month period. For other nationalities, these terms may vary. To make sure, it's best to check with the Belgian Embassy or the nearest Consulate Office for visa requirements. More information at www.diplomatie.be.

There is a distinction between the right to reside in Belgium: Short-term stay (= short stay) versus Long-term stay (= long stay).

Short stay

EU/EEA citizens can freely move and work within the EU with a valid ID or passport. Other nationalities generally require a Schengen visa (type C) for stays up to 90 days within a 180-day

period. The EU Commission provides a [calculator](#) to determine eligibility. It is advisable to respect the 180-day rule. Otherwise, future visits to the Schengen zone may be refused.

International artists travelling to Belgium for less than 90 days only require a short-stay visa (type C) to gain access to Belgian territory. Therefore, it's advisable to check whether a visa is needed [for cultural activities](#) (Cultuurloket).

Long stay

Long-term stays (over 90 days) in Belgium may require a visa and work permit, depending on nationality and the nature of the work. EEA citizens and Swiss nationals are exempt from work permit requirements. For other nationalities, employers must typically obtain a combined permit for stays exceeding 90 days. It's crucial to consult the Belgian embassy or consulate for specific requirements. Further details are available on the [Immigration Office website](#).

Further information: [The Ultimate Cookbook for cultural managers](#)

1.4. Music Policy

Belgium is divided into three cultural communities (a Dutch, a French and a German). Culture (and cultural heritage) is a competence of the communities. This has been the case since the first state reform in 1970.

Cultural policy-making is primarily the responsibility of the language communities, which, in the case of Flanders, is included in the Flemish government. In Wallonia, the region and the community are separate. Belgium played an active role in establishing the Council of Europe after World War II, and the principles of political and cultural democracy, as well as references to human rights, remain deeply ingrained in Belgian cultural policies. Cultural policy-making adheres to the subsidiarity principle, meaning the federal level provides a strategic cultural policy framework, including general regulations and support measures ([Compendium](#)).

1.4.1. Music policy in Flanders

In Flanders, there are three important regional-level regulations, or decrees, that shape cultural policy:

1. Arts Decree of April 23, 2021
2. Amateur Arts Decree of January 1, 2024
3. Supra-local Culture Decree of March 8, 2024

The Arts Decree defines the key terms and the framework for providing grants, as well as outlining the grant programmes delivered directly by the Flemish government. These programmes include: operating and project subsidies, scholarships for artists and creators, residency scholarships, support for international activities and support to arts institutions (see more: [Codex Vlaanderen](#)). Operating subsidies are granted for the whole five-year period of the Decree.

Overall, the Flemish Arts Decree provides a “relatively flexible framework that allows organisations with a predominantly private income structure (such as music clubs) to apply for public funding” ([Compendium](#)).

1.4.1.1. Local level: Flanders

After reforms in 2016, cultural policy-making was further decentralised to the local (municipal) level, away from the provincial level. A separate Decree on Supra-local Cultural Activities was created to continue to incentivise and support cultural collaboration between the communes.

Furthermore, the resources for the cultural policy of the Flemish municipalities have been integrated into the Municipal Fund. There are no more conditions or reporting obligations, and the municipal authorities are now fully responsible for designing their local cultural policy ([Department Of Culture, Youth & Media](#)). This does not mean that regional cultural policy, through the design of the Arts Decree, for example, would not influence a city's cultural policy. It does tie in with the local level and shapes the overall dynamics of the cultural ecosystem in Flanders ([Dewaele, Soete](#)).

1.4.1.2. Organisations involved in music policy making

Kunstenpunt

Kunstenpunt was founded in 2015 from the merger of BAM, Muziekcentrum Vlaanderen and Vlaams Theatre Instituut (VTi), the sectoral arts support centres for visual, audiovisual and media arts, music and performing arts, respectively. Kunstenpunt is the support centre for professional arts in three disciplines: visual arts, performing arts and classical music. For all those who work in the arts, Kunstenpunt wants to be an inspiration, an accessible and reliable source of knowledge, a data supplier and fact checker, a pillar of support, a connector and an innovator. Kunstenpunt also has an English-language version called Flanders Arts Institute. Most of the information you will find on the Kunstenpunt website can be found here in English.

VI.BE

VI.BE is the support centre for artists and the music industry in Flanders and Brussels - from beginner to professional, from local to international, regardless of genre. Formed in 2020 through the merger of Poppunt and Kunstenpunt's non-classical music activities, VI.BE provides guidance, resources, and opportunities to musicians and industry professionals at all levels and across all genres. They assist municipalities and cities at both local and supra-local levels in developing local music policy and offer a range of services, including advice, workshops, networking events and internationalisation support. VI.BE champions artistic development, strengthens the music sector, and promotes Flemish music abroad through initiatives like Belgium Booms. They act as a vital connector, fostering collaboration and growth within the vibrant and diverse music landscape of Flanders and Brussels.

Cultuurloket

Cultuurloket functions as a knowledge centre and learning network focused on fostering entrepreneurship in the cultural sector. It provides resources and information on a wide range of topics relevant to cultural professionals, including legal and business aspects, social status, taxation, and international mobility. The online knowledge base offers reliable and up-to-date information, while information sessions, webinars, and training programmes provide further learning opportunities. Cultuurloket serves as a valuable resource for individuals and organisations navigating the complexities of the cultural sector.

Clubcircuit

Clubcircuit is the organisation of 13 music clubs in Flanders: De Zwerver, 4AD, Wilde Westen, Cactus, Democrazy, N9, Nosta, Trix, Het Depot, Casino, Pilar, Ancienne Belgique, AFF/Bootstraat, and VK. Clubcircuit has been the consultative body within which those responsible for these clubs meet to discuss common themes.

1.4.1.3. Main funding programmes for music

The Flemish government supports professional music through the Arts Decree. Originally, a separate [Music Decree](#) (1998) provided funding for classical, contemporary, pop and jazz ensembles, with a focus on supporting organisations in other genres. Management offices or booking agencies were not part of the eligible categories at that time. This decree also established Muziekcentrum Vlaanderen (MCV) as the official support centre for the professional music sector.

In 2004, the Music Decree was incorporated into the broader Arts Decree, which was later revised in 2013 to merge MCV into [Kunstenpunt](#), the Flanders Arts Institute. The Arts Decree provides various subsidy lines for artists and organisations, including scholarships, project subsidies, international presentation support, and operating subsidies for art institutions.

In addition to the Arts Decree, local and supra-local subsidies are available for the music sector at municipal and regional levels. These subsidies, along with the support provided by the Arts Decree, have contributed to the professionalisation of the Flemish music sector, fostering artistic development and business growth across diverse genres.

The Arts Decree

Since 2004, the [Arts Decree](#) has been the most important subsidy framework for the professional arts in the Flemish community. [Kunstenpunt](#) provides overviews and analyses of arts policy in Flanders. The Arts Decrees and the associated implementing decrees together form the most important policy framework for the professional arts in the Flemish Community. They contain the procedures for the submission, assessment, award and monitoring of various grants. Actors within the following disciplines can rely on it: performing arts, music, visual and architecture, design, and all mixed forms.

There are various subsidy lines within the Arts Decree. Eligibility depends on the nature of the applicant and what they do. There are:

- Grants for artists
- Project subsidies for artists and organisations
- International presentation projects
- Allowances for international presentations
- Residency grants
- Operating subsidies for art institutions

Further information about the further conditions, procedure and submission dates can be found on the [website of the Department of Culture, Youth and Media](#) of the Flemish Government. All Flemish subsidies have to be applied for through the online application KIOSK.

Furthermore, local and supra-local subsidies can be applied for by both artists and organisations. Most cities and municipalities provide financial or logistical support to local initiatives. There are also subsidy options for the music sector at the municipal and provincial levels. These are sometimes awarded in the context of a youth policy or fit into a socio-cultural whole. However, these can also be interesting for the professional music sector. Cultuurloket lists some [local cultural subsidies](#). The Flemish Community Commission in the [Brussels-Capital Region](#) also has a culture service and provides subsidies for the arts.

The project subsidy for supra-local cultural projects is a new subsidy line from the Flemish government that aims to support cultural projects that encourage collaboration across the boundaries of municipalities, sectors, and disciplines. OP/TIL is the organisation that guides applicants in this process by offering advice, workshops, and practical tools to strengthen applications.

1.4.2. Music policy in Wallonia

Cultural policy-making in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (WBF), the French language community in Belgium, operates through a structured four-level system established by a 2019 decree, designed to ensure comprehensive consultation and oversight ([Culture.be](https://culture.be)). At its core is the [Higher Council for Culture](#), a cross-cutting body that coordinates and advises on all aspects of cultural policy in Wallonia. This council, composed of 26 members with gender parity, provides overarching recommendations to the government and parliament of the WBF, focusing on strategic vision and intersectoral dialogue concerning key areas like access to culture, artist status, and funding.

Complementing the Higher Council are seven [Sectoral Consultation Chambers](#), each dedicated to a specific cultural sector, such as performing arts, visual arts, and cinema. These chambers, along with the Council for the French Language, Endogenous Regional Languages and Linguistic Policies, provide specialised advice and recommendations on sectoral policies and legislative texts. Professional federations are represented within these chambers, ensuring that the voices of cultural practitioners are heard. The overall structure also includes Advisory Committees and a Chamber of Appeal, further ensuring a robust and well-rounded cultural governance framework. This multi-tiered system aims to promote a dynamic and inclusive cultural landscape within Wallonia.

1.4.2.1. Organisations involved in music policy making

In Wallonia, as in the rest of Belgium, the government plays an active role in supporting various music genres, and there are several organisations actively involved.

Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques (WBM)

Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques (WBM) is an organisation for Walloon and Brussels musicians who want to make their mark internationally. As an export organisation for Walloonian music, WBM supports artists and professionals by guiding them in their international ambitions. It offers financial and logistical support for tours, showcases and residencies, allowing artists to present their music outside Belgium. WBM also helps artists gain visibility at major events such as music fairs and showcase festivals, including Eurosonic Noorderslag and MaMA Festival, and facilitates meetings with international bookers, labels and press.

In addition to practical support, WBM acts as a promoter of Belgian music made in the French-speaking communities of Wallonia and Brussels on a global level. It develops strategic promotional campaigns, produces compilation albums and holds an extensive network of contacts within the international music industry. Through these initiatives, WBM contributes to the professional growth of artists and strengthens the reputation of Wallonia and Brussels as creative breeding grounds.

Conseil de la Musique

Created in 1981, Conseil de la Musique is a non-profit organisation that supports, informs, and promotes the music sector in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Covering all musical genres — from classical to jazz, chanson, pop, rock and contemporary music — it works with professionals, emerging artists, amateurs, and music lovers alike.

Its activities range from flagship events such as the Fête de la Musique and Du F dans le Texte (competition for emerging artists), to information and training services through its Musiscope platform, which offers info days, coaching sessions, and one-to-one guidance.

The organisation also produces publications (Larsen, Orphée Apprenti), runs the music database L'Intégrale de la Musique, and manages the Maison des Musiques in Brussels, a hub for concerts, residencies, and sectoral initiatives. Since 2021, it has also hosted Scivias, a platform working towards greater inclusivity in music.

On the international stage, Conseil de la Musique represents the Wallonia-Brussels Federation at the International Music Council (UNESCO) and the European Music Council, while developing partnerships with cultural organisations abroad. In this way, by combining cultural promotion, professional support, and international representation, Conseil de la Musique not only strengthens the careers of individual musicians but also contributes to the long-term development and identity of the French-speaking Belgian music scene.

Court-Circuit

Court-Circuit's mission is to unite, professionalise and network the music sector by organising various information, training and promotion actions (creation of resources, cooperation, meetings, presentations, etc.) and developing various mediation tools to create links in the sector between structures, artists and audiences (web platforms, competitions, etc.). To do this, 3 main areas are deployed to successfully carry out their missions: 1. Coordinating a network of professional venues 2. Supporting a network of venues in the process of becoming professional 3. Carrying out mediation actions and tools for artists and audiences.

Active since 1992, the non-profit organisation Court-Circuit is the federation of contemporary music venues and concert organisations (associations without fixed equipment and festivals). It works to professionalise its members, to structure and network the music sector at the national and international level and supports artistic emergence in Wallonia and Brussels.

Since 2006, Court-Circuit's activities have developed around the structuring of a network of venues dedicated to contemporary music, the platform for professionals of contemporary music scenes (Club Plasma), which it promotes and represents at the national and international level. Since then, this network has expanded and structured itself into a professional federation. Today, Court-Circuit is the voice of the Federation and therefore of around sixty structures (contemporary music venues, concert and festival organisations). As a tool for professionalising the “live” aspects of the music sector, Court-Circuit has also been a [resource centre](#) since its creation, that organises and collaborates in setting up meetings and information sessions, the latter promoting exchanges and networking in the music sector.

FACIR

FACIR, the Federation of United Authors-Composers and Performers, aims to unite musicians and represent them so that they are better heard by politicians and cultural partners with and for whom they work.

FACIR was created from a "States General" for the music sector in French-speaking Belgium and focuses mainly on the music sector of the French community. Today, it already has more than 1000 members, musicians from all genres. Starting from the idea that music creates a social bond, FACIR advocates a revaluation of the musician as creator and performer, for musical diversity in all media and for the introduction of higher quotas for local talent on radio and television.

La Chambre de Concertation des Musiques

Established by the New Cultural Governance decree of March 28, 2019, the Chambre de Concertation des Musiques (CCM) issues opinions on sector policy and legislative and regulatory texts (including their evaluation), as well as on the case law that applies them. The creation of a consultation forum for music federations represented a major step forward for the music sector in the Wallonia-Brussels federation, since for the first time, the sector was provided with a real tool for cross-functional political consultation concerning all links in the music industry in the FWB.

Meeting agendas and lists of opinions issued by the Chamber can be consulted.

1.4.2.2. Main funding programmes for music

For the French-speaking community, the emphasis of public support has historically been on classical and contemporary classical music. In the 90s, support was developed for French song music (“*Chanson française*”) and jazz, then gradually extended to all types of music. Today, the French-speaking Community supports rock, pop, electronic, urban, French song, traditional and world music, jazz, folk, blues, as well as classical and contemporary classical music.

The overall budget allocated to the musical sector by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation is approximately €54,75 mln (based on the 2024 budget, see table 1). This breaks down into €31 mln for the Philharmonic Orchestra and the House of Opera of the French speaking Community, €13mln for the contemporary (popular) music sector (support for artists, festivals and venues, as well as artistic support structures such as labels, managers, bookers, promotion agencies); €9 mln to the classical music sector and €2 mln for the contemporary classical music sector.

There are **two main types of support**:

1. Single-time support (one-off subsidies for specific projects)
2. Pluriannual support (Multi-year contracts for medium-sized and large organisations, accounting for 95-97% of the budget).

The [Decree on the Performing Arts](#) on the recognition and subsidisation of the professional sector of the Performing Arts was adopted by the Parliament of the French Community in 2003 and amended in 2022.

In addition, Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques (WBM) and Wallonie-Bruxelles International (WBI) also provide grants for international promotion and mobility of artists. These supports form part of the main public funding programmes for music in the French-speaking Community, complementing the subsidies distributed under the Performing Arts Decree.

The performing arts decree provides support for artists, artistic support structures (including labels, management, promotion and booking agencies, as well as institutions involved in promoting, training and professionalizing the sector, such as the Conseil de la Musique and Court-Circuit); Concerts hall and festivals; and the the Philharmonic Orchestra and House of Opera: the [Opéra Royal de Wallonie](#), the [Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège](#).

This [decree](#) provides for [grants to support creation](#), project support for [artists](#) (e.g. for a recording, promotion or artistic residency project, etc.), [music programming](#) projects (festivals, concert organisation) and [artistic support structures](#); and support for [multi-year contracts](#) for organisations. All evaluations of the Music Commission and grants awarded are published annually on [Culture.be](#).

In addition to these budgets allocated to the music sector, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation also supports opportunities for artists to reach audiences through its support for **cultural centres**. These centres are subsidised by the WBF (via the Cultural Centres Decree), the municipalities in

which they are located, and the provinces in which they are situated (or the Cocof in the Brussels-Capital Region). You can find a map of all the cultural centres in the Wallonia-Brussels federation [here](#).

Furthermore, since 2012, there has been a [cultural cooperation agreement](#) between the Flemish Community and the French Community. The agreement not only has an important symbolic meaning, but it also meets real operational and practical needs of the cultural sector.

1.4.3. Cultural Fund of Sabam

Under the [Sabam for Culture](#) section, Sabam supports Belgian music and other art forms in various ways. Affiliated members can receive support for their artistic adventures through Sabam for Culture in the form of grants. The financial support is mainly intended for authors and composers who are members of Sabam, but organisations can also submit an application.

The grant for the promotion of self-produced productions is the best known. This allows artists to receive financial support for promoting their own releases, provided the music is released independently, without the involvement of a label. Also, showcase support is available to help artists perform at international showcase festivals and concert series. Funding can reach up to €2500, covering expenses such as travel, accommodation, equipment rental, promotional costs, and musician/crew fees. Additionally, support exists for organising showcases abroad to promote releases and connect with international professionals.

In 2023, Sabam for Culture supported more than 900 cultural initiatives with a budget of €1,7 million ([Sabam, 2023](#)). Out of the 699 grants provided, 528 were for music.

1.4.4. Cultural Fund of PlayRight

PlayRight is the Belgian collective management organisation for neighbouring rights on behalf of performing artists, including musicians, actors, dancers, and other performers. Beyond rights collection and distribution, PlayRight's cultural arm ([PlayRight+](#)) provides targeted financial support to strengthen the position of performing artists and nurture the broader artistic ecosystem.

PlayRight+ does not fund purely individual artistic ventures. Instead, it supports projects and organisations that demonstrably contribute to one or more of the following objectives: defending and advancing the socio-economic and cultural position of performing artists, educating and informing professionals about their rights and working practices or promoting artists' careers.

Financial support is available through biannual calls for project proposals and through biennial calls for organisational support. Applicants must demonstrate that their initiative furthers PlayRight+'s mission of improving conditions for performing artists and enriching the artistic community.

2. Music Consumption

2.1. Music Discovery and Engagement

Music discovery in Belgium combines digital, social, and traditional elements. In 2025, the most popular way to listen to music was via the radio. According to the annual Establishment Survey of CIM, the Centre for Information on the Media ([CIM 2025](#)), half of Belgians indicate live radio as their main way of consuming music, followed by audio streaming at around 30%. The car radio in particular is crucial with 63,5% of the Belgian population listening to it. Another 56,7% also tune in to their favourite channel at home. Listening to music via smartphone decreased from 20,5% to 16,5% in 2023. Radio remains an important medium for Belgian music, especially since it is consumed via both traditional and digital devices.

When it comes to digital consumption, streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and Deezer are especially popular. Among 12–24-year-olds, streaming accounts for nearly a third of listening time, following live radio at 34% ([CIM](#)). For those aged 45 and older, however, radio remains dominant, with over 75% of their listening time dedicated to it. The trend is even stronger among listeners 65+, where radio accounts for almost 90% of music listening.

As of 2024, 66% of the Belgian population that used the internet in the previous three months listened to or downloaded music online, a significant increase from 36% in 2012, since it was first measured ([Statista](#)). When it comes to streaming, Spotify clearly dominates the market, accounting for three-quarters of total streaming time, far ahead of YouTube Music, the next in the ranking, which only accounts for 13%. The Belgian Entertainment Association, which has been recording an annual decline in music sales since 2000, finally saw a slight increase in sales of recorded music in 2015 (a 5% increase for the Belgian market), driven by streaming services such as Spotify and Deezer ([VI.BE](#)).

YouTube and other streaming platforms clearly differ in the way and for what they are used, both for video and music. Where Flemish people on Spotify, TikTok and Netflix mainly rely on the recommendations, they go to YouTube to look for specific content. This can be content from content creators they follow, or content they cannot find elsewhere ([Mediapunt](#)).

Belgium still has a vibrant radio culture that plays a crucial role in music discovery. Popular stations such as Studio Brussel, Radio1 and MNM regularly feature new music, especially indie and alternative acts, as well as specialty shows dedicated to introducing fresh sounds help listeners find emerging talent. The public service VRT undertakes to ensure that Flemish music productions account for at least 25% of the total music time on the radio stations Radio 1, Radio 2, Klara, MNM and Studio Brussel.

In live radio, which accounts for 63.4% of total audio consumption, FM continues to decline, now accounting for 31.3% of listening time, compared to 59% in 2022. Live radio via television is losing ground slightly in favour of digital listening, i.e. via the Internet, a radio station app or a radio platform. This digital consumption accounts for 14.7% of listening time, compared to 13% in 2022 (CIM, 2025, p. 5).

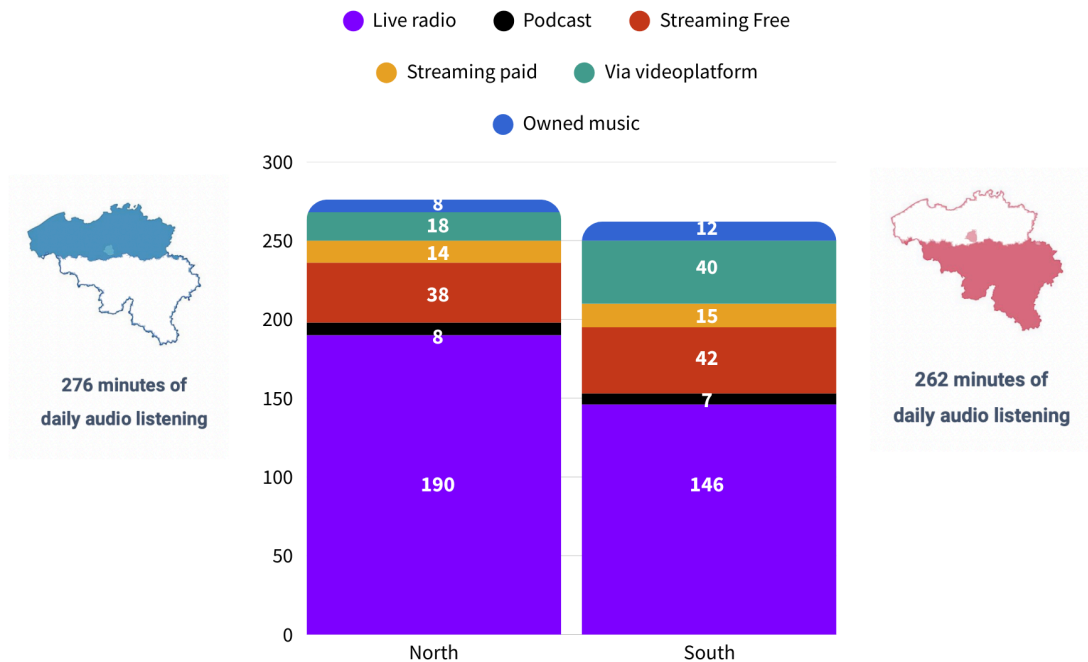


Figure 3. Belgium North and South - listening minutes. Daily minutes listening on. Source: [Centre for Information about Media \(CIM\)](#). (2025). CIM Audio Time 2025. P. 6

In terms of devices used to listen to audio content, radios, car radios and televisions are losing some ground to smartphones, computers and smart speakers, reflecting the general trend towards more digital consumption of audio. With the exception of live radio, the smartphone is the most used device for listening to audio content: it accounts for 61% of listening time for delayed radio and podcasts, and for 50% of streaming.

