

For the Quality of Limburg

draft PEL2014



2. Limburg's ambitions and challenges

2.1 Limburg is in good shape

We are proud of our Province.

Our residents are more satisfied with the quality of the housing and the residential environment than the residents of other Dutch provinces. Limburg offers agreeable and affordable housing, together with a wide variety of clubs and associations and an epicurean lifestyle that many find appealing. North and Central Limburg offer plenty of space in an attractive landscape that has a great deal of nature. South Limburg is more urbanized: Its marvellous landscape, hills, and the expansive nature areas just across the national border are all undeniable assets. Maastricht's unique ambience is felt throughout Limburg.

Agrofood, chemicals, and life sciences are our 'tickets to the future'. The efforts being made in these economic sectors are now beginning to bear fruit, for example in the form of the cooperation with Maastricht University. The BrightlandsChemelot Campus and Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus are strong cards in the international competition for R&D and knowledge staff. Greenport Venlo, one of the five national greenports, is the Netherlands' second most important horticultural area. Limburg's logistics sectors and leisure economy also rank among the Netherlands' best. In the European economic competitive strength rankings, Limburg is a solid second-tier region.

Limburg lies in a strategic location and has readily accessible economic centres that do not suffer from traffic jams of the severity of those in the Netherlands' Randstad conurbation.

2.2 Limburg, the Netherlands' most international province

Internationalization has an extra dimension for Limburg, the sole Dutch province that has a border with both Germany and Belgium. Internationalization in the form of 'creating links with other countries' is of material importance to the Netherlands' future, whereby economic internationalization will also be essential for Limburg.

Two levels of scale are of spatial relevance:

- Limburg linked in a wider international perspective to Europe, in particular north-western Europe, and the world.
- Limburg as part of a coherent EU-regional urbanized region – agglomeration, daily urban system – with a broad cultural and nature diversity and a major economic potential.

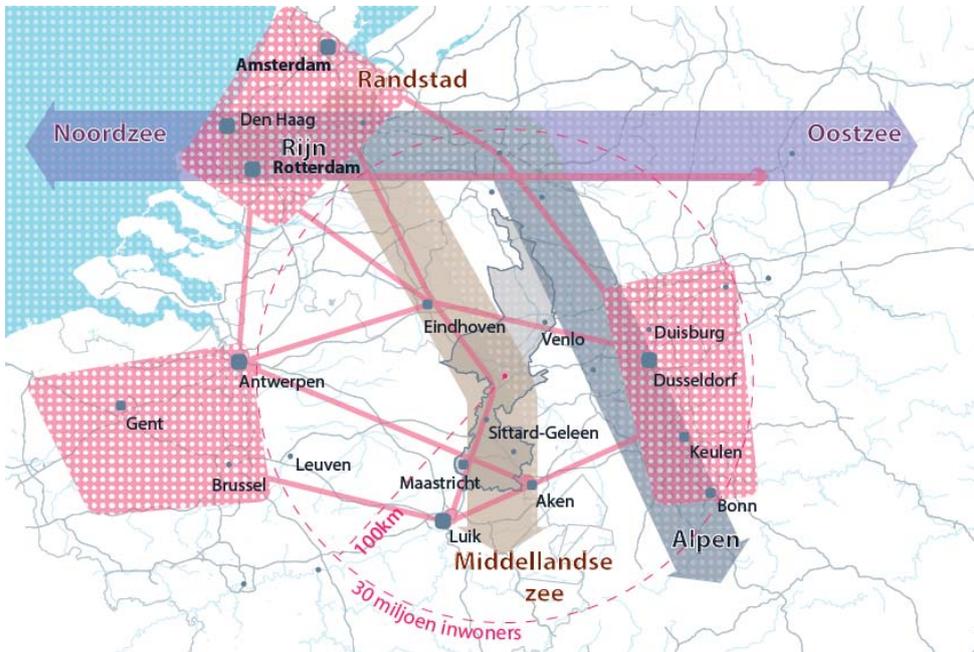
Limburg central in North-western Europe

Limburg lies in a strategic location between the Dutch and Belgian mainports and the European hinterland (the Ruhr region and East Europe). No less than 30 million people live within a radius of 100 km – an enormous market.

