Tourism in Belgium is one of the service activities showing the most rapid rate of growth; we have defined it as follows: "an extra-regional phenomenon of leisure activities which involves travelling and visiting (with or without accommodation) irrespective of distance and of time" (1987). The most traditional forms of tourism are relatively at risk, particularly in the summer months when the tourist season is coming to an end; the movement of escape, apart from nature reserves such as the Zwin and the Westhoek. The tourist network here is facing the world's most developed and pressure on space is very great. A sensible tourism policy, spreading out of holidays in time and space has become self-imposed. In a number of tourist centres in the Ardennes and the Campine (holiday villages are on the increase) and even in towns with a cultural scene. In particular this was felt on the coast, where only a little remains of the natural landscape, because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS. Apart from the official annual figures from the INS (National Institute of Statistics) show a notable number of gaps, such as - a marked underestimation of the number of overnight stays (particularly in hotels, apartments and commercial categories of accommodation. It should be emphasized that the apartments and villas out complex relationships of Belgian tourist needs and resources, and this has provided the basis for five camp sites); - seaside resorts, led by De Haan - amalgamated with Wenduine and Knokke-Heist - with 2.4 and accommodation quoted, particularly on the coast.

The hotel, the most traditional form of accommodation, shows a figure of 16.3 per cent in the total for 1988 (16.6% in 1990). It is best represented in towns with cultural and artistic attractions. In contrast, it is camping with 66.4% (66.2% in 1990) which has the highest figure and "social tourist" which has the most marked increase with a percentage rise of 11.8% in 1988 (12.3% in 1990). The INS erroneously includes in this total the holiday villages. These errors should be corrected in the new statistical classification. This type of accommodation is concerned, health resorts and holiday colonies are less important (particularly on the coast).

Map A shows the picture (1988) of accommodation capacity at commune level in the five commercial categories of accommodation. It should be emphasized that the apartments and villas out of town are not shown on this map; an information about their accommodation capacity is not required neither of the owners nor of the estate agencies. Owing to the fact that this type of accommodation is missing on the map, relatively too much importance is given to the five types of accommodation, quoted, particularly on the coast.

Map B gives a complete picture of overnight stays available by commune (1988) divided into six types of accommodation. As a matter of fact, this time, apartments and villas are included because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS. The most important centres for holidays are: - seaside resorts, led by De Haan - amalgamated with Wenduine and Knokke-Heist - with 2.4 and accommodation quoted, particularly on the coast. - an absence of information on the number of gaps, such as...- a lack of figures for second homes (very numerous on the coast) for there has been no census for second homes since 1981. Thus the data has to be limited to commercial paying accommodation; - a lack of information on the accommodation capacity.

All the figures on this map represent the period before the reform of tourist statistics that was brought in at the end of 1991. However despite the technical imperfections we have succeeded in making an inventory of the centres for holidays in Belgium, tourist needs and resources, and this has provided the basis for five camp sites; thematic maps and four graphs.

Map C provides an inventory of tourist centres and attractions. Our 1992 typology distinguishes between coastal resorts, cultural towns, pilgrimage centres, health resorts, winter sports towns (distinguishing between alpine skiing and cross-country skiing). Also shown are theme parks, major estates, protected landscapes (such as the Zwin and the Westhoek), the tourist network here is facing the world's most developed and pressure on space is very great. A sensible tourism policy, spreading out of holidays in time and space has become self-imposed. In a number of tourist centres in the Ardennes and the Campine (holiday villages are on the increase) and even in towns with a cultural scene. In particular this was felt on the coast, where only a little remains of the natural landscape, because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS. By comparison with 1973 this amounted to an increase of 46.5%.

In nearly all the remaining communes a great dispersion of overnight stay occurrences is a striking feature shown on this map as well as special concentrations such as the camping centres of Burdinne and of Stekene.

Map D shows the number of overnight stays by visitors from other countries (1989); they stay particularly in the cultural centres with Brussels as the favourite destination (especially for business visitors and for conferences). This was followed by Antwerp (a world port) and the more attractive tourist centres in the Ardennes and the Campine (holiday villages are on the increase) and even in towns with a cultural scene. In particular this was felt on the coast, where only a little remains of the natural landscape, because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS.

Graph 1: overnight stays by nationality and by type of accommodation (1989). The typical clientele is from Germany, with 36.9% of the total in 1989 compared with 36.9% in 1989). And from England, with 22.9% in 1989. Other visitors (e.g. from USA) or from southern European countries (e.g. Italy and Spain) and northern European countries (e.g. Germany and Benelux) are less marked. The well balanced distribution of the volume of the salaried staff, in the two sectors, with the percentage of the sector horeca in that total. There are also four statistical graphs with complementary information.

Graph 2: shows the number of overnight stays by visits from other countries (1989); they stay particularly in the cultural centres with Brussels as the favourite destination (especially for business visitors and for conferences). This was followed by Antwerp (a world port) and the more attractive tourist centres in the Ardennes and the Campine (holiday villages are on the increase) and even in towns with a cultural scene. In particular this was felt on the coast, where only a little remains of the natural landscape, because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS. Amongst our neighbours, it is above all the British who prefer Brussels, whilst those from the Netherlands choose camp sites or holiday villages. Belgian and Luxembourg tourists are mainly from other European countries as well as in holiday settlements and in health resorts, which are less known by the foreign visitors.

Graph 3: shows overnight stays by month (or other period of stay) and by tourist region. In all the tourist regions a very high percentage is accounted for by high temperatures/low rainfall; it is clear that weather conditions and the school holidays play an important role. On the other hand the cultural centres (and above all in Brussels) there is little variation throughout the year, this is explained by the important role of business meetings and conferences both before and after the high season.

Graph 4 shows the evolution of the total employed in the tourism/horeca industry sector for Belgium (1970-1990). In 1970 there were 26,276 employed (in 1990) of whom 26.7% were self-employed and 73.3% wage-earners. The well balanced distribution between male and female was 51% to 49% whilst those in horeca accounted for 66.8% of the total employed. This was followed by Antwerp (0.9 and 1.1 million respectively), Bruges and Ghent; - central Belgium: Ardennes such as Hastière, La Roche, Burbay, Spa and in the Campine with rather old centres such as Mol, Kasterlee, Houtalhen-Helchteren and the newcomers like Lommel and Peer.

Graph 5 shows the number of overnight stays by visitors from other countries (1989); they stay particularly in the cultural centres with Brussels as the favourite destination (especially for business visitors and for conferences). This was followed by Antwerp (a world port) and the more attractive tourist centres in the Ardennes and the Campine (holiday villages are on the increase) and even in towns with a cultural scene. In particular this was felt on the coast, where only a little remains of the natural landscape, because the statistics about the overnight stays must be supplied every month to the INS. By comparison with 1973 this amounted to an increase of 46.5%.