

# TH/IS FLAN DERS



**Flanders**  
State of the Art



Side panel of the St. Ursula Shrine by Hans Memling 1489 - Memling Museum, Bruges © Tom Dhaenens

# content

## Colophon

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## 03-07

### The heart of Europe

The journey in Flanders begins with its  
prime location. With easy access to and  
from Flanders, you're never far from  
discovering the region's riches.

## 08-25

### Discover Flanders

In Flanders, food and cycling are in the  
blood. From the kitchen to the cycle path,  
Flanders is regarded as a world-class place  
to enjoy an internationally celebrated fine-  
dining experience as well as a trek across  
the countryside.

## 26-37

### Heritage & contemporary

Flanders has centuries' worth of cultural  
heritage gems in the fine arts and architecture,  
as well as cutting-edge fashion, design and  
contemporary arts. And that's just the  
beginning.

## 38-53

### Invest in Flanders. Trade with Flanders

Quality, craftsmanship and a standard of  
excellence are found in everything that  
comes from Flanders. You will find only  
the best here, with no exceptions.

## 54-55

### Intrigued by Flanders

Flanders will capture your imagination,  
and it won't let go. There are many ways  
to delve deeper into this fascinating  
region, so let your curiosity be your guide  
as you discover all that Flanders has to  
offer.

**“Flanders is a region of creators; headstrong, sustainable, skilled and helpful people who have been passionate about knowledge and expertise for centuries. It is a story of pioneering and high-profile skill – in the past and present, as well as in the future.”**

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In Flanders, we can offer you a great time. And besides that... We design fashion for Paris and the freakiest costumes for fun. We make breathtaking cinema and theatre and take our love for arts abroad. We excite with our heritage even when it recalls a dramatic era. We talk a dozen languages and cook with a thousand flavours. We export hundreds of beers and send our witlof to New York. We make the best pills for headaches and the most delicate chocolates. We design the finest lingerie and cut the most sparkling diamonds. We build the biggest screens and podiums for the world's greatest events. We spin and weave for inside and out, extra-large or small, in metal, plastics or textiles. We deliver heavy-duty machinery and sophisticated

medical transplants. We create new islands in the sea and build the highest towers. We assemble world-famous cars and bikes for all purposes. We make scientists and craftsmen think outside the box and come up with solutions to new challenges. We are champions at recycling, giving our resources seven lives. We are too busy to be proud of our achievements, and this modesty serves us as well in politics as it does in sports, in doing business as in sustainable relations, in Flanders and around the world.

“Flanders is a region of creators; headstrong, sustainable, skilled and helpful people who have been passionate about knowledge and expertise for centuries. It is a story of pioneering and high-profile skill – in the past and present, as well as in the future.”





01

# FLANDERS, THE HEART OF EUROPE

Getting to Flanders is easy / Flanders is the  
autonomous northern region of Belgium

# Getting to Flanders is easy

< LONDON



Brussels > London: 1h51

AMSTERDAM



Brussels > Amsterdam: 1h52

Brussels > Cologne: 1h43



COLOGNE

Brussels > Paris: 1h25



PARIS

BRUSSELS IS AT THE HEART OF EUROPE. LONDON, PARIS, COLOGNE AND AMSTERDAM ARE ALL LESS THAN TWO HOURS AWAY.



## TRAVELING BY TRAIN

Coming from Paris, Amsterdam or Cologne?  
[www.thalys.com](http://www.thalys.com)

Coming from London?  
[www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)

Traveling within Flanders?  
The Belgian rail system offers various special tariffs and passes.  
[www.belgianrail.be](http://www.belgianrail.be)



## TRAVELING BY PLANE

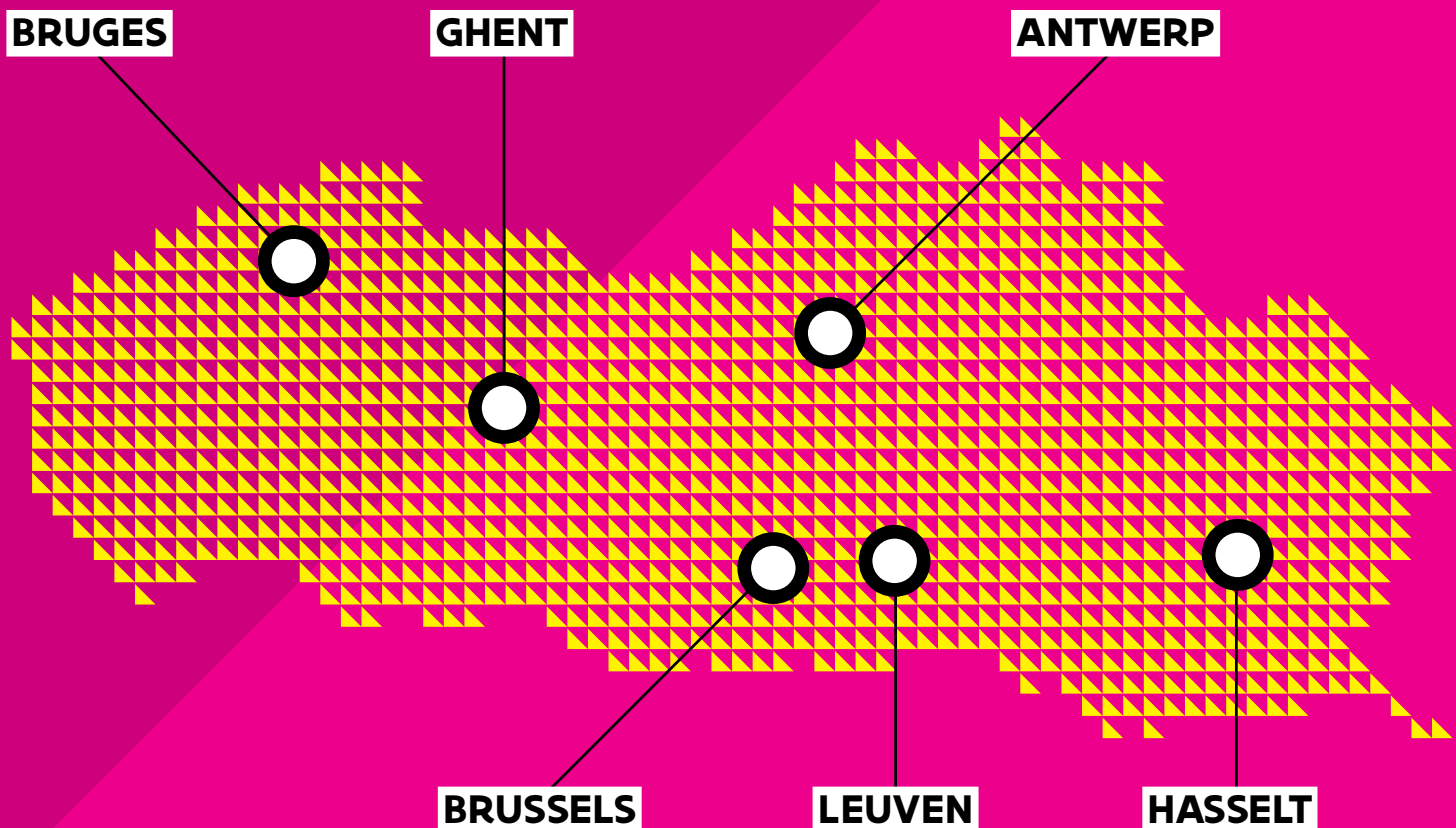
Brussels Zaventem Airport: the main international airport, 20 minutes from Brussels City Centre.

Brussels-South Airport Charleroi: 45 minutes from Brussels City Centre.

AT [WWW.ACCESSIBLEFLANDERS.BE](http://WWW.ACCESSIBLEFLANDERS.BE), YOU CAN FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ACCOMMODATION, TRANSPORT, MUSEUMS AND ATTRACTIONS, PLUS HOLIDAY REPORTS AND TIPS FROM TRAVELLERS WITH A DISABILITY.

You don't speak Dutch? No problem. As Flanders is at the heart of Europe, nestled between the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, most people are happy to help out in English, French, German or even Spanish.

