



Belgian Events - October 2016

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

This autumn issue of 2016 contains news on topics varying from Belgium in the UN, education, sports, the latest events at the Ambassador's Residence and World War Remembrance services. You may also enjoy reading the usual 'faits divers' section under 'Did you know?' and an interview with two Belgian architects based in London. As always, the cultural calendar lists upcoming Belgian events in the UK.

Do get in touch if you have any news or suggestions you would like to share with us via belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be. New subscribers can provide their details via the [Embassy's website](#).

Belgium and the United Nations

Last month, in the margins of the opening of the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders held a ministerial event dedicated to the **fight against impunity of mass atrocities** committed by **Daesh** in the Middle East. A dozen ministers and senior officials from around the world came together to discuss the options for the prosecution of the crimes of Daesh.

The Minister opened the session by emphasising the gravity of these crimes that affect regions and countries throughout the world, including Belgium. According to Reynders there is little doubt that in Syria and Iraq crimes have been committed that can be qualified as war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly even as genocide.

The minister intends to keep the topic high on the international agenda. The various options for a trial and the actions to be taken will be reviewed in close cooperation with the parties concerned so that justice for the victims can be done effectively.

Meanwhile back in July, in the presence of HM Queen Mathilde, Minister Reynders launched the [Belgian campaign for a seat at the UN Security Council](#) for the 2019-2020 period in New York. The election will be held in June 2018. A non-permanent **seat on the United Nations Security Council** will allow Belgium for two years, to play a central role in the UN decisions on peace and security.



Education

Belgium's Education System highly rated

According to the annual education report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), **Belgium** has the **third best education system** amongst the 35 OECD countries. Thanks to outstanding teachers and a flexible education system, our country has scored considerably better than the world average. To read the OECD's assessment of Belgium, click here ['Education at a Glance'](#).

Innovative KUL

The **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven** has been elected the **most innovative university** in Europe when it comes to science and technology. According to the [Reuters ranking](#), many British universities, including Imperial College London in second place and Cambridge University in third, are also innovative institutions.

This ranking, linking both the academic and the business worlds, focuses on the impact individual universities have on the global economy. It celebrates the technical and practical application of research carried out at the university and solutions this may offer in the real world. However, innovation is hard to measure. In order to establish an objective ranking of about 200 universities, the Reuters ranking is based on ten specific criteria among which the number of academic articles written within five years. Other criteria include how often a university's patent application was granted, how many patents were filed with global patent offices and local authorities and how often the university's patents were cited by others. Universities were also evaluated in terms of how often their research papers were cited by patents and the percentage of articles that featured a co-author from industry" (Reuters, "Methodology: Ranking the World's Most Innovative Universities").

Thanks to its influence, innovation and numerous patents, KUL stands out. There are plenty of examples of KUL researchers putting theory into practice by developing products and plans based on their own research results, which makes it a highly reputable university in the fields of technology and science.



© kuleuven

Antwerp's Fashion Academy ranks 4th in the world

Both the Bachelor's degree and Master's degree offered by the **Fashion department in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp** (KASKA) rank 4th in the [Global Fashion School Rankings 2016](#) run by the leading British fashion platform The Business of Fashion. The 1st place is held by Central Saint Martins in London.

"Since the international success of the so-called Antwerp Six, who studied at the Fashion department in the late seventies, further generations have continued to confirm the school's strong vision," states Walter Van Beirendonck, who runs the fashion department as well as being one of the Antwerp Six. "This vision focuses on creativity and individual designer statements. A new generation of fashion designers has emerged in Antwerp today – Demna Gvesalia, Glenn Martens... - showing that fashion can be exciting, individual, adventurous and rebellious." [Read more](#)



©Royal Academy of Fine Arts – Fashion Dept

Did you know...?

Belgium moves up in the WEF Ranking

Over the last five years, Belgium has gained two positions in the [World Economic Forum's Competitiveness Ranking](#) which is defined by the WEF as "the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country". Among 138 countries, Belgium is now ranked 17th globally and occupies 9th place in the European ranking.

Healthcare, teaching, training and technological development appear to be Belgium's strengths, whereas fiscal policy and employment legislation still need improving. At the top of the ranking, Switzerland seems to be the ultimate model. The Netherlands is ranked in fourth place ahead of Germany while the United Kingdom is ranked 7.



© World Economic Forum

Sheep drive across London Bridge

If you were left wondering why a herd of sheep crossed London Bridge on the first Sunday of October, you are certainly not alone. The annual [London Sheep Drive](#) sees the City of London's Freemen exercise their right to drive sheep over London Bridge. The crossing tradition dates back to the 12th century when sheep farmers drove their herds across London Bridge into the City to

sell them at market. Freeman of the City, labelled as such because they worked for themselves rather than anyone else under the feudal system, were excused the bridge toll that was a required payment from those outside the City. The driving of sheep to the City markets stopped many years ago but the ceremony was recently re-introduced.

This year, around 600 Freeman dressed up in typical sheep-related costumes, participated to raise funds in aid of the Lord Mayor's Appeal and the Woolmen's Charitable Trust. Ambassador Trouveroy, a Freeman himself, his wife and family took part in the unique tradition. The Freeman received a certificate signed by the Lord Mayor as a confirmation that they used their unique rights. This year's Sheep Drive was led by the British former Formula One Champion Nigel Mansell.



Ambassador Trouveroy and his wife Nathalie

Belgian beers make the headlines

Over 1500 beers from more than 35 countries were blind tasted in Britain over three rounds by an international jury before voting on this year's **World's Best Beers**. The final round was held in London, where 50 international brewers, industry experts and journalists tasted and announced the 2016 Country Winners.



Four Belgian beers came top in the eight main categories. Rodenbach Caractère Rouge won the Flavoured Beer category, while Affligem blonde won its Pale Beer division. Oude Geuze Oud Beersel won the Sour Beer category, and Grisette blonde sans gluten bio, from the Saint-Feuillien brewery, won the Speciality Beer award.

For the full World Beer Awards results, go to www.worldbeerawards.com/2016/ and to www.worldbeerawards.com/2016/europe/belgium.html for the awarded Belgian beers.

Meanwhile, in **Bruges**, a long-awaited “**beer pipeline**” opened last month, carrying local beers from the centuries-old brewery *De Halve Maan* in the centre of the city direct to the bottler three kilometres away, without the need for road transport.

When sixth-generation brewmaster Xavier Vanneste started planning the alternative way of pumping his brew underground most people had doubts, including his family, engineers and the Bruges mayor Renaat Landuyt. However, the 26-year-old knew that with the rapidly growing demand for his beer, it was only a matter of time before the authorities would put a limit on the number of tankers allowed to squeeze down the Unesco-protected narrow cobblestone streets to collect the beer. Vanneste was determined and launched a crowdfunding effort so residents could sponsor the pipeline, raising €340,000 of the €4 million price tag. Top investors can stop by *De Halve Maan* to receive a daily beer for life. The mayor hopes other industries will adopt the idea to help rid his city of more heavy trucks. “It’s an invitation to the world to get creative,” he said. “We invite people to come forward with further creative ideas to improve Bruges.”



Belgian men are among the tallest in the world

According to a survey commissioned by **eLife** and conducted at **Imperial College London**, Belgian men are among the tallest in the world. They are only preceded by Dutch men, whose average height surpassed 182.5cm. Scientists used records from 1914 to compare the data from 200 different countries and 18.6 million individuals, in order to ascertain changes in height over the last century. The average height was taken from samples at age 18, since this is when most people stop growing. According to Professor Majid Ezzati from Imperial College, average height is a key indication of general health and health care, food and environment. Height is directly linked to quality of life; taller people tend to live longer and have better overall health. However, we need to consider the important role played by genetics as well. Men from Estonia come third in the ranking, Latvian men are fourth, and Danes come in at fifth. Among women, Latvians are the tallest followed by Dutch women, women from Estonia, the Czech Republic and Serbia.

Survey: <https://elifesciences.org/content/5/e13410>.

Newsletter 'Focus on Belgium'

Did you know that you can receive the 'Focus on Belgium' newsletter in your mailbox? It summarises what has happened in Belgium during the past month, puts a spotlight on a famous Belgian and tells you an interesting fact about our country. The September issue is now available.

[Focus on Belgium](http://bit.ly/2dx3CcG) is the website of the FPS Foreign Affairs aimed at shedding light on the various assets of our country: creativity, diversity, gastronomy, culture, upcoming talents, evolutions and perspectives. Subscribe to the newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/2dx3CcG>



Events at the Ambassador's Residence

Now that the Summer period is over, the Ambassador is again hosting various business, cultural and academic events at his Residence in Belgrave Square. The latest events are listed below.

Belgium Financial and Business Club with Kevin Rodgers

On the occasion of the release of his book *Why Aren't They Shouting?* (Penguin, Random House, 2016) former senior investment banker **Kevin Rodgers** gave an interesting speech about the impact and consequences of computer usage in the banking world. Rodgers gave a high-quality performance, making him a wise choice as guest speaker at the first meeting of the **Belgian Financial and Business Club**.

eNewborn and the UK National Neonatal Research Database

An event was organised in support of the recently launched [eNewborn](#) platform set up to evaluate and compare the outcomes of **newborn healthcare** on an international level. Professor Dominique Haumont (Brussels) collaborated with colleagues in London in the launch of "eNewborn". The platform contains patient records from Belgium, the Czech Republic, France and the UK while other countries have committed to join.



Professor Dominique Haumont, Ambassador Trouveroy and Professor Neena Modi.

World War Remembrance

Cenotaph Parade

On Saturday 16th July, the 82nd annual **Belgian Parade** took place at the **Cenotaph** in Whitehall. A wreath was laid at the famous monument by the Belgian Minister of Defence Steve Vandeput, acting as a representative of the King for this event. Since 1934, the Belgian Parade in London has yearly taken place in July, preceding the Belgian National Day. Our country is the only nation that is allowed to parade its troops in uniform and carrying arms in central London, a unique honour bestowed upon the Belgians by King George V of Great Britain.



© Malek Azoug

Leicester Remembrance Service

On Sunday 20th of August 2016, the **remembrance service** for the Belgian casualties buried in Welford Road Cemetery in **Leicester** was held. The yearly ceremony was attended by a member of the Embassy of Belgium. There are eight graves known to be of Belgian soldiers who died during the First World War in the 5th Northern General Hospital, where casualties of the war were treated. The ninth grave of an unknown soldier remains unidentified.



© Maggie Silver

East Twickenham Belgian refugee project

As part of the commemorations of the centenary of World War I, the **East Twickenham Centennial Group** has set up a project which focuses on the [First World War Belgian refugees](#) in the area. In 1914, at the dawn of the world war, several thousand Belgian refugees fled the German invasion and came to Britain. They particularly favoured the boroughs of Twickenham and Richmond where the Belgian entrepreneur Charles Pelabon had established a shell working factory known as “Pelabon works”. Subsequently, a Belgian community known as the **“Village belge sur la Tamise”** was born.

To commemorate the story of the Belgian refugee community, the Group has managed to secure funding to commission a work of art in the form of a carved stone memorial to be placed in Warren Gardens, near the site of the Pelabon Works along the Thames. In preparation, the funds will also be allocated to the restoration of the Gardens to their former splendour.



© Twickenham from Facebook page “East Twickenham Belgian refugee project”

Interview with two Belgian architects in the UK

The embassy has had the pleasure to meet up with two Belgian talents at the London architectural scene: **Michele Brackx** and **Ramses Frederickx**. Both architects consider London a very attractive place to work, a vibrant metropolis where artistic ideas emerge and fuse to give birth to remarkable architectural achievements. Click [here](#) to read the interviews.

