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News from Belgium

September - December 2008

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The port of Zeebrugge
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LOCAL NEWS

The new Newsletter

This is the first edition of the new newsletter about Belgium and covers the period September – December 2008.

The newsletter offers an overview of the most important developments in our country in a variety of fields: the economy, culture, science, education and others.

Go straight to any of these topics by clicking on it above.

Belgium in 4th place worldwide in attracting foreign investments

A study by the KUL (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven/Catholic University of Leuven) professor Leo Sleuwaegen, "Foreign Direct Investments, trends and developments", indicates that Belgium is in 4th place worldwide in attracting foreign investments (2006). Only the US, the UK and France outdo it. With 72 billion dollars worth of inward investments our country is doing very well. In 2006, 63 billion dollars left Belgium in outward investments, giving a positive balance of 9 billion. The economic importance of foreign companies in Flanders and Brussels is increasing, both in terms of employment opportunities and added value. In 2007 there were 5,318 foreign manufacturing and service companies active in Flanders, or 7% of the total. They employed nearly 600,000 people, which is 41% of employees in those sectors. With € 57.4 billion they realise more than half of the value added (51 %).

THE ECONOMY & BUSINESS

Faster business or work visas for foreigners and their families

Since 15/09/2008 the *Service for Economic Migration*, which is part of the Immigration Office, has been operational in Belgium. This will give foreign investors, business men and employees, including the members of their families, faster access to visas allowing them to do business or to work in Belgium. Belgian diplomatic posts will continue to be responsible for delivering the visas. The new *Service for Economic Migration* will provide support for the embassies, consulates and other competent bodies, such as the local authorities and the Federal Public Services Employment and Economy. The *Service for Economic Migration* will also act as the point of contact for the business world, supplying information on obtaining work permits, procedures and exemptions.



<http://www.annemieturleboom.be/NL/migratiebeleid/08/22.htm>
<http://www.dofi.fgov.be/>

The Directorate General for Consular Affairs of the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs is currently working on a pilot project which aims to improve the registration and follow up of business visa applications in India and China. This "Fast-Track" project will contribute to the success of the *Service for Economic Migration*.

Brussels ranks 4th on list of most attractive European business cities



European Cities Monitor 2008, a recent survey by *Cushman & Wakefield*, has revealed that Brussels ranks 4th on the list of "most attractive European business cities". Brussels did well in the survey. London, Paris and Frankfurt are number 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The annual report is based on interviews with senior managers and board directors in charge of location for 500 of Europe's largest companies. Companies consider the availability of qualified staff as a key factor when deciding where to relocate their business. Brussels' strengths are its language skills, housing quality for expats, market and customer accessibility, and the national and international transport network.

<http://www.cushwake.com/cwglobal/jsp/newsDetail.jsp?repId=c19400007p&LanId=EN&LocId=GLOBAL>

Research centres can attract foreign talent even faster now

Thanks to an initiative of Vincent Van Quickenborne, Belgium's Minister for Enterprise and Administrative Reform, recognised research centres that want to bring in foreign talent will be able to do so in just a few days from now on. In October 2007 a new regulation came into force eliminating the need for recognised research centres in Belgium to apply for work permits for foreign researchers. Since then it has been enough for recognised research centres to conclude visiting agreements with foreign researchers. Furthermore, from now on Belgian embassies and consulates will be able to issue visas to researchers with visiting agreements, without having to ask authorisation from the *Immigration Office* first. This means that taking on talent from outside the EU for recognised research centres will only take a few days now.

<http://www.kafka.be/showpage.php?iPageID=40&sLangCode=FR>

Belgium is best location for industrial/logistics facilities



Belgium is the best location for industrial/logistics facilities, according to the *European Distribution Report 2008* produced biennially by global real estate consultant *Cushman & Wakefield*. Both Flanders and Wallonia dominate the European industrial and logistics market, because of low rental levels, land prices and building costs and the expected evolution of these costs, availability, and limited traffic congestion.

