

DOING BUSINESS IN THE EUREGIO MEUSE-RHINE
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CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

EXPORT DAY AT HASSELT

[COM: Hasselt, March 30]

The Chambers of Commerce in Southeast Netherlands and Belgian Limburg are organizing an information day with Export Flanders and the Export Information Service (EVD). The day will provide extensive information for starters and experienced, internationally operating, companies with workshops, plenary sessions and an information market. Particular attention will be paid to surrounding countries and to the new members of the European Union. You will also have the opportunity to meet people from both parts of Limburg.

Content

2x 2 workshops in the morning, lunch and then an information market and opportunity for informal contact. In the afternoon 1 x 2 workshops with a drink at the end of the day. Attention will also be paid to exports, imports and outsourcing.

Workshops

For starters

1 Starting in international business (import/export)

Export strategy

Export/import: a practical approach

Practical cases:

- 1 Business with experience in importing
- 2 Business with experience in exporting

2 Distribution contracts, agents, distributors, working directly via

- 1 Direct sale
- 2 Agent/distributor

3 Central Europe: a comparison of four countries: Poland, Hungary, The Czech Republic and Slovakia

- a. Socio-economic comparison
- b. Tax law, banking and security aspects
- c. Business culture and behavior
- d. A business with experience in importing, exporting or outsourcing in one or more of the four countries mentioned above.

For experienced exporters

4 The new member states with emphasis on Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in practice, concrete issues, problems and possible solutions

The characteristic of this workshop will be interactivity, with questions and possible solutions/answers. There will be a broad panel, which, following a brief introduction, will talk about their specialization and give examples and answer questions from the public. Questions may also be submitted by e-mail.

Questions will also arise from the discussion.

5 Russia Ukraine

- a. Socio-economic development structure, safety, payments, good opportunities, approach to the market, information and options for subsidies
- b. Business culture of the Ukraine and Russia
- c. Business experience
- d. Businesses with experience in the Ukraine and Russia

6 China

Focus on import, exports, outsourcing: Is China the panacea? Focus on culture and business behavior

- a. Importing
- b. Outsourcing
- c. Exporting, all aspects of the protection of intellectual property will be considered
- d. Banking
- e. Business experience, particular in the three areas of import, export and outsourcing.

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<http://www.kvklimburg.voka.be>

DUTCH-WALLOON BUSINESS CLUB

[COM: Maastricht, March 24]

The next meeting of the Business Club will be on Tuesday April 27 in Liège at the Archeoforum in the center of Liège, Place St Lambert, with the support of the ING Group. The program is as follows:

16.30 : Reception

16.45 : A word of welcome

16.50 : Presentation of the history and development of Place St Lambert by the architects who developed the project

17.15 : Presentation by the ING Group on ING's interest in Liège and the city center

17.40 : Presentation and visit to the new Archeoforum, the new interactive museum under Place St Lambert, where there are the historical remains of the once great cathedral and other earlier finds

18.30 : A drink

19.30 : The meeting ends.

The contribution to the costs of the evening is EUR 50 per person.

Contact bpiette@maastricht.kvk.nl

WEST EUROPEAN MARKETS

[COM: Aachen, March 10]

In the context of a world conference of all German Chambers for external trade in Berlin, the representatives of the West European external trade Chambers have decided to come to a West European Day in Aachen, where the various Western markets will be presented and there will be opportunities for networking. The West European Day will take place on May 4 from 10.30 – 16.45 hrs at the Aachen Chamber's David Hansemann Saal.

Countries involved are: Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain.

In addition to the various workshops, in which market experts on the economic position of the various countries, will outline the business potential of German firms and services, there will also be an option for informal talks with the various representatives.

Further information from Gudula Kreuzheck, tel. + 31.49.241.4460-129, or mail

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<http://www.aachen.ihk.de>

AACHEN BRAND LAUNCH IN BERLIN

[COM: Berlin, January 29]

A unique treaty was signed recently at the NRW Berlin Mission between the representatives of Aachen's Rhenish-Westphalian Technical University (RWTH) and its Chamber of Commerce.

Aachen has been transformed and it has new capital that has been refined and polished by its superb technical university - among the world's top five engineering schools. Now it has to valorize its knowledge assets.

The role of the Chamber of Commerce is to apply business acumen to bright ideas, so that start-ups can be generated and a new economic infrastructure of innovative science-based SMEs can ensure the future of Charlemagne's capital. To start with, in this, its 200th anniversary year, the Chamber will contribute EUR 250,000 for a rolling investment fund. The path is not unfamiliar. Since 1980/81, more than 860 science-based businesses have been set up providing total revenues of EUR 4.1bn and 25,000 jobs by the year 2002.

The University will display its plumage among the world's top-flight universities. It raised more than half a billion Euros in 2003 (EUR 142.5m from external funding sources to add to the University's EUR 366.7m budget for the year). With unashamed elitism, it will adopt an 'Ivy League attitude', bringing together its alumni for homecoming events, actively networking and tapping new sources of funds.

The profile of the new Aachen will be that of the right place to be. A top engineering school allied to top Research Establishments (Jülich, Fraunhofer, etc) and private labs (Ford, Microsoft, Ericsson, Mitsubishi and Philips), where the best come and the best results are achieved, with the 'double A' status of the city's name as a designation of quality.

<http://www.aachen.ihk.de>

CHAMBER CHIEF SPEAKS

[COM: Aachen, February 17]

In the bicentenary of the foundation of the Aachen Chamber of Commerce, the president, Mr Michael Wirtz spoke of the need for Modern institutions, independent of the state. A free business community, free trade, and dynamic growth were required. Mr Wirtz pointed out that as far as globalization was concerned, it was not a question of whether one wanted it or not. It was here. But he also pointed out that it was not a one-way street.

Existing income tax law could not be reformed. A new tax system was needed to encourage growth and reward performance. The structure of municipal finances also needed to be reformed, this applied in particular to the *Gewerbesteuer*, or trade tax, that was driving business away. A solid basis for municipal finances could come from a municipal charge on income and company tax.

As far as social security was concerned, this was the most important political issue of the decade. Social security costs were a true job killer in Germany. There should be more personal responsibility for old age pensions and personal contributions to health insurance.

The labor market and unemployment were also serious problems. Changes in the regulations for the skilled trades were a good move, but there was still a lack of qualified employees, which led Mr Wirtz on to the issue of education.

As far as education was concerned, Mr Wirtz lamented its current state. The chambers had started to get into the training business themselves. There were also international activities with French and British partners.

As far as the potential of the regions was concerned, the technological facilities and the central location of Germany were a plus. The traffic infrastructure was a problem; the failure of the toll system was a blow, and it meant a loss of EUR 160m a month, meaning that the budget for highway construction would be cut by almost EUR 700m.

