

The Smartest Region in the World

A prize, a province, and what did not work in Limburg

J. Konstapel, Constable Research, Leiden © 2026 J. Konstapel, Constable Research, Leiden. All rights reserved. Quotation with attribution is permitted; reproduction of the whole requires written permission. Version 1 — 18 October 2026

1. Philosophy

A prize says something about the one who gives it. It also says something about the one who applies for it. It says less about the thing it names.

This essay separates three layers. The first is the prize maker: who it is, how it earns, how it judges. The second is the applicant: a province that wanted a brand and a telescope. The third is the region itself: what was built, what holds, and what failed.

The method is simple. Every claim rests on a public source. What is reported by an interested party is marked as such. What is not public is named as not public.

2. Occasion

On 15 October 2026 the Dutch public broadcaster NOS reported that Limburg had been named “the smartest region in the world”. The award was the Intelligent Community of the Year 2026. It was given by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) to “Brightlands-Limburg”.

Brightlands is the brand above four campuses:

- Chemelot in Sittard-Geleen: chemistry and materials.
- Maastricht Health Campus: health.
- Data & AI Campus in Heerlen.
- Greenport Venlo: food and agriculture.

The jury praised the cooperation of government, business and knowledge institutions. It praised the recovery after the closure of the coal mines. It also credited the Einstein Telescope and the Brightlands Startup League.

The media translated the title as “smartest region in the world”. The award itself makes no such comparison. It is given to communities that join a network, nominate themselves and take part in its programme.

3. The prize maker

3.1 Two entities

ICF has two legal forms.

The first is **Intelligent Community Forum L.P.**, a limited partnership at 250 Park Avenue, New York. It is a commercial firm. It sells research, advisory services, certification, conferences, delegations and memberships. In 2023 it filed the trademark “Intelligent Community Institute” for “business research and data analysis services” in economic development.

The second is the **Intelligent Community Forum Foundation Inc.**, a US non-profit under section 501(c)(3), recognised in 2009. It has the same address. Robert Bell is its principal officer. No other board members are recorded.

The foundation is small. Its reported revenue fell from \$79,500 in 2018 to \$7,041 in 2022. Between 2015 and 2019 about 99% of its revenue came from membership fees. The commercial firm publishes no figures.

3.2 Who runs it

ICF’s own privacy statement says that ICF “is managed by the Intelligent Communities Group (ICG)”. The World Teleport Association lists that group as “Intelligent Communities Group (Alan/Anthony Inc.)”.

Alan/Anthony Inc. is a for-profit firm in New York. It manages trade associations and special-interest communities for others. Lou Zacharilla is a principal of it.

Who owns the limited partnership is not public. A New York limited partnership need not publish its partners. The general partner is recorded with the New York Department of State.

3.3 The founders

Robert Bell. He was connected with the World Teleport Association, the trade body of satellite ground stations, for nearly thirty years. He was its executive director until 1 March 2025 and is now its strategic advisor. He was also executive director of Space & Satellite Professionals International. At ICF he leads research and writes the annual Top7 reports. He wrote *Broadband Economies*. No education is stated in his public biographies.

Lou Zacharilla. He began in advertising, including the US Army’s “Be All You Can Be” campaign. He became a principal of Alan/Anthony Inc. His ICF biography credits him with creating the Top7 and the Intelligent Community of the Year award. He holds a master’s degree from the University of Notre Dame.

He is an adjunct professor at Fordham University and a trustee of Walsh University in Ohio. With Bell he wrote *B2B Without the BS*, a sales and marketing manual.

John G. Jung. He was president and CEO of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance and of the Calgary Economic Development Authority. Both are agencies that market a region to investors. He is a registered urban planner and economic developer. ICF credits him with the concept of the “Intelligent Community”.

Matthew Owen is executive director. He signed the agreement with Limburg. His ICF page carries no biography.

The founders come from satellite trade associations, advertising and regional marketing. None of the public biographies shows a background in research.

3.4 How the award works

ICF’s own procedure, as published:

1. **Self-nomination.** A community submits an assessment questionnaire. ICF also uses updates the community provides and public information.
2. **Smart21.** ICF selects 21 communities from questionnaires submitted in the last three years.
3. **Commitment.** To enter the Top7 evaluation, a community must commit, if selected, to attend the ICF Summit, take part in its programme and join the Awards Dinner.
4. **Site audit.** Each Top7 community receives an audit of up to two days. The community organises it and pays travel, accommodation and the auditor’s expenses.
5. **Jury.** The auditor’s report goes to an international team of jurors. Their rankings are averaged with earlier scores.

ICF publishes membership rates. A public-private partnership of more than 500,000 inhabitants pays US\$5,000 a year.

3.5 A recurring circle

Hilliard, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, was in the Top7 for the fourth year running in 2026. The nearby city of Dublin, Ohio, funds its own “Global Institute for the Study of the Intelligent Community”, founded in 2015 as an offshoot of ICF. Its first executive director, Doug McCollough, serves as an ICF juror and has audited Top7 communities. Ohio was named “the world’s first Intelligent State” in 2022. The 2026 winner was announced at the ICF Global Summit in the Columbus Region.

Shenzhen, Boston, Munich and Seoul did not take part in 2026. The field consisted of those who applied: Assaí, Bursa, Hilliard, Kingston, Las Rozas de Madrid, Yunlin County and Limburg.

4. The applicant

4.1 The route

- **Early 2025.** The Province of Limburg joined ICF as “Brightlands Limburg Region”. ICF assessed the region for membership. On that basis it was admitted and placed among the Smart21.
- **March 2025.** The nomination was announced at the Brightlands symposium during TEFAF in Maastricht.
- **26 May 2025.** Provincial executive Stephan Satijn signed an agreement with ICF. Limburg became co-host of the Top7 conference of 2026.
- **October 2025.** The title went to Durham Region, Canada.
- **1 April 2026.** Limburg was again named among the Smart21, in Curitiba, Brazil.
- **17 June 2026.** The Top7 were announced jointly from Maastricht and New York. Limburg was one of them.
- **October 2026.** Limburg was named winner at the Summit in the Columbus Region.

4.2 The stated purpose

At the start the Province stated its aims plainly. Satijn said Brightlands would “increasingly become the brand with which innovative Limburg presents itself”. Membership was meant to raise the chances of the Einstein Telescope coming to the Euregio, against competitors such as Sardinia.

The prize therefore served two goals set before the outcome: a brand and a telescope.

4.3 What is not public

- The questionnaire Limburg submitted.
- The narrative answers on ICF’s six factors.
- The audit report.
- The cost of membership, of co-hosting the Top7 conference and of the audit.

A notice to the Provincial States of 19 March 2025 (DOC-00759694) may contain the costs. It is not available online. The notice of June 2025 on co-hosting names no amounts. These documents can be requested from the Province under the Dutch Open Government Act (Woo).

4.4 How the news travelled

The first report, by IO+ on 22 March 2025, consists of quotes from ICF and the Province and of statements “according to the Province”. It contains no independent source. Maastricht University, IMEX and others published the same line. The NOS report of October 2026 repeated the title.

5. What failed

The prize names a region that works. The public record shows a region where several flagship projects did not reach their goal. Each case below is taken from public sources.

5.1 The chemical park

Chemelot accounts for about 14% of Dutch chemistry, about €8 billion in turnover and about 8,000 direct jobs. In 2026:

- SABIC is selling its European petrochemicals, including Geleen, to the German investor Aequita. SABIC uses about 40% of the site.
- OCI is selling its nitrogen plant to the Czech group Agrofert. About 550 people work there.
- Fibrant stopped caprolactam production in January 2026. Three of seven units close. About 100 jobs go.
- The Vynova plant in Beek headed for bankruptcy in February 2026.

In July 2026 the cabinet, the Province and Chemelot agreed a cluster plan of twelve projects, worth about €1.7 billion. The companies ask for lower energy costs, subsidies and import protection.

5.2 Hydrogen from waste: FUREC

FUREC was RWE’s plan to turn household waste into hydrogen. A plant in Zevenellen (Leudal) would make about 700,000 tonnes of waste a year into pellets. A plant at Chemelot would gasify the pellets into about 54,000 tonnes of hydrogen a year.

- In January 2023 the EU Innovation Fund awarded more than €100 million.
- The Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment advised against the permit until the effects were clearer. The environmental report was judged insufficient more than once.
- The Province granted the permit anyway in August 2025.
- The Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) appealed. In its view the plant is in practice a waste incinerator, which must meet stricter emission rules. It is the Inspectorate’s first appeal against a Chemelot project.
- An SDE++ subsidy had to be repaid because of the delay.
- In the summer of 2026 RWE found no buyers for the hydrogen. Construction is not going ahead for now.

5.3 The campuses

The Province has committed or invested more than €700 million in the campuses and related projects since Brightlands began.