Belgian music on the radio

The divide between Flanders (Dutch-speaking) and Wallonia (French-speaking) results in distinct cultural preferences. Flemish audiences typically favour English-language media, while Wallonia leans towards French content. Flanders has a strong historical and cultural connection to the Anglo-American world, and English is widely spoken and understood there. This proficiency is further enhanced by the significant influence of Anglo-American music, films, and TV shows.

Because of this linguistic divide, Flemish audiences are generally more aligned with media from the UK, US, and Northern Europe, where English is predominant. French-speaking artists from Wallonia and France may enjoy considerable popularity in Francophone regions but often struggle to gain visibility in Flanders unless they achieve broader international recognition.

The share of Flemish people who listen to Dutch radio stations is negligible. In contrast, quite a few Walloons listen to radio stations from France. The main reason is probably because of the shared language and cultural affinity. The popularity of French radio stations in Wallonia can also be attributed to several factors, including geographical proximity, similarities in music preferences, and the supply of high-quality programmes. Because both Wallonia and France are French-speaking, Walloons are often attracted to French media, which connects with their culture and interests. In addition, stations close to the French border are easily received via FM, DAB+ or online.

French stations promote a lot of international and French-language music. This is attractive to Walloons who want to hear a mix of global hits and French-language songs. French stations also

often play a key role in the promotion of popular French-language artists, such as Stromae, and Angèle (who is also Walloon), who are loved in Wallonia.

Public radio plays a more central role in everyday listening habits in Flanders than in Wallonia, with the VRT generally achieving a higher radio market share in Flanders than RTBF does in Wallonia. This depends on specific factors such as age, region, and personal preferences. In Wallonia, RTBF radio has a strong market share, with popular stations such as Classic 21, La Première, and Tipik. In Flanders, the market share of VRT radio (such as Radio 1, Radio 2, and Studio Brussel) is lower, as commercial stations such as Qmusic and Joe are more dominant there. Recent listening surveys (such as those by CIM) show that RTBF reaches around 35-40% of radio listeners in Wallonia. VRT reaches a smaller share in Flanders, around 25-30%, with strong competition from commercial stations.

Additionally, French radio stations also have a significant audience in Wallonia, in addition to local and national stations such as those of RTBF. French stations are particularly popular in border areas and among younger listeners because of their wide range of music and shared culture. This makes French radio a natural addition to the Belgian media landscape.

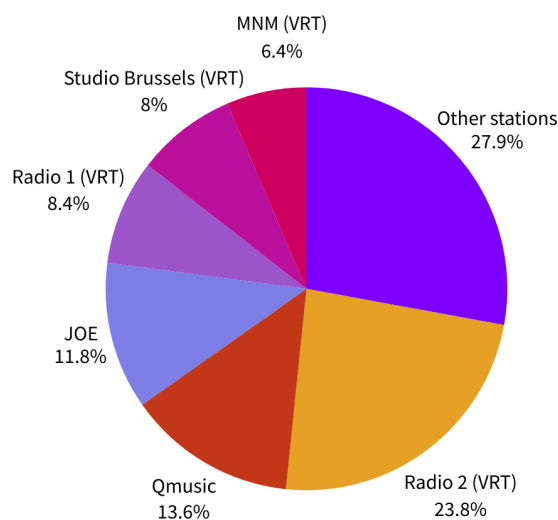


Figure 4. Market share of radio stations in Flanders in 2024. Source: CIM, 2024.

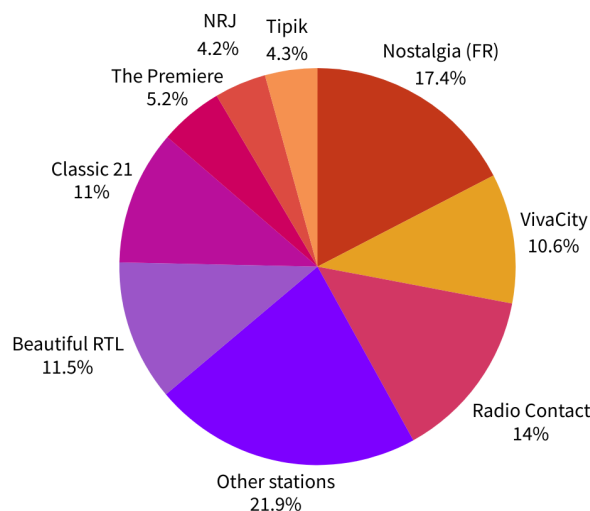


Figure 5. Market share of radio stations in Wallonia in 2024. Source: CIM, 2024.

TV and video consumption

Compared to audio and internet, video remains the most popular medium: 97% of Belgians say they have consumed video in the past month, compared to 93% for internet and 85% for audio. These figures are slightly lower than last year, although this may be an effect of the recruitment mix. People aged 65 and over consume as much video as the average, but this does not apply to audio, which is consumed by 8 out of 10, and internet, which is consumed by just over 7 out of 10.

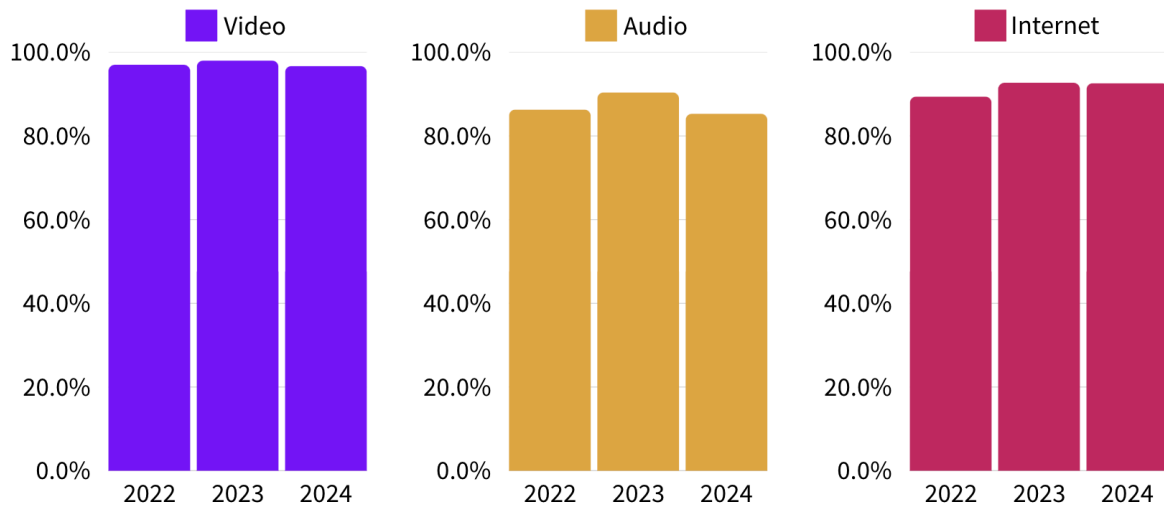


Figure 6. Media consumption in Belgium. Source: [CIM](#), 2024.

In terms of video consumption, live television is still far ahead of all other types of video content. Almost three-quarters of Belgians consume this media, although this has decreased by 5% in one year. Videos consumed on platforms such as YouTube (new to the survey this year) come in second place and are used by more than one Belgian in two. Recorded television, films and series via streaming services, and videos on social networks complete the top 5.

2.2. Participation in Live Events

2.2.1. Flanders

According to the Participatie Survey, a large-scale survey, which is conducted every few years by the Flemish government, attendance at non-classical music (e.g. rock, pop, jazz, blues, world music, electronic) concerts is on the rise. In 2020, 19% of respondents attended frequently (two or more concerts in the past 6 months), up from 7,4% in 2004. Going to classical music concerts increased as well, but more modestly, from 4,6% to 6,8% ([Ghent University](#)).

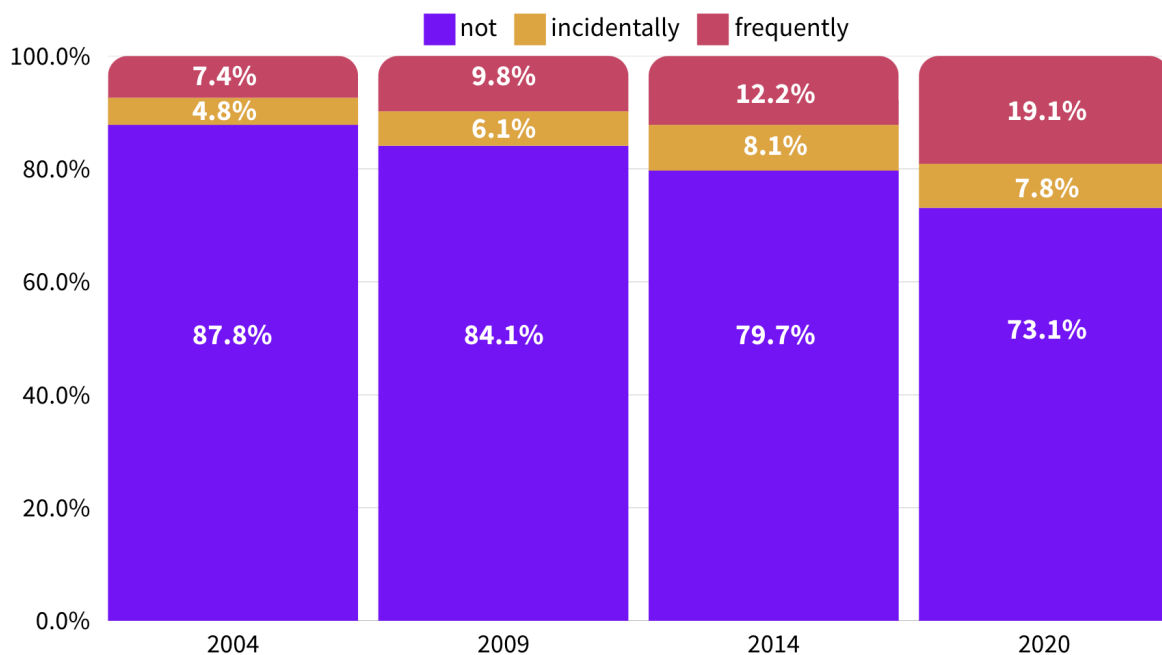


Figure 7. PAS trends: Percentage of concerts by genre (non-classical). Source: [Ghent University](#). (2024).

Almost one in three respondents (28.5%) visited a festival during the previous year. At these festivals, people attended pop and rock concerts the most, followed by concerts of world music and electronic music ([Flanders Arts Institute](#)).

The long-term analysis gives reason for optimism for the years 2004-2020 (the fourth survey was conducted just before the first lockdown). There is a clear increase in the number of Flemish people participating in visits to museums, concerts, performing arts, cinema and heritage initiatives; and these participants also go out more often.

Clubs

According to data from *Clubcircuit*, people are attending live music concerts at venues in Flanders in significant numbers. In 2023, 10 venues hosted 1071 shows featuring 2458 acts, drawing a total of 511 206 visitors. Tickets are primarily purchased online (75-90%), with prices averaging €18. Smaller clubs and specific genres like hip-hop may still see some ticket sales at the door.

Ticket Prices

For the first time, four days of the festivals Rock Werchter or Graspop cost more than €300 in 2024. Ticket prices for concerts and festivals in Flanders have risen considerably in recent years, mainly due to inflation and rising costs for logistics, security, and energy. In 2023, an average price increase of 11-14% was recorded for various festivals. For example, ticket prices for major events such as Rock Werchter and Pukkelpop increased by around 20€ per combination ticket, while at some festivals, such as Les Ardentes, price increases even amounted to 32%, an increase of €70 for a weekend ticket with camping ([Festileaks](#), [De Standaard](#)).

Despite these increases, many festivals remain sold out, especially the larger events. However, visitors indicate that they have to choose between different festivals more often, as in addition to the tickets, the costs of food and drinks at the festivals are also increasing.

The price at some festivals is rising faster than inflation. "That is because visiting a festival is now sold even more as an experience," says economics professor Jan De Loecker (KU Leuven). "You can

see that in all kinds of arrangements and VIP packages. They attract an older or foreign audience that is not so price-sensitive" ([DeMorgen](#)).

Between 2013 and 2024, life has become 32% more expensive on average. For a combined ticket for the five largest festivals, this represents an average increase of 67% in that period, more than double the inflation rate. Festival prices are rising faster than inflation ([De Standaard](#)).

2.2.2. Wallonia

In 2020, Walloons spent 7,4% of their budget on culture ([IWEPS](#)). Concerts tend to be a small part of these expenditures. A [study](#) into the reasons why visitors flock to festivals shows that the reasons given by survey participants for attending the music festival (see Table 3) are often linked to the festival itself: the general atmosphere (16,5%), the headliners (15%) or even musical discovery (11,3%). However, the proximity of the festival site to home is often mentioned (12,2% of responses given), as well as spending time with acquaintances, friends, family members who were going there (9,4% of responses given).

Reasons for attending the festival	Replies	Percentage
General atmosphere	1230	16.5%
Headliners	1117	15.0%
Proximity to home	910	12.2%
Musical discovery (discovering new artists, new groups, etc.)	844	11.3%
Spend time with acquaintances, friends, family	704	9.4%
Modest ticket price	513	6.9%
Location	467	6.3%
Multiculturality, intercultural issues	359	4.8%
Festival fame	326	4.4%
Camping, the atmosphere at the campsite	155	2.1%
Festival sustainable development policy and awareness, site cleanliness	149	2.0%
Restoration	150	2.0%
Commitment (associations present on the festival site, etc.)	143	1.9%

Table 2. Reasons for attending the festival. Source: [Van Campenhoudt "Enquête sur les publics des festivals de musique de la fédération wallonie-bruxelles: quelques analyses descriptives" \(2018\)](#).

2.3. Listening to Recorded Music

Whereas around the turn of the century, music magazines and television were still the determining factors for the distribution of music in Belgium, this has changed in 2024.

Streaming services are popular in Belgium, with a third of Belgians listening to music via an audio streaming service. Of all DSPs, Spotify leads the way with more than a quarter using it, though the user count saw a 2% decrease compared to 2022 ([CIM, 2023](#)). YouTube Music follows in second place with 7% of users, and Deezer, as well as Apple Music are also used. Almost one in five Belgians also pay for a subscription to a music streaming service - although often entire families are covered by one paying subscription. Behind a relatively small number of paying accounts, a

whole host of paying users can therefore be hidden who generate streams for a wide range of Belgian artists, from Camille and dEUS to Psychonaut and Naragonia.

While Spotify is more used in Flanders than in Wallonia, the popularity of YouTube music is higher in the South. The younger the age group, the more they listen to music. In Wallonia, those between 35-44 listen to music the most, 291 minutes, while the average is 265 minutes. In Flanders, this number is even higher - 304 minutes among 25-34 year olds. Video platforms are considerably important for teenagers and young adults, while radio remains dominant for older age groups. ([CIM, 2025](#))

While music streaming has gained popularity in Belgium, its adoption has been comparatively slower than in the Netherlands, for example. This slower uptake is influenced by Belgium's fragmented market, shaped by linguistic and cultural divisions between the Flemish and French-speaking regions.

Music video clips are hardly seen on television anymore, with the exception of channels such as Ment55/MentPop (for Flemish popular music) and Xite (for pop music), which combine their broadcast schedules with a radio station. User-generated content platforms such as YouTube and TikTok have become much more important for the discovery of music. The former is one of the oldest video and music platforms in the world, used by 66% of Belgians. However, few use it daily. Social or short-form video (SFV) platform TikTok do a lot better. Since 2022, TikTok has been installed on a quarter of Belgian smartphones. Almost 65% of users open TikTok daily, and although little money is made from it. Nevertheless, the app is still crucial for music discovery.

However, this does not mean that music programmes no longer have a place on regular television channels. Variety shows with a specific focus on music, such as *Liefde voor Muziek* (Flanders' most-watched programme in 2023), and *Tien Om Te Zien* (all on VTM), remain popular by pairing new artists with established names. And broadcast music competitions such as *The Voice* and the *Queen Elisabeth Competition* put a spotlight on young musical talent. *The Music Industry Awards* (MIAs) award show also attracted a lot of attention in January 2024, with more than 800 000 viewers.

Since 2018, Spotify Benelux has employed an editor responsible for promoting Belgian music through dedicated playlists.

2.4. Musical tastes

In terms of the type of music that Belgians listen to, English-language music often dominates the charts, and artists from the US, the UK, and other countries find a large audience here. The Flemish market has a strong preference for Dutch-language music, but also for international (English-language) hits. Genres such as pop, rock, and hip-hop are popular. Flemish artists are well-received, while international artists also have a strong fan base. According to Spotify, “Belgian listeners have an interesting mix of music; their tastes range from electro to pop to rock.”

The 10 most sold albums in Belgium in 2023 were:

- *Per Ongeluk* by Pommeliën Thijs;
- *Sincèrement* by Hamza;
- *Endless Summer Vacation* by Miley Cyrus;
- *Harry's House* by Harry Styles;
- *=* by Ed Sheeran;
- *HEROES & VILLAINS* by Metro Boomin;
- *Midnights* by Taylor Swift;
- *Starboy* by The Weeknd;
- *Barbie The Album* (various artists);

- *RUSH!* by Måneskin ([DeMorgen](#)).

Divided into two distinct markets on either side of the language border, plus Brussels, Belgium had none of its [most-streamed](#) songs in 2023 come from local artists. This markedly stands out, as most other European countries had at least three out of their five top-streamed songs produced domestically. Belgium's openness to European music is therefore notable. According to the [ESNS Radar Chart](#), 45 of the top 50 artists saw streaming and radio play in Belgium, compared to only five in France. This disparity may partly result from France's radio quotas, which mandate a certain percentage of French-language music, limiting the crossover of foreign acts.

As remarked by Olivier Vandeputte, the General Manager of BRMA:

“The division between the Flemish and Walloon markets also reflects cultural differences. While Flanders is more focused on Anglo-Saxon influences, French culture dominates in Wallonia. Major artists such as Stromae transcend this divide, but for others, it remains a challenge to break through in both regions. The difference in preferences and the rise of streaming require artists to adopt a new strategy, in which constant visibility via social media and a fast production cycle are essential. Yet this speed raises questions about the quality and the disappearance of traditional formats such as the album.”

3. Music Ecosystem

3.1. Industry Events and Conferences

While Belgium doesn't host large music conferences and showcase festivals, such as ESNS, MaMA, MIDEM, Reeperbahn Festival and the Great Escape Festival, there are still some important industry events.

We Are Open (Antwerp, February)

We Are Open is an annual showcase festival organised by Trix, a leading concert venue in Antwerp, with a focus entirely placed on emerging Belgian artists and bands. A platform is provided for local talent to present themselves to music lovers, journalists, and industry professionals, serving as a springboard for artists aiming to break through on larger national and international stages. A diverse range of genres, including indie, rock, hip hop, and electronica, is featured, establishing the festival as a key discovery space for new talent. Networking opportunities are also created for booking agents, managers, and other music professionals to scout new talent and strengthen relationships within the industry.

Love Tomorrow Summit (Boom, July)

It is an annual event organised by Love Tomorrow, the sustainability and innovation arm of Tomorrowland. The objective is to bring together 'changemakers, innovators, artists, entrepreneurs' around themes such as sustainability, health, technology and society. The idea is to provide inspiration and concrete ideas/actions for a better future.

FiftyLab (Brussels, November)

Fifty Lab is a festival designed for curious music lovers, offering an opportunity to discover emerging musical talents from Belgium and beyond. Located in the heart of Brussels, the future of live music, DJ sets, and performance is explored by attendees. Curated recommendations from some of the most influential Belgian and international music programmers (including Primavera Sound, Down the Rabbit Hole, Montreux Jazz Festival, Pukkelpop, and Couleur Café) have been provided, allowing the audience to discover the next musical sensations across all genres and nationalities. In 2023, the Fifty Lab Music Festival was expanded with the introduction of Fifty LabO, which added an array of conferences and talks to the daytime and early evening schedule, complementing the evening and nighttime festival programme.

UNWRAP (Kortrijk, November)

UNWRAP, a conference on the future of digital entertainment, is held annually in Kortrijk, uniting professionals from the game, music, film, and media industries. Trends in games, music, film, and their crossovers are highlighted, with music-related speakers featured alongside discussions on gaming and film. In 2023, panels explored topics such as the future music economy, value creation through music in streaming and gaming, and AI-driven music festival management. After 15 editions of Sonic City and three of UNWRAP, the two festivals have been merged to create a city-wide event. Kortrijk now hosts a week of inspiration, networking, live music, and events aimed at professionals and the public, positioning the city as a hub for the gaming, music, and entertainment industries.

Belgian Booms x Jazzlab

After hosting the European Jazz Conference in Ghent 2024 VI.BE and JazzLab are organising a yearly visitors programme with showcases and networking opportunities for international promoters at one of the famous Belgian Jazz festivals, such as BRAND! in

Mechelen (Kunstencentrum Nona in 2025), Motives for Jazz in Tongeren (De Velinx) in 2026 and Brussels Jazz Festival in Flagey, Brussels in 2027.

Wallifornia (Liège, July)

Wallifornia is an innovative platform based in Liège, Wallonia, that brings together music, technology and entrepreneurship. It combines an annual festival experience with a creative hub that supports artists, tech companies and professionals. Founded in 2017, the event focuses on three pillars: Walifornia MusicTech, a conference for innovation in the music industry; the Wallifornia Creative Hub, an incubator programme for start-ups and artists; and the Walifornia Festival, where music performances go hand in hand with technological presentations. This combination makes it unique in Belgium and Europe.

Les Nuits Botanique (Brussels, May)

Les Nuits Botanique is a major showcase festival in Brussels that serves as a springboard for emerging talent from Belgium and the international music scene. The festival takes place annually in the iconic Botanique, a cultural centre and concert hall known for its intimate and unique atmosphere. Les Nuits Botanique offers a platform to artists from various genres, from indie and pop to electronic and worldwide music, making it a crucial player in the discovery and promotion of new talent. In addition to the performances, Les Nuits Botanique has a strong focus on networking and cross-pollination between artists, professionals and music lovers.

