



Press release

Former President of Europe Herman Van Rompuy visits Antwerp diamond industry controlling body

On Friday 27 March, Herman Van Rompuy paid a visit to the Antwerp diamond industry. Considerable attention was given in particular to the Diamond Office, the controlling body that controls all imported and exported diamonds under the supervision of the FPS Economy and FPS Finance-Customs. The Diamond Office is the European benchmark concerning controls of the global diamond trade.

Since the implementation of the Kimberley Process now more than ten years ago, the diamond trade is strictly monitored, leading to a drop in the percentage of conflict diamonds from 15% to 0.2%. The Kimberley Process is a unique partnership between governments, the diamond industry and NGOs, acting together to monitor global diamond production. The KP entails *inter alia* the requirement that each shipment of rough diamonds that is traded internationally be accompanied by a valid KP certificate issued by the competent authority of a country participating in the KP.

The European Commission has appointed the FPS Economy as the competent authority in Belgium for applying the international requirements of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds. Experts from the FPS Economy, together with customs officials and diamond experts from the Diamond Office conduct the requisite controls in the Diamond Office, a department of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre.

Given that Antwerp is the largest and most important diamond trade center at the European as well as the global level, the Diamond Office constitutes the European benchmark concerning controls. The Diamond Office staff and the board of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre were delighted with the visit from the former 'President of Europe'.

Mr. Van Rompuy concluded his visit with an extensive keynote speech at a seminar organized by the Antwerp World Diamond Centre on the financial challenges facing the global diamond industry.

AWDC, 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 is 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:

Margaux Donckier, Spokeswoman

Mado@awdc.be

0478/32.47.97

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