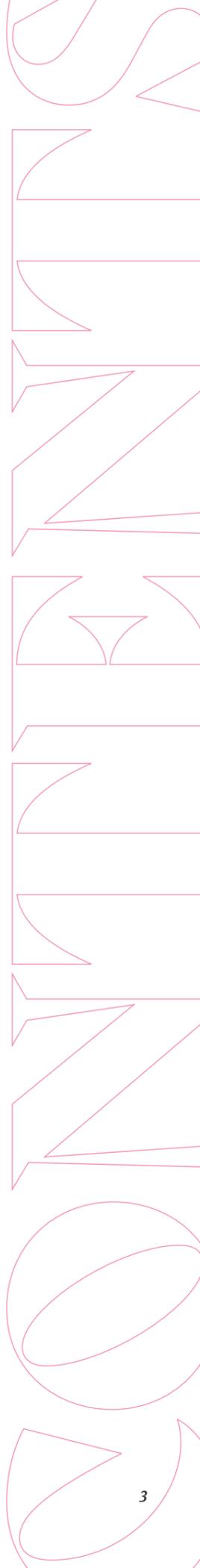




EXPAT GUIDE LIMBURG

for expats

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WELCOME TO FLANDERS' SMALLEST AND GREENEST PROVINCE!

You won't find densely populated cities or skyscraper skylines in Limburg, and we're proud of it. **What we do offer is a balance between work and play. In other words: quality of life.**

Flanders' greenest province has open spaces and charming cities. There is a pleasant bustle, but it is peaceful at the same time. Moreover, as a province, Limburg is the most ambitious. It aspires to become (even) more competitive, sustainable, inclusive and digital in the coming years. Our province is already home to seven business incubators, not to mention lots of bright entrepreneurs with innovative ideas and growing businesses.

Limburg's geographic location at the heart of Europe means that cities such as Aachen, Liège and Maastricht are only a short drive away. Here in this green environment, bursting with business opportunities and warm-hearted and welcoming inhabitants, you will certainly feel at home soon.

HI, EXPAT! WELCOME TO LIMBURG, BELGIUM!

You are choosing to settle in the east of Belgium. A choice you will not regret. The people in this region are kind and down to earth and there's so much to explore. In this guide we will give you all the useful information on the most important topics you will need during your relocation. How does public transport work? How do I greet someone in Dutch and what are fun activities for the kids? You will find a mix of formal and informal information both from a national and regional perspective.

SERVICE CENTRE FOR EXPATS

The Expat Centre Limburg is a central hub for expats living and working in the province of Limburg. Our mission is to support international companies and highly skilled migrants, scientific researchers and their families. We aim to facilitate a fast and smooth introduction of expats and their families to this region by providing comprehensive information about formalities, services and activities in the area.

THIS GUIDE

This guide will lead you to the most important institutions and companies needed for your relocation.

1. Limburg in a nutshell. Some key facts and figures about the province p. 6
2. Administrative: p. 10
 - What to do upon arrival
 - Available services and information about daily life and arrangements
3. Economic: in-depth information about the vibrant environment you will be working and living in p. 16
4. Leisure: must sees before your departure, so grab that bucket list! p. 38

Questions?

The team at Expat Centre Limburg is more than happy to help you.

VISIT
www.expatscentre limburg.com | www.youregion-emr.eu

FOLLOW
Expat Centre Limburg -  | 

JOIN
YouRegion International Network - 
and start discovering this vibrant region

**LIMBURG IN A NUTSHELL.
SOME KEY FACTS AND
FIGURES ABOUT THE PROVINCE.**

Let's talk numbers

EMPLOYMENT MARKET AND ACTIVITY

419

419 companies are represented by the **incubators**.

NUMBER 3 IN GLOBALISATION

Belgium is ranked third most globalised country in the world in the KOF Index of Globalisation. This makes the region enormously attractive to internationals and open-minded and motivated entrepreneurs.

77,648

The total number of **enterprises** in Limburg has been increasing year on year and reached 77,648 in 2020.

Source: *provincie in cijfers*

25%

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In Limburg, there has been a 25% increase in the number of entrepreneurs over the past 8 years. This is lower than the Flemish average of 28%.

Source: *provincie in cijfers*

158

EXPORT IN LIMBURG

In 2019, 5.2% more certificates of origin were issued in Limburg than the year before, amounting to a revenue of 1.2 billion euros. Certificates of origin are issued when exporting goods to distant countries (beyond the EU).

Source: *Voka*

Limburg exported to 158 countries in 2019.

Source: *Voka*

Exports from Limburg totalled 15.3 billion euros in 2019.

Source: *nbb.be*

CLIMATE CHAMPION

-23%

Limburg wants to become Belgium's first **climate-neutral province by 2050** and is well on its way. Carbon emissions were successfully decreased by 23% between 2008 and 2017.

Source: *Provincie Limburg*

A green province for **green energy**. Limburg is ahead of the game when it comes to the production of solar and wind energy. Limburg produces 900 watts of solar energy per inhabitant, which is half as much more solar energy per inhabitant than Flanders at 600 watts. When it comes to wind, the province is also the leader, producing 319 watts of wind energy per inhabitant compared to 206 watts in Flanders. What a breath of fresh air!

Source: *Provincie Limburg*

EDUCATION

21,930

Almost 22.000 students embarked on their higher education at one of our three knowledge institutes in 2020-2021.

Source: *vlaanderen.be*



POPULATION

255,000

Limburg is multicultural. On average, Limburg has more inhabitants with a non-Belgian current nationality, a non-Belgian birth nationality and a non-Belgian origin than the rest of Flanders. Most citizens with a non-Belgian background come from the Netherlands, Turkey and Southern Europe.

Source: *provincie in cijfers*

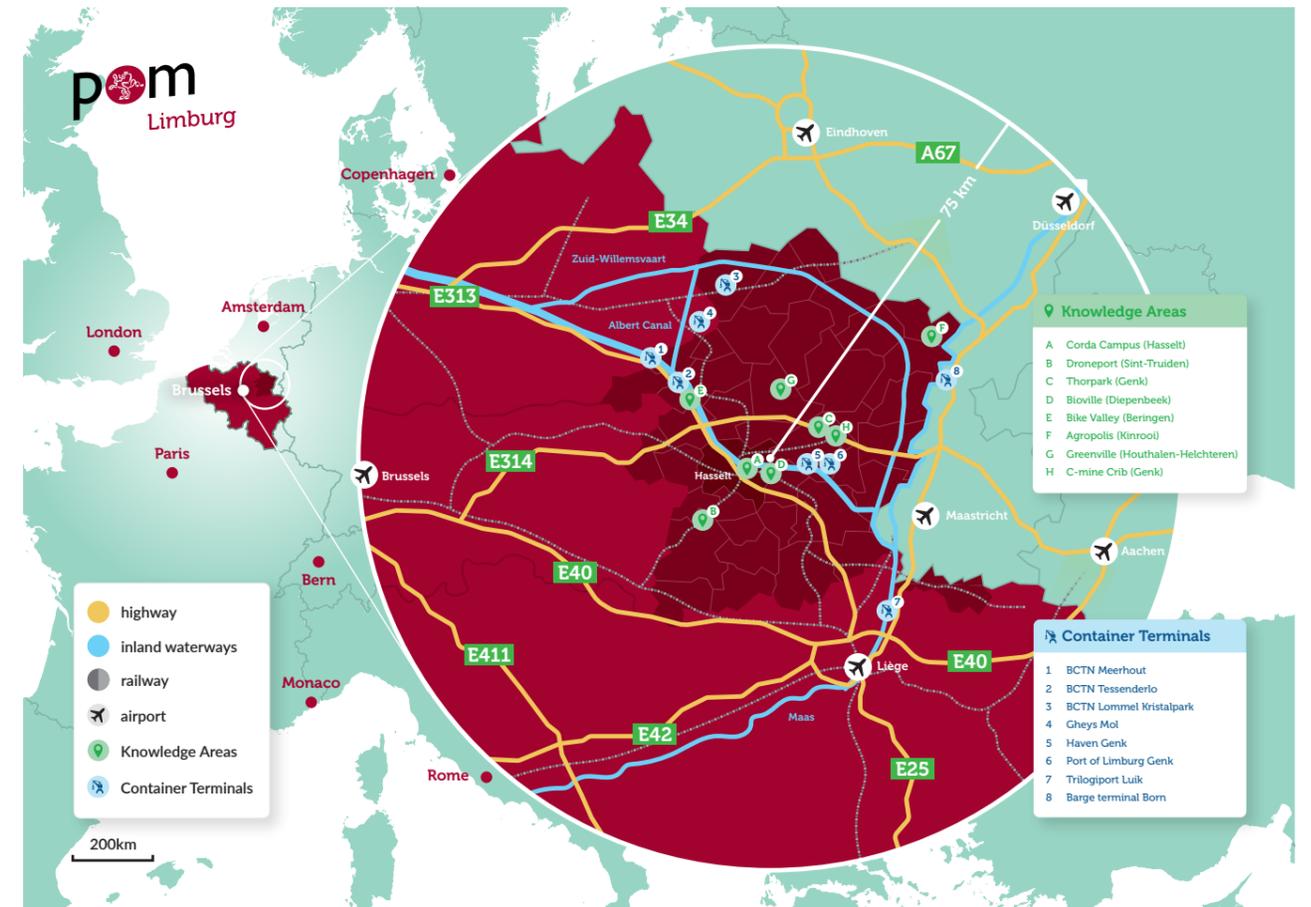
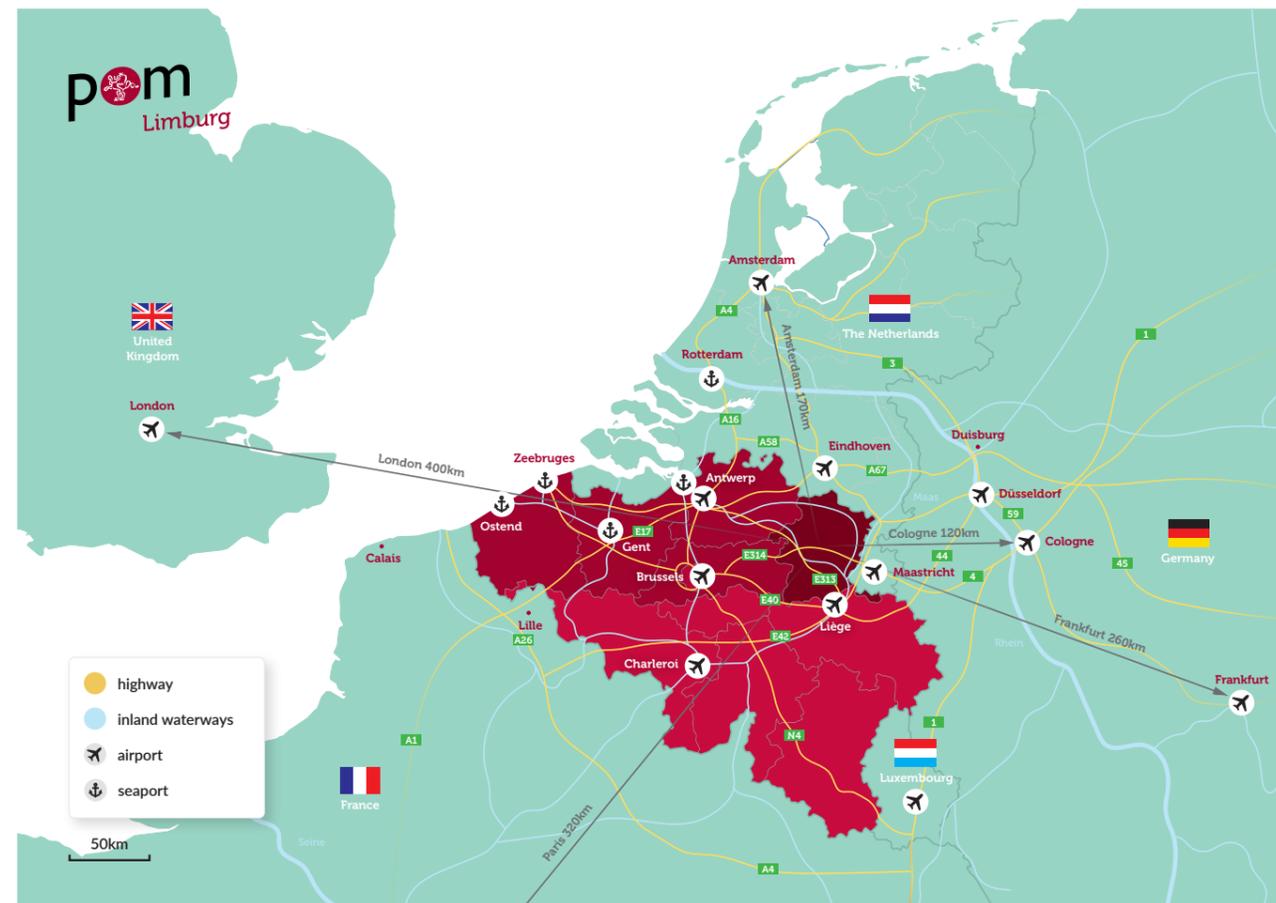
Limburg has 255.000 inhabitants with a non-Belgian origin. There are 171 different nationalities in Limburg.

