

**Secretary of State for Foreign Trade, HEM Pieter De Crem, as salesman of Belgium to the United Arab Emirates**

**On 12 February 2017, HEM Pieter De Crem, Secretary of State for Foreign Trade, escorted by a 35-member Delegation involving no less than 17 Belgian companies from the three Regions of Belgium and Luxembourg, landed in Dubai in the framework of a Multisectorial Economic Mission to the UAE.**

Important Belgian Companies such as Besix, Tractebel, whose name are known all around the UAE, joined

“This trade mission enables us to further strengthen our contacts, to discuss ideas and opportunities and to deepen our ties” HEM Pieter De Crem

this economic mission led by the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce with the support of FIT, BIE, AWEX, the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce, the Embassy of Belgium in the UAE. One must not forget that thanks to their wide range of

connections and expertise such companies help put the Belgian potential firmly on the map and thus open up the market for other entrepreneurs.

It is thus no surprise that the Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce, benefitting from its extensive network and privileged position in the Arab World, took the initiative to bring Belgian companies to explore the UAE market and to go beyond the commonly explored Emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The Belgian Delegation also got the unique opportunity to get to know better less explored Emirates such as **Sharjah, Ras Al-Khaima** and **Fujairah**, which are offering a real potential for SMEs.

*This Mission was a real opportunity for us to optimally explore the UAE market for the first time. We gained knowledge in a short period of time. It was a really rewarding experience as we could establish relations within the UAE. But also, another quite important point, is that this mission established a strong relationship between members of the Delegation and we could benefit from the experience and advice from other companies within the Delegation. Finally, the presence of Secretary of State De Crem, combined to the extended network of the ABLCC, was a significant added value as it gave us more credibility and opened-up unexpected doors.*

For some companies such Derbigum, manufacturer of building materials, House & Garden, manufacturer of outdoor furniture, this was an opportunity to establish new contacts outside the major commercial centers.

For other companies, such as the Brussels IT company Ad Infinitum Bi, or the Electrical Panels Installations Company P&I bvba, as well as for Advensys Conseil, a Luxembourg accounting and fund investment firm, this was a first introduction to the UAE.

The UAE, which counts 3500 Belgians living and working there, is by far the most important trading partner of Belgium in the Arab world.

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*The Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce brings together the 14 Chambers of Commerce in Belgium and defends 26,000 companies. EUROCHAMBRES is the Association of European Chambers of Commerce. It represents the interests of more than 20 million companies from 45 European countries through a network of 2000 local Chambers of Commerce.*