



EPHEC Guide for Exchange Students

Accommodation & Living Expenses

Contents

1. Accommodation ----- 1

- Information on accommodation
- What the International Office can do for you
- Important advice
- Suggestions on where to look for accommodation
- Districts of Brussels
- Real estate mini-dictionary

2. Living expenses ----- 5

- Food
- Grocery stores & markets
- Public transport
- Leisure time
- Examples of costs

3. Tips from previous students ----- 7





Accommodation

For accommodation, students have to find a room on the private market as EPHEC University College does not manage its own student residence halls.

Students should look for a room by themselves and if necessary, the International Office (or the Students Union) can provide some assistance upon arrival. You are also invited to contact former or current guest students for advice and maybe even take over the room they are renting for the moment.

Information on accommodation:

Mr Frédéric Simonis,
International Office
E-mail: international@ephec.be
Tel.: +32.2.775.97.75

What the International Office can do for you:

- We will refer to relevant websites where you can look for accommodation.
- We may sometimes be able to put you in touch with EPHEC students who wish to rent their own room/apartment while going abroad or with former guest students.

Important advice:

- Please note that the housing situation in Brussels is difficult and it takes some time and effort to secure your accommodation. We therefore invite you to start your research as soon as possible when your Erasmus nomination has been confirmed.
- Typically, an apartment for students is called “a kot” in Belgium. There you will have your own room but share a kitchen and a bathroom with others.
- We advise you to budget with a rent from around EUR 400 to 500 per month, depending on location and standard.
 - The current average prices in Brussels: for a furnished student room €350 to €450 with charges included, for a furnished short-term studio (6 months to 1 year) €450 to €700 charges not included & for a non-furnished long-term studio €600 charges not included
- Do check whether charges (the costs of heating, electricity, water etc.) are included in the rent. If not, the contract should clearly state how these costs will be calculated.
- A deposit is required from most landlords and is normally 2 months rent for a room and for an apartment.
- If possible, check out the room or apartment personally. You can also ask if an EPHEC contact can help you check the room. Use the Facebook forum created for your semester.



- You should never send money via Western Union or other private money transfer institutions. Use only authorised banks for transferring money and ask the landlord to send identification details – e.g. a copy of a passport.
- You should always sign a contract with your landlord. Study the contract carefully and be sure to check deadlines for how to give notice. If you have any doubt or question about the contract, feel free to contact Mr Simonis or any person who is likely to help you.

Suggestions to where you can look for accommodation:

- Contact international students who are currently studying at EPHEC (we can give you the list and contact addresses). Maybe you can take over their accommodation when they leave.
- Search for accommodation by using the websites below:

www.eurasmus.com / www.brusselsdestination.be/en/ / www.spotahome.com / www.immoweb.be/en/ / <https://brik.mykot.be/en> / www.eu-rentals.com/ / www.brukot.be/en/ / www.upkot.be/ / <https://ikot.be/en/flat-brussels/> / www.student.be/en/student-rooms / <http://coloctoit.com/category/belgique/> / <http://inforjeunesbruxelles.be/> / en.allekoten.be/ / www.housinganywhere.com / www.chambrealouer.com / www.kitkot.be / www.appartager.be / www.gabinohome.com/en

The website www.spotahome.com will allow you a 25% discount on your accommodation if you mention the following code: **EPHEC25**.

- On Facebook, you can also find several groups for accommodation in Brussels. You can for example search for “Brussels Rooms and flats to rent”, “Rooms in Brussels (Expats, Interns, Erasmus and Students)”, “Desperate People looking for a room in BXL!!”, “BXL A LOUER : STUDIO/APPART/COMMERCE”, “BRUSSELS: Flats & Rooms for rent”, “BXL A LOUER - de bouches a oreilles”, “Bxl à Louer - de bouche à oreille (II)”, and “Colocation, appartements sur Bruxelles”.

For temporary housing look for hotels, hostels or Airbnb. Here are some useful links:

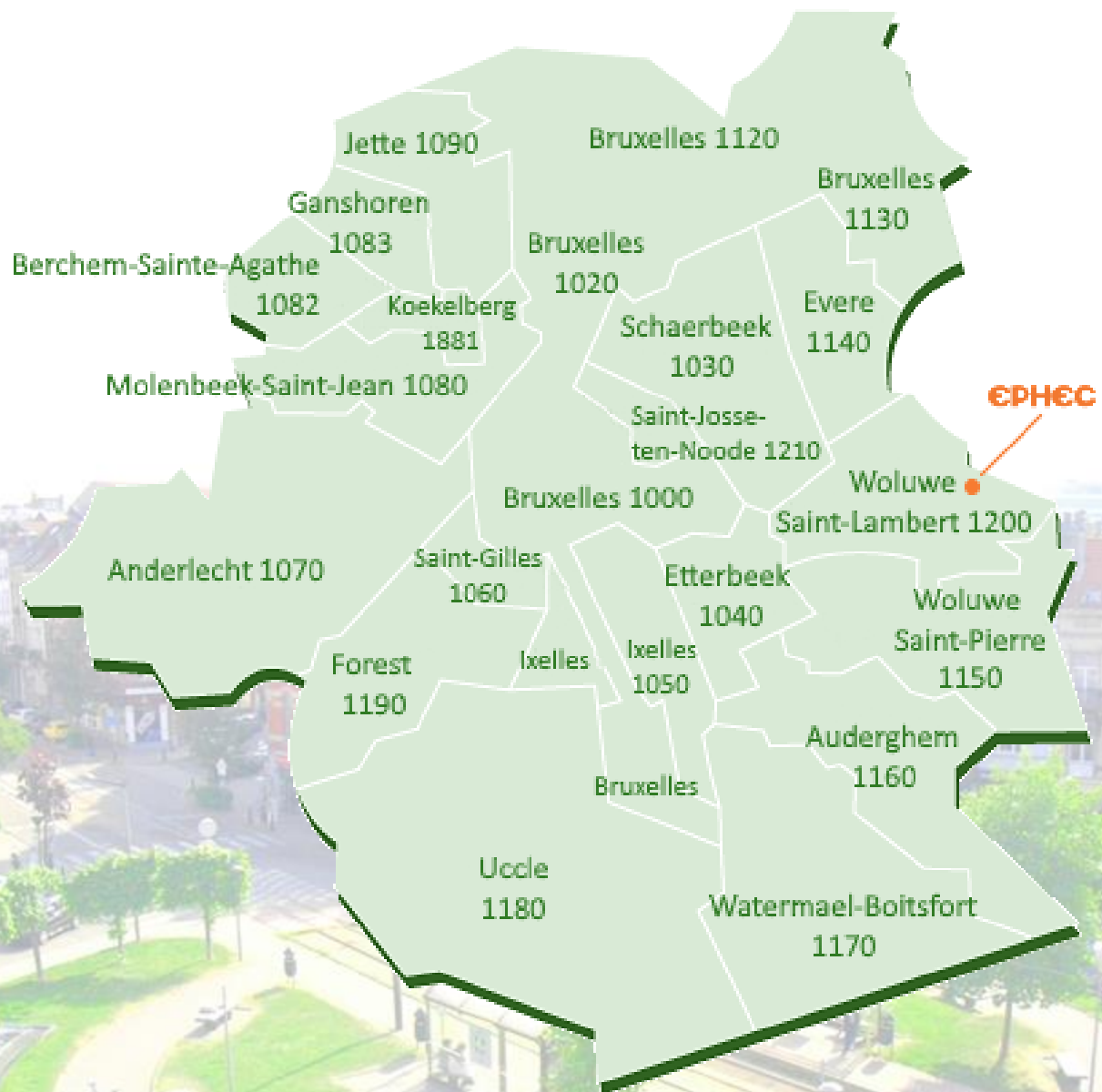
www.hotelscombined.com / www.hihostels.com / www.airbnb.com



Districts of Brussels

Brussels is divided into 19 communal regions with each having their own local authorities and administrative services. In the map below, you can see the names of the communes, the postal codes and the location. Ephec Woluwe campus is situated in the commune of Woluwe-Saint-Lambert.

See more information of the communes: www.brussel.irisnet.be/about-the-region/the-communes-of-the-region





Real estate mini-dictionary

Please use the French/English dictionary below to check out the rental offers and ask the International Office if you need assistance with the French language.

| Real estate mini-dictionary | |
|--|---|
| French word | English word |
| Annonce | Ad/advert |
| Description | Description |
| Cautions | Deposit |
| Cautions à payer avant d'emménager | Deposit to be paid before moving in |
| Loyer | Rent |
| Appartement, kot | Apartment, student room |
| Zone, quartier | Area/neighbourhood |
| Code postal/ville | Postcode/zipcode/town |
| À vendre, à louer | For sale, for rent |
| Propriétaire | Landlord, owner |
| Type d'appartement | Type of apartment |
| Chambre(s) | Room(s) |
| Taille, superficie | Size (number of square meters) |
| Type de location | Form of renting |
| Durée de location | Period of renting |
| Chercher | Search |
| Meubles | Furniture |
| Meublé | Furnished |
| Charges (gaz, électricité, etc) exclues | Charges (gas, electricity etc) excluded |
| Charges (gaz, électricité, etc) incluses | Charges included |
| Salon, pièce de séjour | Living room |
| Chambre à coucher | Bedroom |
| Logement à partager | Shared accommodation |
| Chambre à partager à deux | Shared bedroom |
| Virement bancaire | Bank transfer |
| Date d'arrivée/de départ | Arrival/departure date |
| Nombre de personne(s) | Number of person(s) |
| Fumeur/non fumeur | Smoker/ non smoker |



