

Inauguration of BelgiumDC, NRB's new data centre, by Minister P-Y Jeholet

Villers-le-Bouillet, June 22, 2018

Pierre-Yves Jeholet (Vice-President of the Walloon Government, and Minister for Economy, Industry, Research, Innovation, Digital, Employment and Training), Aline Devillers-Saal (Mayor of Villers-le-Bouillet), Philippe Lallemand (Chairman of the Board of Directors of NRB and CEO of Ethias) and Pascal Laffineur (CEO of the NRB Group) officially inaugurated today the new NRB Group data centre in Villers-le-Bouillet, around thirty kilometres from Liège. After the official ceremony, they visited the advanced and highly secure data centre.

BelgiumDC is a joint venture between NRB and Etx Everywhere, each of which holds half of the shares. Etx is a Luxembourg company, specialised in the construction and deployment of 'turnkey' data centres, in full expansion with sites on every continent. Through this collaboration, NRB has access to Etx's data centre network, and is therefore able to offer its customers – particularly those with international operations – cross-border solutions. In addition to NRB, the parent company, the NRB Group also includes Xperthis (IT for hospitals), Trasys International (active for international organisations) and Cevi, Logins and Civadis (solutions for local authorities).

The data centre that was inaugurated today complements NRB's three data centres in Herstal. The two sites, thirty kilometres apart, are connected by optical fibre.

NRB's data centres host systems, applications and data from local, regional and federal administrations as well as from companies in sectors such as financial services, energy, utilities, industry and healthcare.

The first BelgiumDC module, with a surface area of 300 square meters, is currently operational. Two additional modules can be deployed in a matter of a few months.

Advanced and highly secure data centre

You will not enter the Villers-le-Bouillet data centre easily! When entering the car park there is video surveillance with intelligent car and visitor recognition. You will need a QR code or a badge, a PIN code, a login and a password... all remotely monitored by the NRB and Etx control centres. Those who enter are 'weighed'. This happens again when you leave, to ensure that you do not take anything with you. The data centre is protected by double reinforced concrete walls and is equipped with an inert gas fire extinguishing system. Temperature, humidity, dust, hardware and software operations and other parameters are monitored every second by NRB and Etx control centres. In the event of an anomaly or if strict standards are exceeded, an automatic alarm is triggered to immediately resolve the problem.

BelgiumDC is equipped with the latest technologies in the field of security, energy supply, cooling, but also in the field of networks, data storage and installations for mainframe and distributed systems.

The data centre as a pillar of NRB's strategic plan

The new data centre strengthens NRB's private cloud capabilities as a pillar of its hybrid cloud strategy. Earlier this year, NRB partnered with IBM to provide its customers with a cloud platform which acts as a 'cloud services broker' that advises them on how best to manage and process their data – whether on-site, in NRB's private cloud or in public clouds, or a combination of the latter. The

platform is 'agnostic' in the sense that it can provide access to the clouds of Amazon, IBM, Microsoft and Azure, as well as Google or others soon.

In addition, the new data centre reinforces NRB's role as a local safe harbour for its customers' data. For more than 30 years, NRB has been the partner of choice for companies, hospitals and numerous public bodies in Wallonia, Brussels and Flanders and even at European level, organisations that are attaching more importance than ever to the security and integrity of their customers', patients' or citizens' data.

The investment in the new data centre and the collaboration with IBM are part of the NRB Group's strategic growth plan for 2022, the year NRB will become 35 years old. The plan provides for an expansion and deepening of its activities, including internationally and through acquisitions. The group's objective is to double the current workforce from 2,000 to 4,000 by the end of 2022.

A solid engine

'BelgiumDC allows us not only to stay one step ahead of other IT service providers and data centre operators in Belgium, but also to continue to offer our customers solid added value,' says Pascal Laffineur, CEO of NRB. 'After all, our data centres and hybrid cloud offering form the technological foundation, the solid power source so to speak, that drives our new role as a facilitator of our customers' digital transformation. Compare this to the autonomous car: the car can be as sophisticated and intelligent as possible, but if its engine fails, you're not going anywhere.'

Note to the editor: photos, a presentation about BelgiumDC, a brochure about NRB's data centre service and the NRB Group 2017 annual report are available for download via this link. If you want an interview with Pascal Laffineur, the CEO of the NRB Group, please email or call Bart Inslegers (contact details below). He will be happy to arrange an interview for you soon.

About the NRB Group

With a consolidated turnover of €323 million and over 2,000 employees, the NRB Group ranks in the top three of the Belgian ICT industry.

NRB helps its customers to fully benefit from ICT assets in order to optimise and accelerate their processes, innovate and allow their business to grow and evolve with a view to keeping up with the new digital reality.

Within this context, NRB provides a complete range of ICT services based on four key areas: consultancy, software, infrastructure & cloud services, and managed staffing.

NRB focuses on Belgium's key sectors: the public and social sector, the energy and utility industry, the financial services sector and the industrial sector, while Trasy International, which is also part of the NRB Group, is aimed at European and international public and corporate organisations.

Xperthis provides specialised ICT solutions for the healthcare sector. Cevi and Logins in Flanders and Civadis in Brussels and Wallonia are specialised in ICT products and services for local authorities.

More information is available at www.nrb.be

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