

# Field trip to Brussels 2019

## Report



Prof. Dr. Gerhard Roller

Prof. Rainer Hartmann

### Wednesday, 22 May 2019

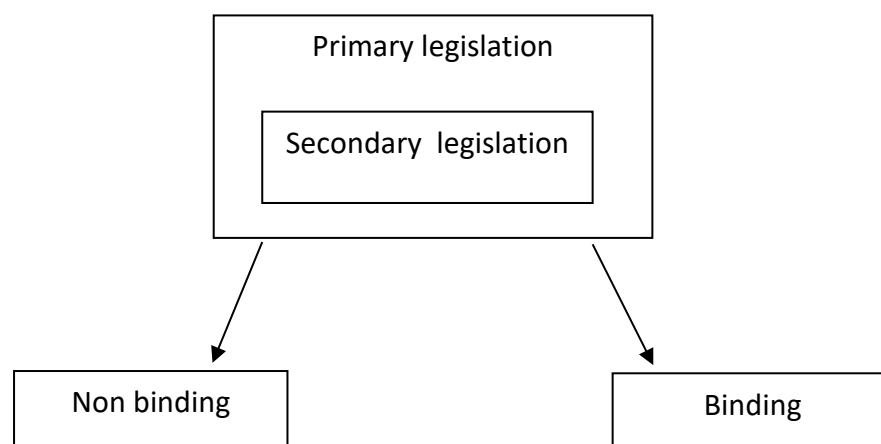
- 8:45 Meeting at Hauptbahnhof (Main station) Bingen,  
Departure at 9:06
- 13:30 Arrival in Brussels, Sleep Well Youth Hostel
- 14:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks, Meeting room
- 14:30-19:00 Free time to explore Brussels, guided city tour
- 19:30 Dinner at the Youth hostel

### Thursday, 23 May 2019

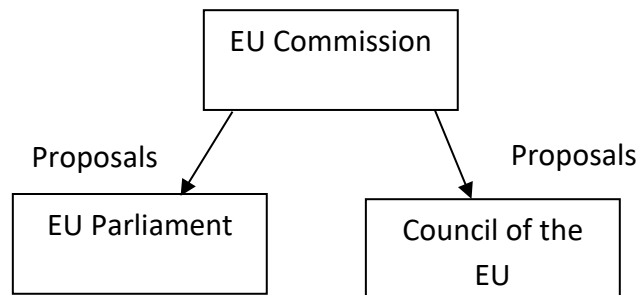
- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:45 Departure
- 9:15 Visit of the European Commission
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 House of European History
- 14:30 Council of the European Union
- 19:30 Dinner at the Youthhostel

### **Information visit of the European Commission:**

1. Mr. Lloyd HUITSON: Policy assistant- Erasmus+ Higher Education Student and Alumni Engagement and the Middle East.
  - The European commission is like a civil service in a country.
  - The EU law:



- Roles of the EU commission:



## 2. Mr. Jan STEINKOHL: Policy officer-The European energy directive

- The actual discussion at the parliament is about the discarbonisation 2050 target (Paris agreement), which is between 80% and 95% discarbonisation.
- The clean energy package (winter package) is a law, legally binding, which means if any country doesn't, reached the targets ( 20%, 20%, 20%) they will be pursued on EU court.

### House of European History

Located in the green surroundings of Parc Leopold, inside the newly renovated Eastman building, the house of European History offers exhibitions in the 24 official languages of the EU. Tailor-made resources are available to schools.

### Information visit of the European Council:

The European council gives the political guidance to the EU institutions. The meeting of head states and governments takes place inside of the EU parliament to discuss the European commission's proposals.

In the European council there is a permanent committee called Coreper, they meet twice a week and discuss instead of head of states who meet every 3 months.

The Council of EU is different of the EU council. In the council of EU takes place the meeting of Ministers from the member states.

### Friday, 24 May 2019

- 08:30 Breakfast
- 09:30 Departure
- 10:30 Visit of the European Parliament
- 12:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Visit of Climate Alliance
- 16:00 Free time to explore Brussels
- 19:30 Dinner at the SLEEP WELL hostel

#### **Information visit of the European Parliament:**

In the european parliament there are 751 memebers, the number of seats depend on the number of popualation for example:

- Germany 96 seat
- France 74
- UK 73
- Italy 73
- Malta 6
- .....

After the Brexit the seats of the United Kingdom were distributed to other countries like France which got +5 seats.

