

essenscia promotes the Belgian pharmaceutical cluster in California

Brussels, June 3rd 2013 – essenscia, the federation for chemistry and life sciences industries, is organizing in collaboration with the regional biotech organizations BioWin, FlandersBio and VIB and with the export agencies Awex, BIE and FIT a seminar entitled “From Belgium to the US, world leaders in biotech”. This seminar will be held on June 4th at Janssen Labs in San Diego as part of the Belgian trade mission on the West Coast of the United States. The Walloon Minister of the Economy Jean-Claude Marcourt will participate in the visit of Janssen Labs.

The United States are the principal trade partner of the Belgian pharmaceutical sector, representing no less than 19% of total annual Belgian exports of pharmaceutical products, worth 6.4 billion euros. What is more, the Belgian trade balance with the United States is structurally positive for pharmaceutical products. In 2012, the trade balance showed an excess of 1.7 billion euros.

During this week, the Belgian delegation will visit Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. The trade mission will have a special focus on pharmaceutical and biotechnological products. The first day will be devoted to visiting the headquarters of Amgen at Los Angeles. The Belgian biopharmaceutical company UCB maintains close links with this American pharmaceutical company, with which it has concluded a successful R&D partnership for the treatment of osteoporosis.

Tuesday, June 4th, will be completely devoted to biotech with a visit of the Janssen Labs innovation center and the organization of the seminar entitled “From Belgium to the US, world leaders in biotech” on the campus of Janssen R&D at La Jolla, San Diego. Janssen Labs is a new R&D center for life sciences offering promising young firms the opportunity of working as if they were a large company. Janssen Labs applies the open innovation model, allowing biotech companies to hire office and laboratory space in a flexible manner. This model allows young firms to invest their means in research and development rather than in costly infrastructures and to concentrate on science rather than on daily administrative tasks. Janssen Pharmaceutica is also experimenting with various ways to organize work on its Beerse site.

“Over the last decades we have developed in our country a world scale pharmaceutical cluster. It is now important that companies and the authorities make the wisest decisions in order to maintain this industry in Belgium but also to watch over its growth. This is because the industry is the basis on which we can build our prosperity. The United States remain the principal trade partner of our Belgian pharmaceutical companies. The stress placed by the trade mission on this sector is thus an ideal opportunity for us to convince the Americans of our advantages”, states Yves Verschueren, Managing Director of essenscia.

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essenscia represents 800 firms in the chemical, plastics and life sciences industry (pharmaceutics and biotechnology) in Belgium.