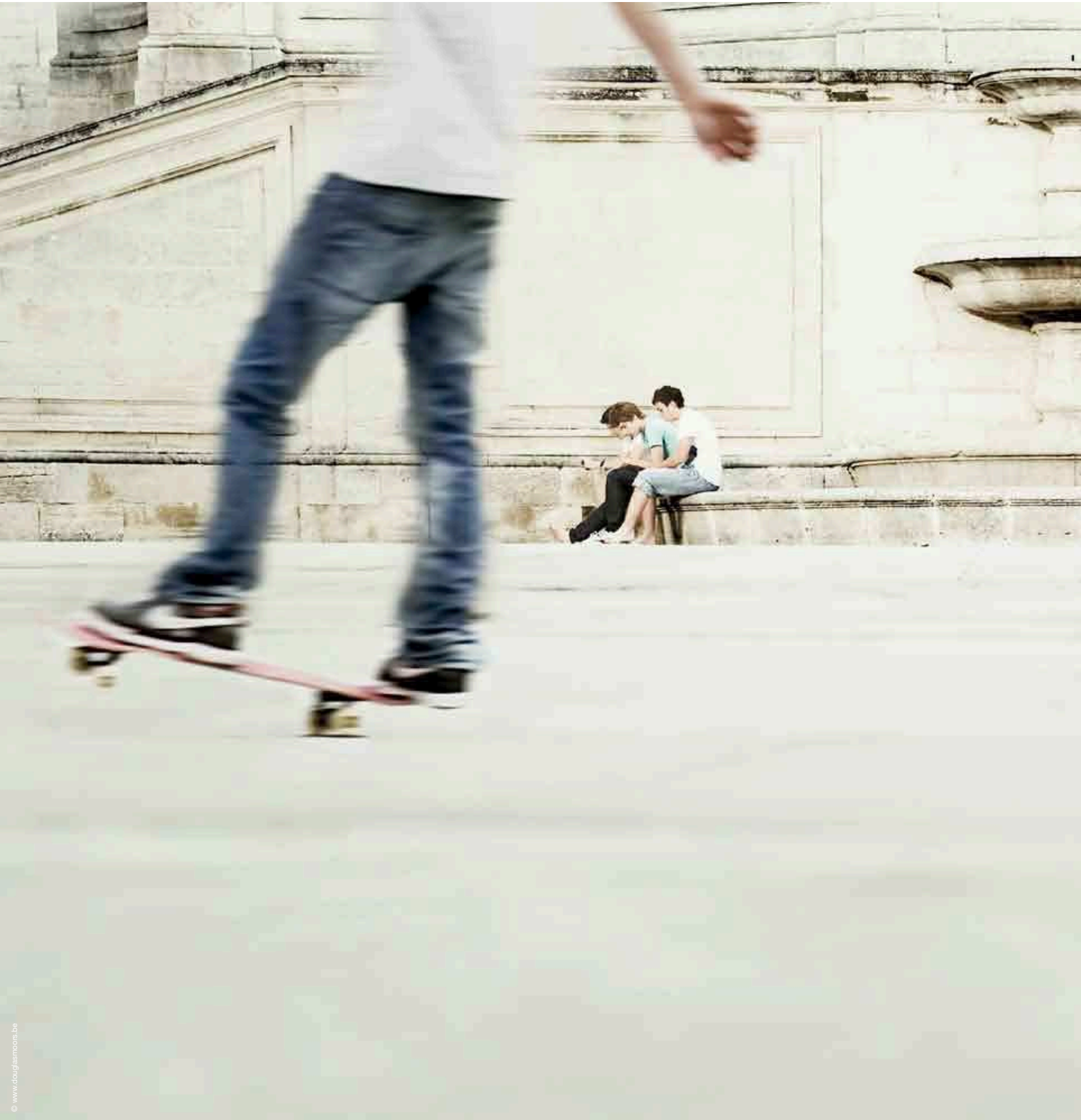


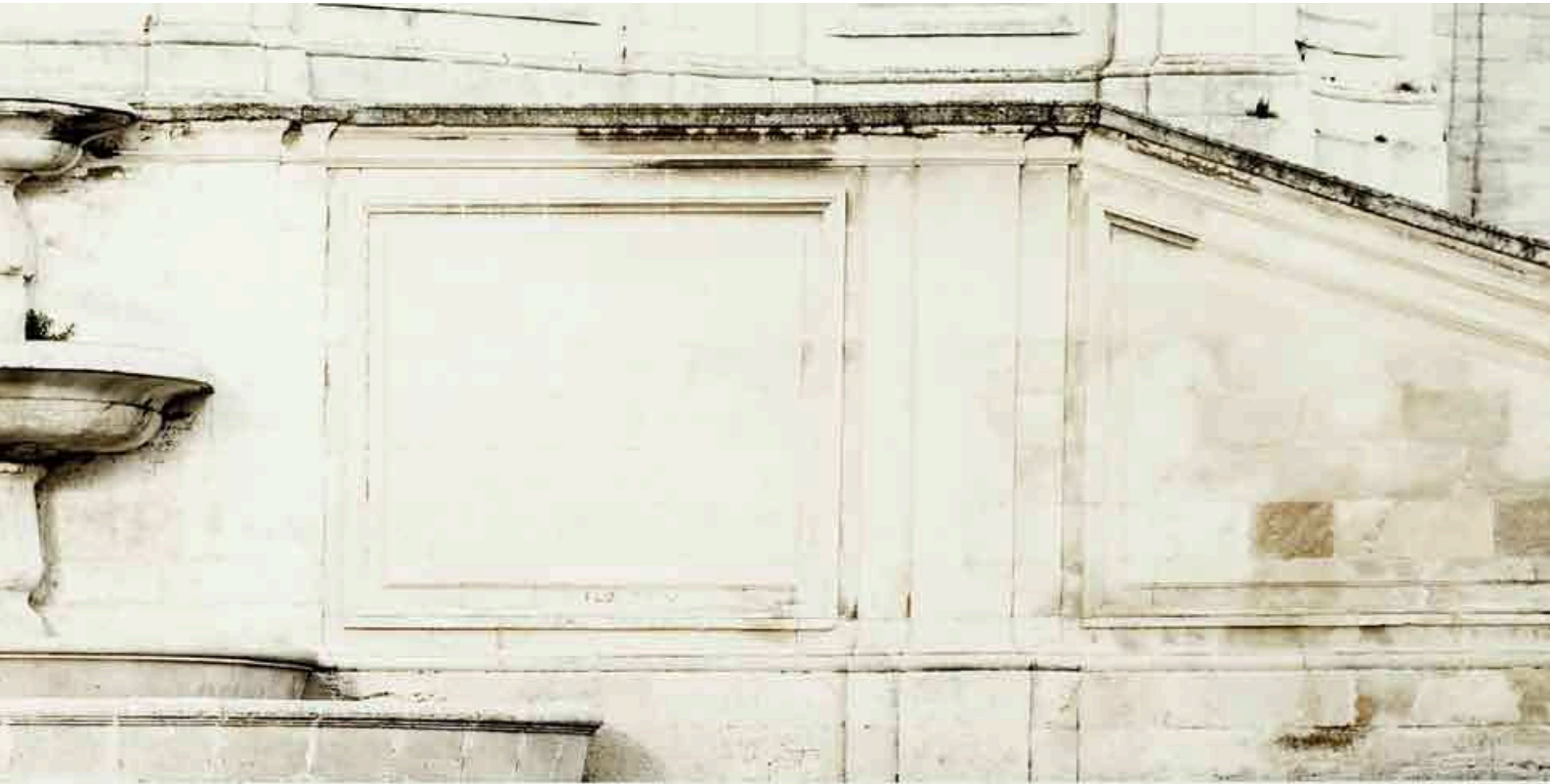
Education is the best provision for old age.

*Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC)*



# CHAPTER 7

## Education





# The Belgian Knowledge Economy

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During the “March 2000 Summit” in Lisbon, the European Heads of State and the Government leaders accepted the challenge of transforming Europe into the world’s leading knowledge economy by 2010.

Indeed, innovative knowledge will be the driving force for prosperity and wellbeing in this new millennium. The speed and intensity at which new scientific and technological developments are transformed into socially

and economically relevant activities have obviously been attested. Many regions in Europe, the United States, and increasingly in Asia claim to have a regional competitive advantage to become successful poles of growth. Also in Belgium, various regions are clearly demonstrating the ambition to play a dynamic and leading role in building up the European knowledge economy of the 21st century. Reference can be made

to the currently dominating growth poles of Leuven, Ghent, Louvain-La-Neuve and Liège.

It is clear that the present economic development takes place in close connection to the Belgian universities, research centres and technical institutions. They play a key role in the diffusion of the “state of the art” of the scientific and technical knowledge in, among others, information technology, bio-medical sciences, nanotechnology



and genomics. This knowledge is diffused throughout the existing Belgian industry, and it also generates more and more high-tech start-ups. For success in these new endeavours, we not only need to train scientists and engineers, but also experts in legal aspects, management, intellectual property, marketing and sales. Moreover, expertise in novel ways of financing, such as seed and venture

capital, are required. In the maturity stage, some of the new innovative companies go for an initial public offering.

From the "Leuven Knowledge Economy Model" we have learned that the success of the knowledge economy regions largely depends on the following parameters:

- presence of a critical mass of high quality research sources;



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- presence of an entrepreneurial climate, with entrepreneur role models;
- presence of a legal framework for exploitation of scientific research;
- clear policy and incentives to encourage research groups to actively seek knowledge transfer opportunities;
- presence of a professional interface unit (transfer cell) providing an integrated approach of research valorisation, which can result in spin-offs, contract research and creation of patents (intellectual property);
- presence of sufficient seed and venture capital;
- clear ownership of intellectual property;
- increased awareness among federal, state and local stakeholders;
- presence of excellent networks;
- enthusiasm and a high quality of life.

