Brussels, capital of Europe
Brussels is the capital city of 500 million Europeans. When you visit the European district of Brussels, the word “Europe” takes on a whole new meaning. The European institutions employ more than 40,000 people from the 28 member countries of the European Union. The European district is a meeting place for various cultures. Every street corner has a surprise to offer, with unsuspected leafy-green settings and many cosmopolitan café terraces here and there.

SUMMARY:

I. Museums, cultural institutions and attractions  
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I. MUSEUMS, CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ATTRACTIONS

The European district offers a kaleidoscope of cultural activities. From the Parlamentarium, which explains in detail how the European Union works, to the iguanodons of the Natural Science Museum via the classic old-timer cars of Autoworld, there really is plenty to amuse you there. Why not take a look …

Parlamentarium

Discover the fascinating world of the European Parliament at the Parlamentarium, the only visitor centre of a parliament in Europe. European politics as you’ve never seen it before! Children and adults alike can learn, in a lively and original way and in any of 23 different languages, how decisions are made and how they influence our daily lives.

Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Brussels
Monday: 13.00 – 18.00
Tuesday & Wednesday: 09.00 – 20.00
Thursday & Friday: 09.00 – 18.00
Saturday & Sunday: 10.00 – 17.00
Free of charge
www.europarl.europa.eu/parlamentarium

Antoine Wiertz Museum

Behind the doors of the Wiertz Museum, a very big surprise awaits. Because Antoine Wiertz, a Belgian painter of the 19th century, saw himself as a combination of Raphaël, Michelangelo and Rubens. No less! He specialised in religious subjects, philosophical and allegorical scenes and portraits, often creating enormous, wildly romantic paintings.

Rue Vautier 62, 1050 Brussels
Tuesday – Friday: 10.00 – 12.00 and 13.00 – 17.00
www.fine-arts-museum.be

Museum of Natural Sciences

Don’t miss the Bernissart iguanodons, the masterpieces of the Museum. They can be found in Europe’s largest dinosaur gallery. Like the Evolution gallery, this is a real journey through the history of living beings. Several exhibition spaces display magnificent specimens: the whale hall, the North and South Poles, the insect room, and more. A true temple of science where you can learn about your past and prepare for your future in harmony with Mother Nature.

Rue Vautier 29 - 1000 Brussels
Tuesday – Friday: 09.30 - 17.00
Saturday & Sunday: 10.00 - 18.00
www.sciencesnaturelles.be
The Temple of the Human Passions

The Pavilion or Temple of the Human Passions, in pink marble, was Victor Horta’s first project when he was a trainee to Alphonse Balat in 1890. A real treasure is hidden there, an impressive bas-relief by Jef Lambeaux (1852 - 1908): "The Human Passions" in Carrara marble. It represents the pleasures and misfortunes of unbridled humanity with the figure of death looking down on them. It had only been open for three days when it was closed again because Jef lambeaux was not satisfied with the low level of light in the building designed by Horta. In 1910, although unfinished, the building and its relief were, once again, opened to the public. They were then listed in 1976. The edifice was restored in 2013 and is now open to visitors throughout the summer season.

Parc du Cinquantenaire, 1000 Brussels
In 2015 – open from Saturday 28/03 till Sunday 25/10
Wednesday: 14.00 – 16.00
Saturday & Sunday: 10.00 - 16.45
www.kmkg-mrah.be

The Great Mosque of Brussels

The Great Mosque is the oldest one in the region. The original building dates from 1879 and was constructed to mark the occasion of the National Exhibition of Brussels in 1897. In 1967, King Baudouin gave the edifice to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who decided to turn it into a place of worship for the Belgian Muslim community. Following several years of restoration work, it was officially opened in 1978. The Great Mosque of Brussels is very well-attended and organises many activities.

Islamic and Cultural Centre of Belgium
Parc du Cinquantenaire 14, 1000 Brussels
www.centreislamique.be

The Cinquantenaire Archway

Constructed from 1904 to 1905 by the architect Charles Girault, this triple archway commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of Belgian independence. It supports a bronze quadriga, a sculpture by Thomas Vincotte and Jules Lagae. A wonderful sweeping view is spread out before you from the top of the archway. Admission is free of charge via the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 3, 1000 Brussels
Tuesday – Sunday: 09.00 – 12.00 h and 13.00 – 16.45
Free of charge
www.klm-mra.be
Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History

The museum brings together a hundred thousand or so pieces, making it one of the biggest military museums in the world. Here you’ll find: a section of weapons and armour from the Middle Ages, the Belgian armed forces from 1831 to 1914 and showcases dedicated to Kings Léopold I and Léopold II, and the technical development of weaponry (until the mid-20th century). The First and Second World Wars occupy an important place there with interactive sections on the Resistance and deportation as well as some armoured vehicles and ships. The "Air" section of the museum includes a full range of aircraft, with 80 models from all eras on display.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 3, 1000 Brussels
Tuesday – Sunday: 9.00 – 12.00 and 13.00 – 16.45
Free of charge
www.klm-mra.be

Royal Museums of Art and History

The Cinquantenaire Museum is divided into four main departments: National Archaeology, Antiquity, non-European Civilisations and European Decorative Arts. Its treasures include a six-ton statue from Easter Island, tapestries from the Middle Ages and a scale model of Ancient Rome, among others. A visit to this museum takes you around the world in time and space.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 10, 1000 Brussels
Tuesday – Friday: 09.30 - 17.00
Saturday & Sunday: 10.00 - 17.00
www.kmkg-mrah.be

Autoworld

We often forget that the motor car was one of the jewels of Belgian industry before the Second World War: Minerva, FN, Imperia, Nagant, Germain, Vivinus, to name just the most important ones. The museum can be regarded as one of the most prestigious of its kind in Europe, or even in the world (some 400 vehicles, all roadworthy). Here, you can relive the history of the motor car from 1886 to the seventies.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 11, 1000 Brussels
From 01/10 till 31/03: 10.00 – 17.00 (w/e = 18.00)
From 01/04 till 30/09: 10.00 - 18.00
www.autoworld.be

Paul Cauchie’s House-cum-Studio

The architect Cauchie built his house in 1905. His letter heading used to say: "Entreprise générale d’intérieurs complètement meublés, décorés et ornés" (General contractor for fully furnished, designed and decorated interiors). The huge sgraffito “To the nine muses” transformed the façade into an advertising poster proclaiming the talent of its author.

Avenue des Francs 5, 1040 Brussels
Tours: first weekend of every month from 10.00 to 13.00 and from 14.00 to 17.30
www.cauchie.be
Mini-Europe (not in the European district but too good to miss)

Standing at the foot of the Atomium, Mini-Europe is the only park where you can travel across the whole of Europe in just a few hours. A journey you wouldn’t be able to make anywhere else. Wander through the unique atmospheres of the most beautiful cities in the Old World. The incomparable chimes of Big Ben welcome you to the heart of London. Gondolas and mandolins introduce you to the charms of Venice. Follow the T.G.V. (high-speed train) all the way from Paris to the other end of France. Activate the animated attractions yourself: the eruption of Vesuvius, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the corrida in Seville and many more besides. In total, there are 350 scale models and places of interest finished to an unrivalled standard. Visit the European centre too. It offers a wealth of interactive multimedia games and the “Spirit of Europe” exhibition, a place where you can learn anything and everything about Europe while having fun at the same time.

Brupark, 1020 Brussels
From mid-March to mid-June: 09.30 – 18.00
July & August: 09.30 - 20.00
September: 09.30 - 18.00
October – December: 10.00 – 18.00
www.minieurope.com
Metro: Heysel

The House of European History (open at the end of 2015)

The permanent exhibition of this museum will focus mainly on European history of the 20th century and on the history of European integration based on the very different experiences the Europeans have lived through. The aim of the House of European History is to offer a transnational perspective of the history of Europe while taking into account its diversity and the many different interpretations of it.

Parc Léopold, bâtiment Eastman, 1000 Brussels
II. THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

It’s impossible to talk about the European district without explaining the different political institutions that you come across there. Enormous glass buildings where big decisions are made and European issues are debated.

**European Parliament (Spaak and Spinelli buildings)**

This large building with the commanding presence of its gleaming walls is the European Parliament. The part housing the ‘Hemicycle’ (debating chamber) consists of two oval wings, which earned it its nickname of “Caprice des Dieux” (meaning ‘whim of the gods’ and named after the well-known French cheese). The Parliament is the only supranational institution whose members are democratically elected by direct universal suffrage. It represents the nations of the member States. The European Parliament is elected every five years. It lays down many laws (directives, regulations, etc.) that affect the daily life of every citizen.

Rue Wiertz 43, 1047 Brussels (European Parliament)

From September to June
Monday – Thursday: 10.00 and 15.00
Friday: 10.00

In July and August:
Monday - Thursday: 10.00, 11.00, 14.00, 15.00
Friday: 10.00 and 11.00

It’s not necessary to book but tours are limited to 80 people.
www.europarl.europa.eu

**European Economic and Social Committee & Committee of the Regions (Delors building)**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body of the European Union. The EESC has three main missions:
- helping to ensure that European policies and legislation are better suited to the economic, social and civic realities on the ground
- furthering the development of a more participatory European Union that’s closer to the citizens
- promoting the values on which European integration is founded and advancing democracy in Europe and across the world.

The Committee of the Regions represents the regional and local authorities within the European Union.

Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels
www.europa.eu
Council of the European Union (Juste Lipse building)

The Council of the European Union is the institution where the representatives of the member States’ governments sit, that is to say the ministers from each member State with responsibility for a given field. It has various tasks. They include, in particular: adopting legislative acts (regulations, directives, etc.), coordinating the policies of the member States and developing common foreign and security policy. A large part of the building is occupied by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. With its 225,000m² and 24 km of corridors, the Juste Lipse is a real maze!

Rue de la Loi 175, 1048 Brussels
www.consilium.europa.eu

➔ In 2015, the new headquarters of the European Council will also be installed on the Schuman Roundabout. With its singular contemporary architecture, it will become a new centre of attraction in the European district, although its primary function is not that of receiving visitors. Like certain monuments in other capital cities, “The Lantern” will become a new landmark on the Brussels landscape.

European Commission (Berlaymont building)

The Berlaymont is one of the 66 buildings occupied by the European Commission. It stands on the former property of the Dames de Berlaymont (Ladies of Berlaymont) convent. This was purchased by the Belgian State in 1960 for the purpose of setting up the headquarters of the European Commission there. In order to construct this enormous edifice, the convent was therefore demolished. In 1991, extensive work began to remove asbestos from the Berlaymont, a process that took several years. Today, it again houses the office of the President and of the 26 Commissioners and their staff. The European Commission represents and defends the interests of the EU as a whole. It puts forward legislative proposals. It also oversees the proper implementation of EU policies and runs the EU budget.

Rue de la Loi 200, 1040 Brussels
www.ec.europa.eu
III. PARKS & PUBLIC GARDENS

Tucked away among these glass buildings are several leafy-green settings. Here, you’ll be in the company of students who’ve come to chill out or officials making the most of their lunch break to get some fresh air.

Léopold Park

In Léopold Park, the old rustic-looking caretaker’s lodge stands alongside the stained-glass windows and precious woods of the Solvay library. Let the charm and tranquillity of the place wash over you. Between 1851 and 1877, this park was home to a zoological garden. The gateway on the Rue Belliard side testifies to this. Unfortunately, as a result of poor management of the place, the animals there fell ill and soon died. It was then turned into a science park, mainly for medical science. The science buildings have now been converted. At the first signs of summer weather, students, local residents and employees from the surrounding area descend onto the lawns, gathering here for a picnic lunch on the grass. There’s even a playground for the youngsters.

Parc Léopold, 1040 Brussels

Square Ambiorix and surrounding areas

Here, you come to a beautiful Art Nouveau district that you won’t forget in a hurry! Avenue Livingstone, Square Marie-Louise, Avenue Palmerston, Square Ambiorix and Square Marguerite - so many places that, with a number of impressive buildings, celebrate that architectural movement. Because Brussels is the capital city and Victor Horta the master of Art Nouveau. Along Square Ambiorix, no. 11 is certainly the most eccentric house. This is the work of Gustave Strauven, built at the request and according to the ideas of the painter Léonard de Saint-Cyr. It was so out of the ordinary that special permission was required before they could go ahead with its construction. Play areas have also been laid out for the little ones. The playground on Square Ambiorix is suitable for children from 3 to 7 years of age. It has spring riders, a large sand pit, a slide and a roundabout to make their heads spin! Square Marguerite, in turn, welcomes children from 8 to 12 years of age. There’s a climbing frame, seesaw, table tennis tables and a basketball court for them to use.

