

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

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This Newsletter is a common initiative of the Chambers of Commerce of Aachen (D), Eupen-Malmedy-St Vith (B), Belgian Limburg (B), Liège-Verviers (B), and Southern Limburg (NL).

Industrie- und Handelskammer
Aachen



CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

FLIGHTS TO CEBIT

[BIZ: Aachen, January 19]

The Meuse-Rhine Chambers of Commerce are organizing a charter flight from Maastricht Aachen Airport to the CeBIT Fair in Hanover on March 13. This is biggest trade fair for IT and communications technology. There are still seats available at EUR 225. For further information get in touch with Ardy Assink on 31 45 544 9576 or e-mail

aassink@maastricht.kvk.nl.

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

EUREGIONAL BUSINESS LUNCH

[COM: Maastricht, January 19]

There will be a Euregional Business Lunch with a focus on construction and project development in Meuse-Rhine on February 17 at the Radisson SAS Balmoral Hotel in Spa from 10:00 to 14:00. The cost is EUR 90 per person. Get in touch with Mrs. Reiny van Kessel on 31 45 544 9574 or e mail her at rvankessel@maastricht.kvk.nl.

This is an opportunity to develop a network in this area. Within the parts of Meuse-Rhine construction is an important sector and cross border cooperation increases the competitive position of the industry.

During the meeting businessmen and women will speak about their experiences in this sector on both sides of the border. This will be a valuable development in the area of 'contacts to contracts'.

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

BETTER A GOOD NEIGHBOR THAN A DISTANT FRIEND

[COM: Maastricht, January 19]

On April 25 in Roermond, the Chambers of Commerce, in cooperation with Ernst & Young and the Dutch-German Chamber of Commerce in Roermond, will be holding a seminar from 13:00 to 17:00 under the heading 'Better a Good Neighbor than a Distant Friend' for Dutch businesses that are going to do or want to do business in Germany.

During the seminar the opportunities and dangers of the German market will be talked about, and the fiscal aspects of cross-border employment of staff, investment subsidies, and practical experience will all be discussed.

For further information get in touch with Ardy Assink on 31 45 544 9576 or e-mail

aassink@maastricht.kvk.nl.

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

HIGH-TECH TRIP TO BAVARIA

[COM: Maastricht, January 19]

From April 3 through 6, the Chambers of Commerce are organizing a high-tech trade group trip to Bavaria at the request of the Economic Information Service and in cooperation with the Consulate General in Munich, headed up by Mark Rutte as Acting Minister of Foreign Trade.

The objective of this trip is to encourage and support SMEs in the high-tech sector looking for German partners and/or strategic cooperation. In view of the business opportunities in Bavaria, the focus is on the most promising sectors there. This trip is for Dutch companies active in micro-electronics, electronics, IT, biotech/ life sciences and preferably biotechnology and medical devices.

Costs are EUR 500, including travel and lodging expenses. You can register at the website below. For further information and registration get in touch with Ardy Assink on 31 45 544 9576 or e-mail aassink@maastricht.kvk.nl.

<http://www.evd.nl/projecten/duitsland.asp>

FACT-FINDING MISSION TO CHINA

[COM: Maastricht, January 19]

The Chambers of Commerce in Meuse-Rhine are organizing a trip to Shanghai and Guangzhou from May 6 to 14, 2006. This follows up two successful fact-finding missions in November 2004 and May 2005. This trip will be to Shanghai, the Yangtze Delta, and Guangzhou (the Pearl River Delta). During the trip an overview will be given of the developments in the various regions. There will be a range of contacts with organizations, embassies, and businesses. Businesses will be visited and there will also be matchmaking appointments on the basis of a profile of your business that you will submit yourselves.

For more information about this eight-day trip get in touch with Ardy Assink on 31 45 544 9576 or e-mail aassink@maastricht.kvk.nl.
<http://www.maastricht.kvk.nl>

DUTCH-WALLOON BUSINESS CLUB

[COM: Maastricht/Liège, January 19]

Maastricht-Liège: a new eldorado for the hotel business? There will be a visit to the Kruisheren Hotel in Maastricht to determine whether the hotel business be one of the future growth businesses in Maastricht and Liège? In the last month various projects in Maastricht and Liège have been either completed or announced. The Kruisheren Hotel is an excellent example of this. Camille Oostwegel, the celebrated hotelier who set up the Kruisheren Hotel project invested more than EUR 15m into the renovation of this 15th century monastery and church. The opening of the hotel was another giant stride in the development of the Oostwegel Group, which has based its empire on the development of restaurants and hotels in historic buildings, including châteaux.