# Flanders is the autonomous northern region of Belgium



Belgium has been a **federated country** since the reforms of 1993. The country is divided into **three territorial Regions** (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital Region) and **language-based Communities** (Dutch, French and German) in line with these language groups, with **Brussels as the capital** of the federal state of Flanders.

The Region and Community of Flanders have a common **Parliament** and a **Government**. This federal state of Flanders has its **own legislative and executive powers** and is the

autonomous northern region of Belgium, with broad and exclusive domestic and international responsibilities. Flanders has a **unicameral legislature**. The legislative and monitoring power rests with the Flemish Parliament, which is **directly elected** by the people of Flanders every five years.

Flanders enjoys **complete autonomy** in numerous domains, because the Government of Flanders and the federal government are on an equal footing and their powers do not overlap. Flanders is responsible

for **economics, foreign trade, healthcare, energy distribution, housing, agriculture and horticulture, the environment, public works and transport, employment, culture and education, science and innovation**. Flanders pursues a foreign policy regarding all of its competences and is able to conclude **bilateral and multilateral treaties**. Its exchange with other countries is promoted not only by its diplomatic representatives worldwide, but also by approximately 100 representatives who specialise in **trade and investment promotion**, agriculture and tourism.





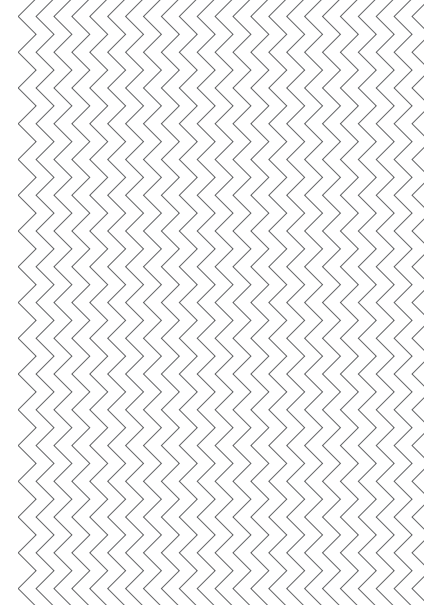
02



# DISCOVER FLANDERS

Meet the people from Flanders ... and their lifestyle /  
Antwerp / Brussels / Bruges / Ghent / Mechelen /  
Leuven / Flanders Fields

# Meet the people from Flanders ...



Aveigem Sluis © Westtoer

Flanders as we know it is the combination of the people, their environment and their history. It is a mixture of knowledge, no-nonsense behaviour and non-conformity tempered with ingenuity and innovation. These traits are widespread: in industry, education, healthcare, the creative economy, culture, science, technology, tourism and heritage.

Flanders is truly a place where history is so clearly present that it is palpable in every element of everyday life. Each generation adds creative aspects and a new layer of reality, and in this way, new generations prepare Flanders for what tomorrow may bring.



© Flanders Investment and Trade



© Flanders Investment and Trade

Rumour has it that we are modest. Likewise, words such as diplomacy, compromise and strategy describe our attitude. Such qualities help the people of Flanders excel, on a national and international level. Because our region is so small, our people are used to looking beyond boundaries. This constant searching has become a habit, a characteristic, a reflex that has proved to be very useful in many ways.

The nickname of 'Flandrien' was given to the track cyclists from Flanders in the



Het Pakhuis restaurant Ghent. © Piet De Kersgheleer



Dominique Persoone © Kris Vlegels

## ... and their lifestyle

1910s and 20s, and today it describes an intrepid cyclist who rides through all types of weather, never lets his head drop and – ideally – wins the race. Flanders is home to the challenging Ronde van Vlaanderen (Tour of Flanders), a 260km race that includes steep hills, cobblestoned streets and stunning views.

Flanders is a true culinary adventure. Whether in large, contemporary restaurants or intimate old-fashioned cafes, you'll find sophisticated and surprising creations. Flanders boasts more than 70 Michelin-starred restaurants. Young chefs from Flanders are unique, with an eye for detail and a powerful drive to distil ingredients to their purest form.

Not only do the people of Flanders drink beer with their meals, they also incorporate the wide range of beers into some of their traditional dishes. Monastery brews are particularly good, though the most celebrated beer is Trappist, made in only a handful of Cistercian monasteries; one of these, Westvleteren 12, has been rated as the world's best beer. In Flanders you can indulge yourself in all kinds of chocolate flavours. With an eye on quality, our chocolatiers aim to surprise their customers with the finest creations.

# Brussels

left: Musical Instruments Museum © Vlaanderen Vakantieland  
top, middle: Manneken Pis fountain, Brussels © www.milo-prof.be



right: WIELS Building at Night © WIELS / at the bottom, middle: Brussels © www.milo-prof.be

Brussels is an international metropolis and the ultimate European city – a mosaic of languages, cultures and traditions. As the headquarters of the European Union and Nato, Brussels is often referred to as the Capital of Europe. More than 3,800 diplomats are active there. The only place in the world where you will find more is New York City.

The Grand Place, frequently hailed the most beautiful square in Europe, is recognised by Unesco as a World Heritage Site. The square was built as a merchants' market in the 13th century, and every two years, the Grand Place becomes a stunning floral carpet, consisting of one million begonias. The Horta Museum in St Gilles is also a must-see, and while you're in the area, visit Flagey, an Art Deco building that houses a chic arts centre and a trendy cafe.

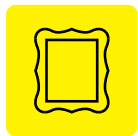
Unique in the history of architecture, and the unmistakable symbol of Brussels and Belgium, is the Atomium, the most popular local attraction. Built for the 1958 World's Fair, the Atomium is modelled on an iron crystal enlarged 165 billion times. Right

in the centre of the city, on Place Royale, the Magritte Museum exhibits the richest multidisciplinary collection of the Surrealist artist's creations in the world.

Manneken Pis, the famous little bronze statue of a urinating boy, was created in the 17th century and embodies the irreverent spirit of Brussels. Comics are also a distinct and very typical art form in Flanders. The classics have held global audiences spellbound for generations. For example, some Suske en Wiske (Spike and Suzy) albums have been translated into 27 languages. To discover Brussels through the eyes of Tintin, follow the comic strip theme walk or visit the Belgian Comic Strip Centre.



# BRUSSELS, THE CAPITAL OF EUROPE.



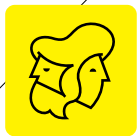
## ART

Many international galleries are moving to or are opening a branch in Brussels.



## AIRPORT

Brussels Zaventem Airport is the main international airport, 20 minutes from Brussels City Centre.



## HERITAGE

The Grand Place, frequently hailed the most beautiful square in Europe, is recognised by Unesco as a World Heritage Site.



## HEADQUARTER

Brussels is home to the headquarters of the European Union and NATO.



## ARCHITECTURE

The Horta Museum in St Gilles and Flagey, an Art Deco building housing a chic arts centre and a trendy cafe, are must-sees.

Antwerp succeeds in being a world-class city without ever overlooking the importance of being pleasant and above all liveable. With its many outstanding restaurants, bars and special venues, Antwerp has something to satisfy all tastes.



#### FASHION

Fashionistas can explore the stores of Antwerp's designers, whose stylish creations are revered all over the world.



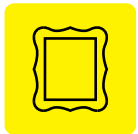
#### TRANSPORT

Antwerp is Europe's second largest port and is easily accessible by ship, as well as by train, plane and car.



#### DIAMONDS

For more than 550 years, Antwerp has been the world's most important and most reliable diamond trading centre.



#### ART

Antwerp is an inspiring source of culture thanks to its impressive architecture and its magnificent art displayed in a wide array of museums and churches.

The MAS Museum (Museum aan de Stroom) designed by Neutelings Riedijk Architecten . hosts the cultural heritage of Antwerp and its port – Antwerp © Tom D'haenens



Tim Van Steenberghe, Antwerp © www.milo-profi.be



Schelde, river view, Antwerp © www.milo-profi.be



Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp © Antwerp Tourism and Congres

Antwerp has long been a creative centre. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the city was home to Old Masters such as Peter Paul Rubens and Sir Anthony van Dyck. Rubens' paintings are found in various museums and churches in Antwerp, such as the Cathedral of Our Lady, the largest Gothic church in the Low Countries. The cathedral is an iconic treasury, with an impressive collection of major art works including famous paintings such as Rubens' Elevation of the Cross and his Descent from the Cross.

