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Country Profiles Report **BELGIUM**

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i) Parts of the country descriptions are extracted from: Copus, A. et.al. (2006): Study on Employment in Rural areas

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1. Introductionⁱ

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Key ideas/comments on the resulting DG Regio Typology (reasonable classification?, processes hindered?, degree of internal variation?, etc.)
- Basic comments on the main Drivers, Opportunities and Constraints affecting different typologies of regions in the country
- Basic comments on the implications of the three “Grand Narratives of Change” described by Mark Shucksmith in the rural areas of Belgium (ref. document “Narratives of Change Affecting Rural Areas of Europe”)

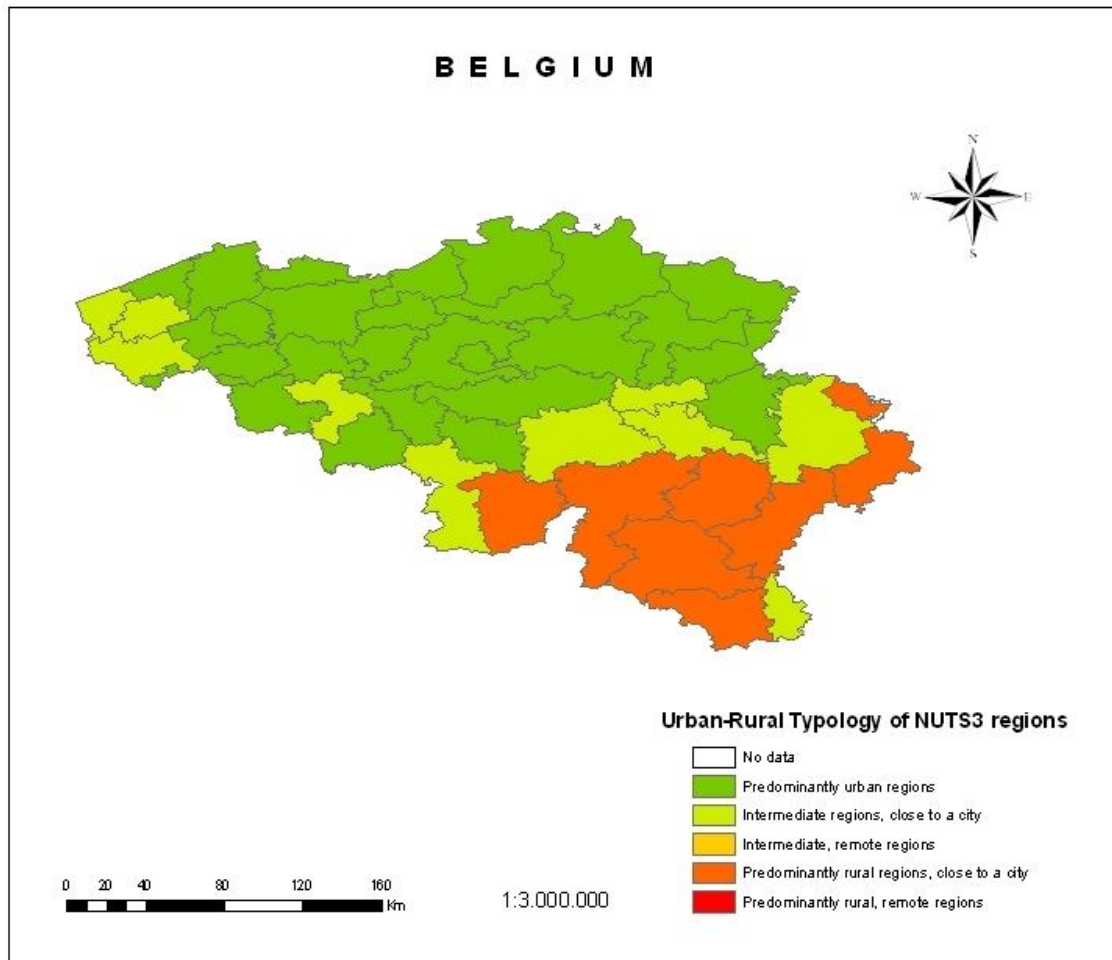
Belgium has a surface area of 20500 square kilometers and a population of 10446000. However it has a GDP of 288,09 billion (in 2004) and is one of the ten largest trading nations in the world.¹

As the map clearly shows most of Belgian NUTS 3 regions are “Predominantly Urban Regions”. All in all over 60 % of the regions, 55 % of the area and 85 % of the population are classified as PU. PRA and IRA regions together count for less than half of the area, and only 15 % of the population. The PRA and IRA areas coincide quite well with the Walloon part of Belgium, while the PU regions are found in the Flemish part. In any case, all regions belong to the “accessible” side of the typology classification, even those classified as predominantly rural. Therefore, there are no regions in Belgium that can be characterized as remote.