<http://www.cushwake.com/cwglobal/jsp/newsDetail.jsp?repId=c17700012p&LanId=EN&LocId=GLOBAL>

Toyota invests € 80 million to expand its research and development centre in Zaventem

The Japanese car manufacturer *Toyota* is investing € 80 million to expand its European research and development centre in Zaventem, having already invested € 75 million there in 2006. At the *Toyota Motor Europe Technical Centre* in Zaventem vehicles have been developed and adapted to suit the requirements and tastes of the European market since 1987. It currently employs around 800 people and will require another 250 or so in the next 2 years. Thanks to this investment the number of employees at the research centre will rise to over 1000. Including those in Diest, Evere, Zaventem and Zeebrugge, *Toyota* has more than 3000 employees in Belgium.



http://www.toyota.eu/01_Latest_News/index.aspx

Successful cooperation between Jet Airways, Brussels Airlines and Brussels Airport



In 2007 the Indian airline *Jet Airways* decided to make a hub in Brussels. From the first flight in August 2007 till the end of September 2008, *Jet Airways* carried 700,000 passengers to and from Brussels Airport. In the space of 4 months it opened 6 routes in Brussels with daily flights to Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Toronto, New York JFK and Newark. What is more, *Jet Airways* and *Brussels Airlines* have formed a partnership - the two airlines have coordinated their flight schedules to streamline connections. The Indian airline's passengers can get to all the main cities in Europe and a variety of destinations in Africa from Brussels. The partnership is advantageous for both *Jet Airways* and *Brussels Airlines*.

http://www.aerocontact.com/actualite_aeronautique_spatiale/cp-bilan-positif-pour-le-premier-anniversaire-du-hub-europeen-de-bruxelle-01688.html

<http://www.jetairways.com/be/>

<http://www.brusselsairport.be>

<http://company.brusselsairlines.com/en/home/>

Indian consortium Caliber Corporation opens distribution centre in Liège

Caliber Corporation, an Indian consortium of textile manufacturers and exporters, is to open a marketing and distribution centre in Liège. *Caliber Corporation* will commercialise the whole of its textile production from Liège, particularly furnishing fabrics sourced from *Cauvery Hi-Tech Weaving Park* in Lomarapalayam, in southern India. By establishing itself in Liège *Caliber Corporation* hopes to increase its profit margins by bringing end-users and manufacturers closer together and limiting the number of intermediaries. The European headquarters of *Caliber Corporation* intends to call on local designers in order to be able to respond better and faster to the requirements of the local clientele. Liège was chosen for its logistical importance in Europe.



© Caliber Corporation

http://www.calibercorporation.com/marketing_distribution.html

Japanese companies choose Zeebrugge



© Wim Robberechts

The Japanese tyre manufacturer *Bridgestone* and the Japanese car manufacturer *Mazda* have chosen the port of Zeebrugge for the deployment of their activities.

The Japanese tyre manufacturer *Bridgestone* operates its largest European distribution centre in the Port of Zeebrugge, Belgium, and is now planning to expand its logistics centre. The company aims to increase its warehousing capacity by 40 %, an investment worth a total of € 15 million. The expansion of *Bridgestone's* current concession will take place in two stages.

As of April 2009 *Mazda* will supply the United Kingdom and Ireland from the port of Zeebrugge instead of Rotterdam. This was confirmed by Marc Adriansens, the head of *ICO (International Car Operators)*, a subsidiary of the Japanese carrier, *NYK (Nippon Yusen Kaisha)*. This switch means an annual increase in traffic to Zeebrugge of roughly 126,000 extra vehicles, spread over import and export. This contract confirms Zeebrugge's role as a hub for the distribution of new cars in Europe.

http://www.lloyd.be/nieuws/id22466Zeebrugge_annonce_plusieurs_investissements_japonais.html
http://www.delloyd.be/nieuws/id22574ICO_Zeebrugge_remporte_un_trafic_de_Mazda.html

Jan De Nul dredging company secures challenging contracts abroad

Contract for the expansion of the port of Duqm in Oman

Jan De Nul Group and *CCC/STFA* were awarded a contract worth € 620 million for the expansion of the port of Duqm in Oman. The contract is an extension of an existing contract that is currently being carried out by *Jan De Nul Group* and *CCC/STFA* for the construction of a new port and dry dock complex in Duqm. This extension to the contract brings the consortium's total investment in the new port complex to € 1 billion. The additional work includes extension of the breakwaters and deepening of the harbour basin and access channel. Completion is foreseen for May 2012.

© Jan De Nul

Challenging project in New Caledonia

Jan De Nul Group started the dredging Works for the *Koniambo Nickel Project* in New Caledonia. The works involve the dredging of a 5 km long channel and a turning basin for the future nickel export port. The project value is € 66 million.



© Jan De Nul Group



© Jan De Nul Group

Major Mexican contract

The Mexican branch of the *Jan De Nul Group* signed a contract with the port authorities of the Mexican Pacific ports of Ensenada, Mazatlan en Manzanillo. The contract has a total value of € 48 million. It involves dredging and extension works in the three ports. The Manzanillo scope mainly consists of the deforestation, excavation and reclamation of a terrain which will be an extension of the container terminal.

<http://www.jandenul.be/newsitems/NF200809A.pdf>
<http://www.jandenul.com/newsitems/NF200810B.pdf>
<http://www.jandenul.com/newsitems/NF200809B.pdf>

Solvay strengthens its position in Asia and North Africa

High-quality fluorine compounds in Asia

The *Solvay* Group has inaugurated a new world-class production unit for polytetrafluoroethylene micropowder (PTFE) in China. It already had one in Marshallton, Delaware, USA. The new factory in China will meet the dynamic local demand for innovative high-quality materials. PTFE micropowder is used in a wide range of complex applications like cosmetics, high-gloss inks, high-quality lubricants and heat-resistant materials. The new factory is part of *Solvay's* strategy of geographic expansion in fast-growing markets.



Sodium carbonate company in Egypt

Solvay entered into an agreement for the acquisition of *Alexandria Sodium Carbonate Company (ASCC)* from the *Holding Company for Chemical Industries (HCCI)*, an Egyptian state-owned holding company. *ASCC's* plant was erected in 1974 and was thoroughly modernized at the end of the 1990s.

The operation is part of *Solvay's* geographical expansion strategy and will allow the Group to attend to the growing needs of Egyptian consumers and to support the projects of its customers in the fast-growing Middle-eastern and North-African markets. *ASCC* has an annual production capacity of 130,000 metric tons of soda ash. *Solvay* aims at rapidly increasing annual production capacity to 200,000 metric tons of sodium carbonate. In the longer term, *Solvay* considers producing up to 500,000 tons per year at the Alexandria plant.

Sodium carbonate is a widely used chemical whose largest application is glass manufacturing, including glasses, bottles, windows and car windows. Other outlets include the chemical and detergent industries, as well as the purification of fumes.

<http://www.solvaypress.com/pressreleases/0..66779-3-0-00.htm>
<http://www.solvaypress.com/pressreleases/0..67826-3-0-00.htm>

American magazine *TIME* celebrates *ECOVER*



Under the title "*Heroes of the Environment 2008*" the American magazine *TIME* selected *ECOVER* as eco-pioneers fighting for a greener future. A whole article was devoted to the company, which has its headquarters in Malle, near Antwerp.

ECOVER was founded in 1980 in Belgium. The company is active in the production of ecological washing and cleaning products. From the start *ECOVER* was a pioneering company that brought out a phosphate-free washing product even before phosphates were branded as a problem.

Since then *ECOVER* has developed into the largest producer of ecological washing and cleaning products. Besides the headquarters in Malle, near Antwerp, *ECOVER* has branches in the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland and France and markets its products in more than 25 countries.

ECOVER's revolutionary environmental policy is expressed not only in the products that the company markets but is also an integral part of its operational management. *ECOVER* has extended its environmental policy to every department in the company, from production to marketing. The most obvious feature of this is the first ecological factory in the world.

ECOVER's outstanding services in the field of conservation and sustainable development have been recognised and honoured many times. The most prestigious mark of recognition was perhaps the *United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Roll of Honour*, which was awarded to *ECOVER* back in 1993.

<http://www.ecover.com/us/en/news/details.htm?ID=196>
http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1841778_1841780_1841784,00.html

Important contracts abroad for IBA

The Belgian company *IBA (Ion Beam Applications)* develops and sells technologies, pharmaceuticals and custom-made solutions for healthcare, with the emphasis on cancer diagnosis and treatment.

IBA delivers proton therapy systems to two hospitals in the United States

In cooperation with *ProCure Treatment Centers, Inc.* it will deliver proton therapy systems to the Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, Illinois, in the USA and to the ProCure Proton Therapy Center of the William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. Construction of a first proton therapy centre in Oklahoma City is already underway. *IBA* is currently equipping six proton therapy centres worldwide – four in the US and two in Europe, and has six proton therapy centres that treat patients daily in the US and Asia. Proton therapy is a superior form of cancer treatment.

IBA and Hae Dong to cooperate to develop the PET radiopharmaceutical market (Positron Emission Tomography) in South Korea

IBA is to provide support for the South Korean company *Hae Dong* in the training of doctors in the nuclear medicine sector. *Hae Dong* will also be *IBA's* favoured partner in South Korea for the distribution of PET radiopharmaceuticals under an exclusive license from *IBA*. Likewise, *IBA* will be *Hae Dong's* number one partner for PET radiopharmaceutical technology. The agreement with *Hae Dong* will increase *IBA's* network for the production and distribution of PET radiopharmaceuticals with 7 extra centres in South Korea, 5 operational and 2 under construction. The *IBA* network now has 45 facilities all over the world.



© IBA



© IBA

IBA sells a cyclotron and signs co-operation agreement on research and development in Argentina

On the occasion of an economic mission in October 2008 *IBA* signed a co-operation contract with an Argentine laboratory from Villa Martelli, in the Buenos Aires province. The contract concerns the sale of a cyclotron and co-operation in the field of research and development.

IBA ships particle accelerator to India

IBA shipped a Cyclone ® 30, which is a 30MeV (Millions of Electron Volts) cyclotron, to the Indian *Department of Atomic Energy* in Kolkata. The contract was signed in 2007 and the project is on schedule to be operational in late 2009. *IBA* has been active in India since a number of years. India is a growing market for the Belgian company.

Increasing number of Belgians have a diploma of higher education

An increasing number of people in Belgium have a diploma of higher education, says "Education at a glance 2008", a report by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). According to OECD statistics 32% of Belgians between the ages of 25 and 64 have a diploma of higher education. In the 25-34 age group that number rises even to 42 %.

The most popular higher education courses are social sciences, business and law, followed by engineering or life sciences, and the humanities.

At the moment Belgium invests 4.1% of its GNP in primary and secondary education and 1.2% in higher education. The average in OECD countries is 3.8% and 1.5% respectively.



[38 41266761 1 1 1 1.00.html](http://www.photo-libre.fr)

Vlerick Leuven Management School breaks into the top 10 of the Financial Times European Business School ranking

This authoritative listing also includes other Belgian management schools, such as the Solvay Business School (22nd place), the Universiteit Antwerpen Management School (52nd place) and the IAG-Louvain School of Management (58th place).

<http://rankings.ft.com/businessschoolrankings/european-business-school-rankings>

Researchers at KUL make an important discovery concerning HIV-AIDS

A research team from the department of Molecular Medicine at the KUL (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven/Catholic University of Leuven) led by Zeger Debyser and Frauke Christ has discovered a protein that transports the HIV-1 virus that causes AIDS to the nucleus of human cells. Insight into the transport mechanism is important in the search for medications against HIV infection.

To be able to develop, the virus has to rely on cellular proteins to complement its own limited arsenal of viral proteins. If you can neutralise these partners you can prevent HIV infecting a host cell and, in the end, inhibit the development of AIDS.

HIV is a lentivirus. It multiplies by implanting its own genetic information into the genetic material of a host cell. In the host cell the genetic material is initially packed in a particle. Lentiviruses can send that particle through the pores of the nucleus membrane. Until recently the mechanism for this was unknown.

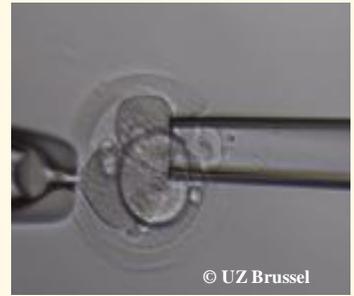
Researchers have now succeeded in working out how HIV-1 gets into the cell nucleus. The virus uses Transportin-SR2, a so-called import factor, which is important for the transport of the package of HIV genetic material through the pores of the nucleus membrane to the nucleus of the host cell. Meanwhile, a laboratory experiment in collaboration with Anna Cereseto, in Pisa, has proved that, if the transportin protein is neutralised, HIV cannot be imported into the nucleus of the cell. (Christ *et al.*, *Current Biology* 18(16):1192-202)



This research was carried out within the framework of a European project subsidised by the European Commission: THINC. <http://www.kuleuven.be/molmed/thinc>

World first in stem cell research for Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel

Scientists at *UZ Brussel*, the Flemish university hospital in Brussels, have developed a new technique, whereby stem cells can be derived from embryos, without the embryos having to be destroyed. This is a worldwide first. Scientists from the Department for Embryology and Human Genetics have demonstrated that it is possible at an early stage, when the human embryo consists of four cells (*see photo*), to remove one cell from which embryonic stem cells can be derived. The remaining three cells can then develop into an embryo/baby.



This breakthrough could facilitate stem cell therapy and contribute to the development of new medications. The new technique could also put an end to the numerous ethical objections to which stem cell research has hitherto given rise.

<http://www.uzbrussel.be/u/view/nl/127652-Pers.html>

Belgian South Pole base will be a world first

The Belgian Princess Elisabeth base, the first research station in Antarctica to produce zero carbon emissions, will become operational in March 2009.

The complex will work completely on renewable energy generated on site (wind turbines, solar panels and heat collectors) and is unique of its kind. Diesel generators will take over if necessary. 40 cm insulation should ensure that heat generated is retained. The main source of water is snow, so a water purification installation has also been included in the steel construction. 75 percent of the waste water is filtered via bioreactors for reuse.



There will be room for between 12 and 20 scientists at the Belgian base, who will carry out research into glaciers, meteorites, bacteria, magnetic fields, global warming and biodiversity, amongst other things. In the first instance the base will only be manned in the Antarctic summer. However the monitoring instruments will function all year round.

The base is almost completely privately financed. Once it is ready for use, the operational and scientific management will be entrusted to the Pole Secretariat, a public-private partnership between the *International Polar Foundation (IPF)* and the Belgian government.

www.polarfoundation.org/index.php?/projects/princess_elisabeth_antarctica/&uid=73
www.antarcticstation.org

Awards for Belgian cineastes Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

The cineastes Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne have won awards for their whole oeuvre in the Netherlands and Germany. At the Dutch film festival, "Film by the Sea", in Vlissingen in September 2008 they received a Lifetime *Achievement Award*; in Germany the city of Cologne and the film foundation NRW (North Rhine-Westphalia) awarded them the *Film Award Cologne* in October.

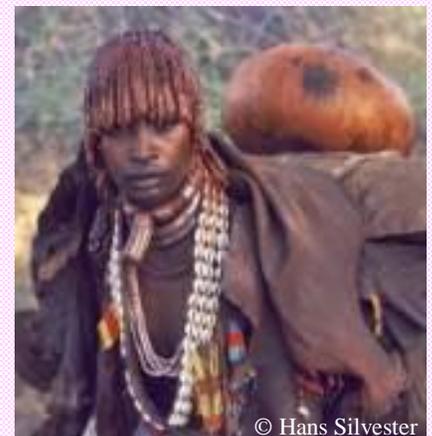


The brothers Dardenne write, produce and direct their films themselves, films which are often set in the socially weaker classes of Belgian society. They have twice won a Golden Palm Award at the International Film Festival in Cannes, for "Rosetta" (1999) and "L'Enfant" (2005). Their most recent production, which carried off the European Parliament's *Lux Cinema Prize*, is called "Le Silence de Lorna". Thanks to the award the film will be translated into the 23 official languages of the European Union and at least one copy will be distributed to each of the 27 Member States.

"Omo, People & Design", temporary exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (7 November 2008 – 31 August 2009)

The Omo valley, located in south-western Ethiopia, is on Unesco's World Cultural Heritage List. This exceptional paleontology site on which several ancestors of the human race were discovered, is rightly named the "birthplace of humanity". Graced with stupendous natural beauty, it also has several national parks. It is the cultural crucible of a dozen nomad tribes that barely survive in an austere environment.

The Ethnographic section of the Royal Museum of Central Africa possesses over 1,000 objects collected from those various tribes, representing one of the largest collections for the region.



The exhibit offers one person's view of the nomadic peoples of the Omo valley and of their relations with their environment. It focuses on the esthetics of ordinary, everyday objects and explains the role played by them in a society constantly obliged to adapt itself to the laws of nature. It also describes the new social and geopolitical stakes, and the recent challenges faced by these small nomadic communities.

Some magnificent portraits and pictures of body paintings complete the exhibit. This is all the work of Hans Silvester, who has been working in the Omo valley for several years.

CoBrA. Temporary exhibition at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (7 November 2008 – 15 February 2009)

Created in Paris in November 1948 by artists coming from Copenhagen (Jorn), Brussels (Dotremont, Noiret) and Amsterdam (Appel, Corneille, Constant), the Cobra movement remains unknown out of Europe.

The project firstly aims at relating the story of the Cobra movement by putting it in its historical and cultural context. After the Liberation and during the Cold War Cobra wanted to explore other paths which we now could call libertarian or alternative. Therefore the action of Cobra is worth to be enhanced in a perspective that will lead some of the artist to the Situationism and Fluxus.



© MRBAB

<http://www.fine-arts-museum.be>

Brussels Biennial (19 October 2008-4 January 2009)

The first edition of the Brussels Biennial takes place from October 19th, 2008 through January 4th, 2009. The Brussels Biennial is an exhibition of contemporary art combined with debates and workshops involving international artists, curators and politicians. The Biennial incorporates a patchwork of institutions from all over the world. Participating organizations will be structured according to various aesthetic and thematically built relations. The exhibitions are located in two deserted buildings along the North-South railway axis in Brussels. Alongside the main project of the Brussels Biennial 2008, there will be a series of special projects across Brussels in different institutions of contemporary art.

http://www.brusselsbiennial.org/site/index_lang.php



© Arocha Carla

Most prestigious American jazz award for Toots Thielemans

On 17 October 2008, at the Lincoln Center in New York, Jean "Toots" Thielemans was given the highest honour available to jazz musicians in the US, the *National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Fellowship* award. Our fellow countryman is the first non-US-born jazz musician to be given this honour, which has previously been awarded to Count Basie, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie and other jazz legends. Toots stole the show easily during the concert following the award ceremony.

<http://www.tootsthielemans.com>



© Jos L. Knapen

Flemish tapestries for the Dukes of Burgundy, Emperor Charles V and King Philip II (21 November 2008-29 March 2009)

The Flemish tapestries belong to the most successful export products of our history. Important Flemish weaving centres such as Brussels, Oudenaarde, Mechelen, Bruges or Doornik produced with unequalled technical precision the most splendid tapestries, often designed by famous painters. The Burgundian, Spanish and Habsburg kings were fanatic collectors of these spectacular and valuable textiles.

The exhibition at the Sint-Pieters abbey in Ghent brings together an amazing collection from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.



© Patrimonio Nacional

It includes top-tapestries from the *Patrimonio Nacional* of Madrid, the Spanish cathedrals and famous European museums. The highlight of the exhibition is the breathtaking panorama on the taking of Tunis in North-Africa during one of the numerous campaigns of Emperor Charles V.

<http://www4.gent.be>



© Musée royal de Mariemont

Traces of Great Men : the collection of autographs from the Royal Museum of Mariemont (Morlanwelz, 25 October 2008-17 January 2009)

This exhibition presents a unique collection of autographs from the Royal Museum of Mariemont. It allows you to discover prestigious documents signed and/or written by international personalities such as Charles the Fifth, Louis XIV, Luther, Lapérouse, Jean-François Champollion, Erasmus, Victor Hugo, Frédéric Chopin, Maurice Béjart, Titian, Rembrandt, Christian Huygens, Galileo ...

<http://www.musee-mariemont.be>

Antwerp amongst "Lonely Planet" travel guide's top 10 world cities

The international travel guide, "Lonely Planet", has included Antwerp in the ten most interesting cities in the world to visit. Every year "Lonely Planet" publishes a guide with a top 10 of countries that are certainly worth a visit in the coming year. Besides Antwerp, Beirut, Chicago, Glasgow, Lisbon, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, Warsaw and Zurich are also on the prestigious top 10 list.



© Dina Petridis

BELGIUM ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Belgium 10th biggest donor to UNAIDS

On 9 September 2008 the annual consultations between the Belgian Development Cooperation and the United Nations aids programme, UNAIDS, took place in Brussels. The objective of the meeting was to engage in political dialogue, follow up programmes financed by Belgium and increase internal coherence by bringing all those involved round the table.



Belgium's financial contribution for the period 2008-2011 comes to € 17.6 million. Belgium was the 10th largest donor to UNAIDS for the period 2006-2007. Over the last 10 years the Belgian Development Cooperation has increased financing for the fight against aids tenfold, but this is only a minimal estimate – a large number of the Belgian Development Cooperation's programmes have an AIDS component, for example, programmes involving sexual and reproductive healthcare.

