



**BELGIAN  
POLAR  
SECRETARIAT**

**PRESS RELEASE**  
BELGIAN POLAR SECRETARIAT  
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### **NEW DIRECTOR TAKES CHARGE AT BELGIAN POLAR SECRETARIAT**

Brussels, 16 May 2012 – The Belgian Polar Secretariat [1] today announced the appointment of Rachid Touzani as its new director, tasked with managing Belgium's presence in Antarctica, the iconic zero emission Princess Elisabeth Antarctica scientific research station [2].

Touzani, who has degrees in bioengineering and business management from the Catholic University of Louvain, comes to the Belgian Polar Secretariat after several leadership positions in the private sector.

"I am honoured to receive the opportunity to bring Belgium's Antarctic presence to a new level, by ensuring Princess Elisabeth station continues to be a leading research facility for scientists from Belgium and all over the world, where they can contribute to a better understanding of the Polar Regions, our planet and climate change", said Touzani.

At his new role at the Polar Secretariat, Touzani will oversee all activities and work closely with the Strategic Council [3] in order to implement its decisions.

"We are delighted to welcome Rachid Touzani to his new role, which completes Belgium's Polar Secretariat governance structure", said Strategic Council President Alain Hubert. "We will continue to deliver the best service quality to international scientists and to represent Belgium and Princess Elisabeth Station within international Polar fora."

For more information, please visit the [www.polarsecretariat.be](http://www.polarsecretariat.be)

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**Notes for editors:**

[1] The Belgian Polar Secretariat represents the Belgian State for all matters related to the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica (PEA) station. Created as a public private partnership between the Belgian Federal Government and the International Polar Foundation, it manages administrative, financial, logistics, facilities and all operational matters, and seeks to build broad partnerships for activities in synergy with its main missions, namely facilitating research at or in the vicinity of PEA. This includes promoting and implementing scientific programs, ensuring dissemination of knowledge linked to Antarctic research and climate change, and implementing new technologies to broaden the “Zero Emission” performance of all operations.

[2] Designed and constructed in 2008-2009 by the International Polar Foundation as a legacy to the International Polar Year, 200km inland from the Antarctic coast in Dronning Maud Land, Belgium’s Princess Elisabeth Antarctica station welcomes scientists from around the world to study its unique environment. The station is the first “Zero Emission” polar research station, completely meeting the requirements of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty aka the Madrid Protocol. [www.antarcticstation.org](http://www.antarcticstation.org)

[3] The governing bodies of the Polar Secretariat are the Strategic Council and the Director. The Strategic Council has 12 members, equally distributed between public and private sectors. They are nominated by the Science Minister of the Belgian Federal Government, who also selects its President and Vice-President. Since 2009, the nominated Antarctic operator for the Polar Secretariat is the International Polar Foundation, offering scientists top-level services to pursue their research in the best and safest conditions.