Square Ambiorix, 1040 Brussels

Cinquantenaire Park

This was created in 1880 to host the exhibition held to mark fifty years of Belgian independence. This realm of greenery surrounds the archway, the Royal Museums of Art and History of the Cinquantenaire, the Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History, Autoworld and the Horta Pavilion or ‘Temple’. It’s an ideal spot for a little walk or impromptu picnic and for exploring the museums.

Parc du Cinquantenaire, 1000 Brussels
Felix Hap Park

Purchased in 1804 by Albert Joseph Hap, this beautiful property became a public garden in 1959. The garden is a pleasant and relaxing space laid out around a few separate features: the remains of the old manor house, a pond, a garden pavilion and the orangery, which was also used as stables and now houses an artists’ studio. This park is one of the last traces of what was, once upon a time, the verdant Maelbeek valley. A real hidden gem to be enjoyed to your heart’s content.

Chaussée de Wavre 510, 1040 Brussels

IV. BARS AND RESTAURANTS

Place du Luxembourg

This is where you take the pulse of European life in Brussels. Every bar is frequented by EU officials and the many trainees. If you listen carefully, you can hear snatches of conversations in any of more than 23 different languages.

Place du Luxembourg, 1000 Brussels

5 good places to go in the area:

Punto y Coma
Spanish bookshop with lots of books and films

Rue Stevin 115a, 1000 Brussels
www.puntoycoma.be

Gourmet Food & Gift Brussels
Food imported from the Scandinavian countries, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Rue Archimède 59, 1000 Brussels
www.homeshopabroad.com

Piola Libri
Take your pick from the many films and books stocked by this Italian bookshop.

Rue Franklin 66, 1000 Brussels
www.piolalibri.be

The Old Oak
Irish pub with traditional interior and atmosphere.

Rue Franklin 26, 1000 Brussels

Mer du Nord – Noordzee
The famous Brussels establishment opened a new bar in October 2013. You can enjoy delicious fresh seafood there.

Rue du Luxembourg 62, 1000 Brussels
www.poissonniemerduenord.be
Place Jourdan

Place Jourdan has a real village feel about it. Buy a little paper cone of chips at Maison Antoine and eat them in one of the many cafés that brighten up the square (the ones that clearly display permission to do so). Stroll around the Sunday market and, not far from there, help to reclaim a small plot of land “la friche de la tour Eggevoort” (wasteland around the Eggevoort tower), in the company of several local residents. A fine example of transforming an unused public space into a meeting place dreamed up and designed by and for the neighbourhood.

Place Jourdan, 1040 Brussels / Friche de la tour Eggevoort, Avenue du Maelbeek, 1040 Brussels

5 good places to go in the area :

Be Positive
A little place where you can buy the best there is in organic products. Food, well-being, cleaning products, cosmetics, a complete and varied stock!
Place Jourdan, 26 - 1040 Etterbeek
www.be-positive.be

Sardinian Food
Grocery store offering exclusively Sardinian produce.
Rue Général Leman 19, 1040 Brussels
www.facebook.com/Sardinian.Food

Kuchnia Polska
Polish food and produce.
Avenue d’Auderghem 160, 1040 Brussels

Balkani
Selection of Bulgarian produce.
Rue Gray 7, 1040 Brussels

Boutique-Librairie Maelström
A shop and bookstore dedicated to writing and poetry from Rome, Brussels and Paris.
Chaussée de waver 364, 1040 Brussels
www.maelstromreevolution.org
V. MISCELLANEOUS

Bruxelles-Luxembourg railway station

The building with the clock standing opposite Place du Luxembourg is the old façade of the Bruxelles-
Luxembourg railway station. At the main entrance, you’ll come across a monumental fresco by Hergé, which was officially unveiled in 2009. This image was published for the first time in Le Soir newspaper of 27th October 1932. It depicts Quick and Flupke, Dupont and Dupond (Thomson and Thompson), and others.

Gare de Bruxelles-Luxembourg, 1050 Brussels

Résidence Palace

The Résidence Palace was designed just after the First World War. It was once a sort of “city within a city”. In those days, it was the biggest apartment complex in Europe. It was intended for the middle and upper classes of Brussels. The building consisted of several luxury apartments, restaurants, a swimming pool, a theatre, a hairdressing salon, a post office, grocers’ shops and many other facilities. It was subsequently occupied by the Germans during the Second World War, then later housed federal officials. Today, this complex has become a press centre and, very soon, will be part of the new headquarters of the European Council.

