



# BELGIUM KING'S DAY

15 NOVEMBER



## Words by Ambassador Andy Detaille

### Dear Readers,

I want to thank the Kuwait Times for giving us the opportunity, on the occasion of our King's Day, to present my country to you.

Most of you know Belgium as the land of chocolate and beer, which of course we are. In fact to earn the Belgian AMBAO quality label the chocolate cannot contain any vegetable fat as is often the case with non-Belgian products.

But my country is so much more. We are in fact the per capita biggest exporters in the world, a whopping 80% of our prosperity stems from selling products and services abroad.

This has led to innumerable success stories, some global, some in Kuwait and I invite you to discover some of them on this page.

Yours truly,

**Andy Detaille**  
Ambassador of Belgium  
to the State of Kuwait.

### Belgium has the third best education system

According to the annual education report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Belgium has the

third best education system amongst the 35 OECD countries. Thanks to outstanding teachers and a flexible education system, our country has scored considerably better than the world average.

The OECD research "Education at a Glance" speaks very highly of the Belgian education system. Teachers and head teachers are relatively young in our country. In secondary education 16% of the teachers are younger than 30. That is twice the EU22 average (countries which are both members of the European Union and the OECD). The number of teachers older than 50 is considerably lower than the EU22 average.

The salaries of teachers in primary and secondary education are higher than the OECD and EU22 average. The salaries of teachers delivering post-16 education in Belgium are even higher than the average salary of others who have completed higher education. Whilst post-16 education teachers have a master's degree, the majority of higher educated people only have a bachelor's.

The youth of Belgium start higher education at a very young age. 95% of those younger than 25 following higher education enrol furthermore for the first time. The average age to start a bachelor's degree is 19. For a master's degree it is 23. In 2015 almost 37% of 25 to 64-year-olds obtained a higher education degree. 21% of them attained a bachelor's

degree and 15% graduated with a master's.

The Belgian expenditure for education is 5.8% of Gross Domestic Product. This amount is considerably higher than the OECD average of 5.2%. The majority of the education budget (95%) originates from the public sector whilst only 5% comes from the private sector.

There is, however, a downside to the Belgian education system. Only 26% of women successfully completed a science, mathematics or computer science orientated

degree. Belgium comes third from last of all OECD countries within this segment. In addition, female teachers are still underrepresented in Belgian education. Whilst 97% of the pre-school teachers are female, this proportion decreases strongly in primary, secondary (63%) and higher education (48%).

### Belgium is leading the fight against rheumatism

Scientists from Ghent have received the

'Center of Excellence' quality label for their ground-breaking research into rheumatism, an illness characterised by joint pain. This shows they are among the very best in the world.

It is now the third time that EULAR, the European League Against Rheumatism, has awarded this highly-coveted label to a team of rheumatologists from Ghent, coordinated by Professor Dirk Elewaut and consisting of a further forty scientists from UGent, UZ Gent and VIB (the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology).

Although the EULAR quality label does not elicit any financial contributions in itself, this international acknowledgement may well open doors to necessary funding in the future. It may also facilitate future collaboration with other research centers and universities.

EULAR is a non-profit organisation based in Switzerland that represents an estimated 3 million sufferers of rheumatism across all European countries, along with professional experts, scientific researchers and other care providers.

The team of rheumatologists from Ghent carries out basic experimental research along with clinical testing with the aim of developing medication. This also involves various forms of collaboration with Belgian companies such as UCB, Galapagos and Ablynx for the manufacture of medicines specifically designed to target rheumatism.



### Belgian involvement in the opening ceremony

You might have had the chance of attending the opening ceremony of Sheik Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre on the 31st of October and also have enjoyed the impressive outdoor spectacular combining video, light projections and fireworks on the 5th of November.

You might also have wondered who was behind these productions. The knowhow needed to set all these techniques in motion actually comes from Belgium.

Both these shows were produced by LSE, a world renowned company in the fields of technical and artistic productions. It is not the first time that LSE sets foot in Kuwait. You might remember the breath-taking national day fireworks or the opening ceremony of Al Shaheed Park and Al Jaber Al Ahmad stadium.

LSE's strength lies in the ability to combine all existing show techniques and to create new technologies at the service of emotion. More info you can find on [www.lse.eu](http://www.lse.eu)



## Did you know SEEDiS?

Automatic Systems, a Belgian company with more than 45 years of experience is a world leader in the automation of secure entrance control, they design and manufacture pedestrian, vehicle and passenger access systems for airports, metro, buildings, industrial sites, etc...

Their equipment, turnstiles, barriers, bollards are present everywhere in the World and also in Kuwait at Sief Palace, the United Nations House, Bayan Palace, The Arab Fund for Economic Development, Kuwait Finance House, KNPC, American University of the Middle East (AUM), KNPC, etc...

With equipment boasting a life-cycle exceeding 20 years, it is a unique example of heavy duty engineering. Automatic Systems has gained a unique know-how and demonstrated their ability to adapt its equipment to the local markets. From Brussels to Kuwait City, day in, day out, Automatic systems equipment is performing its duty every day.

In Kuwait SEEDiS General Trading and Contracting has been Automatic Systems agent for more than 10 years and have installed all the references above. More info can be found through [info@seedis.net](mailto:info@seedis.net) or [www.seedis.net](http://www.seedis.net).