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KUWAIT CITY, Dec 19: In conjunction with the visit of a Belgian delegation led by Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) hosted a meeting with a Belgian trade delegation on Wednesday.

The delegation was led by Herwig Fleerackers, General Manager of Healthcare Belgium, and focused largely on medical companies and healthcare, with representatives from some of the most distinguished hospitals and healthcare centers in Belgium.

Wafaa Al-Qatami, member of KCCI, who began the meeting by welcoming the delegation and expressed her happiness at Didier Reynders' visit.

"Imports from Belgium to Kuwait are now valued at \$153 million, and we are exerting far more effort to ensure that these figures continue to improve," she stated. Imports from Belgium have more than doubled over the past ten years, whilst Kuwaiti exports to Belgium have been valued at \$13 million in 2010, with plans to expand and improve the two-way trade and bilateral relations between the two countries.

The agenda was taken up by Herwig Fleerackers, who expressed his warm thanks to KCCI, and in particular to Ali Mohammed Thunayan Al-Ghanim, Chairman of KCCI. Fleerackers was representing Healthcare Belgium, one of the leading non-profit health organizations in Belgium, with particularly strong specializations in radiology, clinical support for mammogram screenings as well as cervical screenings.

"Belgium is invariably ranked first or second in terms of excellence in healthcare," continued Fleerackers, "and also ranks fourth in terms of higher education", he stated, stressing the importance of this aspect in continuing the bilateral trade and relations between Kuwait and Belgium.

He was followed by Jacques De Toeuf, CEO of CHIREC Hospital in Belgium, a group of private nonprofit hospitals that excel particularly in hand surgery, IVF (in vitro fertilization), cancer care, plastic (and reconstructive) surgery as well as obesity. CHIREC recently launched an affilia-

Kuwait, Belgium to up trade

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Visiting team focuses largely on medical firms, healthcare

tion with New Mowasat Hospital for a specialized eye care center.

Dr Marc Noppen, CEO was representing University Hospital UZ Brussels, an academic hospital located on the outskirts of Brussels, excelling in reproductive medicine, diabetes, cardiovascular care, amongst others. UZ is the first center to develop IVF, and they have lent their expertise to Hayat Hospital, the largest fertility center in Kuwait.

Representing MedicClean Air was Hendrik Von Passel, CEO. MedicClean Air specializes in air purification for hospitals, and providing air isolation for rooms, reducing the risk of infection for patients, doctors and visitors.

GlaxoSmithKline was also represented by Mohammed Zafrullah, Vice President and chief of GCC operations. GSK is a leading international pharmaceutical company, with 14 manufacturing sites worldwide.

Also present was Pieter Verkerst, International Sales Manager of Haelvoet, a company specializing in manufacturing hospital furniture. In addition, Executive Director Marc Dellaert represented Management Centre Europe, which helps managers and management team develop functional and cross-functional skills.

Representing IMEC was Executive Vice President Ludo Deferm, a leading center for research in nanoelectronics. Philippe Dessoy, General Manager, represented Besix Middle East, a Belgian Construction Company, and Azzam Al-Mutawa, Managing Director represented Kuwait Petroleum Belgium, discussing the activities of KPB in research, refinement, etc.

Tractebel Engineering, a global engineering consultan-

cy company was represented by Jereon Gellynck, and finally, SCK-CEN, one of the largest research centers in Belgium was represented by Professor Hamid Ait Abderrahim, Deputy Director General.

Relations between Belgium and Kuwait have been strong for over a decade now, and this visitation by the delega-

tion serves the purpose of furthering these relations and inviting an expansion of the exchange between the two countries.

The meeting was concluded in the presence of Didier Reynders as well as Ali Thunayan Al-Ghanim, followed by a private lunch for the delegation.

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The meeting in progress.

Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed