

De: BeFamily info@befamily.be
Objet: 🌱 Spring is here - BeFamily's Blooming Progress
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Spring 2025 Newsletter

Dear Members of BeFamily,
Dearest Friends,

Spring is in the air, and with it comes a sense of renewal, fresh opportunities and—dare we say—a bit of optimism! The days are getting longer, the flowers are starting to bloom, and our community is growing. This season brings not just a change in weather, but also a big breakthrough: diplomatic spousal pensions have been explicitly mentioned in the new governing agreement. This is a major milestone, and while there's still a long road ahead, it proves that our advocacy efforts are making an impact. Now, it's up to us to keep the momentum going!

In this newsletter, we'll dive into the latest updates on our General Assembly, where we reflected on 2024 and set our ambitions for 2025. We'll also introduce the Family Satisfaction Survey, a crucial initiative to back up our advocacy with hard data—because change starts with knowing exactly what needs to improve. You'll find highlights from Diplomatic Days in Brussels, the Earth Day Challenge 2025, and the recent Q&A on pension and social security. And of course, there's always room for community news, from a podcast launched by one of our members to some of the hottest topics discussed in our WhatsApp Community.

Happy reading, and as always, don't hesitate to reach out - BeFamily is here

because of you!

Han, Fabio, Maria, Adriaan, Suzanne, Odile, Bram & Felix

P.S.: We'll end this newsletter again with some lovely pictures from across the globe!

From the new government agreement: A Breakthrough for Diplomatic Spouse Pensions!

Let's start with the biggest news! Regardless of how you feel about the new governing coalition, there's one development we can all welcome: for the first time, **diplomatic spouse pensions have been explicitly mentioned in the governing agreement** (the agreement: [FR/NL](#)). This marks a real opportunity to push our case forward.

NL: We moderniseren de diplomatieke carrière met oog op een aantrekkelijk personeelsbeleid en een modern gezinsbeleid, waarbij we rekening houden met internationale mobiliteit van onze diplomaten en hun gezin. We verhogen de capaciteit voor opleidingen in talen, onderhandelen en veiligheid. Bij de uitvoering van het beleid in verband met de federale publieke functie, houden we rekening met de eigenheid van het personeel van de FOD BuZa, dat voornamelijk in het buitenland is tewerkgesteld. We onderzoeken een regeling waarbij partners van diplomaten in het buitenland sociale zekerheidsrechten en pensioen in België kunnen opbouwen, inclusief telewerkopties naar Belgisch recht. De jaarlijkse diplomatieke beweging wordt verder geobjectiveerd. We erkennen het belang van een evenwichtigere genderverdeling bij de externe loopbaan en dit vanaf de rekrutering en bevorderen deze. (p. 195)

FR: Nous modernisons la carrière diplomatique en vue d'une politique du personnel attractive et d'une politique familiale moderne, tenant compte de la mobilité internationale de nos diplomates et de leur famille. Nous augmentons la capacité en matière de formations en langues, en négociations et en sécurité. Lors de la mise en oeuvre des politiques liées à la fonction publique fédérale, nous tenons compte du caractère propre du personnel du SPF Affaires étrangères, qui est principalement employé à l'étranger. Nous étudions un système permettant aux partenaires des diplomates à l'étranger d'acquérir des droits à la sécurité sociale et à la pension en Belgique, y compris des options de télétravail en droit belge. Le mouvement diplomatique annuel est objectivé plus avant. Nous reconnaissons l'importance d'un meilleur équilibre entre les genres dans la carrière extérieure et ce, dès le recrutement, et nous le promouvons (n. 202)

This recognition didn't come out of nowhere. It's partly thanks to the advocacy efforts we've been building over the past months—including the open letter we sent to the Commission on Foreign Affairs back in December (if you missed it, you can read the letter [here](#)).

We're seeing momentum, and **now is the time to act**. The door has been opened, but it's up to us—BeFamily—to shape the next steps. We will be setting out a strategy to ensure this topic stays on the table and leads to real change. However, this is a big and ambitious project, and **we need more (wo)manpower** to keep the momentum going. **If you want to be back in the driver's seat regarding your (and all of our) pension rights, [now is the time to get engaged!](#)** Click below and drop us a message!

