



OSTBELGIEN

# LIVING AND WORKING À LA CARTE



IF YOU LIVE HERE,  
YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL!

## EAST BELGIAN LIFE

### LIVING À LA CARTE

Either ... or? Not in Ostbelgien. People here speak German and French, live in rural and urban surroundings and blend Germanic virtues with the famous Burgundian way of life. If you live here, you can make the most of everything because here you will find everything and more than you expect.

The East Belgians enjoy both the advantages of rural life and the bustle of the nearby cities: beautiful landscapes for walking, cycling and skiing - here you can enjoy pure nature to the fullest. Aachen, Maastricht, Liège ... just a stone's throw away. Brussels, Cologne, Düsseldorf ... just next door. Cultural diversity on both sides of the border: international cultural and music events as well as art exhibitions on your doorstep. Theatres, clubs and bars as well as concerts from electronic to classical are within easy reach using the excellent transport links.

## LIVING THE EUROPEAN LIFE

In Ostbelgien, the idea of Europe seems at home: being on the border and having had an eventful history has made it a region of bridge builders and networkers. The 77,000 or so East Belgians are proud of their homeland at the heart of Europe. For them multilingualism and cultural pluralism are the norm. Boundaries? They don't have them on the map or in their heads! The European life is everyday life here.





### JUST DO IT!

We don't hang about, we get stuck in! And we do it in German, French, Dutch or English. Ostbelgien has even more to offer: ambitious, excellently trained employees, cross-border markets, ideal connections to international hubs such as Antwerp, Brussels, Düsseldorf, Amsterdam, Luxembourg and Paris. There is an exciting mix of industries in Ostbelgien, where traditional craftsmanship meets the creative industries and precision mechanics. Also industrial real estate is affordable here.

### IT'S WORTH HAVING A GO!

In Ostbelgien, you soon feel at home. The warm, cosmopolitan East Belgians welcome newcomers with open arms. With the deeply ingrained Burgundian attitude to life, they know how to combine the useful with the pleasant and to enjoy life! *Savoir-vivre* and *savoir-faire* - get to know us. We look forward to meeting you!

*The Germanspeaking Community in East Belgium is the smallest of the four Belgian regions. The official, school and court language is German. It lies on the border with the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg. With its own parliament and government, the region has wide-ranging responsibilities in culture, youth, tourism, sport, education and training, social affairs, health and employment.*

# THE EAST BELGIAN ECONOMY

OPEN TO THE WORLD  
AND ROOTED IN OUR  
HOMELAND

The East Belgians have always done business on both sides of the border. The factors for economic success are the multilingual population and the ideal geographical location. More than 40 million consumers can be reached in just four hours by truck. This corresponds to around 20% of the purchasing power within the European Union. Excellent rail and motorway connections provide easy access to the regional hubs. Even distant markets are served in a matter of hours thanks to the six surrounding airports (Düsseldorf, Cologne, Brussels, Liège, Luxembourg and Maastricht).



A RURAL FEEL AND  
YET CONNECTED TO ALL MARKETS.

## SOUGHT-AFTER WORKERS

No pain no gain! East Belgians are ambitious workers. Most speak German and French as a matter of course. They often have good English and Dutch skills and a high degree of cultural awareness. No wonder, then, that East Belgians are in demand on the job market.

## DETACHED BUT WITH BOTH FEET FIRMLY ON THE GROUND

According to global statistics, a plane containing components from East Belgium takes off every three seconds. Our products enjoy an excellent reputation on an international scale: global corporations such as Coca-Cola, Disney, Porsche or Total are among the loyal and satisfied customers of East Belgian companies.

## SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING!

In Ostbelgien's corporate structure, high-performing small and medium-sized family businesses set the tone: 82% of all companies employ fewer than ten employees. The label "A company from Ostbelgien" stands for quality. Many companies enjoy a positive image precisely because of their typically East Belgian character.

