

Belgian Events

July 2010



trio.be

**The Belgian Presidency
of the Council of the European Union**

1 July – 31 December 2010

www.eutrio.be

The new Belgian Ambassador to London, Johan Verbeke, has a knack for securing a ringside seat when history is being made. "I always seem to find myself in countries in transition, but that is what makes life so interesting," says the Ambassador, who has just returned from a tour of duty at the UN in New York. His posting ended with two grueling years on the UN Security Council, in which he led the Security Council Mission to Kosovo to smooth a path to independence and was appointed the UN Secretary General's troubleshooter-in-chief in Lebanon and Georgia, to help ease these countries into peaceful dialogue.

It's a trend that spans his entire career, which started in Lebanon at the height of the civil war (1983-85), and also included a stint in Chile where he witnessed the country's transformation from dictatorship to democracy (1988-90). As deputy chief of mission in Washington during the Clinton Administration, he reveled in the boiler room of world politics. "You are a first-hand observer of global diplomacy at the State Department," he recalls. "From dawn until dusk we would be discussing everything – from the Balkans, pre and post-Dayton, to North Korea to the Middle East." Verbeke found this experience invaluable when he returned to Brussels, where he rose through the ranks to serve as Chef de Cabinet to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2002-04).

True to form, the Ambassador arrived in London just in time to watch history-in-the-making again, as the British public voted in its first coalition government since World War II.



Coalition conundrums

"I see that Britain is moving a little closer to Belgium," he smiles, "because we have always had to live with coalition governments. We know the strengths of coalition governments in that you have consensus-based politics, but the weaknesses are that you spend much time negotiating and you have to compromise a lot. It will be interesting to see how the UK fares." Coalition governments can be tricky, even for past masters such as the Belgians, whose government recently collapsed, prompting a hasty election. While there is a determined mood in Belgium to find a compromise over the persistent issue of language rights, the Ambassador does not predict a UK-style quick-fix coalition: "Finding a formula for our political conundrum may take some time," but he adds: "We are well prepared to handle the presidency without domestic issues interfering."

After all, Belgium has done this 11 times before and Brussels could not have picked a better man to handle the job in London. Because, between his high-octane postings, the Ambassador has also spent years in Brussels observing the minutiae of the EU machine, as Director General of European Affairs and Chef de Cabinet for the Europe Minister.

E-mail: london@diplobel.fed.be
Website: www.diplomatie.be/london

Editor: Kris Dockx

Reactions and contributions by outsiders are welcome

No-nonsense presidency

Setting out his stall, the Ambassador says the hallmark of the Belgian Presidency will be a custodial, “no-nonsense” approach: “We are not here to wave the flag of Belgium and draw attention to ourselves.” Rather, Belgium intends to cement the new institutions brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, specifically to be a supportive “co-pilot” for the new High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Cathy Ashton.

He also promises less talk and more action: “The question is no longer so much who we are as what we do. The period of endless European soul-searching is over.”

Topping the EU agenda, says Verbeke, will be finding an exit strategy from the economic crisis. “Our countries have all undertaken stimulus packages and now that there is a sign of recovery, we need to look at tackling the budget deficits.” With a debt crisis threatening to overwhelm some EU member states and destabilise the eurozone, a certain level of “increased coordination” in fiscal policy may be needed, says Verbeke. The EU also intends to curb the worst excesses of financial risk taking with new regulations and increased financial supervision. Such talk is bound to raise the alarm bells in the City of London, but the Ambassador is ready to deploy all his emollient skills: “We will handle that very carefully to make sure that these negotiations are inclusive and fair and take into account the specific concerns of some member states.”

Continuing with the process of EU enlargement is also a priority for the Presidency, adds the Ambassador. “The road for an enlarged Union remains open and we will continue to work as honest brokers with those countries with whom we have started enlargement negotiations, specifically Croatia and Turkey.” Other potential candidate countries, such as Iceland and those in the Western Balkans should also be encouraged, he adds. “We will offer practical help so that those countries move closer to the EU while ensuring, however, that the benchmarks that the EU has set are upheld. There are no hidden agendas.” Outstanding bilateral issues with member states have in the past thrown up roadblocks on the route to EU membership. On this the Ambassador is clear: “The enlargement process should be seen on its own merits and should not be taken hostage by bilateral complications. We will look at the larger picture, while recognising that those issues need to be resolved.”

