



Belgian Events - December 2015

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

This final issue for 2015 contains news on Belgian Representations with the UN and Interpol. You can read about the latest business, cultural and academic events at the Ambassador's Residence. This issue also reports on the Edith Cavell commemorations in the UK and Belgium and includes an interview with Sébastien Moureau, a Belgian academic living and working in the UK. Belgium's exceptional sports performances are highlighted and the '*Did you know?*' section includes details on how our country is perceived internationally. As always, the cultural calendar lists upcoming Belgian events in the UK.

Finally, if you have any news or suggestions, don't hesitate to share them with us via belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be. New subscribers can provide their details via the [Embassy's website](#).

Belgian Representations

Belgian campaign for a seat in the UN Security Council

On 23rd October, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders, together with Their Majesties the King and Queen, launched the **Belgian campaign** for a seat as a non-permanent member in the [UN Security Council](#) for the period 2019-2020. The launch followed a conference on the role of Belgium during 70 years of United Nations, with the participation of Belgians who play a leading role around the organisation: Serge Brammertz, Jacques Rogge, Olivier De Schutter, Marleen Temmerman and Jean-Pascal van Ypersele. Our country already held five times a seat in the UN Security Council, and actively contributed to the development of several innovative tools for conflict management, mediation and peacebuilding.



Belgium elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (2016-2018)

On 28th October, Belgium was elected for a three-year mandate in the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) for the period 2016-2018. It is the second time that our country will hold a seat in this council. During its mandate in Geneva, Belgium will continue to work on priority issues such as the fight against impunity, the abolition of death penalty, women's rights, children's rights and freedom of expression. Our country will also focus on strengthening institutions that defend human rights, such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and regional organisations such as the [Council of Europe](#) and the [African Union](#).



IMO elections

End of November, the Assembly of the [IMO](#) (International Maritime Organisation) gathered at the Organisation's headquarters in London. The IMO is the UN specialised agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. On 27 November, the Assembly held elections for the **IMO Council** for the biennium 2016-2017. Belgium, which presented its candidature for re-election, was among the 40 states that managed to secure a seat. Membership of the Council is of high importance for Belgium and its maritime industry. The Belgian delegation is therefore delighted to be able to continue contributing to the achievement of the IMO's mission and objectives.

Head of Belgium's Police appointed Interpol's European Representative
Catherine De Bolle, the head of the Belgian federal police force, has been chosen as the **European representative** in [Interpol's Executive Committee](#). She is the first Belgian ever to be selected for this position. As a representative for Europe, she will monitor the good functioning of Interpol, an international organisation engaged with supporting police organisations and the prevention of and battle against crime.



Events at the Ambassador's Residence

During the past few weeks, the Ambassador's Residence in Belgrave Square has again been the venue for various business, cultural and academic events.

Business Events

Big Data - 8th October

The Embassy organised a seminar on 'big data' in collaboration with several young Belgian professionals keen to inform a public similar to theirs. Besides the concept of 'big data' the four panelists covered topics such as the impact of 'big data' on the financial sector, telecommunications, sectors affected by "disruptive" companies (Uber vs cabs, Airbnb vs hotels,...) as well as the required professional skills to be able to ride the 'big data' wave. The fifty young professionals and Ambassador Trouveroy were most impressed by the quality of the discussion.

Smart Cities - 5th November

The Brussels Commercial Attaché hosted a lunch at the Residence with the theme 'smart cities', as part of a mission organised by [BIE \(Brussels Invest & Export\)](#). A dozen Brussels companies attended the lunch to establish the needs and possible synergies that exist between them and the city of London. The meeting covered transportation and green logistic, architecture and urban planning, citizen's involvement, energy management, ...

Eurostar - 10th November

The [Eurostar](#) company (5% owned by SNCB ,the Belgian's National Railway's Company) organised a seated dinner for Belgian entrepreneurs in the UK. The objective was to reach out to the Belgian community and the Belgian private sector (sometimes less prioritised by Eurostar than the French community in London for example). It was also the occasion to thank the Belgian private sector for its loyalty and for the CEO of Eurostar to present the new fleet of trains that will shortly run on the tracks.



Unizo - 7th December

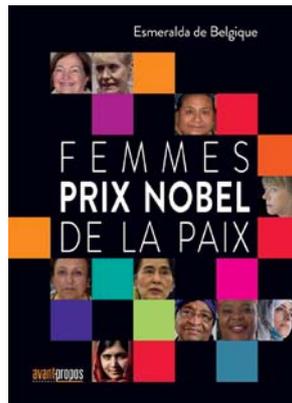
The Embassy welcomed a multi-sectorial mission (food, jewelry, textile, design, architecture, engineering, consulting, distribution and software) presented by [Flanders Investment & Trade \(FIT\)](#) and [Unizo](#). During a seminar at the Ambassador's Residence the delegation could benefit from five Belgian stakeholders and/or Belgian companies active in the UK explaining their sectorial or cross business experience. Both [FIT](#) and [Unizo](#) were delighted with the opportunity to learn from others and to network ahead of concrete B2B appointments the following day and a half.



Cultural Events

“Femmes Prix Nobel de la Paix” - 13th October

HRH Princess Esmeralda of Belgium presented her book “Femmes Prix Nobel de la Paix”, to a predominantly feminine and French-speaking audience interested in finding out the Princess' personal views of the exceptional women she has met in her life.



Waterloo - 26th October

The final event organised this year at the Residence as part of the Bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo was a buffet offered to the British organisation [Waterloo 200](#), both the Duke of Wellington as well as Count Lukas von Blücher were present.

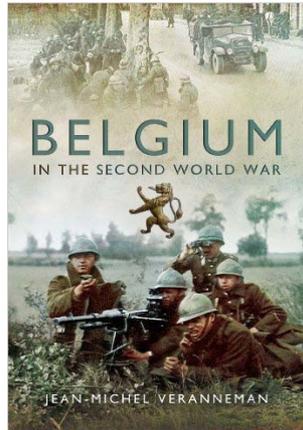


Soldiers' Charity - 28th October

[Soldiers' Charity](#) is an organisation which offers financial support to military personnel, in service and retired, and their families. The Ambassador hosted a formal dinner at his Residence for some thirty guests selected by the Charity. During the evening, the guests were thanked for their support and were encouraged to continue supporting the charity in the future.

Belgium in the Second World War - 29th October

The Honorary Ambassador Jean-Michel Veranneman presented his book ["Belgium in the Second World War"](#) to an audience of mainly historians and institutions related to history and commemorations, as well as some of his friends and contacts established while he was Ambassador in London. His book is particularly interesting in that it fills gaps other historical publications might have about the Second World War in Belgium.



Brussels Art Fair (BRAFA) - 19th November

On 19th November the Ambassador invited the chairman and vice chairman of [BRAFA](#) to his Residence. A dinner to promote BRAFA 2016 was organised. The Brussels Art Fair will take place next year between 23 – 31 January, at Tour & Taxis in Brussels. Some thirty British art collectors, art experts and gallery owners attended the event.

Academic Events

The Fondation Wiener-Anspach (FWA) - 22nd October

The [FWA](#) promotes academic and scientific cooperation in all areas between the [ULB](#) (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and the universities of [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge](#). On 22nd October, the Ambassador organised a network evening on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Fondation, attended by alumni, partners and donors.



Students in Maritime Sciences - 18th November

The Students in [Maritime Sciences of Ghent University](#) were in London during the week of November 18th, where they visited the [IMO](#) (International Maritime Organisation), and a number of legal and financial public and private maritime institutions. Together with colleagues from the Flemish Representation and FIT, the Ambassador received the students for a lunch at his Residence. Two weeks before the election of the IMO Council, the main theme of discussion was directly related to the Belgian

candidacy for a place in the Council.

CoCo Bonds Conference - 10th December

Ambassador Trouveroy welcomed the 3rd edition of the 'The World of CoCos' conference at his Residence. The event was organised by the KU Leuven and focused on the latest developments in the field of CoCos (Contingent Convertible Bonds), a financial product introduced by the banks in response to stricter regulations since the financial crisis. The financial maths research group at the KU Leuven is praised internationally for its research into these 'CoCos'. Some forty-five international participants, including risk managers and investors, attended the conference. Jan Smets, Governor of the [National Bank of Belgium](#), concluded the conference with a well-attended keynote speech on the future challenges of the Belgian financial sector. During the networking reception participants and the Embassy's guests from London's financial world could meet and further discuss the challenges highlighted by the Governor over a well-deserved Belgian beer.

World War 1

Edith Cavell Commemorations

On 12 October 1915, the British nurse, **Edith Cavell**, who was working in Brussels at the start of the First World War, was executed by the German Army and buried in Brussels. She had been arrested and sentenced to death in 1915 by a German military court for having helped allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium. After the war, her body was exhumed and repatriated to Britain.



Commemorative ceremonies on 12 October 2015 in Norwich and London to mark the 100th anniversary of Cavell's death were attended by representatives of the Belgian Embassy in London. In Brussels, British and Belgian Royals unveiled a bust of Edith Cavell and paid tribute to the British heroine.

