

Press Release
4 July 2016

Limburg rolls out the red carpet for internationals

On Wednesday July 20th, in the presence of the Mayor of Maastricht, Annemarie Penn-te Strake, the Governor of the Province of Limburg, Theo Bovens and the dean of the Faculty of Law of Maastricht University, professor Hildegard Schneider, the Maastricht International Centre in Centre Céramique, Maastricht, will be opened. Initially three support organizations will be located in the Centre, the Cross-border Information Point Maastricht, the Holland Expat Center South, and the Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility.

Characterised by a mix of languages and cultures

Limburg is a border region par excellence. The provincial border with Germany and Belgium is 351 km long: there is 'only' 113 km bordering the rest of the Netherlands. It is only logical that international cross-border behaviour and attitudes are deeply rooted in the DNA of the province and of the region.

Limburg straddles an ancient line where many of Europe's languages and cultures convene. A European mixing pot, where the great Germanic and Latin cultures met, some 2,000 years ago. It is the centre of a Euregion of 4 million people living in three countries and speaking four languages. Together this has made Limburg and in particular the city of Maastricht what it is today: an innovative, multi-cultural, open and vital community.

International appeal

Our unique border locations in the heart of Europe, our internationally-focused institutes and business climate have a strong appeal for international companies, knowledge migrants and students. The Brightlands campuses, for example, have become the locations where researchers, companies – from multinationals to start ups – and students cooperate to develop sustainable solutions to worldwide challenges. Moreover, the university city of Maastricht has the most international university in the Netherlands.

Living, working and studying in the region

At present some 12,000 internationals live and work in Limburg, 80% of whom in Maastricht and Zuid-Limburg. The number of internationals has been growing consistently in recent years. This group has filled a substantial share of the increase in jobs anticipated in the Brainport-2020 programme. Around 25,000 people travel daily across the border to and from work in Belgium or Germany. 7,500 international students study and work in Maastricht. But cross-border life, work and study produces a number of administrative obstacles, practical problems and many questions.

Service and expertise concentrated in one place

With the support of the Province of Limburg, the Municipality of Maastricht and Limburg Economic Development (LED), the Holland Expat Center South (HECS), the Cross-border Information Point (Grensinfopunt /GIP) Maastricht and Maastricht University's Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross-border cooperation and Mobility (ITEM) have joined forces. To increase cooperation with each other, they have chosen to work from a single location on the first floor of Maastricht's Centre Céramique, under the name of Maastricht International Centre. The centre will help internationals by giving them a soft landing in our region, help to connect them to the region and will tackle the bottlenecks in cross-border mobility and cooperation.

Knowledge knows no borders

This cooperation will strengthen the international business location of the region. It will increase the region's ability to attract and retain internationals (knowledge migrants, border workers and students) and international companies. A well functioning center will also contribute to the profile of the region as a melting pot where knowledge knows no borders.

A region with its innovative Brightlands-campuses, more than 100 international institutes, the most international university of the Netherlands, (university) hospitals, the United World College and internationally operating companies such as APG, DSM, Medtronic, SABIC, Canon-Océ and Q-Park within easy reach.

Note: Information about the organisations

About the Cross-border Information Point (Grensinfopunt / GIP) Maastricht

In the border regions of the European Union Europe is not a theoretical concept but daily practice for its citizens. Particularly in those areas relating to social security, wages, taxes, health insurance, family assistance, pensions etc, problems may develop which can impede cross-border mobility. Cross-border employees and businesses in de Euregion (those who live and / or work across the borders) can turn to the Cross-border Information Point for help in such cases. The (potential or former) "border crosser" can be helped directly by specialists from the Sociale Verzekeringsbank and the Belastingdienst. There already exist a number of Cross-border Information Points along the German-Dutch and Belgian borders who work together closely. A good example is the cooperation between the Cross-border Information Point in Maastricht with the Cross-border Information Point Aken / Eurode (Kerkrade/Herzogenrath).

About the Holland Expat Center South | Maastricht Region

The presence of international knowledge workers, scientific researchers and employment migrants is an essential requirement for our economy, productivity and innovative strength. Holland Expat Center South aims to provide international businesses, knowledge institutes and knowledge migrants a warm welcome. By concentrating all the public and private services that an international needs during the period just after arrival in the Netherlands at central locations and as far as possible together at the same time. An accelerated procedure for issuing a Burgerservicenummer (BSN) in combination with the residence procedure of the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation service (IND) is one of the key services of the Expat Center. Internationals can bring their questions about work permits, housing, registration, taxes, insurance, education and regulations, among other things. The Expat Center organises informative and social activities together with its partners and acts as a hub within the regional international community to actively connect international talent to the region.

About ITEM

The Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM operates at the convergence of research, counselling, knowledge exchange in the domain of cross-border mobility and cooperation.

The center of expertise was set up in 2015 to support and promote cross-border and international operation of transnational and euregional society from the scientific point of view. A team of researchers carry out systematic research on cross-border issues and publicises practical and fundamental perspectives and potential solutions. Interdisciplinary, basic and applied research are combined in this process.

At ITEM all partners learn from each other and new, relevant knowledge is constantly being acquired. The center of expertise shares its conclusions with advisory bodies which in turn, are in direct contact with citizens / employees. ITEM represents knowledge for policy and practice.

Opening times Cross-border Information Point Maastricht

Monday: 9:00-16:00 (by appointment)

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 09:00-12.30 en 13:30-16:00 (by appointment)

Friday: shut

+31 (0)43 – 350 5020 (Monday –Thursday 09:00-17:00; Friday 09:00-12:30)

www.maastricht.grenzinfo.eu

Opening times Holland Expat Center South | Maastricht Region

Monday: shut

Tuesday: 09:00-16:30

Wednesday: 09:00-12:30 (walk-in) en 13:30-16:30 (by appointment)

Thursday: 09:00-16:30

Friday: 09:00-12:30 (by appointment) and 13:30-16:30 (walk-in)

+31 (0)43 – 350 5010 (Monday-Friday 09:00-17:00)

www.hollandexpatcenter.com

Office hours ITEM

Daily office: Monday-Friday (Bouillonstraat 1-3, Maastricht) / Tuesday and Thursday (Maastricht International Centre)

Scientific office: Monday – Friday (Bouillonstraat 1-3, Maastricht)

www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/item

Visiting address

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Note for editors

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