Source: *provincie Limburg*

LIMBURG IS LOCATED AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

Because of Limburg's central position, cities in other countries are just a short trip away. Fancy some shopping? The train takes you to Paris in just two and a half hours. More in the mood for some culture? London is only three hours away by train. How about a city trip? Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Maastricht, Luxemburg and Düsseldorf are all a car journey or train ride away. Around Christmas time, the most spectacular Christmas market can be found in Cologne, which are all at driving distance.

The tripoint area, where the borders of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands meet, is part of an important European region: the Meuse-Rhine Region. The goal of the European youRegion project is to promote living and working in a top-technology region with excellent career opportunities and a high quality of life in the heart of Europe. This project covers 5 regions: the Belgian province of Liège, East Belgium (Belgium's German-speaking community), the Belgian Province of Aachen Zweckverband in Germany. Furthermore, youRegion aims to develop a hospitable Euregional culture by focusing on how to align relocation with the partner's career and family life.



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT BELGIANS AND LIMBURG(ERS)

- Belgium is a constitutional monarchy: the position of the monarch is laid down in the constitution. King Filip I is the Belgian head of state.
- Equal rights for everyone are guaranteed by law. Egalitarianism forms a central belief in Belgian society.
- How to greet someone in Belgium? In formal situations, everybody shakes hands. In informal situations, the custom is to exchange three kisses on alternating cheeks. Men only exchange three kisses with women, not with men. (before the coronavirus pandemic, of course)
- When visiting friends or relatives, flowers or wine are often given as a gift. The bottle of wine will often be enjoyed on another occasion, so will be put aside after receiving.
- When invited to a wedding or baby shower you would also be expected to bring a gift.
- It is important to be punctual in Belgium. If you cannot make it to an appointment in time, give a call and avoid last minute cancellations.
- When answering the telephone or calling, people usually say their (full) name.
- When you have finished eating, place your fork and knife side by side at the 15:15 position on your plate.
- Birthdays are celebrated at work. Bring something to share (such as cake or something else). Your colleagues will take time to enjoy the treat and some coffee.
- Smoking is prohibited in many areas.
- Belgians and Limburgers tend to be more reserved at first and keep their thoughts to themselves. However, once you get to know them, you will discover that they are very friendly and always ready to help.
- Despite their reserved nature, Limburgers love a good party. Life's milestones (birthdays, wedding anniversaries, births, retirements, ...) are always a good reason to party. However, you might not always get invited to many of these events as Limburgers tend to socialise very much within their own family groups.
- Dress code: for work, it mostly depends on the company culture. Otherwise, most Belgians dress (smart) casual.



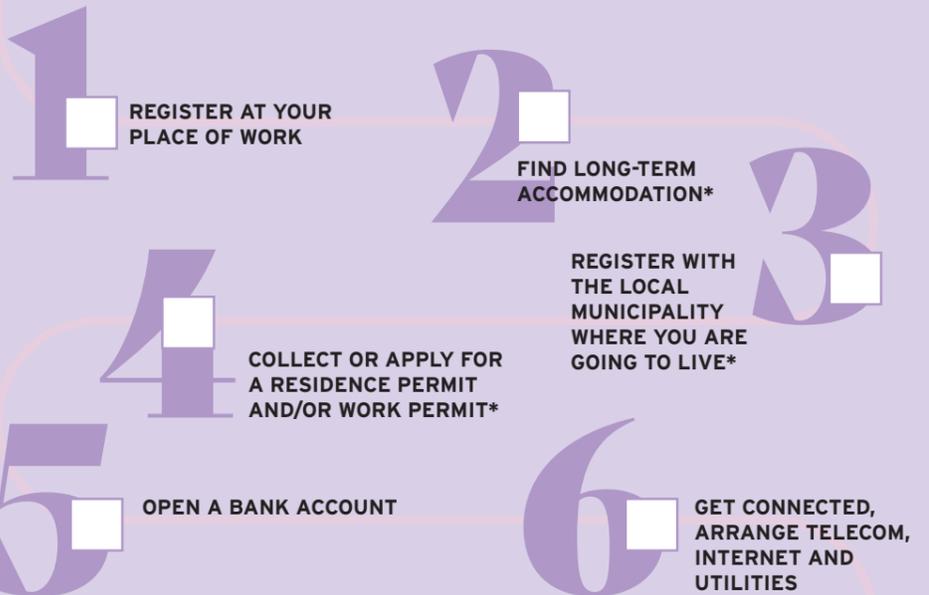
ADMINISTRATIVE:

- **WHAT TO DO UPON ARRIVAL**
- **AVAILABLE SERVICES AND INFORMATION ABOUT DAILY LIFE AND ARRANGEMENTS**

YOU'VE ARRIVED!

Moving to another country can be an overwhelming experience, and proper organisation is necessary to make the process run smoothly. Below is a basic checklist to help you, once you've arrived in Belgium.

ONCE YOU'VE ARRIVED



SETTLING IN



13 JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BY SIGNING UP VIA THE EXPAT CENTRE LIMBURG SOCIAL MEDIA

14 LEARN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

*Items marked with an asterisk are mandatory

TAKING CARE OF FORMALITIES

REGISTER WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

If you stay more than three months in Belgium, you are obliged to register at the municipality where you will be living. To register, you must have an address in this municipality. The registration must be done within eight days of your arrival.

The following documents are normally required when registering at the municipality:

- Proof of identity for all family members over the age of 16
- Proof of your new residential address (rental contract or purchase deed or written permission from the owner/main occupant at your residential address along with a copy of their proof of identity)
- Birth certificate
- 3 photos
- Marriage / divorce certificate

Once you have registered successfully, you will receive your electronic identity card, which is also your official residence permit.

Identity Card Tips:

Carry your ID with you at all times.

Don't forget to extend your ID on time.

Lost or stolen? Report this immediately to the nearest police station.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The first step is to register for social security, because this is needed to access healthcare in Belgium.

Go to your nearest social security office and provide them with:

- a valid ID, such as a passport
- a residence permit
- proof of address, such as a recent utility bill

The social security benefits which you may enjoy as a foreigner depend strictly upon the conditions under which you are resident on Belgian soil. Find out to which benefits you are entitled by visiting the portal site of the social security department:

www.socialsecurity.be

If you come to work in Belgium on a temporary basis or part-time for a foreign employer, or if you are self-employed in another country and you provide your services in Belgium on a temporary or part-time basis, you will need to declare the services you will offer in Belgium via the LIMOSA online services.

Useful links

www.vlaanderen.be/en/health-insurance

www.expatsocialsecurity.be/social-security

www.expatsocialsecurity.be/healthcare

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

Opening a bank account in Belgium will make processes such as receiving a Belgian salary, applying for a mortgage and setting up direct debits for home utilities much easier. All banks also offer internet banking. There are around 100 banks operating in Belgium and many differences in fees and services. Tip: shop around!

Opening an account before you arrive: you can do this online, but keep in mind that you will have to visit the bank with a proof of identity and official address after your arrival.

Opening an account after arrival: visit a bank of your choice and take along your proof of identity and official address (in Belgium or home country).

Some banks will also require you to provide a proof of residence once your permit has been issued.

Some of the best-known Belgian banks are: Argenta, Belfius, BNP Paribas Fortis, ING and KBC.

Debit cards are commonly used to pay for purchases, credit cards are less common and mainly used for larger amounts, online payments or restaurants.

Tips:

If your salary package includes a **'maaltijdkaart'**, you can pay for your groceries (only food and drinks) with this card. The employer deposits a pre-arranged amount on this card monthly.

If your salary package includes **'ecocheques'**, pre-defined ecological products or services may be bought with these cheques. But be aware, not all merchants accept these cheques as a form of payment.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Every person living and working in Belgium is legally obliged to subscribe to at least a basic healthcare insurance. You are free to choose any provider of health insurance, but you will need a social security number before you can do so.

The insurance must provide standard cover including, for example, the cost of consulting a general practitioner, undergoing a test in a hospital or buying medication at a pharmacy. Additional insurance such as dentist, physiotherapy, birth control and family planning is optional, and provided by all health insurers.

Once you have health insurance, you are able to receive various allowances, including:

- refunds for consultations with a doctor, dentist and certain specialists, such as physiotherapists
- reimbursements when buying medicine for some specific treatments
- fixed allowances for hospitalisation
- the payment of allowances in the event of being unable to work or for pregnancy/maternity leave

Important

Even if you are insured back in your home country, taking Belgian health insurance is mandatory in most cases. You have to arrange your health insurance immediately after your arrival. Once you acquire your health insurance policy, the company (by law) will automatically charge the insurance costs from the day you received your residence permit, and not from the day you acquire your insurance policy. In this way you are insured from the day you arrive.

HEALTH FUND OR ZIEKENFONDS

After sorting your social security, you need to choose a health fund or 'ziekenfonds'. You are free to choose whichever fund you like. An overview of all available ziekenfondsen can be found here:
www.riziv.fgov.be

Of course, you may also choose to visit private doctors, in which case you should take out private health insurance or pay in full. Some healthcare specialists will provide both private and state-funded treatment, so do check which kind they are offering.

Different doctors' fees

Fees charged by doctors might differ depending on the situation:

- the category to which they belong (qualified, in training, etc.)
- their area of specialisation (dermatology, gynaecology, paediatrics, general medicine, etc.)
- the place where the consultation is done (at the doctor's practice, at home, etc.)
- the time of the consultation (evening, weekend, etc.)

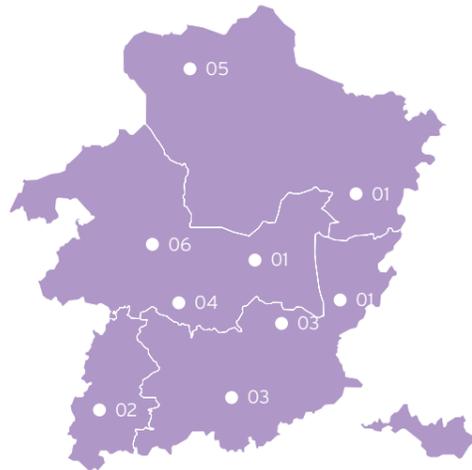
EUROPEAN HEALTH CARD

This free card gives you access to essential medical, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, under the same conditions and at the same cost (free in some countries) as people insured in that country.

Do keep in mind that the European health card:

- is not an alternative to travel insurance and will not cover any private healthcare costs, nor a return flight to your home country or any lost/stolen property.
- does not cover your costs if you are travelling for the express purpose of obtaining medical treatment.
- does not guarantee free services, as each country has a different healthcare system with different costs.

To apply for this card, check this link:
www.ec.europa.eu



Tip

In case of illness or accidents that are not life threatening it is best to visit a GP. GP's work shifts at night and during weekends. Do not go to the hospital yourself, unless your doctor has referred you or you are in a life-threatening situation.



