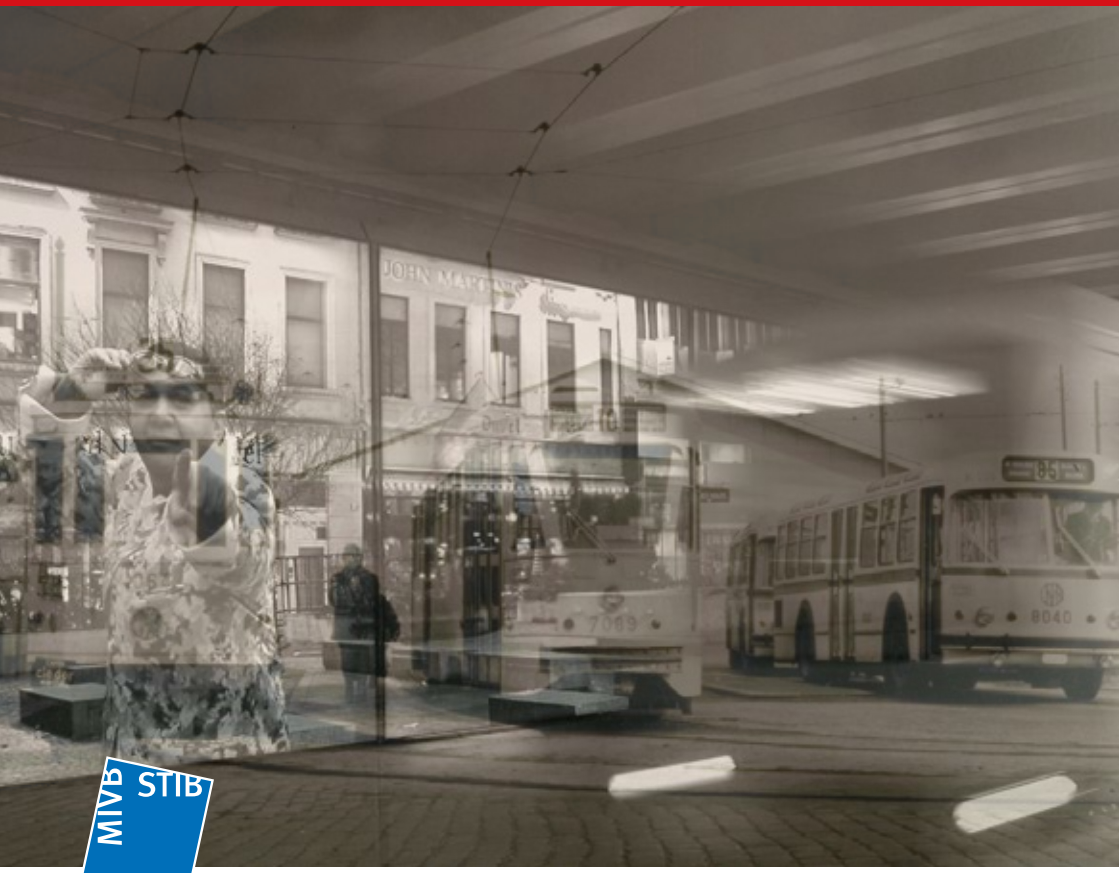
# A SHORT HISTORY
## OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN BRUSSELS



MIVB STIB

.brussels

TOGETHER, LET'S GET BRUSSELS MOVING

# A SHORT HISTORY
## OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN BRUSSELS

**Brussels and its bus, tram and metro lines are closely linked. Public transport has been a part of Brussels for almost two centuries, contributing to its development and the emergence of new districts. Delving into the history of public transport means rediscovering part of the history of this Brussels that is so dear to us.**

This brochure covers the most important events in the history of public transport in Brussels, and more specifically of the STIB. Some people have tried to tell its story in more detail, as in "Histoire des transports publics à Bruxelles", volumes I and II, and "Les transports publics bruxellois" by Thierry Demey, which served as sources for this brochure. Our thanks to their authors and to the members of the Tram Museum who helped us create this brochure.

If you prefer to listen rather than read, let yourself be transported through the history and the behind-the-scenes of public transport with "En route", the STIB podcasts. Listen to them on the StibStories blog and on your favourite streaming platforms.

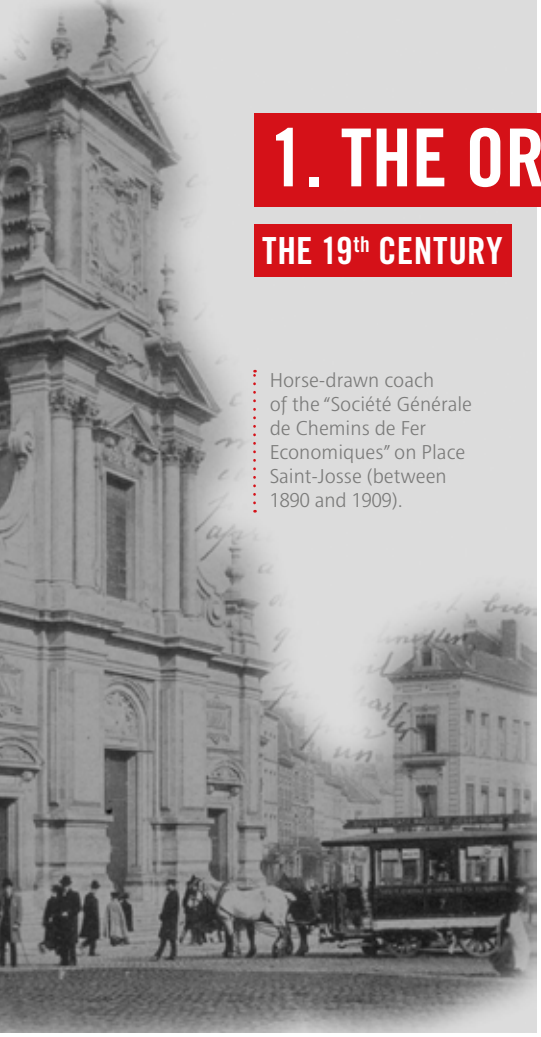
To immerse yourself in the world of public transport, don't miss the Tram Museum, adjacent to the Woluwe tram depot and guardian of the past of Brussels public transport. You will discover vintage vehicles and even travel in them.
All the information you need is available at **www.trammuseum.brussels/en/**

We wish you a pleasant trip aboard our time machine!

**DISCOVER "EN ROUTE", THE STIB PODCASTS:**

# 1. THE ORIGINS

## THE 19th CENTURY



Horse-drawn coach of the "Société Générale de Chemins de Fer Economiques" on Place Saint-Josse (between 1890 and 1909).

## AT FIRST THERE WAS...

...the railway! To go back to the origins of public transport in Brussels, we have to go back to 1835, the year the railway line between Brussels and Mechelen was inaugurated. In those days, it was rare to leave your district. Only the more affluent classes travelled, either in their private vehicles or by stagecoach services. Needless to say, the price was prohibitive for those who were neither aristocrats nor businessmen.

