



Flanders
State of the Art

8 amazing facts about Flanders as your next conference destination

Welcome to a region 726x smaller than the U.S.,
but at least as versatile

VISITFLANDERS

SMALL CITIES, GREAT VENUES, UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES



BY **EVELYNE BARDYN**
Head of Convention Bureau
VISITFLANDERS
Convention Bureau

May I begin your introduction to Flanders with a dash of history? Of all the regions in Europe, Flanders has been conquered most often by other powers. The Ancient Romans, Vikings from Norway and Denmark, France, Spain, Austria, Holland, Germany - all came along once or more.

The reason for so much interest is simple. Flanders has been a great region for centuries, with easy accessibility at the crossroads of Europe, rich historic cities, friendly people* and good food. All criteria you check off when looking for a venue for your conference.

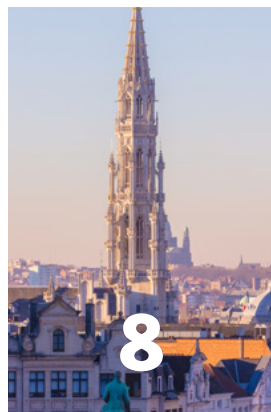
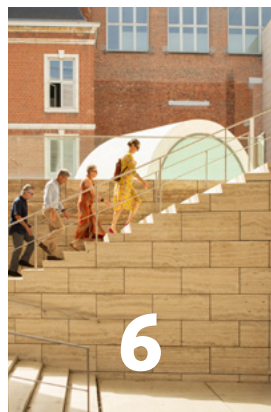
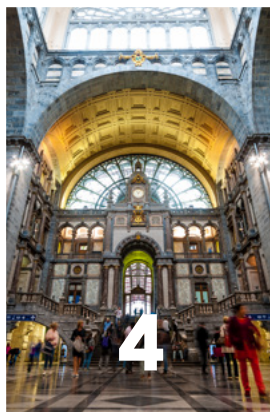
In this booklet we introduce the pluses of Flanders to you. You will notice right away: you organize a conference here that your delegates are sure to remember for a long time. Want to bet that they will gladly return to our region a second time, just like the French and Germans did?

Fortunately, the intentions of your delegates are more peaceful. On behalf of VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau and all the people of Flanders, I warmly welcome you, your organisation, your conference and your delegates.

Evelyne Bardyn
Head of Convention Bureau

*Some of these friendly people work as experts at the official convention bureau of Flanders. They will gladly give you tailor-made advice about Flanders as a destination for your conference. Please find their details at the end of this brochure.

8 EXCELLENT REASONS TO DISCOVER FLANDERS AS A CONFERENCE DESTINATION



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1. FLANDERS IS EASY TO REACH FOR YOUR DELEGATES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

Connect on a map Paris, London and Amsterdam with each other and you know exactly where Flanders is situated: in the north of Belgium, in the centre of Western Europe. Even though Flanders is 726 times smaller than the United States, it is located at one of the busiest intersections in the world.

