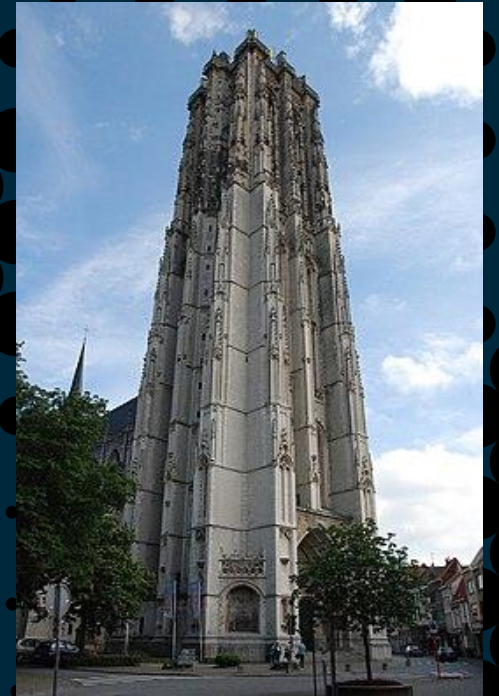


# Mechelen, City of Cultures

BIP – 21BIS News Lab - 13-17 November 2023



# Where is Mechelen?



...indeed, in Belgium! Somewhere between Brussels and Antwerp.



# Participants

**ISCPA** Paris, Toulouse & Lyon  
(École de journalisme, communication & production)

- 12 students, 1 lecturer

**Kozminski University** (Business Department)

- 12 students, 2 lecturers

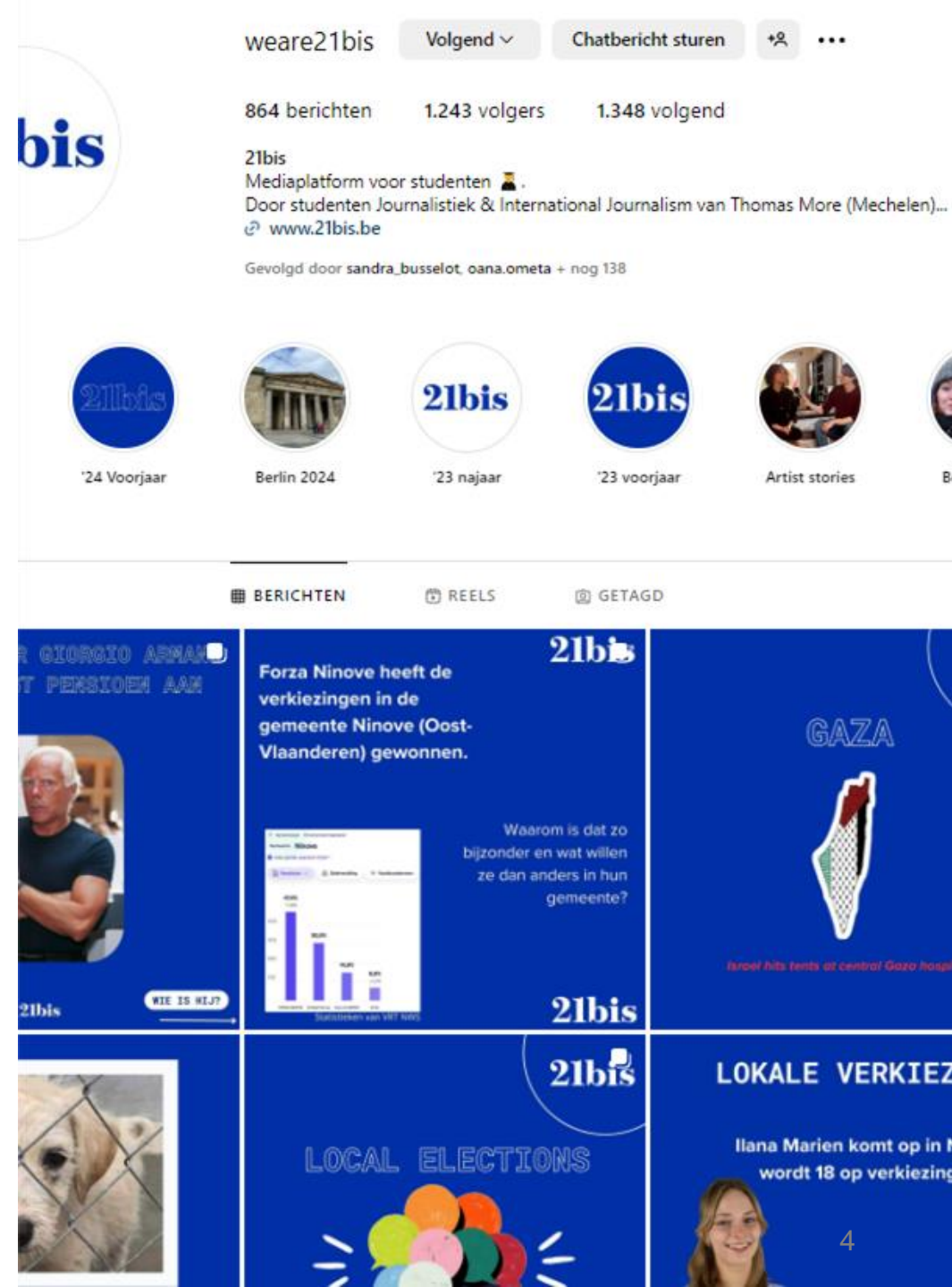
**Thomas More**, International Journalism