In Liège - the hotel city of the future - there are various chains. One hotel is going up near Liège Airport and there is another five-star project in the city itself, in mansions of de Sélys-Longchamps and the Comtes de Méan families, which look down over the center of the city from the heights of the Mont Saint Martin.

There aren't enough hotels in Liège but it looks as if the situation is about to change. Deputy Olivier Hamal, in charge of tourism in the province of Liège, will give a talk about the situation of the business in Liège and the prospects for the future.

The Dutch-Walloon Business Club has been a platform for business to meet in south Limburg and the Walloon country over the past two years. The object is to develop contacts between companies in these regions, to strengthen them, and to exchange information. The Business Club meets about five times a year in different parts of both regions. Contact Bernard Piette on 31 45 544 9573 or e mail bpiette@maastricht.kvk.nl.
<http://www.maastricht.kvk.nl>

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

CYCOS UNIVERSAL MESSAGING

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Aachen November 14]

In a comparative test of Session Initiation Protocol, SIP-Compatible Unified Messaging Systems, carried out by the Network Computing magazine, 'HiPath Xpressions' developed by Cycos AG for Siemens was said to have an impressive price/performance relationship. For the test at the Real-World Labs of Syracuse University, NY, three systems were chosen. There are currently few providers of Unified Messaging / Unified Communications solutions that support SIP, the standard technology for Voice over IP - an important Indicator for the future viability of UM/UC solutions and the innovative strengths of the producer.

The assessment noted that Cycos-Siemens' HiPath, which came second, provided excellent integration paths into LDAP-based directories and enterprise message stores and provided the most control over system management and configuration. It added that HiPath should be on anyone's shortlist for UM products, because of its top-flight voicemail-only functionality and conventional UM performance, all at a low price.

Cycos is among the early-adaptors on the production side and is compatible with Open Source IP-PBX 's and new solutions from Linux, Unix und SUN.

<http://www.cycos.com>

NAEBERS AT AVANTIS

[BIX: Avantis, November 14]

The Dutch company Naebers Electro-Techniek from Heerlen is going to move to Avantis, the cross-border science and business park between Heerlen and Aachen. The company maintains and repairs electric motors for the petro-chemical industry, the water business and breweries. The contract for the sale of a 3,500 m2 lot has been signed. Construction will start in May 2006 and the company expects to be operational at Avantis in spring 2007. It will do business both as a Dutch BV and a German GmbH. "This gives us more scope," said the company owner Marcel Naeber.

The Company is looking for new clients in Germany and expect to expand they staff; now 15, by 20. German applicants are welcome. René Sijben, Avantis MD, says: "This new business fits in well with our focus at Avantis on advanced technologies and sustainable energy."

<http://www.avantis.org>

LESS-THAN-DEADLY AT FN

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Liège, November 14]

FN, the Herstal firearms manufacturer and the University of Liège have signed an R&D contract. Thixomolding and the production of less than lethal weapons were then current areas of shared interest. It now appears that there is renewed interest in less-than-lethal weaponry and the Walloon Region is contributing EUR 500,000 to research on the project in which the University of Liège and FN will be associated. [The civil disorder and crowd control markets look more promising than the Congo basin and are probably politically more acceptable. Ed]. A company description of the current FN 303 follows.

The FN 303 is designed to be the premier system for situations requiring less lethal response. Completely dedicated to reduced lethality and liability, the basis of the FN 303 concept lies in its ammunition. The .68 caliber, 8.5 gram projectiles, utilize a fin-stabilized polystyrene body and non-toxic bismuth forward-payload to provide greater accuracy and effective range than other less-than-lethal weapons.

The primary effect of the projectile is trauma, which directly neutralizes the aggressor. In addition, secondary effects from the projectiles can be delivered via a chemical payload depending on mission requirements. Magazines have a capacity of 15 rounds and a clear rear cover to allow for rapid ammunition count assessment.