The arrival of the railroad brought about a major change. A sense of "wanderlust" gained ground and the need arose to connect Allée Verte station - the former railway station of the Brussels-Antwerp link. Omnibus lines were soon put into service. These vehicles, pulled by horses, were provided by a succession of different private companies. In around 1867-1868, there were seven horse-drawn omnibus lines serving Brussels, all of which terminated at the current location of the Bourse. They owe their development to the creation, in London, of a company called "The Belgian Street Railways Omnibus Co. Limited", also known as Société Vaucamps, after its managing director.

### DID YOU KNOW?

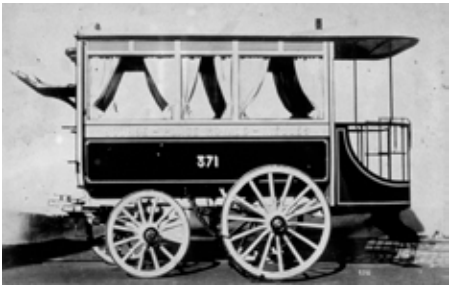
The Schaerbeek depot, still in use today, was built between 1874 and 1878. The "Ecuries van de Tram" adjacent to the depot are aptly named, as this building housed the horses needed for horse-drawn vehicles at the time. Today, this site hosts cultural, social and ecological events.

## PLENTY OF HORSEPOWER

The omnibus services were not very profitable. Several horses were needed to pull them. In some places, additional horses had to be harnessed to the omnibuses to enable them to climb hills. In addition, the streets were paved at the time, which did not help with passenger comfort.

The solution was the tram! Created in New York, this invention involved running horse-drawn vehicles on rails. As a result, passengers were less shaken and the traction was much easier. After a first aborted attempt in 1854, the first pavement-level railway line was opened between the Porte de Namur and the Bois de la Cambre in 1869.

Various companies have operated tram lines in Brussels over the years, gradually replacing the omnibuses, although these did not completely disappear. Of particular note is the Tram-Car Nord-Midi company, which operated the omnibus line between the Gare du Midi and the Gare du Nord from 1895.




Omnibus 371 (1893) of the "Tramways bruxellois" that travelled on the "Bourse-Ixelles" line. The precursor to the current line 71.

Place de la Bourse at the end of the 19th century.

Each company had its own vehicles and applied different rates and rules. The Tramways bruxellois were born in 1875 from the merger of the companies Maurice and Vaucamps. They owned the vast majority of the Brussels tram lines and soon tried to obtain a monopoly on trams in Brussels, but did not succeed until much later.

Horse-drawn traction was still a heavy financial burden for the tram companies. Veterinary care, food, farrier, stable boy... And, of course, the animals needed rest and could only work 4 to 5 hours a day.

## FANTASTIC ELECTRIC

In 1892, an epidemic of typhoid fever struck the cavalry, encouraging operators to test other options. One invention in particular, the trolley, was of particular interest. This was a device installed on top of the tram, allowing it to capture the energy needed for its traction. In 1893, the first trolley tram line was inaugurated in Belgium, not in Brussels, but on the line between Herstal and Liège. Brussels followed in 1894, on the line from Place Stéphanie to Uccle, via Avenue Brugmann. The direct current supply was provided by a central plant established in part of the old depot of Rue Brogniez.

The Tervuren and Boitsfort lines were electrified in 1897 for the International Exhibition. On this occasion, bar cars were operated, where passengers could have a drink or play cards.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Although it originated in the United States, the trolley owes its discovery to a... Belgian, Charles Van de Poele. Originally from Lichtervelde, this engineer emigrated to the United States where he worked with Edison.**

This tram was the forerunner of the current Tram Experience, although the latter offers a much more elaborate menu today as it travels the streets of the capital.

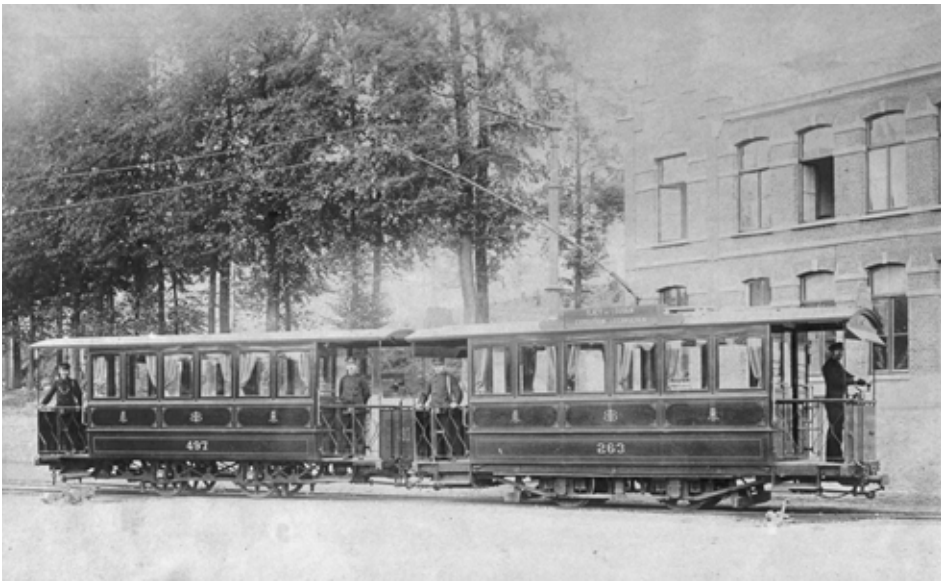
In 1899, the Tramways bruxellois took over the narrow-gauge railways from Brussels to Ixelles-Boondael. However, the Belgian government set conditions for this takeover, including certain road improvements, the rectification of the track gauge, the standardisation of fares and, lastly, the complete electrification of the network.

The 1910 exhibition at Solbosch with its internal "little train".

Gare du Midi with an electric tram of the "Tramways bruxellois" in the early 20th century.


First electric trams on the "Nord-Midi" line (1894).

The Gare du Nord in the 1930s.



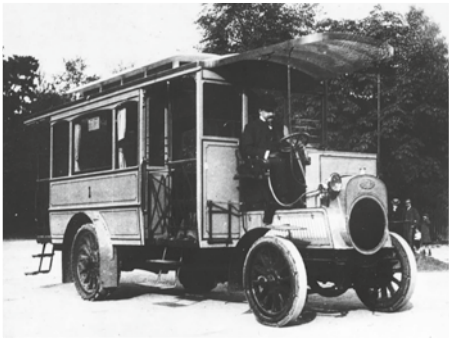

Tram of the "Chemins de Fer à voie étroite de Bruxelles à Ixelles-Boondael" company in front of the Woluwe depot (1897).


On Sundays, line 40 disembarked strollers at the Quatre-Bras de Tervuren (1930).

# 2. THE WRATH OF WAR

## THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

During the war, a tram is assigned to the daily transport of milk.



First motorised omnibus, September 1907.