More recently, in the 20th and 21st centuries, fashion designers such as the Antwerp Six have called the city home. Since the 1980s, the Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts has been one of the world's best design schools. Founded in 1663, it is one of the oldest of its kind in Europe.

The Academy's fashion department is in the Antwerp Fashion Museum (MoMu), a dynamic and inspiring space in the heart of the city's fashion district.

Antwerp is also responsible for nearly 80% of the world's rough diamond trade, making it the diamond capital of the world. The MAS museum reveals a largely untold story about the city and its relations with the port and the world. Antwerp's Museum Plantin-

Moretus is also a unique experience. More than 400 years after the printing company was established, the working day still seems about to begin for the typesetters, composers, printers and proofreaders in the world-famous printing works. The oldest printing presses in the world are there, and they are fully functional.

Antwerp is centrally located on a crossroads of European motorways, just a 45-minute drive from Brussels and a 34-minute train journey from Brussels Airport. It has rail connections with London, Paris, Amsterdam and other major cities in Europe. It is even possible to fly to Antwerp, with the airport only 15 minutes from the city centre. [www.visitantwerpen.be](http://www.visitantwerpen.be)

# Antwerp



# Bruges

Since the Middle Ages, Flanders has given the impression of being a chessboard of closely linked monumental cities. The heart of Bruges, surrounded by an almost continuous ring of canals, is the best-preserved example of medieval Flanders. The historic centre of Bruges is on the list of Unesco World Heritage Sites and is teeming with places of interest. Bruges is so magical that visiting is like being on a film set.

During the 15th century, the Flemish Primitives, including Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling, found their creative niches in Bruges. The fine arts reigned supreme, and Bruges quickly became the meeting place and a source of inspiration for many artists. Illustrious masterpieces and other top collection pieces can be seen today in one of the 24 Bruges museums, including the Groeninge Museum.



Rozenhoedkaai © Jan Dartheet, Toerisme Brugge



Begijnhof © Jan DHondt, Toerisme Brugge



Sint-Salvatorokathedraal © Jan DHondt, Toerisme Brugge

# BRUGES, WORLD HERITAGE CITY.



Markt © Jan Darthet, Toerisme Brugge



Concertgebouw © Jan Darthet, Toerisme Brugge

In medieval Bruges, polyphonic chamber music and choral music reverberated vibrantly. Internationally renowned polyphonists had the run of the rich Burgundians' elegant city palaces; since the 19th century, this tradition has been continued in the splendidly restored city theatre, one of the best preserved in Europe. And in the contemporary Concertgebouw (Concert Hall) – a souvenir of 2002, when Bruges was the European Capital of Culture – top productions follow one after the other.

When the Flemish cloth industry declined in importance in the 15th century, Bruges

concentrated on the production of various luxury goods. Guilds and, later on, trade organisations, protected the creation of these quality products. Besides panel painting by the Flemish Primitives, Bruges excelled in goldsmithing, the production of illuminated manuscripts, diamond cutting and lace. Today, the city is still an international centre of refined craftsmanship. Bruges is a leader in the field of calligraphy and letter sculpting, and two renowned colleges train culinary talent, allowing chefs to create gastronomic waves in Bruges and overseas.



## HERITAGE

Bruges is one of the best preserved cities in Europe and the world, and its whole historic centre is listed as a World Heritage Site by Unesco.



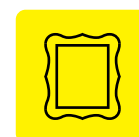
## NATURE & PARKS

Bruges's many parks and wide surroundings testify to its beautiful nature.



## STAR RESTAURANTS

Bruges is considered the epicentre of the world's gastronomy, with an impressive list of first-class restaurants.



## ART

Bruges is the place to marvel at medieval and early modern art, including the world-famous collection of the Flemish Primitives.



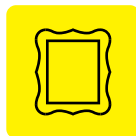
Market hall of the old city of Ghent - architects Robbrecht & Daem & Marie-José Van Hee © Tom D'haenens

Although Ghent is a historic city, it is also a contemporary one. It's a gloriously eclectic city, with an excellent mix of old and new buildings. The modern daily life of the city's active inhabitants plays itself out against a gorgeous historical backdrop, as they live, work and enjoy life to the fullest each day. For example, every year in July, the city holds a sparkling cultural festival with numerous performances by national and international musicians, street-theatre companies, exhibitions, animated movies for children, fairs, parades and so much more. And at night, when other cities go to sleep, Ghent comes to life. In recent years the City of Ghent has invested heavily in scenic lighting for the city centre, and the Ghent lighting plan has received international awards.



UV-inspection for the restoration of the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb by the Van Eyck brothers - in the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent (MSK) © Tom D'haenens

# Ghent



## ART

In 2012, the restoration of the Mystic Lamb began. The Van Eyck brothers painted this unique altarpiece in 1432.



## STAR RESTAURANTS

Three culinary geniuses chose to open their restaurants in Ghent. The Flemish Foodies create a playful, dynamic and delicious cuisine.



## HERITAGE

At night Ghent comes to life. In recent years the City of Ghent has invested heavily in scenic lighting for the city centre.



## FESTIVALS

Ghent holds a sparkling cultural festival with numerous performances, exhibitions, animated movies for children, fairs, parades and so much more.

The modern daily life of the city's active inhabitants plays itself out against a gorgeous historical backdrop.



STAM museum Ghent © Phile Deprez



© Visit Ghent



© Visit Ghent



© Visit Ghent

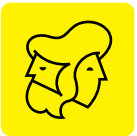
The modern daily life of the city's active inhabitants plays itself out against a gorgeous historical backdrop.

Philip of Alsace must have had in mind a real sense of dominion when he rebuilt the Gravensteen Castle, the imposing 12th-century Castle of the Counts. Overlooking the city from its battlements high up on

the keep, you can sense the feeling of wealth and power that the lord of the castle must have had, and that he wished to demonstrate. Ghent's town hall is a building with many faces. The flamboyant Gothic style of the facade in the Hoogpoort contrasts sharply with the rather sober Renaissance style of the Botermarkt side. In 2012, the restoration of the Mystic Lamb

began. The Van Eyck brothers painted this unique altarpiece in 1432, and it has become a symbol of the city's rich tradition. It is the highlight of the Flemish Primitives and a milestone in the history of art. In addition to such historic treasures, you can also find vintage clothing stores, quaint organic cafes and delightful river walks, combining the old with the new.

# Mechelen



## HERITAGE

The people of Mechelen take pride in their city's more than 300 listed monuments, four of which are inscribed on Unesco's World Heritage List.



## TRADITION

Acquaint yourself with Mechelen's treasure trove of unique traditions, rare crafts and unsurpassed workmanship.



## SHOPPING

Longing to hit the shops? High-street chains and chic boutiques stand shoulder to shoulder with traditional specialist shops.



## CARILLON SCHOOL

Since 1922, Mechelen has been home to a world-famous carillon school that attracts students from all over the world, looking to perfect the art of carillon playing.



## CAR-FREE

In the historical heart of the city, pedestrians and cyclists reign supreme. If you're visiting by car, there is easy access to parking facilities.



Mechelen is a small and picturesque city that is big on charm and history, yet is probably best known for its carillon school. Here, students from all over the world come to learn the art of playing church bells. Mechelen is a city brimming with quaint shops, traffic-free zones and pleasant little squares. The grace of centuries-old palaces and majestic churches appeals to everyone.

Tapestry Manufacturer De Wit, Mechelen © www.wmilo-profi.be



The Carillon © Layla Aerts

Mechelen has no fewer than 336 historically listed buildings and monuments, including eight Gothic and Baroque churches from the 14th century to the 17th century. A climb up the 538 steps of St Rumbold's tower offers breath-taking views of the city from the Skywalk, a panoramic glass walkway atop the tower. Building work by the Keldermans family of architects on this imposing Mechelen monument began in 1452, and although the 97m tower was never completed, it is nonetheless the symbol of Mechelen and is another Unesco World Heritage Site. The city's most important documents used to be kept in this fortified tower, which was also the belfry. The bells in the tower would tell the townspeople the time and sound the alarm in the event of danger.

Kazerne Dossin © Stijn Bollaert



Kazerne Dossin is a very poignant place of remembrance for Belgium. The Dossin barracks was a prelude to death for more than 25,000 Jews and Gypsies from Belgium and northern France during the Second World War. A museum has recently been built to record the historical significance of this place for present and future generations and to illustrate themes such as racism, exclusion and human rights. The combination of the human rights theme and the historical story of the Holocaust in Belgium makes Kazerne Dossin a project of European, and global, interest. The new museum was designed by leading architect and former Government of Flanders architect bOb Van Reeth.

Mechelen has no fewer than 336 historically listed buildings and monuments. A climb up the 538 steps of St Rumbold's tower offers breath-taking views of the city from the glass Skywalk.

University Library stairs, Leuven © Toerisme Leuven



Museum M, Stéphane Beel Architecten © Johnny Umans

Leuven is the ideal place for quenching a thirst for knowledge – or merely a thirst. This youthful city, less than half an hour by train from Brussels, is home to one of Europe's oldest and most important universities, KU Leuven, and history is present on every street corner. The university has its roots in the centre of Leuven, and its historic college buildings dominate many of the squares and streets. KU Leuven and its 55,000 students and professors have a special bond with the city, which has existed since the university's founding in 1425.

A few fortunate students even have the distinct privilege of living in the 13th-century stone beguinage or *begijnhof*, which has also been selected as a World Heritage Site by Unesco. In addition to being a highly respected seat of learning, Leuven is Belgium's reigning brewing capital – no small feat in a country that produces literally hundreds of delicious varieties of beers. Leuven is the headquarters of InBev, the largest brewery in the world, famous for its range of beers. Centuries of tradition and craftsmanship in Flanders are behind Leuven's premium brews.

Leuven's town hall is one of the best-known Gothic town halls in the world and is the city's pride and joy. It took three architects and 30 years to build it. Leuven's 'Hall of Fame' features 236 statues, which were only added to the facade after 1850. Furthermore, M-Museum Leuven, an impressive, streamlined museum building in the heart of the city, is quite an attraction. The complex as a whole, designed by renowned Belgian architect Stéphane Beel, integrates existing historical buildings with contemporary architecture built around a stately old oak tree in a peaceful interior courtyard.

Terrace at Hogeschoolplein, Leuven © www.milo-profi.be



# Leuven

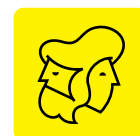


A stone's throw from Brussels, Leuven is a city with a rich cultural and historical heritage. It's the birthplace of the oldest Catholic university in the world.



#### **BREWERY**

Leuven hosts the huge InBev brewery, alongside the home brewery Domus.



#### **HERITAGE**

The 13th-century begunage or begijnhof has been named a World Heritage Site by Unesco



#### **ARCHITECTURE**

M-Museum Leuven combines two old and two new buildings in a design that forms a unique setting for old and contemporary art.



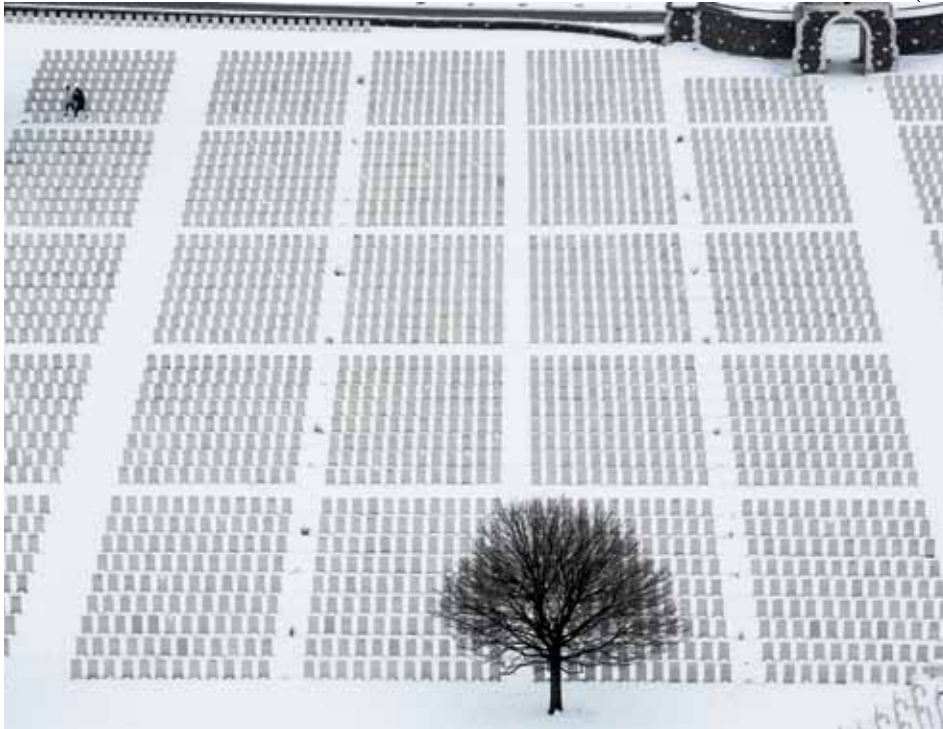
#### **UNIVERSITY**

Leuven is a centre of knowledge and innovation.



# Flanders Fields

Tyne Cot Cemetery – Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, Zonnebeke (Ypres) © Tom D'haenens



Hallen Ypres © Westtoer



Lijssenthoek military cemetery © Westtoer

Flanders' strategic position on the European map makes it an ideal region not only for entrepreneurs but also for warmongers and promoters of peace alike. Throughout the centuries, European powers have fought their wars and made peace on Flanders' soil and in its cities. Most cities have at least some remnants of fortifications used to defend themselves against these acts of war.

Poignant traces of this process of war and peace can be found in Flanders Fields, one of the emblematic sites of the Great War (1914-18). For four long years, while the rest of Belgium was occupied territory and suffered great hardship, the First World War raged over this pastoral westernmost corner of Flanders.

The landscape of Flanders Fields still tells the sorry tale and bears the scars of the war. It contains hundreds of monuments and cemeteries that have great historical significance for the people of many nations. Museums explain in an interactive way all the elements of the conflicts: the personal testimonies of soldiers and civilians, the

military aspects, life at the front or in occupied territory... The daily Last Post that has taken place each day at the Menin Gate in Ypres since 1928 is proof that the memories of the fallen are still honoured. Meanwhile, the intense desire for peace thrives as well. From 2014 to 2018, a hundred years on, Flanders will be host to those wanting to commemorate and to learn from the past. As it welcomes guests from more than 50 nations that were involved in the conflict, the Government of Flanders is leading a wide-ranging project of international remembrance, ensuring that Flanders Fields will continue to bear witness to the follies of war for generations to come.

THE LANDSCAPE OF FLANDERS FIELDS  
STILL TELLS THE SORRY TALE AND  
BEARS THE SCARS OF THE WAR.







03

# FLANDERS IS HERITAGE AND CON- TEMPORARY

Flanders is heritage / Visual and performing arts /  
Music & festivals / Architecture / Design / Fashion /  
Film / Literature



Many prominent artists in Flanders have had a lasting impact on a European level over the centuries and have likewise inspired painters from around the world. One only has to think of artists ranging from Jan Van Eyck, Hans Memling, Pieter Bruegel I, Peter Paul Rubens, Sir Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens to, more recently, James Ensor, Constant Permeke and Magritte to realise the tremendous contribution by Flanders to the cultural heritage of the arts.

In the 15th century, the Flemish Primitives were among the first artists in Europe to paint a detailed vision of the world around them. This is also true for an artist such as Pieter Bruegel I, who is best known for his seasonal landscapes and the seemingly comical depiction of peasant life. The Baroque of the 17th century also yielded several important Old Masters who have cemented Flanders' place in the history of art.

