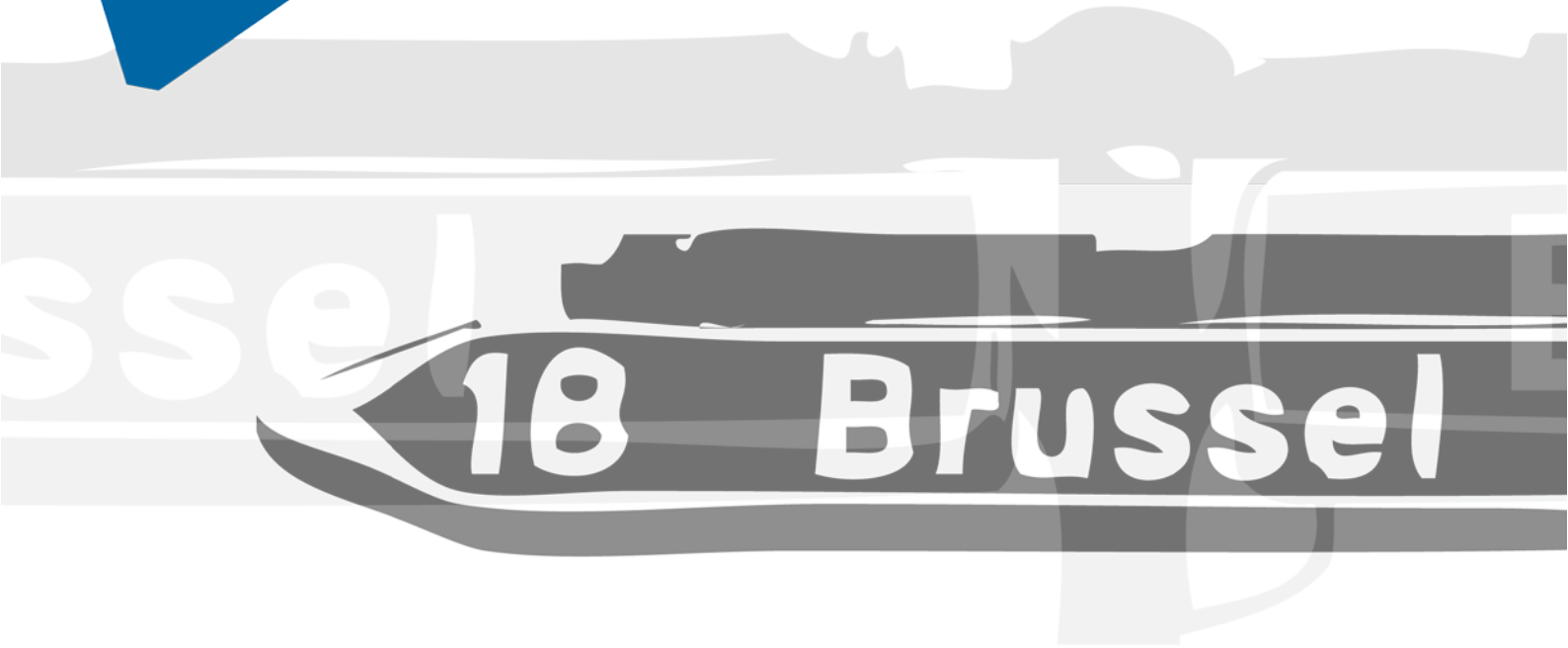




Brussels Informatie-, Documentatie- en
Onderzoekscentrum



Brussels and Europe: a general outline.

Presentation at the 20th Meeting of the EU-Belgium Task Force,
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Mr Vice-President,
Ladies and gentleman,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to come and present the book on Brussels and Europe. It is the fruit of the international colloquium, held in December 2006 in the Borschette Conference Centre. It is also the result of common labor and intense interuniversity, multidisciplinary and 'transcommunity' cooperation between research centres of the Flemish and French Community and foreign universities.

Before this colloquium BRIO had already two earlier colloquia on 1) the status of Brussels and 2) the Brussels model and the relations between the Brussels Capital Region and the 19 municipalities. 50 years after the Treaties of Rome my colleagues and I thought that it was time to analyse the position of Brussels - as 'capital' of Europe and as seat or working place of countless international institutions, organisations and companies in the 'world city network'. How did Brussels grow into the political world city it is today? Secondly an analysis of the complex and multiple interactions between the European institutional presence and the Brussels Capital Region was needed. Finally the colloquium committee also asked some specialists to delve deeper into various pressure points and areas of tension.

You can imagine that it is impossible to present all of the 26 contributions in detail. I will try to give a brief overview of the main results, based on the introduction to the acta in which I have summarised them.

1. The development and position of Brussels as European 'capital' in the world city network

The first part deals with the growth of Brussels and its position as European capital in the world city network.

Indeed, the Belgian capital has developed into a first-rate political world city, in spite of the fact that no European constitutional regulation exists, which would be the undisputed foundation of the status of Brussels as the capital of the European Union. As a global city, Brussels has a specific profile because it is a central junction in international government networks and their related NGO networks. Brussels did indeed develop global urban functions, which are closely related to its role as the centre of *global legal services*. According to British geographer Peter J. Taylor Brussels is without doubt one of the most important cities in the world because of its position as the seat of a multitude of international institutions, with the European Union and NATO as the most important. Camilla Elmhorn had stated earlier that Brussels has by now developed into a political world city, which owes its rise to an active display of an advanced and specialised service economy.

