



Contact details

The city of Kortrijk

Name of contact person	Margot Vervaecke
Address	Leiestraat 21 8500 Kortrijk
Country	België
Telephone number	+32 485 25 91 02
Email	margot.vervaecke@kortrijk.be
Website	www.kortrijk.be



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Belgium

Belgium is a kingdom in Western Europe, located on the North Sea. France, the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg are its neighbours.

Belgium is a relatively flat country, with the highest point 'Signal de Botrange' at 694. Because of the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean, there is a typical temperate maritime climate, so the temperature difference between summer and winter is not so big. The average temperature in winter is +5°C, in summer +20°C.

Belgium has around 11 million inhabitants in an area of just over 30 500 km², making it one of the most densely populated areas in Europe.



The northern part of Belgium is called Flanders. The Flemings live in Flanders, they speak Dutch and with 60% they form the largest population group in Belgium. The southern part of Belgium is called Wallonia. The Walloons live there and they speak French.

In the capital, Brussels, both French and Dutch are spoken.

Finally, there is a small German-speaking minority in the east of the country.

Belgium is divided into 10 provinces (+ the Brussels-Capital Region).



Belgium is a decentralised federal state. This means that, in addition to the national government, there are several other political levels, each with its own competence. This table gives an overview of the institutions that exist at each level.

NIVEAU	INSTELLINGEN		
Europees	Europese Unie (EU)		
Nationaal	Federale staat (Belgische overheid)		
Gemeenschappen (taalgebieden)	Nederlandstalige Gemeenschap	Franstalige Gemeenschap	Duitstalige Gemeenschap
Gewestelijk	Vlaams Gewest	Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	Waals Gewest
Provinciaal	5 Vlaamse Provincies (waaronder provincie West-Vlaanderen)		5 Waalse Provincies
Lokaal (steden en gemeenten)	308 Vlaamse Gemeenten (waaronder Stad Brugge)	19 Brusselse Gemeenten	262 Waalse Gemeenten

In this video, you can get to know the country even better in a fun way:

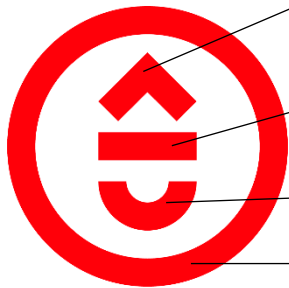
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TuMvWCbM-g>



Kortrijk

Kortrijk is a central city in the south of West Flanders. In addition to its city centre, Kortrijk also consists of 7 sub-boroughs: Aalbeke, Belleghem, Bisseghem, Heule, Kooigem, Marke and Rollegem.

The logo describes the most important characteristics of the town:



Symbolises the Broel towers, the artillery towers that remain from the city walls in the Middle Ages

Symbolises the Leie, the sparkling river that runs straight through the city.

Symbolises the bridges over the Lys.

The circle symbolises our unity. It is a city for everyone, regardless of age, origin, beliefs or health.

The city was a centre of flax industry in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today Kortrijk is known for its textile industry, as a purchasing town and as a centre for employment, services and education. The city has two high schools and two universities and attracts a large group of students from all over Flanders because of its innovative offer.

Kortrijk is a pioneer in the field of design and has several museums. It is a quiet city where much attention is paid to families and children. Every year the city celebrates the Sinksenfeesten, a weekend full of music, theatre, dance, food and all kinds of other fun activities.



Demografic characteristics

Surface area	80,02 km ²
Total population	77 292 inhabitants
Population density	966 inhabitants/ km ²

Kortrijk consists of the city centre with 7 surrounding boroughs. The sub-boroughs each have a built-up village centre, but are often surrounded by rural countryside. The total population of Kortrijk is equally divided between the city centre and the suburbs.

27.6% of Kortrijk's population is younger than 24. This is why we want to present ourselves as a city for and by children and young people. 50.9% are between 25 and 64 years old and 21.4% are over 65.

Kortrijk has a slight population growth. Kortrijk has 20.9% inhabitants of non-Belgian origin. These are mainly inhabitants with Maghreb, East European and Asian roots.

Characteristics of the city council

The city council is the highest administrative body in the city. It defines the policy on matters of municipal interest. The 41 city councillors in Kortrijk are directly elected by the inhabitants of the town every six years.

In Kortrijk, the city executive consists of a mayor and 9 aldermen who are elected after the elections from and by the city councillors. The College is the executive body of the city administration and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the city. Each alderman (including the mayor) is responsible for a number of city policies. In addition, the mayor is also the head of the local police on the town's territory and the chairman of the OCMW (Public Centre for Social Welfare). As a representative of the federal and Flemish governments and of the provincial authorities, he is responsible for implementing the laws, decrees and decisions of those authorities. Every legislature, a policy plan is drawn up in which the emphases for the coming years are laid down.