## THE FIRST BUSES

The bus made a timid entrance onto the Brussels network at the beginning of the 20th century. The Tram-Car company was the first to experiment with a bus in 1906, followed in 1907 by Tramways bruxellois, to mention just two of the few attempts. However, Tramways bruxellois threw in the towel in 1913. The Tram-Car company continued the experiment until the start of the war, which meant that it could not renew its concession. It was not until after the war that the bus was introduced.

## THE JUGS TAKE THE TRAM

During the '14-'18 War, there were shortages of everything, including the means of making deliveries. The Brussels trams came to the rescue. On 17 May 1917, a tram is assigned to the daily transport of milk jugs. The trams were also used to transport the wounded, supply food, remove rubbish and even as hearses.

Since horses were requisitioned for the war, the tram companies also had to be creative in transporting equipment. Consequently, to transport the equipment needed for public transport to the right place, they opted for river transport by barge or... bovine traction!


## DID YOU KNOW?

Until the telephone became more widespread, the trams had a letter box, allowing mail to be sent quickly from one side of the city to the other.

## THE GLORY DAYS OF THE TRAM

In 1921, the Tramways bruxellois decommissioned their last horse-drawn ladder car, marking the end of horses on the Brussels transport network. The automobile slowly gained ground. It was also at this time that the bus became increasingly popular, thanks to the advances made during the war. In 1924, the first bus line was created between North and South, as well as a second line between Place de la Monnaie and the current Boulevard Général Jacques, formerly known as Boulevard Militaire.

However, the inter-war period was the heyday of the trams. The automobile was still in its infancy and the tram remained the main means of transport. In 1925, the Tramways bruxellois created the timetables in graphic form. The result was improved regularity and a better match between supply and demand.

## TROLLEYBUSES, THE COUSIN OF THE ELECTRIC BUS

Don't confuse buses with trolleybuses. The former were driven by a heat engine, while trolleybuses, although fitted with tyres, were driven by an electric engine. The power came from two overhead lines (also called catenaries). This differentiated them from electric buses, which operated with on-board batteries.

In 1939, the Tramways bruxellois launched their trolleybus line between Forest and Machelen. These vehicles, which combine trolley traction and rubber-tyred travel, seemed to be well suited to the winding route and the significant difference in altitude on the route taken.

Trolleybus 6002 (1939).

A total of 24 trolleybuses were in operation in Brussels until 1964, when they were replaced by buses.

## THE TRAM BECOMES AN AMBULANCE

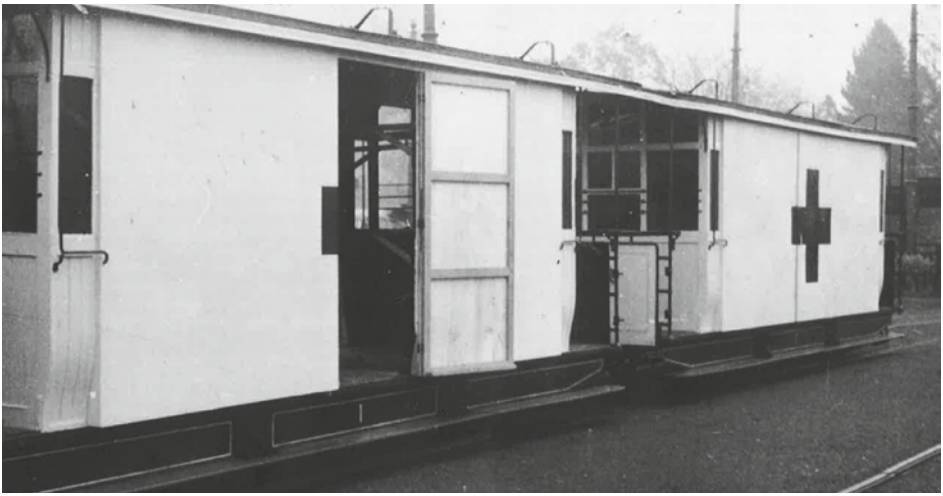
Once again, Brussels, its population and its transport suffered from the war. The staff was mobilised, raw materials and buses were requisitioned, petrol was reserved for the army, and a lot of material damage occurred. The Tramways bruxellois were forced to reduce their service, but the only means of transport allowed were trams and bicycles. It was a time of hardship, as evidenced by the conversion of tram trailers into ambulances to transport the wounded.

The war brought some changes to the transport network, such as the introduction of a single class and the abolition of the gutter feeder. Since 1942, drivers have been able to call a central dispatching office in the event of an incident or to request an intervention.

## CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE TRAM

The post-war period was mainly marked by the rise of the automobile. Trams got caught up in traffic jams and saw their commercial speed drop. A whole series of measures were taken to make public transport more efficient again in the following decades, such as moving stops beyond junctions and the remote control of switches. This was the beginning of a new era.

Trailers converted into ambulances.



# 3. THE BIRTH OF THE STIB

## THE 1950's

The Rue Henri Maus along the Brussels Stock Exchange in the 1950s .


## STIB IS BORN

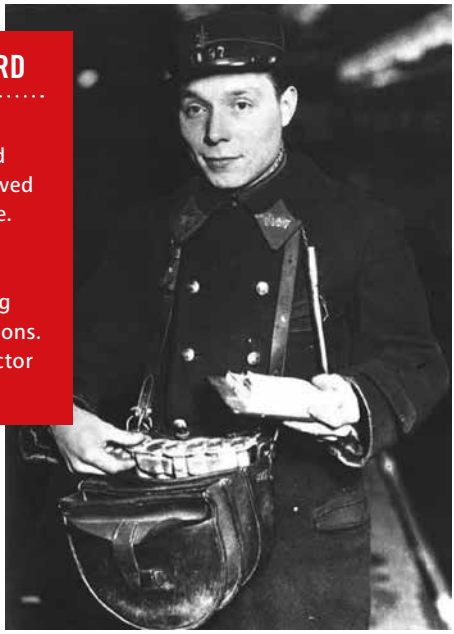
STIB was officially founded on 1 January 1954. The Belgian State, the Province of Brabant and 21 Brussels municipalities joined the SA "Les Tramways bruxellois" to create the "Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles", which succeeds the T.U.A.B. (for "Transports urbains de l'Agglomération bruxelloise"). At that time, half of the company's capital belonged to the public authorities and half to the SA "Les Tramways bruxellois". The STIB also took over the Autobus bruxellois in 1955.

## THE 'BUSIFICATION'

The first purely STIB bus line opened on 16 July 1956. This was line 49 and ran between Place Bockstael and the Gare du Midi. Busification continued until the 1970s.

## THE DRIVER, THE ONLY MASTER ON BOARD

In 1956, the driver was the only employee on board and was responsible for both driving and collecting fares. The job of conductor still survived on tram lines but the "one-employee service", i.e. collection directly by the driver, was gradually extended throughout the network thanks to a coordinated programme of conductor retraining and the restructuring of prices and fare collections. No buses or trams have travelled with a conductor since 8 May 1978.



