



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM  
Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and  
Development Cooperation



# ***Belgium Unlimited***

***News from Belgium***



***Belgian diamond trade  
grows and prospers***

# Belgium on the international stage

## ► Belgium takes part in the NATO Active Endeavour operation

Belgium took part with a mine hunter in *Active Endeavour*, the NATO operation for the prevention of and protection against terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea.

Belgium deployed the mine hunter *Narcis*. This ship and its crew formed part of the Standing NATO Response Force MCM (Mine Countermeasures) Group 1, or SNMCMG1. The participation took place on:

- 14 to 20 March 2011;
- 2 to 7 April 2011;
- 13 to 21 April 2011.

<http://www.mil.be>

<http://www.premier.fgov.be>



© Bogaert Pierre



© Braekevelt Jürgen

## ► Libya: Belgian participation in the air-lift

At the request of the European Union, the Belgian government decided to take part in the air-lift instituted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to evacuate refugees on the border between Tunisia and Libya, in the beginning of March.

A Belgian Defence Airbus A-330 was used, which repatriated over 1,600 refugees. Two full crews, a medical and an air marshal team participated in this special mission. The plane returned to Melsbroek, Belgium, on 11 March after accomplishment of the mission.

© DG COM Defensie



In this way Belgium continued its contribution to the international community's efforts to address the humanitarian consequences of the crisis in the region.

Belgium had decided on 3 March already to make €1 million available to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

<http://www.mil.be>

<http://www.premier.fgov.be>

## ► Belgium taking part in international action in Libya



Following the approval of resolution 1973 of the UN Security Council, the Belgian Government, in consultation with the Parliament and with its approval, decided to take part in the international action in Libya.

The purpose of Belgium's participation in the military operation is to protect the civilian population, to put a stop to violence against the Libyan people.

It is vital from the Belgian point of view that the action be supported by the Arab League and the African Union.

The Government reached an agreement on 21 March on Belgium's precise involvement, i.e.:

- 136 troops, six F-16 fighter planes, one minesweeper (the *Narcis*) and crew ;
- Since 23 March, the minesweeper has been under NATO command, and the F-16s since 30 March;
- The purpose of sending air capacity: controlling compliance with the no-fly zone over Libya;
- The purpose of sending navy capacity: controlling compliance with the arms embargo;
- It is not foreseen that Belgium will take part in an action with ground troops.

As instructed in resolution 1973, the aforementioned capacity was notified to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York and to the Secretary-General of the Arab League.

<http://www.mil.be>

<http://www.premier.fgov.be>

<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

## ► Belgian Walter Stevens appointed Head of Crisis Management and Planning Department of EEAS

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President, appointed Walter Stevens from Belgium as Head of the Crisis Management and Planning Department of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Head of CMPD plays a key role in the EEAS.

Mr. Stevens will, among other things, be in charge of crisis response strategic planning, including the elaboration of Crisis Management Concepts and Joint Actions.

His department's mission is also to develop greater synergies between the civilian and the military crisis response capabilities, to ensure coherence with the approved political-strategic objectives and to monitor the coherence and effectiveness of EU action.

Mr. Stevens will also prepare and conduct crisis management exercises. He will also contribute to the EU's ability to cooperate effectively with the UN, NATO, the African Union and third countries.

Walter Stevens was Belgium's Permanent Representative to the Political and Security Committee and was previously chief of staff to the Belgian Foreign Minister and diplomatic adviser to the Belgian Prime Minister.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/120349.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/120349.pdf)



W. Stevens

## ► **Brussels Forum 2011** (Brussels, 25-27 March 2011)

Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders to address pressing challenges currently facing both sides of the Atlantic. Participants include heads of state, senior officials from the European Union institutions and the member states, U.S. Cabinet officials, Congressional representatives, Parliamentarians, academics, business people and media.

Brussels Forum provides a venue for the transatlantic community to address new and global challenges. By bringing together leading politicians, thinkers, journalists, and business representatives, *Brussels Forum* helps shape a new transatlantic agenda that can adapt to changing global realities and new threats.

The *Brussels Forum* agenda 2011 reflected the growing diversity of issues at the core of the transatlantic relationship, as well as the increasing geographic reach of transatlantic cooperation. The 2011 edition included discussion sessions on a vast array of themes, such as the economy and international trade, the G20, energy, the situation in North-Africa and the Middle-East, Libya, Japan, the Balkans, Turkey, the European Neighbourhood Policy, politics in America, to name only a few.

Brussels Forum is a joint initiative of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (a grantmaking and public policy institute dedicated to strengthening transatlantic cooperation), *Daimler*, the Federal Authorities of Belgium and the Egmont Institute, with additional support from the European Union Delegation to the United States, major representatives from the private sector and others.

<http://www.gmfus.org>



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## ► **High rating for Belgium in OECD report on official development assistance in 2010**

On 6 April 2011, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published its annual report on official development assistance (ODA), which shows remarkable results for the year 2010, namely a Belgian ODA of 0.64% of gross national income (GNI).

Belgian Cooperation has contributed greatly to what the OECD calls a historical peak for ODA in 2010: our country has seen exemplary growth of over 19% of its share of ODA, which is above the average for the 15 participating EU Member States, namely 6.7%.



© DGD / Thomas Hiergens

The OECD emphasised that Belgium exceeded what was requested in 2005, i.e. to reach a figure of 0.51% of GNI by 2010. Nevertheless, Belgium will continue efforts to reach the target of 0.7% of GNI.

<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/41/47515917.pdf>

# The economy & Business

## ► Belgian economy grows beyond expectations

Data from the National Bank of Belgium (NBB) indicate that the Belgian economy closed in 2010 much higher than was expected. Economic growth for the whole year was 2.1 per cent, whereas in 2009, Belgium's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 2.7 per cent.

The recovery of economic activity last year is due the substantial rise in foreign demand: the export of goods and services rose by more than 10 per cent, i.e. more quickly than imports.

Domestic employment grew last year by 0.6 per cent, or 28,000 units, whereas in 2009, employment decreased by 0.4 per cent.

<http://www.nbb.be>



## ► Belgian exports up by 20 per cent in 2010 \*

According to the Institute for National Accounts, Belgian exports in 2010 amounted to €212.3 billion, and imports for the same period for 213.8 billion. This represents an increase of 19.6% and 16.9% respectively compared with the figures for 2009. The balance of trade for the year closed with a deficit of almost €1.5 billion.



This is an improvement of around €3.8 billion compared with the balance for 2009.

Throughout 2010, export volumes rose by 10.8%, while import volumes increased by 5.7%.

\* figures based on the national concept

<http://www.nbb.be/doc/DQ/F/DQ3/HISTO/EFP1012.PDF>

## ► Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School opens new English language Executive MBA in Moscow

Starting in October 2011 Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School will be offering a newly designed International Executive MBA in Moscow. The School already had a part-time MBA on its St. Petersburg campus since 2005. With this new Moscow based programme Vlerick is further strengthening its position on the Russian MBA market. Vlerick is the only business school offering triple-accredited (AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA) MBA education in Russia and is the highest *Financial Times* ranked European Business School with a campus in Russia.

The programme is completed in 17 months. The international character of the programme is further enhanced by outstanding international faculty from Vlerick and other top schools (*Harvard, London Business School, INSEAD...*) in Europe, the US and Asia.

The new EMBA programme will cater for young but experienced leaders already in place or about to take on new management responsibilities. It will integrate Western management methods into the Russian business reality.

<http://www.vlerick.com>



© Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

## ► Pfizer Animal Health invests €22 million in Louvain-la-Neuve

The American company *Pfizer Animal Health* is investing €22 million in the expansion of its pilot factory in Louvain-la-Neuve (Walloon Brabant province) and in the transfer of a research and development laboratory for veterinary medicine from Sandwich (UK).

The pilot factory in Louvain-la-Neuve, inaugurated in April 2008, provides a space to develop new products and production processes. Small batches of vaccines for animals are produced here in the clinical development phase.

*Pfizer* is to begin by expanding the pilot factory. A new 1,300-m<sup>2</sup> centre will provide space for the entire chain of the research, development and production of new antigens; the active component of vaccines. The investment is set to improve production output and flexibility. Under normal circumstances the pilot factory will produce small amounts to support the development and registration process, but can - if need be - quickly step up its production capacity. The new centre will be fully operational by the end of 2012.



*Pfizer* is also transferring a share of its R&D activities in veterinary medicine from Sandwich (UK) to Zaventem (Flemish Brabant province), which will eventually employ 90 researchers. In addition, *Pfizer* is to build a new and fully equipped laboratory for vaccine analysis in Louvain-la-Neuve. The laboratory is destined to finetune new vaccines, analyse the results of clinical tests and develop control procedures. It will also offer unique opportunities for cooperation with Belgian universities, specialised research centres and companies.

[http://www.pfizer.be/sites/be/fr/media/press\\_bulletins/in\\_general/Pages/PfizerAnimalHealthinvestit22millionsdeurosaLouvain-la-Neuve.aspx](http://www.pfizer.be/sites/be/fr/media/press_bulletins/in_general/Pages/PfizerAnimalHealthinvestit22millionsdeurosaLouvain-la-Neuve.aspx)

## ► Second Microsoft Innovation Center opened in Belgium

IT giant *Microsoft* has opened a Microsoft Innovation Center (MIC) in Etterbeek, Brussels. This is now the second MIC in Belgium. The American group has already opened an Innovation Center in Mons (province of Hainaut).

The new Innovation Center has three tasks: helping SMEs to further develop their technological capacity, to stimulate innovation and to give specific training to job seekers, employees and the self-employed.

The aim is to create dozens of new start-ups every year and offer training to 150 people. The Brussels-Capital Region and *Microsoft* are going to invest € 250,000 per year into the Innovation Center. These two partners are looking for a third investor. *Microsoft* has 110 Innovation Centers worldwide.

<http://www.microsoft.com/belux/fr/presspass/2011/cloud-center.mspix>



► **Belgian company Theuma to supply the doors for the athletes' village at 2012 Olympics in London**

The Belgian firm *Theuma* from Bekkevoort (in the province of Flemish Brabant) is supplying the doors for the athletes' village next year at the Olympic Games in London. The contract involves 25,000 doors, all FSC labeled.

The organizing body of the Olympic Games, determined to make the London edition the first 'green' one, is imposing strict quality standards on all the materials being used. For the doors in the athletes' village for example, it only chooses wood from legal and sustainable sources, carrying the widely-know FSC label. The *Theuma* door-making factory had to undergo a rigorous quality audit before it was selected as an Olympic-approved door supplier.



After London 2012 the *Theuma* doors will remain just where they are: the athletes' village, east of London, is designed in such a way that it can serve as a residential zone afterwards, embedded in a green environment.

*Theuma* is one of the leading manufacturers of wooden interior doors and steel and timber door frames in Europe. The company also provides total solutions in the field of interior door systems.

© FSC Belgium

<http://www.theuma.be>  
<http://www.fsc.be/default.aspx?ID=336&Taal=FR>

► **Belgian company Van Hool awarded contract for delivery of 27 hybrid buses to France**

*Van Hool*, a Belgian manufacturer of coaches, buses and industrial vehicles established in Lier (Koningshooikt) in the Antwerp area, has been awarded a contract by Metz Métropole. This contract concerns the delivery of 27 24-metre hybrid bi-articulated buses. These vehicles are unique in Europe in that they combine the flexibility of a bus with the efficiency of a tram. The contract is worth around € 23 million in total.



© Van Hool

The buses will be introduced into the high quality system-to-be of Metz's metropolitan area, christened 'Mettis'. The project will include two busways with several branches. Works will start in May 2011 and the system will be operational as of 2013. The new buses will be fitted with hybrid technology, which means that fuel savings of between 15 and 20% will be possible compared with a conventional engine.

[http://www.mobilicites.com/fr\\_actualites-exclusif-metz-metropole-commande-26-bus-de-24-m-a-van-hool\\_77\\_901.html](http://www.mobilicites.com/fr_actualites-exclusif-metz-metropole-commande-26-bus-de-24-m-a-van-hool_77_901.html)  
<http://mettis.metzmetropole.fr>  
<http://www.vanhool.com>



► **Belgian diamond trade grows and prospers**

According to the specialist website [www.antwerpfacetonline.be](http://www.antwerpfacetonline.be), the export of Belgian cut diamonds grew in February 2011 by 51%, with imports rising by 33%.

Raw diamonds, too, performed very well, with an increase in imports of 35% and in exports of 26%.

Due to increased demand, the price of cut diamonds also rose on international markets, with favourable consequences for the Belgian sector: exports of cut diamonds generated USD 1.3 billion, compared to USD 875.3 million the year before. The export of raw diamonds brought in a further USD 232 million.

In January, too, Belgian diamonds performed very well. The strong growth of 2010 is clearly not abating.

Ari Erpstein, CEO of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre, is very pleased with the way things are developing. "Antwerp remains the ideal barometer for the world diamond sector, and indicates a healthy global diamond trade."

- <http://www.antwerpfacetonline.be/nc/articles/single/article/antwerps-imports-and-exports-rise-strongly-again-in-february/>
- <http://www.awdc.be>
- <http://www.hrdantwerp.be>



## ► From Salvador Dalí to René Magritte The surreal world...

**Exhibition, Castle of Waroux, Alleur, 12 March - 17 July 2011**

An exhibition on surrealist painters will be held in the Castle of Waroux from 12 March to 17 July.

The exhibition will exhibit some hundred original works and lithographs from private collections. Visitors can view paintings, drawings, pictures and illustrations by artists such as Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, René Magritte, Paul Delvaux, Max Ernst and André Masson.

'From Salvador Dalí to René Magritte, the surrealist universe' also has an exhibition designed for the little ones, entitled 'children admitted'.

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



Jane Graverol, *First metaphores*, Brussels, 1938, private collection.  
Cop. Jane Graverol / Sabam Belgium 2011

## ► Belgian film 'Four Roses' awarded prize at Memphis International Film Festival

At the Memphis International Film Festival in Tennessee, the Belgian film 'Four Roses' from director Kris De Meester was awarded the prize for 'Best Feature Film'.

'Four Roses' is a no-budget film in English, shot in just four days without any subsidies. The story takes place in a hotel, in the outskirts of an industrial city, one hot summer evening. The film recounts the story of twelve individuals and their quest for love, while killing time. 'Four Roses' is a provocative drama exploring the themes of isolation, love and being.



'Four Roses' was selected for over fifteen film festivals, including Cannes, Paris, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Strasbourg, Toronto, Florida, Brussels, Memphis and Hamburg. The film has also won six awards, e.g. the 'Best no-budget Film' award at the Cannes Independent Film Festival and the 'Best Foreign Feature Drama' award at the Atlanta Underground Film Festival.

