



Media Release from the Council of Ministers

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Financing a New Research Station in Antarctica

On the proposal of Mrs. Freya Van den Bossche, Budget Minister, M. Didier Reynders, Finance Minister, M. Marc Verwilghen, Economy and Scientific Research Minister, Karel de Gucht, Foreign Affairs Minister, and André Flahaut, Defence Minister, the Council of Ministers has agreed to pursue research in Antarctica and to finance a new research station to be established in 2007, following the International Polar Foundation (IPF)'s initiative.

The IPF is a Public Utility Foundation which was created in 2002 to make the public and younger generations aware of the importance of efforts in polar research and of their connection to issues regarding climate change. The Foundation has been placed under the honorary presidency of Prince Philippe.

The new scientific station is a summer base, having a carrying capacity of maximum 20 scientists over 4 months of the year (November through February). The mounting and inauguration of the station are foreseen during 2007-2008, within the framework of the International Polar Year (IPY) which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the King Baudouin base.

After the second phase has been completed in 2007, the Council of Ministers will grant the Science Policy Minister with additional employment credits amounting to 1 million euros, the requirement being that the IPF must prove before the end of 2006 that the private sector has financially contributed 4.4 million euros.

An additional amount of 1 million euros a year will be given to the Belgian Scientific Policy (Belspo) in 2008 and in 2009 for the running, management and basic maintenance of the station, and another 500,000 euros a year for financing the scientific projects relating to the research station.

The *Monnaie Royale de Belgique* will issue a special coin from which the income from sales will be entirely granted to the IPF.

The Defence Ministry will follow through with the Belspo and the IPF on future collaboration possibilities.

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BACKGROUND:

The International Polar Foundation (IPF) is an international not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Brussels (established as a "Fondation d'Utilité Publique" in Belgium in 2002, with HRH Prince Philippe as Honorary President). It also has branches in Great-Britain, France, Switzerland and the United States.

The IPF's mission is:



To communicate and educate on the reality of climate change through the findings of Polar sciences and thereby convince society to act responsibly now to ensure a sustainable world for future generations.

For more detailed information about the IPF visit www.polarfoundation.org.