



Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce Inc.  
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Olivier Smekens, President  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce celebrates Belgian Entrepreneurship in the United States with the “Lifetime Achievement Award”, the “Belgian- American Company of the Year Award” and the “Most Promising Belgian-American Company of the Year Award” at its annual Gala Evening on November 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 at the Harvard Club, NYC.**

New York, NEW YORK, October 2011 - Headquartered in New York City, the main objective of BelCham is to make Belgian-American ventures successful, to support entrepreneurs by providing intelligence and sharing know-how of former Belgian success stories in the U.S., as well as to promote business relations between Belgium and the U.S. In addition, BelCham also runs a J-1 visa program in which they act as a visa sponsor for Belgian students and recent graduates who want to gain professional experience in the US.

“We understand entrepreneurs and business executives always look to advance their entities in any state of economy. So BelCham has created a **Center for Successful Entrepreneurship** that offers an accessible pool of Belgian and U.S. business talent who volunteer their time and expertise as business counselors to U.S.-based or incoming Belgian entrepreneurs,” explains Olivier Smekens, President of BelCham. Smekens is also Head of Corporate Banking with KBC USA Bank.

Key engines and promoters of BelCham’s **Center for Successful Entrepreneurship** include top companies such as Microsoft, Novartis, Brussels Airlines, Bekaert, Le Pain Quotidien, CIC Bank, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Duvel, Delhaize, KBC Bank, Air France-KLM-Delta, BNP Paribas Fortis, Deloitte and Dexia.

Since its inception in 1918, BelCham has and continues to play an integral role in facilitating various peer-to-peer business communications and trade research between both countries, and more recently, to provide innovative, strategic guidance and experienced pro-bono trade consultancy for its members.

BelCham also has chapters in Atlanta, Houston, Boston, Silicon Valley, Washington DC, Portland and Chicago-Detroit.

BelCham will honor **Mr Georges Ugeux**, Chairman and CEO of Galileo Global Advisors, with a “**Lifetime Achievement Award**”. A lawyer and economist by training, Georges Ugeux has focused his entire career on the global dimensions of business, government and finance. Georges began his career in commercial banking at Societe Generale de Banque (now BNP Paribas Fortis), where he became the General Manager of the investment banking and trust division. He then worked in leadership functions for a string of high profile financial institutions including Morgan Stanley, Societe Generale de Belgique, Kidder, Peabody and the European Investment Fund. Before launching Galileo Global Advisors, Georges immersed himself in the global equity markets by heading the International Group of the New York Stock Exchange, bringing over 300 non-US companies, valued at \$ 2.7 trillion, to the U.S. market.

In lieu of its business mission, BelCham will also present the “**Belgian-American Company of the Year**” and the “**Most Promising Belgian-American Company of the Year**” award to two Belgian-American businesses.

The winner is determined by a high-profile independent jury that will review submissions from numerous Belgian-American enterprises in the U.S. for the best product/service and most powerful venture and business plan. Jury members are Michel Moortgat (president of the BelCham jury and CEO of Duvel-Moortgat), professor Hans Crijns (Head Center for Entrepreneurship Vlerick Management School) and Guillaume Bastiaens (retired vice-Chairman Cargill and social entrepreneur).

For more information on Georges Ugeux’ “Lifetime Achievement Award”, or any of the other entrepreneurship awards, or initiatives by the BelCham to provide timely and industry-related consultancy and expertise network to its U.S. based members, please visit [www.belcham.org](http://www.belcham.org) or contact [info@belcham.org](mailto:info@belcham.org)

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***Editor’s Note:*** For more information on the press release or to speak with Mr. Olivier Smekens, President of BelCham, contact Tamara Zouboff – [info@belcham.org](mailto:info@belcham.org)