

Who are we ?

The Belgian Connection originated from the activities organized by 'Vlamingen in de Wereld – Romania' since 2007. With a growing interest by the Belgian Community in our meetings, and a clear business-orientation combined with the practical questions any 'newcomer' in Romania has, the foundations for a networking club were present.

Since 2008, Freddy Jacobs, Frederik Deman, Luk Vangansbeke and Pascal Plovie are the driving forces behind the Belgian Connection.

For more information, we refer to www.belgianconnection.be

What is our mission ?

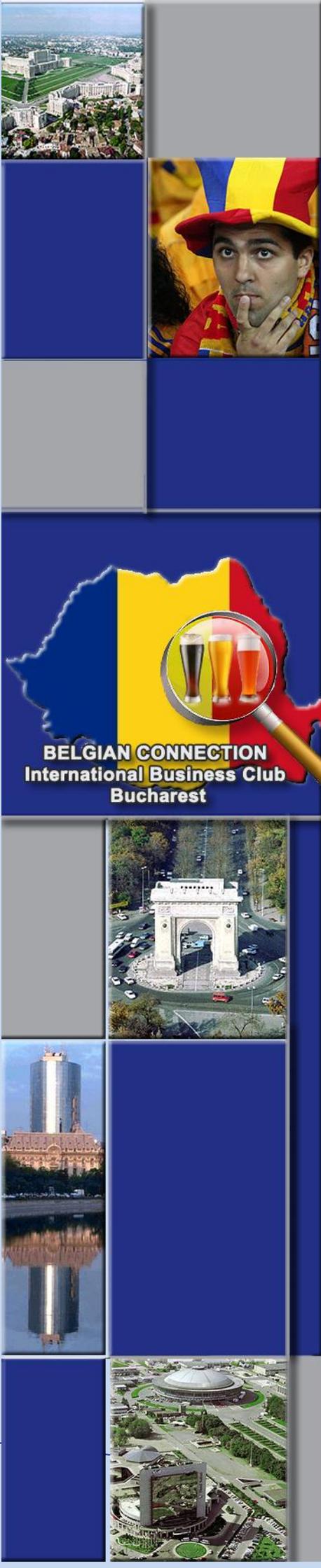
It is our mission to enhance business contacts in Romania by linking expat communities. We do so by offering regular gatherings where the Belgians business community can exchange own experiences on the Romanian market with businesspeople from another nationality during 1-on-1 gatherings (combining 2 or more nationalities).

In addition, and therefore distinguishing from other networking initiatives, the Belgian Connection organises & supports larger events, where multiple nationalities can meet in different & select environments.

Our networking drink – Belgian Happy Hour

The Belgian Connection organises networking drinks every two months. The main goal is to link the Belgian nationals to other nationalities and to stimulate networking between nationalities once that they have become a member of the Belgian Connection.

The Belgian Connection offers an international networking platform, where you can invite two business relations to join you.





The events organized by the Belgian Connection

The Belgian Connection has an event every two months. Apart from an occasional wine- or chocolate tasting, the BC organises a 'mussel' dinner in December and a 'Wine and Cheese' evening in April. They offer you the opportunity to meet recurrently in a classy environment, under the Belgian 'gourmet-flag'.

Once or twice a year BC organizes a larger happening - a performance, a concert or alike - where the members can invite your business relations and customers. Every member can invite up to 25 people for these events.

Your advantages and benefits

The Belgian connection offers you the opportunity to meet your peer top level business people in different environments and lounges created by our events and activities. You have the opportunity to present yourself and your business to other networkers. You can exchange leads, experiences or listen to the latest news and developments in various sectors and business domains.

Apart from the 'business angle', the social aspect of the gatherings will help newly re-located people solving their most practical issues by exchanging experiences or contacts concerning housing, administration, etc...

Last but not least, our meetings offer you the perfect middle between formal and informal: there are no boundaries when it comes to status, political adherence, religion or whatever personal beliefs – apart from all extremes...

How to use the Belgian Connection

You can use the BC as a platform to invite your business relations and customers. Use the BC as a networking environment and as the extreme tool to take care of your prospects and relations in a top level atmosphere that we create with our bimonthly events. As we provide the platform, it is up to you to use it at your advantage...





Here are some tips you can use to increase your networking and business – success:

Tip 1: Go with a goal



One of the first and most common mistakes that people make when entering a networking situation (planned or otherwise) is to fail to have a firm goal in mind. Are you looking to acquire new prospects, meet colleagues for possible collaborations, create a mutual referral partnership, create name recognition for you and your business, find funding or just "shop around" for interesting news and trends you can use? If you haven't taken the time to determine what your goals are for the encounters ahead, you will have a hard time meeting them.

Tip 2: Sharpen your message.



When someone asks you what you do, can you articulate not only your business but it's benefit to them in a clear and concise manner? How about your "elevator speech" or 15-second intro - is it crisp, to the point and compelling, or do people's eyes glaze over before you get to the end? This is not the time to give a dry and deadly-dull job description. Save that for your resume. When someone asks about you and your business, you are being given a golden, but brief, opportunity to knock his or her socks off and to persuade them that you are the best thing to happen to them since sliced bread. Make sure you do so. Important - leave your sales pitch at home!

Networking is networking, and sales is sales. Confuse the two and you'll lose out on both.

Tip 3: Check your gear and outfit.



Make sure that you have everything you need to make a great impression. Are your business cards or other hand-outs up to date, and as professional-looking as you can make them? If this is a planned event, do you know who will be attending and have you isolated a few people you definitely want to make sure to meet, or are you going in blind and resigned to winging it? And don't forget to double-check the time, date and venue. Nothing is more irritating than showing up only to find that you're too early, too late or unable to find a parking space closer than a quarter-mile away.