Intercity relations are increasingly evolving towards networks, which will only become more transnational in the future. Brussels has become a truly global city in the sense that its connections are 'global'. Next to its European connections Brussels has a strong connection with Pacific Asia and North America. Agents from international firms play a role as *city network makers*; through their daily activities they create a transfer of information, knowledge and instructions between cities and by doing so, create connections between cities. Brussels owes its global position in part to the high concentration of agents from non-economic *city network makers* (such as NGOs).

Brussels scores highest in the connectivity rankings in the sector of legal services and law firms, which are of course attracted by its position as a decision-making centre with a global impact. In short, Brussels owes its position in the top 20 of world cities and in the top 10 of European cities to its strong position in the network of *global legal services*. In terms of political network makers - international organisations, agencies for the United Nations - Brussels outperforms London and Paris, which demonstrates its supra-European position. Within the network of global cities, Brussels is best called a political world city.

The position of Brussels as “capital of Europe” must be viewed in the perspective of a complex and dynamic evolution process, resulting in what Carola Hein calls a polycentric European capital or headquarters system, which has developed slowly but surely. Brussels had to go a long way before becoming the main centre within this polycentric system.

Brussels is actively and persistently profiling itself as *the* capital of Europe and its claims to this title seem justified by the fact that its name alone is almost synonymous with the EU, which has located its main centres of power (the Council, the European Commission, the daily activities of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions) in Brussels. However, because of historical developments - and diplomatic complications - Brussels is not the one and only capital of the EU. In 1992, the Council of Edinburgh confirmed three seats - Brussels, Luxemburg and Strasbourg - as official headquarters, as opposed to the preliminary status they had before. In addition to these three permanent seats, the EU has since established new decentralised agencies in over 20 other cities, which has resulted in the development of a polycentric capital or capital system. (According to Hein, this decentralisation is not the result of an explicit policy but rather the result of a competition of interests between (capital) cities, prompted by both the economic advantages and the symbolic capital which follows in the wake of the establishment of the seat of a European (sub)organisation.)

The emergence of this polycentric system is mainly the result of a decision-making process in which -- strangely enough - the nomination of Brussels in 1952 for the seat of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community was met with the veto of ... the Belgian government! After elections of June 1949 Paul-Henri Spaak was forced to surrender his foreign affairs mandate to former Prime Minister, Paul Van Zeeland, who was to hold this office throughout the homogenous CVP/PSC governments in 1950-1954. In the summer of 1952, the other five member states involved in the establishment of the ECSC, had even reached an agreement to select Brussels as the seat for the new organisation. To think that Van Zeeland used his veto and maintained the nomination of Liège rather than Brussels, seems incomprehensible today, even surreal. This diplomatic decision meant that Brussels would not become the exclusive location for European organisations and later the EU. The initial veto undoubtedly had a large impact on the way the European institutions were incorporated in Brussels: (by opposing the nomination of Brussels, a situation was created where Luxemburg and Strasbourg acted as additional working places and the temporary allocation and spreading of seats over three cities could hardly be a solid foundation for a well-considered urban planning strategy.)

The veto by Van Zeeland is also in sharp contrast with the way in which Brussels' international ambitions had been promoted since the 19th century and even more so at the beginning of the 20th century by a number of political agents and opinion makers. Indeed, before and after WWI Brussels was promoted not as a mere European but global centre: Brussels was to become a centre of global expansion ('expansion mondiale'). Paul Otlet launched the idea of the Mundaneum/Palais Mondial, while others pleaded for the establishment in Brussels of a federal world district (Louis Frank) or a world centre of communication (Andersen & Hébrard). The allied powers first agreed on organising the peace conference and to establish the seat of the League of Nations in Brussels, but in the end, that plan fell through, and Brussels was forced to relinquish the seat of the League of Nations to Geneva. Otlet relaunched Frank's idea of a federal world district, which would be granted some form of supranational extraterritoriality.

After Van Zeeland's veto against the nomination of Brussels as the seat for the ECSC in 1952, the city was forced to stand by and watch Liège try its luck. A government reshuffle, the come-back of Spaak and the preparations for the World Fair Expo 58 were an excellent opportunity to once more launch the nomination of Brussels as the seat for the European institutions and place it on the international agenda.

Today there still exists discrepancy between the political and sociological fact that Brussels presents itself and is generally perceived as capital of Europe, and the international legal fact that no explicit legal rule exists on which to base such claims. Koen Lenaerts and Kristien Vanvoorden provide clarity on the exact legal status of Brussels as European 'capital'. Unlike the Belgian Constitution, of which article 194 does indeed declare Brussels as the capital of Belgium, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe does not mention a capital of the EU, even though it does establish a flag, anthem and motto. Lenaerts and Vanvoorden analyse the decision-making process on the matter of the European capital starting from 1952. It took more than thirty years after the Treaties of Rome before the member states reached a decision on the official establishment of the seat of all European institutions, illustrates just how delicate a matter this really is. After its first direct election in 1979, the European Parliament asserted itself more prominently with respect to the seat issue, especially invoking its right to organise its own internal operation. The European Court of Justice was to rule on this issue in 1983 and stated that the member states - which not only have the right but the duty to establish the seat of the institutions - and the European Parliament, have shared jurisdiction.

