

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

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CHAMBER NEWS

MEUSE-RHINE PURCHASING

[COM: Maastricht, August 20]

This year, the fourth in succession, Meuse-Rhine Chambers are holding a Euroregional Purchaser's Day in Liège on October 24. The objective is to allow buyers to meet pre-screened potential suppliers from within Meuse-Rhine. Admission and participation is without charge for this day for the buyers.

Practical details: the buyer can note what he/she is looking for in terms of products and services, noting specifications/ special features on a dedicated form. The forms are bound and sent as a booklet to prospective suppliers and published on the Internet. Fourteen days before the start of the fair, each buyer will receive a list of companies who would like to meet him/her with a description of the company's activities. This list will allow the buyer to choose which companies he/she wishes to speak to. Meetings will be scheduled, allowing 20 minutes per person; allowing each buyer to meet as many network contacts as possible with maximum efficiency. If you are interested, get into contact with Bernard Piëtte, on 00 31 (0) 43-3506613; e-mail: bpiette@maastricht.kvk.nl
<http://www.maastricht.kvk.nl>
<http://www.purchasersday.biz>

TRUCK TOLLS IN GERMANY

[COM: Berlin, August 19]

The proposed toll on trucks of 12 tons and over on Germany highways will now start on November 2, 2003. It was initially planned to come into effect on August 31. At the beginning of November 2003, the toll will be charged for use of the German Federal Highways by trucks of 12 tons and over on the basis of the distance covered. The toll charge will depend on vehicle's number of axels, its emission class and on a classification of emission in terms of type of vehicle. This will change in the period through 2009. The forecast is that it will cost 12.4 c per km. The payment system is via on board units (OBU), which are installed in the vehicle, via the Internet or a call center, or via one of the 3,500 tollbooths at the highway service centers throughout Germany. Foreign users of the German truck toll system are provided with information in 17 languages by Toll Collect. More information is available at the link below.

<http://www.tollcollect.de>

INTERTECH 2003

[COM: Durham, August 18]

County Durham's Intertech 2003 is an opportunity to develop new business contacts with companies involved in the key knowledge-based future technologies of:

- Biotechnology & Life Sciences
- Digital Technology and Media
- Medical Healthcare
- Nanotechnology & Microsystems
- Photonics
- Scientific Innovation

To be held in County Hall, Durham, England, on October 13 & 14, 2003, Intertech 2003 is designed to encourage new business partnerships and ventures between Small to Medium size Enterprises (SMEs). It is specifically geared to help companies which may lack the time, or resources to seek out the kind of contacts an event like this can provide. The event aims to provide each and every participant with a schedule of pre-booked 30-minute meetings with potential commercial partners. This will create an ideal forum for businesses to exchange ideas and to explore areas of mutually beneficial cooperation. Participation in Intertech 2003 represents an opportunity to establish new contacts and explore new markets in Europe and beyond. More information is available at the link below. You will also find a button to register.

<http://www.intertech2003.com>

HASSELT CHAMBER ON EU 25

[COM: Hasselt, August 5]

The Hasselt Chamber of Commerce wants to safeguard the competitive position of business in the 25 country-strong EU. On May 1, 2004, ten new members will join the EU and, in the view of the Chamber, the current 15 country EU is not yet ready in institutional or budgetary terms to take this big bang. The Hasselt Chamber and its Euro Info Center want to monitor developments and, where necessary, make changes to support the competitive position of Flemish and Limburg.

The Chamber is not happy with the institutional sluggishness of the EU and the time it takes to get anything done on the budgetary side. It is important to remember that the new members can undercut current members on almost everything in terms of price and that their budgetary contribution will be far smaller.

The number of consumers will rise by 22 percent to 480 million, which means that Belgian business will be able to sell to a larger market. The Chamber points out that it is also important to remember that competition will be sharpened by low wages and relatively well-trained staff in companies in the new member states, although this will be a short-term advantage.

Corruption in the candidate states is also something that the Chamber regards as an issue. Language too, where the importance of English, French and German will need to become a focus. The Chamber is champion of exports in its role in an international network and has been preparing this for some time, as evidenced by its activities in the Plato project. Expect more information from this corner.

<http://www.khnl.be>

OFF THE RAILS

[COM: Aachen/Maastricht, July 26]

The general managers of the Chambers of Commerce in Aachen and Maastricht, Jürgen Drewes and Peter Haane, have contributed an article on cooperation, or the lack of it, in Meuse-Rhine, which was published in *Dagblad De Limburger* recently. They refer to the Chambers' support for proposed light rail Circle Line, linking the cities of Aachen, Kerkrade, Heerlen, Sittard-Geleen, Maastricht, Liège, Verviers and Eupen with one another.

German, Dutch and Belgian railways and Aachen local transport viewed the plan with interest, particularly in view of its connection to the intercity network and the TGV. The Province of Limburg (NL), however, while finding it a 'nice idea', have devoted their energies to a light rail connection between Kerkrade, Geleen and Maastricht via the valley of the Geul on the basis of their product orientation.

A second issue in the region is the difficulty German and Dutch authorities have in deciding who is to cut down trees to allow the AWACS early warning aircraft to take off from their base in Geilenkirchen, a base of considerable economic importance to the region; a decision to lop off a few branches apparently being a decision too far.

<http://www.limburger.nl>

DIGITAL CUSTOMS DOCS

[COM: Eupen, July 9]

Since July 1, printed customs documentation for transit movements in 22 European countries have been replaced by digital documentation. The New Computerized Transit System (NCTS) is a European wide system, based upon electronic declaration and processing, designed to provide better management and control of Community and Common Transit. It involves all EU Member States, the EFTA and V4 countries (22 countries in all).