Ambulance and Fire Department
112
www.sos112.be



Pharmacy
+32 (0)78 051 733
www.apotheek.be



Dentist on call
+32 (0)90 339 969
www.tandarts.be/wachtdienst



Police
101
www.politie.be



Anti-Poison Centre
+32 (0)70 245 245
www.antigifcentrum.be



Burns Centre
+32 (0)22 686 200
www.brandwonden.be



UNIA Anti-discrimination centres
www.unia.be/en



Doctor on call
+32 (0)70 257 025
www.mediwacht.be



Card Stop
+32 (0)70 344 344
www.cardstop.be



HOSPITALS

01: Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg Genk, Lanaken and Maaseik
+32 (0)89 325 050
www.zol.be

02: Sint-Trudo Ziekenhuis Sint-Truiden
+32 (0)11/699 111
www.sint-trudo.be

03: Ziekenhuis Vesalius Tongeren and Bilzen
+32 (0)12/ 396 111
www.azvesalius.be

04: Jessa Ziekenhuis Hasselt
+32 (0)11/ 335 577
www.jessazh.be

05: Maria Ziekenhuis Pelt
+32 (0)11/ 826 000
www.mariaziekenhuis.be

06: Sint-Franciscus Ziekenhuis Heusden-Zolder
+32 (0)11/715 000
www.sfz.be



DRIVING LICENCE

To drive a car or motorised vehicle in Belgium::

- You must have a valid driving license
- Your car must be registered
- You must have third-party insurance

If you hold a valid European driving licence, you are allowed to drive on Belgian roads. If you hold a non-European driving licence, you can drive on Belgian roads for 6 months. This is only the case if you hold an acknowledged non-European driving licence. A list of these acknowledged licences can be found here:
www.mobilit.belgium.be

A non-European driving licence can be exchanged for a Belgian one if it is a valid and authentic acknowledged driving licence which was obtained during a period when the holder was not registered in Belgium.

Those who are not authorised to drive with their foreign driving licence, or stay longer than 6 months, must pass the Belgian driving-theory exam and driving test.

For more information about the terms, go to the website of Expat Centre Limburg or www.mobilit.belgium.be



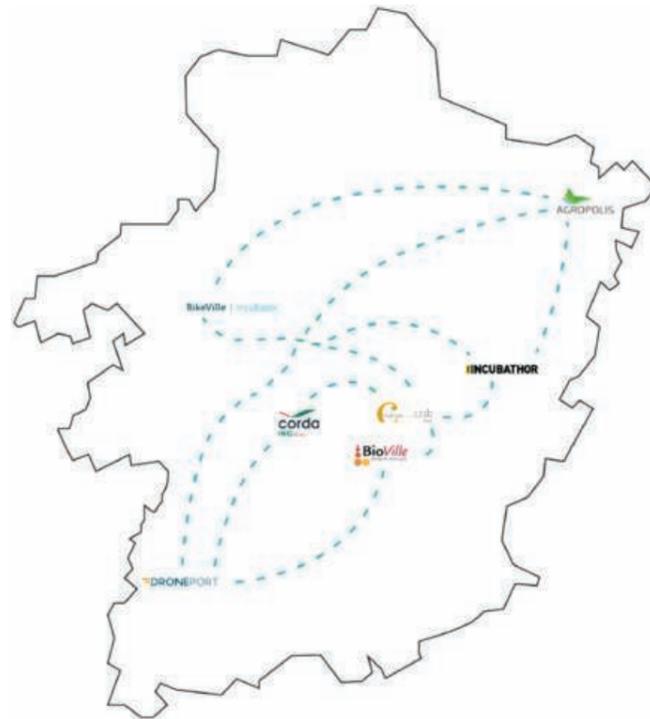
**ECONOMIC: IN-DEPTH
INFORMATION ABOUT THE
VIBRANT ENVIRONMENT
YOU WILL BE WORKING
AND LIVING IN.**

business

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INCUBATORS

Limburg has a large number of incubators and business parks, in fact the most incubators in Flanders. It is therefore no surprise that the greenest province is home to many bright entrepreneurs with innovative ideas. Each incubator, which has its own specialisation, offers services to help its startups flourish.

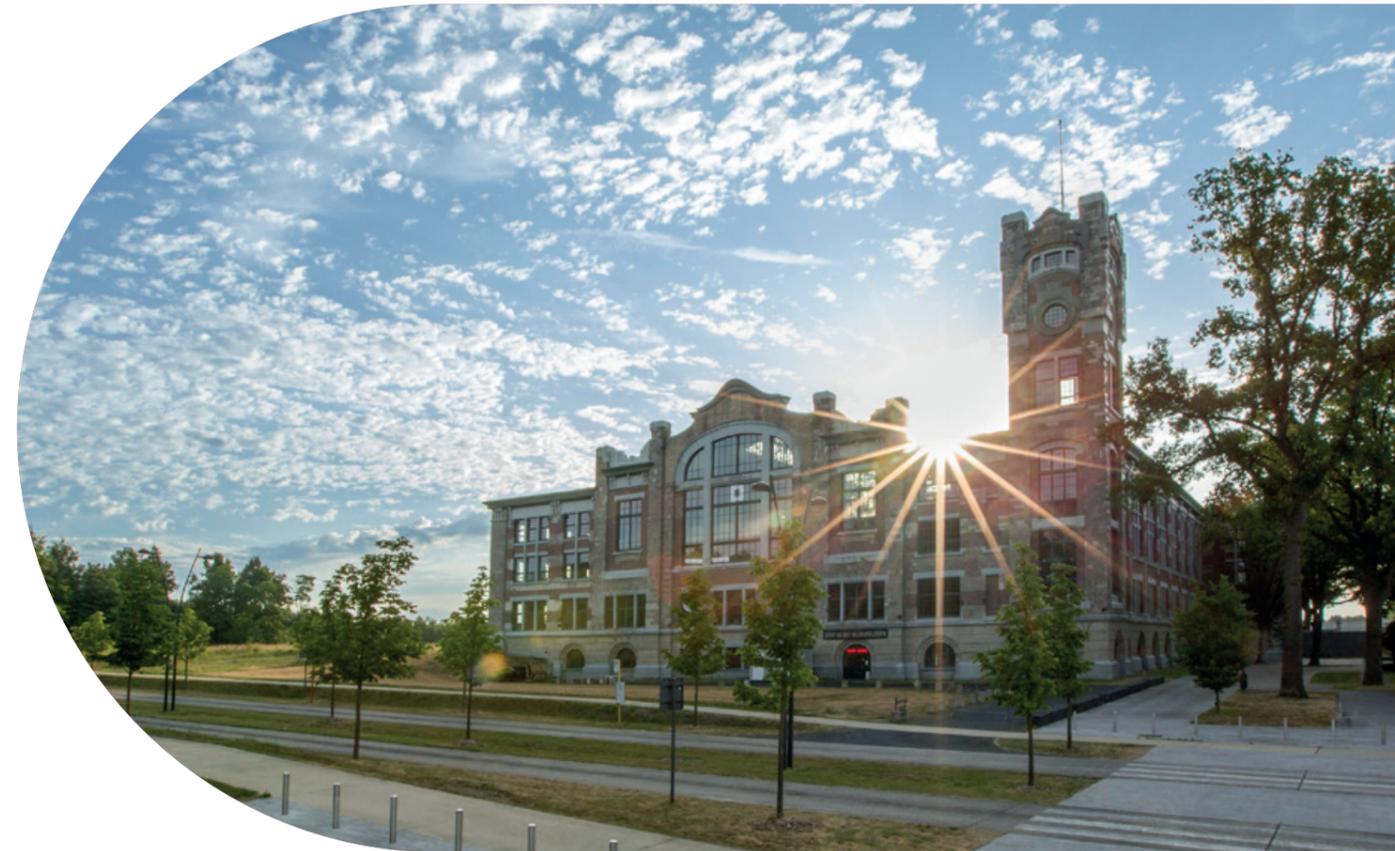


- 1. IncubaThor**
Home to start-ups and scale-ups, focusing on smart energy, innovation and technology.
- 2. Greenville**
Hotspot for the circular economy.
- 3. Droneport**
Catalyst for research, innovation and enterprise related to aerospace and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).
- 4. Corda Incubator**
Base for startups in the technology and services sectors.
- 5. C-mine crib**
Supporting creative innovative startups.
- 6. BioVille**
Bio-incubator for young companies active in the Health and Care sector.
- 7. Agropolis**
Centre for innovative companies in agriculture and horticulture.

Looking for an inspiring spot to enrol and accelerate your business as an investor or business owner?

Want to be informed on business-related info like available business centres, ambitious innovative projects such as the Health Campus, a sustainable building tech campus, or a campus for smart logistics?

Feel free to contact us!



SPACE AS AN ASSET

In the 1980s, Limburg was hit hard by the closure of the coal mines. Many workers in the province lost their job. This drama repeated itself with the closure of Ford's car factory in Genk in 2014. But Limburg is a dynamic, strong and energetic region that gets back on its feet every time. Currently, Limburg has a particularly business-friendly climate, with plenty of room for entrepreneurship. Our most important asset is space, literally and figuratively. Physical space in the form of well-equipped, sustainable business parks, and mental space for experimentation and innovation. No less than half of the purchasing power within the European Union lies within a radius of 450 km. Our excellent geographical location plus easy accessibility make our province the ideal business location in Europe. Large international companies along with many small and medium-sized companies are the engine of the Limburg economy. Science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship: these are the four major pillars supporting the future of Limburg's economic policy. A future that is already underway. We are investing in a large number of high-quality and sector-specific science parks and incubators. Limburg is very active in innovative sectors, in cleantech, life sciences, creative economy, logistics, digital media, and waste disposal.

Thor Park is located on the former mining site of Waterschei, as the beating heart of a growing business and science park where technology, research, energy and innovation come together. © Stad Genk



BioVille - Life science business park © LRM



DigiHub in BioVille © LRM



INTERNATIONAL BREAKTHROUGH

Due to its central location, Limburg has the potential to be a prime economic location in Europe. Within a radius of 300 km you will find an extended market with more than 100 million consumers and 200,000 companies. We connect Limburg with the rest of the world through smart, high-tech applications. With all of its creativity and talent, Limburg has great economic growth potential. Many of our promising startups and scale ups are on the eve of their international breakthrough. With the right boost, they will soon put Limburg on the world map as a world-class innovative and economic region.

GREEN DEAL

The Limburg region is also keen to get a head start in the climate challenges that are defined in Europe. We hold all the cards required to exploit the distinctive powers of sustainability in a densely populated area and tap into its very interesting potential, both on a social and economic level. Using these strengths we can link economic prosperity to a climate-robust future for Limburg and the rest of the world. With a Limburg Green Deal, we are strengthening European ambitions and aim to be a climate-positive province by 2040. This means that, in Limburg, we will remove more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere than will be emitted. As a result, we will show our distinctive development capacity and we will attract more activity.

EnergyVille (at Thor Park) is a collaboration between the Belgian research partners KU Leuven, VITO, imec and UHasselt in the fields of sustainable energy and intelligent energy systems. © Stad Genk



Incubator at Corda Campus © LRM



Battery project Terhills is the largest energy storage project in Europe with a capacity of 18MW © LRM

Not only is the largest solar park in the Benelux located in Limburg, we are also home to one of the largest batteries (Battery project Terhills) in Europe. In addition, Limburg generates the highest capacity of wind power per inhabitant while also boasting the highest capacity utilisation of roof tops for solar panels. Our cleantech companies offer a broad range of state-of-the-art technologies to prevent and treat water, soil and air pollution, respond to renewable energy challenges, promote sustainable mobility and recycle waste into new resources.

Housing & Living

HOUSING AND LIVING

As an expat, you can either rent or buy a house or apartment in Limburg. Depending on the duration of your stay, one option is likely to outweigh the other. Housing prices in Limburg are relatively low, compared to the rest of Flanders.

LOOKING FOR PROPERTY

There are different media to consult when looking for property:

- Online property portals: websites where you can search for Belgian real estate
- Estate agents: they charge a fee, but provide a range of services and know the market
- Property hunters: they provide a more tailored search and more extensive service, but this comes at a cost
- Local connections: properties can be found on expat forums or via local groups

Useful tips and more information on buying or renting a house or apartment can be found on www.vlaanderen.be

NICE TO KNOW

Houses in Limburg are less expensive and/or more spacious than in Brussels, Antwerp, Leuven or Maastricht.

This region offers a wide array of housing - anything from the city lights to village life in the surrounding countryside.

BUYING

To buy a house or an apartment, you will need a Belgian mortgage. The initial loan must be repaid, along with administration costs and interest. The exact costs depend on your lender and the type of loan you take out. How much you can borrow, depends on your financial status and circumstances. In Belgium, there is also free guaranteed housing insurance. If you have been working for at least one year (self-employed or as an employee), you can take out this insurance for ten years when you take out a mortgage to build, buy or renovate a house. If you involuntarily become unemployed or incapable of work during this period, you may receive a contribution to help you repay your mortgage.

