OSCE ODIHR
HATE CRIME REPORTING

Information contained in this report was compiled as part of ODIHR's 2024 Hate Crime Report.
For more information, including on previous years' reporting, please visit: hatecrime.osce.org/belgium

For more information about ODIHR's Hate Crime Report, visit: hatecrime.osce.org/our-methodology

2024

Summary

Belgium regularly reports hate crime data to ODIHR. Recent initiatives to improve hate crime identification, recording, and data collection have been implemented through ODIHR's Information Against Hate Crimes Toolkit (INFAHCT) programme. In particular, Belgium has implemented the programme's recommendations on the operational practice of police, prosecutors, and equality bodies.

Crime victimization surveys and research are frequently conducted in Belgium. "Safe.brussels", the Brussels public service responsible for crime prevention and security within the Brussels-Capital Region, conducts surveys on the perception of security and crime victimization among the general public every two years.

Hate crime data collection in Belgium
Support for hate crime victims in Belgium
Hate crime capacity building in Belgium
Belgium's hate crime legislation

ODIHR's Key Observation

ODIHR recognizes Belgium's efforts to update the existing policy and operational framework (Circular No. COL 13/2013) to enhance hate crime data recording and the effectiveness of the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. Based on the available information, ODIHR observes that Belgium's hate crime recording and statistics do not sufficiently distinguish hate crimes from other crimes, and that Belgium does not comprehensively collect hate crime sentencing data. In addition, ODIHR observes that Belgium would benefit from ensuring that hate crimes are addressed in a comprehensive manner, including by introducing a co-ordination mechanism.

Official Data

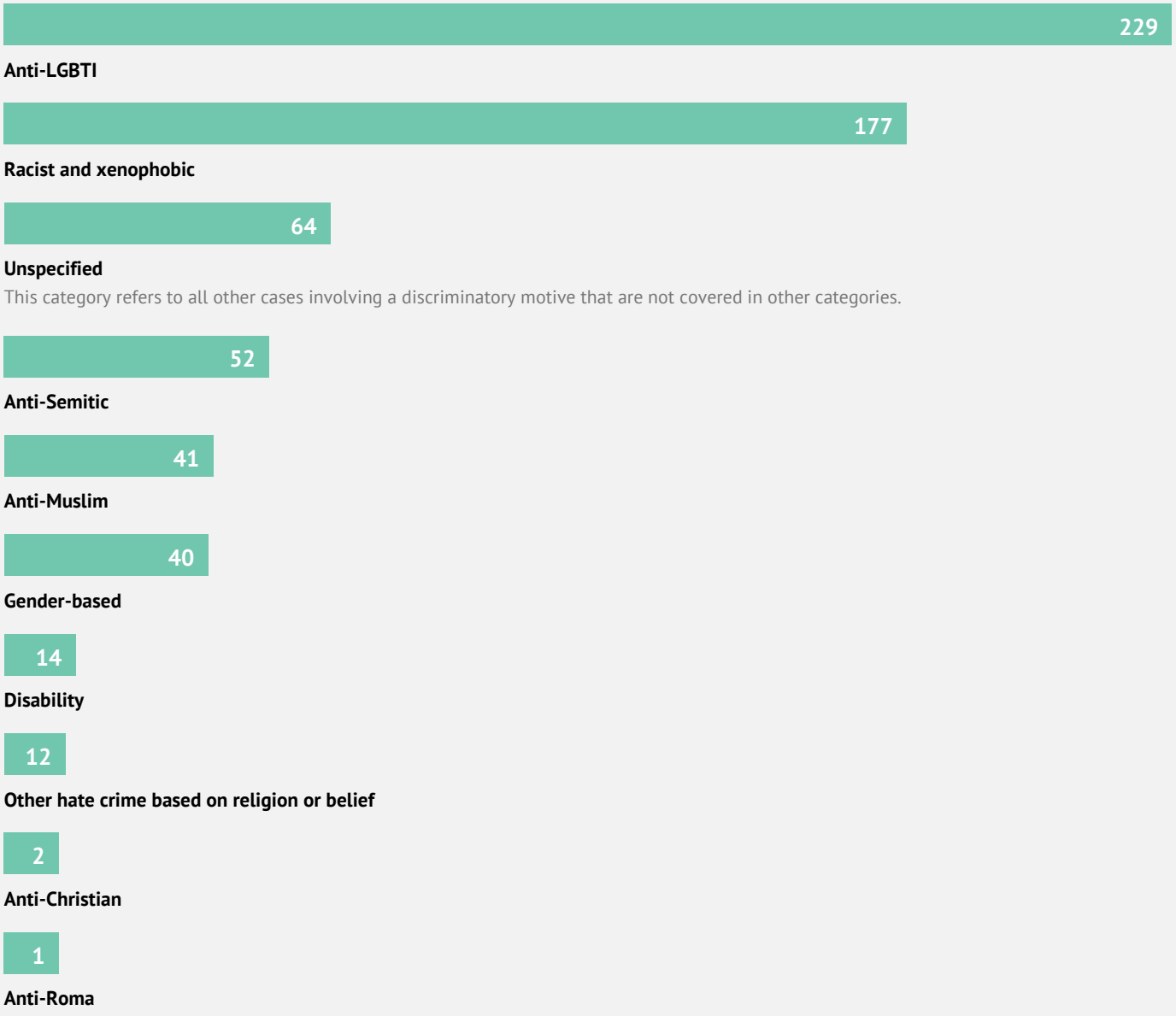
Police-recorded hate crimes refer to criminal cases with a discriminatory motive. Prosecution statistics refer to case proceedings, which may involve more than one defendant. The police figures reported above reflect Belgium's newly adopted and improved hate crime recording methodology, in use since April 2024. The data above thus combines different recording approaches applicable throughout the year. Some discrimination and hate speech offences that fall outside the OSCE hate crime definition may therefore still be included in these statistics. Furthermore, the police figure only captures data recorded in the first three quarters of 2024. Data on conviction statistics, including for hate crime cases, are not available.