- Only Chemelot campus is financially self-sufficient.
- Greenport Venlo is not. BASF|Nunhems ended its shareholder role on 1 January 2025.
- The Data & AI Campus is not. It depends on continued public support.
- The provincial progress report calls the earning model of the Maastricht Health Campus uncertain. A further €116 million is being invested there.

According to regional broadcaster L1, the Brightlands Report 2026 gives hardly any insight into how much has been earned back. Brightlands’ own counts vary: 575 companies, 16,000 jobs and 14,000 students in one place; “more than 30,000 entrepreneurs, researchers and students” in another.

5.4 Risky investments

In 2024 the Southern Court of Audit (Zuidelijke Rekenkamer) found that the Province had insufficient control over about €190 million in risky investments: Greenport Venlo, Mijnwater and Maastricht Aachen Airport.

Mijnwater, the mine-water heat network in Heerlen, works. Its own history records losses from “improper design and failed execution of the concept” in its first decade. About €45–55 million of municipal, provincial and EU money went into it. Its expansion adds €80 million from Enexis and €40 million from the Province.

5.5 The institutes

The provincial LINK programme founded M4I (molecular imaging) and MERLN (regenerative medicine) in Maastricht. The target was eight spin-offs with 20–40 jobs. The result was four spin-offs with 32 jobs.

5.6 Alzheimer: announced, then quiet

BReIN. In 2019 the Province, Maastricht UMC+ and Maastricht University announced €20 million for the Brightlands e-Infrastructure for Neurohealth. It was to collect and analyse health big data, with Alzheimer’s disease as the first prototype, and later other diseases. Partners in Liège, Leuven and Jülich were named. No later results, publications or evaluation under the BReIN name were found.

ToxGenSolutions. This Maastricht start-up develops a microRNA blood test for preclinical Alzheimer’s disease. Its main publication (Tsamou et al., 2023) used

39 people and reported an AUC of 0.87–0.92 without independent validation. It was funded by grants: \$262,699 from the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation and a Eurostars project (2021–2024). Public communication stopped in September 2024.

Roflumilast. Maastricht researchers test this COPD drug in a phase II trial (ROMEMA) in people with mild memory problems. The protocol was published in 2024. Results were not found.

5.7 Prevention: the main goal not reached

Alzheimer Centrum Limburg ran the campaign “We zijn zelf het medicijn” (“We are the medicine ourselves”) with the app MijnBreincoach. The evaluation compared about 600 people before and 600 after.

- The primary outcome did not change. The share of people who believe dementia risk can be reduced did not rise significantly ($p = 0.26$).
- Recognition of healthy food rose from 51.7% to 62.3%. Recognition of physical activity rose from 65.6% to 73.3%.
- 20% knew the campaign.
- Awareness among men fell by 8%.
- The app was downloaded about 13,300 times. About 36% of those made an account.

The campaign was relaunched in February 2025.

5.8 The telescope

The Einstein Telescope is the main reason the Province joined ICF. The jury credited it. The cabinet calls it a government priority and made €25 million available for preparation. Wallonia reserved €200 million. The construction cost is estimated at about €2.3 billion. The bid book is due at the end of 2026. The location decision is expected in the second half of 2027. Nothing has been built. The EPathfinder test facility in Maastricht is what exists.

6. Why

The cases differ. Several patterns recur.

6.1 The knowledge belonged to others

From 2013 to 2017 Limburg filed 3,788 patent applications. SABIC filed 1,833, DSM 866 and Canon 399. Together that is 3,098, or 82%. Four of five Limburg patents came from three concerns.

Those concerns decide elsewhere. SABIC decides in Riyadh, and sells Geleen to a German investor. OCI sells to a Czech group. Canon decides in Tokyo. RWE decides in Essen. A province can host such firms. It cannot hold them.

6.2 Buildings before products

Most provincial money went into campuses: land, buildings, shareholdings. The campus companies sit on the provincial balance sheet. A campus is a landlord. It earns when tenants earn.

The one campus that pays its own way, Chemelot, stands next to an industrial park that already existed. The others were built where the tenants still had to come.

6.3 Projects without a customer

FUREC had a subsidy, a permit and a site. It had no buyer for its hydrogen. ToxGenSolutions had grants and a small study. It had no validated product. BRiN had €20 million and an announcement. Its results never became public.

In each case the money came before the customer. When the subsidy ended or was repaid, the project stopped or went quiet.

6.4 Counting attention instead of results

The prevention campaign measured recognition of messages. Its primary outcome, belief that risk can be reduced, did not change. Whether people actually changed how they live, or whether dementia fell, was not measured.