In the Aachen region it was essential that the A4 between Aachen and Cologne be expanded to 6 lanes and the link on the A1 between Blankenheim and Dahlen be completed.

High-speed trains were important, and it looked as if the importance of a stop in Aachen was disappearing from German Railways' field of view. An internal dispute in the rail sector was damaging the interest of the region, and this was not acceptable.

On the positive side, technology in the region, with the Microsoft and Ericsson establishments was doing well, and the agreement between the Chamber and the University has been renewed in an amended treaty in Berlin.

Start-ups were vital and the Chamber and the University would be making work of this in the future. Regional marketing was also important as evidenced by the presentation of Aachen at Expo Real in Munich, where the sister Chamber from Maastricht was playing a role.

Changes in the administrative organization of the state into the Ruhr and Rhineland, were clearly important.

The proposal of the federal minister of economics, Mr Clement, for more flexible bodies of legislation in 3 test regions, could be useful to the Euroregion. Anything that would reduce the red tape would be of value.

The Roermond Declaration of Cooperation was also discussed. A working group had been set up with the Limburg Employers Association (LWV), the Chamber of Commerce for South Limburg, and the Chancellery of the Ministry of Economics and Labor of the State of North Rhine Westphalia. Detailed research was being undertaken into achieving the objectives of the Roermond declaration: a merger between the Chambers of Commerce and Aachen and Maastricht.

The help desk has been established, there was also an interlinked project called the Dutch corner, on the German side and a German corner on the Dutch side, which would align valuable synergies.

<http://www.aachen.ihk.de>

VOKA PULLS THE CART

[COM: Hasselt, January 8]

Jos Broekmans, Nitto Europe Director and President of VOKA - The Limburg Chamber of Commerce (B), started his annual address at the Chamber's annual reception, Invitito in Hasselt (which attracted more than 1500 paying-guests), with a quote from Winston Churchill. Sir Winston once said: "Some regard private enterprise as if it were a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is: the strong horse that pulls the whole cart."

Mr Broekmans spoke for Voka, the new Chamber of Commerce organization in Flanders, which has been integrated with the Employers Association VEV. The new organization came into being on January 1 of this year. It creates an organization with 20,000 members, which will make it a force to be reckoned with.

Indeed, Mr Broekmans did not pull his punches in a forthright, hands-on speech referring to his audience as members of the biggest network in Flanders and Belgium. The synergy is very considerable and the network is, as he says, the shortest way to Brussels. But, of course, the focus for Limburg will be on Limburg and VOKA will continue to organize the major events in Limburg.

In his wide-ranging speech, he spoke of the importance of including business in education, in cooperation with the Export Services and in the Investment Services of Flanders. He pointed out that the regional share in the business property tax, a burden of EUR 50m, had already been removed.

Surveying the year's events, Mr Broekmans confessed that he was shocked by the response to the major lay-offs at Ford, expecting that there would be more flexibility in seeking solutions and he confessed himself to be concerned about the direct action taken by workers at some companies in other parts of the country in their disagreements with management.

It had to be said, he went on, that wages were too high and that the current social security system was leading to bankruptcy. He also targeted early retirement at 50 and earlier and a government bureaucracy of more than 1 million. He said that decisions should not be taken on party-political, ethical or interest group positions, but they should be based on objective data.

A business-like approach to problems would be welcome in all areas of society, he added. Mr Broekmans then said that he completely supported the position of VOKA chairman Ludo Verhoeven in proposing a two-year wage freeze. He also spoke in favor of performance-based pay. A social contract should not be based on the interest of an individual or a group, but of all of the stakeholders, he noted.

He went on to say that a thorough simplification of the tax system was something that could well emerge from its complexity. Taxation should be simple and transparent and a lot of the paper should be consigned to the wastepaper basket.

Fraud, of course, should be investigated, both on the tax front and on the social security front. He returned again to the enormous burden of social security, referring to the system of social security as a system for the redistribution of income. He then said energy should be devoted to providing more to be shared in business, rather than fragmenting what little there currently is.

All in all, Mr Broekman's speech was hard-hitting and very much the businessman's point of view, which is what one would expect from a Chamber of Commerce.

<http://www.kvklimburg.voka.be>

BICENTENNIAL CHAMBER ADDRESS

[COM: Born, January 7]

The President of the Chamber of Commerce for South Limburg Thijs Wöltgens gave his annual address at the NedCar plant in Born, on the shop floor between the production lines for the new Mitsubishi Colt and the Smart forfour. As this marked the bicentenary of the Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1804, the President gave a historical overview and pointed a way to the future.

The Chamber was founded during the French period under Napoleon. Mr Wöltgens consequently made a point of emphasizing the quintessential European context of South Limburg, which, at the time of the foundation of the Chamber, was a patchwork quilt of territories belonging to the Netherlands, Austria, the Principality of Liège and Germany.

The importance of the role of Liège was emphasized as the source of industrial development in South Limburg and also in Germany. The speech also covered the switch from a mining economy to the start of a high-tech economy at a time when there is considerable competition worldwide.

Mr Wöltgens pointed out that the area's competitive position could be improved by the injection of government cash and noted that 1% extra on a budget deficit could produce an amount of EUR 20 – 25bn for investment in education and the infrastructure - revealing himself to be no friend of the Stability and Growth Pact (to keep budget deficits to below 3% of GDP).

He emphasized the importance of education, the links between education and business (as exemplified in the US) and the potential for cooperation within Meuse-Rhine. The Chambers were already cooperating, he noted but much remained to be done on the infrastructural front.

EUR 2bn would cover highway infrastructure expenditure. The barrier between the port of Liège and waterways to the north should also be removed, he said. Mr Wöltgens also placed emphasis of a link between the TGV stations and South Limburg.

He returned, in conclusion, to the issue of cooperation between the Chambers, reminding listeners of the existence of the Dutch-German Business Club, the Dutch-Walloon Business Club and a potential Flemish-Dutch Business Club. On innovation on the education front, the Chamber will be working with LIOF to uncover innovative potential in the region and with the Aachen Chamber to offer German solutions in vocational training to regional business.

<http://www.maastricht.kvk.nl/>

Business and Industry

EUR 78M AACHEN COURT COMPLEX

[BIZ/GOV: Aachen February 28]

A new EUR 78m law court complex is to be built in Aachen on the Adalbertsteinweg, with a surface area of 40,000 m², 40 courtrooms and a parking garage for 378 vehicles. There will also be a top security court with room for 200. The complex will employ 900 and include labor, social, administrative and district courts as well as the public prosecutors office.

