

DOING BUSINESS IN THE EUREGIO MEUSE-RHINE
The newsletter of the Chambers of Commerce of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine

Q2, 2004

Issue 8

May, 2004

Contents:

[Chambers of Commerce](#)

- Export Day at Hasselt
- Liege-Verviers ISO 9001
- Liege-Verviers: other fronts
- Team-building in the desert
- Production planning: Aachen
- Employment contracts online
- Aachen-Maastricht Chambers
- Chamber Cooperation III
- Walloon-Dutch Business Club

- Flanders' Drive Engineering
- Luminus outsources calls
- Solar panels from Limburg
- New Sabic head office
- CMI going strong
- Outlet malls
- PolyOne-Rubber Resources
- Ford invests EUR 700M in Genk
- Grand Bazar in gold leaf
- World's top brewer

[Business and Industry](#)

- NL/NRW Competence Network
- Tongres-East grows
- Grenslandhallen
- Hexagon acquires Thona
- Microsoft-AGIT embassy
- Two for Trilandis
- Sig Combibloc: EUR 100M
- Film and media aachen
- Top technology region
- 'Auto-Mobility'
- Alro's exploding cases
- LRM and Fortis into cheese

[Logistics and Infrastructure](#)

- Port of Liege
- Pan-European Essers
- TNT expands to Turku

[Life Sciences and Sci-Tech](#)

- Atomic imaging and analysis
- Life science lobby
- Ionic's latest redspider
- MUBio cytomegalovirus chip
- Outsourcing lab analysis
- Rosetta+AMOS to meet comet

This project has been made possible thanks to the European Interreg III program for the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, the Région Wallonne (B), the Provincie Limburg (B) and the Land Nordrhein-Westfalen (D).



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.

For more information contact Ardy Assink in Maastricht, tel. +31.432.350.6511, e-mail aassink@maastricht.knk.nl
<http://www.kvklimburg.voka.be>

LIEGE-VERVIERS ISO 9001 CERTIFIED

[COM: Liège/Verviers, April 14]

The merger of the Chambers in Liège and Verviers has led to upgrading in a wide range of activities. This merger is noted as being of benefit to all concerned. Information to members includes a new database system with information on the staff in Liège and Verviers. It is an aid to members of all shapes and sizes in developing their activities and networks. See the information on the website.

<http://www.ccilv.be/Accueil.asp>

LIEGE-VERVIERS ON OTHER FRONTS

[COM: Liège/Verviers, April 14]

The Chambers were also able to report positive results on the environmental permit front where they organized eight conferences on the subject informing 262 businesses about the requirements and another 200 companies benefited from a personal analysis of their own environmental situation and a further 25 requested the Chamber to update their status on the environmental permit.

Further services included a daycare center/crèche for children at Petit-Rechain/Chaineux, part of an initiative of the not-for-profit organization Raids, achieved in partnership with the cities of Herve and Verviers, and others. Thirty-six beds were made available for babies of parents working in the park's businesses. Annual cost are EUR 2,500 for each reserved bed.

The Chambers also upgraded its communications and is scanning incoming mail, which requires it to meet particular formatting instructions - information on which can be found in the CCI communication pack. The activities available via the Chamber are also listed at the website.

<http://www.ccilv.be/Accueil.asp>

TEAM-BUILDING IN THE DESERT

[COM: Liège/Verviers, April 14]

A team including the following members Sophie Grosjean, Nathanaël Ferraioli, Coraline Leclercq, Chantal Polis, Bernard Vicenzotto, Philippe Rousseau, Pierre Moulart and Emile Lepot, representatives of business in the area, spent the period from February 28 through March 5 team-building in the Sahara, taking with them antidotes for snake and scorpion bites, notepads, and the requisite toiletries. They crossed the wasteland by camel, following the desert fauna; and, at lunchtime, after unloading their camels, they prepared their repast in the shade of the sand dunes and even found time to talk about their problems in business. Despite the cold in the evening and even a little rain, the group spent an intense, rich and unforgettable period and emerged, swathed in burnoose cloaks, full of emotion and stronger in purpose as the result of it.

<http://www.ccilv.be/Accueil.asp>

PRODUCTION PLANNING IN AACHEN

[COM: Aachen, March 24]

The research institute for rationalization, in cooperation with CIM GmbH, is organizing the 11th Aachen production planning event on May 5 and 6. This year, the motto is "Best practice ERP".