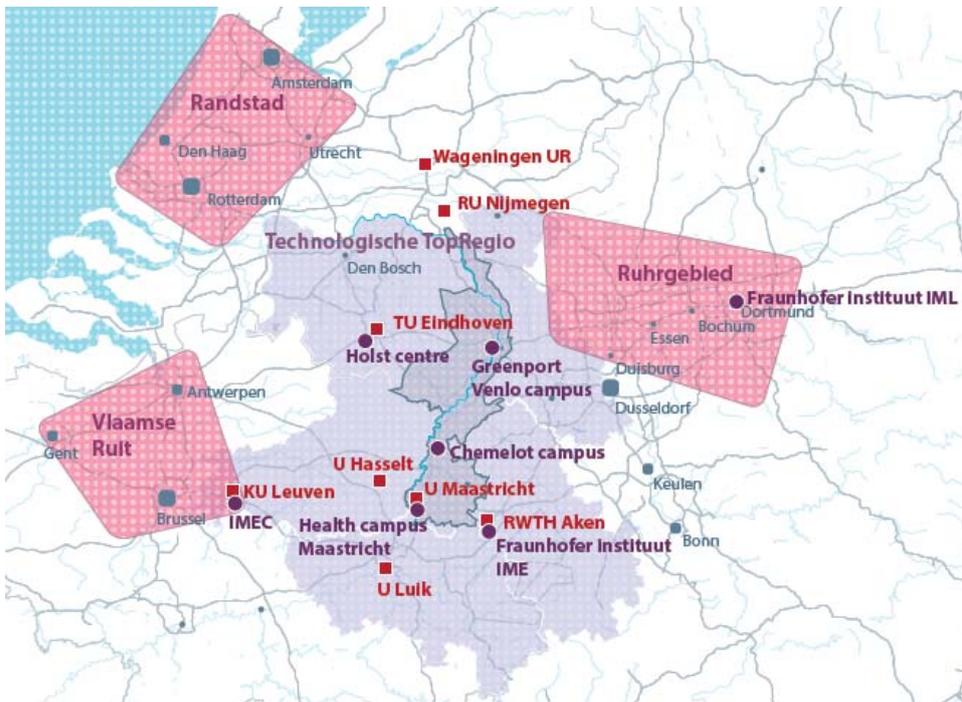
Limburg lies in a very central location in the major European transport corridor network (TEN-t).

Limburg is of importance to the Rotterdam and Amsterdam mainports by virtue of its hinterland connections, which are recognized as being of European importance (the TEN-t corridors) such as Warsaw-Midlands,

Genoa-Rotterdam, Amsterdam-Marseilles, and a branch of Strasbourg-Danube. This is also applicable to the Antwerp and Zeebrugge seaports and their European hinterland connections (road and rail).

