

Press release

Leiden, January 22nd 2010

Visitor Centre Leiden

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Expats Centre Leiden officially open

Thursday the 21st of January the Expats Centre Leiden was officially opened by Marc Witteman (alderman of Economic Affairs and Sports at the municipality of Leiden) and Willem te Beest, Vice President of Leiden University. The Expats Centre Leiden is the new regional information desk for high skilled migrants living in the Leiden region.

Knowledge cluster

The Leiden region belongs to the largest knowledge clusters in the Netherlands. With the Leiden Bio Science Park, Leiden University, ESA Estec in Noordwijk and the floral industry in the direct surroundings, the region is home to a wide range of knowledge intensive sectors.

In such a region, human capital is core to creating new knowledge and transferring that knowledge to products and services. As highly skilled, technically educated employees are scarce, the international market increasingly becomes an important source to recruit knowledge workers.

Facilitating expats

Some 3.000 highly skilled migrants already work in the region and in the years to come, many more. In the 'settling in process' expats, however, often encounter problems in tackling juridical matters, looking for a house, and finding their way at a social level. The Expats Centre Leiden is set up to meet these needs. It will facilitate the expats in their 'settling in process' by not only informing on legal issues". Marc Witteman, alderman Economic Affairs of the city of Leiden: "We owe it to the city, with its large knowledge based economy, to make expats feel at home in Leiden."

Warm welcome

The Expats Centre Leiden consists of a virtual information point with a vast amount of information at the website, www.expatcentreleiden.nl. The Expats Centre's office, located in the Visitor Centre Leiden, is open for the public from Friday 22th. The dedicated expat officer will answer questions on immigration formalities, living in the region (taxes, insurances, working, finding a house and schools), social life and information about Leiden as a region. Project manager Ellen Smit, "the Expats Centre Leiden staff will provide expats with a warm welcome and all the information needed during settling in and their stay in the Leiden region."

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LEIDEN REGION

Regional partners

The Expat Centre Leiden is an initiative of the Leiden Bio Science Park, Leiden Marketing, the Leiden University, the City of Leiden, the Chamber of Commerce The Hague (location Leiden), the association of Leiden Bio Science Park companies (OV BSP) and law firm Teekens Karstens. The province of South Holland and the national Ministry of Economic Affairs also financially supported the Expat Centre.

The Expat Centre starts with providing information on legal issues related to the city of Leiden, later also the surrounding municipalities in the Rijnland region will be incorporated in the project as well.

Expat Centre Leiden

Stationsweg 41

2312 AT Leiden

Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 18.00 hrs

Website: www.expatscentreleiden.nl

Extra information, not for publication:

Please contact Ellen Smit, project manager Expat Centre Leiden, for more information, mobile + 31 6 25 180 597, ellensmit@leidenbiosciencepark.nl www.expatscentreleiden.nl

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Photo caption: Team Expat Centre Leiden: Monique Moot, Ellen Smit, Agta Kockmann