Production planning and control and enterprise resource planning is concerned with a software-based control system that is not just for the production process, but for the whole business, including finishing, finance, logistics, staff and business. It also goes further, extending to supply chain management and access of customers to in-house information systems (E-shop systems). Further information is available at the website.

<http://www.pps-tage.de>

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS ONLINE

[COM: Maastricht, March 18]

On a special site, the Dutch State Gazette 'Staatscourant' is providing an overview of all collective employment contracts in the Netherlands. One page is available for each agreement listing the parties and the general terms and conditions, which may be downloaded as PDF-documents. There is also a link to the related sites.

(Source: Chamber of Commerce)

<http://www.sdu.nl/staatscourant/cao/caonederland.html>

AACHEN-MAASTRICHT CHAMBERS

[BIZ: Aachen/Maastricht, March 17]

An annual report for 2003 has been drawn up by the Chambers. In the introduction, mention is made of the helpdesks on either side of the border in Aachen, Maastricht and Heerlen. The light train, the Euroregional circle line is also discussed. There are ongoing moves for a closer association, which depend on adjustments in national legislation. Reference is also made to the bicentenary of the Chambers this year and to the proposed legal association between the Chambers and the opportunities offered by the Treaty of Anholt.

Meetings are being held between the presidents; there are public-private activities, an exchange of staff and language courses. Networks are being developed; there are meetings and events, and regional promotion. Planning, the environment, economic reporting, technology transfer. And transfrontier business promotion are also covered, including a Euroregional business platform. Starters, succession in business, business fairs and the issue of shared information sessions are further issues in the report, which is bilingual and available from the Chambers.

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

CHAMBER COOPERATION III

[COM: Aachen/Maastricht, March 11]

Discussions took place between the Chambers and the representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs on March 8 in Aachen and Maastricht and the Ministry had already indicated in October 2003 that it would look favorably on the necessary legal treaty or basic legal changes required for a merger between the Chambers. Similar changes are also required on the German side, to permit the foundation of a cross-border public law institution able to undertake activities falling under public law. This year has also seen cooperation in the area of cross-border vocational training. Members of the Dutch Ministry also had talks with an Aachen company that is interested in training Dutch students using the German model.

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

WALLOON-DUTCH BUSINESS CLUB

[COM: Maastricht, March 10]

An immediately popular Walloon-Dutch Business Club was established on March 10 at Kasteel De Hoogenweerth in Maastricht under the patronage of the Chamber of Commerce of South Limburg and the Liège Exporters Club. The initiative was taken by Bernard Piëtte, the Walloon business specialist at the Maastricht Chamber, who followed former ENCI boss, Jan de Jong and former RTBF Maastricht correspondent Henk Heuberger in giving the background to the project.

The very considerable interest was, in itself, remarkable and more than 130 potential members soon filled the accommodation at Hoogenweerth. Company visits, talks, special interest groups, all passed review in terms of future activities for the club. The issues of language and culture, so often seen as a barrier in the past, were shown to be perhaps a little bit less forbidding than originally thought. 75 participants registered from the Walloon country prior to the meeting.

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

Business and Industry

NL/NRW COMPETENCE NETWORK

[BIZ: Düsseldorf, March 29]

There is to be major support for SMEs in the Netherlands and North-Rhine Westphalia who want to get in touch with one another, or strengthen their relations across the borders. In the second half of April, a major Internet portal is going on line (see the link below). It will bundle the knowledge of 19 advisory organizations on both sides of the border in order to provide SMEs with professional and extensive assistance in tune with the relevant regional situations; ranging from general business information to a response to specific questions. This is one of the central activities of the NL/NRW Competence Network that started at the end of 2003 and by means of which the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia, the Netherlands and the EU want to encourage closer contact in the region and to assist SMEs.

<http://www.inter-ned.info>

TONGRES-EAST GROW

[BIZ: Tongres, March 26]

The 100 hectare Business Park at Tongres-East on the Maastrichtersteenweg is to be expanded by 40 hectares. Currently, 25 businesses are located at the site, which have provided 1,655 jobs in South Limburg (B) between 1997 and 2002. The new extension should be open for business from 2005.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

GRENSLANDHALLEN

[BIZ: Hasselt, March 26]

The new multifunctional hall at the Grenslandhallen will provide space for 16,000. 35,000 m² puts the Hasselt complex into the mid range of European exhibition and conference centers. The surface area of the hall is 22,000 m². It can be used for sport, music and the arts and involve an investment of EUR 11m. In the autumn, a 10,000-m² area will form the site for an indoor "Plopsaland" at the Grenslandhallen. Plopsaland with Kabouter Plop, Samson and Gert and many others will be ready for the public in April 2005. It is expected to draw 225,000 visitors annually.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

HEXAGON ACQUIRES THONA

[BIZ: Eupen, March 22]

The Eupen-based polymer group Thona, with production facilities in Belgium, the Czech Republic, the US and Canada is to be acquired by the Swedish-based engineering technology group Hexagon; the deal to close April 30. Hexagon is today, via its business area Hexagon Polymers, the leading supplier of polymers in Europe – It also owns GFD Tecnology in Hückelhoven-Baal in the Aachen Region. Thanks to the acquisition of the Thona Group, Hexagon will become the leading supplier in the world. The Acquisition will bring substantial synergies in production as well as raw material sourcing.

The Thona Group is technically advanced and has the capacity to manufacture both rubber as well as TPE compounds. It supplies many of the top automotive and electrical appliance manufacturers. The Group has a Sales turn over of approximately EUR 100 m. per annum and employs 270 employees.

<http://www.hexagon.se>

MICROSOFT-AGIT EMBASSY

[BIZ: Aachen, March 22]

Dr Götz-Philipp Brasche, program director of Aachen's European Microsoft Innovation Center (EMIC) and Victoria Appelbe, head of AGIT's regional marketing department, will both be representing the Aachen technology region at an international conference. The conference, "Foreign investment in the new Europe", will be held in Berlin March 23.

Dr Brasche will be the principal speaker and inform the audience about the choice of Aachen as the location for Microsoft's innovation center. EMIC has been in Aachen since 2003 and opens officially in 2004.

AGIT's objective at the conference is to emphasize the advantages of the Aachen region as a highly quality location for both research and development and for logistics and services. Victoria Appelbe says the location of the Taiwan company Quanta and Microsoft in Aachen give a clear indication of the region's attractions. "The principle target group for us at this conference are the business consultants that support international business in its choice of location," says Ms Appelbe. The more than 100 participants at the conference, include, in addition to the world of consultancy, other global businesses, like EasyJet and Oracle, EU regions and the new member states.

<http://www.agit.de>

TWO FOR TRILANDIS

[BIZ/IND: Heerlen, March 19]

In the near future, two new companies are setting up shop at the Trilandis business park in Heerlen, close to the German border, where its location on the highway provides added logistical value.

The first company is Flowlight, is should open at the end of April. The company comes from Ulestraten and was established in 1985. Flowlight produces double-skin roof lights, the top sheet of which has a long-life colorfast film and a bottom sheet, a film that decreases permeability. Both sheets are made of fiber glass-reinforced polyester. The top sheet is a UV barrier and the light transmission, at 71% has good light dispersion qualities. It is used in industrial construction in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Germany.

The other company for Trilandis is Karnevalswierts, which expects to have a new 7,000-m² distribution center and office operational at the beginning of 2005. The new distribution center brings other centers on the Beitel site together and will be distributing Carnival accessories and party goods. It is also opening a shop at the Loon shopping center in Heerlen in June 2004. Karnevalswierts has two megastores in Cologne and Würselen (G). 25 People will work there.

<http://www.heerlen.nl>

SIG COMBIBLOC INVESTS EUR 100M

[BIZ: Linnich, March 18]

The Sig Combibloc group is one of the world's leading manufacturers of carton packaging for fresh and long-life food products, including beverages, soups, sauces and deserts. At the same time, it is a system supplier of the corresponding filling machines. The company's HQ is at Linnich near Aachen. To meet the great demand, additional carton production units are being built in Wittenberg and Linnich and in Riyadh, Saudi-Arabia.

In addition to increasing shift work, approximately EUR 100m will be invested in the German production sites in Linnich, with three production plants, and in Wittenberg, with one. The board of directors of the company recently approved another coating plant in Linnich. This decision was mainly driven by the expected volume requirements and Linnich's central location. While coating in Linnich can be processed locally and supplied to other SIG Combibloc plants; the investment requires the construction of a new production building. The new coating plant is planned to start up in early 2006.

<http://www.sigcombibloc.com>

FILM AND MEDIA AACHEN

[BIZ: Aachen, March 18]

An association for film and media Aachen, FiMeA e.V. has been established at the Aachen Chamber of Commerce with 21 founder members. The objective of the association is to bundle and structure businesses in the film and media sector in Aachen and to promote the sector, its marketing and presentation on a shared platform.

In the context of performances, lectures, exhibitions and workshops etc, the association will be a presence in the region and allow its members to contact other networks, business, institutions and education. In the founding year, the principal activities will be the presentation of its members and their high quality competence on a shared Internet platform; the acquisition of further members and the planning and holding of two networking events.

Aachen was the first cited as a media location in 1999 as a result of an initiative by the city and the Chamber of Commerce and publication of a catalogue called "Immer im Bild" (always in the picture). This led to another association "Branchentreff Film und Medien" in 2003 and an intention to develop a Euroregional network for all film and media organizations in the region with its headquarters in Aachen. The first step in this direction is the foundation of this group.

<http://www.locationnrw.de>

TOP TECHNOLOGY REGION

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Eindhoven, March 17]

The mayors of Eindhoven, Aachen and Louvain met recently in Eindhoven to sign a declaration of intent on cooperation and the bundling of the knowledge and resources of the three city regions. The focus is on IT and its integration in mechanical, chemical and biomedical systems.

Mayors Alexander Sakkers (Eindhoven), Jürgen Linden (Aachen) and Louis Tobback (Louvain) want to develop the Eindhoven-Aachen-Louvain region into a new European top technology region. In each of the city regions, there is a great deal of complementary knowledge and skill available in the areas concerned. The mayors want business from SMEs to big business and the knowledge centers to be closely related in this program. The Eindhoven-Aachen-Louvain region also wants to attract talent, in the form of: foreign researchers, exchange university staff/students and to acquire foreign business and/or knowledge institutions. They want to create a multi-cultural innovative ecosystem, to create a seedbed for renewal and provide optimal conditions for contact and the exchange of knowledge. Physical and virtual access to the region will also be upgraded. In the first instance, a small number of working groups in Eindhoven-Aachen-Louvain will develop programs and, within 6 months, they want to have a joint program ready. Mayor Alexander Sakkers said, in signing the document, that he hoped that Maastricht, Liège and Hasselt would also participate at a later stage and that he hoped that European funding would be available to support concrete cooperative projects.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

'AUTO-MOBILITY'

[IND: Liège, March 16]

The automotive industry is of great importance to Belgium and the Walloon country has its own cluster of automotive activity that was launched in June 2001. Currently, 16,000 people are employed in the Walloon country in this industry producing revenues of EUR 4.5b, more than half of which, EUR 2.78b, goes for export. The importance of the sector is crucial. A driving force in the cluster is now provided by René Fabry, an automotive specialist and economist. He was born in Louvain, but is a native of Liège and Visé. He is the chief of the 'auto-mobility' cluster and he has run FEBIAC, the Belgian federation of the car and two wheeler industries for 9 years.

Currently, the cluster is developing a focus on innovation. It has taken the initiative in industrial products and is collaborating with Forem and the development center for automotive competence, located close to the Spa Francorchamps circuit, which is to become operative within a few months. There will be programs in high technology provided by the University of Liège, which has an automotive chair, and by their German partner, the 'Institut für Kraftfahrwesen' (Ika) in Aachen.

(Source: Athena 199)

<http://www.clusterautomobilite.be>

ALRO'S EXPLODING CASES

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Dilsen-Stokkem, March 16]

The Alro group from Dilsen-Stokkem, specialists in the surface treatment of trucks and passenger vehicles, has taken over the Brussels company, IQ Sec from Group 4 Securitas. IQ Sec, a wholly owned subsidiary of Group 4 Securitas, is, with FN (Herstal), the owner of a patent on intelligent systems for cash-in-transit companies for a security solution, using a screen-printed polyester security film onto which a silver-ink circuit is printed. The highly sensitive film has a two-component, polyester material that forms a protective closed-loop circuit around the security box. The film was specifically developed to detect attempted security box violations.