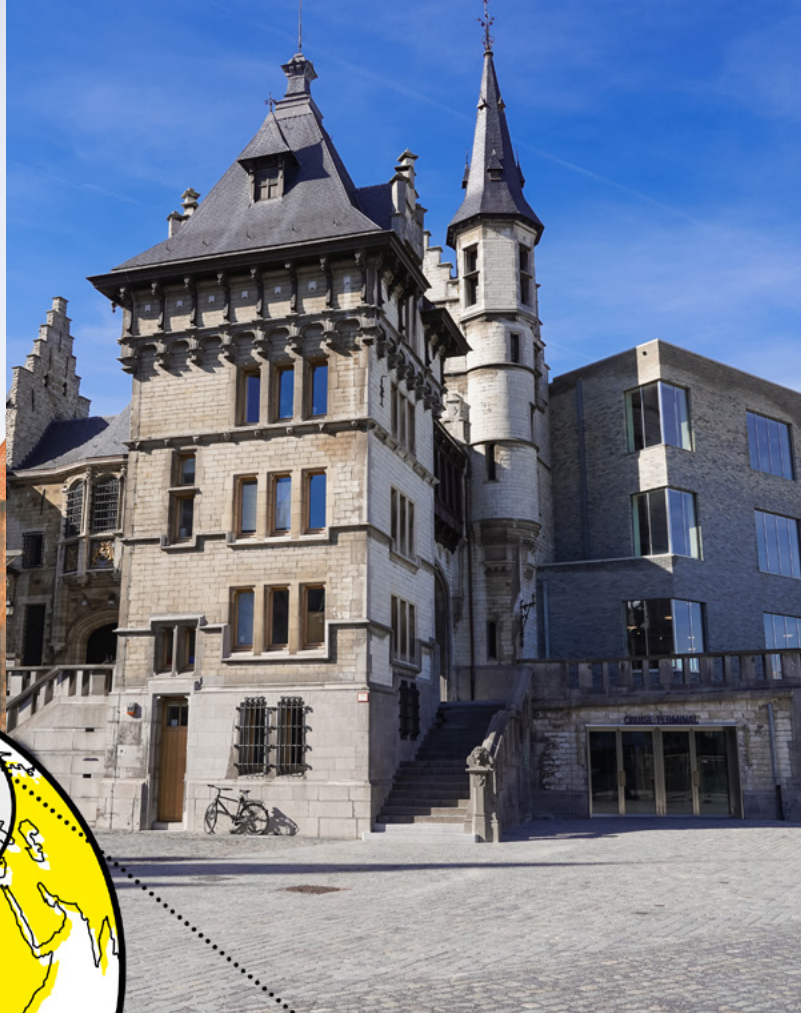
The train connections from France, UK and The Netherlands are excellent. Even from Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt and Prague you'll be here in no time. The national airport of Brussels makes sure Flanders is nearby for all delegates, from wherever they are in the world.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the easy accessibility of Flanders.

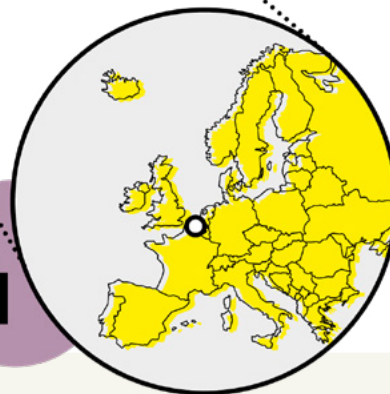
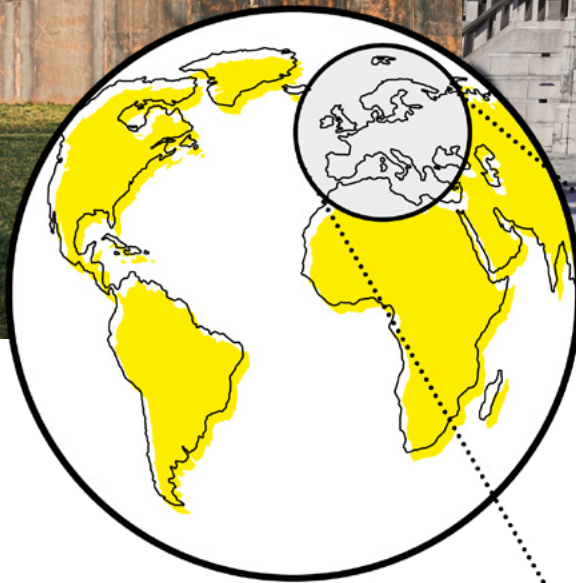




