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Patrick Janssens

Since 2003, Mr. Janssens has led the 55 member Council for the City of Antwerp. Mr. Janssens started his career in 1985 as General Director of Dimarso, a market research and public opinion polling firm. Later, Mr. Janssens entered the world of advertising with BBDO World Wide as Director of Strategic Planning and Managing Director in 1991, completing his advertising career as Chairman in 1997.



In 1999, Mr. Janssens became Chairman of the Flemish Socialist Party, a post he held until 2003 when he entered municipal politics as City Councillor of Antwerp. In 2003, Mr. Janssens also became Member of Parliament and in July 2003, he was elected Mayor of the City of Antwerp.

The City of Antwerp is responsible for a range of services, including waste management, local infrastructure (parks, street lighting, street cleaning), pre-primary education, social services, housing, and cultural affairs. City Council is made up of 55 members. In response to the election results of the late eighties and early nineties, the City has been significantly restructured; it is now divided into nine districts, each with its own district hall and district council, although the major responsibilities for running the city still lie with the City Council.

Antwerp

Fast Facts	City	Metro Area	
POPULATION	446,525	935,381	
AREA	203.80km ²	1000 km ²	
GDP (EUROS) PER CAPITA	33,090	23,289	
MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS	port industries, petrochemical, diamond trade	automotive industry, telecommunications, pharmaceutical industries	

The City

Antwerp is the largest city in Flanders in the northern region of Belgium. Approximately 60% of the 10 million Belgians are Flemings. Most speak Dutch, and the region has its own distinct parliament and government. The City of Antwerp is divided into nine diverse administrative districts and is a city of neighbourhoods representing one of the most multicultural cities in Europe.

In the 16th century, Antwerp was the Manhattan of Europe, with 150,000 inhabitants. After religious conflicts, more than 100,000 people fled the city. In addition, notwithstanding the destruction which occurred during the World Wars, Antwerp has managed to protect many of its historic monuments.

Recently, the city has begun an impressive planning and development programme, with major projects in progress or near approval: a futuristic courthouse designed by British architect Richard Rogers; development of the old docks, known as "Het Eilandje", similar to the London Docklands; the new district "Het Nieuw Zuid" with a new park; and development of the majestic Central Station into an international high speed rail station with platforms on three levels and tunnels under the city center. In addition, a completely redesigned road plan is also adding transportation network efficiency to the city.

The Economy

The Belgian economy is particularly geared towards exports. Belgian exports are five times as large as Japan's per capita and seven times as large as the USA's. More than one third of all the Belgian exports are produced in the Antwerp region. After Houston, Antwerp has the world's highest concentration of chemical industries.

The economic success of the Antwerp region can be attributed to its excellent transportation infrastructure. Large tonnage canals and the Schelde river provide links with all European inland waterways. The Antwerp harbour is Belgium's main railroad junction and Europe's second largest and busiest port after Rotterdam.

In addition, Antwerp's fashion and diamond industries also occupy a leading position in the world. The diamond market produces about 60% of the world's rough and finished stones.