



Visit Chinese Minister of Commerce to Antwerp diamond district confirms excellent relationships

Antwerp, June 1st - 2012. On Friday, an official delegation led by the Chinese Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China was welcomed by AWDC's CEO Ari Epstein.

Since the past decade, the Belgian-Chinese trade relationships have been thriving, with a prominent role for the Antwerp diamond industry.

Our partnership is illustrated perfectly by regular, official delegations being welcomed both in China and Belgium, for example through the Shanghai World Expo and the Belgian EU-pavilion with the very popular diamond section present there. More recently, in November 2011, the Antwerp diamond industry established an even more profound and tangible collaboration, during the Belgian Princely Mission, with an unprecedented networking event between Chinese entrepreneurs and their Belgian counterparts in the fabulous Great Hall of the People at Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

The visit of the high level Chinese delegation led by H.E. Minister Chen Deming, Chinese Minister of Commerce, once again confirms the mutual beneficial commercial alliances between China and Belgium. The diamond trade in Belgium has grown dramatically recently and is currently 60% above pre-crisis levels. The bilateral diamond trade between China and Belgium clearly follows that trend and is forecast to rise to \$5 billion over the next year.

AWDC's CEO Ari Epstein: "We are honoured to have the Minister as our guest and it underscores the strong ties between China and Antwerp. Today already a stunning 25% of Antwerp's polished diamond export is heading to Hong Kong and mainland China. With rising prosperity levels and consumer spending, that number can only grow. Every day more and more Chinese customers discover nature's most beautiful treasure, in all its facets, from the rough stones that are unearthed, the exclusive jewellery piece that celebrates a joyous occasion to the exquisitely polished stone that equals a stable and secure investment."

Diamonds love Antwerp