Sports news

Belgian athletes in Rio

Now that the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio are over, it is time to take stock. Belgium's athletes offered us medals, breath-taking performances and a strong team spirit.

On the opening day of the Olympic Games, **Greg Van Avermaet** won the first gold medal for the [Belgian team](#). Despite difficulties, the cyclist from Lokeren valiantly fought for victory and managed to overtake his opponents in a spectacular final sprint. ULG student **Nafi Thiam** (picture below) was one of the biggest revelations at the Games, winning gold in the heptathlon. The 22-year old from Liège surpassed herself and beat several personal records in front of a supporting crowd.

Pieter Timmers took silver in the 100m freestyle (swimming). Though coming second behind the Australian athlete Kyle Chalmer, he nonetheless set a new Belgian record. The **Belgian men's hockey team** also competed impressively, winning a silver medal in the final against Argentina.

Two other Belgian athletes took third place on the podium: the Judoka **Dirk Van Titchelt** won the bronze medal after having defeated a panel of tenacious opponents while cyclist **Jolien D'Hoore** from Ghent, also won bronze in the women's omnium at the velodrome in Rio.

With the accumulation of six medals in total, ["Team Belgium"](#) put our country back on the Olympic map by occupying 35th place in the final rankings.

Belgium's performance in the Paralympics was equally impressive. The Belgian team surpassed expectations by winning 11 medals; a historic first for Belgium.

Marieke Vervoort seized Belgium's first medals by coming second in the 400m wheelchair and winning the bronze medal in the 100m. Shortly after the race, the athlete chose the Olympic podium to announce her upcoming retirement from competition. The youngest athlete of the delegation, 16-year-old **Laurens Devos** (picture below), won gold in the table tennis final. The tenacious young champion did not give his opponent the slightest chance, defeating him in all three sets to become the youngest athlete ever to win Paralympic gold in table tennis. Within the same discipline, the world number one in his category, **Florian Van Acker**, took many risks and displayed great determination to win gold against the Australian Samuel Von Eimen in a thrilling final.

Belgium's third gold medal came thanks to **Peter Genyn's** sublime performance in the 100m wheelchair. He won a second gold medal in the 400m. The athlete revealed his personal struggle with stress and underlined the importance of mental strength in such competitions.

In the Para-equestrian competition, **Michèle George** won silver in the dressage and, more determined than ever, a gold medal in freestyle, the third gold of her career so far. Cyclist **Kris**

Bosmans won his first Paralympic medal: silver in road cycling. Wheelchair tennis also brought success for Belgium with an impressive and emotional **Joachim Gerard** winning the bronze medal.

The strong team spirit "Made in Belgium" proved its worth once more in the mixed hand-bike relay. **Jean-François Deberg, Christophe Hindrick** and **Jonas Van De have** brilliantly took bronze.



© Picture : The Indian Express



© Picture Belga

Belgian cyclist wins Prudential RideLondon

Following the 2012 London Olympics, the Mayor of London set up a yearly festival of cycling, the [Prudential RideLondon](#). The 4th edition of the cycling festival took place over the weekend of 29-31 July.

Amateur cyclists participate in the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 – a 100-mile challenge on the same closed roads as the professionals, with the added incentive of raising money for good causes. For the first time, this year's event also featured a 46-mile sportive created specifically for newer and also younger cyclists.

Over 95,000 cyclists took part in the 2016 edition of the race. Among the professionals, Belgium's **Tom Boonen** was the first to cross the finishing line on The Mall. His win was especially impressive considering he suffered a puncture earlier in the race.



Tom Boonen

© Eddie Keogh/Silverhub for Prudential RideLondon

Events Calendar

In our [listing of upcoming events](#) you will find details on exhibitions, lectures, concerts and sports activities with a Belgian touch. The list is continuously updated.

Copyright © 2016 Embassy of Belgium in the UK, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
belgianevents.uk@dipobel.fed.be