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**Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Benelux Branch**

Annual Report for 2001

March 2002

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2 Executive Summary

In its fifth year the Benelux Branch Committee concentrated on its Vision and Objectives set in May 1998 to be the Benelux Network of IMechE members contributing to professional and business life in Europe. Attention focused on:

- The organisation of **Professional Events**. We focused on publicity gained from the Presidential Visit to Benelux in April 2001 and organised a European Forum on “The Training of Engineers for the 21st Century”. The number and variety of events for Branch members and guests was increased.
- **European Awareness**, for which we arranged meetings for the President and DG with several Belgian, Dutch and German engineering institutions.
- Improving the quality of **Communications with our members**, especially in the use of Internet related media where we have an established website and started to implement ‘imechenearyou’. We conducted a membership survey to ensure we were meeting their professional needs.

We believe that the Benelux Branch is well equipped, in terms of an active committee, financial resources and administrative structures to proceed into the year 2002. However, in the longer term, the Branch must develop greater Committee participation to ensure that senior members are available for future administrative positions.

3 Acknowledgements

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the special contribution of the following individuals for their efforts in running the I Mech E Benelux Branch

Organisation of Events:	Theo Speaight, Peter Tromans, Andy Webb, Ken Elvery, Malcolm Henderson, Peter Tromans, Berndt Flugel
Website/Emailing List:	Alan Hankinson
Newsletter:	Paul Revell Kenichi Izumi, (Koyo)
The Forum on “Training of Engineers”	Bill Adam, Andy Webb, John Thompson
Auditing of the accounts:	David Nicholson, Guy Hundy
Young Members	Berndt Flugel
Presidential Visit Programme	Ken Elvery, Denis Hicks, Andy Webb, John Thompson,
Interviews:	Tony Waters, Chris Graham, Hilary Mercer, Rachel Crocker and Ken Elvery

4 Branch Strategy & Structures

4.1 Strategy

In May 1998, the Benelux branch committee reviewed its strategy and structure. It defined the following Vision and set Objectives to Branch activities which remained valid in 2001:

Vision	
To be the Benelux Network of IMechE members contributing to professional and business life in Europe	
Objectives	
Activities	European Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· To hold and organise, solely or in collaboration with other bodies, at least 4 topic meetings per year and an AGM.· To organise at least 4 technical visits per year· To organise at least 2 social events per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· To engender awareness amongst IMechE staff and world-wide membership of issues initiatives and programmes at EU level· To make a regular input to IMechE's strategic thinking especially on European Affairs· To facilitate visits to EU Institutions of IMechE HQ management
Communications	Links and Agreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· To compile and distribute to all members a quarterly branch newsletter.· To maintain a regularly updated IMechE Benelux Branch Page· To promote awareness and knowledge of Mechanical Engineering and IMechE within local engineering institutions	<p>To continue to maintain active links with the BSMEE, SRBII and VDI in Belgium and KiVI and NIRIA in Holland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· To collaborate actively with other UK engineering institutions in Continental Europe· To explore possible links with other local professional bodies

These formed the basis of the Branch's first 5-Year Business Plan which was sent to the HQ for approval in Dec 2000.

4.2 Constitution

The Committee maintains its own Constitution under the Institution's Branch Rule Book. A proposal to update the Constitution was made and a revised Constitution prepared for approval at the Annual Meeting in 2002 and by Birdcage Walk. The proposed changes update the Constitution to allow for electronic payments from Branch funds, the changes in the Institution's governance and administrative details

4.3 Committee Structure

The Committee's policy is to preserve a structure that represents the geographical spread of its membership, and contact with local organisations, including the EU.

At present, the committee structure has the four constitutional posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary.

In addition, special positions exist for EU Affairs, liaison with Belgian and UK institutions, maintenance of membership lists, Editor of the Newsletter, contacts with Professional Engineer and Website development. A new position of Young Members' Representative was created on the Committee to recognise the importance of this class of member in the Branch.

Each country in the Benelux has at least one Committee member to co-ordinate local events and act as a focal point in that country.

4.4 Budget

The Institution granted the Branch a budget of £6500 for its activities in 2001. Other income of £1633 arose from events, sponsorship of the newsletter and bank interest. In addition, members' companies provided the use of resources that saved the Branch an estimated £1200 in 2001. The net cost to the Branch of the Forum was £862. Overall, the Branch finished its year overspent by £1006 which was covered by reserves built up from the excess of income over expenditure in each of its previous years.

The principle sponsors were

Activity	Sponsor(s)
Partial sponsorship of Branch Newsletter	Koyo Seiko Europe
Miscellaneous use of facilities	Air Products
	Fokker Space
	Allseas
	Huntsman Polyurethanes
	Shell
	British Embassies, Brussels & Den Haag

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The Branch maintained two bank accounts. The principal account in Belgium, held with Citibank, Waterloo was managed by the Treasurer. A second account at ABN-AMRO Bank in the Netherlands was maintained in Guilders to minimise transfer costs for expenditure in the Netherlands. This account was managed by The Branch Chairman. Expenditures were authorised according to the Branch Constitution by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary.

The statement of accounts is available from the Treasurer.

4.5 Insurance

The Branch maintained its own insurance within Benelux, in addition to that of the Institution. The premium was Euro 137 renewable annually and was arranged through the brokers Bokiau of Brussels.

This insurance covers legal responsibilities resulting from our actions as part of the Branch (or related activities, e.g. participation at social or professional events, setting up displays at exhibitions, preparation and distribution of food and drinks). Material damage is covered up to Euro 125000 per incident, personal injury coverage is Euro 1.25 million per incident. The Branch pays the first Euro 125 of any damage.

Coverage is world-wide (but any activity outside the EU must be notified in advance).

Use of vehicles is covered but committee members' private insurance covers personal vehicles used on I Mech E business

If we purchase an item for the branch and it is used by a member then any damage-in-use is covered.

The normal exclusions apply e.g. use of explosives, damages under the influence of drink and drugs, illegal actions, damages due to extreme faults of judgement, war, aeroplanes falling out of the sky etc.

We continue *not* to pay for insurance cover for the following

- Payment of legal costs,
- Insurance for items in our possession (e.g. loaned equipment),
- Insurance related to any product that we produce.

5 Promotion of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers

The Committee sees its role as serving IMechE members working and living in the Benelux and as a facilitator of contacts with other national engineering bodies and the European Commission. This is possible because of the wealth of experience and contacts that the senior members of the Committee have built up over decades.

5.1 Presidential Visit & Forum – 23–26 April 2001

This year the committee organised the Presidential visit to Benelux in April, involving the IMechE President, Mr Denis Filer, the Director General, Sir Michael Moore and Manager of the Regional & International Operations Department, Martin Northcott. The events arranged were:

- Receptions for Benelux Branch members and invited guests at the British Embassies in Brussels and The Hague.
- A visit to the University of Brussels, where the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences gave the visitors a useful rundown on the training of engineers for the 5-year degree of “Ingénieur Civil”.
- Lunch with the Presidents of BSMEE, KVIV, and the SRBII in Brussels.
- A meeting with VDI representatives at their Brussels office, to learn why the VDI considers it important to have an office in Brussels.
- An International Forum on “Training Engineers for the 21st Century”, which gathered attendance from all over Europe.
- A return visit for Denis Filer to Huntsman’s Polyurethanes plant at Rozenburg, where he had been the project manager when the plant was originally built by ICI in the early 1970’s.
- Discussions with the Vice-President, General Secretary and Director of KivI in The Hague.
- A programme of informal presentations by YM’s, held at Shell’s head office in The Hague, that were followed by lively discussions on YM’s interests.

The Forum, held in Brussels on the 24th April 2001, was the year’s major event. Under the Chairmanship of Mr. Jean-Marie Polet, Chief Executive Officer of the CIME Group, Denis Filer, President of IMechE opened the forum. He outlined the role of the Institution and how it compared to its continental equivalents. Other high profile speakers making presentations relating to the forum theme included Professor Pierre Klees, President of the Belgium Post Office, CEO of Brussels Airport and President of the Royal Belgium Society of Engineers and Industrialists, Professor John Spence, a past President of the IMechE, and Mr. Bernard Lafitte, Director of International Affairs of the CNISF.

An open session followed with a debate on the presentations. One of the common areas of agreement was that engineering bodies, both nationally and on the European level, are neither sufficiently focused nor cohesive to talk to governments. The event attracted 41 senior engineers from around Europe.

5.2 Contacts with European Engineering Institutions

The Belgian Society of Mechanical and Environmental Engineers.

The BSMEE has offered to send its Trimestrial Journal, which is published in the English Language, to members of the Benelux Branch.

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Societe Royale Belge des Ingenieurs et Industrialistes, Brussels, Belgium

Several Branch Committee members are also members of the SRBII. The SRBII's activities were regularly circulated through the Branch's Internet Mailing List.

