



Press release:

Paul De Wachter appointed new CEO of HRD Antwerp

Antwerp, October 1, 2025. The Board of Directors of HRD Antwerp, a subsidiary of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), has appointed Paul De Wachter as its new CEO. Bringing over twenty years of experience and a proven track record in the international diamond industry, De Wachter will assume the role in January 2026. As CEO, he is tasked with strengthening HRD's position as a reliable partner for the international diamond trade and leading the organization through a period of significant transformation. Former CEO Ellen Joncheere, whose contract was not renewed, is stepping down, with Stanley De Belie appointed as interim CEO during the transition phase.

De Wachter began his career in the diamond sector in 2002 and rose to the position of Senior Relationship Manager at the Antwerp Diamond Bank. After a brief period at Channel Capital Advisors in a similar role, he joined the National Bank of Fujairah (NBF), where he has been active for more than seven years. He started there as Head of the Antwerp Representative Office, focusing on building a strong local client portfolio. Since 2020, he has served as Head of the Diamond Unit, where he expanded the bank's brand and significantly strengthened its market position.

The Board of Directors of HRD Antwerp has expressed full confidence in the new CEO. "With his extensive experience in the international diamond industry, his strong and relevant network, and the concrete results he has achieved as Head of the Diamond Unit at NBF, Paul convinced us that he is the right person to lead HRD Antwerp into the future," says Bart De Hantsetters, on behalf of the Board of Directors. "We are delighted that someone with his expertise and vision is taking on this important role and wish him every success."

The Board also extends its sincere thanks to Ellen Joncheere, who is stepping down after a little more than five years as CEO of HRD Antwerp, for her dedication and service. She succeeded in putting the company back on track in a relatively short period after a turbulent time—an achievement that was anything but self-evident. To ensure

continuity during this transition period, Stanley De Belie, currently Chief Operations Officer at HRD, will serve as interim CEO.

“I am very much looking forward to taking on this new challenge,” says Paul De Wachter. “I am fully aware of the amount of work that lies ahead, at a time when the international diamond industry is facing major challenges, including the rise of lab-grown diamonds. HRD needs a strong, clear vision and determined leadership to deliver on its role as a trusted partner for its clients. In my role as CEO, I will do everything I can to make that happen.”

Paul De Wachter is 48 years old and married. He earned a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration in 2002. Throughout his career, he has led teams of varying sizes, built an extensive international network, and developed in-depth expertise in the global diamond industry.

About HRD Antwerp

HRD Antwerp is a leading diamond laboratory headquartered in Antwerp, specializing in the certification of polished natural diamonds. The laboratory was founded in 1973 as part of the Diamond High Council (HRD), an organization established at the initiative of the Belgian government and the diamond industry. In 2007, HRD was split into two separate entities: the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) and HRD Antwerp. Today, HRD Antwerp operates in more than five locations worldwide.

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