¹ <http://www.diplomatie.be> (17.04.2009)

i) Parts of the country descriptions are extracted from: Copus, A. et.al. (2006): Study on Employment in Rural areas

Figure 1.1 DG Region modified Urban-rural typology of NUT3 regions: Belgium



Source: own elaboration from http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/focus/2008_01_rural.pdf

2. Demography

i) Parts of the country descriptions are extracted from: Copus, A. et.al. (2006): Study on Employment in Rural areas

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which are the main demographic processes in the country?
- Which are the features of the “natural growth”? (positive or negative growth, ageing process)
- Which are the features of migration processes? (dimensions, size, directions, prevalence, tradition, consequences on territorial model).
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

All in all Belgium has a population of 10 Million people. 59% live in the Flemish region, 9 % in the Brussels region and 33 % in the Walloon part. The population density is with 342 inhabitants per square kilometer one of the highest in Europe. Particularly in the Brussels region the population density is with 6635 people per square kilometer extremely high. Between 1990 and 2007 Belgium experienced a positive population development in all types of regions. Belgium had a positive population development with regard to natural population development as well as net-migration. Regions with population increase above national average belong mainly to the category “predominantly rural-close to a city”.

In relation to the demographic structure, there is a general ageing process shown both in the reduction of the population less than 15 years old, and an increase of the group of more than 64 years. The dependency rate has doubled in the period 2001-2007, reaching 50%. This indicates that, on average, each “active” person contributes to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of the public costs incurred by each non-active person. With regards to out-migration of young people, Belgium is characterized by a relative strong migration out of the Walloon regions and the western parts of Belgium to the north and eastern parts.

Between 2001 and 2006 population decrease is on average with -51% 44 percentage points higher than the EU-average (-6%). It is highest in PU regions followed by IRA and regions. In contrast to the population decrease in PU and IRA regions there can be registered an increase in the same time span of 83 % in PRA regions.

The change in net migration between 2001 and 2006 is on average 300 % which is a considerable positive migration change compared to the EU-average of 9%. Here it is striking that although the net migration change shows very high values of 470% in PU regions followed with a considerable distance by PRA regions with 73 %. In IRA regions there can only be registered a slightly negative net migration change of -0,44%. Considering total population over fifteen years, 44% have an education level between ISCED 0 and 2, which places Belgium above the European average (37%). Similarly, the values for the higher educational levels ISCED 5 and 6 also exceed the European average by 5% - points.

Considering participation in life long learning it can be observed that the percentage is higher in PU regions than in IRA and PRA regions and lies on average 1 % -point below the EU-27 average.

The training of farmers is highest in IRA areas followed by PU and PRA regions. On average, the training of farmers is 6 % -points above the EU average of 40 %.

Table 1.1 Demography indicators

DEMOGRAPHY* ¹		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Country average	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	EU 27 Average
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
Census pop. 2001	% people aged 0 to 14 years	17.39	18.12		19.69		17.92	16.76	16.71
	% people aged 15 to 64 years	65.82	64.59		63.96		65.24	66.62	66.65
	% people aged 64 years and over	16.80	17.29		16.35		16.84	16.53	16.55
	Age dependency rate	25.56	26.77		25.56		25.84	25.10	25.10
Population	Population change 2001-2007 (Index pop. 2001=100)	101.95	101.75		103.35		102.13	96.58	96.31
	% pop. 0_14_2007	16.75	17.31		18.89		17.21	16.69	15.97
Population	% pop. 15_64_2007	65.70	64.97		64.82		65.40	69.76	70.18
	% pop. >64_2007	17.55	17.73		16.29		17.39	13.56	13.85
	Age dependency rate	52.23	53.93		54.28		52.94	44.08	43.17
	Natural increase change_01_06	-93.80	-19.44		83.33		-50.69	-5.99	-6.09
	Net migration change_01_06	470.71	-0.44		73.63		300.46	7.09	8.97
Education	% ISCED 0_2* ²	43.17	45.24		43.19		43.64	33.63	36.66
	% ISCED 3_4* ²	34.18	33.80		35.23		34.26	43.29	47.14
	% ISCED 5_6* ²	23.88	22.19		23.27		23.40	17.04	18.55
	% of farmers with basic or full educational attainment	46.24	49.57		42.57		46.41	35.34	39.55
	Life-Long Learning in Rural Areas	8.09	6.62		6.55		7.51	7.70	8.61

*¹ Values NUTS3 have been replaced by values NUTS 2 due to lack of data.

*²% ISCED by groups is calculated for population more 15 years.

3. Employment

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Main processes and trends in relation to the labour market (employment/unemployment, disadvantaged groups and territories). Explanatory reasons
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

The percentage of the Belgian economically active population is not equally distributed between the rural and urban areas. 15 % reside in rural regions, while 85 % of the active population lives in the PU areas of Belgium. The rural – urban pattern coincides quite well with the very distinctive regions in Belgium, Wallonia and Flanders. The employment rates are slightly below the EU-27 average. The unemployment rate is on average in accordance with the EU-27 average. The youth unemployment rate is quite high it is highest in PRA regions (25 %) followed by IRA regions (22 %) and PU regions (22 %).

Whereas on average the long term unemployment rate is with 2 % - points slightly above the EU-27 average. It is highest in PRA regions (50 %) followed by IRA regions (48 %) and PU regions (43%).

All in all the employment situation is better in the Flemish region than in the Walloonian area. According to Meunier et al.² the main reasons are the location advantages either due to natural endowments (better accessibility to the north sea) or to non trade infrastructure (dense highway network). Moreover, other factors like agglomeration economies attributable to pecuniary externalities (proximity to large markets) or production externalities (knowledge spillovers, specialized workforce, etc.) stimulates the regional economy.

Regarding the distribution of employment by the sector of activity a higher service specialization than the European average can be observed. In all regions 70% of the population work in the service sector. Employment in agriculture is lower than the European average, which indicates to the existence of high-tech farms that are more productive. All in all the share of employment in agricultural activities is highest in predominantly rural regions.

