Dear Friends of Belgium,

Another term has gone by, with so many interesting activities and wonderful moments. I hope that you all enjoyed the New Year's break and that 2016 started off dynamically and positively for you. As you will read in this newsletter it was certainly not a lazy period for the Belgian community either!

The Belgian week mid-February was one of the highlights of our public events. For those who missed it, this year, we did not only bring the fantastic jazz group Jef Neve Trio, but we decided to make it a real Belgian week, with excellent cooking by Olivier Bruckner (l'Olivier, Na-
mur) at Nairobi Serena Hotel and succulent chocolate workshops with the passionate and talented chocolatier Laurent Gerbaud, from Brussels. You will see a few pictures in this newsletter, but don't hesitate to visit our Facebook page where we published many more great moments of this memorable week.

The Belgian Club has kept on organizing its own activities, with e.g. the popular Monthly Drink. Several members of our community have already offered to host this friendly and informal event. Don't hesitate to write to BelgianclubKenya@gmail.com if you wish to host the event, if you would like to suggest any activity or be a member of the Committee. Keep an eye on your e-mails to be informed of the activities to come!

What's next? March is always the month of the Francophonie. Many activities will be taking place in Nairobi and other Kenyan cities: pétanque, spelling contest, fun day at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies and of course, the famous ball! Contact Nadine if you wish to have more information about these events. We will also be travelling in the jurisdiction in the coming weeks: I'll be going to Madagascar (March 15-20), Vincent Willekens to the Seychelles (June 1-5) and Hilde Van Inthoudt to Mombasa (June 20). These are all occasions to meet our community members who do not reside in Nairobi. Please do not hesitate to signal us if you need anything from us and note that we will be able to register your biometric data if you need a new passport in the months to come.

Hoping to get the opportunity to see you very soon, I wish you all the best.

Warm regards,
Roxane de Bilderling
Ambassador
Diplomatic news

Diplomatic days – Ambassador Roxane de Bilderling joined all Belgian Ambassadors, Consuls-Generals and Permanent Representatives to international institutions late January in Brussels to discuss the challenges of the Belgian diplomacy. At the opening of the Diplomatic Contact Days, the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade put the emphasis on economic diplomacy as well as on the role of Belgium in addressing humanitarian and political challenges, and in the fight against impunity, death penalty, and violence against women and children. In particular, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Reynders, discussed the issues facing Belgian diplomacy in his opening address. The main points he raised referred to the fight against terrorism at home and abroad, the stability of the European neighbourhood, the migration crisis and the possibility of Brexit and its ramifications.

Focus on Belgium – The Diplomatic Contact Days also served as a launchpad for a new website called “Focus on Belgium”, which is intended to become the

Consular news

Consular services – Kindly note that payments in cash for consular services are no longer accepted by the Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi. Belgians are requested to pay the consular services beforehand and come to the Embassy with the proof of payment. The list of consular costs and our bank details are to be found on our website. Please take into account that this does not apply to the honorary consulates. The consulate in Antananarivo only accepts cash (€).

Madagascar – Ambassadeur Roxane de Bilderling sera en mission à Madagascar ce mois-ci. La valise biométrique sera disponible du mercredi 16 mars au vendredi 18 mars 2016 au consulat honoraire. Les ressortissants belges qui souhaitent introduire une demande de passeport ou dont passeport échoit dans les six mois à venir sont invités à prendre rendez-vous par email à consulatbelgiquemada@yahoo.com.

Seychelles – First Secretary Mr Vincent Willekens will attend the EU-Seychelles political dialogue between May 31 and June 5. The biometric kit will be available at the honorary consulate. Do you live in the Seychelles and need to renew your passport? Please contact the honorary consulate to book your appointment via belgium consul@seychelles.net.

Temporary passport - Since March 1 2016, temporary passports with a validity of one month can be issued in an emergency case. The cost of this passport is 10 EUR. Temporary passports with a validity of two months up to one year still cost 50 EUR.

Mombasa – Consul Hilde Van Inthoudt will travel to Mombasa on June 20 with her European colleagues and will provide consular services to Belgians. Belgian citizens living in the region will be informed in more detail later.

In pictures

On the occasion of the Belgian Week, Ambassador de Bilderling organised a business lunch about the hospitality and food sector.

Belgian Ambassadors were received at the Royal Palace of Brussels on the occasion of the diplomatic days.