The National Administration of each country will develop its own NCTS structure, according to centrally defined architecture, which will be connected, through a central domain in Brussels, to all of the other countries. The NCTS will link some 3000 European customs offices and eventually replace the existing paper based system. The aim is that all traders will eventually input all transit declarations, and any other necessary messages, such as arrival of the goods, to the NCTS, electronically.

This system guarantees a faster and more secure transmission of data and the customs posts at Eupen, Malmedy and Welkenraedt are part of the network. The formalities can be dealt with via the Internet, but an electronic signature is required. To apply for this signature, you should approach your local Chamber of Commerce and Industry referring to 'GlobalSign'

<http://www.ihk-eupen.be>

AACHEN PLASTICS IN CHICAGO

[COM: Chicago, July 8]

A number of leading Aachen specialist companies, including Intravis, KTB Kunststofftechnik Bittner GmbH, M-Base Engineering + Software GmbH and SIGMA Engineering GmbH were at the world's plastic showcase in Chicago recently to show what is happening on the plastics front in Aachen.

Intravis has been providing successful image processing systems for quality control of mass-produced plastic articles for ten years to twenty different countries. KTB specializes in the development and production of fiber-reinforced plastic parts. It started off in the high tech aerospace area but now is providing applications in many areas in machine and equipment construction.

M-Base is the leading international supplier of material databases, material information systems, product information systems and material related simulation software. This also involves competent and extensive consulting. Sigma has a new simulation tool based on 3-D volume elements, to ensure cost effective production and quality of plastic parts. It simulates the injection molding process, including the cooling and heating phase for thermoplastics, elastomers and thermosets. Filling dura materials under gravity can also be simulated. Sigmasoft provides a complete solution from development to production.

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

EUROREGIONAL PLASTICS

[COM: Heerlen, July 8]

A first meeting of the Euroregional Plastics Platform was held in Heerlen at the Hogeschool Zuyd. Involving the joint Chambers of Aachen and Maastricht, the idea was to set up a market for remnant products which can be accessed at the website.

At the meeting, there was a presentation by Isatech GmbH on the specialities of micro injection moulding and the instructor spoke of his experience with transfrontier EU supported development projects on molding fibers.

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

EURO INFO

[COM: Hasselt, July 1]

Although Robert Schuman gave birth to the idea of the EU 53 years ago, 90% of Europe's population regard the EU as having to do with people who live in Brussels and spend money on things that the average person doesn't understand. There are information centers, intended to remedy this deficit, provided by the European Employment Services (EURES), which facilitates the free movement of workers within EEA, among others. Figures reveal, however, that 5% of Belgian Limburg's companies make use of these centers and only 0.2% of the population knows where they are. Hilde Nuyts, of the EURO INFO CENTER LIMBURG, says that her organization receives 500 questions on doing business in Europe, in the broadest sense of the word, each year. When you realize that in Limburg (B) there are 19,000 companies, this can clearly be seen as minimal. INFO POINT EUROPE tells the same story. If you are reading this, however, and live in Belgian Limburg, they can give you three e-mail addresses that might have an answer to your questions.

eic@khnl.be

lmartens@vdab.be

infopointeurope@limburg.be

<http://www.khnl.be>

MERZBRUECK AIRFIELD

[COM: Aachen, July]

The Aachen Chamber is asking, in a new study, for a step-by-step development of the runway at Merzbrück. This would secure business flights for long term. In contradistinction to the decision of the Aachen District, the Chamber does want to extend the runway to the south. The Chamber proposal would cause less of a problem for local residents and the runway could be extended to 1400m.

The Aachen Chamber has added its own proposal. General Manager, Jürgen Drewes said the idea was born in 1998 and sees a runway to the south where proximity to the existing airfield is safeguarded and it remains within the area available. At that time it would have been possible to build an 800-meter runway.

The proposal had the added attraction that the existing building, particularly the control tower could continue to be used. A future-oriented extension to the runway and new airport infrastructure construction could then later be added step by step or as need dictated. In addition to the development of the airfield, business parks to the north and south would be possible without acquiring extra land.

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

LIEGE AND VERVIERS CHAMBERS GET CLOSER

[COM: Liège, June 25]

The Chambers of Commerce of Liège and Verviers, having decided to merge in the year 2000, are now closer to the actual event; which is expected to take place in January 2004.

<http://www.ccilg.be/>

A VIEW OF 2015 FROM SOUTH-LIMBURG

[COM: Maastricht, May]

The Chamber of Commerce has come up with a lengthy document in which it sets forth its development targets in the Euroregional context over the next dozen years. It deals with business, the labor market, the knowledge infrastructure, the traditional infrastructure, parking, business parks, office locations, the retail trade structure, tourism, leisure etc. As regards the first category business, it points to the importance of the growth of innovative SMEs that will make the economy of Meuse-Rhine less dependent on the boom and bust cycle. Better cross-border access to work is advocated; as is a reduction of the tax and social security barriers to this. Important industrial centers must be supported by a strong knowledge infrastructure, developed by R & D within business and in educational institutions. The existing knowledge infrastructure should be used optimally, upgrading the qualifications of those employed and promoting innovation. Vocational training at secondary schools should be emphasized. There should be a shared Euroregional infrastructural program, with a top ten in terms of priorities.

