

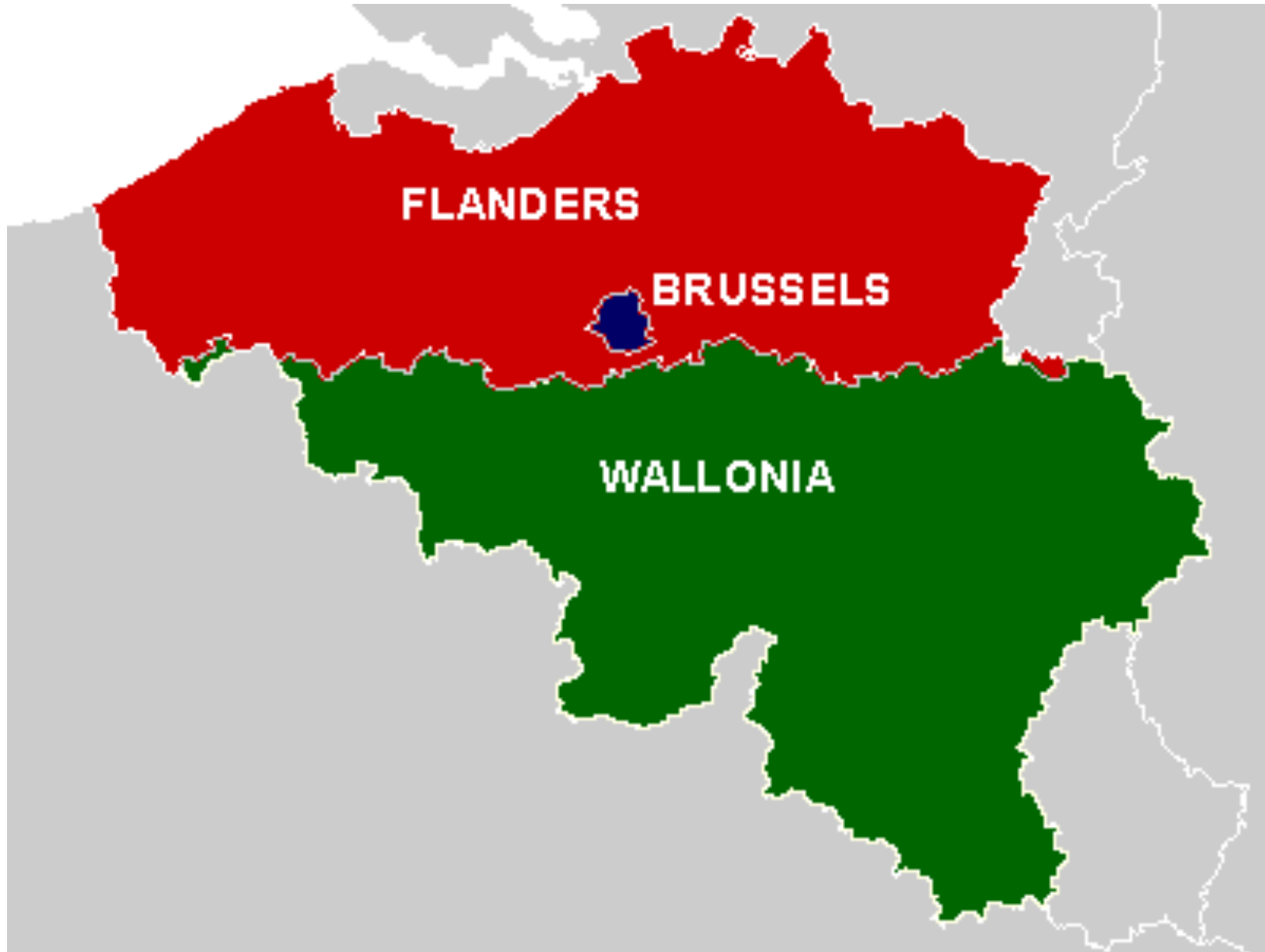
# Language criteria as a means to organize society in Flanders

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# Languages in Belgium:

- ▶ Dutch
- ▶ French
- ▶ (and German)

# The Dutch language

- ▶ Flanders: 6,7 million inhabitants
- ▶ The Netherlands: 17,5 million inhabitants
- ▶ In total: 23 million people speaking Dutch
- ▶ Official language in European Union
- ▶ 24 languages in EU, Dutch 8th

# Official EU-languages

## The Official Languages of the European Union

Where is each of the 24 official languages spoken?

### LEGEND

BG	Bulgarian
CS	Czech
DA	Danish
DE	German
EL	Greek
EN	English
ES	Spanish
ET	Estonian
FI	Finnish
FR	French
GA	Irish
HR	Croatian
HU	Hungarian
IT	Italian
LT	Lithuanian
LV	Latvian
MT	Maltese
NL	Dutch
PL	Polish
PT	Portuguese
RO	Romanian
SK	Slovak
SL	Slovenian
SV	Swedish



### NOTES

<b>Belgium</b>	Dutch (Flemish): 60% - French: 40% - German: <1% of the population.
<b>Cyprus</b>	Turkish has official language status but is not an official EU language. Documentation is generally accepted in English.
<b>Finland</b>	Finnish: 92% - Swedish: 8% of the population.
<b>Ireland</b>	Documentation is generally accepted in English.
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Luxembourgish has official language status but is not an official EU language.

# Dutch speaking area



taal:  
unie

# The Union for the Dutch Language

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## Misson

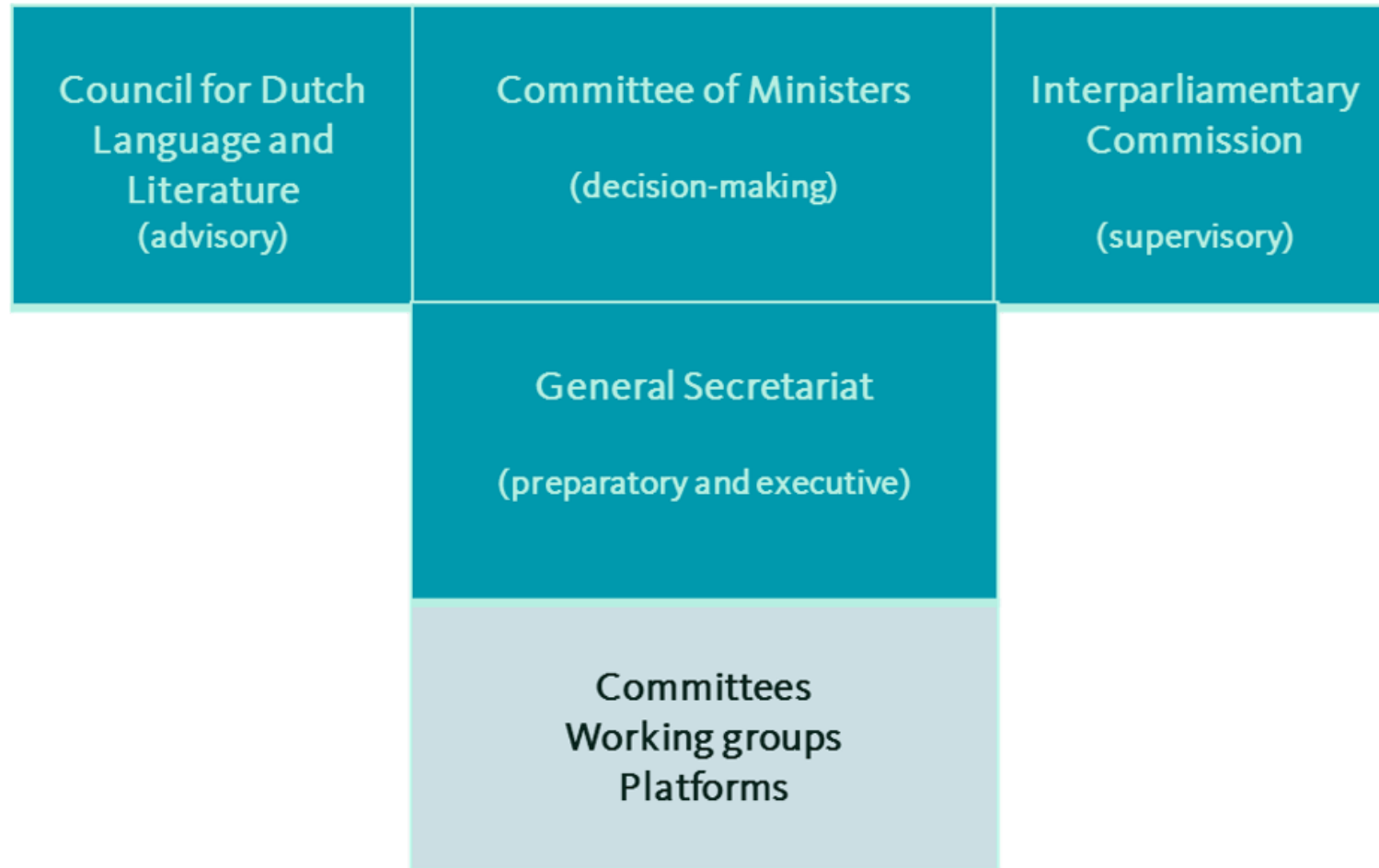
- ▶ The Taalunie develops and promotes policy on Dutch in the Netherlands and Flanders (and Suriname).
- ▶ Wants to strengthen the position of Dutch abroad

# History

- ▶ Founded by a treaty between the Netherlands and Belgium in 1980.
- ▶ Also cooperation with former Dutch colonies Suriname, Bonaire, Saint Eustatius, Saba, Aruba, Curaçao and Saint Martin.
- ▶ And with South Africa (Afrikaans is related to Dutch)
- ▶ Unique in the world !



# Structure and organisation Taalunie



# Dutch studies worldwide



# Belgium

- ▶ Founded in 1830
- ▶ French minority dominated Flemish majority
- ▶ Official language = French
- ▶ Success in life? Speak French !

# Brussels

- ▶ Flemish city became French
- ▶ Today: 88% know French, 30% English, 23% Dutch, 18% Arabic

# Flemish want language rights

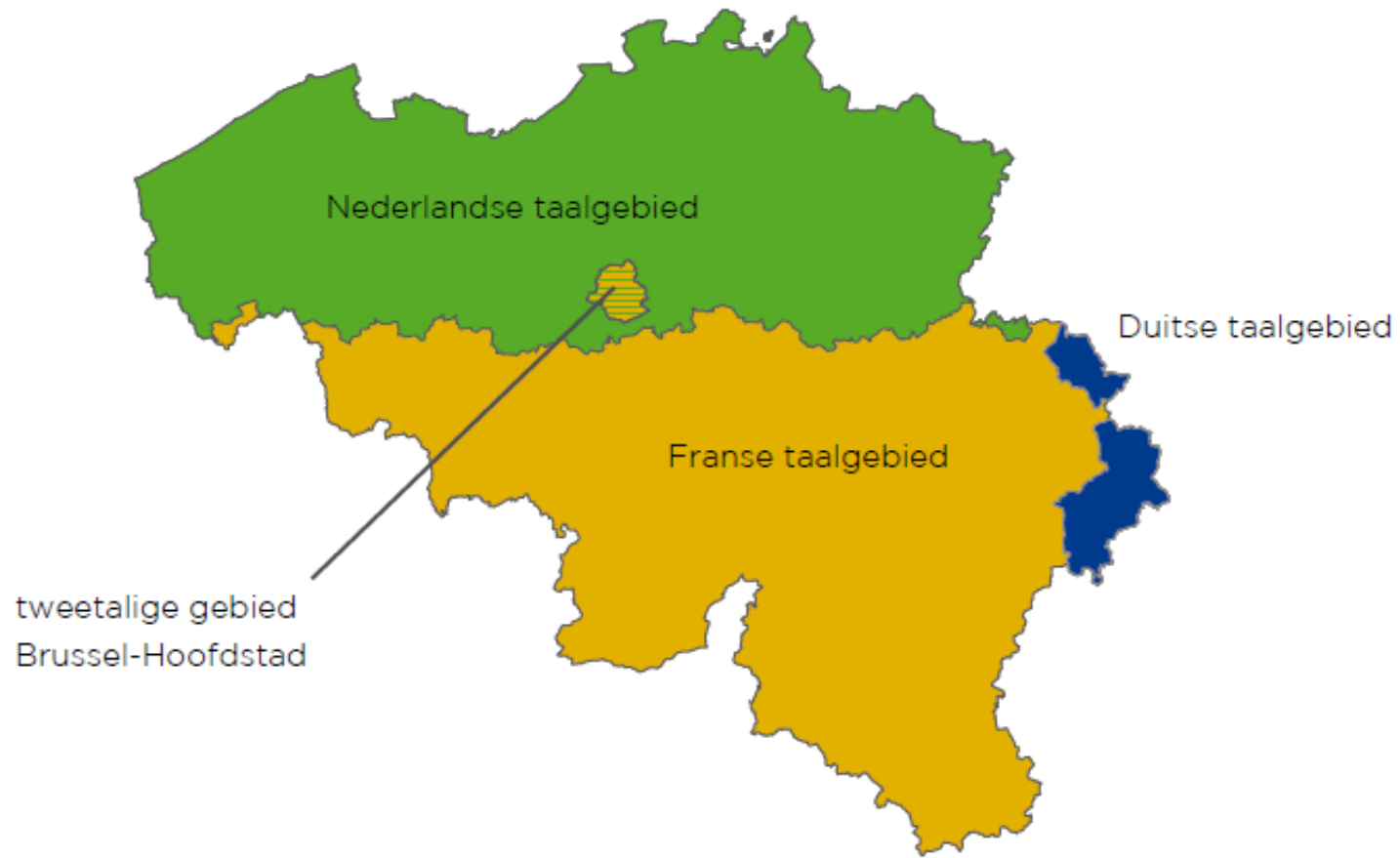
- ▶ Action since 1860
- ▶ In 1960's: language border established

## Belgium: 4 language zones

- ▶ Dutch zone (Flanders)
- ▶ French zone (Wallonia)
- ▶ German zone (small)
- ▶ Bilingual zone (French and Dutch): Brussels



# Language zones in Belgium



# Language zones in Belgium

■ Het Nederlandse taalgebied



■ Het tweetalige gebied  
Brussel-Hoofdstad



■ Het Franse taalgebied



■ Het Duitse taalgebied



# Principle of territoriality versus personality principle

- ▶ (In Latin: “ius solis” versus “ius personae”)
- ▶ Personality principle:
  - ▶ a person has language rights and takes these with him
  - ▶ public authorities have to adapt to the individual
- ▶ Principle of territoriality:
  - ▶ region has language rights
  - ▶ individuals have to adapt

# Language as a social vehicle

- ▶ Region, society, has certain rules + language
- ▶ Knowledge of language is important for social cohesion

## Private versus public

- ▶ Private communication:
  - ▶ People speak language they want
- ▶ Communication citizen and authorities:
  - ▶ Linguistic rules

## Communication in public

- ▶ “language breathing space”,
- ▶ We “feel at home”,
- ▶ We feel safe
- ▶ Social cohesion + solidarity

=solid society

## Europe: Culture versus Free trade

- ▶ Colourful diversity = typical for Europe
- ▶ BUT: nothing must prevent free traffic of goods, persons and services

## Cultural paragraph + educational paragraph

- ▶ Treaty of Maastricht (1992): countries can protect and stimulate their cultural identity + importance of linguistic diversity
- ▶ Countries can subsidize their films, books, tv-programmes, works of art, theatres, etc.
- ▶ = “cultural exception”



## Protection of “smaller languages”

- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ▶ European Charter for regional or Minority Languages
- ▶ European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages
- ▶ Mercator information network
- ▶ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

# Language as an instrument to organize society

- ▶ Language =/ race or ethnic background.
- ▶ Language as a criterion if one can motivate
- ▶ Motivation: finding a job, integrate in a community, keep certain areas livable, communication with authorities
- ▶ Motives: not only cultural or linguistic, but also social.



