

# BENELUX

## BELGIUM



AREA 30,528 sq km  
POPULATION 10,431,000  
MONEY Euro

## NETHERLANDS



AREA 41,526 sq km  
POPULATION 16,847,000  
MONEY Euro

**B**ENELUX is a word made up from Belgium, Netherlands and LUXembourg. Fortunately, the

first two letters of each name are the same in most languages, so everyone can understand the word. These three countries agreed to co-operate soon after World War 2. But they still have their very own Kings (of Belgium and of the Netherlands), and Grand Duke (of Luxembourg). Look at the coins below.

The Benelux countries are all small and are the most crowded in mainland Europe, but there is plenty of countryside too. Most of the land is low and flat, so they are sometimes called the Low Countries.

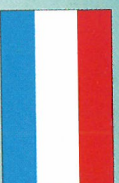


▲ **Are these windmills?** Most Dutch 'windmills' are really wind-pumps. They were used to pump water up from the fields into rivers and canals. The river is higher than the land! These are at Kinderdijk, east of Rotterdam.

## GAINING LAND

The map shows that a large part of the Netherlands is below sea level. For over 1000 years, the Dutch have built dykes (embankments) to keep out the sea and rivers. Then the water is pumped out to create dry land called 'polders'. Once they used wind-pumps (see photo above); today they use diesel or electric pumps. The rich farmland grows vegetables and flowers.

## LUXEMBOURG



AREA 2,586 sq km  
POPULATION 503,000  
MONEY Euro



▲ **Bruges** is a historic town in Belgium. This horse-drawn carriage is taking tourists round the medieval market square. Look at the 'stepped' gables of the old buildings behind the market stalls.

## WHICH COUNTRY?

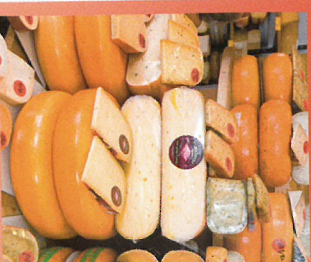


These Euro coins come from the Benelux countries – but which coin belongs to which country? The Dutch coin shows Queen Beatrix who reigned until 2013. (Answers on page 97.)



▲ **Europoort, Rotterdam.** Rotterdam is by far the biggest port in Europe. Ships come from all over the world, and barges travel along the River Rhine and the canals of Europe to reach the port. Containers unloaded from this ship may be taken to other ports around the North Sea.

## PUZZLE



## A puzzle from the Netherlands:

What are these round yellow items for sale in a market? (Some have been cut and sliced.)

(Answer on page 97.)