Climate change and preparations for the UN summit in Cancun is also on the agenda. Although the EU is a star pupil in the developed world when it comes to commitments on carbon emissions, the task now is to bring the other big economies in the developed and developing world with it. And the Ambassador does not pretend this will be easy. “Our idea is to capitalise on those few but substantive elements from the Copenhagen Accord and maximize them so that we can go to Cancun and continue to make progress which will ultimately spill over into the important summit in South Africa in 2011.”

Progress on the Stockholm Programme, which defines the framework for EU police and justice cooperation will continue, adds Verbeke, as will work on the EU social dimension, even more crucial with the EU-wide belt-tightening following the financial crisis.

Foreign policy priorities

On foreign policy, Afghanistan will continue to dominate, says Verbeke. “The London Afghanistan Conference in January gave the right policy reorientation and the task for us in the EU is to put that into action by creating a programme that includes a proper civilian dimension.”

The question of Iran’s nuclear programme is also likely to demand further attention, predicts Verbeke. “This is one of the most difficult issues because it hinges on the question of deep security, not just for the region or Europe or the US, but for the world at large. We now have a new, tough UN sanctions regime that may have to be complemented with an EU package, but the diplomatic track will continue with a view to come to an understanding with Iran over its nuclear programme.”

During the presidency, Belgium would also like to see the EU’s partnership with Africa developed, adds the Ambassador, who has fond memories of his time served in Burundi. “There is an important EU-Africa summit taking place next semester and Belgium is historically close to Africa so we have pressed this question and we have been supported by many member states, notably the UK.”

On defence and security matters, the debate about the cooperation between Nato and EU remains important, especially in these strained economic times. “Belgium, along with other member states including the UK, is working on improving the working relationship between the EU and Nato,” says Verbeke. “There are some underlying political issues relating to Turkey and the Cyprus question – but we won’t let that issue hold us hostage. While there won’t be formal agreements with high visibility, we also know that under the radar screen we can be effective. Also, the time has come to reflect how we can maximise the added value of our combined capabilities by creating synergies and sharing of resources”.

The EU’s awkward member?

Managing these debates in Britain, with its new, more euro skeptical government, may pose a challenge, but Verbeke thinks the EU-UK divide is overplayed. “There are a lot of clichés out there. If you look at the Conservative programme, even before the elections, yes there is an element of caution when it comes to Europe, but it is definitely less dramatic than some wanted us to believe.” A little British pragmatism is no bad thing, he adds: “The British approach is a non-ideological; it’s an approach with a lot of realism and I think that is healthy for the Union as a whole.”

It’s going to be a busy six months for the Ambassador, but negotiation and compromise come naturally to the Belgians. “It’s in our DNA,” says Verbeke. “We are located on the crossroads between Northern and Southern Europe. Historically the Germanic and Latin communities have learned to live together in peace – but I must stress through a lot of accommodations and compromises. “And for diplomats, that is exactly the tool we need to bring parties together. When there is a compromise to be brokered, call in the Belgians!”

Based on a recent interview with Ambassador Johan Verbeke published in *Embassy Magazine*, Issue 26 ; www.embassymagazine.com



The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

It is for the 12th time that Belgium assumes the 6-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This is not so much a privilege vested upon us, as a responsibility we are quite willing to assume, in the interest of all the 27 EU Member States. Our Prime Minister, Yves Leterme, and our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Steven Vanackere, have clearly indicated that Belgium will go for a non-nonsense and result-oriented Presidency, in a spirit of soberness and effectiveness. A Presidency should not try to re-invent the wheel every six months, but simply do what is expected from it. And that is already quite a lot, particularly given that many dispositions of the new Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force only in December last year, still need to be fully implemented.

This Belgian Presidency will for the first time have to operate in a new institutional context which substantially affects its nature. As is well known, the European Council which sets the overall guidelines for the development of the Union, is now presided over by a stable president, our former Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy. Also, as far as the Union’s foreign and security policy is concerned, a High Representative, who is at the same time Vice-President of the Commission, has been designated in the person of Baroness Cathy Ashton. Belgium intends to closely cooperate with both Mr Van Rompuy and Mrs Ashton, as it is convinced that such synergy amounts to an overall win-win for the Union as a whole. An intense cooperation will also take place with the European Parliament, whose largely increased legislative powers make it a key partner in our common enterprise.

Ultimately, the European Union is there for its citizens, that is you and me. The Belgian Presidency has elaborated a detailed programme of work that you can consult on www.eutrio.be, which aims at making sure that your interests are being taken care of in the context of a difficult socio-economic situation and fundamental transformative changes that reshape the world. I am confident that, as we so often did in the past, we will succeed in tackling both these challenges.