This rich cultural heritage is still a strong part of the culture and is fundamentally supported by the community of Flanders. As such, since the inauguration of Cultural Heritage Day in 2008, collaborators in museums, archives, heritage libraries and regional geography and history groups are now part of a network whose mission is to bundle expertise and to reach a wide audience.

Many prominent artists in Flanders have had a lasting impact on a European level over the centuries and have likewise inspired their colleagues from around the world.

Frequent collaborations between the flagship museums of Flanders – the KMSKA in Antwerp, the MSK in Ghent and the Groeninge Museum in Bruges – are evidence of this communal level of support. These museums also work abroad in an exchange of expertise and resources. Moreover, the public has recently had the opportunity to visit three new city museums that have opened within a short period of time: M-Museum in Leuven, the MAS in Antwerp and the STAM in Ghent.

Het balkon van Manet, MSK, Ghent © Lukas - Art in Flanders vzw, foto Hugo Maertens, © Sabam Belgium, 2014



Venus Frigida, KMSKA, Antwerp © Lukas - Art in Flanders vzw, foto Hugo Maertens



Margareta van Eyck, Groeninge Museum, Bruges © Lukas - Art in Flanders vzw, foto Hugo Maertens



De intrige, KMSKA, Antwerp © Lukas - Art in Flanders vzw, foto Hugo Maertens, © Sabam Belgium, 2014

Artists such as Luc Tuymans and Jan Fabre paved the way and developed a visual language that strongly influences the visual culture of their and future generations.

Artists such as Luc Tuymans and Jan Fabre have paved the way for the contemporary visual arts scene in Flanders and have developed a visual language that strongly influences the visual culture of their and future generations, at home and abroad. Today, new generations of artists, curators and museum directors are exhibited worldwide and are omnipresent in museums, art centres and international biennales.

Flanders has an exceptional array of medium-sized visual art institutions, including M HKA en Middelheim Museum in Antwerp, S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Mu.ZEE in Ostend and Bozar and Wiels in Brussels. There are also experimental art spaces: Objectif Exhibitions in Antwerp, Netwerk in Aalst, Z33 in Hasselt and Argos in Brussels, each with a unique profile and remarkable exhibition programmes.

Alpensee, Thierry De Cordier © Dirk Pauwels



Unicorn, Michaël Boyemans © Peter Cox, Courtesy Zeno X Gallery



Neecompany - Isabella's room © Eveline Vanassche.



The contemporary performing arts scene in Flanders has never been so wide and so diverse. Artists have gained international acclaim for their ground-breaking choreography, theatre work and performances.

Rosàs / Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker - Fase, Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich (c) Herman Sorgeloos



Berlinde De Bruyckere Kreupelhout – Cripplewood, 2012 – 2013 © Mirjam Devriendt



Flanders also has a significant number of collectors who play an important role in supporting emerging and established artists and enriching the collections and exhibition programmes of public museums. Galleries are also part of the scene, with prestigious international galleries moving to or opening a branch in Brussels.

The contemporary performing arts scene in Flanders is a dynamic landscape of high-quality artists and venues creating theatre

and dance in all its forms. The driving force behind this dynamism is rooted in the 1980s, when globally influential theatre-makers such as Jan Fabre, Jan Lauwers, Jan Decorte, Ivo Van Hove and Guy Cassiers and choreographers such as Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Alain Platel and Wim Vandekeybus flooded the field with innovative choreography and theatre, crafting a signature tradition.

They inspired new generations of ground-breaking artists. Performing artists in Flanders today create a wealth of hugely diverse performances, from repertory theatre and dance to site-specific performance. They are open to other disciplines and often integrate new media, visual arts, live music and contemporary writing. Their work is rooted in a rich international practice of worldwide presentation and co-operation.







# MUSIC & FESTIVALS

Jef Neve © Hugo Van Beveren



Triggerfinger © Anton Coene



Flanders is also music. More than 280 festivals take place every year in a variety of styles. Rock Werchter and Tomorrowland are known respectively as among the best pop/rock and dance festivals in the world, with both regularly receiving international acclaim. Jazz aficionados fall in love with Ghent Jazz and Jazz Middelheim, while Flanders also has high standards for early and classical music. Festivals like Laus Polyphoniae cherish the early music tradition of polyphonic music. The Festival of Flanders and the annual Queen Elisabeth Competition attract young musicians from around the world.

In recent years, stories of musicians from Flanders making it across the borders have become commonplace. For many, the Antwerp rock band dEUS cleared the way in 1994. The international success of their exhilarating, creative and unconventional debut album inspired other groups to believe it was possible to come from Flanders and find a dedicated audience in other European countries and beyond, paving the way for artists such as Hooverphonic, Selah Sue, Triggerfinger and Milow.

The architectural scene in Flanders and Brussels has become one of the most vital in Europe. Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels are now tourist destinations attracting international attention for their contemporary architecture. Moreover, architects from Flanders are frequently invited by internationally renowned art events such as the Biennale of Venice and the Oslo Architecture Triennale to serve as curators or make artistic contributions.

The extensive building production of quality in Flanders is truly remarkable. Architects from Flanders have developed innovative strategies for redeveloping former industrial sites and urban areas, and formulated new concepts for housing, infrastructure and leisure. These contemporary architects reveal that architecture's contribution to contemporary Flanders lies not in the provision of iconic buildings but in the careful yet imaginative handling of the building programme and construction techniques.

Eilshout Kitchen Tower Anderlecht - XDGA Xaveer De Geyter Architects  
© Harry Gruyaert - Magnum Photos



Budafabriek Art Centre SINME © Filip Dujardin



WDT hangar conversion Antwerp - Verdickt and Verdickt Architects © Stijn Bollaert

# ARCHITECTURE

Overdose, Bram Boo



Spoon - prototype - Stefan Schöning © Lenz Vermeulen



Flanders is a prominent player in the world of design, from industrial and graphic to jewellery and ceramics, as well as enjoying a strong representation in applied arts. This rich tradition and excellence of design in Flanders is found in its various academies, design exhibitions and organisations, as well as design museums and centres such as those in Antwerp and Ghent. Flanders exudes design and demands only the best from its designers.

As for individual designers, an icon of the design world in Flanders is Maarten Van Severen (1956-2005), who made history with his chairs, tables and cabinets. Other notable material designs include ceramic elegance by Piet Stockmans, and, among the younger generation, Bram Boo's playful coloured furniture. Flanders also boasts internationally acclaimed jewellery designers and silversmiths such as Nedda El-Asmar and David Huycke.



Cabrio collection, Hoet © Jurgen Rogiers



Crossed legs / two in one - one for two, 2002 - Lachaert &amp; d'Hanis © Joris Luyten

Belgian fashion design is marked by its quality, innovation and high-level craftsmanship, and is recognised and celebrated around the world. The internationally renowned Antwerp Six, who graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp in the 1980s, are still highly productive, both in Belgium and internationally. Several of the Six are fashion leaders with their own labels, such as Dries Van Noten, Walter Van Beirendonck and Dirk Van Saene. Raf Simons, though he did not study fashion primarily, has become Flanders' most renowned fashion designer. Younger graduates such as Haider Ackermann and A.F. Vandevorst have also made their mark on the world stage.

Brussels is also a true fashion centre, and it tends to display a more avant-garde image than Flanders' other design centres. The Brussels fashion academy La Cambre is at the pinnacle of the international fashion scene, with Kim Stumpf and Jean-Paul Lespagnard notable alumni.