Brightlands counts companies, jobs and students in different ways in different documents. The Province reports “€650 million added value” from the campuses. What has been earned back is not reported.

6.5 The prize confirms the policy

The Province joined ICF to strengthen a brand and a telescope bid. It co-hosted the finals. The jury cited the telescope, which does not yet exist, and the Startup League, a provincial programme. The prize returns the Province's own description of itself, with an international stamp.

This is not deception. ICF's procedure is published. The Province stated its aims. But the result is not an outside judgement. It is the policy, reflected back.

7. What does carry

Some activities carry themselves. They have one thing in common: they do not depend on the campus structure.

- **Canon Production Printing, Venlo.** About 1,900 staff. Research,

development and production of printing systems. Among the top-10 R&D investors in the Netherlands. It needs no government money and no university partner.

- **Chemelot campus.** Financially self-sufficient, with a working pilot plant used by start-ups.
- **Born.** After the last Mini left the VDL Nedcar line in February 2024, the site became a defence cluster. DeltaQuad makes drones, Tulip Tech batteries, Milrem Robotics unmanned vehicles. They signed ten-year leases.
- **Mosa Meat, Maastricht.** Cultivated beef. About €120 million from private investors and 1,700 crowdfunders. More than 160 employees. No market approval in Europe yet.
- **The institutes M4I and MERLN.** About 180 staff, four spin-offs, carried by the university and the hospital.

None of these is the reason for the prize.

8. The people

The prize speaks of recovery after the mines. The figures for the people show what has not yet recovered.

- **Work.** The employment agency UWV expects jobs in South Limburg to fall from 331,700 in 2026 to 329,400 in 2028. Nearly 3,000 jobs are disappearing in Limburg industry and trade. In 2026 the minister acknowledged this.
- **Population.** Limburg has the strongest population decline of all provinces. Many young people leave.
- **Health.** Life expectancy is below the national average. South Limburg scores below average on perceived health. The Province has sought a “trend break” since 2016. It has not been reached.
- **Heerlen-Noord.** 56,000 inhabitants. Nearly 60% have a low income. Energy poverty is high. A national programme of 25 years has run since 2021.

In Heerlen the mine galleries that once took the men underground now heat a few hundred homes above them. In Geleen the plants that replaced the mines are being sold. In Heerlen-Noord, where the miners lived, nearly six in ten households live on a low income. These are the people the prize speaks about.

9. Conclusion

The Intelligent Community Forum is a commercial network run by an association-management firm. Its founders come from satellite trade bodies, advertising and regional marketing. Its award goes to members that nominate themselves, commit to attend the summit and pay for their own audit.

The Province of Limburg joined to strengthen a brand and a telescope bid. It co-hosted the finals and won. The jury cited the telescope that does not exist and a programme the Province runs itself.

Under the prize lies a different record. The chemical park is being sold. The hydrogen plant has no buyer. Three of four campuses depend on public money after more than €700 million. Alzheimer initiatives were announced and went quiet. A prevention campaign missed its main goal. What carries itself, such as Canon, Born and the Chemelot campus, does so without the structure the prize honours.

The prize describes how Limburg presents itself. It does not describe what holds.

Annotated references

The prize maker

Intelligent Community Forum. “Awards — Compete”. Why read? ICF’s own procedure: self-nomination, questionnaire, the commitment to attend the summit and dinner, and the audit paid by the community. Reading advice: the paragraphs on Top7 evaluation. <https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/compete>

Intelligent Community Forum. “Privacy Policy”. Why read? It states that ICF is managed by the Intelligent Communities Group, and gives the New York address. https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/privacy_policy

World Teleport Association. Member listing “Intelligent Communities Group (Alan/Anthony Inc.)”. Why read? It links ICF’s management group to Alan/Anthony Inc., the association-management firm. <https://www.worldteleport.org/members/?id=9022710>

Justia Trademarks. Owner: Intelligent Community Forum L.P. Why read? It shows the commercial entity and its trademark for business research and data analysis services. <https://trademarks.justia.com/owners/intelligent-community-forum-l-p-5714676>

InfluenceWatch. “Intelligent Community Forum (ICF)”. Why read? Revenue and expenses of the foundation from its Form 990 filings, 2018–2022, and the share of membership fees. <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/intelligent-community-forum-icf/>

