



FINAL REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

PhD Sandwich Program Abroad (PDSE/CAPES)

SCHOLAR IDENTIFICATION

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(PPGAU-UFAL)

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Scholarship Period: October 1, 2025, to April 27, 2026

Destination Country: BELGIUM

Host Institution: KU LEUVEN

International Supervisor: JEROEN STEVENS, Ph.D.

Brazilian Academic Advisor: SUZANN FLÁVIA CORDEIRO DE LIMA, Ph.D.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the academic mobility period in Belgium, the CAPES scholarship recipient conducted research, academic training, and institutional exchange activities focused on studies of spaces of deprivation of liberty, gender, and migration policies.

Technical visits were conducted, accompanied by the NGO deHuizen, to two small-scale detention facilities associated with the RESCALED model, located in Brussels and Kortrijk, as well as a technical visit to a transition house in Leuven, Belgium. The scholarship recipient also participated as an observer in the International Workshop on Policies for Small-Scale Detention for Women, organized by RESCALED in Brussels. Within the academic context, she attended courses at KU Leuven in the fields of Criminology, Architecture, and Social Sciences, with a focus on studies of space, power, and resistance. In addition, she participated in meetings of the LOCUS and PPUL research groups, affiliated with the Faculty of Architecture at KU Leuven, under the supervision of her international supervisor, thereby strengthening interdisciplinary dialogue and scientific collaboration. As an outcome of the activities conducted, a scientific article on the increased vulnerability of female bodies in the context of the migration crisis in Belgium was submitted to the Digest journal of HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts.



1. OBJECTIVES OF THE PHD SANDWICH PROGRAM ABROAD

1.1 General Objective

To understand the policy of humanizing penal spaces in Europe, based on the principles of the RESCALED and deHuizen programs—small scale, differentiation, and integration—as part of the methodological development of the ongoing doctoral dissertation.

1.2 Specific Objectives

- To analyze the architectural designs and/or built spaces of penal institutions based on the materialization of the International Regulatory Framework and local criminal justice and correctional policies;
- To analyze the built spaces of penal institutions based on their socio-spatial properties;
- To analyze the built spaces of penal institutions based on their construction properties.



2. PLAN OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

2.1 Introductory Considerations

This report presents the activities conducted במסגרת the Ph.D. Sandwich Program Abroad (PDSE/CAPES), Process No. 88881.125497/2025-01, carried out between October 2025 and April 2026 at the Faculty of Architecture of KU Leuven, Belgium, under the international supervision of Professor Jeroen Stevens, Ph.D.

The research aimed to examine new humanized correctional policies in Belgium, with an emphasis on small-scale detention units associated with the RESCALED movement, with support from the NGO deHuizen. The study was grounded in the growing European debate on prison overcrowding and the need for alternatives to traditional incarceration, particularly following recommendations issued by the Council of Europe to Belgium regarding measures to reduce the prison population and improve detention conditions.

During the period abroad, technical visits were conducted to small-scale detention units and transition houses in Belgium, prioritizing facilities serving women while also including facilities for men and mixed-use facilities. The activities were organized with the support of RESCALED and the NGO deHuizen and involved in situ observations, photographic documentation, and spatial analyses based on the walkthrough methodology.



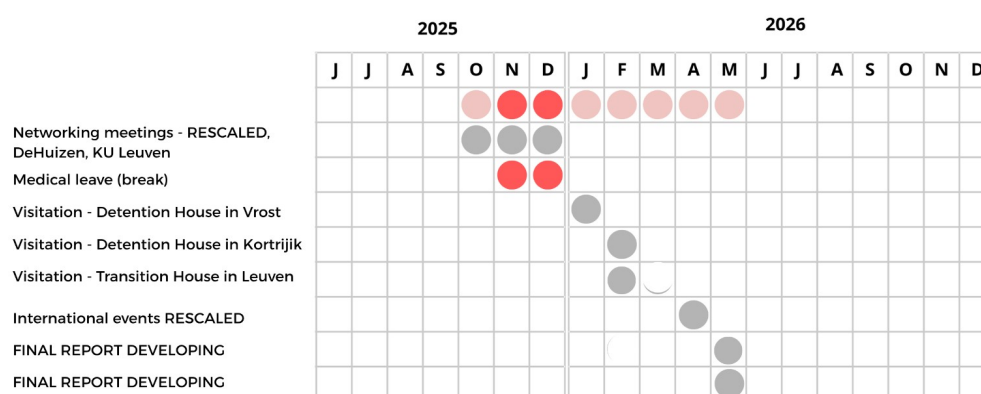
The research also addressed discussions on accessibility, inclusion, and human rights in public and private spaces, taking into consideration both Belgian and Brazilian regulatory frameworks. The international research experience made it possible to identify contradictions between institutional discourse and spatial practices, particularly in older correctional facilities, while also fostering critical reflections on vulnerability, reduced mobility, and humanization within the European context.

Alongside the technical visits, the researcher participated in academic meetings of research groups affiliated with KU Leuven and attended courses in criminology, architecture, and social sciences on the KU Leuven campus, broadening interdisciplinary dialogue on architecture, criminology, and correctional policies. This experience contributed to strengthening the internationalization of Brazilian research and consolidating a critical research agenda on socio-spatial humanization in the contemporary correctional system, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and international discussions on human rights, inclusion, and social reintegration.

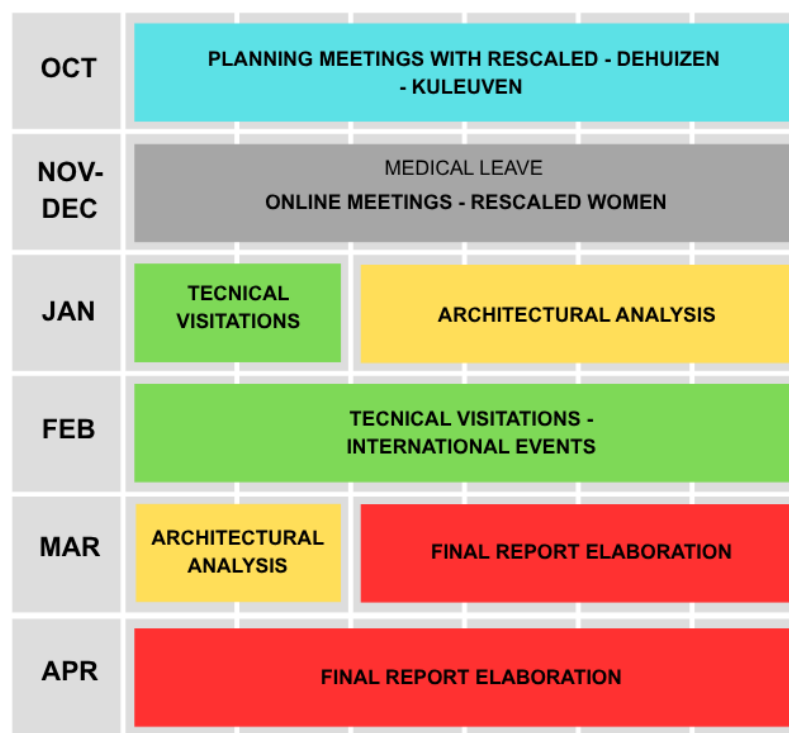
During the period in which the academic activities were conducted in Brussels, observations and analytical records were made concerning conditions of accessibility, inclusion, and socio-spatial belonging, taking into account the researcher's own experience as a foreign woman with temporarily reduced mobility. The reflections developed through this experience engage with autoethnographic approaches and studies on intersectionality, gender, and social vulnerability.

