****

&

**Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows**

Sciensano, Brussels

**Belgium**

Last updated:

Updated: February 2022

* Javiera Rebolledo, Valeska Laisnez

Based on previous guidance by

* Natalie Fischer, Ana Hoxha

Source:

<http://epietalumni.net/activities/countries-guide/>

*Please note: This is a living document. If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading onto the EAN country guides website. Thank you.*

**CONTENT**

[EARLY ON AND GETTING STARTED 4](#_heading=h.30j0zll)

[1. Registration in Belgium 4](#_heading=h.1fob9te)

[Residence permit/card (if needed) & Visa (if needed) 4](#_heading=h.3znysh7)

[Registration, incl. social security number/ID/Person number 4](#_heading=h.2et92p0)

[2. Finding accommodation 4](#_heading=h.tyjcwt)

[Areas to live 4](#_heading=h.3dy6vkm)

[Type of housing 4](#_heading=h.1t3h5sf)

[Terms – when looking for a flat 4](#_heading=h.4d34og8)

[Necessary documents to get accommodation – contract 4](#_heading=h.2s8eyo1)

[Amenities: Internet, Telephone, Television, Gas, Electricity, Water, Heating 4](#_heading=h.17dp8vu)

[Furniture and household goods 5](#_heading=h.3rdcrjn)

[Useful websites 5](#_heading=h.26in1rg)

[3. Reimbursement of expenses 5](#_heading=h.lnxbz9)

[4. Finances 5](#_heading=h.35nkun2)

[Bank account 5](#_heading=h.1ksv4uv)

[Taxes 5](#_heading=h.44sinio)

[5. Administration 5](#_heading=h.2jxsxqh)

[Contract 5](#_heading=h.z337ya)

[Salary corrections 5](#_heading=h.3j2qqm3)

[Pension (public/private) 5](#_heading=h.1y810tw)

[6. Insurance 5](#_heading=h.4i7ojhp)

[Health insurance 5](#_heading=h.2xcytpi)

[Travel insurance 5](#_heading=h.1ci93xb)

[Travel health insurance 6](#_heading=h.3whwml4)

[Accident insurance 6](#_heading=h.2bn6wsx)

[Liability insurance 6](#_heading=h.qsh70q)

[Expat insurance 6](#_heading=h.3as4poj)

[7. Leaving the country 6](#_heading=h.1pxezwc)

[Suggested removal companies 6](#_heading=h.49x2ik5)

[Places to deregister from 6](#_heading=h.2p2csry)

[AT WORK 6](#_heading=h.147n2zr)

[8. The institute <name> 6](#_heading=h.3o7alnk)

[Getting to & from the City/Institute 6](#_heading=h.23ckvvd)

[Your office space 6](#_heading=h.ihv636)

[Access card 7](#_heading=h.32hioqz)

[Laptop and mobile 7](#_heading=h.1hmsyys)

[Remote Access 7](#_heading=h.41mghml)

[Holidays 7](#_heading=h.2grqrue)

[Public Holidays 7](#_heading=h.vx1227)

[Working Time 7](#_heading=h.3fwokq0)

[Lunch 7](#_heading=h.1v1yuxt)

[LIVING IN Belgium 7](#_heading=h.4f1mdlm)

[9. Culture (dos and don’ts) 7](#_heading=h.2u6wntf)

[10. Public transport 7](#_heading=h.19c6y18)

[11. Cycling in the city 8](#_heading=h.3tbugp1)

[12. Language schools 8](#_heading=h.28h4qwu)

[13. Recreational Activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people 8](#_heading=h.nmf14n)

[14. Supermarkets 8](#_heading=h.37m2jsg)

[SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS 8](#_heading=h.1mrcu09)

[15. Moving in with a family 8](#_heading=h.46r0co2)

[CONTACT 9](#_heading=h.2lwamvv)

[16. Key contacts at your institute 9](#_heading=h.111kx3o)

[Secretariat: nsih-admin@sciensano.be (EPIET) 9](#_heading=h.3l18frh)

[HR: info@sciensano.be 9](#_heading=h.206ipza)

[Finance: info@sciensano.be 9](#_heading=h.4k668n3)

[17. Contact information of current and previous fellows 9](#_heading=h.2zbgiuw)

#

# EARLY ON AND GETTING STARTED

## Registration in Belgium

### Residence permit/card (if needed) & Visa (if needed)

*As an EU-citizen, you have the right to live in any EU country if you work there.
During the first 3 months of your stay, your host country cannot require you to register your residence. You can do so if you wish. After 3 months, your host country may require you to register your residence with local authorities, to show that you're working there and obtain a document confirming your right to stay.*

*Source:* [*https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/residence-rights/index\_en.htm*](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/residence-rights/index_en.htm)

### Registration, incl. social security number/ID/Person number

*In Belgium you have to register in the commune (municipality) where you are going to live and the whole procedure takes around three months.*

*Initially you present at the commune and explain your case, then they will tell you the documents you need to bring in order to open a file and after that you will need to present a couple of other times, to confirm the registration and have your Belgian ID.*

## Finding accommodation

### Areas to live

Most well-known areas are the city centre, Ixelles, Saint Gills, Etterbeek and Schaerbeek. It depends a lot on you on where you want to live, almost all the city is OK if you visit and like the area.