<http://www.fourrosesmovie.com>

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

## ► Tutankhamun, his tomb and his treasures

Exhibition, Brussels Expo (Heysel), 20 April - 6 November 2011

The Tutankhamun exhibition breaks new ground in the presentation of cultural history in general and Ancient Egypt in particular. On the one hand is the incomparable breadth of presentation. With more than 1,000 objects – perfect replicas produced under scientific supervision – ‘Tutankhamun’ is more complete than any previous exhibition of originals. And on the other hand, there is the sumptuous arrangement of the treasures. Entering the tomb chamber, feeling like a discoverer, the unbelievable splendour right before your eyes, close enough to touch – it’s an adventure for all the senses that no visitor will forget.

Exhibitions relating to ancient Egypt’s fascinating artefacts and riches have been immensely popular for many years now. The ‘Tutankhamun – his tomb and his treasures’ exhibition project offers a completely new and unique experience: visitors can actually relive the exciting events of the historic excavation and view the world-famous treasures as if they were actually there themselves. Owing to the delicate and immensely valuable nature of original historical artefacts however, removing them from the safe and carefully controlled confines of a museum environment presents huge risks, no matter how much care is taken.

The preservation and conservation of ancient monuments is of such concern in this day and age that many historic treasures the world over can no longer even be displayed in museums. And when dealing with the priceless, world-famous riches of Tutankhamun, these risks are greatly amplified. This is why our exhibition, instead of displaying a mere handful of the original treasures locked away at a distance behind glass barriers, lavishly creates the entire, magnificently coloured burial chamber of Tutankhamun with over 1,000 lovingly and painstakingly crafted replicas approved by renowned Egyptologists, ensuring that this precious world heritage remains intact for future generations.

This unique, vastly entertaining and educational exhibition is not designed to replace the presentation of the original artefacts, but to complement them by allowing visitors to experience the tomb and indescribable treasures of Tutankhamun just as they were, and to relive the magical moment of their discovery as if they had been there themselves. This is an unforgettable adventure for any visitor and one that leaves a lasting impression.

<http://www.kingtutbrussels.be>



## ► Jean Brusselmans

**Exhibition, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, 9 April - 4 September 2011**

From 9 April to 4 September, Jean Brusselmans is on exhibition at the Mu.ZEE in Ostend. This is the first solo exhibition for thirty years.



Jean Brusselmans, *The Storm*, 1938. Collection Mu.ZEE, Ostend. Photo: Steven Decroos. © SABAM 2011

Jean Brusselmans's earlier work is primarily known for its realism and its impressionism, and one never had to look too hard to see its fauvism either. Jean Brusselmans did not want to be labelled as an 'expressionist', and yet he shows affinities with the expressionists of his day. This expresses itself in the constructivism of the compressed shapes he portrays on the canvas as stylised or even geometric, and in the use of bright, vivid colours. Brusselmans's personal style was to speak strongly to many artists, including Roger Raveel, from 1945 onwards.

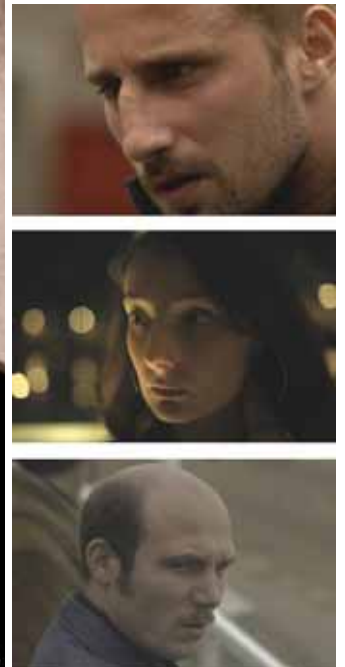
This exhibition is not a retrospective, but focuses primarily on the avant-garde years, more specifically the second half of the 1920s and the 1930s, with much attention paid to his drawings. From the 1930s onwards he truly developed his own style, and it is precisely the 1930-1940 period that the Mu.ZEE in Ostend is exhibiting. The chronology is played out with a few key works, the selection of which was inspired by the way in which Jean Brusselmans knew how to portray reality through painting.

<http://www.muzee.be>

## ► Belgian film 'Bullhead' wins prizes in France

At the 3rd edition of the International Thriller Film Festival (*Festival International du Film Policier*) in Beaune (France, 30 March - 3 April 2011), the Belgian film 'Bullhead' ('Rundskop' in the original Flemish version), directed by Michaël R. Roskam, has won two awards: the Jury Prize and the Critics' prize.

In Belgium, 'Bullhead' - which was released on 2 February - is already a box office success. The film's international career was launched through an international premiere at the 'Panorama' section of the Berlin International Film festival. At the end of May, Dutch audiences will be presented with this Belgian film. Meanwhile 'Bullhead' will be on view at the *Marché du Film* of the Cannes film festival.



In first feature, Michael R. Roskam tells the story of the young Limburg cattle farmer Jacky Vanmarsenille is approached by an unscrupulous veterinarian to make a shady deal with a notorious West-Flemish beef trader. But the assassination of a federal policeman, and an unexpected confrontation with a mysterious secret from Jacky's past, set in motion a chain of events with far reaching consequences. 'Bullhead' is an exciting tragedy about fate, lost innocence and friendship, about crime and punishment, but also about conflicting desires and the irreversibility of a man's destiny.

Starring Matthias Schoenaerts, Jeroen Perceval, Jeanne Dandoy, Barbara Sarafian, Tibo Vandenborre, Frank Lammers, Sam Louwyck, Erico Salamone and Philippe Grand'Henri.

<http://rundskop.be/>  
<http://www.beunefestivalpolicier.com/>

## Show by two Belgian choreographers wins two Olivier Awards in London

The 'Babel (words)' show by the Belgian choreographers Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet won two Laurence Olivier Awards in London on 13 March. The Olivier Awards, which were created in 1976, were awarding the best shows performed in 2010 on London stages. A total of 25 prizes were awarded for fields such as theatre, dance, musicals and opera. The show by Cherkaoui and Jalet, a production by Eastman vzw and the *Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie / De Koninklijke Muntchouwburg*, came top of the categories for Best New Dance and Outstanding Achievement in Dance (prize for the set design by the British artist Antony Gormley).

'Babel (words)' is the final piece in a triptych (following 'Foi' and 'Myth'). The show is about the tense relationship between people living side by side. The choreographers show how words can give rise to conflict by the fact that they are interpreted differently by different people. The concept of multiple identities is therefore central to the piece.

This is where 'Babel (words)' partly differs from other pieces such as 'Origine' and 'Sutra', in which reconciliation and peace are the central themes. It is also Cherkaoui's first show with his own dance company Eastman, which he founded at the start of 2010.

The British sculptor Antony Gormley designed the décor for 'Babel (words)'. Gormley had already worked with Cherkaoui in 'Zero Degrees' and 'Sutra'.

'Babel (words)' had its world premier in Brussels on 27 April 2010 and has been touring Europe since May 2010 (to end in May 2011).

<http://www.olivierawards.com>

<http://www.east-man.be>





Peter Piot

## ► **Belgian Peter Piot is member of President Obama's International Research Panel**

The Belgian Peter Piot was chosen to become a member of the International Research Panel that will consider the effectiveness of current U.S. rules and international standards for the protection of human subjects in scientific studies supported by the Federal U.S. Government in order to ensure that those rules protect people from harm or unethical treatment, domestically as well as internationally. The International Research Panel was created in direct response to a request from President Obama, who asked the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (Bioethics Commission) to report on this matter.

The International Research Panel includes experts on medical ethics, science and clinical research who bring wide experience from academia, government, and industry. The Panel members will be acting in their individual capacities and are not official representatives of their home nations. The members of this International Research Panel will offer a valuable global perspective.

Their diverse backgrounds, extensive experience and understanding of global research, and their commitment to the highest ethical standards will be critical to informing the Bioethics Commission's report to President Obama.

Doctor Peter Piot is Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is the former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and the founding Executive Director of UNAIDS. He is former Associate Director of the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS. Dr. Piot co-discovered the Ebola virus in 1976.

<http://www.bioethics.gov/>

## ► **Researchers at the University of Antwerp are the first to be able to separate intact carbon nanotubes from damaged tubes**

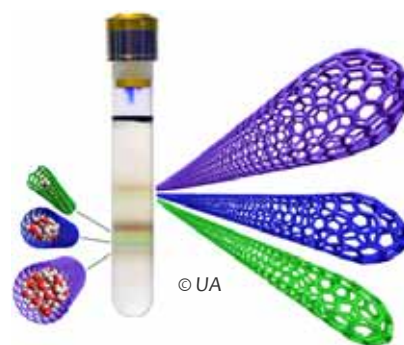
Carbon nanotubes have a diameter of just one nanometre, but are one of the strongest materials in the world. They are also one of the lightest. They are already being used in some bike frames and tennis rackets.

Researchers at the University of Antwerp, lead by Prof. Wim Wenseleers from the Physics Department, discovered back in 2007 that there were stronger and weaker types of nanotubes. Water can be added into some of the tubes, but not into others. The undamaged, empty examples are the strongest. In addition, they possess better electronic properties.

Prof. Wenseleers and researcher Sofie Cambré have now discovered how to separate the intact tubes from the damaged ones, using water-filled carbon nanotubes. This is done using density-gradient ultracentrifugation.

This discovery must be able to lead, in the long-term, to stronger materials and applications in fields such as nanoelectronics. An article on this research was published in *Angewandte Chemie*, a prestigious scientific journal, on 14 March.

<http://www.ua.ac.be/>



© UA

## ► **World's first ultra-low dose CT scanner introduced at Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel**

Computed tomography (CT) is a medical imaging method employing tomography created by computer processing. Generally used for screening for certain diseases, it generates a three-dimensional image of the inside of an object and provides far greater information than traditional radiography (from X rays). The *Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel* (University Hospital Brussels, *UZ Brussel*) has introduced the world's first ultra-low dose CT scanner. This new scanner is the first medical imaging device to combine sufficient image quality with very low amounts of radiation. *UZ Brussel's* Radiology Department, led by Professor Doctor Johan De Mey, conducted the research into low-dose CT imaging jointly with the manufacturer of the ultra-low dose CT scanner.

In the fairly recent past CT scan imaging was associated with radiation doses at the high end of the dose range used in Radiology. This was required to enable the accurate diagnosis of patients. More recently, thanks in part to technological advances, a trend has emerged towards achieving superior results with minimal amounts of ionising radiation. Only recently have computers become sufficiently powerful to process all the necessary patient data. The CT scanner achieves this by coupling a reconstruction module to the CT scanner, which is equivalent to the power of 256 parallel computers.

This innovation will mostly benefit patient groups such as children and young adults who need to undergo frequent CT scans (e.g. cystic fibrosis and cancer patients). Children and young adolescents are much more prone to abnormalities resulting from ionising radiation. The risk is 2 to 3 times higher and for some disorders even up to 10 times higher. This is why the ultra-low scanner will at first be used for children, young adults and pregnant women.

<http://www.uzbrussel.be>



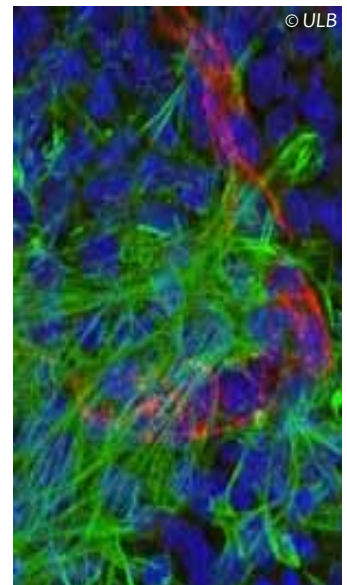
## ► Researchers from the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) isolate the earliest cardiovascular progenitors that arise during the differentiation of pluripotent stem cells

The heart is composed of different cell types including the contractile muscle cells and the vascular cells. During embryonic development all cardiac cells and certain blood vessels derive from primitive cells known as cardiovascular progenitors. Pluripotent stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) present the capacity to differentiate into *all* cell types of the body, including cardiac and vascular cells, which gives us hope that one day we will be able to use these cells to replace the dead or damaged cells in various diseases. The discovery of new methods allowing the purification of cardiovascular progenitors during embryonic stem cell differentiation is thus essential before these cells could be used in large scale to treat patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases or for drug discovery.

Researchers from the *Université libre de Bruxelles* (ULB), lead by Dr Cédric Blanpain (Faculty of Medicine), study the mechanisms that govern the specification of cardiovascular progenitors during pluripotent stem cell differentiation. In a new study published in *The Journal of Cell Biology* on 7 March 2011, the ULB researchers used genetically engineered embryonic stem cells that become fluorescent when the stem cells become cardiovascular progenitors. By isolating these fluorescent cells, they purify the cardiovascular progenitors and differentiate these cells into beating cardiac cells *in vitro* and *in vivo*.

Using whole genome analysis of these isolated fluorescent cardiovascular progenitors, the researchers identify novel markers expressed by these cells that allow their isolation without the need of any other genetic manipulations. This important finding will provide, to the scientific community as well as the pharmaceutical industry, a simple and robust method to isolate cardiovascular progenitors arising from the differentiation of pluripotent stem cells.

This work was supported by the Belgian *FNRS*, a career development award of the Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSPO), la *Fondation ULB*, a starting grant of the European Research Council (ERC) and the EMBO Young Investigator Program.



[http://www.dev.ulb.ac.be/db/revue/articles/08032011REF\\_701.pdf](http://www.dev.ulb.ac.be/db/revue/articles/08032011REF_701.pdf)

## ► Lemaître's Big Bang

Exhibition, Euro Space Center, Transinne, 2 July 2010 - 30 June 2011



Archives Georges Lemaître.  
Université catholique de Louvain

This exhibition 'Lemaître du Big Bang' is dedicated to the life and work of Georges Lemaître. Lemaître (1894-1966) was a Belgian Catholic priest, astronomer, cosmologist, mathematician and physicist. In 1927, he formulated a hypothesis about the expanding universe. In 1931, he expounded his theory of the Primeval Atom, the origin of the Universe, which later became known as the Big Bang. He postulated that the cosmic rays contain traces from the initial 'explosion'. Lemaître was a professor at the University of Leuven and a member and chairman, of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

The Lemaître main belt asteroid was named after him. There is also a crater on the Moon that bears his name.

After his death, Lemaître's role in the development of the new view of the Universe was disregarded for a long time. His name only began to resurface in the 1980s in scientific history, after which his pioneering work gained more and more recognition.

Cosmology has significantly changed since Lemaître established the fundamentals for it. The exhibition at the Euro Space Center shows how Lemaître gave the Universe a history and dispelled the ingrained perceptions that people had up until that time.

<http://www.eurospacecenter.be>

# Miscellaneous



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## ► **Belgian students are world champions in diplomacy for the third time in a row**

The Belgian student team took home their third gold medal in a row at the 20th edition of the World Model United Nations Conference, which was held in Singapore from 14 to 18 March 2011. There were 2,200 students from 270 universities in more than 65 countries participating in this official world championship in diplomacy. Debates and negotiations were held on major international events, according to the rules used by the UN, in an international setting with delegations coming from all around the world.

The Belgian team was made up of skilled members from various Belgian universities. There was a long and thorough preparation period preceding the Belgians' participation in this prestigious model UN conference. The Belgians took first place thanks to their reasoning talents, their dossier and language knowledge and the quality and structure of their arguments.

