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Unprecedented times

Dear readers,
If you look outside the window these days and weeks, it may almost seem as if your own neighbourhood, your own city, almost the whole world held its breath for a moment.

No planes in the sky, no inner-city traffic chaos, no kindergarten or school, but also no lively activities in the parks or open-air restaurants during spring temperatures – no doubt, the Corona crisis affects us all. It is a stress and character test, with major changes for each one of us, but also for the whole of social life, for European solidarity and the global economy. Protecting people's health is a priority. However, it is not yet possible to foresee at this stage fully what impact the shutdown will have on economic life and on our partners and tenants. Many, and especially smaller companies, are today struggling to survive. How to stabilise operations in such a phase? How to adjust the strategy in order to be able to grow again during and especially after the crisis? And what does this mean for leading employees?

At VGP too, we have seen this change in recent weeks. Many employees work from their home office. I myself am sitting quite unusually at home in my study while writing this text. We nevertheless have shown impressively in recent weeks that the "New Normal" at VGP does not mean standing still. I am really impressed by what we have achieved together since the beginning of the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic.

Our managers and teams have made an unparalleled commitment to ensuring that the health, safety and well-being of our employees and partners are always our top priority, while at the same time maintaining business operations. Apart from a few temporary interruptions, all our pre-leased development projects have resumed with minimal delays. For example, we further expanded our co-operation with the Allianz Group and successfully raised capital through the private placement of new shares.

I am proud of all the employees who keep our business running every day. Their team spirit, solidarity and personal commitment set an example for us all in this exceptional situation.

We at VGP think long term – the right balance between tradition, innovation and sustainability is the foundation for our daily work. It has just now become clear that this guiding principle is a solid foundation that stands firm even in stormy times like these. With a full order book, a diversified and high-quality tenant portfolio across a wide range of industries and regions and a strong balance sheet, we are well positioned to master the current situation.

Nobody can predict exactly what the consequences of the pandemic will be in the future, nor can anyone promise anything. However, the answer to this uncertainty must not lead to a sense of resignation. It is precisely when things get difficult that we must set ourselves goals and do something about them – individually, together, as citizens, as Europeans, as companies.

You will learn more about our projects and goals on the following pages.

Stay healthy and
take care of yourselves
and your loved ones!

Jan Van Geet

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Anne De Paepe joins VGP Foundation Board

Professor Anne De Paepe, who currently chairs the Board of Directors of the Ghent University Association, has been named to VGP Foundation's Board of Directors. A professor of human and medical genetics at Ghent University, Prof. Dr. De Paepe is an expert in rare hereditary diseases and developed the Ghent University Centre for Medical Genetics into an internationally renowned institution researching hereditary diseases. Since 2019, Prof. De Paepe has been a board member of TAJO (Talent Atelier for Youth), which supports disadvantaged children in and around Ghent, Belgium. In her new role, she will focus on social projects, such as education and childcare, which comprise one of the Foundation's key areas. The Foundation, established in 2019, also is focused on biospheres preservation and protecting European cultural heritage. As the Foundation's third board member, she joins Jan Van Geet, CEO of VGP, and Olaf Tschimpke, who is chairman of the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union's International Nature Conservation Foundation. The Conservation Union is Germany's largest nature and biodiversity conservation association. Mr Tschimpke's main focus within the VGP Foundation is on nature conservation. In announcing her nomination, Mr Van Geet, remarked that "*Anne will strengthen the VGP Foundation's board through her inquisitive nature and analytical perspective, driven by her conviction as to the importance of education in the development of young people's talent.*"

Anne De Paepe

Prof. De Paepe noted in accepting the position that she strongly believes in the view that acquiring knowledge always creates a thirst for still more knowledge. "*Therefore,*" she said, "*I welcome the efforts of the VGP Foundation to help ease access to education to the wider community, particularly as socially vulnerable youth continue to be deprived of opportunities. In order to seize opportunities, young people must first be given opportunities.*"

Rooftop solar is helping VGP to achieve its sustainability goals

It may be difficult to imagine a place better suited to converting solar energy into electricity than the expansive roofs of VGP's logistics warehouses. Projects to install solar panels generating approximately 53 megawatts of electricity at peak capacity (MWP) have either been installed on VGP warehouses or are in the pipeline. Upon completion, these installations will provide electricity sufficient for 11,605 households and reduce CO_2 emissions by 6,755 tonnes annually. Rooftop solar enables VGP's clients to consume locally produced green energy without imposing aesthetic burdens on their local communities. Other benefits of this decentralised contribution to energy production include more continuity and availability of energy at specific industrial logistics parks and their surrounding communities while reducing potential burdens on the network. The main projects with solar panels under construction are VGP Park Munich, VGP Park Nijmegen, and VGP Park Roosendaal. Fifteen new projects in Germany and two projects in the Netherlands are ongoing, and additional installations are being negotiated in other countries. So far, projects enabling the generation of 16.5 MWP all have been arranged through third-party solar power operators. The company is in advanced discussions, though, for the installations of a further 36.8 MWP, most of which will involve direct investments by VGP. A new company, VGP Renewable Energy N.V., has been established to expand the roll-out of photovoltaic installations in co-operation with VGP's tenants.

VGP Park Leipzig, Germany

Responding to covid-19, but looking beyond

Nothing is more important to VGP than the well-being of its employees and partners during the present struggle with covid-19. The company and its stakeholders also recognise that life, work and business will continue after this crisis, and they are helping VGP to remain strong and ready for the future. The VGP team has mostly been working from home since mid-March. Where possible, construction work has continued. Incoming rental payments have so far been little impacted, and development continues under a new joint venture with Allianz at VGP Park München.

"*Our primary focus today is the health and safety of employees and partners, yet, due to the agility of our teams and operating model acting as in-house contractor, our pre-let development pipeline is running nearly entirely on schedule,*" reported Jan Van Geet, VGP's CEO, upon release of the Q1 trading update in April. "*Combined with a full order book, a diversified and quality tenant portfolio across a broad range of industry segments and a strong balance sheet, I hope and believe we are well placed to weather the current storm.*"

During Q1, VGP signed rental agreements corresponding to annual income of € 5.9 million in new leases (€ 2.7 million on behalf of JVs) and € 1.7 million of renewals (all on behalf of the JVs). Annualised committed leases at March 2020 totalled € 159.9 million (vs € 155.0 million as at December 2019). The JVs accounted for € 104.0 million of that. VGP had 37 projects under construction totalling 865,000 m² of future lettable area. The projects are expected to generate € 54.4 million of new rent when fully built and leased. Three projects were delivered during Q1 and are 100% let. VGP acquired 0.56 million m² of land in the quarter. At VGP Park München, 3 buildings and 2 parking houses are already under construction. Completion of the first building, for BMW, is expected in August. The other buildings should be delivered to KraussMaffei by November 2022.

Capital increase will support VGP's targeted and future investments

On 21 April, VGP completed a € 200 million capital increase. This front-footed transaction has provided the Group with additional resources to pursue its strategy of capturing investment opportunities through purchase of prime land locations and will ensure delivery on the significant pre-committed pipeline. The transaction, which represents 10.8% of the issued share capital pre-capital increase, was launched intraday at 13.00 CET and books closed at 16.03 CET the same day. In line with their pre-commitments, Mr Jan Van Geet and Mr Bart Van Malderen subscribed to and were allocated € 70.0 million and € 40.3 million, respectively. The transaction, which was the first capital increase recorded by a public company in Belgium since emergence of the coronavirus pandemic, met with very strong investor demand which resulted in the "books being covered" within 32 minutes of launch and the final book being multiple-times oversubscribed at the final offer price. The transaction priced at € 100.0 per share, which represents a 4.6% discount to the last closing price, against a volatile market backdrop with the EURO Stoxx 600 and S&P 500 indices dropping by as much as 0.9% and 2.2% during the bookbuilding period, respectively. Mr Van Geet noted that the offer of shares "met with strong demand from both local and international investors," adding. "We are grateful for the ongoing support by existing investors and welcome our new investors." The new shares increase the company's ordinary shares outstanding from the previous 18,583,050 to 20,583,050. The new shares are immediately entitled to dividends. Based on the new number of ordinary shares outstanding, the 2019 dividend per share will be adjusted to €2.93 from the € 3.25 per share previously announced. J. P. Morgan and KBC Securities were joint global coordinators and joint book runners responsible for placing the issue. Belfius Bank also acted as joint book runner.

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Business

The City of the Senses – Laatzen in Lower Saxony

Interview with the mayor of Laatzen, Jürgen Köhne

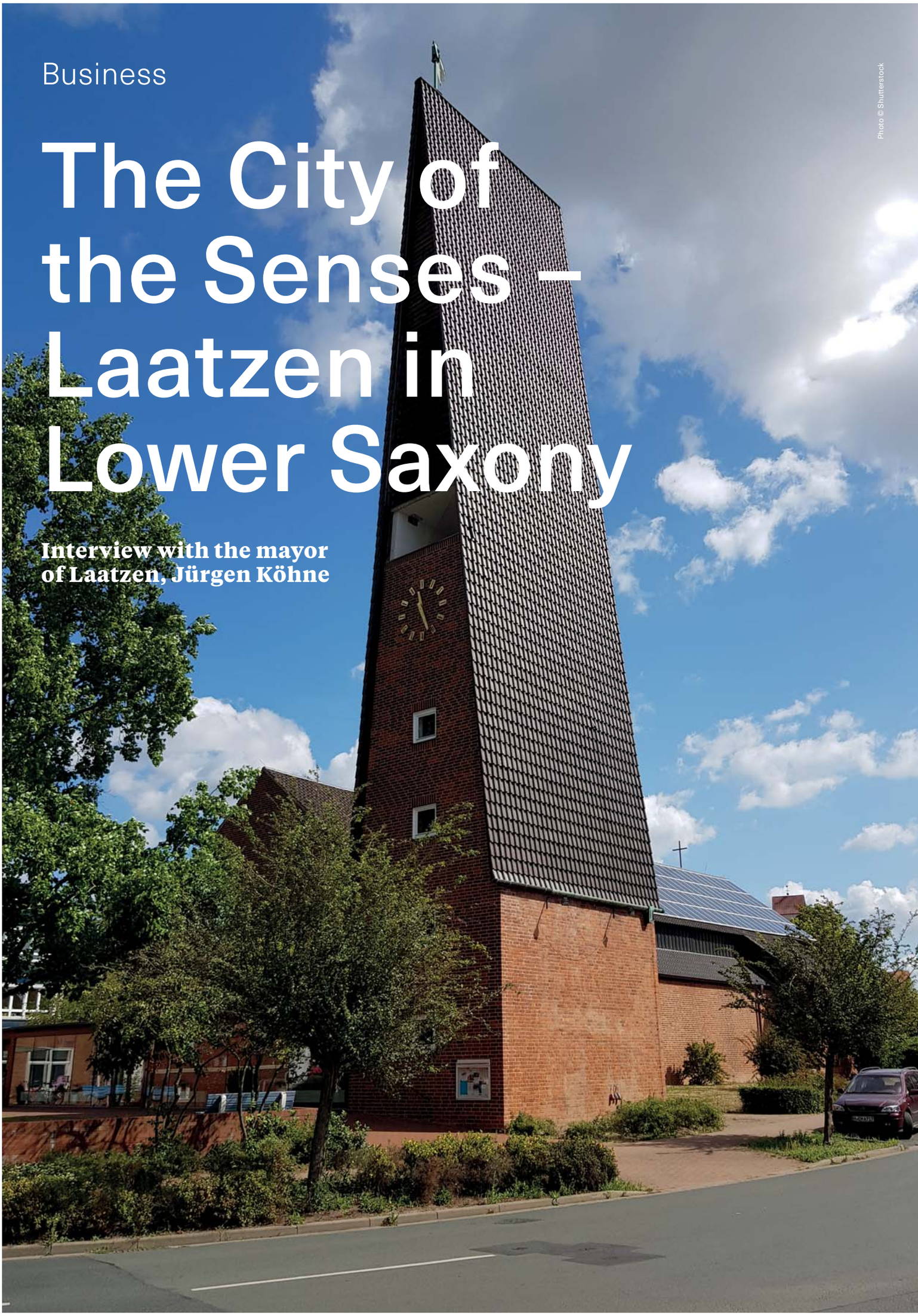

Photo © Shutterstock

In the central northwest of Germany is the state of Lower Saxony, the second-largest of the 16 German states after Bavaria. On the state coat of arms, a grey horse on a red background, the so-called “Sachsenross”, spans an arc from well-known horse breeding (e.g. in Verden) to the world-famous automobile industry (VW) based in the state. In the state capital of Hanover, one speaks – so they say – the purest “High German”, in other words without any dialect. Very close by, south of the Hannover region, the medium-sized city of Laatzen is located. The city with around 44,700 inhabitants is an outstanding industrial location due to its good infrastructure. In addition, extensive educational, leisure and recreational facilities have led to the settlement of numerous companies. The diverse range of retail shops also contributes to the success of Laatzen as an industrial location.

Photo © City of Laatzen

Mr. Jürgen Köhne, Mayor of Laatzen

Q Mr. Köhne, you have been the directly elected mayor of the town of Laatzen in Lower Saxony since 1 November 2014. Your town is still very young, isn’t it?

The city, full of green, whose city centre “Laatzen Mitte” was created in the 1970s and whose charm is usually only revealed at second glance, did not even exist half a century ago. Where 20,000 people live today, fifty years ago there were still fields and meadows. The municipality of Laatzen was only granted municipal law in 1968 by Lower Saxony's Interior Minister Lehners. This marked the beginning of a turbulent urban development. Since 1974, the different districts Ingeln-Oesselse, Rethen, Gleidingen, Grasdorf, Alt-Laatzen and Laatzen-Mitte are together the “City of Laatzen”.

Q What led to this?

Major employers such as the Deutsche Rentenversicherung Braunschweig-Hannover have settled in the city since then, companies like Siemens have chosen Laatzen and opened branches. In the heart of the city, the “Leinecenter”, a large mall with many shops, established itself as a local centre. And more recently, medium-sized companies like Krauss-Maffei Berstorff have announced the construction of new sites.

Q Mr. Köhne, what exactly makes this city, which has grown enormously in recent decades, so attractive apart from its convenient location?

If you believe the many visitors from near and far who come to Hannover every spring to attend the world's largest industrial goods fair, and who are also numerously accommodated in hotels or private accommodations in Laatzen, it is the open-mindedness of its citizens for the modern and new. Diversity is seen as an opportunity in the city – people from more than 100 different nations live in Laatzen – and the city is very open to international inspiration.

Q Are there other examples that mark Laatzen as a world-open city?

This is also reflected in the culture. As part of the world exhibition “EXPO 2000”, the city became part of the exhibition concept with a bold “Park of the Senses”. Laatzen was heavily involved in the events and many Laatzen residents became frequent guests on the Expo grounds and enjoyed the international flair. When the EXPO ended, the park, which was designed by landscape architect Hans-Joachim Adam, was retained.

Since its opening, it has been expanded further and has only gained in charm and appeal. A dedicated support association is committed to maintaining the park and also helps to finance new projects.

Q What other factors do you think play a role in triggering this development?

The example of the development of Laatzen shows what is possible when an open-minded administration and efficient business development work hand in hand for the benefit of its citizens and businesses. The city is well positioned for the future in any case.

Q And what else is there to see in Laatzen?

A small hint for all those who are also interested in history, and perhaps wonder why so many visitors from Norway and Denmark come to the city every year: The Danish naval hero Vice Admiral Peter Wessel, called Tordenskiold, fell in a duel against the Swedish colonel Jacob Axel Steal of Holstein in the Gleidinger Sehlwiese near Laatzen. A granite stone from Trondheim was placed here in 1958. The 300th anniversary of his death is coming up on November 12th. But I can assure you: There will be no more duels here!

Photo © VGP

VGP Park Laatzen

Project

VGP Park Nijmegen

combines strategic logistics, multimodal transport, and renewable energy

Situated in the heart of the Arnhem–Nijmegen region, VGP Park Nijmegen is at one of the few locations in the central and eastern part of the Netherlands where large-scale logistics and distribution centres can be developed and built.

VGP's park, which is suitable for small or large, tailor-made logistics solutions, for light manufacturing or for commercial activities, is within the vast Park 15 Logistics development area between Nijmegen and Arnhem. VGP Park Nijmegen was VGP Group's first semi-industrial development project in the Netherlands although it was quickly followed by a project in Roosendaal.

Taking shape within a land space immediately amid waterway, motorway and railway routes, Park 15 has all the ingredients to become a multimodal transport node. It already has a container terminal located on a main branch of the Rhine (the Waal), and there are plans for a rail terminal on the Betuweroute freight railway directly next to the logistics park. This means there will be a direct rail connection to Rotterdam and Europe. Positioned at the terminus of the A15 near the German border, Park 15 benefits from its proximity to the intersections of such North–South and East–West routes as the A15, A50 and A73 motorways. Plans call for the A15 to have a direct connection with the A12 into Germany by 2023.

356,592 m²
Land area

205,000 m²
Lettable area

VGP Park Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Lessees include the solar energy supplies company ESTG B.V., the supplier of sustainable disposables and food packaging Conpax, and the large food retail group Ahold Delhaize, which is extending its online activities at VGP Park Nijmegen. A new Albert Heijn Home Shop Center (HSC) currently under construction will be Breeam Very Good certified. It will provide approximately 21,000 m² of warehouse space and 2,700 m² of office space. The new Home Shop Center will employ ca 1,000 people, who will collect and deliver 40,000 orders per week to customers in the East Netherlands region.

VGP Group first acquired land at Nijmegen in 2018. That was sufficient for constructing approximately 155,000 m² of lettable area. At the end of 2019, VGP acquired another 80,000 m² of development land within Park 15. An additional 8,000 m² was acquired in March 2020. This will enable the development of approximately 205,000 m² of built-to-suit lettable area in total and offer the possibility for more growth in coming years.

The overall vision for the Park 15 Logistics development area is to have a strategically very important assemblage of business parks and also generate renewable energy. Among firms already established in the general area are Lidl, Kraft Heinz, the large Benelux logistics company Nabuurs, Mars, McDonald's, Shell, SCA hygiene products company, and the Netherlands private-label food manufacturer SupperFood. In a first phase, 13,679 solar panels generating 4.6 MWP are being installed. Installation began in March 2020.

Zaandam and the Zaanstreek: A prosperous region for four centuries

The Dutch Republic was in its Golden Age when in 1697 the 24-year-old Russian Tsar Peter I set out on his so-called Grand Embassy to see Western Europe.

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Peter (someday to be called Great) made it one of his main goals to learn what was enabling the Dutch, English, Spanish and Portuguese to build global empires so that he could use that knowledge to transform his backward country. Peter's search for future greatness brought him to Zaandam, which was at that time a shipbuilding centre and one of the world's first industrial areas. Already at that time several hundred windmills were operating in the area, their spinning, cloth-covered sails providing power to mill grain, saw logs imported from Scandinavia into boat timbers and lumber, pump water, and run other early industrial machinery.

What Peter must surely have learned was that ingenuity, mechanisation, hard work, accumulation and clever investment of capital, plus openness to the wide world were fundamental to building broadly dispersed prosperity. The young tsar took a short shipbuilding apprenticeship at Zaandam and lived there for a time in a simple wooden house that has been preserved to this day. Later known for building Russia's first navy and also as a canal builder, Peter must have been impressed, too, by the Dutch Republic's many waterways.

Those coming today to Zaandam and its surrounding region of Zaanstreek will get some hints of life in those earlier days by visiting Zaanse Schans, an assembly of preserved windmills, historic buildings, and museums arranged along the River Zaan embankment. Zaanse Schans is one of the Netherlands' most popular tourist attractions.

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

A foundation was created in 1961 to develop the area, and each year for the next decade and a half ancient windmills and other structures began to be moved in on low trailers and by boat from across the surrounding Zaanstreek. Visitors can learn about these buildings and the lives of the merchants, farmers, millers, bakers, cheesemakers, fishermen, tinsmiths, coopers, and others who occupied them. They also can stop in at the original grocery store that Albert Heijn took over from his father in 1887. That event marked the founding of the Dutch branch of what is today Ahold

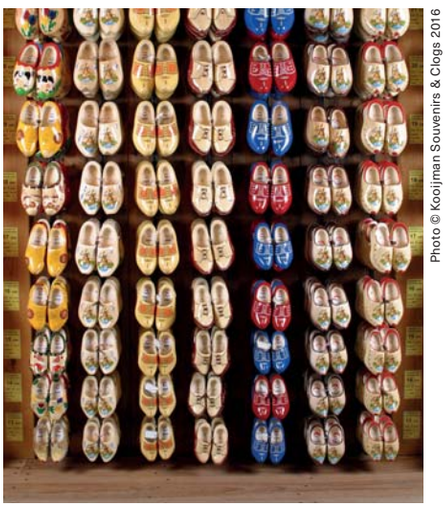

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Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Delhaize, the Dutch–Belgian holding of grocery and other retail stores.

Several of the buildings at Zaanse Schans are thematic museums. Very popular and deliciously aromatic are the bakery and chocolate museums. Other museums are devoted to clocks and to windmills. Live demonstrations of traditional trades are also featured. These include pewter casting, vegetable oil production, pigment manufacturing from natural materials to be used in producing textile dyes, distilling and, of course, crafting of wooden shoes (See separately "Carving out a place in a footwear tradition").

Tsar Peter's house is located not at Zaanse Schans but in Zaandam's city centre. The centre is worth a visit in its own right for the sake of interesting buildings both old and new (and new looking old), shopping, and strolling along the canals. The most-striking architectural work is perhaps the Inntel Hotel, whose façade makes it appear to be a collection of traditional Zaanstreek houses neatly stacked together.

Of course, visiting Zaandam and Zaanse Schans is only one high point of an excursion to the province of North Holland. Lying just north of Amsterdam, Zaandam is today essentially a contiguous part of the Netherlands' capital city. Boat tours of the area are available and, as true of the Netherlands everywhere, there is no better way to see and appreciate the local sites and culture than to travel by bicycle. There are many, many bike trails and bicycle rentals are available. Popular bike routes pass through a blend of rural, urban and natural area landscapes.

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Nearby Amsterdam of course offers numerous attractions, including, for example, the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum, which is a national museum devoted especially to history and the arts. The Anne Frank House and Museum as well as the Rembrandt House Museum are must-sees for many visitors. The Albert Cuyp Market is Amsterdam's largest outdoor shopping place. A feast to the eye and nose as well as the palate, this popular market is open Monday through Saturday. Try a caramel-filled stroopwafel with coffee, the famous Dutch cheeses, some pickled herring served on a bread roll with raw onions, and the poffertjes (almost bitesize pancakes served with butter and powdered sugar). Amsterdam's parks (and especially its large Vondelpark), botanical garden, and zoo are also popular.