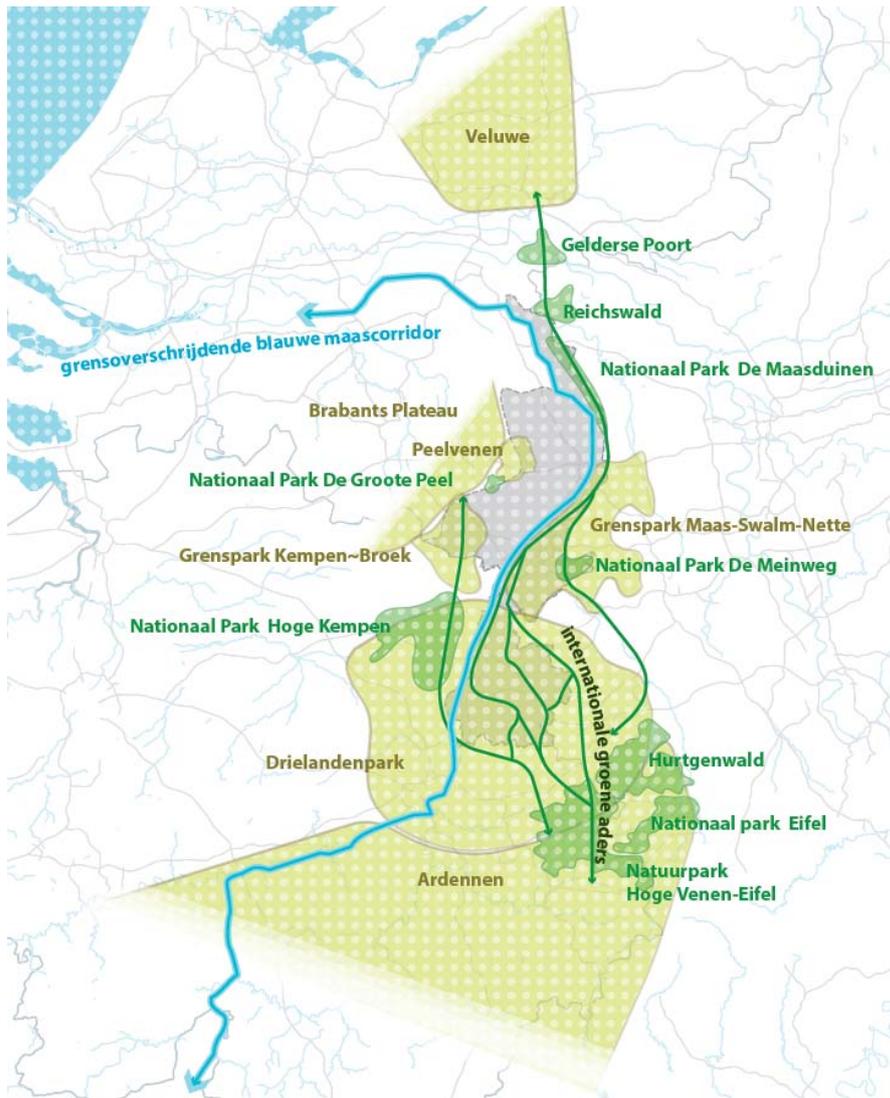


Limburg is part of Brainport 2020, the Technological Top Region (TTR, and the Eindhoven-Louvain-Aachen-triangle (ELAT).



Limburg, as part of the international rivers system, is of strategic importance to the cross-border Blue Meuse Corridor.

Limburg also serves as a strategic region between Europe's important nature areas of the Veluwe/Gelderse Poort and Eifel/Ardennes (North-South direction) and the Hoge Kempen/Kempen-Broek/Brabants Plateau and Eifel/Ardennes (East-West direction).



Limburg in a cross-border, EU-regional daily urban system (daily commuting and residential environment)

The EU-regional daily urban system, which extends between 30 and 40 kilometres beyond the borders, is of particularly great importance to housing, industry, the labour market, shopping and recreation.

For North Limburg, Nijmegen, the Eindhoven and Helmond regions, and the NiederrheinAgrobusiness Region all play a major role. For Central Limburg, the Weert-Eindhoven relationship and the interaction with the neighbouring German area with its high population concentrations are of particular importance. For South Limburg, the relationships with Aachen, Belgian Limburg (Maasmechelen, Lanaken-Riemst, Hasselt, and Genk), and Liège play a prominent role.

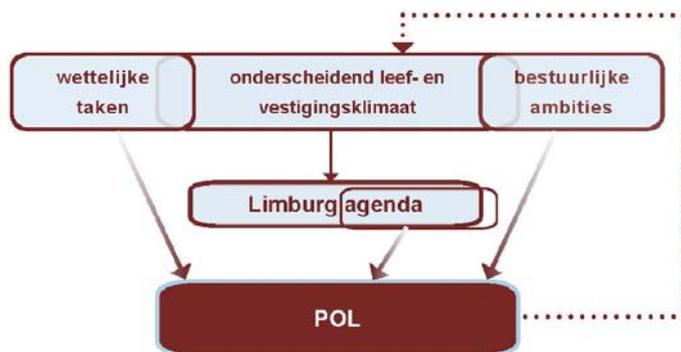
2.3 Ambition: Excellent residential and business environment

Our ambition is to offer an excellent cross-border residential and business environment that contributes to individuals and businesses deciding to come to Limburg – and, and above all, to *stay* in Limburg. Our Limburg Agenda specifies what will be needed to fulfil this ambition. What are the points on which Limburg can distinguish itself from other regions? What are the points on which Limburg is already distinguishing itself?



This ambition requires a powerful environmental policy. We specify this policy in the PEL.

The PEL is an environmental plan and, consequently, focuses on the physical aspects of the residential and business environment. In addition, the PEL details the approach to the statutory tasks (such as the development and protection of the ecological network, the protection of surface water, groundwater, the soil and the environment, and wind energy) and other administrative ambitions that contribute to the quality of the area.



We attach great importance to a PEL that is perceived as a plan for us all – a plan that inspires, challenges, and connects, but which is also *selective*. A selective plan is necessary, as we cannot take on all challenges at the same time. Moreover, the PEL is a plan that makes clear choices.

2.4 Challenges facing the PEL

Limburg is a prosperous region. However, continued prosperity is not a given: A wide range of developments under way in and outside the region bring us challenges for the future.

Promotion of innovation (economic profile)

Innovative strength, the knowledge infrastructure, and the labour market are all of essential importance to Limburg's economic development. The PEL primarily relates to the spatial business establishment conditions: high-quality space and excellent national and international accessibility by road, rail, water, and pipeline. The focus is then placed on innovative business activity within our top sectors, for example the promotion of the development of campuses as knowledge breeding grounds.