The compressed air powered FN 303 launcher is designed to fire less lethal projectiles exclusively, with an effective range of 50 meters at a point specific target for law enforcement and a maximum range of 100 meters for military applications. It is made from a durable, lightweight polymer and features comfortable ergonomics and an easy to operate safety. In addition to the flip-up iron sights, the integrated, Picatinny rail can be used to mount red-dot sights or other accessories. An undercarriage version with mounts is available and may be utilized with most tactical rifles. Accessories for the FN 303 include: compressed air bottle; air filling equipment; tactical vest; sling; and carrying case. (Source: RTC Television)

http://www.fnusa.com/contents/II_303.htm

MDS MERGES WITH TOPPOLY

[BIZ: Heerlen/Betten, November 10]

Philips is merging its Mobile Display Systems' activities with Toppoly Optoelectronics from Taiwan. The transaction means that Toppoly will be taking on a debt of EUR 70m. Philips expects the merger to be completed in 2006. Following the transaction, Phillips will have a 17,5% stake in the business, which will be called TPO. Other major shareholders are the Taiwan companies Compal electronics, and UniPresident Enterprises, which will have 25,1% a 3,5% respectively. Phillips put MDS, which develops screens for cell phones into its Other Activities department at the beginning of 2005. These activities were part of the Semiconductor division, and before that of the Components division, which no longer exists. There are positive assessments of the company's options following a sale/joint venture from the analysts. (Source: Novum)

<http://www.elsevier.nl>

ARCELOR/LIEGE U: BIOMIMETICS

[BIZ/SCI-TECH: Liège, November 10]

'New Strategies in Perspective' is the name of a session hold at the Château de Colonster in Liège. Where the largely unexplored field of biomimetics [i.e.: good design based on naturally occurring design phenomena] have been discussed and where an assessment has been made of the new products that could be generated by the encounter between space science and steel technology. This is an attempt to answer the question as to how a metal supports with very high value for biomedical, special, and electronic purposed can be produced.

After signing a partnership agreement in February 2004, Arcelor and the University of Liège have got together to develop new pathways for cooperation in this broad and interdisciplinary area. The objective is to identify innovations likely to lead to new products and to thus contribute to the creation of new business in the region.

Information about this session is available at the website linked below.

<http://www.ulg.ac.be/arcelor>

WOOD PELLETS IN BERTRIX

[BIZ: Bertrix, November 9]

A plant for manufacturing 'wood pellets' is being set up in the municipality of Bertrix and will be operational next year. The pellets are made from waste wood from sawmills, pressed and fired before use. This is an ecologically sound way of dealing with this waste product. A production facility for wood pellets is also planned for the Kaiserbaracke Business Park.

<http://www.brf.be>

EUR 25M 5 STAR HOTEL IN LIEGE

[BIZ: Liège, November 8]

In the faded glory of a splendid ballroom, replete with chandeliers, Pierre-Charles Berryer and Olivier-Noël Martin explained to the press their plan to turn two stately homes, formerly belonging to the aristocracy of the Principality into a EUR 25m five star hotel. The two mansions of de Sélys-Longchamps and the Comtes de Méan families, which look down over the center of the city from the heights of the Mont Saint Martin - in whose church the flower of the Second Estate met a fiery end in the XIV century - a new start will be made.

There will be 120 rooms including: 28 m2 rooms; executive rooms at 35 m2; ten 50 m2 suites; a 300 m2 entrance with bars and a library; an 80-seater panoramic restaurant; a 50 seater gourmet restaurant in the Chinese rooms; a cigar bar; a VIP-club; a business center; eleven conference rooms; a party room to seat 360; a 900 m2 fitness center and parking, including an underground parking garage for 90 cars. Construction is scheduled to start in June 2006; the opening is scheduled for end March 2008.

<http://www.royal-selys.be>

PRIZE FOR KRUISHEREN HOTEL

[BIZ: Maastricht, November 8]

The new Kruisheren Hotel in Maastricht has won the European Hotel Design Award for 2005 in a field of 17 hotels in the Restoration, Rebuilding, and Refurbishment category. Other hotels in the same category were The Cumberland Hotel at Marble Arch, London, the Casa del Mar in Corsica, the East Hotel in Hamburg, the Semiramis Hotel in Athens, the Hospes Amerigo in Alicante, the Malmaison in Belfast and the Mamaison Residence Sulovena in Bratislava (Slovakia). This award has been going for eight years and has become one of the most prestigious in the international hospitality industry. The prize was awarded at a special evening in Old Billingsgate Market in London on November 8.