Thor Central's mine tower



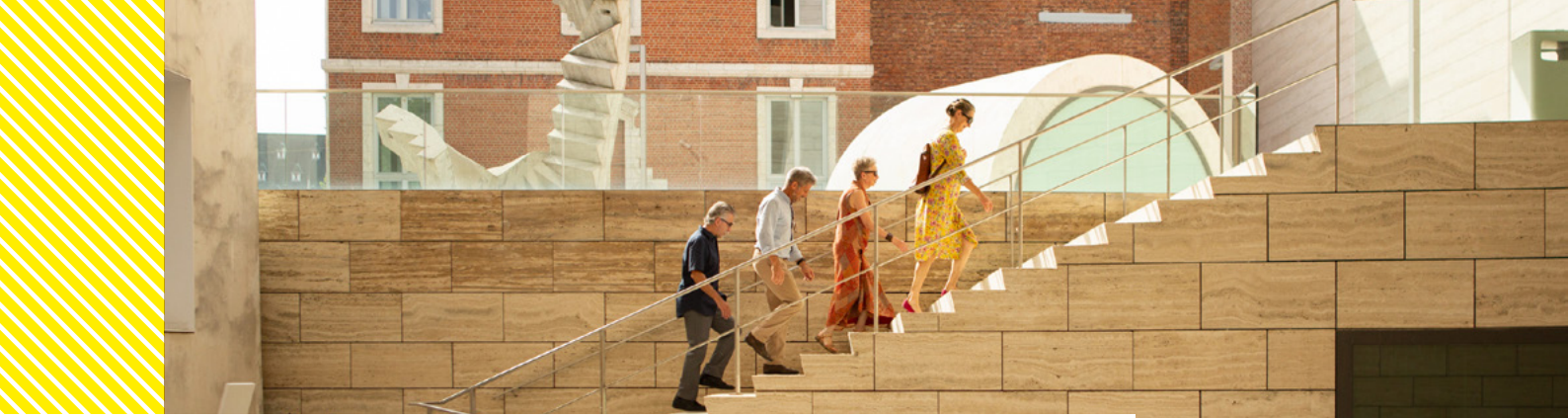
Het Steen, Antwerp



EUROPE



Flanders is small, but it is the only region in the world with an artwork on the Moon. "Fallen Astronaut", by the Flemish artist Paul Van Hoeydonck, was placed on Earth's satellite by the crew of the Apollo 15 mission in 1971.



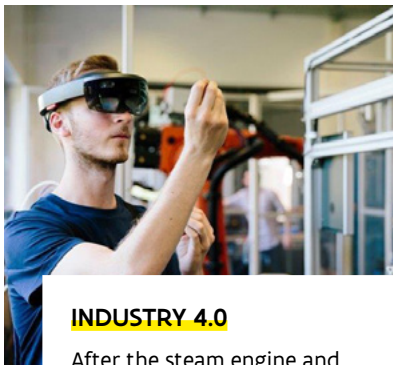
2. YOUR DELEGATES MEET RENOWNED EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD

In Flanders, a multitude of experts stand ready to assist you when organizing your conference. Knowledge institutions, governments, companies, associations, networks, and citizens actively contribute to creativity and innovation in the realms of knowledge, education, and research.

The presence of these experts is your ultimate assurance for a successful conference. Not only as a speaker on the program, but also as an interested and engaged audience.

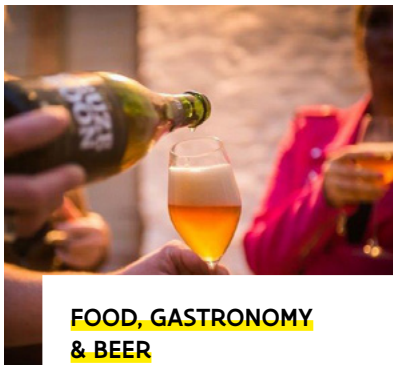
[Click here](#) to learn why you are setting a milestone with your conference in Flanders.

You won't just meet experts here. The capital of Flanders, Brussels, has the largest number of diplomats and international correspondents along with Washington D.C.



INDUSTRY 4.0

After the steam engine and the Internet, there is Industry 4.0. Find out how Flanders supports your conference in the age of smart machines and factories.



FOOD, GASTRONOMY & BEER

Welcome to a key industry for which even Heston Blumenthal and Ferran Adria seek inspiration in Flanders.



CYCLING

Cycling in Flanders is not a sport or a means of transport, it is a religion.



CARE & HEALTH

Why is Flanders a unique location for your congress in this domain? Because nowhere the future of Care & Health is taking shape faster than here.



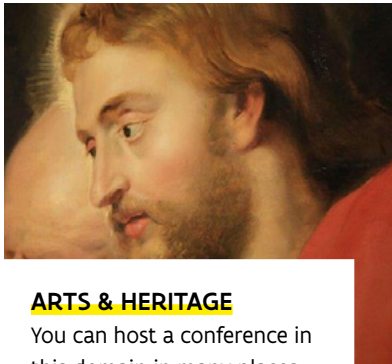
LIFELONG LEARNING

Your learning curve becomes more important than your salary curve. Give your delegates' curve a boost in Flanders.



