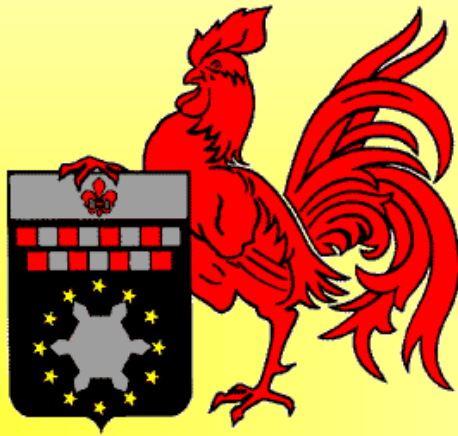




PRESENTATION OF CHARLEROI

C.E.C.S. La Garenne



Welcome to Charleroi...



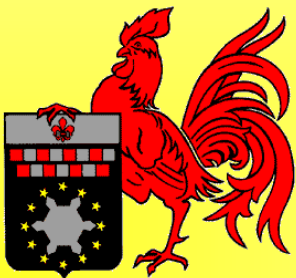
Charleroi is the biggest city in Wallonia (the French-speaking part of Belgium) and the third-biggest city in Belgium.



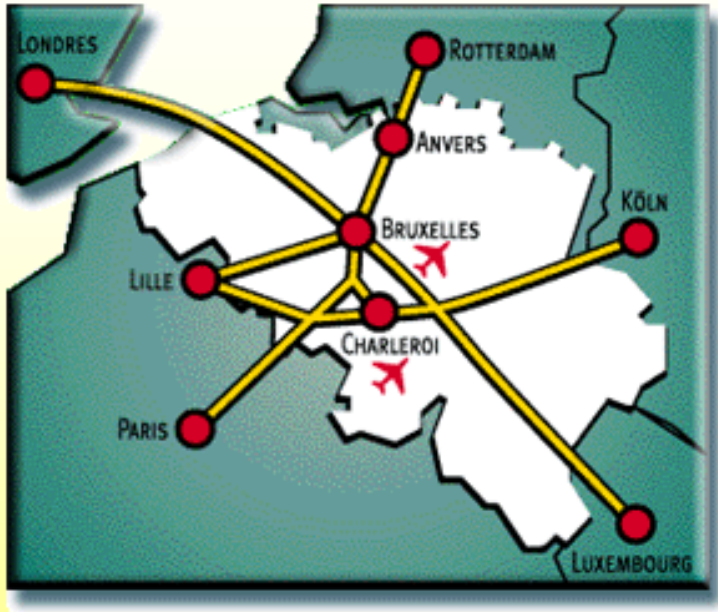
Statistics

Surface : 102 km² 57% urban area
43% rural area

Population : 206,898 inhabitants

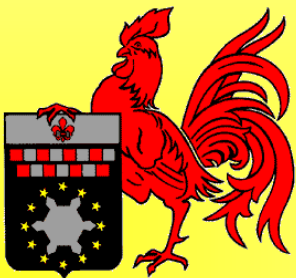


A privileged situation in the heart of Europe...



As the economic and cultural centre of a conurbation of nearly half a million inhabitants, the city of Charleroi is an important centre for communications and transport by motorway and rail and on the river Sambre.

As the gateway to the Ardennes it is favourably located fifty kilometres (50 km) south of Brussels, the European capital, and one hundred kilometres (100 km) east of the important city of Lille.



Charleroi has also a rapidly developing regional airport, ***Brussels South Charleroi Airport.***



Charleroi is also the sister city of several other cities around the world.



Pittsburgh,
USA

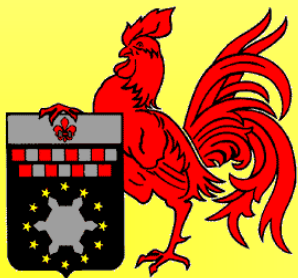


Himeji,
Japan

Sélestat, Saint-Junien,
France



Donetsk,
Ukraine



Casarano, Follonica,
Italy

Schramberg, Waldkirch,
Germany

A short history of Charleroi...



In 1666, the Spanish built a fortress on a headland overlooking the valley of the Sambre. The stronghold was named Charleroy to glorify Charles II, the infant King of Spain.