2.2 Schedule of international activities

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE



SOURCE: Developed by author, 2026.



SOURCE: Developed by author, 2026.



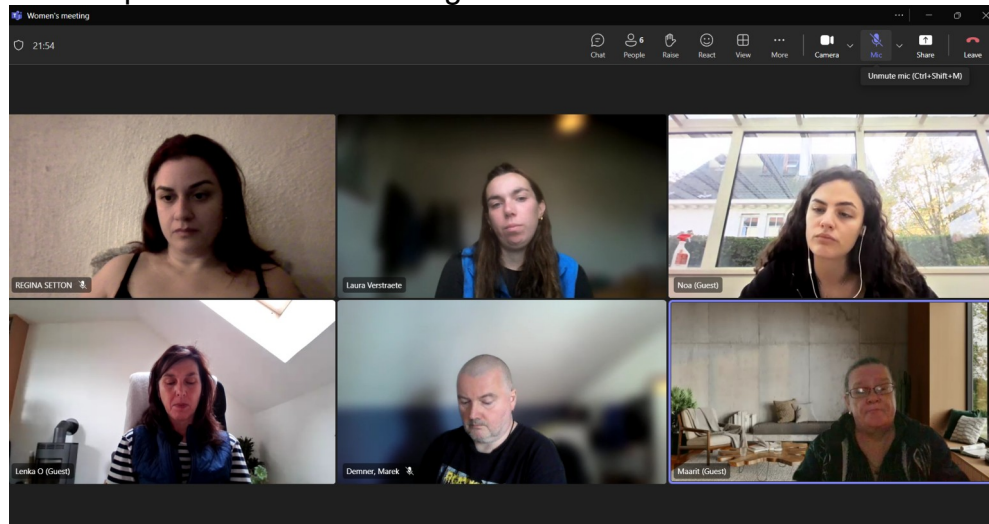
2.3 International research activities

Regarding international practices, the fundamental role of the RESCALED movement in facilitating the research conducted in Belgium should be emphasized. This multidisciplinary technical group challenges the conventional concept of the “prison” and proposes the concept of “detention houses,” drawing on principles from criminology and restorative justice. Small-scale detention houses are differentiated and integrated into the community in order to contribute to sustainable, safe, and inclusive societies.

Due to an unforeseen circumstance that resulted in the international supervisor's medical leave, the support provided by RESCALED and deHuizen was crucial to the collection of data abroad. An accident sustained by the researcher in Brussels also resulted in a two-month interruption (November and December 2025) of her in-person activities only. During this period of medical leave, the research activities continued remotely through online meetings, as well as through readings and technical analyses of the RESCALED database.



Participation in online meeting of WOMEN RESCALED PROJECT



SOURCE: Registered by author, 2026.

Participation list of Joint Session WOMEN RESCALED – 2026, October



Joint learning session on Net-widening

Participant list

Name	Organisation	Country
Tabea Schleising	Verein Richtungswechsel	Austria
Acácia Regina Resende Setton	Federal University of Alagoas / KU Leuven	Brazil
Hans Claus	De Huizen	Belgium
Maarit Suomela	Silta-Valmennusyhdistys ry	Finland
Philip Larragy	Release	Ireland
Marlies Gailliaert	De Huizen	Belgium
Tina McPhee	Justice Reform Initiative	Australia
Trícia Ciampa	Women And Mentoring	Australia
Sara Gambino	CEIPES ets	Italy
Marek Demner	RUBIKON Centrum	Czech Republic
Deniz Tokmak	CEIPES ets	Italy
Ludmila Andrade	Young Perspectives	Netherlands
Jazz Singh	EmpowerAbility	England
Aneta Dimoska	STABILITAS	North Macedonia
Beth King	Focus Ireland	Ireland
Gert Jan Slump	RJN	Netherlands
Deborah Schorno	Swiss center of expertise for prison and probation	Switzerland
Elisa Caccia	RJN	Italy
Noor Rumers	RESCALED	Belgium
Hanne Smismans	RESCALED	Belgium

SOURCE: Developed by author, 2026.



Before the commencement of the activities abroad, we established professional contacts with Noa Shoshan (Brussels), Knowledge Manager of the RESCALED Project, through whom we obtained extensive theoretical reference materials, including RESCALED databases, institutional videos, case-study materials, as well as textual resources on the RESCALED project and its applications across Europe. Through Noa Shoshan, we also expanded our professional network by gaining access to Marlies Gailliaert, a member of the active management team of the NGO deHuizen, which develops business, neighborhood, staffing, action, and architectural plans and, based on these plans, provides recommendations to governments and interested organizations. The Belgian government has already adopted these ideas and decided to launch pilot projects involving transition and detention centers. With the support of deHuizen, access was obtained to small-scale detention units in Belgium.

At present, Belgium has three operational units, located in Kortrijk, Brussels (Berkendael/Vorst), and Olen. Among these, the Kortrijk unit is particularly noteworthy because it includes a section for women, including transgender women. With the support of the NGO deHuizen, technical visits were conducted to the Berkendael/Vorst unit on January 22, 2026, and to the Kortrijk unit on February 27, 2026. Both units began operating in 2022 following the adaptation of buildings that had previously served other purposes, including former large-scale conventional prison facilities. The Olen unit, which opened in 2025, could not be visited due to the lack of institutional authorization.



In addition to the detention units, a technical visit was conducted to the Leuven Transition House on February 4, 2026. This experience contributed to an understanding of the procedures and reintegration strategies adopted by the Belgian correctional system. The visits enabled observations of spatial organization, operational procedures, and practices associated with contemporary approaches to the humanization of incarceration in Europe

Detention House of Vrost

As previously noted, Belgium currently has three small-scale detention houses: Kortrijk, Vorst (Brussels), and Olen (Antwerp). The first is the only unit with a section specifically designated for women, including transgender women. Among the several common characteristics shared by these facilities, which will be examined in greater detail in this dissertation, one particularly relevant aspect is that all of them operate in buildings that were previously used for other purposes, including large-scale or “traditional” imprisonment, as these facilities are also commonly described in Belgium.

With the support of the NGO deHuizen, we successfully conducted visits to two of the three units: Berkendael-Vorst (visit conducted on January 22, 2026) and Kortrijk (visit conducted on February 27, 2026). Although these are recent experiences in Belgium, both units began operating for detention purposes in 2022. The Olen unit is even more recent, having opened in 2025, but we were unable to obtain authorization to visit it. However, it was possible to visit the Leuven Transition House, which, despite having a different purpose from the other facilities, was



essential to understanding how the Belgian correctional system is structured in procedural terms.