Tip 4: *Make sure everyone knows what you want.*



Are you seeking a collaborative partner for a project? Then make sure everyone knows what the project is and what sort of partner you are looking for (and the general parameters of the partnership they'll be investing their time into). If you're looking for referrals, then do your potential referral sources know what constitutes a good referral for you? It's a waste of your time and a drain on your referrer's good will and reputation if you turn down or do a bad job for everyone they send to you because the referrals were inappropriate. Likewise, a well-educated referral source might wind up sending you fewer referrals, but those are much more likely to be quality prospects that have a high probability of becoming solid clients.

Tip 5: *Follow up.*



The most important part of networking happens after the initial contact. The best impression, the snappiest laser marketing message and the deepest desire to work together will all come to naught if they don't hear from you in a timely manner - or even worse, never hear from you at all. No matter who said what about calling whom, always follow up promptly and in a manner designed to strengthen the relationship and add value for the other person.



What can the Belgian Connection do for your business relations ?

- Members of the Belgian Connection can invite 1 or 2 business relations to the bimonthly drinks. Members of BC can invite 1 to 12 relations on our bimonthly events. The number of invitees for the larger events is limited to 25 invitees per member (or company). The BC creates the platform and it is up to the members to use it. We give different tastes, moods, mixers, concerts, stand-up comedians, live performances and much more but always with style and oriented towards top level business people.



Testimonials

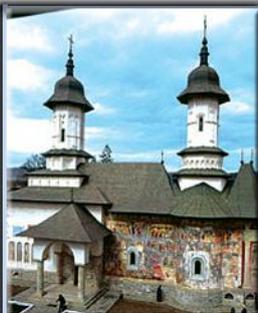
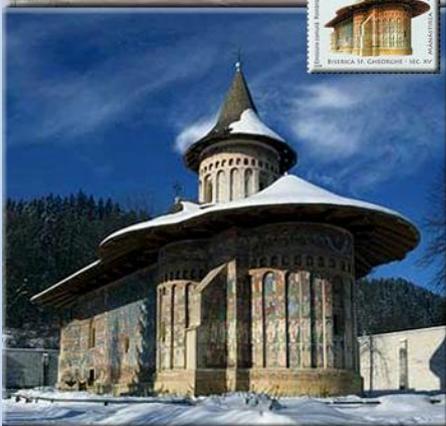
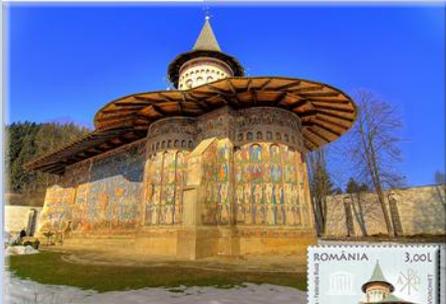
- *Less than two weeks after taking up my post as Belgian ambassador to Romania, I was invited to attend the monthly meeting of the members of the Belgian Connection, in the Novotel Hotel.*
- *I received a very warm welcome by Mr. Luc Vangansbeke and Mr. Freddy Jacobs, who introduced me to a number of Belgian and Romanian businessmen, and to whom I want to express my sincere thanks.*
- *The venue gave me an opportunity to meet all kinds of different entrepreneurs, working steadily, on a small or larger scale, to promote their business in close cooperation and understanding with their Romanian counterparts. The meeting set a fine example of how the relations between Belgium and Romania can be developed in the commercial field, and beyond: indeed, the spirit is one of friendship and trust, reassuring for newcomers as well as for those who are used to work and live here.*
- *I therefore want to reiterate my promise to work with the Belgian Connection, as a cordial and useful network, in order to contribute to the further strengthening of Romanian-Belgian relations, be it in the economic sphere or in other fruitful exchanges between our two peoples.*
- *I wish the Belgian Connection every success, stating again my willingness to help fulfilling its objectives of enhancing contacts and understanding through a lively and pleasantly animated network.*

D'Aes Leo, Bucharest, Belgium
Ambassador, September 2008



- *I was grateful to receive an early invitation from the 'Belgian Connection'. The new and aspiring business club strikes me as a modern and open community of able business people, who take an interest in doing business, but also in making their personal best of their stay in Romania.*
- *I believe that is the best, and in fact the only, recipe for success in this challenging country.*
- *As representative of the Netherlands, which has a marked economic footprint in Romania already for some time, I am pleased to note the open attitude of our Belgian friends, also here in Romania. I believe it opens up multiple opportunities for working together. And for drinking together. Not only business, also culture and language. There is more that we share than we are sometimes willing to admit.*
- *With a positive mind set, geared at promoting synergy between our countries where possible, I believe we can accomplish, and enjoy, a lot, also here in Romania.*
 - *All the best to the Belgian Connection.*

Jaap Werner, Ambassador of
the Netherlands in Romania,
November 2008



- *You will not hear me say that Romania is the Promised Land, but in my opinion it is for sure a country with a promising future.*
- *Since Flanders Investment & Trade opened its office in Bucharest last year, I discovered not only that small problems can turn into long lasting frustrations that affect our every day life, but also the countless opportunities to do business and to invest in a fast growing market, for those willing to take the challenge.*
- *And a lot of our companies did, which is proven by our rising exports and the Flemish presence all over Romania.*
- *The Belgian Connection may be instrumental for more and valuable contacts with the Romanian and international business community.*

Dirk Timmerman, Economic & Commercial
Attaché for Romania and Moldova, Embassy of
Belgium, Flanders Investment & Trade,
November 2008



The BC team, May 2009

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