# In Flanders: use Dutch !

- ▶ After struggle of many decennia: Dutch used by
  - ▶ Courts
  - ▶ Education
  - ▶ Companies
  - ▶ Administration
  - ▶ Housing (social houses)
  - ▶ Minimum living wages (financial support)

# Courts

- ▶ In Flanders: Dutch language
- ▶ In Brussels: Dutch or French
- ▶ Possibility: interpreter

# Education

- ▶ Kindergarten, primary and secondary education:  
Dutch
- ▶ Exceptions (experiments) :
  - ▶ Partly in the language of immigrants
  - ▶ Immersion education

# Education

- ▶ Universities and higher education: Dutch
- ▶ But: in higher education more and more courses in English.
- ▶ Max. 9 % bachelors in other languages and max. 35% masters in other languages.

# Companies

- ▶ Enterprises in Flanders: Dutch
- ▶ In Brussels: Dutch + French
- ▶ But: in reality often English
- ▶ European Court: obstructs free traffic of people and services.
- ▶ Solution: two versions of text (Dutch + other language).



## Public administration

- ▶ Government, provinces and municipalities: Dutch
- ▶ Semi-public authorities, e.g. public transport: Dutch
- ▶ People in contacts with authorities: Dutch
- ▶ In practice, Flemish often are very tolerant

