



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Raphaël Liégeois -
ESA selects a Walloon
astronaut

FOCUS

Belgium ranked among
leading European countries

BIG PICTURE

Takeda is here to stay

AMBASSADORS

Nicolas Dessambre

INNOVATION!

Editorial coordination Bernadette

Pâques and Jean-Willy Lardinois

Reporters Hugh Featherstone

Eric Coppers

Frédérique Siccard

Perrine Mertens

Emilie Henry

Mathilde Warnier

Magali Mouthuy

Géraldine Sauvage

Contributors Thomas French

Jane French

Ciarán Ó Faoláin

Elizabeth Mudie

Ojas Chaudhari

Art director Julie Van Mele

Layout Christine Voss

AWEX

Pascale Delcomminette

Marie-Catherine Duchêne

Place Saintelette 2

B - 1080 Brussels

+32(0)2.421.85.76

mc.duchene@awex.be

It is a necessity, the credo of our companies, the DNA of our Wallonia. This appetite for innovation, I see it every day, here or while on business abroad, when talking with entrepreneurs, partners and socio-economic players in Wallonia.

Across all sectors, our companies are creative, innovative and agile. They are inspired and, in turn, inspire each other. Once they have an idea, they test it, implement it, adapt it. Years of effort, colossal investments, but which all pay off, especially in times of successive crises, in the face of resource shortages, ballooning costs, and even geopolitical threats. From concept to achievement, from challenge to solution, from dream to reality.

From the start-up creating assisted reality glasses, to pharmaceutical giant UCB investing more into sustainability, you will discover a wealth of articles that puts a spotlight on innovation in Europe and Wallonia and on the ambitions of our ecosystem. We're sure you will find something to inspire you.

Let us be proud of our companies, our talents and marvel at their excellence. The choice of Raphaël Liégeois to join the promotion of astronauts of the European Space Agency gives us the perfect opportunity.

Enjoy your flight

Pascale Delcomminette



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BELGIUM'S ROYAL MISSION TO JAPAN

As well as their cultural proximity, Japan and Europe share several economic and societal challenges, including decarbonising their economies and dealing with an aging population. With this situation in mind, HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium led a delegation comprising of hundreds of entrepreneurs to Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kyoto, to promote their technological solutions and services. Energy transition, renewable energy, life sciences, and the food industry were among the 15 different sectors that were showcased throughout the week. The visit was concluded by the signing of several distribution agreements and partnerships, as well as around 30 agreements between Japanese and Belgian academic institutions.



© Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation



© Antonin Weber

KIKK FESTIVAL: EVERYTHING THAT UNITES US

Since 2011, the KIKK Festival in Namur has been inspiring and astonishing everyone to get inspired and marvel at the latest technological innovations, displayed through physical or digital art installations all over the Walloon capital. The Festival's mission is "to build bridges and create ties in the areas of art, science, culture and technology." For its 11th edition, the Festival's theme is "everything that unites us as human beings". The festival is open to the general public (25,000 people) as well as skilled professionals (2,500 entrepreneurs from 41 countries).



© EY

MEURENS NATURAL SUCCEEDS ODOO

Meurens Natural, a Liège-based company, has been awarded Company of the Year 2022, or *L'Entreprise de l'Année*® 2022, thus prevailing over Atenor (Brussels) and La Laiterie des Ardennes (Libramont). Meurens Natural's organic range of non-refined cereal syrups are used for producing plant-based drinks and yogurts, as well as biscuits, muesli, chocolates and ice cream. The company, comprised of 85 employees, achieved a turnover of 65 million euros in 2021 with an average annual growth rate of 24%.

BELGIAN FASHION AWARDS: CELEBRATING BELGIAN FASHION

Jointly organised by MAD Brussels, Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode, Flanders DC and Knack Weekend / Le Vif Weekend, the Belgian Fashion Awards celebrate Belgian fashion each year by honouring fashion houses and designers. Among the 8 awardees of 2022 was duo Ester Manas and Balthazar Delepierre, who were awarded *Changemaker of the Year* for their fashion label, which designs "bold collections for fierce and joyful women."



© J. Van Belle - WBI

AEROSPACELAB CROWNED SCALE-UP OF THE YEAR 2022

Aerospacelab, the latest rising star of Wallonia's digital and technological economy, designs, manufactures and operates planetary observation satellites. After having received the Wallonia Rising Star Award from AWEX, the company, which was founded by Benoît Deper (Mont-Saint-Guibert), was crowned Scale-up of the Year 2022, or *Scale-up de l'Année 2022* by EY "for its unique and ambitious project."



© EY



CYBERWAL IN GALAXIA PROGRAM: A FIRST IN WALLONIA

Belgium's first international cyber-security school has begun its first session at the Euro Space Center in Transinne. Cybersecurity being one of the European Commission's main goals, Wallonia aimed to include it in its stimulus plan by collaborating with various partners to become "one of the major players in developing cyber-security solutions on a global scale." The project has already welcomed around one hundred students from all over Europe. "Wallonia has some of the leading experts in cyber-security among its ranks. We could become the new Silicon Valley," says Axel Legay, cyber-security specialist at UCLouvain and leader of this project.



STARTECH'S DAYS: TOMORROW'S FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS TODAY

The Startech's Days event, organised in Ciney, showcases both training programmes and professions in the technical, technological and scientific fields, as well as promoting the personal and professional opportunities these areas can offer. By organising competitions in various technical and technological fields for young adults aged 16 to 24, the event aims to encourage them to improve their technical skills as well as their soft skills. The 2022 Champions in their respective fields will represent Belgium at the EuroSkills 2023 competition in Gdansk.

PAIRI DAIZA: THE BIGGEST PHOTOVOLTAIC CARPORT IN THE WORLD

In 2018, Pairi Daiza committed to becoming "100% green" by 2032. The first step in this direction was taken in 2019 with the installation of 62,750 photovoltaic panels spread over the site's car parks. Out of these, 31,036 new panels are expected to be in service by mid-2023. This power will be partially used to cover the park's energy requirements, and any surplus energy will be fed back into the network.



