



PRESS RELEASE

Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Reynders visits Antwerp diamond sector

Antwerp, Tuesday July 2013. On Tuesday, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Reynders visited the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC).

The program included a visit to Diamond Office, the Antwerp diamond import and export body, the Antwerp Diamond Tender Facility, a walking lunch with various Antwerp diamond companies and an informal meeting with AWDC's CEO, Ari Epstein and AWDC President, Stéphane Fischler.

The working visit underscores the important role of the Antwerp diamond industry in regard to Belgium's foreign trade.

Ari Epstein, CEO AWDC: "We warmly welcome the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Reynders to the Antwerp diamond sector. Our industry is perhaps the single most international sector in our country. Apart from the multicultural character of our community, where more than 70 different nationalities live and work together, as the world's prime diamond centre, we maintain extensive trade relationships with countries across the globe. In 2012 diamonds took up 82% of the total Belgian exports to India. In addition, the diamond trade represented nearly 15% of the total trade between China and Belgium. Diamond equals 5% of the total Belgian exports and even 15% of all exports outside the EU. These are impressive figures that perfectly illustrate the distinct export-oriented character of our business. That is precisely why optimal trade relations are essential, especially considering the increasing foreign competition within our industry."

During the visit, Minister Reynders also discussed a tonnage tax or diamond carat tax (DCT), a very important topic for the diamond sector. "In the Antwerp Diamond Masterplan, launched early 2012, we plead for the implementation of a sustainable fiscal regime that could provide sufficient insurance for the Antwerp diamond companies. A diamond carat tax would provide a complete legal and transparent framework that would help Antwerp to maintain its leading position as the world's foremost diamond centre. We are very grateful Minister Reynders pledges his support in this matter." says Ari Epstein, CEO AWDC.

Furthermore, Vice Prime Minister Reynders and the AWDC discussed other current affairs, such as the ongoing KP reform debate and the upcoming Princely Missions to Angola, South Africa, India and Russia.

Diamonds love Antwerp