

# Case study on Housing

**LIÈGE (Belgium)**

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**City Housing Service**

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final

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# 1 Background information on Belgium

## 1.1 History of migration and composition of migrant populations

After the Second World War, Belgium signed several bilateral agreements in order to organize the recruitment of migrant workers in its coal mining sector first and later on other sectors. The first was concluded with Italy in 1946, followed by others with Spain and Greece in the 50's; Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia in the 60's and at the beginning of the 70's, Algeria, Yugoslavia and Portugal. Migrants came from these countries but also from neighbouring countries like France and the Netherlands. In 1974, like other European countries, the Belgian government decided to stop immigration of workers. However, data on immigration during the following decades show that, in spite of this decision, immigrants still arrived in Belgium. It happened particularly through 6 patterns of migration: mobility of EU citizens, asylum applications, foreign student's mobility, highly skilled worker's migration, irregular migration and not least, family reunion (Gsir, Martiniello and Wets, Belgium report in Niessen J & Y. Schibel (eds.), *EU and US approaches to the management of immigration. Comparative perspectives*, Brussels, MPG, 2003:62-63).

In 2004, Belgium's foreign population reached 8.3 percent of the total population. This is less than in the 90s, when it was around 9%. This figure did not include neither foreigners residing irregularly in Belgium, nor Belgians of foreign origin. So the immigrant population and its offspring is higher. The foreign population is spread unequally around the country. In 2004, 26.3% were located in the Brussels-Capital Region, 9.1% in Wallonia and 4.8% in Flanders. In Flanders, the foreign population is especially concentrated in the provinces of Limbourg and Antwerp, while in Wallonia, it is concentrated mainly in the old industrial provinces of Liège and Hainaut (Martiniello & Rea, "Belgium's Immigration Policy Brings Renewal and Challenges", Migration Information Source. October 2003). Most of the foreigners are EU nationals (66% at the end of 2004) mainly Italians, French, Dutch and Spaniards. The number of Poles is in the increase since 1990. The other foreigners widely represented are the Moroccans (81,279) followed by the Turks (39,885). But they have highly diminished since the change of nationality law in 2000 which has facilitated access to Belgian nationality.

Between 1990 and 2004, women represented less than 50% of foreign population whereas they constitute around 51.3% of Belgian population. Nevertheless, the distribution of women among the foreigners varies, for example, with higher rate among Greek population (58% women) and the lowest 42.6% in the Algerian population. Regarding the age distribution among foreigners, people between 25 and 50 are greater in number (Direction générale Emploi et marché du travail, *L'Immigration en Belgique. Effectifs, mouvements et marché du travail. Rapport 2006*. Bruxelles, Service public fédéral Emploi, travail et concertation sociale, 2006).

## 1.2 General national integration policy

The federated entities (Regions and Communities) of Belgium are in charge of most issues linked to integration (education, health, housing and partly employment). Flanders and Wallonia have



developed their own approach of integration of migrants. Flanders developed multicultural policies inspired by the Dutch model, whereas Wallonia has been influenced by the French Republican model of assimilation.

From the 80's, the Flemish government encouraged the involvement of migrants' associations in integration policy. Thus, in 1996, it passed a decree defining a policy for ethnic-cultural minorities. This minorities policy is three dimensional: (1) emancipation of the so-called 'allochtones' (legal foreign residents), (2) integration of newcomers and, (3) emergency support for irregular migrants. Since 2003, the Flemish government has developed its integration policy for newcomers with the concept of *inburgering* ('citizenisation'). It is made of a compulsory integration programme for all newcomers arriving in Flanders as from April 2004. It includes Dutch and civic courses, and job orientation programmes. Furthermore, since 2004, Flanders has a Minister for integration who tries to shift the minorities' policy towards a policy of diversity .

Instead of a proper integration policy, the Walloon government opted for a general anti-exclusion policies. In the mid 90's, it passed a decree on integration without however defining precisely the concept. The task was entrusted to six regional integration centres that were recognized by the decree. In Liège, this centre is the CRIPEL (Centre régional pour l'intégration des personnes étrangères ou d'origine étrangère de Liège). Later, the Walloon government adopted measures linked to cultural diversity such as in education a decree about "positive discrimination", in other words a kind of affirmative action.

The Brussels-Capital Region tries to develop its own approach which is largely inspired by the two models developed in the north and the south of the country.

At the federal level, integration has been above all stimulated by access to the Belgian nationality. Consequently, the Belgian nationality code has been modified several times and is currently one of the most liberal in Europe. (Gsir, Martiniello and Wets, Belgium report in Niessen J & Y. Schibel (eds.), *EU and US approaches to the management of immigration. Comparative perspectives*, Brussels, MPG, 2003). Since 2004, another step forward has been taken. The right of vote at local elections has been granted to non-EU nationals. They still do not have the right of enfranchisement. Prior registration on electoral lists is mandatory whereas for Belgians, the vote is compulsory. Nevertheless, civic and political rights are henceforth a further means of integration in Belgium.

## 2 Background information on Liège and its integration policy

### 2.1 General structural data of Liège

Liège is the largest city of Wallonia and the third largest city of Belgium after Brussels and Antwerp. It is the capital city (chef-lieu) of the Province of Liège and it is an important crossroads between the Netherlands and Germany. Crossed by the river, Meuse, its river port is the second largest in Europe. With a port, an international airport, a European motorway network and, soon a TGV (High Speed Train) station, Liège is a dynamic trade and economic centre in the Euregio. This situation is reinforced by two international poles of excellence for transportation and logistics as well as for biotechnologies and space research. Liège is also an



industrial city with iron and steel industry. The city offers a wide range of high-quality education with one university and several colleges of higher education and therefore attracts a important number of students from all Belgium, the neighbouring countries and from all over the world.

The city is a part of the agglomeration of Liège divided in three perimeters following the urban and circulation stakes. The first perimeter includes the city-centre (around 8,800 inhabitants). The second perimeter surrounds the city-centre and all the bordering sectors. It is commonly called the dense urban area. It is located in the lower section of the valley of the river. And, the third perimeter includes all the motorways' connexions and the main economic and residential poles of the agglomeration. The agglomeration has a head count of about 500,000 inhabitants. It is worth noting that the population is two times greater in the periphery than in the central urban area. Jobs are concentrated in the centre of the city, the second perimeter and in the third perimeter, there are job openings in the industrial furrow of the river and some industrial zones near the motorways and the airport. The city of Liège itself is made up of 23 neighbourhoods: the centre, Avroy, Guillemins, Sainte-Marguerite, Saint-Leonard, Outremeuse, Longdoz, Sainte-Walburge, Laveu, Thier-à-Liège, Vennes, Droixhe, Angleur, Bressoux, Chênée, Grivegnée, Jupille, Wandre, Glain, Rocourt and Sclessin. The most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are located in Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Leonard and the social housing/council flats neighbourhoods (Droixhe). The less disadvantaged neighbourhoods are concentrated in the Liège south periphery.

