



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

A word from your Ambassador

Dear friends of Belgium,

All of us here in Nairobi have gone through a period with some tension and our patience was put to the proof. On 9 March, results were finally announced and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders was happy to congratulate the people of Kenya, who turned out peacefully and in large numbers for these important elections. The fact that the whole world has seen so many Kenyans waiting patiently to cast their votes has strengthened the image of the

country. I, for one, am confident that the economic and social development of Kenya will be boosted by these peaceful elections during the coming weeks and months. The commitment from the Belgian Embassy is to work closely with Kenyan authorities – including the new counties – and all Kenyan citizens to further enhance our relations and to contribute to new growth and prosperity for all in Kenya. The International Criminal Court case is of course an element in our relations but certainly our presence here can never be reduced to this delicate and important subject only.

cooperation we received. I was likewise very pleased with the constructive response of Belgians on our text messages, Facebook posts and special issues of this newsletter.

More good news comes from Somalia where for 20 years the catastrophic security situation did not allow normal diplomatic relations. I was very proud to be among the first ambassadors since a very long time that could go to Mogadishu in order to present credentials to President Sheikh Hassan Mohamoud – who by the way had visited Brussels to meet Minister Reynders only a fortnight earlier.



May I personally thank our Belgian sector contacts who helped us tremendously in preparing for any possible crisis situation in Kenya. An expert mission from Brussels came to Kenya to test our preparations and was generally impressed with the solid

With your help and a daily dose of enthusiasm we can build a great Embassy and more intense relations between East-Africa and Belgium. That is my commitment.

Bart Ouvry

Consular News

Kenyan elections and our sector contacts - During the election period, Belgians living in Kenya have received two special issues of our newsletter. The sector contacts played a key role in the preparation and monitoring of the Kenyan elections 2013. In

fact, they were, and still are, our 'boots on the ground'. One of their main tasks was the scrutinizing of your contact details, which enabled the Embassy to communicate more efficiently with you. The Embassy team would wholeheartedly like to

thank them for their work and commitment.

Although Election Day has passed generally peacefully, it is important to realize that a crisis can suddenly erupt due to various causes and on different

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scales, e.g., political crises, natural disasters, chemical disasters and traffic accidents. Consequently, our system of sector contacts remains operational and will be activated in times of crises.

Biometric passport - Since March 1, all Belgian passports delivered abroad contain biometric data. Please, be guided by the following principles. Belgians officially residing in Belgium and present on Belgian territory request their passports from the municipal administration of their place of residence.

Belgians officially residing or travelling abroad can apply for a passport at the Belgian Embassy or Consulate. Take into account that our Honorary Consulates, i.e., Mombasa, Antananarivo, Victoria and Asmara can not deliver this service.

This may cause some inconveniences as you will be asked to come to the Embassy to register your biometric data, i.e., fingerprints. Hence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed multiple solutions to limit the inconvenience for you as much as possible:

1. This Embassy has a mobile kit to travel to other countries in the jurisdiction. Our goal is to render this service in Madagascar and the Seychelles every 6 months, although our travel budget is limited;
2. If you are a resident abroad but travel to Belgium, you can request a new passport at the provincial administration;
3. If you live closer to another Belgian Embassy or Consulate or you travel to other countries, you can also apply for your passport there.

In pictures



Somalia



Seychelles



Virunga Park

Diplomatic news

Accreditation in Somalia - On Tuesday February 26, Ambassador Bart Ouvry presented his credentials in Villa Somalia, Mogadishu, to President Sheikh Hassan Mohamoud as non-resident Ambassador of Belgium to the Federal Republic of Somalia. He was joined by four other EU colleagues, Germany, France, Spain and Finland and the EU Envoy to Somalia Michele Cervone. With the exception of one short period no European Ambassador had been accredited to Somalia since the end of the Siad Barre regime in 1990. Diplomatic accreditation is the process in which an ambassador is certified as one country's official representative to another. Credential letters confirm that the ambassador is authorised to represent his or her country, and ask the host country to respect this fact.

High Level visit to Seychelles - In December 2012, General Van Caelenberge, the Belgian Chief of Defence, headed a high-

level delegation on a three day visit to the Seychelles. The main focus of his visit was to refocus the cooperation between Belgium and the Seychelles on the fight against piracy and related threats. Both countries signed an agreement to allow such cooperation and a Seychellois coast-guard boarded the Belgian frigate Louise-Marie for a month to learn how Belgium deals with anti-piracy. Meanwhile, on 5 February, the Belgian frigate ended its successful tour of duty.

Virunga Park - On Thursday January 10, the Chief Warden of the Virunga National Park Emmanuel de Merode, who is Belgian, was our guest of honour at a business lunch with guests from the Belgian and Kenyan business community. The Virunga Park has been maintained and developed in very difficult circumstances over the last 20 years and when peace comes back in the Kivus cooperation between the Kenyan tourist sector
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and the Virunga park seems very promising. The Kenyan Tourism Secretary Nelson Githinji and the Managing Director of the Kenya tourism Board Ndegwa Muriithi were present. Minister of State and President of the Belgian Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee François-Xavier de Donnée also attended – he is a staunch supporter of the Virunga National Park. The Ambassador of Congo to Kenya Tadumi On'Okoko attended as well. Emmanuel de Merodes presentation was extremely well received by all who attended. Click [here](#) for more information about the Virunga Park.

EU Election Observation

- Belgian Embassy Attaché 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 the Kenyans to democratic principles, the huge turnout and the calm and peaceful atmosphere. The European observers stressed the willingness of all Kenyans to exercise their democratic right. Kenyans stood up for peace and for their rights on Monday. Click [here](#) to read the EOM's findings.

UNEP - A nine heads strong Belgian delegation attended in the week of 18 February the first Governing Council of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) with universal membership. This means that all 193 UN members can participate

in the decision-making. This was one of the negotiated results of the Rio+20 Conference last June 2012, attended by Belgian Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP Pieter Leenknecht.

Belgian delegates were active throughout the week in negotiating decisions on issues such as international environmental governance, chemicals pollution and hazardous wastes, the state of the global environment, UNEP's budget spending and the "green economy". Ambassador Ouvry also participated in one of the ministerial round tables, and especially defended the importance of an even better integration of civil society and stakeholders groups in UNEP's future decision-making.

Did you know...

Women represent

23.5%

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs external career and the percentage is increasing?

Belgian corner

Christoffel Plantin Fund

- The [Christoffel Plantin Fund](#) is looking for a Belgian living abroad whose activities contribute to the image of Belgium abroad. This year the Christoffel Plantin Price will be awarded to a person active in the cultural sector. Deadline for applications is 15 June 2013.

Hope for Kabondo - Ambassador Ouvry, together with his family, visited the [Hope for Kabondo](#) orphanage in Nyanza. This initiative which entails much more than the orphanage, aims at reviving the whole village. Hope for Kabondo is supported by a large group of Belgians among which journalists Lieve Blancquaert and Annemie

Struyf. Very soon the Belgian television VRT will broadcast a new documentary on Kenya's social reality by Annemie Struyf.

Vzw Karibu Loita Hills

- In the Loita Hills, 150 km southwest of Nairobi, Ms Inge Perdieu founded a project '[Ilkujuka](#)' supporting the Masai people in the region by building schools and maintaining the water provision. Her remarkable story started in 2005 when she first visited Kenya and since then, Ms Perdieu has contributed a lot to the education of the local youth.

Semaine de la Francophonie

- From this Saturday 16 March to Sunday 24 March, the French-

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Ambassador Ouvry and his family visit Hope for Kabondo



During the Sinterklaas party, the ladies won this game of tug-of-war



speaking community in Kenya organises a "Semaine de la Francophonie". On the occasion of this week, the community organises a series of activities to celebrate the French language as well as bringing together the diversity of Francophone cultures that continue to enrich the language. Schools, universities and 'les Alliances françaises' are involved in different projects and activities, among others a photo concourse and on 24 March a 'petanque' tournament in the Windsor Hotel (registration is already completed). For more information, please write an email to Nairobi@diplobel.fed.be and mention 'Semaine de la Francophonie' in the subject line.

European Film Festival - Belgium will be participating with two movies in the European Film Festival in Kenya organised by the Alliance Française. This film festival will take place in Nairobi from 9 to 26

May, in Mombasa from 3 to 9 June, followed by Kisumu 14 to 16 June and Eldoret 21 to 23 June. Keep an eye on our Facebookpage to see which movies will be selected and when they will be shown in Nairobi and possibly other cities around the country.

Femmes Francophones Actives - Six months ago, four ladies in Nairobi decided to create « Femmes Actives de Nairobi » (FAN). FAN's objective is to meet once per month in Nairobi to have a "ladies only" drink, chat, share diner or organize any other activity. All their activities are organized after working hours as all of the FAN members are active.

So, if you are working or have your own business/project and you feel like "I need to get some time for myself, I need to have some fun and I need to share ideas with other ladies"... do not hesitate to join FAN!

More comfort on Nairobi flights with Brussels Airlines - Brussels Airlines recently unveiled a 30-million-euro makeover for its flights to Nairobi, which features flatbed seats in business class, more spacious seating in economy and the latest in-flight entertainment technology. You may take advantage of enticing fares to Brussels for tickets issued on or before 10 April for travel up to 25 June or from 10 September to 14 December 2013. Mail infoke@brusselsairlines.com or visit their [website](#).

Eén - You are living abroad and you feel like 2013 is going to be your year? Then you are the right person for a new television programme. Eén, the Flemish public TV-station, is looking for people living abroad who will have an extraordinary 2013. More information can be found [here](#).

Friends of Belgium

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

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

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Contact:

- Embassy of Belgium and consular services: nairobi@diplobel.fed.be
- Defence Attaché: atd09@qet.be
- Website of the Embassy: <http://diplomatie.belgium.be/kenya/>
- 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 a Economic Newsletter on a regular basis. If you wish to subscribe, please send an email to nairobi@belemb.eu

News from the Embassy

Diplomatic Spouses - The Diplomatic Spouses Association of Kenya organised a very successful fund raising party at the Belgian Residence. The party hosted by Ambassador Bart Ouvry and his wife Ms Carine Ouvry succeeded in raising over 2 million Kenyan Shilling, all of which is destined for social projects in Kenya. The dance party was very well attended and the more than 300 guests had a great time chatting and dancing to the music of the Kalabash orchestra. The Embassy and the DSA thank the generous sponsors and volunteers.

UNEP Fun Run - Three colleagues of the Embassy took part in the UNEP 7,5km FunRun in Nairobi. The organisation brought together more than 2500 runners, most of Kenya's renowned and upcoming athletes, UN staff members, the diplomatic community and the general public. The event was used to promote environmental conservation and celebrate UNEP's first session of GC/GMEF with universal membership.

Facebook - More updates can be found on our Facebook page. Click [here!](#)

Welcome - In December 2012, the Embassy welcomed Koen De Smedt as a new attaché to its team. Since then, Koen has been working on political affairs and the external communication of the Embassy. Before, Koen worked at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy as Political Attaché.

In focus - Discover our new feature 'In focus' in the next newsletter. In this section we will focus on a Belgian living in the jurisdiction.