Business news

Golden Bridge Trade & Export Awards

On 26th November, the 19th edition of the [Golden Bridge Trade & Export Awards](#) took place at the BLCC Club House in London. The Golden Bridge Trade & Export Awards is an initiative of the [Belgian Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain \(BLCC\)](#) and the [British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium](#) in order to celebrate the very best of Benelux and British business. Golden Bridge Award winners have been drawn from a wide variety of industries leading to four Belgian companies receiving an award this year:

Ambassador Trouveroy handed over the Golden Bridge Trade & Export Award to the construction company [Soudal NV](#).



[NMC sa](#), a company who produces synthetic foam received the Best Medium Sized Company Award



Carole van Eyll from the Belgian Embassy presented the Best Small Company Award to [Projective](#), a company specialised in project & programme management



[Syx Automations](#), a software automation company, received the Best Newcomer Award

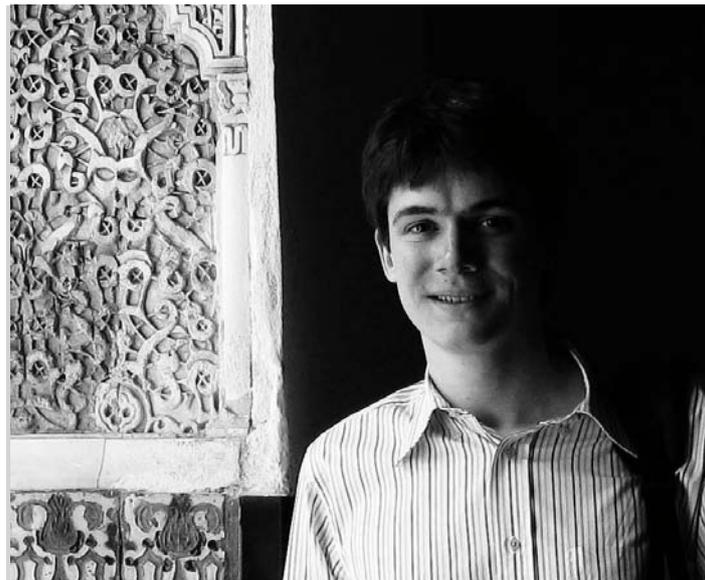


Herbosch-Kiere along the Thames



Whilst on a stroll along the river **Thames** you may have come across the name Herbosch-Kiere on a vessel and building equipment next to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and wondered whether there is a Belgian link as the name might suggest. Indeed, the **Antwerp-based company [Herbosch-Kiere](#)** (with a subsidiary in the UK) specialised in river, port and coastal projects is building an extension to the pontoon at Bankside Pier close to Tate Modern. The project forms part of the [Transport for London River Action Plan](#). Bankside Pier is a transport link offering a hop-on-hop-off river bus, riverboat and cruise service. The pontoon extension will allow for extra boats to serve the pier from next year.

Interview with a Belgian in the UK



*Dr Sébastien Moureau, scientific collaborator at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve, took up a post-doc fellowship at London University in October this year. Dr Moureau is specialised in **classical and oriental philologies** and will be based in London for 2 years. His fellowship is partly funded by the **Belgian Chair** charity.*

What has drawn you to the field of Classical and Oriental Philology?

My passion for classical studies started at the Schola Nova high school in Walloon Brabant (www.scholanova.be) after which I took up classical philology studies at the University of Louvain (UCL). My interest in oriental studies was born during my studies in classical philology. I had the opportunity to learn Hebrew, and this led to a second Master, in Oriental philology (Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit), following my classics. My PhD was situated at the border between the Orient and the West.

You obviously have spent time in the Middle East. Where did you stay and what did you investigate?

My longest stay was in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, in order to learn Arabic. My other travels were mainly to get manuscript copies from various libraries.

Which languages are required in your field of research?

I am mainly working with Arabic, Latin and Greek and at times I also use Hebrew. Specialising in the Arab-Muslim Middle Ages, knowledge of the Arabic language is of course essential, and as a specialist of transfer of knowledge from Greece to the Islamic world and from the Arab-Muslim world to the Latin West, Greek and Latin are indispensable.

Until recently, you were based in Belgium. What made you decide to move and pursue a career in London?

I was offered a Frances A. Yates long term fellowship at the Warburg Institute, which is an incredible opportunity. The Institute is one of the world's leading laboratories in my field, and offers access to a unique library and panel of experts. In fact I did not choose to come to London but to the Warburg, which happens to be in London.

Could you describe what the Fellowship you have been awarded entails?

Being one of the world's leading institutes in my field of interest, my assignment at the Warburg Institute allows me to carry out my research more rapidly than anywhere else and to share and acquire new knowledge. It also offers great career opportunities because of the Institute's excellent reputation.

How did you find out about the 'Belgian Chair at London University'?

A colleague of mine gave me the information when I told her that I was about to stay in London. Indeed, I explained that I would have to travel frequently between London and Belgium to keep in close contact with my Belgian university in Louvain for research purposes. The Belgian Chair charity will help me fund these trips. We intend to return to Belgium about once a month for scientific purposes and we will seize these opportunities to visit family and friends.

Having moved to London with your wife and young child, what are your first impressions of this city?

After the initial nightmare of finding accommodation, life is becoming pleasant and enjoyable in London. We live in a quiet suburb with fairly easy access to the centre. The most impressive thing for scholars is the amazing number of libraries and research institutes in this city. On a family level, we have been very impressed by the parks and playgrounds, which our little daughter enjoys a lot.

Have you, in the short time you have been here, met other Belgian expats in academic circles or elsewhere?

One of my colleagues from Louvain had a three-month fellowship at the Warburg Institute at the beginning of this academic year, but she has now returned to Belgium. We also have a Belgian friend who has lived here for years. But I must confess that so far I have had no contact with other Belgians in London, but then we only recently arrived in this city.

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 constantly updated.

Sports news

Belgium excels

Despite its mere 11 million inhabitants, our country regularly makes the world sports headlines. Since November, the Belgian national **football** team is top of the [FIFA World Ranking](#), the first time the [Red Devils](#) reach the highest position on the global ladder. Belgium's football champions **AA Gent** secured a win against Zenit St Petersburg and are through to the **last 16** in the **UEFA Champions League**. Reaching the first knock-out stage of the Champions League is something no other Belgian team has done since 2001.



Meanwhile, earlier this month, our national men's **hockey** team, the [Red Lions](#), managed to win a silver medal at the [Hockey World League](#) in India, the first medal at a World Class tournament since Belgium took bronze in the men's hockey competition at the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp.



Some of you undoubtedly watched an exhilarating [Davis Cup tennis final](#) between Great Britain and Belgium in Ghent, but did you also know that Belgium's **Joachim Gérard** became the men's singles champion at the [NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters](#) in London earlier this month? C'mon Belgium!!!



Did you know...?

Global Happiness Index

Belgium has the happiest workers in the world according to Swedish branding company [Universum](#), followed by Norway and Costa Rica. The ranking, called the "[Global Happiness Index](#)", surveyed 250,000 professionals in 55 markets. The research took into account factors such as employee's satisfaction at their current job, the likelihood of recommending their current employer and their stated sense of job

loyalty.



OECD Better Life Index

According to this year's [OECD Better Life Index](#), **Belgium** takes **4th place** after Denmark, Spain and The Netherlands. Our country benefits from successful flexible working programs and a high level of personal time devoted to friends and family, with only 5% of employees working very long hours. The Index allows to compare well-being across 362 world regions based on 11 topics the OECD sees as essential in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life.

Climate Change Performance Index

Belgium is in **7th place** in the 2016 edition of the '[Climate Change Performance Index](#)', a ranking of countries' climate policies established by German environmental organisation Germanwatch with Climate Action Network Europe, and presented earlier this month at the United Nations Climate Conference (COP21).



In fact, Belgium (whose performance is described as "good") comes fourth, as the first three places in the rankings are left empty because "no country does enough to avoid the terrible consequences of climate change," note the authors of this 'Climate Change Performance Index'.

Denmark tops the list for the fifth year in a row and thus is ranked fourth, followed by the United

Kingdom and Sweden. The rankings are based on CO2 emissions per resident, and how they are evolving, use of renewable energy sources, energy performance for each national economy, and public policies to deal with climate change. 300 energy and climate experts, most of whom are members of environmental NGOs, also collaborated in establishing these rankings.

Stromae in 5th place of the most influential figures in Europe

The political news website POLITICO Europe has placed Belgium's [Stromae](#) **5th** in a list of 28 people selected from each EU country who have a **great influence** on the continent. The Brussels pop star of Rwandan ethnic heritage, has become a world star. Politico has branded the Belgian singer as an ambassador of Belgium's multiculturalism. Stromae, often compared to Jacques Brel, is praised to the heavens for his intelligent music and charming personality. His album 'Racine Carrée' has sold over 2 million copies.



Season's Greetings

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy 2016 to all our readers!



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