Although the box and the film are housed within a polyurethane outer casing, any attempted violations will result in an open-circuit contact that triggers a destructive sequence using a high-intensity pyrotechnics. The Alro group has decided to improve the product and make it suitable for further applications. It wants to turn this Belgian product into an international standard with the knowledge center in Lanklaar. Last year, the Alro group produced revenues of EUR 130m and employed 1,000.

(Sources: Zi-Biz & <http://www.electronicstalk.com>)

<http://www.alro.be>

LRM AND FORTIS INTO CHEESE

[BIZ: Hasselt, March 12]

The Limburg (B) Development Company LRM and the investment company Fortis Private Equity have taken 72% of the shares of the Halen cheese manufacturer De Kaasbrik. A major part of the buy-out was financed by own capital. Kaasbrik currently employs 15 and produces 4,000 tons of cheese annually. Last year it achieved revenues of EUR 10m. It wants to expand its staff to 30 and double production volumes.

<http://www.lrm.be>

FLANDERS' DRIVE ENGINEERING

[IND/SCI-TECH: Lommel, March 12]

Flanders' Drive Engineering Center in Lommel is going to increase the options for the outsourcing of product innovation and development in the automotive sector. It has just opened its advanced engineering center with a focus on the reliability, sustainability and product quality of automobile, sub-systems and components. It offers outsourcing options, including co-development, co-design and even co-assembly. It has the most advanced design and simulation equipment and a new infrastructure which comprises state-of-the-art test benches. It also has access to the Ford test track in Lommel.

Technological evolutions and convergence in the area of mechanics, electronics, mechatronics, telematics and intelligence systems are a must in today's industry. Facilities at Flanders Drive include: 800 m² of office space; 3000 m² of labs and test benches; full vehicle shaker in a climate-controlled chamber (-40°- 60°C) with sunlight simulation; with 6 degrees of freedom; general fatigue test with a broad range of actuators (which can also be used as an exhaust test bench); 1000 Hz dynamometer for functional tests; advanced (mobile) data acquisition systems.

Funding: EUR 8.9m from the Flemish government, EUR 3.07m from EFRD, EUR 2.94m from the Province of Limburg and the founding members contributed EUR 1.5m.

<http://www.flandersdrive.be>

LUMINUS OUTSOURCES CALLS

[BIZ: Hasselt, March 10]

Luminus, the power utility, 50% of which is owned by the British utility Centrica, is to outsource its call center to the Hasselt company Call-IT, itself a subsidiary of the Dutch Exchange-quoted United Services Group. Call-IT-Luminus has 100 positions, which are manned by 120 permanent and temporary agents to provide services for Luminus.

(Source: ZI-BIZ)

<http://www.luminus.be>

SOLAR PANELS FROM LIMBURG

[BIZ: Wijnandrade, March 9]

Eric Pelzers writes in 'Dagblad De Limburger' that there are plans to set up a production facility for solar panels in South Limburg. The plant is expected to be operational in 2005 and to employ 50 and at a later stage some 200. The initiative has been taken by Mr Boxhoorn, former director of the solar energy division of Shell. Potential locations are Sittard, Maastricht Aachen Airport or Avantis in Heerlen. According to Mr Boxhoorn, LIOF is interested. He himself ran the Shell solar panel plant in Helmond from 1996 – 2000, when it was taken over by a foreign producer. Mr Boxhoorn believes that he can produce at 10 – 20% cheaper than the current rate.

<http://www.limburger.nl>

NEW SABIC HEAD OFFICE

[BIZ: Sittard, March 8]

Saudi-based, Sabic Petrochemicals has commissioned the architect Philip Vencken, of the international architectural firm of Aukett, to build its new European head office in Sittard. The building will cost between EUR 35 and 40m and will be 11 stories high, with space for 450 people. The 11,000 m² ground floor will probably be open to the public with space for receptions, exhibitions, etc.

The location is on the Bergerweg, near the Fortuna office center, and the building should be completed in 2006. It will be built on a slant and be largely transparent. The municipality of Sittard-Geleen and the Province of Limburg will be contributing to the cost of the new office. The municipality has put EUR 4.2m on the table and the province EUR 1m.