<http://www.blb.nrw.de/>

SIMONIS: RAPID PROTOTYPING

[BIZ: Liège, February 23]

The Simonis Group, which has been active in plastic injection molding for some time, has also become a center for testing, and is now going in for rapid prototyping. They are working with Techno Consulting, based close to Hasselt for this purpose.

Producing rapid prototypes for industry reduces the time needed to introduce a new product by 25%. With the acquisition of Techno consulting, the Simonis Group now masters a wide range of plastics activities. It employs 32, revenues come close to EUR 4m and it is currently a leader in the plastic injection market.

Among its products is the chassis of the F2000 FN rifle, and it is also active in the automotive, medical, and electronics areas.

<http://www.lalibre.be>

ALKEN MAES BREWS CARLSBERG

[BIZ: Alken, February 21]

The Alken Maes brewery, which has a location in Alken, Belgian Limburg (B), is going to start brewing and bottling Carlsberg beer from April. The brewery has recently been awarded a three-year contract for this purpose. An annual flow of 100,000 hectoliters is expected to be involved.

Currently, the brewery produces Maes, Grimbergen, Cristal, Ciney, and Mort Subite beers. The contract means additional employment for its operations in Alken and Kontich, where it achieved revenues of EUR 144.6m in 2002, employing 660.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

COLT COUPE FROM NEDCAR

[IND: Born, February 20]

'Dagblad de Limburger' reports that NedCar in Born will be starting the production of the Mitsubishi Colt coupé at the end of this year or the beginning of 2005. This is the sports version of the hatchback that will be rolling off the production lines in Born this month.

The coupé will have a more streamlined design with a length of 3.81 meters, 6 centimeters shorter than the hatchback. It will have a 150 horsepower turbo engine, and the price will begin at EUR 13,000, which is 500 less than the hatchback.

<http://www.limburger.nl>

LIEGE EXPRESS LAUNCHES

[BIZ-MEDIA: Liège, February 20]

Every fourth Thursday of the month, *La Libre Belgique-Gazette de Liège*, the Belgian daily newspaper, will be accompanied by a new magazine, *Liège Express*. The magazine will have a business focus, and bring readers up to date with activities in the Principality. The presentation of the new magazine was led by the editor-in chief, Frédéric van Vlodorp, at the Archéoforum in Liège. It included articles on Eurogentec, a story on Disteel Cold, which is providing steel paneling for the new Queen Mary luxury liner, launched recently in France. There is also an article in which the director of the Port of Liège (PAL) Mme Marie-Dominique Simonet is portrayed modeling some rather attractive new outfits, making rather a change from her tomboy image.

<http://www.webcontentnow.com>

EUROGENTEC: SMART BUILDING

[BIZ/LIFE-SCI: Liège, February 18]

Eurogentec, one of the most important biotechnology companies in Belgium and Europe, inaugurated its new "Eurogentec II" building in the Liège Science Park on February 17. It brings together research and production activities, as well as marketing and administration offices, and accommodates 155. It thus adds to the capacities of the first building, opened in 1992 in the Liège Science Park, which houses pharmaceutical production activities (75 staff).

Eurogentec manufactures "tools" (biochemical reagents) for researchers in genomics (the study of the function of genes) and proteomics (the study of the function of proteins). Its main products are synthetic DNA (or oligonucleotide), DNA Micro Arrays and peptides. Eurogentec also develops and manufactures new medicines for the pharmaceutical industry (for example, a product treating leukemia).

The new building was designed to meet Eurogentec's technological production needs.

This ingenious complex covers 6,000 m² on 3 levels, including 1,850 m² of laboratories and 1,850m² technical floors to manage the air-conditioning (more than 10 changes of air per hour in the labs) and the flows of the various gases dispensed at each lab table.

<http://www.eurogentec.com>

CROSS-BORDER LEASING

[BIZ/INFRA: Hasselt, February 18]

The US Senate finance committee has approved proposed legislation by Senator Chuck Grassley, which would in all probability mean the end of cross-boarder lease transactions. The proposal will be presented in March. Forty Limburg (B) municipalities want to sell their sewers to the United States and lease them back.

According to the mayor of Beringen, Marcel Mondelaers, there is a considerable state of anxiety amongst the municipalities that have chosen to sell their drains. Sales of sewers to American investors would produce revenues of EUR 65m for Limburg (B) municipalities. So one can understand the unease.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

TRIANEL FIANCIAL SERVICES

[BIZ: Aachen, February 16]

The Trianel European energy trading company GmbH set up its first financial service company on February 4. This was predicated on permission to supply financial services, which was granted by the responsible federal authorities. It means that Trianel is one of the few businesses in the energy sector that has attained the status of financial service provider. The first transaction was carried out for STAWAG, the Aachen power utility.

<http://www.Trianel.de>

TESSENDERLO GETS PRESS PRIZE

[BIZ/MEDIA: Hasselt, February 16]

Voka, the Limburg Chamber of Commerce in Hasselt, presented its 7th press and communications prize awarded by a panel of professional journalists to the business that best communicated with the media in 2003 and it went to Tessenderlo Chemicals.

In 1997 the prize was won by Interelectra CVBA, an intercommunal utility. In 1998, the prize went to Ford Werke AG, in 1999 to Logis vzw, training/ logistical training. In 2000 IPTE, the software company won and in 2001 it was Essers, the logistics operation. Last year, the award went to the Zolder Circuit, where the world cycling championships were held in 2002.

Werner Couck, the project leader at the press center, who initiated the award, pointed to the importance of direct communication between business and the outside world. He also recommended that the Minister take a look at what the Chambers were doing.

<http://www.voka.be>

SUPERBOWL ANATOMY

[BIZ: Liège/Fairfield, February 12]

Liège-based, EVS Broadcast Equipment's XT servers were the backbone [not the breastbone!] for the CBS High Definition production of Super Bowl XXXVIII. The SportNet SDTI networking architecture was completely utilized as several network branches were created to handle the pre-game coverage, the game telecast – that included super motion replays, Eyevision clips, and in-game editing – as well as the halftime and post-game coverage.

The reliability and versatility of the EVS solution was quickly realized at this broad coverage of the Super Bowl. The SportNet power was able to interconnect the many facets of this production and allow the crucial areas of the broadcast to access the footage they needed, instantly. The end result was the superb coverage that was beamed to over 140 millions viewers of this historic Super Bowl.

