

**BIG PICTURE**  
Karine Clauwaert's vision

**FOCUS**  
Multimodal logistics  
in Wallonia

**INNOVATION**  
Carbon negative concrete  
made in Wallonia

# FERTILE GROUND

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We undoubtedly have a nomadic streak in our DNA, full of curiosity, a thirst for knowledge, dreams and creativity. It shows itself with every ambition, whether bold or humble, every result and close collaboration, every exchange of viewpoints, every “yes”, “no” and “let’s go”. A strength that grows from different roots, which interlace and intercommunicate. Before any cross-pollination can occur, flowers need fertile ground. That is what we are celebrating in the summer edition of this magazine.

Should you be interested in becoming an entrepreneur in Wallonia, you would benefit from a multimodal network that provides constantly evolving logistics solutions and is fully aware of its need to decarbonise. Construction and biotech companies also hold ambitions that respect the environment: Roosens is working on cleaner concrete, and others are cleaning up polluted soils; Abscint is developing precision molecular imaging agents, and Q1 Scientific is providing stability storage for high-end medical products.

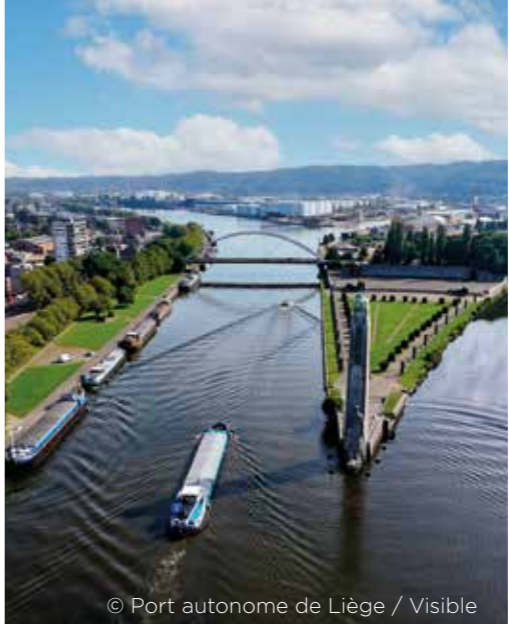
You might also come across Wallonia in Bloom, the beautiful bees Marta Maziers created for Cartier, the international plans Aleksandra Logist designed for entrepreneurs eager to expand into in Europe or Canada, or the fabulous adventures of iconic air hostess Natacha. She is undoubtedly the best among us, captivating the world from Visé through the drawings of François Walthéry, and especially so in France, which went on to adapt his work in film.

How about you? What dream is nearly yours?

*Pascale Delcomminette*



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© Port autonome de Liège / Visible



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WAB magazine | Wallonia.be



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www.wallonia.be

**HSL BELGIUM LAUNCHES BELGIUM'S FIRST HYBRID FREIGHT TRAIN**

In April 2025, Eupen-based operator HSL Belgium launched Belgium's first hybrid freight locomotive: the SmartHybrid DE18. With the potential to lower emissions by up to 80%, this train marks an ecological turning point for Belgian railways. A second locomotive is scheduled to be launched by the end of 2025.



**BELGIUM SOARS AT THE 55TH INTERNATIONAL PARIS AIR SHOW**

From 17 to 23 June, over 80 Belgian companies, most of them from Wallonia, took part in the Paris Air Show (Salon International de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace) held at Le Bourget, just outside of Paris. Under the "Belgian Aerospace" label, companies such as FN Herstal, Safran Aero Boosters and Sonaca shared their aerospace know-how, with the support of Awex and Belgian ministers.



**ASLA MAISON DES GAUFRES, A BELGIAN ICON**

Located in the heart of Brussels, La Maison des Gaufres has been welcoming visitors since 1982 with their range of artisanal waffles: crunchy and chewy, savoury and sweet. With its elegant setting, this iconic teahouse embodies pure Belgian indulgence.



**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL LIÈGE: A HUGE LEAP FORWARD IN TREATING DIABETES**

On 17 April 2025, the University Hospital Liège (*CHU de Liège*) fitted an adult with an Omnipod 5 insulin pump, a first in Wallonia. This tubeless smart device uses AI to automatically regulate blood sugar, thus improving independence, comfort, and quality of life for patients with type 1 diabetes. This device is now in use in various places throughout Europe.





## KARINE CLAUWAERT'S VISION

Karine Clauwaert is the CEO of Abscint, a Liège-based biotech company specialising in precision medical imaging. She embodies a new generation of visionary female leaders who combine scientific expertise with personal commitment and international ambition.

Never one to resist a challenge, she holds a PhD in toxicology and has experience in sales and technology transfer, on top of achieving a Good Manufacturing Practices certification for Abscint. "In 2003, while working with VIB, I discovered single-domain antibodies (sdAbs). That's also where I first met Professor Tony Lahoutte: we co-founded Abscint together in 2020. Our goal is to advance medical imaging in a focused and innovative way, generating functional and accurate information which will have a direct impact on clinical decisions." This cutting-edge Liège-based biotech company develops precision molecular imaging agents based on a unique technology: sdAbs coupled with PET scanning. This approach offers a non-invasive alternative to biopsies for detecting key biomarkers; their main programme is focused, although not exclusively, on breast cancer. "What we offer is the ability to anticipate, make more efficient selections, and therefore provide better treatment." Under Karine's leadership, Abscint has already had significant success in Europe and Australia. It is now targeting the North American market and exploring opportunities in Asia. The company is also developing other tracers for rare pathologies or, in their words, "to be used in conjunction with antibody-drug conjugates, which are expensive treatments that require better patient selection." People are at the heart of her strategy. Karine strives to instil a climate of trust, curiosity, responsibility and scientific excellence within the company. "Every employee must be able to measure the real-world impact their work has on patients' lives," she emphasises, highlighting the commitment and passion she shares with her colleagues. Based in Wallonia and with a strong international outlook, Karine Clauwaert is moving forward with determination. After having raised €3 million in capital in 2023, Karine dreams of a near future where every nuclear medicine department will have a "fridge full of Abscint cold kits," and is resolved that "our tracers will become everyday tools, available in hospitals."