<http://www.dgcd.be/>

Belgian gets key post in UN panel on climate change

On 3 September 2008 the Belgian Jean-Pascal van Ypersele was elected as the new Vice Chair of the *IPCC* (the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*).

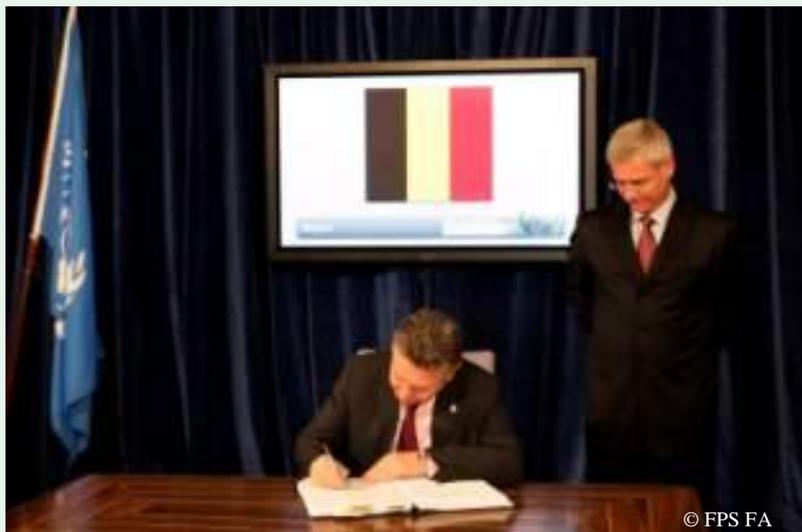
The *IPCC* was created in 1988 by the *WMO* (*World Meteorological Organisation*) and *UNEP* (*United Nations Environment Programme*). In cooperation with thousands of scientists and experts on the socio-economic aspects of climate change, the Panel has produced a variety of reports. In 2007 the *IPCC* and Al Gore were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, professor at *UCL* (*Université catholique de Louvain*), is the former Vice Chair of a group within the *IPCC*, which was dedicated to subjects such as the repercussions of climate change and adapting to them. Prof. van Ypersele enjoys the respect of both the developing and the industrialised countries. He is an internationally recognised expert in climatology as well as in building bridges between science and policy. He is also extremely interested in the problem of sustainable development.



The Belgian Federal Science Policy Office provides scientific and technological as well as administrative support for this Vice Chairmanship. The Science Policy Office is also an *IPCC Focal Point*.

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>



Belgium signs the Convention on cluster munitions

Belgium was the first country in the world, in February 2006, to pass a law completely banning submunitions. On 3 December 2008 Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel De Gucht signed a new international convention in Oslo concerning a ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions.

Belgium takes charge of the Combined Joint Special Operations Component Command of the EUFOR operation in Chad and the Central African Republic

EUFOR started on 15 March 2008 for a period of one year. The goal of this European Union military operation is to create a safe environment in Eastern Chad and the north east of the Central African Republic, so that the humanitarian organisations and the *Chadian Police in charge of Humanitarian Protection* can carry out their activities. Approximately 70 Belgian military personnel will take part in command and control, intelligence gathering, and construction and maintenance of military quarters.

At the request of the military commander of *EUFOR*, Belgium will head the *Combined Joint Special Operations Component Command (CJSOCC)* within the *EUFOR* staff from 15 October 2008 till 15 March 2009.

The *CJSOCC* is part of the command structure of *EUFOR* which is in charge of all special operations forces responsible for intelligence gathering.



© Communication Service of the Belgian Federal Council of Ministers
Directorate General External Communications
Office of the Prime Minister

MISCELLANEOUS

Seminar in Brussels on the “Legacy of the International Criminal Tribunals”

On 27 September 2008 the Federal Public Service (FPS) Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation organised a seminar on the legacy of the International Criminal Tribunals.

The workshop took place during a visit to Belgium by the United Nations Security Council Working Group on International Tribunals. The visit was part of a mission the Working Group went on to the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Belgium will preside the Working Group till the end of this year.

Representatives of all 15 members of the Security Council Working Group were present, except Vietnam. The discussions were presided by Paul Rietjens, Director General of Legal Affairs of the FPS. The debate was animated by a panel of professors, made up of Christine Van den Wijngaert (Antwerp, a judge at the ICTY), Jan Wouters (Leuven) and Eric David (Brussels).