In the framework of recurring debates on state reform and the future of Brussels, the idea of turning Brussels into an international European district has regularly come up since the 1990's. Caroline Van Wynsberghe and Christian Franck situate the proposal regarding *Brussels, European District* in a comparative-typological perspective, in which they compare the existing federal districts and other federal capitals. Even though the theme of a European District is frequently present in debates on the future of Belgium, the authors conclude that this idea originated from an exclusively internal, Belgian debate and offers the EU something it has not asked for. On the contrary, the jurisdiction of the European Commission does not allow it to even imagine that this jurisdiction would be compatible with interference in the government of the city where it has its seat. The European and other international institutions simply expect the Belgian state and Brussels to provide the conditions to guarantee and facilitate their smooth operation.

The relation between the Brussels-Capital Region and Europe of Regions is also examined. As other regional governments BCR has become a player in the complex system of *multilevel governance* which was born in the wake of the European integration process. The direct impact of BCR remains limited, just like that of other regions and local authorities, because the Committee of the Regions is a consultative organ, with little binding authority. Over 300 regional and local authorities have installed and developed their own representation in Brussels, acting as regional 'embassies' and as the channel for subnational mobilisation in the EU. They represent an important category of interest groups and lobbies in Brussels. They have set up a supraregional network in function of common interests and a similar or shared political, geographic or economic profile or interest. The promotion and marketing of their own region has become an increasingly important activity.

The phenomenon of the growing number of regional and local representations in Brussels automatically takes us to the general phenomenon of lobbying and interest groups in Brussels. Figures on all 3,000 lobbying groups located in Brussels and 15,000 members of staff are indicative of the quantitative dimension of the phenomenon. According to Rinus Van Schendelen Brussels has become *the place to be* for lobbyists, who are actively trying to influence EU decision-making in Brussels. Van Schendelen poses a pressing question: whether or not the phenomenon of lobbying is beneficial to integration and democracy in Europe. He exposes the widespread prejudices against lobbying by switching from a normative interpretation of the phenomenon to an analysis on a political technical level of all legal and legitimate forms of lobbying, which he classifies as *public affairs management*, strictly separating them from illegal practices and behaviour. He stresses the high level of transparency and openness of the lobbying system in Brussels, which is largely responsible for the high level of social control which competitive EU-officials, lobbyists and journalists exercise among themselves. Lobbying at the EU in Brussels means producing specialised services and organising useful knowledge. Hence, Brussels should be regarded not as a *City of Evil* but as a *City of Intelligence*. On the whole the

activities of lobbyists and the *PA-establishment* are considered substantially positive, concluding that with the organisation of ever more interest groups in Brussels, the general interest is - as a rule - better served. He characterises Brussels as *Capital of Pragmatic Accommodation* and as the EU's main centre of political knowledge and know how.

2. Interactions and mutual influence between Europe and Brussels in a socio-economic, demographic, political and cultural perspective

Jan Degadt analyses the impact of the presence of European and international institutions on the regional economic network in Brussels. Its growing visibility and recognition as *de facto* capital are important assets to attract investors. The first consequence for the regional economy in Brussels has been its rapid internationalisation, accompanied by large cash movements. (According to a study by Iris Consulting from 2001, the European Union generated a direct cash flow of EUR 724 million for Brussels in that same year. The lion's share flowed towards the salaries of EU officials in office, living in Brussels, and towards expenses related to building maintenance. The other international institutions - mostly NATO - added another EUR 261.5 million on top of that.) Taking into account indirect effects, the study calculates a cash flow of EUR 7,518.1 million as a consequence of the presence of the international sector in Brussels, which of course in turn generated a considerable impulse for employment in Brussels.

Data from the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region show that the presence of the international institutions directly resulted in the creation of over 25,000 jobs in Brussels in 2004, of which 19,764 for the European Commission. (Other large employers were the Council of the European Union (2,619 jobs), the European Parliament (2,309 jobs) and NATO with 14,131 jobs.)

Of course, there are not only positive effects of the European presence on the regional economy and employment in Brussels; there are a number of inevitable negative side effects as well. The influx of spending power has not been enough to mitigate BCR's continuing problem of vast unemployment, which is threatening to cause a duality in the economy and in society. (However, updating the estimate of the impact of international presence in Brussels on employment in 2007 indicates it is likely to be even higher than the figures calculated by Iris Consulting: the direct and indirect employment generated by this international presence amounts to no less than 92,000 jobs or a whopping 12.7% of total employment in Brussels. No wonder people have the persistent idea that the presence of the European institutions in Brussels is fuelling the Belgian economy in general, and the Brussels economy in particular.)

Christiaan Vandermotten and his team investigate the impact of foreigners on the demographic balance, especially foreigners from other EU member states and other developed countries. They further analyse the spatial distribution of this foreign population in the larger Brussels area, as well as their contribution to social mutations seen in certain Brussels districts, in particular the phenomenon of gentrification. The demographic evolution of the last fifty years is characterised by a growing number of affluent foreigners working for international institutions and by the immigration of migrant workers. The presence of the international institutions has certainly reinforced the position of Brussels and contributed to the socio-economic dynamics of the capital, but it has also introduced a risk of perverse side effects such as reinforcing the social duality in Brussels. What's more, the international institutions offer but a small contribution in the employment of semi- and unskilled workers, who are usually part of the migrant community and form the hard core of Brussels' unemployed. (This contribution estimates the share of international institutions in Brussels' employment and paid labour at 4.6 % and 5 % respectively, while the group of well-paid workers represents no less than 8 % of the income from paid labour in BCR.) **The total of direct, indirect and multiplying effects of the presence of international institutions in Brussels in 2004 in terms of employment and added value is estimated at 95,000 jobs and EUR 6.8 billion, or 13 % and 14 % respectively of the total for Brussels.**

Nonetheless, the net contribution for the economy and job market in Brussels should be reduced, because approximately 40,000 of the 95,000 jobs are filled by 'imported' workers. The international presence is said to provide jobs for 9,000 semi- or unskilled workers, amounting to just 6 % of the total number of semi- or unskilled workers in the BCR.

