

# PICTURE



**Pro-active management  
of the Impact of Cultural Tourism  
upon Urban Resources and Economies**

Case study

## Liège

Task n° **3.4**

Task Leader:

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in cooperation with the LEMA**

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## Case Study: Liège

The field work was done between September and January 2005 by the LEMA team.

The team conducted 2 groups of surveys. In both of them the technique adopted was the direct interview, using a semi-directive questionnaire as a guide.

The sample was of 200 persons.

This study aimed at two main objectives:

- A. Find out the visitors previous knowledge and mental representation of the city they are visiting.**
- B. Detect the relationship between residents and the cities' tangible and non-tangible heritage, in order to know what elements are considered as the most representatives and typical of it.**

## **Objective A – Visitors’ previous knowledge and mental representation of the city,**

### **Survey 4/b, Prototypicality of the offer**

Sample: 100 subjects.

Technique: Direct interview, using a semi-directive questionnaire as a guide.

Profile of the sample: This survey was specifically addressed to visitors. 55,6% of the sample are females, the remnant are males. More than the half of the survey (62,6%) has an age comprised between 12 and 17 years old. The second group most represented is that from 18 to 29 years old (35,4%). The study level is mostly secondary (91,9%), with only of 6,1% of people with superior studies. Regarding the provenance, the 79,8% of the sample are Belgians, while the 8,1% are Italians.

Definition of the survey: 5 open and semi-directive questions about the knowledge of the city and the elements that best represent it.

#### Question 1 Knowledge of tangible and non-tangible Heritage of Liège

This question presented the following list of some of the tangible and non-tangible elements of the city (on basis of what local authorities thought representative): The St. Barthélémy's Church and the "Fonds Baptismaux", the "Palais des Princes Evêques", the "Fêtes de Wallonie", the "15 Août en Outremeuse", the "Nocturne des coteaux de la Citadelle", the Journées du Patrimoine, the "Promenades sur Meuse", the "Sentier des coteaux", the "Journées sans voiture, Ferme en ville", the "Festival des Promenades", the "Retrouvailles" and the "Batte" . The subject was asked to tick on any places or events s/he directly knew. The analysis of the answers shows that, in general, the heritage (both tangible and non-tangible) of the city is rather well-known: in average, each element is familiar to the 77% of the sample. However, the best known are the "Batte" and the "Fêtes de Wallonie" (known respectively by the 93% and 91%), followed closely by the "Fête du 15 août en Outremeuse" (88%), the "Palais des Princes Evêques", Saint Barthélémy (82%) and the initiative "Journées sans voitures, ferme en ville" (80%). On the other hand, there are some elements that are significantly less popular, as the "retrouvailles" (known to the 61%) or the "Festival des Promenades" (47%). The "Batte", the "Fêtes de Wallonie" and the "Fête du 15 août en Outremeuse" are known mostly in a direct

way, while the “nocturne des coteaux de la Citadelle”, the “Journées du patrimoine”, the “Promenades sur Meuse”, the “Journées sans voiture, ferme en Ville” or the “Festival des promenades” are known mostly indirectly, i.e. by having heard about them.

### Question 2 Subjective Heritage valuation

A clear preference emerges from this analysis: the “Fêtes du 15 août”, which is placed in first position by the 44% of the subjects. Other popular elements of Liège are the “Fêtes de Wallonie” (in first position for the 12%, and in second position for 18%). Also popular, though difficult to place in a preferences list, are the “Batte” (mentioned somewhere in the preference list by the 40% of the sample), the “Nocturne des coteaux” (mentioned by the 22%), the “Sentier des coteaux” (16%), the “Journées sans voitures” (15%) and the “Retrouvailles” (11%).