The administration (city council, college of mayors and aldermen) is supported by a city administration. Kortrijk employs about 1800 civil servants who take care of the execution of the daily policy.

International cooperation

Vision and objectives

The City of Kortrijk considers it important to stimulate world citizenship among the population and considers international solidarity as a moral obligation of the local policy. Through this initiative, the city wants to (re)start international cooperation, more specifically through a strong partnership with a city from a country on the OECD DAC list. We are looking for an accessible form of international cooperation in which the partners involved work together as equals on the common theme of 'nature and biodiversity', focusing on 'green in and around the city'. The objective is to exchange knowledge, expertise and best practices, to get to know each other's workings and to realise concrete actions in the cities involved, and to increase international solidarity in our city through communication and visibility.

Thematic cooperation

Kortrijk has already had international cooperation with Cebu City, a city in the Philippines. This was a city-twinning with a purely administrative exchange. Together with Cebu City officials, we worked on culture, waste disposal and the general functioning of the cities. In 2020, we decided together that it was time for a new adventure and ended our cooperation.

After a thorough analysis, we decided to go for a thematic exchange this time. In consultation with a few Kortrijk organisations, volunteers, colleagues from the city council and politicians, we chose the theme: a green city. This because we were all convinced that sustainable, green and ecological cities are the future worldwide. It is a theme that concerns every city and a challenge to innovate in it. That is why we think it is an ideal theme to work on together with another city council on an equal footing.

A green city

By 2025, the City of Kortrijk wants to be the city with the most punitive plans for more biodiversity and less pollution.

A lot of work is already being done on this. The following strengths emerged from questioning a number of partners:

Green recreation



Throughout our city you will find many green spaces where children and young people can play freely and where nature elements are part of their playground.

Some organisations, such as Wildebras, are great pioneers in this. They protect green spaces where children can play wild again. Kortrijk, for example, has a small island to which some children have access. There they build camps, play with water and romp with their friends.

With the support of the city, a few schools in Kortrijk were able to convert their playgrounds into green oases where children can romp around to their heart's content.

Mowing management

All areas with short-mowed grass without a play, recreational and/or other function are better transformed into (natural) flower-rich and herb-rich grasslands, flowery ruins with edges consisting of native shrubs and/or trees. Mowing these areas is done in phases so that the local fauna gets the chance to survive mowing periods. Small areas of ruin must also be given the chance to go into the winter unmowed. This method provides more variation, more biodiversity, a more natural, aesthetic character, better sustainability and lower management costs.



Expansion of forest and nature areas



Research has shown that Kortrijk is one of the poorest forest regions in Flanders. Therefore, over the next six years Kortrijk wants to create 100 hectares of extra nature and forest. There are already beautiful pieces of woodland and nature reserves, especially in the boroughs, but it is a challenge to connect them and create new ones.

connect and expand them in the coming years.

But there is still a lot of work to be done. As mentioned above, Kortrijk is still one of the poorest wooded regions in Flanders. The Kortrijk citizens would also like to see more greenery in and around the city, as was proven in the city monitor of 2020 (an annual survey on the liveability and sustainability in Flemish cities).

Even though we have already come a long way in terms of nature, forests and biodiversity in our city, not everything goes without saying. A survey revealed a number of aspects that can be seen as stumbling blocks to achieving our ideal green city. It was often mentioned that the ambitious policy is sometimes difficult to realise. Greening a city often requires a lot of time, resources and consultation, which is why realisations often take longer than originally expected. We also notice that we have not yet been able to convince every Kortrijk resident of our policy. We are also still looking for ways to transform our heat islands into a liveable environment.

The ideal partner city

- Is willing to work together over the next three years to develop greener and more biodiverse cities by sharing expertise and good practices.
 - We expect reciprocity in the cooperation, that each partner has its (substantive) input and also a constructive attitude.
 - We expect the partner to have a working relationship with the theme. This could be various organisations that are active in the field, projects that have already been rolled out in the field, a clear policy vision on the subject, and so on.
- Is a city from a country on the OECD DAC list.
- Has a city government that we can easily communicate with
 - English, French or Dutch is the working language or second language of the city administration.
 - Is located in a similar time zone
 - Is relatively easy to reach
 - Is relatively easy to reach, preferably by ecological means.
- Is a city that can be compared to Kortrijk
 - Similar total number of inhabitants, urbanised context, similar operation of city government...
- Is located in a stable political context (peace, political calm, democratic principles such as participation possibilities, separation of powers, etc.) in his country and region and has respect the human rights.