## ECONOMIC LOCATION OF OSTBELGIEN

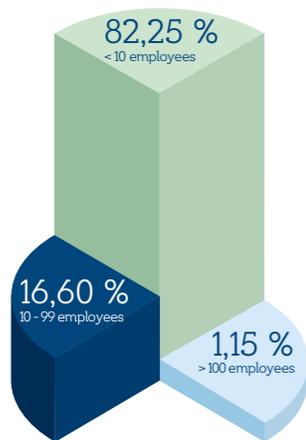
Transport and logistics, metal-producing and processing industries and precision mechanics are among the most important sectors of the region. Because of the large forest area, there are many innovative companies dealing with timber. The construction industry is also strongly represented in Ostbelgien. Traditionally, skilled trades enjoy a particularly high priority in Ostbelgien. Dual vocational training - in businesses and in training centres - guarantees a high quality of the East Belgian skilled trades.

## CREATIVE IN EUROPE

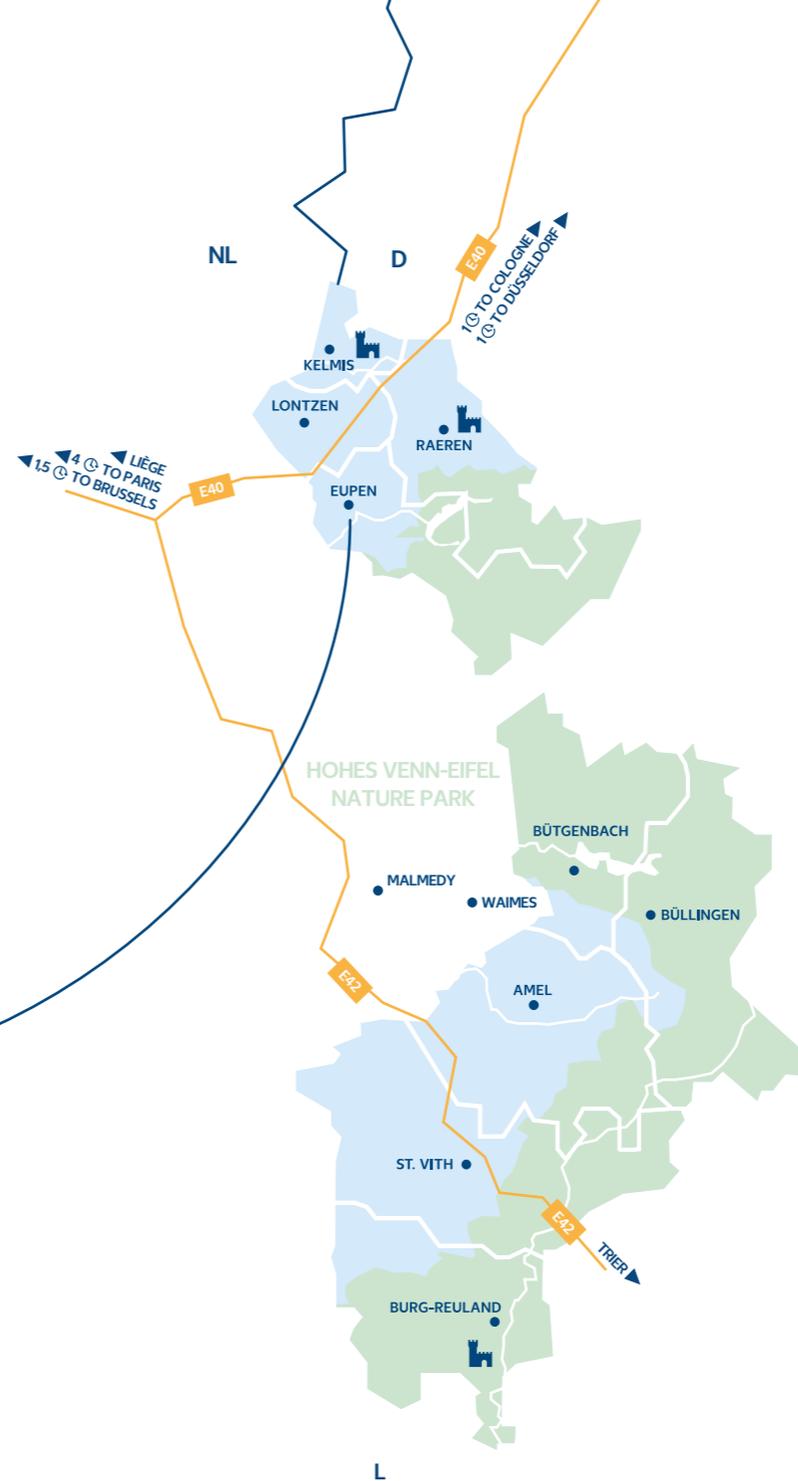
The arts and creative industries in border areas and rural areas are on a growth curve. In Ostbelgien too. Here, creative professionals find the ideal environment: affordable space, excellent infrastructure, proximity to the major hubs and a relaxed atmosphere where ideas can emerge and grow.