Johan Verbeke
Ambassador

Peter Piot to head London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Professor Peter Piot, former head of UNAIDS, is set to head the prestigious London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. The renowned research institute has bagged the AIDS expert from the London Institute for Global Health, where he was appointed director last year. Piot, who also worked as a researcher at the Antwerp Tropical Institute, called the world's attention to the AIDS crisis in Africa and, under his guidance, UNAIDS grew to become one of the biggest advocates in the continuing war against AIDS. Piot became a master-fundraiser, getting discounts for aids inhibitors for developing countries and obtaining considerable sums to get free or cheap aids drugs to millions of people. The International Aids Society announced it was delighted with the appointment.



Belgian director of Tate Modern



Belgian Chris Dercon, presently in charge of the Munich Haus der Kunst and formerly head of the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, is set to become director of Tate Modern. Dercon will replace current head Vicente Todolí in the spring of 2011. Todolí spent seven years in charge at the Tate Modern.

Tate Modern is housed in a former power station on the banks of the river Thames. Since its opening ten years ago, it has seen some 50 million visitors pass through its doors. Together with the New York Museum of Modern Art and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, it is one of the leading museums in the world for contemporary art.

Dercon responded to the news by saying it would be a challenge to 'transform the Tate Modern into a new type of art institution, one ready for the 21st century and for the diverse types of audiences of which London has so many'.

Belgium among the top countries for mothers and children

Mothers in Norway and Australia are living in the best places in the world, according to *Save the Children's* 11th annual *Mothers' Index*, which ranks the best and worst places to be a mother. Belgium enjoys ninth position while Afghanistan ranks at the bottom of the list of 160 countries. The UK comes 14th.



Belgian women live to an average age of 83. After spending approximately 16 years at school and in further training they enter the job market, earning considerably less than their male colleagues. Once she starts a family, she receives 15 weeks maternity leave. Belgian women have only a 1 in 7,800 chance of dying at childbirth. These figures served as evidence for *Save the Children* to put Belgium among the top ten countries on the mothers ranking list. "We link health with education as well as political and economic factors," says Tanya Weinberg, spokesperson for *Save the Children*. "Belgium scores well in the field of education, but in economic and political positions women could be better represented," she adds. But the tide is turning and compared to last year, Belgium has upped its ranking. Two factors contributed to this shift: the increase in a woman's income compared to that of a man in a similar position and increased involvement by women in political decision-making.

The top scorers are predominantly European countries and Canada while the United States dangles at the bottom of the list of developed countries, with Cuba leading the middle group of emerging countries and China having to contend with eighteenth position. African states dominate the group of developing countries. Countries at the bottom of the ranking assume this position mainly because of the high mortality rate among women in childbirth. "Women in these countries are often prevented from visiting a male doctor or nurse," says Weinberg.

www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/every_one/news.html

Foreign Investment Boost



Belgium has leapt from eighth to sixth place in Ernst & Young's annual list of top European destinations for foreign direct investment. It reflects a slight rise in overall investment projects in Belgium, from 142 to 146, despite the economic downturn that drove overall European investment projects to drop 11 percent.

Belgium's share of European investment was 4.4 percent, and 100 of the 146 investments entailed new projects, mainly in sales and marketing. However, the new investments created marginally fewer jobs (3,357) last year than they did in 2008 (3,406).

Ernst & Young highlighted the importance of a politically stable climate for attracting foreign investment. In that respect 2009 was a relatively calm year in Belgian politics.

With 33 investments, the US is still the biggest investor in Belgium, followed by the UK (16), France (14), Germany (13) and the Netherlands (9).

The country's strong results are mainly due to Wallonia, which claimed 57 of the 146 investment projects, up 17 from 2008. The number of projects in Flanders fell from 74 to 64 and in Brussels from 28 to 25.

A survey among business CEO's showed that the main reasons companies opt for Belgium are the quality of life, the good telecommunications infrastructure, transport and logistics, employee skills and the stable social climate.

<http://www.ey.com>

Exports rise while trade balance deficit shrinks

Belgian exports rose by 11 percent during the first quarter of 2010 compared to the previous year. 'This confirms the recovery in international trade, which has been observed since mid-2009,' says the National Bank of Belgium.

The recent rise in exports is primarily due to Antwerp, where diamonds, petroleum products, chemicals, rubber and plastics are manufactured. During the first six months of 2010, the export of cut diamonds rose by 29.3 percent to 4.26 billion dollars. So far, the export of uncut diamonds doubled in 2010 to reach 4 billion dollars.