GuideStar. “Intelligent Community Forum Foundation Inc” (EIN 26-4215605). Why read? Ruling year, address and the absence of recorded board

members. <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/26-4215605>

Intelligent Community Forum (2026). “Intelligent Community Forum Names the Top7 Intelligent Communities of 2026”, 17 June 2026. Why read? The Top7 announcement from Maastricht and New York, and ICF's description of Brightlands-Limburg. https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/intelligent_community_forum_names_the_top7_intelligent_communities_of_2026

The founders

Cisco Blogs. Author page Louis Zacharilla. Why read? His career in advertising, his role at Alan/Anthony, his education and affiliations. <https://blogs.cisco.com/author/louiszacharilla>

GovTech. Author page Robert Bell; DatacenterDynamics, profile Robert Bell. Why read? His roles at ICF, the World Teleport Association and SSPI. <https://govtech.com/authors/MT-Author-DC-Robert-Bell.html>
<https://datacenterdynamics.com/en/profile/robert-bell>

Satellite Markets (2025). “World Teleport Association Names Randall Barney as Executive Director”. Why read? It dates Bell's departure as WTA executive director and his thirty-year link with the association. <https://archives.satellitemarkets.com/people/world-teleport-association-names-randall-barney-executive-director>

GovTech. Author page John Jung. Why read? His earlier roles in regional marketing in Toronto and Calgary. <https://www.govtech.com/authors/mt-author-dc-john-jung.html>

Bell, R. and Zacharilla, L. B2B Without the BS: The Business-to-Business Sales & Marketing Manual. Why read? It shows the founders' shared professional field: sales and marketing. <https://www.amazon.com/B2B-Without-BS-Robert-Bell/dp/0974452300>

City of Dublin, Ohio. Global Institute for the Study of the Intelligent Community. Why read? The Ohio institute linked to ICF, whose director serves as juror and auditor. <https://www.econdev.dublinohiousa.gov/?p=22187>

City of Hilliard (2026). “Hilliard named to Top7 Intelligent Communities list for fourth consecutive year”. Why read? It shows the recurring participation of the same communities. <https://hilliardohio.gov/?p=92170>

The applicant

Province of Limburg (2025). Notice to the Provincial States on co-hosting the ICF Top7 Conference 2026, June 2025. Why read? The agreement of 26 May 2025, the signatories and the absence of amounts. <https://limburg.bestuurlijkeinformatie.nl/Document/View/218bc306-d030-44aa-bcb1-ccd2ecc9b865>

IO+ (2025). “Limburg kandidaat ‘Slimste regio van de wereld’”, 22 March 2025. Why read? The start of the route and the Province's stated purpose: brand and telescope. It consists of quotes from ICF and the Province. <https://ioplus.nl/nl/posts/limburg-kandidaat-slimste-regio-van-de-wereld>

ICT&health (2026). “Dutch Brightlands among the Smart21 Communities of 2026”, 1 April 2026. Why read? It dates the second nomination and the venues of each stage. <https://www.icthealth.org/news/dutch-brightlands-among-the-smart21-communities-of-2026>

IO+ (2026). “Limburg named the world's smartest region”. Why read? The jury's reasoning, the investment figures, and the statement that only Chemelot campus is self-sufficient. <https://ioplus.nl/en/posts/limburg-named-the-worlds-smartest-region>

NOS (2026). “Limburg uitgeroepen tot slimste regio ter wereld”, 15 October 2026. Why read? The report that made the title national news. <https://nos.nl/artikel/2635204-limburg-uitgeroepen-tot-slimste-regio-ter-wereld>

What failed

Hbpmmedia (2026). “Clusterplan Chemelot moet chemie verduurzamen en autonomie versterken”, 10 July 2026. Why read? The twelve projects and the figures for the chemical park. <https://hbpmmedia.nl/clusterplan-chemelot-moet-chemie-verduurzamen-en-autonomie-versterken/>

NOS. “Hoge energiekosten en concurrentie: Chemelot kijkt met zorg naar toekomst”. Why read? A short overview of the sales and closures on the park. <https://nos.nl/artikel/2623928-hoge-energiekosten-en-concurrentie-chemelot-kijkt-met-zorg-naar-toekomst>

Binnenlands Bestuur (2023). “Honderd miljoen EU-steun voor afvalverwerker RWE”. Why read? The plan and the EU subsidy for FUREC. <https://www.binnenlandsbestuur.nl/ruimte-en-milieu/honderd-miljoen-eu-steun-voor-afvalverwerker-rwe>