<http://www.evs.tv>

VODAFONE UMTS LAUNCH

[BIZ: Maastricht, February 12]

Concurrent with the commercial launch of its 3G services in Europe, Vodafone has scheduled the launch of its UMTS Mobile Connect Card, with optimum data speeds of 384kbps, in the Netherlands for February 16. It provides 25% national coverage, including the conurbation of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht and also Groningen, Enschede, Den Bosch, Eindhoven and Maastricht plus the highways in between. Outside these areas, the card switches automatically to GPRS with 100% national coverage. The Mobile Connect Card, Europe's first high-speed laptop data card, with e-mail diary and Internet functions 10 times faster than GPRS. It costs EUR 299.00 (excluding VAT); GPRS costs EUR 179.00.

<http://www.vodafone.nl>

LRM EUR 125,000 BUY-OUT

[BIZ: Hasselt, February 11]

Stokjes Tessenderlo (airflow systems) has received a subordinated loan to the value of EUR 125,000 from the Limburg Development Company LRM for a 100% management buy-out. The buy-out was implemented via the take-over holding company Prime Air. Money was released, but a substantial sum also came from personal funding. The company plans to achieve revenues of EUR 2m in 2008, which is equivalent to an increase in sales of 10% per year. The budget allows for an increase in staff from 14 to 20.

<http://www.lrm.be>

KEEPING FLIES OFF HORSES

[BIZ: Amay, February 11]

Geode Chemicals and Laboratories SARL is expanding. With revenues of EUR 300,000 in 2003, the company could increase these by 30-50% next year, with its new specialties for export. These include insecticides, and insect repellants for horses, antiparasitics, orange-based medications and detergents, also environment-friendly, biodegradable products.

<http://www.rtc.be>

WFG AT TEN

[BIZ: Eupen, February 6]

The East Belgian Development Company WFG was established in December 1993 to promote business. It had two members of staff and it has developed in a modern service provider with a staff of 19, headed by general manager Marc Langohr and the President, Professor Franz Palm. In the presence of the Prime Minister, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Mr Langohr reviewed the activities of the last ten years in the areas of business start-ups, export promotion, business park planning, countryside development and the context of European funding programs.

Items reviewed included the frontier crossing at Lichtenbusch, the plan for business parks, the wood competence center, location marketing, the network for expatriate East Belgians, the WFG newsletter and 66 inbound files among 96 enquiries. It also dealt with the move to the Quartum Business Center; the subsidiary office in St.Vith for projects in the south, the multimedia documentation center in Eupen and new European projects, including cooperation with the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion in the areas of life-sciences and business agencies. Currently with its staff of 19, WFG has an annual budget of EUR 1.6m. They also have a new logo, which gives the impression, vis-à-vis the old one, of a move from sailing ships to the space age.

<http://www.wfg.be>

PARSYTEC FOR CORUS & TURKEY

[IND: Aachen, February 4]

Parsytec AG – the world's leading supplier of surface inspection systems for strip products such as steel, aluminum and paper – has received an order for two inspection systems from Corus Packaging Plus. This order follows the successful installations of Parsytec solutions at various Corus plants and is the first time ever that Corus has ordered two inspection solutions in one negotiation.

The company has also received an order for one hot mill inspection solution from Eregli Iron & Steel Works (Erdemir). With this order, which has a total volume of EUR 0.9 million, Erdemir starts equipping its production infrastructure with surface inspection solutions.

<http://www.parsytec.de>

FN R&D AT LIEGE U

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Liège, January 29]

FN, the Herstal firearms manufacturer and the University of Liège have signed an R&D contract. There has been cooperation over the past 10 years, but this has now been formalized. FN does have a research lab in Herstal employing 120, 90 of whom are located in Belgium. They, as reported in L'Echo, concentrate on precision engineering and metallurgy applied to small arms. However, a good deal of research is outsourced to the University. There is a need for more integrated electronics; Thixomolding and the production of less than lethal weapons are also current areas of shared interest.

<http://www.lecho.be>

EVS RECORD RESULTS UP 8%

[BIZ: Liège January 28]

EVS Broadcast Equipment, one of Liège's star performers has achieved record sales of EUR 39.2m (+8%, as against 2002:EUR 36.4m) share capital reimbursement of 3 EUR/share 2003. At constant exchange rate, the growth reaches +14%. Operating income amounts to EUR 40.4 million. EVS confirms its guidance of Net Current Result 2003 per share will exceed 3.0 EUR, i.e., exceeding EUR 8.4 million.

<http://www.euronext.com/>

TRANSCOM HAUTS SARTS

[BIZ: Liège, January 28]

Transcom Worldwide is the Customer Relations Management (CRM) operator in Europe with the largest geographic coverage. It has more than 8,000 trained professionals delivering services in 38 languages to over 80 clients in 19 countries and 38 service (call) centers across Europe. The next one is to be in Hauts Sarts, near Liège in Belgium, where the company will be employing between 60 and 150 in a partnership with Forem. The company has been brought in by SPI+'s telecom service. Transcom chose the Liège location because of the excellent infrastructure. It is the first major call center in the region and its service include inbound communication, telemarketing and outbound communication, administrative activities, web servicing, CRM consulting service, legal service and credit management services. 60 People should be employed by mid May and in the medium term there are expected to be 150 jobs there. (Source: Le Soir)

<http://www.transcomworldwide.com>

VACUUM PLASMA COATINGS

[IND: Ivoz-Ramet, January 23]

A new start-up, Arceo, part of the giant Arcelor steel combine, has a starting capital of EUR 24.4m (34.8% from the Walloon region, managed by Sogepa) to develop a production line for the vacuum plasma coating of steel. This coating procedure has a number of advantages allowing for sustainable development and recoating of steel using a vast range of materials, metals or alloys and the preparation of future surfaces in a move towards self-cleaning and anti-bacterial types. The development is also moving in the direction of considerations of appearance, anti-corrosion and energy saving.

<http://www.echonet.be>

PAM/GRAPHODATA/POWERFLASHER

[BIZ: Heerlen, January 17]

PAM, the marketing specialists based in Parkstad Limburg (NL), recently entered into an agreement with the Aachen-based Graphodata AG, specialists in e-mail marketing, and are now also to work with the Aachen company, Powerflasher GmbH, to develop internet advertising in the Dutch and German markets. PAM is an internet marketing bureau and, thus far, the only one with a Meuse-Rhine focus.

<http://www.parkstad-aachen.com>

LRM IN CATERING

[BIZ: Hasselt, January 16]

LRM, the Limburg (B) Development company, is investing EUR 150,000 of its BIZ Capital fund in the Genk company, Delicatesse Catering. The money is necessary to enable the company's growth and the required investment. Delicatesse Catering is going to concentrate on the sale and production of ready-to-eat meals for homes, schools and the institutional sector. The company employs 13 and expects to create another ten jobs.

(Source: zi-biz)

<http://www.lrm.be>

NEW BMW AND PORSCHE GO CONTI

[IND: Aachen, January 15]

BMW is already on the order books for the 2004 production program at the Continental Tire plant in Aachen; as is the production of new safety SSR tire. The new BMW number 1 series will be using the tires from Continental Aachen, as will the number 3 series. Porsche is also ordering its tires from Continental, which will be producing 18 and 19-inch sizes for them. Continental Aachen's Investment program will run into double-digit millions and the plant will continue to employ a workforce of 1360.

<http://www.conti/online.com>

STAR GOES EAST

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Liège, January 15]

STAR INFORMATIC, Europe's leading geospatial technology vendor has announced that it has opened subsidiaries in Prague (Czech Republic) and Rabat (Morocco). These locations will extend the company's direct coverage that already includes Belgium, Luxembourg, France, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. The role of these companies will be to ensure a better proximity service to customers in the Czech Republic and Morocco, to develop the business further in the regions and to establish specific R&D units.

Star Informatic (leading in development and in the French-speaking world) is among the largest European vendors of G.I.S. software packages and applications for utility companies, power and water distribution companies, local authorities, public administration, etc. The Star Informatic group of companies has its headquarters in Liège and has affiliated companies and offices in Paris, Lyon, Mulhouse, Ghent, London, Prague, Rabat and Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The group recently took a majority share in APIC SA (France).

<http://www.star.be>

CONTI-TIRE PRODUCTION RECORD

[IND: Aachen, January 13]

The Continental Tire plant in Aachen has achieved a production record by producing 8 million tires in one year, enough to fill 9,000 trucks. The 255/45 R 18 Conti Sportcontact 2 tire, suitable for speeds of up to 300 km/h, was the one to pass the finishing post. The original Aachen target for 2003 was 7.4 million tires. Looking back we can see that in 1996, Continental Aachen produced 3.7 million tires and in the year 2000, it produced 6.7 million. 'The new record was a result of the whole of the Aachen team demonstrating its flexibility', said Günther Gebhardt, the plant manager. Works Council chairman, Bruno Hickert, was delighted and proud of the team's performance. It strengthens the long-term viability of our location in Aachen, he said.

<http://www.conti/online.com>

INTERPOLIS EXPANDS Q-STAKE

[BIZ: Maastricht, January]

Interpolis Pensioenen has increased its stake of more than 5% in Maastricht parking company Q-Park, on behalf of its retail, grocers' and housing pension funds, to 6.42%. Stakeholders in Q-Park include the ABP, ING Real Estate, RUPA, REAAL Life Insurance, Stichting TKP Pensioen Real Estate Fonds, Delta Lloyd, BHF-Bank and ENTERO.

Maastricht-based, Q-Park is one of the top five on the European parking scene, with parking garages either owned, managed or run in some mixed form. In recent years, its interest in Europe has increased. It has a strong market position in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, England and Ireland. By the end of 2003, Q-Park was running 160,000 parking slots in various European countries with a staff of 1,500.

<http://www.q-park.com/>

MAASTRICHT CONGRESS BUREAU

[BIZ: Maastricht: January]

A new Maastricht Congress Bureau opened in January, as an independent body for the promotion of conferences and meetings in Maastricht and the region. The Director of the center is Marcel Knols. A management agreement has been signed with the Maastricht Tourist Board, of which Mr Knols is also the director. This is to provide a synergy between the two bodies. Research has shown that acquisition in business tourism in the region should have a sharper cutting edge and that a better organizational structure was required for sales. The new bureau is a foundation or trust with an independent chairman, Mr Rob Stevens, four board members including Mrs M.J.Odekerken for the hotels, Mrs M.Roovers for the service providers, Mr Eric Rosier for the MECC and Mr Nico Bos for the University of Maastricht. Management will be in the hands of Marcel Knols. The emphasis will be on the acquisition of business conferences in Maastricht.

<http://www.maastrichtcongresbureau.nl>

MITSUBISHI BORN DISTRIBUTION

[IND: Born, January]

Mitsubishi activities are to expand at Born with an expansion of the distribution center to 30,000 m². This will provide extra employment, in addition to 130 currently working there. There will be space for 26,000 cars and by 2005 this will be 56,000. Mitsubishi sold 108,000 cars in Europe last year and is targeting 300,000 by 2007. The location close by of the Mitsubishi plant at NedCar, where the new Colt is being built, is no coincidence.

<http://www.mitsubishi-motors-europe.com/>

20-YEAR SPA OPERATING LICENCE

[BIZ: Spa, January]

The Province of Liège has authorized the Spa Monopole Company to run a tourist center for thermal and other leisure activities linked to the center of the town via a funicular system. The building will have a surface area of 10,000 m², two swimming pools, each with 95,000 liters, a 67,000-liter Jacuzzi, and other areas for sport, sauna, beauty care, and other spa-related activities.

The Provincial Council had decided to contribute to the intercommunal authority Aqualis at Spa, and make a sum of EUR 247,894 available. This partnership will reinforce the synergies developed with the Province in promoting tourism. The project is part of the Aqualis thermal project.

<http://www.prov-liege.be/>

FEV OPENS NEW US FACILITY

[IND/SCI-TECH: Aachen/Auburn Hills, Mich., January]

Aachen-based, FEV Engine Technology, has opened an additional 37,500-sq. ft. facility that will accommodate the company's expanding services and staff, in response to increasingly heavy customer demand for powertrain and vehicle system-related engineering services.

The new facility will supplement FEV's nearby North American Technical Center in Auburn Hills, which recently completed a 15,000-sq. ft. expansion to add new test cell facilities.

Located at 2046 Brown Rd. in Auburn Hills, Michigan, the new building includes garage facilities and a powertrain/vehicle staging area for FEV's vehicle integration and calibration group as well as state-of-the-art design and simulation facilities for the company's powertrain design staff.

In addition, FEV recently announced the establishment of FEV Test Systems, Inc., a provider of turnkey, integrated powertrain test systems. FEV Test Systems, Inc. will use the site as its North American test facility integration center and corporate offices.

<http://www.fev-et.com>

NEW WAREHOUSE FOR SOBELVET

[BIZ/LIFE-SCI: Seraing, January]

The veterinary distribution center Sobelvet, established in 1993, which distributes veterinary products pursuant to the law to those who are entitled to have them, has bought 5,000 m² back from the SPI+ and they are going to build a new 700-m² warehouse. They have increased their revenues by ten per cent and 18% of the revenues are earned via the Internet site, which is an excellent performance, according to Pierre Van Temsche, quoted in *Gagner & Réussi'*. Sobelvet fills 450 orders a day, deals with 6,000 products, of which 3,800 in stock. They have annual revenues of EUR 17m with a staff of 29. Sobelvet belongs to the Alcyon Group, which is the leading European center in terms of revenues and the number of veterinarian shareholders. Clients include 3,500 French vets and the French market itself represents EUR 900m.

<http://www.sobelvet.be>

EUROPEAN PHOTONICS

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Aachen/Paris, December 29]

EPIC, the European Photonics Industry Consortium was founded December 29 by five European companies that are major players in the photonics marketplace. They are: AIXTRON AG, Cambridge Display Technology Ltd, OSRAM Opto-Semiconductors GmbH, Philips Lighting BV, and SAGEM SA.

EPIC was developed by the OPTIMIST coordinating program of the EU's IST-5 framework research program. EPIC's objective is to achieve sustainable growth for European optoelectronics industries by bringing together the three important photonics sectors: Manufacturers of fabrication equipment, component manufacturers and users of photonics components and systems.

EPIC will develop and maintain the technology roadmap for photonics technologies that are critical for the development of European industries. This roadmap will be a basis for its discussions with the European Commission for the design of R&D programs that meet the needs of European business.

<http://www.epic-assoc.com>

TRIANEL EUR 11M SHARES

[BIZ: Aachen, December]

Trianel, the Meuse-Rhine-based European energy trading company, has added 11 new partners to its business. There are currently 46 partners and 40 associated partners in the Trianel group. The following were the most recent to join: Stadtwerke Unna GmbH, Stadtwerke Lemgo GmbH, Stadtwerke Schäbisch Hall GmbH, Stadtwerke Detmold GmbH, Stadtwerke Herford GmbH, Stadtwerke Soest GmbH, Stadtwerke Lengerich GmbH, Stadtwerke Georgsmarienhütte GmbH, Stadtwerke EVB Huntetal GmbH, Stadtwerke Speyer GmbH and Teutoburger Energienetzwerk eG. This brings the shareholders capital of Trianel to EUR 11m. On the energy front, the company has also started to supply Continental AG with gas in addition to electricity. Since the beginning of the new gas economic year on October 1, 2003 this has added 42 GWh of gas, and 50 GWh of electricity, as of January 1, 2004. Trianel has also launched a new informative website. <http://www.trianel.com>

Logistics and Infrastructure

EUR 13.92M FOR HERKENRODE

[INFRA: Hasselt, February 14]

The Flemish government has released EUR 13.92m for a project to refurbish the historic 12th century abbey of Herkenrode. The funding will be via the Limburg (B) Development Company, LRM. The site will be used for tourism. In recent years, old fruit trees have been planted in the area and highland cattle graze there. The tithe barn has also been completed restored. By 2010 the factors house will be a reception and souvenir center. The horseboxes will be changed into exhibition areas and there will be shops for organic products with 'wellness' and catering facilities. The tithe barn will also serve as a conference center.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

TGV CARGO?

[LOG: Liège, February 14]

Despite the caution expressed by Minister Johan Van de Lanotte in an article by Thierry de Gyns in *La Libre Belgique*, a recent university study demonstrated both the feasibility and economic viability of a high-speed rail cargo network in Europe. Liège and Paris could be first in the race and a model for others. In the long term, the project could link other platforms for the major players in the express courier business. At the present time, there is only one high-speed cargo train in Europe, the TGV mail train, which has been running between Paris and the South East of France for 20 years (to stations between Dijon and Avignon)

<http://www.liegeairport.com>

HASSELT UNIVERSITY

[INFRA: Hasselt, February 6]

The Limburg (B) University Center in Diepenbeek has been renamed University of Hasselt. There was dissatisfaction with the use of the word center, which seemed to qualify the term university and universities generally bear the name of the towns where they are located. Hasselt was thought to mean more than Diepenbeek or Limburg. An objective is eventually to develop with the University of Maastricht and the tUL, ending up as the University of Maastricht-Hasselt.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

GIS GET TOGETHER

[INFRA: Maastricht, February 4]

A major conference was held at Government House in Maastricht with as its theme 'Information without frontiers'. It was concerned with the development of a knowledge infrastructure to support cross border projects. Because Limburg is a border province, and attaches a great deal of importance to international cooperation, the provincial government wants to exchange data, knowledge and experience across borders and make this information accessible for the citizenry and business. GIS, which involves the linking of statistical and geographical information often gathered by satellite, is a hot issue in local government at present. The most important conclusion of this afternoon was that the development of an international knowledge network. Topics such as the countryside and the environment, water, planning, etc. do not end at the frontier and demand cross border harmonization. By linking international databases, administrative obstacles can be removed. Clear transfrontier information forms the basis for real cooperation.

<http://www.limburg.nl>

ESSERS TAKES PART OF EUTRACO

[LOG: GENK, February 2]

The Genk-based Essers logistics group is taking over part of the activities of the Eutraco group in Roeselare. This relates to transport and logistical installations of Châtelet (12,000 m²). Eutraco will be viewed as a sister company and continue under its own name. (Source: Truck & Business)

<http://www.essers.be>

LED TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN AACHEN

[INFRA/SCI-TEC: Aachen, January 17]

The city of Aachen has started to implement a system of LED light emitting diode traffic lights in the city. A total of EUR 1.3m was required to change the lighting systems and the state of North Rhine Westphalia paid 75%. The work was carried out by the Dohmen Company from Ubach-Palenberg; construction was headed by the Aachen engineering bureau Günther Gessenich and the city engineer Karlheinz Ophey.

<http://www.aachener-zeitung.de>

TRANSPORT MATHIEU

[LOG: Eupen, January 17]

Transport Mathieu, which achieved revenues of EUR 10.5m last year with its 51 drivers and 11 employees, did 60% of its business in Germany, 20% in Italy, 15% in France and 5% in Spain. It has 67 trucks and is moving to a new building on a 33,000 m² site in Eupen. There will be a 5,000 m² warehouse (half storage half logistics), a one-story office building and a state-of-the-art double truck wash area. Within three months a further 5,000 m² warehouse will be ready for its clients. Only half of the existing office area will be used by Mathieu, leaving some space for others. New high quality software is also being employed for the accounting and transport planning system.

<http://www.grenzecho.be>

EUROREGIONAL STATISTICS

[INFRA: Maastricht, January 18]

The Meuse-Rhine Euroregion intends to set up its own statistical bureau. The objective of this is to provide as much statistical information on the three border areas as possible. This was made public by the Limburg department of Knowledge and Strategy to the provincial committee on General Affairs. The statistical information center is an initiative of five partners in the Euroregion: the provinces of Belgian Limburg, Netherlands Limburg, Liège, Belgium's German-speaking community and the Aachen region. The national statistical services in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany only have national data, but as the Euroregion is increasingly putting itself forward as a unity, Euroregional information is required. On the Dutch side, the Chamber of Commerce for South Limburg and the LIOF are aware of the absence of data and, when they try to attract foreign companies with the concept of the Euroregion as a growth area, they do not have the required data.