Yes, I want to help!

Let's wrap up this section by extending a warm welcome to the **new Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Maxime Prévot** - BeFamily is looking forward to working with you and your Cabinet!



General Assembly

BeFamily held its General Assembly online on January 28, to reflect on our achievements in 2024 and set our ambitions for 2025. It gave the opportunity to those who attended to weigh in on BeFamily's priorities and strategies, ensuring that we continue moving forward together.

Over the past year, we've strengthened our



Over the past year, we've strengthened our community with a nearly 10% increase in paying members, transformed our WhatsApp group into a Community, and expanded our advocacy through letters on pension rights and pollution. We also hosted the EUFASA 2024 Conference in Brussels and organized a range of webinars and in-person events.



Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to keep growing our membership, increase in-person and online gatherings, enhance our advocacy efforts within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and update our website to better serve our members. A Family Satisfaction Survey will also be launched to better understand the needs of our members. For those who couldn't join, click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Family Satisfaction Survey

One of the topics discussed during the General Assembly was BeFamily's newest initiative: the Family Satisfaction Survey. We want 2025 be marked as the year where we enhance our advocacy and work towards tangible change for diplomatic families. However, striving for change implies that we are **diplomatic families aren't fully satisfied at the moment** ... and that's a strong statement to make, and one the Ministry might not enjoy hearing. Therefore, to formulate a convincing argument for change in family policies within the Ministry, we need more than just anecdotes. **We need hard data.** This is why we are launching this Family Satisfaction Survey, to strengthen our voice while advocating for meaningful change.

Join our efforts for a better family policy
by completing BeFamily's

FAMILY



FAMILY SATISFACTION SURVEY

BeFamily
Belgian Diplomacy Family Association



The more responses we collect, the stronger our case will be. [We urgently need your help to fill out this survey](#) and share it with other spouses of diplomats you know. This survey is for all diplomatic families, whether or not you're a BeFamily member. It only takes 15 minutes to complete, and your input is completely anonymous. Your voice matters—help us ensure that diplomatic families get the support they deserve! Please take a moment to fill out the survey and share it within your network.

Fill out the survey here

All responses will be compiled, analyzed, and summarized in a report that we will share with our members, the Ministry, and other stakeholders later this year. For more details, you can watch the [video here](#). But most importantly—fill out the survey! Your participation is essential to making this initiative a success.

BeFamily at the Diplo-days

BeFamily had an exciting week in Brussels during the Diplomatic Days from February 3-7, right at the start of the new government's mandate. The event was packed with meaningful conversations and key engagements, reinforcing our presence and advocacy.



We started with the Head of Missions' partners' drink, hosted by the Family Officer, where we had the chance to meet the new DG P&O, who committed to strengthening support for the Family Officer. At the Amicale's General Assembly, we highlighted the power of unity in advancing key issues like the pension dossier and sought their support in growing our community to amplify our collective voice.



In the spirit of connection, we hosted a special get-together for our members. Despite the flu making its rounds, those who joined had a great time strengthening bonds and sharing ideas in a festive atmosphere.

A special moment came at the closing ceremony when former Minister M Quentin placed one of our BeFamily cards in front of him, reminding everyone that we are all family.

Moving in 2025? Join our WhatsApp Group!

Are you moving this summer, whether abroad or back to Belgium? Our WhatsApp Community has a special group just for those relocating this year! If you're not yet part of our community, drop us an email to join.

Recently we already discussed enrolling kids in Belgian daycare, settling claims with the insurance company, and the do's and don'ts when buying a car abroad. Join the conversation!



MOVING ? THIS SUMMER

We have a Whatsapp Group specifically for you in this Community! Join the “🚚 moving in 2025” group and start sharing your questions & advice.



BeFamily's Earth Day Challenge 2025

The members of our BeFamily community travel across the world experiencing diverse cultures. Throughout history, different societies have developed innovative ways to adapt to their surroundings—whether in transportation, energy use, architecture, or fashion—using locally available resources. These adaptations reflect not just cultural traditions but also sustainable practices that can inspire us today.