<http://www.sleep05.com>

GREEN ROOFS

[BIZ: Lummen, November 7]

Green roofs are energy saving, environmentally friendly, economical and also subsidized. The Lummen company Floradak has come up with its version of them. Marcel Eykens of the company lays out green roofs that provide nothing but advantages in respect of energy saving and environmental protection, and these roofs are also subsidized by the Flemish Region. A green roof, in addition to its functional advantages, looks good — instead of gray asphalt there is an attractive green with flowers and butterflies, and the smells and colors. You can walk around on them, or even sit down there, or perhaps have a little pool.

They use mycorrhizal fungi, which have a vital role in revegetation, restoration, reclamation, and sustainable agriculture. Because of the environmental benefits, the Flemish government pays EUR 25-31 per square meter for a three-layer green roof with a total cost price of EUR 30-40 per square meter. They provide excellent insulation, warmth in winter and cooling in summer, and they also have a soundproofing effect.

Check the website.

<http://www.floradak.be>

FORD GENK UNSCATHED

[BIZ: Hasselt, November 5]

According to a report in the Belgian newspaper Het Belang van Limburg, the American automotive giant Ford is going to scrap 2,600 jobs in Europe this year. The worse blows will fall in Cologne and Saarlouis where 1,300 will be lost. The UK will also lose jobs and Ford is intending to scrap 10,000 jobs worldwide. The only plant to be spared will be Ford Genk, where 286 temporary workers are being taken on.

This decision was confirmed by company spokesperson Jo De Clerq recently. Depending on the production prognosis for the new models, new people will be taken on at Genk.

The reason for the restructuring in Europe is the general level of difficulty being experienced in the business.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

FILL HER UP WITH INK

[BIZ: Herzogenrath, November 4]

Refill 24 GmbH, which opened in 2003 is the first ink service station in the Aachen Region. Now there is an InkCorner in Houston, Texas, which fills empty cartridges. Refill 24 has 650 outlets either wholly-owned or franchised, with 337 in Germany. MD Wilhelm Liebertz notes that they achieved revenues of EUR 42.5m in 2004.

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

SOLLAND SOLAR 2

[BIZ: Avantis, November 3]

Solland Solar Energy Holding BV, on the border between the Netherlands and Germany at the Avantis Science and Business Park, started production of its solar panels on November 3, with a staff of 50, with an annual production of 20 megawatts. The building has a 60 megawatt per annum capacity with a second production line and the first line is sold out for five years. In today's booming market this seems the right way to go. As Mr Boxhoorn, the MD, says, he has one of the biggest reactors imaginable in service and it is a fusion operation too - even if it is 93 million miles away. This observation was provoked by the rebirth of an interest in fission. It must also be said that another concern on the solar energy front is the sunshine itself. However, since Limburg is about to exchange its climate for that of Burgundy, from the point of view of wine and sunshine this would appear the place to be.

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here have been some concerns about the cost of photovoltaic cells, but the cost has been falling by 50% per decade. Solar panels are also small enough to fit on rooftops, which brings production and consumption together, cutting out the middleman. With sufficient government funding, it should be possible with mass production and innovative technology to eventually make solar power competitive with coal, natural gas and nuclear power. Then things will really take off.

<http://www.sollandsolar.com>

SERVATIUS BUYS A BREWERY

[BIZ: Maastricht, November 2]

The Servatius housing association has bought the premises of the former De Ridder brewery on the banks of the Meuse in Maastricht from the Heineken group. According to the managing director Leks Verzijlbergh. The company paid between EUR 2–3m for the property.

Servatius will turn the brewery into student apartments, private apartments, and perhaps a housing unit for senior citizens. This was reported in Dagblad de Limburger. Servatius had to increase its initial bid (dating from 2003) by 10% because there were other candidates for the property. Servatius had the right to increase its bid if it was out-bid by another organization.

<http://www.propertynl.nl>

ONCOMETHYLOME RAISES EUR 15M

[BIZ/LIFE-SCI: Liège and Durham, N.C., November 2]

ONCOMETHYLOME Sciences (OMS) has announced the closing of a EUR 15m Series B financing round, led by Edmond de Rothschild Investment Partners, Paris, France. Existing investors ING Belgium, Life Sciences Partners, PolyTechnos Venture-Partners, Meusinvest and Technowal also participated in the round. Raphael Wisniewski of Edmond de Rothschild Investment Partners will join OMS' Board of Directors.

The new proceeds will be used to accelerate the development of ONCOMETHYLOME Sciences' diagnostic and pharmacogenomic solutions for early detection and individualized treatment of cancer. This latest Series B financing round brings the total capital raised to date by ONCOMETHYLOME Sciences to EUR 29.2m. Since its foundation in 2003, ONCOMETHYLOME Sciences has established a solid research and development organization and has built a valuable network of clinical research collaborations with leading oncology institutions and companies in Europe and USA, such as Johns Hopkins University, Fox Chase Cancer Center and EXACT Sciences Corporation.

The Company's broad product pipeline is based on patent protected DNA methylation technology, and spans major cancer indications that include prostate, colorectal, lung and breast cancer. Initial OncoMethylome Sciences products have been partnered for commercialisation with global partners such as Veridex LLC, a Johnson & Johnson company, and Chemicon International, a Serologicals company.

<http://www.oncomethylome.com>

ARDENNES OUTLET CENTER

[BIZ: Verviers, November 29]

The Ardennes Outlet Center, Shopping Mall has opened on December 9. Half of the 10,000m² has already been let. Brands on sale will eventually include Nike, Puma, Gerry Weber, Butch, David Harley, No Excess, Trespass, bianca, Zaza, Zaza trends (Children's clothes), Danish cosmetics, Beauty Zone and VF Jeanswear's: Hero, Lee, Wrangler, Eastpak, Jansport and HIS. Discounts on brands can be as much as 30-60%.

Retailing executive, Etienne Defour had earlier been named as the Center Manager for the Ardennes Outlet Center. (Source: <http://www.netecho.info>)

<http://www.ardennesoutlet.com/news.htm>

ETHIAS ARENA-GRENSLANDHALLEN

[BIZ: Hasselt, November 26]

The Junior Eurovision Song Contest, with its 80m viewer potential in 16 European states, was held in the Ethias Arena at the Grenslandhallen in Hasselt on November 26. The audience of more than 16,000, in the presence of Prince Laurent and Governor Steve Stevaert certainly made an impact guaranteed to reinforce the image of the Limburg brand.

Audiences throughout Europe will also have seen flashes of life in Hasselt, which formed the continuity between the young singing acts. So, it was not only the delightful little winner, Kseniya Sitnik, from Belarus who filled the screen, but also images of the fashion museum, the Japanese garden and surely we must have seen something from the jenever (gin) museum. The show was hosted by Maureen Louys, a Liégeoise living in Brussels, and Marcel Vanthilt, with great aplomb.

Hasselt's exhibition and conference center, the Grenslandhallen, came into use in 1983 but over the past three years it has seen enormous growth. In March, the Ethias Arena, the Plaza, the Studio, and Artist's Foyer were completed and in April 2004 development started on the Plopsa Indoor Hasselt, which is scheduled to open on December 1.

<http://www.grenslandhallen.be>

ICE-TRAINS PREPARED FOR FRANCE

[BIZ: Wegberg, November 26]

Five ICE-trains for the German-French routes are to be upgraded at the Siemens rail test center in Wegberg-Wildenrath over the next six months. These third generation ICE-trains are to be specially equipped. The value of the contract is EUR 43m.

<http://www.wdr.de>

MEUSE-RHINE TRIANGLE BUSINESS

[BIZ/GOV: Liège, November 24]

Mr. Julien Mestrez, Deputy of the province of Liège, gave his consent to the provincial support for the Intereg III project called 'The Meuse-Rhine Triangle'. This is a campaign for the promotion of inbound business investment, and a subsidy for this purpose of EUR 12,553 went to SPI+, the Liège development agency.

Within the context of the Intereg III program, Limburg (NL) initiated the campaign for inbound business in October 2003. This is to attract investors to Meuse-Rhine, which includes Belgian and Dutch Limburg, the German-speaking community in Belgium, the Province of Liège, and the Aachen region. Detailed information on certain sectors were given, including: automotive, logistics, IT, mobile technology, aerospace, the timber industry, innovative production, metallurgy, and the life sciences.

The marketing campaign will be handled by SPI+ in Liège and by the other development agencies. The total cost for the campaign is EUR 468,218 and in 2003 the province of Liège approved the global grant of EUR 55,213.50 to SPI+. This amount was split on an annual basis into EUR 4,125 in 2003, EUR 27,983 in 2004 and now EUR 12,553 in 2005; EUR 10,552.50 remains for 2006.