Propulse Festival (Brussels / Ath, January)

Propulse Festival is a professional showcase festival in Brussels that focuses on promoting artists and companies from the French-speaking community of Belgium. The festival covers various disciplines, including music, theatre and dance, and offers emerging talent a platform to present themselves to an audience of programmers, bookers and other professionals from the cultural sector. With its focus on artistic diversity and quality, Propulse attracts both local and international professionals, with the aim of helping artists break into new markets. In the musical field, Propulse presents a wide range of genres, from pop and rock to worldwide music and jazz, with a special focus on French-speaking and Walloon talent. The festival not only offers stage opportunities but also networking opportunities through conferences and meetings.

3.2. Industry Trade and Development Associations, Unions

Belgian Recorded Music Association

The Belgian Recorded Music Association (BRMA) is an organisation that focuses on protecting and managing the copyrights of musicians, composers, and other creatives in the Belgian music industry. The mission of BRMA is to represent, promote, and advise the Belgian recorded music industry. BRMA plays a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of artists and producers, and ensures that they are fairly rewarded for their work.

Belgian Independent Music Association

The Belgian Independent Music Association (BIMA) represents and supports independent music labels and artists in Belgium. Its mission is to advocate for their interests, promote their work, foster collaboration, and strengthen their position nationally and internationally.

BIMA works to create a legal, economic, political, and financial environment that supports the growth of the independent music sector. Key initiatives include advocating for copyright reforms, radio quotas, VAT reductions, and tax credits for music producers. While

defending independents against major companies, BIMA also seeks collaboration to address shared challenges.

Belgian Music Publishers Association

The Belgian Music Publishers Association (BMPA) represents and supports music publishers in Belgium. Its mission is to defend their interests, promote their work, and strengthen the role of music publishing within the national and international music industry.

BMPA works to create a fair and sustainable environment for publishers by fostering professionalism, transparency, and collaboration. Key initiatives include advocacy within collective rights management (such as SABAM), sectoral campaigns, and partnerships with other music organisations. By doing so, BMPA helps to amplify Belgian repertoire and ensure that composers and authors receive proper recognition and remuneration.

Belgian Worldwide Music Network

This non-profit organisation aims to represent the worldwide music sector and its professionals in Belgium: musicians, producers, journalists, managers, programmers, bookers, press agents, authorities, sympathisers, etc. Everyone who works in, around or for worldwide music in the broadest sense of the word.

Their aim is to bring the sector together, to enable moments of exchange and encounter and to represent common interests of the sector. Every year, the Belgian Worldwide Music Network organises various networking events and a showcase event at the Belgian Worldwide Music Night. Also of interest worldwide is Toernee Mondial, a collaboration between various cultural centres and venues in Flanders focusing on this genre.

Music Tech Belgium

Music Tech Belgium is a new network created by Ancienne Belgique, VIERNULVIER, Les Ardentes, Reflektor, VI.BE, Wallifornia and Wilde Westen, with the aim of stimulating technological innovation in the Belgian music sector. The network wants to encourage start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop innovative solutions for challenges in the music sector, such as reducing the ecological footprint, hybrid concert experiences, immersive sound and fair pay for artists. This is achieved through an annual acceleration programme, an innovation summit, regular talks, networking events and pitch sessions. In addition, Music Tech Belgium connects entrepreneurs with investors, governments and research institutions to create a thriving music tech scene that can compete internationally. The network aims to expand further in the coming years and welcome new partners. Various events are planned for the coming year, including panel discussions, networking moments and an innovation summit.

In Flanders

The Federation of Music Festivals in Flanders - FMiV

The FMiV is the umbrella organisation and advocate for recognised organisations active in the festival sector. The FMiV coordinates and formulates positions on all issues that concern its members and the entire festival sector, such as cultural policy, the status of the artist, copyright, infrastructure, taxation with regard to festivals, social security, labour relations, safety, non-profit organisation legislation, etc. It informs its members about the impact of this on their operations and also contacts the competent authorities about this.

Flanders Folk Network

Flanders Folk Network (FFN) is an organisation that focuses on the promotion and support of folk and traditional music in Flanders. The network acts as a platform for musicians,

organisers and lovers of folk music, and plays a crucial role in strengthening folk culture in the region. Flanders Folk Network is an important player in Flemish music culture, as it contributes to the development and preservation of folk music and traditional musical practices. By connecting artists and audiences, FFN helps strengthen the folk community and promote a vibrant cultural scene.

De Muziekgilde

The association for musicians, classical musicians, DJs, composers, and music teachers. In short, an association where everyone who is professionally involved with music can find a voice.

MMaF (Music Managers Federation)

A network of music managers advocating for better working conditions for managers and artists.

In Wallonia

Fédération des Festivals de Musique Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles | IDLM

The FFMWB was an association of more than 30 music members with the aim of providing support to festivals from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in order to professionalise the music festival sector by helping it to develop around common issues. The federation was dissolved, however, in late 2024.

FBMU (Fédération des Bookers et Managers Unis·e·s)

Fédération des Bookers et Managers Unis·e·s, brings together music booking and/or management agencies based in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The FBMU studies the issues related to the sector providing expertise and insights through the shared experiences and solidarity of its members.

Fazz

Founded in 2007 as MUSEACT and renamed FAZZ in 2023, the organisation brings together non-profit actors active in jazz and improvised music in French-speaking Belgium. Since 2011, its members have co-managed the Belgian Jazz Meeting, a biennial showcase for national and international professionals. FAZZ aims to coordinate, represent, and support its members, fostering collaboration and information exchange across the sector. Recognised in 2020 as a professional federation by the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, FAZZ contributes to cultural policy discussions and advocacy for the jazz sector.

FACIR

Founded in 2013, FACIR (Fédération des Auteur·ices, Compositeur·ices et Interprètes Réuni·es) is a professional federation representing musicians across all genres in French-speaking Belgium. It aims to identify common priorities within the sector and to advocate for artists' interests in policy-making, institutions, and the media. FACIR acts as a collective voice for creators and performers, strengthening their visibility and influence within the music ecosystem. The organisation is funded through membership fees and structural support from key partners including PlayRight, SABAM, and the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. By fostering coordination and representation, FACIR plays a central role in defending artists' rights and shaping cultural policies impacting the music sector.

3.3. Collective Management Organisations

There are numerous Collective Management Companies in Belgium that represent different (sub)sectors.

The best-known and relevant CMOs for the music sector are the following:

- **Sabam** – Authors, composers, and publishers across music, visual arts, and literature. They also represent audiovisual authors and authors in performing arts (theatre and dance).
- **PlayRight** – Performing artists (musicians, actors, dancers) for neighbouring rights.
- **SIMIM** – Music producers (phonogram producers) for neighbouring rights. They also represent the producers of videoclips.
- **SEMU** – Publishers of sheet music and song lyrics.
- **Auvibel** – manages private copy levy for music amongst others)
- **Reprobel** – manages lending rights for music carriers amongst others)

[Unisono](#) is a digital platform developed by Sabam, SIMIM and PlayRight to make music licensing simple and transparent. It allows users who wish to play music to easily obtain a license, ensuring that authors, performers and music labels are fairly compensated for their work

There are also [SACD](#) for authors of audiovisual works and performing arts, with a strong focus on theatre; and [Scam](#) for authors of audiovisual and radio documentaries. Actually both SACD & SCAM do audiovisual, SACD focuses on fiction and SCAM on documentary and also does literature).

In addition, there are CMOs also for other cultural sectors, such as SOFAM – Visual artists (painters, sculptors, photographers) and SAJ – Journalists and press authors (written works).

3.4. Other Music Organisations

Flanders has a rich palette of [music education organisations and initiatives](#) aimed at both individual music practitioners and ensembles (classical, jazz and light music, folk, etc.) and at collective music participation (harmonies, choirs, etc.). A number of clubs, music houses, festivals, workshops, amateur arts and art education organisations also focus strongly on talent development. In some organisations, music education takes the form of coaching programmes, both on an artistic and business level. In addition to structurally supported organisations, there are numerous private, project-based or commercial initiatives that offer music education activities (art education, youth culture and socio-artistic education). This rich educational offer forms the basis for both participation and the development of the greatest individual talents, who can grow into a professional career.

The professional and academic programmes are numerous. All in all, more than a thousand students enrol in professional music education every year. In addition to the ‘traditional’ music education in Classical, Contemporary or Jazz and Light Music (master’s and manama), there is now also a new offer, such as the unique producer education or the training in folk music at the [School of Arts Ghent](#) (master’s) or Music, Management and Music Technology (bachelors) at [PXL-Music](#) in Hasselt. Furthermore, the Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound is a Brussels School of Arts for audiovisual arts, drama, stage techniques, media and events and research. Studying at the [RITCS](#) in the direction of Audiovisual Arts is about development and collaboration.

Related education for supporting functions (cultural management, cultural education, cultural communication, entertainment marketing, etc.) or specialisations (such as music therapy, music pedagogy, musicology, musical instrument building or sound engineering) are offered in several places.

With its conservatories, academies and specialised institutions, **Wallonia** offers a wide range of musical education, from classical and contemporary music to pedagogy and sound design. Institutions such as the Royal Conservatory of Liège and Mons play a key role in training professional musicians, while organisations such as [IMEP](#) focus on music education. Together, they form a solid foundation for the Walloon music scene and talent development.

In Wallonie, there is also [IAD \(Institut des Arts de Diffusion\)](#) managing a training programme for music managers.

4. Live Music Sector

4.1. Festivals and venues in Flanders

As far as the [live](#) sector is concerned, Flanders has numerous excellent music clubs, concert halls, nightclubs and festivals that can count on a lot of artistic recognition internationally and play an important role as an economic and tourist lever. Despite the economically fragile times, the concert scene retains its dynamism. New stages are still being added, and the number of activities is very large. The ambition to continue to grow in various areas (infrastructure, positioning, programming, reach, etc.) is noticeable within all genres. Coupled with the increasing professionalism, this requires ongoing initiatives and a realistic regulatory framework.

The Flemish music landscape can be understood in terms of three overlapping circuits rather than strictly separate scenes. These circuits differ in scale, organisation and audiences, but artists often move between them and many of the same challenges apply across the board. The local and grassroots circuit includes youth centres, music cafés and small clubs. This is where many artists take their first steps, experiment, and build an audience. Open stages, competitions and small festivals help emerging musicians gain experience, leading to visibility and sometimes connections with professional bookers or managers.

The institutional and artistic circuit is made up of cultural centres, concert halls and subsidised organisations that present a wide programme of music alongside theatre, dance or film. They play an important role in supporting music that may not be commercial but has strong artistic or cultural value. Because they often work with subsidies, these venues can give a stage both to established artists and to new voices, contributing to artistic development.

The large-scale and commercial circuit revolves around arenas, major festivals and independent promoters who focus on national and international headliners. These events aim for a broad audience and operate on a different financial logic, but they form an important part of the wider ecosystem.

Although each circuit has its own dynamics, they are interconnected. Artists move back and forth between small stages, cultural institutions and major festivals, while the whole field faces common challenges: fair pay, internationalisation, digital disruption and the need for more inclusive and sustainable practices.

4.1.1. Music Festivals in Flanders

Flanders has a unique place in the world of festivals, with more than 280 music festivals attracting more than 5 million visitors annually and Flemish festivals like Rock Werchter, Pukkelpop and Tomorrowland have received numerous industry awards.

See also a brief history of music festivals in Flanders at [Cemper](#).

IN FOCUS: Music Festivals:

Interview with Serge Platel, director of the Federation of Music Festivals in Flanders

Nowhere in the world are so many festivals organised as here, in Flanders ([DeMorgen](#)). Serge Platel of the Federation of Music Festivals in Flanders estimated in 2017 the number of festivals in Flanders and Brussels alone at 300.

Pioneers like Jazz Bilzen and Torhout/Werchter inspired many to give it a try. Tomorrowland now provides a new impetus, with attention to experience, creativity and DJs. "95% of Flemish festivals run entirely on volunteers", Platel notes. This volunteer culture is not only financially essential, but according to him, it also explains the number of festivals. "Association life is in our DNA."

Belgium as an International Festival Destination

Every summer, Belgium transforms into a heaven for music lovers, with festivals taking place every weekend and attracting acts and crowds from all four corners of the world. Belgium has made a name for itself on the music scene in recent years, with iconic festivals such as dance festivals Tomorrowland and Rock Werchter, which attract thousands of music lovers every year.

Professional organisation of Flemish Festivals

The festival sector in Flanders is highly professionally organised and has built up a solid reputation in Europe and beyond. This is due to a mix of organisational skills, logistical expertise, innovation and a strong focus on the total experience of the visitor. Festivals in Flanders pay a lot of attention to the total experience for the audience. This goes beyond music, with extras such as interactive art installations, theatre, food trucks and wellness areas. The aim is to create an unforgettable experience for visitors, which requires professionalism in planning and executing these extra programmes.

Festivals in Flanders are often organised by experienced organisations or partnerships between cultural institutions, governments and private partners. Many organisers have a professional background in event management, which means that processes such as permits, logistics and safety are handled professionally.

An important part of professionalism in the Flemish festival sector is the attention to logistics and infrastructure. Major festivals like Tomorrowland and Rock Werchter have teams of experts who coordinate everything from sound systems to crowd management. This ensures that both visitors and artists have a smooth experience, with amenities such as high-quality sanitary facilities and camping facilities, catering and solid mobility plans.

Rock Werchter and the Global Influence of Stageco

Rock Werchter is a unique experience. The line-up is always world-class, the conditions excellent, the festival feeling omnipresent. Rock Werchter is a multi-award-winning, international top festival. The festival is a must-see for every music lover. In 2025, the festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary (1975-2025). Rock Werchter, one of the oldest festivals in Europe, is also known for its leading role when it comes to logistics and technology.

Stageco, the company from Tildonk, also became world famous in the wake of Rock Werchter. We have probably all seen Stageco's unique stages. Bands such as Pink Floyd, U2, The Rolling Stones, and Genesis relied on the art of this Belgian stage builder. It all started with one man named Hedwig De Meyer, Stageco's founder and president, who organised an annual event in Werchter (Belgium). This required the hiring of a marquee and soon resulted in the Saturday night disco being extended to accommodate a Sunday concert, which later on became the first Rock Werchter festival (1975). After five years, the festival had grown out of its original tent and the stage moved completely outdoors on a new site. Looking for appropriate internships at

decent prices, the Rock Werchter organisers decided to build their own system. Promoters visiting Rock Werchter noted the unique approach to staging and began asking Stageco if similar solutions might be available for their own events. Consequently, Stageco has already produced an astonishing list of successful projects.

“Why is Belgium a festival paradise? Of course, you don't just become the best festival country in the world. Something like that grows, just like the grass, the sacred ground on which the festival takes place.”

Festivals in Flanders

Rock Werchter *Werchter*

Held annually since 1974, Rock Werchter is one of Europe's largest and most renowned music festivals, drawing massive crowds and top-tier international artists. It typically spans four days in late June or early July and showcases diverse genres, with headliners ranging from rock and pop to indie, hip-hop, and electronic music. Originally started as a small-scale rock festival, Rock Werchter has grown into one of the largest and most famous music festivals in Europe.

The music festival landscape has changed significantly over the past few decades, with audiences increasingly interested in niche experiences tailored to specific music genres or demographics. By adding TW Classic and Werchter Boutique, Rock Werchter's organisers could better adapt to these shifts, ensuring that they could capture audiences who might otherwise choose other specialised festivals.

- Werchter Boutique is a one-day festival usually held in June, featuring a more mainstream lineup with a focus on pop, mainstream rock, and accessible music for a broad audience. This event attracts a wide age range, including families and fans of major mainstream acts. With approximately 60 000 attendees, the Boutique setup caters to those interested in a single-day festival with a laid-back, comfortable experience.
- TW Classic, also held annually, focuses on a single-day lineup of classic rock and legendary artists. It features fewer artists than Rock Werchter but offers an exclusive lineup geared toward fans of rock and classic acts. The audience here is mostly adults with a passion for rock heritage, creating a loyal, enthusiastic crowd that appreciates both iconic and contemporary classic rock acts.

When: June or July

Capacity: 88 000/day

Audience & Reach: Rock Werchter attracts over 150 000 attendees from across Europe and beyond. Its audience is a mix of Belgian fans and international visitors, especially from neighbouring countries. For an artist, performing at Rock Werchter is both prestigious and career-boosting. It places artists in front of a massive, diverse audience and positions them alongside global names, increasing their visibility in the European market.

Primary genres: rock and pop.

Tomorrowland *Boom*

Tomorrowland is one of the largest and most prestigious electronic music festivals in the world. It attracts tens of thousands of visitors from over 200 countries every year. With its spectacular decorations, breathtaking light shows and top artists, the festival is a global benchmark for EDM festivals. Tomorrowland stands out with its fantasy-inspired, otherworldly stage designs. Each year, a new theme is introduced, transforming the festival

into a visually stunning experience with intricate details, cutting-edge technology, pyrotechnics, lights, and 3D visuals. Tomorrowland is more than just an event; it is a lifestyle experience. With its magical, fairy-tale-like environment and strong sense of community, the festival has built an emotional bond with its attendees. This connection is reinforced through limited-edition merchandise, clothing lines, memorabilia, and Tomorrowland-themed travel packages.

When: July

Capacity: 70 000/day

Primary genres: EDM, electronic music, house, techno, dubstep, trance, etc

Pukkelpop *Kiewit, Hasselt*

Pukkelpop has a reputation for being experimental and eclectic, catering to fans who appreciate variety and exploration. The lineup includes a broad spectrum of genres, from rock, punk, and indie to electronic, hip-hop, metal, and lesser-known genres like drum and bass or world music. Pukkelpop often showcases cutting-edge or niche artists alongside mainstream acts, attracting an audience open to discovering new sounds and underground genres. While Rock Werchter typically draws a mixed-age crowd, including young adults, middle-aged fans, and older festival-goers who appreciate the convenience, comfort, and world-class lineup, Pukkelpop tends to attract a younger, more alternative crowd that embraces its eclectic, adventurous lineup and countercultural vibe. The festival is known for its more relaxed, experimental atmosphere, with a focus on creativity and diverse experiences. Pukkelpop attendees are often open-minded music fans who value the festival's independent spirit and discovery aspect, making it feel edgier and more spontaneous.

When: August

Capacity: 66 000/day

Primary genres: pop, rock, indie, electronic, hip-hop, and eclectic.

Graspop *Dessel*

Graspop is one of the largest metal festivals in the world and attracts a worldwide audience of metal and rock fans. With an impressive line-up of big names from the metal and hard rock scene, the festival has built a loyal fan base.

When: June

Capacity: 55 000/day

Primary genres: metal, rock.

Reggae Geel *Geel*

Reggae Geel is one of Europe's oldest and most beloved reggae festivals, held annually in Geel, Belgium. It's a cornerstone of the European reggae scene, with a rich history of promoting reggae and its related genres like dancehall, dub, and roots music.

When: August

Capacity: 20 000/day

Primary genres: reggae, roots music.

Dranouter Festival *Dranouter*

This folk festival is one of the most renowned in its genre in Flanders and Europe. Although it was initially a purely folk festival, the repertoire has been expanded over the years to include world music and alternative genres.

When: August

Capacity: 18 000/day

Primary genres: folk, alternative.

Sfinks Mixed *Boechout*

This worldwide music festival is one of the oldest and most iconic festivals of its genre in Flanders. The festival focuses on diversity and brings artists from all over the world to Flanders.

When: July

Capacity: 18 000/day

Primary genres: world music, ethno.

Live /s Live *Antwerp*

Live /s Live is a relatively new but fast-growing festival in Belgium. First held in 2022, it was created to offer a unique festival experience with a focus on high-quality live music, particularly for fans of pop, rock, and indie genres. The three-day festival takes place in the Middenvijverpark on Antwerp's Linkeroever – a spacious oasis of calm. Dageraad – the second stage which was introduced last year as the festival expanded – will again offer concerts in a more intimate setting.

When: July

Capacity: 15 000/day

Primary genres: pop/rock.

Lokerse Feesten *Lokeren*

While most of Belgium's now iconic festivals started out small – including giants like Tomorrowland – the Lokerse Feesten is one of the country's prime examples of how a festival can expand from a local, community-driven event to a large-scale festival attracting visitors from across Belgium and beyond.

When: August

Capacity: 15 000/day

Primary genres: pop, rock, metal, electronic, and eclectic.

Rock Herk *Herk-de-Stad*

Rock Herk is known for its broad musical programming. Originally, it focused mainly on rock music, but the festival now offers a mix of alternative music genres such as rock, punk, hardcore, metal, drum & bass, and electronic music.

When: July

Capacity: 12 500/day

Primary genres: electronic, rock, punk, hardcore, metal, drum & bass.

Antilliaanse Feesten *Hoogstraten*

This festival focuses on Caribbean music and culture and is one of the oldest and largest festivals in Europe that serve this niche.

When: August

Capacity: 12 000/day

Primary genres: Caribbean music.

Gent Jazz *Ghent*

Another festival loved for its quaint location, hidden away in the historic Bijloke site near the city centre. The festival is considered one of Belgium's best jazz festivals, and every year manages to pocket some of the genre's most legendary artists. The other jazz festival in Belgium that is internationally known is [Jazz Middelheim](#), cap. 4000/day.

When: July

Capacity: 10-day event - cap. 4000/day

Primary genres: jazz.

Horst *Vilvoorde*

Horst Arts & Music Festival is an immersive three-day event held annually in Vilvoorde, Belgium, blending electronic music, contemporary art, and innovative architecture. Hosted at Asiat Park, a former military site transformed into a cultural hub, the festival features experimental installations, captivating stage performances, and architectural discoveries that blur the lines between reality and imagination

When: May

Capacity : 12 000/day

Primary genres: electronic.

All these festivals play an important role in the Flemish cultural landscape and each have their own unique history and audience. Other festivals like **Rampage** (cap. 20 000/day), **Extrema** (cap. 23 000/day), **Paradise City** (cap. 15 000/day), **WeCanDance** (cap. 20.000/day) and **Rave Rebels** (cap. 15 000/day) (for electronic music), **Alcatraz** (cap. 18 000/day) (metal) and **Cactus** (cap. 10 000/day) (pop/rock) also represent an impressive diversity in music, culture, and audience. Each of them occupies a unique niche, contributing significantly to Belgium's reputation as a top festival destination.

Music Festival Wizard provides a useful tool for Music Festival Search in Belgium. It also features a magazine.