KARINE  
**CLAUWAERT**

“

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, AND DARE TO SAY NO TO THOSE WHO DRAG YOU DOWN. INTUITION AND COURAGE MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.



COMMITTED TO BETTER REPRESENTATION  
OF WOMEN

As a pioneer in her field, she also represents a model of female leadership. “I want women who are active in the science sector to see what is possible: too many women doubt their own legitimacy. Having diverse perspective is an asset for innovation.”



# BRUSSELS AND VIETNAM: STRENGTHENING TIES FOR THE FUTURE

In November 2024, the Permanent Joint Commission for Wallonia-Brussels and Vietnam defined the priorities for an ambitious cooperation programme between Belgium and Vietnam for 2025-2027, fostering closer ties between the two countries. This programme will focus on scientific research, training, health, environment and innovation.

“Vietnam is a complex but high-potential market. We must be able to offer high-added-value solutions to bolster our presence in the market,” says Isabelle Pollet, the AWEX Area Manager for South-East Asia and Oceania. The recent State Visit, which commemorated 50 years of diplomatic relations between Belgium and Vietnam, also helped transform mere interest into concrete partnerships. John Cockerill has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Viettel Group, which specialises in key areas such as defence and telecommunications. Through this MoU, John Cockerill inaugurated their Ho Chi Minh City offices, which are set to serve as a

future hub for Asia, and focus on the production of green hydrogen. Ecostreyl, a company specialising in the treatment of medical waste, has also signed several contracts. Structural engineers at Matriche, on the other hand, were involved in the design of a 12-storey multi-purpose circus hall in Ho Chi Minh City. Among other highlights, AWEX organised the Green Economy Forum in Hanoi, where many companies including Ménart, IBA, Haemers Technologies and ULiège, shared their expertise in the areas of recycling, soil decontamination and waste management. **“It is Walloon know-how that is appealing to Vietnam, a developing**

**country looking for concrete solutions and partnerships in order to meet its environmental and health challenges.”** Apart from trade, the two countries are also seeking cooperation in academic and scientific fields, through projects in aquaculture and medical research. The challenge is clear: “We need to diversify Walloon exports, support businesses in demanding markets, and build long-lasting relationships.” While over 70% of Walloon exports remain concentrated within Europe, Vietnam offers a strategic alternative, provided that we cultivate patience, the right partners and strong local connections.

## One Refractories, a Walloon success story in Vietnam

One Refractories is a company specialising in refractory cement, founded in Anhée in 1925. Their story perfectly illustrates the strong relationship between Wallonia-Brussels and Vietnam. With AWEX’s support, this family-owned company chose Ho Chi Minh City as the location for its first manufacturing unit outside of Europe. Their goal was to produce locally to better serve South-East Asia. “Vietnam has provided us with a genuine opportunity, thanks to its booming market, highly motivated teams and a promising industrial environment,” says Thomas Pirmez, Managing Director. “This also presents us with an opportunity to boost our presence in the Middle-East and to reduce the costs and environmental impact of transport.”





# WALLONIA AT THE HEART OF Q1 SCIENTIFIC'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

A subsidiary of the US pharmaceutical group Cambrex, Q1 Scientific chose the Liège region in May 2023 for its second European site, after the Republic of Ireland.

“Wallonia was our obvious choice,” explains Cécile Jacoby, General Manager of Q1 Scientific Belgium. The Liège region is located at the heart of a pharmaceutical and biotechnology hub, close to major cities such as Brussels and Leuven, and major transport links (Liege Airport). All this is backed by Wallonia’s solid infrastructure, skilled workforce and efficient support from local authorities and development agencies such as AWEX. “Villers-le-Bouillet offers the ideal combination of a strategic location, a talent pool, and facilities, all of which will enable us to provide the most effective service to pharmaceutical companies in Belgium and continental Europe.”

These are all key factors for the Belgian subsidiary’s activities. Q1 Scientific Belgium supports stability testing for manufacturers of medicines, vaccines and other healthcare products by

ensuring optimal storage thanks to controlled temperature and humidity conditions, in order to guarantee their safety and efficacy. “At Villers-le-Bouillet, we also offer Good Distribution Practice-certified storage for finished products that are ready for delivery to hospitals, pharmacies, and patients.”

“Since opening in May 2023, we have signed many commercial partnerships with pharmaceutical and biotech companies, including QUALIblood, a contract research organisation based in Belgium that works with pharmaceutical companies, in vitro diagnostics companies, hospitals, and universities, by providing analysis services for blood tests and hemocompatibility testing.” The growth of Q1 Scientific Belgium is part of the company’s international expansion, which has also seen it open a subsidiary in the United States.



Investment of €5 million



Creation of around ten jobs



Stability storage facility of 1,500 sq m



2,000 storage areas, under ICH conditions as well as specific conditions ranging from -90°C to +60°C



First extension completed in May 2025 (5 walk-in chambers and 700 additional environmentally controlled storage spaces)



## CARBON NEGATIVE CONCRETE MADE IN WALLONIA

**Roosens have established themselves as a top innovator in Seneffe by becoming one of Wallonia's specialists in carbon-negative concrete. This eco-friendly construction material is both reusable and carbon neutral, and marks the culmination of 15 years of research.**

“Roosens Bétons is a family-owned business as well as a robust company, with 115 years of experience in manufacturing concrete building materials.