<http://www.limburger.nl>

CMI GOING STRONG

[BIZ: Seraing, March 5]

Two years after its severance from Cockerill Sambre, CMI, Cockerill Mechanical Industries, would appear to be doing well. Involved in the steel, energy and defense, industries, the group currently employs 2,000, including 1,200 in Belgium, and has global revenues of EUR 320m. It concluded 2003 with a positive result for the third year in succession. The company is developing its presence abroad with branches in Peking, Singapore, Australia and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. It has also just signed a contract for seven years, worth EUR 50m, to look after the global maintenance of a new Arcelor steel site at San Francisco Do Sul in Brazil. This involves multidisciplinary maintenance and leading a team of 50 under its own banner. Source: Le Soir)

<http://www.lesoir.be>

OUTLET MALLS

[BIZ: Maasmechelen/Liège/Verviers, March 4]

In Maasmechelen, the outlet mall would appear to be doing well and they are hoping for 90 outlets by 2004. They attracted 2 million visitors in 2003. By way of comparison, Daniel Conraads in Le Soir points out that in Liège, the Belle-Ile center, which has close to 90 retail outlets, had received 8 million visitors per annum. In the meantime, the new outlet center scheduled for Verviers, the project which is a joint venture between RAM Eurocenter and Blaton et Moury, has not yet taken off, although the decision is due to be taken very shortly. These developments always cause concern among local downtown retailers.

<http://www.lesoir.be>

POLYONE-RUBBER RESOURCES

[BIZ: Maastricht/Cleveland, March 4]

PolyOne Corporation and Rubber Resources B.V. have announced that PolyOne's Elastomers and Performance Additives Group has signed an exclusive agreement with Rubber Resources to sell and distribute its recycled rubber products in the US, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

End-use applications for Rubber Resources' Ecorr® RNR Natural Rubber Reclaim, Ecorr® RBR Butyl Rubber Reclaim and Ecorr® RNM Powders are in the automotive industry and includes tires, sealing, hoses, mats and molded interior parts. Additional applications include flooring, conveyor belts, cable bedding compounds and shoes. PolyOne's sales effort will be directed by Glenn Thurman, director of tire and toll services for PolyOne's Elastomers and Performance Additives Group and supported by Sheila Fortner, customer service representative.

PolyOne's Elastomers and Performance Additives Group produces proprietary synthetic and natural rubber compounds and prepared rubber chemical additives and offers custom compounding services. With headquarters in Solon, Ohio, the group offers approximately 400,000 metric tons of compounding capacity from six manufacturing sites in the US and Mexico.

Rubber Resources, a Vredestein company, is based in Maastricht, and is a worldwide supplier of recycled rubber materials. The company's current recycling capacity is approximately 50,000 metric tons per year. Additional product and service information can be found at the web site.

<http://www.rubber-resources.com>

FORD INVESTS EUR 700M IN GENK

[IND: Genk, March 3]

According to a report in de Tijd, quoted by Zi-Biz, Ford is investing EUR 700m in its factory in Genk. This is EUR 100m more than has originally been planned. The investment is to allow various models to be built on the same production line.

<http://www.tijd.be>

GRAND BAZAR IN GOLD LEAF

[BIZ: Liège, March 3]

The refurbishment of the façade of the old Grand Bazar on the Place Saint Lambert, dating from 1853-1913, in all its gold leaf glory has been completed. The covers were taken off March 2. The restoration of the façade that has listed building status cost EUR 1.7m. In September, the gallery with its 40 new businesses will open.

<http://www.brf.be>

INTERBREW WORLD'S TOP BREWER

[BIZ:Louvain/Sao Paulo/Jupille, March 3]

Interbrew - which owns the Jupille brewery close to Liège - and the Brazilian Companhia de Bebidas Américas (AmBev) are merging to create InterbrewAmBev, the world's largest brewer. InterbrewAmBev will, on a 2003 pro forma basis, have a global market share of approximately 14%, combined revenue of EUR 9.5bn and EBITDA of EUR 2.4bn. This platform, together with the combined group's enhanced financial strength, will enable InterbrewAmBev to leverage three global flagship brands Stella Artois, Beck's, and Brahma, while further strengthening specialty and local brands. It will give the company a major boost on the Latin American market.

<http://www.interbrew.com>

Logistics and Infrastructure

PORT OF LIEGE

[LOG: Liège, March 23]

In 2003, the Autonomous Port of Liège (PAL) achieved the second best results (1.73% down on 2002) since its establishment in 1937. However, closure of the hot rolled steel business will take its toll in 2005, which could lead to a reduction of between 30 and 40% in the tonnage handled, with consequences for the 10,000 port-related employees.