4.1.2. Music Venues and Clubs in Flanders and Brussels

According to data and insights from Clubcircuit, on average, a concert hall organises 107 concert evenings per year (100 paying concerts, 7 with free admission). The capacity of the halls varies from 250 to 1100 (with Ancienne Belgique, cap. 2000 as an exception). 38% of the annual budget goes to program costs (fees + production costs). On average, this amounts to 855 490€. The average ticket price is 18€ (varying between 11€ and 35€). Depending on the genre, 75% to 90% of the tickets are purchased online. Ticket sales at the entrance still occur sporadically in smaller clubs and for hip-hop or nightlife events.

Shows

2013 (14 venues)	2019 (11 venues)	2022 (10 venues)	2023 (10 venues)
1045	1151	1039	1071

Artists

2013	2019	2022	2023
2792	2692	2260	2458

Visitors

2013	2019	2022	2023
431 409	456 545	457 857	511 206

Table 3. Shows, artists and visitors in Flemish clubs. Source: Clubcircuit.

In the master's thesis of Tom Declercq, the analysis of the data shows that for every euro of subsidy, Flemish clubs get another 0,69€ from other subsidies and no less than 2,53€ from 'the market' (Declercq). Subsidies are a lever and a good investment (VRT).

"In times of austerity, the question is often asked what the economic impact of the subsidised sectors is exactly. Now we have the figures to show that subsidies for music clubs are good investments," says Mike Naert of Het Depot in Leuven. Subsidies are a driving force. They are

necessary to be able to start and to be able to generate other resources. Mike Naert also believes that it is the task of music clubs to also organise small concerts, for example, by artists who are only just starting. These concerts are not profitable. If subsidies disappear, these small concerts will also disappear and the landscape will become impoverished.

Clubcircuit refers to the network of eleven (mostly) subsidised music clubs and concert organisers throughout Flanders and Brussels where popular music artists perform and/or have a residence. Well-known examples include Trix (Antwerp), VK (Brussels) and 4AD (Diksmuide). For several years now, these clubs have been represented by the umbrella organisation [Clubcircuit vzw](#), which focuses on common needs and represents them at various policy levels. The circuit is important for rehearsal and performance opportunities for young artists, such as the [Sound Track course](#).

List of members Clubcircuit 2024:

- 4AD (Diksmuide),
- Ancienne Belgique (Brussels),
- AFF/Bootstaat (Hasselt),
- Cactus (Brugge),
- Casino (Sint-Niklaas),
- Democrazy (Gent),
- De Zwerver (Leffinge/Ostend),
- Het Depot (Leuven),
- N9 (Eeklo),
- Pilar (Brussels),
- Trix (Antwerp),
- VK (Brussels),
- Wilde Westen (Kortrijk).

Clubcircuit has been the consultative body within which those responsible for these clubs meet to discuss common themes.

Music clubs not only have a well-developed receptive concert operation, but also fulfil other functions: they set up workshops, organise festivals, offer rehearsal spaces, etc. As a result, they provide a new dynamic and stimulating impulses in Flemish music life. Virtually all the big names have passed by the stage of a music club. Music clubs offer playing opportunities and form an irreplaceable link in the ecosystem of the music sector. They play a crucial role in talent development. The arts decree requires clubs to profile themselves sharply in terms of content, based on artistic criteria and content choices, so that there is sufficient diversity in the landscape. The clubs are happy to take on this challenge. After all, placing the artistic content central and making these sharp choices partly form the identity of a club. This is partly how they derive their specific role in the music landscape and from this they relate to other players, such as the commercial concert circuit.

And finally, music clubs play a role in community building that should not be underestimated. Due to their strong local anchoring, music clubs enjoy great prestige in the local community. They are not only meeting places for music lovers, but also play a role in the social fabric of a local community. The efforts of motivated volunteers prove this every day on the ground. According to the most recent figures from Club Circuit, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of visitors.

4.1.2.1. Pop & Rock, Eclectic

Ordered by capacity from largest to smallest.

Koning Boudewijnstadion *Brussels*

The King Baudouin Stadium, located on the Heysel plain in Brussels, is Belgium's largest stadium, with more than 50 000 seats. Every year, major sporting events take place here, such as the national football team's matches, the Belgian Cup final, the prestigious Memorial Van Damme, etc. It is also the venue for concerts by some of the world's biggest artists, such as the Rolling Stones, Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, U2, Madonna, Beyoncé, Robbie Williams, Genesis, Bruce Springsteen.

Capacity: 60 000

Genres: all genres

Notable international acts: the Rolling Stones, Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, U2, Madonna, Beyoncé, Robbie Williams, Genesis, Bruce Springsteen, etc.

Afas Dome *Antwerp*

One of the largest indoor arenas in Belgium, Sportpaleis hosts major international artists across various genres, including pop, rock, and hip-hop. It's a premier venue for large-scale concerts and events.

Capacity: 20 000

Genres: rock, pop, hip-hop, classic, comedy & family shows

Notable international acts: Beyoncé, U2, Coldplay, Metallica, Lady Gaga

Vorst Nationaal *Brussels*

A popular venue for both local and international artists. It frequently hosts big names in music and has a varied lineup across genres.

Capacity: 8000

Genres: rock, pop, soul, R&B, hip-hop, EDM

Notable international acts: Prince, Madonna, Depeche Mode, Bruce Springsteen, The Cure

Lotto Arena *Antwerp*

This arena is often used for concerts and events, hosting both emerging and established international artists. It's known for its versatility and can be adapted for different types of performances. Since the opening of the Lotto Arena in 2007, one can speak of a real Antwerp event site. The Lotto Arena is a smaller hall next to the Sportpaleis and is connected to both the Sportpaleis and the Hospitality Centre.

Capacity: 7000

Genres: pop, rock, hip-hop, electronic, comedy & family shows

Notable international acts: Billie Eilish, Dua Lipa, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, Kendrick Lamar

Ancienne Belgique *Brussels*

A renowned venue for live music, the AB hosts a mix of international acts and local talent. It's well-regarded for its intimate setting and diverse programming, covering genres like rock, pop, and electronic music.

Capacity: 2000 (mainhall) + 250 (club)

Genres: rock, pop, electronic music

Notable international acts: Coldplay, Arctic Monkeys, Adele, LCD Soundsystem

De Roma *Antwerp*

Known for its eclectic programming, De Roma features a diverse array of genres, including rock, pop, jazz, blues, and world music. The venue attracts both emerging and established artists, offering a platform for various musical styles. De Roma is a cultural landmark in Antwerp and is often recognised for its commitment to promoting live music and

supporting local talent. The venue also hosts a variety of cultural events, including film screenings and theatrical performances, making it a versatile space for the arts.

Capacity: 1800

Genres: rock, pop, jazz, blues, world music

Notable international acts: Patti Smith, Bryan Ferry, Suzanne Vega, Kronos Quartet, Tindersticks

Handelsbeurs *Ghent*

Handelsbeurs is known for its diverse programming, showcasing a mix of genres, including rock, pop, jazz, electronic, and world music. The venue frequently hosts both local and international artists, making it a key player in the Belgian music scene.

Capacity: 700

Genres: rock, pop, jazz, electronic, world music

Notable international acts: Bon Iver, Norah Jones, Yann Tiersen, José González, Kamasi Washington

Be•at (part of Live Nation BE) manages some of the most iconic event sites in the country, such as the Afas Dome, Lotto Arena, Vorst Nationaal, Capitole Gent, Stadsschouwburg Antwerpen, Trixxo Theatre and Trixxo Arena in Hasselt.

4.1.2.2. Jazz, Folk & Worldwide

Ordered by capacity from largest to smallest.

BOZAR *Brussels*

One of the biggest concert venues for jazz and classical music in Brussels.

Capacity: 2000

Genres: jazz, classical

Bijloke Music Centre *Ghent*

Concert hall in Ghent with both jazz and classical programming (and home to Ghent Jazz, JazzLab & the Conservatory of Ghent).

Capacity: 900

Genres: jazz, classical music

Flagey *Brussels*

Flagey in Brussels is a historic cultural centre and concert venue, renowned for its exceptional acoustics and diverse programming across music, cinema, and performing arts.

Capacity: 860

Genres: jazz, classical music

Muziekcentrum Dranouter *Dranouter*

Muziekcentrum Dranouter is a vibrant music venue and cultural hub located in the village of Dranouter, Belgium. It plays a significant role in promoting and preserving folk and world music, offering a rich programme of concerts, festivals, and educational initiatives. The centre is also known for its annual Dranouter Festival, one of Belgium's leading folk festivals, which showcases both established and emerging artists from Belgium and around the world.

Capacity: 500

Genres: folk, ethno

Muziekpublique *Brussels*

Muziekpublique is a Brussels-based organisation dedicated to traditional and world music. Its annual Hide & Seek Festival presents concerts in unusual and iconic city locations such as museums, historic buildings and hidden sites, combining cultural heritage with diverse global sounds.

Capacity: 100–400 (depending on venue)

Genres: traditional, world, folk, acoustic

Merodefestival *Flemish Brabant*

Merodefestival is a concert series bringing folk and world music to historic churches and heritage sites in the Merode region. Its programming highlights acoustic and cross-cultural encounters, creating intimate experiences where music and space reinforce each other.

Capacity: ±150–300 (per location)

Genres: folk, world, acoustic

Hnita Jazz Club *Heist-op-den-Berg*

Legendary jazz club in Heist-op-den-Berg, recently renovated.

Capacity: 120

Genres: jazz

't Ey *Belsele*

Music club 't Ey vzw is a concert hall in Belsele that focuses on acoustic music with a focus on folk. Musicclub 't Ey collaborates with many other cultural instances within the city like the Academy of Arts, Sint-Niklaas' cultural centre, many other venues, local and national associations to organise larger activities.

Capacity: 100

Genres: folk, ethno

More jazz clubs in Belgium can be [found here](#).

4.1.2.3. Nightlife

The nightlife in Flanders and Brussels, and the resulting music scene, is notorious and famous all over the world. Flanders has a rich and diverse nightlife culture, and several clubs have played an important role in both the Belgian and international scenes over the years. In the 90s, Flanders had several legendary clubs with big names such as La Rocca, Cherry Moon, Fuse, Boccaccio. Here are some of the most influential nightlife clubs in Flanders and Brussels nowadays (Ordered by capacity from largest to smallest):

Kompass Klub *Ghent*

Description: Kompass Klub is one of the most renowned clubs in Flanders in the field of electronic music. The club in Ghent is known for its underground atmosphere and line-up of both top international DJs and local talent. The raw, industrial character of the location, combined with an excellent sound system, makes for a unique clubbing experience. Kompass has built a strong reputation in the international techno and house scene in a short time.

Capacity: 1500

Genres: electronic

Fuse *Brussels*

Fuse is a nightclub in the Marollen district of the Belgian capital Brussels. The establishment opened in 1994. Although Fuse is technically located in Brussels, this club plays a crucial role in the Flemish nightlife. Fuse is one of the oldest and most legendary techno clubs in Belgium and is known for its pure focus on techno and house. It is an

unmissable location for electronic music lovers and attracts clubbers from all over Flanders and beyond. Fuse is regularly mentioned in lists of the best clubs in the world and has hosted international techno legends such as Jeff Mills, Laurent Garnier, and Carl Cox.

Capacity: 800

Genres: electronic

Notable international acts: Jeff Mills, Laurent Garnier, and Carl Cox.

Other nightclubs like [Traum Club](#) (Antwerp), [Garage Klub](#) (Antwerp), [Club Vaag](#) (Antwerp), [Funke](#) (Gent), [Decadance](#) (Gent) and [Horst Club](#) (Vilvoorde) are also an important part of the scene.

4.2. Festivals and venues in Wallonia

As far as the [live scene](#) is concerned, just like Flanders, Wallonia has also numerous music clubs, concert halls and festivals that can count on a lot of artistic recognition internationally and play an important role as an economic and tourist lever. Despite the economically fragile times, the concert circuit retains its dynamism. New stages are still being added, and the number of activities is very large. The ambition to continue to grow in various areas (infrastructure, positioning, programming, reach, etc.) is noticeable within all genres. Coupled with the increasing professionalism, this requires ongoing impulses and a realistic regulatory framework.

In contrast to Flanders, where the festival scene is influenced by the global anglophone trends, in Wallonia, the programmes are often more focused on French-speaking artists, worldwide music and chanson, such as Les Ardentes and Francofolies de Spa. This cultural diversity reflects the languages and preferences of the regions, with Wallonia being more oriented towards France and Flanders towards the English-speaking world.

Flanders has a greater concentration of well-equipped concert halls, such as Sportpaleis (Antwerp) and Vorst Nationaal (Brussels, Flemish side), which attract international artists. Wallonia has fewer large halls and focuses on smaller, more intimate venues such as Le Forum de Liège or Le Botanique in Brussels.

While the Flemish music industry benefits from a highly developed infrastructure and more private sponsorship, in Wallonia, there is often more dependence on public subsidies, such as through the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, which supports smaller festivals and initiatives. This allows for unique events to emerge, but the scale is often more limited. In addition, Wallonia places more emphasis on cultural participation and social projects around music. These differences make both regions unique and complementary within the Belgian music sector, each with their own strengths and challenges.

4.2.1. Music Festivals

The festival landscape in Wallonia is a dynamic mix of large, international events and small-scale, local festivals that reflect the diversity of the region. Festivals such as Dour, Les Ardentes in Liège and the Francofolies de Spa are flagships of Walloon festival culture, with a focus on French-speaking artists and urban and pop genres. They attract tens of thousands of visitors each year and offer a stage to both established names and emerging talent. Wallonia distinguishes itself through its strong cultural anchoring: festivals often go beyond music and integrate art, literature and social themes into their programmes, as can be seen with Esperanzah!, which combines world music with a social message.

In addition, there is a strong focus on accessibility and participation. Many Walloon festivals are supported by public subsidies, which helps to keep ticket prices affordable and attract a wide audience. Small-scale festivals such as Nandrin Festival play an important role in discovering alternative music genres and niche artists, making them a breeding ground for new sounds. Due to

their location in nature or historical towns, Walloon festivals often offer unique settings, which contribute to an intimate and authentic atmosphere that is loved by visitors. This mix of large-scale professionalism and small-scale authenticity makes Wallonia a lively and varied festival landscape.

Blue Bird Festival *Ohey*

The Bluebird Festival is a relatively new addition to Belgium's festival landscape, focusing on intimate and innovative music experiences. This festival focuses on acoustic and indie-folk music, set against a serene countryside backdrop. Its smaller scale creates a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for music lovers seeking soulful and unplugged performances.

When: Early July

Genre: indie, acoustic and experimental music, highlighting singer-songwriters and emerging talent.

Couleur Café *Brussels*

Couleur Café is one of Belgium's most iconic music festivals, held annually in Brussels. Since its inception in 1990, the festival has become renowned for its celebration of African, Caribbean, and global rhythms, blending genres like reggae, hip-hop, funk, soul, R&B, Latin, and more. Over the years, it has hosted world-class artists such as Wu-Tang Clan, Busta Rhymes, and Cypress Hill.

When: June

Genre: African, Caribbean, and global rhythms, blending genres like reggae, hip-hop, funk, soul, R&B, Latin, and more.

Dour Festival *Dour*

Spread over five days, Dour is a haven for diverse musical tastes, from hip-hop to electronic and alternative rock. It's one of Belgium's largest festivals, promoting cutting-edge acts and a party-like atmosphere. Notable past headliners include Aphex Twin and The Blaze. The event appeals to adventurous, festival-savvy audiences looking for boundary-pushing performances.

When: July

Genre: Eclectic (Alternative, Hip-Hop, Electro, Rock, and World Music).

Esperanzah! *Floreffe Abbey*

Esperanzah! combines music with activism, showcasing artists while advocating for sustainability and solidarity. Held at the historic Floreffe Abbey, it offers a blend of concerts, workshops, and discussions, attracting socially conscious festival-goers.

When: Early August

Genre: World Music, Reggae, and Folk.

Francofolies de Spa *Spa*

Dedicated to celebrating Francophone music, this festival offers a mix of French chanson, pop, and rock. Held in the picturesque town of Spa, it combines a rich cultural experience with a warm community vibe. It's ideal for fans of French-speaking artists and those seeking a laid-back yet culturally immersive event.

When: Mid-July

Genre: Francophone and World Music.

LaSemo *Enghien*

This family-friendly festival promotes sustainability, with an eclectic lineup covering world music, pop, and folk. Held in the scenic Parc d'Enghien, LaSemo offers street performances, artisanal markets, and green initiatives, making it popular with environmentally conscious attendees and families.

When: Early July

Genre: Family-Friendly, Eclectic (Folk, Rock, Electro).

Les Ardentes Liège

Les Ardentes has grown into a major event, drawing over 90,000 attendees annually. Known for its vibrant mix of genres, the festival in Liège has developed a strong rap and urban music focus in recent years, featuring international stars like Kendrick Lamar and Travis Scott alongside emerging artists. Its dynamic lineup blends hip-hop, electronic, and pop music, attracting a youthful and energetic crowd.

When: July

Genre: Urban, Hip-Hop, and Electronic.

Listen Festival Brussels

Listen Festival is Brussels' leading urban and electronic music festival, taking place across various venues in the city. Since its start in 2016, it has grown into an influential platform for electronic music and club culture, combining concerts, DJ sets, talks and workshops. The festival not only presents established international names in house, techno, hip-hop and experimental electronic music, but also highlights Belgian talent and fosters connections between artists, audiences and industry professionals. Its citywide format and emphasis on diversity and innovation make it a cornerstone of Brussels' contemporary music scene.

When: April (in November since last year)

Genre: Electronic, Urban, Experimental.

Micro Festival Liège

The Micro Festival is a boutique music event held annually in Liège, Wallonia. Since its debut in 2010, it has become known for its intimate yet vibrant atmosphere. The festival takes place in the green surroundings. It promotes musical discovery and friendliness, making it a great spot for festival-goers looking for a more personal experience. It typically features a diverse range of artists, often highlighting up-and-coming talent alongside more established names from various music genres.

When: Early August

Genre: indie, acoustic and experimental music.

Ronquières Festival Ronquières (near the Inclined Plane)

Located near the iconic inclined plane of Ronquières, this three-day festival combines stunning scenery with eclectic music. Its lineup typically features a mix of international stars and local Belgian talent, such as Placebo, Indochine and The Haunted Youth. The intimate setting appeals to families and fans of varied musical styles.

When: Early August

Genre: Rock, Pop, and Chanson.

4.2.2. Music Venues and Clubs

Wallonia offers a rich and diverse ecosystem of musical venues that cater to foreign bands, ranging from intimate cultural spaces to large-scale arenas. This variety allows international artists to perform in settings that suit their audience size, genre, and atmosphere, making the region a key destination for musicians exploring Belgium and its neighbouring countries.

Small and Medium-Sized Venues, such as cultural centres and independent music clubs, provide an ideal starting point for niche or emerging foreign bands. Cultural centres like Le Delta in Namur are versatile spaces that host concerts alongside theatre and art exhibitions, fostering strong connections with local audiences. Independent clubs, like Le Rockerill in Charleroi, offer an

intimate atmosphere perfect for bands on their first international tours or with dedicated cult followings. Concert Halls bridge the gap between small clubs and large arenas, offering capacities from a few hundred to several thousand. Equipped with professional sound and lighting systems, venues are popular for mid-sized international acts across a variety of genres.

For high-profile foreign bands with extensive fan bases, Large Arenas and Multi-Functional Spaces provide world-class facilities and significant capacity. The Spiroudome in Charleroi exemplifies these venues, often hosting major stops on international tours. Similarly, Wallonia's Festivals are a prominent platform for foreign acts, bringing diverse audiences together in open-air settings; Les Ardentes in Liège is a standout example.

Beyond traditional venues, Wallonia also embraces Alternative and DIY Spaces for experimental and underground music scenes. Locations like Magasin 4 in Brussels, while technically outside Wallonia, are frequented by Walloon audiences seeking unique performances in unconventional settings. Additionally, Public Spaces and Open-Air Venues, such as parks and historical sites, host outdoor concerts during cultural festivals, providing a stage for foreign bands in visually striking environments.

Foreign artists considering performances in Wallonia should be mindful of the region's predominant French language and its cultural nuances, though many venues offer multilingual support. Aligning venue size with their fan base and leveraging Wallonia's position within European touring routes can maximise their reach. Together, these factors underscore Wallonia's vibrant appeal as a dynamic hub for international music.

Club Plasma (now part of Court-Circuit, see below)

Here's an overview of the ten music clubs that used to form Club Plasma, a platform for contemporary music venues in Wallonia and Brussels, currently part of Court-Circuit.

Atelier 210 (Brussels) A medium-sized venue in Brussels that supports a mix of emerging and established artists, focusing on innovative and experimental performances.

Atelier Rock (Huy) Located in Huy, this space promotes rock and pop music, often serving as a launching pad for regional talents.

Belvédère (Namur) Built in the former Namur cable car terminal in 2007, between the citadel and the open-air theatre, this 200-seat concert hall suspended on the hillside offers an exceptional setting for groups who come to perform there one or two evenings a week. It also organises exhibitions, workshops and artist residencies there. A scenic venue in Namur known for intimate concerts that span diverse genres, from folk to indie and electronic music.

Ferme du Biéreau (Louvain-La-Neuve) This venue focuses on acoustic and classical-inspired performances, as well as jazz and world music, providing a unique atmosphere for live shows.

L'Entrepôt (Arlon) Situated in the south of Wallonia, L'Entrepôt in Arlon is a hub for alternative and indie music, often spotlighting cross-border collaborations with artists from Luxembourg and France.

Le Salon (Silly) A charming and versatile space in Silly, Le Salon offers a diverse programme ranging from indie and folk to local Belgian acts.

Magasin 4 (Brussels) Magasin4 is a club founded in 1994 dedicated to alternative music: Hardcore, Funk, Punk, Alternative Rock, Ska, Pop, Experimental Musics, Chanson Française, Jazz and a lot of original fusions. It is entirely managed by an ASBL, and runs

completely on volunteer work. It is a place where you can make discoveries. In this logic, the entrance fee is quite affordable.

Recyclart (Brussels) Known for its multidisciplinary approach, Recyclart combines music with visual arts and community projects. The venue often features underground and avant-garde acts.

Reflektor (Liège) In the heart of the Cité Ardente, near the Carré, the REFLEKTOR brings current music (rock, pop, electro, techno, house, drum & bass, dub, reggae, urban, metal, hip-hop, beats, world, jazz, funk, etc.) to Liège all year round. The hall, which can accommodate an audience of 600 people per date, has a large stage and a powerful sound system, making it one of the most popular venues in the city for live music lovers.