## HOW LARGE ARE EAST BELGIAN BUSINESSES?



## IN WHAT RECOGNIZED ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS ARE EAST BELGIANS ACTIVE?



Official, teaching & court language **GERMAN**

**77.000**  
INHABITANTS

9 municipalities over  
**854** km<sup>2</sup>

**2**  
HOSPITALS  
for medical care

every **3** DOES THEIR VOLUNTARY WORK

**CHILD CARE**  
in Ostbelgien (up to 3 years)  
EU-REGULATION **33 %**  
38,1 %

Vennbahn cycle route

345.500 cyclists

## FACTS AND FIGURES

# EDUCATION



THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES  
THANKS TO MULTILINGUALISM

## MANY DOORS ARE OPEN FOR EAST BELGIAN STUDENTS

East Belgians have a high level of language skills and a high degree of cultural awareness for their European neighbours. That's why East Belgian students have the best opportunities to find a university or training place or a job – whether in East Belgium or the neighbouring countries.

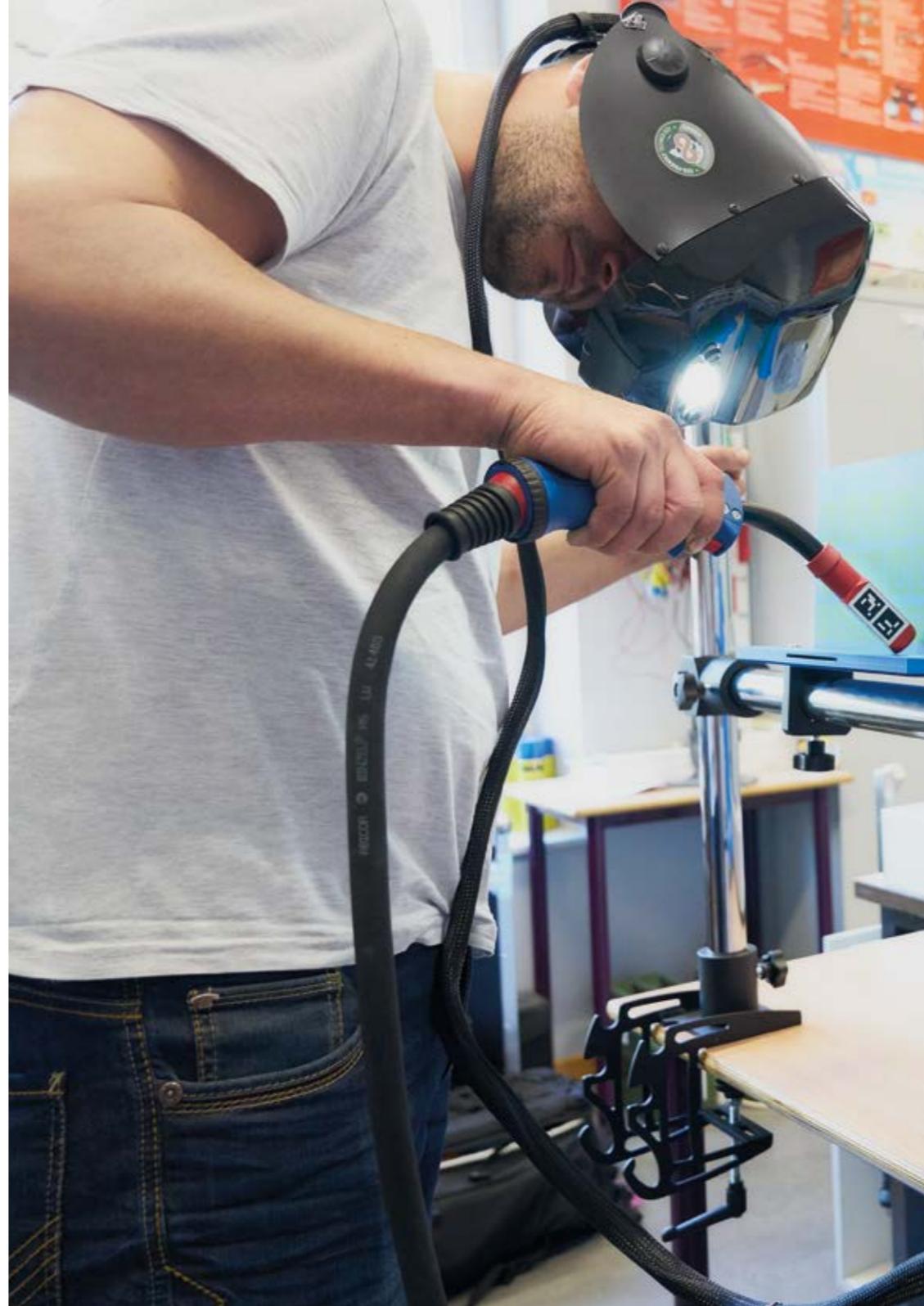
## THE ADVANTAGE FOR YOUNG CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

In Belgium, nursery schools are an integral part of the school system. Right from the first year of nursery, little East Belgians are introduced to their first foreign language, French. Children at preschool take their first steps in reading and writing through play. This way they experience the transition to school in an informal and easy-going way. An advantage for the parents: cost = zero euros!

