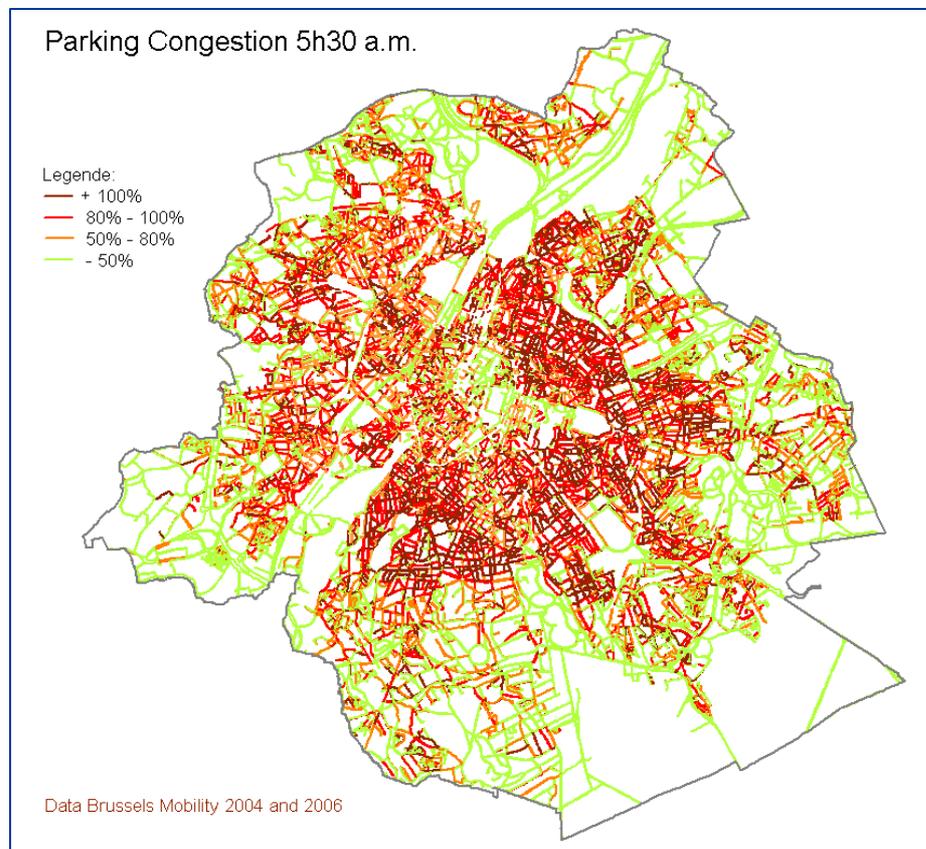


**Brussels Parking Agency: towards an integrated regional parking policy**

The Brussels Capital Region is getting its act together on parking: regional legislation will provide for the coordination of parking policy among Brussels' 19 districts and establishes the Regional Parking Policy. From now on things can only go better.



With 750 000 cars per day entering the region combined with an insufficient number of accessible parking spaces, Brussels is confronted daily with immense problems. Not only does this lead to illegal parking (with all the inconveniences connected to this), research shows that 30 % of all traffic is generated by the search for a parking space. The existing car parks are not visible enough. The location and availability of parking space is in general insufficiently advertised for motorists to comprehend during already complex urban driving conditions. The 19 Brussels districts which together make up the Brussels region are responsible for parking policy, which leads to incoherence. Overall, this has led to an approach that was assessed as lacking user-friendliness and providing insufficient accessibility.

**Legal framework for regional parking policy**

For a long time, the Regional administration (Brussels Capital Region) has formally and informally cooperated with the 19 districts on parking policy. A "parking dialogue" was established to structure this process. The Brussels Regional parliament recognised the problem and issued

several parliament resolutions during the previous legislative periods. A thorough consultation with the districts then led to a proposal for an Ordinance (regional law). This was voted in the course of January 2009 and will enter into force on the 1 March.