Rockerill (Charleroi) A former industrial site turned cultural hotspot, Rockerill is known for its eclectic programming, including electronic, rock, and worldwide music.

These clubs collectively represent the vibrant and diverse musical ecosystem in Wallonia and Brussels, catering to a wide spectrum of genres and audiences. They are vital platforms for both emerging and established artists to connect with local and regional audiences.

KIOSK RADIO *Brussels*

Founded in 2017, Kiosk Radio in Brussels is an online community radio station operating from a characteristic glass kiosk in the Warandepark. The station serves as a crucial platform for emerging Belgian artists, established names and international guests. The offer is broad and eclectic, covering genres such as electronic music, hip-hop, jazz and experimental styles. Known for its 'diggers' — DJs who bring rare and unknown music to the fore — Kiosk Radio offers artists the opportunity to present their music to an international audience. By organising live broadcasts from the public space of the park, a sense of connection is created between artists, listeners and the local community.

The relevance of Kiosk Radio for musicians and artists is significant, with an impact on both a local and international level. Here are three key aspects: Kiosk Radio offers artists a platform to share their music with an international audience. Through the 24/7 livestream and on-demand availability of shows via Mixcloud, artists can increase their reach, especially in niche and underground scenes where traditional media is often limited. The collaborations with international platforms such as NTS Radio in London contribute to the international visibility of Belgian artists and enable them to access new markets.

Through its focus on 'diggers' — DJs who share rare and unknown music — Kiosk Radio encourages musicians to explore new music styles and experiment with less conventional sounds. This offers artists creative freedom, which is essential for their artistic development. The live broadcasts from the public space of the Warandepark give artists the opportunity to test their music and connect directly with listeners and the local community.

Kiosk Radio acts as a meeting place for artists, DJs, music lovers and cultural players. Resident DJs, live events, and collaborations with festivals provide musicians with access to valuable networks. This can stimulate new collaborations, performances and creative exchanges. For many emerging artists, this is crucial in building a sustainable career within the music industry.

By combining these functions, Kiosk Radio plays an essential role in the career development of artists and in the positioning of the Belgian music scene within a global network.

Le Botanique *Brussels*

From the perspective of a foreign booker or artist manager, Le Botanique in Brussels is a highly attractive venue for several reasons. The venue is a well-known cultural centre in Brussels and a prestigious location for showcasing both emerging and established artists. The venue comprises several performance spaces, including La Rotonde, Orangerie, and Witloof Bar, which accommodate different audience sizes and atmospheres. This allows for a range of performances, from intimate acoustic sets to larger concerts.

Le Botanique is known for its commitment to discovering and promoting emerging talent across genres, especially indie, electronic, and world music. This makes it an excellent platform for introducing new international acts to the Belgian market. As Brussels is a major European hub, performing at Le Botanique can be a gateway to the broader European market. The city's diverse population also means that artists have access to a wide and varied audience. The venue often partners with festivals such as the Nuits Botanique, offering further opportunities for exposure. It also provides professional sound and lighting, making it easier for touring artists to deliver high-quality performances. For foreign bookers or managers, Le Botanique offers a credible, supportive environment to build an artist's profile in Belgium and beyond. Its reputation as a cultural institution can serve as a strong endorsement for new and upcoming artists.

Spirit of 66 *Verviers*

Spirit of 66 is a legendary music venue located in Verviers, Wallonia, known for its intimate atmosphere and dedication to live music, especially within rock-oriented genres. Established in 1995, the venue has become a staple for both local and international acts. The venue hosts a wide range of genres, including blues, progressive rock, hard rock, and tribute bands. Recent and upcoming acts plus tribute bands honouring classic rock icons like Genesis and Nirvana. It also embraces modern trends, featuring Southern rock groups and local Belgian acts. For artist bookers, Spirit of 66 is an excellent stage for connecting with a dedicated audience of rock and blues enthusiasts, offering opportunities to showcase both rising talents and established names. Its reputation for high-quality acoustics and passionate crowd makes it a prime choice for live recordings and memorable performances.

IN FOCUS: Interview with David Dehard ([Court-Circuit](#))

Historical Evolution and Institutional Support in Wallonia

Over the past decades, the music industry in Wallonia has undergone significant evolution, largely due to the efforts of organisations such as Court-Circuit. Originally, music was performed in simple spaces without facilities, which led to the need for structural support and subsidies. Initiatives such as Club Plasma, founded in 2006, played a crucial role in professionalising music venues by promoting collaboration and offering marketing and management training. This process culminated in the creation of LiveDMA, a European network that collects data and supports the management of music networks, which became particularly important when small festivals and local organisations asked the government for help directly.

Regional Differences

Despite this progress, there remain major differences between Flanders and Wallonia, both in terms of funding and recognition. Flemish music institutions enjoy a longer tradition and higher subsidies, while Wallonia has historically received less funding, partly due to structural and political factors. In addition, there is a lack of pride in local artists in Wallonia, which hinders visibility and recognition in the wider music sector. This contrasts with Flanders, where artists

often have more regional support and a stronger media presence, illustrating the challenges for the Walloon music scene. Nevertheless, Court-Circuit remains an essential intermediary between government and organisations, not only facilitating subsidies but also encouraging diversity and inclusivity in the sector.

While Wallonia retains its unique characteristics, collaboration with Flanders and other regions is essential for growth. Bands from Wallonia often find it easier to break through in France than in Flanders, while Flemish artists are more focused on international markets. This gap can be closed through more strategic promotion and investment in cross-border projects. Court-Circuit continues to advocate for an inclusive and sustainable music industry in which both professional and amateur artists can flourish. At the same time, the organisation works on better working conditions and training for staff in venues, thereby not only professionalising the music industry but also strengthening its social role.

Large-Scale vs Small-Scale Festivals

A key point is the diversity of festivals and the distinction between large-scale and small-scale events. Small festivals are praised for their intimate atmosphere and direct connection with the audience. Furthermore, David highlights how an abundance of music options and events leads to a saturated market, making it difficult for both artists and audiences to make sustainable choices.

Challenges

Finally, attention should be paid to the financial and logistical challenges that artists and venues face. For new artists, charging high fees is often a stumbling block, while concert venues struggle to survive amid increasing competition. Sustainability in the music industry is seen as a core challenge, with collaboration between sector parties deemed necessary to develop a common strategy.

The cultural differences between Flanders and Wallonia are also noticeable in how their venues are funded. Subsidies occupy a significant part of the revenues of concert halls. The higher the share of public intervention, the higher the revenues due to ticket sales. Indeed, at Club Plasma, ticket sales only cover 65% of the programme on average, while they cover 77% at Club Circuit (Useful information on [Court-circuit en chiffres](#) in 2019-2020).

In the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, [cultural policies](#) concerning contemporary popular music (*musiques actuelles*) are mainly implemented at the same level of authority. These aim to support, promote, develop and professionalise the music scene in all its diversity. They are aimed either directly at artists or at recognised concert venues and organisations.

4.2.2.1. Club Plasma / Court-Circuit

Club Plasma was the label for 10 founding venues recognised by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. It included venues specifically and mainly dedicated to contemporary popular music (*musiques actuelles*), fulfilling broadcasting missions, as well as support, training, residencies and other activities related to this sector. The members were: Le Reflektor/les Ardentes Club (asbl Festiv@Liège), l'Atelier Rock, l'Entrepôt (Losange Fondation asbl), le Belvédère (Panama asbl), le Magasin 4 (Entropie asbl), le Recyclart, la Ferme du Biéreau, l'Atelier 210, le Rockerill and le Salon (Silly Concerts asbl). Originally, the creation of Club Plasma aimed to improve the infrastructure of existing venues, to professionalise activities specifically focused on contemporary music and to develop common communication. All members have an independent programme. Club Plasma existed up until 2019, and in 2024, the venues were integrated in Court-Circuit.

[Court-Circuit members](#) are professional contemporary popular music (*musiques actuelles*) venues (labelled "Club Plasma" and/or Cultural Centres) and concert organisations, professional or in the process of becoming professional, without fixed equipment (associations and festivals). All these structures promote emergence, discovery and musical diversity in a professional and friendly setting. 20 of them are in Brussels, 45 in Wallonia. Alongside Plasma (10) also cultural centres (6), collectives (15), festivals (18) and halls & concert cafes (31) can be found.

In 2022, Court-Circuit gathered data from 9 of the 10 Plasma venues and reported of 528 events and parties organised with 1292 artists or groups programmed and 128 952 people present in the audience ([Court-Circuit](#)). Court-circuit.live is the online agenda that lists concerts in Wallonia and Brussels. Court-Circuit members, partners and artists can enter their upcoming events there. A search tool allows the user to find concerts in their region or by popular preferences.

4.3. Promoters and Booking Agents in Belgium

In **Flanders**, there are a few big players and independent promoters that dominate the music and event industry. The main music promoters make sure that both international top artists and local bands perform in concert halls and at festivals. Festival promotion in **Wallonia** is characterised by a blend of global operators and local organisers, contributing to a dynamic and diverse event landscape. This mix of global operators and local organisers enables Wallonia to present a broad spectrum of musical events, from major festivals with international headliners that attract wide audiences, to smaller-scale initiatives that highlight local talent and specific genres.

Busker

Busker is a young and dynamic agency that focuses on Belgian and international artists within the pop, rock, and alternative genres. Busker handles bookings for 120 Belgian artists and around 500 festival performances. They work with emerging Belgian artists and focus on developing long-term careers for them as well as booking both concerts in clubs and performances at major festivals. In 2021, Busker joined forces with Scandinavian independent entertainment company All Things Live and since 2022, Busker has been working very closely with management agency Musickness. In addition to the familiar concert and festival bookings, Busker promotes live events with the aim of supporting the careers of the artists on the roster even better.

FKP Scorpio

The FKP Scorpio Belgium office opened its doors in January 2020 and is part of the international FKP Scorpio group that has headquarters in Hamburg. FKP Scorpio is one of the largest independent concert and festival organisers in Europe, and also has a strong presence in Flanders. The company is originally from Germany, but has expanded its activities to several countries, including Belgium. They have their own festival in Flanders (Live/s Live).

Gracia Live

Gracia Live is a concert and event promoter based in Antwerp, founded in 2011. Since its inception, the company has specialised in bringing high-quality international productions to Belgian audiences, ranging from concerts by Adele, Céline Dion, Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Paul Simon to large-scale spectacles such as Disney On Ice, Lord of the Dance and The Lord of the Rings in Concert. In recent years, Gracia Live has broadened its scope by also presenting film-concerts and exhibitions, including The Art of Banksy. The company positions itself as a key player in the Belgian live music market, combining blockbuster events with attention to smaller venues and artist development. Its recent initiative, Brussels Palace Open Air, introduces a new outdoor concert series in front of the Royal

Palace, signalling its ambition to create iconic cultural moments in the capital. At the same time, Gracia Live has expressed an interest in revitalising small 100–200 capacity clubs, aiming to support the grassroots layer of the music ecosystem. Known for its professional integrity, the company has publicly rejected speculative ticketing practices, underlining its commitment to fair access for audiences. This dual focus (on both international top acts and local development) illustrates Gracia Live's growing role as a versatile and influential promoter in Belgium.

Greenhouse Talent

Greenhouse Talent is an independent, international concert and comedy promoter, booking agency and festival organiser with offices in Ghent (Belgium) and Breda (Netherlands). Together, the offices promote more than 500 concerts, comedy shows and family shows annually and the roster consists of more than 1000 international and national acts and artists. Greenhouse Talent promotes, organises and books across all (music) genres in large and small locations, from local halls to large arenas such as the Sportpaleis, Vorst Nationaal, Paleis 12, Ziggo Dome, AFAS Live, GelreDome and Rotterdam Ahoy. Greenhouse Talent also produces concerts and festivals at unique locations such as the Sint-Pietersplein in Ghent (Prince, Leonard Cohen, Ennio Morricone), the beach of Zeebrugge (Bon Jovi), Strijp-S (Bryan Adams, UB40, Madness), the Amsterdamse Bos (Once In A Blue Moon Festival) and Goffertpark (Rammstein). Greenhouse Talent has a solid reputation in the music industry, both domestically and internationally. In 2023, they took over the organisation of the Gent Jazz festival.

Live Nation

Live Nation Belgium is a subsidiary of Live Nation Entertainment. The company specialises in organising concerts, festivals and other events in Belgium. Live Nation Belgium is involved in some of the biggest concerts and festivals in the country, including: Rock Werchter, TW Classic, Werchter Boutique, Pukkelpop and Graspop Metal Meeting as well as being involved in Dour and Les Ardentes. In addition to festivals, Live Nation Belgium organises concerts by big international artists in venues such as the Sportpaleis and the Lotto Arena in Antwerp or Vorst Nationaal in Brussels. Live Nation Belgium acts as a promoter and organiser of events and plays a key role in bringing internationally renowned artists to Belgium. They manage ticketing, marketing and logistics for events, usually through Ticketmaster, which is also a subsidiary of Live Nation Entertainment.

Toutpartout

Toutpartout is a Belgian independent concert promoter and booking agent that is mainly active in the alternative and indie scene. They book artists for venues such as Botanique, Het Depot, and Ancienne Belgique. Toutpartout is instrumental in the promotion of independent and underground music, providing smaller and alternative artists with a platform in the competitive European music market. The agency collaborates with a diverse range of artists spanning various genres, with a primary focus on alternative, indie rock, folk, post-rock, and experimental music. Representing both international and local European talent, Toutpartout facilitates the organisation of tours throughout Europe. Over time, their roster has featured several influential artists.

In addition to the big players in **Flanders**, there are also some smaller, independent promoters who organise more niche events or concerts in specific genres or support emerging artists: [Amplify](#), [BeRoots](#), [Peter Verstraelen](#), [Kurious](#), [RedCat](#), [Gri Gri Music](#), [Odyssey](#), [Inside Jazz](#) and [Rumoer](#). Local promoters, which promote underground and experimental music, also play an important role in

the Flemish music scene. Some other local smaller promoters include [Skinfama](#), [Culte](#), [Luik Agency](#), [Julia Camino](#), [Full Colorz Agency](#), and [Superkarma](#), among others.

Back in the Dayz *Wallonia*

Back in the Dayz, active since 2009, is a prominent Belgian agency specializing in artist management, booking, concert production, and event organisation. Annually, they organise and co-produce hundreds of concerts, significantly contributing to the promotion and development of music in Belgium. While particularly strong in hip-hop, pop, and electronic music, representing both Belgian (e.g., Roméo Elvis, Caballero & JeanJass, Damso, Le Motel) and international artists, their expanding catalogue now spans pop, variety, pop rock, indie, and electro. Beyond their core services, Back in the Dayz has diversified, offering a recording studio (Studio Planet with Caballero & JeanJass), a record label, a publishing company, and a media platform (Check). They actively organise concerts and festival performances, including Uzine, Fcknye, and Inc'rock, across Wallonia, and collaborate with event organisers in Flanders.

Intersection *Wallonia*

Intersection is a Belgian booking agency based in Brussels. It represents a diverse roster of artists across various genres, supporting them with live performances and industry exposure. The agency works with artists like Through The Void, as well as others like Fishbone, Krakin' Kellys, and Nouvelle Vague. Intersection's booking services aim to help its artists secure gigs and tours, both in Belgium and internationally. The agency's contacts and experience within the live music sector make it a valuable resource for artists aiming to grow their presence on the European music scene.

JauneOrange *Wallonia*

Jaune Orange operates as both a music collective and an independent booking agency, concentrating on alternative music genres such as indie rock, pop, and electro. They specifically support emerging artists and bands from Wallonia, offering them a platform for bookings, promotion, and distribution. In addition to its role as a label, Jaune Orange fulfills a broader cultural function within the region by organising concerts, festivals, and other cultural events that enrich the music scene in and around Liège. Key venues like Le Hangar and Reflektor play a crucial role as stages for both local and international acts. Through their involvement in these festivals and events, Jaune Orange contributes to the visibility and accessibility of alternative music in Wallonia.

What sets Jaune Orange apart is their emphasis on a do-it-yourself (DIY) mentality and collaborative ethos. The collective functions as a network where artists, technicians, and other creatives work together on music productions and events.

Next Step Agency *Wallonia*

Next Step Agency focuses on young talent and emerging artists from various genres, with a special focus on electronic music and urban. They represent emerging Belgian artists such as L'Or du Commun, Blu Samu and Swing. They book their artists for performances in clubs, theatres, and festivals such as Les Nuits Botanique and Dour Festival.

OD LIVE *Wallonia*

OD LIVE is a Belgian music and events platform that focuses on live performances by notable artists. It serves as a promoter for both established and emerging acts across genres. OD LIVE organises concerts, special events, and tours in Belgium, often in major venues like Forest National in Brussels. Artists featured by OD LIVE include a mix of French-speaking pop stars, international performers, and diverse musical styles.

ODESSA Wallonie

Odessa Maison d'Artistes is a dynamic Belgium-based music agency that combines management and booking expertise under one roof. Founded with the ambition to connect diverse artistic voices with audiences, Odessa represents both local talent and international acts, bringing a cosmopolitan touch to the Belgian scene. Their roster spans a wide range of styles, reflecting a belief that music thrives on diversity and cross-pollination. The agency positions itself not just as a service provider, but as a creative partner that helps artists navigate the complexities of today's music industry. Much like a lighthouse guiding ships to shore, Odessa offers direction in areas such as career strategy, live performance opportunities, and international exposure. By balancing tailored support for emerging musicians with professional representation for established artists, Odessa plays an increasingly important role in linking Belgium's cultural infrastructure to the global music ecosystem.

NADA Booking Wallonie

NADA Booking is a Belgium-based agency dedicated to artist representation and live music development, with a strong focus on contemporary and independent scenes. Positioning itself at the intersection of creativity and strategy, NADA supports artists through tailored booking, tour development, and international positioning. Its roster reflects a commitment to bold, forward-thinking projects, often bridging genres and engaging with emerging audiences across Europe. Beyond securing live opportunities, the agency acts as a close partner to artists, helping shape coherent touring strategies and sustainable career growth. By combining local expertise with an outward-looking approach, NADA contributes to strengthening the visibility of Belgian artists within the international live music ecosystem.

4.4. Organising a Tour or Gig

Breaking through in Belgium as an international artist requires a strategic approach that considers the country's bilingual nature and diverse music landscape. Focusing on radio airplay, opening up as support, playing at local festivals and utilising streaming platforms are all key steps. Touring is an important element in building a lasting presence. Also even smaller club shows or opening for more established artists can help you gain exposure. Therefore, artists should research venues that align with their genre and target audience. Smaller festivals may also be open to emerging acts.

Reaching out to venues or festivals via email with a press kit - including a bio, demo, social media links, and notable achievements - can help get an artist started. However, working with local promoters and engaging with local media proves more effective than cold calling. An independent promoter with a strong network and understanding of timing and strategy can ensure that an artist's music reaches the right people at the right time.

For artists from other European countries, it's worth looking into whether their home country's music export office has initiatives targeting Belgium. Many European countries offer financial support or promotional assistance for artists looking to break into other European markets. Additionally, Belgium Booms (a joint initiative by Wallonie-Bruxelles Musiques and VI.BE) supports international collaborations and exchanges, which can provide opportunities for exposure.

In Focus: Touring in Belgium

[*Interview with Werner Dewachter \(Busker\)*](#)

The Role of a Local Booker

A local booker adds significant value when securing gigs abroad, but an artist's international breakthrough depends on a network of key players, including streaming platforms. According to Dewachter, streaming has made it easier to place Belgian acts abroad, reducing reliance on local record companies. Dewachter: "Thanks to these streaming platforms, it is also much easier to place a Belgian act abroad," says Dewachter

A booker works with artists to plan their live strategy, booking them at festivals and concert halls, negotiating fees, and creating a tailored plan. Festivals are increasingly important, but aligning the expectations of festival organisers and artists can be challenging. Artists often want to perform as much as possible and be paid well, while festivals seek exclusivity and lower fees.

According to Dewachter, it is important that a band shows its market value before the summer with a few club shows.

"If you manage to sell out the AB three times, your market value increases considerably. The number of performances outside Belgium also plays a role. A Belgian band that plays a lot abroad can limit the number of times it visits Belgian festivals and ask for a bit more."

Artist Fees and Negotiation

Unlike show business, where fixed prices circulate for artists, such a list does not exist in the rock genre. The price that a band or artist asks depends very much on the number of performances and where. Moreover, there is always room for negotiation." Nobody wants to mention specific amounts for artists, but they do want to mention orders of magnitude. A Belgian act with multiple albums and hit singles will charge around €25 000 to €30 000. A band with the necessary fame that will not play exclusively, asks somewhere between €10 000 and €15 000. A starting band with the necessary airplay on the radio, is between €5 and €10 000. The top league in the Belgian genre that limits itself to a few performances per year can count on around €125 000 for a festival performance. Compared to international top acts, it's still a bargain. Headliners at Werchter are already expected to cost millions.

However, due to increased competition, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure a spot at a festival. Local artists are also increasingly having to compete with foreign acts. In the past, an absolute top act would only come to Belgium every three years. Now there are several. International bands are also touring longer and longer." Dewachter also notices it: "Ten to fifteen years ago, there was a whole host of Flemish bands that played around 20 to 25 festivals in Belgium each summer. Now they only make it to a maximum of 10 to 15 festivals." Maybe there is too much talent for the festivals to process.

Local Promoters and Sustainable Careers

"Local promoters abroad can surely help with organising concerts, tours or special performances, which is a good way to build a new fan base. But building a sustainable artist career depends on more than just playing shows (abroad). Try to align your expectations and maybe only look abroad if you have already managed to build a strong professional network and loyal fan base locally. The value of streams and views can't compete with this" says Dewachter.

In Focus: Building an Audience in Belgium

[Interview with Maxime Lhussier \(Odessa Music\)](#)

A key strategy for emerging artists is to start with smaller festivals and venues that often work with curator groups. These organisations have a loyal audience that is open to new artists. Well-known festivals such as Micro Festival (Liège) and 50 Lab (Brussels) offer opportunities to gain visibility. Venues such as Volta also play a crucial role because of their strong ties with the local music community. Building an audience by consistently playing in the right places is seen as essential.

Importance of Marketing

Digital marketing, including social media and platforms such as TikTok, can contribute to an artist's success, but it is never the only factor. While digital campaigns are valuable, the power of word-of-mouth and personal recommendations remains dominant in building an audience. Artists must balance physical performances with online visibility to build momentum. Successful campaigns often focus on specific cities and audiences rather than broad, generic strategies.

The importance of press and publicity in Belgium has declined, especially in French-language media. Local press and radio still play a role, but their influence is limited. International press coverage, particularly in France and the UK, has more impact. Local PR campaigns are seen as useful, but not essential for an artist's initial success.

