

Newsletter

Embassy of Ireland Monthly Newsletter | April 2018



Voting in the Belgian local elections

Did you know that non-Belgians are entitled to vote in Brussels in the upcoming local elections (October 2018)? [VoteBrussels](#) is a non-partisan campaign by Migration Policy Group, co-funded by the EU under the FAIREU project led by European Citizen Action Service. By 31st July VoteBrussels aims to help the 300,000 non-Belgians in Brussels to sign up to vote. Non-Belgians can make a major difference in the elections as they make up one third of the electorate across Brussels, including nearly half of the electorate in Etterbeek, Ixelles and Saint Gilles. Surveys suggest that most non-Belgians have not voted before in Belgium because they did not get the correct information in time to sign up. Voting strongly affects the decisions taken by the communes, who have more powers in Belgium than in most European countries. VoteBrussels is keen to address associations, events and offices in order to present how and why to sign up to vote—and to directly sign people up to vote.

If you would like further information please contact votebrussels@migpolgroup.com

For more information: <http://www.commissioner.brussels/>

I VOTE! 14*10*2018

- Download the voter form from www.commissioner.brussels or pick up the form at your local commune.
- Complete and sign the form. Send it with a photocopy of your Belgian ID by ordinary mail to your commune or drop it off there before 31 July 2018.
- Your registration will be confirmed by post.
- For more info visit www.commissioner.brussels or contact us on +32 (0)2 430 66 00.

JE VOTE! 14*10*2018

- Téléchargez le formulaire d'inscription sur www.commissioner.brussels ou demandez-le à votre commune.
- Remplissez et signez le formulaire. Faites-le parvenir avec une copie de votre ID belge à votre commune avant le 31 juillet 2018.
- Vous recevrez une confirmation de votre inscription par courrier.
- Pour plus d'infos, consultez www.commissioner.brussels ou contactez-nous au +32 (0)2 430 66 00.

IK STEMI! 14*10*2018

- Download het inschrijvingsformulier op www.commissioner.brussels of vraag het aan bij uw gemeente.
- Vul het formulier in en onderteken het. Bezorg het aan uw gemeente met kopie van uw Belgische ID vóór 31 juli 2018.
- U ontvangt een bevestiging van uw inschrijving per brief.
- Voor meer info zie www.commissioner.brussels of contacteer ons op +32 (0)2 430 66 00.

"More than 210,000 EU citizens live in Brussels' 19 communes, representing a quarter of the electorate. In your commune, a few hundred votes could change the outcome... So make your voice heard!"

The communes have broad competences and can defend your interests with regional and national authorities. Communes make decisions that directly affect your daily life: the development of your neighbourhood and its public and green spaces, cleanliness, parking, housing, education, and much more. EU citizens are entitled to vote in local elections. Do you want a say in your municipality's future? Don't forget to send in your voter form in time.

Who can vote?
All residents who have the nationality of an European Union member state and who:

- are registered in the population or foreigners register on 1 August 2018 or hold a special identity card;
- are at least 18 years old on 14 October 2018;
- complete the voter form for the elections before 31 July 2018.

Non-EU citizens also have the right to vote if they have lived in Belgium for 5 years or more (Info: www.elections.fgov.be).

FAQ

What do I have to do to become a voter?
Voting is a basic right and the procedure is extremely fast and simple. You fill in a one-page form and give it to the commune (by ordinary mail or in person) with a photocopy of your Belgian identity card.

Once I am registered, is voting compulsory?
No, because non-Belgian citizens can derogate as voters before 31 July 2018. After the elections, you can also derogate if you do not wish to vote in future elections.

Can I still vote in my own country?
Yes, taking part in local elections in Belgium has in principle no effect on your right to vote in elections in your own country.

What happens if I am abroad, sick or absent for another reason on 14 October 2018?
No problem, there is a simple solution: you can give a proxy vote to another elector, who votes in your place.

I voted in the previous local elections. Do I have to register again?
No, your registration is still valid, even if you have moved to another municipality in the meantime.

What if I voted in Belgium in the European elections?
You also have to register for local elections. These are two different procedures.

Can I stand as a candidate in local elections?
Yes, EU citizens can become local councillors or aldermen.

Think European VOTE LOCAL

14*10*2018

Be Do Brussels

Commissioner Brussels

www.commissioner.brussels

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Look BEFORE you book!

Before you plan your Summer adventure, check your passport is valid and don't forget over 18s can now renew using our [Online Passport Service](#).

It's faster and cheaper to renew online and no forms or paper photos are required.

Also check the kids' passports too are valid as these have shorter validity and allow enough time to renew. We strongly advise you to allow at minimum of 6 weeks for applications lodged via the Embassy.