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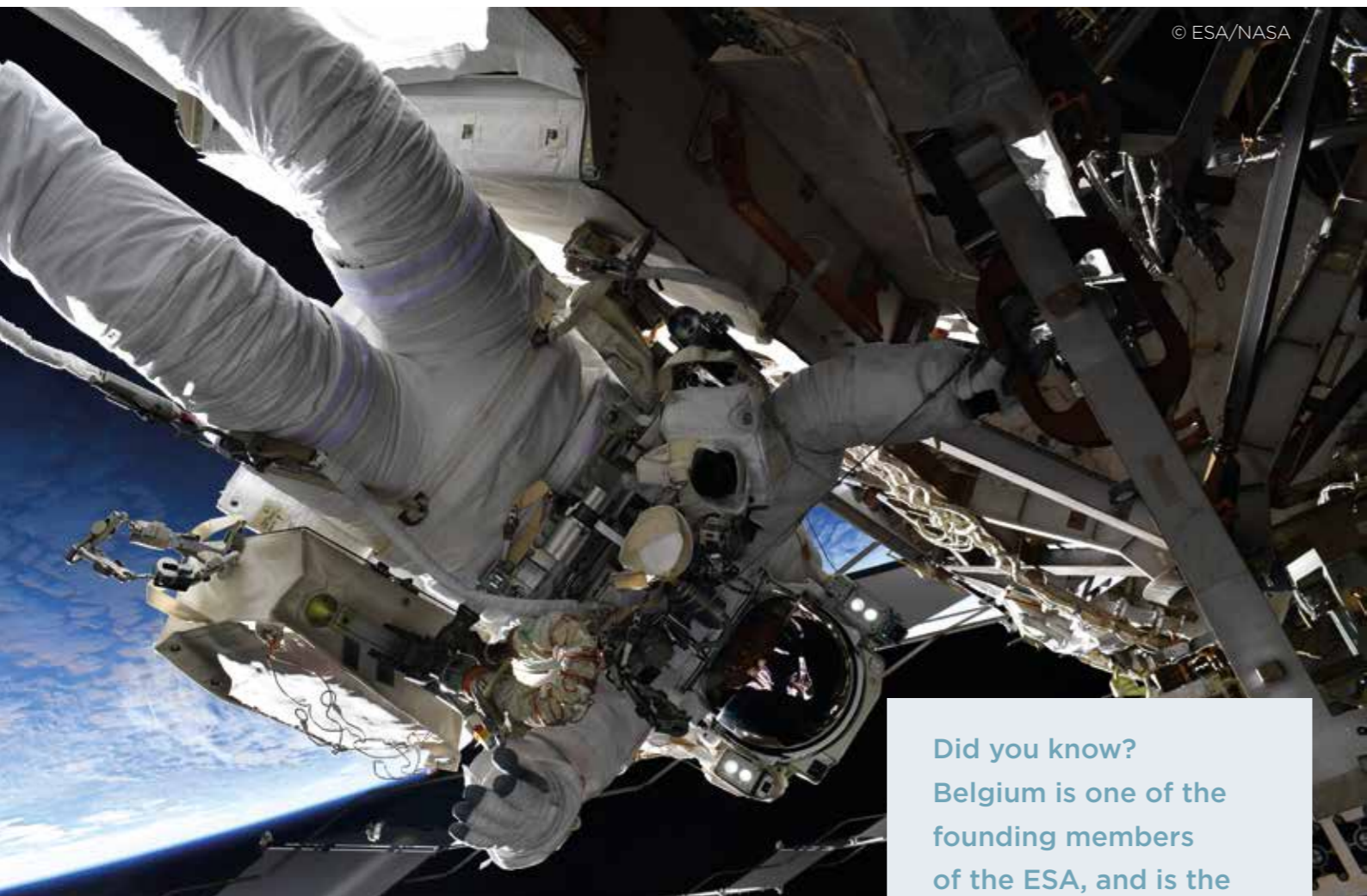


Raphaël Liégeois
© ESA - P. Sebirot

RAPHAËL LIÉGEOIS

A WALLOON
IN SPACE

On 23 November, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced its selection of future astronauts to join the European Astronaut Corps. Among them, a Walloon - Raphaël Liégeois, who comes from Namur. He follows previous Belgian astronauts Dirk Frimout and Frank De Winne in the race to the stars.



© ESA/NASA

Did you know?
 Belgium is one of the founding members of the ESA, and is the fifth largest contributor in absolute terms. Its net contribution will increase from €250 to €350 million by 2023. The aerospace sector generates more than 10,000 jobs in Belgium.

In 2021, the ESA launched a new recruitment campaign for astronauts. It received more than 22,500 European applications, from which it selected 17 candidates: 5 career astronauts, 11 reserve members and one “parastronaut”, who has a physical disability. They are all determined to carry out missions to the International Space Station (ISS), and beyond.

Thirty years after Dirk Frimout’s first space flight, and 20 years after Frank De Winne’s, the ESA is welcoming a Belgian. Raphaël Liégeois has an atypical profile, to say the least. He is a 34-year-old engineer with several degrees. Having studied Biomedical Engineering at ULiège, he became an engineer at the École Centrale in Paris, where he obtained a Master’s in Fundamental Physics from the Université Paris-Sud Orsay. He then obtained a PhD in Neuroscience at ULiège, where he developed mathematical models of brain function, and worked as an assistant. This was followed by postdoctoral research at the National University of Singapore and then at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland), and a stay as a visiting researcher at Stanford University (USA).

Since 2021, he has been working as a research and teaching fellow at the Université de Genève and at the École Poly-

technique Fédérale de Lausanne, in Switzerland, where he has been teaching Neural Engineering and Statistics. He is also carrying out research into brain dynamics in health and disease. This has not stopped him from meeting the challenges of the ESA’s fourth physical ability and assessment phase, which stresses that “the work of an astronaut is physically demanding, requiring stamina, dexterity and more. This assessment ensures that the selected candidates will be able to cope with the physical demands of the job, whether on Earth or in space.”

This Namur native has a taste for discovery and adventure, whether on land, sea or in the air. He is a glider, hot-air balloon and gas balloon pilot, a diving and sailing enthusiast, and a cyclist in his spare time: he cycled from Singapore to Belgium, with his family, to meet up with poets from Asia and Europe. Now he is pursuing his childhood dream of becoming an astronaut. He has almost achieved it: he is off to the European Astronaut Centre in Cologne (Germany) for a 12-month basic training course, before the next phase of training for the International Space Station.



© ESA astronaut announcement Class of 2022 by Sebastiaan ter Burg, CC BY 2.0



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TAKEDA IS HERE TO STAY:

THE JAPANESE COMPANY MAKES MAJOR BIOTECH AND SUSTAINABILITY INVESTMENT

During the celebration for its 50 years on the Lessines site, Takeda announced its decision to provide it with a 300-million-euro investment. This investment, the largest to date, confirms the Japanese company's position as a leader in biotech and makes it an example of sustainability.

Takeda Belgium is a pharmaceutical research, development and production company that specialises in oncology, gastroenterology, haematology, vaccines, neuroscience and the treatment of rare diseases. The Lessines plant has 1,200 employees, exports to 80 countries, plans to reuse 90% of its wastewater by 2025 and has set itself the goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

This massive investment includes a new, fully digitised purification line for plasma-derived therapies, as well as the construction of a state-of-the-art warehouse.

PATIENTS, THE PLANET AND HUMANITY

"Patients are, of course, at the centre of everything. Plasma-derived therapies are changing the lives of patients with rare and genetic diseases and extending their life expectancy," said Geoffrey Pot, General Manager Operations. Thanks to this new production line, more than 60,000 patients all over the world will be able to be treated each year, in addition to the 250,000 patients and families who already benefit from the therapies developed in Lessines.

"Respect for the environment and the preservation of biodiversity and natural resources are also a key issue for Takeda," he continued. The company has already installed 8,000 solar panels and plans to add a few thousand more soon, in addition to 2 wind turbines and geothermal wells, in order to achieve electrical autonomy by 2030. In addition, employees benefit from a vegetable garden and a large green space full of native plants where they can eat and relax.

