



**WINNER OF THE 2013 EXPORT LION**

**PRESS FILE**

18/06/2013

**Presentation of the 2013 Export Lion**

**Flanders Investment & Trade**

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## H.Essers and Medec Benelux win 2013 Export Lion

**Flemish and innovative: two strong export firms awarded prize by Flanders Investment & Trade**



H.Essers of Genk and Medec Benelux of Aalst can keep the title of “Export Lion” for a whole year. In the ‘small companies’ category Medec Benelux won the day, while in the ‘large and medium-sized companies’ category H.Essers hit the jackpot. The Export Lion is an opportunity for Flanders Investment & Trade, the Flemish Agency for

International Trade, to annually reward firms with an outstanding export performance. The Export Lion was presented by Minister-President Kris Peeters on Tuesday evening in Hasselt, in the presence of the pick of the Flemish exporting firms and the entire foreign network of 67 Flemish Economic Representatives of Flanders Investment & Trade. The grandiose network event was attended by 750 people.

H.Essers of Genk, winner of the ‘large and medium-sized companies’ category, and, Medec Benelux of Aalst winner of the ‘small companies’ category, were rewarded by Flanders Investment & Trade for their exceptional export performance. In 2012 the winners’ export constituted respectively 84% and 99.66% of the company’s total turnover.

The transport firm H.Essers is a leading logistics service provider for top players in sectors such as chemistry, pharmaceuticals and healthcare. H.Essers provides logistic services for the export of goods to all the countries in Europe, but also – to a lesser extent – to other countries such as the USA, Israel, South Africa, Brazil and Panama. In 2012 this firm achieved a consolidated turnover of approx. 388.3 million euro. According to the jury the firm bears witness to a strong strategic vision and alongside this submitted an impressive dossier and great export figures. The jury believes the company’s innovative character is also a major advantage. Alongside the company’s great passion for business, the jury appreciated its strong future vision and sustainability policy.

The winner in the “small companies” category, Medec Benelux, is a producer of high-quality anaesthesia machines and was established in 1994. Initially target markets were Belgium and the

Netherlands, but Medec Benelux rapidly branched out into other countries. In 2012 the Aalst-based firm exported to 93 countries worldwide. Medec Benelux now has 40 employees.

H.Essers en Medec Benelux were selected from 6 finalists, in turn selected by the jury from 35 candidates. The 6 nominees for the Lion were Brouwerij L. Huyghe, Medec Benelux, and Vermeiren Princpes nominated in the 'small companies' category and ADB, H.Essers and Punch Powertrain in the 'large and medium-sized companies' category.

The Export Lion is a way for Flanders Investment & Trade to annually reward the export successes of Flemish firms, thus highlighting how important export is to our Flemish economy.

#### About FIT

Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), the Flemish Agency for International Trade, promotes Flanders as a place of business for foreign firms, but also supports Flemish firms in international trade. They can make full use of FIT's expertise, and its national and international network.

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## About H.Essers

H.Essers was founded in 1928 by Henri Essers and with its headquarters in Genk, is a leading logistics service provider for multinational top players in sectors such as chemistry, pharmaceuticals and high-quality goods. The international service portfolio goes from transport and warehousing to fully integrated logistics solutions, driven by innovation. The family firm adopts an internationalisation strategy for the export of goods to all the countries of Europe, and far beyond. In 2012 this firm achieved a consolidated turnover of around 388.3 million euro, 84% of which was export.

H.Essers has 32 branches in 11 countries. Of its 3390 employees 1830 work in Flanders. The firm has 850,000 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouse space, 1200 trucks and 2300 semitrailers.

In spite of the crisis H.Essers has experienced a major expansion in recent years. Reasons behind this are the establishment of a few international branches (in Italy, Romania and Denmark, amongst others) and a few strategic takeovers such as Hessenatie Logistics (2011), Furtrans (2009) and Nijs Transport (2008).

## About Medec Benelux

This producer of high-quality anaesthetic machines was founded in 1994.

Initially target markets were Belgium and the Netherlands, but Medec Benelux rapidly branched out into other countries. In 2012 the Aalst firm exported to 93 countries worldwide. As much as 99.66% of the turnover in 2012 – almost 9.5 million euro – came from abroad. Medec Benelux now has 40 employees, double the number of workers in 2008.

In 2012 Medec Benelux opened a sales office in the United Kingdom and a sub office in Costa Rica. Alongside this the firm has a worldwide extended distribution network with one single distributor per country.

Innovation is a priority for this high-tech player. On an annual basis Medec Benelux invests at least 10% of its turnover in R&D.

## The Export Lion

Flanders Investment & Trade (the Flemish Government's Agency for International Trade) annually rewards a successful Flemish export firm with the "Export Lion". This export award gives Flanders Investment & Trade a chance to reward a Flemish exporting firm, thus highlighting the importance of export for our Flemish economy.

Both firms with less than 50 employees and firms with 50 employees or more were in the running for the prestigious prize. Of the 35 candidates 6 Flemish firms were nominated. The candidates were evaluated on the basis of sales figures, geographic diversification, financial performance, marketing tools, innovation, sustainable enterprise and future prospects.

A jury of major actors in the economic field then selected the winners, which Flemish Minister-President Kris Peeters will present with the Export Lion in the Cultural Centre of Hasselt on 18 June and which will then be able to refer to themselves as Export Lion 2013 for a whole year. The award leads to national fame, but FIT's international network abroad means it opens a lot of doors as well.

In 2013 the prize was awarded for the twelfth year running. Previous winners include such prestigious exporters as BEST, Duvel-Moortgat, DEME and Financial Architects. Their success stories are a real incentive for other firms with international aspirations.

## **Flanders Investment & Trade**

The “Export Lion” fits in with the general mission of Flanders Investment & Trade: raising awareness of Flemish firms, and stimulating them to get involved in international trade.

Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), the Flemish Agency for International Trade, promotes Flanders as a place of business for foreign firms, but also supports Flemish firms in their international trade. They can make full use of FIT’s expertise, as well as its national and international network.

International trade notably plays a major role in the socio-economic development of Flanders. This is why Flanders Investment & Trade is interested in the promotion of international trade amongst Flemish firms, and in particular amongst SMEs. FIT offers Flemish entrepreneurs an ambitious joint action programme, with a balanced mix of trade-promoting activities, both in Flanders and abroad. FIT informs Flemish firms of international opportunities and all the questions concerning international trade (countries, sectors, business practice, regulations...) are answered by experts. Alongside this Flanders Investment & Trade also provides Flemish firms with the contact details of foreign prospects and collaboration partners. SMEs can also go to FIT for financial support. Firms are individually supervised by FIT via the provincial offices.

But FIT also attracts foreign investors. Flanders Investment & Trade is successful in its mission via its excellent provision of services at home and abroad: every Flemish province has a network of advisors, but globally FIT also has more than 90 offices. As a logistic junction right in the middle of the European purchasing power Flanders has an awful lot to offer, and as an investment location Flanders is of particular interest for firms with pan-European ambitions. FIT is there to support these firms with their investment projects in Flanders.