We will first examine the small-scale detention unit located in Brussels, more specifically the former women's wing (Berkendael) of the Brussels Prison Complex, which consisted of the following units: Sint-Gilles, Vorst-Forest, and Berkendael. According to information provided by the Conseil central de surveillance pénitentiaire (CCSP) (Belgium's Central Council for Penitentiary Surveillance), these three facilities were decommissioned in mid-2022, when Belgium's largest prison, Haren Prison (La prison de Haren), began operating. All inmates who had previously contributed to overcrowding in the complex were transferred to Haren.

To better understand the current configuration of the Vorst unit, it is necessary to examine its history, particularly because it is a space shaped by gender-related considerations. This case illustrates the reversal of a spatial adaptation initially designed for women and subsequently converted for male use, contrary to what is commonly observed in studies of correctional buildings. The experience within the Vorst unit confirms how readily architectural and spatial configurations can be adapted to men's needs when the specific requirements of women are treated as transient considerations in spatial design.

The relatively recent Prison pour femmes de Berkendael – Gevangenis Vorst – Vrouwenafdeling Berkendael, currently known as the Detention House of Vorst, is located on Rue de Berkendael / Berkendaelstraat, in the municipality of Forest, Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium. Easily accessible by various modes of

transportation, the facility is architecturally integrated into a predominantly residential and apparently quiet neighborhood:

Rue Berkendael, Forest. Brussels, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026

Author's Comments:

The architecture of the correctional facility blends into the surrounding built environment. Although a wall with limited interior visibility is present, the building typology is similar to that used for residential properties. Furthermore, unlike the other buildings of the former Brussels Prison Complex, it does not exhibit a medieval or Gothic architectural style. To some extent, these characteristics camouflage the facility within the surrounding urban landscape.

Main façade of Detention House at Rue Brekendael 42, Forest. Brussels, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026

Author's Comments:

There are no architectural barriers between the main entrance door and the exterior area—the public street. Upon entering, visitors reach the first interior hall, where, when the facility operated as a women's prison, a body-scanning device was located for personal security screening. This practice is no longer used at the detention center, and the space currently serves solely as an entrance and circulation area.

Main façade of Detention House at Rue Brekendael 42, Forest. Brussels, Belgium.



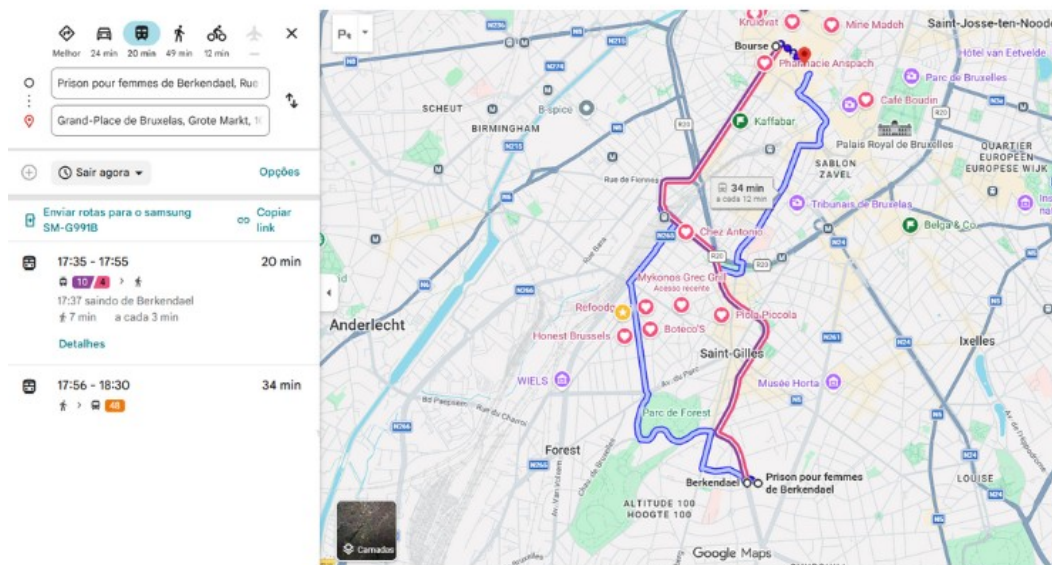
SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026

Author's Comments:

The main façade does not represent the entirety of the building, as the primary spaces occupied by residents and staff are located toward the rear, to the north, in an attached three-story building. Despite the difference in height between the entrance block and the detention block, the main façade does not provide direct visual access to the interior block.

The journey by public transportation from the Grand Place in Brussels, the city's central landmark, to the correctional facility takes approximately 20–34 minutes and is served by more than one public transportation route.

The route between the center of Brussels to Detention House in Vrost



SOURCE: Google Maps, 2026. Developed by author, 2026.



At the end of 2016, Berkendael Women's Prison ranked second among the correctional facilities with the highest overcrowding rates in Belgium, with an overcrowding rate of 42%. According to the Central Council for Penitentiary Surveillance (CCSP), in 2022, Berkendael Prison had a capacity of 64 beds and an average population of 80.40 inmates, indicating an overcrowding rate of 25.6%.

Regarding the functional program, the publicly available data provided by the CCSP indicate that the facility included a nursery and cells designed for two people, which could be used by inmates caring for children up to three years of age. Nevertheless, during a technical visit conducted on January 22, 2026, the prison staff member who served as the tour guide reported that he had previously worked as a correctional officer at Berkendael and that it was common for more than one—and sometimes more than two—inmates to occupy individual cells. In 2017, between one and five infants were living inside the prison with their mothers (CCSP, 2022).

Among the main concerns reported by inmates at the Forest and Berkendael prisons were uncertainties regarding social reintegration after the completion of their sentences, particularly among immigrants, who expressed concerns about the effectiveness of immigration policies in Belgium. Uncertainty regarding opportunities for vocational training and employment were also identified by inmates as significant concerns in their statements to the CCSP committee during inspections of the correctional facilities (CCSP, 2022).

The technical visit to the small-scale detention house in Vorst took place on a Thursday afternoon during the European winter. I deliberately chose not to wear a



coat during the visit so that I could experience firsthand the interactions between the building and the climate, particularly because the conditions were the opposite of those with which we typically contend in Brazil. Indeed, in the interior areas, I experienced no discomfort from the cold, with the exception of the individual isolation cells. In the outdoor area, however, remaining without adequate warm clothing quickly became impracticable.

As in Brazil, we were not permitted to take photographs of the interior areas or to interview the inmates, who, in turn, moved freely throughout the building during the tour conducted by the researcher and other students whose projects had been developed in collaboration with HOGENT, a public higher education institution in Belgium, primarily located in the city of Ghent. The students' objective was to become familiar with the correctional facility and develop proposals for interventions that could foster connections between society and people in detention.

Following the visit, I attended a presentation of the proposals developed for this correctional facility by the student group at a seminar held at HOGENT on January 30, 2026. It was interesting to observe that all of the groups unanimously proposed temporary structures for use in outdoor areas, intended to facilitate the distribution of items produced by inmates. Whether through the recycling of waste generated by society or through work in a community kitchen within the prison, these groups understood the promotion of social interaction as being facilitated through material exchange between inmates and society.