Long-Term Vision

Finally, the interview highlights the need for patience and a long-term vision. While it is possible to build an audience with niche genres in Wallonia, this often requires a specific and consistent approach. For mainstream artists, the challenge is greater, especially without initial support from major radio stations. Artists must not only make good music, but also be willing to invest in live performances and networking within the music community.

In summary, foreign artists who want to break through in Belgium should adapt their strategy to the regional differences between Flanders and Wallonia. Flanders focuses on the UK and the US, while Wallonia and Brussels look more towards France. Start with small festivals and intimate venues such as Micro Festival and Volta, where new artists are discovered by an audience that trusts curators. Digital marketing is important, but should be local and focused on specific cities and genres. Combine this with live shows and press strategies to create momentum. Word of mouth and a strong live performance are essential, while consistency and a unique artistic proposition can bring success in the long term.

Legal Noise Standards in Flanders

Since 2013, [noise regulations](#) for electronically amplified music, also called “musical activities”, have applied in Flanders. In Flanders, legal noise standards apply to all music events that are accessible to the public and where recorded music or electronically amplified music is played. The noise standards are there to prevent visitors and employees from suffering hearing damage and to avoid nuisance. These noise standards are part of the Flemish policy on hearing damage and are included in the [VLAREM](#).

In addition to a concise overview of the applicable regulations, this document provides more information on the obligations for measuring the sound level at these “musical activities”.

5. Recorded Music Sector

5.1. Recorded Music Industry in Figures

Every year the Belgian Recorded Music Association (BRMA), the federation that represents music distributors and music producers, supplies the figures of recorded music revenues. After 2020, when the growth of the Belgian recorded music market comes to a complete standstill, strong growth of no less than 16% can be noted in 2021. [In 2024](#), music sales in Belgium increased by 10.5% to a total turnover of €116 mln. Digital sales now account for 88% of the market, driven primarily by downloads and streaming.

Digital revenues rose by 14.6% to €102.2 mln, with streaming surpassing the €100 mln threshold for the first time, consolidating its position as the main growth engine of the market. Meanwhile, the physical market continued to decline, generating €14 mln or less than 12% of total revenues. CD sales have been decreasing for years, and in 2024 vinyl sales also dropped slightly to €9.25 mln, compared to €9.9 mln in 2023 ([VRT, 2025](#)).

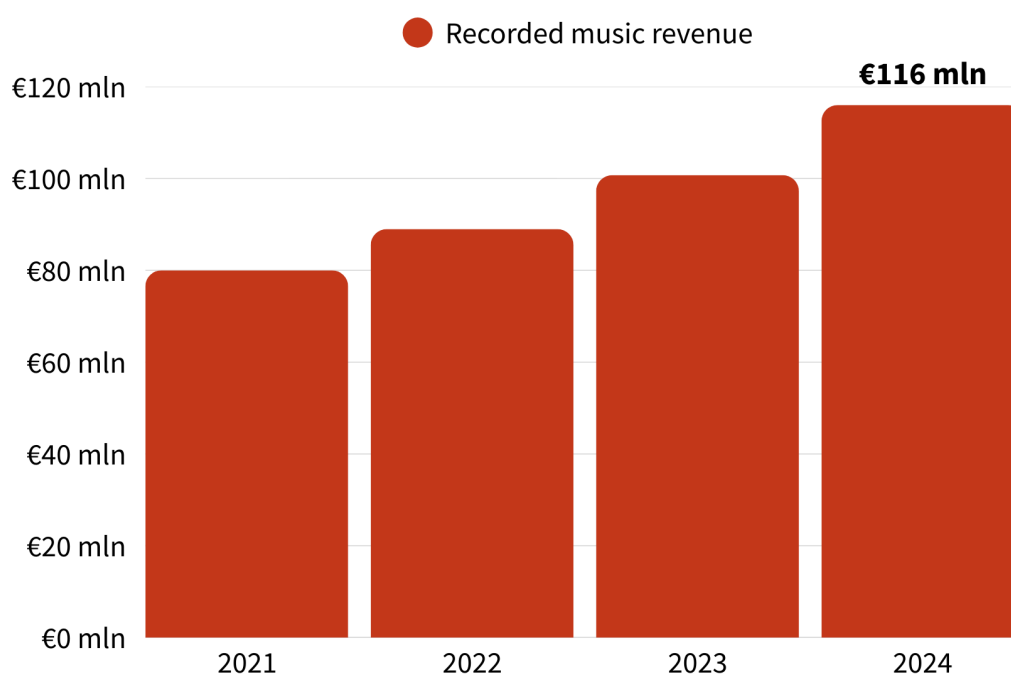


Figure 8. Recorded music revenue from 2021-2024 Source: [VRT. \(2025\)](#).

In 2024, 88% of music was purchased digitally and 12% physically. In concrete terms, this involves downloading or streaming songs for a fee, via various services and apps.

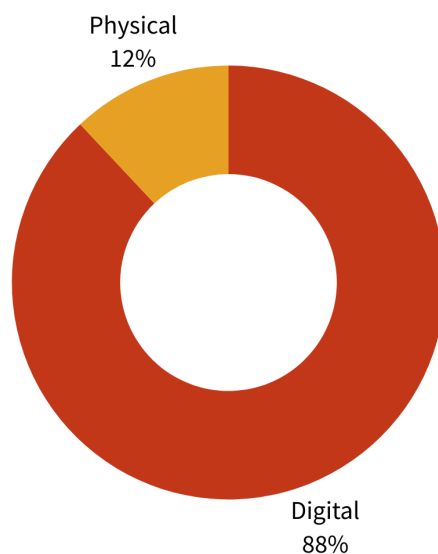


Figure 9. Percentage of digital and physical media. Source: [VRT, 2025](#). *Cijfers muziekverkoop in België*. VRT Nieuws.

Physical music sales did not decline further, but remained more or less stable in 2023 compared to 2022, generating turnover of €14,89 mln, slightly more than the year before (€14,28 mln). There was a slight decrease in vinyl sales in 2024 from €9.90mln to €9.25mln ([VRT, 2024](#) and [VRT, 2025](#)).

IN FOCUS: Recorded Music in Belgium

[Interview with Olivier Vandeputte \(BRMA\)](#)

"More and more music lovers and fans are finding their way to their favourite artists and the immense range of music because the music industry succeeded years ago in bringing its entire music offering into one streaming service," says Patrick Guns, chairman of BRMA and MD Universal Music Belgium. "A large part of the growth is therefore due to the Belgian music lovers who are increasingly finding their way to Spotify, AppleMusic, Deezer, YouTube Music and other streaming services. The physical market also grew again in 2021, but that is of course mainly due to the temporary closure of 2020. We are positive that this trend continues."

[Physical sales](#) also showed a cautious growth last year, from €14,28 mln to €14,89 mln. This is entirely due to a brave oldie. Vinyl records were sold 12% more last year than the year before, good for €8,96 mln in revenue. With this, vinyl sales drowned out the dying CD sales for the second year in a row.

Patrick Guns, managing director of the Universal Music label in Belgium and chairman of the BRMA, sees the figures as proof of "the dynamic power of streaming as the engine behind the contemporary music industry." It is a vision that BRMA director Olivier Vandeputte also shares. "This growth is not only a victory for the record companies, but for the entire music industry, and proves that our joint efforts to create a sustainable ecosystem for music creation and distribution are paying off", says the BRMA director.

"We have evolved from a sales market to a de facto rental market, where consumers pay 11€ per month to be able to listen to everything they want", says Vandeputte.

“In that model, you no longer receive an amount all at once, but it is spread out. That is an adjustment, but in the long term, we believe it is also a blessing, because you are compensated for your work over a longer period of time. We are convinced that the entire ecosystem will benefit from the evolution towards streaming.”

5.2. Main Actors in the Recorded Music Industry

There are several record companies active in Belgium, ranging from large international labels to smaller independent labels that focus on local artists. The three so-called majors Universal, Warner and Sony have Flemish presence and together control about 80% of the market. Belgium is also where [PIAS] was founded in 1982. Starting as Play It Again Sam, an independent record label, it grew into one of the largest independent labels in the world. In 2024, [PIAS] was acquired by Universal Music Group.

CNR Records

As Belgium’s largest independent entertainment company, CNR Records' roster includes several renowned artists. Additionally, CNR Records is the official compilation partner for major brands and events like Tomorrowland, DPG, and VRT/Ketnet. CNR Records also encompasses sister companies that support the broader music industry, such as One Bookings, CNR Brands, and the music publisher Tousensemble Publishing.

[PIAS]

[PIAS] - the abbreviation of Play It Again Sam - is one of the biggest success stories in Belgian music history. The company groups several independent labels. [PIAS] has over 300 employees and two core divisions: the [PIAS] Label Group, which oversees the company’s various record label interests and [Integral] Distribution and Label Services, which provides support to its own, in-house labels and over 100 independent label partners around the world. Some of those label partners include ATO, Beggars Group, Bella Union, Chrysalis, Domino, Epitaph, LSO, Mute, Ninja Tune, Partisan, Secretly Group, Transgressive and Warp. In June 2022, [PIAS] and Universal Music Group already entered into a strategic partnership. In [October 2024, Universal has now completed](#) the acquisition of the [remaining](#) 51% of shares from [PIAS] co-founders Kenny Gates and Michel Lambot, for an undisclosed fee. Subsequent to the acquisition, [Integral] will merge with UMG’s Virgin Music Group. The [PIAS] Label Group will continue to run as a separate and “completely autonomous” division, according to a company press release. It will become a Virgin Music Group/[Integral] client.

Sony Music Belgium

Sony Music also has a branch in Belgium and works with both international and local artists. Sony supports various Flemish artists within different genres. Sony is also one of the big majors and plays an important role in the Flemish music scene. They work with big Flemish artists such as Suzan & Freek, Loïc Nottet, Pommélien Thijs, Lost Frequencies and other popular acts from the region. Sony Music Entertainment Benelux has offices in Amsterdam and Brussels. They work with a wide range of local and international artists and labels in every music genre, from Afrobeats to Electropop, from dance to hip hop and far beyond.

Tomorrowland Music

Tomorrowland Music is the music division behind the iconic music festival Tomorrowland, offering comprehensive services to the electronic music industry. Building on its recorded music division the label has seen steady releases from top global electronic music artists

like Vintage Culture, Martin Garrix, Alok, Timmy Trumpet, Jengi, Denis Sulta, and many more. In recent years, Tomorrowland Music has expanded into a fully-fledged music operation, with a team of A&Rs, marketing and DSP specialists, a synch manager, and finance and legal support.

Universal Music Belgium

Universal Music is one of the largest record companies in the world and has a strong presence in Belgium, including Flanders. They represent both international artists and Flemish acts. Universal Music may be one of the largest record companies worldwide, but the Belgian branch is also active in promoting Flemish and Belgian artists such as Berre, Tourist LeMC, Aaron Blommaert, etc.

Warner Music Benelux

Warner Music Benelux is the regional branch of Warner Music Group (WMG), one of the largest music companies in the world. The label is active in both the Netherlands and Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), and focuses on promoting both international and local artists in various genres. As part of Warner Music Group, Warner Music Benelux has access to a huge international network, allowing it to support Belgian and Dutch artists to break through in international markets. In addition to promoting international stars, Warner Music Benelux invests heavily in local talent. Flemish and Dutch artists such as Clouseau. In Flanders, Warner is mainly involved in developing artists who sing in both Dutch and English.

Several independent labels illustrate the diversity and vitality of the Belgian music landscape. **NEWS** has established itself as one of the most important distributors and label groups, working across genres with both domestic and international acts. Sdban is recognised for its focus on jazz, funk and eclectic reissues, bringing Belgian heritage and contemporary sounds to a global audience. **Unday Records**, linked to the Belgian indie scene, has built a strong catalogue of alternative and singer-songwriter talent. **MayWay Records** has become a breeding ground for new Flemish talent, successfully developing emerging artists with both local and international potential. **V2 Records** operates as a key independent player with a wide roster that bridges commercial and alternative markets. Niche labels such as **Trad Records**, dedicated to traditional and folk music, **Zephyrus**, promoting talent in world music and jazz, and **Consouling Sounds**, specializing in experimental, ambient and heavy music, further show the breadth of artistic approaches within the Belgian label ecosystem.

In Focus: Recorded Music in Belgium

[Interview with Olivier Vandeputte \(General Manager BRMA\)](#)

The Belgium Recorded Music Association represents all major music labels in Belgium, including the three majors and larger independent labels. They collect sales data, both digital and physical, and manage the Ultratop charts. Although Belgium is a single market in terms of sales reporting, there are major differences between Flanders and Wallonia in musical preference and approach. Flemish charts are more focused on international products, while the Walloon market is more local and French-speaking. This split affects both consumption and artistic strategies.

Rise of Streaming

The rise of streaming has drastically changed the Belgian music industry, with 85-90% of sales now being digital. Despite the dominance of platforms such as Spotify, YouTube and other

alternatives are also gaining ground. This stimulates competition, but brings challenges, such as how to stand out in a market with thousands of new songs every day. To support local artists, airplay is added to the single charts to maintain the balance with international content. Nevertheless, competition remains fierce, especially for artists who are not picked up via algorithms or playlists.

Flemish vs Walloon Market Differences

The division between the Flemish and Walloon markets also reflects cultural differences. While Flanders is more focused on Anglo-Saxon influences, French culture dominates in Wallonia. Major artists such as Stromae transcend this divide, but for others it remains a challenge to break through in both regions. The difference in preferences and the rise of streaming require artists to adopt a new strategy, in which constant visibility via social media and a fast production cycle are essential. Yet this speed raises questions about the quality and the disappearance of traditional formats such as the album.

Transformation of Music Consumption and Media

The music sector is constantly evolving, driven by the rise of streaming services and changes in consumer behaviour. The convenience of platforms such as Spotify has played a major role in bridging the gap between users and music, but also raises the question of the value of a subscription and the possible return to piracy. Music choice is increasingly driven by convenience, such as personalised playlists for daily activities, rather than individual artistic preferences. At the same time, traditional media such as radio struggle to maintain relevance in a landscape increasingly dominated by on-demand and algorithmically generated content. The younger generations no longer have an affinity with linear media, forcing radio stations to reposition themselves with innovative formats and social media channels.

Commercialisation and Fragmentation

In addition, the creative process of making music is confronted with intensive commercialisation and fragmentation. Although authenticity and craftsmanship remain central, artists must tell their story more than ever via social media and storytelling. Music is becoming an integral part of a broader experience, with an emphasis on visual and digital presentation. The speed of production and the oversupply make it difficult for artists to distinguish themselves, while the traditional concept of "the second record" is losing relevance. In parallel, a distinction is becoming visible in the sector between music that is consumed functionally and music that is consciously chosen for its artistic value. This dynamic raises questions about the balance between creativity and commerce, and how AI or algorithms will further influence this balance.

Finally, there is the role of local partners and international expansion. Belgian artists, both from Flanders and Wallonia, face the challenge of breaking through locally, but at the same time must be able to operate internationally in order to be economically successful. Local labels and PR partners remain crucial in this respect, as they understand the specific characteristics of a market. At the same time, increasing protectionism in several countries creates additional obstacles. Maintaining open borders for music exports and avoiding quotas are essential to support the growth of Belgian artists. These challenges require a strategic approach that leverages the unique characteristics of the Belgian music scene, while seeking connections with international networks.

In **Wallonia**, there are several noteworthy music labels currently active, catering to various genres from classical to folk and contemporary music. These labels play a crucial role in fostering both

regional talent and international collaborations, contributing to the diverse musical landscape of Wallonia.

Capitane Records

Capitane Records is a production collective and a label based in Brussels. Driven by the ideals of collaboration and self-management, Capitane Records's primary ambition is to create beautiful records and humbly spread the word about it. Both a think tank and a self-defense unit, since 2018, Capitane Records has provided a safe environment for Turner Cody, Under The Reefs Orchestra, Great Mountain Fire, Nicolas Michaux, KAT, and The Soldiers Of Love.

Choux de Bruxelles

Choux de Bruxelles is a Brussels based artist collective, organizing its own management and record label. The most internationally known bands to emerge from Choux de Bruxelles are Jaune Toujours (Kick Ass Roots Band/Rock du Monde) and Mec Yek (Roma Gadzje Music Band). New in the house with international potential is 3'Ain (Contemporary Jazz & Worldwide with Oriental Twist). All projects at Choux de Bruxelles have in common a multicultural range of ideas and influences. Their bold approach in bridging cultural boundaries, and creating innovative forms beyond them, not only produces a whole new sound but often a fresh and richer identity. It's an identity that is fuelled, claimed and embraced by all its participants.

Contre-Jour

Contre-Jour was created in 1992 to handle management, production, record releases specialised in Worldwide Music. Contre-Jour privileges the close ties between stage performances and record production. As part of its activities, the agency handles the organisation of tours and the record production.

Cyprès Records

Based in Belgium, this label is known for supporting innovative and classical projects, often partnering with Musique en Wallonie to release albums featuring lesser-known composers and performers.

Exag Records

The label sparkled from Greg Noël's fantasy to press vinyls for cranky garage-psych-rock'n'roll bands, host them at his place and help these smelly rats head down the roads of Europe with vans that wouldn't break down and backline that shouldn't burn out towards the million kinds of venues these days can produce.

Humpty Dumpty Records

Good vibes & local music only. Indy DIY record label created in 2006 and based in Brussels.

JauneOrange

JauneOrange is an independent label based in Liege, Belgium operating since 2000.

Musique en Wallonie

A prominent label focusing on Wallonia's classical music heritage, rediscovering historical compositions and supporting classical recordings. It was established in 1971 and is managed by a non-profit association that brings together musicologists, researchers and presenters from the Belgian French-speaking musical world. The label collaborates with Cyprès Records and has gained recognition for its dedication to preserving and promoting Walloon cultural heritage.

Some other labels worth mentioning include [Alliance Club](#), [Crammed Discs](#), [Igloo Records](#), [Luik Music](#), and [Vlek](#).

[More on jazz labels on this website](#)

5.3. Digital Distribution

Music distribution in Flanders is heavily digital, with platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and Deezer playing a central role. Flemish artists use digital distributors such as TuneCore and DistroKid to reach global audiences. Physical media, while still in demand for niche markets, plays a secondary role, particularly for vinyl enthusiasts. In contrast, Wallonia places greater emphasis on traditional channels, with local audiences favoring CDs and vinyl, especially at cultural events and folk festivals. The preservation of cultural heritage fosters a market for physical recordings of regional music.

The types of labels also differ. Flanders has a mix of independent and major labels like Universal Music Belgium and NEWS that cater to both physical and digital markets. Wallonia, however, features more small, independent labels dedicated to promoting traditional music, often supported by cultural institutions. This focus on regional music influences the way artists distribute and market their work.

Promotion in Flanders relies on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, with radio stations such as Studio Brussel and MNM playing a key role in boosting visibility. In Wallonia, social media is relevant, but local festivals, community events, and radio stations like RTBF's Classic 21 remain primary channels for promoting traditional music.

5.4. Physical Distribution

Physical distribution in Belgium is shaped by the interplay between global majors and strong independent actors. On the international side, Universal Music Belgium, Sony Music Entertainment Belgium, and Warner Music Benelux dominate the market. They provide not only the logistics for physical distribution but also extensive marketing, retail placement, and cross-platform promotion for their international superstars and selected Belgian artists. Their presence ensures that blockbuster releases can still be found in mainstream retail chains and supermarkets, while also securing visibility in specialised stores. Warner's Benelux structure highlights how Belgium is often tied into broader regional operations, reflecting the relatively small size of the Belgian market but also the necessity of cross-border efficiency.

PIAS, historically one of the country's largest and most respected independent distributors, entered a new chapter in October 2024 when it became fully owned by Universal Music Group. While its distribution arm, Integral, has been integrated into Universal's Virgin Music Group, the PIAS Label Group continues to operate as an autonomous division. This dual structure allows PIAS to combine the weight of a global major with its long-standing expertise in promotion and international networking.

NEWS NV (N.E.W.S.), by contrast, has carved out a highly focused profile. With a strong emphasis on electronic and dance music – particularly through its long-standing collaboration with the iconic R&S Records – NEWS remains a tastemaker and influential force in electronic music culture, both domestically and internationally.

Bertus/V2 Benelux complements these players by catering to jazz, folk, singer-songwriters, and other niche genres. Its strength lies in ensuring that non-mainstream releases continue to reach physical record shops and collectors' markets,

providing an important channel for audiences who value depth and diversity beyond the commercial mainstream.

A number of specialised and boutique distributors further enrich the landscape, addressing dedicated fan communities that continue to value physical formats. Consouling Sounds, based in Ghent, combines its own label activities with curated distribution of indie, experimental and heavy music, often blurring the lines between artistic curation and commercial distribution. It has become a cultural hub in itself, running a record store, label and live events, reinforcing the connection between physical releases and community building. These examples show how distribution in Belgium is not only about logistics but also about sustaining ecosystems of genre, identity and cultural value, where global majors, established independents and highly specialised actors all coexist and complement each other.

Record Stores

Record stores continue to hold significant importance in Flanders, reflecting a broader trend seen globally. The local record store scene has become vital for supporting independent artists and labels. Stores often curate their selections carefully, offering both mainstream and obscure titles, which allows them to act as important cultural centres. Many record shops also host events like album signings, listening parties, and live performances, contributing to the local music scene's vibrancy. Events like Record Store Day further enhance their visibility and relevance, attracting customers who seek unique releases and in-store performances.

Some notable record stores in Flanders include the following:

Consouling Store (*Ghent*)

Consouling Store is a cross between a record label, a music store and a coffee & tea house. It serves as the home for Consouling Sounds, a label known for its focus on genres like post-rock, doom, drone, and ambient music. The store has an extensive selection of vinyl and CDs, particularly leaning towards heavier and alternative music styles.

Music Mania (*Ghent*)

Known for its extensive range of new and second-hand records, Music Mania is a go-to spot for vinyl enthusiasts. They offer everything from rock to jazz, catering to a broad audience.

Wally's Groove World (*Antwerp*)

Specialising in electronic music, Wally's is regarded as one of the finest stores in Europe for this genre. The shop is located at Lange Nieuwstraat 126 and offers a carefully curated selection

For the complete list and additional details, you can visit their official page [here](#).

Like in Flanders, record stores in Wallonia play a similarly crucial role in fostering niche musical communities, often focusing on alternative, indie, and French-speaking local artists. These stores serve not only as retail spaces but also as cultural hubs, hosting small performances and community events that strengthen the regional music scene. Despite their cultural significance, the network of record stores in Wallonia is relatively limited, a reflection of the region's smaller population and market size. However, a growing interest in vinyl among collectors and enthusiasts has helped sustain the relevance of independent shops.