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

INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE SURVEY

[BIZ/INFRA: Aachen, November 23]

The 2004 Survey of Industrial Real Estate in the Aachen Region was able to cover 45 of the 46 municipalities. For the first time, this provides a survey by lot, using Geographical Information Systems (GIS). A total of 212 industrial/business sites with a net surface area of 5,048 hectares and a reserve of 1,351 hectares were included in the survey. The most striking development compared with the previous year was the clear increase by 24% of the total industrial reserve area. This is primarily due to the municipalities efforts in addition to factors related to the survey such as an increase in the area covered and the employment of a new system.

The immediately available supply of industrial real estate in the Aachen Region (552 ha) was stable in comparison with the previous year. Shortages only arose in three municipalities, and these were solved by cooperation or development. Clear increases were apparent in the region, in areas that could be ready within a period of between two to five years. The short-term available potential at 214 grew by 56%. The area available in the medium-term rose by 459 hectares, by half compared with 2003.

The greater part of the increase was a result of an active policy in the districts of Aachen, Düren, and Euskirchen. The selling price of the land in the region was between EUR 6 and EUR 150 per square meter. The weighted average price level had increased on the previous year from EUR 38 to EUR 41; and, at 37.3 hectares, the total number of lots had reached the size of 2004 (the previous year). The number of sales at 75 (in 2003) fell to 59, so that the number of municipalities who were able to release land fell from 60% to 53%.

The focus of interest was in the district of Heinsberg, as every second square meter that was released was there. However, it should be noted that the Municipality of Heinsberg itself was not included in this. Aachen was in second place and was able to release just a fifth of the land. The districts of Aachen, Düren, and Euskirchen saw a fall in demand of between 57% and 42%.

The major demand comes from the logistics, trading and processing sectors, whereas the year before it was from the construction and housing sectors, which are now less important. Logistics and transport, forwarding and commissioning are at the heart of things. In 2004 every third square meter went to this sector. The average size of the plots in 2004 was a good 6,300m², as against 5,050 m² the year before. This shows an increased demand for larger lots (up to five hectares). Their share rose by 38% and purchase interest in the 0.2 < 0.5 ha segment fell by 41%.

Among the 59 businesses looking for land, nine were truly new and four were from the Lower Rhine area, two from the neighboring Netherlands, and one each from Italy and Japan. (Source: Gewerbeflächen-Monitoring 2004, AGIT mbH)

<http://www.agit.de>

BOMBARDIER

[BIZ: Aachen, November 22]

After a weak 2005 Bombardier, the train builders in Aachen, have seen the light at the end of the tunnel. In an article in the Aachener Zeitung the plant manager Frank Iffländer is positive about the future. In particular, demands for the new Talent, with orders from The Netherlands and the 60 additional four-car Bombardier Talent electric multiple units (EMUs) to be used on regional and commuter services with Austrian railways, provide good future prospects. The plant employs 665 and currently has between 80 and 100 temporary employees.

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

THE LIEGE OFFICE MARKET

[BIZ: Liège, November 22]

International business real estate specialists DTZ note that the City of Liège seems ready to take a second look at a third business park. This prognosis is based on the balance between supply and demand. A supply estimated at 1% in the area of quality office property in the region.

The Liège real estate market has provided evidence of its good health, with the sale of around 50,000m² of office space over the past few months. When the new economic development group GRE had their meeting at the end of October, the speakers came to the same conclusion as that put forward by Christophe Nihon, the general manager of Walloon DTZ, i.e.: that the Liège real estate market is characterized by a major lack of quality office space.

This position is based on a detailed market analysis by DTZ, which reveals only 1% market availability of quality office space and the absence of office space with more than 500m² for immediate access. According to current criteria, 500m² represents the space necessary for a business of just above 25 employees. "We can't meet this demand within a four-month period," says Christophe Nihon.

The demand for office space in Liège, whether it is for business or with a view to conversion to residential properties, borders annually on the 100,000m² mark. "Even if it is obvious that these requests are not always founded on a concrete project, the demand is important and we don't know how to meet it," added Nihon.

This is the reason why the old La Meuse newspaper building and the rue des Guillemins are already partially rented before they're completed. In view of this situation, DTZ is now proposing to build a second or a third business park in Liège. The Val Benoît site, or future Place des Guillemins, would clearly be preferable.