Liège's population was 186,805 as of December 2005 (51.2% men and 48.8% women). Adding those who are registered in the so-called "waiting register" which includes the population primarily made up of asylum seekers, this figure rises to 190,822. According to the municipality, the population actually residing in Liège is around 200,000 inhabitants. On average, there are 2,699 inhabitants per square kilometre. The population dropped between 1989 and 2005 (-6.8%). Indeed, besides the official residents there are also a number of people residing in the city whose official residence is situated in another municipality. It is particularly the case for students who occupy small rooms called "kots". But irregular residents are also in this case. This phenomenon of demand for small housing and consequently the fragmentation of housing influences the evolution of housing of lower quality. Furthermore, like other big cities, the phenomenon of sub-urbanization can be observed in Liège. The urban well-off tend to leave the city for residential areas at the periphery but remain linked by their work/profession to the city. The city has lost a lot of inhabitants since the 60's (29,000 persons in 20 years) because of this residential migration of households towards the peripheries. Nevertheless, this trend has slowed down since the mid 80's.

The population of Liège is fairly old. The current ageing ratio is 110.9 whereas it is 92.1 for Belgium and 85.9 for Wallonia. This ratio represents the portion of the persons older than 60 relative to those who are between 0 and 19 years old. The city has 17,9 % foreigners (34,234 persons: 18,304 men and 15,930 women). This figure includes asylum seekers and foreigners whose asylum applications are still pending. Contrary to the balance in the Belgian population in the city, there are more men than women within the foreign population. There are 142 different nationalities in Liège. EU nationals represent 47,6% of all foreigners (17,916). The Italians are the most important foreign group followed by the Moroccans. The household structure is also



changing. The single-parent households are increasing and represent more than 50% of the city households. Households of two persons or more are decreasing especially those of three, four and five persons.

Even though tens of SME's have been created during the past years, the iron and steel industry still weighs a great deal on the city and region's economy. The industry sector (around 47,000 jobs) is dominated by the group of metal representing more than 40% of jobs. Nevertheless, the district has lost more than 100,000 jobs in its industries since the beginning of the 60's. The expected closure of the ARCELOR group in the near future will have other repercussions in the region. The secondary sector represents less than a quarter of the jobs. Liège is the main work pole of the region of Liège. It has 41% enterprises and 51% of jobs of the region. As opposed to the secondary sector, jobs increase in the tertiary sector; around 60,000 jobs were created between 1961 and 2002. In the city itself, the tertiary sector represents 90% of the 110,000 jobs and in the district around 77% of the 210,000 jobs. 17,000 jobs are located in the first perimeter of the agglomeration. All types of activities are represented in the city as in the district however the services sector prevails. Prominent services sectors include education (around 75,000 students of whom 33,000 in high education), health care (around 3,800 beds), social services and trade (more than 5,000 businesses in the city). Regarding office space, the city has only around 450,000 square meters shared between public and private sector, which is less than a tenth of the ratio of offices in Brussels. Nevertheless, according to the FOREM, the situation of the city is ambivalent. On the one hand, its activity ratio is good whereas on the other hand, its employment ratio is the lowest in the region of Liège and as a corollary, a high unemployment ratio.

According to the Walloon Region, employment figures for Liège fell from 1999-2000 while these figures increased at the regional level. The unemployment rate in Liège is around 21% in Liège, higher than elsewhere in Wallonia where the average is 16%. During the second semester of 2005, the percentages of unemployed persons based on their sex stood at 53.3% (male) and 46.7% (female). The job seekers have difficulties to find a job because many of them have low qualifications or none at all. The number of people on welfare (integration income, former minimex) is higher than the regional average. The socio-economic data on the population of Liège for 2005 reveals that 8,121 inhabitants depended on welfare: 5,987 received what is called 'integration income'; 2,077 received social help; 3 got exceptional help while the rest, 54 got assistance as homeless persons (source: CPAS, Liège). The employment figures for 2003 are 107,392 jobs with 96,314 salaried workers and 11,078 self-employed workers.

The average income per inhabitant is 10,350 euros for 2004 and 22,345 euros for the average income declared. The average incomes are lower than those of the district of Liège. The evolution during the last 15 years shows that the city has lost a number of households. High and middle incomes have migrated to other municipalities whereas households on benefits have arrived in the city. The impoverishment of Liège is largely due to its central position within an industrial basin and the evolution of the ways of life and the residential aspirations of certain population groups. Average income/inhabitant in 1980 showed that the city of Liège ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 24 within the agglomeration. In 2002, the ranking dropped to 20<sup>th</sup>. It's clear that within this period high income earning households quit the center for the periphery. During the period under consideration, unemployment rate was at 21% for Liège whereas the regional rate was



16%. The city has been confronted these past years with high unemployment, poverty, urban exodus but it seems that it experienced a reversal of fortunes since 2006.

## 2.2 History of municipal migration and composition of migrant populations

The city is characterized by different migrations as a result of migrations cycles in Belgium. First migrations were internal migration at the end of 19 century. Migrants arrived from the Ardennes and Flanders in order to work in the mines and the metallurgy sector. Before the First World War, migrants from the neighbouring countries but also from as far away as Poland, Italy and Russia arrived in Liège. They came for various reasons: asylum, studies and work.

After the war, individual migrations grew all over the province because of the job opportunities in the coal fields of Liège . As soon as the Belgian state organized immigration for work purposes through bilateral agreements, Liège received important migration flows from Italy mainly but also from Spain, Poland and later from Morocco and Turkey. After 1974, the Belgian government stopped economic migration. Nevertheless, as elsewhere in the country, immigrants still arrived in Liège through the family reunification channel. At the end of 1980's, besides foreign students coming particularly from Africa, a new category of migrants arrived in Belgium and in Liège in particular. People from Eastern European countries, from Asia and sub-Saharan Africa seeking asylum in Belgium arrived in Liège. Because of the importance of the influx of asylum seekers, the City and its CPAS decided at the end of 1993 to not accept newcomers anymore. But this measure did not impede the arrival of migrants from Kosovo and other Eastern countries at the end of the 90's. It is important to underline that numbers of asylum-seekers decided to reside in Liège even when the source of their welfare payment depended on another CPAS. Furthermore, the city also comprises a number of irregular migrants (Kagné B. et Martiniello M., « L'Immigration a aussi son histoire », *Passé- Présent de la province de Liège*. Bruxelles, éditions Alambic, 1999 : 280-296).

Of a total of 34,234 foreigners, Liège has 18,466 EU nationals (EU 27) among these, 17,916 are from EU (25) and 15,768 non EU nationals. The three main foreign nationalities present in Liège are Italians (10,517), Moroccans (3,718) and French (2,834). Other important nationalities are Spanish (2,255) Turkish (1,753), Congolese (1,672), Former-Yugoslavs (Serbia and Montenegro) (855), Russian (709), Algerian (576) and Greek (444). These ten major nationalities represent 73,9% of the foreign population with 31% Italians, the largest group. However these figures are not indicative of the real ethnic diversity of the city since a large number of inhabitants of foreign origin have taken up Belgian nationality in the past few decades. In 2005, 1,542 changes of nationalities were recorded. The distribution of unemployed persons according to their nationality shows that 77% of them are Belgians, 11% originated from the EU and 12% from outside of the EU.