The objectives of the Ordinance are the creation of a coordinated parking policy by the regional administration and of a regional parking agency to implement this policy and handle specific tasks. These objectives are developed in the two following paragraphs.

### Coordinated parking policy



The Ordinance defines a clear division of powers between the regional administration and the 19 districts. The former defines the parking policy, with a harmonisation of the types of parking zones, rates and permits systems. The districts develop parking action plans at local level.

The regional approach is brought together in a general policy plan, that sets the maximum number of parking spaces on the regional and municipal roads of every district, the number of regulated parking spaces per zone, the minimum number of reserved parking spaces (e.g. for people with disabilities or for deliveries) and last but not least: the rates.

At the district level, local action plans are developed. These include plans that detail the specific arrangements and locations of parking spaces. An action plan lists the actions required for the implementation of the scheduled parking strategy. The action plan includes actions in terms of infrastructure, traffic management etc. The local action plans need to be approved by the region.

### Coherent zonal approach



The Ordinance defines three types of parking zones: red (paid parking, no exceptions), green (paid parking, with possible exemptions for permit holders, e.g. for residents, people with disabilities, medical practitioners on call) and blue (free parking for up to 2 hours, with possible exemptions subject to permit). Streets outside these zones are open for free and unlimited parking.



The Ordinance also sets the rates and the fines for all 19 districts. Rates range from €1 to 4 per hour, depending on the zone. If use of a regulated parking space remains unpaid, a penalty is applied which ranges from €20 to 50.

### Flagship measure: the Brussels Regional Parking Agency

The mission of the agency is to implement the parking policy for the whole of Brussels. In order to do so, it will establish concrete instruments such as a data bank and a system of vehicle removal services. In addition, the agency has been asked to organise, manage and control the public and transit car parks within the region. The agency will develop a regional parking guidance system to direct motorists to car parks.



Specific parking schemes and a parking guidance system will be established for lorries and buses. A big challenge for the agency is to handle arrangements for opportunities to use private car parks outside of office hours. Substantial private off-street parking (e.g. office blocks) capacity, that remains inaccessible at night and during weekends, might prove a very interesting perspective to develop. Last but not least, the agency will create bicycle and motorbike parking options.



The agency can also be asked by the districts to take over parking enforcement. In principle, a single type of enforcement for each district will be developed in a coherent way for regional and municipal roads.

The agency has an important role to play with regards to the financial aspects of on-street parking in the Brussels region. It collects parking fines, bears the cost of actions taken against slow payers and is responsible for the costs that are related to parking enforcement. The income that remains after deducting these overhead costs is divided following a simple rule between the agency (15%) and the districts (85%). To further facilitate parking enforcement in Brussels, an administrative fine is planned for inappropriately parked vehicles (obstructive or illegal parking), which is currently a Belgian federal traffic law enforcement.

The agency will be established as a limited liability company under public law and is planned to be operational from 2010 onwards. It operates under a five-year management contract with Regional administration.

### Towards less car intensive lifestyles in Brussels

The parking agency and the regional parking policy is an important measure in the overall IRIS plan, the Brussels regional mobility plan. In the IRIS plan, the Brussels Region is taking measures to achieve less car intensive lifestyles: the taxi sector has been remodelled (under the brand Collecto, the system of shared taxis has been introduced) and the public transport company has recently set up NOCTIS, the night-time service. Last but not least: Brussels is (according to Belgian standards) a very successful car sharing city. In 2008, the car sharing service provider Cambio saw an increase of 44% of clients to the number of 3 905. Car sharing is promoted by the Brussels public transport company MIVB-STIB and has 134 assigned parking spaces in the Brussels Region.

This article is based upon a presentation given by Pierre Schmitz and Chantal Roland of the Brussels Region in the Polis Social and Economic Working Group meeting on the 16 December 2008. For more information, contact [pschmitz@mrbc.irisnet.be](mailto:pschmitz@mrbc.irisnet.be).

Polis would like to develop more activities on parking. If you are interested, contact [icre@polis-online.org](mailto:icre@polis-online.org).