A.F. Vandevorst © Ronald Stoops



Walter Van Beirendonck © Ronald Stoops



Haider Ackermann © Kris Vandamme

**FASHION**

Matthias Schoenaerts in 'Bullhead' - Michaël R. Roskam © Nicolas Karakatsanis



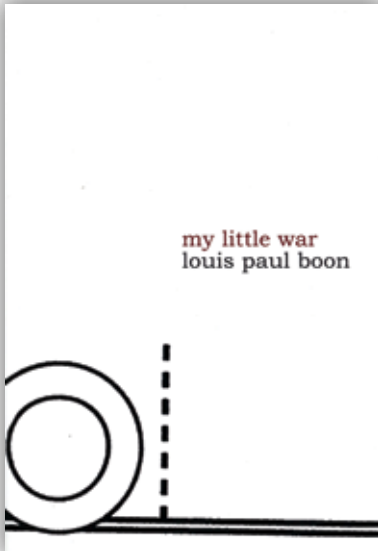
The Broken Circle Breakdown 2012 - Felix Van Groeningen

The audio-visual landscape in Flanders has changed dramatically in the past 10 years. Most striking is the emergence of a new generation of creative talent, led by internationally acclaimed film directors such as Michaël R Roskam, Felix van Groeningen and Erik Van Looy and actors such as Matthias Schoenaerts and Veerle Baetens. Animation studios in Flanders are also expanding, developing ambitious projects of their own and participating in prestigious international productions.

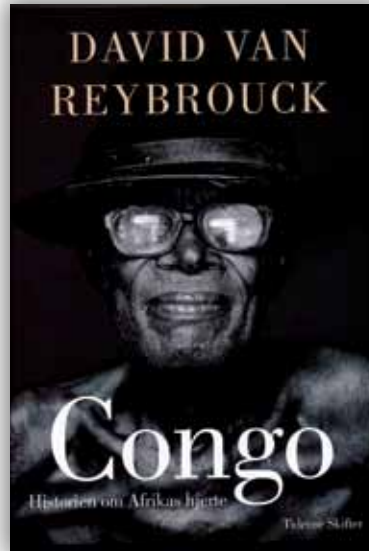


The Invader, 2011 - Nicolas Provost

Driving this newfound vitality is a framework of incentives and other mechanisms that nurture local talent and make productions possible. Creativity in Flanders also benefits from a thriving services sector, with several visual effects and digital post-production houses that are becoming significant international players. Companies such as Barco, a world leader in digital cinema projection, and Galaxy Studios, the business behind Auro-3D sound, are helping revolutionise the cinema experience.



Cover of My Little War by Louis Paul Boon, Translated into English by Paul Vincent, and published by Dalkey Archive Press. Cover: design and composition by Danielle Dutton, illustration by Nicholas Motte.



Cover of Congo. Historien om Afrikas hjerte by David Van Reybrouck. Translated into Danish by Birthe Lundsgaard and published by Tidse Skifter. Cover design by Malene Henssel

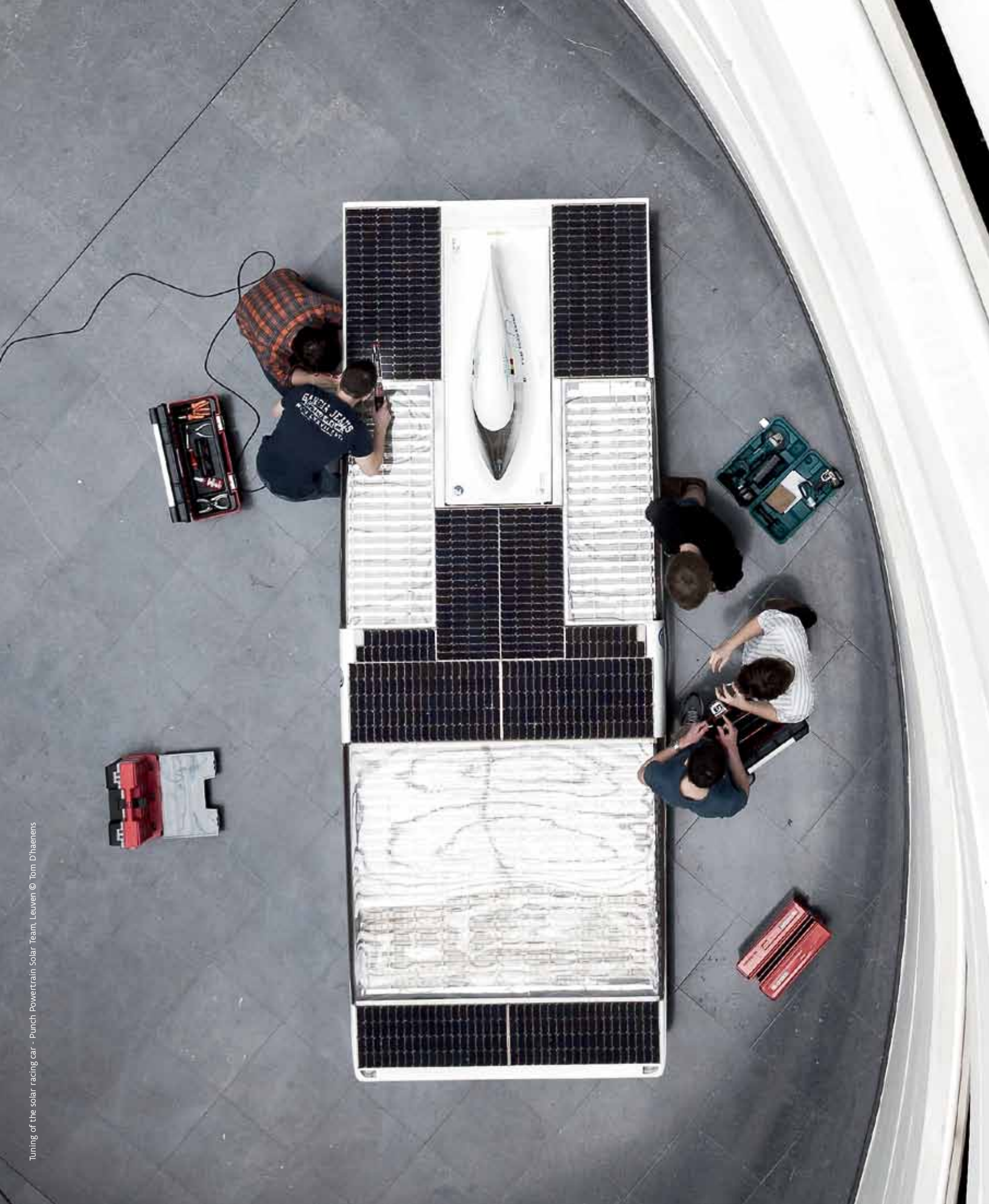


Poster for 'La Boîte à Gand', an exhibition set up during the Angoulême Festival 2013 © Brecht Evens, Brecht Vandembroucke, Sarah Yu Zeebroek, Hammelore Van Dijk, Lotte Van de Walle

Advocates of Flanders' literature can certainly boast of its past, present and future. Not only can Flanders take pride in a rich literary tradition, but some of the finest contemporary Dutch-language literature also comes from here. And international attention for translations of prose, poetry, illustrated teenage and children's literature, graphic novels, literary non-fiction and theatre texts has risen sharply in recent decades.

For example, comics and illustrated children's books are a highly developed, distinct and well-known art form in Flanders and abroad. Drawing on the Belgian tradition set by the creators of Tintin and Gaston, comic artists from Flanders are refining their craft into art, gaining them ever more international recognition. The same applies to illustrators from Flanders, who renew, adapt and expand techniques established by our world-famous artists from the Middle Ages onwards. Although these artists share a common heritage, they all seek a straightforward, highly personal and recognisable style.

# LITERATURE





04

# INVEST IN FLANDERS. TRADE WITH FLANDERS

Study in Flanders / Logistics & automotive  
in Flanders / Cleantech in Flanders / Construction in  
Flanders / Life sciences in Flanders / Chemicals in  
Flanders / ICT in Flanders



# Belgium – and Flanders as a region – has the second most open economy in the world, according to the 2014 KOF Index of Globalization.

## **ITS LOCATION AT THE HEART OF EUROPE, ITS SUPERB TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND UNIQUE WORKFORCE MAKE FLANDERS THE DESIGNATED ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL BUSINESS PURPOSES.**

The biggest asset of the Flemish economy is the people of Flanders. They not only rank among the world's most highly educated and productive workforce, but they are also well-known for their linguistic skills. Because the people of Flanders live at a point where Europe's three major cultural groups meet, many speak up to four languages, English included. Furthermore, Flanders' workforce has one of the world's highest rates of loyalty to an employer.