A pleasant daytrip from Zaandam can be made to nearby Edam (home of the famous Dutch cheese by the same name) and the adjacent fishing village of Volendam. It is completely feasible to do this trip also by bicycle (22–26 km one way from Zaandam, depending on the choice of routes). Edam is a beautiful village for strolling, and the traditional public cheese market is re-enacted on Wednesday mornings during July and August. If you would like to see and learn how Dutch-style cheeses are actually made, however, you will want to go down the road a couple kilometres to Volendam and visit the cheese factory there. Volendam is traditionally best known for producing smoked eel, so the visitor will want to be sure and give that a try.

Although today's visitors to Zaandam may not discover any secrets to their future greatness, they can experience a first-rate sampling of Holland through the ages.

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Carving out a place in a footwear tradition

Not many people are so lucky as to make a living pursuing their hobbies. Jaap Kooijman was a rarer man still, because his son and grandsons are still running the business that grew out of his hobby of collecting wooden shoes.

That business has continued and grown to become a very popular tourist site in the Netherlands – the Wooden Shoe Workshop of Zaanse Schans – and an amazing exhibition of Dutch footwear – the Clog Museum.

"*Our family business started on the first of April 1974,*" explains Justin Kooijman, "*when our grandfather and grandmother, Jaap and Ineke Kooijman, started the Wooden Shoe Workshop on the Zaanse Schans.*" At that time, the Zaanse Schans was just taking off as a tourist attraction and preservation area. "*Our grandparents saw an opportunity to show visitors the history and handicraft of wooden shoemaking,*" Justin continues. "*My grandfather had a huge collection of old wooden shoes (dating back to the 16th century), which is still on display in our museum today. Our father took over the business in the 1990s, and at the moment my brother Robin and I are taking it over from him.*"

Along with windmills and tulips, nothing could be more characteristic of the Netherlands than wooden shoes or clogs (or klompen, as they are onomatopoeically called in Dutch). And folks from the Low Countries have long been clomping about in wooden footwear. Justin, who clearly shares his grandpa's enthusiasm for wooden shoe lore, relates that the oldest known wooden shoe was found during excavations in the old centre of Amsterdam and has been dated to the year 1230.

The fact that Jaap had been able to collect so many examples of shoes even hundreds of years old was a combination of good luck and dedication. "*Wooden shoes were never kept by people*," his grandson explains. "*Once they were worn out, the wooden shoes were thrown into the fire as firewood and a new pair would replace the old one. So, there's a great possibility that wooden shoes are way older than a thousand years!*"

"*The wooden shoes like we know them in Holland, with a closed wooden cap, are originally Dutch. They were great to use for working in the fields and make good safety shoes,*" Justin explains. "*They can withstand a pressure of 750 kilograms on the nose! Moreover, they were relatively easy to make and also cheap to make. Other countries surrounding the Netherlands also used wooden shoes, but they were only partly made out of wood and aren't as old as the original Dutch wooden shoe.*"

Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

The Wooden Shoe Workshop on the Zaanse Schans

We should note that Justin says "relatively easy to make". To learn the shoemaker trade traditionally took about 7 years, and a good shoemaker could carve out a pair by hand in 2–3 hours. The Netherlanders were of course well known already centuries ago for their manufacturing inventiveness, and that is true also for their traditional shoes. "*During the industrial revolution,*" Justin notes, "*machines were invented to copy a model of a wooden shoe. It works according to the same principle as for how keys are copied. You can place a model shoe of any size into the machine and a pair of wooden shoes is copied within a minute! The outside part is made on one machine, and the inside is drilled out on another. After that, the shoes are dried by the wind – but not in the sun, because otherwise the wood might split – and then sanded to avoid splinters.*"

Visitors to the Kooijmans' shop at Zaandam on the northern outskirts of Amsterdam can witness these machines in operation. They will also learn from visiting the museum that the basic shoe, whether it was made by hand or machine, was just a starting point for a creative Dutchman or Dutch woman. Being made of wood and with large surface area, the simple shoes are almost just too inviting not to be carved or painted or adapted in some way or another.

Justin says his grandfather had started collecting shoes at a very early age, and he acquired a lot of very special shoes. He had so many, in fact, that the museum can only display about 10–20% of the collection at any one time. The family rotates the exhibits, so visitors today may not see all the same shoes as they might have seen there on an earlier occasion. "*We're still trying to add new shoes to our collection, too,*" Justin remarks, "*but this is getting harder every year.*"

KOOIJMAN
Souvenirs & Clogs

As one might expect, in recent centuries, wooden shoes were traditionally worn most by poorer and middle-class people while those in the wealthier classes were more likely to wear shoes made partly or wholly of leather. That is not to say, though, that the common people could not make a fashion statement with their footwear!

"*Because every region, city or province in Holland used to have its own particular shape and decoration,*" Justin notes, "*you could see where someone was from just by looking at their wooden shoes. In earlier days, people also used to have 'Sunday' wooden shoes to go to church in. They were painted beautifully with a lot of decorations and details. Most of the time people had their initials or names on the cap of the wooden shoes. That was so they could find their shoes after the service, since you couldn't enter the church with your wooden shoes and had to leave them outside.*"

The Kooijmans have some of these special church-going shoes on display. Another special type is the bridal shoe. A hopeful suitor might spend many months carving and decorating a pair of shoes as a gift to the woman he hoped to have as his bride. His proposal, then, would include to offer her these shoes. "*If she said 'yes',*" Justin says, "*the shoes could be found next to her bed the next morning! We have a lot of bridal wooden shoes on display in our museum, and these are actually my favourite.*"

Many visitors to the Wooden Shoe Workshop select a pair to take home suiting their tastes and foot size. That brings a couple questions to mind: Do people actually wear wooden shoes today or are they just for decoration? If they do wear them, is there a trick to doing so comfortably (because, well, frankly, they do not look all that comfy)?

Justin reports that about a million pairs of wooden shoes are still sold in the Netherlands each year and they are commonly worn by farmers and factory workers (since the 1990s, they have been CE certified as working shoes). The shoes are cheap, very strong, comfortable, durable, environmentally friendly, waterproof, and have an orthopaedic foot shape. The trick to comfort, he says, is a thick woollen sock and a finger of space behind the heel.

"*This makes wooden shoes actually very comfortable,*" Justin declares, "*and I prefer my wooden shoes over my sneakers any day!*"

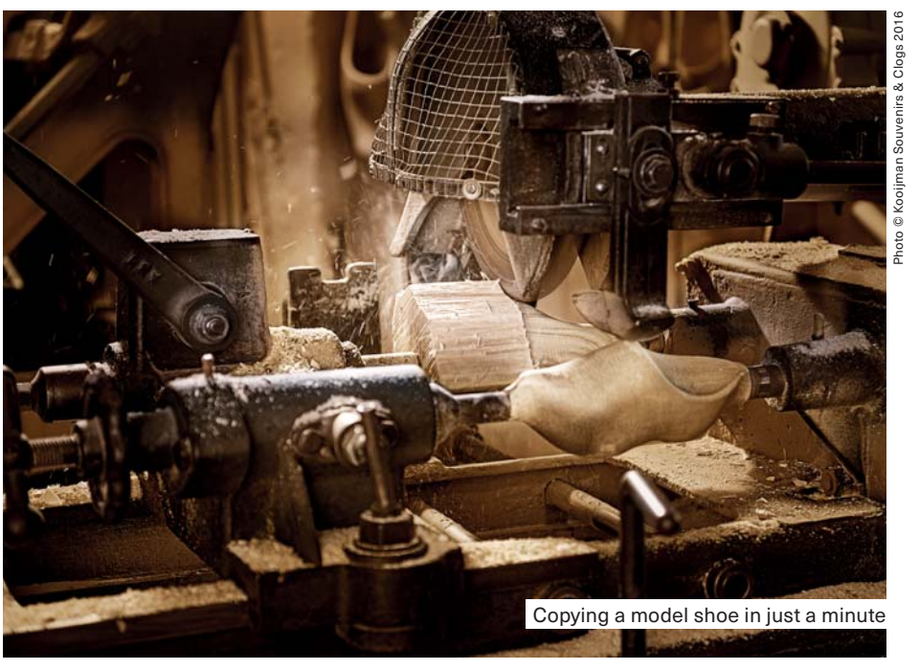


Photo © Kooijman Souvenirs & Clogs 2016

Copying a model shoe in just a minute

Jonathan Watkins

Interview with Jonathan Watkins, who joined VGP's management team as Chief Operating Officer (COO) Western Europe on 1 December 2019.

Since 1 December 2019, Jon is part of VGP's management team as Chief Operating Officer (COO) Western Europe. In this role he supports the country teams in Germany, the Benelux, Portugal, Spain and Italy as well as leading potential expansion of the Company into other Western European countries.

Q Jonathan, can you recall when you first learned about VGP?
Yes, when I was working with Amazon and looking for properties in Germany, our park in Frankenthal was one of the first leases that I signed on behalf of Amazon.

Q After a successful career as EME Head of Real Estate at Amazon, you joined VGP in December 2019. What made VGP so attractive for you?
In my previous job I negotiated three lease deals with VGP and through this I was able to meet and get to know some members of the VGP team. I was struck by the family nature of the company, the quality of the team and the speed of the decision making, which for a stock market-listed company is exceptional. These things separate VGP from the other developers that I have worked with in my career so far. I really felt as if it was a company I would enjoy working for in the long term, and so far, I was right!

Q In your role you will support the country teams in Germany, the Benelux, Portugal, Spain and Italy as well as leading potential expansion of the Company into other Western European countries. After the first few months, what do you see as your top priorities?
Without any hesitation, it is land acquisition and recruitment. Without land we don't have the basic raw materials to produce our product, so establishing a long-term pipeline for the future is vital. In terms of recruitment, we currently have a first-class team in place. However, as we grow, we need to grow the team as well. It is a big priority to strengthen the team and maintain the spirit. But only if we find people who will fit with our culture and share our values.

Jonathan Watkins

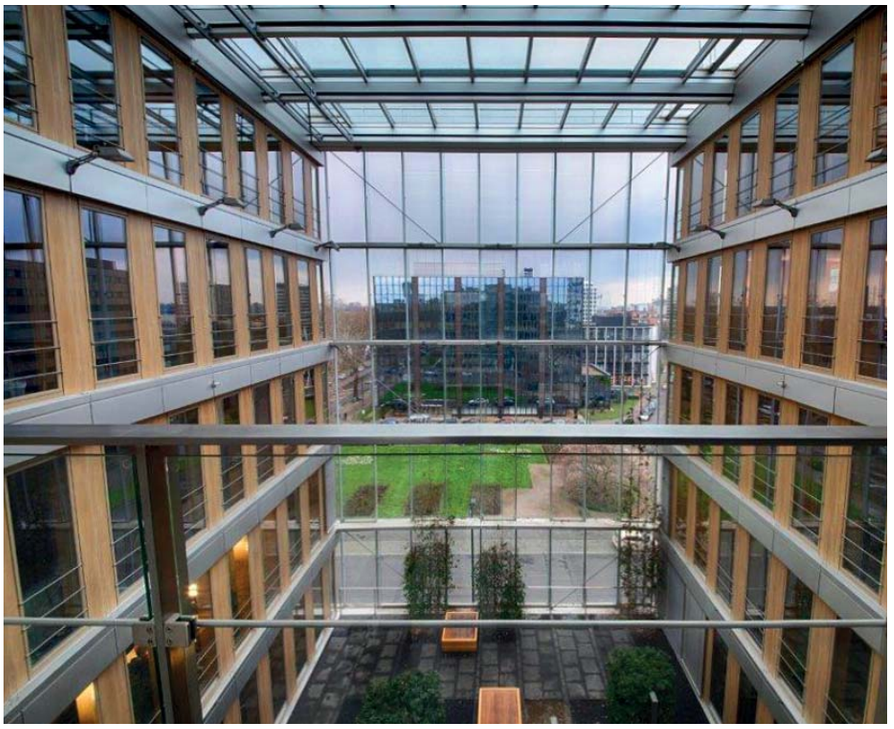
Jon was most recently EME Head of Real Estate at Amazon, in which capacity he was responsible for Amazon's warehouse and logistics buildings throughout the European Union and the Middle East, with a special focus on the two biggest markets of Germany and the UK. For Amazon, he secured over 3 million m^2 of warehouse and logistics space. Originally from Wales, he has lived in Germany, Scandinavia and Luxembourg.

Q What opportunities do you see for VGP's business in those markets? And what are the challenges?
In some of the countries where we operate there are not many companies building speculatively as we do, this gives us an edge. However, the biggest challenge is keeping the quality of the location high. If we compromise on the quality of the location the risk of not successfully letting a building increases exponentially.

Q Sustainability has become one of the key themes for VGP. Is this an increasing demand from your customers/tenants or what induced the company to take this step?
The company has just published it's first Corporate Responsibility Report. This clearly underscores the company's progress and commitment to strengthening sustainability efforts across its day-to-day business. This is not a "nice to have"; it is integral to our strategy, and a clear signal that we want to do more in creating value for our customers and shareholders.

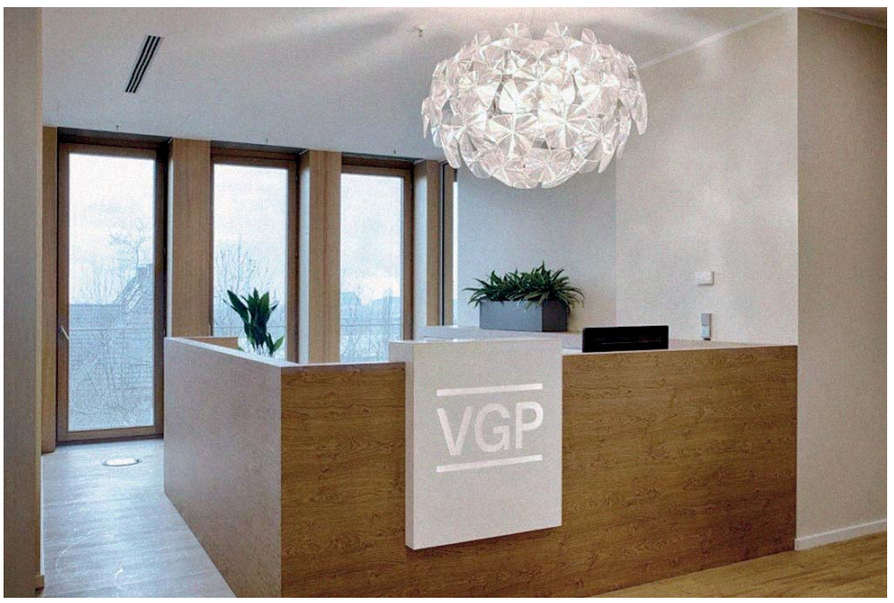
Q Can you give a few examples of sustainable solutions that VGP offers its customers?
The company has already launched and implemented numerous initiatives in 2019, such as the launch of VGP Renewable Energy, a new separate business line 100% owned by VGP N.V., to capitalize the available roof space on the VGP parks for photovoltaic systems and most current energy technologies, the clear intention to certify all new buildings from this year onwards with BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) certifications and the launch of the VGP Foundation. And for 2020 we have set ourselves enhanced sustainable development goals, as we believe the private sector plays an important role in creating solutions that help grow the economy and addressing challenges such as climate change.

Q Finally, you are originally from Wales, however, have gained quite a lot of experience living in various places of Europe. What did you find exciting to live in those countries? Any favourite place?
During my time in the army I was based for two years near Düsseldorf, which was a city I really enjoyed spending time in. It is so great to have the opportunity to go back there all these years later.



VGP Germany moves into new offices

Until last October, VGP Industriebau GmbH was spread across two locations in Düsseldorf. It was necessary to consolidate into a single place. After a search and considering the options, the choice was made to move into a modern administrative building at Karl-Arnold-Platz 1. The office area is ca 1,400 m² within a total of 9,490 m² and provides a basis for a team of 65 people. An important aim was to create a pleasant workspace where our colleagues will be happy to work. The interior design makes use of wooden elements to create a warm atmosphere. We hope all our colleagues in Düsseldorf will find an inspiring environment there.



Meet people in the VGP team

VGP is making significant additions to its international team, thereby positioning the company even better to uphold its promise of quality and to generate growth. Here are some of VGP's team members.

Jacqueline Rosado

Property Management Director, Spain

Jacqueline joined VGP in January 2019, as the Property Management Director for Spain. She has focused her entire professional career in facility management. Jacqueline started out as the person in charge of soft services for some of the most emblematic buildings in Catalonia (Museu Marítim, Aquàrium de Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, and Teatre Nacional de Catalunya). There followed a successful 14 years at BNP Paribas Real Estate Property Management, where she was the Director for Catalonia in charge of developing the national market. Jacqueline enjoys spending her spare time with her family. She has two young sons who are full of energy and enjoy plenty of activities. She loves travelling, and each year she and her family discover a new country in the world. Her favourite sport is swimming, and she keeps herself in good shape by going to the pool at least twice a week.

Javier Morales

Technical Director, Spain

A civil engineer with degrees from ETS ICCP Granada and ESTP Paris, Javier gained more than 20 years of solid experience working for Bouygues Construction, a French company ranked in the top 10 among the world's leading construction companies. He has worked in the UK, Spain, France, Cuba, and the British West Indies, with roles ranging from project manager to project director in such high-profile projects as Paris Zoological Park and La Seine Musicale, a musical and performing arts centre in Paris. Before joining VGP in September 2019, Javier was in charge of operations for Bouygues' Spanish subsidiary in Barcelona. He is in love with his 18-month-old baby, Mia, and, whenever she lets him, he likes kitesurfing in summer and skiing in winter. Travelling to all corners of the world and international cooking are the family activities he enjoys most.

Manuel Fernández

Commercial Manager, Spain

Manuel studied business administration at the Universitat de Barcelona and, as part of his training, he spent one year as an exchange student at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Before joining VGP in the summer of 2019, he worked as New Business Development Manager at the car park management company Saba, which included a three-year posting in Chile. Prior to Saba, he had worked at the transport logistics company Abertis Logística. Manuel has devoted his entire career to business development, mainly focusing in logistics parks and parking lot properties. He loves sports, especially football, golf, and tennis.

Laurent Jayr

Development Director, Spain

After working for more than 15 years in the logistics real estate sector at turnkey construction companies (GSE and ABCD) and a Spanish investment developer group (Abertis), Laurent joined VGP's team in Spain in November 2017 as Development Director. Born in Perpignan, France and a resident of Barcelona since 1996, Laurent spends his free time with his family (wife and three sons, ages 10, 12 and 15), enjoying his hobbies rugby, football, music and cooking, and spending time with friends.

Valentina Slavazzi

Project Construction Manager, Italy

Valentina has been working for VGP Italy in project management since May 2019. She graduated in civil engineering from Politecnico di Milano and has always shown a particular interest in construction sites. She has worked as a designer and director of transport infrastructure works, understands parcelling plans and urbanization works at logistics sites, and has a talent for dealing with clients and construction companies. Her first project in VGP is the build-to-suit construction of the new Macron headquarters in Valsamoggia near Bologna. Valentina says she feels honoured and proud to be part of the new and dynamic enterprise that VGP is developing across Italy. She loves travelling, good food, and of course spending time with her husband and dog.

Mauro Zanaga

Technical Manager, Italy

Mauro joined VGP in September 2019 with the conviction that it would be a great opportunity for personal growth. After graduating as an architect and studies at Politecnico di Milano, he studied further as a fire protection technician. At VGP, Mauro works mainly as a property and facility manager but also is involved in other phases of the projects (technical due diligence, building permits, etc.). In his previous job with a real estate firm, he acquired great experience in large-scale logistics construction projects that over ten years built 600,000 m^2 of warehouses for such large international groups as Carrefour, IKEA, Kuehne+Nagel, and Geodis. In his free time (which he notes usually means the weekend), Mauro says he spends every minute with his wife and 2 sons.

Maleen Landwehr

Commercial Officer, Germany

Maleen has been working at VGP since 1 December 2019 as a Commercial Officer based in Düsseldorf, Germany. She studied economy and purchasing at Mosbach, Germany and Lyon, France. Maleen has 5 years of experience in the construction industry. Before joining VGP, she worked at construction company GOLDBECK in the project management department, where she was involved in reporting, purchasing, calculation, law, and supervising of the branch. Maleen's work at VGP is in the area of property acquisition and project leases. In her free time, she likes to travel both inside and outside of Europe and engage in sports.

Mirko Parys

Head of Purchasing, Germany

Mirko acquired 12 years of professional experience in the construction industry working at medium-sized companies and international experience as a project purchaser at Heitkamp engineering and power plant construction, August Prien construction company, and Brüninghoff construction company for the likes of engineering and industrial buildings, power plant construction, and waste incineration. Mirko also worked at Pro Projekte GmbH & Co. KG (Schwarz Produktion Group) where he was responsible for large projects such as PET-Recycling Factory or fully automatic high rack warehouse. Mirko is responsible at VGP to develop purchasing strategy for Germany and will be responsible for large projects such as the parks in Munich and Laatzen.

Michael Herx

Controlling Manager, Germany

Michael has been working some 20 years in controlling roles within the real estate sector. He built up his controlling experience at the project development companies Frankonia Eurobau AG and Kölbl Kruse GmbH. At insurer Generali, he started out at the Generali Real Estate subsidiary with responsibility for project controlling and later was Senior Portfolio Controller in charge of the direct investments portfolio. Since September 2019, Michael has been Controlling Manager at VGP in Düsseldorf and responsible for developing the controlling function in Germany. He is the father of two boys, ages 13 und 15. In his free time, he often can be found playing handball or dancing salsa with his wife. Michael's next goal is to qualify for a sporting boat licence.

Sally Silze

DGNB Auditor/LEED GA, Germany

Sally has been working since December 2019 at VGP, where she is responsible for the sustainable construction standards that VGP would like to apply for all new projects. The company's German projects should be certified DGNB silver or similar. Sally studied civil engineering at Jade University in Oldenburg. Prior to joining VGP, she worked at ZECH Bau, where she was in charge of sustainable projects and obtaining DGNB, LEED, and other certifications. Sally is also trained as a DGNB auditor. She enjoys travelling, and her preferred sports are skiing and diving.

Kristof Janssens

Legal Councel, Belgium

Kristof Janssens joined VGP as Legal Counsel in January 2020. In this capacity he will be assisting the different offices of VGP with all legal matters relating to their activities. Before joining VGP Kristof worked 5 years as a lawyer for the international law firm DLA Piper based in Brussels (Belgium), in which role he advised and assisted both international and national (listed) real estate companies with respect to their real estate and corporate matters. Kristof was born in Belgium and he holds a master's degree in law from the Catholic University of Leuven. He lives in Brussels (Belgium) and loves hiking, travelling and reading.

Gijs Spruijt

Technical Director, The Netherlands

Gijs Spruijt joined VGP's Benelux team from 1 February 2020. He is responsible for technical aspects as that team works to expand VGP Parks within the Netherlands and eventually also in Belgium and Luxemburg. Gijs has long and various experience in developing and constructing all sorts of real estate. After working for several large construction firms, he was director of a construction company for 9 years. The past 2 years, he directed his own company in developing the Park15 Logistics park near Nijmegen, which involved substantial collaboration also with VGP. Gijs is the father of 4 children, ages 12, 12, 16, and 18. In addition to his work, he enjoys mountain biking, swimming, snowboarding, racing his motorbike, and travel.

