BelCham Puts a Turbo on Belgian Entrepreneurship with Triple-A Approach in their 100th Year.

Embargo – Friday, October 11, 2019 6:00AM CET

- BelCham celebrates its centennial anniversary this week. The perfect moment to look back on 100 years of history and to reveal an ambitious vision for the following century.
- To mark this anniversary BelCham organizes the ‘Party of the Century’ on October 11 in New York attended by the Belgian-American top (www.belcham.org/100years)

New York, October 11, 2019 - BelCham, the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce in the US, celebrates its centennial anniversary. The Chamber was founded in 1919 by Belgian entrepreneurs following the Belgian royal visit of King Albert I and Queen Elizabeth to the US. On the occasion of this historic event commercial ties between both countries were given a new boost after the burden of the war. Today, BelCham has become a catalyst of economic and social progression more than ever before with offices in New York and San Francisco. The organization is led by Valerie Van den Keybus and Laurence Van den Keybus, a dynamic duo of siblings who arrived in the US after an international career. Marianne Amssoms – former spokeswoman at AB InBev – became President in 2019.

In times of massive competition and technological disruption the average lifespan of an enterprise is less than 20 years. The centennial existence of BelCham therefore is all the more remarkable. What started with supporting the reconstruction of Belgian family businesses after both World Wars has evolved into the successful guidance of scaleups on the American market in the most recent years.

"Making it in the US is the dream of many entrepreneurs. There is no surprise there. The US economy is still the biggest worldwide and Americans highly value entrepreneurship. In an increasingly polarized world where free trade and mutual understanding are under pressure it is especially important to support companies and entrepreneurs in their transatlantic crossing", says Marianne Amssoms.
‘Amid the turmoil it’s easy to forget that the American market offers enormous opportunities. We have a first row view on the success stories and multiplication of Belgian talent and American opportunities on a daily basis,’ Valerie Van den Keybus adds.

Since 2014 ca. 200 Belgian entrepreneurs have started their activities on the American market making use of the BelCham co-working spaces and acceleration programs. More than 750 young professionals have launched their international career thanks to the BelCham exchange program and 400 business leaders have found inspiration in the US through bespoke innovation days and prospection missions.

‘BelCham has been an engine of social mobility, economic opportunity and progress – thanks in part to generations of bold dreamers and doers,’ states Laurence Van den Keybus. ‘We know that Europe offers fertile soil, but in order to achieve scale and fast growth, companies need to consider accessing the US market. The same is true for students and young professionals. Experience has taught us that cultivating an international mindset helps turning Belgian modesty into bold actions.’

As a consequence, BelCham puts an ambitious turbo on their activities to invest in the future of the Belgian entrepreneur. Initiatives in their centennial year include ‘Academy’, ‘Atelier’ and ‘Assembly’:

- BelCham plans to support 1000 talented students and young professionals in their entrepreneurial ambition. A fundraising initiative open to the public will help launch ‘Academy’, an inclusive ‘entrepreneurial school’ with online and offline programming.
- BelCham will help 100 new entrepreneurs find their first partner, client, investor or employee in the US through ‘Atelier’, the incubator and co-working space.
- BelCham will organize ‘Future Forums’. Under the slogan ‘Outsmart the Future’ they are creating a platform (‘Assembly’) for discussion and collaboration between industry leaders. The first edition will take place in NYC on October 10, 2019.

The executive team agrees on the future vision for the next century: ‘We get our success from the success of our community. We will give our members access to new and even more transatlantic opportunities – on a professional, personal and economic level. More opportunities. More growth. More BelCham.’

About BelCham:
BelCham, the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce, is an independent not-for-profit and NGO with offices in New York and San Francisco. BelCham is the driving force behind international business growth and has become a central access point for Belgians (and by extension, Europeans) in the US. BelCham offers support to ambitious students, starters and companies to accelerate their growth: www.belcham.org
Marianne Amssoms has been President at BelCham since 2019 and board member since 2012. She is the founder of Carpe mutatio, a reputation management consulting agency in New York. Until last year she was responsible for global communication and reputation at AB InBev, where she had a career of 15 years.

Valerie Van den Keybus – co-Managing director BelCham – graduated in Strategic Communication and Business Administration at the University of Antwerp and Antwerp Management School. She came to the US through an international career at GE after stays in Paris and Dubai. She has been active at BelCham since 2018 where she was Executive Director in New York until 2019.

Laurence Van den Keybus – co-Managing director BelCham – graduated in Law and Global Management at the University of Antwerp and Antwerp Management School. After a consulting career in Brussels and Madrid he started at BelCham in 2015. He was active as Executive Director in San Francisco until 2019.

Contact:

Philippe Olivier
philippe@growth-inc.be
+32496301618

Valerie Van den Keybus
valerie@belcham.org

Laurence Van den Keybus
laurence@belcham.org