Each year, Roosens Bétons produces 500,000 tonnes of concrete, all while offering a wide range of products from foundations to finishes. In order to address current sustainability challenges, the company is undergoing a complete transformation by adopting an innovative approach focused on regenerative economy. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that Roosens Bétons has been Carbon Neutral (no hyphen) certified since 2014.

### ONE OF A KIND IN EUROPE

Roosens Bétons has pioneered a major change in its business dynamics: they are promoting a regenerative economy by prioritising interaction between local stakeholders and, notably, transportation by inland waterways wherever possible. But they aren't stopping there. The Walloon company's goal is to limit the use of natural resources as much as possible and to recover 100% of the materials used. The company is already recovering and reusing their manufacturing by-products to make other products. They intend to create a circular, reusable economy to boost their products' lifespan.

**“We are offering a high-quality product that is also cheaper and carbon neutral.”**

For the last few years, the company has been working towards making their raw material carbon neutral. This endeavour has been the result of their collaboration with universities, the technical centre and the scientific hub for the construction sector based in Limelette. The total amount invested in this project comes to 1 million euros, 50% of which comes from subsidies. “We are offering a high-quality product that is also cheaper and carbon neutral,” says the Head of Research and Development at Roosens Bétons.

In practical terms, Roosens uses only 1.5% cement, along with waste recovered from deconstruction sites (Urban Mining), to produce a durable concrete masonry block. Instead of extracting mineral materials, the company uses rubble composed of nearly 70% terracotta sourced from bricks and around 30% concrete. These materials are further processed to form sand and gravel, thus serving as an alternative to material sources from quarries. Adding the cement makes drying easier and ensures the final product remains profitable. During the production phase, the block is exposed to CO<sub>2</sub>, which is absorbed and trapped by the block through carbonation.

For the time being, these blocks are only used for interior masonry. However, the commercialisation of carbon-neutral concrete is just around the corner, and this unique product holds tremendous potential for the future.



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Meanwhile in Gembloux, GSK just inaugurated a giant, highly automated warehouse to stock their pharmaceutical products. Other players in the biologistics sector such as Q1 Scientific have chosen Wallonia to make the most of its reliable connections and to benefit from niche, region-specific expertise in the medical, pharmaceutical and even biotech industries.

costs, abundant land, reliable infrastructure, and most of all, incredible adaptability.

17 wab | summer 2025

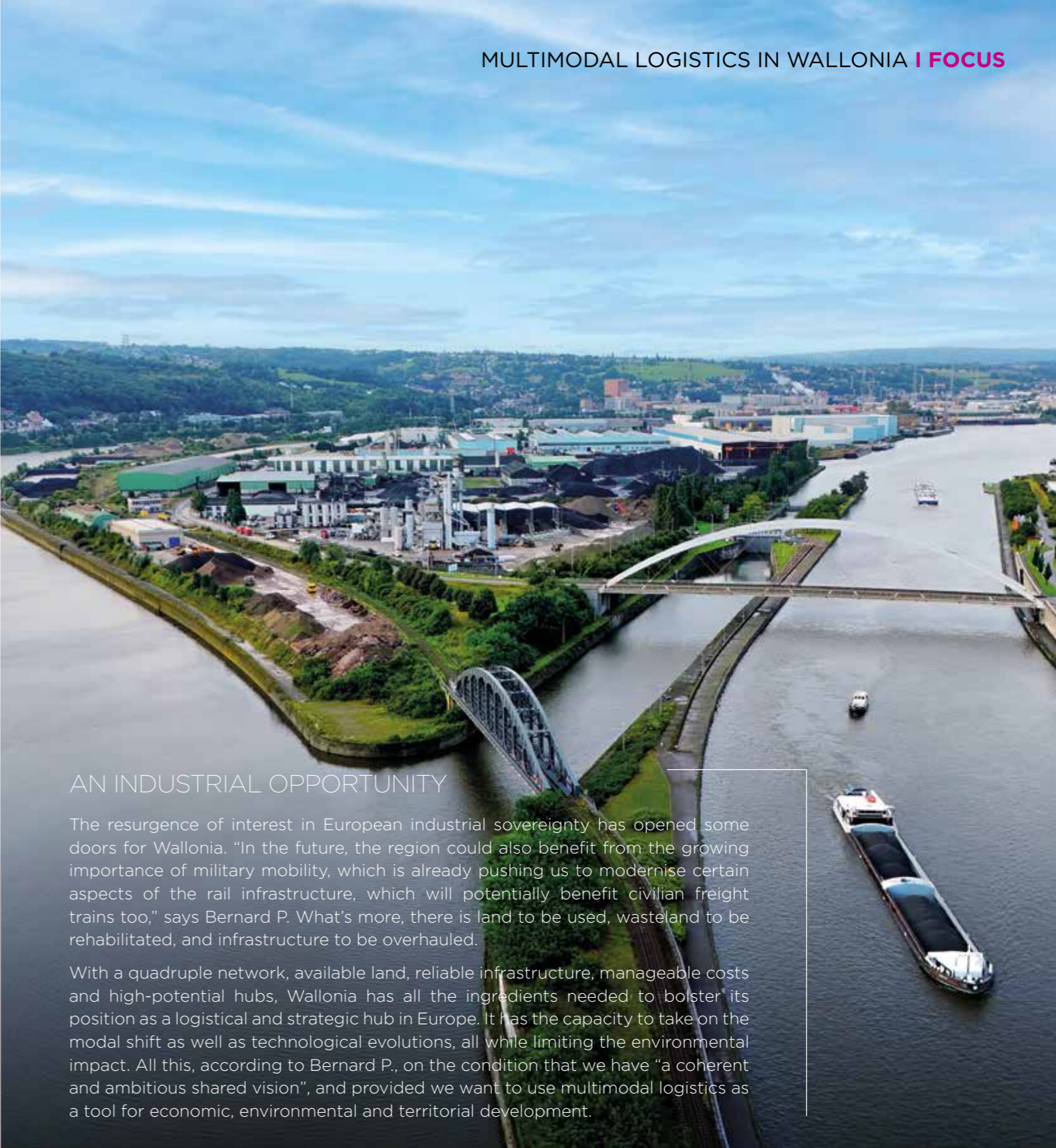
A EUROPEAN LABORATORY FOR MULTIMODAL AND INNOVATIVE LOGISTICS?