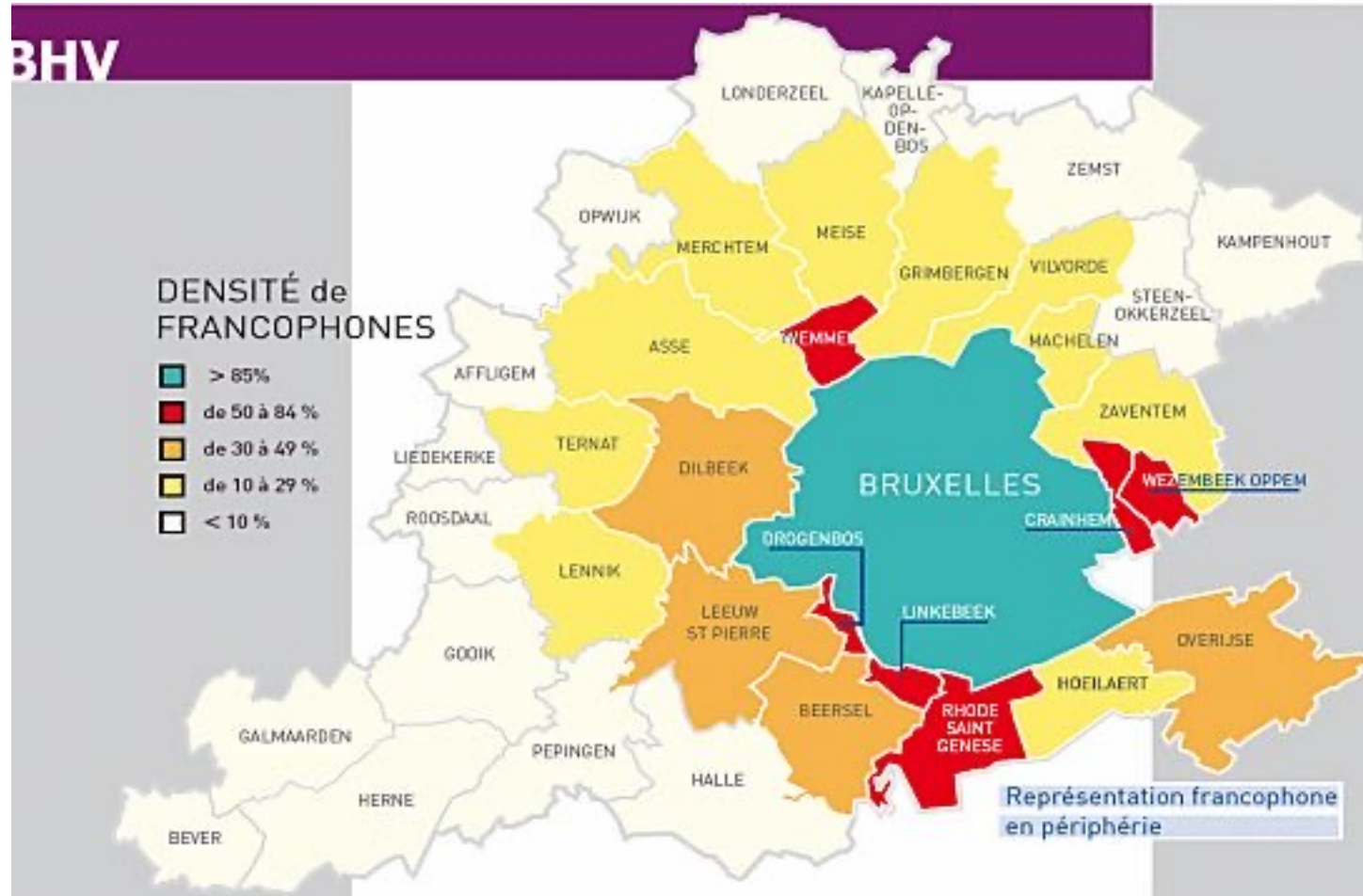
## Brussels

- ▶ Dutch and French official languages
- ▶ Civil servants, doctors and nurses in hospitals, etc have to know both languages.
- ▶ In reality: often only French.
- ▶ Flemings gave up majority in Belgium. Condition: no discrimination of Flemings in Brussels.

## Flemish communities surrounding Brussels

- ▶ French domination in Brussels: effects on the Flemish communities surrounding Brussels.
- ▶ French people come and live there
- ▶ They obtained special language rights

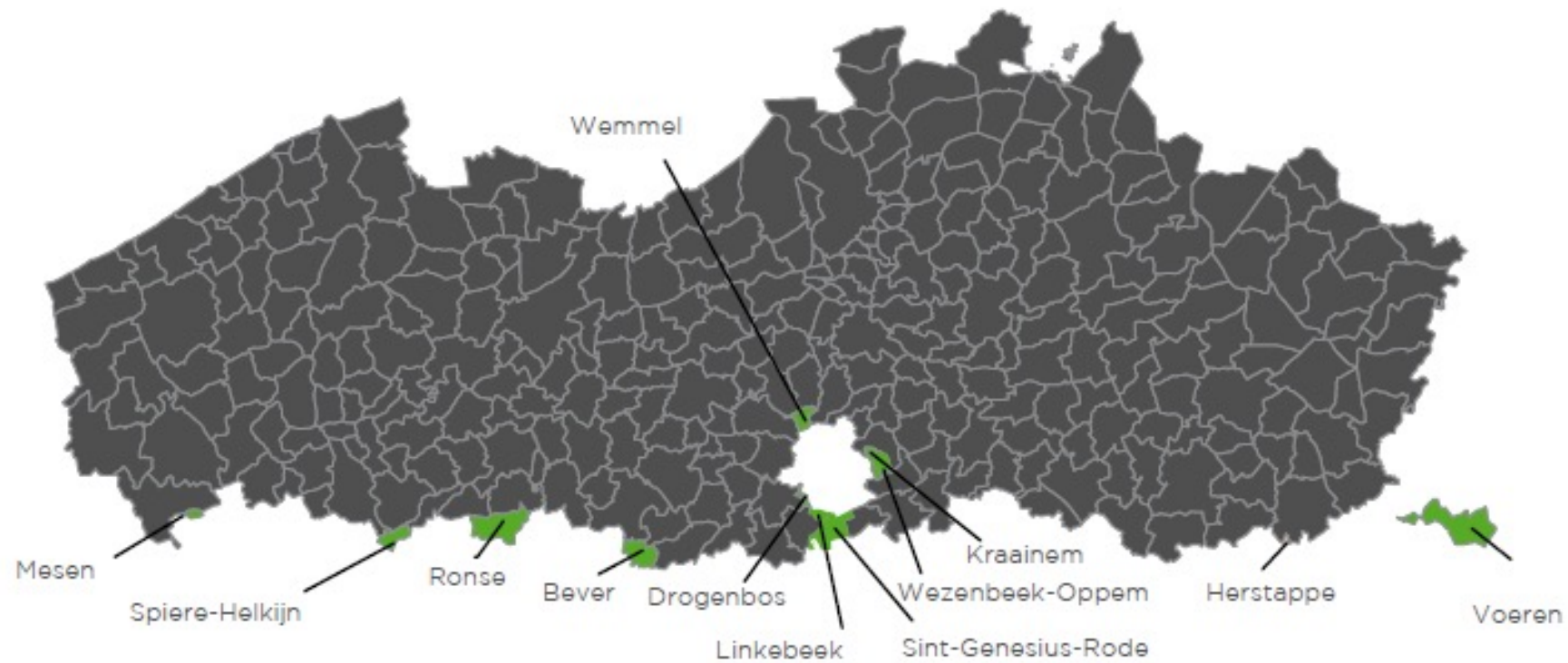
# Pressure of French language on Flemish communities