RENTING

To rent a house or apartment in Belgium, you must agree to a rental contract, containing the following:

- Identity of the landlord and the tenant
- Date of the beginning of the contract
- Monthly rent
- A detailed description of the property must be enclosed in the contract
- Costs and charges
- Referral to the 'vulgariserende toelichting' (appendix containing the rules of the Flemish housing rental law)
- Duration of the contract:
 - The standard duration of the contract is nine years, but there are three exceptions:
 - o A contract for the duration of three years or less
 - o A contract for the duration of more than nine years
 - o A lifelong contract (as long as the tenant lives)
- Deposit (1-2 month's rent is normal, this may be withheld to compensate for any damage caused by the tenant)

The 'diplomatic clause'. It is advisable for expats to insist on a clause allowing them to break the contract quickly if they need to return to their home country unexpectedly.

GUIDE PRICES

Type of housing with rental price per month (indication)

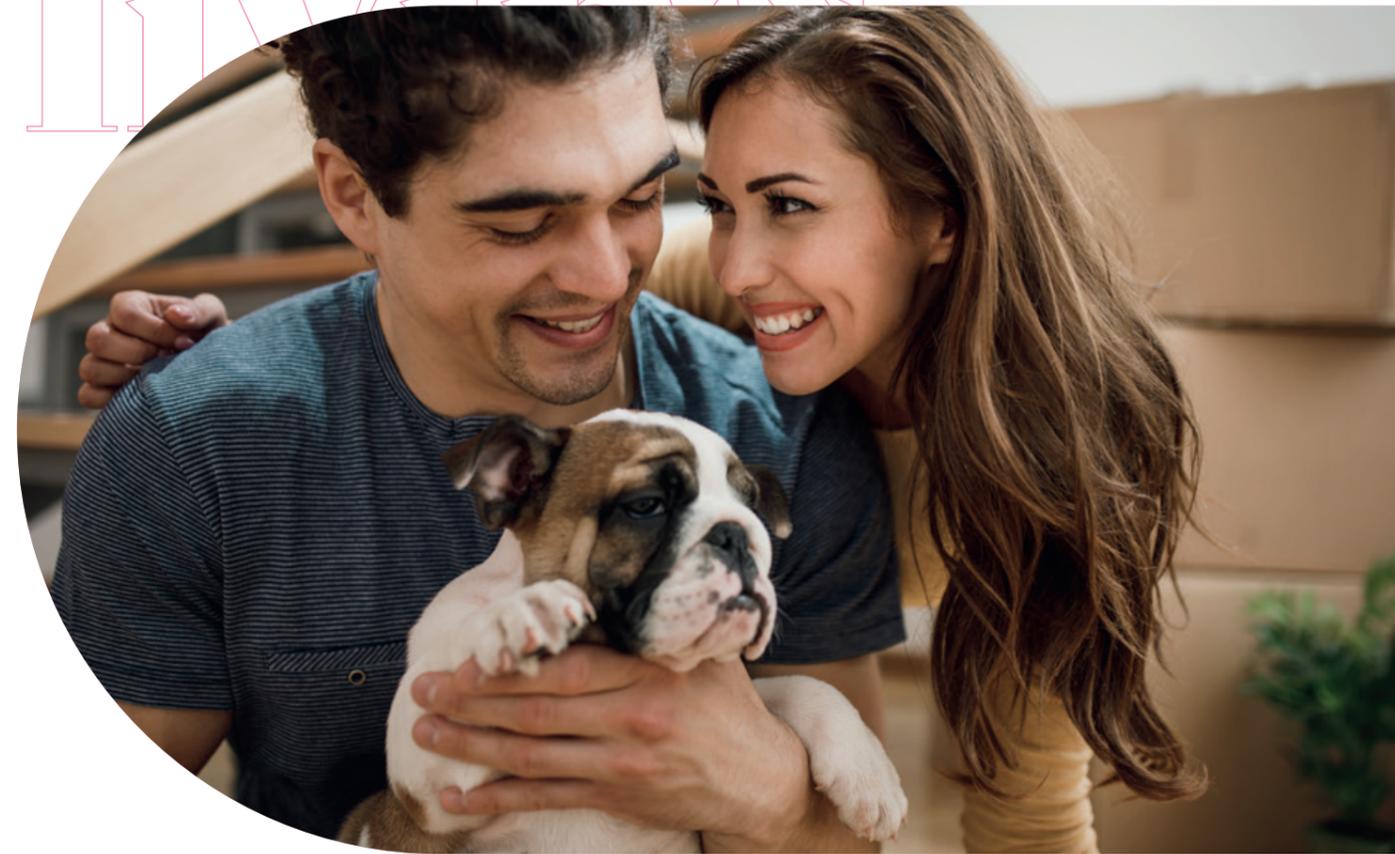
- Studio apartment € 300 - € 800
- Two-bedroom apartment € 600 - € 1200
- Three-bedroom terraced house € 1000 - € 1450
- Semi-detached house > € 900
- Detached house > € 1200

TIP

Agree on who is responsible for maintenance and repairs. Make sure it is clear who looks after the garden, as well as the building.

Be sure that you know all the costs that are included in the monthly rent, how much they will cost and how they are calculated.

Water, electricity, gas: take note of the meter readings before moving in.



BRINGING YOUR PETS

1. Moving within the EU

Dogs, cats and ferrets must have a European passport to travel within the EU. The animals must be vaccinated against rabies as well. There is a vaccination procedure. The vaccination against rabies can only be administered after the animal has reached the age of 12 weeks. There must also be 21 days between the vaccination and arrival in Belgium. Therefore, it is not possible to travel to Belgium with an animal that has not reached the age of 15 weeks. It is useful to contact your veterinarian to learn about the regulations in force when moving in the European Union.

2. Moving from a third country

When bringing animals (cats, dogs and ferrets) from a third country to Belgium, the animals must have an individual certificate according to the European model. This certificate must be obtained at an official veterinarian maximum 10 days before take-off. The animals must also be vaccinated against rabies. It is important that the vaccination is given after the animal has been identified. It is also possible to vaccinate the same day as the identification. The vaccination against rabies can only be administered after the animal has reached the age of 12 weeks. There must also be 21 days between the vaccination and arrival in Belgium. Therefore, it is not possible to travel to Belgium with an animal that has not reached the age of 15 weeks.

If the animal comes from another country than the ones listed on the website www.ec.europa.eu, a blood test must be done to check for antibodies against rabies. This blood test must be done by a laboratory acknowledged by the EU within a specific time frame: at least 30 days after vaccination and at least 3 months before arrival in Belgium.

For more information on travelling with pets to Belgium, please check: www.health.belgium.be

UTILITIES

When renting or buying a house or an apartment, various utilities have to be arranged.

WATER

If you want to arrange a new water (dis)connection, please contact your water company. In the case of a move, the previous and the new resident can sign a form to transfer the water subscription.

www.vlaanderen.be

ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

In order to use electricity or natural gas, a connection to the distribution network is required. The distribution network operator depends on where you live. In Flanders, your distribution operator partner is Fluvius. To compare prices among distributors, type the search term 'vergelijk energieleveranciers'. Searches are done based on the postal code of the city where you live.

MOBILE PHONE, TV AND INTERNET

There are several options when it comes to mobile phone providers. Some will offer a complete package with phone and contract, while others provide prepaid or SIM card only. Some providers also offer discounts when you register several SIM cards at one address for the whole family.

Lots of information can be found online. To compare prices of mobile phone providers, use the search terms 'mobiele abonnementen vergelijken' or 'mobiele telefoon aanbieders'.

Most internet providers take 2 to 3 weeks to install a service in your new home.



WORK AND EDUCATION

As an expat you most probably already have a job when you arrive in Belgium. For partners arriving with you, there are several options to finding a job. Belgium offers a free integration course for all foreigners that register in the 'rijks-register' and stay for more than three months in Belgium.

This free course covers the following subjects:

- The Dutch language
- Orientation course about living in Belgium: working, living, education, rights and obligations, etc.
- Guidance in finding a job or education, information about sports, culture and leisure

For more information on the integration course, please check:

www.integratie-inburgering.be

You can also contact us and we can get you in touch with one of the counsellors!

VOLUNTEERING

Doing work for free for your community is deeply rooted in our culture. Almost half of the population volunteer at least once a year, and this might include helping at school, in a sports club, in the community centre or helping the elderly.

Volunteering is a great way to spend time when you are unemployed, to help your community, meet new people (and thus develop your network) and learn the language. Volunteering is a real asset on your CV when you are applying for jobs.

CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION

FOR THE LITTLE ONES

A 'crèche' or day care centre for infants and toddlers is very common in Belgium and this is where most babies go until the age of 2.5 years. It is recommended to start the search for a reliable day care centre early (during pregnancy) so that a place can be reserved for your infant. Via a simple tool on the website of the public health institution Kind en Gezin you get access to all certified and monitored day care centres in Limburg: www.kindengezin.be

TIME FOR SCHOOL

In Belgium, your kids can attend international and Belgian schools. If you are planning to stay in Belgium for a short period, or moving on to another foreign country following your stay, an international school may provide your child with a sense of continuity. If you would like your child to experience the local culture and pick up the language, you may prefer to choose a Belgian school. Another factor to consider is the considerable price difference. To enrol children in school, it is necessary to contact the school of your choice yourself. The school will provide advice on the most appropriate class in which to enrol them. Home education is also an option, but in that case you need to apply for a permit at the Ministry of Education.

Schools in Belgium offer high-quality education. Compulsory education ('leerplicht') applies to all children aged 5 to 18, or until a child obtains a diploma.

- Preschool or kindergarten is free in Belgium. It is available from the age of 2.5 to 6 years
- Primary school is compulsory and is for children aged 6 to 12
- Secondary school is also compulsory and for adolescents aged 12 to 18

In Belgium, all schools are either publicly-run (funded by the government) or privately-run (not funded by the government). There can be some substantial differences in price between the two types of schools. Moreover, the quality of privately-run schools is not supervised by the government. This does not mean that private schools are of lesser quality, but you should inform yourself about the difference before making a decision.

International schools in our region:

- European School Mol for children aged 3 to 18
- United World College for children aged 6 to 18

More information on this topic can be found on:

www.expatcentrelimburg.com

TIP

Take advantage of the free INTEGRATION COURSE offered in 30 languages! To participate, contact the Agentschap voor Integratie en Inburgering (AGII).

TIP

Free vaccination programmes are offered for babies and young children by Kind en Gezin.



Limburg is not the usual busy high-stress big-city environment. Here you can find campuses which are only a bicycle ride away from green fields and inviting rural save villages. In the last years there is a significant growth in the number of foreign talents as students and professors.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Master of Management is an international one-year master's programme (in English) that prepares students for a career in dynamic, international business environments.

MASTER OF STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCE

The English two-year programme combines a solid study of principles of statistics and modern data science, with a focus on applications in the life sciences (e.g. clinical trials, epidemiology, public health, genomics, ...).

MASTER OF TRANSPORTATION SCIENCES

Towards an efficient, sustainable and safe transportation future. This is an accredited high-quality, two-year international master's programme worth 120 ECTS.

MASTER OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

The international Master of Interior Architecture with a specialisation in adaptive reuse is geared towards bachelor's and master's students with a degree in architecture or interior design and an interest in adaptive reuse and the cultural aspects of architecture in a broad sense.

MASTER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

This programme focuses on state-of-the-art methodology, knowledge, insight and academic skills, enabling graduates to unravel the molecular mechanisms of health and disease as independent researchers. The programme provides students with the knowledge and skills required for the proper design of a scientific research project.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NUMBERS:



NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT UHASSELT/TUL
bachelor, master, bridging programme, preparatory programme, PhD programme

6522 6522 6522

5586

Belgian students

936

International students



595

PhD students



274

Current PhD
(international)

The Netherlands
India
Germany
Iran
Pakistan

Italy
China
Vietnam
Cuba



554

International master
students

368

Non-Belgian
students



INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS
Germany, Spain, Brazil, Italy, France

99
99
99

TRANSPORT AND DAILY LIFE

Finding your way in everyday life, both literally and figuratively, can take some time! How does public transport work? Do I need a bike? What to do with my rubbish? And where can I find a handyman? All these questions are about to be answered here.