Liège would be the infrastructural hub of Meuse-Rhine. Motor vehicles should not be forgotten. Where necessary, capacity should be increased and there would be light-rail connecting all of the Euroregional cities. Mobility was expected to become more readily sustainable because of the switch to improved fuel sources and infrastructural developments. There should be adequate parking at places of employment. The municipality should work on this; with scarcity leading to higher charges. Businesses in office centers or in business parks would be able to develop their own facilities or pay into a parking fund to make use of municipal facilities. There would be sufficient business parks of the appropriate quality and ongoing developments in this area. The available space should also be dealt with efficiently. In some cases, offices can be located in business parks but the retail trade had no place there, in the view of the document.

There was to be a provincial network of regional business park companies to revitalize business sites and distribute and manage facilities on a sustainable basis. As regards offices, there would be both large and small-scale developments. Large-scale developments would be at city perimeters with highway access. There was to be a second northern bridge in Maastricht, to access the new Belvedere area. A distinction was to be made among three urban areas to allow for a level of complementarity among their activities.

Maastricht would focus on the international and national office market; on business services, the life sciences and call centers. Sittard-Geleen would have an industrial focus and Heerlen, IT. As far as the retail trade was concerned, the fine mesh in the region was to be maintained and supported. The government had a watching brief on developments. The retail trade, outside the centers, was to be in the bigger cities and shopping centers were to have adequate access. There should be regional cooperation to maintain a balance and the Euroregional cities should emphasize their complementarity. Parking facilities should always be taken into account. As far as tourism was concerned, it should include both bad weather and good weather facilities. The Euroregional product should also be promoted as such.

http://www.kvk.nl/sectie/sectie_regio.asp?sectieID

EUR 80 MILLION JUELICH UPGRADE

[BIZ: Jülich, August 12]

Refurbishment and upgrading of older buildings from the 70's is now being proposed at the Jülich Research Center – Meuse-Rhine's biggest. EUR 40m is needed for the lecture and seminar rooms and the laboratories. The same sum has to be invested in a new building. This would, in any event be the most economic proposition, according to the competent engineering organization Aachen.

The location for the new building would be the Solar Campus on the Merscher Höhe.

There is, according to the City of Jülich, enough land for construction there, but the last word is with the Ministry of Economics in Düsseldorf that will take the decision on the new building in the spring of 2004.

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

TRIANEL FIRST HALF UP 20%

[BIZ: Düsseldorf, August 11]

Trianel, the Meuse-Rhine based, European Energy Trading GmbH saw a positive development in business in the first half of 2003, with growth of more than 20 percent in sales and revenue. The positive developments were the result of new business and partners. The extreme weather conditions were also good for business. 2002 saw Trianel and its subsidiaries achieve revenues of EUR 310m. Energy sales were at 10.7 TWh; sales in the developing gas business 1.4 TWh (Terawatt-hour) and in the fourth consecutive year of business, the consolidated net income of EUR 1.158m was clearly above the plan. The Dutch subsidiary Trianel Energie B.V. supplied more than one TWH to 400 clients in the Netherlands, in Belgium the subsidiary has been licensed for the Flemish market since February 2003 and 160 GWh (Gigawatt-hour) can be delivered to the first clients. Energy sales for the Netherlands and Belgium are in the hands of Trianel Energy Trading Benelux B.V. founded in the second half of last year. There is cross border trade between Germany and the Netherlands and Scandinavia. In August, Trianel made its first sales from Germany to Denmark.

<http://www.trianel.de>

EUR 13 MILLION DUEREN SPORTS HALL

[BIZ: Düren, August 7]

A major new sports hall will be completed next year and available for sporting activities and for Düren's Evivo volleyball team. The hall will have 3,000 stand seats and will also be open for major cultural events. The EUR 13 million project is being financed by a Swiss investor and the district of Düren will rent it from the owners.

<http://www.wdr.de>

EUR 16 MILLION STOLBERG STORE

[BIZ: Stolberg, August 1]

A major Kaufland department store, with parking facilities is to be built next year in Stolberg, pursuant to an agreement between the municipality of Stolberg, Kaufland and an unnamed Aachen investor. The complex will represent an investment of EUR 16 million and produce 90 jobs.

<http://www.brf.be>

US ORDER FOR PARSYTEC

[BIZ: Aachen, August 1]

Parsytec AG – the world's leading supplier of surface inspection systems for strip products such as steel and paper – has received an order for their HTS 4.2 Inspection Solution from USS-POSCO Industries (USA). The Parsytec system will be installed at the coupled pickling-tandem line in Pittsburg, California. This order follows other successful installations at coupled pickling-tandem mills at ThyssenKrupp Steel (Germany) and POSCO (Korea). The order highlights Parsytec's position as the leading solutions provider for value driven inspection tasks.

The Parsytec inspection system will be applied at the continuous pickling-tandem line. Parsytec's solution will avoid strip breaks at the tandem mill caused by surface visible material faults from earlier processing steps; reducing down time at this crucial process step. Subsequent roll shop costs and material loss are also avoided.

The key feature of the Parsytec inspection solution for coupled pickling-tandem mills is the ability to generate interactive warnings. Real time alarm generation has been combined with an online decision support for the operators both at the pickling and tandem line. USS-POSCO produces cold rolled sheet, tin plate, and galvanized sheet. It is a joint venture between U.S. Steel and POSCO. The recently ordered Parsytec system is part of the most modern and efficient flat-products mill in the United States. USS-POSCO ships approximately 1,500,000 tons of steel each year.

<http://www.parsytec.com>

LIMBURG'S COAL- BED METHANE

[BIZ: Hasselt, August 1]

The Limburg-based company NV Mijnen, a subsidiary of LRM, the Limburg Development Company (B) and owner of the coalmining concessions in Limburg, is involved in negotiations with a Swiss joint venture company, interested in coal bed methane (CBM) production. A Letter of Intent has been signed between the parties, with the view to a contract for exploration and the eventually production of the gas. The next stage will be test drilling on site. There is a considerable reservoir of untapped coal-bed methane gas in the Campine basin in Belgian Limburg.

