



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,

While July and August are holiday months in Europe, the Embassy team in Nairobi is looking back on a very productive period. Over the last months, we significantly strengthened the economic, political and scientific ties between Belgium and Kenya.

I was particularly happy to **welcome Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders to Kenya**. It was an excellent visit during which the Minister had high-level political contacts with an economic focus. The Minister signed two major financial contracts between Belgium and Kenya, i.e., an IT project connecting Kenyan counties and electricity infrastructure in Homa Bay, Kenya. In addition, we made

progress towards concluding an investment and double taxation agreement.

The visit by Minister Reynders will be followed up by a **Trade Mission** of about 70 Belgian companies visiting Kenya from November 6 to 9, 2013. In close collaboration with the Embassy team, Trade Commissioner Ivan Korsak is working hard to make this mission a resounding success. If you want to interact with any of these Belgian companies, please get in touch with him.

On August 31, the Kenyan research vessel '**Mtafiti**', a gift from the Flemish Government to Kenya, started its journey from the Port of Ostend in Belgium to Mombasa as its final destination. I visited the Mtafiti – Swahili for 'researcher' – when it was being upgraded at the Ostend shipyard and I can ensure you that the vessel will create a wide variety of opportunities for field

sampling and oceanographic observation programs in the West Indian Ocean.

Finally, I would like to stress one of the priorities of this Embassy, i.e., our provision of services to the Belgians and friends of Belgium abroad. Here, I refer to the consular news on the Belgian **federal elections** next year. New legislation has been approved and I am confident that we now have a much more practical and user-friendly system. Secondly, we are looking forward to a wonderful night with jazz pianist and composer **Jef Neve** who will perform his first shows in Africa next week. I hope to welcome you in the Michael Joseph Centre in Nairobi or Tamarind Mombasa. Follow us on Twitter or Facebook and do not hesitate to contact us for any enquiry.

Bart Ouvry



Minister Reynders was keynote speaker at Mindspeak

Consular News

Federal elections 2014 - Federal, regional and European elections in Belgium will probably be organized 25 May 2014. In our previous newsletter the Embassy team informed you that Belgians registered overseas are only allowed to vote for the

federal elections. To cast this vote, you will have several possibilities:

1. Personally in Belgium;
2. By proxy in Belgium;
3. Personally in the Embassy of registration;
4. By proxy in the Embassy of registration;
5. By letter;

The day of voting in the Embassy is planned for Wednesday 21 May 2014. The option by letter is discouraged by the Embassy as your letter might get lost or delayed.



In pictures -



Belgians celebrated the National Day at the Windsor Golf Club with golf, petanque and a good traditional Belgian meal.



Networking event on July 3 at the Belgian Residence with 'Close the Gap' and 'Worldloop' partners in Kenya



The Ambassador hosted a business lunch attended by Belgian and Kenyan businessmen and - women and Minister Reynders as guest of honour

To choose your preferred way of voting, **all Belgian citizens who are officially registered at this Embassy and are at least 18 years old are invited to collect a personalized envelope at the Embassy or their respective Honorary Consulate.** This envelope contains a registration form, information about the Belgian municipality of registration (which is already allocated based on previous registration of the person or next of kin) and further details. You can give a written proxy to a person of your choice to collect this. The envelopes which are not collected by the beginning of November will be sent to your postal address, but the Embassy will not be responsible if this letter gets lost. You can contact the consular services to propose a feasible alternative for you by sending an email to nairobi@diplobel.fed.be.

The registration form must be returned to the Embas-

Diplomatic news

Concessional loans - On the occasion of the visit of Minister Reynders, Belgium and Kenya signed concessional loans for a total value of 27 million Euros. The ceremony took place at the National Treasury, with Principal Secretary Dr Kamau Thugge signing for Kenya on the one hand, Minister Reynders and representatives from KBC bank on the other hand. These loans will finance two projects in the framework of Vision 2030 aiming to lift Kenya to the level of a middle-income country over the next decades. The first project by Belgian firm CG

sy by January 31, 2014 at the latest to enable you to cast your vote. More information can be found on our website.

We cordially invite the Belgian expat community to cast their votes!

JKIA fire update - The fire of 7 August that destroyed the international arrival zone at the international airport of Nairobi, was a matter of great attention for this Embassy. Operations have resumed at the airport with both domestic and International departure and arrival functions running.

Passengers and airport users are reminded that domestic departures and arrivals are at KQ Cargo Building at JKIA Cargo Area. For international departures, KQ is operating from Unit 2 and other airlines are operating from Unit 3. Contact your airline in case of any further questions.

Holdings, financed by a concessional loan of ca. 16,5 million Euros, will allow the electrification of the Homa Bay area on Lake Victoria in Western Kenya, benefiting both public facilities and private users.

The second project by Belgian firm SOULCO, financed through with a concessional loan of ca. 10,5 million Euros, consists in the creation of a secure IT network for electronic and other communication between the central government and the counties, a matter of growing importance under the new conces-

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titutional dispensation of devolution.

PS Thugge applauded Belgium's many contributions to Kenya's development in the sectors of infrastructure, governance, education and capacity building more generally. Minister Reynders, for his part, vowed to continue and extend these efforts to other sectors. He recalled that Belgium is Kenya's 11th trading partner and with projects (to be) funded for a total of 180 million Euros its 5th partner for concessional loans. He also announced the resumption or finalization of investment and double taxation treaties.

