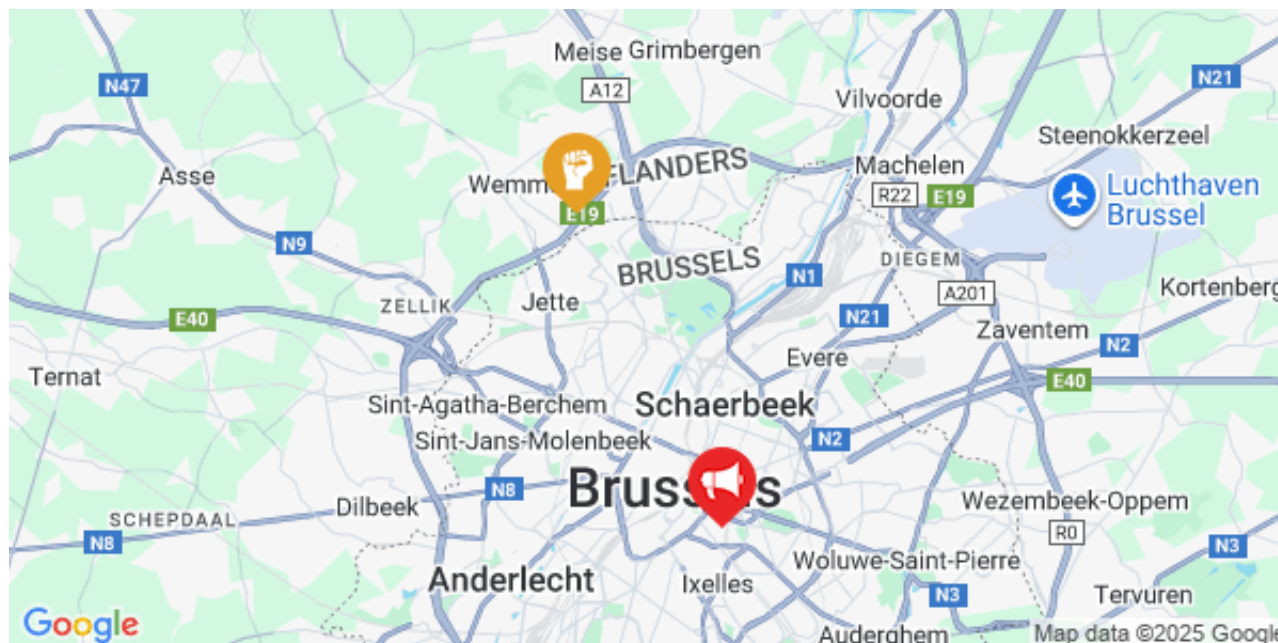


Protest



13

DEC
7:21 UTC

Belgium Tactical: General strike across Wallonia-Brussels Federation, associated protest in Brussels, to take place on December 15; avoid nonessential travel

Current Situation

- United Trade Union Front, a major labor confederation comprised of Confederation des Syndicats Chrétiens (CSC), the Federation Generale du Travail de Belgique (FGTB), and Centrale Generale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique (CGSLB), has announced a general strike in all sectors of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and associated protest on December 15.
- The action is intended to oppose the government's budget and alleged austerity measures. In recent months, Belgium has experienced sustained labor mobilization and large-scale anti-government protests. Notable actions include a student-led protest on December 11, a multi-sectoral strike from November 24 to 26, and a large multi-sectoral strike with associated demonstrations on October 14.
- The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has issued an advisory about this general strike and associated protest, stating that the action is expected to impact public transport and some public services, including schools.

- FCDO also warned about the farmers' protest on December 18, citing that significant road closures and public transport disruptions are expected, especially around the Schuman area. Further details of the farmer's protest are available [here](#).

Source: [Medias de Bruxelles](#)

- An associated demonstration is also slated to take place in Place du Luxembourg, Ixelles, Brussels, at 10:00 (local time) on December 15.



Source: [Instagram](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Based on precedent and the organizing capability of the union, the strike is likely to be widely adhered to.
2. Disruptions are expected across multiple sectors, particularly transportation, education, and public services. Public transport cancellations and delays are likely to affect metro, tram, and bus services operated by Societe des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles (STIB), as well as train services run by the national rail operator Societe nationale des chemins de fer Belges (SNBC). Vehicular traffic disruptions are likely across Brussels as commuters shift to private transport, increasing congestion amid higher pedestrian footfall and road usage.
3. Flight disruptions at Brussels Airport (BRU) are also likely, although no cancellations or delays have been announced at the time of writing. Similarly, interruptions to public services, including hospitals, are also anticipated. Unions representing the education sector are also

participating, making disruptions to schools, nurseries, and higher education institutions likely, including class cancellations.

4. Based on precedent, the demonstration is expected to draw low to mid tens of thousands of participants. In addition to Place du Luxembourg in Ixelles, spontaneous and short-notice gatherings can be anticipated across central Brussels, including symbolic locations such as Manneken Pis, Bruxelles Central train station, and Grand Place, before protesters converge.
5. Considering that the large-scale protest on October 14 recorded instances of scuffles, as police used tear gas and protesters set off flares and smoke bombs, given the sustained heightened sentiments, this rally also carries a high risk of similar unrest. As such, authorities are expected to deploy a bolstered security presence in the vicinity of the protest to oversee proceedings and respond with forcible measures, like conducting arrests and using tear gas in the instance of escalating unrest.
6. Significant pedestrian and vehicular disruptions are expected throughout central Brussels as police implement preventive cordons and road closures throughout the day.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Brussels on December 15 are advised to avoid nonessential travel near Place du Luxembourg due to the high risk of unrest at the slated anti-austerity protest during morning hours.
2. Reconfirm itineraries and allot for significant disruptions to transport and other public services across the Wallonia-Brussels Federation due to the slated general strike.