





En marge… Landscape, ecology and urbanization along infrastructure in the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai

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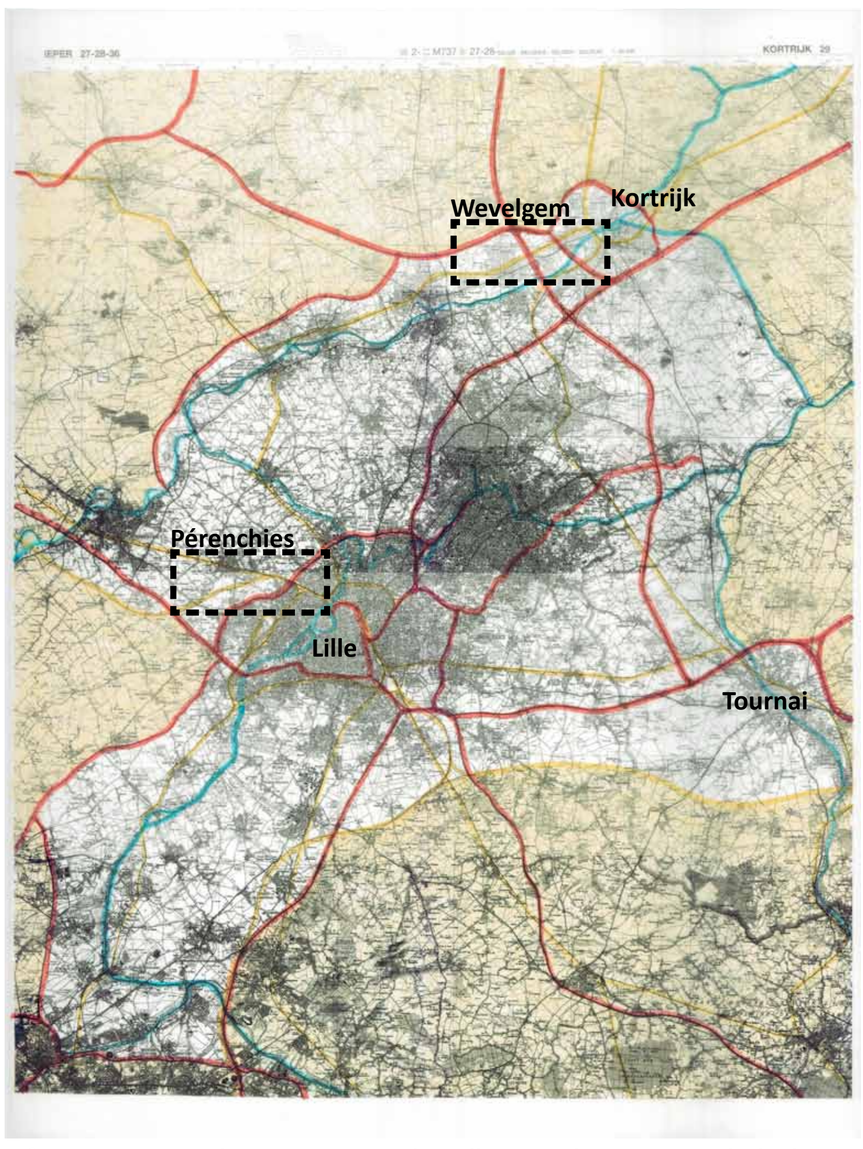
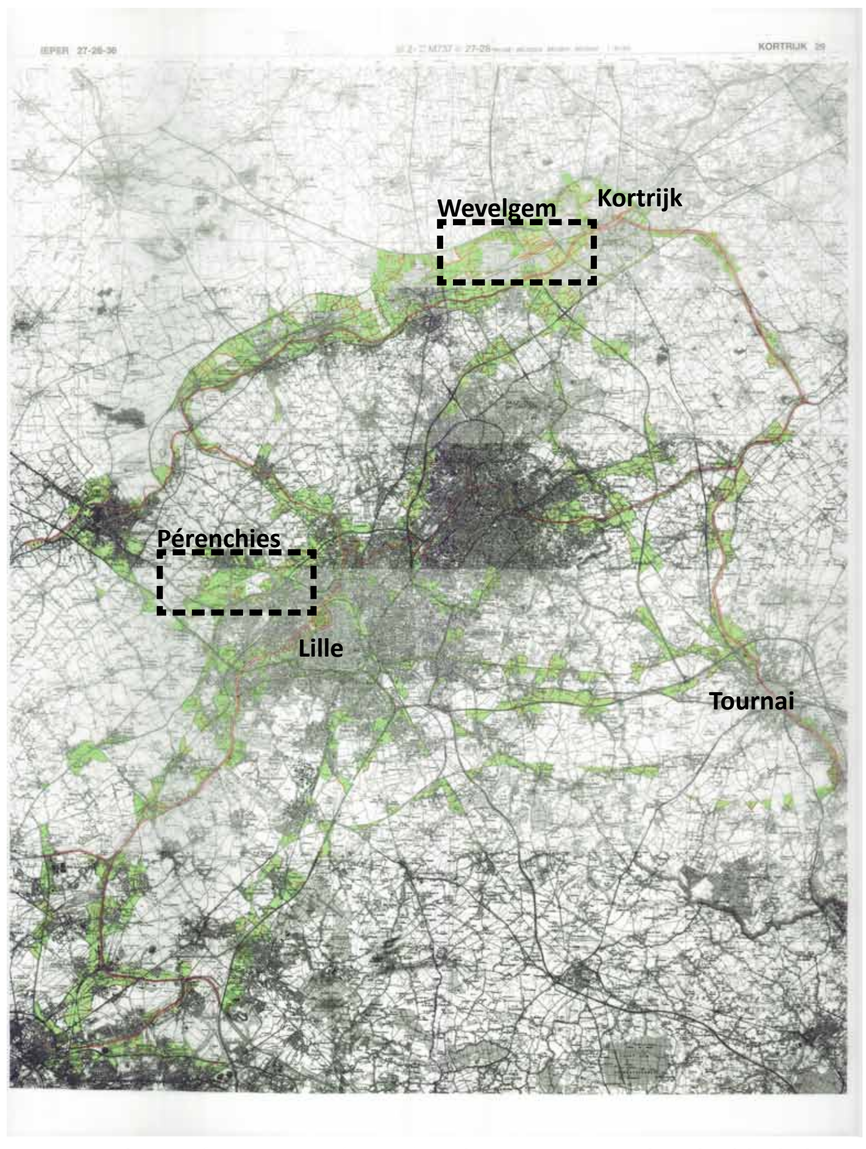
'En marge… Paysage et biodiversité des délaissés et accotements infrastructurels de l'eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai' is an ongoing research project conducted by Labo S (Laboratory for Urbanism, Ghent University) in collaboration with LACTH (Laboratory Conception Territory History, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Lille), Laboratoire Génie Civil et géoEnvironnement (Université Lille Nord de France) and CBNB (Conservatoire Botanique National de Bailleul). Subject of the study is the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, a cross-border polynuclear region in which the infrastructure (roads and highways, rail roads, canals) composes the framework joining the dispersed urban condition. Biologists have ascertained that the infrastructure's margins hold an important ecological value. Along the infrastructure, multiple 'terrains vagues' are situated, sites that have lost their status or function as they were cut through by infrastructure. A first part of the research visualizes the biological diversity of the margins along infrastructure and their possibility to function as ecological corridors. A second part of the research regards the relationship between these corridors and urbanisation.

