



Media Release

International Polar Foundation, Brussels, 14 September 2007

Princess Elisabeth Antarctica: Inauguration Ceremony

Princess Elisabeth Antarctica, the world's first "zero emission" scientific research station and Belgium's new Antarctic base, was inaugurated at Tour & Taxis in Brussels, on September 5th 2007.

In the presence of Crown Prince Philippe of Belgium, Honorary President of the International Polar Foundation (IPF), the new Antarctic station was revealed to the public, before an audience of over 2000 guests and 200 journalists.

Alain Hubert, President of IPF and general supervisor of the Princess Elisabeth project, in his opening speech reminded the environmental challenges with which our Western societies are confronted in this day and age: "Facing up to the climate challenge is one of the great 'works in progress' of the 21st century. Our ability to respond, as well as our desire and the extent and speed of that response, will determine the economic survival not only of Western society, but also of our planetary ecosystems."

Antarctica offers a hope to society: "The unique and shared manner in which this continent is governed shows us that we can work together to find an answer to the climate challenges that face us." In a public-private partnership, the Belgian Federal Government joined the IPF and international corporations in fulfilling this groundbreaking project. Within the polar secretariat, the Belgian Scientific Policy Office (Belspo) will be responsible for deploying the scientific programs carried out at the station.

A special thanks was made to all financial sponsors and technical partners which have participated in the design and building process. It is with their help that the IPF has been able to find the bulk of the station's funding. Conceiving the first "zero emission" base demonstrates that we have "the knowledge and the ability, as well as the technology, to do here what we can do far away over there in extreme conditions. This base will stimulate technological innovation and sustainable development initiatives."

The following four days were extremely successful. More than 35.000 visitors came to see Princess Elisabeth Antarctica and adhered to the values conveyed by the project. The IPF would like to thank all those who attended the event for helping to bring Princess Elisabeth to reality.

The Station has started being disassembled as of Monday September 10th. The structure pieces of the base will be loaded into containers and brought to Antwerp, where they will be shipped by way of Cape Town to Antarctica. Re-assembly of the station in Antarctica is scheduled during January and February 2008. The official inauguration of Princess Elisabeth Antarctica is planned the following year in February 2009, after the interior systems and facilities have been installed.



Background information:

www.polarfoundation.org

Princess Elisabeth project:

www.antarcticstation.org

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International Polar Foundation (IPF):

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.