Welcome to Mini-Europe.

In these times of crisis and these years of remembrance of the 1914-18 war, we must not forget that the European Union and the Euro have maintained solidarity between Europeans. A hundred years ago, nationalism and competition between nations led us to war.

This guide is an essential help on your trip through The European Union. As Robert Schuman said, you will find out what these people, regions and countries have in common ... and what makes each one special.

You are visiting a park of outstanding quality: all models are built down to the finest detail to a scale of 1:25. So you can easily compare the different constructions and technological achievements such as the HST, Ariane space rocket, the Berlin wall, etc...

This park offers something to everybody’s taste; lovers of history, enthusiasts of the European Union, people remembering their latest journey, people preparing their next tour or people just having a nice stroll.

At the end of this guide is a European Factbook which will tell you more about the European Union.

I wish you a very pleasant visit.

*On 01.04.2015
A MONUMENT = A EUROPEAN VALUE

EUROPEAN VALUES: DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a value that has its origins in Greece (the Acropolis). It went on to take root in our cities (belfries and city halls symbolise the independence of cities). England invented bicameral parliamentary democracy (Houses of Parliament). The French revolution injected the principle of equality into this democracy. This value was carried across Europe by Napoleon’s armies. (Arc de Triomphe). The Berlaymont, seat of the European Commission, evokes a new type of European democracy. Democracy is a value that is worth fighting for every day: (Riga, Solidarnosc, Berlin wall).

EUROPEAN VALUES: THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

Europeans have set forth from the endless coastlines on exciting voyages of discovery. With Christopher Columbus (the Christopher Columbus column), Europeans braved the seas and started a wave of colonisations. Unlike the Chinese, who did not lay claim to any other territory during the epic exhibitions on which they embarked 70 years before Columbus. The tower of Belem, a fortress on the river Tagus, is another symbol of discoveries. Modern voyages of discoveries head for space: the Ariane rocket and the Galileo satellite.

EUROPEAN VALUES: THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE

Banks, letters of credit, commercial companies, insurance, bank notes and the exchange market are some of the European developments in the field of trade. The hanseatic league set up a network between cities such as Lübeck, Gdansk, Bruges and Riga. The Northern League linked London and Bruges. The craftsmen organised themselves into corporations (the Guild houses in Antwerp, Gent and Brussels, Arthus Court in Gdansk...). Today, the European Union is the world’s largest production and trading hub. The European ports are still the biggest in the world.

EUROPEAN VALUES: TECHNOLOGY

From the Greeks, Europe has inherited the spirit of analysis. Renaissance put man back at the centre of the universe. It became a working method, a life doctrine and an educational system. The ships, the mills (which in Holland serve to dry the polders), the Eiffel tower, the Airbus aeroplanes, the Channel tunnel and the Ariane rocket are all technological success stories. Since 2001, the European Union is the leader in the hi-tech manufacturing industry.
EUROPEAN VALUES: CULTURE AND INFLUENCE

Culture and influence are illustrated in Mini-Europe by a university, the houses of Shakespeare, the windmills of Cervantes’ La Mancha, Beethoven’s childhood home, museums such as the Curtius and Beaubourg, and the Copenhagen stock exchange.

The prestigious universal exhibitions are represented by the Eiffel Tower and the Oceans Pavilion. Indeed, each building bears witness to our culture through its style, its decoration or its use.

EUROPEAN VALUES: THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Christianity has shaped Europe, leaving its stamp on religion, art, education, trade, politics and social thinking. In the Middle Ages, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella was also a western crusade for the “reconquest” of Spain.

Religious orders, such as the Teutonic order, became real commercial and military powers (the castle of Alden Biesen)

EUROPEAN VALUES: SOCIAL THINKING

Influenced by Christian principles, the Renaissance and the equality proclaimed by the French revolution, social thinking continues to strongly influence Europe. Europe devotes 30% of its GDP to social protection (health insurance, unemployment, pensions, etc.). The Royal Saltworks illustrate social thinking at the time of Louis XIV.

NEW EUROPEAN VALUES: SECULARISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

Secularism (the separation between the State and religion) is a value that is continuing to spread throughout Europe. Secularism was very much influenced by the French Revolution and the declaration of human rights. Multiculturalism comes from a constant exchange between the Europeans themselves and non-Europeans. Mobility is nothing new in Europe and that is reflected in numerous monuments.
The capital of the EU, Brussels is home to many institutions, including the Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers. 30,500 civil servants work in the city, scattered throughout 77 buildings. The BERLAYMONT is the main seat of the Commission. It stands here in Brussels on the Rond-Point Schuman, named after Robert Schuman, one of the founders of the European Union.