Takeda Belgium decided to attract talent in the competitive biopharmaceutical ecosystem by offering its employees "an exceptional on-site experience: Geoffrey Pot further explains: "The factory is designed as a campus where it is good to live". Working groups have been set up to address topics such as well-being, inclusion and sustainability, and the management supports any initiative aimed at helping employees enjoy their time at work.

VITAL SUPPORT FROM AWEX

The Wallonia Export & Investment Agency has greatly facilitated the group's development in Wallonia by promoting the region as a land of the future, establishing contact between the various relevant bodies, confirming stable political support and preparing the arguments for the Board of Directors. It was this personalised support that convinced the Japanese board to invest in the Lessines site once more.



- 1200 (Lessines)
- 50,000
- 9 million / year
- 300,000
- €300 million
- 80 countries
- 100%
- 90 % → 2025
- 0% CO₂ → 2030

P104

© Takeda

PLANET

Solar panels

Wind turbines

Geothermal energy

© Takeda

© Takeda



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On the night of September 26-27, at 1:14 am Belgian time, the American DART probe intentionally collided with Dimorphos — the smallest of two asteroids in a binary asteroid system — with a diameter of 160 metres and located 11 million kilometres from Earth.

“It is a first for humanity, as this demonstration successfully shortened Dimorphos’ orbit around its parent rock, Didymos, further confirming the feasibility of the asteroid deflection technology,” said Thierry du Pré-Werson, CEO of the Belgian company Spacebel.

The DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) mission is the first phase of an international project spearheaded jointly by NASA (for

DART) and the ESA (for Hera, the follow-up mission). This project aims to test and validate a method to protect the Earth in the event of an asteroid impact.

Expected to be launched into space in late 2024, the European probe, Hera, will follow through with the experiment in 2027, by investigating the consequences of the collision, conducting a detailed study of the collision crater and the structure of the asteroid, as well as demonstrating innovative technologies.

Spacebel has been entrusted with several major contracts for this mission. “Since 2018, Spacebel has been in charge of the Hera spacecraft’s software systems,

called the “central software”. This flight software, equipped with high-level on-board autonomy similar to that of a driverless car, will perform real-time spacecraft functions.”

Spacebel is also pioneering various simulation software systems for Hera, along with managing and developing the CubeSat Mission Operations Centre at Redu, in the Luxembourg province of Belgium. This centre will control the pioneering nano-satellite duo, Milani and Juventas. “These two shoebox-sized CubeSats have a dual objective: to gather more detailed scientific data on Dimorphos and its environment, and to test a new inter-satellite linking technology. The central software will monitor

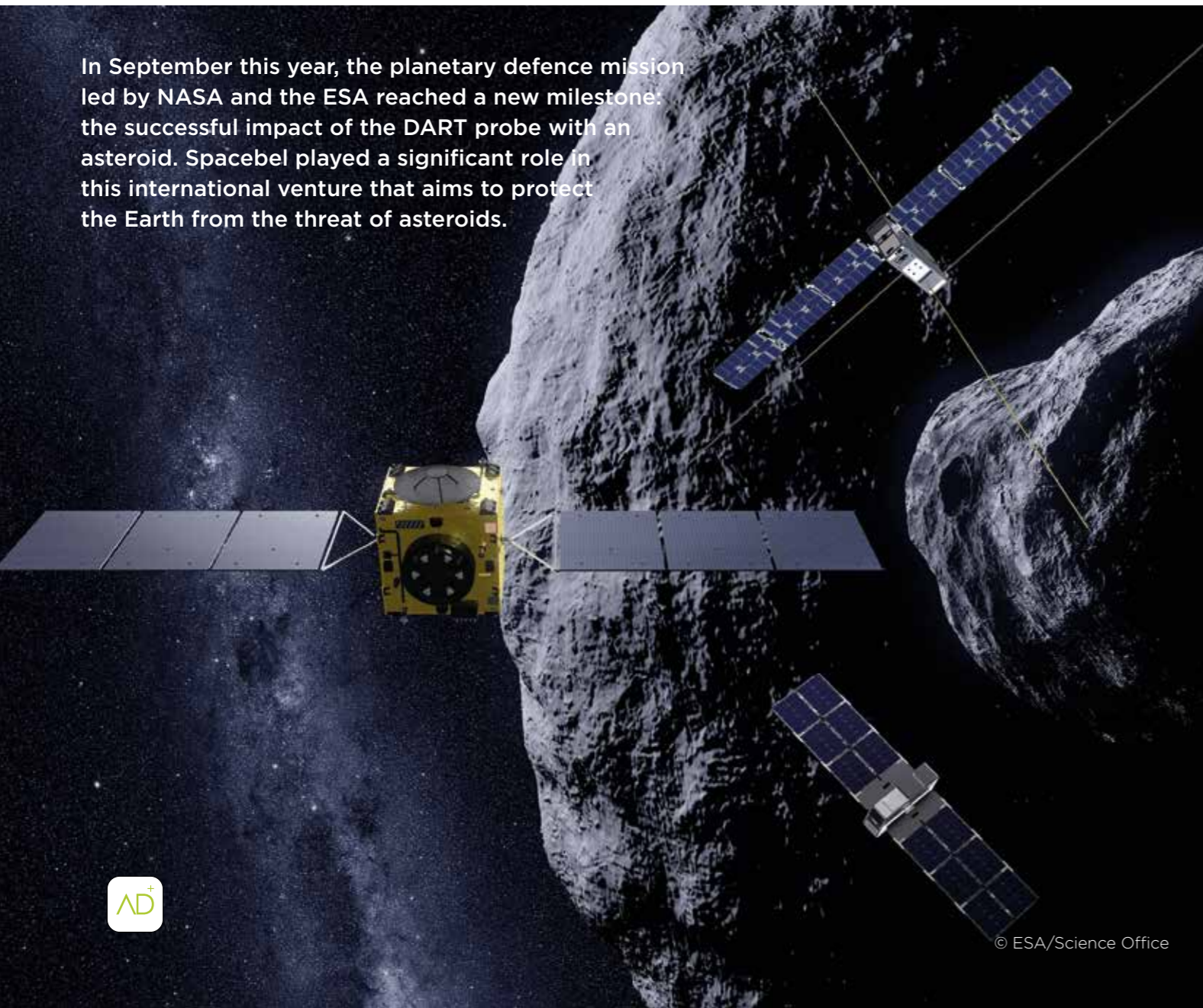
communications between the main spacecraft and the two CubeSats, as well as between the main spacecraft and Earth.”

Established more than thirty years ago on Walloon territory, Spacebel has provided its expertise to many key European space projects. “The Belgian aerospace business remains a deep-rooted tradition in Wallonia, thanks to universities like ULiège that excel in the fields of space and aeronautics. We are present in different sectors, mainly Earth observation and space flights, but also telecoms, navigation, exploration, stratospheric balloons and so on,” Thierry du Pré-Werson said.

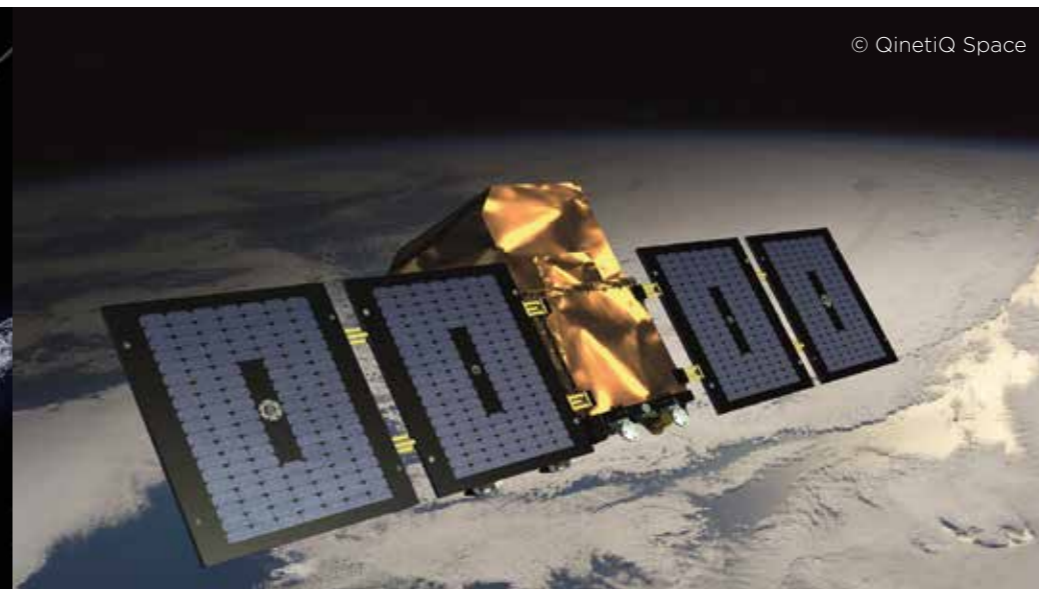
SPACEBEL

SETS COURSE FOR DIMORPHOS

In September this year, the planetary defence mission led by NASA and the ESA reached a new milestone: the successful impact of the DART probe with an asteroid. Spacebel played a significant role in this international venture that aims to protect the Earth from the threat of asteroids.














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© QinetiQ Space

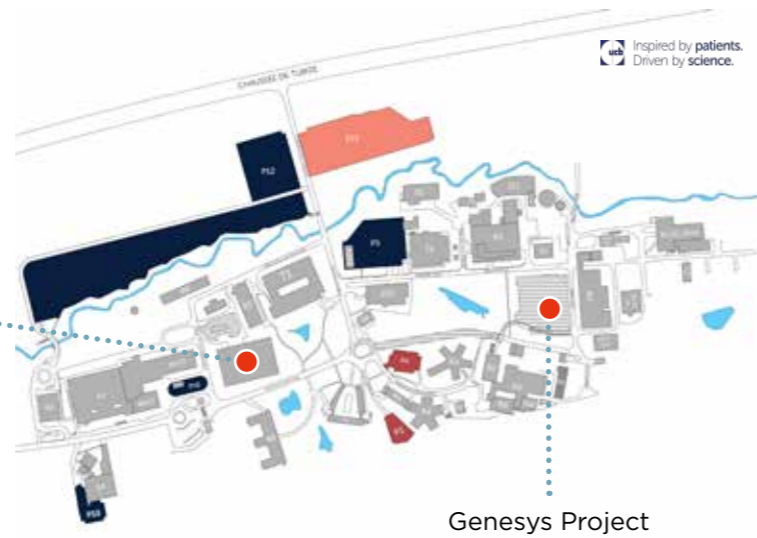


-  September 1988
-  30+ years in the space sector
-  50+ space missions
-  €12M /2021
-  98% exports
-  100
-  500m² of cleanrooms
-  SO 9001-2015
-  3 sites: 2 in Belgium (Liège and Hoeilaart) and 1 in France (Toulouse)
-  2 affiliated companies:
 - N7 Space (Poland)
 - ConstellR (Germany-Belgium)
-  100% Belgian share ownership (Noshaq, Sogepa, SRIW, and private investors)





Inflexio Project



Genesys Project



UCB PROPELS BRAINE-L'ALLEUD TO THE TOP

Specialising in treatments in a wide range of fields, including neurology, immunology, rheumatology, osteoporosis and dermatology, UCB has announced a series of strategic investments amounting to 1 billion euros in the Braine-l'Alleud campus, over the course of the following decade.

Founded in 1928, UCB has always known how to reinvent itself in order to survive. It invests a staggering 25% of its global turnover in R&D. In 2018, UCB reasserted its leading position in biopharmaceuticals after pledging 300 million euros towards the construction of a new biotech plant, which will be operational in 2024. The company is currently experiencing a 30% growth, with nearly 9,000 employees worldwide, including 3,000 in Belgium alone, distributed between Anderlecht, Leuven and Braine-l'Alleud. UCB exports to 40 countries, enabling the treatment of 3.7 million patients every year. This new series of investments will be used to create an R&D unit, develop the "Genesys"

gene therapy programme, ensure the sustainability of the 50 hectare campus which acts as the true nerve centre, as well as develop the Inspace Project, which focuses on skilled employees' well-being and comfort.

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES: GENE THERAPY

UCB will invest 200 million euros towards the construction of a real gem: a new gene therapy facility with cutting-edge comfort and technology on the campus. As for this facility's uniqueness, Laurent Schots, Head of Corporate External Communications, explains

that: "All the elements of the production chain come together here, all aspects of work cross paths here, from research to marketing, in order to foster collaboration." The company aims to accomplish ongoing as well as future research projects with speed, scalability and quality.

INSPACE: ATTRACTING AND NURTURING TALENT

The high-tech campus must be competitive and inviting in order to attract the best talent in the biopharmaceutical field. It is home to a community of 2,065 employees from 50 different countries, including scientists, technicians, digital technology experts, engineers, and manufacturing and procurement professionals. Between 2018 and 2022, the workforce has grown by more than 30%.






The campus buildings are being renovated. Its modern and luminous restaurant offers well-balanced menus, and wellness paths wind through the green space. Everything has been done to ensure the comfort and the well-being of those who bring the research projects to life.

ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY REMAINS A PRIORITY

While UCB admits that it is challenging to continue growing while staying environmentally neutral, it complies with the highest standards of sustainability and is confident of becoming carbon-neutral by 2030. It also intends to reduce its water consumption, recycle 70% of its wastewater and replace the use of natural gas with that of biomethane.

According to UCB, the town of Braine-l'Alleud is planning to construct an enormous 18-hectare solar farm by the summer of 2023. This farm will be made up of 18,500 solar panels, making it the biggest in Wallonia, and would cover 25% of the campus' electricity needs. The purchase of additional green electricity will help meet the rest of its needs.

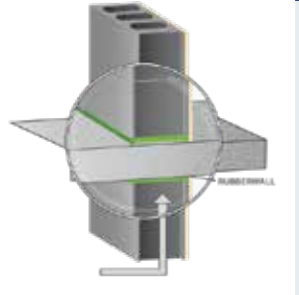


-  **9000 (2,065 at Braine-l'Alleud)**
-  **€5.8 billion**
-  **40 countries**
-  **Braine campus established in 1971**
-  **3.7 million**

0% CO₂ → 2030



© UCB



RUBBERGREEN 100% RECYCLED

Founded in 2009 in Frameries, RubberGreen's industrial operation is based on the principles of the circular economy, and uses recycled rubber granules as raw material.

€ €4,8 million

🏠 2000 m²

🏭 400 m²

From anti-vibration mats used in railway infrastructure and building insulation, to rooftop solar panel supports, heat pumps, and even air conditioners, RubberGreen is using recycled rubber to create and market a wide variety of product lines.

The company employs around forty people and processes 7,000 tonnes of recycled rubber

in its Frameries production site every year. "Wallonia is appealing because of its support for the circular economy," said Thierry Lemaigre, RubberGreen's BDO. He also highlighted the network of experts developed locally with partners such as MateriaNova (UMons), MecaTech, GreenWin and the Bridgestone company.

"Recycled rubber is the company's DNA. The rubber

particles come in the form of granules that RubberGreen either buys directly from the recovery sector - which in turn sources it from end-of-life tires - or we 'manufacture' them on site using industrial waste transferred to us by partner companies, including the Bridgestone plant located next-door to RubberGreen on the Frameries site," Thierry Lemaigre explained.

For more than 5 years, and with the help of new investors - the Green.er fund, housed by the King Baudouin Foundation, and the Treis Group - who have joined the company's historical partner, the local investor IMBC, RubberGreen has been able to develop a new way to process recycled rubber. "Until now, recycled rubber has been agglomerated, but it can now be devulcanised, that is to say 'melted', or structurally modified. RubberGreen is preparing to deploy this innovative technology as soon as 2023 by selling pads that can be placed between the sleeper and the ballasts of railway tracks. These pads will be made from devulcanised rubber produced by our first production line, which will be inaugurated next month," Thierry Lemaigre said. "The challenge the company has set itself is to develop solutions with 100% recycled rubber, and products with mechanical properties and technical specifications similar to those made from virgin rubber, which means they can replace them."

In addition, RubberGreen uses its own photovoltaic panels for its operations, which further reinforces its adherence to a sustainable model.

Having recently accomplished a 2.7 million Euro capital increase, the company is forecasting a 7 million Euro turnover for 2022.



© RubberGreen



BELGIUM RANKED AMONG LEADING EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Since last year, Belgium has been among the top five innovative countries in Europe, and Wallonia is helping maintain this momentum.

Each year, the European Commission publishes the innovation scoreboard, offering a comparative assessment of the performance of the European Union and its member countries in the fields of research and innovation. “This annual report allows decision-makers to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of national research and innovation systems, monitor progress and identify key areas in need of assistance,” said Chantal Léonard, AWEX EU Office Coordinator. “Member states fall into four performance groups: emerging innovators, moderate innovators, strong innovators, and innovation leaders. In the 2021 report, Belgium was placed in the innovation leaders group.”

Each country’s score is calculated based on several aspects: working conditions, investments, innovation activities, and employment, sales and environmental impacts. “Belgium’s strengths lie in attractive research systems and the use of new technologies,” said Marie Beheydt, Project Manager at the AWEX EU Office. “This includes doctoral students abroad, innovative SMEs and companies that provide training in ICT. Belgium’s position between 2020 and 2021 can be explained by the performance increase of several indicators using data on innovation, but also on digital skills, venture capital and resource productivity. Belgium also has above-average scores with regards to climate change.”

WHAT ABOUT WALLONIA?

The Regional Innovation Scoreboard serves as a regional extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS). It provides a comparative evaluation of regional innovation systems using the same methodology as that of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), but with fewer indicators. Similar to the EIS, where countries are classified into four groups based on their results, the regional scoreboard divides European regions into “regional innovation leaders” (38 regions), “regional strong innovators” (67 regions), “regional moderate innovators” (68

regions), and “regional emerging innovators” (67 regions). “Wallonia is ranked as a ‘strong innovator’, ahead of regions such as Hauts-de-France, Catalonia or Piedmont,” said Marie Beheydt.

5 AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

“Europe is pushing regions to specialise in the areas where they are strongest: this is known as the smart specialisation strategy,” said Philippe Lachapelle, Director of Innovation at AWEX. “In Wallonia, there are 5 areas where we can concentrate our strengths: circular materials, improved health (life sciences represent 33% of the Walloon economy in terms of exports), agile and safe design and production methods, energy systems and sustainable housing, and agri-food supply chains of the future. Wallonia must focus on these sectors, which generally correspond to the competitiveness clusters, in order to continue ensuring its economic

development, all while respecting the environment and human rights.”

According to the Director Lachapelle, Walloon innovation must be supported by tools that encourage it. Starting with people: “It is essential to be able to hire, and rely on, people who will see this innovation through. Wallonia is taking action to strengthen this capacity, notably by establishing a European biotech school in Charleroi. Its goal is to train the people we need in order to remain strong innovators.”

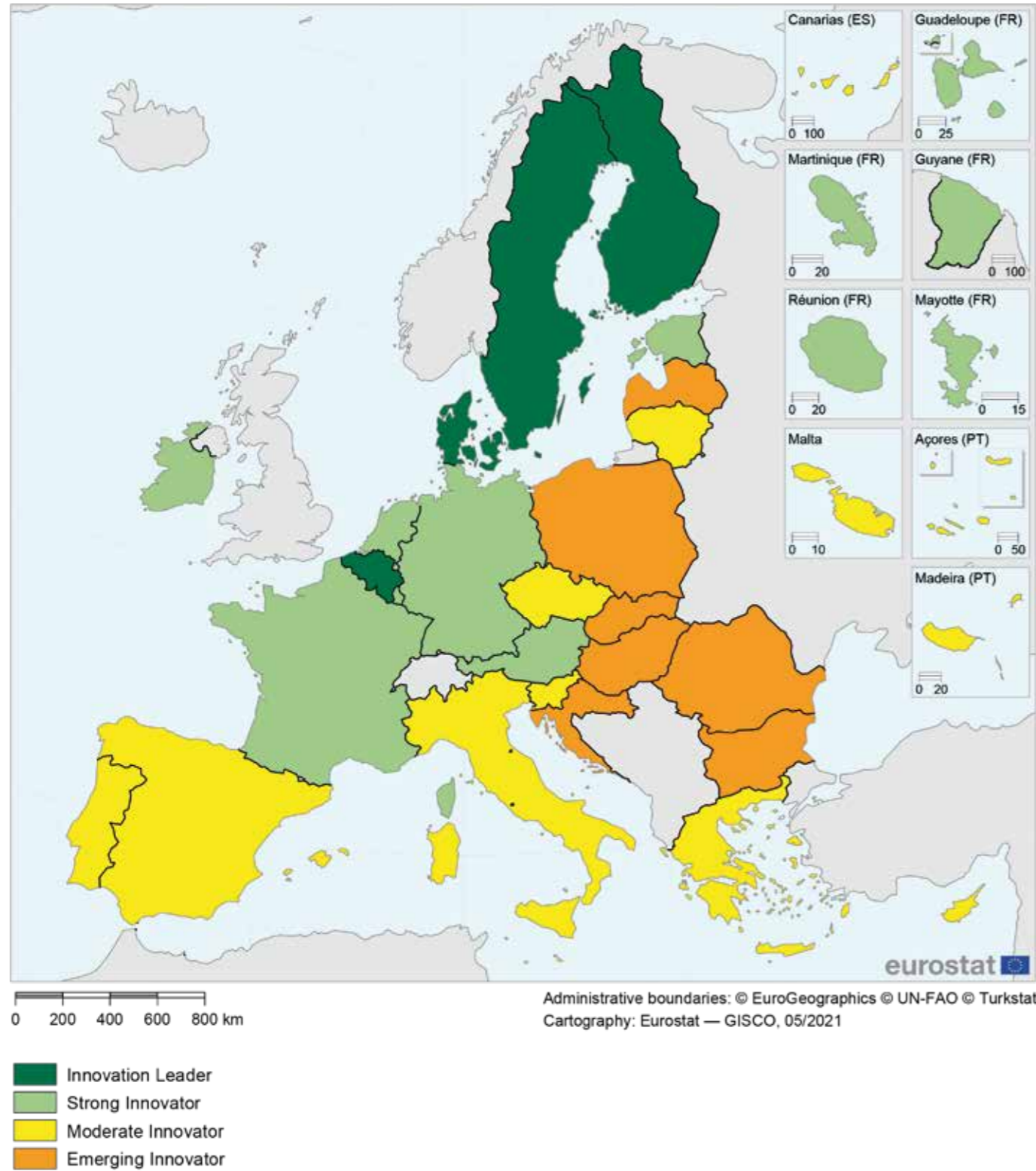
There is also a financial element involved. “Wallonia is reforming and merging its financial means to offer greater support for innovation, starting with research, which must then be transformed into businesses, which will need money to grow,” said Philippe Lachapelle. “Today, research and development is well supported at the federal level, through tax measures that protect intellectual property, expertise and patent registration. We need to solidify this in Wallonia, through strong tax measures.”

ECOSYSTEMS AND SOFT LANDING

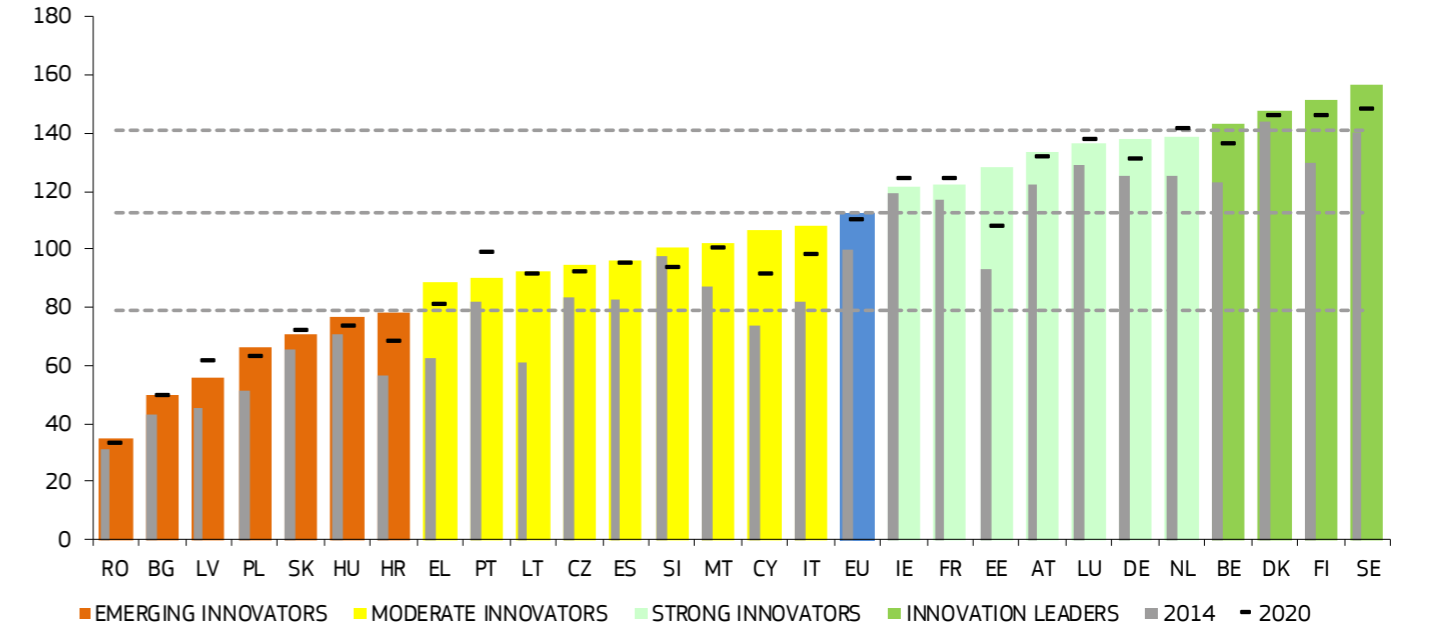
Finally, Awex and WBI also support the internationalisation of innovation. “The newly founded Innovation Department (*Direction à l’Innovation*) enables us to build ecosystems where our companies can find everything they need to grow from a commercial point of view in external markets. We’ve been working on it in Texas for 15 years. We want to do the same with Taiwan, Israel, Canada and the United Kingdom, where innovation is strongly rooted. However, we must also help companies wishing to develop in Europe: the soft landing can use Wallonia as a platform, via WSL, the sixth best incubator / technology accelerator in the world.”

In a nutshell, “Wallonia excels in several areas and can say so with pride!” This is an observation that makes us confident in its economic development and its future.”

MAP SHOWING THE PERFORMANCE OF EU MEMBER STATES' INNOVATION SYSTEMS

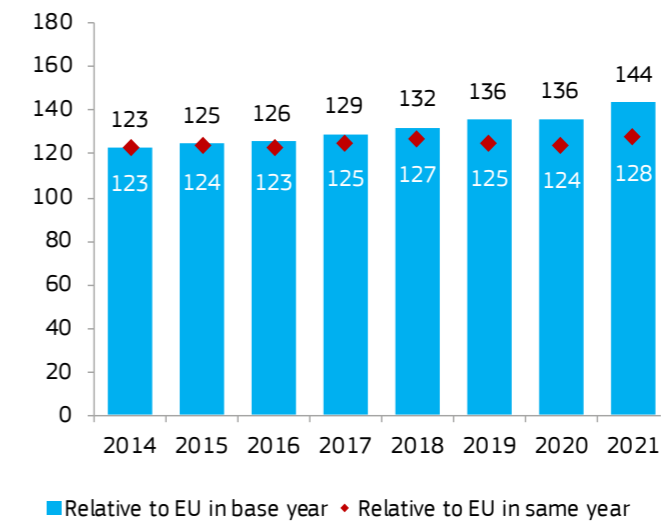


PERFORMANCE OF EU MEMBER STATES' INNOVATION SYSTEMS



Coloured columns show countries' performance in 2021, using the most recent data for 32 indicators, relative to that of the EU in 2014. The horizontal hyphens show performance in 2020, using the next most recent data, relative to that of the EU in 2014. Grey columns show countries' performance in 2014 relative to that of the EU in 2014. For all years, the same measurement methodology has been used. The dashed lines show the threshold values between the performance groups, where the threshold values of 70%, 100%, and 125% have been adjusted upward to reflect the performance increase of the EU between 2014 and 2021.

BELGIUM IS AN INNOVATION LEADER. OVER TIME, PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO THE EU HAS INCREASED.





“Our organisation has been expertly promoting tourism abroad for 40 years now. Today marks an important shift with the rebranding of the non-profit Wallonie Belgique Tourisme as VISITWallonia, a brand created during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is a historic evolution, as this specific naming convention is shared by so many in the field,” says Pierre Coenegrachts, VISITWallonia’s Deputy Director-General.

As the field is becoming more and more professional (it currently represents 4.1% of Wallonia’s GDP), VISITWallonia has endeavoured to strengthen its linguistic reception, and to digitise its tour operating partners. “We are also optimising the online sale of trips and outings on the VISITWallonia.be website. Nowadays, practically everything gets booked online and digital promotion is evolving further, particularly when the target audience lives in French and Dutch-speaking Belgium, but also in the Netherlands, France, Germany, the UK, and Italy.”

Wallonia has many qualities and a wide variety of activities to offer all year round. This Walloon winter is promising to be an unforgettable one!



WALLONIA - 40 YEARS OF PROMOTING TOURISM ABROAD



VISIT Wallonia .be
VISITWallonia.be/winter





© J.P. Remy



© Daie



© J.P. Remy



© Lanterna Magica

MAGIC AND WONDER COME TO WALLONIA

Winter is upon us and marks the beginning of a magical period filled with wonder and joy.

Take a look at the VISITWallonia website where you can find a selection of Christmas markets, light shows and magical walks to get you into the holiday spirit.

Wander through the wooden chalets of the Walloon Christmas markets during the festive period;

Enjoy a moment of enchantment exploring a light trail or watching an amazing show;

There are plenty of light trails, events and shows to enjoy in Wallonia this winter!

Whether in the setting of a castle, citadel or cathedral, you can be sure to experience an enchanted and captivating atmosphere.

At the end of winter, across Wallonia, bonfires are lit to symbolise the transition from the darkness of winter to spring. Traditionally, the pyre, which is usually placed high up so that it can be seen from the surrounding area, is lit by the last couple of the year to be married.

In Wallonia, for centuries, the end of winter and the return of spring have also been celebrated with carnivals. Traditionally, the carnival period begins on Mardi Gras or Shrove Tuesday, but some carnivals take place on Laetare Sunday, in the middle of Lent. This is the case in Stavelot, Fosses-la-Ville and Welkenraedt.

Carnivals are so important to Walloon folklore that the Binche Carnival and its famous Gilles have been recognised as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity by UNESCO. Wearing imposing ostrich-feathered hats and throwing oranges, the Gilles are a memorable sight!

If you are looking to spend some magical moments in Wallonia this winter, take a look at [VISITWallonia.be/winter](https://www.visitwallonia.be/winter)



© Ruffus

“A WONDERFUL STORY” RUFFUS

The Agaises vineyard is celebrating its 20th anniversary! To mark the occasion, let's look back over the highlights of this Belgian success story.

In the spring of 2002, pioneers of Belgian viticulture Raymond Leroy, Étienne Delbeke and Thierry Gobillad combined their skills to create the Vignoble des Agaises. At that time, the three men simply wished to realise a shared dream and could not have imagined the dozens of international prizes that RUFFUS cuvées would go on to win. Later, Raymond's sons Arnaud and John Leroy, as well as a second generation of farmers, came to strengthen the ranks of the now famous family business.

“It is a wonderful story,” said Arnaud Leroy, the son of the founder.

Walloon soil is comparable to that of the Champagne region because it is also very rich in limestone. The northern Belgian terroir and climate are reflected in the minerality and freshness of the wine. These elements are why

the different cuvées have been served at the tables of the greatest restaurants in the country, where they accompany the finest dishes.

The vineyard produces around 300,000 bottles a year, a drop in the bucket for lovers of bubbly. However, it can take 5 years after joining the waiting list before you can pop open a bottle of RUFFUS.

The 2018 Grand Millésime recently won the 2022 Concours Mondial, and the 2022 Guide des vins belges (Belgian Wine Guide) gave it the maximum possible score of 5/5.

The hot and dry summer that we have just experienced also means that exceptional cuvées are on the horizon and will be enjoyed in 2 years!

Long may the party continue and long may RUFFUS' wines continue to sparkle!



© Ruffus



GET YOUR WAY PROTECTING BELGIUM'S PRODUCTION CAPACITY

One month ago, Nicolas Dessambre was made a Wallonia.be ambassador. The founder of Get Your Way, a start-up powered by VentureLab, he has developed assisted reality glasses, designed for SMEs.

Having made impressive appearances with his team at the KIKK festival, at the invitation of the Grand Poste de Liège, and at the 14th AWEX export mission in Texas, Nicolas Dessambre aims to let the world know about Belgian expertise. As he is personally concerned with the issue of local resources in design and development, he is very glad to be able to produce his glasses in Belgium under realistic economic conditions, while emphasising the use of local solutions.