Year	Hate crimes recorded by police	Prosecuted	Sentenced
2024	597	1,816	not available

Police data by bias motivation

The police hate crime data presented below are based on a combination of different recording systems applicable in 2024, and capture only the first three quarters of the year. Separate bias motivation and type of crime breakdowns were reported to ODIHR, and cannot be combined in the table below. Therefore, the chart below only presents police-recorded cases by bias motivation.

The police figures below include criminal offences, some of which may fall outside the OSCE definition of hate crime but could not be separated from the total number.



Police data by type of crime

The police hate crime data presented below are based on a combination of different recording systems applicable in 2024, and capture only the first three quarters of the year. Separate bias motivation and type of crime breakdowns were reported to ODIHR, and cannot be combined in the table below. Therefore, the chart below only presents police-recorded cases by bias motivation.

The police figures below include criminal offences, some of which may fall outside the OSCE definition of hate crime but could not be separated from the total number.



Other

National Developments

In 2024, Belgium's authorities revised the joint circular Col13/2013 for police forces and public prosecutors on the recording and investigation of discrimination and hate crimes. The objectives of the revision were as follows:

- clarify certain concepts and definition of phenomena encountered;
- ensure the more effective identification and recording of discrimination and hate crimes (a list of indicators was drawn up for this purpose);
- raise awareness of the problem and current legislation among magistrates from the public prosecutor's office, the labour audit, the police, and the social inspection services concerned;
- provide more effective guidance on investigating and prosecuting the offences concerned for magistrates and police officers in the field;
- improve collaboration and mutual exchange between the judiciary, the police, UNIA, and the IEFH;
- focus attention on investigating offences committed via the Internet, and develop specific collaboration; and
- develop specific alternative measures to improve hate crime recording and investigation.

On 8 April 2024, a comprehensive revision of the Belgian Criminal Code was adopted and published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 8 April 2024 (coming into force on 8 April 2026). The revised Criminal Code will have an impact on anti-discrimination legislation and its practical application, in that:

- the specific incriminations provided for in some laws will be integrated;
- offences will no longer be categorized separately as crimes, "offences" and contraventions;
- a new scale of principal penalties, ranging from level 1 to level 8, will be introduced;
- new penalties will be introduced; and
- a prison term will be considered as a measure of last resort.

In January 2024, the Interfederal Coordination Mechanism for Combating Antisemitism was set up. This mechanism is managed by the Secretary of State for Equality of Gender, Opportunity, and Diversity. The aim of this mechanism is to target the fight against anti-Semitism through a cross-cutting approach which foresees co-operation between different levels of government. The participation of the federated entities in this mechanism makes it possible to establish structural consultation and an exchange of information between the federal authority, the communities, and the regions.

Belgium's equality body - UNIA - also published reports on discrimination against people of African descent and anti-Semitism in Belgium in 2024.

In 2024, a national survey on gender-based violence was organized at Eurostat's request. The survey was conducted by the Interfederal Institute of Statistics with support from the various regional governments. The research report with results on a national and regional level was published in 2024 in French and Dutch.

In 2023, the Flemish government asked the University of Ghent to analyse the data of the UN-MENAMAIS survey on sexual violence to gain insight into the prevalence of sexual violence among persons with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses compared to persons without disabilities/chronic illnesses. Between 2024 and 2025, a follow-up research into the bottlenecks and success factors of the existing victim support for persons with disabilities was set up. The research ended in November 2025.

Notable case:

On the evening of 17 September 2020, a 43-year-old man from Liège was killed by 15 stab wounds in his home after an encounter with another man. With the family's agreement, UNIA brought a civil action to have the aggravating circumstances of homophobia and racism recognized and to increase the sentence. On 7 June 2024, the perpetrator was found guilty of murder with aggravating circumstances of homophobia and racism. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Incidents reported by civil society

For 2024, ODIHR received reports of hate incidents in Belgium from the following civil society organizations:

- Collective for Inclusion and against Islamophobia in Belgium (CIIB);
- European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses;
- International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF);
- The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC)
- International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA)

To learn more about these organizations, visit the Contributors page.

Individual incidents submitted by CSOs have been analysed by ODIHR. Those that were broadly considered to be hate crimes within the OSCE definition (criminal offence committed with a bias motive) are listed in the tables below according to the bias motivation category. Some incidents involved multiple biases and may be listed in multiple categories.

ODIHR's insights

For 2024, ODIHR received reports of 18 incidents that took place in Belgium in the following bias motivation categories: anti-Christian, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic and racist and xenophobic. ODIHR observes that a low number of incidents were reported in Belgium for 2024.

ODIHR observes that incidents targeting the Christian community in Belgium commonly involved the desecration of cemeteries. Anti-Semitic incidents in Belgium took place when perpetrators connected the victims or targets to the conflict in the Middle East. The anti-Muslim incidents observed often related to harassment by colleagues or neighbours.

It should be noted that ODIHR did not receive any reporting on Belgium relating to anti-LGBTI, anti-Roma, gender-based or disability hate incidents. This indicates potential gaps in the information reported here.

Please note that incidents reported here are based on voluntary civil society submissions and as such might not reflect the actual number of incidents or the most targeted communities in Belgium.

To address under-reporting, ODIHR encourages any civil society organizations or groups that monitor hate incidents in Belgium to report these to ODIHR at hatecrimereport@odihr.pl.

To export an Excel sheet with summaries of all incidents from Belgium click here and search by year and country.

View civil society incidents for Belgium, 2024