In conclusion, I would like to state that several regions in Belgium fulfil the aforementioned criteria and can, therefore, position themselves as outstanding "Knowledge Economy Regions" on the European map.

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## AIS: Leading Education in an Expanding Expat Community



Antwerp offers expat families a wealth of advantages, from convenient commutes, to affordable housing, to a welcoming international community. Education is, of course, a top priority for expats, so the Antwerp International School is a keystone in Antwerp's position as a growing expat destination.



Family concerns are one of the top determiners of the success or failure of an expat experience, and schooling for children is at the centre of this issue. That's why a school like the Antwerp International School—which focuses on both the academic and personal development of each child—is such a critical factor in how attractive a potential new city is for expatriates, and therefore for their companies.

In 2007-2008, the Antwerp International School celebrated its 40th academic year.

Located a few kilometres north of Antwerp's city centre, it provides a top-level, English-language learning environment to students from pre-school through grade 12, offering both a standard high school diploma and the International Baccalaureate diploma.

Established in 1967, AIS is one of four international schools in Belgium, and the only one in the important expat community of Antwerp. Over the years, it has grown from 67 students to its current population of 600 students from 35 nationalities. In 1972, the school was the first institution to receive

academic accreditation from the European Council of International Schools, and later became the first school in the world to be accredited three times by the Council. This constant evaluation ensures that AIS remains a high quality school, and that transcripts and diplomas are recognised universally.

The 80 faculty members represent 10 different nationalities, in a 1:9 teacher-to-student ratio. With the school's six buildings housing 45 classrooms, four science laboratories, a library, three computer centres, English as a Second



Language and Learning support classrooms, counsellors' offices, nurses rooms, a new gymnasium complex, a Fine Arts Centre and an attached theatre with music classes, a large multi-purpose area, a kitchen and cafeteria and three playgrounds on its ten-acre campus, expats children can also maximise the opportunities of living abroad.

AIS's dedicated staff members ensure that each child receives the personal attention he or she needs. Children are valued as individuals and taught to work together in a multi-cultural atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. The learning approach is student-centred, and the curriculum focuses on teaching the importance of understanding, academic discipline, service, the arts and good health.

Students have opportunities to work both individually and collaboratively, in order to learn to solve problems, meet challenges and develop respect for the perspectives of others. Students' social, physical, emotional and intellectual development are all addressed.

The school takes full advantage of the diversity of the student and faculty bodies. Every other year, on International Day, each nationality shares its culture, food, customs and costumes with each other.

The school encourages an active Parent Teacher Organisation (PTO). The PTO assists new families to integrate into the community, thanks to conversation groups, sports and other classes, and social and networking events.

To prepare students for continuing education anywhere in the world, AIS offers the International Baccalaureate (IB). These high quality international education programs connect AIS to a worldwide community of over 2,300 schools in 128 countries. IB retains an important function in providing access to an internationally recognised curriculum around the world.

Diploma students take six core subjects over two years. They choose three "higher level" subjects comprising 240 hours of teaching, and three "standard



level" subjects with 150 hours of teaching. All diploma students take Theory of Knowledge as a seventh subject.

IB candidates also have 150 hours of Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) over two years. This is an integral part of the IB program, providing a balance with academics to enable students to express values such as caring, commitment, generosity and solidarity. Students are encouraged to take part in artistic and sporting activities and in community service, at home and abroad. AIS offers the CAS program from the 10th grade.

IB candidates also complete a 4,000 word research essay on a subject of their choice. Each student has a supervisor who assists him or her in developing a hypothesis and who follows through in the research process. Diploma students find the essay one of the most valuable parts of their preparation for their continuing education.

AIS's location in Antwerp is no accident. "In Antwerp, we are in a unique position to take advantage of the cultural heritage of Belgium and the adjacent countries, to promote an understanding and respect for other cultures and customs," notes MS and HS Principal Steve Petra.

The city's convenient position and excellent standard of living make it a desirable destination for expats. Antwerp

benefits from an excellent transport infrastructure and ideal location. Brussels is only 45 kilometres away, while Amsterdam, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Luxembourg, London, Strasbourg, and Paris are all less than 500 kilometres away. The city is within easy reach of numerous motorways connecting it to the rest of Europe. Two international airports (Zaventem/Brussels and Antwerp) are within a 30 minute drive.

One of the greatest strengths of the local workforce is its language skills. According to Antwerp Chamber of Commerce, most of the city's workers speak English, French, German and Dutch, making it even easier for expats to fit in immediately. With over 3,000 restaurants and bars, and about 35 museums, 6 concert halls and 29 theatres, and, of course, the Antwerp International School, Antwerp offers a very high quality of life for all members of the expat family.

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