## THE FIRST DEDICATED LANES

In 1957, Brussels was working tirelessly to prepare for the World's Fair, to be held the following year. It began to develop its rail network, taking advantage of the major road works carried out for this international event. Tram stations opened in Heysel and the first dedicated lanes were created for trams on the Grande Ceinture and Avenue Louise.

## THE FIRST TRAM TUNNEL

As well as the roadworks undertaken during the hectic preparations for Expo 58, several tunnels were dug to facilitate public transport access. One major tunnel near the Gare du Midi was the "Constitution" tunnel created by engineers from the Office National de la Jonction (Nord-Midi railway). This tunnel is now a major bottleneck, which explains why a new tunnel is dug under Place de la Constitution to accommodate the new metro line 3.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**World's fairs were popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Held in Brussels in 1880, 1888, 1897, 1910, 1935 and finally 1958, they were opportunities to develop the public transport network and acquire new vehicles to transport the many visitors.**

Premetro station Schuman.

# 4. THE FIRST SIGNS OF AN UNDERGROUND NETWORK

## FROM THE 1960's TO THE 1970's

Works
Rue de la Loi.

## STIB EXPLORES THE UNDERGROUND

Buses were popular in the 1960's and began to take over from trams, as they were much cheaper and easier to operate. In 1964, 40 kilometres of rails disappeared, while the bus network expanded from 40 to 185 km. Private cars were also becoming more widespread at this time, and STIB explored the possibility of underground tracks to combat this competition. This was an opportunity to resurrect the first plans for an underground tram network, which dated back to 1892.

A line 5 bus in 1963-'65. This was the first series of buses with double doors at the front.


Buses were stuck in car traffic, that constantly densified.


A bus with large windows on line 80 at the Montgomery roundabout in 1978-'79.

## WORKS STARTS ON THE PREMETRO

In 1965, work started on the construction of the premetro around the Schuman Roundabout, on the future east-west axis. The work was carried out by hundreds of miners, whose mines in Limburg and Wallonia were in the processes of shutting down. This avoided the need to make highly qualified personnel unemployed. The decision-makers and engineers anticipated the future, as the tunnels were initially used by trams, but their size was that of metro trains. In this way, the underground infrastructure could be operated directly with the existing equipment, as a quick solution to relieve surface traffic, while leaving time for the STIB to order new vehicles and for passengers to become familiar with the underground network. Something for everyone!

### "JEF, DE FLÈCHE IS AF!"

When the surface tram plunged into the first premetro tunnels in 1969, the current collection system had to be adapted. It was impossible to continue current collection with sag due to the low height of the tunnels. The pantograph took over from the trolley pole. In 1977, STIB extended this articulated system to all its trams. "Jef, de flèche is af!" is nothing more than a memory for elderly Brussels residents.

## BUSES WITH LARGE WINDOWS

In 1967, a new type of bus appeared. No more small separate windscreens that sloped like skylights. Drivers and passengers could now gaze at the streets of Brussels through wide windows. Plenty of daylight entered the vehicles and comfort and safety were improved.

## MAJOR UPHEAVAL ON THE NETWORK

The development of the underground network led to the reorganisation of the surface network between October 1967 and April 1968. The number of lines was reduced, in order to keep service frequency high and create shared sections, which would make it easier to integrate the future premetro. This restructuring, the largest in STIB's history, was not all plain sailing: ridership fell below the symbolic 200 million mark at the end of 1968. Public transport experienced a 12.5% drop in passenger numbers between 1967 and 1969. But it would more than make up these numbers later.

The first premetro line opened in 1969 between Schuman and De Brouckère. The terminus is situated aboveground, on the Marché aux Poissons, and forms a loop where passengers can get in and get out.

## KING BAUDOUIN OPENS THE PREMETRO

King Baudouin opened the first section of the east-west line on 17 December 1969. It was 3.6 kilometres long and comprised six underground stations - Schuman, Maelbeek, Arts-Loi, Parc, Central Station and De Brouckère, with a surface terminus at Place Sainte-Catherine. A year later, the Petite Ceinture premetro also became operational. A section of around 2 km, comprising four stations between Madou and Porte de Namur, opened on 21 December 1970. The line was extended to Rogier in 1974. It was also at this time that art in the metro was born, with the new stations enhanced with works of art that enriched the cultural heritage of Brussels.

## ARTICULATED ENGINES

The fleet had to grow and modernise despite this tense economic context. In 1972, the STIB purchased type 7000 trams again, equipped itself with articulated "7500" vehicles and, at the same time, with about 30 "7800" bi-directional vehicles. These trams were fitted with two driver's cabins and doors on both sides. This made it easier to develop and operate the termini. As when drivers reached the destination, they could leave their cabin, walk through the tram and set off in the other direction, with a minimum number of manoeuvres.

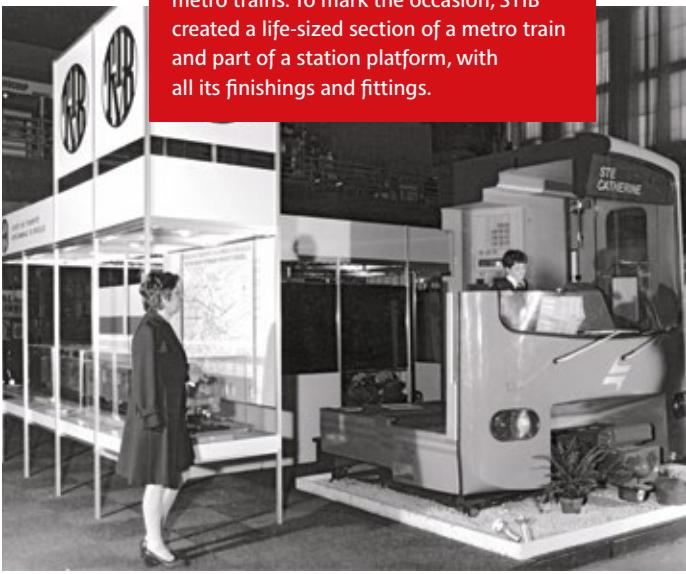
Opening of the Brussels metro on 20 September 1976.

A line 90 tram with two driver's cabins.

The success of bi-directional vehicles also encouraged STIB to transform its existing trams, fitting them with two driver's cabins. That same year, a fleet of 480 brand new buses replaced the 400 decommissioned vehicles and the Delta depot was built for the occasion. It was put into service in 1976.

## WHAT COLOUR SEATS FOR THE METRO?

In the early 1970's, STIB was working hard to prepare for the arrival of the metro. From 6 May to 21 June 1972, crowds packed into the Ravenstein gallery to visit the exhibition on the future metro. The public was invited to decide on the colour of the seats and the interior of the future metro trains. To mark the occasion, STIB created a life-sized section of a metro train and part of a station platform, with all its finishings and fittings.



# 5. THE METRO OPENS IN BRUSSELS

## FROM THE 1970's TO THE 1980's

### THE METRO OPENS WITH GREAT FANFARE

On 20 September 1976, crowds gathered for the inauguration of the first metro line in Brussels. Such popular jubilation had not been seen since the Liberation. This 11 km line, comprising a shared section from De Brouckère to Merode, split into two branches beyond the Parc du Cinquantenaire to serve the south-east (Beaulieu) and north-east (Tomberg) districts. Forty-five trains were commissioned for the occasion. The people of Brussels willingly enjoyed the modernity of this new means of transport.