<http://www.worldmun.org>

<http://www.munsocietybelgium.org>

## ► **K.U. Leuven law students triumph at international moot court competition**

The Faculty of Law of the K.U. Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven) promotes student participation in international moot court competitions. Moot court competitions form part of the Master's examinations. Students are given the opportunity of gaining in-depth knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of legal proceedings and of seeing to what extent they hold their own with colleagues from all over the world.

In so doing, the Faculty of Law of the K.U. Leuven has built up a strong reputation at international moot court competitions. Also during the past few weeks, students obtained good results.

A team of final-year students from Leuven won the regional finals of the *European Law Moot Court Competition*, an annual competition on EU law, where students plead in both English and French. This year the competition concerned the possibility of EU Member States being allowed to impose all types of restrictions on television channels who broadcast inappropriate messages. The Leuven students will compete against three other teams for the world title before genuine Justice Court judges in the All-European final in Luxembourg.



Another Leuven team was the only Belgian team to win a place in the final round in the *Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition* in Washington. During this prestigious competition on international law students are confronted with a series of current legal problems, including the use of guided missiles against suspected terrorists and the prohibition of wearing the Islamic headscarf. The final-year Leuven students won all the prizes: best written pleadings, best pleader in the preliminary rounds, best pleader in the final and best overall team.

A team of first-year Leuven Master's students won the *Frits Kalshoven Competition on International Humanitarian Law*. As the only Belgian team, the students beat the more experienced teams from various universities from the Netherlands. The competition serves to prepare the students for the renowned *Concours Jean Pictet* on international humanitarian law.

The team of students from the Master of Laws and the Master after Master of Taxation won the final round in the *European Tax College Moot Court Competition*. In this competition, where students have to resolve various disputes on European and International tax law, teams from top European and American universities compete against one another. Besides winning the final round, the team also walked away with the following prizes: 'best pleading team' of the entire competition, prize for best individual pleader of the entire competition and the prize for 'best oral team' for claimants.

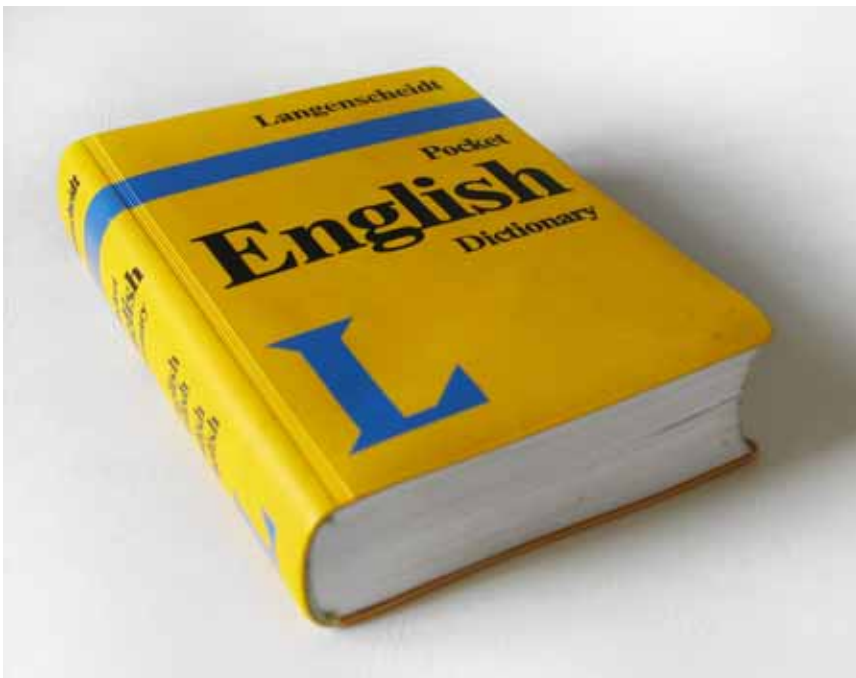
The Faculty of Law is not finished yet. A Leuven team is also participating in the *Elsa WTO Law Moot Court Competition* and the *European Tax College Moot Court Competition*. Moreover, the Faculty also organises a *Pre-Moot Court Competition* to prepare for the *Willem C. Vis Competition* on international trade law.

<http://www.kuleuven.be>

## ► **Belgium scores high on English proficiency index**

In a study published by *Education First*, a Finnish language training company, the *EF English Proficiency Index (EPI)* measures the average English proficiency of an entire country and compares English skill levels between countries. It is the first index of its kind to give countries a standardized measure of English competency in adults. The findings of the study are based on free online tests completed by more than two million adults around the world.

In this study Belgium comes second in the 'high proficiency' group. In effect, in Belgium English as a foreign language is taught at school and is frequently used in universities and it is also used generally throughout the Belgian business community, not only in the Brussels-Capital Region but also in other parts of the country. Multi-lingualism is the norm in Belgian workplaces and many Belgian employees communicate internationally on a daily basis.



The most common attitude in Belgium towards English is that it is a requirement in today's society. Belgium sees itself as a European crossroads and effective multi-national communication is highly valued.