Returning to the architectural perceptions of the correctional space, according to accounts provided by the correctional officer, when the facility served as a women's prison, handicraft activities, such as sewing and garment-making, were commonly carried out within the facility. Because the physical structure of the building was not modified during the transition from large-scale to small-scale detention, the room where these activities took place has become obsolete and is currently unused by the residents.

Similarly, the individual isolation cells, whose use is permitted in Belgium as an instrument of control and punishment, are currently unoccupied. Previously, however, they were used to confine women whose behavior was considered aggressive and who had been classified by the institution as posing a higher security risk. The correctional officer also reported that, at certain times, it was common for more than one inmate to occupy the same cell.

During the visit, we had access to four individual isolation cells on the first floor, and were informed that identical cells were located on the two floors above. Although there were no inmates occupying these spaces, traces of their previous use were still evident, such as mattresses and pairs of shoes on the floor, as well as exposed toilet fixtures. No heating equipment was observed in these cells, which, in a region such as Belgium that experiences periods of intense cold, may have constituted an additional punitive condition for the bodies confined there. Three cells are located in Sector E and one in Sector D.

Building sector analysis of Detention House of Vrost



SOURCE: Developed by author, 2026.

Sector B – Detention House Indoor Entrance  SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026	Author's Comments: The internal detention block has an architectural typology similar to that of the front block in terms of its modernist style; however, it incorporates different construction elements that contrast with the surrounding landscape outside the correctional complex. The main façade functions as a form of camouflage and as a visual barrier between the community and the correctional space.
Inauguration plaque for the Forest-Vorst Detention Centre, Brussels, Belgium.	Author's Comments: Particular attention should be given to the presence of the exterior wall in the background of the image, which no longer features the razor wire previously used as a security

 SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026	measure at Berkendael Women's Prison.
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At the small-scale facility in Forest, we were not permitted to take photographs, even in unoccupied areas. Therefore, the impressions gathered during the visit will be reported from the researcher's visual memory, based not only on what was seen but also on what was heard during the process of becoming familiar with the space. We did not tour all floors of the detention block, as the visiting group tacitly understood that this was unnecessary, given that the spatial arrangement was essentially a “repetition of the same layout.” Nevertheless, several physical elements that might otherwise have gone unnoticed were identified as symbolic examples of the adaptation of the space to resemble a “home.”

A doormat bearing the word “welcome” at the entrance to an individual bedroom invites entry into this small space with a private bathroom. The room, previously occupied by more than five women, is currently occupied by a single man who uses the table for small meals as a workspace for his handicraft tools and materials. The only double bedroom, occupied by two people, was proportionally



larger than the individual cells. National flags from foreign countries displayed inside some of the rooms corresponded with the resident identification board installed in the shared area of the floor.

Both at the Forest facility and at the small-scale facility in Kortrijk and the Transition House in Leuven, Belgium—discussed in greater detail in the following sections—when residents were asked whether we could enter their bedrooms for observation, they showed notable willingness to cooperate, provided that the visit took place after a brief check to ensure that the spaces were in appropriate order. This behavior, particularly observed among the male residents, conveyed a certain degree of care and concern for the inhabited space, suggesting a positive indication of spatial appropriation.

Throughout the tour, it was common to hear the correctional officer compare procedures and activities before and after the transition to small-scale detention, particularly with regard to the use of the building's interior and exterior spaces. One example that drew attention, alongside the cases involving the isolation cells, was the existence of a designated area in the courtyard for isolating women whose behavior was considered deviant.

The remnants of this structure remain and, in a certain sense, preserve the memory of what was essentially a concrete cage, which currently resembles a type of gazebo. It is a small structure approximately 4 meters long and 1.5 meters wide, with vertical and horizontal concrete pergolas forming its walls and roof. No sanitary facilities were present; only a concrete bench was observed inside, which may have



been used as a bed. The structure is located outside the main building, functioning as an annex between the building and the courtyard designated for social interaction activities.

Finally, an account provided by the correctional officer responsible for supervising and accompanying the visit deserves attention. He commented on the interruption of relationships with former residents once they complete their sentences and leave the detention house. According to his account, staff members are not permitted to maintain the relationships established with residents, which he regarded as negative because bonds of trust are developed throughout the detention process.

It is relatively common, and even understandable, for a former resident to seek out correctional officers to discuss their experiences after leaving the detention house, since, for several years, they shared the same space as part of a process of social redefinition and reintegration grounded in respect for human dignity. Although this model involves a semi-open regime, many residents have no family ties outside the correctional system, in addition to facing the difficulties inherent in rebuilding their lives after completing a prison sentence. In this context, mandatory separation creates an abrupt rupture in a social relationship that was actively encouraged as a foundation for a more dignified form of detention.

Detention House of Kortrijk

The small-scale detention house located in the city of Kortrijk, Belgium, began operating in 2022. It currently operates in a residential complex that was previously used as a nursing home (PRISON INSIDER, 2026), which, in turn, underwent no

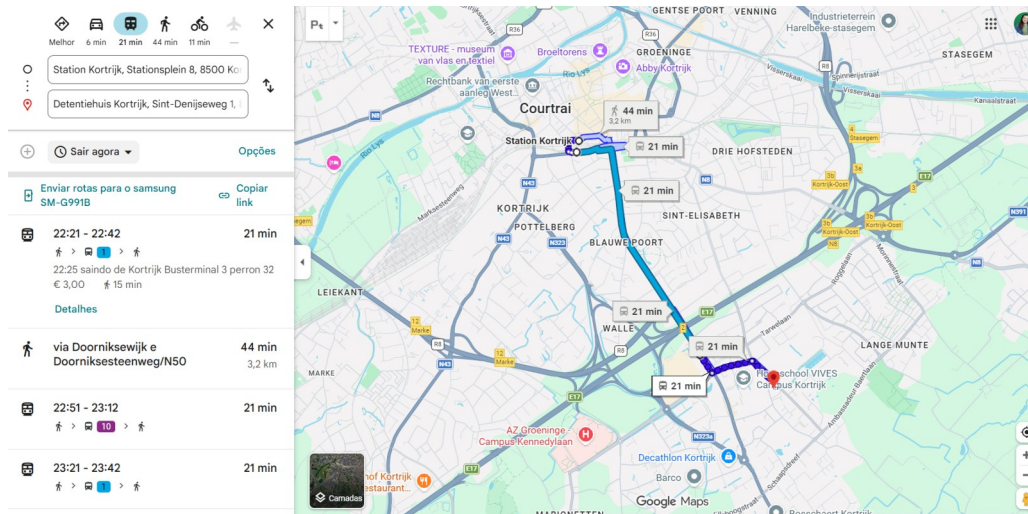


major structural modifications when its function was changed to accommodate the detention of men and women. Accounts provided to Prison Insider by Helene de Vos (2026) regarding the absence of noise, the apparent sense of tranquility, and social interactions within the inhabited space were corroborated during a technical visit conducted by the researcher in February 2026. According to De Vos (2023, n.p.):

Kortrijk enables detention to operate on a small scale. I was told that, when the facility opened, they discussed the house rules with the residents so that they would make sense to everyone. This is not something that can be done in a large-scale prison. There are far more opportunities to approximate everyday life outside prison. The goal is to normalize life within these facilities, and this can be achieved through their proximity to the surrounding community. The atmosphere, interactions, and relationships between staff and inmates can be entirely different when there are only 20 or even 60 people (DE VOS, 2023, n.p.).