- 14 students and 5 lecturers



# Programme

1. Masterclasses: expert-led sessions focused on **interview** techniques and **online storytelling**, essential skills for aspiring journalists.
1. Field Visit: **Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA)**, providing cultural context and inspiration.
1. Team Assignment: **collaborative creation in mixed teams of a newsworthy human-interest portrait** about an international student at Thomas More, living in Mechelen. The goal was to produce content (text, video, or audio) for the student news platform 21bis.be and its social media channels.





You must focus on the student's personal story and cultural context. How does the student experience life in another country?

Does the country meet the student's expectations? Which stereotypes do they have to reconsider, or does the student also encounter stereotypical ideas about themselves or their cultural background?



# Learning goals / evaluation criteria

- Teamwork: how well did the team work together as a mixed team?
- Engaging story with a cultural and diverse perspective: does the story clearly depict the student's experiences and efficiently highlight cultural elements, reflecting what living in a diverse society in 2023 is like (=news dimension)?
- Considering international students as the target audience: did the story reflect what international students would like to read/watch/listen to?
- Meeting medium-specific and social media requirements: did the story fit well with social media and online reader engagement?
- Clear and mistake-free language & strong visuals: was the language used easy to understand and without mistakes? Are the visuals effectively portraying both the story's main character and Mechelen's background?

# Stories



15/12/2023

Lotte van den Hout

**MECHELEN, CITY OF CULTURES – Manouk studies furniture design: ‘Mechelen feels like a big village, everyone knows each other’**

## **MECHELEN, CITY OF CULTURES – Data Science student Ikechukwu (The Gambia): ‘I’ll put my foot in my mouth when issues are brought up’**

‘Oh wait, I’ll take out my laptop,’ Ikechukwu ‘Ik’ Nwakanma (20) stops me right before I can snap a photo, ‘they have to know I’m a coder.’ Ik came from The Gambia to study Data Science, Protection and Security at Thomas More University in Mechelen. He aspires to become an ethical hacker after graduating.



21/11/2023

Audio, Video

Katoo Bourdon

**MECHELEN, CITY OF CULTURES – Communication and Media student Alva Jämting (Sweden): ‘I met a boy and we fell in love’**

Alva Jämting (20) Swedish international student Communication and Media shares her story on being an

## **MECHELEN, CITY OF CULTURES – Business student David (Spain) : ‘Being supported helped me adapt during my exchange’**

David Sanz (21), is an exchange student from [Madrid University Francisco de Vitoria](#), where he studies Business Analytics and Computer Engineering. But now he is an International Business Management student at [Thomas More](#) in Belgium. Coming from a big city like Madrid to the small town of Mechelen was a change for him, but he found support in the international community.

Going on an Erasmus can be a very exciting adventure at first. However, leaving the commodities of your home country can create a shock for many students: ‘As an only child, I have always wanted to experience what living alone is like, without my parents.’ Nevertheless, having to actively participate in daily tasks he was not used to, surprised him in a special way: ‘I had never put myself doing daily tasks like cooking, cleaning my room, buying groceries, not on a daily basis at least’, David confesses.

Arriving in Mechelen for the first time was a big change for David. He felt delighted by the quiet and calm atmosphere of the city. ‘I’m used to the noisy Madrid, so I was pleased to know how different Mechelen is.’ The weather, on the other hand, had him confused at the beginning: ‘The first days I arrived it was very hot in Belgium which I was not prepared for. I only brought winter clothes, so it was very hard because of the heat. I remember people used to tell me: “Just wait for the winter and you’ll see!”



00:09 / 02:46

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# Coming up: COIL European Newsroom

- This COIL will unite students from Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, the Central University of Catalunya (Vic), Plymouth Marjon University, Bábes-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca), the Academy of Social and Media Culture (Toruń) and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.
- We are going to simulate a **real-world newsroom** where students identify stories of international interest, manage editorial tasks, and meet deadlines while working remotely together, using each other as foreign correspondents.
- Students will work in **mixed groups** composed of participants from two partner universities. Each group will be tasked with **producing two feature articles**: one about the home country of one group's students, written by their international peers, and vice versa. For example, in a Belgian-Romanian team, the Romanian students will write a feature about Belgium, while the Belgian students will write about Romania.

# Thank you!

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