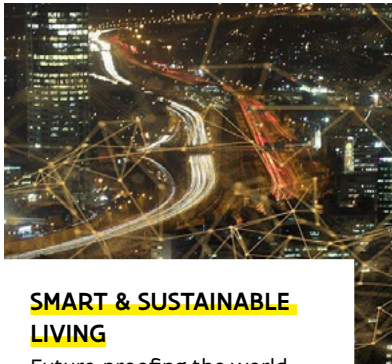
SMART ENERGY

How does a region 700 times smaller than the USA become a global player in smart energy? Discover the answer in Flanders.



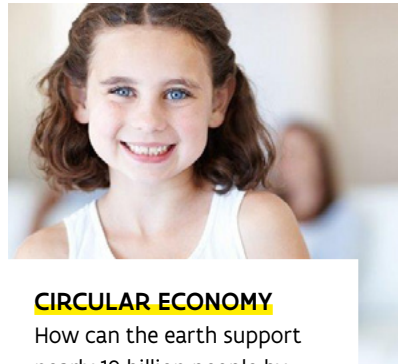
ARTS & HERITAGE

You can host a conference in this domain in many places around the world. But only here can you feel the real spirit of Rubens, Van Eyck and Bruegel.



SMART & SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Future-proofing the world we live in. To meet this challenge, Flanders offers your conference the experts, the venues and the support.



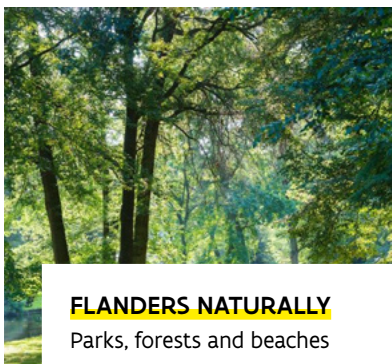
CIRCULAR ECONOMY

How can the earth support nearly 10 billion people by 2050? Find the answer with your conference in a region at the world's top in recycling.



SMART MOBILITY

The game changers in mobility are digital and green. With your conference in Flanders, you'll build a rock-solid bridge between technology and climate.



FLANDERS NATURALLY

Parks, forests and beaches interspersed with picturesque villages and world-renowned cultural cities. Nature in Flanders is unique, and so is your conference.



The first colour photo to be published in National Geographic Magazine – in 1914 – was a city in Flanders. It showed a flower garden in Ghent.



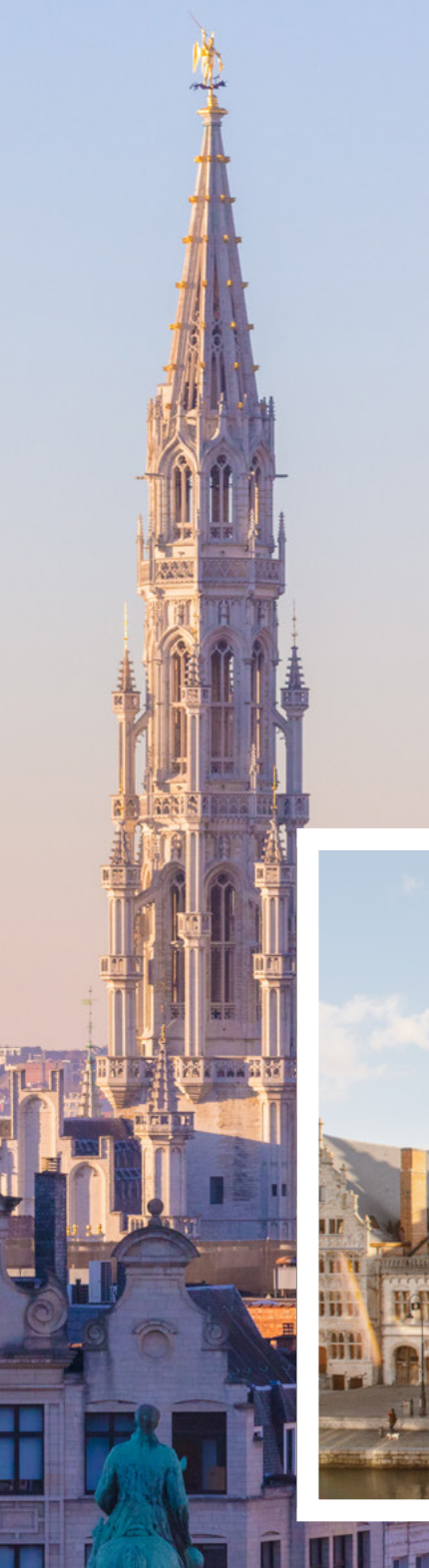
3. WHY FLEMISH CITIES ARE SUCH A GREAT LOCATION FOR YOUR CONFERENCE

Small cities, great experiences. That perfectly sums up the essence of a Flemish city. There is so much to discover in each of the conference locations. At the same time, these cities are barely a stone's throw from each other. You can easily get from city to city by public transport. The carbon footprint of your conference is immediately significantly smaller.

