INTERNATIONALE SCHELDEDAGEN
JOURNÉES INTERNATIONALES DE L'ESCAUT
INTERNATIONAL SCHELDT DAYS

PRESS RELEASE

Leon Dhaene appointed Secretary General of the International Scheldt Days

Working together towards better water management

GHENT, 16 October 2026

The ***International Scheldt Days***, a platform and stage for knowledge institutions and research centres, innovative companies and established infrastructure companies, investors, students and job seekers, and government agencies and administrations, all active in water management, today announce the appointment of Leon Dhaene as Secretary General.



"*For this role, which must ensure that a team of organisers, water management experts and companies active in water management in France, Belgium and the Netherlands can work together smoothly, we were looking for someone with solid international experience, a proven track record in international negotiations and experience of working with the European Commission*", says Hilde Dujardin, director of D Services Group, one of the founders of the International Scheldt Days. *"Add to that his multilingual skills and experience in public communication, his lobbying experience and a very extensive network of contacts, and Leon Dhaene is the right candidate to bring this assignment to a successful conclusion."*

The International Scheldt Days aim to create a meeting place, both physical and digital, for academics and researchers, investors and innovative companies, major infrastructure groups, and sectors such as chemicals and agriculture that can showcase their achievements, all under one roof and open to the general public – a scale that is currently lacking in the sector.

"*Leon Dhaene is experienced in leading a flat organisation where, alongside strategic thinking, it is just as necessary to roll up one's sleeves at critical moments",* says Mathieu Foulon, director of Event-M and co-founder of the International Scheldt Days. "*Since 1985, Leon has gained experience in setting up and supporting major exhibitions, such as the South Flanders Greek Weeks and the South Flanders Indian Weeks, each featuring dozens of events held across South Flanders; as well as with the European Card Acquiring*

Forum, a specialised trade fair for the financial sector that grew into the 'Berlin Conference', with 1,600 participants, 90 partners and 30 exhibitors; and the many solo exhibitions he has organised for artists."

"*Setting up an initiative such as the International Scheldt Days, where the 5 domains meet with the aim of working together towards solutions, is a first step forward*", says Leon Dhaene. "*Just as Flanders Technology International was the stepping stone for a digital boost in the Ghent area in the 1980s, the International Scheldt Days will move a stone in the river, and the current will never follow the same course again*[1]."

The International Scheldt Days are organised on an independent, international and non-profit basis, with funding from private companies.

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About the International Scheldt Days

The ***International Scheldt Days*** aim to bring together all stakeholders (knowledge institutions, investors/capital, infrastructure companies, water management innovators, government and public agencies, and the public, such as students – job seekers – interested parties) in ***water management*** (water management in its broad sense, covering both water quality and water quantity) around a ***platform*** and on a ***stage***, thereby creating a dynamic that will lead to greater awareness of water problems and of how they can be solved together in the future.
It is the vision of the International Scheldt Days that only through cooperation between all actors can the enormous environmental problems of our time be tackled and solved, and that this task must be carried out as a matter of urgency.
To that end, a river basin is an ecologically defined entity that shapes a micro-ecological system in which nature, animals and people must live together in harmony.

[1] **Freely adapted from VERMEULEN, Bram. *De steen*. Almere, Emergo Classics, 1988, 3'18.**