The distances between the Kortrijk Central Railway Station and the detention complex are relatively short and easily accessible due to the integrated public transportation system and the good urban infrastructure that facilitates access by private vehicles:

Map showing the public transport route between Kortrijk Central Station and the small-scale detention complex.



SOURCE: Google Maps, 2026. Developed by author, 2026.

The small-scale detention house in Kortrijk is a mixed-use facility. According to RESCALED data, in 2023 the facility had 77 residents, including both men and women. Although this number exceeds the recommended capacity for small-scale units, the building occupies a physical space that facilitates the management of this population (RESCALED, 2026), as confirmed by correctional management during the visit conducted on February 27, 2026.

Not every part of the complex was toured during the technical visit. However, it is worth noting that all areas used collectively and/or individually by correctional management and residents, both men and women, were presented to the researcher by the facility's management team:

Map showing the sectors covered during the technical visit conducted on February 27, 2026.



SOURCE: Google Maps, 2026. Developed by author, 2026.

Exterior view of the Small-Scale Detention House in Kortrijk, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Author's Comments:

The Kortrijk small-scale detention complex is located in a predominantly residential area that, on the day of the visit, had low levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity. The setting appeared peaceful and featured architectural characteristics similar to those of the detention house, fostering a sense of belonging within the urban environment. It is worth noting that the complex, previously used as a residential facility for older adults, was recently converted into a detention facility for men and women.

Exterior view of the Small-Scale Detention House in Kortrijk, Belgium.

Author's Comments:

The façade features an arrangement of asymmetrical window openings that, when viewed from inside the building, enhances the perception of transparency and visibility, even in intimate areas such as residents' bedrooms.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Exterior view of the Small-Scale Detention House in Kortrijk, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Exterior view of the Small-Scale Detention House in Kortrijk, Belgium.



Author's Comments:

Unlike the detention house in Berkendael, Brussels, the absence of exterior walls promotes greater integration with the surrounding urban environment and reinforces the concept of a residential space, even though the facility is used for the detention of individuals.

Author's Comments:

Camera surveillance is conducted only in interior circulation areas and along the exterior perimeter of the building, within a designated circulation zone. Since its opening in 2022, there has been only one reported case of escape.

SOURCE: Registered by author, jan 2026 Interior view of the shared access corridor at the detention center in Kortrijk, Belgium.  SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026	Author's Comments: In all corridors providing access to the bedrooms, as well as in some administrative areas, there is visual contact with the outdoor area located in the central section of the complex. The building typology is designed in a manner that invites contemplation, representing a context entirely different from hostile architecture. The cleanliness of the communal areas, circulation spaces, and bedrooms was clearly evident throughout all areas visited in the building.
Women's dormitory at the detention center in Kortrijk, Belgium.  SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026	Author's Comments: The women's bedrooms have a slightly smaller usable area compared with the spaces used by men. There is no interaction between the genders, except in specific circumstances under the supervision of correctional management. According to the director's account, there had been several romantic relationships between male and female residents at a time when supervision was less restrictive than it is currently. Some interpersonal conflicts arising from these relationships had to be addressed. Combined with other risks associated with mixed-gender social interaction, correctional management considers gender separation necessary to prevent problems arising from disagreements or similar situations.
Women's solitary confinement cell at the	Author's Comments:

Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

The use of individual cells for confinement and isolation is a practice in Belgium when correctional management deems it necessary. The management team in Kortrijk reported that this is not common at the facility; however, the space has been used when it was necessary to restrain residents exhibiting atypical behavior associated with mental health problems. This isolation cell was located in the women's section and has a functional program, furnishings, and interior dimensions similar to those of the corresponding cell in the men's section. The absence of bars, the type of window frame, the apparently adequate cleanliness and heating, and the presence of a private bathroom are among the elements that indicate similarities with the other bedrooms.

Affective signs in a women's dormitory at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Signs of spatial appropriation in the

Author's Comments:

In the women's bedroom, physical and symbolic elements reflected the appropriation of the space through personal, affective, and family memories.

Author's Comments:

women's dormitory at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Only one women's bedroom and one men's bedroom were visited. In both cases, correctional management openly and informally requested authorization for our access in a cordial manner, as might occur in any other residential setting where individual privacy is respected. We were granted access without significant difficulty and observed signs of everyday use of the spaces, with no apparent attempt to prepare the rooms specifically for the technical visit. During the visit, management identified the residents who were approached to request permission for access to their bedrooms.

Indoor mixed-use space for physical activities with scheduled zoning



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Author's Comments:

The room equipped with strength-training equipment is the only space designated for sports activities and is located in the men's section. Although women are permitted to use it at designated times to avoid mixed-gender use, they expressed a desire for a larger outdoor area for collective sports activities, such as basketball and soccer.

Men's dormitory at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.

Author's Comments:

The men's bedroom has construction features similar to those of the women's bedroom but provides a



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Men's dormitory at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.

larger usable area. Like the spaces used by women, the men's bedrooms accommodate two people. The bathroom is also private for both groups and is located within the bedroom. Particular attention should be given to the window, which has no bars and provides a broad view of the area outside the building, toward the front façade.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Men's dormitory at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.

Author's Comments:

The men's bedroom has construction features similar to those of the women's bedroom but provides a larger usable area. Like the spaces used by women, the men's bedrooms accommodate two people.

Author's Comments:

In this particular bedroom, no personal elements indicating individual appropriation of the space were identified, unlike those observed in the women's bedroom and in



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Men's dormitory bathroom at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Men's dormitory bathroom at the Kortrijk detention center, Belgium

bedrooms at the Berkendael detention facility in Brussels. Nevertheless, during an impromptu focus group organized by correctional management with male residents during lunchtime in the shared kitchen, several residents expressed satisfaction and described a sense of "being at home" in their accounts.

Author's Comments:

Private bathroom within a men's bedroom, featuring plumbing fixtures and hardware comparable to those commonly used in conventional residential settings. In other words, there are no anti-vandalism fixtures and/or equipment typically found in large-scale correctional facilities, which are designed to prevent their use as weapons or instruments for acts of defiance.

Author's Comments:

Accessibility was not a predominant feature of the units visited, but this reflects the broader cultural context of Belgium. Nevertheless, as observed in spaces outside the detention facilities, some elements indicate attention to accident prevention and/or accessible use of certain areas, such as the grab bar beside



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

External view from men's dormitory



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

View of the central courtyard from the
internal corridor providing shared access
to the complex

the toilet. No modifications made by residents were observed, whether for purposes of vandalism or to facilitate the use of or access to other areas. This suggests that the facilities provided by the built environment have been used without evident expressions of dissatisfaction from the residents.

Author's Comments:

Particular attention should be given to the window at men's bedroom, which has no bars and provides a broad view of the area outside the building, toward the front façade.