On **Earth Day 2025**, let's come together to explore and share the incredible solutions different cultures have developed to live in harmony with the environment. This year, we're **focusing on the fashion industry**—one of the most impactful sectors on our planet. Join us for the Earth Day Challenge with your family and embark on a journey through fashion across the globe. Let's celebrate creativity, sustainability, and the ways we can make a difference!

Start the challenge by responding to this question right here:

Start!



Q&A on pensions & social security

Q&A on pensions & social security

About a year ago, we had the opportunity to submit our questions on pensions and social security to the Family Officer. These questions were compiled and forwarded to Professor Yves Stevens and his team from KU Leuven, experts on the matter. Their findings and responses were presented during the **Q&A session on pension and social security held on 1 February**.

With approximately 30 participants, the session offered an in-depth overview of how marriage impacts social security and the proactive steps spouses can take to safeguard their interests. The expertise and approachability of Professor Stevens and his team made for an insightful discussion, addressing key aspects of pension rights, entitlements, and legal considerations.



For those who missed it, **additional Q&A sessions are planned for May/June and October**, which will be conducted in English.

To ensure that this valuable information is accessible to everyone, we are compiling it into a single document. This resource will be available in three languages: Dutch, English, and French, ensuring that all members of our community can benefit from it.

Podcast Tip: Expat Daily - by one of BeFamily's own

Our BeFamily member Aygun has launched a new podcast! "[Expat Daily](#)" is now on Spotify, created by our member currently posted in Mumbai alongside an Indian co-host. The podcast is dedicated to expats, with its first season featuring episodes from India. [Feel free to listen](#) —you might find some useful insights!



Whispers from our WhatsApp Community: Lots of discussions & the Christmas spirit

As you know, our WhatsApp Community is the beating hearth of BeFamily. We are spread across the world, but through WhatsApp we can stay in touch and share advice, whether we are in Brussels, Buenos Aires, Bamako or Beijing. **you aren't a member yet, you are really missing out!** Some of the topics we discussed in the previous months were:

- Online English classes for kids
- Which VPN is the best
- Being employed by your Belgian business when abroad
- How to deal with malaria and mosquitoes
- Reimbursement for language classes
- Moving a furry family member to Abidjan
- Breaking social isolation as a foreign spouse in Belgium
- The difference between our Ethias and Cigna insurance
- Enrolling kids in Belgian schools when moving back
- Wise or Revolut, which one to choose?
- Saving for the spouses' pension what options?

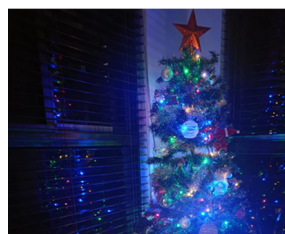
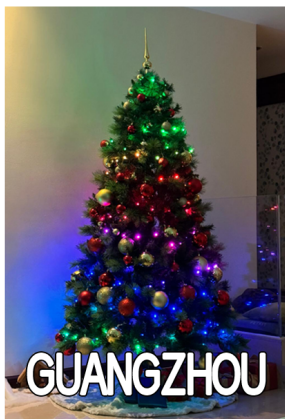
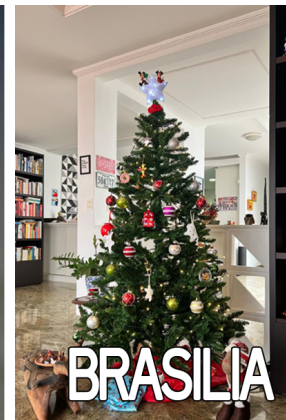
Lots of useful info, based on real life experiences, more than any vademecum could ever offer! Access to our WhatsApp Community is one of

Click here to
join

the many perks of being a BeFamily member.
Join BeFamily by dropping us an email!

BeFamily!

But it isn't all serious discussions though... just look at our Christmas trees from around the world!





KIGALI



ISLAMABAD



ATLANTA



BRUSSELS



DAR ES SALAAM



ZAGREB



BELGIUM



INDIA



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The newsletter for members of BeFamily (formerly Alloquium).

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