In this regard, the Flemish cities differ thoroughly from cities such as London and Paris, where distances are considerably greater. And despite their proximity to each other and their common history, each city has its own DNA and charm.

[Click here to discover](#) all the cities of Flanders.

85% of all associations organizing a conference in Flanders are **very satisfied**.



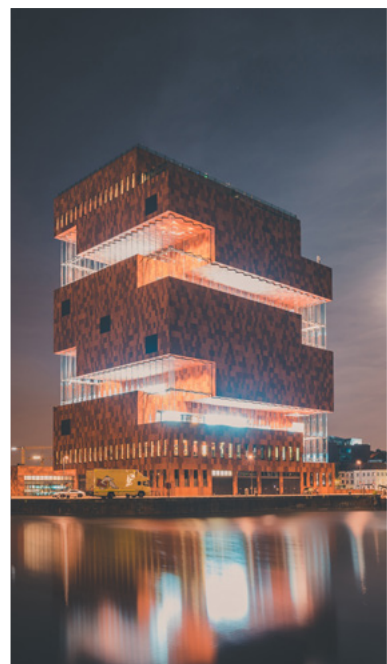
FLANDERS



Medieval houses in Mechelen



The Belfry of Bruges



The Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp



BRUGES



Flemish cities are centuries old and were among the richest in Europe during the Middle Ages. Their eventful history translates into unique architecture and a magnificent heritage.

ON THE PHOTO

The centre of Bruges has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Bruges



Leuven



The Flemish universities – that hold a permanent place in the world’s top 100 – have branches in all Flemish cities. This means everywhere experts in your field are present.

ON THE PHOTO

In Leuven your delegates can admire the most beautiful town hall façade in the world.



ANTWERP



From conference venue via the hotels to your social program: in the Flemish cities everything is within walking distance. This invites your delegates to do activities together, allowing strong ties to be forged and successful collaborations to arise.