BUS

In Belgium, transport by bus is organised at a regional level. De Lijn is responsible for the bus network in Flanders, while STIB operates in the Brussels area. TEC is responsible for bus traffic in Wallonia. Buying a ticket is possible via the mobile app, SMS, at the stations, kiosks or even on the bus itself.

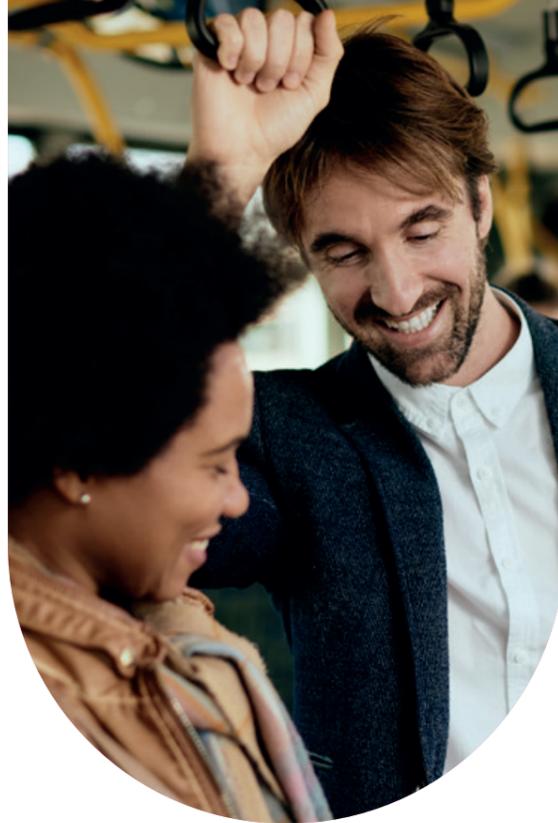
A tip for people travelling to and from Limburg by bus: don't miss the last bus home. Routes in more rural areas like Limburg often finish early, so check timetables before travelling.

MoBIB: one card to travel by train, tram and bus all over Belgium!

The MoBIB card operates across the country for all transport options, making it much easier to switch between modes and companies.

It significantly facilitates your mobility throughout Belgium. This contactless card exists in two versions: the MoBIB card by name and the MoBIB Basic. On the MoBIB card by name you can load several tickets, including subscriptions, single or multiple trips.

The MoBIB Basic card (not by name) can be lent to other people! So it can't be used with a subscription or tickets with a discounted fare.



TRAIN

Travelling by train in Belgium is a great way to get from city to city. All public trains are operated by NMBS (in Dutch) or SNCB (in French). Tickets can be bought via the website, mobile app or at the ticket vending machines and ticket offices at the station.

- Make sure you get a ticket before boarding, to avoid paying a supplement for buying on board.
- International trains to Amsterdam, Paris and London for example, depart from the South Station of Brussels (known as Brussel Zuid/Bruxelles Midi).
- No inspiration for a day trip? You can find plenty of excursion ideas to nature and animal parks, culture, science and adventure on the website of the NMBS.

Travelling by train also gives you the opportunity to admire some of the world's most stunning architecture. Worth checking out is the impressive railway station of Antwerp Central (Antwerpen Centraal), elected the world's fourth greatest train station in 2009. A more modern architecture can be found in the railway station of Liège-Guillemins.

More information can be found on: www.op.europa.eu

The Facebook Messenger chatbot MOBI is a virtual assistant which helps you plan your train ride or answer simple questions (FAQ) in three languages (Dutch, French and English).

MOBI uses Facebook Messenger, and is an easy chatbot. New questions and topics are added at regular intervals. Using MOBI is easy, think of it as your virtual assistant when you want to book a train.

ROAD RULES IN BELGIUM

CAR

- Drive on the right and overtake on the left.
- Vehicles coming from the right have priority, unless indicated otherwise.
- Mobile phones may only be used with a hands-free system. Holding a mobile phone while driving is considered an offence.
- The maximum speed in towns is 50 km/h, outside urban areas 70km/h and on motorways 120km/h (except where otherwise stated).
- Cycle paths run along most roads and roundabouts. When turning or leaving a roundabout, make sure to always check for bicycles crossing your path.

BIKE

- Cycling on the cycle track is mandatory (present on most roads, otherwise you must cycle on the right side of the road).
- Lights! Your bicycle needs to have lights. It's best to use white light at the front and red at the back. Using your mobile phone as a front light does not count, and you can even be fined twice for missing mandatory parts and using a mobile phone while cycling.
- Be aware that it is strictly prohibited to take passengers on your bicycle carrier, and drinking and driving rules apply to both car drivers and cyclists.

FREQUENTLY USED TRAFFIC SIGNS



Stop and give way to ALL drivers on the intersection road



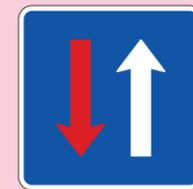
Entry prohibited, cyclists included (road with one-way traffic)



Mandatory path for cyclists



Road narrowing, give way to oncoming



Road narrowing, oncoming drivers have to give way

IMPORTING VEHICLES

If you import a car from a country outside the EU, you must declare the car and in most of the cases pay import duties and taxes. You also need an individual certificate of approval ('individueel goedkeuringscertificaat'). To obtain this, the vehicle needs a valid MOT. Be aware of the fact that not all cars may be imported. Next, the car must be registered at the DIV ('Dienst voor Inschrijvingen van Voertuigen'). As a last step, you must pay a registration tax called 'inverkeerstelling'. More information on importing non-EU cars can be found here: www.vlaanderen.be (in Dutch).

If you import a car from an EU country, you first have to make a fiscal declaration of the vehicle and have a MOT. Then, you must arrange insurance and register at the DIV (Dienst voor Inschrijvingen van Voertuigen).

RECYCLING AND WASTE DISPOSAL

In Limburg, waste such as paper and cardboard, PMD, organic waste and domestic waste is collected from your residence address. If you live in an apartment, other rules may apply, such as a common container for all residents.

Unwanted clothing must be taken to a clothing container. Used glass bottles, jars or other glass waste must be taken to a glass container. Other types of waste must be taken to a recycling centre. When purchasing certain bottled drinks, you might have to pay a small deposit, which is refundable when you return the empty bottles to the grocery store.

RECYCLING CENTRES IN LIMBURG

Other large domestic waste, or dangerous or specific waste types like wood, used and broken bricks etc. can be taken to your local recycling centre. In Limburg, the recycling centres are operated by Limburg.net and can be found in almost all cities. You can access the parks only with your residence permit (your electronic ID-card). The majority of the recycling centres is free to use, but for certain types of waste, such as wood, mixed construction rubble, bulky waste and roofing you will need to pay a fee.

More information on recycling centres and their rates can be found here: www.limburg.net (in Dutch).

SMOKING IN PUBLIC

You're not permitted to smoke in public buildings, bars and restaurants. Most of these offer separate smoking areas, although rules will become stricter in the coming years. Be aware that in some places, smoking is prohibited, both inside and out. On train platforms, for example, smoking is only allowed around the 'rookpaal' (pole marking a smoking area). You can be fined if you don't follow the rules.

Tip

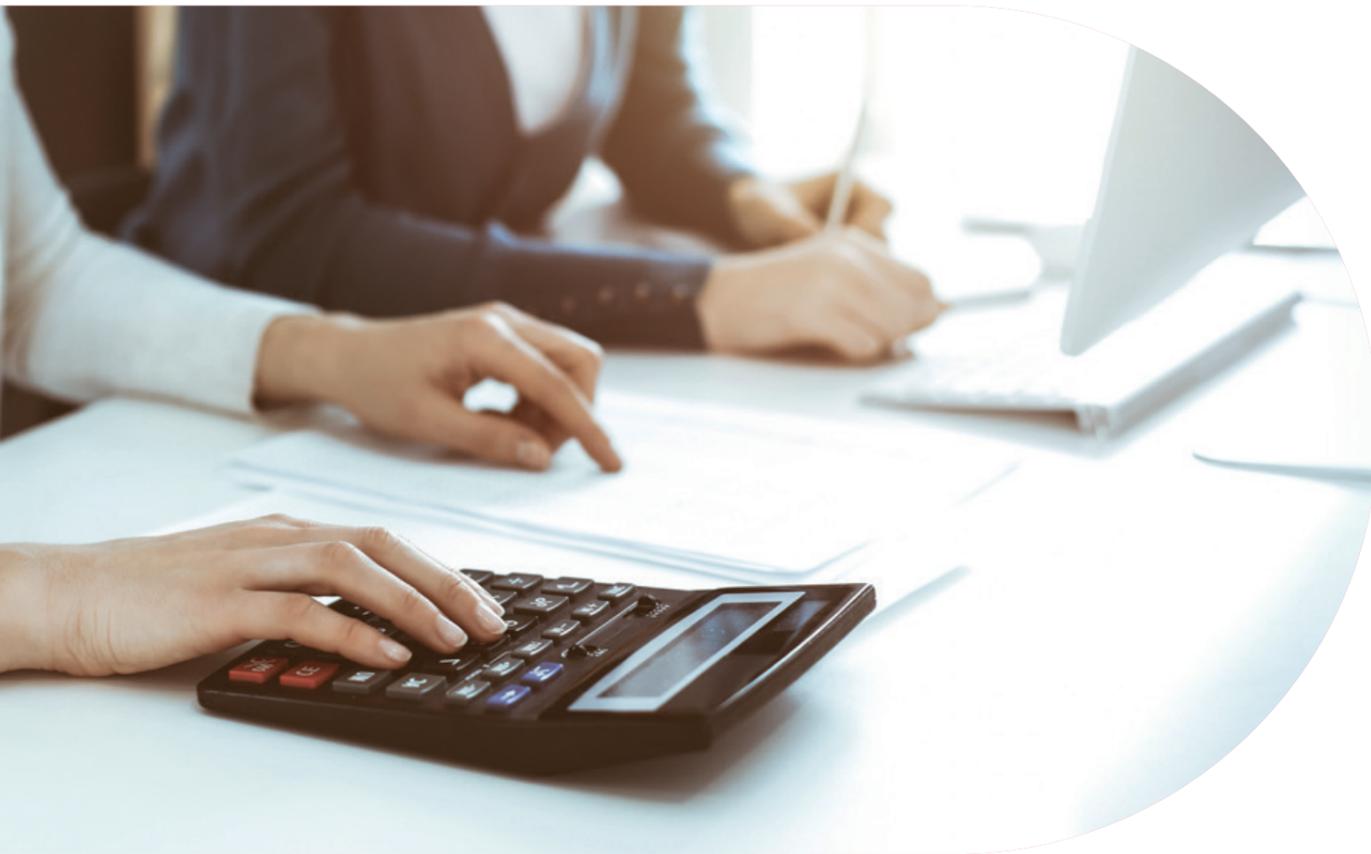
Donate, rather than throw away! Before throwing anything away, consider donating clothes, furniture, toys etc. to a thrift/second-hand shop (kringloopwinkel) or a voluntary organisation such as Sint-Vincentius.



DUTCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The official languages in Belgium are Flemish (Dutch), French and German. Most foreigners find the pronunciation difficult, which involves growling g's and rolling r's. Also, the order of the many small words can be quite a puzzle when you are still learning to make your own sentences. But learning the language is the key to understanding our people and culture. You will find an introduction to the Dutch language and culture in this section, and you will learn much more about it during your stay in Belgium.

| English | Dutch |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Do you speak English? | Spreekt u Engels? |
| Hello | Hallo |
| Goodbye | Dag, tot ziens |
| Good morning | Goedemorgen |
| Good afternoon | Goedemiddag |
| Good evening | Goedenavond |
| Thank you | Dank u |
| Please | Alstublieft |
| Yes | Ja |
| No | Nee |
| Excuse me | Pardon |
| Entrance | Ingang |
| Exit | Uitgang |
| Lovely | Mooi |
| Tasty | Lekker |
| How do I get to the city centre? | Hoe kom ik in het centrum? |
| Where can I find a supermarket? | Waar is een supermarkt? |



INCOME TAX

The Belgian income tax has progressive tax rates. This means that the higher your income, the higher the rate of tax you pay. Your employer is also obliged to withhold a wage tax from your taxable salary called the 'bedrijfsvoorheffing'. This is a deposit on the actual amount of income tax that must be paid. Your employer will also withhold 'RSZ bijdragen' from your gross salary which will be used for social contributions such as pensions, health insurance, unemployment, etc. This is usually 13.07% of your gross salary.

| BELGIAN INCOME TAX RATES : | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| €0,01 – €13,440 | 25% |
| €13,440 – €23,720 | 40% |
| €23,720 – €41,060 | 45% |
| >€41,060 | 50% |

BELGIAN RESIDENT

Personal income tax is calculated on all taxable income, even if some of it was realised or received abroad. The Belgian income tax return should generally be filed before June 30th of the year following the income year. Everyone who is subject to personal income tax is entitled to a 'tax-free allowance'. This means that a portion of your taxable income is not taxed. The tax-free allowance is €8,990 (for 2020 income). It may be higher depending on your personal situation (e.g. if you have any dependent children). The amount of tax you pay is also reduced if you have particular types of income (e.g. foreign income, pensions and substitute income, etc.) or certain expenses (e.g. childcare, pension savings, etc.).