Multimodal logistics are no longer simply a matter of aligning different modes of transportation. It's a booming industry, reinforced by digitisation, automation, artificial intelligence, and most of all, the need to reduce environmental impact. Spurred by various European directives, companies now expect increased mobility and sustainability.

"Logistics is all about managing transportation costs," says Bernard P. "Given that 75 to 80% of transportation is done by road, the challenge is to combine solutions to make them economically attractive, relevant in terms of the desired modes of transportation, and with the lowest possible environmental impact." In Wallonia, Logistics in Wallonia supports these transitions through programmes like Lean&Green Europe and MultiModal Wallonia. "Our job is to boost innovation by supporting projects from companies working in collaboration with universities and research centres, such as autonomous navigation. We work with companies to help them reduce their supply chain CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 20% over 5 years at most, all while focusing on the multimodal perspective and sustainable logistics."

Christian W. adds: "No company will change their mode of transportation unless it's reliable, flexible, and economically feasible. The next challenge will be the modal shift. In other words, making a swift transition from trucks to freight trains or waterways. When will this shift happen? How much time will it take? Nobody knows, but Wallonia is primed to welcome it."

Technical innovation is also making its mark on the landscape, with new tech such as AI, real-time traceability, automation, digital twins, and more. At the same time, Wallonia needs to assert itself more as an international logistics hub. "We have all the ingredients for it right here," says Christian W. However, the workforce, particularly waterway and rail sectors, highlights a need to invest in training and in making the sector more appealing.



AN INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITY

The resurgence of interest in European industrial sovereignty has opened some doors for Wallonia. "In the future, the region could also benefit from the growing importance of military mobility, which is already pushing us to modernise certain aspects of the rail infrastructure, which will potentially benefit civilian freight trains too," says Bernard P. What's more, there is land to be used, wasteland to be rehabilitated, and infrastructure to be overhauled.

With a quadruple network, available land, reliable infrastructure, manageable costs and high-potential hubs, Wallonia has all the ingredients needed to bolster its position as a logistical and strategic hub in Europe. It has the capacity to take on the modal shift as well as technological evolutions, all while limiting the environmental impact. All this, according to Bernard P., on the condition that we have "a coherent and ambitious shared vision", and provided we want to use multimodal logistics as a tool for economic, environmental and territorial development.





## TRILOGIPORT SETS THE EXAMPLE

The Autonomous Port of Liège is the biggest in Belgium and the 3rd biggest in Europe, sharing the vision of a quadrimodal network with Namur, la Louvière and Charleroi. Liège Trilogiport, one of the 33 port areas managed by the Autonomous Port of Liège and dedicated entirely to logistics, is one of the most emblematic projects of the Walloon multimodal strategy.

Linked to the biggest seaports via waterways (Antwerp, Zeebruges, Rotterdam, Dunkirk), connected to both rail and road, and with air access provided by the nearby Liege Airport, it is the embodiment of integrated, sustainable and accessible logistics. “Our competitive edge is direct, onsite association between the multimodal terminal and the logistics areas equipped with next-generation warehouses, to cater to Europe-wide distribution needs,” says Hélène T. “On top of this, our site is fully equipped for loading, unloading, stocking and handling all kinds of products.”

Companies such as DPW Liege Container Terminals, which manages the container terminal for this multimodal port, as well as WDP, Jost Group and Weerts Supply Chain, benefit from “a complete, modular and sustainable logistical offering, with robust public land management, a high-quality policy, and joint governance.” Hélène T. elaborates: “We create the ideal conditions for success for private operators who share this sustainable, integrated vision.”

The Autonomous Port of Liège is also taking a proactive approach towards digitalising transport streams, as well raising awareness among companies regarding the use of waterways and railways. It is also calling on Walloon authorities to refurbish industrial wasteland in order to attract new investors.

Photo credits: Port autonome de Liège - Visible



## THE AUTONOMOUS PORT OF LIEGE

- **33 port areas located** along the Albert canal and the Meuse river
- **12 million tonnes of merchandise** (out of a total traffic of 16 million tonnes) handled via waterways (in 2024)
- **Over 18,000 jobs** created
- Liège Trilogiport:
  - **300,000 m² of logistics** warehouses
  - **A container terminal** offering container shuttle boats between Liège and Antwerp-Bruges
  - **A 40-hectare** environmental integration zone

# SPORTY WALLONIA IS PERFECT FOR TRAIL RUNNING!

Wallonia welcomes trail runners! This region is a fantastic playground for all sport and nature lovers: there are even permanent trails, which can be accessed year-round. Starting out from Herbeumont trail station, you can choose from 6 hiking and 4 fitness trails, covering a total 95km of marked pathways. From the Nassogne tourist office, you'll find no fewer than 24 signposted trails, with a total elevation gain of D+ 100m to 1,000m.

And it gets even better: 30 interconnected permanent trails from EXTRATRAIL, the largest network of secure, signposted nature trails in Europe. These trails can be found in the East of Wallonia, covering over more than 750 km. Starting points are located at the tourism offices of participating Belgian municipalities.

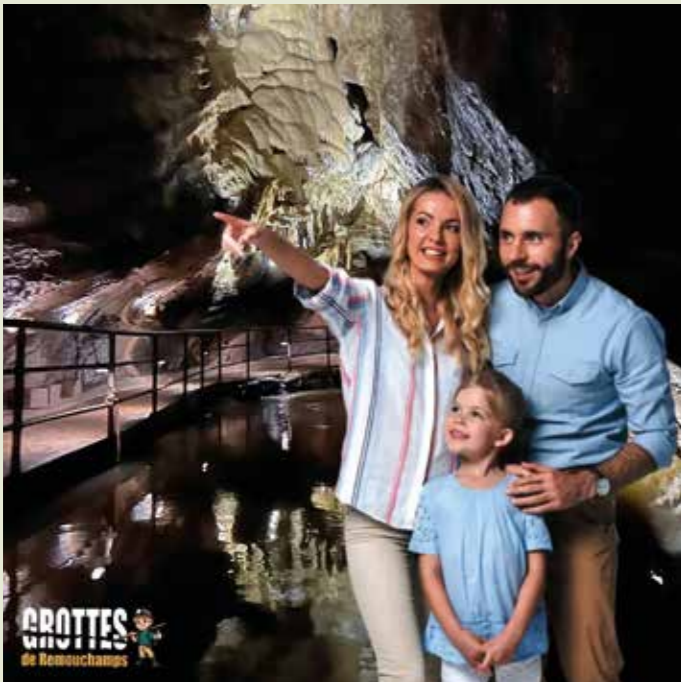
[www.extratrail.com/en](http://www.extratrail.com/en)  
[www.gorunning.be](http://www.gorunning.be)

Photo credits: VISITWallonia

“THESE TRAILS ARE PURE JOY, AND THE VIEWS ARE SIMPLY BREATHTAKING”  
says Nadine, who regularly goes trail running in the Famenne region.

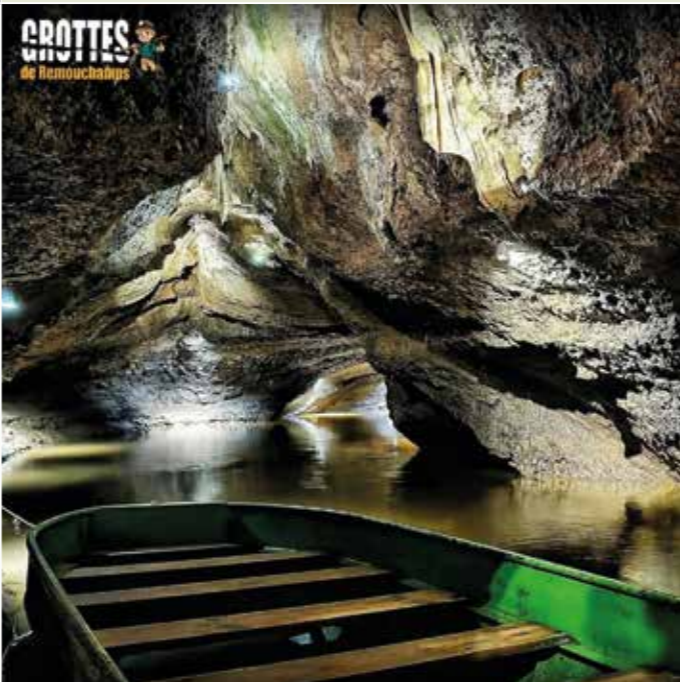
**VISITWallonia.be** [VISITWallonia.be/trail](https://www.visitwallonia.be/trail)





**CAVES OF  
REMOUCHAMPS**  
HOLD ON TO  
THEIR MICHELIN  
STARS

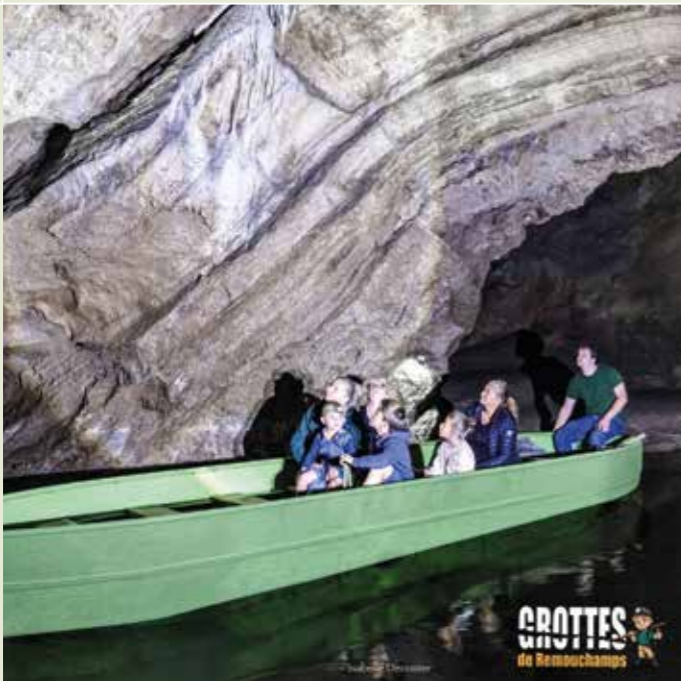
For the second year in a row, the 2025 edition of the prestigious Michelin Travel Guide has awarded 2 stars to the Caves of Remouchamps, for both the quality and the quantity of its mineral deposits. A very well-deserved recognition for this historic site, which was formed by the Rubicon, discovered in 1828, and then made accessible for visitors in 1912.