Author's Comments:

External view of the internal courtyard located in the central area of the complex, which is occasionally used



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

by residents, at designated times, as a space for recreation and contemplation. This courtyard is visible to everyone circulating through the interior areas of the building.

Interior view of the main entrance to the Kortrijk detention complex



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Author's Comments:

Interior view of the main gate providing access to the detention complex. Particular attention should be given to the high degree of transparency and the penetration of natural light through the door and window openings. The door opens automatically and is controlled by the correctional monitoring staff. There is no body-scanning equipment or designated space for personal or strip searches.

Interior view of a communal circulation hall

Author's Comments:

Interior view of a circulation corridor connecting the administrative section to the shared area used by male residents for meals.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

Interior view of one of the shared dining areas in the men's wing.



SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

View of the central courtyard from the men's dining hall

Author's Comments:

Interior view of one of the shared kitchens used by male residents on the ground floor. Each floor has one kitchen, as well as a shared dining and recreation area.

Residents have complete freedom to prepare their own meals. In Kortrijk, we observed an implicit hierarchy regarding who cooks, who eats in their bedrooms, and who chooses to participate in communal activities. Particular attention should be given to the management's efforts to provide halal food for residents who consume only this type of food.

Author's Comments:

Interior view of the communal dining area in the men's wing on the ground floor, with a visual connection to the central courtyard. The dining area in the women's wing does not have this visual connection; instead, it has large windows overlooking the exterior area

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SOURCE: Registered by author, feb 2026

of the complex.

Transition House of Leuven

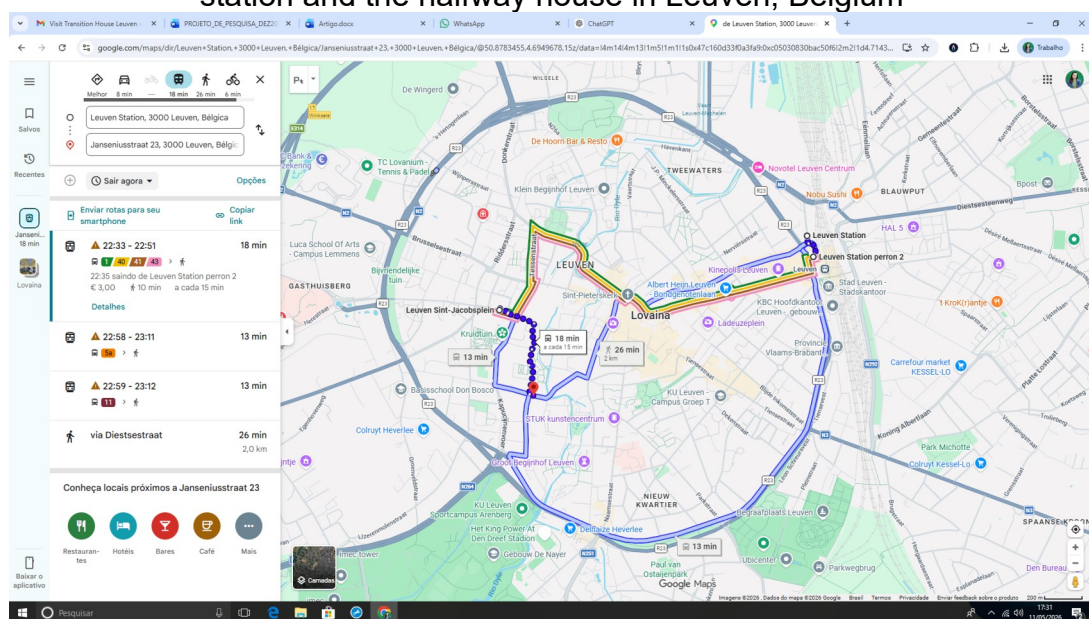
The Transition House in Leuven, Belgium, was the “exception” within the itinerary planned for the visits required as part of the international research. Although its function is highly similar to that of the other facilities in terms of interpersonal relationships between residents and correctional staff, its primary purpose is not custody itself but rather the transition process associated with the completion of a prison sentence.

During the period of immersion in the concepts of small-scale detention in Belgium, questions arose regarding the distinction between transition houses and detention houses, since, in both settings, residents are subject to a semi-open regime with restrictions on schedules and substance use, while also interacting with the staff responsible for operating these institutions in an apparently democratic and socially constructive manner.

The visit to the Leuven Transition House was proposed by the NGO deHuizen and accepted by the researcher as an opportunity to identify elements that could contribute to a better understanding of the principles and purposes underlying the approaches currently adopted in Belgium. Indeed, the more limited functional program of the Transition House and its smaller number of residents, compared with the detention houses visited, may constitute additional factors distinguishing the two types of facilities.

The Leuven Transition House is located on a predominantly residential street in a central area of the city characterized by a peaceful atmosphere. Access to the facility from Leuven Central Station is quick and convenient, facilitated by the variety of public transportation routes, as illustrated in the diagram below:

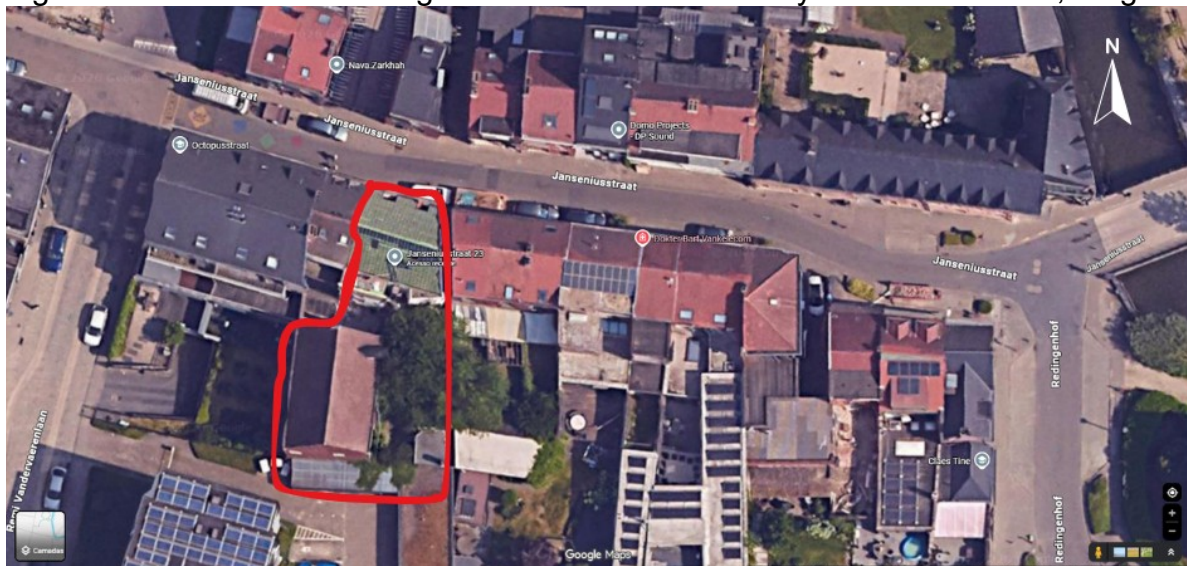
Figure - Schematic representation of public transport availability between the central station and the halfway house in Leuven, Belgium



SOURCE: Google Maps, 2026. Developed by author, 2026.