The focus of this workshop was on the contribution of the ICTR and ICTY Tribunals to justice at a national and international level and, in the broader sense, the fight against impunity (historical context of the International Criminal Tribunals, progress since Nuremberg and Tokyo, definition of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, etc.).



Donor conference for Georgia in Brussels



During a donor conference in Brussels, on 22 October 2008, at which 67 countries and international organisations were represented, € 3.45 billion were pledged to rebuild Georgia. This will be spread over three years. The EU donated € 500 million and Belgium promised € 1 million. This comes on top of the € 500,000 that the Belgian Red Cross promised at the outbreak of violence in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia last summer.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/georgia/conference/index_en.htm

Belgium celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On 10 December 2008 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UDHR is the basis of international law on human rights. It is the work of representatives of all parts of the world and all legal traditions. It recognises that all human rights, whether they are civil rights, political rights or economic rights, are inseparable and interlinked.



The rights embodied in the Declaration are universal and inalienable – they apply everywhere, always and to everyone. This is why the Declaration has stood the test of time. It is a valuable instrument for combating injustice and protecting human dignity in all societies, in times of conflict and in times of peace.

In Belgium, a variety of events were planned to spotlight the 60th anniversary of the UDHR and the theme of human rights in general. Many conferences and seminars took place, a study day and a special evening concert in the Brussels Conservatory on 9 December 2008.

<http://www.diplomatie.be>

AGENDA

EVENTS IN BELGIUM

For general touristic information about Belgium :

<http://www.visitbelgium.com/>

<http://www.agenda.be>

<http://www.opt.be/accueil/fr/index.html>

http://www.wallonie-tourisme.be/contenus/agenda_culturel/fr/181.html

http://www.cfwb.be/index.php?id=portail_theme_culture

<http://www.toerismevlaanderen.be/showpage.asp?iPageID=5>

<http://www.cultuurweb.be/CNETPortal/Home2.aspx>

<http://www.opbrussel.be/>

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Maison Martin Margiela.

12 September 2008 - 8 February 2009

Antwerp, Modemuseum

<http://www.momu.be>

The Terracotta Army of Xi'an.

Treasures of the First Emperors of China.

1 October 2008 – 31 March 2009

Maaseik, Minderbroederskerk

<http://www.museamaaseik.be>

The Smile of Buddha. 1600 Years of Buddhist Art in Korea.

10 October 2008 – 18 January 2009

Brussels, Bozar

<http://www.bozar.be>

Survivors of the X-treme.

15 October 2008 – 30 August 2009

Brussels, Museum for Natural Sciences

<http://www.naturalsciences.be>

It's our Earth!

18 October 2008 – 26 April 2009

Brussels, Thurn & Taxis

<http://www.expo-terra.be>

Körperwelten.

29 August 2008 – 1 March 2009

Brussels, Cellars of Cureghem

<http://www.koerperwelten.be>

Destinations Delvaux.

14 November 2008 – 13 September 2009

Liège

<http://www.destinationsdelvaux.be>

Biennale Design 2008. Gustave Serrurier-Bovy.

26 September 2008 – 18 January 2009

Liège

<http://www.mamac.be>

TOP EVENTS IN 2009

Opening Museum René Magritte

2 June 2009

Brussels

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Opening M Leuven (renovated Museum of Leuven) & Exhibition Rogier van der Weyden "1400|1464 – Master of Passions"

20 September 2009 – 6 December 2009

Leuven

<http://www.mleuven.be> and

<http://www.rogiervanderweyden.be>

Europalia China

October 2009 – February 2010

Brussels and other Belgian cities

<http://www.europalia.be>

MUSIC

International Lute Festival

20 – 23 February 2009

Antwerp, AMUZ, Augustinus Muziekcentrum

<http://www.amuz.be>

Ars Musica

10 March 2009 - 10 April 2009

Brussels, different locations

<http://www.arsmusica.be>

Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition - violin

May – June 2009

Brussels, Koninklijk Conservatorium – Paleis voor Schone Kunsten

<http://www.imkeb.be>

FAIRS

<http://www.beurskalender.be>

http://mineco.fgov.be/enterprises/fairs/home_fr.htm

CONFERENCES

<http://www.conferencealerts.com/belgium.htm>

<http://www.conference-service.com/conferences/be/index.html>

FILM FESTIVALS

<http://www.insidefilm.com/europe.html>



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