The SRBII has been instrumental in setting up at its headquarters the "International Club of Engineers and Industrialists" (IEC) - a non-profit making organisation bringing together engineering associations in Belgium and neighbouring countries. The IMechE Benelux Branch obtained agreement from HQ to proceed as a founder member and our immediate Past Chairman, Mr Bill Adam, is one of two Vice-Presidents of the Association.

IMechE Benelux Branch's membership of the Club entitles all members of the Branch to use the facilities at the SRBII's headquarters at 'Hôtel Ravenstein'. It is situated in the heart of Brussels, a few minutes walk from Central Station. It is an ideal venue for networking and meeting business associates. The facilities became available for use by IMechE members in 2001 and have been used as venue for the 'Forum on Training of Engineers in Europe' and for the YM seminar on 'Presentation and Negotiation Skills'.

Our Committee 'focal points' for the IEC are Bill Adam and John Thompson.

***Koninklijk Instituut van Ingenieurs (KIVI), The Hague, The Netherlands
(Royal Institution of Engineers in The Netherlands)***

The IMechE Benelux Branch Chairman maintained active contact with KIVI during 2001. He participated in the joint KIVI/NIRIA/IMechE event planning committee of the Mechanical and Marine Engineering Division.

KIVI/NIRIA mechanical engineering events were publicised to IMechE Benelux Branch members via the Benelux Branch Newsletter and the KIVI and NIRIA websites. These events are, of course, in Dutch.

FABI, Brussels, Belgium

The Branch was invited to the 75th Anniversary Dinner of FABI. John Thompson and Ken Elvery attended.

AGI-ISF

Invitations to a presentation by Mr Xavier Karcher, President of CNSIF, on the Sustainable Car were received from AGI-ISF. Bill Adam and John Thompson attended.

European Union – Forum Technology and Politics

The Branch was invited to the European Union Forum on "Environmental Management Accounting: State of the Art and Future Trends" organised by the VDI. Bill Adam and John Thompson attended.

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IEE, ICE and IChemE contacts in the Benelux countries

Our Branch Chairman maintained personal contacts with the local Chairman or Secretaries of these institutions, with regional organisations in this area. There is a continuing interest in expanding liaison between Institutions in the Region. At YM level, there are close contacts with IEE, resulting in a number of joint events.

5.3 Membership Activities

Careers Conventions

For the third year in succession, the British School at Voorschoten, near The Hague, invited IMechE to be present at its annual Careers. Thirty-two professions were represented. This year Benelux Branch Chairman Ken Elvery were able to show the latest IMechE schools publicity material to a significant numbers of senior pupils, who showed an interest in studying for mechanical engineering as a career. Aspects emphasised included the latest Engineering Council requirements to achieve Chartered Engineer status (SARTOR 3), the type and level of university degree required and the IMechE list of accredited university degree courses. However, the interest, challenge and satisfaction of an engineering career were also emphasised. A most successful exposure for our Branch, which may result in several pupils accepting the challenges which mechanical engineering, offers.

The Branch continued to participate in the British School of Brussels Careers Week and ran a workshop for potential Mechanical Engineers. This has proved to be popular and two students were offered places at British universities to study Mechanical Engineering.

Interviews for Corporate Membership

During 2001, 5 interviews conducted for Membership - all of the candidates were successful. Applicants were primarily from Shell (4 off) and included 2 female applicants.

Training of Committee Members

Theo Speaight and Malcolm Henderon attended the Regional Officers Seminar at Bircage Walk. The Young Members' Representative, Berndt Flugel, participated in the annual 'CHaTS' training day for YM representatives at IMechE HQ.

6 Communicating with the membership

Communication with the Branch membership over the three countries is always challenging and expensive. Each mailshot costs the branch over £300.

The communication policy of the Branch is to use

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- A Newsletter (4 times/year) and mailshots (2 times/year) as the main communication media.
- Events to increase personal contact between members and enhance our role in forming Networks in the region.
- An Internet page. The Branch implemented the decision to establish and control our own Website in 2000 (www.imechebenelux.org). This year the site was completely updated.

In addition, a Internet mailing list has continued to inform members of activities in Benelux (Benlist). Subscription to the mailing list is voluntary and for Members in the Benelux region.

Finally, our ability to communicate effectively with our members greatly improved using the accurate contact details established in the Branch Members Database. This is regularly updated so that an analysis of the age, location and membership status could be completed as an input to the Branch 5 Year Plan.

6.1 Newsletter

In 2001, the Branch continued its newsletter and issued four, 4-page editions. Editorial control was by Paul Revell.

