

FOREIGNERS

The maps on this sheet depict the situation at the census of 1 March 1981. 878 577 foreigners were counted, which is nearly 9% of the population of the nation. Within this number, 320 339 foreigners were born in Belgium (36.5 %) and some of them were even born of parents born in Belgium. According to the Belgian regulations, modified in 1984, a child born in Belgium obtained the nationality of his father but had the option to choose Belgian nationality at his majority. Persons with diplomatic status, the members of their households, foreign servants living with them and the NATO-military with an official mission in Belgium are not considered for the census. However, the personnel of the European Institutions has been subjected to the census through the secretary of these institutions. Obviously, foreigners having acquired Belgian nationality by marriage, option or naturalisation are not taken into account.

The maps show the strong concentration of foreigners in the abandoned or still active coalmining basins (the agglomerations of Mons-Borinage, La Louvière, Charleroi, Liège, and the Campine (Kempen)), the large agglomerations with their urban fringe (besides those cited above, Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent) and the border regions (essentially near Lille and in the Campine, in the regions of Eupen and Arlon). In the other areas, the absolute and relative number of foreigners is very low, except within the triangle Brussels-Antwerp-Ghent (particularly in Sint-Niklaas and Malines (Mechelen)) and in the towns with a predominant university function (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve). 47% of the foreigners live in Wallonia, 27% in Brussels and 26% in the Flemish region (against respectively 32%, 8% and 60% of the Belgians).

In 1920, nearly all the foreigners in Belgium are from the border countries. From the first world war to 1930, there is a first immigration wave of workers coming from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Italy. From 1930 to the second world war, immigration is very low, due to the economic crisis. From the war up to 1961, nearly half of the immigrants are of Italian origin. A new diversification of origin starts in 1955 with the arrival of Spaniards and Greeks. They are also important in the 1961-1970 period, which is also characterised by the start of Moroccan and Turkish immigration. After 1970, only the Moroccan immigration continues. Between 1970 and 1981, the arrival of foreigners from border countries, from the United Kingdom, from the United States and from the Third World is also increasing.

There are several explanatory factors : the closure of the frontiers of Eastern Europe after the Second World War; the reluctance of the Italian government to allow emigration to the Belgian coalmines after the disaster of Bois-du-Cazier (Marcinelle, August 1956); the spatial extension of recruitment campaigns as a response to this latter event and to the stronger competition during the Golden Sixties between the Western countries with a tense labour market; free movement of workers throughout the European Community since 1968 and its successive enlargements; the growing international function of Brussels; development of the Third World, etc.

In 1981, six nationalities are well represented : together they account for 77% of the registered foreigners. The Italians come first (279 700, or 32%), followed by the Moroccans (105 133, 12%) and the French (103 512, 12%). They are followed by the Dutch (66 233, 8 %), the Turks (63 587, 7 %) and the Spaniards (58 255, 6 %). The Germans, the British and the Greeks have more than 20 000 nationals in Belgium, the Americans (US), the Algerians and the Portuguese more than 10 000 and the Zaireans and the Poles more than 7 000.

The display of the nationalities reflects the characteristics of the labour market during their arrival period in Belgium. Indeed, since 1936 immigration is subjected to a double work permit, one for the immigrant and one for the employer who wants to put him at work. This permit ties the immigrant to his first employer for one year and thereafter to the same employment sector for at least three years. This contributes to freeze the initial location of immigrants. During the inter-war years the coalmining sector was nearly the only one which was allowed to appeal to the foreign workforce, after the second world war this was extended to heavy industry and building industry and during the Sixties to all industries and services. On the other hand, the first important pit closures took place during the end of the fifties. The years 1959-61 formed the turning point between an immigration geared towards coalmining and heavy industry and one geared towards more diversified occupations but chiefly located in the urban centres. The Campine is the only region that showed strong immigration both before and after 1960 : the recession in the Campine coalfield is more recent and the setting up of multi-national enterprises has provided new job opportunities in the region.