At the age of six, the children are enrolled into all-day primary school. After that they go on to secondary school for another six years or into vocational training for seven years. In addition to the second language, French, English and Dutch are added later on.

## CAN YOU STUDY IN GERMAN IN BELGIUM? YES, OF COURSE!

Ostbelgien is rightly proud of its independent university, where primary and nursery school teachers, nurses and accountants are trained. The bachelor degree courses last for three to four years and are recognised throughout Europe.



## SUCCESSFUL WITH AN APPRENTICESHIP

In Ostbelgien, 95% of all apprentices find a job within six weeks of completing their apprenticeship. The training takes place in the dual system: the practical part is taught first hand in businesses. The theory is taught at training centres. A major advantage for companies that value the practical qualification of apprentices.

Skilled trades are worth their weight in gold: In 2017, the quality of the East Belgian dual training course was again recognised at the Euroskills: the East Belgian participants returned with a gold medal and several excellence awards from the European Championship for skilled trades and professions.

## TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE: ONE TRAINING COURSE, TWO DIPLOMAS

Cooperation agreements with the Aachen and Trier Chambers of Crafts allow Belgian-German double degrees for East-Belgian trainee. With one training course automotive mechatronics engineers, hairdressers, retailers and cabinet makers obtain two diplomas that are valid both in Belgium and Germany. This is how young people benefit from the border location in Ostbelgien.