The Newsletter contained

- Branch and Institution news,
- a review of recent Branch events,
- notification and registration details for forthcoming events,
- general interest articles about Benelux , and
- contact details, webpage information, subscription details for the Internet mailing lists

The newsletter was printed and distributed, with partial sponsorship from Koyo Seiko Europe.

6.2 Website and Mailing List

Our website www.imechebenelux.org has been maintained through the year and remains a good reference source for information such as committee details and event profiles.

The mailing list BenList for our members in Benelux was maintained once again in 2001 as a channel to inform subscribed members (10% of the Branch members are subscribed) about our events and those of other institutions (e.g. SRBII, Brussels). The total number of subscribers still fluctuates at about 30.

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The IMechE website www.imech.org.uk has a new section IMech Near You in which our Branch has information posted. Alan Hankinson and Paul Revell are accredited users (for input) of the section.

The IMechE Near You website for the Regional and Overseas network was launched on 29 October 2001. From that date Regional/Overseas accredited users have been able to maintain and amend information on their respective pages using a specially designed suite of administration templates.

This project is being rolled out in two phases. Phase 1 is currently ongoing, accredited users are familiarising themselves with the administration templates and populating their areas of the website.

Phase 1 has also been an opportunity for the Regional and International Operations department to review the site addressing any problems that have arisen and noting where improvements could be made. The Regional and Overseas network have been very pro-active in suggesting where changes/improvements can be made. The site has experienced teething problems and HQ are working hard to resolve any outstanding issues.

The Phase 2 development work for 'IMechE Near You' will primarily be developing a report function that will be used to drive the production of the Regional events listing in Agenda, a central events database (including speaker contact details) and Regional programme cards.

6.3 Membership Questionnaire 2001

In 2001 the Branch updated its survey on members. The highlights were

- A total of 50 members responded representing 17% of the total Branch membership. The percentage of members responding from Belgium (23%) and Luxembourg (21%) was higher than The Netherlands (14%).
- On average, respondents have been resident in Benelux for 12 years with 16% expecting to leave within the next 2 years. 36% spend 7 days or more travelling.
- 84% of respondents have an e-mail address (slightly more at home than work). Of these 86% would prefer to receive communications by e-mail.
- To obtain information on Branch activities, 92% use the Newsletter, 20% use the Internet, and 12% rely on HQ. The Newsletter is read thoroughly by 48%, briefly by 44% and glanced over by 8%. Of those with Internet, 12% visit the Branch web-site regularly, 48% sometimes and 40% have only visited the site once.
- Types of events in order of preference are: technical visits (44%), high profile speaker (42%), management meeting (36%), technical meeting (32%), social event (30%), personal skills training (26%) dinner with speaker (24%), industrial meeting (24%). Other types of events scored less than 10%.

7 The Branch's contribution to professional and business life in Europe

7.1 Summary of Events and Industrial Visits

Our target is to hold and organise and present, solely or in collaboration with other bodies, at least

- 4 topic meetings per year,
- an AGM,
- at least 4 technical visits per year, and
- at least 2 social events per year.

In 2001 we did not meet this target. The Branch organised the AGM, 4 topic/technical meetings, 2 technical visits, one YM's skills training event and 4 social events. A comprehensive Presidential Visit programme, including the Forum on Training of Engineers for the 21st Century, consumed considerable resource. In addition, the Branch participated in one Schools careers evening. Two technical lectures arranged jointly with other institutions were postponed or cancelled.

The table shows our achievements and membership response. The level of activity was much higher than last year due to the Presidential Visit and Forum.

Table 1: Summary of Events 2001

Date	Topic	Attendance
24 March 2001	Technical Lecture 'Thrust SSC'	30
24 March 2001	AGM	30
23 April 2001	Presidential Reception – Belgo-Lux Members	47
24 April 2001	Forum 'Training of Engineers for the 21st Century'	41
26 April 2001	Presidential Reception – Netherlands Members	70
8 September 2001	Technical visit "Ford Proving Ground"	11
4 October 2001	YM's Interpersonal skills Seminar (joint with IEE)	9
18 October 2001	Technical Lecture – 'Design of the London Eye' (joint KIVI/NIRIA)	22
27 October 2001	Annual Dinner	24
3 November 2001	Technical Visit Hydro-electric power station, Schengen	14
3 November 2001	Technical Lecture 'Fusion Energy at the Edge of Demonstrating Technical Feasibility'	14
November 2001	Social Event YM's 'Microbrewery in Amsterdam'	10

7.2 Young Members Group

The membership profile shows that the Branch has a large proportion of Young Members. It was therefore considered both appropriate and viable to focus on this group via a sub-group of the Branch Committee.