<http://www.dtz.be>

BIOCOAT

[BIZ: Liège, November 19]

The cooperation between the University of Liège and the steel giant Arcelor has produced a new project called BioCoat, which will be headed by Professor Joseph Martial (one of the founders of Eurogentec). It will be examining new methods of coating large steel surfaces with increased added value. It means developing new materials and improving those that currently exist. The project is worth EUR 1.84m, and funding will come from the Walloon Region University and Arcelor. (Source: Patricia del Marmol)

<http://www.lecho.be>

BY CHOPPER TO THE TEFAF

[BIZ: Maastricht, November 19]

The art and antique fair the TEFAF in the MECC in Maastricht, one of the world's leading exhibitions of its type, will be accessible to helicopter traffic from Liège Airport and MAA in Maastricht. TEFAF runs from 10 to March 19, 2006. TEFAF visitors can reserve their helicopter flights through to March 1.

<http://www.limburger.nl>

NEW RADISSON HOTEL IN HASSELT

[BIZ: Hasselt, November 18]

The brand new Radisson SAS Hotel has opened in Hasselt. It is located in one of the biggest towers at the TT Center on Torenplein and has 126 rooms and suites. Guests of the hotel will have access to the fitness club, and the TT Center will provide wireless access to the Internet as well as ample parking. (Source: Het Belang van Limburg)

<http://www.zi-biz.be>

WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES

[BIZ/LEI: Aachen, November 18]

The World Equestrian Games to be held in Aachen from August 20 through September 3, 2006, have already sold 300,000 of the 500,000 tickets and 40,000 tickets have been sold for the final of the dressage. Seats have already sold out for the Western Riding and Horse-borne Acrobatics shows.

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

INDUSTRIAL PARK SALE IN LONTZEN

[BIZ: Lontzen, November 16]

The municipal council of Lontzen has agreed to the planned sale of the industrial park in Herbesthal to the investment company of SPI+, the province of Liège's development company, for a price of EUR 3.5m. The municipality purchased the area in 1999 and it had initially thought of developing a business park itself.

<http://www.brf.be>

LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

LOGISTICAL GROWTH IN AACHEN

[LOG/BIZ: Aachen/Würselen, November 7]

Logistics is becoming increasingly important in the Aachen region. Almost every third square meter sold in 2004 went to the logistics sector. In the district of Aachen alone, there are 86 transport and logistics companies, 13 of which are based in Würselen. Quadrimodal logistics (air, land, rail and water) is the decisive element in the choice of location. A market of 161m customers can be accessed within a day's trucking distance. The Ünsped Group, with its headquarters in Istanbul, has chosen Würselen for its hub and will organize its European supply chain from there. "After the decision had been taken," said Sezgin Baki, the manager of Ünsped Group in Germany, "we had to move rapidly. As a result of prompt cooperation with AGIT (the Aachen Development Company) and with development companies in the Aachen district and Würselen it was possible to select a new location within two weeks."

In the first year, Mr Baki is intending to create five jobs and depending on the economic situation there will be up to 20 in the intermediate term. The company employs 5,000 in Turkey.

<http://www.agit.de>

HELIPORT FOR LOMMEL

[BIZ/LOG: Lommel, November 17]

The City of Lommel is planning to develop a heliport at its Maatheide business park. Test flights have been planned to assess the effects of the heliport on the environment. Those taking the initiative for the heliport want to specialize in checking gas pipelines and package delivery. They will also be able to carry out ambulance services. They are working closely with Paramount Helicopters from Diest.

Various permits are required; but, before the land is sold, the City of Lommel wants to check on the proposed flight plans and determine whether these have any negative effects.

<http://www.hbvl.be>

LIFE SCIENCES AND SCI-TECH

25% BASIC PHARMA STAKE

[LIFE-SCI: Roermond, November 15]

Limburg Ventures is taking a 25 % phased stake in the share capital of the Basic Pharma Group BV. Basic Pharma is an independent pharmaceutical company in the Netherlands, with three business units: Basic Pharma Manufacturing BV, Basic Pharma Technologies BV and Interdos Pharma BV. It is currently considering a move to the DSM Research Campus at Chemelot.

Basic Pharma will use the investment to develop new methods of administering existing medicines and other new pharmaceutical products. Specifically, these methods include semi-solid and liquid administrative agents such as: medicinal fluids, lotions, rinsing liquids, nose sprays, creams and gels, products often used for the treatment of skin disorders.

