

## THE BELGIAN VACUUM SOCIETY

Société Belge de Vacuologie et de Vacuotechnique Belgische Vereniging voor Vacuologie en  
Vacuümtechniek Belgische Vakuumgemeenschap (BELVAC)

Original (1986) by J. Dupont

Updated (2001) by R. Vanden Berghe

Updated (2018) by D. Depla, R. De Gryse and R. Snyders

BELVAC, the Belgian Vacuum Society was founded on May 16, 1963 from the merging of two elder groups: the section on Vacuum Technique of the "Société Royale Belge des Ingénieurs et des Industriels, asbl", founded in 1954, and the other was a contact group "Nuclear Sciences and Low Pressures" of the "Institut Interuniversitaire des Sciences Nucléaires", founded in 1955. BELVAC is nowadays a non-profit society with legal status. The organization consists of a council with a president, a secretary six representatives in the IUUSTA Divisions and 11 administrators. BELVAC was the representative of the Belgian Standardization Organization in the six working groups of the International Standards Organization (ISO) TC 112. BELVAC also serves as a liaison between the Secretary General of IUSTVA and the Belgian Ministry of Justice on the IUUSTA Statutes.

The purpose of BELVAC is to promote the development of vacuum science and technology and contribute to its advancement in Belgium. It also has its objective to create and maintain interesting and useful relations between its members (academics and industrials) concerning vacuum and to provide interesting and useful relations with foreign vacuum societies and with international organizations having the same objectives.

Belgium has been a key player in the field of vacuum science since the early days. The first International Congress on Vacuum Technology, organized in connection with the 1958 Brussels World Fair, by the Belgian group "Vacuum Techniques Section" of the Société Royale Belge des Ingénieurs et des Industriels on 10-13 June 1958 in Namur (Belgium), is indeed generally accepted as the founding event that ultimately led in 1962 to the formation of the International Union for Vacuum Science, Technique and Applications (IUUSTA).

Anniversaries of the foundation of BELVAC were often celebrated in the context of international meetings. Examples are the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BELVAC was celebrated in 2003 during a meeting co-organized with the Société Française du Vide (Nouvelles Tendances en Procédés Magnétron et Arc pour le Dépôt de Couches Minces) in Gent (see picture). The 50th anniversary of BELVAC was celebrated in 2013 in the context of an international scientific meeting at the University of Antwerp in the presence of Prof. Jean-Jacques Pireaux, Belgian Président of IUUSTA for the 2010-2013 Trienium



Figure 1. Photographs taken during the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BELVAC (Gent, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003). Photograph top left: From left-to-right: Mrs. Dupont, Mr. Dupont, Mr. De Gryse, Photograph top right : From left-to-right : Mr. Depla (Chair of the TF division (2013-2016)), Mrs. Van Nevel, Mr. Thys, Mr. Vanden Berghe, Bottom From left-to-right : Mr. De Gryse, Mr. Reniers (Treasurer at IUVESTA (for 3 triennia in 2018))

The activities of BELVAC mainly include the organization and the support of scientific meeting in Belgium or in a partner country. These meetings have sometimes been organised together with either the French or the Dutch Vacuum Societies. During a certain period of time there was a close co-operation for the regular organisation of an annual joint meeting both with NEVAC, Nederlandse Vacuum Vereniging, (Netherlands) and with the SFV, Société Française du Vide, (France). In addition, IUVESTA related meeting such as ECOSS-5 (Gent, 24-27 Aug 1982), ECM 1 (Brussels, 8 Dec 1962), ECM 4 (Brussels, 3-4 Dec 1964), ECM 85 (Namur, March 2000), ECM 111 (Namur, 11-13 March 2011) have been organized in Belgium with Belvac as organizer. Nowadays, BELVAC still contributes and participates to several events per year such as, for example, the International Conference on Thin Films (ICTF14) in 2008, and the International Vacuum Conference 19 in Paris in 2013. The participation of BELVAC to such event is very important in term of visibility of the society. This is also why BELVAC act as the main organizer of the participation of Belgium as partner country for the 2018 issue of the Plasma Surface Engineering Conference which is held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen every two years.

More recently BELVAC has also decided to enhance the promotion of Vacuum technologies towards the Belgian industries by participating to industrial fairs such as Eurofinish 2017 in Leuven where a booth as well as a workshop have been organized.

In addition to the support and participation to scientific events, BELVAC also publish each trimester a technical review journal, BELVAC News which is sent to all BELVAC members. Its publication started in December 1985 (see figure). In addition to regular scientific papers, this journal advertise events related to vacuum and allows to inform the BELVAC members on the life of the society. In order to complete the information, a website (<http://www.BELVAC.be>) is also available since 2008. On this website, in addition of the information also published in the journal, grants are offered to students who participate to vacuum oriented conferences.



Figure 2. The first BELVAC News was published in May 1985. As Belgium is a bilingual country two separate copies were published, one in Dutch (left), and one in French (right). Now BELVAC News is published in English (below)