



Friends of Belgium - Newsletter

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

A word from your Ambassador

Dear Friends of Belgium,

When looking at what happened these last three months I cannot help thinking that time has again passed extremely quickly. The European summer holidays are at our door and so much has

happened in our vibrant and active community during this quarter.

I am so pleased that the multiple events in March gave me the opportunity to meet so many of you. I had the occasion to travel to Madagascar to present my credentials to the President. I also paid my first official visit to the coast, in both Mombasa and Kwale counties. I had the immense pleasure to share a drink with our Belgians of the coast. March ended up beautifully with the fortnight of the Francophonie, with the apotheosis being without doubt the charity ball at the residence. Thank you to all participants for the fantastic atmosphere and great efforts in dressing up in seventies style.

in Garissa. His Majesty the King and the Belgian government sent their condolences to the Kenyan people. We were all shocked by these barbaric acts against innocent students.

I am currently writing to you from Eritrea where I attended the 24th anniversary of independence and went on a visit of projects in the countryside with the other European Union Ambassadors.

I wouldn't want to conclude this word without wishing all students a lot of success for their exams and great holidays to all those who have travel plans in the coming months.

Warm regards,

Roxane de Bilderling
Ambassador

The month of April started off very sadly with the horrible attack on students



Ambassador de Bilderling and Deputy President of Kenya William S. Ruto after their meeting the beginning of May

Consular News

Mission to Mombasa - On Friday May 15, consul Hilde Van Inthoudt and her colleagues of other European embassies in Nairobi met with European honorary consuls in Mombasa. This gathering offered consuls from Mombasa and Nairobi the opportunity to exchange experiences and knowhow on consular affairs.

The consuls of the European countries also offered their citizens consular assistance.

Update website - You might have noticed that the Embassy has updated its visa-section on the Embassy website a couple of weeks ago. The Embassy team has created two different pages on visa applications for Belgium,

i.e. one exclusively dedicated to Madagascar and one to Kenya. On these pages, seven questions are outlined and answered, providing you with a good overview of all aspects of a visa application for Belgium. You are welcome to send us your thoughts and comments about the website as we try to improve our product on a daily basis.



In pictures



The Belgian Embassy handed over its electrical waste to the WEEE Centre supported by Close The Gap



A view on some of the wind turbines of Ngong Hills installed by the Belgian company TPF Econoler



Group photo of EU consuls and honorary consuls in Mombasa

Diplomatic news

Credentials in Madagascar - Ambassador de Bilderling presented her credentials to the President of Madagascar Hery Rajaonarimampianina during a trip to 'la Grande Île' mid-April. Ambassador de Bilderling and the President repeated the wish for enhanced bilateral ties between our two countries and explored ways to increase economic cooperation. Ambassador de Bilderling also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar Beatrice Atallah. During this cordial meeting, the Ambassador and the Minister discussed many topics like the indirect Belgian development aid, e.g., via academic cooperation (ARES).

Diplomatic rotation - Counsellor Pieter Leenknecht and First Secretary Vincent Viaene will leave Nairobi this summer to take up a new challenge. Both colleagues have worked about four years at this Embassy. Mr Vincent Willekens, who will arrive from New York, will replace both colleagues and will take up his functions at the end of August.

Upcoming trade mission - Trade Commissioner Ivan Korsak is currently preparing an economic mission to Rwanda, Ethiopia and Kenya which will take place in November of this year. Commercial exchanges with these countries have been increasing and business opportunities lie in many segments. If you would like to find out more about this mission, please contact nairobi@belemb.eu

Visit to Mombasa - The end of March, Ambassador de Bilderling visited several projects at the Kenyan coast, more particular in Mombasa and Kwale county. Some of the highlights of her visit were a visit to the research vessel Mtafiti which was donated to Kenya over one year ago and a meeting with the Managing Director of the Kenyan Ports Authority Dr. Ndua to explore more cooperation between the Belgian ports and the Kenyan port of Mombasa. The Ambassador also visited the governor of Kwale to discuss the Belgian support in the water and governance sector. Other visits included the Coast General Hospital which has a long standing cooperation with Ghent University, the International Centre of Reproductive Health of compatriot Prof. Marleen Temmerman, Transparency International Kenya supported by our country and the Belgian run projects Annick For kids Kenya and Sunshine4kids in Ukunda. The Ambassador also had the pleasure to meet with a lot of Belgians living at the Kenyan coast.

UNEP bilateral consultation - UNEP, based in Nairobi, is one of the partner organisations of the Belgian development cooperation. On June 3, UNEP will meet in Brussels in the context of regularly held consultations on the bilateral relations and to hold a debate on the 'Green Economy'. Worldwide, about a quarter of the total burden of disease is caused by environmental hazards and as many as 13 million deaths can be

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prevented every year by making our environment healthier. Thus, health is central to achieving sustainable development. Investments in greening key sectors of the economy, and adopting related policies and strategies, can lead to a healthier population. The Belgian Development Cooperation is organizing a debate on this issue with UNEP's Executive Director Achim Steiner on June 3 in Brussels, Belgium. Info and registration (in Dutch): <http://bit.ly/1BbBFb1>

Belgian wind energy - On May 18, Ambassador de Bilderling and Trade Commissioner Ivan Korsak visited the wind turbine park on Ngong Hills. Fourteen of the turbines there were put in place by Belgian company TPF Econoler since 2007 in two phases, with concessional financing to Kenya through Belgium's FINEXPO mechanism. The project pioneered wind energy in Kenya, and the park was in fact the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. Resident Project Engineer of TPF Econoler, Zarko Petkovic, made the tour of the

site with the Embassy delegation after a briefing by KenGen, which exploits the wind park. Conditions on Ngong Hills are exceptionally favorable for generating wind energy, with yields that are up to a third higher than the European average. The electricity generated at Ngong serves the greater Nairobi area. The visit to Ngong Hills took place in the context of Econoler's pending application for concessional financing to realise a third phase with 5 more turbines.