It's not just its location at the heart of Europe that makes Flanders the perfect location for businesses; it's also the quality transport infrastructure that allows for fast transportation of both goods and people. Although Flanders is rather compact, it has four world-class ports, the most concentrated waterway network in northern Europe, three airports for cargo and passengers, and an extensive rail network for national and European destinations. Last but not least, Flanders also has a high density of toll-free roads.

Furthermore, the Government of Flanders is committed to creating an optimal business climate for companies that settle here by offering a wide range of tax benefits and financial grants, ranging from tax

exemptions to beneficial tax regimes for R&D and pension funds. Companies using their own capital to finance their activities can lower their effective corporate tax rate even further. In addition, a special ruling commission guides foreign investors through the fiscal aspects of their investment project in Flanders. The sum of these tax incentives leads to one of the lowest effective corporate tax rates in the European Union. And finally, Belgium – and Flanders as a region – has the second most open economy in the world, according to the 2014 KOF Index of Globalization.



© Marco Mertens

By 2020, Flanders aims to be the fifth most important region in Europe by putting into practice its Nieuw Industrieel Beleid (New Industrial Policy). Key aspects in this policy are the rapid modernisation of industry, related services and the social fabric by means of value creation, productivity and flexibility.

Foreign investors can count on a pro-active approach from various industrial clusters in Flanders and a customised package of all the assets Flanders has to offer them.



# Study in Flanders

The educational system in Flanders prepares young people to perform optimally in a rapidly changing and increasingly internationally oriented society. The system's excellence is confirmed by the results of the PISA assessment project – the Program for International Student Assessment, coordinated by the OECD – which measures the scholastic performance of 15-year-olds in 57 countries in reading proficiency, problem-solving skills, and mathematic and scientific knowledge. Flanders' education system ranks sixth in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015. When it comes to maths and science education, the region is in third position in the world.

Flanders has numerous international schools. There are, for example, the Antwerp British

School and the Antwerp International School; the International School of Brussels and the British School of Brussels; and the College of Europe in Bruges, which provides university-level courses and houses the international research and training centre of the United Nations University. Ghent opened an international school in 2012, and the city of Leuven, KU Leuven University and imec research centre recently established an international private primary school that offers courses in English.

Flanders has five public universities: Leuven, Antwerp, Ghent, Hasselt and Brussels. KU Leuven, with more than 32,000 students, is the largest and the oldest in the Low Countries, followed by the University of Ghent, which has nearly 30,000 students.

Anatomical class at the faculty of veterinary medicine - Ghent University © Tom D'haenens



Ballet training session - Royal Ballet Flanders, Antwerp © Tom D'haenens





Three of these universities feature in the world Top 200 ranking published by UK newspaper The Times: Leuven ranks 55th worldwide, while Ghent is in 90th place. Various business schools in Flanders are also rated highly in Europe, such as the University of Antwerp Management School and Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School, which is ranked in the Top 20 in the Financial Times' annual ranking.

Flanders' education system ranks sixth in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015. When it comes to maths and science education, the region is in third position in the world.



Welders at work at the construction atelier for busses - Van Hool, Koningshooikt © Tom Dhaenens

# Logistics & automotive in Flanders

Flanders is home to a thriving logistics industry covering a comprehensive range of sectors. There are nearly 800 European Distribution Centres in Flanders – that's more than five per 100km<sup>2</sup> – with some operating across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world. With its ideal location at the heart of the European markets and its superb infrastructure for transport by land, water and air, Flanders has built up an enviable reputation and incomparable know-how and expertise in logistics.

Furthermore, in the third quarter of 2014, prime logistics space in Flanders was traded at less than €50/m<sup>2</sup>, according to real estate agent Cushman & Wakefield's Marketbeat Industrial Snapshot, making it one of the lowest rates in Europe. Many multinationals already serve Europe from Flanders, such as Bose, Duracell, Honda, Mazda, Nike, Pfizer, Procter & Gamble, Samsonite, Sara Lee, SKF, Stanley Black & Decker, Toyota, Volvo and more. Moreover, Flanders ranks third in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index 2014.

32,500 motorcycles per year pass through this warehouse - Honda Belgium, Ghent © Tom Dhaenens



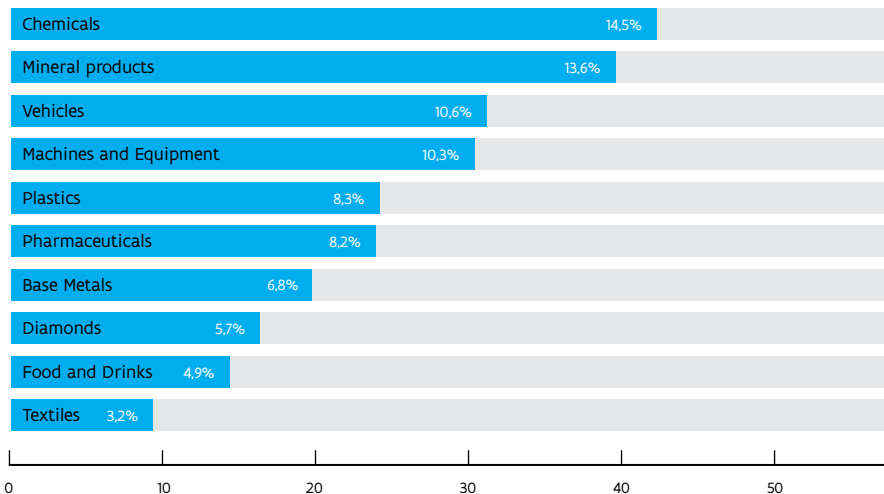
There are nearly 800 European Distribution Centres in Flanders – that's more than five per 100km<sup>2</sup> with some operating across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world.

Flanders also serves as the European gateway for automotive companies the world over. In the Port of Zeebrugge alone, more than 3 million cars are handled annually. Thanks to the abundance of expertise in the construction of vehicles, components and related services, major car manufacturers such as Audi, Volvo, Toyota, Mazda and Honda are all present in the region, either with assembly plants, R&D and engineering centres, or regional headquarters.



Large seaship (90,000 tonnes) entering the sealock, heading for the ArcelorMittal plant in Ghent - Terneuzen © Tom D'haerens

**TOP 10 FLEMISH EXPORT PRODUCTS IN 2013** (in EUR billion and as % of total)



According to the World Trade Report, Belgium – and consequently Flanders – is one of the top exporting countries in the world, and its per capita export figure is among the highest. As a European hub, Flanders is also a top importer. Flanders' most successful export products are minerals, vehicles, pharmaceuticals, organic chemical products and mechanical machinery.

# Cleantech in Flanders



© Flanders Investment and Trade



Oiltanking, Antwerp © Tom Dhaenens

Flanders boasts a wide range of innovative cleantech initiatives with a focus on knowledge acquisition and sharing.

Fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum and natural gas are becoming depleted and increasingly expensive. Furthermore, the continued use of these fossil energy resources is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions, with long-term effects that may change our climate. That is why Flanders has for some time been making great strides in the development of new technologies for sustainable energy. Flanders boasts a wide range of innovative cleantech initiatives with a focus on knowledge acquisition and sharing. Three of the major clusters and incubators are:

**Greenbridge Science Park in Ostend**, which specialises in renewable energy. [www.greenbridge.be](http://www.greenbridge.be)

**Ghent Bio-Energy Valley in Ghent**, Europe's first open innovation and education centre for a bio-based economy. [www.gbev.org](http://www.gbev.org)

**Energyville in Genk**, with its expertise in renewable energy, smart grids and sustainable cities. [www.energyville.be](http://www.energyville.be)



Dredging along the coast of Abu Dhabi – Deme, Zwijndrecht © Tom D'haenens

# Construction in Flanders

A popular saying holds that 'Flemish people are born with a brick in their stomach', due to their deep passion for building. The region is home to numerous producers of innovative building products and construction technologies. These are adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of homeowners in respect of comfort, safety, health and living environment or to the pressures on the built environment, such as energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Engineer - Ocas, Zelzate © Tom D'haenens



© Flanders Investment and Trade





Patient positioning and immobilisation mask for radiation oncology - Orfit, Wijnegem © Tom D'haenens



© Flanders Investment and Trade

# Life sciences in Flanders

Flanders is home to numerous international and local life sciences companies, from worldwide pharmaceutical and medical imaging firms to small, focused biotech firms, device producers and support manufacturers. Flanders is known the world over for its scientific breakthroughs in the research and development of human therapeutics. Several of these are realised by the numerous biotech spin-off companies, which gravitate to business parks in or near universities and VIB, Flanders' world-class research centre for life sciences. These are the subject of successful IPOs, venture capital deals, takeovers and capital investments.