### Type of housing

It will depend on your needs and availability. Most probably you will find an apartment in Brussels, and it can be shared or not based on how much you want to spend. A room can go from 4-600 euro, a studio around 6-800 and an apartment 700-1000. The prices fluctuate based on the type of housing and area of the city.

### Terms – when looking for a flat

The terms and conditions of every place depend a lot from the renter and your requests. You can have a yearly contract or ask directly for the two years.

Best website is <https://www.immoweb.be/en/> .

### Necessary documents to get accommodation – contract

For your work contract you will need only your ID or passport, while for the apartment contract you will need the ID/passport and a bank account, which can also be in your country of origin.

### Amenities: Internet, Telephone, Television, Gas, Electricity, Water, Heating

Biggest internet provider are: Proximus, Base, Telenet and Voo. They also provide mobile sim cards, as well as the company Viking. Have a look at their rates online since they keep changing.

To get a phone contract you will need your Belgian ID card first! Until then you can use prepaid cards.

The house services will depend a lot on the house you will get. For further information ask the landlord/landlady.

### Furniture and household goods

For affordable furniture, there is Ikea and also local second hand shops. For the latter, please google for further information or go to <https://www.2ememain.be/>

Useful websites

#### Housing

Best website is <https://www.immoweb.be/en/> .

Also check Facebook groups like Bruxelles:loc&coloc, BXLàlouer-debouchesàoreilles

## Reimbursement of expenses

## Finances

### Bank account

You can open a bank account in the bank you prefer. I would recommend the ING bank because they have all the services and paper work also in English (Ana).

BNP Parisbas Fortis also has an expat department and I have made good experiences here (Natalie).

Other banks : Belfius, KBC, Beobank (easy for expats).

### Taxes

You have to declare your income to Belgian tax department.

## Administration

### Contract

P&O@sciensano.be

### Salary corrections

You can check your salary correction with the ECDC Fellowship Office. As an indication, check the 2016 correction factor here, around page 16: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/6939681/7070380/5189298_annual_report.pdf>

### Pension (public/private)

Public pension, no action to be undertaken by fellow

## Insurance

### Health insurance

#### Recommendations/suggestions

There are a lot to choose from. I am with Partena Health Insurance, as they offer services in English as well. The cost is about 8 Euros a month, depending on your needs, size of family etc. Sciensano also offers hospital insurance for free for employees, which I also took. Complementary insurance is available too, check with institute on arrival.

#### Travel clinics/where to get vaccinations

CHU Hospital St Pierre in Brussels <https://www.stpierre-bru.be/fr/services-medicaux/maladies-infectieuses-2/travel-and-vaccine-clinic/en-bref-333>

Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp

### Travel insurance

*Information about ECDC Travel Insurance*

*ECDC travel insurance is provided by Cigna International Health Services. All staff and sponsored meeting delegates travelling on behalf of ECDC are covered by this insurance. The insurance takes effect as from the time one leaves their home/office for the meeting/mission and ends upon return to home/office. Times outside this period, including durations with private deviations, are not covered.*

*Coverage includes, among others, medical expenses as well as costs for repatriation in case of personal accident and/or serious illness, theft, riots etc. For medical expenses, the travel insurance is a complimentary insurance. Any costs or damages that are not covered by the primary insurance (private, national or corporate) will be supplemented by the travel insurance upon a written declaration that such expense had not been covered.*

*Please note that the ECDC Travel Insurance is only a "top-up" insurance and everyone are expected to have a travel insurance (professional or private) already.*

*It is recommended to always bring your European Health Insurance Card when travelling in Europe.*

*Source: ECDC EVA*

### Travel health insurance

Extra insurance can be taken, like EuropAssistance, Partena, Ethias…

### Accident insurance

Extra insurance can be taken, like EuropAssistance, Partena, Ethias…

### Liability insurance

Extra insurance can be taken, like EuropAssistance, Partena, Ethias…

I got mine at my Bank (BNP Paribas Fortis, about 8 Euros per month).