In the end, how does the international presence influence the socio-demographic situation? There is a high foreign presence in Brussels and it has increased the population between 1999 and 2007 with no less than 77,000 inhabitants, but the authors situate these foreigners/inhabitants at both extremes of the social pyramid: international officials and executives at the top and the population of migrant workers at the base.

It is common knowledge that European and international presence in Brussels is having a large impact on the housing market; both on rental and property prices, and on the city's spatial configuration. Including family members, the demographic size of EU personnel and satellite organisations can be estimated at 105,000 people or 10 % of the population in Brussels. In terms of buying power, of course, this group is even more significant. But Bernard reaches several conclusions which contradict often populist prejudices, targeting the "Eurocrats" as the scapegoat and blaming them for rising real estate prices. On the whole Brussels is still one of the cheapest capitals in Europe concerning rental and property prices. The price increase is first and foremost caused by local speculators, exploiting the well-paid foreigners as a target group. Rather than increasing rent, the real danger lies with the gentrification of certain districts, brought about by Europeans investing in certain degraded central districts causing the emigration of the original inhabitants. A policy of social residential construction and an intervention by BCR against a total deregulation of the private market could be efficient measures to remedy the position of low income families on the housing market.

A number of authors have focussed on the political aspects of the interaction between the European presence and BCR. Dirk Jacobs (ULB) and Pascal Delwit (ULB) have investigated the degree of political participation and the electoral impact of EU citizens in BCR against the background of the municipal elections in October 2006. (After all, under the Maastricht Treaty non-Belgian EU citizens have the right to participate in Belgian local council elections, and did so for the first time in October 2000, allowing for a first comparative analysis.) **In 2000 EU citizens hardly exercised their newly acquired rights of local political participation, either as a voter or as a candidate. In 2006, the degree of participation in municipal elections again turned out to be very low, in spite of efforts to inform and stimulate them.**

The actual electoral impact of EU citizens remains limited as a result of a low degree of registration of potential voters, in spite of the fact that they really do represent a large enough potential to exercise considerable political influence. The figures speak for themselves. (In all 19 BCR municipalities, the potential electoral impact of EU citizens outweighs that of non-EU citizens, ranging from 8.5 % in Ganshoren to over 32 % in Sint-Gillis.) **On the whole, the number of potential EU voters in BCR amounts to no less than 136,482, of which a mere 18,682 were registered in 2006. They have a potential electoral impact of 18.31 %, but their actual impact is only 3.16 %. In some municipalities, the EU citizens could even seize power and decide which coalition is to be established and who will end up in the opposition.**

The authors seriously doubt if this low level of participation can be significantly increased in the future through information campaigns, because of the bureaucratic registration procedure and the compulsory vote. **The local political integration of EU citizens, as well as non-EU citizens, could be simplified - as the authors claim - by cancelling the registration procedure and compulsory vote after registration.** They suggest boosting local political integration of all non-Belgians by sending all of them a ballot and giving them the choice of whether or not to vote. The Belgian government could take the initiative to introduce this reform, but the rest is up to the EU citizens themselves. However, the vast majority of this group does not seem to consider it a moral duty to participate in local political life, nor sees any real benefits in it.

Interaction between the EU and Belgian governments: from 'Beliris' to 'Euriris'?

The implantation of European institutions is a complex field of political cooperation, where on the one hand the Belgian federal government and BCR have had to establish some form of dialogue and structural cooperation and, on the other hand, an evolution has taken place towards a structured 'multilogue' between Belgian governments and European institutions.

I draw your attention to the contribution of Johanne Poirier (ULB). (She points out the significance and difficulties when setting up consultation structures between government entities, which, in themselves, already have quite a complex structure, both concerning the number of government layers and the opposing agenda's of political agents that sometimes exist. **The lack of institutionalisation in an interinstitutional dialogue was the result of the fact that cooperation was simply not a priority among the various Belgian and European political and administrative agents. This situation has only recently started to change.** Poirier has taken stock of the attempts to provide structure in the dialogue between Belgian government partners, some of which were short-lived, while others withstood the test of time and changing political majorities. Inside the Belgian government and between the Belgian government entities, community conflicts relating to the structure and future of Brussels were of course an important factor as well. The Flemish were keeping a sceptical eye on the way BCR was profiling itself as a privileged and indispensable partner to the EU. It stands to reason that BCR would aim to reinforce its autonomy and position within the Belgian federal system and does so, among others, by setting itself up as a crucial partner to the European institutions in the debate on Brussels. This dialogue between Belgium and Europe has been repeatedly (re)started and interrupted since the beginning of the 1990's. The European institutions have participated in certain multilateral initiatives launched by BCR, sometimes assisted by the federal government. These initiatives however, are characterised by a lack of continuity, with the exception of the Brussels-Europe Liaison Office, established by the BCR. But that serves a different purpose and was not meant to promote the interinstitutional dialogue.

