

Press release, 6 March 2018

WINNERS 'PUBLIC ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR®' 2018

Antwerp Port Authority is big winner of 'Public Organization of the Year®' 2018

Flemish Tax Administration wins first 'Sustainability Award'

The Antwerp Port Authority, the Flemish Tax Administration, the Federal Department of the Interior, the Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, and the City of Wavre are the five winners at the fifth edition of 'Public Organization of the Year®' 2018

Brussels, 6 March 2018. This evening in Brussels, EY in cooperation with De Tijd/L'Echo and BNP Paribas Fortis organized the 'Public Organization of the Year®' award for the fifth time. The prizes were presented in the presence of ministers and prominent figures from the public and private sector. The jury chose the Antwerp Port Authority as the big winner across all categories, thereby awarding it the title of 'Public Organization of the Year®' 2018. This year also saw the introduction of the 'Sustainability Award' that went to the Flemish Tax Administration.

Big winner: Antwerp Port Authority

The **Antwerp Port Authority** was chosen by the jury as the big winner across all categories, thereby awarding it the title 'Public Organization of the Year®' 2018. The Antwerp Port Authority received the award from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Security and Interior Affairs charged with the direction of public buildings Jan Jambon. *The Antwerp Port Authority was originally nominated in the category 'Local Public Organization of the Year'.*

With an annual budget of 269 million euros and 1,577 employees, the **Antwerp Port Authority** governs and operates one of the world's largest ports, managing and maintaining the docks, bridges, locks, wharves and grounds within the Antwerp port area as well as being responsible for a smooth and safe flow of shipping traffic. The port employees are also responsible for the use of tugs and cranes, carrying out dredging operations and promoting the port both at home and abroad.

The jury was very impressed by the development of this organization in recent years *"The Antwerp Port Authority is both a symbol of the tradition and renewal of the Port of Antwerp: the organization has opened up to the outside world and succeeded in effecting a mind shift. 'What company will the port need tomorrow?' is the question the management put to the stakeholders. The result is an organization that is no longer inward looking, but open to the demands and interests of the hundreds of companies that are the engine of the Flemish economy,"* said Bernard Gilliot, chairman of the jury and president of the FEB (Federation of Enterprises in Belgium).

Flemish Tax Authority wins the very first 'Sustainability Award'

The **Flemish Tax Authority** is the winner of the first edition of the **'Sustainability Award'**. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post, Alexander De Croo, presented the award. For the organizers, the launch of this new award, created upon the request of BNP Paribas Fortis, is a way of stressing the importance of sustainability in today's economy. It is not only private companies that must work on an increasingly sustainable basis, but public organizations too. In the years to come this is a subject that will assume an increasing importance within all organizations.

The award for **'Federal Public Organization of the Year'** 2018 went to the **Federal Government Department of the Interior** and was presented by Defence Minister tasked with Civil Service Steven Vandepuut.

The jury also elected **Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen** as **'Regional Public Organization of the Year'** 2018. The award was presented by, Flemish Minister of Tourism and Public Works, the Brussels Periphery and Animal Welfare Ben Weyts.

Finally, the award for **'Local Public Organization of the Year'** 2018 went to the **City of Wavre**. This award was presented by Max Jadot, CEO of BNP Paribas Fortis.

An award for successful Belgian public organizations

It was back in 2014 that EY, together with its partners De Tijd/L'Echo and BNP Paribas Fortis, launched the award for 'Public Organization of the Year®'. It was designed to reward public organizations that excelled in the fields of strategy, customer focus, efficiency, sustainability, reliability, versatility, innovation and partnership.

"Just like with the 'Entrepreneur of the Year®' Award, we discover every year when electing the 'Public Organization of the Year®' that government organizations, just like private companies, can and are not afraid to commit to innovative strategies as a means of providing efficient, customer-focused services. In this way, these public organizations contribute every day to the Belgian society and its economy. They too deserve recognition for their efforts in providing an ever better response to the demands of companies and citizens," says Patrick Rottiers, Country Managing Partner EY Belgium.

Chairman of the Jury and President of the Federation of Belgian Enterprises (VBO) Bernard Gilliot, explains why the jury selected the winners: *"The winners show that public organizations, which are not driven by profit and self-interest, are making continuous efforts to innovative as a means of providing a quality and customer-focused service. These organizations are not only an example for public organizations, but also for private companies."*

Jury choices explained:

Flemish Tax Administration wins first 'Sustainability-Award'

The **Flemish Tax Administration (VLABEL)** is an autonomous agency within the Flemish Government responsible for implementing Flemish tax policy. Its mission is to collect and issue demands for Flemish taxes in a manner that is both effective and efficient. In so doing the agency applies the following principles: maximum customer-focus, reduction of administrative formalities to a minimum by applying modern technologies, equal treatment, and timely and correct processing.

In addition to the efficiency shown by the Flemish Tax Administration the jury was particularly impressed by its drive for sustainability: *"Paper is out in this organization and tax files are fully digitized. The citizen can enter all data online, thus dispensing with the need to visit in person. The tax returns are now the only document sent out on paper. Hopefully the efforts regarding the e-box will soon bring results. The Flemish Tax Administration is also investing in hybrid and electric cars, service bicycles and carpooling. Also, when concluding framework agreements for the purchase of office equipment environmental performance is a criterion."*

'Federal Public Organization of the Year' 2018: Federal Government Department of the Interior

The **Federal Government Department of the Interior** is charged with preparing and implementing the policy of the Federal Minister for Security and Interior Affairs and of the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration. The Department is responsible for police and civil security (public order and prevention), assistance to the population and crisis management, immigration policy, registration and identification of natural persons, management of institutional and regulatory matters and implementation of certain democratic rights that fall within federal competence.

The jury believes that the Federal Department of the Interior is now reaping the rewards of the innovation introduced in recent years: *"Belgium has always been a pioneer when it comes to electronic identity cards. The systems were initially not always the strongest but in recent years it took some very bold steps. We see this award primarily as an encouragement to further innovate and to continue to take professional steps in major areas of society."*

'Regional Public Organization of the Year' 2018: Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen

Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen brings together the Flemish Opera and the Royal Ballet of Flanders. The principal mission of the Kunsthuis is the (co-)production of musical theatre and dance and ballet presentations, as well as managing their performances. The Kunsthuis is also responsible for recruitment and maintaining and managing the infrastructure.

The jury was impressed with how the Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen has flourished at a time of growing selection of leisure activities: *"Through renewal, rejuvenation and digitization the Kunsthuis has succeeded in breaking out of its niche. Also positive is the evident awareness that government funds are limited and more own revenue must be raised. Over the next two years the Kunsthuis must show that it can translate good ideas into reality."*

'Local Public Organization of the Year' 2018: City of Wavre

The **City of Wavre** implements tasks laid down by decree and provides the services of a local government for the benefit of the citizen. It also assists in preparing and implementing policy. Wavre has announced an urban metamorphosis for 2030 and to achieve its objectives is using two complementary aids: the communication tool 'Wavre in Progress' and I.R.M.A (Information Research Model for (financial) Anticipation).

The jury stresses that Wavre has major plans to develop the town and make it more attractive for new residents. *"With its considerable financial reserves the City of Wavre is planning to involve private partners in its development. The municipal authorities use online applications to consult and inform citizens as well as to make known their desires or demands."*

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