## 2.3 Municipal integration policy



The municipal integration policy in Liège, like in other cities of Wallonia, is a general policy of equal opportunities and fight against exclusion. Thus, Integration policy is not a competence or prerogative of a particular department or service within the City's administration. It seems that there is a will to approach migrant integration in a transversal way but without a clear definition of integration. This probably explains the fact that the Mayor is in charge of the immigration policy and equal opportunity, as well as citizen participation and relations between the neighbourhoods.

Without doubt, the City recognizes that Liège is a crossroad of different cultures. The variety and the richness of the associations and NGO's active in the city represent the cultural diversity. Rather than developing a specific integration policy, the City has developed a municipal multicultural policy. Interculturality is one of the competences of (vice mayor for cultural affairs) Alderman of culture. He is thus in charge of promoting cultural diversity. The Intercultural Department for Youth Services is an interface between the numerous associations working in the field as well as all those working for better cohabitation and regular participation of all inhabitants in Liège. The mandate of the Intercultural Department is to support actions promoting or showing "the culture of the other".

As a consequence, the City Council voted in 1995 a Charter entitled "*Liège against racism.*" Through this Charter, it affirms its opposition against all forms of racial, ethnic, religious or philosophical discrimination. And it is committed to guaranteeing equal access for all to all City services. Moreover, it affirms its opposition to all kinds of racial discrimination against the City staff/employees. And, finally, it encourages the participation of all – irrespective of their origin - at every level of city life.

The Regional Centre of Liège for Integration of Foreigners or of persons with migratory background (CRIPEL) is responsible for integration policy at the regional level. Its management body (provincial authorities, CPAS and associations) is composed, on par of local authorities. Its mission is, among others, to develop integration activities at the socio-professional levels, in health and housing areas preferably within the framework of conventions with local authorities and associations. Through its department for local initiatives, the CRIPEL is a support for local integration initiatives and a wide array of activities. The main objectives are in particular (1) encouraging partnerships in the city and the neighbourhoods, (2) encouraging and framing local operators' initiatives for revitalizing/regeneration of neighbourhoods, (3) helping logistically, (4) promoting the participation of foreigners in the society, and (5) monitoring and evaluating. The CRIPEL works in partnership with the City.

According to the City experts, the integration approach as it is developed in Liège works quite well. Criteria of success seem to be, among others, the absence of open conflicts among the diverse populations and the relative assimilation, invisibility of the foreign population.

According to the City experts, very few or no differences exist since the City respects directives from the federal and regional authorities.



## 2.4 Inter-city cooperation

Liège was Lead partner in the URBACT Working Group "The right of security for all and cultural diversity: What challenges for urban policies" 2004-2006. The major focus of the Working group was to study the phenomenon of the stigmatisation of certain population groups with respect to urban insecurity. The objectives were to: (1) take stock and make an updated assessment of (best) practices that take into account cultural diversity during the formulation and implementation phases of urban safety policies and (2) formulate recommendations (best practices) to the European Commission.

Through its security contract, the City is also active in the project for the social relays in Wallonia in the framework of EQUAL. The reasons are the exclusion of people due to the deficit of cultural identities, weak mental health and financial problems. The objective is to reinsert excluded people in Liege. The focus will be on the valorisation of the competencies of the beneficiaries. There is an emergency in the creation of a structure of guidance and process of restructuration. The project develops structures for the creation of employment. The project will consist in the creation of new structures and processes of insertion for persons in difficulty. The action consists in going to the deprived and to give them guidance until the real insertion. There will be focus on the City of Liège and interaction between the current social partners. The aim is to ameliorate the existing structures, to coordinate existing actions, to go beyond the legal problems.

## 3 Housing situation in Liège

### 3.1 Housing stock and housing market in general

The quantity of available housing varies according to the statistic sources. It is estimated at 94,089 dwellings by the 2001 socio-economic survey on population and housing conducted by the Ministry of economic affairs whereas, according to the urban tax on households, it is higher: 95,882. These figures do not take into account the numerous "kots". Thus, if the small dwellings were taken into account as well as dwellings used as secondary residencies, deserted dwellings and clandestine dwellings, the total number of housings would be about 100,000.

Most of the dwellings belongs to private owners (85%). Around 10% to 15% of the housing stock belongs to the public sector (social housing companies, City and other institutions).as opposed to about 60% in a nearby city like Maastricht-Netherlands. Also the number of flats/appartments makes up 48.2% of total housing in Liège against 17.4% in the rest of the Walloon region. The trend is quite the opposite with regards to single-family dwellings which comprise a meager 5.8% of all housing in the municipality as opposed to 35% in the rest of the Walloon region. Around 48,200 are owner-occupied dwellings. The ratio of owners living in their own dwelling is around 50%, lower than the regional average (69.8%). Tenants are proportionally greater in number than in nearby municipalities.

Rented dwellings are distributed as followed. Firstly, there are 7,397 of them in the social housing sector. Secondly, there are also 39 middle housing. Middle housing is a kind of social housing because its allocation takes into account the occupant's income just like for social housing. The latter



requires a lower income and also is allocated according to a points system (see below). Thirdly, the City boasts 15 transit housing. This specific housing provided by a Walloon government ordinance of 1999 is a kind of emergency dwelling for households deprived of housing for unforeseen/unexpected reasons such as fire. Transit housing can only be rented for a maximum of 6 months, renewable once. They are managed by the CPAS. Fourthly, 37 Insertion housing (specific housing with a social accompaniment) are managed by the AIS. Fifthly, 216 housing domains assimilated to social housing are managed by AIS, Régie Foncière and FLW. Sixthly, there are 209 emergency housing. Seventhly, there are 18 acquisitive social housings. Eighthly, the City has 2,112 private dwellings, 667 unoccupied and 41 uninhabitable (considered as unhealthy).

The quality of housing in Liège is directly linked to the history of its different neighbourhoods. Spaces and housings in the city do vary. A part of the housing stock is timeworn. It results from the aging of buildings in certain neighbourhoods and also because of a lack of maintenance due to the departure of the middle-class toward the periphery. It would appear from a study by the University of Liège that 75% of uninhabited houses were constructed before 1919. It should be also noted that several unoccupied houses (around 900) are located above the ground floor shops in the city centre.

The other major problem of housing is that it being parcelled out. The result is a reduction in size and living space for the inhabitants. The data of the socio-economic survey conducted in 2001 reveal that the ratio of small dwellings (smaller than 35 square meters) has increased during the last 10 years. This ratio was 14.5% in 2001 as against 9% in 1991. Nevertheless, these figures are underestimated because the "kots" are not taken into account in the survey. These kots are small dwellings specifically created for the student population. But, it appears that they are sometimes dwellings for families who can not afford decent housing or for specific populations such as drug addicts or irregular migrants. The development of the kots causes the division of single-family dwellings. Consequently the supply of good housing for large family is insufficient. Up to now, 7,500 dwellings smaller than 28 square meters have been registered. There is also a crucial lack of social housing. 3,362 requests for social housing could not be met in 2003.

Even if depopulation has slowed down for the last decade, some neighbourhoods in particular in the centre of the city are on the down-grade with an habitat deteriorating. Moreover, of the 95,000 housings of the whole city, the City Housing Service has discovered that around 3,500 are vacant. These deserted housing spaces, often unhealthy, are above all located in the oldest and central neighbourhoods of the city.