The author concludes that the Brussels-Europe dialogue seems to have been consolidated since 2003, in part because of the European Commission taking the first step to institutionalise it. **The Brussels-Europe Task Force, for example, has now set out on the road of institutionalisation**, however modest and pragmatic it may be. The dialogue between the EU and the Belgian governments is finally finding structure and stability, a change for the better, undoubtedly. The fact that it took so long, but is now finally happening, is due to the urgent necessity both Europe and Belgium are experiencing to find solutions for the urban problems surrounding the European institutions. The expansion of the EU and the growth of its institutions have only increased their need for space, which has forced a rationalisation. According to Poirier, it is theoretically possible to complement the 'organic' cooperation with a contractual form of cooperation, which is why she concludes by investigating the hypothesis of "Euriris", in the wake of a Beliris where the European institutions would be included. An obstacle in realising this line of thought is that neither the EU, nor the member states would be likely to be persuaded to contribute financially to solve the problems Brussels is suffering concerning urbanism and mobility, while the Belgian governments are not keen to open this debate while the risk of relocating the European institutions continues to exist. Furthermore, a "Euriris" and a form of co-financing by the EU would have the disadvantage that agents in Brussels and Belgium would have to relinquish their decision-making power and cancel their own priorities. This is why she advocates continuing along the pragmatic road of structured multilateral debate, as it was shaped in the Task Force.

The next theme in the political interaction between Brussels and Europe concerns **the European regional policy and the degree to which BCR is profiling itself in the framework of this European policy strategy and manages to obtain funds from the European structure funds for urban renewal.** Two contributions deal with the interactions between Brussels and Europe in the framework of the European regional policy. Political scientist Gaëlle Hubert (FUSL) analyses the

global political decision-making process to find out how the BCR has been organised to influence that process.

In general, her contribution shows that BCR is in fact succeeding in translating the European regional policy into a regional Brussels approach, thanks to its degree of constitutional autonomy and through direct debate with the European institutions. Unlike most European regions, who are limited to a mere lobbying strategy, BCR is a full political agent trying to obtain European funds directly in order to support its regional development policy. Unfortunately, BCR is not a homogenous government entity, it is politically and territorially fragmented. As a consequence, a multitude of agents are interacting with each other to construct the BCR strategy concerning the European regional politics. And that 'intra-Brussels' decision-making is absorbing huge amounts of political energy.

Joost Vaesen uses the issue of urban renewal and European funds to investigate the complexity of intergovernmental relations in BCR where the European Union is concerned.

From a political point of view, the urban issue is an important priority for the European Union. It considers cities as important actors for economic, social and cultural reasons. Several European financing channels provide the European capital with the possibility of financing all sorts of projects to enhance its urban entity. Vaesen analyses the interaction between supra- and subnational government levels using two European programmes related to urban renewal (Urban 1 & 2; Objective 2). After all, the urban area in Brussels is characterised by segregation and duality, a trend which started with the suburbanisation of the 1960's and 1970's and which finally resulted in the spatial and socio-economic duality of Brussels. The institutional instability of Belgium in the 1970's and 1980's is to blame for the lack of initiative from the Belgian government to tackle this problem. In 1989, the newly established BCR immediately received jurisdiction for urban renewal, which heralded in a new era.

Vaesen investigates the factors which played a role in the decision-making process for selected European funds and tracks down which European funds were disbursed in Brussels and the relative types of projects selected. In addition to the financing of these projects, he investigates the interaction between the various governments involved: the European Union, Belgium, BCR, the Communities/the Community Commissions and the municipalities of Brussels. The relationships between the various governments, including the concepts behind this policy, are of vital importance. Vaesen concludes that, in spite of the proximity of the European institutions, financial support from European funds in Brussels is limited, though by no means negligible. Its importance lies in the concentration of means by limiting projects geographically based on the principle of territorial redistribution and solidarity. As a result, European funds for urban renewal have been concentrated and applied in certain neglected districts to complement or reinforce existing regional initiatives. A total of 88 projects in seven municipalities were selected within the framework of Urban 1 & 2 and Objective 2 between 1994 and 2006 for a total amount of EUR 133 million. (His analysis of the government interactions within the Brussels model between regional and municipal and administrative authorities leads Vaesen to conclude that BCR allocated part of the European funds to finance its own projects, reinforcing its position as a subnational agent in the federal network. The execution of urban renewal programmes further demonstrates the important role municipalities continue to play and how this policy creates a balance between BCR and local governments as well as a partnership model.)

The impact of European and international presence on the linguistic evolution in BCR: the rise of a multilingual region

The presence of European and international institutions have irrefutably had a large and very real impact on the cultural and linguistic area occupied by BCR and its periphery. The language usage of European officials and EU citizens in Brussels is being investigated Rudi Janssens (BRIO), who is responsible for the periodical follow-up of the capital's linguistic evolution, the so-called Language Barometer. He not only researches the language, but also assesses the identification process of EU officials and other EU citizens in Brussels, two groups which generally do not display the same behaviour in both areas. Taking into account the large number of EU citizens living in Brussels and its outskirts, it is obvious that they have had a strong influence on the evolution of the linguistic landscape. At the start of 2004 BCR, the Flemish district Halle-Vilvoorde and the Walloon district Nivelles together counted almost 200,000 EU citizens from just one of the then 15 member states. The impact of the EU's expansion (2004, 2007) to the current 27 member states has not yet been included in these figures. In 2005, EU citizens represented a group of no less than 154,693 or 15.37 % of the total population of BCR (1,006,749 inhabitants). Where the capital used to be dominated by the French language, it has now evolved into a multilingual region, where French of course still plays an important role, but no longer has the monopoly as lingua franca. English has gained increased importance as the official language on the shop floor and in the social life of EU citizens in Brussels.