NON-RESIDENT

Non-resident tax is only calculated on income that was realised or received in Belgium. Some income is not taxed at these progressive rates. Instead, separate rates apply (e.g. certain supplementary pension capital). The Belgian income tax for non-residents is set in September or a few weeks later. If the earned income that is taxable in Belgium amounts to at least 75% of the total earned income (both the Belgian and foreign earned income), a non-resident is entitled to a 'tax-free allowance'. This means that a portion of your taxable income is not taxed. The tax-free allowance is €8,990 (for 2020 income). It may be higher depending on your personal situation (e.g. if you have any dependent children). The amount of tax you pay is also reduced if you have particular types of income (e.g. pensions and substitute income) or certain expenses (e.g. childcare, pension savings, etc.).

Numerous tax benefits are also subject to the condition that the earned income that is taxable in Belgium accounts for at least 75% of the total earned income.

1. Taxation of non-inhabitants

This applies to you if you reside in a foreign country or stay in Belgium for a shorter period of time (work or studying for example). You must submit a 'non-resident income tax return'.

2. Taxation of inhabitants

If your place of residence is in Belgium or you have established a seat of wealth in Belgium, you will be classed as a Belgian resident and are subject to Belgian income tax. You will be issued a tax number once you receive your national registration number ('rijksregisternummer') after registering with the municipality upon arrival. This is linked to your registration number. So there's no need to request a new tax number separately.

More information can be found on www.finance.belgium.be

3. Leaving Belgium

If you are about to leave Belgium and become resident of another country, you must tell your taxation office. You will receive a special declaration that allows you to declare your income for the year of your departure. You must submit this form within three months after leaving.

If you have your residence in a foreign country, you should let your taxation office know when you are leaving Belgium. The year after leaving, you will receive a taxation declaration for non-residents, which allows you to declare your Belgian income relating to the year of your departure. To receive this declaration, you must register first.

OTHER TAXES

Value Added Tax (V.A.T.)

The standard Belgian tax rate is 21% and applies to most goods and services. A 9% tax rate applies to certain items, such as food and (non-alcoholic) beverages.

Real estate transfer tax

When buying a house in Belgium, you are obliged to pay a real estate transfer tax ('registratiekosten'). This tax rate differs depending on the location of your new house. In the Flemish region, the tax rate is settled at 6%.

Road tax

When buying or importing a vehicle, taxes must usually be paid. Every year, you must pay the 'verkeersbelasting' for using the Belgian roads. When importing a vehicle or buying one (new or second-hand), it is likely that you will have to pay the one-off 'belasting op in-verkeerstelling'. The amount of this tax depends on environmental standards and the age of the vehicle.

Provincial tax

Since Belgium is organised in regions and provinces, tax rates may differ from one province to another. Residents of Limburg have to pay an annual province tax of 35 euros. No special registration is required. The invoice or transfer form will be automatically sent to your address.

Waste tax

As a resident, you are requested to pay an annual contribution for the waste collection service. You do not need to take any special action for this either. An invoice will be sent directly to your address.





VISA AND WORK PERMIT

BEFORE ARRIVAL

EEA CITIZENS AND SWITZERLAND

Step 1: Identification documents and visas

Documents needed when moving to Belgium:

- Valid ID or passport
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate

As a citizen of the EEA or Switzerland, you only need a valid passport or national ID card when moving to Belgium. A visa is not needed as citizen of the EEA or Switzerland.

THIRD-COUNTRY CITIZENS

Step 1: Identification documents and visas

Documents needed when moving to Belgium:

- Valid ID or passport
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate

As a non-EEA citizen, a valid passport or national ID card is needed. Furthermore, it is also necessary to apply for a visa. In Flanders, there are three types of visa:

1. Short-term Belgian visa

This type of visa permits stays of up to 90 days for tourism or business.

2. Non-immigrant visa

This type of visa is appropriate for longer-term stays for studying or working on fixed-term contracts. The holder of this visa does not intend to stay in the country beyond a fixed period.

3. Immigrant visa

This visa is a long-term visa. People who wish to stay in Belgium long term or permanently, for purposes such as work or retirement, should apply for this type of visa.

More information on visas can be found on diplomatie.belgium.be

EEA CITIZENS AND SWITZERLAND

Step 2: Work permit

POSTED WORKER

If you are an employee posted in Limburg, you will fall under the terms and conditions of employment of your host country if they are more advantageous than those of your home country.

You will not need:

- A work permit.
- Recognition of professional qualifications.
- Registration with social security authorities, because you remain insured in the country where you are normally employed. However, if you are posted in Belgium for over two years, there are two options:
 - o Switch to the Belgian social security system, or
 - o Ask your employer to apply for an extension of the validity of your social security for your posting period, in order to remain covered in your home country.
- If you are posted in Limburg for less than 6 months, you will not be liable for Belgian income tax.

For every secondment or temporary assignment as a self-employed worker in Belgium (without staying permanently in Belgium), it is necessary to apply for a Limosa declaration. Foreign employees or self-employed workers must be able to present their employer or client with the Limosa-1 document before commencing work.

More information on the Limosa declaration can be found on www.international-socialsecurity.be

SELF-EMPLOYED WORKER

You do not need a Professional Card to start a self-employed activity in Belgium if you are a member of the EEA or Switzerland.



THIRD-COUNTRY CITIZENS

Step 2: Work permit

Before starting to work in Flanders as a foreigner, you first need to check if you need a work permit and if so, which type. There are three types of work permits:

1. Work Permit (short stays)

This permit is for foreigners who wish to work as wage earners in Belgium for a maximum of 90 days. This Work Permit is only granted to certain categories of workers. The employer must then apply for an admission to work. If it is granted, the employer receives an 'arbeidsvergunning' and the employee receives an 'arbeidskaart'.

For more information on the Work Permit, please visit www.vlaanderen.be

2. Professional Card (self-employed individuals)

If you wish to perform a self-employed activity in Belgium, you must apply for a Professional Card. If you are still abroad, you can apply for this card at the Belgian Diplomatic or Consular Post. If you are in Belgium and have a valid permit, you can apply for the Professional Card at an Approved Enterprise Counter.

For more information on the Professional Card, please visit www.assets.vlaanderen.be

3. Combined Permit / Single Permit with Fixed Term (long stays)

If you wish to work as a wage earner in Belgium for more than 90 days, a Combined Permit is needed. This permit is only allocated to certain categories of employees. The applicable categories and procedures can be found on www.vlaanderen.be

The future employer must apply for this type of permit. It is important to note that the approval of the Combined Permit does not give you the right to reside in Belgium. When you have the permission to reside in Belgium and the Combined Permit is approved, you will receive the form 'Bijlage 46' or 'Bijlage 47'.

After receiving permission to work and reside in Belgium:

- Option 1: you are still abroad
 - o If you are still abroad when receiving one of the forms 'Bijlage 46' or 'Bijlage 47', you should go to the embassy.
 - o The embassy will issue a Visum type D.
 - o When arriving in Belgium, you should make an appointment with your local authority, and take your identification, visa and 'Bijlage 46' or 'Bijlage 47'.
 - o The local authority will issue your Combined Permit.
- Option 2: you are already in Belgium
 - o Take your form 'Bijlage 46' or 'Bijlage 47' and identification to your local authority.
 - o You will receive a prove of registration 'bijlage 49' and may now work in Belgium.
 - o The local authority requests an electronic residence card A.
 - o Once the card is ready, you can collect it at your local authority.

EEA CITIZENS AND SWITZERLAND

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A citizen of the EEA with a qualification to perform a regulated profession, which is obtained in an EEA country, can apply to enter the profession in Belgium using a professional recognition. There is no need to launch a NARIC procedure.

More information on where to apply for a professional recognition can be found on www.naricvlaanderen.be

THIRD-COUNTRY CITIZENS

For every secondment or temporary assignment as a self-employed worker in Belgium (without staying permanently in Belgium), it is necessary to apply for a Limosa declaration. Foreign employees or self-employed workers must be able to present their employer or client with the Limosa-1 document before commencing work.

Academic and professional qualifications

The authentication of your academic and professional qualifications obtained in a non-EEA country must be done via NARIC.

More information on the recognition of foreign qualifications can be found on www.naricvlaanderen.be

Spouse and family members of posted workers

Who is defined as a family member or spouse?

- Spouse: legal partner of the posted worker via marriage, civil union or registered partnership
- (Grand)children under the age of 21
- (Grand)children aged 21 or older if they are dependent on the posted worker
- Legal partner of a dependent minor
- (Grand)parents if dependent on the posted worker

EEA NATIONALITY

Right to stay in Belgium

As an EEA citizen, a spouse can join his/her partner and stay in Belgium because of his/her own rights. As an EU citizen, you have the right to move to any EU country to live, work, study, look for a job or retire. The formal documents that spouses and family members must bring with them can be found in Step 1.

Right to work in Belgium

A family member, according to the description above, can join the posted worker and work in Belgium without a work permit, single permit or professional card, if this person has EEA nationality him/herself. However, if you are a different family member than the ones described to have an EEA identity, and wish to work in Belgium, you must apply for the appropriate permit in Step 2 of 'third-country citizens'. This is required until the family member concerned receives an F(+) card.

NON-EEA NATIONALITY

Right to stay in Belgium

Non-EEA spouses or family members can join their partner, who is located in Belgium, if they stay as a dependent.

Right to work in Belgium

The right to reside in Belgium, does not give you the right to work in Belgium as well. Depending on the nationality of the person you join, other procedures must be followed.

1. EEA Partner

If you are classed as a family member according to the definition and wish to join your partner and work in Belgium, a single permit is not needed if you possess 'bijlage 19ter'. If you received 'bijlage 15' before receiving an F(+) card, or if you have received an F(+) card, you are also exempt from the permit. In other cases, you must apply for the correct type of permit as shown in Step 2.

2. Third-country partner

During the process of applying for a permit to stay:

- Once you have received the 'Attest van Immatriculatie (AI)', you can work as an employee without a single fixed-term permit.
- To work as a self-employed worker, you must first receive the 'AI'. This document is needed to apply for a professional card, which is necessary to work as a self-employed worker.

After receiving a temporary visa or permit to stay:

- If you are in the possession of card A or form 'bijlage 15', you are exempted from a single fixed-term permit.
- To work as a self-employed worker, you must apply for a professional card. You can only obtain this card if you have received card A or 'bijlage 15'.

After receiving an unlimited-stay permit:

- You do not need to apply for any permit to work as an employee or self-employed worker.

There are also several exemptions when you do not need to apply for a professional card or single permit with a fixed term. To find an overview of the exemptions, please visit www.vlaanderen.be





**LEISURE:
MUST SEES BEFORE
YOUR DEPARTURE,
SO GRAB THAT
BUCKET LIST!**



LIMBURG, THE HEART OF YOUR NEW ADVENTURE

The greenest and friendliest province in Belgium offers a wide range of highlights. The list is endless: lots of open space, unique cycling experiences, repurposed mining heritage and varied landscapes. You'll hardly believe it, but you'll find it all here in Limburg, as Belgium's most hospitable province.

Belgian Limburg is waiting to be discovered by you. Your new adventure starts here. Welcome home!



WHAT NOT TO MISS

Here are a few ideas of some of the most unforgettable experiences on offer in Limburg. We've divided the activities into three main categories.

WHAT TO DO?