The average monthly rent for a flat with one bedroom (around 65 square meter) is 275€, 330€ for two bedrooms (around 90 square meter); 350€ to 400€ and 500€ to 625€ for a three bedrooms flat. Acquisition prices, range between 60,000€ for a flat with two bedrooms and between 62,000€ and 75,000€ for a house with three bedrooms. According to a study of the magazine *Trends Tendances*, prices of flats in Liège are clearly lower than the prices in Brussels (56% cheaper) but rather similar to prices in Charleroi albeit a little higher. The evolution of the prices in 2001, 2002 and during the last five years is different between the three cities. In Liège, prices went up from 5% to 15%; in Charleroi, 10% to 19% and in Brussels, 11% to 38%. Regarding the houses (as opposed to flats),



sale prices are higher in Brussels. The prices for building-sites are higher in Liège than the average for the district (30.59€/square meter in Liège against 18,22€/square meter in Wallonia).

These prices can vary according to the neighbourhoods. Even though they are not areas with real estate pressure as defined by the Walloon Housing Code, some buildings located in the centre or in some neighbourhoods (Avroy, Botanique, Cointe and Sart-Tilman) are three times more expensive than the city average. These high costs are due to the type of dwelling (maison de maître, new buildings) or because of the urban location. Even if not noticeable yet, it seems that the Guillemins neighbourhood in particular is experiencing the same phenomenon because of the new (High speed train) TGV station still under construction. Furthermore, it seems that in deprived neighbourhoods, some investors increase the housing prices without renovating the property.

It is important to underline the fact that the prices of real estate increase faster than the cost of living. This evolution is an impediment for some households to find decent housing. Moreover, City experts observe pauperization of a part of the city population who are often concentrated in the neighbourhoods with the more parcelled out and damaged dwellings.

Areas such as Droixhe- Bressoux bas, Sainte-Marguerite, Burenville, Vennes, Saint-Léonard are generally considered as being problematic as a result of high unemployment and school drop out rates, lack of social amenities etc.

Furthermore, Liège is an old industrial city and has a lot of old industrial buildings that can not be improved upon as well as also fallow lands. Most of them are located in the neighbourhoods around the centre of the city like Saint-Léonard, Longdoz or in the periphery like Sclessin. Even if construction-sites for new houses are rare, there is a development potential of 137 hectares located in the areas of differed planning or ZAD (Zones d'Aménagement Différé) in order to increase the supply. Furthermore, first signs of gentrification are observable in several streets and blind alleys of the centre. Nevertheless this return of inhabitants to renovated and quiet spaces is still limited.

To sum up, housing problems are faced mostly by young couples who have no choice but migrate to the periphery. Other poor population groups face acute housing problems. Houses are old/dilapidated and abandoned. Supply of housing does not meet the demand of same. Constructible land is rare; people live in camping lots and residential parks. Annual movements of population are also important. Around 12,000 persons leave the city each year whereas only 11,000 come each year to officially reside in Liège. Only the persons aged between 15 and 30-35 years old have a positive balance.

### **3.2 Housing situation of residents with migration background**

According to the City experts, it is mainly the purchasing power that determines the choice of housing and of the residential area. They recognize that most of the population with migration background has limited purchasing power, living in low cost houses around the municipality. The City did not provide data on housing according residents with migration background.



Crossing the data on foreign population and information about the neighbourhoods such as socio-economic situation, housing, perception, it seems that the large part of population with migration background is located in the deprived neighbourhoods. It appears consequently that the population with migration background has to face a difficult housing situation. There is no data provided by the City experts, but according to previous research, residents with migration background (particularly former guest workers) used to be restricted to privately rented housing, often of modest or bad quality. And in the 1980s a substantial number of these moved into (often precarious) homeownership.

Nowadays newcomers encounter as many problems on the private rental market as the former migrants. They end up in the secondary rental market in deprived neighbourhoods such as Sainte-Marguerite, a kind of transit zone for many newcomers. Asylum seekers, people with a precarious status and irregular migrants are most likely to become victims of slum lords. Already in 1993, the special service for the reception of the Asylum Seekers (SADA), a body integrated into the City-CPAS (the public organisation responsible for the well-being of citizens) produced an eloquent report about the housing conditions of the asylum seekers in Sainte-Marguerite. The report was based on field data observed directly by the SADA social workers. It denounced the bad housing conditions (tight space, bed rotation, no warming, etc.) on the one hand, the mafia system of the housing distribution on the other hand and finally, the inaction of the local authorities. During recent law enforcement actions, a high number of these population categories were found in slums

Furthermore, associations are very active regarding emergency housing in Liège. Associations such as Homeless Women or Homeless Men or Oxygène, Emmaus and Sürya, among others target specific groups like drug addicts, homeless, former prisoners or victims of trafficking. In the latter case, the asbl Sürya offers a shelter to women victims of trafficking and most of them are migrants. Another association, Action Group for the housing rights (GADL) supports irregular migrants in their housing needs.

### **3.3 Segregation: Spatial concentration of residents with migration background**

The population of foreigners is unequally distributed among the 23 neighbourhoods. Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Leonard are the two neighbourhoods with the highest foreign population. The first one, Sainte-Marguerite has 4,016 foreigners; mainly Italians (1,288) followed by Moroccans (465) and Turks (362). It is also the neighbourhood which has the highest figures for EU nationals (1,917) and of non EU nationals (2,099). The second one, Saint-Leonard has a foreign population of 3,581 inhabitants. The main group is also the Italians (1003) followed by the Spaniards (382) and the Moroccans (365). The other neighbourhoods with foreign populations are Bressoux (2,833), Longdoz (2,754), Sainte-Walburge (2,593), Outremeuse (2,072), Grivegnée (2,045) and Avroy (1,600). Among these neighbourhoods the foreign nationalities are differently distributed. Sainte-Walburge, Grivegnée, Bressoux and Longdoz have an important population of EU nationals (between 1,034 to 1,259). Non EU populations are rather located in Longdoz, Bressoux and Sainte-Walburge. Neighbourhoods. A smaller number of foreigners live in Droixhe and Chênée. However, neighbourhoods such as Droixhe or Bressoux comprise an important population with migration



background a large number of which has taken up Belgian nationality. In 2005, 1,542 changes of nationality were recorded in the city. Droixhe is moreover the neighbourhood with the smallest population of EU nationals (119). The neighbourhoods with less non EU populations are respectively Rocourt (144), Chênée (188) and Thier-à-Liège (219).

The neighbourhood of Droixhe is characterised by high rise buildings. The high rise buildings in Droixhe were constructed in the 60's. Inspired by Le Corbusier, they were considered as a model of modernity with community facilities, green areas where a diverse population with different incomes were living. It is the largest complex of this nature in Belgium. In the 70's, other buildings were raised. But, in the 80's, buildings and dwellings broke down and became dilapidated. Droixhe has gradually become a dormitory city with around 1,800 social flats. Abandoned by the local authorities, some residents, in particular merchants and middle-class residents ran away. The neighbourhood lost its social diversity and became a segregated area with a high percentage of residents with migration background. The neighbourhood has completely lost its good image and is often regarded as a dangerous ghetto. This is one of the reasons why the pilot project "Foyer Permanent de Sécurité" was put in place in Droixhe and , after a few years of demonstrable and demonstrated success on the ground, the project was instituted in two other neighbourhoods (Burenville and Sainte-Walburge) deemed problematic areas of the municipality. Nowadays, the City has projects to renew and rehabilitate the neighbourhood.