Hope for the future would seem to be invested in Antwerp and the Albert Canal. Antwerp, which is growing by 8 to 9% annually in container traffic has reached saturation point. It is looking for partner and port sites. After a meeting next week, the Liège-Antwerp working group will set up a study of logistical groups organized in the Euroregion, the North of France and of companies with dedicated logistics needs, like Nike and Castorama.

Port Director, Marie-Dominique Simonet is looking forward to this partnership to solve problems. Not only does Liège have the river, but it also has maintenance facilities and a great deal of experience. Currently, an increasing number of companies are looking for waterborne logistical solutions. Last year, 1,000 vessels, a 152 more than in 2002, took on cargo or discharged it in Liège. Minerals, solid combustibles, construction materials and petrochemicals fell in 2003 (-11%), but agricultural products went up by 87%, metal products by 8%, chemicals by 29%, foodstuffs and fodder by 20% and fertilizers by 8%.

157 seagoing coasters (30 more than last year) also used PAL's infrastructures. They came to Liège from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Spain and there are options from Lithuania and Latvia.

The port is preparing for expansion, 90 hectares along the Albert Canal at Hermalle-sous-Argenteau have been acquired by the region which will be added to the 160 acres at Chertal following its decontamination.

Finally, the port of Liège is among Belgium's top maritime ports, after Antwerp, Zeebrugge and Ghent, but ahead of Ostend.

(Sources: la Libre, LeSoir et al.)

<http://www.liege.port-autonome.be>

PAN-EUROPEAN ESSERS

[LOG: Genk, March 16]

Essers, the Limburg transport group is going to join up with the French group Heppner, the Austrian Gebr. Weiss and three German logistics operations to develop a pan-European network in the area of deliveries and groupage. They are working on a pan-European network that will improve the structure of current agreements. The first objective is deliveries, but in the longer term they will extend to logistics. They are also considering other partners. (Source: Zi-Bizz and De Lloyd)

<http://www.essers.com>

TNT EXPANDS TO TURKU

[LOG: Liège, March 1]

TNT Express - the world's leading b2b express carrier- has announced that it is further expanding its European air network, with a dedicated 16-tonne B737 aircraft operating directly between the company's European Air Hub in Liège, Belgium, and Turku airport in Finland from March 1, 2004.

The new daily route will improve delivery times for imports to customers by over two hours and extend collection times for exports - also by two hours - giving TNT a competitive advantage over other express carriers in the region.

TNT operations at Turku airport will be supported by a dedicated ground handling team and a fully operational company-owned warehouse. Prior to opening this new air link, TNT Express serviced Turku and its surrounding area using road connections and uplift from Helsinki airport.

Christian Drenthen, Managing Director, TNT Express worldwide networks said: "The additional air linehaul connection will substantially improve connections between western and central Finland and strengthen TNT's already dominant position in the market."

The new air connection will also enable TNT Express to re-route its aircraft from the Estonian capital Tallinn to Turku, rather than the previous routing through Helsinki. This means a 25 minute improvement on departure times from Tallinn where TNT will now depart 90 minutes later than both DHL and UPS, again further strengthening its competitive advantage.

<http://www.tnt.com>

Life Sciences and Sci-Tech

ATOMIC IMAGING AND ANALYSIS

[SCI-TECH: Jülich, March 26]

Scientists at the Jülich Research Centre have made individual oxygen atoms directly visible with an electron microscope in a certain class of materials, the perovskites. They have developed a technique to correct the unavoidable aberrations in the microscopy, which lead to blurred images in which no individual oxygen atoms can be recognized. The findings were published in "Science" (Science: February 7, 2003). A recent development (Science: March 26, 2004) reveals that the Jülich team is now able to measure the chemical content of the atoms.

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

LIFE SCIENCE LOBBY

[LIFE-SCI: Berlin, March 17]

A German association of life scientists and biomedical groups was established on March 17. The 13 founder members represent around 17,000 life scientists in Germany. The 17 other companies and associations are involved in the foundation process and, during the course of the year, the number of members will expand. Check the website.

