



Press Release

## AWDC Wins Best Belgian Sustainability Report Award

**Antwerp, 2 December, 2014 - On December 2nd, 2014 the 16th edition of the award ceremony for Best Belgian Sustainability Report took place. The Award is an initiative of the Belgian Institute of Registered Auditors. It encourages and rewards companies and organizations that, next to reporting on their economic and financial data, report on their activities in the framework of sustainable development in a transparent manner. AWDC is the proud winner in the category 'other organizations'.**

The jury found that AWDC's very first sustainability report was a clear, well-structured report and did not shy away from addressing sensitive issues. Some of the praise AWDC received was as follows:

*"In the 'other organizations' category, the jury considers the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC)'s report a clear, well-structured and excellent example of a good GRI G4 report. The report succeeds very well in explaining materiality, stakeholder consultation and management of governance and compliance. The jury was also impressed by the fact that AWDC's report touches sensitive issues in a transparent manner, acknowledging the diamond sector's weaknesses and including a risk analysis. The jury considers AWDC's sustainability report an act of courage, and an important signal from AWDC to the diamond sector, sure to have an impact on the industry."*

AWDC CEO Ari Epstein was honored to receive the award: *"It gives me immense pleasure to accept this award on behalf of our organization. This was the Antwerp World Diamond Centre's first sustainability report, and we meant for it to be a clear message to our industry. Like all other businesses and organizations that are present here today, AWDC and the Antwerp diamond sector have a major responsibility towards society."*

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important. 15 years ago, only large companies reported on their impact on sustainability. In the last few years, however, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the public sector and government organizations, schools and associations, have also come to recognize the added value of such reporting and are becoming increasingly committed to publishing their own sustainability reports.

Ari Epstein believes this to be a logical evolution: *"We owe it to our employees, our partners, our stakeholders and all the people and communities involved in the diamond chain to take the lead, and to strive for a sustainable diamond industry. Transparency, compliance and corporate social responsibility are the cornerstones of our policy, and assets that set Antwerp apart from other diamond centers. Our efforts, initiatives and strict controls have long been known within the diamond industry, and thanks to this sustainability report, we now have the opportunity to present our story to everyone else who may be interested."*

AWDC, short for Antwerp World Diamond Centre, is an industry-established foundation, whose mission is to serve and support the diamond business in Antwerp, the world's most important diamond trade hub. AWDC is the coordinating body and the official representative of the Antwerp diamond sector, and as such are recognized internationally as the host, spokesperson and intermediary for the Belgian diamond community. In this capacity, AWDC liaises on behalf of the Belgian diamond sector with governments and actively promotes support for the diamond sector at home and abroad.

# Diamonds love Antwerp

Private Stichting – Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) ☐ Hoveniersstraat 22, BE-2018 Antwerpen, Belgium  
T +32 3 222 05 11 ☐ F+32 3 222 05 99 ☐ info@awdc.be ☐ www.awdc.be ☐ BTW – BE 0885 969 987



84% of all rough diamonds and 50% of all polished diamonds pass through Antwerp. Diamonds represent 5% of the total Belgian exports and 15% of all Belgian exports outside the EU, making diamonds the most important export product outside the EU.

**Press contact:**

AWDC Communication Department  
03/222.05.41

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T +32 3 222 05 11 ☐ F+32 3 222 05 99 ☐ [info@awdc.be](mailto:info@awdc.be) ☐ [www.awdc.be](http://www.awdc.be) ☐ BTW – BE 0885 969 987