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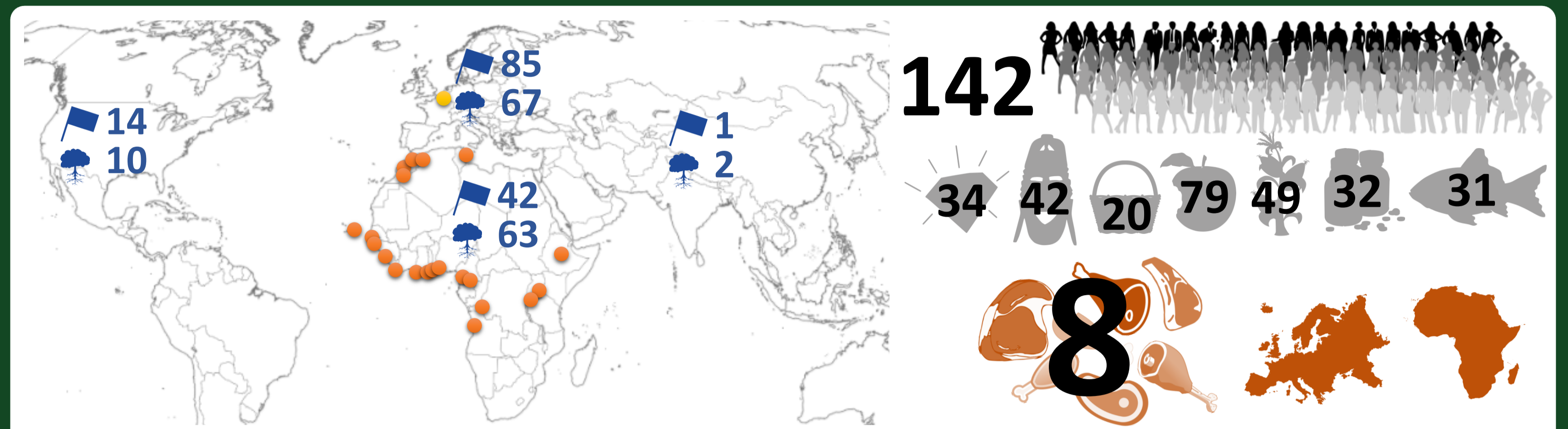
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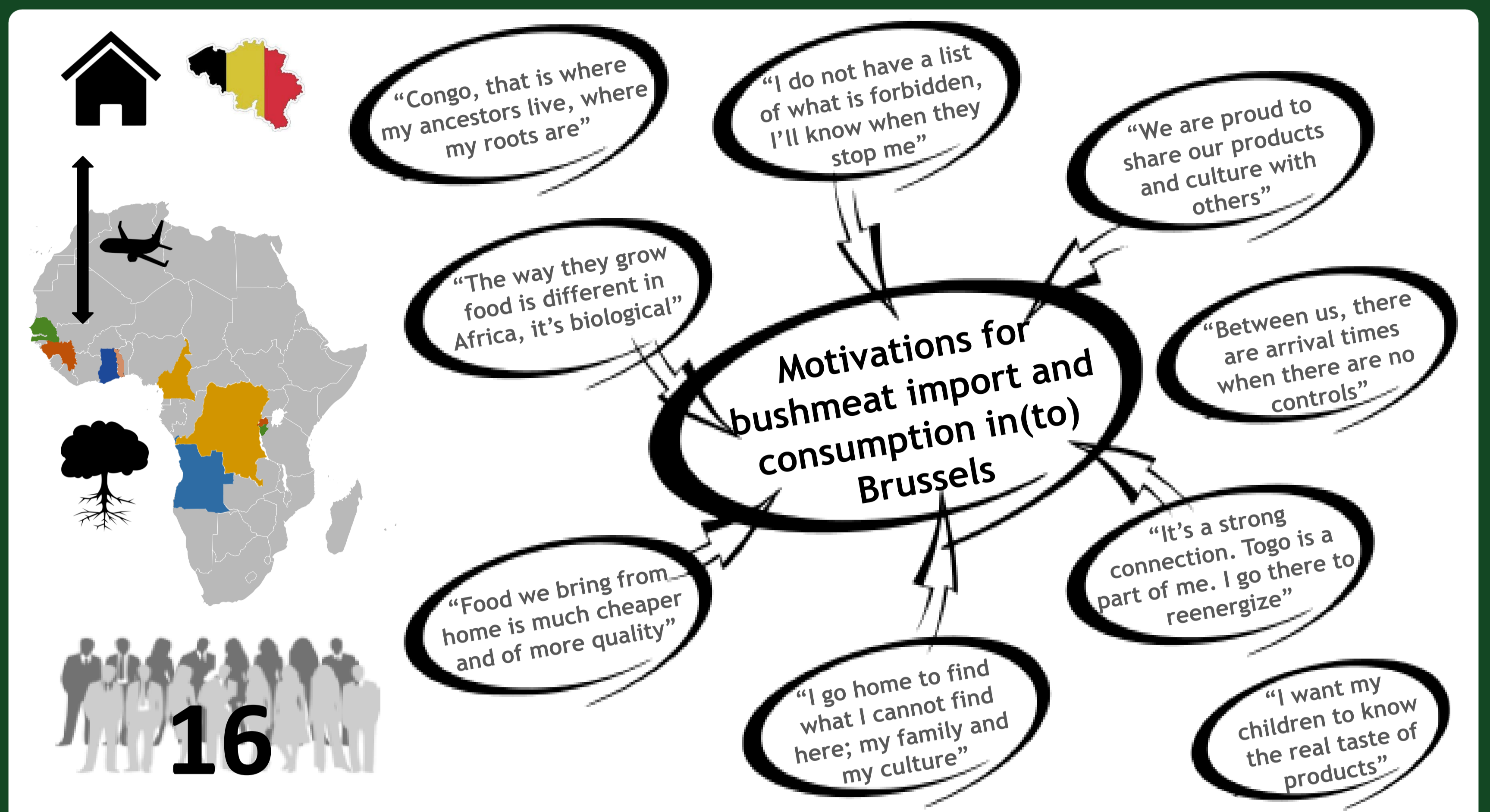
Notwithstanding the prohibition at national and European Union level to import individual consignments of meat (products), various studies (Chaber *et al.*, 2010; Falk *et al.*, 2013; Wood *et al.* 2014) report that large quantities of meat, including bushmeat, enter Europe via its international airports without authorization or certification. These studies suggest the existence of an African bushmeat market in Europe.