#BelgianWeek in Nairobi: Chef Olivier Bruckner and chocolatier Laurent Gerbaud.
main tool at the MFA’s disposal to promote Belgium throughout the world. The website’s purpose is to showcase “people, stories, facts and figures” about Belgium. The website therefore offers a range of articles dealing with Belgian achievements in lifestyle, science, culture, international news and business. Beyond that, the website presents an array of tips and recommendations on trading, investing, studying and visiting Belgium. This content is complemented by official facts and figures that may come in handy for those desirous to learn more about Belgium before travelling or doing business in our country. “Focus on Belgium” is thus your gateway to (re)discover everything there is to know about Belgium and its people in a convenient and entertaining manner. Visit the site on http://focusonbelgium.be/

Belgian Week - For the first time, the Belgian Embassy in Nairobi organised a Belgian week from February 17 to February 21 by bringing the best of Belgium to Nairobi: exquisite chocolates, fine cuisine and smooth jazz. The week was a huge success with most of the events fully booked. The Belgian week was an excellent opportunity to confirm Belgium’s status as a top culinary country, using the slogan “Food.be - Small country. Great food.”.

Film Festivals - The Embassy of Belgium is currently investigating participation at several European Film Festivals in Kenya (May 12– June 11), Eritrea (June) and Madagascar (May 6-16). The Embassy will keep you up to date.

Belgian Club - The Belgian club in Kenya is up and running. On behalf of the Belgian Club committee, the Embassy distributes a monthly calendar of activities. Would you like to propose an idea for an activity to the Belgian Club or would you like to become a member of the committee? Do not hesitate and write an e-mail to belgianclubkenya@gmail.com

Sinterklaas - Saint Nicolas at the Belgian Residence on December 6

Jef Neve Trio at the Safaricom International Jazz Festival 2016
In focus - Bruno Pozzi, European Delegation to Kenya

What brought you to Kenya Mr Pozzi?
I arrived in Nairobi towards the end of August 2015 with my wife Catherine and my two sons, Marco and Basile. I started as Deputy Head of Mission at the European Delegation in Kenya on September 1. As a Belgian Diplomat, I am seconded by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the European External Action Service (EEAS) since 2011. The EEAS, under the leadership of Federica Mogherini, can best be described as the European Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As such, it gathers diplomats from all Member States and European civil servants. Before coming to Kenya, I worked for Belgian embassies in Japan, China and South Africa. For the European Union, I worked as Political Counsellor to the EU Delegation in Ivory Coast. This experience was truly exceptional from a diplomatic point of view as the country was recovering from a long political crisis, and the EU was one of the leading political driving forces supporting the country.

What does your work at the European Delegation to Kenya entail?
The EU Delegation in Kenya is said to be one of the largest in Africa, if not one of the largest in the world. As Deputy Head of Mission, I work in close relationship with the Head of Mission on all files, while overseeing the daily management of the Delegation as a whole. The “European Family” in Kenya is large and diverse and the coordination of our activities is a true challenge. Indeed, the European Union displays a wide array of initiatives in Kenya, ranging from cultural to humanitarian projects. And there are also 20 Member States represented here in Nairobi. In my action, I try to bring my experience as a Belgian diplomat to the table in my daily dealings, an experience tainted by pragmatism, which I am sure is an accurate reflection of Belgian diplomacy as a whole. Political work in Belgium demands a great deal of coordination between various entities, which is undoubtedly the best diplomatic training to embark on a career in the European Union.

How do you like living in Kenya?
The moving went well and the whole family adapted very quickly to life in Nairobi and Kenya. It is a real pleasure to discover this part of the African continent after our stays in South and West Africa. Africa is very dear to our hearts. For us Europeans, Africa is our closest neighbor and we share so many things that our destinies are very much interlinked. In Nairobi, we also found a very active Belgian community, helped by Ambassador de Bilderling and her husband (with whom we were already posted in South Africa; the paths of the “Belgians of Africa” always cross!)

Do you have any advice for countrymen moving to Kenya?
Just come! It is an advice I give to all countrymen and women who ask me about life in Africa. Do not hesitate to come, be positive and curious, forget about those clichés. Kenya is an open and dynamic country and even if paper work could sometimes appear to be a national sport, the country abounds of opportunities. And nothing beats a sunset in the Mara to convince the most sceptic.

News from the Embassy

Karibu Alexandre – The new Embassy trainee Alexandre Gianasso arrived at the beginning of this month for a three-month internship in Nairobi. Prior to coming to Kenya, Alexandre completed an internship at the Embassy of Belgium in Kiev where he monitored the unfolding political crisis in Ukraine. Alexandre studied politics at the University of Glasgow and specialised in international trade, politics of development and security policy.

Social media news – A big shout out to all who have liked us on Facebook. We have now reached over 1.250 likes! Let’s try to keep on growing, you can find us on Facebook under “Embassy of Belgium in Nairobi”. We are also active on Twitter, so follow us there as well: @BEinKenya.

Embassy closed – The Embassy will be closed on Friday March 25, Monday March 28 and Monday May 2.