ON THE PHOTO

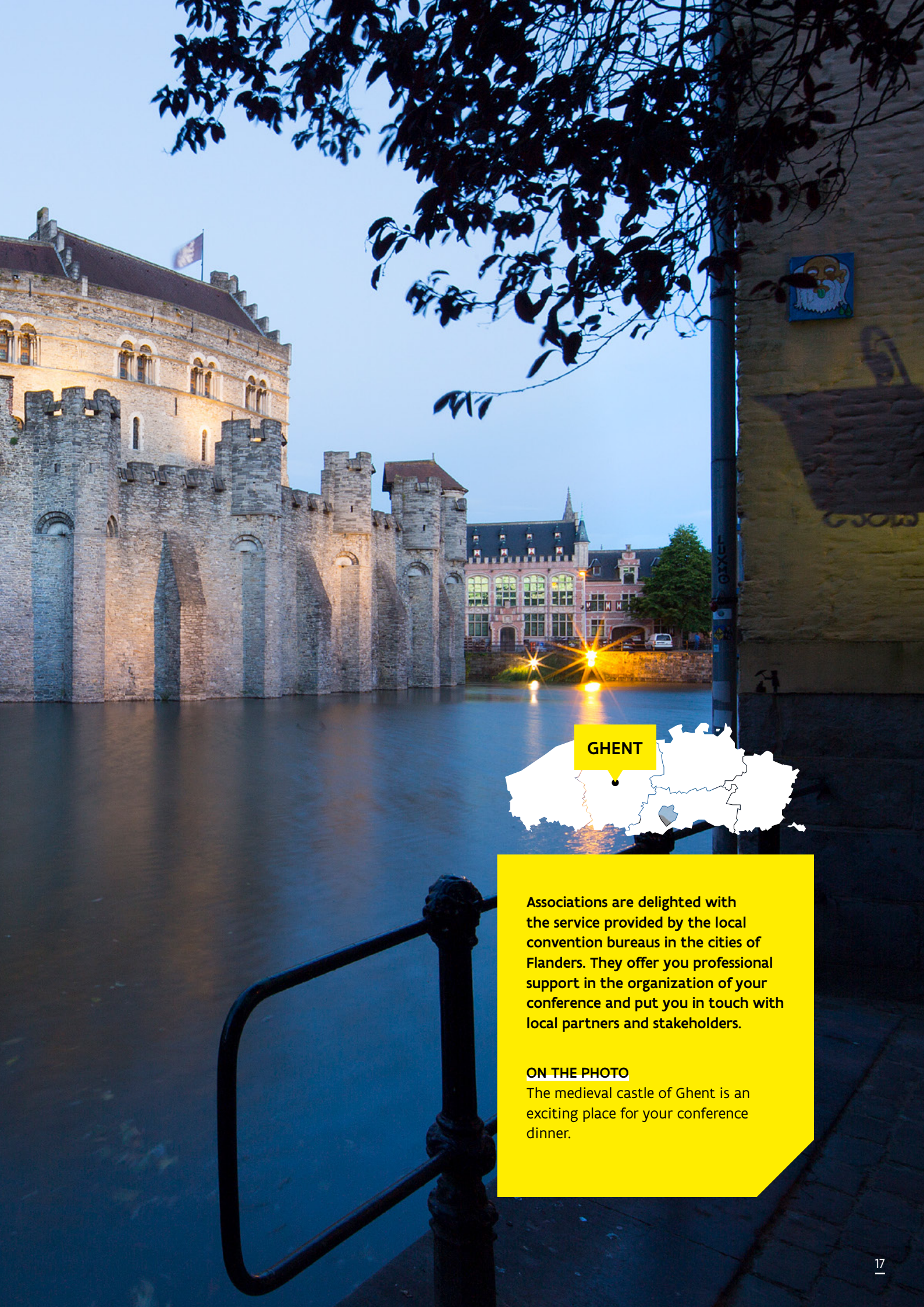
The Antwerp Port House – a design by Zaha Hadid – is an architectural marvel.

Antwerp





Ghent



GHENT

Associations are delighted with the service provided by the local convention bureaus in the cities of Flanders. They offer you professional support in the organization of your conference and put you in touch with local partners and stakeholders.

ON THE PHOTO

The medieval castle of Ghent is an exciting place for your conference dinner.



**FLANDERS
HERITAGE
VENUES**

VISITFLANDERS

4. YOU MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION ON YOUR DELEGATES WITH A FLANDERS HERITAGE VENUE

Flanders' finest venues are united in a unique network: the Flanders Heritage Venues. Here you welcome your delegates in a building with a unique story.

From majestic castles to converted industrial spaces, each place has exceptional architectural value, is situated in the historic city centre, and is within walking distance of all of Flanders' cultural, artistic, and culinary assets.

By organising your conference in one of these venues, you offer your guests an unforgettable heritage experience. They are transported to a place where history, culture and innovation converge.

[Click here to discover](#) all the Flanders Heritage Venues.



Thor Central is located in a former coal mine.



The Predikheren in Mechelen is among the 5 most beautiful libraries in the world.



In De Hoorn in Leuven, the first Stella Artois was brewed.

FLANDERS MEETING & CONVENTION CENTER ANTWERP





The FMCCA is the world's only conference venue in a zoo.
Here, you welcome your delegates among the lions and tigers.