In order to get an impression of the nature, extent and value of African bushmeat trade in Brussels, 142 travellers waiting at the African departure gates of Brussels Airport were questioned about their travel and import habits. Also, we interviewed 16 Brussels citizens of African descent who frequently travel to Central African countries. In addition, we bought 15 pieces of bushmeat in African grocery shops in Brussels to explore: (i) which species are being sold, (ii) if these are endangered or legally protected, and (iii) the price of bushmeat in Brussels.

The interviews revealed that food from the country of origin is considered superior by the interviewees and that, notwithstanding the (limited) awareness of the rules and policies, the interviewees frequently import African food. The interviews also revealed that apart from the authenticity and flavour arguments, bushmeat trafficking is considered as an easy way to earn money or pay the travel expenses, while the risk of getting caught by customs control is perceived as very low.



Results from a survey interviewing 142 travellers at the departure gates for African destinations at Brussels Airport (Belgium). The map shows the departure airport (Brussels) and the African destinations of the interviewees (●), as well as the distribution of nationalities (▲) and origins (●) of the interviewees. The figure on the right displays how many of the interviewees indicated to 'import' jewels, art, baskets, fruit & vegetables, seeds, medication, fish and meat (from wild animals) on occasion when returning to Europe. The eight interviewees declaring to sometimes 'import' meat were of European and African nationalities and/or origin.



In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 travelling expatriates with a balanced age (24 - 55 y.o.) and gender (50 / 50 male-female) spread. The participants originated from 9 different countries and were interviewed for approximately two hours in two groups. All interviewees were well educated, living in Belgium and regularly travelling to their home countries. A few quotes (translated from French) are displayed here to (i) exemplify the importance of the connection to the home country, (ii) to clarify the reasons for bringing food items into Belgium, and (iii) to illustrate the perception of import rules and regulations.

SOLD BY VENDORS AS:	IDENTIFIED BY COI & CYTB AS:
red river hog	<i>Potamochoerus spec.</i> red river hog or bushpig
African buffalo	<i>Bos taurus / indicus</i> domesticated cow
duiker	<i>Tragelaphus spekkii</i> sitatunga
antelope	<i>Cephalophus spec.</i> ‡ duiker
cane rat	<i>Philantomba monticola</i> blue duiker
mangabey	<i>Atherurus africanus</i> African brush-tailed porcupine
monkey	<i>Thryonomys swinderianus</i> cane rat
	<i>Cercopithecus neglectus</i> De Brazza's guenon
	<i>Cercopithecus ascanius</i> red-tailed monkey/guenon

Every arrow represents one piece of meat bought in Brussels. The colours & dashes indicate:  
 → the DNA-based identification confirms the information given by the vendor;  
 → the DNA-based identification differs from the information given by the vendor;  
 - - - the information given by the vendor is very vague (higher taxonomic level).

‡ DNA-based species ID using COI and cytb were not able to distinguish among the closely related *Cephalophus callipygus*, *C. ogilbyi* and *C. weynsi*. Only *C. ogilbyi* is CITES-listed

Listed on Appendix II  
 Cheap  
 Expensive

Bushmeat was not on display in any of the African grocery stores visited, but after asking specifically for bushmeat, a total of 15 pieces could be purchased from five different shops in Brussels. The meat was sold using local African or common species names and was said to originate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

DNA-based identifications revealed that the 15 bushmeat pieces comprised nine potential mammal species, and that eight of the 15 pieces were sold under a wrong name. None of the nine species are endangered according to the IUCN Red List, but two monkey and two duiker species are CITES-listed. The price of bushmeat in Brussels can reach twice the Belgian market price of a piece of premium livestock meat, up to € 62 per kg, but does not seem to be related to the species being sold.

This study confirms that various kinds of bushmeat, including CITES listed species, are sold in Brussels. The high prices confirm the luxury status of the product, while DNA-based identifications demonstrate a high incidence of mislabelling. This might be due to the involvement of several intermediate vendors and the fragmented and heavily smoked nature of the meat, making it difficult to identify. Yet, accurate bushmeat species identifications are necessary to assess the hunting pressure on wild animal populations and to implement proper protective measures.

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