



World Diamond Council

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ELI IZHAKOFF HONORED BY KING ALBERT II OF BELGIUM

ANTWERP, BELGIUM: Antwerp, October 11, 2001 - H.M. King Albert II of Belgium granted Eli Izhakoff the title of «Officer of the Order of King Leopold». The decoration was bestowed by Mrs. Minister Annemie Neyts in Belgium's official visitors castle, Val Duchesse in Brussels.

In the justification of the nomination, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Louis Michel stated: "Mr. Izhakoff was the president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses from 1991 on. He has fulfilled this mandate in an exemplary way. He took several initiatives that brought the World Federation of Diamond Bourses on the world map. The restructuring of the World Federation resulted in a permanent seat for Antwerp in the executive committee. Mr. Izhakoff has contributed considerably and on many occasions in emphasizing Antwerp as a world center for diamonds. As such he contributed in making the markets of the Far East more accessible for Antwerp. He was also at the origins of the publication of a book on the history of the Antwerp diamond sector and the importance of Antwerp in the worldwide trade of diamonds."

Minister Annemie Neyts, who bestowed the medal, said: "In this time of communication and transparency, the World Diamond Council has made a clear and right choice choosing you as a president and as a spokesman within the Kimberley process."

"My country Belgium, which has a voluntaristic policy towards Africa, is a pioneer in the struggle against conflict diamonds. We attempt to contribute to the resolution of conflicts with the aim of restoring peace and development." the Minister further reminded.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Bram Fischler, president of the WFDB, Mr. Gaetano Cavalieri, president of CIBJO, Mr. Rory More O'Ferrall, Director of De Beers, Charles Bornstein, President of HRD and leading persons of the

banking sector, government administrations and the Antwerp diamond community.

At night, HRD hosted a dinner for Mr. Izhakoff in presence of diamond industry and government representatives. Baron Delwaide, Vice Mayor of Antwerp held an occasional speech.