The Italians form the great majority of foreigners in all the communes of the Walloon industrial axis : 76% of the Italians live in Wallonia. They represent about 75% of the foreigners in several industrial communes. They are also numerous in the Brussels region and in the Limburg mining communes. It is worthwhile noticing the diffusion of Italians in the Condroz, in the south of the industrial Hainaut and Liège. Spaniards and Greeks live essentially in Brussels-Capital (48% and 45% respectively of their total number in Belgium). Some of them live in the Walloon industrial axis, mainly in Liège and also in Limburg. Moroccans and Turks are not absent from Walloon agglomerations but they are mainly concentrated in Brussels (55% of the Moroccans represent 24% of the foreigners in the region) and in Flanders (48% of the Turks). More Turks are found in Limburg and in Ghent, more Moroccans in Antwerp and in the arrondissements of Sint-Niklaas, Dendermonde and Malines.

The nationals from the neighbouring countries are relatively more numerous in the border regions, where they often represent 80% or more of the foreigners but also in the larger cities. 25% of the French population live in Brussels-Capital and 58% in Wallonia. Their relative importance is strong in all the communes within 30-40 km from the French border, even in the Flemish region. In absolute figures, they are important in the region of Lille (23% of the French in Belgium). 82% of the Dutch live in the Flemish region, mainly in the northern Campine (33% in Limburg and the arrondissement of Turnhout) and in the Antwerp agglomeration (23% in the arrondissement). However they are present throughout the Flemish region including the communes with few foreigners. Their relative importance is sharply contrasted along the linguistic frontier. The Germans are concentrated in the region of Eupen (26%) and in Brussels (30% in Brabant). The Luxemburgers are also found in Brussels (46%) and near Arlon (26%). The British, the Irish, the other Europeans, the Americans (US) and the Canadians are mainly located in the Brussels area (respectively 60%, 82%, 45%, 54% and 56% of them live in Brabant), but also in the agglomerations of Antwerp and Liège, in Mons and in the area north of this town (SHAPE). Lastly, the other countries of the world are concentrated in the large towns. Their relative importance is strongest in the two towns with a predominant university function.

Within the agglomerations the foreigners are located according to their incomes. These show a greater disparity compared to the Belgian population. They restrict the foreigners to bad housing in the private rental market or give them access to the recent residential suburbs. In the Brussels region, the communes with run-down buildings from the 19th century, near the industrial zones, and their extensions north (Vilvoorde) and south (Tubize) count nearly 75% of Mediterraneans, a good part of them being Turks and Moroccans (half of the foreigners in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode and Schaerbeek). In the south-eastern suburbs one finds on the contrary foreigners from the neighbouring countries, British, other Europeans and Americans. These three categories count for one half of the foreigners in Rhode-Saint-Genèse and Waterloo. In the intermediate communes from Uccle to Woluwe-Saint-Lambert are to be found foreigners from the neighbouring countries, mainly French, Italians but also people from other countries attracted by the different University campuses. In the north-eastern outskirts of Antwerp, the area is characterised by the presence of the Dutch (about a half of the foreigners), the presence of nationals from European and non-European countries and on the other hand by the scarceness of the Mediterraneans. But in the central communes the Mediterraneans constitute half or more of the foreign population. In Liège the southern suburban communes (Chaufontaine, Sprimont, etc.) have fewer Mediterraneans but more diversified nationalities than the rest of the agglomeration. They are also characterised by a relative scarceness of foreigners. Towns of a lower hierarchical level cannot attract international managers in a sufficient number to appear in statistical observations. Within the areas with a homogeneous housing market situation, one can find important variations in the structure of the nationalities. They reveal concentrations on the basis of culture and origin. The concentrations of Turks and Moroccans in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode and Schaerbeek can be contrasted with that of the Spaniards in Saint-Gilles.