

**7th APRIL 2009**

## **EXPANDING YOUR BUSINESS INTO THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT — case study BELGIUM**

### **Introduction**

Belgium is the UK's sixth largest export market and the UK is Belgium's fourth largest supplier. Both countries' firms are major investors in each other's economies. Belgium is situated at the heart of Europe and although this is a basic observation, its importance of its central geographical location between the most important countries in Western Europe needs to be highlighted.

More and more businesses are expanding into other European markets, and a number of them are finding that they are being subject to a variety of restrictions which have been imposed to stop them making best use of the free market. This seminar should help clarify what restrictions are likely to fall foul of the law, and what companies can do if they are in this position.

### **Opportunities**

Belgium is an open and highly competitive market, with opportunities in most sectors, especially for small and medium-sized business. UK goods and services are generally held in high regard, but must be of high quality and competitively priced.

With a surface area of 30,500 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 10,446,000, Belgium is one of the smallest Member States in the European Union. However, it has a GDP of EUR 288.09 billion (in 2004) and is one of the ten largest trading nations in the world. It primarily owes its comparably large economic might to its central location and the high productivity of its work force.

This tradition of openness continues today. Belgium is still a hub for international contacts. More than 1,000 public and private international organisations have set up headquarters or have a permanent secretariat in Belgium. Of particular note is the presence in Belgium, in addition to the institutions of the European Union, of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the General Secretariat of the Benelux.

Belgium is a small country but it holds a special place

### **THE 7th APRIL BRIEFING**

- will give an overview of the Belgium market
- focus on the opportunities available
- Overview of the free movement rules; understanding what restrictions can (and can't) be imposed on businesses trading in other Member States

### **PROGRAMME**

- 08:00 REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST**
- 08:45 WELCOME**  
**Jan Ward**  
**Vice President,**  
**Chamber of Commerce**
- 08:50 BELGIUM—The Market**  
**Ben De Smit**  
**Economic and Commercial**  
**Counsellor,**  
**Embassy of Belgium**  
**Flanders Investment & Trade**
- 09:10 OVERVIEW OF THE FREE MOVEMENT RULES**  
**Claire Bradley**  
**Director,**  
**European Law Monitor—**  
**Europe Direct**
- 09:30 OPPORTUNITIES IN BELGIUM**  
**Richard Hall**  
**Manager**  
**Enterprise Europe Network**
- 09:35 Q & A**
- 09:45 Chairman's closing remarks**

### **EVENT CLOSE**

This event is being organised in partnership with Flanders Investment & Trade—Embassy of Belgium, European Law Monitor and Enterprise Europe Network.

Cost: £7.00 incl VAT

Venue: Royal Southampton Yacht Club, Ocean Village, Southampton

To book your place please contact Jackie via e-mail [jackie@chamberinternational.co.uk](mailto:jackie@chamberinternational.co.uk) or tel 023 8022 3541