### **3.4 Accessibility of the housing market system for people with migration background**

Two types of public housing are available in Wallonia: social housing and middle-class housing. The latter is destined for higher income earners than the first one. The subscription and allocation of a public housing unit is subject to certain rules. Firstly, the prospective tenant may not own any real estate. Secondly, he/she has to fall within a certain income bracket. For the social housing, the annual taxable income is up to 20,000€ for a single person and up to 25,000€ for a household. It is increased by 1,860€ per dependent child. For the middle-class housing, the annual taxable income has to be higher than that for social housing but it has a limit of maximum 31,000€ for a single person and 37,500€ for a household and it can be increased by 1,860€ per dependent child. Thirdly, a system of points regulates the attribution of social housing. The candidate gets 8 points depending on his housing situation. For example, when the previous house is recognized uninhabitable by the local administration or when the candidate is homeless. 6 points are also granted according to the household situation (e.g., points for divorced candidate with dependent children or for households with spouses below the age of 30). 4 points are granted depending on the status of the candidate (war invalid for example, but also miner or former mine worker). According to migration history in the region, this measure concerns structurally persons with migration background. Finally, the candidate can get 3 and 2 points on the basis of his personal situation (invalid, lost of job, etc.). The candidates for public housing are on waiting lists because the demand is higher than the supply. Each year the waiting lists are updated to take account of new candidates. The first candidate in chronological order is thus not the first to get a social housing.



According to the City experts, there is no data available at the City level about discrimination and harassment. It is however, widely believed that non caucasian foreigners are often discriminated against in regard to access to housing and more.

## 4 Institutional setting and relevant actors

The alderman (vice mayor) for Trade, Economic Development, Staff City policy, Housing and Employment is responsible of the housing policy in the city. Her competence consists in developing City housing policy and implementing the policies of the Walloon Region (the government and the Walloon Housing Society SWL). The **City Housing Service** is responsible for the implementation of the City housing policy. It is in charge of the social housing and of premiums for building, renovation and embellishing. And the **Urban Shop** (*Boutique urbaine*) is, among others, in charge of information on public housing and on the City premiums for housing renovation.

The **Local Landed administration** (Régie foncière), created in 1971, is in charge of the management, the maintenance, the renovation and the tenancy of the private patrimony of the City (buildings and lands). It is responsible for buying, selling, renting and constructing private buildings such as housing estates and shops/malls, among the City real estates. Among other tasks, it helps solving housing issues and it participates in the fight against slums and the renovation of ancient neighbourhoods. It is managed by four vice mayors aldermen. It has no autonomous status and has to report regularly to local authorities.

The **Walloon Housing Society** (SWL), a regional body, is the main operator of the Housing Policy in the Walloon Region. It is in charge of the social housing associations in Wallonia, the **Housing Society of the Public Service** (SLSP). The main goal of the SWL and the SLSP is to materialize the right of housing recognized in the Belgian Constitution and confirmed in the Walloon Housing Code (CWL) through the rent and the sale of public dwellings. There are 3 SLSP in Liège: **Le Logis social** (The social dwelling) which owns 3,179 dwellings; **La Maison Liégeoise** (The Liège House) and **Terre et Foyer** (Earth and Home). The SLSP are in charge of implementation of complex operations in town-planning. After town-planning studies for the City, they develop better dwellings by seeking all possible subsidies. They realize directly or by delegation all the operations of neighbourhood planning, urban renewal, rehabilitation of disused industrial zones. They insure the creation of new housing in partnership with public or private operators. Their missions are: (1) acquiring and renovating dwellings before letting; (2) acquiring and renovating buildings in order to create dwellings for let; and (3) building and managing dwellings for let or for sale.

The **Walloon Housing Fund for Large Families** (FLW) is a regional body, cooperative society, providing support and premiums for large families for buying or renting housing.

Moreover, the Region gives also subsidies (60% to 90% of the costs according to the project) to the City for perimeters of town-planning. The neighbourhoods are mainly the two ZIP-QI (initiative neighbourhood): Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Léonard (see chapter 6).



Furthermore, the **AIS Liège Housing** (Agence immobilière sociale) is a social renting agency created in 1993 in partnership with the City, the Walloon Region and social actors. The action of AIS Liège takes place in the framework of the global policy joining the fight against insalubrity and vacant buildings. It is a rental intermediary between the recipients of an allowance and the landlords of private or public housing. Through a management contract, the landlords entrust the management of their real estates to AIS. In return, the social estate agency guarantees the payment of the rent that is determined in agreement with the owner. Either the dwelling is rented or not and it repairs the damages caused by the tenants up to one year rent. Currently, AIS manages 142 dwellings.

The asbl **Habitat-Service** (HS) is an association for housing promotion. Since 2005, there are 7 associations of this type in Wallonia. This body was created according to the Walloon government ordinance of 2004. They aim first, at improving the social by providing decent housing, second, at providing administrative, technical and juridical support on housing with priority for deprived households and third, at experimenting projects that develop the regional objectives of housing. The target groups are deprived persons. In other words, persons whose taxable annual income is up to 10,000€ for single and 13,650€ for households. These amounts are increased by 1,860€ per dependent child. Habitat-Service is an interface between the tenant and the owner. HS signs the contract with the owner and is considered as the tenant and provides the renting guarantee. When the tenant has spared the money for the 2 months renting guarantee, HS works with a sliding lease (*bail glissant*); and it is not the tenant anymore.

The **neighbourhoods services** (*régies de quartier*), according to the Walloon government ordinance of 2004, is a body that aims at improving living conditions into one or several housing neighbourhoods by implementing an integrated insertion policy and at socio-professional integration through trainings. The body is formed by a wide local partnership such as the local SLSP, the CPAS, the City, representatives of the neighbourhoods' inhabitants and social partners. Moreover, the neighbourhoods service signs an agreement with the regional employment service (FOREM). This agreement organises the pedagogical partnership and guarantees privileges for the trainees such as training premium, reimbursement of transportation or children nursery and work insurance. In this neighbourhood's service, there are at least 10 vacancies for trainees for 3 months up to one year. The training activities can be in building sites in the neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods' inhabitants in deprived situation can, through this tool, directly, being involved in improving housing.

At the national level, the City is included in the **Federal Urban Policy**, a special policy for large cities. Since 1999 when the federal urban policy was introduced, the five largest cities in Belgium have had support from the federal state. These cities with populations of more than 150,000 inhabitants are Antwerp, Gent, Liege, Charleroi and seven municipalities in the Brussels Capital region. The first criterion for sharing the package between the cities and municipalities was the relative population of the towns in question. Subsequently, socio-economic criteria were used to select new towns from 2001. The towns selected have at least 60,000 inhabitants with at least 10% in deprived districts. The per capita income there is below the national average.