The substitution of methane (natural gas) for coal as the fuel source for power plants would lower greenhouse gas emissions; a promising option is to tap into non-conventional methane (CH₄) resources. The total coal-bed methane gas-in-place reserves in the Campine basin of Belgian Limburg amount to 132 billion m³ of CH₄. Of these reserves, only 53 to 79 billion m³ (using enhanced CBM production methods - see below - with either 60 % or 90 % recovery) are considered likely to be economically recoverable.

A technology that enables economic recovery of coal-bed methane (CBM) is a process that injects CO₂ into coal beds to release the trapped methane. The process is called Enhanced Coal-Bed Methane Recovery (ECBM). In this, the injected CO₂ is adsorbed by the coal and stored in the pore matrix of the coal seams, releasing the trapped methane, to be produced and sold for profit. The process results in two to three molecules of CO₂ adsorbed for each molecule of methane released.

<http://www.lrm.be>

C-INVESTMENTS' STAKE IN QUALITY

[BIZ: Liège, July 19]

C-Investments, a venture capital operation with private funding, specializing in the agri-food business in Europe, is taking a stake, the size of which has not yet been revealed, in Quality Partner S.A., a Herstal-based SME spin-off from the distinguished School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Liège.

Accredited in 1998 by Beltest, pursuant to the European EN45001 standard - a requirement for organizations involved in the analysis of food products - the company specializes in food and animal feed testing for both the public and private sectors.

Stakeholders (EUR 185,644) in the company, in addition to private investors, include GESVAL S.A. and SPINVENTURE S.A.

In a period when all are conscious of threats to the food chain, this company has been making a name for itself in agri-food quality analysis. It was also the first company to produce a BSE test on time and to European specifications.

<http://www.quality-partner.be>

MORE MODULES AT NEDCAR

[BIZ: Born, July 19]

NedCar's policy of bringing other companies into the plant to supply modules, included Johnson Controls and Peguform which will be providing the front end module containing the head lights, fans, air conditioning, horn, etc. The current front-end module has 40 parts, supplied ready to fit as a module by Peguform and then built into the car by NedCar. In addition, Peguform also provides front and back bumpers, called customized body panels, for the 'smart'.

<http://www.nedcar.nl>

CINRAM BUYS WARNER MUSIC

[BIZ: Alsdorf/Toronto, July 18]

Cinram International Inc. has announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement with AOL Time Warner Inc. to acquire its DVD and CD manufacturing and physical distribution businesses, together with certain related businesses, in the U.S. and Europe. The purchase price is approximately USD 1.05bn in cash. The acquisition, which is subject to appropriate regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions, is expected to close in the autumn of 2003.

As part of the transaction, Cinram will enter into exclusive long term agreements with Warner Home Video, Warner Music Group and New Line Cinema to manufacture, print, package and physically distribute their DVDs and CDs in North America and Europe. Cinram has been a supplier to these entities in certain countries for over two decades. Assets being acquired include manufacturing facilities in Olyphant, PA, Commerce, CA and Alsdorf, Germany as well as related U.S. and European distribution facilities. With facilities in North America and Europe, Cinram manufactures and distributes pre-recorded DVDs, VHS videocassettes, audio CDs, audiocassettes and CD-ROMs for motion picture studios, music labels, publishers and computer software companies around the world.

<http://www.cinram.com>

JEWELS FROM SAINT-LAMBERT

[BIZ: Seraing, July 17]

Recently the new president of the Crystal Works of Saint-Lambert, Sylvie Henquin, presented a new collection of unique crystal jewelry mounted by gold, silver and platinum and announced that the crystal works were about to enter the jewelry market. The new collection, called 'Extase', of necklaces, bracelets and rings was developed by Juliette Feard, who has recently joined the business. Glass blower Antoine Cimino, glasscutter Martin Kunnen and jeweler, Alain Laruelle complete the team. Currently Val Saint-Lambert is doing 70 % of its business abroad, with new agents in countries like China. It has also strengthened its position in the home market. (Source: [Proxi-Liège](http://www.val-saint-lambert.com))

<http://www.val-saint-lambert.com>

STAR GROWTH IN GIS

[BIZ: Liège, July 7]

Star Informatic, the major Liège-based vendor of spatial technologies and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), has announced that it has come to an agreement with Esko-Graphics in Gent to take over their cartographic publishing activity and the Mercator product line, effective July 1. The staff involved will be kept on in Gent and the current manager, Paul Duré, will run the newly created Publishing Solutions business unit at Star Informatic.

June 30 saw the company acquire a majority shareholding in APIC SA, the specialist GIS software company, from EADS and LYONNAISE DES EAUX France.

June 11, the ABSYS company in Ouagadougou, (formerly TELEPAC Technology Africa), the most advanced IT Competence Center in in western African, represented by Olivier Sokpoh, decided to start distribution of STAR software in 12 countries; these included Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo, Mali, Chad, Gabon, Niger, Congo, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Guinea Conakry, and Mauritania. This French-speaking area of Africa is a key to Star Informatic's establishing itself as a major presence in the French-speaking world.

May 19 saw the company announce that the City of Tripoli had chosen STAR software to implement its Geographical Information System (GIS). This first contract is to provide software products and services enabling the start of the project for a total amount of EUR 140,000.

<http://www.star.be>

DATA GIANT IN AACHEN

[BIZ: Aachen, July 1]

AMB Generali Holding, Germany's third largest primary insurance group with about 15 million customers and more than 30 million insurance contracts, has opened one of Europe's biggest state-of-the-art data centers operated in the private sector.

