

# Belgium ranked third most stressful country in the world to live in

The Brussels Times – Nick Amies - 15 January 2024

Extraits. Article complet pour les abonnés.

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**Finding the perfect place to settle down can seem like a daunting task. Seeking to shed light on this challenge, a recent ranking has endeavoured to identify the least stressful countries and cities worldwide.**

Compiled by William Russell Insurance, specialising in services for expats, this comprehensive list assesses countries and cities based on stress factors such as cleanliness, quality of green spaces, and the safety of LGBTQ individuals.

Mumbai, Bangalore, and Nairobi emerged as the most stressful cities, with Brussels securing the 30th spot – making it the third most stressful European city after Rome and Athens.

On the national scale, Belgium finds itself as the third most stressful country globally, trailing behind South Korea and the United States. According to the index, Belgium's alarming levels of noise and light pollution significantly impact mental health, disrupting sleep quality and elevating stress and anxiety.

With a noise and light pollution score of 54.93 – an increase of 0.13 from the previous year – Belgium ascends to third position, up from fourth in 2022. The severity of noise pollution in Brussels alone is estimated to deduct approximately eight months from the life expectancy of its residents.

On the other hand, those in pursuit of a more serene existence should head to Portugal. The country boasts low financial stress, a more reasonable cost of living compared to the rest of Europe (excluding rent), with an average monthly expenditure of €625. Furthermore, Portugal excels in providing a safe environment for the LGBTQ community.

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Not far behind the Iberian Peninsula is Sweden. Renowned for its progressive social systems and comfortable living, the index notes, "Sweden ranks among the top five countries in air pollution and is the second safest OECD country for the LGBTQ community." Despite these accolades, the cost of living in Sweden is notably higher.

Estonia secures the third spot in this stress-free ranking, celebrated for its exceptional air quality. The index underlines the critical link between air pollution and stress, emphasising the negative impact on physical and mental health, including an increased risk of depression. Estonia is also lauded for its cleanliness, making it a desirable destination for those seeking a tranquil and health-conscious environment.