Argos/VPRO (2026). “Inspectie stapt naar de rechter om bezwaar te maken tegen nieuwe fabriek op Chemelot”, 26 September 2026. Why read? The Inspectorate's appeal, the repaid subsidy and the lack of buyers. Reading advice: the passage on why the plant counts as a waste incinerator. <https://argos.vpro.nl/artikelen/inspectie-stapt-naar-de-rechter-om-bezwaar-te-maken-tegen-nieuwe-fabriek-op-chemelot>

Commissie m.e.r. “Waterstofproductie uit reststromen (FUREC), provincie Limburg”. Why read? The independent review of the environmental report. <https://www.commissiemi.mer.nl/advies/waterstofproductie-uit-reststromen-furec-provincie-limburg/>

Zuidelijke Rekenkamer (2024). *Grip op investeringen*. Why read? The independent review of €190 million in risky provincial investments. https://zuidelijkerekenkamer.nl/app/uploads/2023/05/20240410_RvB_investeringen_Limburg.pdf

European Commission (2023). “The use of mine water in district heating systems – an example from Heerlen”. Why read? How Mijnwater works, what it cost and why its first decade made losses. <https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-10/The%20use%20of%20mine%20water%20in%20district%20heating%20systems%20%E2%80%93%20an%20example%20from>

Maastricht University. “Extra research groups strengthen top institutes MERLN and M4I”. Why read? Targets and realised spin-offs side by side. <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/news/extra-research-groups-strengthen-top-institutes-merln-and-m4i>

Maastricht University (2019). “Twintig miljoen euro voor aanpak Alzheimer via big data”. Why read? The announcement of BreIN, its partners and its aims. <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/nieuws/twintig-miljoen-euro-voor-aanpak-alzheimer-big-data>

Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation. Portfolio: ToxGenSolutions. Why read? The grant for the microRNA test. <https://www.alzdiscovery.org/research-and-grants/portfolio-details/21276818>

ERA-LEARN. Eurostars project “microRNA tests for diagnosing preclinical Alzheimer’s disease”. Why read? The European grant and its period. <https://era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/eurostars-2/eurostars-cut2013off-15/micrna-tests-for-diagnosing-preclinical-alzheimer2019s-disease-and-accelerating-drug-development>

ROMEMA trial protocol (2024), PMC10910786. Why read? The design of the roflumilast trial in mild memory problems. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10910786>

Tijdschrift voor Gezondheidswetenschappen. Evaluation of the campaign “We zijn zelf het medicijn”. Why read? The before-and-after measurement, the primary outcome and the subgroups. Reading advice: the results section and figure 1. <https://tvgg.nl/article/download/14386/15882/31318>

Rijksoverheid (2026). “Ministerraad benoemt speciaal gezant Einstein Telescope”, 24 April 2026. Why read? The status of the telescope bid, the competitors and the national contribution. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2026/04/24/ministerraad-benoemt-speciaal-gezant-einstein-telescope>

Why, and what carries

Octrooiencentrum Nederland. *Octrooien in Nederland (2013-2017)*. Why read? The patent base of Limburg and the 82% share of three concerns. Reading advice: the provincial dashboard and annex A. https://www.octrooiencentrum.nl/sites/default/files/2025-12/Octrooien_in_Nederland_rapport.pdf

Canon Production Printing. Corporate information, Netherlands. Why read? The size and activities of the largest R&D site in North Limburg. <https://cpp.canon/about/corporate-information/worldwide/netherlands/>

IO+. “VDL Defentec Born reborn as a new Dutch defense production hub”. Why read? The change from car plant to defence cluster. <https://ioplus.nl/en/posts/vdl-defentec-born-reborn-as-a-new-dutch-defense-production-hub>

RetailDetail (2026). “Mosa Meat seeks growth outside Europe with Dutch government support”. Why read? The scale of Mosa Meat and the state of its approval. <https://www.retaildetail.eu/news/food/mosa-meat-seeks-growth-outside-europe-with-dutch-government-support/>

The people

UWV. *Regionale arbeidsmarktprognose Zuid-Limburg 2026-2028*. Why read? The job forecast and its scenarios. <https://www.uwv.nl/assets-kai/files/ea902310-a217-4a0e-81d0-bea08946cfb5/zuid-limburg-regionale-arbeidsmarktprognose-2026-2028.pdf>

CBS (2026). *Monitor Nationaal Programma Heerlen-Noord, update 2026*. Why read? Income, health and energy poverty in the poorest district of the region. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2026/07/monitor-nationaal-programma-heerlen-noord-update-2026>