



Friends of Belgium - Newsletter

News from the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi on Belgian relations with Kenya, Somalia, Madagascar, the Seychelles, the Comores, Eritrea and UN institutions in Kenya.

A word from your Ambassador

Dear friends of Belgium,

A very exciting period has come to an end. Over the past months, the main focus of the work at the Embassy were the elections in Kenya. It provided the opportunity for the Embassy team to put our crisis plan to the test and we did our utmost to keep in touch with you and provide you with relevant real-time information. In the end, the whole process was fortunately mostly peaceful. Our focus now shifts to developing relations with the new government. The ambitious economic reform program of the new administration will undoubtedly create opportunities for more cooperation between our two countries. We should not forget that the ICC

chapter certainly remains a delicate element in these relations. But it should not completely overshadow our 50 year's old, rich relations with a country with so much potential as Kenya.

To celebrate this 50th anniversary of bilateral relations between Kenya and Belgium, the Embassy, sponsors and the Belgian government, are very proud that Jef Neve, a renowned Belgian jazz pianist and composer, accepted our invitation to come to Kenya. On September 12, he will perform a solo piano concert in Nairobi and on September 14 in Mombasa. We will of course keep you up to date on these concerts.

Let me also mention to you my attendance at the inauguration of the Kibera Health Centre on 16 May in the presence of the new Nairobi County Governor, Dr. Evans Kidero. The Centre treats over 350 patients per day, mainly for serious chronic illnesses such as HIV-Aids and tuberculosis. All this is done free of charge for the patients and managed by 'Médecins sans Frontières Belgium'. The quality of the infrastructure is great and medical treatment

free of charge for the inhabitants of Kibera is the only way to guarantee the effective treatment of these grave diseases. The Belgian taxpayers' support to MSF Belgium is well spent.

We have introduced a new feature in the newsletter: 'In focus'. The aim is to allow you to get to know the many Belgians who are active in Kenya and the five other countries covered by this Embassy. We start with a colleague, Mr. Lou Dierick, who is our Honorary Consul in Mombasa – let there be no misunderstanding: the word honorary means that he is available as a consul for the Belgian community at the coast without receiving any remuneration for his hard work. We are very grateful for his commitment and I look forward to introducing you to many other Belgians whom I have met since arriving here in Nairobi.

Bart Ouvry



Consular News

Biometric visa — As from 6 June 2013, the Embassies of all Schengen-countries in Eastern and Southern Africa are obliged to issue only biometric visa. This means that all visa applicants must submit their application in person to have their fin-

gerprints taken. Exceptions are only allowed for Heads of State and members of the Government. As the roll-out of this system was already implemented in this Embassy, little will change in practice.

Federal elections 2014 - The date of the next federal, European and regional elections will probably be 25 May 2014. As usual, Belgian citizens who are not registered in Europe can only cast their vote for the Federal Elections only.

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In pictures -



In April, a team of the Embassy visited Red Land Roses.



Not the Belgians but a team from Madagascar won the petanque tournament



PA to the Ambassador, Nadine De Smedt and Anette during the Francophonie market representing Belgium

Belgians registered in Kenya can therefore not vote for the regional or European elections.

The way to register for this election has changed. You will receive a registration form which is already filled out with your personal data. To complete the registration form, you will be asked to fill in your preferred way of voting. These include personally or by proxy in Belgium, personally or by proxy at the Embassy, or by postal ser-

vices. Please take into account that we do not recommend postal services.

The Belgian municipality in which you can cast your vote will be predetermined. The criteria on where to vote are based on the link with that municipality (e.g. last Belgian municipality of registration, place of birth, place of registration of parents).

In our next newsletters, the Embassy will inform you in more detail.

Diplomatic news

Elections in Kenya - Belgian Embassy staff member Koen De Smedt took part in the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) in Kenya as a Local Short Term Observer. Together with a EU colleague he was deployed to Nakuru County from 3 to 5 March. Our colleague observed the opening, the voting and counting during Election Day in North Nakuru and Laikipia and continuously presented his findings to the EU EOM during the day. He was impressed by the commitment of Kenyans to democratic principles, the huge turnout and the calm and peaceful atmosphere. The EU EOM stressed in its findings the willingness of all Kenyans to exercise their democratic right. Kenyans stood up for peace and for their rights on election day.

tial candidates, among others the current president of the Transition, who are not eligible to be a candidate were accepted by the Special Election Court. This triggered a strong reaction by the African Union, backed by the international community, stating these candidatures are illegal. Some voices in Madagascar are now pleading for a new postponement. The government is expected to take a decision soon.

Noordzee Helikopters - The Belgian financial-economic magazine Trends.be has promoted 'Noordzee Helikopters' (NHV) as leader in the list of Trends Gazelles, the fastest growing companies in Flanders and Brussels in the category of large enterprises.

NHV is based in Ostend, Belgium, and is specialised in leasing helicopters, pilots and technicians for among others, offshore operations, hospitals and medical transport. NHV is active in the gas and oil industry in the coastal region of Kenya.

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Business lunch - In March, the members of the Belgian business community and friends of Belgium enjoyed an interesting presentation by Aly-Khan Satchu at the business lunch at the Belgian residence on perspectives for the Kenyan economy after the elections. Economic indicators for Kenya are very encouraging. Its position at the heart of the East-African Community, tremendous progress in telecommunication and IT and prospects for oil and gas exploitation are only some of the positive as-

pects of the Kenyan economy. More investment in infrastructure - mainly roads - reliable electricity and a more efficient Mombasa port will soon open the gates for industrial investors in Kenya. African tigers are soon to follow the course of their Asian counterparts and Kenya may well be one of them.

Lunch for Belgians in international organisations - At the end of April, the Ambassador welcomed more than 30 Belgians who work for international organisations at the resi-

dence. This lunch provided an excellent networking opportunity for all guests present.

Abbas Gullet, Secretary-general of the Kenyan Red Cross was an inspiring guest of honour. Mr Gullet described how modern management methods allowed him to strengthen the ability of the Kenya Red Cross to act for the benefit of wananchi in Kenya. He also gave us a clear analysis of challenges for the new administration in the country.

Did you know...

Did you know that in Kenya every day more

smart phones

are sold than babies are born?

Belgian corner

European Film Festival -

The European Film Festival in Nairobi drew to its close on Sunday 26 May. Almost 4,000 people visited the festival and enjoyed one of the many European movies. We are grateful we saw so many people attending the Belgian movies 'Bullhead' and 'Au cul du loup!' We sincerely hope you enjoyed them. The Film Festival now moves to Mombasa (3-17 June) where you can watch 'Bullhead' on Tuesday 4 June @ 19h00 and 'Au cul du loup' on Friday 14 June @ 19h00

Jef Neve in Kenya -

The Embassy and our sponsor Brussels Airlines are very proud to announce that on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Kenyan - Belgian bilateral relations, the Embassy will organise two concerts in Nairobi and Mombasa of the renowned Belgian jazz pianist Jef Neve. He will perform two solo piano concerts in Safaricom's Michael Joseph Centre on September 12 and in Mombasa on September 14 2013. Check out Jef Neve's work on www.jefneve.com !

National Day -

On Wednesday, the Belgians in Kenya have received an invitation by the Embassy on behalf of Marc Van der Borght, general manager of the Windsor Golf Hotel and Country Club for a Belgian mid-summer Golf Tournament, accompanied by petanque and a kids corner on the Belgian National Day. A typical Belgian lunch will be served. Please contact Nairobi@diplobel.fed.be in case you did not receive the invitation.

Belgians pupils on a visit -

Ambassador Ouvry welcomed pupils of the Belgian School in Kigali and the Lycée Denis Diderot of Nairobi. They attended the East African Model United Nations in March and received their certificates from the sponsor of the event, Air France and the Belgian Ambassador. The Embassy hopes that many of those young people will now be tempted by a career as an international civil servant or as a diplomat.



The pupils had a photo opportunity at the residence



In focus - Lou Dierick, Honorary Consul in Mombasa

What brought you to Kenya?

In 1987, I was a budding legal advisor in the European Parliament and my wife Marleen Temmerman an obstetrician/gynaecologist. When my wife was asked by Peter Piot to come to Kenya and do a year of research on AIDS and pregnancy, it took us 24 hours to decide. We stayed in Nairobi for five years and I started doing consultancy work in IT and managing my wife's research projects. We returned to Belgium in 1992 where I continued managing the Kenyan site from Ghent University. I came back to Mombasa in 2004.

What does your work as an Honorary Consul entail?

The Consul at the Embassy deals with the citizens of both countries, Belgians who are in Kenya and Kenyans who want to travel to Belgium. An Honorary Consul is appointed in a place far away from the nearest Embassy. They are appointed in places where it is deemed necessary because of a combination of a concentration of Belgians living or

travelling there, Kenyans and Kenyan firms with links to Belgium and/or Belgian commercial interests. An honorary consul is not a diplomat, but typically stays in the same place for a longer time than diplomatic staff.

For the Belgians at the Coast, the Consulate is like the town hall: where you go to get your papers and certificates. When a Belgian has a problem with the law and ends in jail, consular assistance is offered to make sure that the case is handled correctly by the national authorities. When tourists are robbed, assistance is given so they can travel onwards, including a temporary passport and a phone call home. And when a Belgian deceases, the first contacts with home are made and the formalities and burial arrangements are handled. Also, maintaining a list of registered Belgians and 'frequent travellers' is important in case of emergencies. As an Honorary Consul, I can not assist the Kenyan citizens with their visas. As you know, all visa applications now have to be made in person



in Nairobi. Nevertheless, I still handle the legalisation of documents; occasionally have commercial contacts and meet with other members of the Mombasa Consular Corps. In short, the work is very varied and needs tactful human interaction, taking up little routine time but with bursts of urgent action.

How do you like living in Mombasa?

Visitors often envy us for the 'easy life at the beach'. Nevertheless, the reality of working in hot sweaty conditions in the public hospital is quite different from lying at the poolside sipping cocktails. But I would not call it a hardship post.

Do you have any advice for Belgians travelling to Kenya?

For those who can, enjoy your holiday to the fullest!

Friends of Belgium

Friends of Belgium is a three-monthly publication of the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi.

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The Trade Commissioner also publishes an Economic Newsletter on a regular basis. If you wish to subscribe, please send an email to nairobi@belemb.eu

News from the Embassy

Goodbye - In April 2013, the Embassy waved goodbye to Gudrun Praille who was responsible for logistics and accounting for more than one year. Gudrun moved back to South Africa where she is the head of administration at the Embassy in Pretoria. The Embassy team thanks Gudrun for her great work and wishes her all the best in her new position in Pretoria.

... and welcome - The Embassy welcomed Danelly Gonzalez-Viafara shortly after Gudrun's leaving. As a facility manager she started her job full of enthusiasm and energy. Danelly worked before as a consultant for e.g. the Red Cross in Kenya and is a mom of two kids.

Flanders Trainee Program - Do you know that for young Flemish citizens



there exists a subsidised internship program in international organisations like the UN? Check out our Facebookpage for more information.