<http://www.limburg.nl>

LIEGE BUSINESS SCHOOL FOR 2005

[INFRA: Liège, January 16]

The University of Liège and the Institution for Higher Commercial Studies HEC are joining forces to set up a business school, which will be called the Ulg-HEC Management School, to start in 2005. It is expecting 2,500 students and will be cooperating with universities like Maastricht, Luxembourg and Nancy.

<http://www.lesoir.be>

EUR 800M FOR DIRTY WATER

[INFRA: Hasselt, January 9]

The 23 Limburg (B) municipalities are going to hand their drains over to Interelectra, the inter-communal utility. The waste water rates will amount to EUR 58.8 per average family. On the basis of this contribution, Riolim will maintain the drains. Riolim is the name of the arm of Interelectra that will be responsible for the new project, which covers the municipalities of Alken, Bocholt, Bree, Dilsen-Stokkem, Gingelom, Halen, Ham, Hasselt, Heers, Herk-de-Stad, Heusden-Zolder, Houthalen-Helchteren, Kinrooi, Kortesseem, Lanaken, Leopoldsburg, Lummen, Nieuwerkerken, Overpelt, Peer, Sint-Truiden, Zonhoven and Zutendaal. By 2005, a European Directive has ordained that every drop of wastewater has to be purified. Flanders has asked that this be deferred to 2008. The municipalities have calculated that EUR 800m has to be invested to reach the water quality standard required. They have decided to give this business to Interelectra, which also runs the gas and electricity and cable networks. As the organization is an inter-communal utility, the municipalities will continue to be able to make decisions about their own drains. Their business will not suddenly be passed on to a private company.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

5 B737-300 AIRCRAFT FOR TNT

[LOG: Amsterdam, January 8]

The mail express and logistics company TPG NV has announced plans to introduce a further five Boeing 737-300 aircraft to its European air network, via its TNT express division. This follows the successful introduction of the first B737 in June and the second in the first week of December [presumably at Liège]. The aircraft will be leased for five years by TNT Airways from GE Aviation Services and will replace chartered aircraft currently operating in the TNT air network. The aircraft will be converted to full freight capability and will have a payload of 16.5 metric tons.

<http://www.tnt.com>

VOS TAKES OVER ADDED LOGISTICS

[LOG: Genk, January]

Added Logistics, the Genk specialist in tanker transport of chemical transports to Italy, Spain and the U.K., has been taken over by the Dutch Vos group. The name of the company will be changed to Vos Added Logistics and Genk will be the base for the development of all intermodal tank and bulk transport for the Vos Logistics group. Added Logistics generated a turnover of EUR 25m in 2003 and employed 50. The Vos group has 3,000 trucks and achieved a turnover of EUR 600m in 2003. The objective of the company is to organize more transportation flows by rail and water.

(Source: Truck & Business)

<http://www.voslogistics.com/>

FAVINI CONTRACTS BURGERS

[LOG: Meerssen, January]

Favini, the Italian-based special paper company, which has taken over mills in Meerssen and Apeldoorn, has contracted out its logistic activities to Burgers for three years. This includes storage of 10,000 pallets. In addition to various branches in Apeldoorn, stocks will be held at various distribution centers belonging to Burgers.

<http://www.favini.com>

Life Sciences and Sci-Tech

IONIC LEADS GLOBAL SDI

[SCI-TECH: Liège, February 27]

Vincent Dessard, IONIC Software Sales Director and Belgian ISO Delegate to the UN, presented IONIC's cutting-edge technology, products and projects during the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure 7th International Conference (GSDI 7) held in Bangalore, India. IONIC Software is the leading developer of geospatial solutions committed to following open and international standards (OGC and ISO).

Over 400 delegates including 115 international delegates from 36 countries attended the Conference, which was opened by Dr K Kasturirangan, MP of the Parliament of India and former chair of the ISRO, the Indian Space Agency, on February 2, 2004. Dr.

Kasturirangan was recently awarded the "Man of the Year" by the Centenarian Trust Foundation for his endeavors in the promotion of geospatial technologies.

At GSDI 7, IONIC Software demonstrated an interoperable Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) between web services in the USAID's GISD program using an IONIC RedSpider Studio-based client created with the United Nations. The demo focused on IONIC's support of OGC-based technology, such as Web Map Service (WMS), Web Feature Service (WFS), Web Coverage Service (WCS) and Geography Markup Language (GML) and ISO19115 Metadata. The IONIC RedSpider product line is the first commercial solution to create an interoperable SDI based on standard international specifications. In support of the advancement in world-wide SDI-building, Dr. Kasturirangan said, "Spatial Data Infrastructures will ultimately emerge as a major driver for impetus to development activities and also enable the emergence of an information business sector that will promote economic and commercial activities."

<http://www.ionicsoft.com>

CELLS AT WORK II

[LIFE-SCI: Maastricht, February 24]

May 12 and 13, Life Sciences Limburg is organizing 'Cells at work II', a conference and international business-partnering event at the MECC in Maastricht.

New clinical applications for cells at work are discussed under the headings of: imaging technology, cardiology, and oncology. Among the lectures are: "The Glass Patient: transparency by imaging" by Professor Bart ter Haar Romeny; "Molecular imaging: an essential tool for drug targeting" by Dr. Leonard Hofstra and "Treatment of atrial fibrillation by new life sciences techniques" by Professor Maurits Alessie.

Biohart Inc, from the US, another visitor, is concerned with the development and commercialization of cell-base products for the treatment of cardiovascular disease. The topic includes cell turnover and immune cell activation in the control of plaque progression and phenotype in Atherosclerosis. There will also be lectures on innovative implants produced by autologous praedipocytes (among the precursor cells) in textile fiber fleeces, recombinant immunotoxins in oncology, and a great deal more. For further information, refer to the website.

<http://www.heartbeatineurope.org>

EUROPE'S SUPERCOMPUTER

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, February 19]

IBM this week delivered Europe's largest supercomputer; a 1,312-processor cluster based on 41 of the company's p690 servers, to Germany's Research Center Juelich, one of Europe's leading scientific institutes.

Scientists will be able to access the supercomputer's power and collaborate on projects through the UNICORE grid, the development of which was coordinated by the Research Center Jülich. One of the first areas to benefit from the supercomputer is a project using complex mathematical models to predict the diffusion of harmful materials in soil. Using computer-simulated models, scientists can calculate the flow of water underground and simulate the way in which various harmful substances react with potentially damaging consequences.