**Europe's longest underground boat ride**

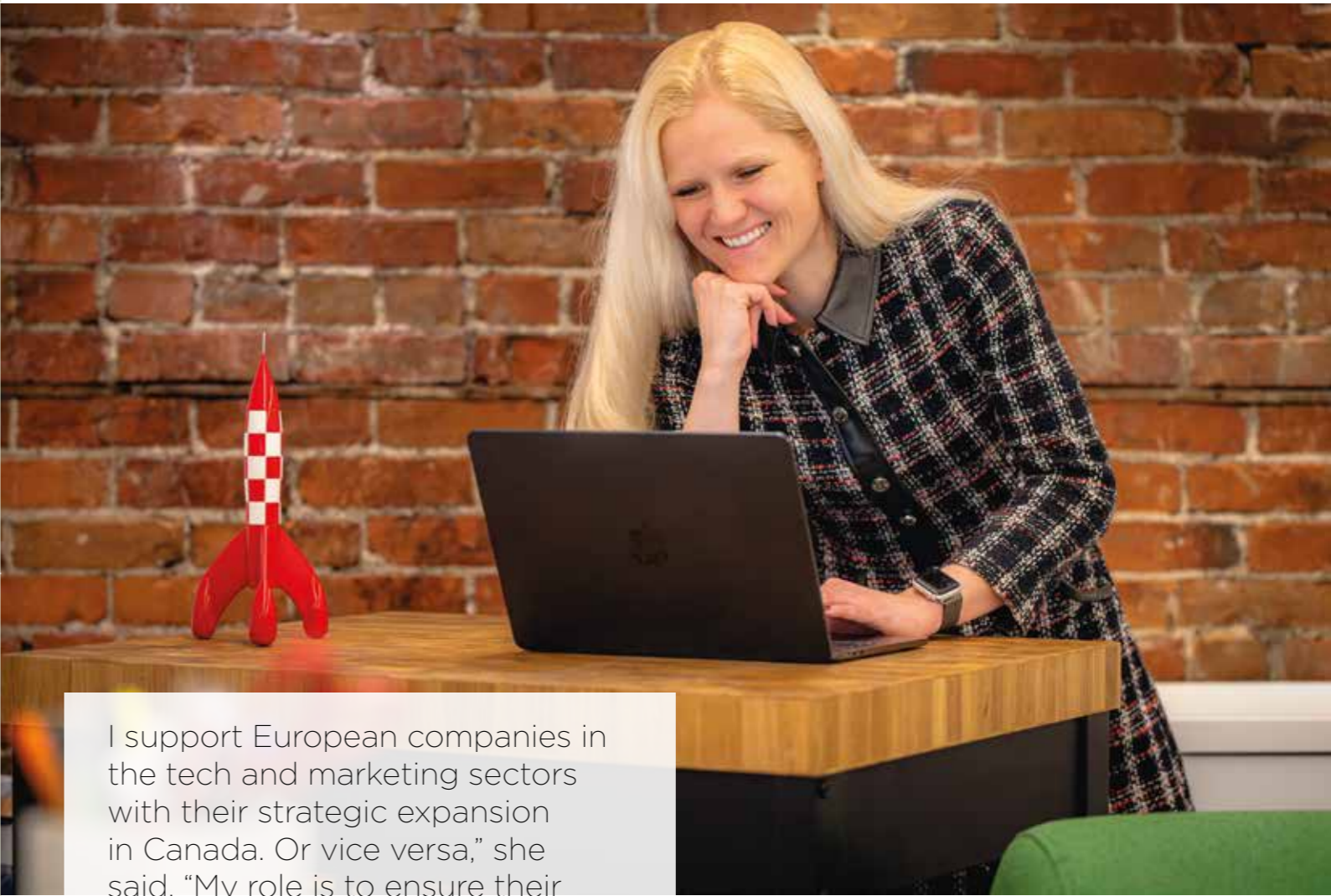
Visitors to the caves can expect crystal waterfalls, strange arches with colourful walls enhanced by custom lighting, and a 40-metre-tall cathedral. Best of all is the 700-metre underground boat ride, the longest of its kind in Europe. This unique experience is full of mystery and beauty, attracting thousands of visitors each year.

<https://lesgrottes.be/>



**MULTICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES**  
NORTH AMERICA STYLE!

Aleksandra Logist is a Belgo-Polish international growth consultant with an atypical career path. Her intellectual curiosity drove her to travel to Canada, initially for just one year; but she ended up working for various companies in the digital sector, before opening and running the North American subsidiary of Actito (a Belgian company) for eight years. She also served as president of the Belgium-Quebec Business Circle. This diverse experience has enabled her to launch Septante-Cinq.



I support European companies in the tech and marketing sectors with their strategic expansion in Canada. Or vice versa,” she said. “My role is to ensure their entry strategy and implement the practical operational aspects. I select trade shows, set up partnerships, and make use of my contacts—in short, I save them time.