² Meunier, O.; Mignolet, M. (2004): Regional Employment disparities in Belgium. Namur

Table 1.2 Employment indicators (a)

EMPLOYMENT		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Country average	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+L I+MK+NO+ TR	EU 27 Average
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
Employment rate*1	T15_64 years	63.04	60.17		60.46		61.98	66.40	66.42
	Tmale 15_64 y	69.64	67.03		68.04		68.80	73.05	73.12
	Tfemale 15_64 y	56.38	53.22		52.71		55.08	59.72	59.70
	Total 15_24 y	29.18	27.08		27.26		28.40	39.66	39.67
	T 45_64 years	55.05	53.91		54.23		54.66	62.37	62.34
	Total 45_54	76.65	74.06		73.84		75.62	78.30	78.38
	Total 55_64	33.45	33.75		34.61		33.70	46.44	46.30
%Employment by sector	%Emp_primary	2.59	4.78		5.83		3.60	7.95	7.97
	%Emp. secondary	24.16	20.49		19.08		22.52	26.71	26.71
	%Emp_tertiary	73.25	74.72		75.09		73.88	65.33	65.31
Unemployment evolution 2002_05*1	Total > 15 years	182,19	382,78		133,39		220,01	187.25	188,17
	Total 15_24 years	282.67	308.06		182.34		272.48	255.25	257.16
	Total >25 years	105.47	90.86		114.49		103.58	82.27	82.21
	Male > 15 years	91.58	95.79		116.71		96.54	82.45	82.35
	Female > 15 years	98.58	102.54		103.95		100.33	94.74	94.79
Unemployment rate 2007*1	Total >15	6.69	8.26		7.87		7.23	7.61	7.63
	Total Male >15	5.70	7.01		6.80		6.17	7.06	7.05
	Total Female >15	7.89	9.75		9.20		8.52	8.61	8.59
	Total 15_24	17.59	22.03		25.37		19.26	15.80	15.64
	Total >25	5.52	6.77		6.41		5.95	6.66	6.66
Long term unemployment	% long term unemploy. rate_07	43.24	48.29		49.89		45.45	43.07	43.12
	Evolution of long term unemploy. 2002_07	108.62	100.62		108.93		106.85	111.33	110.94

4. Rural business development

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which are the features of the rural businesses (size, dominant activities, employment, profitability, innovation, use of IST, etc)?
- Which is the profile of the rural entrepreneur?
- Which are the niches of activity in which rural companies are being created?
- Which are the opportunity sectors for future rural business operation?
- Which are the main constraints that need to be overcome?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in rural business promotion?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

“Coal mining and heavy industry, which enabled Belgium to become the most industrialized country in Europe after Great Britain, lost their dominant status in the second half of the 20th century (...) In Wallonia, which was the base of Belgium’s industrial development, large areas are still struggling with economic restructuring³”. In the same time Flanders became more and more economically strong, mainly because of its central location and the port of Antwerp. Flanders developed the largest concentration of petrochemical activity in the world after Houston³. Since 1995 Belgium made a large shift towards the tertiary sector. “Currently, almost 75 % of the workforce is employed in the service sector and just under 25 % is employed in industry³”. Agriculture represents 3 %.

“ The fact that industry’s share in the economy has declined (to 20 % of the value added) does not automatically mean that deindustrialization will continue. In the last 10 years, industrial production has increased in volume almost as quickly as the Belgian economy as a whole. The decline in the share of industry in GDP can be attributed to higher productivity which has led prices to fall. Industry still accounts for 80 % of Belgian exports³”.

With regard to industry it can be observed that employment density is varied whereas the greatest concentration of jobs is found in the large urban areas as well as central Flanders and the Northeast. The whole south, the entire central Walloon area as well as the eastern regions Verviers and Eupen are not very industrialized³.

The industrial centers of Belgium are Antwerp with mainly petrochemical activities, Brussels with a high share in production of consumer goods, Ghent with a mixture of light industry and heavy industry as well as Châleroi and Liège with a high share of heavy industry⁴. The largest industrial regions outside urban agglomerations are the Kortrijk region with light industry and a dynamic network of SMEs and the North-East with a high share of foreign companies in Flanders⁴.

Concerning the tertiary sector it can be observed that it is – as the industrial sector – better represented in the large urban areas. Following characterizations are possible: Transport is centered around the areas of Antwerp, Brussels and Leuven. Financial services can be mainly found around Brussels and Leuven. Business services are

³ <http://www.diplomatie.be> (17.04.2009)

⁴ <http://www.diplomatie.be> (17.04.2009)

mostly situated in the four largest urban areas but can also be found in the provinces of Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant with their proximity to Brussels⁴. Tourism is especially strong at the coastal regions, the Ardennes and in the region of Campine. Non-market services are mainly found in Walloon⁴.

“Like industry, the tertiary sector has largely withdrawn from cities. Setting up out-of-town is essential for operations which take up a great deal of space such as wholesalers, exhibition centres, large shopping centres and sports venues⁴”.

There are significant differences between types of regions with regard to the percentage distribution of firms by industry as can be seen in table 4. The activities that concentrate a greater percentage of companies are manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade. These activities occupy about 25% of the active population, with significant differences between groups of regions In urban regions, this percentage reaches 28%, and values in rural areas are somewhat lower (20%). The building sector shows stronger growth in rural areas close to the city (17% employment) as a reflection of the suburbanisation processes.