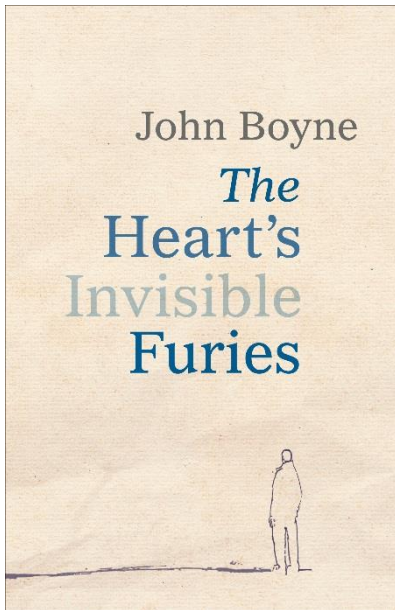


2018 Presidential Distinguished Service Award

The Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad is presented by the President every year. It recognizes the service given to this country or to Irish communities abroad by those who live outside Ireland.

Nominations for the Presidential Distinguished Service Award close on May 8. For more information, visit the [Global Irish website](#).

SAVE THE DATE



Embassy of Ireland Book Club

24.04.2018 | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Join us on Tuesday 24 April for the 4th meeting of the Embassy of Ireland Book Club. The Book Club is reading books by contemporary Irish authors writing in English today, and meets every 6 weeks.

For the next meeting we will read the book "The Heart's Invisible Furies" by John Boyne.

You can get a copy of the book in [Waterstones Brussels](#) – mention the Embassy of Ireland Book Club for a 10% discount! We hope that you'll join us!

Please register [here](#) to attend.



Darkness into Light comes to Brussels

12.05.2018 | 04:00 AM

Please join the Irish and wider international community in bringing the Darkness into Light fundraiser to Brussels for the first time. Wake up and walk with us **on Saturday May 12th 2018 at 4am in Parc Cinquanteaire.**

Darkness into Light began when a bereaved couple from Dublin, rose at 4am to walk into the dawn in memory of their son, who tragically died by suicide. Since 2009 the event has grown from 400 people in the Phoenix Park, Dublin to a worldwide event in over 150 towns and cities across Ireland, China, Canada, Australia and beyond. Funds raised from the Brussels Darkness into Light Walk will jointly benefit Pieta House - an Irish Suicide Prevention organisation - and two Belgian organisations sharing similar values - Centrum ter Preventie van Zelfdoding and Centre de prevention de suicide.

Be a part of the first ever Brussels' Darkness into Light on 12 May at 4am.

Further information can be found [here](#).



Miriam Dowling Art Exhibition

From 18 May 2018 to 30 June 2018

The official opening of Irish artist Miriam Dowling's art exhibition as guest of honour in the Arthus Gallery will take place on Thursday, 17 May 2018 in Brussels.

Miriam is a very talented young rising artist who captures the mood, wonder and magic of the Irish land and seascapes in her work.

The exhibition will run from 18 May to 30 June 2018 in the Arthus Gallery (Rue Simonis 33, 1050 Brussels) and is open to the public Tuesdays to Saturdays from 2 pm to 6 pm. For more info, see the Arthus Gallery website.



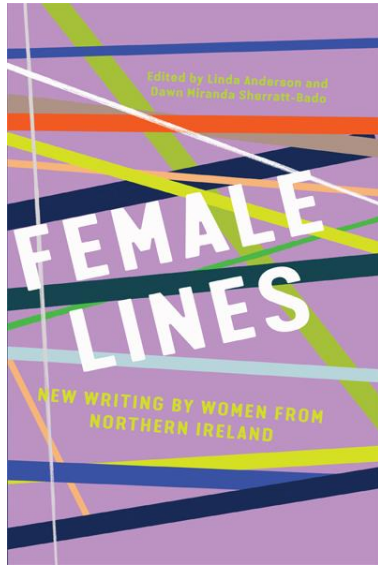
Screening of "Queen of Ireland" film

22.05.2018 | 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Join us in May for a screening of Queen of Ireland together with the United Nations Regional Information Centre to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Queen of Ireland is a 2015 Irish documentary directed by Conor Horgan which focuses on Rory O'Neill, better known as Panti, in the lead up to the historic referendum on marriage equality for same-sex couples in Ireland. You can watch the trailer for Queen of Ireland here.

More info & tickets:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/170361126927939/>



Female Lines – special cultural evening to mark the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement

29.05.2018 | 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

More information and official invitations will follow shortly. Please save this date in your agendas.

*Follow the Embassy of Ireland Twitter for information and updates on events
[@IrishEmbBelgium](#)*

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*Those who wish to be added to our **mailing list** can register [here](#)*



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