

# Belfort

Belfort, in eastern France, lies at one of Europe's crossroads....a 40 minute drive from Germany and even less from Switzerland.

Home to more than 50,000 people, Belfort is a town rich in history which reflects its position as a border town facing the Rhine.

Work to fortify Belfort during the French Revolution enabled the town to withstand a 103 day siege in 1870-71. This epic struggle was commemorated by the creation of the famous "Lion of Belfort", a huge sculpture by Auguste Bartoldi which still clings to the rocks overlooking the town.

Today, Belfort is a thriving commercial centre and like Stafford is home to electricity turbine generator manufacturers Alstom. The company's Belfort site employs around 4,000 people and also manufactures high speed trains.

Car giants Peugeot have a factory close by at Sochaux employing around 18,000 people.

In the summer, when temperatures can reach 40 degrees Centigrade, Belfort becomes a focus for music lovers from across the world.

Every year more than 100,000 visitors descend on the town to see some of the world's leading rock stars. Bob Dylan and Oasis have all performed at Belfort's "Eurokeene" Rock Festival.

During May, the town plays host to around 1,000 musicians from throughout Europe when it stages the FIMU - Festival International de Music Universitaire - which has featured young musicians from Stafford.