Limburg is the perfect place for:

• LEISURE

- o Cycling
With 2,000 km of cycle paths in Limburg, it is the most important cycling province in Flanders
- o Hiking
- o Family activities

• CULTURE

- o Heritage
The Limburg mining sites and the historical cities of Tongeren and Hasselt used to be the engines of the Limburg economy. Now they host incubators, among other things.
Tongeren is the oldest city in the whole of Flanders.
- o Foods & Beverage
Limburg has 21 official regional products, including Limburg pie, fruit syrup, wine, gin and speculaas biscuits.
- o City (Shopping & Wellness)
Shopping: shops have restricted hours during the week and are closed on Sundays, so the shopping streets can get quite busy on Saturdays.

• ADVENTURE & NATURE

- o Sports
Belgium's first inline skating route can be found between Hasselt and Genk.
- o Activities in nature
- o Events
In Belgium, we're famous for organising music festivals, including the famous local Pukkelpop festival.

BIKING

- **Cycling Route Network** | 2,000 km of cycle paths connected with numbered junctions. On your way, you'll pass three famous bicycle projects: 'Cycling through Water', 'Cycling through the Trees' and 'Cycling through the Heathland'.
- **Meuse Cycling Route** | For cyclists of all levels, the Meuse Cycle Route follows one of the most important rivers in Europe. See the river Meuse as you have never seen it before.

HIKING

- **Hoge Kempen National Park** | Belgium's one and only national park. Climb the slag heaps in Terhills, previously known as Connecterra, and enjoy a breath-taking panorama.
- **Hiking Network 'Forest Land' (Bosland)** | More than 70% of the routes here follow quiet dirt tracks. One of the highlights is the Sahara, a 200-hectare, desert-like landscape with clear blue lakes.
- **PIT, art in the open space of Borgloon** | One of the eyecatchers is the see-through church by the Belgian architect duo Gijs Van Vaerenbergh: 'Reading between the Lines'.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- **Barefoot Path** | The original barefoot path in Flanders. Take off your shoes and socks and hike for almost 3 km on a controlled surface of wood, stones, wood chips, grass, clay and water.
- **Plopsa Indoor Hasselt** | For little adventurers between the ages of 2 and 10 and their parents. 25 different attractions.
- **Aqua Mundo Center Parcs** | Subtropical swimming paradise with water slides and waves. You can snorkel past tropical fish. Children will have a whale of a time in the kids' pool.
- **Breugelhoeve** | Play at and experience this garden and pet farm, where children can cuddle goats, sheep, guinea pigs, rabbits and small ponies.

Leisure



HERITAGE

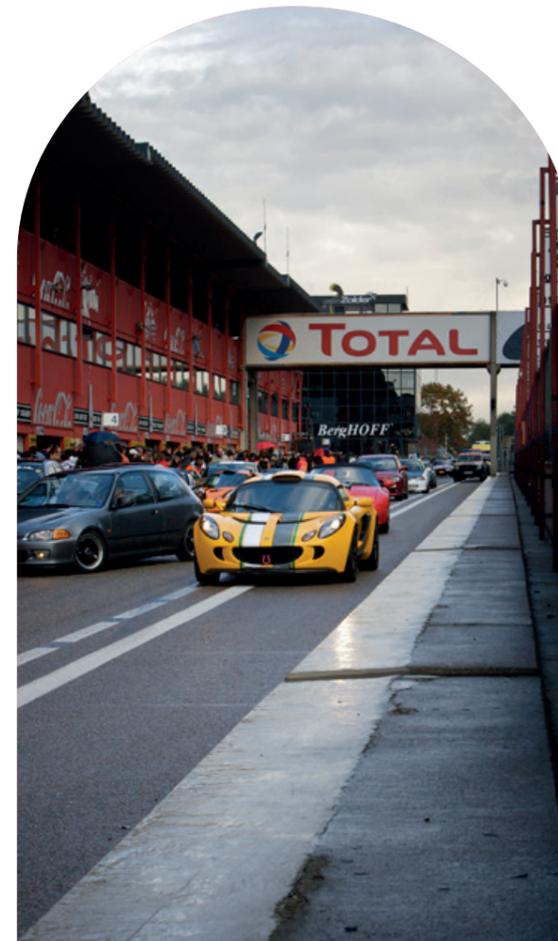
- **C-mine** | Former mining site in Genk, where respect for the industrial past goes hand in hand with artistic activity. The underground experience trail C-mine expedition and giant labyrinth are just some of the highlights.
- **be-MINE** | Former mining site in Beringen with a mining museum, adventure mountain, swimming pool, shops and places to eat.
- **LABIOMISTA** | An evolving work of art that dives into the unique vision of artist Koen Vanmechelen about identity, fertility and biocultural diversity.
- **Tongeren** | Belgium's most ancient city. Highlights are the Gallo-Roman Museum and the antique market on Sundays.
- **Bokrijk** | Open-air museum focused on customs, traditions and craftsmanship. Surrounded by nature reserve De Wijers, the land of 1001 ponds.
- **Abbey Site Herkenrode** | Former abbey site with an experience centre and a large herb garden.
- **Alden Biesen** | Historic Grand Commandery, nowadays a heritage site. Bilzen Mysteries is an interactive quest on the domain.
- **Blossom & Harvest** | April is blossom time in Haspengouw. Natural areas in the Limburg fruit region are transformed with beautiful white flowers. A delightful time to ride your bike or walk between the thousands of fruit trees.

REGIONAL PRODUCTS

Limburg pie, Hasselt speculaas, Loon syrup. It appears that Limburgers are rather sweet-toothed. Fortunately, there are also plenty of healthy regional products: apples, pears, cherries, blueberries, asparagus, and more. And how about a locally brewed beer, regional gin or some excellent Limburg wine? There is something for everyone!

CITY & SHOPPING

- **Hasselt** | Capital of Limburg and city where shopping enthusiasts are sure to enjoy themselves. Combine your shopping trip with a museum visit, a touch of street art or a visit to the Japanese Garden.
- **Z33** | House for contemporary art in the centre of Hasselt, with temporary exhibitions.
- **Maasmechelen Village** | Elegant outdoor shopping destination, where you can find more than 100 luxury brands with prices up to 60% lower than the recommended retail prices.



ADVENTURE & NATURE

- **Snow Valley** | The largest indoor ski slope in Europe. For skiers of all levels.
- **Network for Horse Riders** | The Hoge Kempen National Park extends over 12,000 ha and has 140 km of clearly signposted trails for riders and wagon drivers. 85% of these trails are unpaved.
- **Circuit Zolder** | Former Formula 1 circuit: the place to be for a day full of racing adventure. You can use your own car or motorcycle, come cycling and skating in the evening, or try out the BMX track. Or maybe Circuit Zolder carting is just the thing for you!

cycling

SENSATIONAL CYCLING

Limburg is a true cycling paradise. A handy numbered cycling route network takes you from junction to junction. Our province has 2,000 km of paved, safe and largely car-free cycle paths. And along the way, the familiar blue signs will ensure that you don't get lost. How about that for relaxed cycling?



'CYCLING THROUGH WATER' IN BOKRIJK

This unique cycling experience in Bokrijk leads you more than 200 m through a pond where the water is at eye level. You can literally feel, see and smell the water and enjoy a unique view of the landscape.



'CYCLING THROUGH THE TREES' IN BOSLAND

As you cycle up to 10 m high between the treetops on the iconic circular bridge, this 700-metre-long cycle path gives you the opportunity to experience nature in a completely different way and become one with the forest.



'CYCLING THROUGH THE HEATHLAND' IN HOGE KEMPEN NATIONAL PARK

This 300-metre-long wooden bicycle bridge leads you through the extraordinary Hoge Kempen National Park. While enjoying a panoramic view over the nature reserve, you may spot horses and other animals living in the park.



MEUSE CYCLE ROUTE

This route follows the Meuse river from France to the Netherlands for more than 1,000 km. It runs straight through the River Park Meuse Valley. The Meuse Cycle Route enters Limburg via Lanaken and takes you to Kinrooi, where a ferry carries you to the Dutch banks.

WONDERFUL WALKS



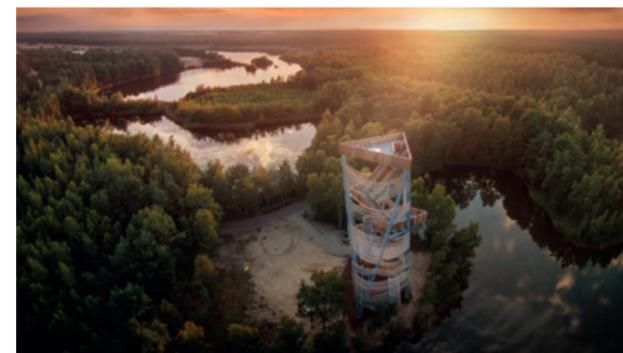
HOGE KEMPEN NATIONAL PARK

More than 5,700 ha of forest, high peaks offering great views, purple flowering heathland and numerous special animals make Hoge Kempen National Park a unique place to relax and enjoy nature. The area extends over 12,000 ha. Terhills in Maasmechelen is described as the most beautiful panorama in Flanders.



PIT, ART IN OPEN SPACE (BORGLOON)

In the green area surrounding the heart of Borgloon, a number of fascinating works of art have been installed in the open space, as part of the PIT project. The highlight is 'Reading between the lines', a striking small church, built in one day. The special way of construction means the landscape is always visible through the church, both from far away and up close. According to the British newspaper The Guardian, this is the most beautiful place in Belgium.



BOSLAND

Explore the largest adventure forest in Flanders via the Bosland hiking trail network, more than 400 km of walking paths which connect the many hiking areas and play forests in which your kids may romp to their heart's content. Like the Lommel Sahara. This large sandy plain resembles a miniature desert with clear blue lakes, heather and forests. Want to see the Sahara from a height of 30 m? Be sure to climb the watch tower!



HIKING NETWORK VOERSTREEK

The signposted 125-km hiking network connects new and existing routes. Thanks to the user-friendly numbered junction system, you can now map out your favourite walk yourself. Follow the unpaved, traffic-restricted hiking trails. Getting lost is almost impossible: the paths are marked in both directions. The beautiful Sources Trail leads you past half-timbered houses and the awe-inspiring landscape.

FUN WITH THE FAMILY



BAREFOOT PATH (ZUTENDAAL)

Connect to earth during a carefully created 3-kilometre trail, which stimulates all the senses and treats your feet to the special feel of wood, stones, wood chips, grass, clay and water. Climb and splash in ponds and over sand hills. Take off your shoes and off you go. Adventure guaranteed for all ages!



PLOPSALAND INDOOR (HASSELT)

Explore Maya's World, feel the butterflies in your stomach on the Wickie Coaster and embark on an adventure with the Pirates on the Crooked Barge. Whatever the weather, immerse yourself in the magical world of your favourite Plopsa heroes and discover the 25 enchanting attractions at Plopsa Indoor Hasselt.



AQUA MUNDO (CENTER PARCS, PEER, LOMMEL)

With the tropical swimming paradise Aqua Mundo and indoor playground BALUBA, Center Parcs Erperheide offers everything you'd expect from a fun and active weekend with the kids. In Center Parcs De Vossemereen you will find an Aqua Mundo swimming paradise as well. In Discovery Bay, you can venture into an indoor pirate-themed playground, complete with suspension bridges and shipwrecks.



culture

RICH CULTURE AND HERITAGE

In the 20th century, the 7 coal mines, employing more than 46,000 miners from all over Europe, were the engine of Limburg's economy. The once-black slag heaps, which form a major part of the history of our province, are now green icons in a unique post-industrial landscape. The historic mining buildings have now been transformed into pioneering factories where entrepreneurs and researchers focus on the energy and economy of the future. The mining sites remain vibrant multi-cultural meeting places bustling with art, creativity, entertainment and tourism, where you can explore both old and new stories.



C-MINE (GENK)

The adventurous C-mine expedition will immerse you in fascinating tales about the mine and will indulge all your senses. When descending to a depth of 6 m, you can enjoy a surprising tour through underground passages. On top of that, take up the challenge and climb up the pit head which is over 60 m tall! At the top, you will be rewarded with a fantastic view of the green Limburg surroundings. 'Labyrinth' on the C-mine square is an art installation by architect duo Gijs Van Vaerenbergh. Find your way through the 1 km of steel corridors.



BE-MINE (BERINGEN)

be-MINE is Flanders' best-preserved and largest industrial heritage site and now serves as a unique tourist- and recreational hub. The small be-MINE slag heap has been transformed into a spectacular adventure mountain for walking and mountain biking. Children can even climb up the mountain and over all kinds of obstacles. Indoor climbing is possible as well in the Alpamayo climbing centre. The icing on the cake is TODI, as Europe's first indoor snorkel and scuba diving centre, where you can dive to a depth of 10 m amidst more than 1,500 tropical fish.