From the outside, the facility is seamlessly integrated into the urban setting. Because the existing residential building was adapted for the purpose of facilitating social reintegration within the correctional system, its architectural characteristics are virtually indistinguishable from those of the surrounding neighborhood. This feature supports the RESCALED proposal for greater integration with the community as a means of supporting the process of returning to society. When individuals no longer perceive themselves as being inside a prison, they may be more likely to experience their sentence in a less stigmatizing manner.

Figure - Satellite view marking the location of the halfway house in Leuven, Belgium



SOURCE: Google Maps, 2026. Developed by author, 2026.

According to information provided on site and confirmed on the website of the De Kansenfabriek Foundation, sixteen men reside at the Leuven Transition House after having spent a significant portion of their lives in prison. The primary objective is to rebuild their lives with intensive support from a dedicated team of professionals who foster a safe, welcoming environment focused on personal growth and social reintegration. The Transition House operates as a network-based organization,



working in partnership with various local institutions in the areas of social assistance, health care, justice, and employment to support participants in all aspects of their lives and prepare them for their return to freedom (DE KANSENFABRIEK, 2026).

According to the house's management, the government contributes to the operation of the facility by providing funding for its establishment, maintenance, and operation. The selection of the location and residential building for residents, as well as the methodology used by the team in working with them, including office supplies and consumable materials, are financially supported by the government, while management and day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the De Kansenfabriek team, with support from the NGO deHuizen.

With a simplified functional program, the Leuven Transition House includes a shared kitchen and food preparation area, dining area, indoor and outdoor social spaces, a laundry area, an active listening room, an administrative office, and shared bathrooms in the common areas (on the ground floor) and for collective use by residents (one on each floor of the bedroom section). The bedrooms are shared by two residents, who have complete freedom to adapt them according to their individual needs.

During the visit conducted on February 4, 2026, the interaction between the residents, all of whom were men, and the predominantly female staff was remarkably cordial and closely resembled a family dynamic. While some residents prepared breakfast, members of the staff sat at the table and shared the meal with them. The visit itself took place only after this period of dialogue and interaction.

Only the administrative office has restricted access for staff. This area stores consumable supplies and office materials required for the operation of the house. In the outdoor area, there is a lounge-like space used as a smoking area, which showed clear signs of frequent use by both residents and staff. Residents are free to enter and leave the house, subject to the schedule and time restrictions established by management.

Interior view of the rear facade of the transition house in Leuven, Belgium  SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026	Author's Comments: Interior view of the rear façade of the entrance block of the Leuven Transition House. The institution operates in a residential complex consisting of an L-shaped building that creates an outdoor space within the central portion of the lot. This outdoor area is used as a smoking area by both residents and staff, as well as for social interaction during mild weather. There is no entrance and exit monitoring room. Both residents and staff have the autonomy to manage their access individually. In this researcher's case, one of the residents opened the door to allow entry, with authorization from the person responsible for the facility.
Dormitório masculino na casa de transição em Leuven, Bélgica	Author's Comments: Interior view of one of the bedrooms. All bedrooms are shared by two residents, and the bathrooms are shared by residents on each floor.



SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026

Men's dormitory at the transitional housing facility in Leuven, Belgium



SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026

Outdoor social area at the transitional housing facility in Leuven, Belgium

Each floor has one bathroom equipped with a toilet, shower, and sink. All residents are fully responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of their respective bathrooms. The bedrooms are located on the upper floors, accessible exclusively by stairs, while the common and service areas are located on the ground floor.

Author's Comments:

Documentation of the arrangement of personal footwear and hygiene items in an individual bedroom. The space appeared well organized, indicating care in its use and personal appropriation.

Author's Comments:

Outdoor space at the Transition House for collective or individual use and contemplation. The space is also used as a smoking area by residents who smoke.



SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026

Outdoor social area at the transitional housing facility in Leuven, Belgium



SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026

Indoor living and social area at the transition house in Leuven, Belgium



Author's Comments:

Outdoor space at the Transition House for collective or individual use and contemplation. The space is also used as a smoking area by residents who smoke. There are no physical or symbolic restrictions on its use.

Author's Comments:

Indoor space adjacent to the dining area, available for collective or individual use as a setting for interaction and leisure. Games and a television are freely available to everyone, including staff members. There are no restrictions on the use of this space.

SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026 Vertical access point to the upper floor, leading to the private quarters, in the transitional house in Leuven, Belgium  SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026	Author's Comments: Documentation of the vertical access (stairs) to the private area where the bedrooms are located. We did not have access to any bedroom spaces on the ground floor and, therefore, cannot determine whether a ground-floor bedroom is available and/or whether a ground-floor room has been adapted for residents with reduced mobility.
Record of the listening and support room at the transitional house in Leuven, Belgium  SOURCE: Registered by author during the	Author's Comments: Documentation of the room used as a reception and active listening space

visitation in feb 4th, 2026 Registration of an administrative room at the halfway house in Leuven, Belgium  SOURCE: Registered by author during the visitation in feb 4th, 2026	Author's Comments: Documentation of the room used as the administrative office. Residents do not have access to this area. Office supplies and consumable materials are stored in this section, in a bathroom that has been adapted for use as a storage room. The original mezzanine of the building is also used for material storage.
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a. Participation in Events

As outlined in the activity schedule for the period abroad, on February 2 and 3, 2026, I participated in the “Women x Resize Seminar”, organized by RESCALED and its partners in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss small-scale practices from a gender-specific perspective, with particular emphasis on women’s bodies.

During the event, examples of spaces and methods for the management and treatment of women in conflict with the law or affected by substance use were presented, drawing on practices implemented in the United Kingdom (England and Scotland), the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. On this occasion, the

RESCALED technical team also presented its experiences and objectives for activities in Europe, including the launch of the RESCALED ACADEMY portal, through which studies, projects, and other publications related to the correctional field will be shared, with an emphasis on humanization and the protection of rights.

Figure – Record of the scholarship recipient's attendance at an international event, Belgium



SOURCE: Author's personal collection, 2026.

Figure – Record of the scholarship recipient's attendance at an international event, Belgium



SOURCE: RESCALED, 2026.

Figure 36 – Record of the scholarship recipient's attendance at an international event, Belgium



02 & 03.02.2026 - WOMEN x RESIZE International workshop

NAME	ORGANISATION
Acácia Regina Resende Setton	Federal University of Alagoas / KU Leuven
Aurore Vanliefde De Keyser	Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC)
Beth King	Focus Ireland
Elisa Caccia	Restorative Justice Nederland
Fionnuala Gordon	One Small Thing
Hanne Smismans	RESCALED
Hans Claus	RESCALED / Vzww De Huizen

SOURCE: RESCALED, 2026.



2. RESULTS ACHIEVED

The experiences gained during the international research period contributed to critical reflections on the relationships among urban space, power, exclusion, and belonging, making it possible to identify how social inequalities and spatial hierarchies influence perceptions of safety, inclusion, and human dignity. These analyses form part of the research conducted abroad and inform discussions on accessibility, socio-spatial humanization, and the increased vulnerability of female bodies in contemporary urban contexts.

The international experience fostered not only the collection of data aligned with the research objectives but also an opportunity to engage with life in distinct sociocultural contexts. For an architect and urban planner, social dynamics are not merely narratives to be disregarded; understanding how architecture is designed and occupied requires an understanding of how the social system operates. Accordingly, the analyses conducted in this research extended beyond its initial objectives once they began in the student residence selected for accommodation, particularly with regard to the architectural conditions and accessibility limitations identified in its interior and exterior spaces.

Subsequently, as a result of an accident that occurred near Place Royale in Brussels, the researcher experienced mobility restrictions resulting from an ankle fracture. This circumstance broadened her critical perceptions of physical barriers, spatial segregation, and the absence of universal design in certain urban and residential environments. The experience made it possible to observe how temporary



disability can significantly alter an individual's relationship with the city and with inhabited spaces, revealing structural limitations related to accessibility and inclusion.

Following the period of medical leave, the researcher subsequently resided in the municipality of Sint-Gillis, in an area near Gare du Midi known for its ethnic and sociocultural diversity. During her stay, observations were conducted concerning urban dynamics, multicultural coexistence, and processes of territorial stigmatization frequently associated with neighborhoods historically inhabited by immigrant populations and socially vulnerable groups.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THESIS AND THE PROGRAM

Initially, the doctoral dissertation proposal defined the central object of investigation as the static and functional dynamics of large-scale female correctional facilities in Sergipe, considering their contemporary configuration and current operational practices. However, the international academic experience provided the researcher with a broader critical perspective on the analytical approaches initially established, prompting a revision of the research objectives in order to foster greater integration between the empirical data collected during the academic mobility period in Belgium and the scientific outcomes intended for the dissertation.

This methodological and conceptual redirection proved essential to achieving greater theoretical coherence, as well as to incorporating comparative and interdisciplinary dimensions into the study. Among the principal revisions was a thematic shift toward the field of urban planning, with an emphasis on the multiple



forms of social vulnerability experienced by female bodies within specific sociocultural contexts.

Within this new analytical framework, the female correctional facility remains a structuring element of the investigation; however, the focus shifts toward the city as a territory marked by disputes, inequalities, and socio-spatial divisions. From this perspective, the study seeks to discuss the feasibility of implementing small-scale female correctional facilities as a potential sociopolitical response to prison overcrowding, particularly within the context of the female correctional system in the state of Sergipe.

Accordingly, the research comes to understand incarceration not merely as an isolated institutional facility but as a phenomenon intrinsically connected to urban dynamics, public policies, and processes of social exclusion that become materialized in urban space. In addition, the personal and academic experiences gained during the period abroad constituted an important contribution to deepening reflections on European cultures and their historical and contemporary relationships with societies shaped by processes of colonization, such as Brazil.

Within this context, an interest emerged in investigating theoretical and empirical references related to migration processes and the experiences of female bodies in Belgium, particularly as a result of discussions held in the courses attended during the academic stay. These discussions contributed to broadening the understanding of the intersections among gender, mobility, territory, and social vulnerability, incorporating a transnational dimension into the research that engages



with contemporary challenges faced by cities and with policies concerning social reception, control, and segregation.

4. OVERCOME CHALLENGES

During the international activities, more specifically on the 25th day of the academic mobility period, I suffered an accident in the city of Brussels that required a surgical procedure and consequently resulted in a two-month medical leave from professional activities. This unforeseen event required the rescheduling of both the sandwich research agreement in Belgium and the appointments previously scheduled for the development of the international activities.

This was compounded by the medical leave of the international supervisor, Professor Jeroen Stevens, PhD, from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at KU Leuven, which occurred concurrently with the period during which I was on medical leave. Thus, despite the difficulties arising from the circumstances described above, the primary objectives established in accordance with the international activity schedule were not significantly compromised, as the necessary rescheduling was successfully completed and I was able to attend the activities scheduled after my medical discharge.

Following the resumption of the international activities, and with the support of RESCALED and the NGO DeHuizen, I have not encountered significant difficulties in fulfilling the scheduled activities. In fact, the activities have proven more productive than initially anticipated. The professional networking established through the



benchmarking activities facilitated by my participation in events organized by these organizations has greatly facilitated access to stakeholders involved in the process of obtaining access to correctional facilities in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The only challenge currently being faced is compliance with the contractual period established by CAPES without the disbursement of the scholarship for the final two months (April and May 2026), as the institution considers that the amounts previously disbursed during the months covered by the medical leave should be used to cover this extended completion period.

The financial difficulties that may arise from this situation while residing abroad, particularly in a high-cost city such as Brussels, where I was based, are self-evident. To address this financial constraint, I will rely on the continued disbursement of the doctoral scholarship funded by FAPEAL, as well as institutional support from PROPEP-UFAL, in order to mitigate the financial restrictions resulting from CAPES's position regarding its obligations and responsibilities.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The international experience constituted a highly relevant formative process from academic, professional, and personal perspectives, broadening perspectives and fostering critical reflections on society, gender, and vulnerability. Among the principal strengths associated with the international experience was the increased awareness of the multiple forms of vulnerability experienced by women, particularly when examined across different social and institutional contexts. The experience



abroad also contributed to challenging colonialized conceptions that frequently position Europe as an absolute reference for effectiveness and development, thereby enabling a more critical and contextualized analysis of international practices and their limitations.

Furthermore, the experience led to a significant revision of the dissertation objectives, which were no longer restricted to a strictly academic endeavor but instead adopted a more applied and socially engaged perspective. Exposure to international practices and policies enhanced the analytical scope of the research and strengthened its potential as a public policy proposal, expanding its relevance beyond the scientific field.

On the other hand, the experience also revealed significant areas of vulnerability. The challenges faced by the scholarship recipient without the expected institutional support exposed structural limitations in the institutional assistance provided during the international period. In addition, the lack of more effective international academic supervision, due to the health circumstances of the external supervisor, indirectly affected the development of the planned activities. The limited discussion of the research topic within the host university was also observed, restricting opportunities for deeper engagement and more substantive academic exchange.

Cultural differences likewise represented a significant challenge, particularly with regard to the potential adaptation and implementation, within the Brazilian context, of institutional practices observed abroad. The experience demonstrated that



practices considered effective in specific contexts cannot be automatically replicated elsewhere; rather, they require adaptation to local social, cultural, and institutional realities.

Thus, the international experience was characterized by complex and transformative learning, combining intellectual and personal development with structural and institutional challenges. Although marked by limitations, the experience made a decisive contribution to the critical maturation of the research and to the consolidation of a more realistic, contextualized, and socially engaged perspective on academic production and its potential impact.

6. FINAL DECLARATION

I declare that the information presented in this report is true and corresponds to the activities carried out during the term of the PDSE/CAPES scholarship.

Brazil, may 20th 2026.

ACÁCIA REGINA RESENDE SETTON

CAPES Federal Government scholarship recipient