Specialized jobs that require greater use of technology are more present in urban areas due to the existence of a more skilled labor force and businesses with greater capacity for innovation. This difference is also evident when observing the number of firms with own website, where PU regions reach 56% and PRA 48%.

Table 1.3 Rural business development indicators (a)

RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Country average	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	EU 27 average
Variables* ¹		1	21	22	31	32			
N° FIRMS BY SECTOR OF OPERATION (1_2 digits)_2006	% Mining and quarrying	NA	NA		NA		NA	0.29	0.30
	% Manufacturing	NA	NA		NA		NA	14.08	14.04
	% Electricity, gas and water supply	NA	NA		NA		NA	0.61	0.62
	%Construction	NA	NA		NA		NA	9.48	9.45
	%Wholesale and retail trade	NA	NA		NA		NA	23.02	21.83
	%Hotel and restaurants	NA	NA		NA		NA	6.52	6.14
	%Transport, storage and communication	NA	NA		NA		NA	8.68	8.46
	%Real state, renting and business activities	NA	NA		NA		NA	37.29	39.11

Table 1.4 Rural business development indicators (b)

RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Country average	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	EU 27 average
Variables* ¹		1	21	22	31	32			
EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR OF OPERATION (1_2 digits)_2006	% Mining and quarrying	0.19	0.29		0.33		0.24	0.57	0.51
	% Manufacturing	28.45	26.97		20.98		26.92	29.18	28.07
	% Electricity, gas and water supply	0.90	0.88		0.86		0.89	1.13	0.89
	%Construction	11.90	13.96		17.37		13.24	9.08	9.14
	%Wholesale and retail trade	24.93	25.99		27.96		25.65	26.13	26.92
	%Hotel and restaurants	6.62	7.85		9.68		7.38	8.26	8.36
	%Transport, storage and communication	10.30	10.72		11.55		10.59	8.64	8.51
	%Real state, renting and business activities	16.64	13.25		11.03		14.98	16.78	17.51
Employment in high and medium technologies manufacturing activities_2004	Employment in high and medium tech manufacturing activities_2004_Media	6.78	5.66		4.75		6.20	6.88	7.42
	Employment in high and medium tech manufacturing activities_2004_%EU 25	102.33	87.42		75.23		94.63	95.89	107.14
%firms with own website		56.05	51.79		48.31		53.85	50.20	50.20

*¹ Values NUTS 3 have been replaced by values NUTS2.

5. Rural-urban relationships

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Are there established or incipient initiatives for cooperation between urban and rural areas?
- Is the “territorial approach” developed? (ie. Territorial Employment Pacts, supra-municipal planning, etc.),
- are there rural-urban partnerships? If so, which are their goals and ways of operation? Where is the power located?
- Which is the importance/extent of suburbanization’s processes?
- What are the main demands/uses over rural areas from urban inhabitants? How these are met?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in promoting appropriate rural-urban relations?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

6. Cultural heritage

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which are the main cultural resources?
- Which are the main cultural resources of rural regions?
- Is cultural heritage used? If so, in which senses (ie. tourism, other economic activities, identity reference, education, other non profit uses?)
- Which are the main demands upon cultural heritage?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in protecting/promoting sustainability of cultural heritage?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

“As in other European countries, the field of cultural policies in Belgium developed following the Second World War and was mainly focussed on promoting universal, democratic values. A framework for culture policies was completed towards the end of the sixties and was centred on objectives of cultural democracy. Instruments of cultural policy were, in most cases, grants allocated to non-governmental organisations and not-for-profit associations.

Cultural policies are governed by the principle of subsidiarity whereby the state does not directly intervene, in principle, in cultural matters other than through general regulation and awarding of grants.

(...)

Since the 1970s, Belgium has undergone a step by step process towards building a federal state made up of territorial regions and linguistic communities. The history of cultural policies since the 1970s can therefore be looked at by examining the activities of the three independent linguistic communities (Flemish, French and German speaking communities) and that of the Federal state; each with their own independent institutions, traditions and political influences.

Flemish Community

Up to the 1980s, the policies of the successive ministers of culture, who were of a Christian-Democrat persuasion, were geared towards the "democratisation of culture". During this time, basic provisions like cultural centres and libraries were provided for throughout the territory of Flanders. Political decisions were taken to subsidise initiatives in the field of adult education and youth work.

During the period 1981-1992, there was an economic crisis in Flanders. With regard to culture, this was reflected in an actual reduction of the overall budget. Cultural institutions were the target of such cuts and were required to generate their own income. This new trend was not wholly based on purely liberal principles of the ruling political parties (and ministers of culture) but rather by a management-oriented trend that also continued under subsequent ministers of the Christian-Democrat political persuasion.

Throughout most of the 1990s, Ministers of Culture (Christian-Democrats) focussed their attention both on the traditional arts and on socio-cultural activities. Legislation was passed in the fields of the performing arts, music and museums which outlined the

role of the government as well as criteria for their involvement. Policies were developed for block periods which provided the sector with greater legal security and allowed for longer term planning. This approach reflects the culture management trend.

The former government (1999-2004) was a coalition of Liberals, Social Democrats, the Green Party and the Democratic Flemish Nationalists, with a Minister of Culture belonging to the latter. With the new government came a considerable increase in the budget for culture and a new cultural policy strategy which is aimed at establishing an "integrated" or mainstreamed policy for Flanders in the fields of the arts, cultural heritage and socio-cultural activities. This approach is aimed at a more streamlined system for creativity, dissemination, preservation and support structures for culture and replaces individual, sector based policies, by a more comprehensive legal framework.

