

TOPOGRAPHY

PHYS 3

The topography is the result of various successive processes of erosion which have shaped the geological substrate over time. It conditions the local climate, the flow phenomena, and the type of vegetation, and it is one of the factors which shapes the landscape. It also plays a role in human settlements, reinforcing the variety of landscapes in the process.

Lowlands and low plateaus

The topography of Wallonia differs between the north and south of the Sambre-et-Meuse line. To the north, bordered by Flanders, Wallonia is essentially made up of an area of lowlands and gently undulating low plateau areas, which are suited to field crop cultivation. Elevations range from 100 m to over 200 m, with a peak of 212 m (Plateau de Hingeon). These are the Scaldisian and Hesbaye-Brabant Lowlands and Valleys. To the east, beyond the Meuse and bounded to the south by the Vesdre valley (Verviers), a higher plateau (200 to 250 m) dominates the landscape: this is the bocage of the Herve plateau.

Condroz and Famenne: alternating ridges and depressions

South of the Sambre-et-Meuse line, the topography is in the form of medium elevation plateaus (200 to 350 m). These are the Condroz plateaus: a medium-amplitude topography with alternating ridges and relatively deep depressions (the difference between a ridge and a successive depression can reach 70 m). The landscape consists of a succession of forests, crops and grasslands. This topography of Condroz is limited to the south by the Fagne-Famenne depression, separated from the Ardenne by a limestone tier, the Calestienne, which

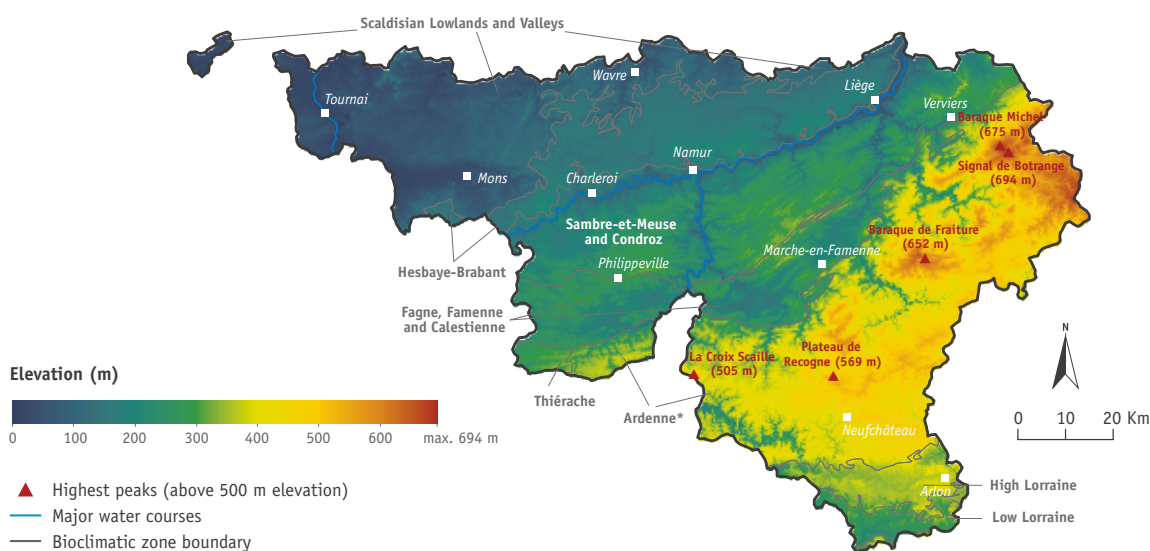
is rich in karst phenomena. The landscapes are made up of forested areas interspersed with large areas of grasslands used for livestock farming.

Ardenne and Lorraine: from high plateaus to cuestas

The Calestienne is dominated to the south by the high plateau of the Ardenne. This rises on a south-western axis towards the northeast, starting from Croix Scaille (505 m), passing through the Plateau de Recogne (569 m), the Baraque de Fraiture (652 m), the Signal de Botrange (694 m), the summit of Wallonia and also of Belgium, and the Baraque Michel (675 m). The landscape is made up of grassy or wooded high plateaus dissected by deep valleys whose slopes are generally wooded. The highest plateaus are occupied by fens.

To the south of the Ardenne lies Belgian Lorraine, at an elevation of less than 400 m, which is characterised by a topography in the form of cuestas (3 cuestas oriented from west to east). The ridges and steep slopes are wooded, while the gentle slopes and valley bottoms are occupied by crops and grasslands.

Map 3 Topography



* Grouping together of the bioclimatic zones "Central Eastern Ardenne", "Low and Mid-Ardenne" and "High Ardenne" for the sake of legibility

SOERW 2017 – Sources: SPW - SG - DGM; DGO3 - DEMNA & DNF