Concerning the relationship between language and identity/identification, Janssens points to the negative attitude of a large group of EU citizens towards the Flemish. Though further research is needed to pinpoint the cause, he sees a number of explanations. Besides the fact that they have limited contact with the Dutch-speaking population, their only source of information on Flanders and the Flemish is the French media. Tense political relations between both language communities have had a strong impact on news coverage and on the representation of the other community. From his data analysis, Janssens concludes that this negative identification with Flanders more often than not originates from the association of 'Flemish' with 'extremism' and 'nationalism'; concepts non-Belgians are cautious to identify with. A number of Flemish are also opposed to a non-Dutch-speaking presence in the *Vlaamse Rand* fearing the EU citizens will politically reinforce the position of the Francophones, which, as Janssens immediately continues, is an unfounded fear. Interviews with EU officials make it clear that they would indeed like to participate in local elections, but that they prefer not to be involved in the heated debate between Flemish and French-speaking sides. Janssens' analysis leaves the Flemish Community to conclude that it is important to include this challenge in its policy for Flanders and Brussels to get rid of this negative perception.

European schools in Brussels: a model for multilingual education in Brussels?

Two contributions concern the the European schools in Brussels. Out of a total of thirteen European schools, no less than three are located in BCR (Uccle, 1958; Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, 1974; Elsene, 2000). This should come as no surprise since these educational institutions have been established by the EU member states to provide an education for the children of European personnel. Together, all European schools located in Brussels account for over 8,500 students, almost half of the total number of students in all European schools. The continued expansion of the EU is causing the number of students in Brussels' European schools to keep increasing, which in turn prompted the Belgian government to build a fourth school at the site of the *Cadettenschool* in Laken, which will accommodate 2,500 students in 2010-2011.

Laurence Vancrayebeck and Xavier Delgrange, both lawyers at FUSL, investigated the legal status of these European schools, which is governed by both a European agreement (1957, 1994) and the public law of the member state where they are located. The authors have conducted research into whether the European legal status of European schools in Brussels is compatible with Belgian constitutional principles.

Since European schools have been specifically designed as institutions for multilingual and multicultural education, the question arises whether it could serve as a model for the entire education system in Brussels. Judging by the number of students and schools, European schools are of course a minority in the linguistic and educational landscape of Europe, but in the context of Brussels, where they will accommodate over 10,000 students as of 2010-2011, their impact is more significant.

Sociolinguist Alex Housen (CLIN & BRIO, VUB) has described the structure and educational intent of the European schools and carried out research into their multilingual development. He concludes that it would currently be inappropriate or at least premature to simply transpose the model of the European school to other contexts. Given the complexity of language learning processes and the results of the multilingual system of education in European schools, further research would be no luxury. In European schools in Brussels, over 50 % of students prefer French as their second language, followed by English (40 %) and German (10 %). However, the increasing number of students from the new Eastern-European member states is slowly tipping the scales in favour of English. The European schools are generally considered as successful model institutions and certainly contribute to reducing ethnolinguistic and nationalist tensions. Concerning the results of language education in European schools, Housen underlines the interaction between language learning inside and outside the curriculum/school. Comparative research has shown that students' results show a significant improvement when, in addition to learning French or English at school, they have the opportunity or are forced to use these languages outside the school context as well, which in Brussels is more the case for French than it is for English. While a comparison of study results of Dutch, French and Greek students may have shown that Dutch speaking students are faster at learning English, it also demonstrated that by the end of secondary education, all three groups in European schools have reached a high degree of language skills in that language, a level that is higher than traditional education and at the very least comparable to other models of bi- and multilingual education. In any case, good multilingual results are the fruit of a learning process which begins in elementary school and really takes off at the start of secondary education. Even in a European school, learning a foreign language is not a simple given.

3. Pressure points and areas of tension

The 'imagining' and representation of Brussels as capital of Europe

Certain specific pressure points in the relationship between Brussels and Europe have been studied as well, because the representation of Brussels as European centre of power is dogged by negative connotations and the spatial implantation of European institutions at the level of urban planning has always been problematic.

What efforts have been made to 'imagine' and represent Brussels as capital of Europe in a positive light and have they had any success?

The last question has been tackled by Vincent Calay (IGEAT, ULB) and Reinoud Magosse (Cosmopolis, VUB). Through a critical discourse analysis, they have deconstructed the representation of Brussels as European capital in an effort to determine the relationships of power between the underlying agents. They show how the "euroscapes" in Brussels and the image of Brussels and the EU are being constructed by numerous "imagineers", ranging from architects and real estate agents to authors of tourist guides and journalists.

Even though Brussels has often been represented as the capital of Europe in the past, this discursive strategy is not enough to counteract the lack of a strong positive image for Brussels, which is linked to the institutional deadlock of the EU after failed referenda on a European constitution. Calay and Magosse assess how the Prodi-Verhofstadt report (2001) has

played a role in the formalisation process of Brussels as capital of Europe, while at the same time fuelling public debate on the way this mission should be accomplished.

An analysis of the European press (June 2003 - June 2005) shows that the international media, which is represented in Brussels by over 1,000 reporters, has strongly contributed to creating a deep-rooted anti-Brussels image. Brussels is acknowledged as the main centre of decision-making, but as the 'de facto' capital of the EU it is mostly represented as the face of the European 'Moloch'.

This negative representation is further enhanced by the fact that the European public is informed on the EU through the national press, because of a lack of a strong European press.