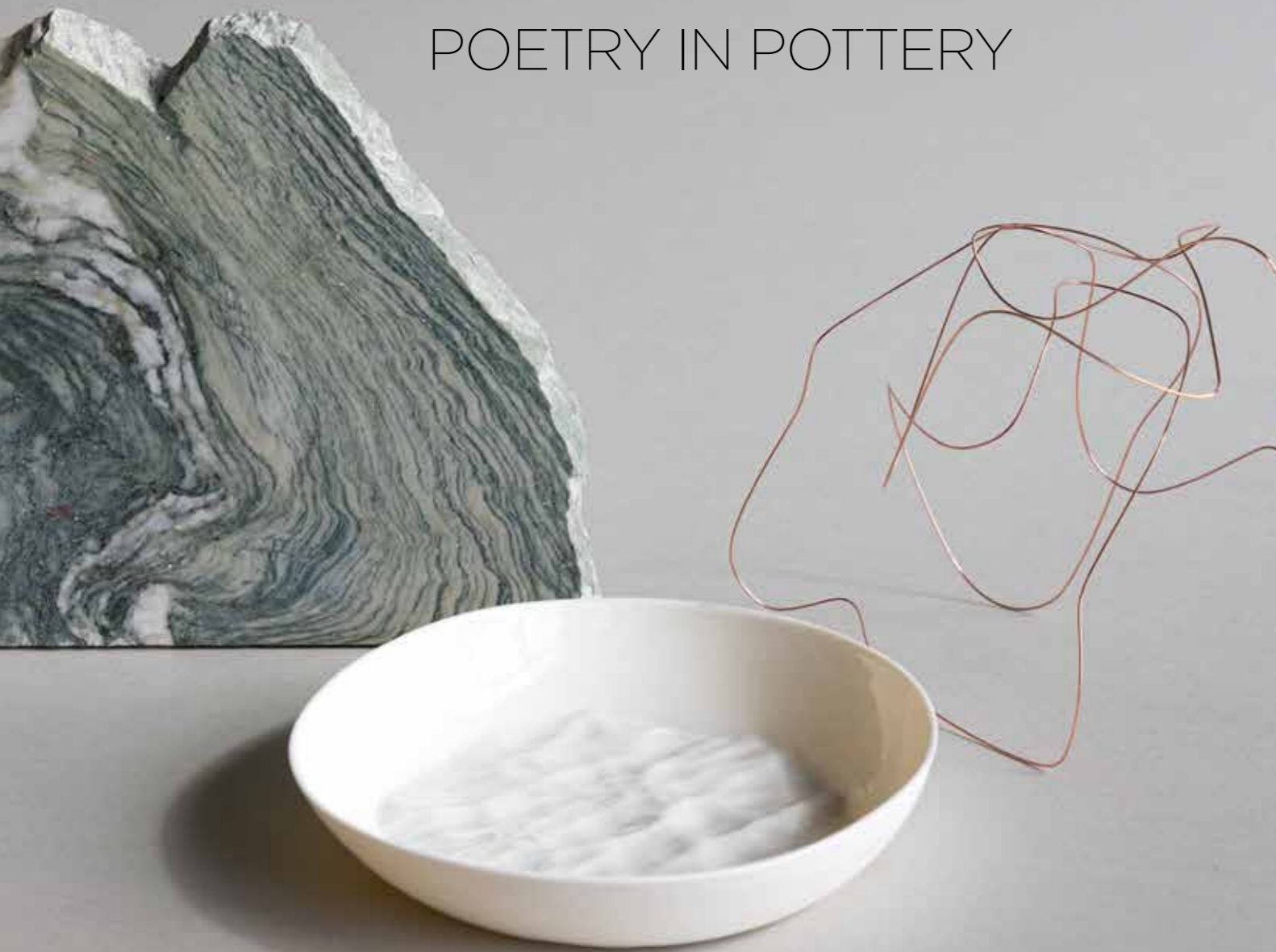
**Interested?** “Belgians and Canadians have more in common than you might think. The same relaxed attitude, the same way of taking their time, or seizing opportunities when they need to, or even that accent that you understand without judging. It makes things a lot easier, believe me!”



[www.septante-cinq.ca](http://www.septante-cinq.ca)

# TERRAIN VAGUE

## POETRY IN POTTERY



“OUR WORK IS ABOUT CONTEMPLATION, IT'S A WAY OF INFUSING EMOTIONS OR A STORY INTO THE MATERIALS.”

Founded by designer Damien Gernay and ceramicist Julie Istasse, Terrain Vague is a Brussels-based studio that seeks to explore the links between art and craftsmanship, between love of nature and new technologies. Each piece is made by hand, in a style that is both delicate and raw.

“Our work is about contemplation, it's a way of infusing emotions or a story into the materials.”

Through the Dialogue project, the two artists have connected their creations to gastronomy, giving their objects a second life with chefs like Kamo Tomoyasu and Régis Baudy.

Selected by Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode alongside four other designers, Terrain Vague showcased its ethical values of craftsmanship and sustainability at the Révélations 2025 salon in Paris this May (part of the

Belgium is Design project). By letting their art speak for itself, this studio is telling an important, thoroughly Belgian story.

DICOVER MORE



[www.terrainvague.studio](http://www.terrainvague.studio)

Photo credits: Eline Willaert

# MARTA MAZIER

## THE ART OF THE CLOCKMAKER



Only 19 years old at the time, Marta impressed Cartier's judges with La Reine du Temps, a clock inspired by the world of bees. Her piece deftly combined enamelling, movement and heart. A student at the IATA in Namur, Marta won Cartier's Talents Horlogers de Demain, a prize given to up-and-coming clockmakers.