The parties inside the parliament are grouped together in political groups, which give 23 committees: EPP, S&D, ECR, ACDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL, EFDD, ENF, N-A.

The voting system in the parliament depends on the member state, in some countries the vote is fresh, in other countries it is not.

#### **BRUSSELS CITY TOUR**

##### The History Of Brussels City Hall

The oldest part of the present Town Hall is its east wing together with a shorter belfry. It was built and completed in 1420 under direction of Jacob van Thienen. Initially, future expansion of the building was not foreseen, however, the admission of the craft guilds into the traditionally patrician city government

apparently spurred interest in providing more room the building. As a result a second, somewhat longer wing was built on to the existing structure, with Charles the Bold laying its first stone in 1444.

The facade is decorated with numerous statues representing nobles, saints, and allegorical figures. The present sculptures are reproductions; the older ones are in the city museum in the 'King's House' across the Grand Place.

The 96 metre high tower in Brabantine Gothic style emerged from the plans of Jan van Ruysbroek, the court architect of Philip the Good. By 1454 this tower replacing the older belfry was complete. Above the roof of the Town Hall, the square tower body narrows to a lavishly pinnacled octagonal openwork. Atop the spire stands a 5-metre-high gilt metal statue of the archangel Michael, patron saint of Brussels, slaying a dragon or devil. The tower, its front archway and the main building facade are conspicuously off-centre relative to one another. According to legend, the architect upon discovering this 'error' leapt to his death from the tower. More likely, the asymmetry of the Town Hall was an accepted consequence of the scattered construction history and space constraints.

After the bombardment of Brussels in 1695 by a French army under the Duke of Villeroi, the resulting fire completely gutted the Town Hall, destroying the archives and the art collections. The interior was soon rebuilt, and the addition of two rear wings transformed the L-shaped building into its present configuration: a quadrilateral with an inner courtyard completed by Corneille Van Nerven in 1712. The Gothic interior was revised by Victor Jamar in 1868 in the style of his mentor Viollet-le-Duc. The halls have been replenished with tapestries, paintings, and sculptures, largely representing subjects of importance in local and regional history.

The Town Hall accommodated not only the municipal authorities of the city, but until 1795 also the States of Brabant. In 1830, a provisional government assembled here during the attempt of the Third French Revolution which provoked the separation of the Southern Netherlands from the Northern Netherlands. resulting in the formation of Belgium as is known presently.

## **HISTORY ABOUT BRUSSELS CHOCOLATE**

Cacao beans from handpicked plantations as far and wide as **Venezuela** and **Vietnam** are submitted to a vast array of procedures akin to medieval torture. Enormous roasters help release the flavour; dremel tools smoothen and reduce the chocolate's particles; grinders crush some into a fine powder and others into cocoa liquor; winnowers sieve off impurities, tempering machines pre-crystallise the chocolate before it can be shaped; and industrial mixers blend some to make ganache.

If it wasn't clear enough already, Belgium takes its chocolate rather seriously. Ever since Jean Neuhaus invented the "Praline" – a filled chocolate bonbon – in **Brussels** in 1912, the country has never looked back. By the 1920s, the

official retail price index included it as one of 56 essential products. Now, the chocolate sector represents 10.4% of the entire national turnover, according to estimates, and supports 11,900 jobs in more than 300 companies. The Belgians wolf down six kilograms of it per person a year on average – one of the highest levels in the world.

“It’s part of our identity and our history,” says Peggy Van Lierde, director of the Museum of Cocoa and Chocolate in Brussels, whose grandfather was a chocolatier. “When we were together, the only thing that we could discuss was chocolate,” she recalls. “They turned the whole house into a chocolate factory, so we were living in the middle of it. I would make Easter eggs while at the same time watching television. So my mother opened this museum twenty years ago because it was a passion that she wanted to share with the public.”

When the museum first opened, Van Lierde says, many Belgians didn’t know “what’s behind the cocoa”, and she wanted to educate them. There is something of an uneasy history that is closely tied to colonialism, where in the past, slaves were forced into backbreaking cocoa harvesting for Western luxury. Times have changed, and now consumers demand greater transparency. “They want to focus on the work of the farmers in the plantation countries,” she says. “It’s in the minds of everyone.”

## **Brussels City Museum**

Upon entering the museum ground floor and turning left you will begin with the history of Grand Place. Especially of the 600 year old building in which you are standing. Sculptures that used to adorn its façade are placed here to show the precise craftsmanship. Detailed information is provided in English, German and other languages. After viewing Brussels porcelain, pewter and tapestries, which were booming industries in middle ages, you will move up to the first where the story of the city begins.