Calay and Magosse have analysed a number of recent attempts to reconstruct a more positive image of Brussels and Europe in the wake of the Prodi-Verhofstadt report. For example, the exhibition *How Brussels became the capital of Europe* (2005) has contributed to the construction of the European identity of Brussels, while the Berlage Institute presented a utopian plan redesigning Brussels as the capital of Europe.

However, the authors conclude that these initiatives are not yet sufficient to outweigh the negative representation and that a coordination of all attempts to positively represent and 'imagine' Brussels as the European capital is imminent, presupposing a coherent vision of a future-oriented urban project, supported by a coalition of local and global agents.

To that effect it is worth mentioning that the BCR government presented the International Development Plan (IDP) for Brussels at the beginning of the political year in October 2007, which set out the main lines for a strategy aimed at reinforcing the international appeal of the capital.

Urban planning and the European Quarter: a laborious evolution towards a visionary pragmatism and a public-private partnership

One of the factors that has complicated the systematic development of the European Quarter's development right from the start, is connected with the fact that the European institutions have been spatially implanted in an existing district, implying a radical intervention in the urban tissue.

In theory, a European administrative district could have been envisaged as an entirely new part of the city, but the laborious decision-making on the seat issue is explanation enough why carrying out such a plan would have been far from easy.

Annette Kuhk puts the development of the European Quarter in the perspective of a dynamic and complex, multilayered development and interaction process. The former Leopold district has undergone drastic changes after the establishment and growth of the European Quarter in terms of ground allocation, urban density, ownership structures, scale, social circumstances, density and composition of the population or the skyline. Establishing the European institutions in Brussels has left an indelible impression on the entire city, but most of all on the Schuman and Leopold district. This once residential district today houses mostly office buildings (90 %).

Many different agents and parties have been involved in the urban development (municipalities, BCR, the federal state, European institutions, property developers, local residents, visitors), which strongly complicated the development of a global town planning vision for the location of Europe in Brussels. Different agents have very differing views on the radical changes in the district. Local residents experienced the changes as cataclysmic. Developing a pied-à-terre for the European institutions was already far from simple, especially when it was further

complicated by the fact that they were permanently growing and the EU has been expanded in a phased approach.

Kuhk reminds us that constructing the Berlaymont building was not the first intervention, marking the conversion of the Leopold district from a residential to an office district, but this first construction project consolidated the option to establish the European administrative centre in an existing part of the city and as such has had far reaching consequences. The initial idea to house all European institutions in a single building had already been abandoned when the construction of the Berlaymont building was completed in 1968. Kuhk reveals how the urban planning of the European Quarter was hampered from the start by dynamics that were even hampering each other, not to mention that they were progressing at different speeds. The development of the European Quarter was thwarted by economic and urban dynamics, as well as by long-term and phased political processes of change by both the Belgian state reform and the European institutional unification.

Kuhk points out that, for example, a more timely decision on the permanent location(s) of the institutions would have allowed for more rational planning, rather than the heavy and forced improvisation as a result of temporary seats. In addition, we should not underestimate the impact of the state reform process and the accompanying political institutional instability concerning the decision-making for town planning in general and the European Quarter in particular. Kuhk correlates the development of the European Quarter since the end of the 1950's with the dynamics of these different layers, and analyses the role of various government and private agents.

She also pays considerable attention to recent evolutions, which as of 2001 have resulted in encouraging a prospective master plan for the European Quarter, starting with the *Schéma Directeur/Richtschema* (2001) and the *Ombudsplan* (2003) and the BCR government's decision to appoint a general coordinator to support the urban planning integration of the European institutions. According to Kuhk, the most recent *Schéma Directeur/Richtschema*, ordered by BCR at the end of 2005, is a synthesis of the best of an earlier directive urban planning schemes, demonstrating a visionary pragmatism.

The development of an urban planning policy, from preparations for decision-making to carrying out and realising the decisions reached, involves various interested parties, both government and private agents. The strategic planning and daily management of an urban environment such as the European Quarter are complex tasks for public authorities. There is no single institution or legal structure in BCR that can be considered as a 'public-private partnership' on the level of urban planning, nor any legal regulation as reference for the cooperation between public authorities and private sectors in this domain. Nonetheless, Yseult Marique (CDPub/ULB) has analysed all legal structures, which have offered the various agents the possibility to formally debate and give structure to their common interests.

On an international level, in both specialised literature and practical policy, the public-private partnership is considered a possible solution to tackle the challenges of any urban policy. In their vision on urban politics and social cohesion, both the OECD and the EU emphasise the need to mobilise private partners, not just the private sector, but also the local population and NGOs to participate in the planning of urban development. In any case, financing an urban renewal policy can only be based on a public-private cooperation, which, at the same time, can generate an innovative approach. Private companies have always participated in the development of public infrastructure, the public road network and urbanisation. In a historic perspective, this is even more true for the Leopold district, as the active involvement of real estate agents such as the 'Compagnie Immobilière de Belgique' proves. But the involvement of the private sector has long been frowned upon and mistrusted, not only by part of the population but by political agents as well, fearing the consequences on the architectural heritage caused by real estate speculation.

A constructive form of cooperation has nonetheless become ever more imminent, partly with the perspective of the EU's expansion and the expected growth of institutions located in Brussels in terms of the number of personnel members and visitors, required office space and numerous other infrastructural facilities, related to mobility and safety, for example. Marique analyses the factors that have increasingly forced both public governments and the centrefield (associations of residents and districts) and economic agents to deliberate and cooperate, and how public-private relations have taken a new, more constructive turn since the beginning of 2000. If the Belgian state is forced to rely on private investors, then both public and private sectors benefit from a well-structured debate with residents, who could initiate time-consuming procedures to protest against town planning permits. Using the example of the 'Résidence Palace', which the Belgian government had suggested in 2002 could serve as headquarters for the European Council and as a permanent meeting place of the European summits, Marique then illustrates how the government was gradually forced to abandon its policy of unilateral interventions because of the double dependence between associations of residents and districts on the one hand and real estate agents and investors on the other.