Minister visits Belgian projects

- During his stay, Minister Reynders visited projects realized by SOULCO and CG Holdings in Kenya. The first was the Network Control Centre (NCC) created by SOULCO in the Treasury Building. In fact, the visit of Minister Reynders provided the occasion for the inauguration of the Centre, consisting of a complex of computer terminals and video conference facilities. More than half of the counties have already been connected to the network, and the remainder will follow as a result of phase two of the project signed. Later, the use of the network will

be extended from communication between different branches of government to different forms of service provision to citizens, like civil registration or tax-on-web. Minister Reynders was given the opportunity to chat with County Commissioners from several counties across the country. Subsequently, Minister Reynders proceeded with a helicopter tour of the electrification facilities installed by CG Holdings in Central Kenya - power stations and transmission lines in the Thika-Githambo area, which have substantially improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens.

Did you know...

Did you know that cyclist and Tour de France winner

Chris Froome

learned his profession in Kenya? The Embassy met David Kinjah from Safari Simbaz, the training club of Chris.

Belgian corner

Jef Neve in Kenya - The Embassy is very proud to announce two concerts of the young Belgian pianist and composer Jef Neve in Kenya. For the ones who might not know Jef Neve, we can say that he has become a prominent figure in Belgium and his reputation is rapidly spreading to the rest of the world. This year, Jef Neve tours solo in Asia and Latin America, among others China, Thailand, Japan and Brazil. Jef Neve combines exceptional musical talent with fine-tuned interaction. His visible joy in performing is highly contagious. Each concert turns into a special and heartwarming experience.

Therefore, we hope to welcome you at one of our concerts, organised with the support of the Embassy of Belgium and sponsors Brussels Airlines, Kenfreight and Safaricom. Check out the two e-shots in attachment of this newsletter and we hope to welcome you. Don't miss out!

National Rugby Team

- The Belgian National Rugby team 7s will participate in the prestigious international tournament Safaricom Sevens in Moi Sports Centre, Kasarani from 20 to 22 September. Rugby 7s is a variant of rugby union in which teams are made up of 7 players, instead of the usual 15, with shorter matches. Rugby 7s is now recognised as an Olympic sport and will make its debut in the 2016 Summer Olympics. Last year, Belgium accomplished the ascent to the Grand Prix Series. The invitation to play in Nairobi is a direct result of this. Tickets are available at all Safaricom outlets. It is your chance to see the rising stars of Belgian rugby. 7s.safaricom.co.ke

Food.be - Belgian cuisine is highly praised and renowned for its quality and taste. Apart from its delicious chocolate, the Belgian fries and the variety of its local beers, Belgium has a lot more to offer. Small country, great food!



Soon Jef Neve will play his first concerts in Africa

Brussels Airlines - Brussels Airlines will start flying to Brussels on Tuesday and Thursday from October 27 onwards. This move to Tuesday and Thursday, enables Brussels Airlines to offer a full-week coverage together with flights via Zurich.

National Day - The National Day celebrations at the Windsor Golf Club and Hotel were a huge success. Belgian fries, stewed meat and Belgian beers during a golf and petanque tournament brought some of Belgium's best to Nairobi.



In focus - Paul Lambert, Rosavie

What brought you to Kenya?

It all started more than 20 years ago with my flower company in Belgium. We conducted research on a new technique in which you could preserve flowers instead of drying them. This research was largely successful due to the co-operation of a Belgian university and two Flemish engineers. To protect our research we filed for a license, but this could not stop the fact that within a year we were being copied by companies in Colombia and Ecuador. In order to compete with these companies we had to improve the quality of our license and reduce our production costs. That is why we decided to come to Kenya about 16 years ago.

Can you tell us more about your professional activities?

My company – Rosavie – is a manufacturer of preserved flowers. It's the first of its kind to preserve flowers rather than to dry them. The difference with drying flowers is that we immerse our flowers in a chemical substance. Due to this chemical bath, our flowers look like fresh flowers for a very long time. In addition, they also

keep the same form and flexibility as fresh flowers. To prevent our flowers from losing their tint, we add some extra colour to the flowers. Of course, to be successful in our industry you need the perfect climate to grow the flowers. Due to its location on the equator and its high altitude, Kenya and the region around Nairobi are perfectly suited for growing flowers. That was also one of the reasons we came to Kenya to continue our business in the flower industry.

Did you see Nairobi change during your time here?

Nairobi has its ups and downs, as most emerging big cities in the world. The positive aspects of living here are of course the exceptional climate and the quality of life that is steadily improving. The negative aspect is that like most places in Africa, for most people life is still a struggle. This struggle is reflected in many ways. For example, I have the feeling that in the last two years corruption has increased again. Also the judiciary is still lacking the necessary efficiency and doesn't function that well. We shouldn't be too nega-



tive though as the last couple of years have marked some clear progress. Kenya has the potential to become one of the most prosperous countries in Africa with beautiful beaches, wildlife, an exceptional climate and minerals. We can only hope that the country will stay on the right track.

Do you have any advice for Belgians who want to live in Kenya?

I certainly recommend it to people, since you can find everything you need here to build a great life. Of course there are some security issues, but if you pay attention and respect certain guidelines you will be fine. It is a fantastic country and people should definitely not miss out on the opportunity to visit Kenya one day.

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:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Embassy-of-Belgium-in-Nairobi/460174370660062?ref=hl>
- 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

Ambassador on Twitter

- Are you on Twitter? Do you know anything about tweets or hashtags? Then, follow the Ambassador on this social media platform via @BartOuvry

Welcome - The Embassy team welcomes Col. Herwig Holsteyns. Col. Holsteyns replaces Col. Frederik



rik Derolez as the new military attaché. Herwig Holsteyns, from Hasselt, was previously attached to the Royal Military Academy in Brussels where he was

Director for Education of aspirant officers. Col. Holsteyns will be accredited to Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. We extend a warm welcome and wish Col. Derolez all the best in Tunis!

Embassy closed - The Embassy will be closed on Friday November 1.