In addition, Flanders is pursuing co-operation between different levels of government - the government of Flanders, the provinces and the municipalities based on the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity. The new policy also devotes a great deal of attention to increasing rates of cultural participation.

The current Minister of Culture was also responsible for culture from 1999-2002, which will result in previous decisions being further implemented and developed in the coming years.

French Community

Inspired by the work of the Council of Europe in the 1970s, the French speaking Community of Belgium laid down the foundations for the creation of a permanent democratic cultural and educational policy. Subsequently, the 1970s and 1980s together were to mark the beginning of a new era in the development of a large number of regulations in the following fields: continuing adult education, public libraries, youth, cultural centres, establishment of community television, support for group expression and creativity, funding of action-theatre, more direct communication with the public on their social expectations and complaints.

In parallel, support to large classic cultural and artistic institutions is maintained, and represents a significant share of the cultural budget.

At the end of the Eighties and throughout the Nineties, there was a trend to promote the autonomous development of specific sectors including heritage, artistic disciplines (music, theatre, dance, and the visual arts), continuing education, youth, audio-visual, literature and the book trade. The result was a strengthening of their respective internal structures, modernised and professional strategies and new relationships on an international level.

German-speaking Community

In contrast to the autonomy granted to the French and Flemish speaking communities in the 1970s constitutional reform process, the German speaking community was initially granted limited authority, including in the field of culture. During the course of its establishment throughout the 1980s, the German speaking community acquired its own parliament and government, which led to a significant increase in its authority and influence as well as to the establishment of new structures. Today, this linguistic community consists of 70 000 inhabitants and has achieved a political rank which is equivalent to the other two communities.

It was mainly during the 1990s that the legal foundations for culture and sport were laid down or revised, in particular, supporting organisations active in the field of youth, adult

education and libraries. Guidelines for infrastructure policy have recently been completed and the government has elaborated new strategies in the field of media policies and legislation covering public and private radio and television.

Future priorities continue to focus on youth, culture, media and adult education. Authorities have agreed to pay closer attention to creativity or artistic quality and increasing cultural professionalism (management) as well as cultural participation by young people. Other goals include the development of a legal framework for scientific surveying and administrative structures to maintain cultural heritage sites and monuments.

In the area of the media, the challenges in the next few years are to further develop the regional audiovisual and television landscape and expand online services⁵.

Belgium has 9 heritage sites that are listed in the UNESCO World heritage list and one national park with an area of 57.5 square kilometres.

⁵ <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/belgium.php?aid=1> (17.04.2009)

7. Services of General Interest

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which is the general situation of the services of general interest (SGI) in the country?
- Which are the main problems in relation to accessibility and provision to SGI for rural residents and visitors?
- Which are the main forms of provision of services in rural areas? Are there innovative solutions to low accessibility areas?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in promoting accessibility/provision of Services of General Interest, particularly in rural areas?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

The number of hospitals in Belgium's PRA and IRA regions is slightly below the EU average. In PU regions hospitals tend to be concentrated in larger facilities and thus show lower density values. The average car driving time to the nearest hospital beds is almost the same in PU and IRA regions and twice as high in PRA regions. For universities the average car driving time for the whole of Belgium is less than half as high as the EU average. But a comparison of the different region types in Belgium shows that it is nearly twice as high in PRA regions than in all other region types.

Internet uptake is slightly above the average. The provision of transport infrastructure tends to be above the average in all types of regions. Density of trunk roads and show above average values. Airports are nearly exclusively located in PU regions with average driving times which are significantly below the EU average. From a European perspective Belgium belongs to the core regions in terms of accessibility. The national averages show that Belgium's PU regions are clearly more accessible than IRA and PRA regions.

Accessibility by car is higher in predominantly urban regions (ie. travel time from each region (i.e. their centroids) to all others over the road network taking into account additional factors such as lower average travel speeds in mountainous areas or border waiting times etc). There are no significant differences with regard to this respect between intermediate rural accessible and predominantly rural accessible. Accessibility times to market by different transport modes (ie. road and railway) increases with rurality.

Table 1.5 Services of general interest indicators (a)

SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Average country	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	Average EU 27
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
Density of motorways		0.08	0.06		0.03		0.07	0.04	0.04
Density of trunk road		0.35	0.26		0.16		0.30	0.17	0.17
Density of railways		0.15	0.08		0.06		0.12	0.10	0.10
Area (km2)**		16738.60	5529.60		7013.50		29281.70	5659749.80	4600910.40
DENSITY	Evolution density 2001_07*	1.89	2.68		3.19		2.28	0.93	0.92
	Density of population 2006***	696.59	232.96		148.39		504.00	414.65	446.23
Daily population accessible by car*		48.032.11	46.174.90		45.306.42		47.176.38	18078.54	19285.23
Time to nearest hospital		13.83	15.55		33.01		16.91	22.83	22.83
Time to nearest university		20.37	26.67		52.47		26.31	45.10	45.10
Time to nearest airport		27.36	37.61		57.13		33.90	83.44	83.44
%households with broadband access		NA	NA		NA		NA	49.07	48.00
% households with internet at home		NA	NA		NA		NA	81.46	81.20
N° STUDENTS ISCED 0_6*	N°students ISCED_0 per 1.000 inhabitants	37.77	38.85		44.29		39.08	29.59	29.46
	N°students ISCED_1 per 1.000 inhabitants	68.21	70.54		79.11		70.52	61.66	60.76
	N°students ISCED_2 per 1.000 inhabitants	40.23	42.93		46.42		41.86	43.21	43.28
	N°students ISCED_3 per 1.000 inhabitants	74.89	76.60		81.08		76.29	48.05	48.03
	N°students ISCED_4 per 1.000 inhabitants	7.04	6.37		4.23		6.43	3.06	3.10
	N°students ISCED_5_6 per 1.000 inhabitants	31.66	27.79		25.06		29.69	37.37	37.23

* Some regions NUTS3 are replaced by values NUTS2 regions

** The findings of these variables are the sum of values, not the average, as the others.

*** These values are only indicatives and aren't reals because in the calculation there are values NUTS2 and NUTS3.

Table 1.6 Services of general interest indicators (b)

SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Average country	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+ LI+MK+NO+T R	Average EU 27
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
BEDS IN HOSPITAL PER 100,000 inhabitants*1	N° of beds in hospitals per 100.000 inhabitants_ 05	757.78	740.54		582.41		725.96	696.91	704.88
	Evolution beds 2000_05	95.73	96.86		96.73		96.15	91.53	91.94
	Density of hospitals	6.07	2.08		0.79		4.98	5.44	5.44
	Hospital beds per head	3.98	3.99		7.47		4.23	4.98	4.98
	Doctors per inhabitant	305.19	400.07		388.23		338.84	171.35	171.35

*Some regions NUTS3 are replaced by values NUTS2 regions

8. Farm structural change

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which are the main DOC in relation to agriculture?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in promoting agriculture?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

According to the European Farm Structure Survey Belgium had 61710 holdings in 2000 with an total agricultural area of 1426780 ha⁶.

Employment in the primary sector in agriculture is less important in rural Belgium than across the EU. The shift out of agriculture to other forms of employment between 1990 and 2003 appears to have taken place at a slightly higher rate than the EU average. There is a relatively high proportion of family labour and holders particularly in PRA regions. Full-time farming is prevalent and even slightly increasing among sole holders and therefore contrasting with the European trend. However the number of sole holders < 35 years has been decreasing steadily since 1995.

Production conditions vary from one region to the next and are influenced by the physical environment and area of land used for farming. All in all in the north (Campine, north Flanders) sandy soils prevail. Meadows as well as growing fodder maize are characteristic for these regions. In southern Flanders clayey-sandy soils can be found that are mainly used for cultivation, intensive cattle breeding and specialized gardening. All in all in the Campine and Flanders regions a wide variety of agricultural production can be found, the farms are on average very small and intensive farming methods prevail. In the Walloon part of Belgium the agricultural production structure is much more uniform. Except in the southwest, the region is characterized by loamy fertile soils and large farms. Here mainly wheat and sugar beets are grown. Southwestern Wallonia's soils are stony and the altitude as well as relief make the conditions less favourable for production so that in this region agriculture is mainly dominated by cattle breeding⁷.

“There are 2 main trends in Belgian agriculture. The first is the disappearance of the small family farm. Farming is increasingly dominated by large agribusinesses. Over the past 3 decades, the number of small farms has decreased by 80 percent. The second major trend is the expanding output of the sector. New technologies and scientific crop research have combined to produce greater yields. Therefore, even if farmers' total acreage declines, they are still producing more. Between 1995 and 1999, crop production increased by 9 percent⁸”.

The degree of aging farmers is relatively seen lower than the European average (42% vs. 50%), especially in the intermediate and predominantly rural regions. Similarly, the educational levels of the Belgian farmers are above the EU average, in particular in the intermediate and predominantly rural regions.

Table 1.7 Farm structural change indicators

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/ES/ess/census/wcares/2000belgiumweb.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.diplomatie.be> (17.04.2009)

⁸ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Europe/Belgium-AGRICULTURE.html> (17.04.2008)

FARM STRUCTURAL CHANGE		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Country average	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	EU 27 average
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
% HOLDINGS 2005	< 2 ESU	8.00	6.00		6.43		7.29	33.42	33.89
	2 to 100 ESU	66.07	67.91		76.70		68.18	57.56	57.02
	>100 ESU	22.23	26.08		16.88		22.25	8.33	8.38
%CHANGING N° HOLDINGS 2000-2005	% Change in number of total holdings 2000-2005* ¹	-18.88	-13.60		-20.27		-17.90	-9.53	-9.19
	% Change in number of holdings less 2 ESU 2000-2005	-31.59	-20.90		-36.09		-29.84	-2.22	-0.65
	% Change in number of holdings 2 to 100 ESU 2000-2005	-23.94	-20.78		-26.12		-23.57	-13.91	-13.73
	% Change in number of holdings over 100 ESU 2000-2005* ¹	20.73	22.69		73.52		29.78	32.21	31.28
HOLDERS	% Holders working full time 2005	66.75	69.97		68.99		67.84	35.42	35.50
	% Change in Number of Holders working full time 2000 - 2005	12.86	-12.49		10.49		12.40	-0.00	0.33
	Economic Farm Size (RDEU07) * ¹	64.62	68.95		55.58		64.16	41.93	41.93
	Farmers with OGA (RDEU07) * ¹	17.20	17.90		19.07		17.66	37.55	37.55
	% holders > 55 years 2007	44.16	39.96		40.61		42.64	50.19	50.61
	% holders < 35 years 2007	5.27	7.99		5.85		5.98	6.35	6.32
	% change in holders > 55 years 2000 - 2005	1.36	7.86		4.07		3.27	5.88	5.61
	% change in holders < 35 years 2000 - 2005	37.42	-24.31		45.29		35.65	-34.00	-33.95
% farmers with basic and full education in agriculture attained (RDEU07)		46.24	55.07		49.66		48.62	42.29	42.29

