

## **Good news from Belgium (the economy & business) – November/December 2009**

### **1. Foreign investments in Belgium**

**This section was prepared in collaboration between the Federal Public Service (FPS) Foreign Affairs and the Liaison Cell Federal-Regions Foreign Investments. The Liaison Cell was created in 1995 as a result of the Cooperation Agreement "Foreign Investments" of 7 February 1995. Its mission is to raise important issues concerning the investment climate in Belgium to policy makers, and create synergies between all the Belgian authorities involved in the attraction of foreign investments. The following authorities are represented in the Cell: FPS Foreign Affairs, FPS Economy, FPS Finance, FIT, AWEX, BEA and the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region. Its chair is held by the Regions on a rotating basis and its secretariat is ensured by the FPS Economy.**

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### **Notional interest deduction, more flexible**

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#### *Carry-over*

When a company does not have sufficient income to claim all of the notional deduction to which it is entitled during a tax period, the balance is carried over to the following tax period. The carry-over of the unused amount of the notional interest deduction can however only be carried over for the following seven years (= tax periods)

As a result of this seven year time limit, the order in which the deduction is done is important. It is more advantageous for companies to claim first the older deductions, before claiming those for the more recent years.

The Minister of Finance has indicated that for the available notional interest deduction of previous tax periods and deductible for later tax periods, it can be understood that the oldest amounts are deducted first, and that the taxpayer can deduct the notional interest formed in earlier years and the notional interest of the current year in the most advantageous order.

#### *Rate*

The rate of the notional interest deduction is calculated on the basis of the rate of the 10-year government bond (or 'OLO'). The notional interest rate for tax year 2011 (i.e. accounting year ending on 31 December 2010 or later in 2011) is however limited to 3,8%.

For SME's the rate is increased by half a percentage point. The rate for the assessment year 2011 will be 4,3% for SME's.

<http://minfin.fgov.be/portail2/belinvest/index.htm>

### **Belgium, World champion in chemical and plastics industry**

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The government, *essenscia* (the federation of the chemical industry and life sciences) and companies have joined forces to promote the Belgian chemical industry to foreign investors. The project is called "*Belgium, a world champion for chemicals and plastics today and tomorrow*". In addition, the government, *essenscia* and the industry are also setting up a *High Level Group* with the objective of strengthening the investment climate in the chemicals sector.

The Belgian chemical cluster is the second largest in the world after Houston and is also highly integrated and diversified, which provides major opportunities for synergies. Eleven of the top 15 of the global chemical concerns have production plants in Belgium. In terms of its contribution to the total economy the chemical industry in Belgium is twice as large as in the average European Union country, bigger even than in Germany, which is traditionally the chemicals country. Belgian enterprises directly target investment in research and development in order to find innovative solutions for the world's major challenges, such as food supplies, water, health, climate change, economical use of energy and natural raw materials. With the world population continuing to grow, the demands on the chemicals sector for sustainable products will only increase in the coming decades.

<http://www.essenscia.be>

See also the campaign, "Belgium, the place to be for biopharmaceutical R&D and manufacturing": <http://www.investinbiopharma.be>

### **Danish shipping company Maersk includes Antwerp in its itineraries to the Far East**

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Since the end of 2009 the Danish shipping company, *Maersk Line*, has included Antwerp in one of its itineraries to South East Asia, Northern China and South Korea. The service will be assured by 10 ships with a capacity of between 8,400 and 8,600 TEU.

On this service Antwerp will be the last loading port in Europe after Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Rotterdam and Felixstowe. Destinations in the Far East include Tanjung Pelepas, Busan, Xingang, Dalian, Qingdao, Kwangyang and Shanghai. The ships will be handled at the Deurganck Terminal of PSA Hesseoordnatie.

The Scheldt port is clearly increasing in importance to the Danish shipping company. Recently the decision was also taken to send two trans-Atlantic services to Antwerp.

<http://www.lloyd.be>

### **Antwerp favourite location for international retailers**

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According to the international real estate agent, *CB Richard Ellis*, Antwerp is the favourite location in Belgium for international retailers. Antwerp has a splendid shopping axis from its attractive Central Station across the Meir to the Nationalestraat. Besides that, *CB Richard Ellis* says that Antwerp also excels in city marketing and that its image as a fashion city is an increasing commercial success.

<http://www.cbre.com>

### **Finnish group Stora Enso centralizes its sales activities in Belgium**

The Finnish group *Stora Enso* is a global paper, packaging and forest products company producing newsprint and book paper, magazine paper, fine paper, consumer board, industrial packaging and wood products. *Stora Enso* has decided to centralize its sales department for the Benelux, the Iberian Peninsula, France and the British Isles in Langerbrugge (Port of Ghent) and at the Vrasenedok (Port of Antwerp).

Langerbrugge, in the Port of Ghent, is home to the group's showpiece, the world's biggest machine for newsprint paper. Operating from Langerbrugge, 30 employees will coordinate the sale of paper and magazine paper across Western Europe.

<http://www.storaenso.com>

### **American hotel chain Hilton plans new investment in Belgium**

The American hotel chain Hilton is to open a new luxury hotel in Ghent in two years time. After Brussels (2) and Antwerp, this will be the fourth Hilton hotel in Belgium. The new complex will have 190 rooms, including 40 luxury studios intended for longer stays. There will also be a wellness centre and a small swimming pool connected to the new hotel. Project developer and contractor *CCR*, from Heusden in the Province of East Flanders, will build the complex.

<http://www.hilton.com>

### **Ford factory in Genk is the next to best in Europe**

A poll shows that of all seven *Ford* factories in Europe, the *Ford* factory in Genk, in the Province of Limburg, is the best after the one in Cologne, Germany. It scores 9.4 in the "*Ford Production System-audit*". Decisive elements are productivity, quality, teamwork and safety. In 2003, the year restructuring was announced, Genk was ranked in first place.

<http://www.ford.be>

<http://www.fordgenk.be>

### **American investor Warren Buffett's wife's fund invests in Belgian company**

The American foundation *Medicines360*, in San Francisco, and *Uteron Pharma Operations S.A.* in Liege have signed an important strategic partnership agreement for the development and commercialisation of a hormonal IUD for long-term contraception. This IUD was developed by *Uteron Pharma*, a spin-off of the biomedical group *Mithra Pharmaceuticals*, which in its turn is a spin-off of the University of Liege and specialises exclusively in women's health.

In the framework of this partnership *Uteron Pharma Operations*, which is a 100% subsidiary and commercial branch of *Uteron Pharma*, will ensure the final development and production of this new hormonal IUD. This will take place at the group's new production site in Liege, *Odyssea Pharma*. For its part *Medicines360* will be responsible for the clinical tests in the United States and Europe.

The end-goal of the partnership is to have the hormonal IUD, which is based on Levonorgestrel, registered with the American (FDA) and European authorities as a reversible long-term contraceptive, and subsequently to commercialise it all over the world, including in developing countries.

The partnership involves an investment of tens of millions of euros. The market for this sort of product in 2009 is estimated at about 500 million euro and is growing annually by 20 to 30%.

<http://www.uteron-operations.com>

<http://www.mithra.be>

### **Japanese pharma company Takeda sets up new commercial operation in Brussels**

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Located in Osaka, Japan, *Takeda* is a research-based global company with its main focus on pharmaceuticals. The largest pharmaceutical company in Japan and one of the global leaders of the industry.

Executing territory expansion in Europe and other priority markets is an important step toward further globalizing their operations and enhancing their ability to bring important medicines to patients who need them said Alan MacKenzie, Executive Vice President - International Operations.

Also, Nordics and Benelux are strategically important regions in Europe. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Luxembourg have a combined pharmaceutical market size which accounts for five percent of the European pharmaceutical market. The creation of these commercial subsidiaries will further increase Takeda's reach in the regions.

Overall, the new subsidiaries will accelerate *Takeda's* expansion efforts for core products and reinforces *Takeda's* global operating infrastructure for the future launch of new products in these regions.

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

### **Chinese Huawei group invests in Louvain-la-Neuve**

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The Chinese group *Huawei*, which delivers new generation networks to telecom operators all over the world, opened a new R&D centre in Louvain-la-Neuve in the Province of Walloon Brabant on 19 December 2009. This is the group's fifth R&D centre on the European continent.

*Huawei* has been active in Belgium for two years. Initially the group was based in Diegem, but was on the lookout for a location for an R&D centre in a university environment. The choice fell on the Science Park at Louvain-la-Neuve, in the New Tech Center building (Einstein Park).

The R&D centre in Louvain-la-Neuve will specialise in the application & software segment.

<http://www.huawei.com>

<http://www.uclouvain.be/parc>

### **Mons, ready to welcome a Chinese incubator**

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A "service centre for Chinese enterprises" has just been opened in the *Initialis* Park in Mons (Hainaut province). AWEX will assign a permanent member of staff of Chinese origin to it.

The centre has opened in the immediate proximity of the head office of one of the first Chinese investors on the site, *Reach Hangzhou*, a company playing an intermediate role for Chinese companies in applying the Reach standards.

This office will be a Wallonia "one stop shop" for Chinese entrepreneurs.

For further information: [mkempeneers@investinwallonia.be](mailto:mkempeneers@investinwallonia.be)

<http://www.investinwallonia.be>

## **2. Contracts abroad for Belgian companies**

### **Belgian chemicals company Solvay Works on Solar Impulse, the first long-distance plane to fly on solar energy**

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The *Solar Impulse* is the first long-distance plane that will be 100% powered by solar energy, which will be picked up by solar cells on the wings of the plane and loaded into batteries. What is revolutionary is that the plane will be able to continue to fly by night as well as by day.

The Belgian chemicals company *Solvay* has contributed to the construction of this airplane. More than 6,000 components of the *Solar Impulse* contain materials from *Solvay*, such as *Polyamide-imide Torlon®*, *polyetheretherketone KetaSpire®* *PEEK*, *Primospire®* *SPR*, *Solef®*, *F1EC* en *Halar®* *ECTFE*. The airplane, which has the wingspan of an Airbus A340 (63.40 meter) but weighs only 1,600 kilograms, made

its first real test flight early in December. It is hoped that the *Solar Impulse* will be able to fly around the world by 2012.

<http://www.solvay.com/strategynew/solarimpulse/0,,44242-2-0,00.htm>  
<http://www.solarimpulse.com/>

### **Belgian green power company Enfinity concludes contract in India**

The solar energy company *Enfinity*, in Waregem in the Province of West Flanders, is specialised in the development, management and financing of renewable energy projects and especially projects in wind and solar energy. *Enfinity* focuses its activities on investments in solar energy and wind energy in countries with a specific incentive programme.

Recently *Enfinity* signed a contract for the installation of solar parks in the South East of India. In partnership with the Indian group, *Titan*, the Belgian company will develop solar power installations with a total capacity of 1,000 megawatt peak. That is a major part of the 20,000 megawatt peak that India aims to develop by 2020. The project occupies an area of more than 12 km<sup>2</sup>. The project will be spread over five years.

<http://www.enfinity.be>

### **White House website runs on Belgian software**

American President Barack Obama uses Belgian software. In fact the White House website runs on Drupal, a creation of the Belgian Dries Buytaert (31). According to Buytaert half a million websites worldwide run on this open source software.

Drupal is an open source content management system (CMS). That is web server software that makes it easy to build and display web pages. Many modern CMSs, including Drupal, offer a "back-end" interface with which managers can adapt the content and design of their website without any programme knowledge.

Drupal's popularity has grown over the years. From July 2007 to June 2008 Drupal was downloaded more than 1.4 million times from the website <http://drupal.org>. In the meantime a large community has contributed to Drupal's development, since the software can be downloaded for free and anyone who wants to can work on it in order to improve it.

In 2007 Drupal won the "2007 Overall Open Source CMS Award". It ended second in other categories like "Best PHP Open Source CMS" and "Best Open Source Social Networking CMS". In 2008 Drupal got the "Open Source CMS Award Winner" and "Best PHP Based Open Source CMS". In 2009 it carried off a "Webware 100 Award" in the *Social & Publishing* category for the third year in a row.

Two years ago Buytaert set up *Acquia*, a company that maintains Drupal websites. The firm periodically checks whether the website is still safe and whether it could work faster.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

<http://drupal.org>  
[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33463174/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-internet/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33463174/ns/technology_and_science-internet/)  
<http://techpresident.com/blog-entry/whitehousegov-goes-drupal>  
<http://buytaert.net/whitehouse-gov-using-drupal>  
<http://buytaert.net/gartner-puts-drupal-in-visionaries-quadrant>

### **Belgian company Vyncke concludes three contracts in Singapore**

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*Vyncke Energietechniek* in Harelbeke, in the Province of West Flanders, has landed three projects for green power. Amongst other things, *Vyncke Energietechniek*, which is specialised in green industrial power stations for biomass, will supply a wood-fuelled boiler to the *Kim Hock Recycling* company. The second commission consists of an installation for *Colben Energy*, which will convert waste products from the palm oil industry into electricity for the national grid. Finally, a small installation will be built for the botanical gardens in the centre of Singapore.

<http://www.vyncke.be/>  
<http://www.nieuwsblad.be/Article/Detail.aspx?articleid=EP2I2J4V>

### **Belgian company rakes in contracts for the construction of bowling alleys in Morocco and Senegal**

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The Belgian company *Valcke Bowling Service*, in Wevelgem in the Province of West Flanders, has pocketed contracts in Senegal and Morocco for the construction of bowling alleys and is in negotiations in other North and West African countries.

Until recently this family company was active only in Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and France. During the Belgian economic mission to Morocco, in November 2009, the company signed an agreement for the construction of twelve bowling alleys in the *Tamaris Aquapark* near Casablanca. The owners of the amusement park intend the investment to increase the attraction of the park and to keep it open in the winter. In 2010 a bowling alley will also be built in the magnificent *Sea Plaza* project in Dakar, Senegal (<http://www.seaplaza.sn>).

<http://www.valckebowling.com>

### **Belgian company Mithra Pharmaceuticals to distribute its products in Morocco as of 2010**

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*Mithra Pharmaceuticals* is a spin-off of the University of Liege. It was founded in 1999 and specialises exclusively in women's health.

In the framework of Prince Philip's economic mission to Morocco from 22 to 26 November 2009 the company signed a contract with the Moroccan firm, *Health Care Promotion*, for the distribution of its products.

The company already has a presence in 38 countries. This new contract in Morocco is a first for *Mithra* in North Africa and will be a foot in the door towards other North African countries and Sub-Saharan Africa.

<http://www.mithra.be>

## **Belgian company supplies heating appliances and a ventilation system for the highest building in the world in Argentina**

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The company *Jaga*, in Diepenbeek, is going to deliver the heating appliances and a ventilation system for the highest tower in the world. This is a spiral-shaped building that will rise 1 whole kilometre out of the sea off the coast of Buenos Aires - a floating city in which 160,000 people will be able to live and work. And they'll need just as many radiators. Besides the radiators, *Jaga* has also been asked to develop a ventilation system.

In 2010 building will start – if everything goes according to plan – on a tower that is to become the highest in the world. The highly futuristic-looking building should be ready for Argentina's 200th birthday in 2016. By then there will be apartments, offices and shops on the 200 floors and everything will be linked to the mainland via an undersea railway. 7 artificial islands will support the construction. The project is headed by the Argentinean architect, Julio Torcello.

In the world of ecological or energy-saving heating *Jaga* is a well-known player. It also supplied the appliances for the Federation Tower in Moscow which, at 506 metres, is the highest tower in Europe.

<http://www.jaga.be>

## **Agfa HealthCare signs four-year agreement with Chinese partners for distribution of radiography solutions**

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*Agfa HealthCare* has signed a new four-year distribution agreement with its Chinese partners, responsible for the sale, distribution, installation and servicing of *Agfa HealthCare's* solutions in the People's Republic of China.

The contract has an estimated value of around US\$500 million

"The Chinese government will invest over 124 billion US dollars in healthcare over the coming three years and will build 5000 new hospitals, primarily in rural regions," states Jo Cornu, CEO of the *Agfa-Gevaert* group. "*Agfa HealthCare* will play an instant and important role in this project."

<http://www.agfa.com>

## **Belgian architecture firm charged with design of tourist centres in Morocco**

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*L'ATELIER-SOCIETE D'ARCHITECTES SC-S.A.* is active in the design and realisation of projects in Belgium, Europe (Poland, Slovakia and Italy) and North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco).

The architecture firm, which is based in Liege, was founded some 20 years ago and is regarded very highly both in Belgium and abroad for its record of achievements in the field of logistical infrastructure (*L'Oréal, Janssen Logistics, Trilogis*), commercial centres (*IKEA, Galerie St-Lambert* in Liege), recreational infrastructure (concert halls, Standard Liege's training centre for young footballers etc.) and many others.

L'ATELIER set up a subsidiary in Marrakech in 2007. In the same year a technical study bureau was set up in Tunis, too. As part of the *Plan Azur 2010* competition, which the Moroccan government launched with the aim of attracting ten million tourists by 2010 and building six seaside resorts, L'ATELIER was commissioned to design the architectural and town planning concept for three of the six resorts:

ESSAOUIRA – MOGADOR  
MANSOUR LAKE CITY – OUARZAZATE  
PORT LIXUS – LARACHE

The projects comprise touristic infrastructure: resorts with golf courses, hotels, villas, yacht marinas, etc.

Other projects are underway in Fès, Tangier, Marrakech, Martil and Tétouan, as well as in Tunisia (Tunis Radès, Tunis Hamam Lif, Bizerte ...)

<http://www.latelier.be>

### 3. General economic information about Belgium

#### **Karel De Gucht gets important Trade portfolio in the European Commission**

The Belgian Karel De Gucht has been given the Trade portfolio in the new European Commission. He succeeds Baroness Catherine Ashton, who was appointed as the new High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission.

In addition, De Gucht will be the coordinator of the industrial relations with other world powers.

De Gucht will also take over part of the Industry portfolio and will coordinate the Trans-Atlantic Economic Council.

As European Commissioner for Trade Karel De Gucht will be responsible for the EU's foreign trade policy and will be the spokesperson of the biggest trading partner in the world. This will include:

- promoting economic development and solidarity in the world
- negotiating and concluding trade agreements on behalf of the 27 EU Member States
- cooperation with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other multilateral organisations to break down international trade barriers
- monitoring compliance with the existing (international) trade policy

In principle the European Parliament will give the new Commission a vote of confidence on 26 January 2010.

<http://europa.eu>

## **The Financial Times declares Didier Reynders third best Minister of Finance in Europe**

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The British newspaper the *Financial Times* (FT) has declared the Belgian Didier Reynders the third best Minister of Finance in Europe after the French Minister, Christine Lagarde, and the German Minister, Peer Steinbrück.

A jury from the FT assessed 19 ministers. Besides a general ranking the newspaper also drew up a list based on political and economic criteria and a credibility score.

Didier Reynders gets third place in the general ranking. For economic affairs he is second. Incidentally, according to the paper the Belgian economy is doing better than its neighbours. Politically he shares eighth place with his Italian colleague, Giulio Tremonti. For credibility Reynders ends up ninth.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3f36c9c4-d2d0-11de-af63-00144feabdc0.html>

## **Belgian best young entrepreneur in the world**

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At the world *Junior Chamber International* (JCI) congress in Tunisia on 19 November 2009, Patrick Decuyper, CEO of the sun and wind energy company *Enfinity*, in Waregem in the province of West Flanders, received the *Creative Young Entrepreneur Award* (CYEA), an annual international award for entrepreneurs organised by the JCI and *Flanders DC*, an organisation of the Flemish authority which aims to promote creative enterprise. The prize is awarded to the best young entrepreneur selected from more than 100 candidates from more than 20 countries. The criteria include creativity and innovation on the one hand and socially responsible enterprise on the other.

<http://www.express.be>

<http://www.enfinity.be>

<http://www.jci.cc>

<http://www.jciwc-hammamet2009.com>

<http://www.flandersdc.be>

## **Belgian arms manufacturer FN Herstal produces a black box for firearms**

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The Belgian arms manufacturer *FN*, in Herstal (Province of Liege), has designed and developed a black box for firearms. This innovative appliance was presented at MILIPOL, the international trade fair for internal state security, in Paris.

The *FN* black box detects, identifies and counts shots, measures burst rates and burst lengths, records firing sequences and detects stoppages due to failure of cycle. Storing such information facilitates maintenance, which greatly increases weapon reliability and availability.

The device can also transmit useful information to the chain of command during a mission. It includes the weapon's identification number and can therefore indirectly

identify the soldier. When it is linked to a GPS it can transmit its identification and location data to the highest command levels via the soldier's communications apparatus.

The *FN* black box is a moulded appliance that fits in any weapon type. It is provided with a non-exchangeable battery that lasts 10 years and has a recording capacity of 100,000 rounds.

<http://www.fnherstal.com/index.php?id=573>

[http://news.cnet.com/8301-13639\\_3-10398967-42.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-13639_3-10398967-42.html)

### **The Belgian company Electrawinds fuels private cars with waste animal fat – a world first**

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*Electrawinds*, the Belgian renewable energy producer, has succeeded in running a private car with a converted engine on waste animal fats for 24 hours at its biofuel power station in Mouscron in the Province of Hainaut. The fat was sourced from slaughterhouses and fat rendering plants. The same biomass is purified in the *Electrawinds* power stations in Mouscron and Ostend, in the Province of West Flanders, to produce a clean fuel that generates electricity. This provides 85,000 families with green electricity.

For this fun experiment, which was baptised "Biofuel Racing Challenge", *Electrawinds* staff used their free time to completely convert an Audi A4 into a sustainable racing car. Despite this world first, *Electrawinds* does not intend to commercialise the initiative. The company only wanted to show that renewable energy is more than just wind turbines and solar panels and that green electrical power can also be produced from waste products.

<http://www.electrawinds.be>

### **Hot Cuisine America, a subsidiary of the Belgian UNIVEG group, receives Entrepreneurship prize in New York**

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On 14 November 2009 *UNIVEG* received the *Hot Cuisine America* (HCA) in New York, the prestigious *BACC Entrepreneurship Award*. The prize is awarded annually by the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce to a company that demonstrates insight into the American market, perseverance, successful marketing and ecological awareness. *UNIVEG Hot Cuisine America* got the prize for its policy of working with advanced production methods to produce top quality products.

Early in 2008 *UNIVEG Hot Cuisine America*, a subsidiary of the fruit and vegetable concern *UNIVEG*, which is based in Swedesboro, New Jersey, started the production and supply of freshly prepared ready-made meals which surpassed the quality standards of both the USDA and the FDA. By reconciling European and American production techniques, *UNIVEG Hot Cuisine America* is able to make high-end meals to suit North American consumers.

<http://www.univeg.com>

## **Japanese Nippon Export Award for Agfa-Gevaert**

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The image creation group *Agfa-Gevaert* from Mortsels (in the Province of Antwerp) has won the *Nippon Export Award* in Japan for the quality of its printing plates. These days *Agfa-Gevaert* competes with leading Japanese suppliers with its unique and environment friendly product.

[http://www.agfa.com/en/gs/news\\_events/latest\\_news/archive/20091213\\_nippon\\_award.jsp](http://www.agfa.com/en/gs/news_events/latest_news/archive/20091213_nippon_award.jsp)

## **Company from Antwerp wins European Best Event Award in Milan**

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Twins|Events & PR, a company from Antwerp, is specialised in the organisation of events from concept development to realisation.

On 26 November 2009 Twins|Events & PR went off with the *European Best Event Award* in Milan for the "Happy Smurfdays Euro Tour".

The 50th birthday of the Smurfs, the brainchild of the Belgian artist Peyo, was celebrated in no less than 15 European countries under the name "Happy Smurfdays". The concept was produced in cooperation with UNICEF Europe and consisted of nightly Smurf invasions, happening press conferences, a special birthday exhibition, an online public competition and cooperation with 15 European celebrities. All of which was backed up by a custom-made website. In addition to that, this project made more than 250,000 euros in aid of UNICEF's educational projects.

Besides the *European Best Event Award* the "Happy Smurfdays Euro Tour" also bagged the silver *ERMIS PR Award* in Athens a few weeks earlier for the organisation of the event in Athens.

<http://www.twins.be>  
<http://www.besteventawards.com>  
<http://www.smurf.com>

## **Port of Antwerp organises "Antwerp Port Promotion Days" in various cities**

On 1 December 2009 the Antwerp Port Authority, *Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf Antwerpen*, organised an *Antwerp Port Promotion Day* in Budapest, Hungary, and on 2 December another in Vienna, Austria. The aim of this type of event is to establish contacts, share experiences and strengthen cooperation. Amongst others, representatives from the logistics and industrial sector, private companies from Antwerp and the port authorities were present.

Antwerp is the second port in Europe and the sixth in the world for international maritime traffic. In 2008 the port handled almost 190 million tons of maritime goods traffic. A good 16,000 sea-going ships and another 61,000 river vessels call in at Antwerp annually. Antwerp is the market leader for steel, project cargo, fruit and forestry products and is an important Ro-Ro port, but it also plays a crucial role for dry bulk, like coffee and tobacco, and liquid bulk.

Antwerp is the largest chemicals and petrochemicals centre in Europe (and the second in the world) and is the most important provider of storage space of all the

European ports. The many logistics companies in and around the port - there are over 350 European distribution centres in the Antwerp region - not only offer storage space but also carry out countless added value activities for all sorts of goods, including steel, cars, tobacco, coffee and fruit, and take care of distribution for the Western European market and overseas destinations.

<http://www.portofantwerp.com>

### **Port of Antwerp elected "Best dry bulk port"**

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The Port of Antwerp was chosen by the trade's *International Bulk Journal* as "Best dry bulk port". The nominated ports were judged amongst other things on the efforts they have made to handle bulk goods in an efficient, safe and environment-friendly manner, the quality of their logistical follow-up, customer service, investments in port infrastructure and management approach towards generating local and international business. The Port of Antwerp was judged best for these parameters.

<http://www.portofantwerp.com>

### **Port of Antwerp freezes port dues**

In response to the global economic crisis, the Antwerp Port Authority has decided to freeze its port dues and concession fees in 2010. Some dues will even be lowered.

Antwerp Port Authority will keep its dues and fees at the 2009 level. Most of the dues, in fact, will be frozen at the 2008 level. Furthermore, a 10% reduction will also be granted for transshipment of conventional/break-bulk cargo, such as steel, fruit, paper and wood, for which Antwerp is the leading port in Europe.

With these measures the Port Authority seeks to combat further losses in freight volumes and employment, while extending a helping hand to shipping companies that are having to deal with the particularly sharp recession.

These measures form part of an overall plan for a competitive port, thus enabling Antwerp to reinforce its position as the second-largest port in Europe. Antwerp port currently provides more than 180,000 jobs in Flanders and contributes nearly 60% of the total added value that the Belgian ports generate for the national economy.

<http://www.portofantwerp.com>

### **Wallonia is the first logistics region in Europe**

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According to a study by *Cushman&Wakefield*, published by *Logistics in Wallonia* and *AWEX*, Wallonia has become the first logistics region in Europe. The study established a ranking of best European locations for logistics and distribution, based on macro-economic criteria.

Like in previous editions of the study, published in 2004 and 2006 by the *Vlaams Instituut voor de Logistiek* (VIL), several Belgian provinces appear in the top tier of the ranking. This is why:

- Excellent access to the most important European markets;
- Optimum geographic location;
- Outstanding transport volume and infrastructure, close to the most important ports or with excellent multimodal connections to those ports;
- Low costs (e.g. for storage) ;
- Availability of very productive, highly qualified and multilingual work force.

<http://www.investinwallonia.be>

<http://www.logisticsinwallonia.be/files/gallery/comparison2009primelogisticslocationsabridgededition1260364171.pdf>