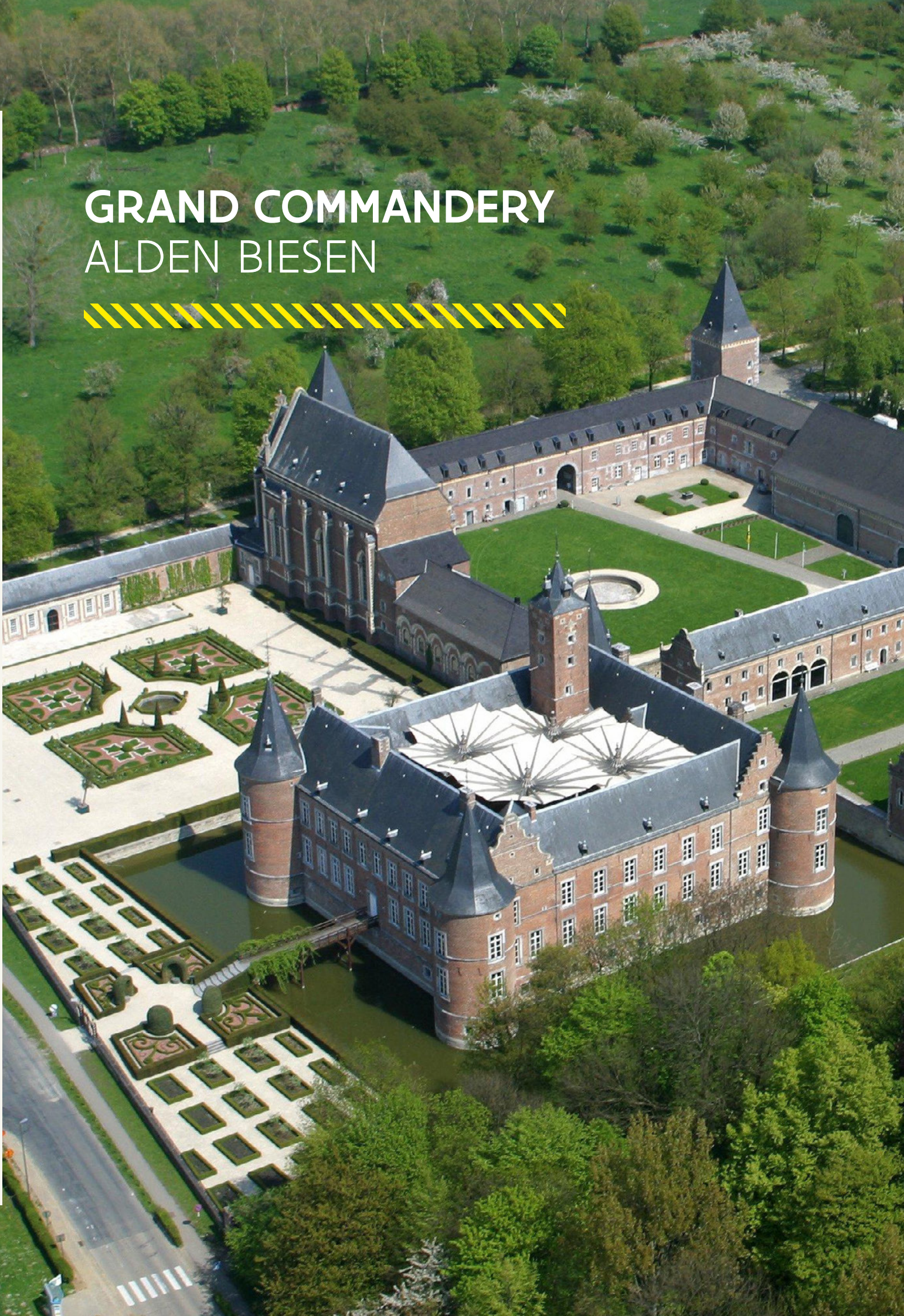
ST. ROMBOUTS TOWER MECHELEN

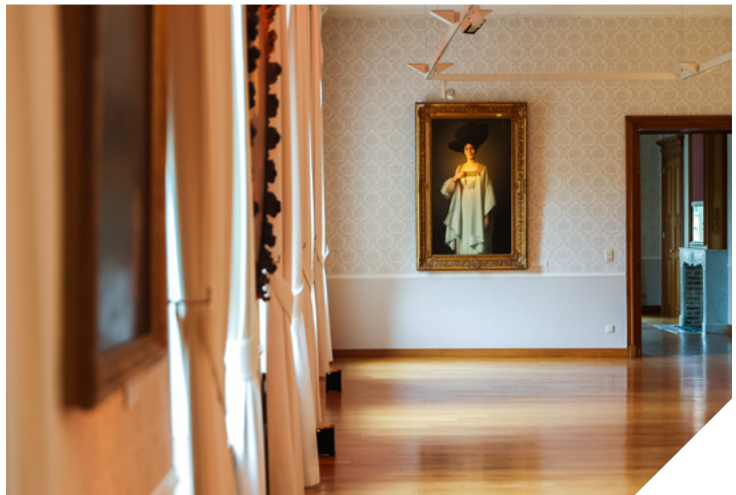
Treat your delegates to an
unforgettable experience:
a reception atop the 97-meter-high
St. Rombouts Tower.