<http://www.bio-bund.de>

IONIC'S LATEST REDSPIDER

[SCI-TECH: Liège, March 15]

IONIC Software has announced the latest release of RedSpider Web 3.1, an out-of-the-box, easily deployable, configurable portfolio of OpenGIS compliant spatial web services. RedSpider Web 3.1 includes functionality to build interoperable spatial data infrastructures, in a scalable, robust, and comprehensive product. With RedSpider Web, users can spatially-enable a geo-enterprise system, with minimum impact on their overall IT landscape, cutting months off integration time.

Version 3.1 of RedSpider Web offers extensive advances over the previous version, including full support for the OpenGIS Web Coverage Service specification and a fully transactional Web Feature Service atop both Oracle 10g and ArcSDE. The RedSpider Web now provides full support for the ArcSDE Raster API, offering users the easiest OpenGIS solution for publishing ArcSDE holdings as a Web Map Service (WMS).

RedSpider Web 3.1 now also offers a cascading Web Map Service that can be easily configured to provide views into multiple distributed WMS through a single OpenGIS Context file. IONIC continues its commitment to interoperability in supporting the widest range of OpenGIS interfaces of any product on the market, including (WMS), WFS Transactional, GML Generation, and the newly added Web Coverage Service. In this release, the RedSpider Web offers enhanced support for the OpenGIS SLD portrayal capabilities, along with enhanced SVG support. IONIC has extended its leadership in metadata standards through updated support for ISO19115/ 19139 metadata.

<http://www.ionicsoft.com>

MUBIO CYTOMEGALOVIRUS CHIP

[LIFE-SCI: Maastricht, March 9]

In early March, MUBio Products BV and Pepsan Systems BV made a proposal to Minister Brinkhorst for a feasibility study on the introduction of a new subsidy from SENTER for SMEs. The feasibility study relates to the development of the diagnostic chip for Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infections. MUBio, Pepsan and the University of Maastricht are the first parties who would make use of this subsidy. The Minister signed the proposal for receipt. MUBio is a spin-off from the University of Maastricht.

MUBio Products BV, established in Maastricht, is concerned with the development of safe and effective vaccines for the improvement of the quality of life of cancer patients. This involves the development of vaccines against cancer, but also against virus infections for which cancer patients are particularly susceptible, including CMV.

MUBio has patented proteins for vaccines and technologies for the identification for new cancer-related proteins, which can serve as a basis for cancer vaccines. In order to make the vaccines as safe and effective as possible, MUBio has its own vaccination technology. MUBio finances its R&D projects largely on the basis of income from worldwide sale of antibodies and the establishment of cancer-related contract research.

Pepscan Systems BV is a Dutch biotechnology company, establishment in Lelystad, which uses advanced chemical technologies to detect and reconstruct crucial parts of proteins.
<http://www.mubio.com>

OUTSOURCING LAB ANALYSIS

[SCI-TECH: Sittard, March 3]

Analyte, based in Sittard, is an analytical laboratory founded in 1994, as the application lab for Anatec BV. Initially, Analyte specialized in thermal analysis. However, its range of analytical techniques has become wider, and now covers the processing of plastics, MFI, infrareds, and water analysis. The instruments used are generally developed by Anatec BV.

In the current difficult economic climate, production costs are increasingly under pressure, and investments are being delayed. Sometimes unnecessary risks are taken in purchasing measuring instrumentation to assess product quality. A cheap alternative that is being used by a lot of companies in the plastics sector is to outsource the analysis.

Market research has shown that this arrangement can save money on the purchase of the analytical equipment necessary for quality control, for example, in checking whether recycled material contains impurities. Saving on equipment is not without risk, because the impurities can cause problems on the production line and lead to poor products which cost money.

So an answer is to outsource to a company like Analyte from Sittard, where analyses are carried out by experienced technicians following an ISO 9000 quality system. Information is available at the website.

<http://www.analyte.nl>

ROSETTA+AMOS TO MEET COMET

[SCI-TECH: Liège, March 2]

ESA PR 14-2004, Europe's Rosetta cometary probe, carrying Amos of Liège's project-condition-tested lithium ion satellite batteries has been successfully launched into an orbit around the Sun, which will allow it to reach the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in 2014, after three flybys of the Earth and one of Mars. During this 10-year journey, the probe will pass close to at least one asteroid.

<http://www.amos.be>