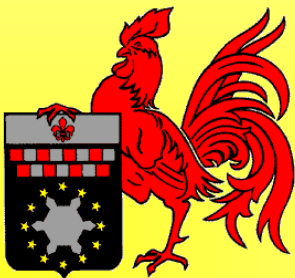
The following year, the fortress was taken by French armies and it was under French occupation that fortifications were completed and extended by Vauban.

Louis XIV, who wanted to promote the development of the new town, granted its inhabitants privileges.



In 1678, under the treaty of Nijmegen, Charleroi was given back to Spain.

A first industrial change based on coal, iron and glass industries brought about a rise in Charleroi's population.

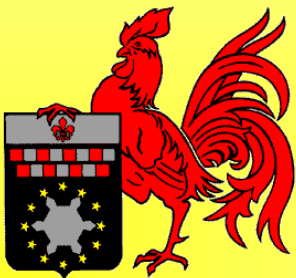


A short history of Charleroi...

The Emperor Napoleon stayed two days in Charleroi before the battle of Waterloo and on the eve of his last victory in Ligny, on the 16th of June 1815.



At the beginning of the 19th century, the industrial revolution which started in England brought profound changes in traditional metallurgy industry. The use of coke instead of charcoal and the use of steam engines instead of hydraulic energy resulted in the shift of metallurgy centres from the forest regions of Ardennes to the coal-mining sites of Charleroi.



Around 1870, the fortress was demolished. On the many hectares of clear land, new suburbs were put up favouring population growth in Charleroi. At this period, the City finally asserted itself as the primary centre of the "Coal Country". In 1976, following the merger of boroughs, Charleroi became the third largest city in Belgium.

The Coat of Arms of Charleroi

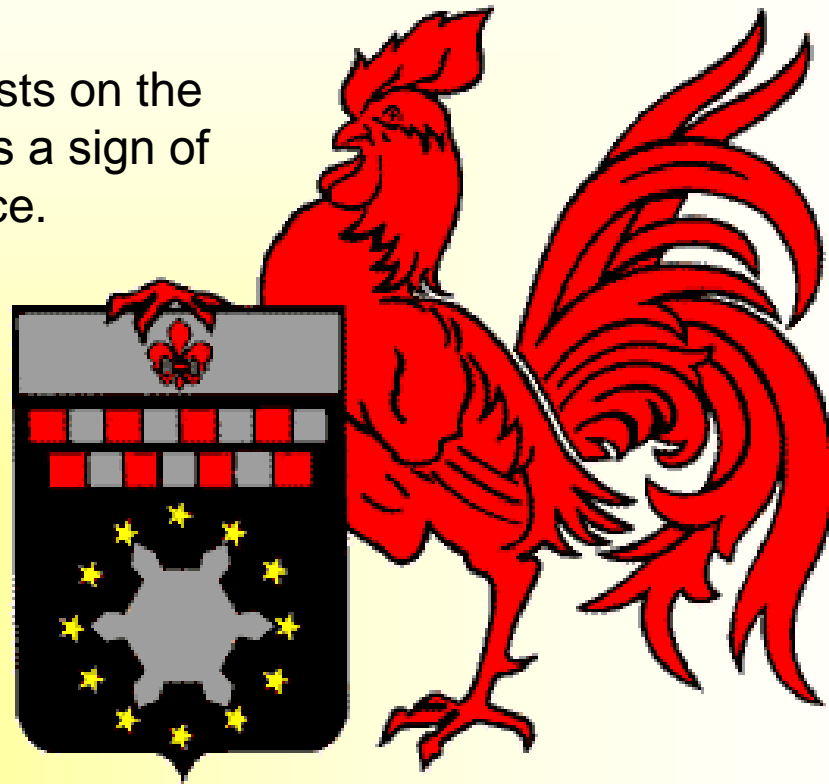
The **rooster** is the symbol of the French-speaking part of Belgium.

Its **right foot** rests on the blazon's crest as a sign of allegiance.

The **fleur de lys** commemorates the impulse in development given by France to the original fortress.

The **15 squares** represent the 15 former municipalities, which came together to form the present-day city of Charleroi.

The **12 stars** symbolise the flag of the European Union.