Brussels, as a cosmopolitan city, has a more vibrant and diverse record store scene. Some examples include:

Caroline Music (*Brussels*)

Caroline Music is an independent record store located in the historic centre of Brussels and offers a varied selection of new and second-hand records. The current location, opened in 2013, is situated across from the renowned concert venue Ancienne Belgique. The store is spacious, featuring a vast collection of both new and used albums across various genres such as rock, punk, metal, pop, soul, and jazz. On the upper floor, customers can find second-hand LPs, CDs, and DVDs. The store has built a solid reputation among collectors of rock, pop and alternative music.

Crevette Records (*Brussels*)

This store is a magnet for fans of electronic music such as house, techno and disco. The selection is carefully curated and the store enjoys international recognition.

6. Music Publishing & Synch Sector

6.1. Main Actors in the Music Publishing Industry

Belgian Music Publishers Association (BMPA) is the organisation of music publishers in Belgium. BMPA is the successor of MusicPublishers.Be. The website of [BMPA](#) mentions at this moment 13 members. The five most prominent music publishers include:

CTM Entertainment

The core of CTM is based on 4 core activities: publishing, production music, neighbouring rights and catalogue. The basis of the music publishing company is formed by an innovative, solid, transparent and reliable accounting system (Counterpoint) that guarantees a global registration and collection of all works. In addition, CTM proudly represents the most leading publishing companies and catalogues from the rest of the world. With a focus on the USA, UK, Australia, Germany, Japan and France, CTM has a wide range of copyrights and active composers.

Strictly Confidential

Founded in 1987, Strictly Confidential was initially launched as the publishing arm of the [PIAS] Group. Whilst still maintaining strong links to PIAS, Strictly Confidential has, over the years, evolved into a separate company and is now firmly established as one of the most active leading independent publishers in Europe today with a roster of writers and composers from around the world. They have a wide network of partners and sub-publishers worldwide and are active in A&R, administration and synch licensing. They have offices in Brussels and Paris.

Studio 100 Publishing BVBA

Studio 100 is a major Belgian entertainment company with an international presence, known for its comprehensive production and management of children's programmes, musicals, theme parks, music, and merchandising. The company holds rights to popular children's characters such as Kabouter Plop, K3, Samson & Marie, Maya the Bee, and Wickie the Viking, overseeing their music, books, and merchandising across several countries. Studio 100 Music operates as the company's dedicated music label and publishing arm. It focuses on the production and publishing of songs integral to Studio 100's TV shows, films, and musicals. This includes managing music rights and releasing albums for their artists and productions, such as K3 and Samson & Marie, as well as various television series theme songs. Studio 100 Music is actively involved in digital music distribution via platforms like Spotify, YouTube, and Apple Music, offering both streaming services and physical album releases.

Tomorrowland Music

Tomorrowland Music, the music division behind the iconic music festival Tomorrowland, has announced an exclusive global agreement with BMG to manage and administer the company's music publishing rights and co-sign new songwriters and producers. This partnership marks a significant step in Tomorrowland Music's [growth as a full-service music company](#). The collaboration with BMG enhances Tomorrowland Music's ability to offer more comprehensive services to the electronic music industry. Building on its recorded music division the label has seen steady releases from top global electronic

music artists like Vintage Culture, Martin Garrix, Alok, Timmy Trumpet, Jengi, Denis Sulta, and many more. In recent years, Tomorrowland Music has expanded into a fully-fledged music operation, with a team of A&Rs, marketing and DSP specialists, a synch manager, and finance and legal support. With the addition of a dedicated publishing team through this new partnership with BMG, Tomorrowland Music is set to offer even stronger support to the global electronic music community, particularly in music creation and synch opportunities.

Warner/Chappell Music Belgium N.V.

Warner Music Benelux falls under Warner Recorded Music and is part of the Warner Music Group, one of the world's largest music companies. Their new [president](#) is in charge of both record company Warner Music Benelux and music publisher Warner Chappell Music Benelux.

Music publishers who have moved to the Netherlands and are no longer in **Flanders**, include:

Sony/ATV Music Publishing

Sony Music Publishing is a large international player with an office in Belgium, and they manage the rights of a wide range of artists, both Flemish and international.

Universal Music Publishing Group – Benelux

UMPG is one of the largest music publishers in the world and has a strong presence in Flanders. They manage music rights for both local Flemish artists and international names.

In Focus: Music Publishing in Belgium

Interview with [Stefaan Moriau \(CTM\)](#)

As a music publisher with more than 25 years of experience, Stefaan works at CTM as a music publisher and explains how the landscape in Music Publishing in Belgium works. Where the large music publishers with a more considerable staff can, in principle, offer a 'full service' and usually also have a greater financial clout, this is often less the case with the smaller publishers. On the other hand, the latter may offer a greater guarantee that your work will not become a minuscule, anonymous part of an immense catalogue.

Music Publishing in Belgium

The music publishing landscape in Belgium has undergone major changes in recent years, particularly in the area of copyright and international cooperation. Belgian publishers often represent foreign catalogues, with only a quarter of the revenue going to local authors. Major players, such as Warner, Universal and Sony, have often merged their Belgian offices with the Netherlands, which has an impact on local involvement.

The cultural differences between Flanders and Wallonia have also had an impact on the market, with Flemish artists looking to the Netherlands and England, while French-speaking artists are more likely to be signed in France.

The landscape within the independent music segment is complex, particularly due to mergers and acquisitions of catalogues, such as the acquisition of Strictly Confidential by American publishers. Small percentages of rights are often managed by international parties, which sometimes leads to complicated licensing processes for the use of music.

In addition, copyrights are often placed in companies, partly because of tax advantages. The lack of structural support in Belgium for young writers and composers is apparent here, particularly

in comparison with neighbouring countries such as the Netherlands.

In addition, broadcasters such as VRT are also active in publishing to recover some production costs, but also to invest in writers. Production houses such as De Mensen also have publishing entities where they sometimes ask for exclusivity from authors to keep control when selling the productions abroad. European regulations sometimes hinder the freedom of producers, as authors retain their moral rights, unlike the American model, where rights can be fully transferred. This makes it more difficult for European producers to broadcast on international platforms such as Netflix without additional costs.

Choosing the Right Publisher

An artist who is successful abroad may need a publisher with local contacts. Our responsibilities include title registration with the local societies, royalty collection and processing, rights distribution and creative licensing (synchronisation). When considering your options, depending on the added value you are looking for, take into account the profile of your conversation partner. Does this publisher have contacts abroad?

Furthermore, will the publisher's role be purely administrative or financial, or will he also actively seek other exploitations of the music? Is there active promotion around the songs, or does the publisher limit himself to collecting the income that comes from the songs in his portfolio?

Finally, is the publisher familiar with your genre? So if you make a specific genre of music, you might prefer a publisher who also has their main contacts within that niche.

6.2. Distributing your Catalogue and Creative Collaborations

Whether a sub-publisher is desirable for Flanders and Wallonia depends on the specific circumstances and goals of the music publisher. Here are some considerations that will help determine whether using a sub-publisher can be useful for these regions:

Flanders (Dutch-speaking) and Wallonia (French-speaking) have clear linguistic and cultural differences. A sub-publisher who specialises in one of these regions would be better able to respond to the specific cultural preferences, media, and markets of each area. In Wallonia in particular, a French-speaking sub-publisher can be useful for maintaining local contacts, promoting music, and better responding to the French-speaking market.

A sub-publisher may have deeper local knowledge and strong relationships with radio stations, television productions, concert organisers, and streaming services in Flanders or Wallonia. This network can help promote the artists' music better and more targeted in the right media.

Wallonia may have different media and distribution channels than Flanders, so a local partner can help get the music to the right places.

Sub-publishers can be more efficient in collecting royalties in their regions. They have experience with local copyright organisations such as SABAM (the Belgian association that manages copyrights) and can respond more quickly to licence requests. They can also be responsible for requesting synch licences for local productions, such as TV shows and films that are specifically aimed at a Flemish or Walloon audience.

6.3. Creative Collaborations

Nowadays, music authors and composers often write new music together with topline writers and/or producers, to build an (international) network and to learn from each other. [SABAM](#) supports

organising songwriting camps, and provides grants of up to €5000 for authors, composers, topliners and producers to cover costs to attend writing camps. However, only members or those active in the music sector with their tax residence or registered office in Belgium can apply.

6.4. A Brief Overview of the Synch Sector

The Belgian music ecosystem also includes companies specialised in sonic branding and tailor-made music production. Firms such as Sonhouse, Brandy, Sylvester Music and Audiotheque develop sound identities, jingles and bespoke compositions for brands, media and cultural projects. Their work highlights another dimension of the music industry, where creativity and strategy intersect, and where music functions not only as an art form but also as a tool for communication and brand experience.

In Focus: Synch in Belgium

[*Interview with Jorne Ceuterick \(Strictly Confidential Music\)*](#)

Today, the synch market is under pressure. Budgets have shrunk since the pandemic and the economic uncertainty. A significant amount of synch deals for series and films are for foreign bands. But the available budgets have decreased considerably. For that reason, people search for alternatives with a similar sound that can clear for a smaller budget. That is precisely why it is important that an artist radiates something. In addition to making great music, that artist must also have an “it” factor. In this way, he or she contributes to the image or appearance of a film, project or commercial. In addition, the artist can best be supported by a publisher who succeeds in pitching the music to the right key players.

Actively building a network yourself is not easy from abroad. As a foreign artist, manager, and/or publisher, you have the best chance of being successful with synchs by working together with local partners who have a local network within the audiovisual sector. The added value is the proximity and the knowledge of the culture and sensitivities and, in general, a better knowledge of the market. Not only do these local players have a better sense of what exactly is being sought in terms of music, they also know the current rates so that a fair price can be asked for the artist and the customer. The more anchored in a local network, the greater the chance of successful collaborations.

7. Media and PR

The linguistic, cultural, and political distinctions have produced a fragmented media environment that mirrors Belgium's federal state structure and its division into distinct language communities. Rather than a single, unified media market, Belgium operates as a collection of regional media ecosystems, each with its own unique media outlets, broadcasters, and consumer preferences. This decentralised nature reflects broader patterns of governance and cultural identity within the country.

The majority of **Flemish** TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and magazines are owned by a few big players. The 5 largest media [groups](#) each own multiple media.

VRT (public broadcaster)

- TV: Eén, Canvas, Ketnet
- Radio: Radio 1, Radio 2, StuBru, MNM, Klara
- News sites, apps and social media: VRT NWS, Sporza and associated social media channels

DPG Media

- Newspapers and magazines: De Morgen, HLN, Humo, Dag Allemaal, Story
- TV: VTM
- Radio: Qmusic, Joe, Willy
- News sites, apps and social media: associated channels of the above media

Mediahuis

- Newspapers: De Standaard, Het Nieuwsblad, Gazet Van Antwerpen, Het Belang van Limburg
- Tv: ATV, TVL, TV OOST, ROB-tv
- Radio: Nostalgie, NRJ
- Podcasts: Sjotcast, DS Audio
- News sites, apps and social media: associated channels of the above media

Roularta

- Newspapers and magazines: De Tijd (Mediafin), KW De Krant van West-Vlaanderen, De Zondag, De Streekkrant, Steps, Knack, Trends, Sport/Voetbalmagazine, Feeling, Flair, Libelle, Plus magazine.
- TV: KanaalZ, RingTV
- News sites, apps and social media: associated channels of the above media

De Vijver Media (Telenet)

- TV: PLAY, PLAY Fictie, PLAY Actie, PLAY Reality, PLAY Crime, PLAY Zuid.

The public broadcaster VRT is the largest provider of radio broadcasting programmes in Flanders. In addition to the VRT, there are also private television broadcasting organisations in **Flanders** that broadcast linear (uninterrupted) television programmes. The media landscape in Flanders is highly concentrated and consists of a diverse range of radio and television services.

Media consumption in **Wallonia** is characterised by a strong shift from print to digital news consumption, with popular online platforms such as RTBF Info and Sudinfo as key players. Radio remains a stable medium, with public broadcasters such as La Première, VivaCité and Pure retaining a loyal audience. Television retains an important role, especially among older target groups, despite the rise of streaming services. Finally, out-of-home advertising remains prominent in urban centres such as Liège, Namur and Charleroi, where formats such as bus shelter posters and large posters still reach a wide audience.

7.1. Social Media

Social media is essential for brands that want to connect with young Belgians. Instagram emerges as the most important platform for brand interaction, especially among 16-24 year olds, where 70.3% follow brands on the platform. However, Facebook remains important, especially among 25-39 year olds, where 56% follow brands there, while 44.5% of 16-24 year olds follow brands on TikTok.

[IMEC](#) publishes annual figures on digital behaviour in Flanders. The average Flemish person spends an average of 182 minutes per day on their smartphone. 25% of that goes to social media ([IMEC](#), 2024). French speakers are much more active on the main social networks than Dutch speakers, according to the latest figures from the Centre d'Information des Médias ([CIM](#)). Proportionally, French speakers over 12 years old are more active than Dutch speakers on 8 of the 10 main social platforms.

In Flanders, Meta platforms firmly hold the lead in the social media landscape. WhatsApp is still at the top with an impressive 88% of active users. Facebook itself remains a major player with a stable reach of 67%. Despite Facebook Messenger seeing a small decrease to 54%, it remains an important player. Instagram, on the other hand, celebrates a growth of 3%, bringing the total to 49%. This suggests a diverse and dynamic user landscape, in which new and existing platforms compete for the attention of users ([IMEC](#), 2024).

Instagram remains the most popular platform among 16-24 year olds, but the momentum lies with TikTok. 16% of Flemish people use the app at least once a month and it is most popular among young people from ages 16-24, 60% of whom use it monthly. However, there has been a 5% increase among 25-34 year olds, 30% of whom now use the app monthly ([IMEC](#), 2024).

YouTube also proves valuable, as 32.1% of Belgians from ages 16 to 39 have learned about brands or products through the platform and 24.9% have searched for more information about brands or products on YouTube ([IMEC](#), 2024). French speakers clearly love YouTube. It's also important to note that YouTube videos are still being used extensively to listen to music and not only through YT Music. The largest standard deviation between French and Dutch speakers is on YouTube. Other video streaming platforms, such as Netflix and Disney+, also proposed to the respondents by the CIM, have much smaller differences.

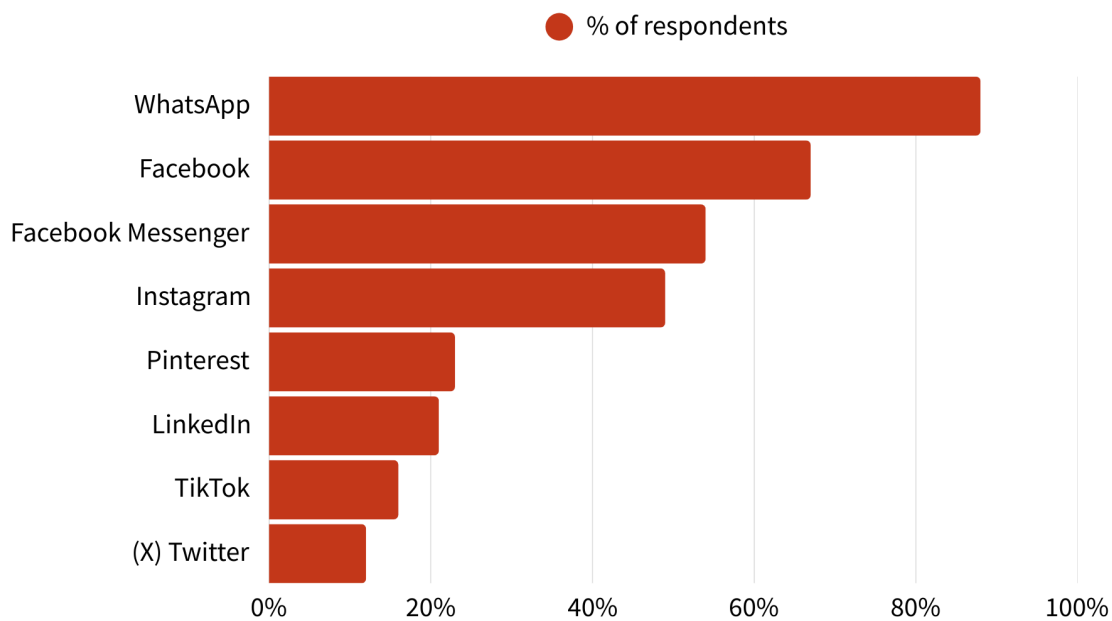


Figure 10: Social media platform usage. Source: [IMEC](#), 2024 p 45

7.2. Written Media – Print and Online

7.2.1. Flanders

The national **Flemish** newspapers are currently divided between 2 publishers: Persgroep and Mediahuis. Of all Flemish newspapers, *De Morgen* grew the most in 2023. In the [CIM figures for 2023](#), in addition to *De Morgen* (+7.1 percent), *Het Laatste Nieuws* (+6.5 percent) and *De Tijd* (+5.8 percent) can also come up with good figures. *De Standaard* (-0.2 percent) shows a slight [decrease](#), while *Het Nieuwsblad* (-3.9 percent) shrinks the most. In Flanders, a number of newspapers and publications are dedicated to arts, music, and culture, serving as key platforms for promoting and staying up-to-date with the region's cultural events and trends. *De Morgen*, one of the leading Flemish newspapers, offers extensive coverage of these topics through its dedicated sections and supplements, such as *DM Mag*, which regularly features in-depth interviews with artists and musicians. Similarly, *De Standaard*, another major newspaper, has a comprehensive culture section that highlights various aspects of the arts scene. While *Gazet van Antwerpen* is primarily a regional newspaper, it also provides strong coverage of the arts and music, particularly in the Antwerp area. Additionally, *Bruzz*, a bilingual magazine mainly focused on Brussels, frequently covers Flemish arts and music, reflecting the cultural overlap between Brussels and Flanders. These outlets play a crucial role in supporting and reflecting the vibrant cultural landscape in Flanders.

In [2023](#), for the first time, fewer than 40 000 newspapers were sold per day in Flanders ([CIM](#)). For every newspaper without exception, the number of mixed subscriptions is increasing, as is the number of newspapers sold digitally and the number of people who buy access to the articles that are protected on the website. Only *Het Belang van Limburg* and *Gazet van Antwerpen* recorded a small decrease in the latter category. The figures show that the digital transition among publishers is gradually compensating in total numbers for the losses in stores and in letterboxes.

The three most important music magazines in Flanders are currently *Humo*, *Focus Knack* and *Gonzo Circus*.

Humo (print run [90000](#) / week)

Humo is a popular Flemish weekly magazine known for its sharp, satirical tone and wide range of topics, ranging from current affairs and politics to culture, music, television and humor. The magazine has a long history in Flanders and is considered an iconic medium for a broad readership. In addition to satirical articles and in-depth reports, *Humo* is also known for its extensive TV guide, interviews with famous figures and reviews of music, films and books. The magazine plays an important role in Flemish pop culture, partly thanks to the organisation of events such as the [Humo's Rock Rally](#), a prestigious Belgian music competition organised by the magazine *Humo*, aimed at discovering new and emerging talent in the rock and alternative music scene. The competition, which began in 1978, has helped launch the careers of many well-known Belgian bands and artists.

Knack Focus (print run [70000](#) / week)

Thanks to its unique concept, *Knack* is the news magazine par excellence in Flanders. It provides background information on current events at home and abroad and also pays attention to the economy, culture, society and social media. A number of well-known opinion makers and columnists also guarantee a critical approach to current events every week. *Knack* is published every week with the entertainment magazine [Knack Focus](#).

Music blogs, such as [Dansende Beren](#), [Indiestyle](#) and [Luminous Dash](#), and magazines (*Focus Knack*, *Humo*) offer reviews and recommendations of both international and local artists. Although the influence of these blogs of magazines has waned somewhat with the rise of social media, they continue to serve as valuable resources for listeners seeking curated content and insights into new music.

7.2.2. Wallonia

While all newspapers in Belgium are selling fewer copies than before, the decline has been steeper amongst French-language newspaper groups, where only the financial newspaper *L'Echo* grew readership. *La Dernière Heure* and *Le Soir* are amongst the heavy losers.

Print media in Wallonia is dominated by two major publishers - Rossel and IPM. Rossel owns *Le Soir*, one of the most prominent newspapers in Wallonia, which now has more digital than print subscribers. IPM owns *La Libre* and *L'Avenir*, which together with *Le Soir* represent a significant share of the French-language press. This consolidation reflects a broader trend towards media concentration, with companies seeking economies of scale to meet the challenges of digitalisation and declining advertising revenues.

As in other parts of Belgium, there is a shift towards digital subscriptions. Brands such as *Le Soir* and *La Libre* saw sales increase. Nevertheless, print remains important, especially among older target groups. However, the closure of the free newspaper *Metro* in 2023 illustrates the pressure on print publications in a shrinking market with rising costs for paper, energy and distribution.

Le Vif is one of Belgium's leading French-language current affairs magazines, serving as the Francophone counterpart to the Flemish *Knack*. It is published weekly on Thursdays and is owned by the Roularta Media Group, with its headquarters based in Brussels. The magazine was established in 1983 and later formed a partnership with the French magazine *L'Express*, which influenced its name change to *Le Vif/L'Express*. *Le Vif* is known for its critical approach, with a particular focus on political news, investigations, major interviews, and cultural analysis. It aims at an educated readership, offering in-depth coverage of topics such as politics, economics, society, and literature. The magazine is considered to have a centre-left editorial stance.

In Wallonia, *Le Vif* plays a key role in shaping public opinion and providing critical perspectives on both Belgian and international issues. Its blend of investigative journalism and editorial analysis makes it a significant voice in the Francophone media landscape.

Focus Vif is a Belgian French-language cultural magazine that operates as a supplement to *Le Vif*. It covers cinema, music, television series, literature, comics (BD), gaming, and the arts. The magazine provides reviews, interviews, critiques, and cultural event previews. *Focus Vif* aims to keep readers updated on contemporary cultural trends, making it a key player in Belgium's cultural journalism. It is part of the Roularta Media Group and is accessible both online and in print.

Larsen is a Belgium-based music magazine published by the Conseil de la Musique, dedicated to exploring the richness and diversity of the music sector in Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. Positioned at the crossroads of journalism and sector insight, it offers in-depth articles, interviews, and analyses covering a wide range of genres and professional issues. More than a publication, *Larsen* acts as a platform for reflection, giving voice to artists, industry professionals, and cultural stakeholders while shedding light on emerging trends and structural challenges. By combining editorial rigor with a strong connection to the field, the magazine contributes to documenting, questioning, and strengthening the visibility of the music ecosystem in French-speaking Belgium.