The Federal Urban Policy develops three kinds of projects. First, projects aiming at improving daily life in the districts by developing public services and participation, by fighting against the exclusion process, by bringing back a feeling of safety, by stimulating community life and



associations. Second, projects for renewing the urban living environment in the districts in difficulty by improving the standard of public infrastructure, guaranteeing a minimum level of commercial areas, by tackling derelict and empty buildings, by producing cleaner, safer public open spaces and reducing nuisance levels. And, third, projects for fixing the identity of the district within its urban area by working on districts' images, while facilitating links between them via economic development based on the development of the urban fabric.

Each year the federal government concludes an agreement with the municipalities. This agreement is based on two principles: subsidiarity and contractualisation. Firstly, local authorities launch and implement projects for the benefit of the population concerned. For its part, the federal government finances the selected projects. Secondly, the federal government and the City are bound by a contract to achieve results. Each City contract is based on a locally drawn up diagnosis. In each of the cities, the federal government supports a limited number of complementary initiatives. The local authorities receive annual specifications. In this framework, a three-year convention on housing has been approved for the period 2005-2007 between Liège and the federal government.

According to the City experts, the support from the Urban Policy is easier to manage and to implement because it leaves a large autonomy to the City and moreover its administration is easier than the “housing local anchorage” (see chapter 6).

## **5 Discourse, concepts and policy concerning housing**

### **5.1 Vision, concepts and policy of administration and Local Council on the issue of access to affordable and decent housing, segregation and integration of migrants**

The priority of the City is to tackle the depopulation process and to attract inhabitants in the city. The main purpose of housing policy in Liège is to offer to all the inhabitants a better quality of life. There are no specific policies regarding migrants or residents with migration background given that they are included in the general category of inhabitants of Liège. The City considers that living in decent housing is the basic condition of social integration and personal accomplishment. This is in line with the Walloon Housing Code and the Contract for the Future of Wallonia (contrat d'avenir pour la Wallonie). The prior objectives are expressed as follows :. First, rehabilitating deprived neighbourhoods, increasing green spaces, and valorising the patrimony. Second, fighting insalubrity, housing vacancy, the multiplication of small and bad quality housing (insalubrity), the so called “sleep merchants” and slums. Third, increasing the stock, and the types of housing, in terms of building and/or renovation in order to respond to the demand. Fourth, giving to the citizens information tools and participation tools to local life in order to increase social cohesion by developing citizenship and individual responsibility. Fifth, privileging mixing between social classes, generations, cultural and ethnic origins in order to achieve a less fragmented city, without ghettos and thus richer. Sixth, changing and improving the image of the City by showing its patrimony, the ancient neighbourhoods culture, the assets



such as jobs concentration, leisure facilities, shops, City services, schools, cultural facilities, health care, etc. To reach these objectives accordingly, the City develops a policy of proximity in the neighbourhoods, improves the living environment, provides tools in order to bring back social housing into the market, offers community facilities and efficient services and guarantees the access to decent housing.

To sum up, the **local housing policy** is three-dimensional: monitoring housing quality and fight against slums; promoting local, regional and national supports and premiums and acting on the building through three measures. These measures are the three-year housing programme and the urban renovation in Priority Initiative Zones – ZIP (with regional level), and the housing plan (national level). All these measures aim at (1) answering the housing need by actions located primarily in the most damaged neighbourhoods such as the ZIP; (2) fighting against housing vacancy and slums; (3) diversifying the housing supply in particular for families and young households and supporting social diversity and (4) improving social cohesion.

As mentioned above, the Walloon government requires local authorities to elaborate a three-year housing programme. Local authorities are seen as closer to the inhabitants and consequently they can better identify problems and find appropriate solutions. This programme supports also habitat improvement and the environment of all inhabitants of Liège. The programme justifies and frames the realisation of housings founded by the Walloon Region: middle housing, social housing, transit housing and integration housing. After a state of the art survey of the social and economical situation of the city and of its housing market, the programme identifies, each year, each operation, the foreman, the partners, the deadline for the realisation, the types and number of concerned dwellings, etc.

At the beginning of the 90's, the Walloon Region created a new policy on town and country planning: the Privileged Initiatives Zones (ZIP). It allows the development of a specific policy for answering problems regarding town-planning and housing. Four types of problems have been defined: ZIP type 1 (zone with great landed pressure), ZIP type 2 (zone for rehabilitation housing units), ZIP type 3 also called ZIP-QI or neighbourhood initiatives (global development of the neighbourhood) and ZIP type 4 (social cities to rehabilitate). Liège is part of the ZIP policy and has several ZIP (like in Pierreuse or Cour Saint-Hubert) and above all it has two ZIP type 3 (ZIP-QI) located in the neighbourhood of Sainte-Marguerite (north-west) and the neighbourhood of Saint-Léonard (east). The ZIP-QI are determined on the basis of disadvantageous factors in terms of housing and in socio-economic terms (employment ratio, ownership and tenancy ratios, proportion of isolated/single persons, population education).

Urban renovation is organized by various ordinances of the Walloon government on ZIP-QI. The project leader coordinates the implementation of the urban renovation projects that have been determined by the neighbourhood project and the master development plan. The latter defines renovation projects regarding habitat, public and green spaces, areas of economic development, spaces for traffic and highways. They are the outcomes of a consultative process with different actors of the neighbourhood. This urban renovation process is overseen by an urban renovation commission.



Concretely, the City can obtain subsidies from the Region of up to 90% of the costs linked to housing acquisition or labour relating to housing or community facilities relating to housing and green spaces planning. And the City can get up to 60% of the costs of labour relating to the creation or the improvement of commercial buildings, offices or other community facilities.

There are also advantages for the inhabitants of the ZIP-QI because they have more support regarding housing. Firstly, they have access to special premiums that are exclusively reserved for some specific perimeters, for example the embellishment premium from the Walloon Region (frames, front and creation of picture windows). The premium is 50% of the labour costs (up to 5,000€). Secondly, they can obtain a 50% rise of the basic amount of some premiums. An example is the building premium or the rehabilitation premium. The latter has, in ZIP, an extra equivalent of 12% of the housing purchase price. Regarding the household income, the number of children, this premium can raise thousands of euros (up to 4/5 of the VAT). Thirdly, there are various possibilities for tax deductions on renovation expenses. Finally, some aid can be obtained directly from the City or the Provincial authorities.

There are also tenancy agreements to provide exploitation in the private sector. The lessor of a collective housing estate or of a single dwelling smaller than 28 sqm. has to get a tenancy permit. This is also the case for the students' kots. Since 2005, a new condition has been added to the Walloon Housing Code: the housing must be "built, arranged or created according to the provisions relating to town planning and urbanism". Consequently, the applications for tenancy permits for housings located in a building parcelled out without a town planning permit are not accepted anymore. To this date, 551 tenancy permits have been rejected while 4,056 have been granted.