### THE TRAMWAYS BRUXELLOIS SOLD THEIR SHARES

The drop in passenger revenue coupled with the increase in social charges and the costs of studies and investments for the metro were undermining the STIB's finances. As a result, in 1978 the State bought out the shares of the STIB held by the Tramways bruxellois. The Brussels transport network was in the hands of the public authorities.

Works for the construction of the metro: tunnel under the canal.

### THE METRO DIVES UNDER THE CANAL

On 8 May 1981, the metro line that links the east of the city to the centre was extended to the west, with a section running under the canal to serve three new stations: Comte de Flandre, Etangs Noirs and Beekkant. The operation to dig the metro tunnel under the canal was perilous, but the engineers were more than up to the challenge! As they were on the Petite Ceinture, where the metro crosses the canal at Place Sainctelette.

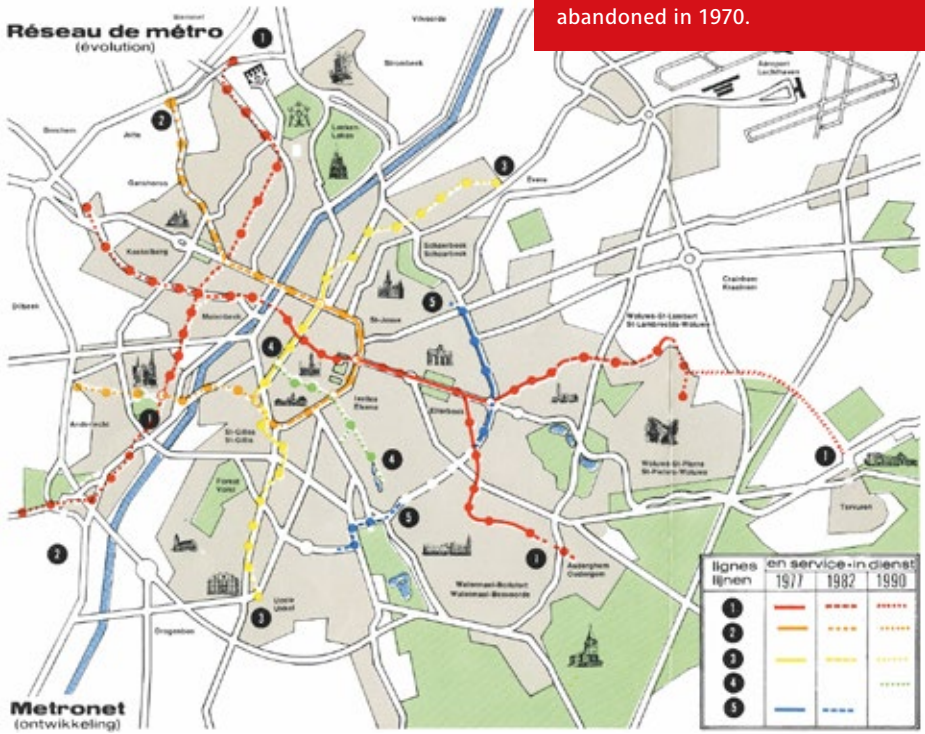
## TWELVE NEW STATIONS

In 1982, the STIB underground network dug its own tracks into the Brussels subsoil. Twelve new metro stations opened to passengers on the eastwest axis: to the east towards Woluwe-Saint-Lambert (Roodebeek, Vandervelde, Alma), south-west towards Anderlecht (Gare de l'Ouest, Jacques Brel, Aumale, Saint-Guidon), and north-west towards Koekelberg, Jette and Laeken (Osseghem, Simonis, Belgica, Pannenhuis, Bockstael).

At the time, the planned development of the metro was somewhat different, although the North-Bordet line was already imagined and was even projected to extend to Uccle.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The first metros to run in Brussels were... Parisian! These vehicles had been recovered to lengthen the convoys running on the surface rail link to Tervuren following its electrification in 1931. Dedicated to the transport of people since the end of the 19th century, the line was used for the transport of goods from 1958, before being completely abandoned in 1970.



Articulated bus on line 71, place des Palais.

## THE ARRIVAL OF ARTICULATED BUSES

STIB ordered larger capacity buses to manage the very high passenger numbers (yes, already) on line 71. As a result, the first articulated buses appeared in the urban landscape of Brussels in 1985. There were 25 of these buses at the time, with a capacity of 140 passengers, but their number has continued to increase over the years, reaching 40% today.

The Place Louise premetro station was built during the same year. It was renamed "Louise" when the Petite Ceinture premetro line was converted into a subway in 1988.

## THE METRO EXPANDS EASTWARDS AND WESTWARDS

In 1985, the metro continued its expansion underneath Brussels, with the extension of the east-west line as far as Hermann-Debroux on one side, and Heysel and Veeweyde on the other.

## A MORE REGULAR NETWORK

An "Operations Support System" (OSS) was developed to improve the regularity of surface traffic. It gradually became operational on all bus lines from the end of October 1987. The OSS system allowed the real-time management of bus traffic, the analysis of actual travel times, and better matching of route schedules.

## A "REAL" METRO ON LINE 2

On 2 October 1988, Brussels celebrated the conversion of Petite Ceinture line 2, which until then had operated with large-capacity trams, into a real metro line.

This was a real achievement for the engineers, who had had less than two years, from when the decision was made, to complete the studies and carry out the work. It was an important stage that paved the way for a real network of metro lines.

## FIVE NEW STATIONS ON THE PETITE CEINTURE

In 1988, Petite Ceinture line 2, which connected Louise to Rogier, was also extended when it was converted into a metro. No fewer than five new stations were created: Ribaucourt, Yser, Hôtel des Monnaies, Porte de Hal and Gare du Midi.

# 6. A CUSTOMER-FOCUSED NETWORK

## THE 1990's

## THE REGIONALISATION OF THE STIB

In 1989, the STIB came under regional control. This step marked a change of direction in the vision of the public transport company, with the adoption of its first management contract in 1991. This contract specified the objectives and responsibilities of both parties, namely the Brussels Region and the STIB.

1991 also brought with it an updated image. Goodbye to primrose yellow, the colour of choice for Brussels vehicles since 1913, and hello to canary yellow. The STIB also adopted a new logo - a blue rectangle with a red base, inclined at 12.5°, the angle of a runner's back.

On the trams, it is placed at door level to indicate their location and the red point makes it possible to see the location of the steps.

### UNDER THE BANNER OF THE IRIS

**In January 1989, STIB added an Iris, the symbol of the Brussels Region, to its logo. The fourth reform of State gave responsibility for public transport organisation to the three Regions. The Brussels-Capital Region was now free to organise urban and regional transport on its territory as it saw fit.**

## WINNING BACK PASSENGERS

The management contract set out a large number of measures to win back passengers. Of particular note was the VICOM program, which later became AVANTI. It provided for the creation of road facilities to improve commercial speed, with exclusive lanes, remote controlled traffic lights, etc. Trams already had exclusive lanes in many places and/or ran on wide arteries. For ease, the proposed improvements were primarily aimed at this mode of transport in the first instance.