Her analysis of the way in which the public-private cooperation was shaped throughout the urban (re-)planning of the European Quarter, shows that a practical, new and flexible form of good urban management has grown, which does indeed aim to reconcile the opposing interests in the European Quarter through debate and contract-based links. The European Quarter Fund of the King Baudouin Foundation has acted as a catalyst and interface in this process. Via urban planning charges and supervision, the government has held on to its traditional instruments, allowing for unilateral interventions. According to Marique, a clear trend exists towards reinforcing mutual trust, which can be seen in the increased transparency of urban planning charges, even though the long called for register to trace the source and destination of these charges has yet to be put in place. **The issue of the 'Résidence Palace', for which the federal and regional governments and the governments of the three municipalities involved reached a cooperation protocol in 2006, again illustrates how government agents have switched from a unilateral to a concerted application of their respective jurisdiction and have set up a multilateral government instrument, which has published and increased transparency for the strategic planning in the development of this project.**

The impact of European institutions on urban safety: no specific safety policy but pragmatic mobilisation

What is the impact of European presence on the policy of Brussels concerning urban safety? Julien Pieret (CDPub/ULB) investigates how the physical presence of the European institutions in the Brussels-Capital Region is influencing the standards, strategies and practices of the safety policy in Brussels. This presence may not have caused a substantial change in the urban safety policy, but it certainly has reinforced its logic as well as internal tensions.

First of all, Pieret points out that **guaranteeing the external safety of the European institutions, their personnel and the diplomats, is actually the result of a general international legal obligation**, which is binding for the national government of any guest nations of international institutions.

The European institutions have irrefutably influenced the deployment of the Belgian urban safety policy in Brussels, but their presence is not at the base of a special safety policy, which would have been developed for that purpose alone. Throughout the Belgian safety discourse, there are really only marginal references to the international institutions, with the exception of the war against terrorism, which may cause an increased threat because of this very presence in Brussels.

The actual shop floor shows a strict separation between the external security of European buildings and public roads, for which federal and local police have jurisdiction and which requires considerable extra effort, especially during European summits, and internal security, for which the European institutions have exclusive jurisdiction. In essence, EU buildings and diplomats have the same level of protection as non-EU diplomats and their offices.

The impact of European institutional presence on the Brussels safety policy and the method of Belgian law enforcement agencies is therefore quantitative, not qualitative. Naturally, the quantitative increase in the need for security and efficient actions and measures does of course require additional means. However, according to Pieret these **additional means**, which are obtained through Beliris (1993) and the fund established in 2001 to finance the international and capital role of Brussels, **are mostly and directly going towards the Brussels police zones, and therefore also to the municipalities and citizens.** After all, this extra money allows for additional investments, such as equipment and telecommunication or language training for Brussels police agents.

The presence of the European institutions and increased efforts during European summits have also been an excellent opportunity to gain experience through trial-and-error concerning safety coordination, both between the various police zones and between the federal and local government levels. Even though some suggest the threat of a terrorist attack would be greater in Brussels than elsewhere because of the presence of international institutions - not just the EU but NATO as well - Pieret thinks it unfair to unequivocally blame the increase of Belgian legislative initiatives in the framework of the war on terrorism on the institutional establishment of international organisations in Brussels. Since the war on terrorism is a priority objective for the entire EU as well as outside of it, Belgium would have had to have taken those legislative measures - some five between 2003 and 2007 - in any case.

It is even striking to notice that the protection of international organisations is not a special priority in any document concerning the Belgian safety policy. Pieret sees two factors to account for the absence of a special safety policy, which would have been drafted with the European institutions exclusively in mind: an urbanistic and a democratic-ideological factor. First of all, the international and European institutions in Brussels have not been established in their own exclusive city district, but have instead been spread over various municipalities in an urban environment with various functions, making it a practical impossibility to screen off some sort of permanent neutral and secured zone. Political proposals to exclusively reserve one location or the other, such as Heysel or Tour & Taxis, for lockdown European summits, have even been rejected precisely in order not to reinforce the negative representation of the EU as a 'fortress'. Interviews with European agents have allowed Pieret to conclude that the idea of a safety policy at two different rates, one for normal Belgian citizens and one special policy for EU personnel, cannot count on much support, either in the sense of a neutral zone, or in the sense of more personalised security for staff. Incidentally, police statistics show that the areas where the European institutions are located are proportionally less conducive to crime than other zones in BCR. The only perk EU officials enjoy compared to Belgians, is the commitment to offer them similar treatment regarding victim counselling as for diplomats or the personnel of other international institutions.

In short, European presence in Brussels has had a relative quantitative impact on safety measures, resulting in a pragmatic mobilisation that has emphasised or improved certain aspects of the police reform. The theory that the institutional presence of the EU in Brussels would have caused certain secret mechanisms and procedures to have been put into motion to protect the urban environment has no bearing on reality, not to mention the idea that the establishment of international institutions in Brussels would have fuelled an ideological instrumentalisation or a modification of the urban safety paradigm towards increased social control, which would have been pushed through at the expense of the democratic constitutional state. This is certainly good news indeed.