

European Under 17 & 15 Championships ~ Hasselt, Belgium

TRAVEL UPDATE 30/3/16

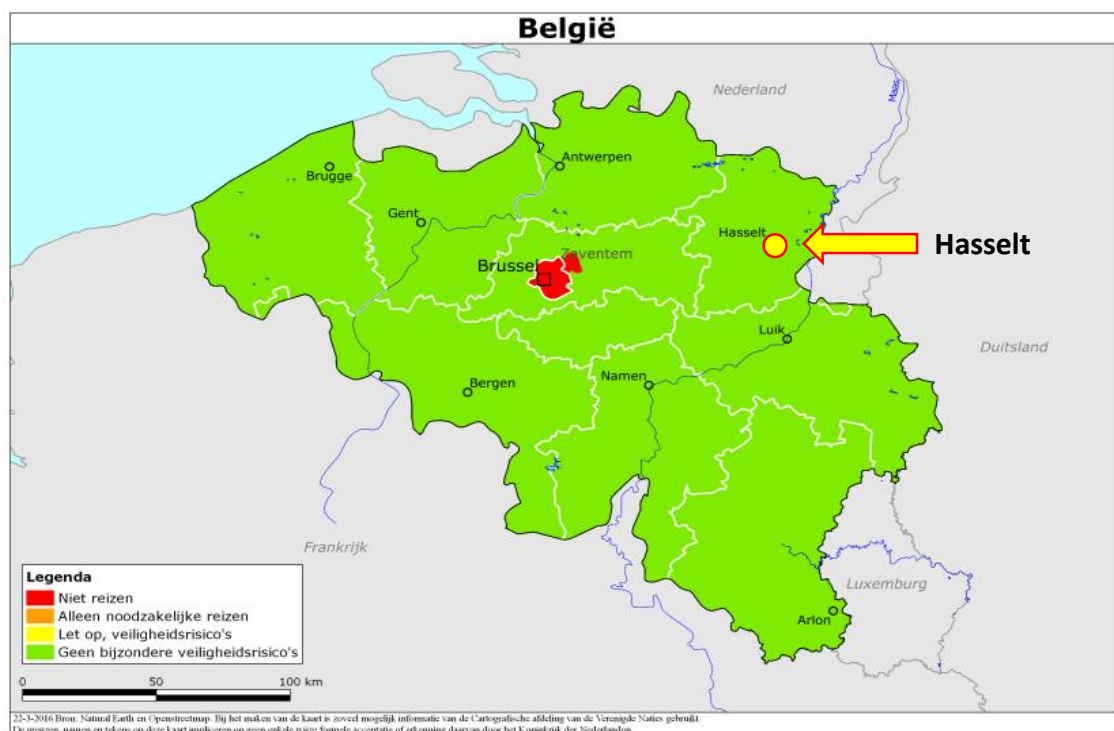
On 22 March 2016 Brussels, the airport Zaventem and metro were targeted by a terrorist attack. This statement is an update relating to the European Junior Championships in Hasselt in early May.

Information prior to your trip to Hasselt

Terrorism is designed to exploit human fear. It is deliberately meant to charge human emotions and intimidate us to change our planned activities. We shouldn't let terrorists succeed in their attempt to disrupt our lives. In response to events in Brussels on 22 March, ESF shared a risk / mitigation plan for the event with the Flemish Federation, and this is a joint statement of their current view.

However, you remain solely responsible for your safety and deciding whether or not to travel.

Hasselt is 85 km. from Brussels. With a population of 75.000 people Hasselt isn't a major city, and the U15/U17 event isn't a high profile one, so the likelihood of being a target is qualified as extremely low.



There is obviously a higher concern from participants around flying into Brussels airport, though we should acknowledge that any major airport or venue in the world could be targeted at any time. The unpredictability factor is a symbolism of terrorism. Brussels airport remains closed with no definitive update on when it may re-open.

This is the latest statement from the Belgian authorities:

"In the past few days, Brussels Airport has made an extensive analysis of the terminal infrastructure and of the various possible scenarios for a partial recommencement of its activities. When this partial restart will take place is not yet decided. If flights are already

*booked, please **contact your airline** for specific flight information. For all essential updates and practical information, see <http://www.brusselsairport2203.be/en> “*

ESF has been liaising with the Belgian (Flemish) Federation regarding alternative travel options, with the following suggestions for those who wish to avoid Brussels:

Some countries can travel to Hasselt and the venue by car or minibus. The venue has ample parking. Some might come by train via Luik or Antwerp. Some might decide to fly into another airport like Oostende, Charleroi, Keulen, Aken, (Germany, but close to the border of Belgium), Maastricht, Eindhoven (The Netherlands, but close to the border of Belgium). Or you could fly into Rotterdam or Amsterdam and take the train to Antwerp & Hasselt. We can provide further information, but the decision to participate or not must be made by the MNA.

Yesterday it was announced that Brussels Airlines is flying into Antwerp, which has a direct train link to Hasselt, so that may now be a good option to consider.

The ESF Board believes that collectively as a European squash community we should support the Flemish Squash Federation and their efforts to host this Championship. The Federation offered to host this event last spring, knowing there were no other bids to host. We appreciate the concerns of players, parents, coaches and MNAs. However, the location of this event in Hasselt lends itself to many alternative travel options, and we hope teams will continue their plans to compete in these European Championships via the alternative travel arrangements suggested.

This travel advice composed by ESF in collaboration with the Flemish Squash Federation.

Neither body accepts any liability for any damage resulting from use of this travel advice. You remain solely responsible for your own safety and deciding whether or not to travel.