TONGEREN, BELGIUM'S MOST ANCIENT CITY

As the oldest city in Belgium, Tongeren is oozing with history. Including its Roman ramparts, the Gothic basilica and the charming beguinage, which is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Meet Tongerens' most famous inhabitant, Ambiorix, at the Grote Markt. The imposing bronze statue of the King of the Eburones is a tribute to his memorable victory over the Romans in 54 BC. Be sure to discover the Gallo-Roman Museum, one of the top European archaeological museums on the history of humanity from prehistoric times until the fall of the Roman Empire. 2,000 authentic objects bear witness to their times. You will learn more about these topics thanks to films, lifelike figures and beautiful models. In addition, every Sunday morning, this city hosts the largest antique and flea market in the Benelux. More than 40 antique shops and 350 exhibitors participate.



BOKRIJK

Are you curious to discover the origins of our current customs and traditions? At the Bokrijk Open-Air Museum, you will discover how the past is inspiring our future in an innovative way. Discover the past, present and future of craftsmanship. Admire demonstrations or participate in fascinating workshops. The Open-Air Museum is located in a 550-hectare park, which is a dream environment for hikers and cyclists. Visit the Arboretum or explore the De Wijers pond area. The viewpoint 'View of the Wijers', near bicycle junction 91, offers a wide view of the ponds and museum monuments. In addition, your children or grandchildren can enjoy themselves to their heart's content in the large outdoor playground.



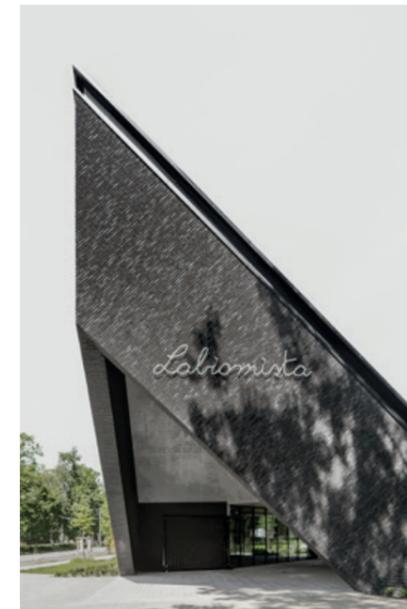
HERKENRODE ABBEY SITE (HASSELT)

A welcoming, peaceful and quiet place, that is still rooted in the past. You will learn all about the rich history of the women's abbey in the Experience Centre located in the stables with coach house. The herb and inspiration garden is a unique place to relax and discover more than 500 different herbs and herbaceous plants.



ALDEN BIESEN (BILZEN)

Alden Biesen was built in the 13th century by the Teutonic Order and is one of the largest castle complexes in the E-region. It is wonderful to stroll through the French and English gardens on this heritage site with its imposing moated castle. You will experience interactive adventures with a top-class actor during Bilzen Mysteries. Historical monument, tourist attraction, setting for events and exhibitions, centre for European activities and conference centre... Alden Biesen has it all!



LABIOMISTA (GENK)

This 24-hectare site is a living work of art by artist Koen Vanmechelen on Zwartberg's former mining site and zoo. A park with works of art, installations and animals. The aim is to stimulate, inspire and invite you to think about a sustainable society.



BLOSSOM & HARVEST

Between April and October, it's one big party in Haspengouw, the fruit region. During these months, the southern part of Limburg is transformed with blossoms and harvest festivals. Enjoy the blossoms, and sample the fresh produce and delicious wines. The cycle and walking routes take you through scenic landscapes bursting with fruits and blossoming trees.



SPLENDID CITY & SHOPPING



HASSELT

Hasselt has it all: from the best-known retail chains to cosy markets. You won't leave town empty-handed. Window shopping, boutique browsing, discovering the latest trends - it is the ideal destination for a 'shop till you drop'-kinda-day! Hasselt is known for its gin distilleries, but also boasts a number of museums. Visit the Jenever Museum, Fashion Museum, Stadsmus Municipal Museum or Z33, House for Contemporary Art. Or get to know Hasselt's impressive street art collection and discover the city by following the graffiti tour past 70 facades. Nice to know: Hasselt has the largest authentic Japanese garden in Europe. With its cherry trees, koi carp, bridges, bonsai trees and winding paths, it is the ideal place to immerse yourself in Japanese culture.



MAASMECHELEN VILLAGE

Fancy saving 60% on the world's leading fashion brands all year round? Discover more than 100 boutiques with popular brands in Maasmechelen Village. This outlet shopping centre is the place to be if you want to buy high-end fashion at a low price. Here you can shop 7 days a week in the cosy streets; the many bars and restaurants provide a pleasant break.



AWESOME ADVENTURE & NATURE



SNOW VALLEY (PEER)

Peer has the largest indoor ski slope in Europe, measuring 350 m long, 42 m high and 30 m wide. The slope suits skiers of all levels. Five ski lifts and a rolling mat take you to the top. For children, there is a 100-metre slope and rails, and a fun park with boxes, rails and jumps for freestylers. The little ones can romp under supervision in the indoor playground.



CIRCUIT ZOLDER (HEUSDEN-ZOLDER)

This former Formula 1 circuit is the place to be for a day full of adventure. Explore the circuit with your own car or motorcycle, come cycling in the evening or try the spectacular BMX track. Fun for the whole family.

USEFUL WORDS

BASIC WORDS AND PHRASES

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Good morning. | Goede morgen. |
| Good afternoon. | Goede avond. |
| Good night. | Goede nacht. |
| Have a nice day. | Een prettige dag. |
| I am from ... | Ik kom uit ... |
| How are you? I'm fine, thank you. | Hoe gaat het? Goed, dank u. |
| I'm very glad to meet you. | Heel leuk u te ontmoeten. |
| I've heard so much about you. | Ik heb al zoveel over u gehoord. |
| Where are you from? | Waar kom je vandaan? |
| It was nice seeing you. | Het was leuk u te zien. |
| It was nice meeting you. | Het was leuk u te ontmoeten. |
| Good luck. | Succes. |
| Have a nice day. | Fijne dag (gewenst). |
| Enjoy your meal. | Eet smakelijk. |
| Have a good journey. | Goede reis. |
| Excuse me. | Excuseer mij. |
| I miss you. | Ik mis je. |
| I love you. | Ik hou van je. |
| Get well soon. | Beterschap. |
| Happy birthday. | Fijne verjaardag. |
| Congratulations. | Gefeliciteerd. |

UNDERSTANDING

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| I understand. | Ik begrijp het. |
| I don't understand. | Ik begrijp het niet. |
| I don't know. | Ik weet het niet. |
| Could you speak more slowly? | Kunt u langzamer praten? |
| Could you repeat that? | Kunt u dat herhalen? |
| Could you write that down? | Kunt u dat opschrijven? |
| Do you speak English? | Spreekt u Engels? |
| Do you understand? | Begrijpt u? |
| I understand you if you speak slowly. | Ik versta u als u langzaam praat. |
| That's better. | Dat is beter. |
| What did you say? | Wat zei u? |
| You can talk to me in Dutch. | U kunt Nederlands tegen mij praten. |
| I only speak a little Dutch. | Ik spreek maar een klein beetje Nederlands. |
| I'm not very good at Dutch. | Ik spreek niet erg goed Nederlands. |

TO THE DOCTOR

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| The doctor | De dokter |
| The nurse | De verpleger |
| The patient | De patiënt |
| The pharmacy | De apotheek |
| The waiting room | De wachtkamer |
| The health insurance | De ziekteverzekering |
| The medications | De geneesmiddelen |
| To prescribe | Voorschrijven |
| The pill | De pil |
| The recipe | Het recept |
| The hospital | Het ziekenhuis |
| The ambulance | De ambulance |
| The emergency call | De noodoproep |

useful words

USEFUL WORDS

ILNESSES AND HEALTH STATUS

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Healthy | Gezond |
| Ill; sick | Ziek |
| Tired | Moe |
| The illness | De ziekte |
| The inflammation | De ontsteking |
| The common cold | De verkoudheid |
| The flu | De griep |
| The sore throat | De keelpijn |
| The cough | De hoest |
| The headache | De hoofdpijn |
| The swelling | De zwellling |
| The allergy | De allergie |
| I feel... | Ik voel me ... |
| My ... hurts. | Mijn ... doet pijn. |

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| My name is ... | Ik heet ... |
| I'm from ... | Ik kom ... |
| I'm ... years old. | Ik ben ... jaar. |
| I am married. | Ik ben getrouwd. |
| I am not married. | Ik ben niet getrouwd. |
| I am traveling alone. | Ik reis alleen. |
| I am not traveling alone. | Ik reis niet alleen. |
| I'm traveling with ... | Ik reis samen met ... |

COMPREHENSION

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|--|---|
| I don't speak any Dutch. | Ik spreek geen Nederlands. |
| I don't understand that. | Dat begrijp ik niet. |
| Do you speak ...? | Spreekt u ...? |
| Does anyone here speak English / French / ...? | Spreekt hier iemand Engels / Frans / ...? |
| Could you write that down please? | Kunt u dat alstublieft opschrijven? |
| Could you please repeat that? | Kunt u dat alstublieft herhalen? |
| Just a moment please. | Eén moment alstublieft. |

SCHOOL

| ENGLISH | DUTCH |
|---------------------|--|
| The school | De school |
| The teacher | De leraar; de juf; de meester; de docent |
| The student | De leerling; de student |
| The homework | Het huiswerk |
| The test | De toets |
| The exam | Het examen |
| The example | Het voorbeeld |
| Easy / difficult | Makkelijk / moeilijk |
| Correct / incorrect | Goed / fout |
| The book | Het boek |
| The schedule | Het rooster |
| The lunch break | De lunchpauze |
| The subject | Het vak |
| History | Geschiedenis |
| Biology | Biologie |
| Maths | Wiskunde |
| The language | De taal |
| Physical Education | Lichamelijke Opvoeding |
| Geography | Aardrijkskunde |
| Economics | Economie |

useful words

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notes

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notes

A WARM WELCOME IS IN OUR DNA

There's no friendlier place than Limburg for business, initiatives, innovation and excellence. Our Welcome Managers at POM Limburg will find you the perfect location and contacts for your business endeavours. We have joined forces with VLAIO and FIT to give you the best, all-encompassing information. Are you an expat? Let the Expat Centre assist you with all your challenges and questions. Links with China? The Limburg China Desk keeps us connected with the world's fastest-growing economy.

Contact: 011 300 100 or welkommanagement@pomlimburg.be
www.pomlimburg.be

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ABOUT US

Expat Centre Limburg is the result of a European-funded project by Interreg called **EMR 73 youRegion**.

Our aim is to provide information and offer services to companies in Limburg and their highly skilled international employees on all matters concerning moving to the most vibrant region of Europe; the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. In doing so, we wish to make the relocation process as smooth as possible for both HR managers and expats. Together with our social and service partners we offer services covering the practical (formalities, finding a house, information meetings, Dutch language training) and social aspects of moving to another country. The welcome desk for internationals is the central point of contact for companies, expats and all other internationals. Our team of locals and expats are here to help you.

POM LIMBURG, CROSSROADS OF CROSS-FERTILISATION

Limburg is the friendliest province in Flanders to work, do business, innovate and excel, with POM Limburg as an economic accelerator. On behalf of the provincial government, the POM team develops innovative projects aimed at boosting the digital transformation of Limburg, decarbonising and making the region more scalable. They concentrate on seven key industries: logistics, manufacturing, creative, energy, healthcare, construction, circular and digital. To achieve its objectives, POM Limburg connects businesses, employees, local governments, knowledge institutions and civil society.

As economic director of Limburg, POM Limburg is responsible for the development of new business parks, innovative campuses and business space master plans. The POM team supplies the economy with data, sets up future-oriented projects, connects businesses to the ecosystem, welcomes international businesses and brings together partners on platforms for every key sector. With digitisation and sustainability as a constant focus.

POM Limburg is run by social partners and local and provincial representatives, led by president and member of the provincial executive Tom Vandepuut and general manager Noël Slangen.

Visit www.pomlimburg.be to find more about our projects.





THE WINDS OF CHANGE ARE SWEEPING ACROSS LIMBURG

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Powering
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economy