Nicolas Dessambre
Founder of Get Your Way



© GYW

STUDIO BISKT

NAMED DESIGNER OF THE YEAR 2022



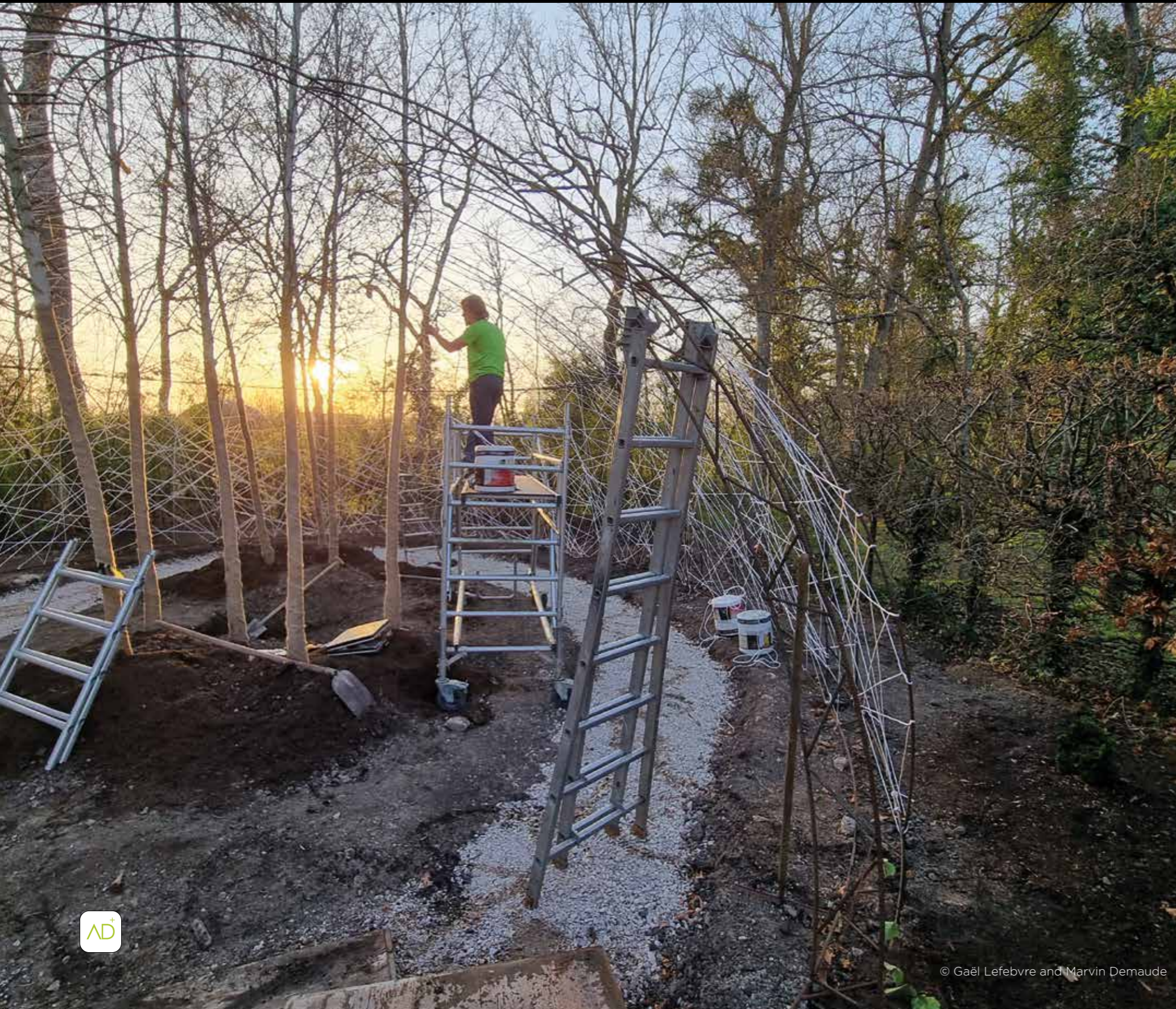
In 2018, Charlotte Gigan and Martin Duchêne created Studio BISKT (pronounced “BISK-it”) . They wanted to combine Martin’s love of machines and Charlotte’s artisanal ceramic-making techniques as well as question the existence of a border between art and design.

These two creative geniuses draw their inspiration from the architecture and everyday urban objects that they transform into unique and aesthetically complex works of art, using an extrusion of 100% Belgian clay.

This prize is awarded by the magazines Le Vif Weekend & Knack Weekend and Biennale Interieur, in partnership with Design Museum Gent, CID Grand-Hornu, Design Museum Brussels and MAD Brussels.

TWO STUDENTS FROM ISIA GEMBOUX

WIN AWARDS AT THE INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL AT THE JARDINS DE CHAUMONT



Take a look at the plant cocoon designed and created by Gaël Lefebvre and Marvin Demaude for the 30th International Garden Festival! The theme was “The Ideal Garden”.

The two garden and landscape architecture students at ISIA Gembloux, the Department of Agronomy at the Haute École Charlemagne, have created a garden where nature rules. Resembling a butterfly chrysalis, this pioneering refuge of biodiversity is pierced by the branches of birches, hops and honeysuckle which free themselves from an ephemeral setting.

This symbol of nature’s resilience in the face of human activity also promotes the richness of indigenous perennial species.



© Gaël Lefebvre and Marvin Demaude



© Gaël Lefebvre and Marvin Demaude

CAV&MA

The Centre d'Art Vocal et de Musique Ancienne de Namur, known as Cav&Ma, unveiled its splendid new concert hall, the Namur Concert Hall, within the completely renovated Grand Manège. Discover the rich winter programme that draws in classical and baroque music aficionados from all around the world. Do not miss these amazing events!



© Gabriel Balaguera



© Gabriel Balaguera



© Gabriel Balaguera

TYPH BARROW

A child of contemporary soul music, Typh Barrow kept festival-goers feeling the groove all summer long. With her mellow and warm voice, the Brussels-born artist has been giving dynamic stage appearances and dominating the airwaves. Follow her 2023 news, including outdoor and indoor shows, in particular at Forest National.



© Anne Stelen



© Francois Leboutte



A Belgian Award in Las Vegas

AWEX will be appearing, as a part of the Digital Wallonia initiative, on two different stands at this upcoming Consumer Electronics Show (CES), which will take place in Las Vegas from 5 to 8 January 2023. CES is the biggest yearly gathering in the world in the field of home electronics. 16 Walloon companies from different sectors (health, automobile/mobility, smart home, digital marketing and govtech) will participate in the show. Belgium is even set to receive an Award that recognises the most innovative regions!

15 Walloon companies at the San Francisco GDC

AWEX is set to participate in the Game Developers Conference (GDC) for the tenth time. The upcoming Conference will be taking place from 20 to 24 March 2023 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco (USA). During GDC 2023, AWEX will be joining forces with WALGA, TWIST, and the Belgian Games Association, all within the Digital Wallonia initiative. 15 Walloon companies will be participating in the GDC, making this the largest party of Walloons to ever make the trip! Cheers to that!



Arab Health Congress

Arab Health is the largest healthcare event in the Middle East. Held annually at the Dubai World Trade Centre, it attracts over 50,000 healthcare professionals from all medical fields, and from more than 70 countries. This is an unmissable event for Walloon companies, 17 of which will be there from 30 January to 2 February. Find them in zones Z1.G50 and Z1.H50.

Maison&Objet Paris

This year, Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode and FlandersDC will be joining forces once again in the TODAY section (stall J82-K81) of the Maison&Objet convention in Paris from 19 to 23 January 2023. From creating furniture and carpets to designing candles, and even innovative solutions in the field of new consumerism, these designers are vouching for societal evolution towards sustainability, and for humanising the very concept of innovation. You can also keep up with the event online with MOM.



Wallonia, the land of **SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION**



- ✓ **Circular materials** eco-design, industrial symbiosis, encouraging the reuse and repair of these materials within the economy, recycling innovation, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for **enhanced health** biotechnologies, medical equipment, eHealth, mHealth, silver economy, prevention, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for agile and safe **design** and **production methods** (IoT, 3D printing)
- ✓ Sustainable **energy** systems and **housing**
- ✓ **Agri-food** chains of the future and innovative management of the **environment**

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welcome@investinwallonia.be



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