Regarding the reasons associated to the preferences, one of the most repeated is the category “conviviality, amusement” (it represents 39% of all the reasons that appear in this part of the study), almost always associated to the “Fêtes de Wallonie” and to the “Fête du 15 Août”. Another category, “Quality of the show and the program of Activities”, (6% of all the motivations) is specifically associated to the “Fêtes de Wallonie”. Other frequent categories of reasons mentioned here are “Relax and leisure time” (12%), “Beauty” (11%), “Historical and/or Cultural Value” (7%),.. Finally, there are some categories that appear only a few times: “Gastronomy” (2%), “shopping” and “typical” (both 4% each), “panoramic views”, “habit”, and “diversity of the offer” (1,4% the sum of the three categories).

In the case of Liège, the “Batte” seems to be the element of the city richest in meanings for the tourists: almost all of the categories mentioned above are cited in reference to this place. From the experience gathered in similar studies, we know that the more categories mentioned in reference to a Heritage element, the highest potential of attracting persons with different interests and profiles. And, on the other hand, the less categories associated, the less chances for the element of becoming a benchmark in the city's cultural offer. Also the “Retrouvailles” is associated to a large number of categories (six). On the other hand, we have heritage elements that are associated only to a few categories: for example, the “journées du Patrimoine”, associated only to the “Cultural value” and “Beauty” categories, or “Promenades”, with just three categories (“Beauty”, “Relax” and “Specific, personal interests”).

### Question 3: Charming surprises

The city does not seem to hide many surprises for the greatest part of the sample. Only the 16% has been charmed by something during the visit to Liège: the "sentier des coteaux" is responsible for 31% of these positive reports, mainly because of its beauty, followed by some streets, and pubs of the city (25%), because of their convivial ambience. Other elements considered amazing are the "Fête du 15 Août", the "Nocturne des Coteaux de la citadelle", the shows and the impasses of the city. If we analyse the same results focusing on the groups of age, we can see that the most "surprised" group is the younger, and that the most amazing elements for them are the "Sentier des coteaux" and the "Fêtes du 15 Août", while the older subjects are impressed rather by the impasses and the shows of the city.

#### Question 4: Deceiving experiences

Unfortunately, for the 37% of the sample there are also some deceiving elements or aspects in the city. Out of this percentage, the 37% are disappointed because of the dirtiness of the streets, while the 14% didn't like the visit to the city. Also deceiving (for the 5% each) were the "Batte", the feeling of insecurity and the archeoforum. If we focus on the groups of age, we see that the older subjects are more deceived by their visiting experience (ratio of deception: 53%) than the younger (27%). This suggests that the first group of age is more specifically concerned by the mentioned issues than the second group.

#### Question 5: Typical, representative or symbolic elements of Liège.

The first part of this question (what are the elements more representative of Liège) has been answered only by 82% of the sample. Out of this percentage, we can see that the elements mentioned by the visitors are very scattered. The element most mentioned is "Le Carré" (a square where there are many bars, the party area of Liège), with a percentage of 16%, but there are many elements represented only by 2,5% or 1,2%. We have therefore decided to regroup the elements into macro-categories, to be able of drawing at least some general conclusions. In this way, the element considered most typical of Liège is the convivial ambience, and places and special events where people can meet and have fun (43%). That clearly speaks for the importance of the intangible heritage in the development of a cultural tourism strategy. For 22% of the sample, the most typical element of Liège is its built heritage, while the open air spaces (parks, gardens, view-points) are the most representative feature of the city for 15%. The culture and history are typical of Liège only for 7%.

Regarding the second part of the question: “what is the second thing most representative of Liège,” we have 75 valid answers. The pattern of answers is identical to the first part of the question: the convivial ambience, and the places and events to go out and have fun, are the second thing most representative for the 36% of the visitors. The built heritage is next, for the 25%, followed by the gardens and open-air spaces (15%), and culture/history (4%).

Finally, the third part of the question (what is the third thing most typical of the city) has provided 66 valid answers. Again, we have almost the same pattern of answers: 38% of the valid sample thinks that the third most typical thing of Liège is the convivial ambience, followed by the open-air spaces (20%), the built heritage (18%), and the culture/history related elements (6%).