Living expenses

Compared to European standards, the cost of living in Belgium is generally quite high but of course, it is also greatly affected by your lifestyle. Brussels as the capital of Belgium is one of the most expensive areas in the country and accommodation costs will be the highest expenses on your budget. The costs for accommodation vary greatly depending on the size and quality of the place, the neighbourhood and its distance to the center. For example, neighbourhoods of Ixelles, Uccle and Woluwe-Saint-Pierre are among the most expensive ones. For details, check the following articles:

ExpatArrivals. 2017. Cost of Living in Brussels [referenced 18.05.2017]. Available at: <http://www.expatarrivals.com/belgium/brussels/cost-of-living-in-brussels>

Vioreanu, D. 2017. Costs of Studying and Living in Belgium. Mastersportal [referenced 18.05.2017]. Available at: <http://www.mastersportal.eu/articles/555/costs-of-studying-and-living-in-belgium.html>

Food

When it comes to food, cooking at home is the cheapest option. Please see the section below on “Grocery stores & markets” for more information on places where to buy food. In Brussels, there are both high-end restaurants and affordable low cost places to grab food if you want to eat out. Cheap snacks include chips (frites) and waffles (gaufres) that you can easily find in the touristic areas of the city center.

Grocery stores & markets

The main grocery store chains in Belgium are Carrefour, Delhaize, Colruyt, Lidl and Aldi. Carrefour and Delhaize have larger selections whereas Colruyt, Lidl and Aldi are generally cheaper. The chains’ own brands are often the cheapest ones in the selection.

On Sundays, most of the big grocery stores are closed but you can head to a market to buy cheap vegetables for example. The biggest market is the Midi market (also called Marché du Midi) that is located next to Gare du Midi. You can also find markets for example on Place Flagey and Place Sainte-Catherine.

Public transport

Public transport in Brussels is very affordable especially for students. We at EPHEC will provide you a student certificate that will allow you to buy a student STIB pass (only available for students aged 18 to 24). With the STIB pass you can use trams, buses and



metros in the transportation network of Brussels capital region. See more about the STIB electronic pass here: <http://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?guid=003e3783-1d83-3410-eab3-ce6aa344e8e2&l=en> A single JUMP ticket (valid 1 hour) costs +/- 2,00€ (or 2,50€ if bought from driver) – prices might change every year.

Travelling in Belgium by train is easy and the prices are attractive for young people. The major railway stations in Brussels are Bruxelles-Midi, Bruxelles-Central and Bruxelles-Nord. Your best buy to explore Belgium by train is the Go Pass 10 (for people under the age of 26). The pass costs 52,00€ and allows you to make 10 trips between any two Belgian stations (regardless of the distance). The weekend tickets and Go Pass 1 tickets are also good options. Check the tariffs here: www.belgianrail.be/en/travel-tickets.aspx

Leisure time

The costs for leisure time vary greatly depending on the activity. In Brussels, there are generally quite many free outdoor events especially when it comes to music. Please have a look at the website of visitBrussels for more information on events and attractions: <https://visit.brussels/en>

If you want to visit museums, quite many of them are free on the first Wednesday and the first Sunday of the month. See a list of the free museums here: <http://www.brusselmuseums.be/en/faq.php?id=6>

For nightlife, in Brussels you can find numerous pubs that stay open till the early hours and have a free entrance. For nightclubs, the entrance cost is on average 10 euros.

Also check www.brussellife.be/en to read articles and to get more information about leisure time activities in Brussels.

Examples of costs

Please visit the website of Expatistan to see some examples of average costs: <https://www.expatisitan.com/cost-of-living/brussels>

Please also see this Numbeo website, which allows you to compare the costs of Brussels with your home city/country: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Brussels>



Tips from previous exchange students

Here you can read some experiences and maybe get a tip or two from a few previous exchange students of the spring semester of 2017.

Sara from Finland

Commune: Ixelles

It's easier to find accommodation if you start looking earlier but there is no reason to panic if you are a bit late. There are plenty of offers especially on Facebook but you should keep looking daily, because the offers come and go very quickly.

I lived in the commune of Ixelles near the cemetery. The area is student friendly and there are lots of bars and restaurants around. I lived in an accommodation from a student housing company Jeronimmo. They have many houses in the area that are targeted especially for exchange students and interns. Not the cleanest place on Earth, and not everything always works, but if you want to have many people around you, then I would suggest it.

Oana from Romania

Commune: Bruxelles

When looking for accommodation in Brussels, try to find other people from your home country who are also going there. That way you can share an apartment and it's cheaper. I suggest on joining many different Facebook groups for the offers. I lived with other Romanian girls in the city center of Brussels, where everything is close by.

Michelle from Austria

Commune: Etterbeek

Finding accommodation was pretty simple for me because I received a list of recommendations from my home university. Through those contacts, I was able to find a room in Etterbeek, a little bit south from the Montgomery station. I found the commune of Etterbeek quite divided, as half of it is quite posh and the other part not so much. The area for me was quiet and calm with lots of old people, families, schools and no bars.

In Brussels in general, it is quite expensive and the prices for accommodation depend on your criteria and the area you want to live in. I would suggest on looking up some blogs of people who live/have lived in Brussels, to get an idea how it is like in there.



Elena from Moldova

Commune: Bruxelles

I lived in the commune of Brussels near the Atomium, so I had a great view from my place. I found the area really good, clean and quiet.

For finding accommodation, I would suggest joining different Facebook groups by country, for example “Moldovian people in Brussels”. Also beware of the housing scams out there and never send your ID information beforehand.

Leyla from Mexico

Commune: Watermael-Boitsfort, Woluwe-Saint-Pierre

I lived in two different communes during my stay in Brussels: first in Watermael-Boitsfort and then in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre. I found both of the communes silent and calm. The people living there are mostly families and older people. There are many shops but they are maybe not the cheapest ones. I had good access to public transport but the places were quite far away. Because of that, it takes a lot of time to get around.

I would advise to really think about your needs and try to find a place that matches them. For example are you just looking for the cheapest option, do you want a furnished or unfurnished place, are you willing to live with a family or other students or do you want to have your own place etc..? The cheapest places I found were for 300 €. Also if you want to save money on food expenses, you can check out “food outlets” where they give out expired or faulty products for cheap. One that I went to was in ULB on Saturdays.

Evgeny from Russia

Commune: Schaerbeek

When I was looking for accommodation in Brussels, I contacted all my friends in Europe to see if they knew a place. I didn't reserve anything beforehand and waited to come to Brussels to see the places myself. I checked several places and finally found a room in Schaerbeek.

Schaerbeek is a huge commune and there are good parts and not so good parts to the area. For example, areas near Parc Josaphat are nice but the areas west from Botanique can be a bit sketchy. Overall I found the area international and there are for example a lot of Turkish people and also you can find cheap food there. Try out the 3 euro kebabs!

Anyway, my suggestion on looking for accommodation is to contact the previous guest students at EPHEC. That's what I would do if I needed to look for a place in Brussels again.



Niels from The Netherlands

Commune: Woluwe-Saint-Pierre

I lived in a shared accommodation in the commune of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre and cycled to school. Because I had a bike, the travel to school was okay but otherwise the connections to get around weren't that great.

The people who live in the area of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre are mostly older people. Also I found it quite expensive and for example there were no cheap grocery stores nearby where I lived.

Sigrid & Carlijn from The Netherlands

Commune: Bruxelles

We found our accommodation through Spotahome and we would recommend it to others as well. The rooms in general are clean and well-furnished and with the website you can easily see what the place is going to be like. We lived in the city center near Sainte-Catherine metro. We think it's the best part of the city, very local and close to Grand Place. Also we really enjoyed the view from our place.

For expenses in Brussels, we would say that you have to know where to go. For example for going out, there are cheap (e.g. Celtica) and expensive places in the city center. For public transport, the student STIB pass is really good and go for Uber instead of a taxi. When travelling by a train, take advantage of the weekend ticket prices.

Máté from Hungary

Commune: Bruxelles

I lived in a student housing from Brik and found it from the Internet. My house was the Van Orley house near Botanique and I lived in a shared room, but single rooms are available as well. Brik is usually for Flemish students but others can apply as well if there is room. It all depends on demand. Overall I liked the place and would recommend it.

About the commune... I think it's pretty nice because everything is close by and there are several metro lines to get around. City center 2 is a good place to go shopping and the nearby Schaerbeek butchers are amazing places to buy meat.

Juan from Spain

Commune: Ixelles

I lived in a student house in Ixelles and found my accommodation on the Internet. The place was big and only on my floor there were 11 other students. I like the area of Ixelles because it has a lot of bars and students. I lived off the main street so it wasn't that noisy either.