## NATURAL GAS

Respect for the environment became a major concern for STIB, which took another step in the area of technological progress. In 1993, 60 new buses were added to the fleet, 20 of which were fitted with a compressed natural gas engine. A compressor station, built in the Haren complex and funded by the Brussels Region, meant that vehicles could be recharged while parked. In 2010, these buses were reaching the end of their life but were not replaced due to the high cost of purchasing and maintaining these vehicles.

## BRAND NEW BUSES

The STIB bus fleet began to age a little. It was time to bring in some fresh blood, so in 1991, STIB decided to gradually replace its vehicle fleet. The new buses were fitted with the latest technology of the time: a top speed of at least 70km/h, a fully low, horizontal floor and a selection of external and internal materials resistant to wear, corrosion and vandalism.


## A NEW LOOK FOR THE TRAM

Was this the end of the traditional image of Jacques Brel's famous Tram 33? The arrival of the T2000 in late April 1994, one hundred years after the introduction of the first electric trams in Brussels, brought a futuristic touch to the capital's network. With its low floors and wide doors, this new tram model offered passengers unprecedented space and comfort.

## WHAT TIME IS THE NEXT METRO?

In 1994, small red lights began to blink on the "Infodyn" (dynamic information) panels installed in metro stations on the east-west axis. This marked a revolution in terms of passenger information. This technological innovation meant that they could follow the progress of their metro train on the line and therefore know exactly how long they had to wait before it arrived in the station. Dynamic information has also reached the surface, with a total of 1,450 surface stops (the busiest) now fitted with waiting time indicators.

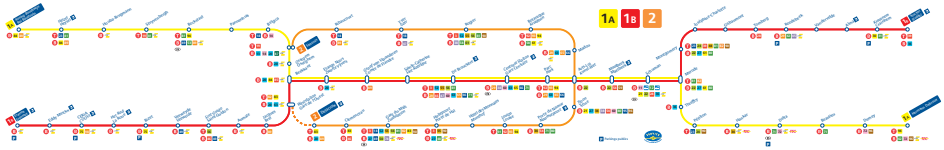
## THE METRO EXPANDS FURTHER

In 1998, the metro was extended to Roi Baudouin station and the new Heysel station was opened, while at the other end of the region, work began to extend the metro to Erasmus hospital. This section was opened in September 2003.

## THE NETWORK ON THE WEB

The STIB surfed the web and launched its website on 5 March 1999. The address "**www.stib.be**" (now **www.stib.brussels**) was an immediate success. Two years later, users were able to search for a route online.

Network plan of the Brussels metro before the "looping" of the Petite Ceinture.




93

# 7. MODERNISATION CONTINUES

## THE 2000's


One of the first midibuses of STIB.

### SMALLER BUSES

In 2000, two small new arrivals made an appearance in the STIB vehicle fleet: the Midibus and the Cito. The midibuses are less bulky than the traditional bus and can carry around 50 people. They are ideal for serving residential districts at off-peak times.

### WHEN WILL MY BUS ARRIVE?

STIB can increasingly rely on real-time information thanks to developments in technology. The first wait-time displays at stops, integrated into the shelters at the stops, flourished on the network in 2003. It was another decade before the new models appeared on the network. This was in line with the introduction of an assisted regulation system, which complemented the operating support system and allowed buses to be regulated in real time at any time of day. This system was extended to the tram in 2007.

## A NEW TRAM AND BUS MASTER PLAN

To better adapt the surface offer to the needs of passengers, the STIB began in 2002 a detailed analysis of the entire tram network. In July 2005, after a feasibility study, the Brussels government approved the new tram and bus master plan. From 2006, the tram and bus network therefore underwent a major overhaul with the creation of new lines.

## A HINT OF "ART NOUVEAU" ON THE NETWORK

In March 2006, a new generation of trams appeared on the streets of Brussels: the 32-metre long T3000. It was elegant, spacious, comfortable, accessible and ecological and brought a hint of "art nouveau" to STIB. This was the perfect time to update liveries across the fleet. So it was goodbye to yellow and blue, and hello to silver combined with bronze, copper or gold. Autumn saw the arrival of the T4000, which is 43 metres long and can carry up to 258 passengers.



Canari yellow PCC-tram on line 94 and T3001 in "art nouveau" style.


Boa metro train in Schuman station.

## THE BOA SLIPS INTO THE METRO

This has nothing to do with the snake found in tropical forests! The Brussels boa appeared on the STIB network in 2008. With its revolutionary design, this new, 94-metre metro train is well named, as flexible parts mean that the train has six adjoining carriages, allowing travellers to move easily from one compartment to another. Its arrival brought a breath of fresh air to a network experiencing ever-growing passenger numbers.

## NOCTIS TAKES NIGHT OWLS HOME

Don't want to miss the end of the film? Fancy going home a bit later than usual at the weekend? Now you can, thanks to the night bus network. Launched in 2007, the Noctis network runs at the weekend between midnight and 3 am. Party-goers and other night-owls can now return home safely.

## STIB TIGHTENS UP ITS PETITE CEINTURE

It was real upheaval in spring 2009. The Brussels metro experienced its biggest expansion since it opened in 1976. What is commonly known as the line 2 “loop” was actually a major reorganisation of the entire underground network. The new metro now had four lines (1 and 5 running east-west, 2 and 6 on the Petite Ceinture) and the north-south premetro line was added to this structure.

After the “looping” of the Petite Ceinture, the metro network is reorganised in four lines.

# 8. A RAPIDLY CHANGING NETWORK

## THE 2010's

Opening of the extended line 8 (2018).

### MORE DYNAMIC INFORMATION

To complement the website **www.stib.be**, a secondary site m.stib.be and a mobile application in Android and iPhone versions were launched by the STIB in 2010. Since 2012, the STIB has also used social media networks to keep its customers informed and respond to their queries in real time.

A new waiting time display with colour screens was introduced at stops. It was followed in 2016 by a third model, which is much lighter and easy to install thanks to a small battery power supply. This lighter version can also inform passengers at temporary stops.

At the end of 2013, STIB rolled out voice announcements in all its buses, following on from the metro and the tram. In addition to these announcements, dynamic screens were introduced that display the route and the position of the vehicle in real time. STIB makes life easier!

### GOODBYE TRAM 94, HELLO TRAM 8

After a first extension to Herrmann-Debroux in 2005 and a second to the Tram Museum in 2011, tram 94 was extended by four more stops to Roodebeek in 2018. The line now connects with metro lines 2 and 6 at Louise, with line 5 at Herrmann-Debroux and finally with line 1 at Roodebeek.

Line 94 then became line 8, thus asserting its position as a major, efficient, structuring line thanks to its mostly exclusive route.

