***Flanders honors 3 foreign top investors after
absolute record investment year***

*Borealis (Austria), Daikin (Japan) and AGP (Peru) claim victories
at the Foreign Investment Trophy*

Brussels, Monday, March 18 – **Three top foreign investors were honored at the 2019 Foreign Investment Trophy. With this formal ceremony, Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT) – Flanders’ government agency for international business – is highlighting the socio-economic importance of foreign direct investment for the seventh year in a row. Last year, foreign companies invested EUR 4.24 billion in Flanders: the highest amount ever. 5,339 direct jobs were also created as a result.**

**Borealis** was the winner of the **2019 Foreign Investment of the Year Trophy 2019**. Flanders’ Minister-President Geert Bourgeois handed the trophy to Thomas Van De Velde, vice president of BU Hydrocarbons & Energy at Borealis. The Austrian multinational is funneling EUR 1 billion into the construction of a new propane dehydrogenation plant on its existing site in **Kallo**, at the Port of Antwerp. “With this investment, Borealis is strengthening the Port of Antwerp’s position as Europe’s largest integrated petrochemical cluster,” said Minister-President Bourgeois.

Borealis was voted the 2019 winner following three voting rounds involving a professional jury, the online public and the audience. The company was one of four nominees: Chinese packaging expert **CPMC**, New Zealand logistics player **Mainfreight** and Japanese specialist in pharmaceutical and medical technology **Nipro**.

Furthermore, **AGP Group** won the **2019 Newcomer or the Year Trophy**.Antonio Balata, vice president of AGP, received the trophy from Claire Tillekaerts, CEO of Flanders Investment & Trade. The Latin-American producer of high-tech automotive glass parts invested USD 90 million in the acquisition of production company Soliver and the opening of a European headquarters in **Ghent**. Claire Tillekaerts: “This trophy is our way of showing our appreciation to a company that’s coming to Flanders for the first time. Attracting new investors is crucial to our economy. 2018 was a record years in that respect: foreign firms invested twice as much in Flanders as the year before. Traditionally, foreign investments mainly originate from the US and our neighboring countries. From Latin America, various production and R&D investments in the automotive sector are now also finding their way to Flanders, where companies seek to strengthen their presence in Europe.”

Finally, the FIT **2019 Lifetime Achievement Trophy** went to Japanese air conditioning specialist **Daikin**. Flanders’ Minister-President Geert Bourgeois presented Frans Hoorelbeke, chairman at Daikin Europe, with the award. “This trophy acknowledges the fact that Daikin has been investing continuously in Flanders for more than 45 years,” the Minister-President stated. “As a result, Daikin has become the biggest employer in **Ostend** and the local site has grown into the Japanese company’s corporate headquarters for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.”

About FIT and Flanders

International firms reap diverse rewards when deciding to invest in Flanders. As a major logistics crossroads in the heart of Europe’s purchasing power, Flanders is the place to be for companies with pan-European ambitions. The region is also known for the close collaboration between its private, public and academic sectors—making it fertile ground for innovative research and development activities in some of the most advanced technological niches.

Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT) actively promotes sustainable international business in Flanders as a key element of the region’s socioeconomic development. FIT accomplishes this by supporting Flanders-based companies in their international business ventures and by attracting foreign investors. FIT assists businesses across Flanders in their international endeavors and provides custom advice and support. Companies can call on the agency’s local and international networks of contacts, while FIT also offers financial support and information about the financial incentives available.

Press contact

Tine Van Valckenborgh, spokesperson Flanders Investment & Trade

E. tine.vanvalckenborgh@fitagency.be

M. +32 499 24 60 93

@InvestFlanders (#FITtrophy2019)

Websites

* [www.foreigninvestmenttrophy.be](http://www.foreigninvestmenttrophy.be) – for more on the ceremony, nominees and former laureates;
* [www.investinflanders.com](http://www.investinflanders.com) – for more on international business and investing in Flanders;
* [www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com](http://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com) – for more info on Flanders Investment & Trade.