# LIFE



## OSTBELGIEN - FAMILY-FRIENDLY LIVING AND WORKING

You can have a good life in Ostbelgien. Here, family life and work can be balanced. In Ostbelgien working parents benefit not only from the well developed social network. Well-structured childcare facilities, free nursery school places and all-day schools are family friendly and up-to-date. People stick together, here they know and help each other.

## MAKE FRIENDS QUICKLY

The open and uncomplicated nature of the East Belgians makes it easy for newcomers. Here you can quickly make friends and quickly feel at home. The border residents speak at least German and French and the balancing act between cultures is part of everyday life. Socialising is a top priority: a lively club life is at the centre of local cultural activities. If you become involved, you quickly integrate. In all towns you will find music, singing, theatre and sports clubs or dance groups. In all, the region has about 450 recognised associations.

## HEALTHY WITHOUT BORDERS

You can also get excellent medical care in Ostbelgien: the basic provision is provided by the two hospitals in St. Vith and in Eupen. Cross-border cooperation enables more extensive medical care. Some examples: the ADAC helicopter enables direct and fast transfers to the nearby clinics in the border area. In the child and adolescent psychiatry department of the Aachen University Hospital there are always places available for East Belgian patients. X-rays from Prüm can be sent electronically to the St. Vith Hospital via a teleradiology network and analysed there.

## CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

*East Belgians take responsibility: because the social cohesion is right, in Ostbelgien, everyone who needs support can lead an independent life. Here the "service for independent living" is of assistance. Domestic help such as meals on wheels, assisted living and home nursing care go hand in hand with voluntary work. This great commitment is representative of the supportive community in Ostbelgien. It enables elderly people who are in need of care to live longer in their familiar environment.*



# LEISURE



EXPLORE UNIQUE NATURE ON FOOT  
OR BY BIKE - A DELIGHT

## LEISURE IN OSTBELGIEN - SHEER ENJOYMENT!

Ostbelgien is a green oasis in the midst of vibrant cities such as Aachen, Liège and Maastricht. A place characterised by charming contrasts where it is never boring. The border location guarantees rich variety and places of interest. From a gastronomic viewpoint too, Ostbelgien brings together the best of all worlds. The culinary influences of the neighbouring countries inspire the diversity of East Belgian cuisine.

## ACTIVE IN NATURE

Large parts of Ostbelgien lie in the cross-border Hohes Venn-Eifel Nature Reserve. The Hohes Venn (High Fens) - with its unique flora and fauna - is one of the last high moorlands in Europe.

A paradise for cyclists and walkers: Here you will find 1,350 km of fully signposted walking trails, five GR long-distance walking trails, the walking trails along the Warche or the Via Gulia, several cultural walking trails and numerous nature trails and over 1,300 km of signposted cycling and mountain bike trails. The Vennbahn premium route at 125 km is one of the longest and most popular cycling routes in Europe. The former railway line passes through Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg without much difference in height.



## A CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Go on a culinary journey of discovery - in Ostbelgien - you will soon find it. Three stars in the Michelin Guide and several toques in the Gault & Millau confirm: East Belgians are true gourmets and attach great importance to good food - preferably in good company.

In 2013, the brand „Made in Ostbelgien“ was founded - now a seal of approval for fresh and high-quality products from the region, which reach the consumer quickly and directly.

And what would (East) Belgium be without its world famous beers?! Approximately 1,500 varieties are brewed in Belgium. So it is not surprising that the divine spark also illuminates the numerous East Belgian brasseries and pubs with local beers. Prosit, cheers, santé and proost!

## A SPECIAL CULTURAL SCENE

*In addition to the active association life, Ostbelgien offers a diverse cultural scene. Numerous artists and cultural associations have their headquarters here. In Ostbelgien tango meets contemporary painting and brass band meets electro beats. The boundaries between the genres are fluid. This creates our very own scene of cultural delights.*





**VERANTWORTLICHER HERAUSGEBER:**

Norbert Heukemes, Generalsekretär,

Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens

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