"This monument is a gift from the European Commission"

"We are not creating a coalition of States, we are uniting people" Jean Monnet.
Denmark ... The frozen North recalls the time of the Vikings. Around 1000 A.D., this rude race sailed a great many seas, pillaged the coasts of Europe and even penetrated into Spain and Italy. One of the best known reconstructed Viking camps is TRELLEBORG [DK1], a circular fortress with 31 wooden "long-houses", surrounded by a system of ditches and ramparts. Awaiting their sea voyages, more than 1,500 soldiers - some with their spouses and children - were stationed here.

It is said that the Vikings discovered North America during their voyages in the year 801.
At the NYHAVN [DK 2] (New Harbour) there are many coloured houses which give the area a bright touch. In fact, the character of the area was largely determined by Dutch people. Nyhavn was an important commercial port in the 17th and 18th century. Now it is mainly visited by tourists and sailors who come and have themselves tattooed there, as the former King Frederik IX did in earlier times.

The EXCHANGE [DK 3], a beautiful 17th-century Renaissance building, was constructed to give new impetus to Danish economic life. King Christian IV, who commissioned the building, could literally keep an eye on the progress of the construction work from his palace. Notice also the pretty little brass turret, the spire of which is made up of four interlaced dragon tails and three royal crowns. The Dutch word "beurs", meaning exchange (or Stock Exchange), is derived from the Dutch name Van der Beurs, a Bruges publican.

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**THE EUROPEAN UNION (ORIGINS).**

- The flag of the European Union is made of a closed circle with 12 yellow stars. These 12 stars have never represented the 12 member States of the European Union but 12 is a symbol for perfection and plenitude.
- The word "Europe" almost certainly comes from the Phoenician "Ereb", meaning "dark, the west".
- In Greek the word "Europe" means : "big eyes". In the Greek mythology, the word "Europe" was initially applied to a beautiful young Phoenician girl, of Greek origin, kidnapped by Zeus.
- May 9, the anniversary of Schuman's declaration, is European Union Day.
- The new motto of the European Union is "United in diversity".
At the beginning of this century, Stockholm urgently needed a new CITY HALL. In 1911 they started the construction, and on Midsummer Eve in 1923 the City Hall of Stockholm was officially inaugurated. The City Hall has been built in a national romantic style. The annual Nobel Banquet on the 10th of December is organised in this beautiful building.

The citizens were given the opportunity to sponsor the roof of the hall. For 25 crowns they received their own copper roof tile. The name of the donor and the tile number were written in the copper book. King Gustaf V, who bought the first one, nailed the copper plate on the roof himself.

SWEDEN

Kingdom
Capital: Stockholm
Area: 441,000 km²
Population: 9.5 millions
Population density/km²: 22
Member of the EU since: 1995
National holiday: June 6
National anthem: Du gamla du fria du fjällhöga Nord
Standard of living (100=EUR 28): 118

- Sverige (Sweden) means the kingdom of the Svear (principal people occupying the country in 800 AD).
- Nobel was an industrialist who invented dynamite; he left his fortune to create the prize that bears his name.
- 20% of men take parental leave for the birth of their child.
- In 1967, Swedish motorists changed overnight from driving on the left to driving on the right.

- Saint Lucia is celebrated on 13 December in Sweden and symbolises light. The girl chosen to represent her carries coffee, saffron rolls and cinnamon and ginger biscuits.
- The Swedes celebrate the summer solstice by dancing around a cross bedecked with garlands (Midsommar).
- Pippi Longstocking (Pippi Långstrump) is a much-loved children's character.
- More than one million Swedes are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

STOCKHOLM

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This magnificent CASTLE OF OLAVINLINNA was built in 1475. Its importance lies in its strategic position on the canal linking many lakes. It used to form part of the frontier defences against Russia. With its summer opera season, the castle has become an increasingly popular meeting-place for East and West.

"With the co-operation of Finland."
ESTONIA

Republic
Capital: Tallinn
Surface area: 43,700 km²
Population: 1,3 millions
Population/km²: 30
Member of the EU: 2004
National day: 24 February
National anthem:
Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm
(My homeland, my pride and my joy)
Standard of living (100=EUR 28): 64

- Nearly 70% of the population lives in cities.
- The Estonian flag was adopted in September 1881 by students from the University of Tartu.
- The Estonians have never had their own king.
- Beginning 1988, protest movements, in particular during song festivals - which gave it the name the "singing revolution" - lead to independence in 1991.