## LINE 9 IS BORN

The first tracks for tram line 9 were laid in September 2015. This new line, which opened in September 2018, connects the Simonis metro station, Ancienne Barrière, Jardins de Jette and UZ-VUB Hospital to the Avenue de l'Arbre Ballon. A second milestone was reached in December 2021, with the extension of line 9 to Roi Baudouin station. The line now connects Simonis and Roi Baudouin in only twenty minutes. The extended line was an immediate success.

## BUSES INVOLVED IN AN... ENERGY REVOLUTION

Following an inconclusive test in 2012, STIB announced a real energy revolution with the purchase of new, fully-electric and hybrid-electric buses in 2018. In June, it opened line 33 to link the upper and lower parts of the city. This new line is operated using seven 100% electric Citybuses that are slightly smaller than a standard bus and ideal for the narrow city-centre streets. Five standard electric buses and 25 articulated electric buses have also been commissioned between the end of 2018 and mid-2019. Lastly, around 400 hybrid-electric buses (238 standard and 164 articulated) are also gradually introduced onto the streets of Brussels between 2018 and 2021.

Tram on line 9.


The STIB installs solar panels on the roofs of its buildings.



Hybrid, electric and hydrogen buses.

And that's not all. The STIB continues to invest in electric buses, and will make new orders for additional buses. This change will make travelling on public transport even more ecological!

In 2021, the STIB began testing a hydrogen bus. This more flexible technology should help the STIB to achieve its energy transition. The test aims to study alternatives to electric buses as a replacement for combustion engine buses. Hydrogen offers several advantages, including the ability to fill up in just a few minutes, with twice the range of a battery-powered bus.

## THE BRUSSELS GOVERNMENT APPROVES THE BUS PLAN

The city is evolving, and the needs of passengers with it. The STIB therefore embarked on a major and unprecedented process that involved the total overhaul of its bus network so it could better respond to new mobility needs. After a long consultation process with the municipalities, as well as with residents and users, the Brussels government approved the new bus plan. It provides for the creation of six new bus lines and the adaptation of 30 existing lines, including the delivery of new electric and hybrid vehicles. Implemented from 2018, this is a small revolution taking place on the Brussels public transport network.

## A NEW FUTURISTIC METRO

New metro trains were needed to increase service frequency and serve the future metro line 3. The STIB has ordered 43 new "M7" trains, the first of which was put into service in 2021. These vehicles provide greater comfort and modernity, with automatic door opening, new multi-purpose areas dedicated to people with reduced mobility, pushchairs and bicycles, large information screens, coloured LED signage above the doors and platform-level floors.

New M7 metro train.

The STIB relies on digital technology to inform its passengers.

## DIGITAL REVOLUTION

In 2018, the STIB went one step further with a brand new mobile app, integrating new features such as a route search and the ability to identify yourself and add your MOBIB card to make purchases from the app. Mobility is also evolving at a lightning speed, with the arrival of new forms of mobility and the concept of "Mobility as a Service" or "MaaS". In 2019, STIB got in on the action with the launch of its test MaaS platform, MoveBrussels. The application was initially launched as a pilot project, with a test phase involving around 2,000 testers.

## THE ARRIVAL OF TNG

Fifteen years after the arrival of the first T3000 and T4000, the first TNG - for "Tram New Generation " - arrived in Brussels. In total, the STIB has ordered 90 of this new model trams to meet future challenges of creating new lines, increasing frequencies and replacing old vehicles. The first prototype arrived at the Haren depot in autumn 2021. This was the first of an order for 90 vehicles, which will eventually provide 10,000 additional seats on the tram network.

The new TNG in the Haren depot.

# 9. DON'T FORGET TO VALIDATE YOUR TICKET!

## ONE TICKET PER LINE

Before the Second World War, all the private companies that ran urban public transport set their own fares. There were as many different fares as there were journeys. Passengers bought a ticket that was valid only on the line they were using. A supplement was charged in the event of a connection. There were also different fares for different sections of the lines. Passengers also had the option of travelling in 1st or 2nd class, at different fares of course. It was very complicated. Over the years, the number of transport companies has decreased, and with it the number of different fares.


1901


1905


1919


1930


## SCHOOL SEASON TICKETS

The first type of season ticket to be created, well before the others, was the school season ticket. It was created in 1886, whereas it was not until much later that other types of season tickets appeared.

## UNIFICATION OF RATES

Since the creation of the STIB, fares have been linked to criteria that determine their evolution. The Brussels government sets the fares every year.

## THE FIRST TICKET VENDING MACHINES

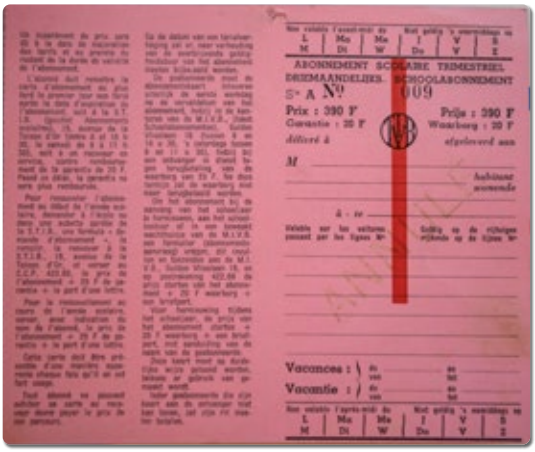
The sale and inspection of tickets were the responsibility of the ticket collector, and then the of driver following the "busification". Since the introduction of the premetro in 1969, passengers have been able to buy a ticket at the ticket machines.

## IT'S RAINING DIAMONDS

In 1972, the first ticket validators came to the rescue of drivers, who had been responsible for collecting tickets since the disappearance of conductors.
This mechanical system removes a small diamond shape from 5- or 10-journey tickets, scattering small cardboard diamonds onto the floor. Single-journey tickets entitle passengers to make one trip and are validated by a machine designed especially for this purpose.

## METRO, TRAM, BUS AND TRAIN SUBSCRIPTIONS

Over the years, STIB has developed a wide range of tickets depending on the customer's travel frequency, age and socio-economic situation. In 1970, the MTB subscription was introduced, which allows passengers to travel on the STIB network as well as on all public transport networks (SNCB, TEC and De Lijn) in the Brussels Region.



1962


1983


1973


1986


1996

## FULL-NETWORK SCHOOL SEASON TICKET

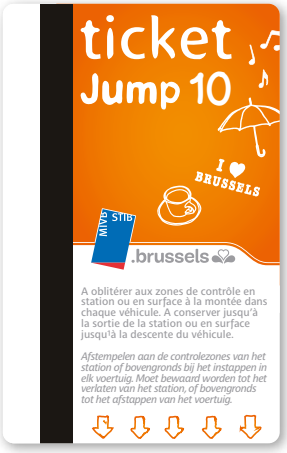
In 1974, the STIB launched its new formula, the school season ticket. Unlike its predecessor (valid only on the line used by the student for home-school journeys), this subscription gives access to every line on the network. Today, the STIB school season ticket is valid throughout the network for one year, including weekends and school holidays. It also gives access to the Noctis night network.