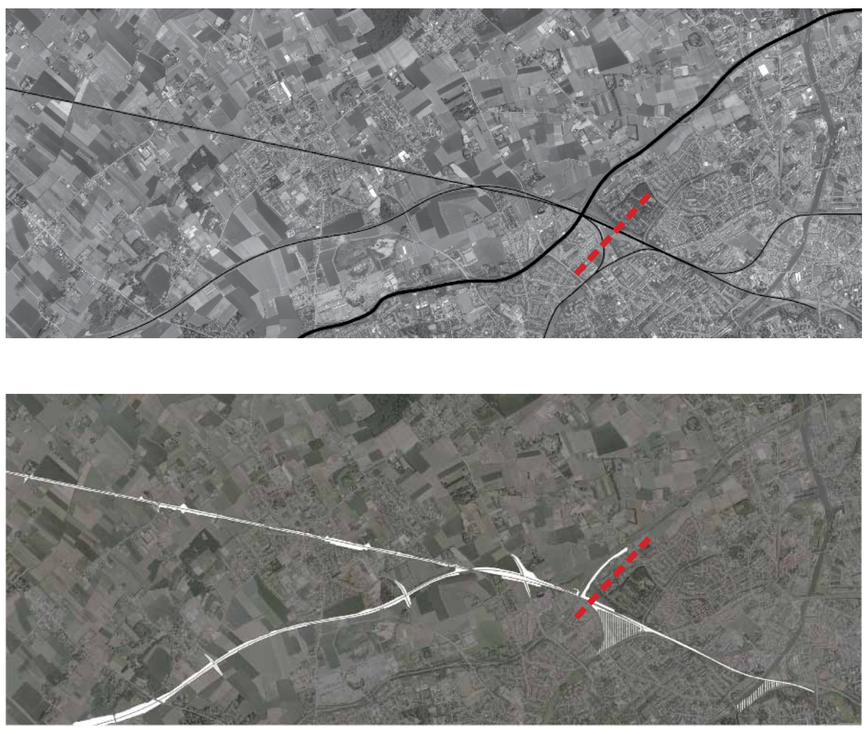


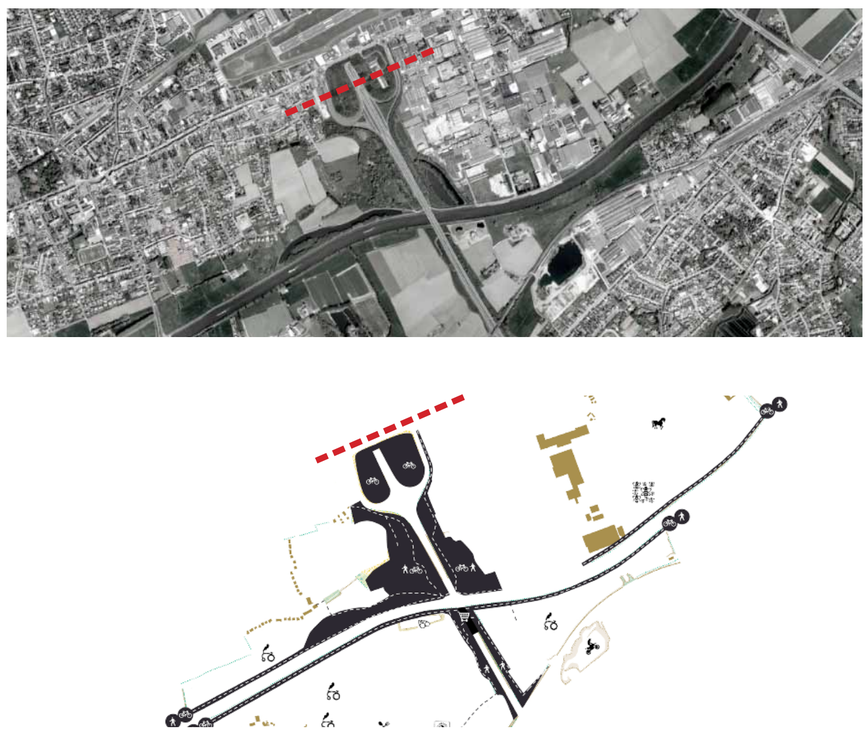
Infrastructure in the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai with highways (yellow), rail roads (yellow) and canals (blue) (© ENSAP Lille).



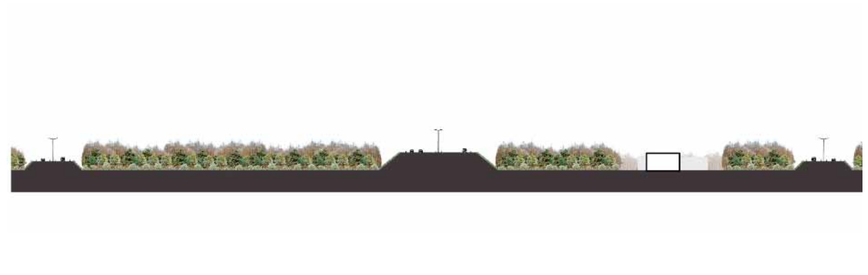
Margins along infrastructure (green) in the Eurometropolis. The black dotted frames represent the location of the two case studies. (© ENSAP Lille).

The first part of the research, executed by the biologists in the team, visualizes the biological diversity of the margins along infrastructure and their possibility to function as ecological corridors. In particular, the hypothesis of considering the infrastructure also as a green and blue network structuring the Eurometropolis is tested.
The map above gives an indication of the potential ecological value of the margins, ranging from a very low biological value (red) to a very high one (solid green line).





Case study Pérenchies (France) with aerial photograph (on top), study area along infrastructure (in the middle, white) and section (at the bottom). The red dotted line represents the location of the section (© masterstudents dept. of architecture and urban planning, Ghent University).



Case study Wevelgem (Belgium) with aerial photograph (on top), study area along infrastructure (in the middle, black) and section (at the bottom). The red dotted line represents the location of the section (© masterstudents dept. of architecture and urban planning, Ghent University).

The second part of the research regards the relationship between these corridors and urbanisation. Using conventional architectural tools such as plans, schemes and sections, the spatial condition as well as the appropriation of some case studies are investigated.

Confronting biological and urbanistic research method on these sites raises questions for further research on this subject: Which landscape qualities do these corridors offer? How are they used? Can they be made accessible and absorb urban functions? How do they relate towards the neighbouring urban tissue en how can they be a structuring element for the urbanised region of the Eurometropolis?