The scheme and proportions of the answers are very similar in all the three parts of the question, and evidence the existence of some elements commonly associated with the image of Liège. These elements are, in order of frequency:

- ❖ the convivial ambience,
- ❖ the built heritage,
- ❖ the open air spaces
- ❖ and the culture/history aspect.

This pattern is the same also if we focus the analysis on different groups of age: the only difference is the importance of the convivial ambience which is higher in the younger group. Despite this difference, the order of the answers remains the same.

These results suggest that, beside the common feeling of convivial ambience and leisure, there isn't a defined image that clearly invests a second and third position, as we can see in other cities that have worked and developed their image.

## **Conclusions**

This part of the study offers a very interesting image of Liège from the point of view of the visitors. The fact that the sample is almost completely composed of subjects under 29 years old doesn't allow us to generalise the results. However, the coherence of these results among the two groups of age (12-17 and 18-29) suggests that the image of Liège is rather homogenous

and non-diversified: the city does not transmit different images to different kinds of audience. Liège is associated, in the following order, with the convivial ambience, the built heritage, the open air spaces and the Cultural/Historical aspect with different tastes and different expectations.

## **Objective B – Relationship between residents and city's heritage.**

### **Survey 4/A, Representativity, Cultural Identity.**

Sample: 100 subjects.

Technique: Direct interview, using a semi-directive questionnaire as a guide.

Profile of the sample: This survey was specifically addressed to residents. 61% of the sample are females, the remnant are males. More than the half of the survey (57%) has an age comprised between 12 and 17 years old. The second group most represented is that from 18 to 29 years old (34%). There are also some adults of age comprised between 50 and 59 (4%), and the remaining part is scattered between the other segments of age. Concerning the study level of the sample, it is mostly secondary (81%), with 15% of people with superior studies. Regarding the provenance, 73% of the sample are Belgians, while 13% are Italians, 4% of other European countries and the remaining 10 % from the rest of the world. The average duration of residence in Liège are of more than 15 years for 60% of the subjects, and between 6 and 15 years for 14%.

Definition of the survey: 4 open and semi-directive questions about the knowledge, the use and the preferences regarding the elements that constitute the cultural offer of the city.

Question 1: Heritage direct knowledge.

Approximately a half of the interviewed subjects have been to or have attended the tangible and non-tangible heritage elements of the city (regrouped in the same list as question 1 of Objective A): in average each element is known by 44% of the residents. This ratio descends to 24% if we consider only the subjects of age comprised between 12 and 17 years old. The best-known elements are the "Batte" (87% of all the sample has been there) and the "Fête du 15 Août" (78%), while the most neglected are the "Promenades sur Meuse" (22%), the "Retrouvailles" (29%), the "Journées du Patrimoine" (32%) and the "Festival des Promenades" (known only to the 3% of the subjects).

Question 2: Frequentation (Visits in the last year)

As predictable, the frequentation of the Liège's Heritage is more reduced than its levels of knowledge. The most frequented place seems to be the "Batte", where 73% of the residents

have been at least once in the last year. The “Fêtes de Wallonie” and “Fête du 15 Août” have a medium frequentation (respectively 41% and 57%). The less frequented places or events are the “Festival des Promenades” (2%), the “Promenades sur Meuse” (12%), the “Journées du Patrimoine” (15%), the “Journées sans voitures” and the “Palais des Princes Evêques” (each one 17%).