Belgium has one of the most open economies in Western Europe and the world, and consequently is reaping the rewards of the recovery in international trade. However, since imports still exceed exports, the trade balance deficit remains, but has been steadily shrinking since the start of the year.

Wincanton establishes Belgian Centre

United Kingdom-based supply chain solutions provider Wincanton PLC is expanding its activities in the Benelux region by opening a new centre for technical installation and transportation services in Mechelen, Belgium.

The facility, which covers 1,500 square metres, is situated between Brussels and Antwerp and is linked directly to Wincanton's European distribution network.

The centre will provide customers from the hi-tech sector with technical services, including pre-assembly and pre-installation work, on-site assembly options and delivery.

The company handles operations ranging from the management of single distribution sites and simple product flows through to complex supply chain solutions. Wincanton works with customers to streamline distribution networks and optimise international logistics.



www.wincanton.co.uk

Focus on gene therapy in the battle against ALS

The Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, KU Leuven and Oxford BioMedica are to join forces to study a gene therapy that could treat the motor neuron disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). ALS is an incurable and paralyzing disease in which the nerve cells that control the muscles degenerate. Sufferers consequently lose control of their muscles but continue to retain their mental faculties. Between 800 and 1,000 people suffer from ALS in Belgium, and most sufferers die from the disease, as no appropriate treatment has yet been found.

One of the approaches now being investigated is that of gene therapy. Gene therapy involves the insertion of genes into the body's cells. With regard to ALS, this involves the gene for the protein VEGF. This links up to research started years ago by Professor Peter Carmeliet at KU Leuven into the formation of new blood vessels, which plays an important role in many diseases. VEGF is a crucial part of this.

Further studies showed that a VEGF deficiency in mice resulted in muscular problems. It appeared to demonstrate symptoms comparable to those displayed amongst ALS sufferers. The study set to be launched will build on these findings. By inserting a gene that manufactures additional VEGF, the scientists hope to curb the disease's progress and thus extend life expectancy.

Scientist makes remarkable advance in diagnosis of ovarian cancer



Dr. Caroline Van Holsbeke, a researcher at the Catholic University of Leuven (*K.U. Leuven*) and a staff member of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology department at ZOL, the Hospital of East Limburg in Genk, have spent six years carrying out intensive research into ways of recognising cancer of the ovaries amongst the large number of benign cysts and tumours.

Together with Dirk Timmerman, a specialist in gynaecological sonography, and with engineers and statisticians from the ESAT department of the *K.U. Leuven*, Dr. Van Holsbeke has developed new computer models that can accurately assess the benignity or malignancy of cysts and tumours. The computer models are based on age and sonographic parameters, amongst other things.

The computer models were tested in 19 hospitals all over the world (including Leuven, Genk, London, Rome, Beijing, Prague, Milan, Lund, Bologna, Lublin and Ontario) and proved to work efficiently and make correct assessments. The new computer models can expand the expertise considerably and should lead to more effective treatment.

www.kuleuven.be

www.zol.be

Researchers unravel genetic cause of rare skin condition

Together with British and American colleagues, researchers led by Dr. Bart Loeys at the Centre for Medical Genetics at the University Hospital in Ghent (*UZ Gent*) have discovered mutations in a gene that cause stiff skin syndrome. The syndrome is a rare congenital skin condition that can cause hardening and fibrosis of the skin all over the body. It frequently leads to restricted mobility in the part of the body where the hardening occurs.

At present there is no treatment for stiff skin syndrome. These new insights into the development of the skin disease open up perspectives for new treatment methods for the more frequent forms of skin hardening, such as localised scleroderma (skin hardening limited to certain places, for example the shoulder, elbow or face) and systemic scleroderma, which affects even internal organs such as the heart, the lungs, kidneys and intestines.

The researchers have also discovered that the gene that causes this skin condition is also the source of another hereditary condition, Marfan syndrome. The findings of the researchers from Ghent, Britain and America were published in the professional journal *Science Translational Medicine* (Vol. 2, Issue 23; 17 March 2010).

<http://www.ugent.be/nl/nieuwsagenda/nieuws/persberichten/stiffskin.htm>

<http://medgen.ugent.be/CMGG/>

Researchers penetrate deep core of stars

Scientists from the Institute of Astronomy at the K.U. Leuven and from the Institute of Astrophysics and Geophysics at the University of Liege (ULg) have achieved a breakthrough in their research on SPB stars (slowly pulsating Bstars). These are heavy and relatively short-lived stars. For the first time the researchers have succeeded in observing this type of star uninterruptedly over a long period thanks to the observation satellite CoRoT.

It is impossible to study the deep internal star structure with classic observation methods, but asteroseismology opens new perspectives. Asteroseismology is a recent discipline that studies the seismic activity of a star by measuring its pulsations. This is analogous to seismology, in which earthquakes are used to study the inside of the Earth. The star pulsations running through the deep and less deep zones of the star provide information on the structure and chemical composition of the inside of the star, which determines its further evolution.

Researchers have been able to detect hundreds of pulsations on the star under observation. The detection and analysis of the links between the pulsations makes it possible to examine the core's structure. Amongst other things, scientists have determined the size of the zone where nuclear fusion reactions occur, as well as finding indications that this zone shrinks as the star continues to develop. The results of the research were published on 11 March 2010 in the scientific journal *Nature*, under the title *Deviations from a uniform period spacing of gravity modes in a massive star*.

www.kuleuven.be
www.ster.kuleuven.be
www.ulg.ac.be

UCL develops an energetic particle telescope

On 4 June 2010 the *Centre des Radiations spatiales* (Centre for Space Radiations) at the *Université catholique de Louvain* (UCL) introduced a prototype of the energetic particle telescope (EPT) in Louvain-la-Neuve.

The EPT was developed by the European Space Agency and will be attached to a satellite. The instrument looks like a "box" and weighs less than 5 kg. It is designed to measure highly energetic particles in space. The data gathered in space will be used in the developing field of "space meteorology". The EPT will allow seven day space weather forecasting so that satellite damage can be prevented in case of strong particle fluxes and space storms.

The telescope detects the charged particles and examines their number, direction, energy and nature. Development on the telescope started in 1997 at the UCL. The concept was devised by Professor Ghislain Grégoire and researcher Mathias Cyamukungu.

Russia and Canada have already registered their interest in the telescope and Belgium too may order one for the Proba-V satellite.

<http://www.uclouvain.be/322709.html>
http://csrsrv1.fynu.ucl.ac.be/csr_web/ept/eptday.php

Francis Alÿs at Tate Modern

15 June—5 September



A man pushes a massive block of ice through the streets of Mexico City until it melts to nothing. Five hundred volunteers walk over a huge sand dune in Lima, Peru, digging with spades and shifting the dune a few centimetres as they go. For several days, a man walks all over Havana with magnetic shoes. By collecting metal rubbish on the way he maps out the different parts of the city. These are the works of the celebrated Belgian artist Francis Alÿs (°1959 in Antwerp as Francis De Smedt) and the subject of a major exhibition at Tate Modern.

Alÿs's work starts with a simple action, either by him or others, which is then documented in a range of media. Alÿs explores subjects such as modernising programmes in Latin America and border zones in areas of conflict, often asking about the relevance of poetic acts in politicised situations. He has used video projection and film but also spreads his ideas through postcards. Painting and drawing remain central to his work too.

Alÿs moved to Mexico City in the mid 1980s at a time of political unrest, and lives there now. He began to make work which recorded everyday life, for example making slide works showing people sleeping on the streets or pushing mobile shopping stalls. The artist also makes works around the world. In *The Green Line* 2004, Alÿs walked along the 1948 armistice line between Israel and Palestine, trailing a line of green paint behind him, and provoking commentaries on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

This exhibition is his most comprehensive to date. It features many works unseen in Britain, such as *When Faith Moves Mountains* 2002 as well as premiering the major new work *Tornado* 2000–10.

www.tate.org.uk

Free downloadable digital city guide for art cities

Anyone planning a cultural visit to one of the art cities of Bruges, Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven or Mechelen will now be able to download a talking guide on their Smartphone, mobile phone or any other mobile instrument. It can be downloaded from www.storynations.com and the first 25,000 city guides are free. The multilingual digital walking guide will take the tourist on an informative tour highlighted by audiovisual clips with information about the cultural history of the city and funny anecdotes. Even though it is new to the Belgian market, the talking guide has been quite successful in the US.

The Flemish government invested 273,000 euros in this project, covering three quarters of the cost. The remaining amount will be financed by the cities themselves and the VRT which will compile a multimedia storyline for each city.

East Flanders markets itself as London Olympic Games training ground

Under the banner 'Gateway to London', the province of East Flanders and the city of Ghent have launched a promotional campaign to encourage foreign sporting delegations to organise their training in the run-up to the Olympics in East Flanders. They are arguing that Ghent is just as far from London as the north of England and training is going to be very costly in the UK during that time. Also, Ghent has the same climate as London, while the distance is easily travelled, explains Hilde Bruggeman of the East Flanders deputation.

So far both the swimming teams of Uganda and New Zealand have voiced an interest. The extensive sports science framework that the University of Ghent offers and the comprehensive professional sporting infrastructure in the province are both additional major bonuses. Ghent has a professional sports hall, a water-sports course and cycling centre while the Puyenbroeck Provincial Sports Centre is located nearby in Wachtebeke. Ghent, as a sparkling city with a rich history, will also gain from the perspective of tourism. Supporters from South America, Asia or Australia could include Ghent on their continental tour after their stay in London.

The various partners have appealed to 'top sports ambassadors' to promote the 'Gateway to London' campaign around the world. This includes the 400-meter runner Cédric Van Branteghem, weightlifter Tom Goegebuer and the ex-mountain-bike champion Filip Meirhaeghe.

www.gatewaytolondon.be

Belgian marathon runner sets world record



On 30 March 2010 the Belgian marathon runner Stefaan Engels won a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* when he ran his 53rd marathon in as many days. Engels' attempt to break the record started on 1 January. His goal was to run a marathon every day this year. Following a foot injury, the counter went back to zero on 18 January, but Engels continued to complete his daily marathon in a wheelchair. On 6 February he resumed his record attempt. On 30 March, he broke the Japanese Akinori Kusada's world record. Akinori Kusada ran 52 marathons in a row in 2009.

The 48 year old athlete hopes to get everyone moving with his initiative. So far more than 8,000 people have joined him this year.

<http://www.marathonman365.be>

Belgian technology at the Football World Cup in South Africa

Belgium-based companies *EVS Broadcasting Equipment* and *Alfacam* reached millions of homes with their high definition images of the recent World Cup Football in South Africa.

The Liège-based imaging manufacturer *EVS* which develops and sells servers, software and services for the TV market, took 350 image servers to South Africa to store and edit 3,000 hours of viewing. One of *EVS*'s novelties is the offside line which automatically sticks to the image by means of an editing console for all incoming camera images. The company accommodated its images in eight trucks provided by the Antwerp company *Alfacam*, one of the largest TV facilities providers in Europe and beyond. *Alfacam*'s trucks have operated overseas in diverse locations such as Ghana (Africa Cup of Nations, 2008), Brazil (Pan American Games Rio, 2007), and China (Olympic Games Beijing, 2008).

Alfacam sent 8 vans, 170 cameras and 155 top technicians to South Africa and won the contract for coverage of about 45% of the World Cup Football matches. It was in charge of the world feed production at the venues in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Port Elizabeth. The company was also responsible for the unilateral signal for ARD/ZDF, the German public broadcasting, as well as for the Japanese TV Asahi.

Both companies will be involved in the broadcasting of the London Olympic Games in 2012.

www.evs-global.com www.alfacam.com

Credentials

On 18th May, Belgian Ambassador Johan Verbeke presented his credentials to HM Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.



Ambassador Johan Verbeke, Marie-France André (Minister Counsellor), Eric Jacquemin (Consul), Serge Dickschen (Counsellor), Geert De Proost (Representative Flemish Government) – Picture taken at the Ambassador's Residence

Guy Van Glabeke receives 'Diplomat of the Year Award'



Heads of Mission from over 80 countries attended *Diplomat* magazine's 2010 Annual Awards Ceremony at the Hyatt Regency London back in April. The 63-year-old foreign affairs magazine presented 10 awards to some of the most influential overseas Ambassadors and High Commissioners based in London. The event was hosted by Lord Digby Jones Kt.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic left the evening with two awards – one for Deputy Head of Mission of the Year and the posthumous award to the previous Ambassador Mr Jan Winkler who tragically died in February 2009. Mr Guy Van Glabeke, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Belgium, won the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Consular Corps

The Royal Anglo-Belgian Club has moved premises

On 1 July 2010, the Anglo-Belgian Club moved from Knightsbridge to its new Club House 'Club Quarters' located at 8 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2, adjacent to Trafalgar Square.

The origins of the Club date back to 1942 when the Belgian Government in London set up the Belgian Institute in Belgrave Square to propagate knowledge of Belgium, its people, arts and institutions.

After the war the Anglo-Belgian Club was established to take up and pursue the activities of the Institute and it became a well-known Anglo-Belgian base in London.

At the end of the lease on the Belgrave Square house in 1978, the Club was able to associate with the Royal Thames Yacht Club, established in 1775, in Knightsbridge.



Ghent's 'veggie day' takes root internationally

In May last year, the Ghent alderman Tom Balthazar suggested a world first with Thursdays becoming a vegetarian day in his city. While the Belgian media paid no attention to the initiative, the international media made a meal of the story. The BBC, CNN, the UK Daily Mail, Time Magazine, Die Zeit in Germany and the Italian broadcaster RAI all interviewed the initiative takers. Now a year later, it seems Ghent started a trend, with Mechelen, Hasselt and Eupen in Belgium and Bremen, Sao Paulo, Cape Town and San Francisco all launching their own meatless days.

In the meantime, 33 primary schools and 42 crèches in Ghent are adhering to Veggie Day. Since October last year, all children between the ages of 18 months and 12 years are served a vegetarian lunch every Thursday, unless they explicitly demand meat. The Veggie Plan Ghent, which also targets tourists, lists 80 restaurants with partial or fully vegetarian menus.

Eating less meat is the largest step one can take to minimize your food's eco-footprint. Stock breeding and meat consumption has a very large impact on the environment and the former is responsible for 18% of the world's emission of greenhouse gasses, more than the entire transport sector. Also, if one person were to refrain from meat for one day a week during his entire life, he would save no less than 250 animals from the chopping block.

Announcements

Conferences

The Art of Theatre: Word, Image and Performance in 19th century France and Belgium

19—20 November 2010
Queen's University, Belfast

The conference will explore the relationship between art, literature and the stage in France and Belgium from 1830-1910.

Guest speakers

Professor Patrick McGuinness, St. Anne's College, Oxford
Professor Laurence Senelick, Tufts University, Massachusetts

For more information, contact Dr Claire Moran, French Studies, QUB and Dr Kurt Taroff, Drama Studies, QUB

Autour de Jacqueline Harpman'

10 December 2010
Centre de Recherches Francophones Belges, University of Edinburgh

This conference is devoted to an exploration of the works of francophone Belgian author Jacqueline Harpman. Papers are welcomed on any aspect of her œuvre.

Invited speakers

Jacques de Decker, Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Françaises de Belgique
Stéphane Lambert, author of *Les Rencontres du mercredi*
Jeannine Paque, author of *Jacqueline Harpman. Dieu, Freud et moi: les plaisirs de l'écriture*
Marc Quaghebeur, Directeur, Archives et Musée de la Littérature, Bruxelles
Ros Schwartz, translator of *Orlanda and Moi qui n'ai pas connu les hommes* into English

For more information, contact [Susan Bainbrigge@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Susan.Bainbrigge@ed.ac.uk)

Belgian Clubs & Organisations

The Anglo-Belgian Society (ABS) promotes Anglo-Belgian friendship and culture. Membership is not expensive and application forms can be obtained, with all enquiries, from the Hon. Secretary, Mr Patrick Bresnan, www.anglo-belgiansoc.com, secretary@anglo-belgiansoc.com

The Royal Anglo-Belgian Club (RABC), situated in the heart of London, an ideal meeting place for Belgians living in or traveling to London, as well as for British with Belgian connections. Information and application forms from the secretariat, RABC, 8 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BY, tel. 0207 127 5139, www.ra-bc.com, secretary@ra-bc.com

The Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (BLCC) For information on membership or on any of the events organised by the Chamber, contact the BLCC at Westwood House, Annie Med Lane, South Cave, HU15 2HG, tel. 0207 127 4292, fax 0870 429 2148, www.blcc.co.uk, info@blcc.co.uk

The Young Chamber. Contact: Patrice Bataille, tel. 079 50495171 All Belgians welcome to meet in informal atmosphere. www.theyoungchamber.org, info@theyoungchamber.org

Brussels Capital Region, François De Vrije, Economic and Commercial Attaché
tel. 0207 235 8949, fax 020/7235 8650, info@brusselstrade.co.uk

The Walloon Region of Belgium, Didier Denayer, Economic and Commercial Attaché
tel. 0207 235 0903, fax 020/7235 0585, www.wallonia.co.uk, london@awex.co.uk

Walloon & Flemish Trade Office (Birmingham Branch), Vincent Bastin, Economic & Commercial Counsellor, The White House, 111 New Street, Birmingham B2 4EU
tel: 0121 616 1962, Birmingham@awex.co.uk

Belgian Tourist Office, Brussels-Wallonia, 217 Marsh Wall, London E14 9FJ, tel. 0207 531 0391, www.belgiumtheplaceto.be, info@belgiumtheplaceto.be

Flanders House, 1A Cavendish Square, London W1G OLD, houses the services of the Representative of the Flemish Government Tel: 0207 299 3592

of **Flanders Investment and Trade**, Ben De Smit, Economic and Commercial Attaché
Tel: 0207 307 7710, fitlondon@fitlondon.org

and **Tourism Flanders-Brussels**

Tel: 0207 307 7730, info@visitflanders.co.uk

Flanders Investment and Trade (Scotland Branch), Cathy Grieve, Commercial Assistant, Conference House, 152 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EB, tel: 0131 200 6080
Edinburgh@fitagency.com

Vlaamse Club in Londen (VCL), organises activities for Flemish and Dutch-speaking people in the London area, thus creating a meeting place and a network opportunity for the many Flemings in the UK, www.vlaamseclublonden.com, info@vlaamseclublonden.com

Vlamingen in de Wereld, representative in the UK: Mr Johan Serneels, 61A Providence Square, London SE1 2EB, johan.serneels@sgcib.com

Union Francophone des Belges à l'Étranger, representative in the UK: Mr Didier Denayer, 20 West Heath Close, London NW3 7NJ, ufbe_uk@yahoo.co.uk

Vlamingen in Surrey organise meetings and events for Flemish people living in the Surrey area. Contact: Brit Deckers-Beckers, Chase Manor, Kingfield Road, Woking, GU22 9AA, tel. 01483 726 760, Britbeckers@yahoo.co.uk, www.vlamingeninnsurrey.co.uk

Orde Van den Prince promotes the unity of the Dutch language and culture, stimulating cooperation between Flanders and the Netherlands. Bimonthly meetings in London. Enquiries: Bruno Stalmans at brunostalmans@aol.com, tel. 01483 893522

23 Jan - July 2011	Works by Belgian artist Fred Eerdekens is on display at the Eastwingnine Exhibition at the Courtauld Institute of Art www.eastwingnine.co.uk
30 May – 26 Sept	Exhibition Visionary Africa, a cutting-edge programme for cultural co-operation between Europe and Africa at BOZAR, Brussels www.bozar.be
3 June - 5 Sept	Maison Martin Margiela '20' , exhibition at London's Somerset House Embankment Galleries Belgian fashion designer Martin Margiela, trained at the prestigious Antwerp Academy, influenced the design world for over 20 years www.somersetshouse.org.uk/fashion/1217.asp
15 June - 5 Sept	Retrospective of experimental Belgian artist Francis Alÿs at Tate Modern in London www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/francisalys/default.shtm
25 June – 10 Oct	Exhibition A Passage to Asia , 25 centuries of exchange between Asia and Europe Centre for Fine Arts at BOZAR, Brussels www.ase8.be and www.bozar.be
23 - 31 July	Production of the Belgian play Forfanteries at the New Players Theatre, Villiers Street, London Olivier Coyette's play has been translated by Simon Scardifield www.forfanteries.co.uk
26 July – 5 Sept	The Royal Palace in Brussels opens its doors to the public with three exhibitions: Biodiversity, Experimenting, Contemporary Art www.belspo.be , www.technopolis.be , www.monarchie.be
29 July – 5 Sept	Groupshow A Drawback at the Edinburgh Art Festival. Drawing exhibition by Perennial Art, Art's Complex, St Margaret's House, 151 London Road, Edinburgh. Belgian participant Sara Bomans www.perennial-art.co.nr
6 August	Idomeneo String Quartet with Belgian violinist Mark Deruddere gives a lunchtime recital at the Cambridge Summer Music Festival, St Edward's Church, Cambridge, 1.10pm
11 – 13 August	Flemish theatre company Ontroerend Goed performs 'Teenage Riot' at the Drum Theatre in Plymouth www.theatreroyal.com
13 – 15 August	Flower Carpet on the Grand-Place in Brussels www.bruxelles-tourisme.be
30 Sept	Idomeneo String Quartet with Belgian violinist Mark Deruddere performs at the Barbican Concert Hall, London, 6pm

Rectification

It was brought to our attention that the picture on the front cover of the April issue of *Belgian Events* featured the Belgian ballet dancer Sander Blommaert together with the Belgian/Iranian ballerina Yasmine Naghdi from The Royal Ballet.