### Expat insurance

Not needed as far as I know

## Leaving the country

### Suggested removal companies

This depends a lot on your country of origin/destination.

### Places to deregister from

Unregister at commune (municipality).

# AT WORK

## The institute Sciensano

### Getting to & from the City/Institute

The main building of the institute is based in the Ixelles municipality. The Epidemiology department is close to the station Gare du Midi (Eurostation), while the Euphem site is in Uccle. The way of how to get to the institute will depend on where you will be based and where you live. Public transport is quite good in Brussels, all areas are reachable either by train, metro, tram and bus. For further details have a look at google maps ;)

### Your office space

Normally office spaces are shared with other colleagues. Offices might go from 2 up to 7 people working in the same area. It will depend from where you will be placed.

### Access card

You will be given an access card for the building of the department your first day of work.

### Laptop and mobile

You receive a laptop from the institute at your arrival, but there is no mobile phone included.

### Remote Access

It is possible to have a VPN connection for your work computer, you have to set it up with the ICT office. It’s possible to work from home. You can also access your email remotely on a computer or on your phone via Office 365.

### Holidays

If you have never worked in Belgium, you are not entitled of paid leave your first year of working. If you have worked in EU before you can apply for European leave. You get up to a maximum of 20 days, 5 days after every 3 months.

This is valid only for the first year. Your second year of work your will have 26 days of holiday a year.

### Public Holidays

The institute celebrates all national public holidays. For specific information check <https://propay.be/en/news/public-holidays-in-2019/> .

### Working Time

Normal working hours go between 9 and 17. You can come in between 9:00 and 9:30, and upon agreement with your supervisor there might be some flexibility according to the needs.

### Lunch

All Sciensano employees have a Sodexo card which allows to pay for food and grocery. The amount received is about 6 euros per working day. There is a canteen at Eurostation where you can have warm and cold meals. There are also plenty of options around the station. Otherwise you can also bring your lunch and eat it in the lunch area. At the EUPHEM site in Ukkel there is no canteen nor places around where to buy food, but you can order sandwiches to be delivered.

# LIVING IN Belgium

## Culture (dos and don’ts)

Brussels is a very international and multicultural city. People are normally open minded and I am not aware of special things you should not do. If you appreciate beer, fries and chocolate, you will be more than fine☺ In order to have other advice, please have a look at:

* <https://expatsinbrussels.be/en>
* <https://www.expatica.com/be/about/basics/an-introduction-to-living-in-belgium-469849/>

## Public transport

The Institute will provide you for free a public transport card, and you can use it for the whole city of Brussels, or if you leave outside the city, also to commute from your place to work.

Normally the card takes 1 month to be ready after your arrival, and meanwhile you can pay the weekly ticket and keep the receives, which will be reimbursed. You will need to provide a picture of you to use for the card.

## Cycling in the city

In most of the areas in town you can cycle, either with your own bike or a rented one. With the transport card you can rent Villo bikes, which are free for 30 mins and then you pay base on how long you keep it. For further information have a look here <http://en.villo.be/How-does-it-work> .

## Language schools

There are every semester internal courses offered by the institute to learn either French or Dutch and they are for free. The start or not of a course normally depends on the number of enrolled people. Outside courses could be:

* French: <https://www.alliancefr.be/en/>
* Dutch: <https://www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/en/learn-practise>

For further information have a look online.

## Recreational Activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people

Have a look at the following websites:

* <https://visit.brussels/en>
* <https://agenda.brussels/en>
* <https://www.brussels.be/>
* <https://www.brusselslife.be/en>

Facebook has also good expat groups where you can meet people!

## Supermarkets

As in every big city in Brussels there are a lot of supermarkets around, and the best one will depend on the area you will live in. The most famous ones are probably Express (Carrefour) and Delhaize.

# SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## Moving in with a family

No information provided.

# CONTACT

## Key contacts at your institute

### Contact point: Elza.Duysburgh@sciensano.be

### HR: P&O@sciensano.be

### Finance: P&O@sciensano.be

## Contact information of current and previous fellows

Feel free to contact the current fellows. They have lots of additional information that they are happy to share with you.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Cohort** | **Email** | **Nationality, moved from🡪to** | **Moved with partner/family** |
| Ana Hoxha | 2018 | Ana.hoxha489@gmail.com | Italian, moved from Italy to Belgium | No |
| Natalie Fischer | 2019 | Natalie.Fischer211@gmail.com  | German, moved from the US to Belgium | With partner |
| Valeska Laisnez | 2021 | Valeska.laisnez@sciensano.be  | Belgian (MS track fellow) | NA |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |