



# BUSINESS MEMO

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium  
www.diplobel.us



NR. 3/2010

## Belgian Presidency of the EU

On July 1st Belgium took over the presidency of the EU for the 12th time. This Presidency coincides with the implementation of the **Lisbon Treaty**, which changed the European institutional architecture. The European Parliament gained increased influence in the European decision making process, and the Treaty also created **two new leading positions**: the posts of permanent president of the European Council, held by former Belgian Prime Minister Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, held by Catherine Ashton.

The new institutions do not mean that the rotating Presidency has completely ceased to exist. Meetings about issues other than foreign affairs – for instance, meetings of the ministers for energy, environment or agriculture – will continue to be chaired by the nation holding the EU presidency, which rotates every six months.

Making the European Commission, the European Parliament, the new actors and the European governments work together around the main issues will be one of the main tasks for the Belgian Presidency.

In the economic area, Belgium will concentrate on the governance of the new European financial supervision architecture, on strengthening the stability of the Euro zone, and on restoring budgetary discipline. In addition, implementation will begin of the **“EU 2020 Strategy for Employment and Growth”**, adopted by European Heads of State and Government in June. The goal of the strategy is to develop a competitive and green knowledge economy by 2020. Core components of the Strategy Europe 2020 will be discussed in depth at the European Council on December 16-17. The Presidency will particularly focus on greater convergence of research and innovation policies, on ways to stimulate innovation in the EU, and on administrative simplification of joint European research programmes.

As Lisbon Treaty gave the EU new powers in **space policy**, the Belgian Presidency will convene a “Space” Council in November, which will focus on the establishment of a European space policy.

www.eutrio.be

## Memphis in May to Honor Belgium



Memphis in May, one of the largest and most important international festivals in the United States, announced in August that Belgium will be its honored country in 2011.

Founded more than 30 years ago, *Memphis in May* introduces foreign nations and diverse cultures to the people of the Mid-South. Each year it attracts about 300,000 people.

Diane Hampton, Memphis in May Executive Director, described Belgium as "The essence of Europe. (...) Very much home to the European Union. It's home to NATO. It's multi-cultural, multi-lingual." And, she said, "It's known for incredible cuisine."

The festival runs for the month of May, and many of the Belgian performances and exhibitions will take place during “International Week” from May 2 to 8. But in every program throughout the month – from the Beale Street Music Festival to the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest - Belgium will of course be duly represented.

<http://www.memphisinmay.org/>

### Contact Us!

Embassy of Belgium (202) 625-5810  
Washington@diplobel.org



## Ambassador Hosts Renewable Energy Roundtable

On September 22nd, Ambassador Matthysen hosted the roundtable discussion *Wind of Change, Renewables and the Power Grids* at his Washington residence. The event was moderated by former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Heather A. Conley, Europe Program Director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

American and Belgian energy companies, local and federal policymakers, and representatives of NGOs listened with great interest to opening remarks by Mr. Daniel Dobbeni, CEO of Belgium's transmission system operator ELIA, and by Mr. Manik Roy, Vice President of Federal Government Outreach for the Pew Center on Global Climate Change.

Mr. Dobbeni gave an overview of the new regulatory environment in Europe for companies like ELIA, referring specifically to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Package for the Internal Market for Electricity, and to the EU's 20-20-20 Strategy adopted a few years ago. He also addressed the recent changes in the structure of the European energy market, and the necessary conditions for renewable energy to become a reliable and a viable energy source.

Mr. Roy gave an entertaining overview of the latest Energy bills currently discussed in Congress, and expressed his views on the perspectives of any legislation being passed very soon.

Mr. Patrick Herman, Minister-Counselor at the Belgian Embassy, described the "smart, sustainable and inclusive" priorities of the Belgian Presidency in the field of energy, as outlined during the recent Informal EU Council Meeting hosted in Brussels by Ministers Paul Magnette and Freya Van den Bossche.

[www.elia.be](http://www.elia.be)

## Latest Economic Indicators

GDP	+ 2.4%	2010-Q2
Inflation	+2.4%	2010-08
Unemployment	8.9%	2010-07
Euro-dollar	1.35	2010-09.26

**National Bank of Belgium -09.26.2010**



## Dr. Erik De Clercq Wins 2010 Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research

Johnson & Johnson announced on September 8th that Professor Emeritus Erik De Clercq of the Institute for Medical Research in *Leuven*, Belgium was the recipient of the 2010 *Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research*. The award was shared with Dr. Anthony S. Fauci of the National Institutes of Health. Both men were recognized for their pioneering work in understanding and combating HIV/AIDS.

The *Dr. Paul Janssen Award* salutes the most passionate and creative scientists in basic or clinical research whose scientific achievements have made a measurable impact on human health. Previous winners include Craig Mello, Professor of Molecular Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and 2006 Nobel Laureate in Physiology.

Known to his colleagues as "Dr. Paul," Dr. Janssen was one of the 20th century's most gifted and passionate researchers. He helped save millions of lives through his contribution to the discovery and development of more than 80 medicines, four of which remain on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines. Dr. Paul also founded in 1953 one of Belgium's most successful companies, Janssen Pharmaceutica, now a part of Johnson & Johnson.

"Dr. De Clercq is a pioneer in the development of antiviral drugs which have saved the lives of millions of patients infected with HIV and other viral diseases," said Solomon Snyder, M.D. Distinguished Service Professor of Neuroscience, Pharmacology and Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Chairman of the Janssen Award Selection Committee.

In his congratulations to Dr. De Clercq, Ambassador of Belgium Jan Matthysen indicated that "this award underlines the top-position that Belgium and Flanders are taking in the field of biomedical research. We are proud of it, and I will be certainly not forget to attract the attention on this perfect example of excellence".

Beerse, Belgium, born Paul Janssen was recently voted runner-up by the public in the very popular "Greatest Belgian" television show in Flanders. Interestingly, the "Greatest Belgian" winner was another Belgian with a very strong link with the United States: the recently beatified Father Damian of Molokai.

[www.pauljanssenaward.com](http://www.pauljanssenaward.com)

## Dow Corning Plans European Distribution Center in Feluy

Dow Corning has announced it will invest in a 345,000 square feet energy efficient distribution centre in Feluy, Belgium, to expand delivery capabilities and optimize service for customers throughout Europe and the Middle East. The project will represent a total investment of approximately \$45 million.

The facility is expected to be completed by the end of 2011, and it will have approximately 130 employees. The distribution center will be located on a 42 acre industrial site near the company's business and technology center and production facility in Seneffe, also in Belgium. The Walloon region and the European Investment Fund will grant Dow Corning 10 million Euros subsidies to support the investment.

"Belgium has a strategic position in the logistics sector and in the heart of Europe and provides access to multiple transportation networks, including road, rail and waterways," said Jim Whitlock, Senior Vice President, Manufacturing, Engineering & Global Operations.

The new distribution center will meet the highest standards and showcase best practices in environment, health and safety performance, according to Whitlock. The building will use innovative design and Dow Corning technologies, such as structural glazing and vacuum insulation panels, to increase energy efficiency. The structure of the building will also be equipped to support solar panels on the roof.

[www.dowcorning.com](http://www.dowcorning.com)

## Lotus Bakeries Opens First Coffee Shop in the U.S.

Belgian biscuit manufacturer *Lotus Bakeries* opened its first "Biscoff Coffee Corner" in San Francisco USA early in July, together with a local partner. *Lotus Bakeries* is best known for its speculoos, i.e. famous, crunchy brown, caramelized biscuits, which are made out of flour, butter, brown sugar and a mix of spices that include cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, powdered ginger, cardamom and white pepper.

*Biscoff*, a neologism amalgamating the words "biscuit" and "coffee", is the brand name under which *Lotus* markets its caramelized 'cookies' in the United States. Although caramelized cookies from Belgium are nothing new in the U.S., the concept of 'coffee and a cookie' is not yet fully established. The company's goal is to make sure that this popular Belgian tradition now takes hold on this side of the Atlantic too.

[www.lotusbakeries.be](http://www.lotusbakeries.be)

## California High Speed Rail Authority Signs Agreement with Belgium

On July 7, the California High-Speed Rail Authority signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Belgium to continue sharing high-speed rail planning and development information.

"This is another example of the international recognition and support of California's high-speed rail system," said Curt Pringle, Chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. "We're pleased that this partnership with Belgium will enhance our planning as this project moves forward."

Belgium has been operating high-speed rail since 1997, with routes connecting Belgium to France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The agreement includes the exchange of information on technical standards, purchasing and building methods, engineering know-how, funding options as well as operations and maintenance data.

"Belgium has extensive experience and expertise in providing high-speed rail technology, with neutrality and objectivity towards technical references, standards and manufacturers. The Belgian railways have been instrumental in making European high-speed rail a success, through international technical integration. We're happy to share this experience with the California HSRA", said Geert Criel, Consul-General of Belgium.

The signing of the agreement was followed by a presentation by Joseph M. Borremans, Senior International Project Manager and Representative for North-America of TUC-RAIL (Belgian Railways group). TUC RAIL extended and modernized one of the world's busiest railway networks situated at the heart of Europe and has been involved in many international projects, acquiring valuable experience as a leader in high-speed rail technology.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is the state entity responsible for planning, constructing and operating an 800-mile-long high-speed train system serving California's major metropolitan areas.

[www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)



## Antwerp and Brussels Top Expat Destinations

The cities of Antwerp and Brussels are among the most favorite destinations for European expats, according to a recent survey of European expats by expat management agency *ECA International*.

The Danish capital Copenhagen heads the charts together with Swiss capital Bern. Second place, out of 400, is shared by two cities in Belgium: Antwerp and Brussels. They beat major business cities such as Amsterdam (11th), Berlin (15th), Paris (20th), Stockholm (21st), London (31st) and Rome (36th).

The *ECA* study is used by HR departments to calculate the compensation that expats can expect to receive for difficulties in adapting to their new environment. The criteria used are climate, health services, housing, public services, distance, social life, leisure facilities, infrastructure, safety, political tension and air quality, among other things.

[www.eca-international.com](http://www.eca-international.com).

## Microsoft Innovation Center in Brussels

On September 2, the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region approved the proposed public private partnership with Microsoft Corporation to create a "Microsoft Innovation Center (MIC) in the Brussels Region. MICs aim to facilitate the creation of technology companies and to monitor the development of these starters.

The MIC Brussels will pursue the incubation and support of new start-ups in high growth areas such as cloud computing and SaaS, two areas where many SMEs are active in Brussels and well positioned. The MIC will also assist with training of entrepreneurs and job seekers in the Brussels Region, particularly through internationally recognized 'certification'.

The Brussels MIC, which should be operational by 2011, will be co-financed equally by the Brussels Region and private partners. The overall annual budget will be around 500,000 euros. The MIC should create every year 10 companies and 50 direct jobs. 150 certifications per year are predicted.

**Can't get enough of Business Memo? Earlier editions are available online, at [www.diplobel.us](http://www.diplobel.us).**

**The Embassy's website also lists other Investment Office publications, such as**

- \*Fact Sheets about various aspects of the Belgian economy**
- \*Setting Up in Belgium: a pocket guide for the business executive.**
- \*Corporate Directory: an overview of the Belgian corporate presence in the US**

**Hard copies of all publications are available from Bart Deelen, Business Development Manager, at [bart.deelen@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:bart.deelen@diplobel.fed.be)**

*To receive this publication by e-mail, please contact Bart Deelen at [bart.deelen@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:bart.deelen@diplobel.fed.be)*

First Class  
Presorted  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Wilmington, DE  
Permit No. 1858

Embassy of Belgium  
3330 Garfield Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20008