English-language movies and TV are often subtitled rather than dubbed, although this is more common in Dutch-speaking regions than in French-speaking ones.

As in many countries, both French and Dutch speakers borrow English words to appear trendy, and English is common in advertising.

<http://www.ef.fi/epi/ef-epi-ranking/>

## ► Renovated old soap factory in Brussels wins award at MIPIM international real estate event

A Belgian project carried off a prestigious award at this year's MIPIM real estate event in Cannes, France (8-11 March 2011). The MIPIM Awards salute the finest projects in the real estate sector in 6 categories: 'Business Centres', 'Green Buildings', 'Hotels and Tourism Resorts', 'Refurbished Office Buildings', 'Residential Developments' and 'Futura Projects' (new in 2011). Some 100 real estate projects from 27 countries entered this exciting competition.

Belgium won the Award in the 'Residential Developments' category for the renovation of the old soap factory *Zeepziederij/Savonnerie Heymans* in Brussels. The project, designed by the Brussels based architects' firm *MDW ARCHITECTURE*, was commissioned by the city's Social Services Department (*OCMW Brussel/CPAS Bruxelles*). The Belgian project competed against the *Burj Khalifa* in Dubai (UAE) and *One Jackson Square*, a residential development project in New York City.



© Marc Detiffe

The *Zeepziederij/Savonnerie Heymans* complex is an excellent example of the integration of the principles of sustainable development within a creative contemporary architecture. This award recompenses also the visionary approach of the *OCMW/CPAS* in terms of social public housing typology and urban revitalization.

On the site of a former soap factory located in the centre of the Belgian capital, the social housing project designed by *MDW ARCHITECTURE* creates a real 'village' of 42 sustainable accommodations including studios, 1 to 6-bedroom apartments, lofts, duplexes and *maisonnettes*. Units feature bioclimatic loggias composed of foldable glass panels providing an effective acoustical and thermal barrier, but also a sense of privacy. All accommodations have very low energy consumption and the lofts are even passive.

The complex is composed of new, restored and transformed buildings and offers a variety of services and facilities: a room for social meetings and events, a public *Ludothèque* (game library) and extensive public space: the 'mini-forest' garden, the 3D landscaped park and playground and the main promenade.

In 2007 the *Zeepziederij/Savonnerie Heymans* was awarded the title of 'Exemplary Building' by the Brussels Institute for Environmental Management (IBGE). It won the 2010 Belgian Award for Energy and Environment and is nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award 2011.

<http://www.mipim.com/en/mipim/programme/awards/>  
<http://www.mdw-architecture.com/>

# Agenda

## 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.wallonie-tourisme.be/contenus/agenda__culturel/fr/181.html)  
[http://www.cfwb.be/index.php?id=portail\\_theme\\_culture](http://www.cfwb.be/index.php?id=portail_theme_culture)  
<http://www.visitflanders.com>  
<http://www.cultuurweb.be/CNETPortal/Home2.aspx>  
<http://www.opbrussel.be/>

### CURRENT EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

#### 'Illuminations' or the adventure of the book in Western culture

15 January - 29 May 2011  
Morlanwelz, Musée Royal de Mariemont  
<http://www.musee-mariemont.be>

#### Hungry Eyes

9 February - 5 June 2011  
Antwerp, Photo Museum  
<http://www.fotomuseum.be>

#### Joan Miró, the lyrical painter

24 March - 19 June 2011  
Brussels, Espace culturel ING / ING Cultuurcentrum  
<http://www.ing.be>

#### Andy Warhol and co ... w

28 January - 25 September 2011  
Stavelot Abbey  
<http://www.abbayedestavelot.be>

### UPCOMING EVENTS 2011

**Opening of the 'Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)'**  
Antwerp, 14 May 2011

**Queen Elizabeth International Music Competition - Voice and Composition**  
Brussels, May - June 2011

**Jeff Wall. The Crooked Path**  
Exhibition, Brussels, Bozar, 27 May - 11 September 2011

**Palazzo Rubens. The master as architect**  
Exhibition, Antwerp, Rubens House, 11 September - 11 December 2011

**Sagalassos, the city in the clouds**  
Exhibition, Tongeren, Gallo-Roman museum, starting 29 October 2011

**Hôtel Aubecq. Victor Horta**  
Exhibition, Brussels, Royal Museums for Fine Arts of Belgium, 1 July - 9 October 2011

**Belgacom Memorial Van Damme**  
Famous international athletics event (Diamond League), Brussels, 16 September 2011

### MUSIC

<http://www.festivals.be>  
<http://www.a-z.be/muziekfestivals.html>

### FAIRS

<http://www.beurskalender.be>  
[http://mineco.fgov.be/enterprises/fairs/home\\_nl.htm](http://mineco.fgov.be/enterprises/fairs/home_nl.htm)

### CONFERENCES

<http://www.conferencealerts.com/belgium.htm>  
<http://www.conference-service.com/conferences/be/index.html>  
<http://www.epsilonevents.com>

### FILM FESTIVALS

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

**Belgium Unlimited**

**FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation**



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