Regarding the reasons why the subjects have visited these places or events, the most frequent convey into the category “convivial ambience”, which sums up 24% of all the motivations given by the visitors. This particular reason is related mainly to the “Fête du 15 Août” and, a little bit less, to the “Fêtes de Wallonie”, to the “Batte” and to the “Nocturnes des Coteaux”. Also frequent is the reason “school visit” (8%), related almost half of the times to the S. Barthélemy church, and rest distributed between the “Palais des Princes Evêques”, the “Sentier des Coteaux”, the “Nocturnes des Coteaux” and to the “Journées du Patrimoine”. Also “Shopping” represents the 8% of all motivations, and is related exclusively to the “Batte”. A little bit less frequent is “Relax, leisure” (6%) related mainly to the “Batte”, and also to the “Journées sans voitures”, more than to the “Sentier des Coteaux” or the “Nocturnes”. “Curiosity” and “Habit” make up, each one, the 5% of the total: the first one appears particularly attached to the “Nocturnes des Coteaux” and to the “Retrouvailles”, while the second one is distributed among many different elements. Among the less frequent reasons we find “Quality of show and the program of activities” (4%), almost exclusively related to the “Fêtes de Wallonie”, and “Typical” (3%), mainly attached to “Fêtes du 15 Août” and to the “Batte”. Finally, it is interesting to notice how little are mentioned the categories “Historical/Cultural value” and “Beauty” (2% each). This might, however, be explained by the fact that many of the cultural attractors given by the authorities were of intangible nature, and therefore hard to find “beautiful.”

The place associated to more reasons of visit is the “Batte” (11 different kinds of reasons to go there). Among the places or events with a minor number of different reasons of visit, we have the “Festival des Promenades” (only 2 different kind of reasons to visit it), the St. Barthelemy church and the “Promenades sur Meuse” (only 4 kinds of reasons to visit each one of them), the “Journées du Patrimoine” (5 kinds of reasons). The remaining places or events have between 6 and 8 reasons of visit each.

### Question 3: Preferences

The results of the analysis show that none of the elements of the list proposed to Liège's residents can really be considered representative of their own vision and perception of the offer of the city: the "Sentier des Coteaux", with only 6% of the preferences of the subjects, is the place with the highest preferences score. The same happens if we analyse the medium preferences score of the other places or elements: the highest correspond to the "Fête du 15 Août", placed in a medium preference position by only the 13% of the sample.

The real preferences of the sample emerge from the open question part, and it shows a panorama of cultural identity very different to the list proposed to residents: the most popular places of all Liège are the St. Lambert Square and "Le Carré", both mentioned by 16% of the sample: the first element is located in the centre of Liège, is a nice place that offers shopping areas, terraces and open air spaces; the second element is a meeting and drinking place for young people in Liège. "Le Carré" is also the most clear second and third choice of Liège's offer (respectively for 14% and 12% of the sample).

Given the dispersion of the results of this question, we have decided to regroup the sample's answers into macro-categories, adding the related percentages to obtain clearer results. If we do this operation from the elements originally included in the questionnaire we have three great categories: built-heritage/cultural offer (which includes St. Barthelemy, "Palais des princes Evêques", "Journées du Patrimoine"); Nature/open spaces (Sentier des Coteaux, Nocturne des Coteaux, "promenades sur Meuse", "Festival des Promenades" and "Journées sans voitures"); Leisure/Conviviality/shows ("Fête du 15 Août" et "Fêtes de la Wallonie" "Retrouvailles" and "Batte"). The first preference, obtained by the sum of the partial percentages, is equally shared by the Leisure/conviviality/Shows and Nature/open spaces categories, with a score of 7% each. Built Heritage/Cultural offer follows, with a 5% score. On the other hand, regarding the medium preferences we find that the category Leisure/Conviviality/Shows obtains the highest score (25%), followed by Nature/Open spaces (12%) and by Built Heritage/Culture (6%).

#### Question 4: Representativity

The last question is an open question, about the three places, or elements of intangible heritage, that the residents consider most representative of the city of Liège. We have regrouped the most common answers into some macro categories, as in the previous question, to obtain clearer conclusions. The first part of the question, regarding the most

representative element of Liège, has been answered by the 51% of the sample. Regarding these valid answers, we can see they are composed at 29% by elements related to the built Heritage of the city, at 27% by Conviviality/Leisure/Shows, at 18% by Nature/Open spaces/Relax, at 8% by Cultural/historical Values, and the remaining 18% by other elements.