7.3. Radio

The Belgian radio landscape is complex and divided into Flemish and Walloon communities. Flanders has two public media groups (VRT and commercial broadcasters), while Wallonia is dominated by the French-speaking public broadcaster RTBF. The commercial radio market is large and varied, with local and niche radio stations. Flanders has a strong presence of alternative and independent radio stations, such as Studio Brussel, which promotes alternative music. Commercial radio stations in Flanders, such as Qmusic and Joe FM, focus on mainstream pop music. In Wallonia, the radio landscape is more diverse, with major players such as NRJ and Nostalgie, which are part of French media groups. Local stations play an important role in the promotion of alternative and niche music. Stations such as Tarmac and Maximum FM focus specifically on hip-hop.

7.3.1. Flanders

In Flanders, radio stations cover a range of formats that reflect the diversity of the audience, from pop and dance hits to news and talk radio. The public broadcaster, VRT, operates multiple stations that target different demographics:

Radio 1

- Adult-oriented rock, jazz, blues, world music, and singer-songwriter genres.
- News, current affairs, and talk radio with a focus on high-quality journalism.

Radio 2

- Easy listening, Flemish popular music, soft pop, and classic hits.
 - Known for its strong regional focus, Radio 2 features adult contemporary music and family-friendly programmes. It's the most popular VRT station, appealing to a broad age range.
-

Studio Brussel (StuBru)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative, indie, and rock music with some electronic and hip-hop. • This station targets younger audiences and regularly features up-and-coming Belgian artists and live sets.
MNM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop and dance hits with a youth focus, competing with commercial youth stations. • MNM's target audience is teens and young adults, with an energetic, pop-focused format and interactive listener participation.
Klara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Klara provides classical music, jazz, and other forms of cultural programming, including podcasts and concerts. • Classical and cultural programming with a niche, well-educated audience in mind.
More on commercial Radio Stations:	
Qmusic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of current hits and pop classics, and its morning show and interactive social media presence are big draws. • Part of DPG Media, Qmusic is a leading pop music station targeting young adults.
Joe FM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also part of DPG Media, Joe FM targets an older audience than Qmusic with an emphasis on pop and rock music from the '80s, '90s, and early 2000s. • It has a loyal following among adults who enjoy nostalgia.
Nostalgie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nostalgie is particularly popular among listeners who enjoy revisiting the music of their youth. • Focused on classic hits, mainly from the '70s to the '90s, with a loyal adult audience.
Willy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock in all its forms, including classic rock, hard rock, punk, indie, alternative, and metal. • Radio Willy is a relatively new, digital-only station in Flanders that caters to rock and alternative music fans. Part of DPG Media, Radio Willy was launched with the goal of filling a gap in the Flemish radio landscape, offering rock music in various forms with a focus on authenticity and diversity in its selections.

According to CIM, 80% listen to the radio at least weekly and 63% daily. This has been stable for the fourth year in a row.

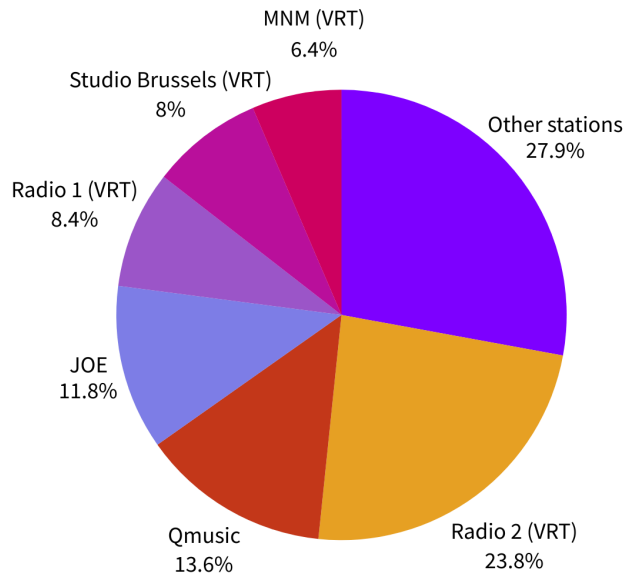


Figure 11. Share of audience in Flemish radios. Source: [CIM, 2024](#)

Most people still listen to radio the traditional way, FM or DAB+. However, stations are investing heavily into web radios, special theme stations, podcasts, etc.

By the end of 2023, digital radio had become indispensable. Almost half (49%) of radio listening today takes place digitally (Digital Audio Broadcast (DAB+), the internet, digital TV), an increase compared to 2021, when digital channels accounted for 41% of the listening volume ([DPG Media / IPSOS](#)). With strong growth from 19% (2021) to 30%, DAB+ in particular is taking an increasingly large share of the total listening time. DAB+ is the major driver in the switch from FM to digital. More and more DAB+ is being listened to at home, at work, but especially in the car - with a striking increase from 34% to 48%.

Podcasts are slowly but steadily becoming more popular with 26% of Flemish people listening to a podcast at least once a month. While young people (18-34) mainly use Spotify and YouTube to listen to music, the older audience often choose apps and websites of news brands.

The VRT radio stations provide a unique diversity within the radio landscape – there are many songs that can only be heard on the VRT. This is also backed by the use of quotas set in the management agreement with the Flemish government. For example, Radio 1 is obliged to program 15% of its total music offering in Dutch. At Radio 2, that is 30%. This has led to the popularity of Dutch-language artists beginning a steady rise ten years ago, with a provisional peak today.

Radio stations remain particularly influential as gatekeepers for both new and established non-classical music with their programming - either determined by music editors or by listening voices such as *VOX* on Radio 1, the *Q-Top 1000* of Q-Music or *De Afrekening* on Studio Brussel. Genre-specific programming has been on the rise again in recent years with the rise and/or return of genre-specific programmes for metal and punk (*De Zwaarste Show* on Studio Brussel, *Staalhard* and *Punkjunks* on Willy), indie (*Duyster* and *Vuurland* on Radio 1), hip hop (*Abattoir Anvers* on Studio Brussel) and jazz (*All That Jazz* on Klara). However, shows can often be stuck in the evening programming ([Landschapstekening](#)). For genres such as folk, worldwide, the search for genre-specific unique programmes continues.

7.3.2. Wallonia

In Wallonia, the radio landscape is characterised by a mix of public broadcasters, dominated by RTBF, and commercial stations. RTBF maintains a strong presence with its diversified offerings, such as Classic 21, VivaCité, and La Première, which appeal to a wide range of audiences with news, music, and entertainment. It has embraced digital advancements with a growing presence on DAB+.

RTBF offers a varied range of radio stations that cater to different musical tastes and information needs. From rock classics (Classic 21) to classical music (Musiq3), from local hits (VivaCité) to youth stations (Tipik, Tarmac), each channel has its own style and target audience. This wide range reflects the cultural diversity of French-speaking Belgium.

Commercial radio stations, such as Nostalgie, NRJ, Bel RTL, and Radio Contact, provide robust competition. These stations often focus on specific niches, such as hit music, classics, or youth-oriented content. They have also invested heavily in digital radio, aligning with trends showing rapid growth in DAB+ adoption and declining FM listenership. For instance, over 46% of radio listening in Wallonia now occurs via digital platforms, surpassing analogue for younger demographics.

But French radio stations also have a significant impact on the radio landscape in Wallonia, particularly due to their cultural and linguistic proximity. Major French stations such as NRJ France, RTL and France Inter are easily accessible via FM, DAB+ and online streaming, making them direct competitors for both commercial stations and the public RTBF channels.

The influence of French radio is mainly reflected in the music choices, programme formats and presentation styles. In addition, the increased penetration of digital radio in Wallonia (DAB+ and streaming) is an important factor. Around half of radio listeners in Wallonia use digital platforms, a trend that facilitates access to French stations.

[RTBF](#) (*La Radio-télévision belge de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*) manages a wide range of radio stations that each cater to different audiences and musical tastes in French-speaking Belgium. Here is an overview of the main radio stations of RTBF:

Classic 21

- Rock and classic hits
- Adult listeners, especially fans of rock, pop and classic hits from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.
- Classic 21 is the reference for classic rock music in Wallonia and Brussels. The channel distinguishes itself by its emphasis on iconic rock artists, but also offers specials, live concerts and interviews with artists.

La Première

- News, current affairs, debate and culture
- Listeners interested in news, debate, documentaries and cultural programmes.
- La Première is considered the “public news channel” of RTBF. It broadcasts talk shows, analyses, cultural discussions and documentaries. Current affairs and political debates play a central role here.

VivaCité

- Popular music, news and entertainment
 - A broad audience, with a focus on listeners who like to combine entertainment with news and traffic information.
-

- VivaCité is one of RTBF's most popular channels, known for its combination of music, regional news bulletins and traffic information. The station also focuses on local news and community events.

Tipik

- Contemporary pop, urban and alternative music
- Young people and young adults (15-35 years old)
- Tipik was launched in 2020 as a merger of the channels Pure and La Deux. It is a cross-media brand that focuses on young people with both radio broadcasts and digital content (videos, social media). It offers a mix of music, lifestyle, gaming and pop culture.

Tarmac

- Urban, hip-hop, rap and R&B
- Young people and lovers of hip-hop, rap and R&B
- Tarmac is a 100% digital channel focused on urban culture. The channel has a strong presence on social media and offers video clips, live performances, interviews with artists and podcasts. It is a platform that focuses on new artists and youth culture.

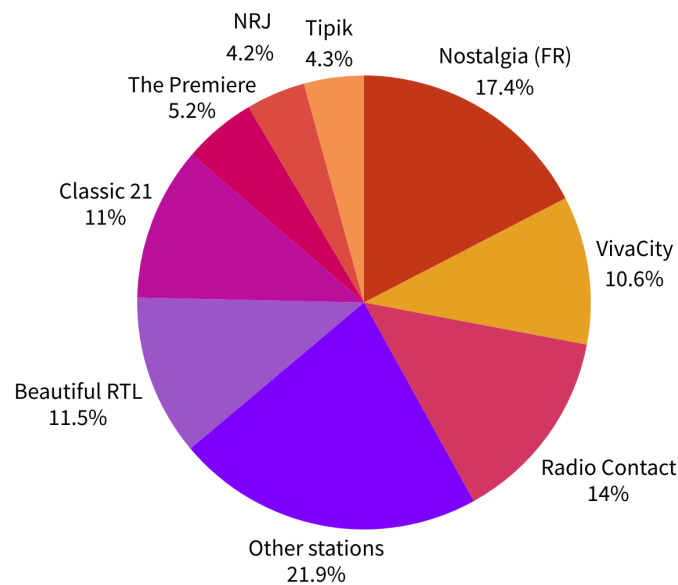


Figure 12. Market share of radio stations in Wallonia in 2025. Source: [CIM, 2025](#).

7.4. Television

Belgium's television landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, with traditional live viewing declining as audiences, particularly younger demographics, increasingly shift towards diverse online platforms and streaming services. Public broadcasters, VRT in Flanders and RTBF in Wallonia, play crucial roles in this evolving environment, adapting their strategies to maintain relevance and provide local content amidst competition from commercial channels and international streaming giants. In general, it can be said that there is little room for specialised music or cultural programmes on television.

7.4.1. Television in Flanders

VRT, the public broadcaster in Flanders, operates several channels: Eén (general family programming), Canvas (culture and quality series), Ketnet (children aged 6-12), and Sporza

(sports). VRT's mandate includes making culture broadly accessible, fostering curiosity, and promoting cultural diversity. VRT 1 holds a strong market share of 32%, while commercial channels VTM and Play4 collectively account for 56%. Flemish viewers show a preference for "knowledge," entertainment, and sports programming.

Live television viewing is decreasing in Flanders, with 45% of daily viewers in 2023, down from previous years. Similarly, delayed viewing, which initially offset this decline, is now also showing a decrease, with 33% of Flemish people watching daily. The rise of "cable cutters" - individuals without traditional TV subscriptions who consume content online - is notable, increasing to 14%. These viewers rely on online offerings from local media brands (like VRT.Nu and VTM.Go), paid streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Streamz), and social media. YouTube remains a dominant video and music platform with 62% active user share, while video consumption on other social media platforms is also growing rapidly (57%). The disappearance of dedicated music channels by 2015 highlights the industry's shift and the continuous need for traditional broadcasters to re-profile and innovate their programming and marketing (CIM, 2024).

7.4.2. Television in Wallonia

RTBF, the French-speaking public broadcaster, is a key player in Wallonia, operating La Une (general audience), Tipik (youth and young adults), and La Trois (educational and cultural content), along with ARTE Belgique (cultural documentaries). The market share in Wallonia is more evenly distributed among La Une (nearly 20%), RTL TVI, and TF1. RTBF's regional production centres strengthen its local connection, and it differentiates itself from commercial and French channels by prioritising local Walloon content. Fiction is the most popular content category in Wallonia, followed by "knowledge" and entertainment programmes.

Similar to Flanders, streaming services are gaining traction among young people in Wallonia, with Netflix dominating the market (over 40% of Belgian users). While Disney+ and Prime Video also have significant shares, Streamz is particularly strong in the Dutch-speaking region. Websites and apps of traditional television channels, such as VRT Max and VTM in Flanders, are popular, with over two-thirds of Flemish users. In Wallonia, Auvio (RTBF's platform) is the most popular, used by 28% of French-speaking Belgians, followed by RTL Play (CIM, 2024).

7.5. Developing a Marketing and PR Strategy

When Ed Sheeran's *Lego House* was released in 2011, interest in this album in Belgium was low at first. When Warner was asked why this wasn't working in [Belgium](#), they answered, "because we have to do everything twice." Perhaps even more than 20 years ago, it remains increasingly difficult to bring music and artists to the attention of Dutch -and French-language media across the language border.

7.5.1. Regional Variations in Music Promotion: Flanders vs. Wallonia

The contrasting approaches to music distribution in Wallonia and Flanders significantly shape the marketing strategies adopted by artists in each region. Walloon artists often emphasise cultural identity, using storytelling and partnerships with institutions like the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to highlight their heritage. Appearances at festivals and local events play a central role in building visibility, particularly for traditional or niche genres. These strategies help artists appeal to both local communities and international audiences interested in world music.

In **Wallonia**, physical media remains an important marketing tool, especially among collectors and vinyl enthusiasts. Artists frequently release limited-edition recordings, leveraging specialised shops and record fairs to reach their audience. Media promotion also relies heavily on local and

regional outlets, such as RTBF radio and community newspapers, which highlight Wallonia's cultural heritage. Social media is used more for community engagement through platforms like Facebook and YouTube, with a focus on niche audiences rather than global reach.

In **Flanders**, marketing strategies prioritise digital distribution and global accessibility. Flemish artists often employ digital-first campaigns, utilising platforms like Spotify, Instagram, and TikTok to engage a broader audience. Influencer collaborations and playlist placements are key tools for boosting visibility. Additionally, securing airplay on major radio stations such as Studio Brussel and MNM remains crucial, as it can significantly impact digital streams and physical sales. Brand partnerships and sponsorships, especially with major festivals like Pukkelpop and Tomorrowland, are also common strategies that align with the commercialisation of music in Flanders.

Artist visibility varies considerably between the two regions. In **Wallonia**, artists often achieve recognition within regional and cultural circles, with some gaining international attention through music festivals. However, mainstream success is limited, and sustainability often depends on cultural grants and heritage-focused initiatives. By contrast, **Flemish** artists benefit from greater global reach due to digital platforms and streaming metrics, which can lead to partnerships with major labels and participation in international events.

Overall, **Walloon** artists are encouraged to focus on authenticity and grassroots promotion, emphasising cultural narratives to build a loyal fan base. Meanwhile, **Flemish** artists can leverage digital marketing expertise and cross-platform promotion to achieve mainstream and international success. These tailored strategies highlight the importance of aligning distribution methods with the cultural and commercial realities of each region.

7.5.2. Professional Promotion Services and Strategic Pitching

Working with a [promotion service provider](#) offers several advantages for artists. Firstly, they have a good network of contacts within the media, which allows them to get your music in front of the right people at the right time. This can help to get your release noticed, which is crucial in a time of abundance of new music. Promotion service providers can also help to create online buzz, which is important for building a fan base. Their expertise and experience can significantly increase the visibility of your music. Therefore, bigger artists often have local PR partners in different countries. Also, to get a foothold in Belgium, you can work with a foreign partner for promotion who will try to convince the press and media of your music. Together with a foreign agent, this can be the key to an international career.

Successful DSP pitching can lead to placements on popular playlists, increasing an artist's reach and audience engagement. It often requires a strategic approach and relationships within the industry to effectively target the right playlists. Many independent promoters provide a diverse array of promotional services, including press representation for both online and print media, playlist pitching for digital streaming platforms, and outreach to both underground and national radio stations. They also execute general marketing campaigns in selected regions. Their approach is always tailored to align with the specific goals and needs of each client.

For more details, you can explore these independent promotion service providers in **Wallonia**: [Five Oh](#), [Boris Engels](#), [Filip De Groot PR](#), Caroline Lacksman, [Emanuel Deroubaix](#), [This Side Up!](#), etc. They all offer comprehensive and tailor-made promotion services for new and renowned artists, labels, events, and festivals in the Belgian and international music business.

In Flanders, several independent promotion service providers also play a vital role in supporting artists, labels and events. [Eight Days a Week](#) offers tailor-made PR campaigns, press promotion and storytelling for artists and cultural projects. [Kimberley Haesendonck](#) works independently as a music promoter, focusing on media outreach and personalised campaigns that strengthen the

visibility of both local and international acts. Other agencies include [Double Deeds](#), [Stiletto](#) and [Les Fabuleux](#), which provides custom press and media strategies for artists, labels and festivals across Belgium and beyond.

7.5.3. Considerations for Radio Airplay

[A good PR strategy](#) could involve setting up a well-targeted promotional campaign (with or without the artist's label) in the countries where play is desired. For example, if a fair amount of streams has already been collected in Belgium, it could be a good idea to write to some press or music blogs there for the next release. That way, even more people will hopefully be reached and extra clout gained to convince programmers.

To convince music compilers to add music to a playlist, a compelling story is essential. Researching and respecting the channel's musical focus is crucial; submitting a metalcore band to a pop station or techno to classical radio is ineffective. Instead, identify online or traditional radio stations and programmes that align with the music's genre. Additionally, ensure more than a single song is prepared before approaching compilers for airplay. Getting airplay on the radio should be part of a step-by-step plan to break through with the music.

In Focus: Developing a PR Strategy

[Interview with Laetitia Van Hove \(Five Oh\)](#)

The Belgian Market

The interview with Laetitia focuses on the complex dynamics of the Belgian music industry and her experiences with PR strategies. She emphasises that Belgium, due to the division between Flanders and Wallonia, has two markets with unique characteristics, which requires artists to develop dual strategies. She compares this to Switzerland, where regional differences also influence the promotion of artists. Laetitia mentions examples such as Angèle and Selah Sue, where local markets proved crucial for their international breakthrough. Angèle emphasised her Brussels roots in her early work, which strengthened her credibility and connection with the audience.

These regions have different influences, with Wallonia more focused on France and Flanders on English-speaking countries. She argues that a successful promotion strategy must be locally impactful and provide a story that resonates with the audience. This is true even in the age of globalisation and streaming.

International artists must adapt to the unique context of the Belgian market. A single success abroad is often not enough; local media attention and PR remain crucial. She highlighted the importance of authentic storytelling and strategic planning, where artists choose the right moments to strengthen their presence in a market.

Developing a PR Strategy

Social media has become essential, but it only works effectively when artists show their authentic selves. Laetitia believes that traditional promotional strategies, such as expensive music videos, have less impact in today's digital age. Instead, it's all about smart, creative approaches such as leveraging local festivals or secret shows to reach audiences.

According to Laetitia, there is no set blueprint for success. Strategies vary by genre, artist, and timing. She notes that flexibility and creativity are necessary to stand out. For some artists, the focus may start in one region, while others may immediately tap into both markets, depending

on their profile and growth potential. She illustrated with examples such as Zaho de Sagazan (FR) and Lous & The Yakuza (BE) how an approach can have both regional and national impact.

Laetitia emphasises the importance of flexibility and vision when developing a PR strategy. A fixed timeline doesn't always work; strategies need to adapt to the artist's vision and goals. Some artists want to be present all the time, while others deliberately take a more reserved approach. She mentions that Belgian government agencies, such as the *Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*, provide financial support to artists for promotional campaigns, but that these are mainly focused on local artists.

She also points out the challenges for independent PR companies, such as the cost structure and limited resources, and stated that creativity is essential to realise impactful campaigns with limited budgets. She also reflects on the relevance of albums in an age where singles dominate, and mentions that an album tells a story that can convey more emotion than individual songs. Laetitia sees the role of PR and music creation as a continuous process of innovation and development, with each campaign and project building towards future successes.

In Focus: Music Promotion in Belgium

[Interview with Amélie Van Hoorebeke \(Les Fabuleux\)](#)

While digitalisation makes it easier for artists to share their work, Amélie highlights that it is becoming harder to stand out due to the sheer volume of new music. Les Fabuleux therefore, still largely focuses on traditional media channels, such as radio and press, and pays less attention to metrics such as streams and social media data. According to Amélie, traditional media remains important to break through in a saturated market.

Choosing the Right Medium

When promoting artists without an established 'social reach' or streaming success, she mentions the challenge of finding the right match with radio stations. For new artists, especially without large numbers of followers, it is difficult to gain a foothold. In the written press, a good story around the music plays an increasingly important role. Media attention is more likely to come about when an album has a relevant and personal story. She therefore advises starting bands to also include a strong narrative in their promotion.

Radio in Belgium

Amélie highlights the changing role of Flemish channels such as Radio 1 and Studio Brussel in supporting new talent. While Studio Brussel is increasingly seeking out the mainstream, Radio 1 offers space for alternative music. In addition, the division between the Flemish and Walloon music scenes is growing, making it increasingly difficult for an artist to break through in both regions. This division limits the opportunities for bands to achieve cross-border success. She also mentions the limited attention for Walloon artists in Flanders, which seems to be partly due to political and cultural preferences for local artists.

Music Promotion and “Single” Culture

The rise of the 'single culture' in the music industry has a major impact on music promotion. Due to the popularity of streaming services, artists often release multiple singles before an album is released. This means that promotion service providers, such as Amélie, have to launch singles

more often, which increases the workload without proportional financial compensation. This change has affected both the approach and the income for freelancers in the music industry.

Finally, she emphasises the continued value of radio as a platform for discovering new music. While streaming services algorithmically play mainly on previous preferences of listeners, traditional media offer space for discovery and diversity. Radio programmes with involved curators thus play an important role in introducing innovative talent and maintain a unique place in the music scene.

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