Dr. Walter Thießen, the Group's Chief Executive said: "In addition to the Group headoffice, the IT center is also now located in Aachen. The center controls the IT infrastructure for the entire AMB Generali Group."

The company in charge of the IT activities, which go far beyond Germany's borders, is AMB Generali Informatik, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Group. The transfer of the Generali Group's Vienna data centre to Aachen has also been of strategic importance. Dr. Thießen added: "AMB Generali Informatik's more than 40,000 users not only include our big German Group companies in Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Aachen, Saarbrücken, Karlsruhe and Augsburg, but also companies in Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Croatia and also the Netherlands". Service to these companies from Aachen, not only covers data production; there is also a disaster back up data center available.

<http://www.amb.de>

BINPAC READY TO EXPAND

[BIZ: Tongres, July 1]

Binpac NV the Tongres mail order company in packaging products, which moved into its new 2,000m² office and warehouse in 2000, is growing fast and so they are building another 5,000m² unit. Despite poor market conditions, they are currently growing by 10% per year. This involves their activities in Benelux and their sister company in Germany. Binpac sends 40,000 packages to 15,000 customers in the Benelux countries annually and sends another 30,000 packages to Germany. It was nominated as a fast mover by Trends Magazine for the second year in succession.

<http://www.khnl.be>

THE E-CONSTRUCTION MARKET

[BIZ: Liège, June 26]

E-market Construction SA, a platform for professional tenders in the construction industry has become a partner of the National Confederation of Construction. This confirms the seriousness of the role of the platform in the industry. The platform was established in 2000 by a group of businessmen, architects and IT specialists. It provides construction professionals with a valuable market tool. (Source: WalloniePress)

<http://www.e-marketconstruction.com>

DUTCH PROF TO HEAD WFG

[BIZ: Eupen, June 26]

The East Belgian Economic Development Agency, WFG, has appointed Professor Franz Palm (55) as their new President, to succeed the colorful Professor Stadtmüller. Professor Palm, a specialist in econometrics, was born in Rocherath in the Eifel and lives in Eupen. In addition to doing his undergraduate work and PhD at Louvain, he has spent a good deal of his academic career in the Netherlands, interspersed with periods at distinguished centers like Chicago and Harvard. Most recently he has been Dean of the School of Economics at the University of Maastricht. Professor Palm, on his appointment, pointed out that East Belgium had done well; that it had considerable assets; but, that in today's difficult economic climate, these assets needed consolidating and that a strategy for the future would be required. Professor Palm was elected a member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2000.

<http://www.wfg.be>

EUR 30 MILLION FOR HUECKELHOVEN

[BIZ: Hückelhoven, June 26]

The local planning committee has approved the development of a shopping center on the old mining site in the center of Hückelhoven. This will involve an investment of EUR 30 million and employ 200.

<http://www.wdr.de>

LIEGE: INBOUND INVESTMENT

[BIZ: Liège, June 25]

The SPI+ Annual Report lists the following companies as new inbound investors for 2002:

- Aardex (Switzerland), EE Visé
- ACT Interpack (Israel), EE Visé
- Biesmans (Belgium), Haut-Sarts
- Chromage Industrial Belge (France), Ivoz-Ramet
- Doedijns Fluitronics (Netherlands), Amay
- F4M Cryoservice (Netherlands), Soheit-Tinlot
- GMS Holding (Netherlands), Trois-Ponts
- Impact People Strategies (UK), EE Atrium Vertbois
- Klöber (Germany), Eupen
- Kontakt Secretariat International (Germany), EE Atrium Vertbois
- Kronenberg (Netherlands), Alleur
- Malho Ouest (Germany), Welkenraedt
- Mercator Assurances (Belgium), Liège Logistics
- Roland Broers Contracting (Belgium), Battice
- Skechers ED (USA), Hauts-Sarts
- Sonatest (UK), Hermalle-sous-Argenteau
- Travel Inn (Netherlands), Grâce Hollogne

<http://www.spi.be>

TECHSPACE AERO BUYS CENCO

[BIZ: Liège/Paris, June 16]

Techspace Aero, the Liège-based specialists in the design, development and production of aerospace propulsion modules, equipment and systems has announced it will purchase the assets and business of Pratt & Whitney CENCO, Inc, part of United Technologies' Pratt & Whitney unit.

The combined strengths of both companies will make Cenco Inc and Techspace Aero Test Cell Engineering one of the world leaders in test cell design, manufacturing and services. Pratt & Whitney, a United Technologies company (NYSE: UTX), is a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of aircraft engines, space propulsion systems and industrial gas turbines.

Techspace Aero, a Snecma Group company, designs, develops and produces engine modules, equipment and systems for aircraft and spacecraft propulsion. The company is also specialized in engine maintenance, in repair and overhaul services as well as in testing facility engineering.

<http://www.techspace-aero.be>

SADEPAN CHIMICA IN GENK

[IND: Genk, June 4]

The foundation stone for the new building for Sadepan Chimica's production facilities in Genk were laid June 4. The new facilities will produce glues and resins for the north European market and will be operational as of September 2003. The laying of the foundation stone was attended by Maura Saviola's group top management and the mayor of Genk, Jaak Gabriëls.

The plant represents an investment of EUR 35m, including EUR 15m for the production facility, which will run on the 24/7 basis. It will have a capacity of 200,000 tons of formaldehyde annually and 240,000 tons of glue and employ 50.

<http://www.grupposaviola.com>

ALDI DISTRIBUTION IN ROERMOND

[LOG: Barchon, August 14]

The German Aldi Supermarket chain is going to build a distribution center in Roermond on a 7.5-hectare lot at the Roermond South business park, close to the A73 and N280 East. The center will be operational at the end of 2005; it will supply all Aldi stores in Limburg and create 250 jobs. (Source: Warehouse Eco)

<http://www.truck-business.com>

SYSTEM PLUS IN GENK

[LOG: Barchon, August 1]

The Dutch Logistics Wim Bosman Group is setting up two separate companies at his Belgian operations in Wommelgen and Genk, which will add 40 new jobs in both places. The locations will be agents for the German-based System Plus Logistic Service, which is a European distribution network involving 18 logistics companies employing 11,000. Bosman has European and regional distribution centers and virtual warehousing with 8,000 m² in Antwerp and 5,000 m² in Genk. The System Plus network provides one unique logistical system of standardized logistic products throughout Europe and standardized service quality, including Recall Service or POD Data Transfer. See the link.

<http://www.systemplus.net>

CUTTING BARGE CHARGES

[INFRA: Namur, July 29]

The Walloon government has set up a steering committee to carry out studies on inland shipping. The committee will analyze 21 proposed promotional measures for inland shipping in the Walloon country. One of these measures is the abolition of shipping charges in the Walloon country, which are ten times higher than those in Brussels and Flanders. In 2002, these charges produced EUR 4.7m. The committee will have to look for alternative sources of income to compensate for the loss. (Source: Wegennet).

<http://www.truck-business.com/>

LIEGE, SEOUL, TAIPEI

[LOG: Purchase, N.Y., July 25]

Polar Air Cargo has announced it will launch a new scheduled service from Seoul, South Korea, to Liège, providing its customers with more shipping alternatives between Asia and Europe in time for the peak cargo season.

The service will operate three times a week beginning Aug. 20 with Polar Air Cargo's Boeing 747-400 freighters. The flight will depart Liège for Seoul on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, continuing on to Taipei, Taiwan. The return trip will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from Seoul to Liège. Both flights originate and end in the United States.

In Seoul, customers will be able to connect to other Asian cities in Polar's network, including Hong Kong, Tokyo and Manila.

Liège Airport, an all-cargo facility open 24 hours a day with no congestion, is an ideal location to expand connections between Asia and Europe. From Liège, Polar offers timely and convenient trucking connections throughout continental Europe.

<http://www.polaraircargo.com>

EUPEN BIZ PARK IN SIGHT

[INFRA: Eupen, July 24]

The planned extension to the business park that crosses the municipality boundaries of Baelen-Eupen-Lontzen and Welkenraedt totaling 127 hectares is on its way. The zoning changes have been made by the regional Minister Forêt in Namur. In September the first administrative procedures can be started. A final change in the zoning plans will then come into effect in March next year. The extension of the business site has been sought by the four municipalities for some time and would cover their requirements in the terms of business locations for the next 15-20 years with the potential creation of 2,200 jobs. There is also direct highway access.

<http://www.brf.be>

ONGOING AT TRILOGIS

[LOG: Liège, July 12]

The Mercator insurance company has started construction at the Trilogis Park Liège airport. The company has two sites, each of 8.26 hectares and has a construction permit for 48.000m² of logistical installations, with the first phase scheduled for completion March 2004. Project commercialization is in the hands of DTZ, the international real estate company. The buildings will go up on the last available sites at the Liège Logistics industrial park and will be equipped with technology to meet the needs of the major distribution companies. There will be one loading dock for every 1.000m² with clear space up to 10m, a heating and sprinkler system, parking and offices to meet the requirements of the clients. The name Trilogis refers to the trimodal air, rail (TGV Cargo) and road facilities to be available at the airport site.

<http://www.truck-business.com/>

SERVATIUS FIGHTS ON

[INFRA: Maastricht, July 11]

The Annual Report of the Servatius Housing Trust in Maastricht includes an important page (16) on its plans for a pilot project in Liège. In essence, the situation is that in October 2000 a Minister gave approval to the development of a pilot project in Liège involving cooperation between Servatius and the City of Liège to develop new public housing in Liège's big city project districts, Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Léonard. The project started and, in November 2001, it was presented to the responsible ministry, with the basic guidelines and details of the pilot. Maastricht, the MHAL cities and Limburg's Provincial Government took a very positive stand on the project. The Ministry, on the other hand, let it be known by telephone in August 2002 that it was not yet ready to approve the pilot project.

On December 5, the Minister put this objection into words saying, that the Housing Act and the Resolution on the Public Rental sector only applied to Dutch territory. This meant that an institution governed by this legislation could only deploy its activities within in the Netherlands. Accordingly, the construction of housing by an institution of this type in Liège, outside the Netherlands, was not permissible. Servatius was then told to cease the activities in Liège under penalty of the provisions of clause 41 of the aforementioned Resolution.

In the view of Servatius, the Minister's behavior is not only in conflict with the general principles of good governance, but also in contravention of the relevant provisions of the EU Treaty. In the view of the European Commission, the authorities can only impose conditions on the activities of social enterprises insofar as these are governed by public law. This is not the case with housing corporations, which do have a social role, but operate as private organizations with no financial relationship with government. Nor does the government have managerial responsibility via the appointment of one of more members of the Supervisory Board.

To support this standpoint, the sectoral organization Aedes and Servatius have jointly charged the Leiden Professor of European Law, Professor Slot, to examine the pilot projects in Liège in the light of EU law. Servatius has already registered its objection and will fight to keep the Liège project.

<http://www.servatius.nl>

NEW HINTZEN CENTER

[INFRA: Eschweiler-Weisweiler, July 8]

The Hintzen Logistik Company has moved into its new premises in the Eschweiler-Weisweiler Business Park, a 32,000m² site for their logistical activities in Europe.

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

DUEREN LOGISTICS

[INFRA: Düren, July 8]

The logistics and distribution center at the Düren Business Park, Großen Tal, will be expanded two years after the opening of the Center. Arvato Logistic Services, part of Arvato Bertelsman AG, wants to extend its site. Düren is particularly suited for the Euroregion and for running the European Logistics Center according to Niels Weithe of Arvato Logistic Services.

The state-of-the-art logistical center was built in 2001 and covers 28,000m². 100 staff are active in the European dealer network for Microsoft providing hardware and software, innovative services for customers, financial services and transport management.

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

PETIT FORESTIER IN LIEGE

[LOG: Liège, July 3]

The French, Petit Forestier Group (13,000+ vehicles, 8,500+ customers and 850+ staff in France, Belgium, NL and Spain), which leases refrigerated vehicles, on a short or longer-term basis, has moved to a new location Hauts Sarts Business Park in Liège. The new site has both offices and a workshop. Petit Forestier will retain its Benelux HQ in Brussels and also has an office in Antwerp. The company's plan is to grow the business further in the Liège region and the south of Belgium. A fleet of 60 vehicles will operate from the Hauts Sarts location. [Curiously, on completing this story, I found that egress from my own gateway was blocked by one of their vehicles. Ed] (Source: Truck and Business).

<http://www.petitforestier.fr>

INTERMODAL HUB NET

[LOG: Maastricht, July 2]

A pilot project has been established for cooperation between intermodal hubs in the south Netherlands and Belgium (SIKZNEB). An independent traffic director uses a computer application for more efficient transport of empty containers by water and the improved use of scheduled and unscheduled river traffic.

The pilot project was the initiative of IncodeDelta South-Netherlands in cooperation with the Belgian *Dienst voor de Scheepvaart* and *NV Zeekanaal België*. 24 competing inland terminals in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany are taking part in this project.

<http://www.incodeDelta.nl>

NEW RECYCLING PLANT IN AMEL

[INFRA: Amel, June 19]

Six companies from the municipality of Amel will be setting up a recycling company for construction waste at the auf Kaiserbaracke highway exit at Born. The municipality has agreed to the lease of the two hectares involved.

<http://www.brf.be>

EUREGIONALE ROADSHOW

[GOV: Aachen, August 14]

The Euregionale 2008 agency's roadshow runs from August 20 through August 22, when teams of architects, planners, artists and futurologists will travel around the Meuse-Rhine triangle. More than 16 mayors will talk about their own cities and municipalities. An exhibition entitled 'Images of a region' will be presented by these cities and municipalities giving a picture of themselves and their project ideas on August 21 at the Anna-Gelände Kraftzentrale in Alsdorf.

<http://www.euregionale2008.de>

WALLOON RIVER POLICE

[GOV: EUPEN, August 6]

Following Flanders, the Walloon region is now to have its own river police. This federal police unit will be based at Vottem and after the initial phase it will grow in strength from 10 to 27. The river police will be responsible for monitoring the rivers and lakes, checking boats and ships and will also be active in the battle against drugs and smuggling people.

<http://www.brf.be>

MONEY FOR HASSELT

[GOV: Hasselt, July 24]

Hasselt is the only Limburg (B) municipality to receive funds from the Flemish City Fund. Minister van Grembergen has granted EUR 1.3m to Hasselt to finance projects in the area of sport, culture, traffic, safety and the environment through 2006.

<http://www.brf.be>

GIS IN THE CITY

[GOV: Heerlen, June 26]

'Participatory Democracy'

The opportunity to provide vast amounts of information graphically has far reaching consequences for local and regional governments. Citizens can quickly grasp complex issues such as urban planning, crime rates, environmental risk areas etc. These have traditionally been ignored by all but the most determined citizen, who has often had to sort through reams of pages of complicated datasets.

Assisted by new developments in technology, it is becoming easier for the citizen to take part in the decision-making process. Lack of adequate and timely information provision can promote distortions in open and democratic societies. Until recently, politicians and civil servants were the trusted guardians of such processes. Now that modern technology provides the opportunity to easily present this information to the citizen, government can be supported by the visual presentation of complex issues in intelligible forms.

These systems, known as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are becoming increasingly important for local and regional government bodies as they strive to inform their citizens and generate trust between government and governed and to be accountable to their citizenry in the 21st Century.

In response to this situation, the European Center for Digital Communication held a meeting for local civil servants and other interested persons on June 26 in Heerlen.

Attended by eight of the targeted 21 local Dutch councils, as well as members of the Dutch Province of Limburg (regional government), the South Limburg Tourist Office, and the Geon Virtual Museum, the program focused upon talks by Peter Verweij (Hogeschool van Utrecht) and René Colijn (ESRI Nederland).

Topics such as the role of GIS in aiding journalists and citizens in gaining greater access to more information; the role of different government bodies in providing this information and the manner in which citizens should be given this information were covered in the two hour session - to be continued in discussions on the Servicepoint website. (Source: jamal.shahin@infonomics.nl)

<http://www.ecdc.info>

LIFE-SCI MEETS MICRO/NANOTECH

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, August 14]

October 29, 2003 will see a one-day synergy workshop in Maastricht, with a focus on combining future technology options and the needs of the life science industry, organized by EMINENT - The European SME B2B accelerator for Micro and Nanotechnologies. It is supported by CeNTech (the first interdisciplinary Center for Nanoanalytics and Nanobiotechnology in Münster, Germany), DIB/VCI (The German Industrial Association for Biotechnology in the Chemical Industry) and the MEUSE-RHINE-TRIANGLE Life Sciences Group.