Users have access to 60 terabytes of data capacity -- the equivalent of 60 trillion bytes, or roughly 60 million 1,000-page-books. Jülich will be capable of a peak performance of 8.9 teraflops -- the equivalent of 8.9 trillion operations per second, said IBM.

<http://www.ibm.com>

BIOLOGICAL ROLE OF THE THYMUS

[LIFE-SCI: Liège, February 6]

Professor Vincent Geenen of the University of Liège is coordinating a program of research on the thymus. European labs and those from as far away as Quebec and Australia are taking part in the project, which has been awarded a research grant of EUR 0.5m for five years. The project describes how T cell receptor excision circles (TREC) quantification is a powerful and reliable method to evaluate the impact of hormones and endocrine disorders upon thymus function.

Though the thymus constitutes a target organ for most protein and steroid hormones, it has been quite difficult to determine the precise control exerted in vivo by the endocrine system upon thymus function. The biological role of the thymus is to ensure the generation of a diversified population of peripheral T cells able to respond to non-self antigens but nevertheless tolerant to self-antigens. .

(Source:La Libre Belgique)

<http://journals.endocrinology.org>

VITAL EXHAUSTION

[LIFE-SCI: Maastricht, February 5]

Gert Schuitemaker has just completed a Ph.D. thesis on the assessment of vital exhaustion and its contribution to the identification of subjects at increased risk of myocardial infarction in general practice. Vital exhaustion is a much-underestimated risk factor in cardiovascular disease. People, who are vitally exhausted, run an increased risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Characteristics of vital exhaustion are: tiredness, lack of energy, irritability and depression. Thus far, age, high blood pressure, increased levels of cholesterol, smoking and diabetes mellitus were seen as the most important risk of cardiovascular disease.

Vital exhaustion was not included.

<http://www.unimaas.nl>

HIGH RESOLUTION ELECTRON MICROSCOPY

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, January 27]

The Jülich Research Center and Aachen's RWTH University are to establish a national competence center for high-resolution electron microscopy. The center, which will be able to examine materials at the nanolevel, will be called the Ernst Ruska Center for high-resolution microscopy and spectroscopy with electrons and will be located at the research campus in Jülich. The national Competence center will have the most powerful electron microscope in the world. Researchers will be able to develop future technologies like nano electronics. The center is named for Ernst Ruska, the Nobel Prizewinner for physics and the inventor of the electron microscope. The cost of the instrument is around EUR 4m.

<http://www.fz-juelich.de>

STAR ON UK MARKET

[SCI-TECH: Liège, January 21]

Star Informatic, Europe's leading geospatial technology vendor has announced that its subsidiary in the UK, APIC UK, will from now on act as a principal distributor for its successful cartographic publishing software Mercator. Besides business development activities in the UK and Ireland, APIC UK will provide a first class local service to the prestigious Mercator customers, which include Ordnance Survey Great Britain, Ordnance Survey Ireland, Dublin Bus Company, The Royal Air Force, the Automobile Association, Phillip's, etc.

Besides addressing traditional map and atlas publishers, APIC UK, will also target large local authorities, utility companies and governmental bodies, whose daily task involves the production of high quality maps. A specific version of Mercator - MercatorPublish - has been created to meet the needs of such organizations.

<http://www.star.be>

ATRIUM CAMERA CAPSULE

[LIFE-SCI: Heerlen, January 19]

The video capsule endoscopy, or camera capsule, is a revolutionary discovery in the area of small intestine research. Since the end of last year, the Atrium medical center, as the first hospital south of the rivers in the Netherlands, has this equipment. The patient swallows a tiny disposable capsule scarcely 2 ½ cm in length and 1 cm across and this finds its way to the small intestine. When it arrives it transmits photos to a recorder that can be viewed by the specialist.

<http://www.atriummc.nl/>

GIANT MICROSCOPE FOR AACHEN U

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, January 9]

A large-scale scanning electron microscope is to be purchased for the University of Aachen to investigate objects up to 70 cm in diameter and 300 kg in weight. The German Research Society is giving EUR 1.63m to the University as one of two locations in Germany, so that research projects on the analysis of surfaces, material fatigue and micro-technical processes in large objects can be carried out.

<http://www.aachener-zeitung.de>

PSIVIDA TO WORK WITH JUELICH

[LIFE-SCI: Perth, January 7]

pSivida recently signed a Licensing Agreement with German research agency Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH for the use of its porous silicon optical mirror technology to develop and commercialize BioSilicon™ optical mirrors as an in-vivo diagnostic device [see Issue 77]. Germany remains a key region of scientific and financial significance for pSivida with the company expecting to undertake further collaborative associations in Germany, particularly in the area of Diagnostics.

pSIVIDA Limited is a biomaterials platform technology company based in western Australia. Following intensive market sector evaluation and product positioning, it has chosen cancer testing as its initial core diagnostic area. The highlights of the strategy include: strong positioning in large diagnostic market sectors, addressable market US\$ 13.1bn and growing, significant advantages over current and planned diagnostic products, strong foundation of knowledge and expertise in GMP manufacture of BioSilicon structures, toxicology, in-vivo biodegradation and safety work conducted through pSiOncology on brachytherapy products.

<http://www.psivida.com.au>

REDSPIDER RECOGNIZED

[SCI-TECH: Liège, January 6]

The OpenGIS consortium Inc. (OGC), which leads the development of geoprocessing inter-operative computer standards, has recognized Liège-based RedSpider Web 3 as OGC Compliant for both WMS 1.1.1 (web map service) and WFS (web feature service) 1.0.0 interfaces. RedSpider Web is the very first product on the market to receive both certifications, compliant with open GIS specifications, which allow the users of RedSpider to implement certified open GIS software architecture in record time and with unequal facility. RedSpider opens the path to inter operability with the diffusion of its spatial data online and, via inter-operability, to finding other spatial data able to produce extremely powerful inter-operable applications.

<http://www.ionicsoft.com>

CABLE NANOTECHNOLOGY

[SCI-TECH: Eupen/Philadelphia, January 1]

Dr. Günter Beyer of Kabelwerk Eupen AG was awarded the Jack Spergel Memorial Award at the International Wire and Cable Symposium (IWCS) 2003 in Philadelphia, for his fundamental research activities on nanocomposites as a new class of flame retardants for polymers and their industrial cable applications. This award is regarded as the most important award in the cable industry worldwide.

http://www.eucabraid.com/images/downloads/dr_beyer_pdf/wac_technolgy_IWCS.pdf