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## **Belgium: Parliamentary Commission's work on colonial past foundered. Justitia et Pax, "deepest regret"**

Belgium has decided to "stagnate in a dark and disastrous past": this is how today Justitia et Pax commented the news that the Belgium Chamber Committee that had to review the colonial past of the country failed to vote on a report yesterday that was expected to end the work started in Summer 2020. One of the recommendations, the one that said that Belgium should have officially apologised for its colonial past, was the most divisive. The Liberal and Cd&V parties were against it and actually left the meeting, so the quorum went lost. "It is with deepest regret that we acknowledge the Belgian Liberals' refusal to take historical responsibility and to open a new page in Belgium's relations with the Congolese, Rwandan and Burundian populations and their diasporas", Justitia et Pax went on in a tweet. Also yesterday, the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, had made an epoch-marking speech, in which he "apologised on behalf of the Dutch Government for the role played by the Netherlands in the past: belatedly to all the slaves of the world that suffered because of such role, their sons and daughters, all their descendants through to this day". And actually Justitia et Pax stated that "the whole world is trying to move forward on such issues", while Belgium has slowed down "an epic process of reconciliation".

Filippo Passantino