EMINENT, an EU-funded project, facilitates cooperation between suppliers of micro and nanotechnology-based products and users in different areas of application. Further information about EMINENT and the program at the link. Register by phone on +49 (0) 2 31 9742-150.

<http://www.eminent.ivamnrw.com>

AUTOMOTIVE COLLOQUIUM

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, August 11]

The 12th Aachen Colloquium on Automobile and Engine Technology will be held October 6 through 8, 2003. The Colloquium has become one of the largest automotive and engine technology conferences in Europe and the increasing number of participants show the ongoing interest of the automotive and the supplier industry. In 2002, there were more than 1500 participants from more than 22 countries. The congress will provide a wide range of technical presentations addressing to current challenges of the vehicle and powertrain industry. Program-related test vehicles, prototypes and aggregates from participating companies and institutions will be presented on ika's (*Institut für Kraftfahrwesen*) test track.

The accompanying exhibition is the second substantial part of the Aachen Colloquium. With 84 exhibitors and an exhibition area of more than 1600 m² we achieved a new record in 2002.

Follow the link for details.

http://www.rwth-aachen.de/ac-kolloquium/index_e.htm

DOCPHARMA 10% MITHRA STAKE

[SCI-TECH: Brussels, July 11]

Docpharma, the Louvain specialist in generic medicines and medical technology, is taking a 10% share in Mithra Pharmaceuticals, a spin-off of the University of Liège, which specializes in the production of gynecological and feminine hygiene products and also the gel used for electrodes in scans.

The company was founded in Liège in 1999 and has 8 full-time employees, of whom four are on the commercial side. It works with 20 researchers subsidized by the Walloon region. It sold EUR 500,000 worth of products last year and has recently acquired the marketing rights for a transdermal patch treatment for menopausal problems from the Swiss giant Novartis.

Clearly time to expand. Docpharma is taking a 10% stake in the company's capital, 30% of which is held by Meuseinvest, estimated at EUR 1.9m. Time for growth says Francois Fornieri, who formed the company with a number of distinguished researchers. (Source: L'Echo).

<http://www.echonet.be>

TAKEDA'S 4TH GOLDEN TABLET

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, July 8]

Germany's Urologists have again chosen Aachen-based, Takeda Pharma GmbH as the best pharmaceutical business for 2003. This is based on a representative questionnaire by the Mefos market research institute in Munich. This is the fourth time, in succession, that their Management team, Dr Erich Brunn and Noriaki Hada have received the 'Golden Tablet.'

As market leader with its therapeutics for advanced prostate cancer Takeda, was able to take a lead over its competitors. An important image criterion was satisfied by the quality of the company's external service.

<http://www.takeda.de>

LIEGE SCIENCE PARK

[SCI-TECH: Liège, July 3]

Sart Tilman, the Science Business Park at the University campus above Liège, is in future to be called the Liège Science Park. The initiative comes from the Liège Development Company SPI+, the town of Seraing and the university who are the three managing partners. This new name and the new logo are to promote the center of 29 hectares, of which two are still free, where 60 high tech companies and research centers, like the Liège Space Center, are active. There are 23 spin-off companies from the university, largely in biotechnology, aerospace, instrumentation, IT and engineering. The center is 10 minutes from town, 50 minutes from Brussels, 35 minutes from Aachen and an hour from Cologne. The park is scheduled to grow eventually to 50 hectares.

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

EXPERTISE CENTER HEERLEN

[SCI-TECH: Heerlen, July 1]

The IT Expertise Center in Heerlen has charted the options for the IT world which can be downloaded from its website. It also points out that the University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Hogeschool are developing a Masters in IT. Other topics that the center deals with in its newsletter are: web enabled supply chain management; organizations and knowledge management; communication and multimedia design, the new joint program between Heerlen Hogeschool Zuyd and the Katholieke Hogeschool, Genk. Information about all of these developments can be obtained from the link below.

<http://www.eict.nl>

LIVE HDTV SPORT

[SCI-TECH: Liège, June 16]

On January 1st 2004 the first European HDTV Channel will go on air. Euro1080 will broadcast exclusively in high definition throughout Europe. The Channel will distribute high-quality content, like sports, music, shows and cultural events, by satellite, in HDTV format, with best quality surround-sound.

Alfacam, Liège-based high-definition TV facilities company, EVS Broadcast Equipment and SES ASTRA, the leader for DTH satellite applications, cooperated with VIASAT - TV3, the Norwegian broadcaster, in the production and transmission of Live HDTV sport content to electronic cinemas in Denmark and Norway.

<http://www.alfacam.com>

LIGHT METAL CASTING CENTER

[SCI-TECH: Aachen, July]

A light metal casting center is to come to Aachen. In future, cars and planes will have to be made lighter to save fuel. Structural castings elements will have to meet more stringent standards: materials will require superior properties. Economic and environmental issues will also have to be considered during the manufacturing process. The Ministry of Science of the State of North-Rhine Westphalia is, accordingly, going to provide funding totaling EUR 250,000 for a Center for Technology. According to Minister Kraft: 'Light metal casting is an innovative field of technology with a range of applications in research'. The new center will be run by ACCESS, a materials research institute at Aachen University, in cooperation with the internationally famous, Foundry Institute at the University. SMEs are to benefit in particular from the new center. The foundry industry is characterized by small-scale operations and 30 percent of all German foundries are located in North-Rhine Westphalia.

<http://www.access.rwth-aachen.de>