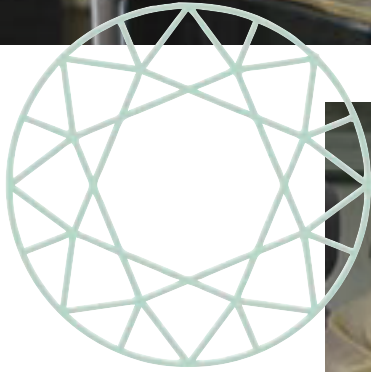




*In 2004, the Beurs voor Diamanthatel celebrated its centennial. The ceremonies were attended by Belgium's Crown Prince Filip (center) and his wife Princess Mathilde. Bourse President Artur Beller (left) watches the Prince signing the bourse's Golden Book.*



*Mother Joyce and daughter Ayelet Lerner are Antwerp-based diamond dealers. In recent years, an increasing number of women have obtained bourse membership.*

become, that first meeting was attended by just the Antwerpsche Diamantkring CVBA, the Beurs Voor Diamanthatel CVBA, the Diamantclub Van Antwerpen CVBA, the Vrije Diamanthatel NV, the Diamond Dealers Club, Inc., New York, the Diamond Trade and Precious Stone Association of America, Inc. (at that time called the Diamond Center), New York, The London Diamond Club Ltd., and the Vereniging Beurs Voor Den Diamanthatel, Amsterdam.

The WFDB's first president, Joseph Lens from Antwerp, requested that the delegates stand in silence in "memory of our colleagues who fell during the war." The meeting then turned to the first item on the agenda which was approval of admission to the body of the then Diamond Club of Palestine. Interestingly, the issue of rough diamond allocations to diamond centres outside of Antwerp, the issue that caused the American industry to press for the establishment of the WFDB, was not raised.

For the rest of the three-day meeting, delegates busied themselves with the re-writing and adapting of the rules and by-laws of the previous World Federation to the new organisation. Indeed, legislative issues still account for most of the time at WFDB meetings. The problem of ironing out the legislative differences between the WFDB and its individual bourse members is an issue that is still alive today. In a nutshell: each bourse maintains its autonomy in internal matters, while the WFDB attempts to standardise the rules under which they operate.