



FLANDERS TODAY

Management prize for 'Belgian microcosm'

The Flemish Association for Management and Policy (VVBB) has nominated EU deputy permanent representative Didier Seeuws and Flemish representative Axel Buyse government managers of the year, the Belgian Permanent EU Representation the first embassy boasting a management prize.

The Belgian Permanent Representation at the European Union is not simply an embassy, but a microcosm of Belgian administrative levels, where federal diplomats and officials work side by side with regional colleagues to prepare European dossiers. This collaboration is not always guaranteed a seamless journey, but during the Belgian presidency of Europe things ran so well that a large number of diplomats and officials, representatives Seeuws and Buyse, were awarded prizes in return for the exemplary way in which preparations were made behind the scenes for numerous European summits and top-level meetings during the Belgian EU presidency.

Didier Seeuws (45) played a key role in the diplomatic achievements during the Belgian EU presidency. A renowned pragmatist and a skilful diplomat, he served as the spokesperson of Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (Open VLD) from 2003 to 2007. Axel Buyse (55) worked as a journalist for the newspaper De Standaard before his appointment as the Flemish Representative in The Hague in 2003 and his appointment as Permanent Representative in Brussels five years later. He manages a team of thirty Flemish officials charged with ensuring the Flemish government is expeditiously notified of all activities within the EU.

The Permanent Belgian EU Representation received the necessary support and feedback from Flemish officials responsible for the preparation of dossiers in respect of regional powers such as fisheries and environmental affairs. It was this close collaboration and team spirit in particular that guaranteed the success achieved. A major factor that attributed to the achievement was the important responsibility bestowed on the officials and diplomats who were closely involved in the preparation of compromises and final decisions, responsibilities that are normally left to the respective ministerial offices at federal or Flemish level. "We worked together as a team drawing no distinction between federal and regional officials or diplomats and civil servants. We need each other to achieve success and I consider this prize as a form of recognition for a job well done," confirmed Seeuws. "The Belgian authorities once again proved their competence and efficiency at European level," applauded Buyse. "It's great to know that those who award this prize also recognize the contribution made by the regional authorities."

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