As sustainability is an important driving force behind innovation, promoting sustainable entrepreneurship can serve as catalyst for innovation. Economic growth comes paired with consumption of raw materials. The transition to a circular economy presents economic opportunities. By incentivizing companies to develop innovations for raw materials and material life cycles, we can develop the solutions we need to increase Limburg's competitiveness (green growth) in parallel with the solutions for the challenges facing society, such as the availability and sustainable management of natural resources and protecting the environment. We endorse the Europe 2020 strategy's principles for efficient use of raw materials.

At a European level, the Netherlands still lags in development of sustainable energy sources – the very field which offers so much potential for innovation. Our ambitions to catch up here are high, and so achieving them will be a challenge. This is emphatically an issue that needs to be addressed by the PEL. Many of the new sustainable energy sources, like wind turbines, geothermal and deep geothermal systems, and solar parks, have a substantial spatial impact.

Innovation can also create new opportunities with regard to national and European environmental requirements. Some of these innovations are also urgent: For example, the European requirements

governing nitrogen deposition in the Natura 2000 areas demand the implementation of a smart, cohesive approach across many sectors, including the agricultural sector in particular.

An appealing region that binds young people and workers (human capital and employment, quality of the residential and living environment)

The quality of our physical living environment (homes, services, culture, and the landscape) makes Limburg an appealing location for businesses and their employees. The Province's accessibility is also of a generally high level.

The entire Province of Limburg is already seeing a sharp decline in the working population. In addition to highly-educated knowledge workers, Limburg will also have a particular need for workers in the care, engineering, and agricultural and horticultural sectors in the years to come. This growing need, aggravated by the rapid shift in demographics towards an older population, makes binding and captivating young people, knowledge workers, and labour migrants a major challenge for the future. For this reason their needs (urban meeting points and housing, to name just two examples) require our specific attention.

Our landscape and nature are amongst the greatest benefits Limburg offers to businesses seeking a location for their operations. We need to continue to work on both their quality and the opportunities for their use.

Fundamentally different housing and facilities tasks (quality of the residential and living environment, physical environment, and connections)

The stabilization and decline of the size of the population and the larger proportion of the elderly as compared to the other age categories both have consequences for a range of fields. Right now, we are dealing with vacancy levels of homes, shops, offices, agricultural buildings, industrial and business parks, leisure parks, and social property that are higher than we would prefer to see. We need to avoid functions competing with each other.

Our task is no longer focused on quantitative growth, but rather on qualitative growth. Today's needs for comfort, sustainability, and health require an approach focused on segments of the existing stock. The rapidly ageing population also results in changing needs, for example with respect to housing, accessibility, and facilities. The expectations for work locations are also changing: in contrast to the past, when the challenge was 'programme seeks space,' the challenge would now appear to be 'space seeks programme'. Creative solutions, new revenue models, and financial arrangements are necessary if we are to be able to continue to achieve the necessary major quality improvements. Doing nothing is not an option.

Quality of the urban and village living environment (quality of the residential and living environment)

The increasing vacancy levels across such a wide range of properties and the disappearance of facilities have consequences for the quality of life in rural village centres and in urban neighbourhoods and districts. In addition, specific attention is required for vacant buildings of an iconic quality or which define the identity of their surroundings. Air, soil, surface water, and groundwater of an appropriate quality are essential to human health. The major tasks we face in this area include improving the quality of the air we breathe (particularly the issue of fine particulates), reducing nitrate levels in groundwater, and reducing pollution of various types (noise, odour, light, etc.). Likewise, the effects of climate change (such as higher temperatures and heavier rainfall) presents us with the task of increasing the climate resilience of our urban environments in the areas of heat stress and local surplus water.

One of the major challenges confronting us in improving the quality of life entails making selections and seeking the necessary solutions, for example new working methods, promoting communal learning, and increasing the involvement of the general public.

Preparing Limburg for the effects of climate change (quality of the residential and living environment, economic profile)

The expected climate developments will have major consequences: We will need, in the longer term, to be able to deal with not only higher peak water levels (see map) of the Meuse and the brooks feeding the Meuse, but also longer periods of drought. This confronts us with a substantial, urgent, and primarily spatial challenge that is still to be specified in part (for example, along the banks of the Meuse between Eijsden and Maastricht and between Buggenum and Venlo). This also offers us opportunities to create win-win situations.



Forecast increase of the water level of the Meuse in 2100