*¹ Some regions NUTS3 are replaced by values NUTS2 regions

9. Institutional Capacity

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- characteristics of the governance system (type of administrative system, levels of government, distribution of powers),
- Dominant types of interactions among levels of government (formal/informal, hierarchical/cooperative, open/closed, top-down/bottom-up, etc.)
- Which are the main problems in relation to government and governance?
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in promoting better institutional capacity, particularly in rural areas?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

Type of government: Parliamentary popular monarchy and parliamentary democracy with bicameralism;

(Belgium is one of the few countries that has compulsory voting)

Area: 30.528 km²;

Capital: Brussels;

National languages: Dutch, French, German;

Administrative division: Federal state with the regions Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. Belgium consists of 10 provinces which are led by a governor. At the local administration level Belgium has 589 communities.

	NUTS 1		NUTS 2		NUTS 3		LAU 1		LAU 2	
BE	Gewesten	3	Provincies	11	Arrondissementen	44	-		Gemeenten	589

(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nuts/introannex_regions_en.html (25.6.2009))

All in all political power is shared between the federal state, the regions and the communities. The federal level is responsible for foreign affairs, defence policy, financial policy, social security as well as police and justice. The regions (Gewesten) are at great parts responsible for following policies: economy, ecology, traffic- and agrarian policy. Furthermore they exert the statutory supervision and supervision on the provinces, arrondissements and communities. The communities (gemeenschappen) (in former times also called cultural or linguistic communities) are responsible for education and cultural policy as well as the family policy, health policy and social policy.⁹ “They rely on a system of revenue-sharing for funds. They have the authority to levy a very few taxes (mostly surcharges) and to contract loans. Moreover, they have obtained exclusive treaty-making power for those issues coming under their respective jurisdictions”¹⁰.

International contracts concluded by the Belgian state that have implications due to the competencies of the communities, as for example contracts affecting the European Community, have to be ratified by the parliaments of the communities, first¹¹.

⁹ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgien> (25.6.2009)

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Belgium (25.6.2009)

¹¹ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgien> (25.6.2009)

Regional disparities: Since the 19th century there exist disparities between the French speaking Wallons and the Dutch-speaking Flemings. Recently the disparities are especially caused by economic differences between the economically weak Wallonian part with its declining heavy industry and the prosperous Flemish part of Belgium. The steadily rising resentment against the economic weakness of the Wallonian region becomes especially manifest in the current Flemish separatist movement leaded by the party "Vlaams Belang".¹² "The Flemish parties generally favour much larger community (and regional) autonomy, including financial and tax autonomy, while the francophone parties generally oppose it. The French-speaking parties tend to favour more state control"¹³.

Membership in international organizations: BENELUX, BITD, EBRD, ECE, EEA, ESA, EU, EUROCONTROL, Europarat, FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IIFC, IIT, ILO, IMCO, IMF, NATO, OAU, OECD, OSZE, UNESCO, UNO, UPU, Weltbank, WEU, WHO, WMO, WTO.¹⁴

Policy for regional development:¹⁵ Since the Ministry of Agriculture was closed in 2001 agricultural policy which is in large parts a EU-directed policy is shaped at the regional level. Agricultural policy is coordinated at the regional level (Gewesten/ NUTS 1) whereas the competencies for rural development are allocated to several administrations at different institutional levels (regions, provinces and municipalities) each with its own set of policy instruments. Whereas the agricultural policy strongly builds on EU-funding (Pillar 2 of the CAP) and has only minor rural development components incorporated the rural development policy is only partly reliant on EU-funding and has a broad scope. Concerning the agricultural policy a shift from a nearly sole focus on enhancing production towards a stronger integration of environmental objectives took place as reaction to land consumption and a increasing societal value change. With regard to rural development the municipalities account for the basic care and quality of the living areas. Provinces negotiate with rural actors about the region-specific application of the available instruments as well as the optimal integration of the different social sectors in the development process.

Table 1.8 Institutional capacity indicators

¹² <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgien> (25.6.2009)

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Belgium (25.6.2009)

¹⁴ <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Laenderinformationen/01-Laender/Belgien.html> (25.6.2009)

¹⁵ cp.Carels, C. et al (2005): Impacts of Agricultural Policy on rural Development in Belgium: case study of the Flemish Region. (= OECD workshop Evaluating Agri-environmental Policies. Bratislava, 24.-26. October),

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		PU	IRA	IRR	PRA	PRR	Average country	Average EU 27 +CH+HR+IS+LI+MK+NO+TR	Average EU 27
Variables		1	21	22	31	32			
GDP DISPERSION OF GDP_2005	GDP in Mio. Euro 2005	10.065.86	2.240.15		1.112.31		6862.87	9722.69	9856.11
	GDP in PPS per inhabitant 2005	24.716.55	18.202.58		16.819.41		21.979.74	20926.83	21110.46
	GDP in euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average 2005	117.23	86.34		79.77		104.25	94.38	95.48

10. Climate change

Guidelines: please, add comments based on your local knowledge on the following (when possible, support your comment on provided tables and/or other sources):

- Which are the main perceived threats in relation to climate change for population, authorities, interest groups?
- Are there any scientific evidence pointing to climate change? Please describe
- Are there specific policies/programs/initiatives that could be labeled as “best practices” in counteracting the effects of climate change, particularly in rural areas?
- Are there significant variations in the above processes depending of the types of regions considered (ie. PU, IRA, IRR, PRA, PRR)? Please, describe briefly.