The following aims for Young Member activities within the Benelux region are:

- Training and Membership – Help and advice on the process to achieve CEng Status.
- Promotion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Development and promotion of a YM (Young Engineers) network

The Interpersonal Skill Seminar and Brewery Visit arranged in 2001 contributed to these aims.

Collaboration

A key success factors identified is the need to broaden the IMechE Young Member activities to include as many Young Engineers as possible. Communication has been made with the other UK Institutions and so far active discussions with the IEE Young Member representative have already resulted in joint events.

Influencing HQ Activities

A further benefit of a Young Member group is access to the Young Member Board, training days and Institution activities. The training provides tools and networking opportunities to help improve Young Member activities, but the major benefit is that the Young Members overseas have a voice within the Institution.

As we move more into a global workforce the Institution needs to address issues surrounding the support for members working outside the UK and in particular how to retain members as they struggle through the process of becoming chartered and participating in CPD. Through the Young Member Board, the Benelux Young Members have the opportunity to put their concerns to the Institution.

8 Increasing our influence within the UK structures of the Institution

In addition to supporting the Council in the management of the Institution, our unique objective remained to ensure that the Institution developed a credible International Policy

- to support its overseas members to a similar degree as UK resident members

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- to highlight developments in Europe which are significant to both UK and Internationally resident members

The Branch Chairman attended four meetings of the IMechE Council, three meetings of the Committee of Regional Chairmen and the annual overseas Branch Chairmen's Meeting in London. He raised various matters including:

- development of IMechE international policy,
- highlights of current professional developments in Western Europe
- our Branch contacts with national engineering institutions in the Benelux region,
- the inauguration of the International Engineers Club in Brussels,
- liaison with HQ departments,
- the development of the IMechE Internet website and Branch web pages.

Two of the Committee members stood unsuccessfully for election to Council.

Berndt Flugel participated in the Engineering Council Professional Young Engineers Group. He attended the workshop on membership, registration and CPD.

In addition, several Committee members continued to provide valuable input to HQ on IT and membership matters. In the IT matters Alan Hankinson continued to represent the Branch on the IT Committee to assist with implementation of the Institution's IT policy.

9 Recommendations to improve the relevance of Branches and Regions to the Institution's activities

Strategy and Structure

- Circulate this report to all overseas branches for information.

Promotion of the Institution in Benelux and Europe

- Identify the Institution's Vital Interests and formulate the Institution's European Strategy.
- Assign a senior Regional Manager to be located in Brussels, to represent the Institution at the heart of the European Union and support the Benelux Branch and the European Corresponding Members and membership in Europe.

Communication with members

- Recognise the importance of Young Members in the Regions through Branch/Region Committee representation and specific events planning.
- Plan and present programmes of attractive events, based on the local membership's expressed interests.

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- Promote the further development and use of a high quality IMechE website, including “IMechEnearyou” and other Internet-related technology, to ensure all members are aware of local events programmes and of E-mailing lists for Institution and regional news.
- Encourage the introduction of a European page in “Professional Engineering”, covering the influence of Europe in the setting of national standards and in providing opportunities for joint R&D projects.

Influencing the UK Institutions

- Encourage the UK engineering profession, through the Engineering and Technology Board, to develop a clear policy on Europe, since Europe is now the UK’s largest market for engineering products and related services.
- Ensure that the UK engineering profession presents clearly the above policy to all UK engineering institutions’ members and European sister organisations.
- Strongly encourage the Engineering and Technology Board to take a much more proactive representational role in Europe, particularly with European Union bodies.

The Institution should encourage demonstrable skills in a second language as part of professional registration requirements, or as part of CPD.

For, and on behalf of, the Benelux Branch of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Denis Hicks, CEng MIMechE

Honorary Secretary – IMechE Benelux Branch

March 2001

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10 Annex 1 : The Benelux Branch Committee of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 2001

Administrative Posts

Chairman	Ken Elvery
Vice Chairman	Andy Webb
Treasurer	John Thompson
Honorary Secretary	Denis Hicks

Functional Posts

Belgian Events	Andy Webb
Dutch Events	Peter Tromans, Ken Elvery
Luxembourg Events	Theo Speaight
Liaison Belgian Institutions	Bill Adam
EU Liaison	Dennys Watson
Newsletter	Paul Revell
Website	Alan Hankinson
Membership Database	Malcolm Henderson
Young Members	Berndt Flugel