

## **Do you want to know more about Belgium ?**

Complete text, written by Marcel Sel and Karine Quarant-Schmidt.

Belgium is known as the dullest country in the world, only inhabited by friendly people gobbling mussels and french fries topped with mayonnaise, and producing swiss chocolate. To cut a long story short, which is required if you really want to understand why the former 4th world power is now at the edge of being cut in really tiny shitty pieces, : Belgium is definitely, totally, completely boring.

Boring, Belgium ? Well, in fact, we found some evidence that this is nothing but an unfair prejudice. Belgium is actually one of the strangest countries in the world. To begin with, it owns the one and only legendary monument that is 20 cm high and pisses openly in front of you. It has the only prime minister who, when asked to sing the national anthem, mistakenly tunes into the French one ! It has the only landmark building made exclusively of... er... balls.

For over 150 years, Belgium has bred the best specialists to engineer the most inefficient political structure. When other country administrations tend to simplify their relationship with citizens, the Belgian prove excellence in making everything as complicated as possible. In three national languages: Dutch, French and German.

Belgium has one central government. And three regions : each one has its own government possessing as much power as the central government. It's a very good way of making it completely impossible to rule the country. Fortunately, only the region of Brussels, in the centre, is bilingual French/Dutch. The Flemish region is monolingual Dutch. But, there are administrative services for the French speaking here (Wemmel), here (Wezembeek), and here (Rhode/Rode) and also here (Voeren/Fourons). And, euh yes here (Ronse/Renaix). French speaking citizens can also be judged in French in the so-called BHV-county where a strong minority speaks French.

Wallonia is expected to be a pure French-speaking territory. Well. Except here (Comines/Comen). And here (Enghien/Edingen). And also here (Ostkantons/Cantons Rédimés), where the German-speaking minority lives !

So, to deal with these numerous minorities, the Belgian Witloof technologists decided that three regions were not enough, and added three extra structures, called communities. There are 3 communities : Dutch, French and German. Like the central state and the regions, each community has its own government and parliament. The French community, for instance, supplies cultural and social services to the French speaking people in Wallonia, and Brussels. (très sévère : )But they are absolutely not allowed to supply any services to the 300.000 French-speaking fellows in Flanders, because Flanders is mo-no-lin-gual and foreign speakers must speak Dutch, godverdomme !

The German community can only act in Wallonia, the French-speaking region. While the Dutch community acts in the Brussels region and in Flanders, and also in Northern France. In New-York. And in Beijing.

So, you see, a French-speaking family in Brussels could depend on the central government for granddad's pension, on the French community government for the music academy, on the Dutch community government for the children's school, on the Brussels

government for the garbage recycling, and so on. On the whole, you can have ministers from 4 different governments spending their time just on one Brussels family !

Some say that when Jacques Chirac planned to celebrate the bicentennial of the French revolution, he thought of doing something with the Belgian, who also had the so-called democrat revolution in 1789. So he called the Belgian minister of Culture, who told him to call the Flemish and the French ministers of culture, who told him to call the Brussels minister of culture, who told him to call... the Belgian minister of Culture. This is probably why Jacques Chirac stopped drinking Stella Artois and switched to Corona.

This also shows that the sum of culture in a country can be inversely proportional to the number of ministers of Culture.

But all that didn't seem inefficient enough for the Witloof-technocrats. So, they decided to divide all the political parties into three. From then on, the federal government would require at least 4 parties to function : 2 French and 2 Dutch. In some cases, 6, 7, 8 or even 9 political parties would be required to rule the country. Not to mention, that a national debate on television is totally impossible : the French community prohibits all political debates on the French-speaking TV with any kind of antidemocratic racist party, whereas the Dutch television is not allowed to debate without the antidemocratic racist party Vlaams Belang.

To cut these belgian stories short would require to cut Belgium into smaller pieces the sooner the better. But even that is impossible. Look at Brussels. It is the most northward French speaking big city in the world (with a strong, historical Dutch speaking minority), but it is surrounded by Flemish territory. As a result, on the Brussels ring you'll find all the indicators in Dutch only. Except here (Forest/Vorst) and here (Anderlecht), and here (Wemmel), and... oh my god... here also (Koningslo), where they are bilingual. And here (Waterloo), here (Ittre) and here (Court-Saint-Etienne) where they are in French only. Even Brussels airport lies in the Flemish region. This is why officially, Brussels does not export any goods at all, although it is the second region with the highest revenue per inhabitant in Europe !

Now, you'll understand why Belgians can't live together, and can't live apart. The belgian people is definitely a marvel of Witloof technocracy, designed to make simple things catastrophically complicated. And it works. Which means that it doesn't work. At all.

Well, to be quite honest, one thing does federate the different communities of this strange naughty little country : they all agree to call their national dish "French" in English. French fries with Mayonnaise. Frieten met mayon(n)aise. Frites à la mayonnaise. Fritten mit Majonnaise.

Oh, I forgot : Mr. Van Cauwenberghe is a French politician and Mr Bourgeois is a Dutch politician.