Regarding the second part of the question, about the second element most representative of Liège, we have to notice first of all that only the 40% of the sample has answered. Of this percentage, the 32% goes to Conviviality/Leisure/Shows, the 22% goes to Built Heritage, and both 15% go to Cultural/historical Values and to Nature/Open spaces/Relax. The remaining 15% is composed by other elements.

Finally, the last part of the question, about the third element most representative of the city, has been answered by just 34% of the sample. Out of this percentage, the 29% goes to Built Heritage, followed by 18% that corresponds to Conviviality/Leisure/Shows, and by 15% that is related to a new category, "Shopping". We have also 12% that goes to Nature/Open spaces/Relax, and only the 9% that refers to Cultural/historical Values. The remaining 17% is composed by other elements that don't fit to any of these categories, and that can't make a category themselves.

Concerning the reasons why the subjects decide that something is representative of Liège, the analysis does not provide very representative information because the explanations given by the subjects are very scattered. However, it is worth to notice how Historical/Cultural value, as a reason, is frequently associated to the "built Heritage" category. Another interesting result is the first appearance of the reason "Beauty", associated to built heritage elements and to nature/open spaces elements.

## **Conclusions**

This survey provides very interesting information about the perception that Liège's residents have of the cultural and tourist offer of their city. The most interesting remark that we can do relates to the incongruity between the places and activities that they enjoy the most, and those that they consider most representative. In fact, the favourite activities and places of the sample are related to leisure and to nature: go to fairs, meet new people, have a drink with friends in the central squares, relax, have a walk along the paths of the city's gardens. On the other hand, if asked what they consider most representative of the town, the residents place

built heritage in the top of the list, above leisure and nature. This incongruency shows that the built heritage, far from being neglected, is known to the residents and considered a “must see”, but doesn't belong to their every day experience of the city. We are not referring to the fact that some particular places of the city may have a live atmosphere, or be the scenario of activities, fairs, concerts. We are referring more specifically to museums and monuments and other places related to “High” culture practice. There is another remark to do about the cultural offer of the city: the survey shows that the aspects related to “high” culture are considered inexistent, or less important, than the previous mentioned elements. This statement needs a clarification, which is the young age of the greatest part of the sample (57% has an age comprised between 12 and 17 years old), a circumstance that inclines the balance of preferences towards leisure-oriented activities. Having said this, we can extract a further conclusion from the analysis of these results, which is that the city's cultural offer content and promotion strategies could be strengthened, particularly regarding promotion of “High” culture issues (opera, theatre, museums) , especially for younger audiences. The current situation of Liège with most major museums closed due to reorganisation and expected construction of a major museum centre might partly explain this situation.

## **Final conclusions and proposals**

Because of the predominance of young people (mainly from 12 to 29 years old) in the sample evaluated, the following conclusions must be considered particularly (but not exclusively) relevant for this segment of population. The image of Liège is mainly associated to leisure and to the open air activities: go to the fairs, meet new people, relax having a walk by the paths of the city's gardens. This image is shared both by the visitors and by the residents; however, in the case of the residents, there is a difference between their list of the city's favourite features (those places and activities they frequent the most), and their list of the city's most representative features (the places and activities they consider most symbolic and representative of Liège). Actually, there is an element that appears in the second list but not in the first one: the built heritage, which is considered an important aspect of the offer of the city, but doesn't appear among the preferences of the citizens. This divergence suggests that the city lacks initiatives that attract Liège residents to museums, monuments and other places related to “High” culture practice. Another information worthy of consideration is the low

relevance of the historical/cultural domain (the “high” culture) in the offer of the city, which is an indicator of a low impact of this area of cultural activities on the sample we evaluated.

In our opinion, this study indicates that it would be advisable for the municipality to improve the program of activities related with “high” culture, in order to make it suitable and appealing for the younger segments of audience. Secondly, it would be convenient to design a project of enhancement of buildings, monuments and other built Heritage, in order to open it to visits and public use. It would be particularly interesting to use these spaces for more cultural activities, working in synergy to offer to the audience a product that satisfy different needs and expectations of cultural tourism.

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