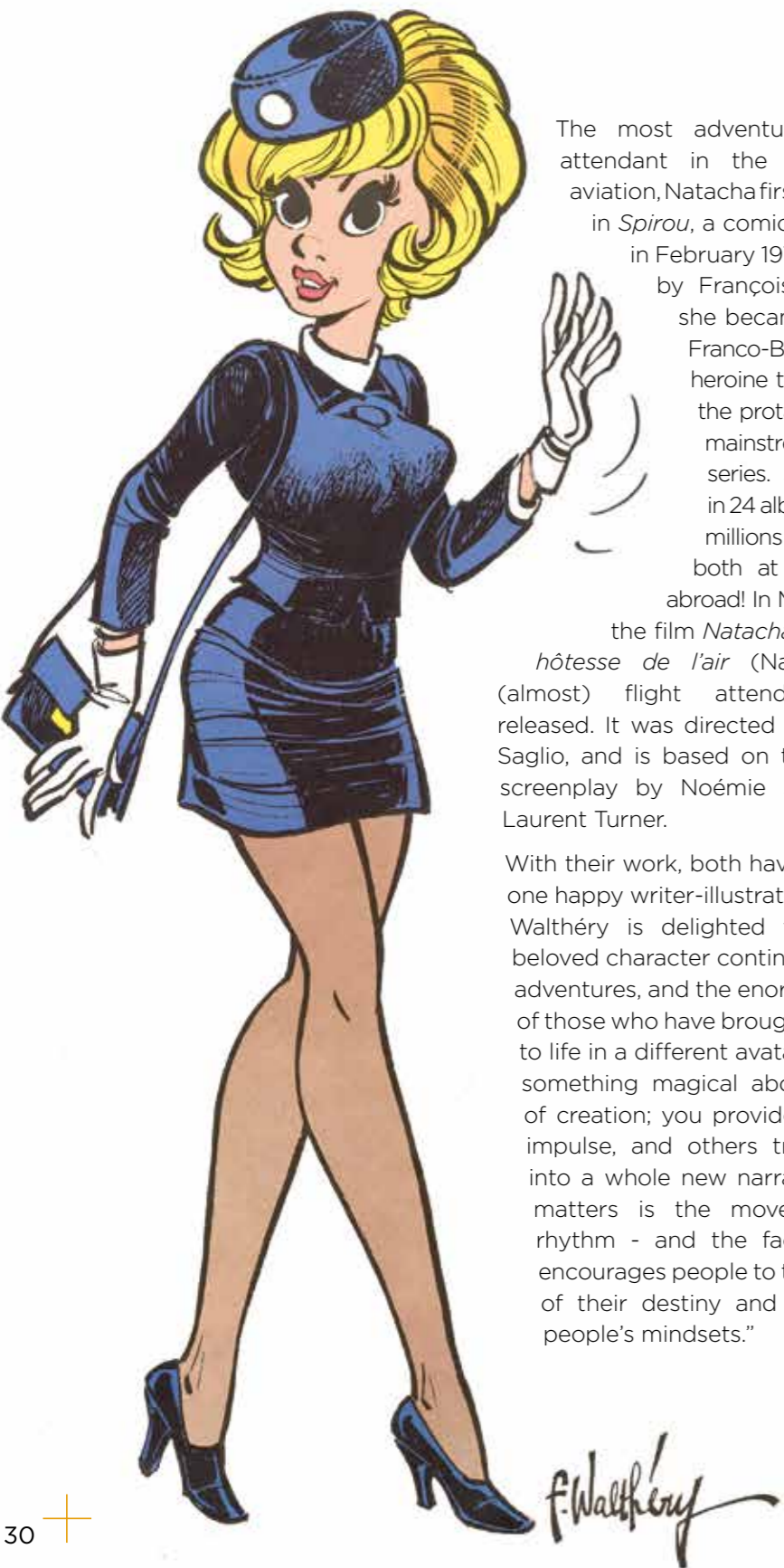
"The bee symbolises loyalty, hard work, intricate attention to detail — a mirror image of the clockmaker! Every detail evokes one of the five senses."

Cartier are offering Marta two internships with them, a wonderful opportunity for this young ambassador of Walloon craftsmanship to gain an insight into watchmaking excellence.



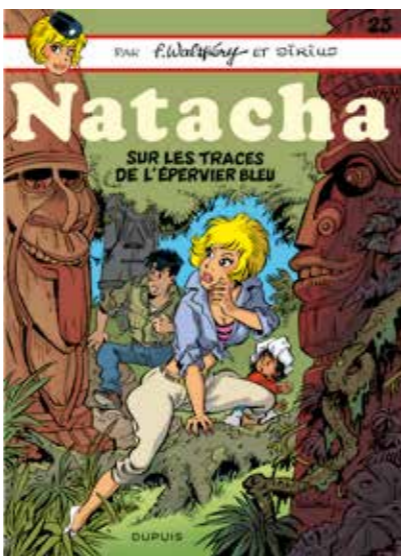
# NATACHA

## THE (ALMOST) FLIGHT ATTENDANT



The most adventurous flight attendant in the history of aviation, Natacha first appeared in *Spirou*, a comic magazine, in February 1970. Created by François Walthéry, she became the first Franco-Belgian adult heroine to feature as the protagonist of a mainstream comic series. She starred in 24 albums, selling millions of copies, both at home and abroad! In March 2025, the film *Natacha (presque) hôtesse de l'air* (Natacha the (almost) flight attendant) was released. It was directed by Noémie Saglio, and is based on the original screenplay by Noémie Saglio and Laurent Turner.

With their work, both have made for one happy writer-illustrator. François Walthéry is delighted to see his beloved character continue with her adventures, and the enormous work of those who have brought her back to life in a different avatar. "There is something magical about the art of creation; you provide the initial impulse, and others transform it into a whole new narrative. What matters is the movement, the rhythm - and the fact that art encourages people to take charge of their destiny and to change people's mindsets."



# WALLONIE EN FLEURS

## (WALLONIA IN BLOOM): SOWING ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

The Wallonie en Fleurs scheme, initiated by Wallonia in 2017 and run by Adalia 2.0, promotes municipalities that are greening their public spaces. By focusing on biodiversity, social cohesion, and the local economy, they are transforming their living environment with creativity and purpose. At the heart of this movement are initiatives that promote nature, sustainable management, and community involvement: 72 municipalities have already been awarded 1, 2 or 3 flowers, so treat yourself to a bouquet!

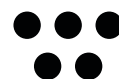
# Wallonia, the land of **SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION**



- ✓ **Circular materials** eco-design, industrial symbiosis, encouraging the reuse and repair of these materials within the economy, recycling innovation, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for **enhanced health** biotechnologies, medical equipment, eHealth, mHealth, silver economy, prevention, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for agile and safe **design** and **production methods** (IoT, 3D printing)
- ✓ Sustainable **energy** systems and **housing**
- ✓ **Agri-food** chains of the future and innovative management of the **environment**

CONTACT US TO EXPLORE GREEN  
OPPORTUNITIES IN WALLONIA

[\*\*welcome@investinwallonia.be\*\*](mailto:welcome@investinwallonia.be)



Wallonia.be