In the center, the **Fortress of Vauban** recalls the origins of the city.

Warm and cordial atmosphere...

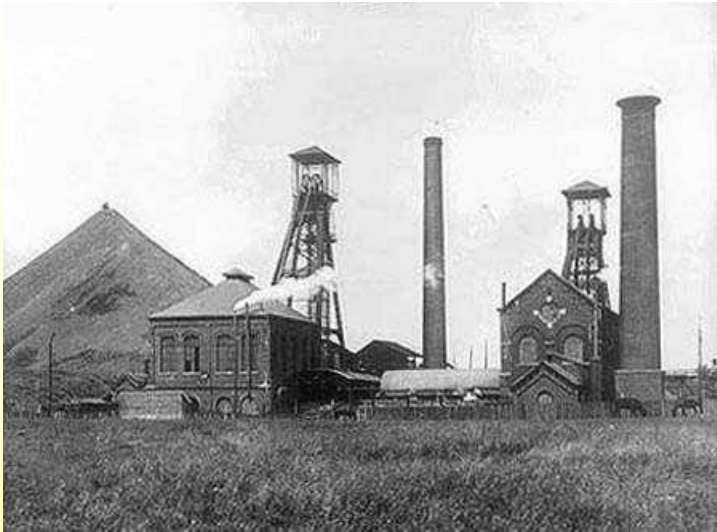
The "**Carolos**" (inhabitants of Charleroi) are well known for their enthusiasm, their generosity, their friendliness and their joie de vivre ...To them, a friendly welcome and hospitality really mean something.

With its pedestrian zones, its squares, its parks, its arteries and its shopping malls as well as its touristic and leisure infrastructures, Charleroi is a comfortable city perfectly suited for walking and shopping.



Every Sunday the weekly market attracts thousands of people, some of them coming from far away. Its warm and picturesque atmosphere should be missed on no account ...

A black country turning green...



Formerly the capital of the black country and one of the richest areas of the industrial revolution producing coal, steel and glass, Charleroi is today a major city being changed by urban and environmental transformations.

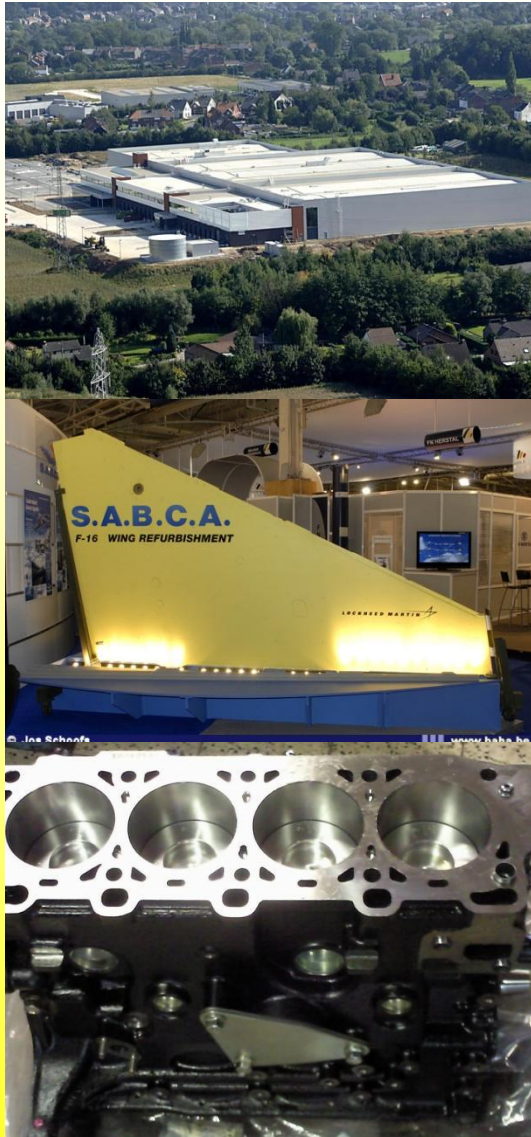
The careful redesign of its centre and the revaluation of its heritage confirm its intention to improve the quality of its urban life.



The numerous parks found in Charleroi as well as its sixty-two slag-heaps, most of them covered by vegetation, are the green lungs of a city with omnipresent flora.



