

E4U National Reports: introducing Belgium

Hello,

I live in a town called Mechelen. It's situated in the middle of 2 big city's named Antwerp and Brussels. There is a legend about our town it's called "the manenblusser". A man thought that the tower was on fire so they extinguished the tower but the tower wasn't on fire it was the moon. There are a lot off immigrants in Belgium and the climate isn't that great. But it can be very warm in summer so that's good. Mechelen is actually a city that have many tourist. Because Mechelen is a really old city with lots of different houses with different fronts. And Mechelen has a really old and big tower called the Sint-Rombauts tower. Mechelen has 3 big recreations, you can relax there or do some sports. We have also a cinema complex and a theatre and a big building for all kind of things like "the book fair" and for horse riding called "the nekkerhal". There are a lot off busses in Mechelen and people often take trains to transport them to the city that they work in Brussels or Antwerp or another city. We don't have that many free time but when we do we are going to see a match of the team of the city called Racing Mechelen.

It's common to have kids even when you aren't married to the person you have children with. The most families have like 2 siblings. It isn't normal to live together with your grandparents in one house. I don't know what the age is when young people leave the house but it's usually when they graduate from university. In don't help with households but I help my father usually when he is working in the garden. Belgium has a divorce rate of 71%. The generation gap isn't that much because the last 50 years we produced a lot of babies and the relationship between generations is really great.

The school system is really well structured, we have 2 different breaks in the morning. People are evaluated on different things on different subjects like the point distributions for each subject is different. There are schools for different people with a handicap or with a mental retardation. And there are also schools for people who are extremely gifted. The most people don't like school because it's boring and you need to get up early. I personally don't like school but I like to go to school just to see my friends, that's the only reason I would like to go to school. There are after school activities like football or dancing it's really fun. A typical school day for me is that I have 8 hours instead of 7 it's a little bit annoying but you get used to it so it doesn't matter anymore.

Christmas is on the 25th December, it's a time when the whole family comes together and eat together it's really fun I love that period. There are traditions like set up a Christmas tree and go to the church but almost nobody does the last one. Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. The tradition is that people try to find eggs on the ground and in the evening there is a special "Easter representation" in church.

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