Rue de la Loi 155 bloc C, 1040 Brussels
www.presscenter.org

VI. EVENTS

Find out about all the events taking place in and around the European district at www.visitbrussels.be/europe

VII. PUBLICATION

Explore the European district with the aid of this mini-map, a practical pocket-sized guide. It takes you through various places in the Léopold district that are too good to miss. This mini-map is available to buy in visit.brussels tourist information offices in FR/EN, NL/DE, ES/IT (0.50€).
VIII. FOREIGN CULTURAL CENTRES

Want to learn the language or about the culture of one of the 28 EU countries? Then, these addresses, proper meeting centres, are for you …

Alliance française de Bruxelles-Europe
Avenue des Arts 46 (ground floor and 1st floor), 1000 Brussels
info@alliancefr.be
www.alliancefr.be

Associação Cultural Recreativa Portuguesa
M. Duchestraat 59, 1800 Vilvoorde

British Council
Rue du Trône 108, 1050 Brussels
Enquiries@britishcouncil.be
www.britishcouncil.org/belgium

Centre Tchèque / Tsjechisch Centrum/ Czech Centre
Avenue Adolphe Buyl 150, 1050 Brussels
ccbrussels@czech.cz
www.czechcentres.cz/brussels

Daarkom: Maison des cultures maroco-flamande / Vlaams-Marokkaans culturenhuis / Flemish-Moroccan House for Culture
Rue du fossé aux loups 18-22, 1000 Brussels
info@daarkom.be
www.daarkom.be

Institut culturel danois / Deens cultureel Instituut / Danish Cultural Institute
Rue Royale 35, 1000 Brussels
info@dkibenelux.org
www.dkibenelux.org

Institut Culturel finlandais pour le Benelux / Fins Cultureel Instituut voor de Benelux / Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux
Rue de l’Arbre 14/3, 1000 Brussels
info@finncult.be
www.finncult.be

Forum Culturel Autrichien Bruxelles / Oostenrijks Cultuurforum Brussel / Austrian Cultural Forum Brussels
Place du Champs de Mars 5 bte 5, 1050 Brussels
bruessel-kf@bmeia.gv.at
http://www.bmeia.gv.at/kultur/bruessel.html

Goethe-Institut Brüssel / Goethe Institute Brussels
Rue Belliard 58, 1040 Brussels
info@bruessel.goethe.org
www.goethe.de/bruessel

Institut culturel hongrois / Hungarian Cultural Institute
Rue de Treuvenberg 10, 1000 Brussels
ifo@bmki.be
http://brusszel.balassiintezet.hu/
Instituto Cervantes
Avenue de Tervuren 64, 1040 Brussels
secbru@cervantes.es
http://bruselas.cervantes.es

Istituto italiano di Cultura di Bruxelles
Rue de Livourne 38, 1000 Brussels
iicbruxelles@esteri.it
www.iicbruxelles.esteri.it
IX. INFORMATION POINTS

**European Commission Representation in Belgium**
Rue Archimède 73  
1000 Brussels  
T.: +32 (0) 2 295 38 44

**European Parliament Information Office**
Rue Wiertz 60  
1047 Brussels  
T.: +32 (0) 2 284 20 05

**InfEuropa Schuman 14**
Rue Archimède 1  
1000 Brussels  
T.: +32 (0) 2 296 55 55

**Europe.Brussels Liaison Office**
Brussels is the capital city of Europe and that asset is a great source of pride to us! The objective of the Europe.Brussels Liaison Office is to consolidate and develop this European character. Thus, it informs the people of Brussels, expatriates and the international and European institutes about Europe in Brussels. To do this, on the one hand, it organises debates, information sessions, communication and promotional campaigns and events and, on the other hand, it offers an administrative assistance service to expatriates. All this to help the people of Brussels feel like Europeans, and Europeans see themselves as fully-fledged citizens of Brussels.

Avenue d’Auderghem 63, 1040 Brussels  
www.blbe.be

**Europe Direct**
Europe Direct Brussels is a European information centre that works closely together with the European institutions (European Commission and European Parliament), FPS Foreign Affairs, VISITBRUSSELS, as well as with the 500 other Europe Direct centres. Twelve of those centres are located in Belgium.

Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels  
T.: +32 (0) 2 549 50 54  
www.europedirectbrussels.be

**visit.brussels (tourist information)**
Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels  
T.: +32 (0) 2 513 89 40  
www.visitbrussels.be