## Municipalities with language facilities

- ▶ Elections, French speaking people can ask for documents in French.
- ▶ French speaking mayors refused to use Dutch in Flemish community councils
- ▶ Discussions Flanders vs Council of Europe

# Municipalities with language facilities



# Housing

- ▶ Immigrants should learn Dutch to rent social house
  - Een kandidaat-huurder moet taalkennisvereiste niveau A2 van het Europees Referentiekader voor Moderne Talen halen. Na twee jaar sociaal huren moet de huurder ook verplicht deze taalkennis Nederlands hebben. Deze twee jaar is gelijk met de duur van een standaardtraject Nederlands als tweede taal bij een centrum voor basiseducatie om dat niveau te behalen.
- ▶ Belgian Constitutional Court + State Council: OK
- ▶ United Nations: not OK

# Housing

- ▶ Some municipalities ask people to learn the language when they want to buy a house or building plot.
- ▶ (Zaventem, Zemst, Hoeilaart, Rotselaar, Vilvoorde, Tervuren ...)
- ▶ Commitment to learn Dutch = OK
- ▶ Test = not OK



## Minimum living wages

- ▶ financial support from municipality
- ▶ Effort to learn Dutch (no examinations)
- ▶ Some communities: tests
- ▶ Motivation: people have to be willing to take a job. Implies willingness to learn Dutch

## Other fields using language criteria

- ▶ After-school **child care** / child-care during holidays  
(annulled by Flemish minister)
- ▶ Selling things on **markets**: only in Dutch  
(annulled by Flemish minister)

## Examples in other countries

- ▶ **The Netherlands:** hairdresser
- ▶ Dutch Society of Acupuncturists
- ▶ **Companies:** rules in The Netherlands and the United States

## Conclusion

- ▶ Belgium and Flanders: rules and laws in favour of Dutch language
- ▶ Principle of territoriality
- ▶ Dutch in administration, courts, education, companies

## Conclusion

- ▶ Recently: Dutch to receive minimum living wages, to hire a social house.
- ▶ = commitment, no examinations.
- ▶ Aim: strengthen social cohesion

## Conclusion

- ▶ Europe: ambiguous
- ▶ Globalisation + migration= high pressure on language zones
- ▶ Measures = “old fashioned”, “discriminating”
- ▶ Measures contested in courts and committees
- ▶ Sometimes OK, sometimes not OK
- ▶ Action still necessary? YES !

Questions?

