

Chairman and Founder of easyFairs honoured by Trends-Tendances magazine

Eric Everard named Belgium's Manager of the Year

easyFairs is delighted to announce that the jury of the Belgian francophone business and finance magazine *Trends-Tendances* has named Eric Everard "Manager de l'Année 2012". Eric Everard founded easyFairs in 2004 and is also the Chairman and Founder of its parent company, the Artexis Group. The award was made at a ceremony at Brussels Expo on Wednesday, 9 January 2013, in the presence of 1200 distinguished guests including Belgium's Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo and Paul Bulcke, CEO Nestlé.

"I am happy to acknowledge that I could not possibly have won this award without the talent, hard work and support of my colleagues at easyFairs and the Artexis Group," said Everard. He added that he would use his moment in the limelight to "promote entrepreneurship in Belgium and in Europe".

The Roularta Media Group, which publishes Trends-Tendances, issued the following statement:

Eric Everard has succeeded in building a company that organises exhibitions and manages exhibition halls in more than ten European countries, from a company with roots in Belgium. This is a unique story in a sector overwhelmingly dominated by German and British players. Despite the economic crisis, the Artexis Group, which this year celebrates 15 years in business, posted a growth in its annual revenues of 14%. The company also achieved an Ebitda of € 8.2 million, an increase of 32%. "We are very proud, all the more so because 2013 results should be cast in the same mould," claimed Everard.

This growth is essentially the result of launching some 15 new exhibitions in 2012, mainly abroad; B2B exhibitions, such as the highly specialised hydrocarbon storage exhibition [StocExpo, powered by easyFairs] in London, which is being "cloned" in Singapore, Calgary and later Istanbul.

"This is in line with our strategy," explains Eric Everard. "We acquire highly targeted and leading B2B exhibitions, the clone them, with the objective of bringing 50% of the exhibitors on board at the various localisations of the show."

This desire to expand beyond Belgium's frontiers also resulted in 2012 in the contracts for two exhibition halls in Sweden (Stockholm and Malmö). Artexis Group is taking over the management of these two 15,000 m² venues for 20 years. It is the first time that the company managing Namur Expo, the Palais des Congrès de Namur, Flanders Expo and Ghent and Antwerp Expos has extended its activity beyond Belgium.

Challenges for 2013

Press information

Ref. Number: I/2013

[Brussels, 10 January 2013]

Page 2 of 3

Eric Everard intends to pursue his growth strategy, adding the management of two new exhibition halls to his portfolio. He is also hoping to acquire or launch around ten additional exhibitions, with a focus on emerging economies. The current crisis also requires Everard to innovate and improve the offer at his exhibitions. “We can no longer simply sell stands. We have to be right up there, putting the accent on content, for example with regular conferences, to create an unforgettable experience for visitors.”

The Artexis Group will be releasing a comprehensive report on its activities in 2011-12 at the end of January. A preview is available online at <http://activityreport2011-2012.artexisgroup.com>

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Page 3 of 3

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