The first-floor houses maps and 3D model recreations of the city as it evolved over the middle ages. The most intricate and fascinating model is one of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Brussels. The artist was able to depict a small town, recently fortified into a pentagon shape. The descriptions of each landmark include modern day references to streets that still exists today. The Grand Place was a small patch of dirt at the time and the Seine River still flowed like trickle through the town.

On the second floor you will be greeted with the current-day glory of Brussels City. It’s “Oldest Citizen” as some nicknamed the Mannekin Pie or Peeing Boy.



## **The Grand Place**

The Grand Place quite possibly features the most history in the entire city. It was first mentioned in the 12th century as a 'lower market' and was a busy trade center. The beautiful buildings that surround the square today are much older – the oldest are the Town Hall and the King's House, which was built in the 15th century. The whole square and all its buildings are on the UNESCO World Heritage list for their authenticity – the entire town square hasn't changed much after being rebuilt in the 17th century – and the perfect way different architectural styles were blended.

## **The Town Hall**

Not leaving the Grand Place, or Grote Markt, just yet, you can take in some more history in your tour by having a closer look at the two big buildings at the square. The tallest and oldest one is the Town Hall. When looking directly at it, notice that the 96-meter-high tower (315 feet) doesn't stand exactly in the middle. This is the result of the long years and the many renovations it took to build this construction. The exterior walls are decorated in detail with many statues that refer to Brussels' and Belgium's past.

Just off the Grand Place, next to the Town Hall, there's a statue of Everard t'Serclaes. There is an intriguing tale connected to this historic figure, which also explains the origins of Belgium's nickname for Brussels' residents – the chicken-eaters. Above the statue of Everard, individuals can see a depiction of the origins of this funny nickname. Legend also states that if you rub his arm, you'll find your true love. Other legends state that you'll be sure to come back to Brussels someday. Either way, a little touch won't hurt – unless you're afraid of germs.

## **A King's House**

In front of the Town Hall is the *Maison du Roi*, which translates to "the King's house." Interestingly, the building has a very different name in Dutch – het Broodhuis, or "the bread house." The Dutch name refers to the building that stood on the site before – an indoor bread market. The French name refers to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who owned the property in the 16th century. Because he was also known as the King of Spain, the building was called the *Maison du Roi*. Inside the King's house, there's a museum dedicated to Brussels' development and rich history.

## **Manneken Pis**

Walking through the many small streets of Brussels, individuals will find this little statue sooner or later – seeing the many tourists indicates you're close to your target. This tiny fountain statue is the face of Brussels. It also cleverly symbolizes Belgium's quirky sense of humor. Though Manneken Pis probably started out as a medieval homage to the tanners of Brussels, there are many fascinating legends that explain its origins.

## **Palace Ruins**

Underneath the Place Royal are the remnants of a palace. Individuals can enter the ruins through the BELvue Museum. It was built around 1100 on the Coudenberg ('Couden mountain') by the counts of Leuven and Brussels. From its location, it must have had a terrific view over the young city of Brussels. Though as most castles, it started out as a military stronghold; Louis II of Flanders turned it into a luxurious palace in the 14th century.

Its ownership was passed on to many important historical figures, including Margaret of Austria and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. It's also important to note that many great events have taken place inside this palace. For example, it's the place where Margaret of Austria handed over the reign of the Low Countries to Emperor Charles V. It's also where Archdukes Albert and Isabella had their court during the Spanish reign over the Low Countries, and great artists such as Jan Brueghel and Rubens were invited to decorate it.

It's a pity it wasn't better conserved – the palace burned down by accident in 1731, and the ruins were demolished to make place for the Royal Square. The new square was based on the Place Royal in Reims, France, and the project took place from 1773 to 1780. What's left of the palace is underground, where individuals can have a look around the remaining brick walls and imagine how it used to be.

## **The Royal Palace**

Unlike the Castle of Coudenberg, this palace still stands. Functioning as the residence of Belgium's Royal Family, the building has seen its share of history. The palace started out as nothing more than a summer residence in the 18th century. The owners were Maria Christina of Austria and her husband. Later it became the property of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and his wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais. After that, it was the property of William I of the Netherlands, who made sure it was thoroughly renovated. Of course, after Belgium became independent, William no longer owned the building, and it was under the jurisdiction of the Belgian kings instead.

**Saturday, 25 May**

9:00 Breakfast

9:50 Departure from the Youth Hostel