



Sight seeing tour - Wallonie



Description of the flag

The flag of the French Community in Belgium is a red cock on a yellow background. It lifts one of his legs, and faces the hoist. The Walloon region, which actually is a part of the French Community, hasn't got a flag. (Filip Van Laenen, 17-sep-1995)

Laws concerning the flag

Law of the Walloon assembly of 16 March/20 April 1913 (this assembly is the assembly of the then Walloon movement, not the assembly of a Walloon region or community). Law of 20 July 1975: flag of the French cultural community. The law mentions also a community day.

Law of the 3 July 1991 concerning the emblems of the French community (replacing the French cultural community). Here are shown official pictures (black and white) for flag, arms and seal. Proportions of the flag: 2:3 with specifications concerning the position of the cock in the flag. There is also a standard for the high authorities of the community. It is yellow with the red cock, red and yellow fringed and has the proportions 26:30 (cms).

"The bold cock is inscribed in an invisible circle, the center of which is the same as the center of the field, the diameter of which is equal to the hoist and the circumference of which goes thru the tips of the upper and lower feathers of the tail and the tip of the raised foot. The horizontality of the cock is determined by an invisible straight line from the top of the crest to the tip of the upper feather of the tail." (Bill Thayer, 19-May-1996)

The flag of the community flies on 27 September (community day) on the public buildings of the French speaking region. It also flies on the official buildings in the same conditions and on the same days as the Belgian national flag. In the bilingual region of Brussels-capital, the flag flies on 27 September on the public buildings which exclusively belong to the French community.

There are no laws concerning emblems for the Walloon region, but as the flag flies also in the Walloon region (the territory of the French community is composed of the Walloon region and also of Brussels) and as it was in the past the "Walloon flag", it is also de facto the flag of this region. (Pascal Vagnat, 17-May-1996)

Name of the flag

In Wallonia, the flag is called "le coq hardi". (P. Vagnat, 29-Nov-1995)

Wallonia Flag – 1998

The Belgium region of Wallonia has adopted its own flag and own coat of arms on 23-July-1998. The flag is exactly the same as the one adopted by the French community in 1991, with an identical coat-of-arms as the French region. The authorities can use the same car flag as the French community. Only the seal is a bit different, in the sense that the words are "REGION WALLONNE."

It shall again be noted that in Belgium only the Flemish/French/German speaking communities can officially adopt their own flags and coats of arms. The regions of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels cannot adopt flags and coats of arms; however all of the communities and regions have adopted more or less official flags and coats of arms (or an emblem in the case of Brussels). The Flemish case is particular in the sense that the legislative and executive powers mixed at the beginning of the 1980's so that the flag of the community is also at the same time the flag of the region, or simply the flag of Flanders.

The Walloon parliament has also adopted an hymn: "Le chant de Wallons." Source: Moniteur Belge of 8-August-1998 (Pascal Vagnat, 13-Oct-1998)

Some words on our Provinces

At the end of the 18th century, distances being calculated according to the speed of the man or the horse; the country was organized in territories, close to our current Provinces, in such a way that each inhabitant could, in one half-day, go with a horse to the nearest city where he had to pay his taxes.

In 1830 (at the time of the independence of Belgium), 9 Provinces were organized:

Antwerp – East Flanders - Western Flanders - Limbourg in the north of the country, Hainaut - Liege - Luxembourg - Namur in the south, and Brabant in the center.

Since January 1, 1995, Belgium has been divided into 10 Provinces, owing to the fact that the Brabant was divided into 3 parts: The Flemish Brabant, the Walloon Brabant and the Area of the Capital City of Brussels (not being a Province).

The Province deals with the provincial interests: i.e. This means that each Province can decide what is best for its own inhabitants, provided that neither the State, nor the Communities or Areas have the responsibility and the duty of it. The Provinces are however subjected to the supervision of the areas; each one of their decisions is controlled and can thus be modified or cancelled.

The Provinces differ from/to each other by their activities and their priorities which vary according to the specific needs of their inhabitants:

Example: There are many farmers in Luxembourg. Hainaut is an industrial area, ...

The future of the Provinces is discussed. Indeed, with the creation of the Regions and the Communities, some claim that the Provinces are not necessary any more whereas others want to preserve them.

Some words on our Communes.

The commune is present in all the aspects of the daily life. The Commune is the smallest division of the country and exists in Belgium since 1830.

The commune is directed by people who live in it and who were chosen by their population. The commune does not have all the capacities and must return accounts, for example, with its Region. Belgium counts: 262 communes in Region Wallonne, 19 in the Brussels Area and 308 in the Flemish Area.

The commune deals with:

- Police, fire department, etc...
- General administration such as: marital status, births, deaths, the family structure, the residence, unemployment, identity papers and passports ...
- Cultural activities such as : school, library, young's houses, social assistance, convalescent homes, hospital
- Public work: they are responsible for the distribution of water, gas and electricity.

Liège



Liège (The capital of Wallonie) is also home to Belgium's national pastry (waffles) and is the country's biggest French speaking city outside Brussels. You may be interested in visiting the Musée d'Armes (the second largest in Europe) and the Musée d'Art Wallon.

Head to the citadelle for a view of the city or the Carré if you just want to hang out.

Tournai



The second oldest city in Belgium was the capital of France during the fifth century and today still bears a strong French influence. Tournai boasts a Grand Place with an impressive cathedral and 13th-century belfry.

Waterloo



18 JUNE 1815 - The battle of Waterloo

The three protagonists of the Battle of Waterloo:
The Duke of Wellington, Napoleon and Marshal Blücher

In 1814 Napoleon had been exiled to the Island of Elba, but escaped to France in March 1815.

Very quickly he managed to form a new army with which he wanted to reconquer his lost empire. The first part that he wanted to reconquer was Belgium and Holland. The European powers, at Congress in Vienna, mobilized their armies to defeat Napoleon. Two major armies made their way to Belgium.

The first one was an army consisting of divisions from different countries (Belgian, Dutch, British) under the command of the Duke of Wellington. The second army came from Prussia and was led by Marshal Blücher.

The preliminary battles at Ligny and Quatre Bras.

The armies already clashed before the actual battle took place. Blücher and the Prussian army fought Napoleon at Ligny, a village north east of Charleroi on the 16th of June. However, Blücher and his troops were forced to retreat. A part of the army of the Duke of Wellington tried to drive the French army back at Quatre Bras, the crossroads of the Brussels-Charleroi and Namur-Nivelles roads. Also Wellington did not succeed and he had to retire to the plains south of Waterloo where he waited for the big confrontation on the 18th. Blücher managed to send a message to Wellington that he would be able to join him on the battlefield at Waterloo, but probably only later in the day. Napoleon thought that the Prussian army had been defeated and that he would only have to face the Wellington troops.



The battle.

On the night before the battle it had rained heavily and both the French and Allied armies had spent the night in the mud and the pouring rain. The troops of Wellington occupied the northern part of the plains of Mont-Saint-Jean and were situated behind a sunken lane, which later proved to be a strategic advantage for the Duke, because the French infantry and cavalry kept fallen inside this sunken land and thereby hindering each other to move further north.

The battlefield was situated around three large farmhouses. On the far left was the Hougomont house, in the middle the Haie Sainte farm and at the extreme right was the Papellotte farm. The French offensive started at 12 o'clock at Hougomont farm. It was never taken. It was garrisoned by British troops from before the battle began and was held at the time of the victory. Later during the day heavy fights took place around the farms of Haie Sainte and Papellote.

La Haie Sainte was taken in late afternoon but for only a short period, because the French for most of the day poured their resources into trying to take Hougomont. By the late afternoon the chances for

both armies were still fifty-fifty. But, around that time the Blücher's troops started to arrive coming from Wavre to assist the army of Wellington.

By then, the French army was surrounded by the two forces and could no longer withstand the joint attacks of allied troops. By the beginning of the evening Napoleon had to withdraw his troops from the battlefield and start the escape back to France. Later, Blücher and Wellington met each other near the Belle Alliance farmhouse and congratulated each other with the final victory over Napoleon.

On the 18th of June 191.300 soldiers fought one of the most decisive battles in the history of Europe in only one day. The Wellington army had 67.000 soldiers, Blücher's army 52.300 and Napoleon's army 72.000. A total of 48.500 men fell or were severely wounded.

After the battle, the territory of the battlefield was given to the Wellington family by the newly formed state of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Later several monuments were erected in commemoration of the different army divisions who fought the battle of Waterloo.

Spa

It doesn't always have to be beer !

Belgians like healthy drinks, hence their love for beer. They also like a change once in a while, hence their love for a lot of different beers andwater. One of the most famous mineral waters that can be found in Belgian supermarkets is the SPA brand (Another famous mineral water is called "Chaufontaine", named after the neighbouring town of the same name) . Already in the 16th century the SPA water was exported. Some of the regular customers were the kings of France (Henry III). Shortly before the First World War a water exporting company was founded, called SPA-MONOPOLE. It is still now the only exploiting company of the very good Spa water. Its main symbol has always been the red clown trying desperately to put the bubbling water back into the Spa bottle.



In the English language there is a specific word for 'health resort' or 'place with thermal baths', namely the word Spa. Very often people don't know that in the Walloon region of Belgium lies the beautiful city of SPA. The name of this city has become a synonym of 'thermal bath' or 'health resort' since the 17th century. Already the Romans had discovered the benefits of this watery place and the name of the city probably comes from the Latin words 'espa' (fountain) and 'sparsa' (from spargere = to bubble up).

At the end of the Middle Ages, SPA became more and more famous and started to attract a lot of people who visited the place to use the water for their health benefits. Soon, SPA became known as 'the Café of Europe'.

Nowadays, SPA still shows the 'grandeur' of its past.

Circuit of Spa- Francorchamps

Early in 1920, two people well-known in the car racing world, the one being Jules de Thier, Manager of the newspaper " La Meuse ", and the other, Henri Langlois Van Ophem, Chairman of the Sports Commission at the RACB (Royal Automobile Club Belgium), had the idea of taking advantage of the triangle drawn by the roads connecting Malmedy, Stavelot and Francorchamps to make a racing track of it.

While enjoying an ideal spot in these green Ardennes, the track stretched in a hilly landscape but was also made of numerous straight portions, particularly suitable to achieve high speeds. Moreover, being close to Spa, already famous on the international scale for its hydrotherapy, and where some car races had been popular for a few years, this track seemed to have a lot of assets to be successful. Therefore, a race was already scheduled for the following year.



Prepared for August 1921, that race for cars could unfortunately not take place, due to a lack of representation. Indeed, although everything was ready, only one competitor was registered on the entry form.

Eventually, the track was inaugurated by the motorcyclists, while the motorists started in 1922.

1924 saw the first organisation of the famous 24 Hours of Francorchamps, only one year after Le Mans, whereas the first real big international race for single-seaters, the European Grand Prix, was run in 1925. Seven cars took part in this event which saw the victory of the famous Alfa Romeo driver, Antonio Ascari.

During the period extending from the mid-twenties until the eve of World War II, the motorcycles Grand Prix and the prestigious car races like the 24 Hours of Francorchamps and the Belgian Grand Prix were going to be the major track events. As far as the track is concerned, it remained roughly the same as it used to be in the beginning.

But something new occurred in 1939 : Francorchamps was getting an artificial curve, unique in its kind : the " raidillon " or steep rise. That obstacle, intended to be passed at a very high speed, was a forerunner of the orientation its manager wanted to give to the track : to make it one the fastest tracks in Europe, contrasting sharply that way with its German neighbour of The Eifel, which was very spectacular too but much more tortuous and therefore one of the slowest.

World War II was going to interrupt the life of the track for seven long years during which that part of the Ardennes was little spared.

1947 saw the sports activities resume in the area around " L'Eau Rouge ".

Once again, the prestigious races were in the spotlight : Motorcycles and Cars Grand Prix, to which were occasionally added the 24 Hours of the Racb, before they resumed annually from 1964.

Later on, other organisations completed that programme. So, in the late fifties, the RAC from Spa organized its Grand Prix of Spa, then, in the early seventies, the junior RAC, its 24 Hours motorcycles.

If everything seemed to develop properly, that situation would, however, only last until until 1970, when, for the last time, the Formula I Grand Prix took place along the fourteen-kilometre-long track.