- Estonian is a Finno-Ugrian language with 32 letters, 14 declensions per word and a three-level quantitative system: one, two or several.
- Estonia was an independent state between 1918 and 1940 before regaining its independence in August 1991.
- The Baltic Sea is the youngest sea on the planet and was formed by the melting of the snows in Scandinavia.
- On the 23rd of August in 1989, 6 million people joined their hands to create a human chain from Tallinn to Riga and Vilnius to declare their independence.

TALLINN

Tallinn "city of the Danes" has had this name since it was conquered by the Danish King Valdemar II in 1219. The large seaport (rebuilt in 1529) and the cannon tower, called the fat Margareta, are part of a superb and well-preserved section of the 4km-long ancient medieval enclosing wall. In this time, Tallinn, like Bruges, Lübeck, belonged to the Hanseatic League and was an important stopover on the way to Russia. The exceptional medieval character of Tallinn has been recognized by UNESCO.

The name "fat Margareta" may have come from Queen Margareta of Denmark.
The famous route "from the Vikings to the Greeks" went from Scandinavia through present-day Latvia and on to ancient Russia and the Byzantine Empire.

1/3 of the population live in the capital, Rīga.

Latvia owes its name to the Letgal or Latvian tribes (an Indo-European people).

Russia displaced many Latvians. They now represent only 60% of the population and 30% of the population is of Russian origin. This has caused integration problems.

Latvian is a Baltic language of Indo-European origin, like Lithuanian.

The MONUMENT OF FREEDOM represents Latvia as a young nation. Created by Karlis Zale in 1931-1935, a little after the first independence of 1918, this monument had an even more symbolic value during the Soviet occupation. The monument depicts the female symbol of Liberty. At her feet, different sculptures represent values, such as labour, family, strength of the nation, strength of spirituality and historical events. In the center is the statue of the Mother nation.

The three stars held by Liberty symbolise the three regions of Latvia: Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale.
LITHUANIA

Republic
Capital : Vilnius
Surface area : 65.300 km²
Population : 2,9 millions
Population / km² : 54
Member of the EU : 2004
National day : 16 February
National anthem :
Tautiska Giesmé (National song)
Standard of living (100=EUR 28) : 55

• Lithuania is one of the world’s leading producers of linen.
• Many Lithuanian wooden and forged iron crosses (sacred art) are recognised by UNESCO as world heritage artefacts.
• Lithuania is the only one of the three Baltic countries (Estonia and Latvia) in which 98% of the Russian speaking residents have been naturalised
• Basketball is Lithuania’s national sport (European champion 2003)
• The geographical centre of Europe is about 25km north of Vilnius.
• Lithuanian is an ancient language still very similar to Sanskrit.
• At the time of the retirement of Russia of Napoleon, 80 000 died there and were buried there

THE UNIVERSITY OF VILNIUS

THE UNIVERSITY LT was founded by the Jesuits in 1579 in the centre of the Old Town close to the Bishops palace. The Lithuanian baroque is the main style of this beautiful ensemble whose 6 of the 13 Courtyards are represented here. The magnificent Grand Courtyard combines three styles: Renaissance mannerism, Baroque and Classicism. The baroque Observatory Courtyard shows the signs of the Zodiac and Latin inscriptions.

The Astronomical Observatory was founded by Elzbieta Puzynowa in 1753 and was the fourth Observatory in Europe.

"Monument given by the Lithuanian government"
• With 480 people per km², the Netherlands have the highest population density in Europe after Malta.
• In January 1995, 250,000 Dutch people had to be evacuated after the rising flood water weakened the dams.
• There are over 19,000 km of cycle paths in the Netherlands. 80% of the population of the Netherlands owns a bicycle.
• Aalsmeer has the world’s largest auctions of cut flowers, with 12 billion flowers sold a year. 50% are exported.

• More than half the area of the Netherlands lies below sea level.
• 80% of Dutch people go on holiday at least once a year. They are the Europeans most likely to go on a trip during their free time.

KINGDOM

Capital: Amsterdam
Area: 41,500 km²
Population: 16.7 millions
Population density/km²: 402
EU member since: 1952
National holiday: April 30
National anthem: Wilhelmus van Nassau
Standard of living (100=EUR 28): 131

MAASTRICHT

It was in Maastricht, the oldest and most southerly town of the Netherlands, that was signed the Treaty of Maastricht, the agreement which is so fundamental to the future of the European Union. The TOWN HALL [NL 1]: this typically Dutch building was erected to a design by Pieter Post in the middle of the Seventeenth century.

The strangest feature of this building is the double landing. The reason for this was the city’s curious double rule: both the States-General and the Prince-Bishop of Liège hold sway in Maastricht. Desirous of avoiding their ‘representatives’ having to literally bump into each other, city authorities specially designed the construction of the double ceremonial staircase.
HOENSBROEK NL

The landscape and the buildings of Southern Limburg make it in some respects an enclave of Holland. This impression is further reinforced by HOENSBROEK CASTLE [NL 2] (near Heerlen). It was in fact an architect from Visé who around the middle of the 17th century was commissioned to replace the medieval castle by the present construction in Meuse Renaissance style. The extensive complex, which is entirely surrounded by water, also includes a farm and other outbuildings from the same period.

OOTMARSUM NL

Ootmarsum once straddled the great trade route linking West Netherlands with the North German Hansa confederation towns, and its medieval character has been preserved intact. The heart of the town is the CATHOLIC CHURCH [NL 3] resplendent in a Roman-Gothic style. The church sits in a labyrinth of little streets, alleyways and squares lined with grand MERCHANTS’ AND GENTLEMEN FARMERS’ RESIDENCES [NL 4] spanning the 17th to the 19th century.

Just outside the church is a bronze statue of the ”Poaskeerls”. Every year at Easter, the Poaskeerls went hand in hand through the streets of the town centre, singing their Easter songs. This event goes by the name of ”Vlöggelen”.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

• What is the westernmost point of the European Union? Guadeloupe.
• The European Union is present on three continents; in addition to mainland Europe, it includes all the French Overseas Departments (FOD) - with special status - as well as the Azores and Madeira (P), the Canary Islands and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the Moroccan coast. The EU does not include the French Overseas Territories (FOT), the British colonies, the Dutch dependencies, the Danish dependencies (the Faroe Islands, Greenland), or the micro-States, such as the Vatican, San Marino, Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein and Gibraltar.
• Greenland is the only region that was once part of the EU before leaving the Union in 1982.
• Europe is the continent with the highest density of borders (40,000 km).
Belgium

Kingdom
Capital: Brussels
Area: 30,500 km²
Population: 11.1 millions
Population density/km²: 361
EU member since: 1952
National holiday: July 21
National anthem: La Brabançonne
Standard of living (100=EUR 28): 116

- Belgians eat more chips than anyone else.
- Half the energy produced in Belgium is nuclear power.
- Belgium, with Antwerp as the main centre, accounts for 70% of the world’s diamond cutting industry.
- Belgium is the EU country which exports the highest percentage of its production.
- Belgium is divided into three communities and three regions: the Flemish community, the French-speaking community and the German-speaking community. The regions are Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. Its political architecture is highly complex.

- An average Belgian consumes 8 kg of chocolate per annum and per inhabitant.

Liège

The high and truly imposing CURTIUS HOUSE [BE 1] is a classic example of Meuse Renaissance. It was built between 1600 and 1610 by order of Jean de Corte. He was ennobled by both the Spanish king and the German Emperor, latinized his name into Curtius and invested a great deal of his wealth in charitable works and... in his impressive house.

Liège was the most important Belgian centre of armaments manufacturing. Its favourable location on the banks of the River Meuse led to a flourishing arms trade with various European cities.

"With the kind patronage of the Wallonia and Brussels Community".
CELLES

The fairy-tale VEVES CASTLE, strategically perched on top of a rock in the valley of the Ry (a tributary of the Lesse), is an elegant fortress with several towers. The castle was destroyed in 1466 but immediately rebuilt.

*The castle is still inhabited by the same family and is still fully furnished today. It gives a good idea of how life must have been in the Middle Ages.*

Dinant is also known as the Citadel town, due to the magnificent position of its citadel on a promontory overlooking the town.

"With the kind patronage of the Wallonia and Brussels Community".

Dinant

The early Gothic Our-Lady church or COLLEGIATE of Dinant is famed for its impressive site against a solid rock wall. The striking, pear-shaped tower - not in the original drawings - also contribute to its renown. Despite damage sustained due to falling rocks and the ravages of war, the church has consistently been restored to its former glory.

"With the kind patronage of the Wallonia and Brussels Community".

BRUSSELS

The Grand Place, which every two years (around the 15th of August) is covered by a magnificent carpet of flowers, is one of the most beautiful squares in Europe.

The gothic style CITY HALL is decorated with 294 statues from the 19th century. The summit of the 96 m high tower built by Jean van Ruysbroeck (1149) is crowned by a statue of St Michael, the patron saint of the city. All around it, the HOUSES of the CORPORATIONS were rebuilt after the French bombing of 1695. The Maison du Roi was built in the 16th century by Charles V on the former site of the Halle aux pains (Broodhuys in Dutch). It currently houses a museum exhibiting the wardrobe of the Manneken-Pis. The complete model of the Grand-Place/Grote Markt cost around 350,000 EURO’s and took 19,000 hours to build.

"With the kind patronage of the Wallonia and Brussels Community".