

Welcome to 16 rue de la Loi.

Important decisions that have a direct impact on our daily lives are taken here in this building every week. Whether it is for international, European or Belgian issues, the different ministers and I work together every day in order to meet the current challenges. Whether it is dealing with employment, health, pensions, economic development or security.

I am delighted to be able to open these doors to allow you to visit these premises, where so many important events creating the political history of our country have taken place.

Being Prime Minister first and foremost means serving all of the people. Allowing you to discover these premises is a way of showing that the institutions of our country belong first and foremost to all its citizens.

I wish you a pleasant visit.

The Prime Minister



## 16 rue de la Loi

Behind the neoclassical façade of 16 rue de la Loi in Brussels are the offices of the Prime Minister's policy unit, made up of his political advisors, and the Chancellery, his administrative departments.

Everyone knows the building's main entrance: it regularly features in television broadcasts showing the prime minister and members of government standing before the entrance of the "16", when journalists report on political events.

The building, located across from the Warande park and next to the Federal Parliament, was erected between 1782 and 1784 based on plans drafted by the architect Louis Montoyer. In its early days, it served as a refuge for the Sint-Geertrui abbey in Leuven. Later on, it was also used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, among others.

The Belgian State purchased the building in 1847 with the aim of housing various departments in its offices. In September 1944, Prime Minister Hubert Pierlot judged that the building at 18 rue de la Loi, which housed the prime minister's departments at the time, had become too small. He then decided to move to the building on the other side of the street, the now famous "16".

Since that time, 16 rue de la Loi has been the official headquarters of the Belgian government. The weekly Council of Ministers meetings and government press conferences take place in the building.



### The Lilac room

This room's name refers to the lilac-coloured border around the ceiling. The Council of Ministers held its meetings in this room in the post war period up until the late sixties. The Lilac room was subsequently used for press conferences. The ministers were seated in front of the fireplace and the journalists took place on the other side of the table. The Lilac room is currently used for meetings or receiving guests.



FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister

16 rue de la Loi - 1000 Brussels



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### ***The prime minister's office***

This office has seen successive prime ministers receive their counterparts, maintain numerous contacts and study many important cases. Each prime minister has brought a personal touch to the office's decor.



### ***The former Council of Ministers' room***

The former Council of Ministers' room was given the grim nickname of "the coffin", in reference to the shape of its table. It was built in the late sixties. There are many seats around the table, most of which were set up during the seventies, when some governments had more than 35 ministers. It is still used for meetings with large groups.



### ***The Council of Ministers room***

This room was inaugurated in November of 2007 under Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt. It is located in the building's attic, which used to house the archives. It is currently used as a meeting room by the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers is one of the main epicentres of Belgian politics. Members of government take decisions collectively in the room, i.e. on the basis of a consensus, and they are jointly and severally liable for the decisions taken. Discussions are kept secret, although the Council of Ministers' decisions are made public in official press releases.

### ***The press room, nicknamed "the bunker"***

This room was inaugurated in May of 1992 under Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene. This is where the government informs the press about the decisions taken during the Council of Ministers meetings. This fully equipped room is located on the basement level of the Chancellery.



## **16 rue de la Loi opens its doors**

See inside the Prime Minister's office  
and the corridors of the federal government