GRAND COMMANDERY ALDEN BIESEN





With your conference at the 800-year-old Grand Commandery Alden Biesen, your delegates will feel like the lord or the lady of the castle.

ANTWERP STOCK EXCHANGE

ANTWERP

In 1520, the world's first stock exchange
opened in the conference venue
"Antwerp Stock Exchange".







5. BECAUSE 100% OF YOUR DELEGATES **LOVE GOOD FOOD**

Good food and drinks are high on the wish list of every delegate. By choosing Flanders, you are guaranteed to score well. Your guests will be amazed by the local gastronomy, the wealth of beers, and our famous chocolate, topped off with a big serving of hospitality and friendliness.

Because of its geographical location, Flanders has been importing ingredients and spices from all over the world for centuries. The craftsmanship of Flemish chefs is thus based on old traditions, which are translated into innovative initiatives. UNESCO recognizes Belgian beer culture as intangible cultural heritage. Our chocolate is world famous and makes a great gift from your delegates to the family back home.





More than 10,000 cafés in Flanders and Brussels will serve your delegates no less than 2,500 different beers.



Shrimp – fished on horseback at the Flemish coast – is an ingredient in the local speciality: tomato stuffed with shrimp.



The world-famous chocolate praline was invented in Brussels, in 1857.

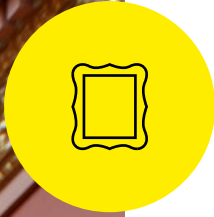


6. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF RUBENS, BRUEGEL AND VAN EYCK

Flanders plays a unique trump card, which not even Paris, London or New York can put on the table: you receive your delegates in the place where Bruegel, Rubens and Van Eyck created their masterpieces. So enrich your conference with a dash of Flemish masters, for example by including a museum visit in your social programme.

[Click here](#) to discover even more good reasons to discover Flanders.





Mystic Lamb, Van Eyck



The Descent from the Cross, Rubens



Immersive presentation of Bruegel's work



DID YOU KNOW...

that some sort of conferences already existed in Van Eyck's time? Ancient documents prove that in the late 1430s there was a meeting of several St Luke's guilds – as the guild of painters was called – in Flanders. Historians assume that an important exchange of ideas occurred there, just like at your conference.



Your delegates can literally cycle through water in Flanders.
TIME Magazine labelled this route as "one of the world's 100 greatest places".



7. SURPRISE YOUR DELEGATES WITH AN UNFORGETTABLE EXCURSION BY BIKE

An exciting social programme is a cornerstone of a successful conference. In Flanders, you can treat your delegates to an unforgettable excursion by bike. Moreover, this outing can fit perfectly into the theme of your conference.





8. YOUR CONFERENCE WILL HAVE A LASTING POSITIVE IMPACT FOR SOCIETY

Your conference can be so much more than an annual gathering for your delegates. You can use this key meeting to initiate positive changes that have a lasting impact on society.

Flanders is happy to put its shoulder to your wheel. This we do with a unique service in which we, together with you, define and develop the impact of your conference. VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau offers this service free of charge when you organize your conference in one of the Flemish cities.

Of course, your conference in Flanders is also sustainable.

You are already assured of one kind of impact: your conference in Flanders will be as sustainable as possible. Our region places a high priority on sustainability. You'll notice that in the conference you organize here.

- Flanders is actively committed to avoiding waste.
- We provide all the necessary technology to organize your conference hybrid.
- Many venues cater exclusively with local products.
- A lot of venues have been awarded the famous Green Key certificate.

A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF IMPACT

On the occasion an important international conference on cycling...

- one city built additional bike lanes (from 3 kilometers to 200 kilometers)
- that city has encouraged residents to cycle more for short distances
- the university in that city is conducting more research on smart mobility
- local businesses gain know-how for new innovations, and new jobs are created

[Click here](#) to read more about our impact philosophy.







Bruges Meeting & Convention Centre (BMCC), Bruges



City Pavilion and Belfry, Ghent



Park Abbey, Leuven



YOU GOT TO KNOW FLANDERS. **NOW FLANDERS WOULD LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU.**

Tell us about your conference.

[Click here to meet the expert](#) in your field or in your country and learn more about our free services, our impact methodology or your free inspirational visit to Flanders. We look forward to seeing you!

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D/2024/5635/7

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