Due to the claims formulated through the sixties, a certain amount of Grand Prix drivers did not want to run in Francorchamps any longer for security reasons, which were quite difficult to solve for the Intercommunale Managers. The tune was however given. Because, even if the other races usually scheduled still took place, it was getting obvious that along its fourteen kilometres, the track had become very dangerous considering the increased performance of the cars and the few possibilities left to adapt the surroundings as it was the case when new tracks were built.

The end of the big Francorchamps was close. They were bound to react if they wanted to preserve the track and create one which took better into account the safety measures claimed by the Grand Prix drivers.

So, after different plans aimed at preserving the main characteristics of the track while eliminating some high risk areas (essentially the part included between Les Combes and Blanchimont), a track was eventually chosen and the works could start.

The seven-kilometre-long track was inaugurated in 1979.

More technical, winding and equipped with clearance areas, the new track kept the major part of the element which made it famous while combining improved safety for the pilots and new appeal for the spectators.

Thanks to the new track, the Belgian Formula I Grand Prix would quickly come back to Francorchamps. That race was a major event which would pave the way for many others, with less media coverage, but which contributed to make Francorchamps more dynamic, to diversify its kind of activities and to put it at the forefront of the international stage.

F1 calendar for the 2007 season

It looks like the 2007 calander has been trimmed down a little.

The European GP and San Marino GP's have been axed, making the season now 17 races.

The good news is that Belgium makes a welcome return.

Australia, March 18

Malaysia, April 08

Bahrain, April 15
Spain, May 13
Monaco, May 27
Canada, June 10
United States, June 17
France, July 01
United Kingdom, July 08
Germany, July 22
Hungary, August 05
Turkey, August 26
Italy, September 09
Belgium, September 16
China, September 30
Japan, October 07
Brazil, October 21

So Australia keeps the season opener, and Brazil again get's the closing race.

Bastogne (The Battle of the Bulges)

Bastogne Historical Center.

The central town square has been renamed 'McAuliffe'- square after W.W.II. On the corner of the square stands an American Sherman Tank as a symbol of the victorious US Army in the Battle of the Bulge. This tank and its audacious crew (6 victories) managed to come very close to the hamlet Renuament, which was being heavily defended by the Germans, but got stuck in the mud and was hit by anti-tank weapons.



This is the most important of all the 'Battle of the Bulge' museums. It is situated 2km outside of Bastogne's city center, on the Mardasson hill, next to the Mardasson monument. This fascinating museum is mainly the work of one man, Mr Guy Franz Arend. Mr Arend founded the first version of the museum in the center of the city in 1950 after visitors to Bastogne had made remarks that they regretted the absence of an historical battle museum in 'Nuts City'

The first museum was quite incomplete, but very soon Mr. Arend received help (in the form of abundant and hitherto secret information) from the officers of the Historical section of the 3rd American Army, as well as encouragements from General and Mrs. McAuliffe who visited Mr. Arend. In 1965 Guy Arend was authorized to conceive an new up-to-date, all-inclusive museum about the Battle of the Bulge. The new museum Bastogne Historical Center was inaugurated on the 31st of May, 1976.

The museum displays a unique collection of uniforms, vehicles and weapons that belonged to the divisions which were involved in the battle. In the center of the museum is a presentation with slides that show the different movements of the troupes. The showpiece is the 24 minute movie compiled with footage that was shot during the battle. The museum also has a nice gift shop.

Bastogne Historical Center :

Address : Colline du Mardasson - 6600 Bastogne. Tel +32-(0)61- 21.14.13

Opening : July - August from 8.30 am to 7 pm

Mai, June, September from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm

from 20 February till 30 April and from 1 October till 31 October : from 10am to 4 pm.

Mardasson Monument

The Mardasson Memorial was built in 1950. It stands as a token of gratitude by the Belgian population for the liberation of the country by the American Army and the allies. The construction of the memorial was suggested by the Belgo-American association (a panel of several eminent Belgian personalities). By erecting this monument they wanted to remember the young Americans who came to liberate Belgium at the cost of their own lives. In total 76890 american soldiers were killed, wounded or were reported missing during the "Bataille des Ardennes".

Patton Monument

Just outside of the town center, alongside the road to Arlon, is a little park where at the back one can see the monument of General Patton, the liberator of Bastogne.