

2 campuses, 30 different nationalities

The new academic year is under way and it's full steam ahead for both staff and students. English voices from all over the world echo up and down the corridors. American accents from Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Canada mingle with Oriental influences from China, India and Taiwan, with students from Romania, Pakistan, the Czech Republic, Russia and Norway adding a touch of exotic variety. Everyone has a unique story to tell, as we found out when we spoke to a few of the newcomers.

"This still feels a bit like home"

Thomas Sors is without a doubt the most international MBA student on the programme. Sors was born in the Netherlands and has a Belgian mother and a British father of Hungarian extraction. He holds both Belgian and British citizenship. After attending the international school in Brussels, he decided to cross the Channel to pursue his university education in Britain. He lost his heart in Australia, where he met and married his wife. He picked up a third nationality in New Zealand, where he worked for five years. "I first heard about Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School when I was in Australia," explains Thomas

Sors. "Belgium still feels a bit like home to me, because I spent eight years here while I was growing up. But the advantage is that London is so close. It's great being back in Europe and seeing family and friends again. That's something I've missed. You can hardly just pop over for a weekend from New Zealand! Another advantage is that my parents still have a house near Brussels. It's ideal, because my wife and I can stay there while they're in India."

"Timing, fees, rankings"

Fabio Del Taglia chose Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School after weighing up all the pros and cons. He knew he wanted to do an MBA, but was initially unsure of where he would end up.

The first thing the Italian had to do was to choose between the US and Europe. America was soon struck off his list when he found out that it usually takes two years to do an MBA there. "And I just didn't want to take so much time out," he explains. Turning his attention to Europe, he began comparing the rankings and fees of the different MBA programmes on offer. "And Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School was almost the automatic choice". The timing was also convenient. A programme starting in August suited him better from an organisational point of view than one starting in January. "Before I arrived in Belgium I knew next to nothing about the place," says Fabio Del Taglia. "I studied in Italy and then got a job there with an American company. A short business trip to Brussels isn't nearly enough to find out how a country really works. But I do like it here. The



Thomas Sors



Fabio Del Taglia



Marcin Holub



Krassimira Kazashka-Hristozova

people are friendly, the mussels and French fries are delicious and I've managed to find a great apartment in Leuven. It promises to be a good year."

"I do want to go back to Poland eventually"

The Pole **Marcin Holub** had already been to Belgium a couple of times on business. He was struck by the fact that a lot of people were riding around on old bikes. "Now I've got one myself," he says. "I rented it for a whole year for 30 euros." And after spending a couple of nights in a hostel, he has now found his own studio apartment. Marcin Holub hopes that his MBA will open up new doors for him. "Once I've finished the course I want to work abroad for another couple of years. I don't really mind where. But then I'm going back to Poland, because that's where I want to settle down eventually."

"I waited to do my MBA"

While **Krassimira Kazashka-Hristozova** was doing European Studies in Bulgaria, a couple of people recommended that she should come to Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School – both a British and a Belgian professor. When she worked at the Bulgarian Environment Ministry, she used to make regular trips to Belgium. "And the country appealed to me straight away," she says. "The warmth of the people, the infrastructure, the social security system, the houses, the countryside, the historic cities. After every visit I used to go back home with a wonderful impression of Belgium. The only drawback as far as I could see was the slow bureaucracy. I had to wait about three months to get a visa to come and study in Belgium for a year. I expected there to be fewer students here. And perhaps a few more women. But in a way that's only natural, I suppose. To do an MBA, you need to have a couple of years' experience after graduating, and that's when a lot of women start planning a family. About three years ago I applied to

Student Profile Masters 2006–2007

■ Number	174
■ Average Age	22,9
■ Gender	Male 110 Female 64
■ Degree	Arts/Philosophy 2 Business/Economics 75 Engineering 47 Exact Sciences 20 Law/Criminology 18 Medicine/Pharmacy 8 Psychology/Pedagogy 4
■ Nationality	Belgian 157 Non-Belgian* 17

*American, British, Bulgarian, Czech, Chinese/Belgian, Chinese, Dutch, German, Pakistani, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese

Student Profile MBA 2006–2007

■ Number	221
■ Average Age	32,9
■ Average Work Experience (years)	8,4
■ Gender	Male 186 Female 35
■ Degree	Arts/Philosophy 5 Business/Economics 62 Engineering 115 Exact Sciences 23 Law/Criminology/Pol&Soc 11 Medicine/Pharmacy 4 Psychology/Pedagogy 1
■ Nationality	Belgian 147 Non-Belgian* 74

*American, Belgian/Hungarian, Belgian/Romanian, Belgian/Polish, Bolivian, British, British/New Zealand, Bulgarian, Canadian, Canadian/Dutch, Chinese, Dutch, Dutch/German, Ecuadorean, French, German, German/Canadian, Indian, Irish/Belgian, Italian, Japanese, Kenyan, Mexican, Norwegian, Peruvian, Polish, Polish/German, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Singaporean, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, Taiwanese, Ugandan

do the Masters in General Management. I got accepted, but then decided to wait. I thought an MBA would be more interesting, precisely because all the students have gained experience in such a wide range of professional disciplines." ■

 De Nederlandstalige versie van dit artikel vindt u op www.vlerick.be/news/magazine