## THE END OF TRANSIT

1983 saw the end of the transit. Where passengers had to pay a higher price to make a connection, tickets were now valid for one hour on the entire network.

## THE RULE OF THE ORANGE MACHINES

The orange machines, as the new STIB validators were generally called, appeared on the network in 1993. To validate their ticket, passengers put their magnetic card into the device, which prints the validation information, such as the date and time, on the ticket. This device took over from the old mechanical validators.




## THE JUMP TICKET

With the new, aptly-named "Jump" ticket, it is now possible to jump from a railway train, a De Lijn bus or the TEC onto a STIB tram, bus or metro or vice versa, with the same ticket. This new ticket is shared by STIB, De Lijn, TEC and SNCB and was launched in February 2003 In the Brussels region.

## GO FOR TICKET MACHINES

Where can you buy a ticket or subscription 24/7? At a GO, obviously. In 2007, the first GO ticket machines, already available in the metro, were introduced at the main surface stops. Today, ticket machines all over the city supplement the KIOSK, BOOTIK, SHOP distributor and online purchase GO Easy sales network.


New GO vending machines.


## A REVOLUTION CALLED MOBIB

In May 2008, STIB launched the MOBIB chip card. This was a small revolution in the ticketing world. There is no need to put the card into the machine for validation, simply present it in front of the validator. MOBIB is a real mobility wallet and also gives access to the Cambio shared car and Villo! bicycle rental systems. It can also be used to load tickets from other operators (SNCB, TEC and De Lijn). It is available in a named version, which can be used to load season tickets, or in an anonymous version, the MOBIB basic card, which can only be used to load tickets on a per-use basis.

First generation MOBIB validator.

The roll-out of the MOBIB smart card signalled the end of the magnetic ticket, which disappeared on 1 July 2016 and the orange machines with it. Occasional travellers can now buy a contactless smart card. The 3,700 orange validation machines, designed for magnetic tickets, were removed from vehicles and stations immediately afterwards. Only the 5,600 MOBIB validators (in red) now remain.

Beginning in late 2019, the vending machines with turning wheel were gradually replaced with new models equipped with touch screens. They come in a light, blue version and a full, red version, which - new feature! - distributes MOBIB basic cards.


Second generation MOBIB validator.

## CONTACTLESS PAYMENT

Contactless payment was introduced onto the STIB network in July 2020. No need to buy a ticket in advance. Just validate with a credit card or a device connected to the new grey validator, and off you go! At the end of the day, the system calculates the number of validations made and the maximum amount per day is capped at the price of a one-day ticket. This system has been directly approved and adopted by occasional passengers and tourists.

## DON'T SAY JUMP OR MTB, SAY BRUPASS

There is something new on the ticketing side. As of February 2021, the JUMP and MTB tickets have been renamed Brupass. Brupass XL tickets were also introduced. They allow passengers to use the lines of the various public transport operators in Belgium - the STIB as well as the TEC, De Lijn and the SNCB - in Brussels and in an extended zone of a little more than 11 kilometres around the city centre.


GO
MIVB STIB


# WHAT'S NEXT...

## A NEW METRO LINE

The metro network will experience a boost in the next few years, with the creation of a new line. The future line 3 will allow STIB to meet the ever-increasing demand for public transport in the north of the region. To do this, the current north-south premetro line will be converted into a metro line and the tunnel extended by more than 4 km beyond the Gare du Nord to Bordet. Seven new metro stations will be created. The new north-south line will eventually be 10.3 km long and have 18 stations. This will make it possible to cross Brussels from north to south in around 20 minutes via the city centre.

## THE METRO GETS A FRESH NEW LOOK

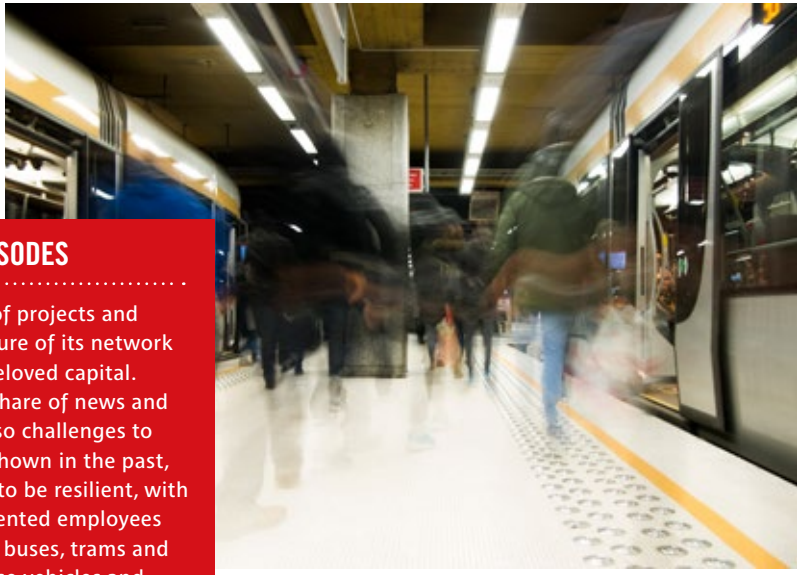
The east-west metro line, which opened more than 40 years ago, has been given a new look. New safety signage is being installed. It will make it possible to increase train frequency - currently 2 minutes 30 on the shared section of lines 1 and 5 in rush hour – and so eventually double the metro's capacity. The commissioning of the new signage on the first section of lines 1 and 5 is scheduled for the end of 2023.

## TRAM 8, 9... AND 10!

To offer a new service to the booming north of Brussels, the STIB is creating a new line to Neder-Over-Heembeek: tram 10. This new 5.5-kilometre-long route will link place Rogier, the Dockx shopping centre, place Peter Benoit and the Military Hospital. Citizen consultation was put at the heart of this large-scale project.

## AN AMBITIOUS TRAMIFICATION PLAN

To meet the capital's mobility needs, the STIB and the Region are planning the creation of several new tram lines over the next few years: Mediatram, Tour & Taxis tram, extension of the 62 to the airport, tramification of the 95... And these are just a few examples!



## ... IN THE NEXT EPISODES

The STIB has plenty of projects and ambitions for the future of its network and, with it, of our beloved capital. Each year brings its share of news and achievements, but also challenges to overcome. As it has shown in the past, the STIB knows how to be resilient, with more than 10,000 talented employees who, every day, drive buses, trams and metros, maintain these vehicles and their infrastructures, think about the future of the STIB, pay the bills, recruit staff, design the network, inform and advise passengers and much more. And then there's you, the passengers. By choosing public transport, you are choosing greener mobility, a city that breathes. Thank you for your confidence. Together, let's make Brussels move.

Discover the STIB's latest achievements in its activity reports at **www.stib.be/activityreport**

**Responsible publisher**
Françoise Ledune

**Realization and layout**
Communication

**Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles**
Rue Royale 76 - 1000 Bruxelles

Edition December 2022

**www.stib.brussels**