A city of business...



Large international corporations as well as small and medium-sized companies have chosen the favourable situation, the know-how and the dynamism of Charleroi to develop their activities.

Special steels, aeronautical engineering, telecommunications, digital data processing, food production and agriculture, mechanical engineering, printing, chemistry, services both to business clients and to individuals, and many other sectors are well established at Charleroi.



A city of sports...



A sporting city with high level soccer, basketball, volleyball, and table tennis activities, Charleroi is well equipped with an infrastructure matching its ambitions.

In fact, it hosted the " Euro 2000 " events.

Every year there are international events and competitions, such as " Astrid Bowl ", " Rallye Bianchi ", " 10 Miles ", cross country trials, Top Gym, etc ...

A city of culture...



For its cultural activities Charleroi is also well worth a detour.

The city is the home of prestigious annual exhibitions and numerous performances and shows.

The reputation of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, the "Charleroi Danse" Ballet ... (and other cultural facilities) are recognized even outside Belgium.



The Museums of Charleroi offer an opportunity to discover magnificent collections of paintings, sculptures, glass, photography, industrial archaeology, science...

A city of culture...



Charleroi is the cradle of the Belgian comic strip in the "Marcinelle School" style as illustrated by "Dupuis Publishers".



Amongst others you will meet Spirou and Fantasio, the Marsupilami, Lucky Luke, Boule et Bill... in the centre of the city or when you use the underground.



Land of traditions...

The Carolos love to cultivate their traditional folk-music and dance and they gladly share it with their guests.



During the "Mardi Gras" Carnival, the city is crowded with "Gilles" and giants. The festivities last until Saturday, ending with the famous fancy-dress ball of the "**Climbias**", a philanthropic association more than a century old.



The processions and the Napoleonic marches in the area between the rivers Sambre and Meuse are also events attracting an assembly of thousands of participants in historic costumes. Their origins reach back some centuries.

The fairs at Easter and in August transform the centre of the city into an immense public fête.



Pays de Charleroi... (Jacques Bertrand)

***Pays de Charleroi,
C'est toi que je préfère,
Le plus beau coin de terre,
A mes yeux, oui, c'est toi. (bis)***



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUivYvTjD1c>

1er couplet

J'ai des maintes cités,
Contemplé les merveilles,
Leurs palais tant vantés
Aux splendeurs sans pareilles,
De ces beaux monuments,
Admirant la structure,
Je regrettais nos champs,
Et leur verte parure,
Qu'annonce le printemps.

2ème couplet

Sous des prés verdoyants
Que la Sambre caresse
Sous les bosquets riant
Pleins de chants d'allégresse,
Git le sombre charbon,
Ce pain de l'industrie,
Que le mineur wallon,
Si cher à la patrie,
Extrait du puits profond. (Ref.)

3ème couplet

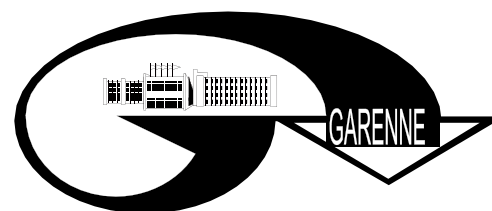
J'aime les hauts-fourneaux
Flamboyant dans la brume
Et le bruit des marteaux
Résonnant sur l'enclume,
J'aime ces travailleurs
Animant nos rivages,
Et le chant des mineurs
Egayant nos villages
Après leurs durs labeurs (Ref.)

4ème couplet

La nuit, j'aime ces feux
Près de chaque houillère,
Et quand l'éclair joyeux
Jaillit des fours à verre,
Verrier, à leur clarté,
J'admire ton courage,
Tu sais avec fierté
Egayer ton ouvrage
D'un chant de liberté. (Ref.)

5ème couplet

J'aime à voir réunis
Au jour de la quinzaine,
Les enfants du pays
Buvant, à chope pleine,
La bière coule à flots,
Pétillante et mousseuse,
J'aime le bruit des pots,
Et la chanson joyeuse
Qui fait dire aux échos. (Ref.)



***CENTRE EDUCATIF
COMMUNAL SECONDAIRE
LA GARENNE***

**This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held
responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.**