The company will be using its certified facilities and know-how for the manufacture of products for clinical studies. This activity will be expanded substantially in the near future, because of the growing need for this specialism.

Background

Basic Pharma Manufacturing (BPM) has its own production facility in Roermond with a GMP manufacturing license. This facility is suitable for R&D and the production of investigational batches for Clinical and Bio equivalence studies as well as contract manufacturing of small to medium size batches and special products. BPM's own production mainly targets the manufacturing of creams, ointments and liquids but via our wide network of contract manufacturers all kind of productions and quantities are possible. All (contract) manufacturing is channeled through Basic Pharma Manufacturing. Basic Pharma Technologies is our R&D and Licensing unit. At Basic Pharma Technologies product ideas, formulations, patents and technologies are developed or licensed in and further developed into ready- to-market products. Basic Pharma Technologies can also act as an independent agent for companies to sell or license their dossiers and/or products to other companies in the Netherlands or in the EU.

Interdos Pharma is our Pharma consultancy and Regulatory unit for the group as well as an independent consultant for third parties. Interdos Pharma has many years of experience in this field and acts as a regulatory agent for several companies in Europe. Interdos Pharma also has a wide experience in setting up quality systems for pharmaceutical companies and developed an internet based quality system: Equador Extranet. Using Equador Extranet decreases the amount of paperwork and makes it possible to carry out a central management of all electronic documents even where the company has several (national or international) locations.

<http://www.limburgventures.com>

THE ALMA-GRID PROJECT (2)

[LIFE-SCI: Liège, November 29]

Interreg III alma-grid project has held a major presentation for the press in English in Liège on December 15, with the presence of leading players from the four universities. To recapitulate: The Alma-grid is a two-year Euroregional project (start: April 2005) coordinated by the University of Liège (GIGA); it is co-funded by INTERREG III (50%) and by the four respective regions of the partner universities.

Project duration: 01.04.2005 -> 31.03.2007

Total budget: EUR 2,188,850

- Coordinating partner GIGA (Université de Liège): EUR 713,850 s
- Partner IMB (RWTH Aachen University): EUR 495,000
- Partner GCM (Universiteit Maastricht): EUR 500,000
- Partner BIOMED (Universiteit Hasselt): EUR 480,000

Description:

The Meuse-Rhine Euroregion (MRE) has an active biotech industry, with over 100 SMEs. The growth of this sector and the creation of biotechnology start-up incubators depend on privileged access to centres of excellence in academic research (such as the genopoles of the universities of Liège, Maastricht, Aachen, and Hasselt).

In recent years the life sciences have undergone a new phase of technological and scientific ferment: the "omics" revolution. This revolution in the life sciences is shaping the new technological environment of biotech companies, which to survive and grow, will have to adapt. "Omics" is based on very expensive instrumentation and requires both specific expertise and a sizeable bioinformatics infrastructure in order to process the tremendous flow of data generated.

Today, it is no longer possible for a local academic centre, let alone an isolated SME, to meet all its technology needs on its own. However, an effective solution is in view thanks to EMR's remarkable web of research centres, one of the densest in the world: the idea is to create a network of related and closely collaborating specialized facilities, offering the whole range of services that companies need. Check the site for details.

<http://www.alma-grid.com>

RITDISPLAY OKS AIXTRON OVPD®

[SCI-TECH: Hsin-Chu, Taiwan, November 7]

RiTdisplay Corporation, the leading manufacturer and supplier of OLED displays, has signed off the system acceptance form for the first Gen2 OVPD® system for mass production of OLEDs. The engineering teams of RiTdisplay and AIXTRON were jointly able to qualify OVPD® technology for manufacture of OLED devices for full color display applications. The β -testing co-operation yielded OLED devices with better performance than devices manufactured with conventional technology (VTE).

The qualification of the Gen2 manufacturing tool is the breakthrough for OVPD® technology. Based on gas phase transport and AIXTRON's proprietary Close Coupled Showerhead (CCS) technology OVPD® has significant advantages over conventional deposition equipment (VTE), such as precise control of deposition rates, long term process stability and reproducibility, high throughput due to high deposition rates, high yield due to excellent uniformity, low maintenance and running cost due to highly efficient material utilization etc. The gas phase process further enables realization of advanced device structures including for example graded layers.

<Http://www.aixtron.com>

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