Due to climate change scenarios following trends can be deduced for Belgium¹⁶:

- a significant rise in summer and winter temperatures by 2050,
- a rise between 6% and 23% for winter precipitation and a decrease of summer precipitation of up to 50%,
- an increase in cloud cover,
- a significant rise of severe heat waves in the summer and
- more frequent heavy rain incidences.
- Furthermore the scenarios indicate the possibility of more intense and/or frequent storm incidences.

Following possible implications caused by climate change could be identified:¹⁷

- A rise in the risk of flooding until 2100,
- a possibility of droughts in summer as well as deterioration in surface water quality,
- costal erosions and loss or inland movement of natural wetlands,
- a rise in the groundwater level and the salinization of soil and groundwater,
- costal erosion and loss of land due to a rise in the average sea level (63000ha with rise of 1 m).

Du to agriculture it is assumed that the climate change will have only moderate effects as on the one hand side a rise in temperature lowers the yields of crops but on the other hand side a increase in CO₂ concentration tends to lead to an increase of the yields of crops.¹⁸

“(…) Belgium is a federal state and the competence related to environmental topics is split between the Federal Government and the three Regions: the Flemish Region (Flanders), the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region (Wallonia). The table below gives an overview of the sharing out of different climate-related subjects between the four institutions”¹⁹.

¹⁶ Marbaix, P.; Ypersele, van J.-P. (2005): Impacts of climate change in Belgium: Summary. URL: http://www.astr.ucl.ac.be/users/marbaix/impacts/docs/GP-rep04-Sum_2-EN.pdf. P.2

¹⁷ Marbaix, P.; Ypersele, van J.-P. (2005): Impacts of climate change in Belgium: Summary. URL: http://www.astr.ucl.ac.be/users/marbaix/impacts/docs/GP-rep04-Sum_2-EN.pdf. P.2-3

¹⁸ Marbaix, P.; Ypersele, van J.-P. (2005): Impacts of climate change in Belgium: Summary. URL: http://www.astr.ucl.ac.be/users/marbaix/impacts/docs/GP-rep04-Sum_2-EN.pdf. P.3

¹⁹ http://dev.ulb.ac.be/ceese/ABC_Impacts/glossary/sheet_belgian_climate.php (13.08.2009)

Figure 1: Competencies sharing in Belgium as regards topics related to the climate policy

Competence level	Federal Government	Regions
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of the international policy - Product standardisation + transit of waste, marine environment, radioactive waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental policy (air, water, soil, forest) - Waste management + dangerous facilities, nature preservation, hunting, etc.
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large infrastructures and planning (gas & electricity) - Pricing and taxes - Nuclear power, off-shore wind energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport and local distribution (gas & electricity) - Rational use of energy, energy efficiency, renewable energies
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National airport and rail sector - Taxes on vehicles and fuels - Technical standards for vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressways, inland waterways, ports, regional airports - Public and academic transports

Source: http://dev.ulb.ac.be/ceese/ABC_Impacts/glossary/sheet_belgian_climate.php (13.08.2009) cited after Hannon, E. (2006): Cours "sciences de la terre et changements climatiques" donné au master en gestion de l'environnement, IGAT-ULB.

"At the national level, climate policy is prepared, coordinated and decided by four main bodies:

1. the Interdepartmental Conference for the Environment,
2. the Coordination Committee for the International Environment Policy,
3. the Directorate-General Coordination and European Affairs,
4. the National Climate Commission²⁰.

"Regions have also sets up bodies to promote the transversal dialogue on climate change across their administrations:

- the **Flanders Climate Policy Task Force** ("Klimaatbeleid Vlaanderen"), set up in 2001: is a dialogue platform on climate policy responsible for the implementation and follow-up of the current Flemish climate policy plan 2002-2005 and the regional position on national and international climate policy.
- the **Kyoto Platform in the Brussels-Capital Region**, set up in 2005: aims at improving the implementation and follow-up of the regional 'Air and Climate Plans'²¹.

All in all in order to face the climate change challenges Belgium set following overall targets for its climate policy after 2012²²:

- Greenhouse gases reduction of 20% in 2020 with respect to 1990 at European level;

²⁰ http://dev.ulb.ac.be/ceese/ABC_Impacts/glossary/sheet_belgian_climate.php (13.08.2009)

²¹ http://dev.ulb.ac.be/ceese/ABC_Impacts/glossary/sheet_belgian_climate.php (13.08.2009)

²² <http://www.kuleuven.be/ei/Public/Agenda-bestanden/D%20Gusbin.pdf> (13.08.09)

- Renewable energy systems development of 20% of Gross Final Energy Demand (FED) in 2020 at European level; Renewable energy systems should become a more important component of the climate policy as renewables value mechanism (renewable energy systems objective + flexibility) leads to higher deployment than climate policy alone;