



Press release

## HRD Antwerp opens first Centre of Excellence in China

**Shanghai, December 15 2016 – HRD Antwerp today opened its first Centre of Excellence branch in Shanghai, China. The opening took place in the framework of the City of Antwerp’s mission to Seoul and Shanghai, and was held in the presence of the Mayor of Antwerp Bart De Wever and Antwerp’s Alderman for Diamonds Ludo van Campenhout. China is the second most important and fastest growing market in the world for polished diamonds, making it a priority for HRD Antwerp. The opening of the Centre of Excellence is an important step in the right direction to expanding their presence in China.**

A Centre of Excellence is a collaboration between a jeweler and HRD Antwerp. The close connection between a retailer and one of the leading certification institutes in the world is intended to give consumers greater trust in the jeweler. To this end, a Centre of Excellence will only sell diamonds and diamond jewelry that have an HRD Antwerp Diamond Grading Report. It is also a unique opportunity for HRD Antwerp to gain a stronger foothold in one of the most important markets for polished diamonds globally.

The modus operandi of the Centres of Excellence is to offer select retailers attractive in-store tools clearly explaining the different steps involved in diamond grading process, thereby inspiring confidence in the product as well as the retailer. In short: consumer confidence is key, and the main message HRD Antwerp is promoting is “choose wisely”. The concept is built around the 4 Cs (Carat, Cut, Clarity, Color) as well as the ‘5<sup>th</sup> C’ of Certification and Confidence. HRD Antwerp made an interesting movie about it, which you can watch [here](#). But it is important not to neglect that the Centres of Excellence are also designed to offer a fun and interactive experience for end-users, helping to distinguish it from other retailers.

In Shanghai, HRD Antwerp is teaming up with Chow Tai Seng (CTS), one of the largest jewelry retailers in Mainland China, to run the newest Centre of Excellence. CTS currently has 2,100 points of sale in 23 provinces in China. This very important chain fully recognizes the quality and craftsmanship of Antwerp diamonds and their polishers, and actively promotes them. CTS is also the exclusive distributor in China of the ‘Love 100 Antwerp’, a unique diamond design created by Belgian diamond company Exelco NV. It therefore comes as no surprise that HRD Antwerp selected CTS for this special partnership.

As a result of this collaboration and the opening of the Centre of Excellence in Shanghai, the quality and the interests of Antwerp diamonds will receive additional promotion in China, and HRD Antwerp will be able to further expand its presence in this important market.

# Diamonds love Antwerp

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**Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC)** 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. 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.

**HRD Antwerp** Founded in Antwerp in 1976, the HRD Antwerp is Europe's leading authority in diamond certification and one of the largest and most respected diamond grading labs in the world and the most prominent laboratory to adhere to the grading standards set by the International Diamond Council (IDC), an authoritative body created more than 40 years ago by the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) and the International Diamond Manufacturing Association (IDMA).

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