## 6 Interventions on housing and integration: measures and projects

As mentioned above, the City of Liège has developed several measures and projects on housing and integration in partnership with the Walloon Region, the federal level but also public bodies and private partners. Among these measures, two important ones are located in neighbourhoods with a high percentage of residents with migration background and they are the so-called ZIP-QI Saint-Léonard and ZIP-QI Sainte-Marguerite. Both are a framework for developing interventions to improve access to affordable and decent housing and they also contribute to reduce and manage spatial segregation. They are also based on population participation.

It is important to point out that within the framework of the Housing plan of the Federal Urban Policy, a specific perimeter has been determined and has been called "**Living downtown**". This perimeter includes the city centre (historic heart) and a part of the neighbourhood, Outremeuse. Strategies for improving housing have been initiated in order, particularly, to allow housing on the upper floors located in buildings with shops on ground/street level. The other purpose is to encourage housing downtown.



The housing agencies (regies de quartier) have joined into an association called the housing agencies of Liege neighbourhoods. It is supported by the European Social Fund, the Walloon region, and the FOREM.

In 2005, the landed and real estate administration of the City participated in the development of activities in close collaboration with the City Housing Service for example in the neighbourhood of Sainte-Marguerite: renovation of buildings in order to create 4 dwellings/appartments.

In order to improve the coordination between the different actors of the regional housing policy, the new Walloon Housing Code (CWL) which entered into force in 1999 created the so called “**housing local anchorage**”. This tool aims to reinforce social cohesion by developing synergies between different local social actors. It gives a new role to local authorities. Some regional competencies are thus decentralized in order to adapt the housing policy and its implementation to the local context. First, the City decides the housing policy of its territory. Second, the SLSP (Housing Societies of Public Service) are the operators implementing the housing policy. The cities can benefit from the expertise of the SWL. Furthermore, the statistical data are crossed at the regional and local level in order to better understand the housing demand.

The housing local anchorage consists of two measures. The first one was a fusion and restructuring process of various Housing Societies of Public Service (SLSP). From 2001 to 2006, the number of housing societies was reduced from 120 to 71. This process has been achieved. The second measure consists in three-year **local programmes of actions on housing** approved by the government of the Walloon Region. These programmes are based on local needs and in dialogue with all housing local actors. And they are elaborated in a parallel with other actions plans regarding town-planning, environment and mobility. Since 2005, this programme has become biennial. The programme is first discussed publicly in the local council and secondly adopted and transmitted to the SWL and the Province. Thirdly it is approved by the Regional Government. It is the guiding principle for the actions of public and private operators. It is also a long-term planning and evaluation tool. The programme has two sections: one on general local housing policy, another on requests for increasing the housing stock intended for rent and creating landed reserve in the framework of the CWL.

The operators of the local programme of actions on housing (2004-2006) are the City (operator and coordinator), the CPAS, the SLSP, the FLW, AIS, ASBL Habitat Service, Coopérative Les Tournières and asbl Oxygène. There are also several partners such as Maison d'accueil des sans logis, the Chambre des Notaires, the National Union of Owners, the Architects Order, the University of Liège, the Province of Liège and the Walloon Region. This coordination allows transversal and coherent actions on housing. Around ten projects identified as priorities by the local college have been selected by the Walloon government. They include rehabilitating and building 150 dwellings (63 for middle income, 65 for welfare recipients and 22 for transit or integration housing). The total amount of the investment is 14,200,000€ (of which 8,900,000€ comes from the Region). The operators of the local programme are the SLSPs (85 dwellings), the City of Liège (43 dwellings of which 24 above shop buildings in the city centre), AIS, Oxygène and Les Tournières (22 dwellings) and the FLW (12 dwellings). For example, the SLSP La Maison Liégeoise will build alone or in partnership with the City, 24 middle income dwellings ; it will rehabilitate 4 houses for large families.



The main goals of the **housing plan** developed by the City thanks to federal support (Federal Urban Policy) are to strengthen local policy for the fight against unhealthy dwellings, slum landlords and deserted dwellings; to increase the housing stock and to improve access to property for households with small or middle incomes as well as for youth. Since 2000, the federal Urban Policy conducted in Liege has mainly focused on three districts, Glain/Sainte-Marguerite, Saint-Léonard and Bressoux-Droixhe. The town authorities actively involve residents in these neighbourhoods in the renovation of their living environment.

Liege has begun the renovation of the former Haecht brewery, situated in the Vivegnis district. Various municipal services are henceforth located there, including a local office of the town council (where residents can access all the local authority's administrative services), a community centre, a branch of the town of Liege multicultural service, a multi-purpose hall available to all local associations, a CRIPEL office (the regional centre for the integration of people of foreign origin in Liege), and, most importantly, a centre for preventive medicine intended for local residents. Dropping out of school lies at the root of unemployment: this is an unfortunate truth which cannot be denied. In the deprived districts of Liege the non-profit association MIREL tries to help young people who have interrupted their education to find work. It persuades them to follow individually planned vocational training and plays a mediating role with employers to give these young people a chance. This is a very intensive task for the mediators, but one which can be successful. In 2004, the City of Liege received 4,255,730€ under the Urban Policy.

For the current housing plan 2005-2007, Liège will receive from the Federal Ministry of Urban Policy 8,101,774€ and will fund 2,000,000€ (24% of the total cost). The Walloon Region also finances the housing plan. The plan concerns 120 dwellings providing accommodation for about 300 persons. It is located in 7 neighbourhoods identified by the local authorities and considered as neighbourhoods in need like the North neighbourhoods, Sainte-Marguerite, Burenville-Glain, Droixhe-Bressoux, Sainte-Walburge, and the central neighbourhoods including Outremeuse and Amercoeur. All the projects included in the three-year housing plan have been proposed and discussed by a working group. This group included members of the local college and housing operators (SLSP Maison Liégeoise and SLSP Le Logis Social, Housing fund for large families, City Housing Service and the CPAS).

## 6.1 Interventions to improve access to affordable and decent housing for migrants

Regarding the **urban renovation in the North neighbourhood/Saint-Leonard**, several indicators have justified the ZIP-QI : high percentage of lonely/unaccompanied persons (50%), high percentage of single-parent households (more than 35%), 65% tenants, 33,7% foreigners, old Belgian population and principally women above 65 years, economic weakness of the population and 31% unemployment in the active population.

Italians and Spaniards are the foreigners most represented in the neighbourhoods (respectively 1,031 and 460). Nevertheless, their number has decreased between 1991 and 2001 : minus 472 and minus 284 respectively. Population from Africa is rising, 508 in 2001.



The main goal of the Saint-Leonard neighbourhood project approved in 1998 is “valorising the neighbourhood as a living/lively environment”. All the activities have to be directed towards this goal. Various operational objectives have been decided. The first one is opening up the neighbourhood, by improving the access from other neighbourhoods, highways, green hillsides, transportation (train), and creating new accesses to the river. The second is revalorising the neighbourhood perception, by working on issues concerning identity, and the feeling of belonging. The objective is that inhabitants would be proud to live in it. The proposals include new economic activities and development of service enterprises-friendly infrastructure; encouragement for the establishment of artists and arts enterprises; development of sport facilities; development of innovative experiences regarding urban life and citizenship. The third one is improving the living environment and community facilities through the destruction of ruins and the cleaning up of deserted sites for activities, landscaping up of the space to provide a view towards the river Meuse and the hillsides and, finally through the support of building renovation and new community facilities. The fourth objective is the creation of conditions for hosting economic activities by setting aside urban activity areas to accommodate service enterprises and small business and, the creation of an (economic) free zone.

The renovation operations of the City of Liège and its public and private partners are the following: (1) creation of housing aiming at more social diversity, (2) planning of public spaces, (3) planning of community facilities and green spaces and (4) planning of economic spaces.

The creation of housing consists in the building of housing and social housing in some streets of the neighbourhoods but also planning an abandoned/ disused industrial zone for social housing and housing for middle-class, the transformation of an old police station into four houses for four families, the construction of eight middle income housing of which three for artists.

Between 1998 and 2008, the housing stock in Saint-Leonard will have increased by 46 units for a total investment of 5,692,000€ excluding the operations of the Walloon Housing Fund and the AIS. The global investment already done or to be realised in the short term within the framework of the urban regeneration of this neighbourhood is more than 16,000,000€.

A working group on housing in Saint-Léonard (formed by the ZIP project leader, City Housing Service, Walloon Housing Fund for Large Families, the CPAS, the police, Security and Salubrity Public Service, Régie foncière and the Commission on Urban Renovation) met two times in 2005 and 2006. According to this group, the housing issue is a complex one in Saint-Leonard. It is thus necessary to work following three directions/lines: renovation operations, monitoring housing quality and providing information to tenants and owners. Moreover, the working group considers that the Saint-Leonard street can be a coherent renovation zone on housing but the demand on housing for families is not met. As for industrial waste lands where housing projects have been developed for the the group considers that the housing projects should focus on the renovation of ruined or damaged buildings.



## 6.2 Local policies related to spatial segregation

### 6.2.1 Policies to reduce spatial segregation

According to the City experts and in particular the (vice mayor) alderman for Housing, the allocation in public housing aims to provide housing for all the candidates who have the right to public housing but the rationale of the allocation is to maintain or create “mixité sociale”, social diversity at the level of the area and even at the level of a building. Concretely, it means that the social estates are allocated also in order to mix various social situations. There is a will to mix social and middle housing in the near future. There is also a will to create diversity and to avoid ethnic segregation. In other words, the social housing allocated to a Turkish household for example will be located in an area where there is no high concentration of Turks like Burenville. The allocation follows a scatter policy of the population with migration background even if it is not expressly mentioned in the housing policy.

Several years ago, the town of Liege began the reconstruction and renovation of the Droixhe reception hall. Since 2000, this project has also been supported under the federal Urban Policy. Work was completed in 2002, making this a multi-purpose complex for sports and cultural activities. The hall is run jointly by the public authorities, local residents and associations. Particular emphasis is given to various activities promoting the integration of young people into society.

## 7 Highlights and Failures: Learning for CLIP

To sum up, Liège as a former industrial city had attracted migrants even before the official recruitment of migrant workers by the Belgian state. A large community of Italians is until now one of its demographic features. For decades onwards, different kinds of migrants have arrived and chosen to reside in the city: members of the families of the former guest workers, students, asylum seekers, and irregular migrants. Inhabitants with migration background are located in almost all of the neighbourhoods. The largest nationalities represented are respectively the Italian, the Moroccan and French and to a lesser extent, Spanish, Turkish, Congolese, Former-Yugoslavia, Russian, Algerian and Greek. Liège has around 142 different nationalities. On a total population of around 187,000 inhabitants, the percentage of foreigners is almost 18%. Moreover, the city attracts a large figure of persons who are not officially residing in the city like students (living in the small furnished room, called ‘kots) or like, to a lesser extent, irregular migrants. In reality, the total population is closer to 200,000 persons. The city is de facto a multicultural city and is considered as such by the local authorities.

Like in other urban centres, inhabitants with migration background are concentrated in deprived neighbourhoods. In Liège, the neighbourhoods with the highest percentage of residents with migration background are Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Leonard. They are considered as problematic neighbourhoods; this applies to Droixhe-Bressoux bas, Burenville and Vennes. These problematic



neighbourhoods are characterized by high unemployment and school drop out rates, lack of social amenities, etc.

Regarding the global situation of the city, it has to face different challenges. The economic situation of the city has been declining for a long time. There is an urban exodus of the inhabitants with middle-incomes, and young families; and an arrival of inhabitants on benefit. The housing comprises about 100,000 dwellings (including the small one-room furnished flats for students, namely 'kots'). Most of them belong to the private sector and around 10% to 15% to the public sector. Almost half of the dwellings are flats or appartements. And almost half of the dwellings are owner-occupied. Social housing represent 7,397 dwellings. An important feature of the housing stock is also the vacancy. A lot of vacancies are located above the shops in the city centre. Moreover, a part of the housing stock is timeworn. There is also a problem of slums particularly in some neighbourhoods such as Sainte-Marguerite. It appears that the slums are often rented to people with migration background and particularly those with irregular or temporary status such as asylum seekers. Finally, the other major problem regarding housing quality and housing supply is that the creation of small dwellings (kots) has entailed the parcelling out of single-family houses. There is consequently a lack of housing for large families. The prices of the housing have not increased as such in the other cities but they vary according to the neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the price evolution has affected the poorest part of the local population.

Integration of migrants is mainly a regional and community competence in Belgium. And Wallonia has opted for general anti-exclusion policies. At the local level, the City has above all developed a multicultural policy promoting intercultural activities and dialogue between the different cultural groups.

In Belgium, housing policy is mainly a competency of the Regions. The Walloon housing policy aims at providing a decent housing as a place for living, emancipation and individual development. There is no specific housing policy towards migrants. Liège, as a city located in the Walloon Region, gets subsidies and tools from Wallonia. Moreover, as a large city, it benefits from federal subsidies in the framework of the Federal Urban Policy (a specific policy for large cities). The City has thus a large array of instruments and subsidies to develop its housing policy at the local level.

The priority of the City is to tackle the depopulation process and to attract inhabitants in the city. The main purpose of housing policy in Liège is to offer to all the inhabitants a better quality of life. There are no specific policies regarding migrants or residents with migration background but they are considered as making up an integral part of the inhabitants of Liège. The City wants to rehabilitate the deprived neighbourhoods and cope with insalubrity, vacancy, dwellings division and slums. Furthermore, the City strives to promote social mix in social housing in particular. This social mix is understood as a mix of households with different incomes thanks to a diversified housing supply (social and middle housing) but also to a mix of households with different migration backgrounds in order to avoid concentration in social housing estates and even at the micro-level of the social housing building.

Two major projects of urban renovation including housing are realised in the framework of the Privileged Initiatives Zones/ Initiatives neighbourhoods (ZIP/QI). They are regional instruments giving



quite large room for manoeuvre to the City. They target two deprived neighbourhood in Liège: Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Leonard. Because of the population structure of these neighbourhoods, they target de facto a large population with migration background. Both ZIP/QI projects are quite long-term projects with plenty of various projects of urban renovation, of housing creation and improvement. Moreover - and it is certainly one of their positive points/ assets – they are based on the population consultation and involvement. They have a participative approach that contributes to the success of the projects and that improve social cohesion in the neighbourhoods.