Belgium – and Flanders as a region – is on the verge of becoming the European leader in the biopharmaceutical sector, according to analysis by the Health, Science and Technology Group and advisory firm Deloitte. The main reasons for this development are the many tax incentives and the strong partnership between government and industry, which recently resulted in a large number of new pharmaceutical investments.

The Government of Flanders awards generous grants and subsidies (up to a rate of 75%) for the R&D of innovative products and processes. According to Deloitte, Flanders offers the best R&D-related incentives in Europe. This high level of incentives results in greatly reduced employment costs, which gives companies based in Flanders a major advantage over their competitors in neighbouring countries when it comes to attracting qualified talent.

Flanders is home to numerous international and local life sciences companies, from worldwide pharmaceutical and medical imaging firms to small, focused biotech firms, device producers and support manufacturers.

With IWT, Flanders' government agency for Innovation through Science and Technology, Flanders has an all-inclusive mechanism in place for non-refundable grants in direct support of R&D programmes. In addition, companies investing in Flanders can take advantage of a number of helpful tax incentives. As a result of these incentives – and the presence of many world-renowned research institutes – Flanders ranks among the most innovative regions in Europe according to the 2014 Regional Innovation Scoreboard, issued by the European Commission.



# Chemicals in Flanders

Centrally located and easily accessible, the Port of Antwerp plays a key role in Flanders' renowned chemical industry. Antwerp houses, among other facilities, five oil refineries and four steam crackers. With a portfolio of 300 chemicals (the most diverse in the world) and more than 500 chemical companies producing a wide variety of basic and intermediate products for diverse markets, Antwerp is the largest chemical cluster in Europe and the second largest worldwide. Between them, these companies generate an annual turnover of €54 billion. Directly and indirectly, they provide work for approximately 150,000 people. The port is also the main hub for the European pipeline network.

Flanders also has a flourishing plastics and rubber production and converting industry. Most of the companies involved deliver direct to the packaging, car and building industries. The lion's share of their output is made up of compounds or master batches for further processing. Flanders has the world's highest plastics production output and conversion rate per capita, and it is home to Flanders' Plastic Vision, a plastics competence pole.

Petro-chemical storage facilities built for a flexible supply chain - Katoen Natie, Antwerp © Tom Dhaenens

© Flanders Investment and Trade





With a portfolio of 300 chemicals and more than 500 chemical companies, Antwerp is the largest chemical cluster in Europe and the second largest in the world.



Gemcutter - The Antwerp Diamond Centre, Antwerp © Tom D'haenens

For 500 years, Antwerp has been host to a flourishing diamond trade and industry. The city has become the world's principal diamond centre, accounting for more than half of the diamond activity around the globe.



Glass plate coated with gold nanoparticles and functionalized with self-assembled monolayers to bind specific biomarkers © Imec

# ICT in Flanders

The strategic research centres are constantly developing cutting-edge technologies and processes that will shape tomorrow's society.

In addition to its enviable reputation in nanoelectronics, nanotechnology and microelectronics, Flanders is also a pioneer in financial security solutions and smartcard technology. Flanders also offers expertise in telematics, GPS, cartography, location-based services and geo-ICT, and in telecommunication and network equipment. Digital audio/video and printing solutions and a wide range of software products – from industrial design to gaming – complete the picture. The region is one



Scientists in the NERF lab. © Imec



At the entry of a 5 meters wide weaving machine - Van De Wele, Kortrijk © Tom Dhaenens

of Europe's most densely cabled regions, and is therefore an excellent market for all kinds of broadband applications. Other ICT niches in which Flanders has a firm foothold are logistics, mobile communications and healthcare.

ICT enterprises in Flanders also work closely with knowledge centres to solve a specific technical problem, support technological innovation or test products. These strategic research centres are constantly developing cutting-edge technologies and processes that

will shape tomorrow's society. They are co-operative partnerships with an international scope and a permanent infrastructure:

**imec** is Europe's leading research centre for nanoelectronics and nanotechnology. [www.imec.be](http://www.imec.be)

**iMinds** is Flanders' research institute for tomorrow's ICT. [www.iminds.be](http://www.iminds.be)

**VITO** is committed to technological research and consulting for product innovation and improved levels of business. [www.vito.be](http://www.vito.be)



# INTRIGUED BY FLANDERS

## Visit Flanders

Visit Flanders aims to sustainably develop tourism in Flanders-Brussels as an economic driver for growth. We wish to achieve higher returns, employment and wellbeing. Visit Flanders' vision is to invest together in the sustainable development and promotion of Flanders-Brussels as a prime tourism destination.  
[www.visitflanders.com](http://www.visitflanders.com)

## Arts Flanders

Arts Flanders is a communications platform that enables non-Belgian cultural professionals, media and intermediaries to find information about the most important art and cultural events in Flanders and abroad. It is a network comprised of discipline-specific partner information centres in conjunction with the Government of Flanders.  
[www.artsflanders.be](http://www.artsflanders.be)

## Flanders Investment & Trade

Interested in the quality products and services Flanders has to offer? Interested in setting up or expanding your operations in the heart of Europe? Want to know more about how Flanders' knowledge-based economy can be of service? Then contact Flanders Investment & Trade.  
[www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.be](http://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.be)

## Fans of Flanders

Fans of Flanders is an online interactive platform and a weekly television programme. Fans of Flanders reveals Flanders and Brussels to the world and explores their culture, mainly through the eyes of expats.  
[www.fansofflanders.be](http://www.fansofflanders.be)

## Flanders Today

Flanders Today is an English-language news medium for policy and opinion makers in Flanders and abroad, supported by the Government of Flanders. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between the policy and activities of the Government on the one hand, and current affairs in Flanders and Belgium on the other. Flanders Today offers news and stories on a wide variety of topics, ranging from business and politics to arts and lifestyle, all of which are tailor-made to the expat community.  
[www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)







**6,350,765**  
people

**13,521**  
km<sup>2</sup>

**187**  
different nationalities

Flanders has the highest density of roads and railroads in the world.



**12,086 km**  
cycle routes

IN FLANDERS, 1 IN 3 PEOPLE HAVE A HIGHER EDUCATION BACKGROUND. 33% OF MEN AND 36% OF WOMEN.

# FLANDERS FACTS AND FIGURES

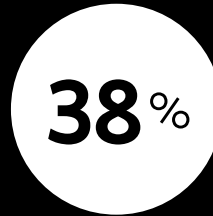


**3234**  
Chip shops

At 26,000m<sup>2</sup> at ground level, the Law Courts of Brussels is the largest court of justice in the world. It is bigger than St Peter's Basilica in Rome.



In 2003, Flanders became one of the first places in the world to allow gay marriage.



38% of the Government of Flanders' total budget is spent on education.

The Galeries St Hubert in Brussels, which opened in 1847, is Europe's oldest shopping arcade.



Flanders produces 63% of the Belgian beers and is responsible for 72% of the revenue of Belgian beers.

The longest tramline in the world is the Belgian coast tram, which operates along the 42 miles between De Panne and Knokke-Heist, from the French border to the Dutch border.



Flanders has more than 70 Michelin-starred restaurants, that is more per capital than France.

**Flanders is a region of creators; headstrong sustainable, skilled and helpful people from Flanders have been passionate about knowledge and expertise for centuries. It is a story of pioneering and high-profile skill – in the past and present, as well as in the future**