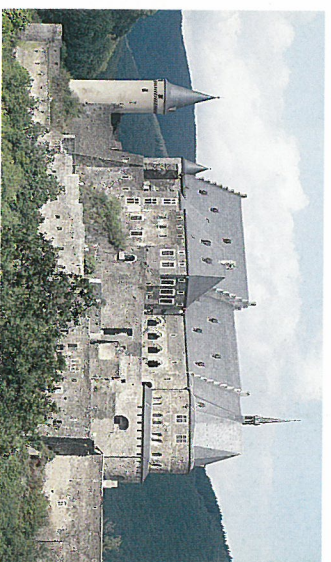
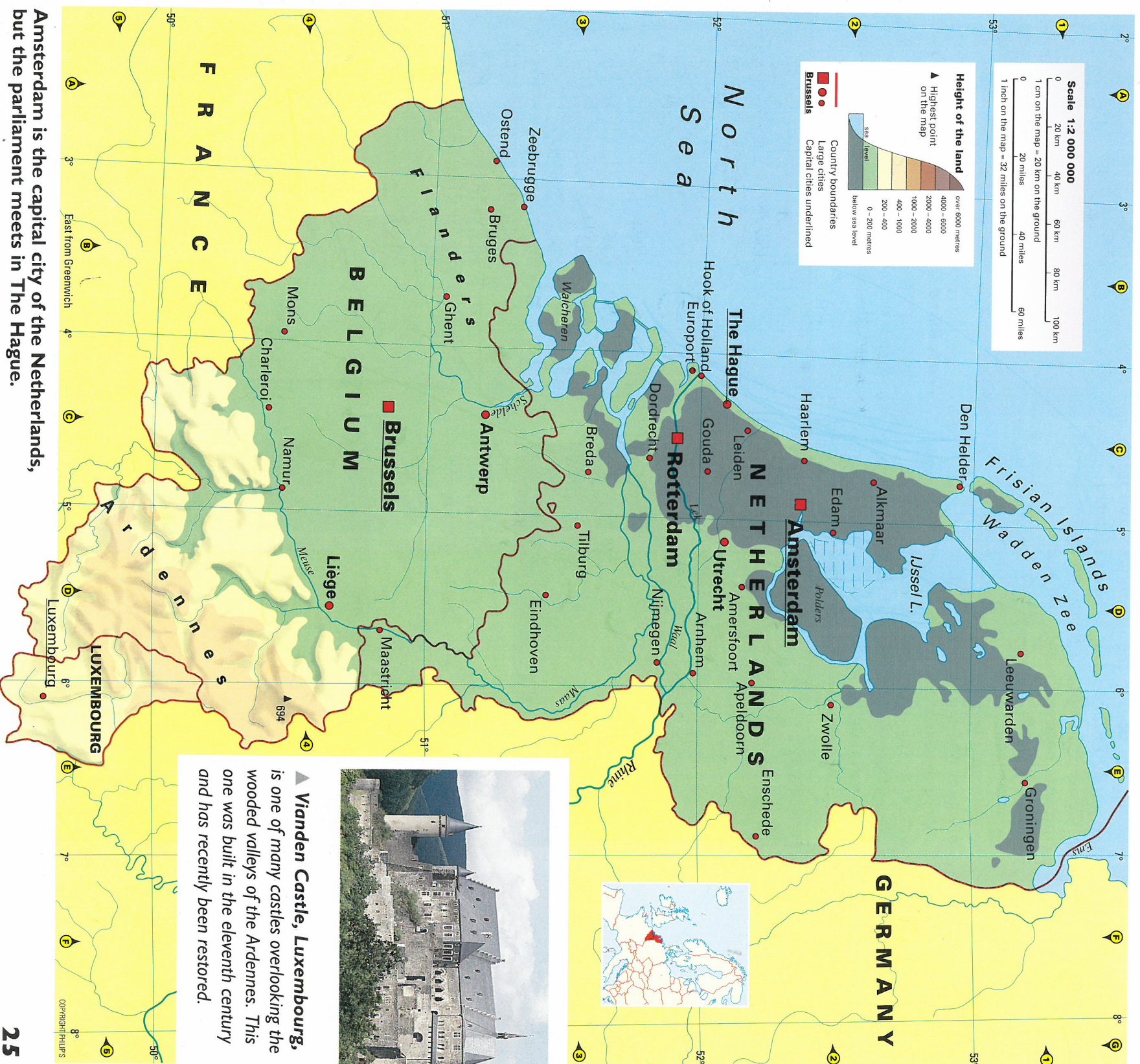


**Belgium** is *one* country with *two* languages. South of Brussels most people speak French. In the north they speak Flemish (similar to Dutch). Road signs in Belgium are in both languages.

**Brussels** is an important city. It is the capital of Belgium and the headquarters of the whole European Union.

The eastern part of the **Netherlands** has large areas of heath and forest.

But the best-known Dutch landscape is the 'polders' of the west. Look at the map to see how much of the land is *below* sea level – and threatened with floods if the sea level rises. But this is the country's best farmland.



▲ **Vianden Castle, Luxembourg,** is one of many castles overlooking the wooded valleys of the Ardennes. This one was built in the eleventh century and has recently been restored.

Amsterdam is the capital city of the Netherlands, but the parliament meets in The Hague.