Did you know...

Did you know that Nairobi will host the next

World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference

from December 15-18 2015?

This conference will gather many Ministers from around the world for trade talks and this for the first time on African soil.

Belgian corner

European Film Festival - The European Film Festival in Nairobi ends on Friday May 31. You still have the opportunity to go and see the Belgian melodrama 'Broken Circle Breakdown'. It will be screened for a second time on Friday May 29 at 5.30pm at the Alliance Française in Nairobi. The Film Festival in Asmara with the Belgian movie 'Allez, Eddy' has been postponed to June 5-10.

Francophonie- The 'Francophonie' fortnight in March was once again a big success. The Belgian 9th art had a central place in the first week of the festivities of the French-speaking countries in Kenya and the fortnight was concluded with a charity ball at the Belgian Residence.

Belgian Club - Until 2006, Nairobi had a "Belgian Club" that regularly organised fun activities and events that gathered the Belgian community (and friends), like a quiz night, a Belgian beer night, a sports day, a

mussels night, "Saint Nicholas" party for the children and even up-country trips. This, rather informal, Belgian Club was run by volunteers and received support from the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi. Proceeds of these events were used for charity. Would you like to put your shoulders under the set-up of a new Belgian Club? Please send an email, before 30 June 2015, to Nairobi@diplobel.fed.be with 'Belgian Club' in the subject line.

BVN streaming - BVN, the TV channel with the best of the Flemish VRT and the Dutch NOS is now also streaming online. You can thus see all their programs live on the internet via bvn.tv/bvnlive.

What's your news? - Do you have any news for us that you would like to share with the Belgian community in Kenya, Madagascar and the other countries in the region? Please send your story to us by sending an email to the Embassy.



The Francophonie ball attracted about 400 guests, most of them dressed up in seventies style



Students of the CEMS Master in International Management visited the Belgian residence during their study trip in Kenya



In focus - Maxime Lenssens

Maxime, you don't live in Kenya, but what made you visit this country?

I came to Kenya twice for professional reasons: in October 1998 for a concert with Zap Mama at the Carnivore restaurant and in February 2015 at the Safaricom international jazz festival, with the Nicolas Kummert 'Voices' band. This is my third visit.

What exactly did you do for Ghetto Classics last week?

I came to spend 8 days in Korogocho. I took this initiative after I got to know the project in February 2015. Every band that performed at the festival back then also did a workshop in Korogocho. I was impressed with the project and with the gratitude and energy we got from the children. The coordinator of the project mentioned to me how much they were thrilled, since they had never had a drum set teacher to spend time with them. This motivated me to come back to share my experience and also to gather equipment to upgrade the drum set. I very quickly found partners to fund flights (Flemish government) and accommodation (Safaricom) and also contacted music instrument companies to donate equipment. All those companies said yes, and the result is that I had 3 suit cases filled with equipment,



worth 3.000 USD. Every drummer in Kenya will be jealous about the drum set in Korogocho. Last week, I spent every afternoon there. The focus was on providing the children with basic techniques. Since they have never had a teacher for drums. We also exchanged ideas and I helped them to translate Kenyan rhythms (played on traditional drums) to the drum set. I plan to follow up by visiting again in 6 months if my schedule and the needed funding allow it. I have some ideas to extend the project with small(er) music ensembles, apart from the existing orchestras.

How do you like Kenya?

Kenya is a country with many known and unknown treasures. I have only seen little since I was so busy teaching and performing. The Kenyan people are warm hearted and welcoming. I've done quite some walking around this week, during mornings in the city center,

and I've always felt comfortable and welcome.

What I find impressive is the very high level of spoken English, both in places like Westlands and in the slums.

I do hope to find time during my next visit to discover more of Kenya's amazing nature and wildlife. I have only visited the national park in Nairobi, which was mind blowing.

My last evening last week brought a great surprise: the hotel I was staying in had a great jazz band with Kenyan musicians I had met back in February, so I played a couple of tunes with them. Great fun!

Do you have any advice for Belgians moving or travelling in Kenya?

Don't hesitate to interact with locals. That's how you discover the hidden gems and off the beaten track places to hear music, taste delicious food. And try the arrow root with spinach at breakfast.

Friends of Belgium

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Limuru Road, Muthaiga
P.O. Box 30 461— 00100
Nairobi
Kenya
Tel.: +254 (20) 712 20 11

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Twitter:

@BEinKenya

Website of the Embassy:

<http://diplomatie.belgium.be/kenya/>

Embassy of Belgium e-mail:

nairobi@diplobel.fed.be

Defence Attaché :

atd09@qet.be

Website for tourism in Belgium:

<http://www.365.be>

Foreign Investment Liaison in Brussels:

Colette.vanstraelen@economie.fgov.be

Trade Commissioner Ivan Korsak:

nairobi@belemb.eu

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please send an email to nairobi@diplobel.fed.be mentioning « unsubscribe ». All comments and suggestions are very welcome on the same address. Our ambition is to improve this product taking into account your needs and expectations.

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 addition to the two diplomatic colleagues, regional financial advisor Maaïke Ghyllbert and Mr Eric Diels of the Defence Office will leave in the coming months to other postings. They will both be replaced. We will welcome the new colleagues in our next newsletter.

Embassy closed — The Embassy will be closed on Monday June 1 (Madaraka Day). In addition, the Embassy will be closed on Friday July 17 (Idd el Fitr).

Social media - Follow us on our Facebook page and Twitter account @BEinKenya.