



*Reactive Statement reg. press release "Belgian FPS Economy discovers shipment of potential conflict diamonds from the Central African Republic"*

## **Antwerp diamond sector steps up efforts in combatting conflict diamonds**

**Antwerp June 6, 2014. The Antwerp diamond industry, represented by the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), is stepping up its efforts in combatting conflict diamonds. The city, largely owing its reputation as the most transparent and strictly controlled diamond trade centre to the rigorous controls of all diamond imports and exports at the Antwerp Diamond Office, is determined to continue its strong commitment towards the Kimberley Process. According to the AWDC, the increased vigilance and intensified controls have already resulted in the detection by the Diamond Office experts of a shipment likely containing conflict diamonds from the Central African Republic (CAR).**

In June 2013, the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KP), the global control mechanism for rough diamonds, issued an export ban on rough diamonds originating from CAR. Because of the KP ban, any import of rough diamonds coming from CAR, accompanied by a Kimberley Certificate from CAR will not be allowed to enter the Antwerp market and will be confiscated.

Apart from the strict controls that are applied in Antwerp and the 100% physical control of each and every shipment that enters or leaves Antwerp, the Diamond Office procedures go even further. Each suspicious shipment is verified scrutinously, comparing the contents of the parcels with the so-called 'production footprints' of mining operations in conflict areas. Rough diamonds that are imported legally in Antwerp via other diamond trade hubs will be cross-checked on typical characteristics such as color, assortment and size using visual material from a typical rough production of a certain area, such as the CAR. Thus the Diamond Office experts can assess whether or not diamonds are likely originating from a specific conflict area.

By implementing these strict controls, Antwerp, the industry's leading trade hub in terms of compliance and transparency, aims to give a strong signal and to prohibit that conflict diamonds enter the Antwerp market. According to a recent report from the Enough Project, today diamonds from CAR are still illegally entering the market in certain countries. These conflict diamonds enter the legal circuit, mostly through forged KP certificates that are insufficiently controlled via other diamond hubs.

The recent discovery of a suspicious shipment of rough diamonds and the strong indications these diamonds originate from CAR have now led the AWDC to raise the alarm. The AWDC calls upon all diamond centres to implement the same strict controls on import and export procedures and KP requirements. It is clear that the Kimberley Process, a unique cooperation between governments, industry and civil society, can only be a powerful tool if all KP participants take responsibility in the fight against conflict diamonds.

AWDC Communications Department: [press@awdc.eu](mailto:press@awdc.eu) – +32 3 222 05 41

# 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](mailto:info@awdc.be) ☐ [www.awdc.be](http://www.awdc.be) ☐ BTW – BE 0885 969 987

## FPS Economy discovers shipment of potential conflict diamonds from the Central African Republic

**Brussels, 6 June 2014** – In the Antwerp Diamond Office, the FPS Economy discovered a suspicious shipment of rough diamonds that could potentially originate from the Central African Republic (CAR), where a civil war is raging. Already in June 2013, the Kimberley Process (KP), the global control mechanism on rough diamond production, issued a ban on diamonds originating from CAR.

Two weeks ago, during the physical inspection of imports and exports by the experts of the FPS Economy, a suspicious shipment of rough diamonds was discovered. Upon request of the Belgian KP authority, the FPS Economy, the KP Working Group of Diamond Experts was immediately asked to advise, comparing digital images of the shipment and images of the CAR footprint, concluding there is a high probability that the shipment of rough diamonds originates from CAR. The FPS Economy immediately notified the judicial authorities.

The European Commission appointed the FPS Economy as the official authority charged with controlling the international Kimberley Process Certification Scheme requirements on rough diamonds. The KP is a unique cooperation between governments, industry and civil society controlling the worldwide rough diamond production. One of those requirements states that each shipment of rough diamonds that is exported or imported worldwide needs to be accompanied by a valid Kimberley Certificate, issued by an officially authorized body in one of the KP participating countries.

Apart from physical controls, the Diamond Office also applies increased vigilance towards suspicious shipments of rough diamonds that show resemblance to the so-called footprint of CAR, which is a typology (describing characteristics such as color, assortment and type) compiled by a KP team of diamond experts. Due to this increased vigilance, the FPS Economy was able to detect this suspicious shipment of rough diamonds.

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<http://economie.fgov.be/en/>

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