Nela Kadlecová

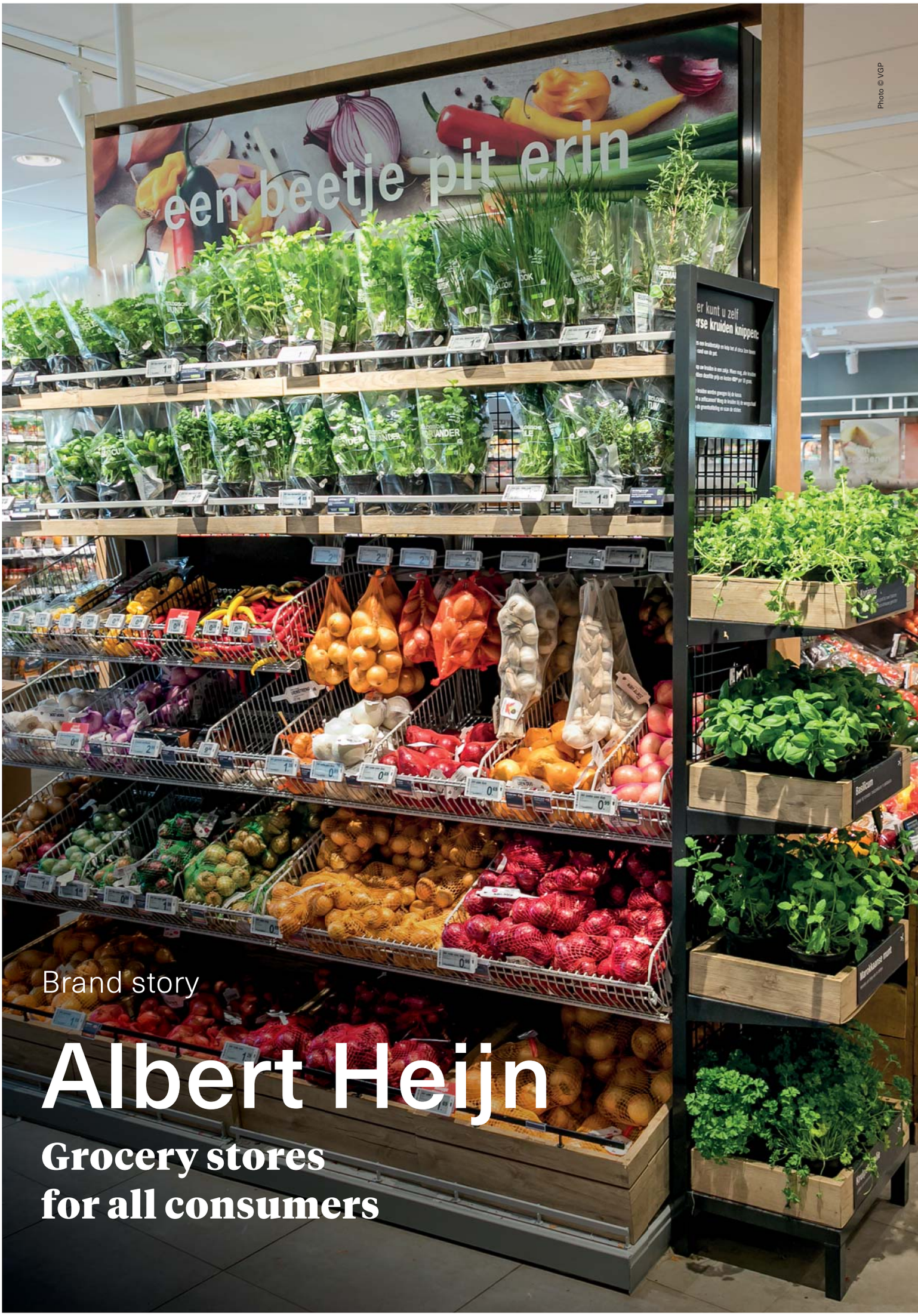
Commercial Officer, Czech Republic

Nela has been working for VGP Czech Republic since September 2019. She graduated in international relations and European studies at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. Nela started her professional career in a Czech real estate development and investment company where she gained more than 6 years of experience in the field of marketing & PR. At VGP, she participates in the area of lease term negotiations, communication with tenants, and land acquisition. Before joining VGP, Nela had decided to travel the world. She lived in New Zealand, South East Asia and Australia. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, visiting new places and exploring international cuisines. Nela is also interested in architecture & design.

Adrian Crizbasianu

Country Manager, Romania

Adrian has extensive experience in transport and logistics, having worked for over 15 years with DB Schenker in Romania in various management positions. In the last 7 years, he was COO and member of the board of management. Adrian was actively involved in achieving Schenker's market-leading position in Romania, directly engaged in developing that company's Contract Logistics – SCM division, and was involved in running a major project for reshaping and securing the future for Schenker's Port Constanta terminal operations. As of 1 February, Adrian joined VGP's management team as Country Manager Romania. In this role, he will be striving to accelerate development of Romanian operations with a short-term goal of extending VGP's presence nationwide.



Brand story

Albert Heijn

Grocery stores for all consumers

Maybe one of the smartest of Albert Heijn's many ideas in his career as an entrepreneur and grocery pioneer was that rich and poor alike should be able to shop at his stores. And by that he meant that every man and woman should be able to find and buy there what he or she wanted and needed.

Now, that may not sound like a revolutionary idea in today's supermarket and even post-supermarket online world, but let us bear in mind that the very first store Albert Heijn took over from his father in 1887 at 21 years of age had just 12 m^2 of floor space. In those days, the grocer in an apron picked the goods off the shelves and handed them across the counter to the customers.

That first store was located in Oostzaan, a village that is on the outskirts of Amsterdam and Zaandam in the Netherlands. A replica of that first shop can be found today at the Zaanse Schans in Zaandam (see story page 9). It was from this humble beginning that Albert Heijn, his descendants, and later tens of thousands of employees and investors through the decades built the multinational retail enterprise known today as Ahold Delhaize. By the time the founder died in 1945, his chain of stores already numbered in the hundreds and Albert Heijn had seen – and overseen – many changes and innovations. The company had launched its own house brands, including of coffee, chocolates, gingerbread, wine, pasta, dairy products, and "buttermilk" soap. The operation became vertically integrated to include warehousing, importing, and food processing. The company began opening franchise stores in smaller communities during 1927. A wholesale business to serve what we today would call the food service and institutional segment was started up during World War II.

The Albert Heijn holding company went public in 1948, offering its shares on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. That marked the first time that ownership extended outside the Heijn family, although it would be another half-century before the chairmanship of Ahold's board would pass to a non-Heijn with the 1989 retirement of Albert Heijn, Jr., grandson of the founder.

The greater access to capital supported continuing innovation and expansion. In 1952, the company opened the first self-service supermarket in Schiedam to appear in the Netherlands. The idea of bringing packaged foods, bakery goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, and meat and dairy products all under one roof was rather new at that time. Another innovative concept – that of offering customers an in-store magazine – debuted in 1954 with the launch of Allerhande. The magazine continues to this day. Of course, Allerhande also has changed with the times. These days it is available also online, and customers and others can find there more than 17,000 recipes, as well as cooking demonstration videos and much more.

Recipes and videos are ways of introducing customers to new foods and new ways to prepare the classics. Ahold has a history of innovating the way modern consumers eat. In the 1980s, for example, the company introduced into its stores a certain hairy, brown-skinned little fruit that was green on the inside. It had an interesting new flavour if one could just figure out how to eat the exotic kiwi.

Although the original Albert Heijn name continues to exist today on stores in the Netherlands and Belgium, Ahold Delhaize is today a fully international group, operating nearly 7,000 stores under 19 brand names in 10 countries with approximately 380,000 employees. The addition of Delhaize reflects the company's 2016 merger with the Belgian-based food retailer by that name. Delhaize is a company with a history even longer than Ahold's (in fact, dating back to 1867).

The world of food retailing continues to change, and the group that Albert Heijn established 133 years ago will surely continue to pioneer in that transformation. Indeed, change has wholly new meaning today. It is not sufficient in 2020 just to make a full selection of high-quality goods available at convenient times and locations for competitive prices. These days, consumers expect their grocers to do more, including to contribute actively to a better world and more sustainable future.

Towards those ends, Ahold Delhaize is taking a hard look at its logistics organization, supply chains, product choices, waste management, energy and water use, workplace conditions and practices, and other aspects of how its businesses are run to support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, or "SDGs". Among the 17 SDGs, the group is especially focused on numbers 2) Zero hunger, 3) Good health and well-being, 5) Gender equality, 7) Affordable and clean energy, 8) Decent work and economic growth, 10) Reduced inequalities, 12) Responsible consumption and production, 13) Climate action, 14) Life below water, and 15) Life on land. These are goals that the young grocer who took over his father's store in 1887 never could have imagined, but they seem entirely consistent with his spirit of innovation.

Olaf Tschimpke

Olaf Tschimpke was nominated to the VGP Foundation's board of directors from 21 February 2020. The geographer is chairman of the International Nature Conservation Foundation of NABU, the largest German nature conservation association.

Q When did you first hear about VGP?
The company has been operating in the German market since 2013, so I have been aware of VGP for quite some time. Before an industrial park can be developed in Germany and a logistics centre built, for example, a municipality must first designate a commercial area. The nature conservation authorities are involved in the approval process, and organisations such as the NABU are also consulted.

Once this process has been completed and the development plan is in place, the options of influencing it are very limited. However, initiatives with regard to what could be done on such a site or on top of the buildings can always be suggested. This is challenging, but also opens huge opportunities. The exterior area, which is not directly used for operations can be developed into amusement parks or greenery can be planted. And roof areas can be used for solar or photovoltaic systems, to name just a few examples.

Q What drove you to serve on the VGP Foundation's board of directors?
Katherina Reiche, one of the board members of the company, drew my attention to the foundation. I have been a committed conservationist for a long time and consider it as my responsibility to contribute with my expertise wherever possible.

There are many foundations that address social issues, and the VGP Foundation will do so, too. But in the field of classical nature conservation, when it comes to protecting landscapes, animal and plant species and preserving biological diversity, there are comparatively few. That is why I consider the Foundation's decision very encouraging; it is good that nature conservation is set as an additional topic.

Olaf Tschimpke

Q From your experience as chairman of the NABU International Nature Conservation Foundation, or Foundation for Nature, you bring along a lot of experience and expertise. How will you bring this into the work for the VGP Foundation?
I am excited to be able to help identify and launch meaningful projects. What makes sense? Where can we make a difference? The Foundation's aim is to develop its own profile and to promote projects that have an impact. Here, I bring a lot of prior experience and an extensive network with the International Foundation for Nature Conservation of the NABU. Additionally, I bring with me an array of employees, also on a European level. We partner with organizations in many countries. Environmental organisations are not as strong throughout Europe as they are in Germany, given that some civil societies are not yet as strongly developed. I see a whole range of tasks that can be tackled together. As an example, I would mention the last virgin forests in the Carpathians, or the protection of wetlands in the EU.

Q Are you already thinking about specific projects that you will propose to the Foundation as worth supporting?
We are currently in the process of identifying which projects – also from a European perspective – we could tackle first. The protection of forests is important, as well as the preservation of migrating birds. Many of the Central European migrating birds are moving to Africa, connecting all countries where VGP is active. They migrate either on the western route via Spain, on the central route via Italy/Malta or on the eastern route via the Balkans/Turkey/Israel. It is therefore particularly important to protect wetlands as important breeding, resting and feeding areas.

The protection of moors, which are an important reservoir of greenhouse gases – the Baltic States, for example, have large areas of moorland worthy of protection – come to mind.

Q Are there going to be projects in each of the 12 European countries where VGP is currently operating?
The EU Commission is currently incorporating important aspects into its biodiversity strategy, which sets out the EU's sustainable development goals. It sets the objective of turning ten percent of total agricultural land into decommissioned areas. The biodiversity strategy thus ties in with the "Space for Nature" demands of the European nature conservation associations in the Birdlife network. One focus will be on the protection and restoration of ecosystems and on the development of green infrastructure at an EU level. Here we can get involved and develop a concept under an “umbrella brand” for VGP for all European countries.

Turtledove, the Bird of the Year 2020 in Germany

Inspiring humans for nature

The turtledove, the symbol of love and peace, is the "Bird of the Year 2020" in Germany. Its existence is highly endangered.

Scarcity of habitat, not enough food or food contaminated with pesticides, legal and illegal hunting: many reasons make it difficult for it to survive. Since 1980, the turtledove population in Germany has decreased by almost 90 percent according to NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany). Thus, the turtledove has jumped from category 2 to 3 on the Red List for endangered species in Germany – highly endangered!

Olaf Tschimpke

But who actually stands behind this organisation, which amongst other things is committed to this endangered bird?

NABU e.V. is one of the largest, most well-known, nature conservation groups in Germany. Founded in 1899 in Stuttgart by Lina Hähnle (1851–1941) as the "Bund für Vogelschutz" (Association for the Protection of Birds), its aim is to inspire people to work for nature through joint action. The organisation's aim is to ensure that future generations will also find an earth worth living on. Diverse habitats and species, good air, clean water, healthy soils – this is what NABU is committed to. In addition to nature conservation on site, research, political commitment, environmental education and public relations are also part of its work. Preserving nature and securing the future is something that no one can do alone. That is why NABU members and supporters work together to achieve this goal through a wide range of activities. In addition, NABU is involved in a wide range of discussions with industry, policy-makers and social interest groups that are committed to nature. And since environmental protection must not stop at borders, international co-operation is also part of its activities.

Today, NABU has more than 770,000 members and sponsors (as of the end of 2019, including LBV) and is active in all 16 German federal states with about 2,000 local, district and specialist groups. The budget of the NABU Federal Association is about € 38 million. It is mainly financed by membership fees (about € 18.5 million) and donations (€ 6.4 million).
www.nabu.de

Dreams

The keeper of fairy tales

Efteling theme park

Efteling theme park continues a centuries-long tradition of entertaining (and sometimes frightening) children and adults alike.

The fairy tale is perhaps Europe's greatest contribution to the world's popular culture. Practically everybody today knows at least the family name of the German Brothers Grimm (their given names were Jacob and Wilhelm), who collected and published in 1812 and 1815 such tales as Snow White, The Frog Prince, and Hansel and Gretel. Then, too, we all know of the Danish Hans Christian Andersen, who brought us the Little Mermaid and The Emperor's New Clothes (among more than 3,000 other tales, which he published over four decades beginning in 1835).

But that tradition stretches even much further back into the obscure past. The Frenchman Charles Perrault (1628–1703) published versions of Sleeping Beauty and Little Red Riding hood more than a century before the Brothers Grimm did so, and what all of these men were finally putting down in ink on paper were traditional folk tales from a long oral tradition.

That folklore goes back to time immemorial. Let us consider, for example, that more than 100 fables are attributed to Aesop, a storytelling slave in Ancient Greece, who lived some 600 years before the birth of Christ. Aesop, for example, is credited with the story of the Fox and the Grapes, thus bringing us the expression "sour grapes" to describe how we might view scornfully goals that we have given up as being too difficult to attain.

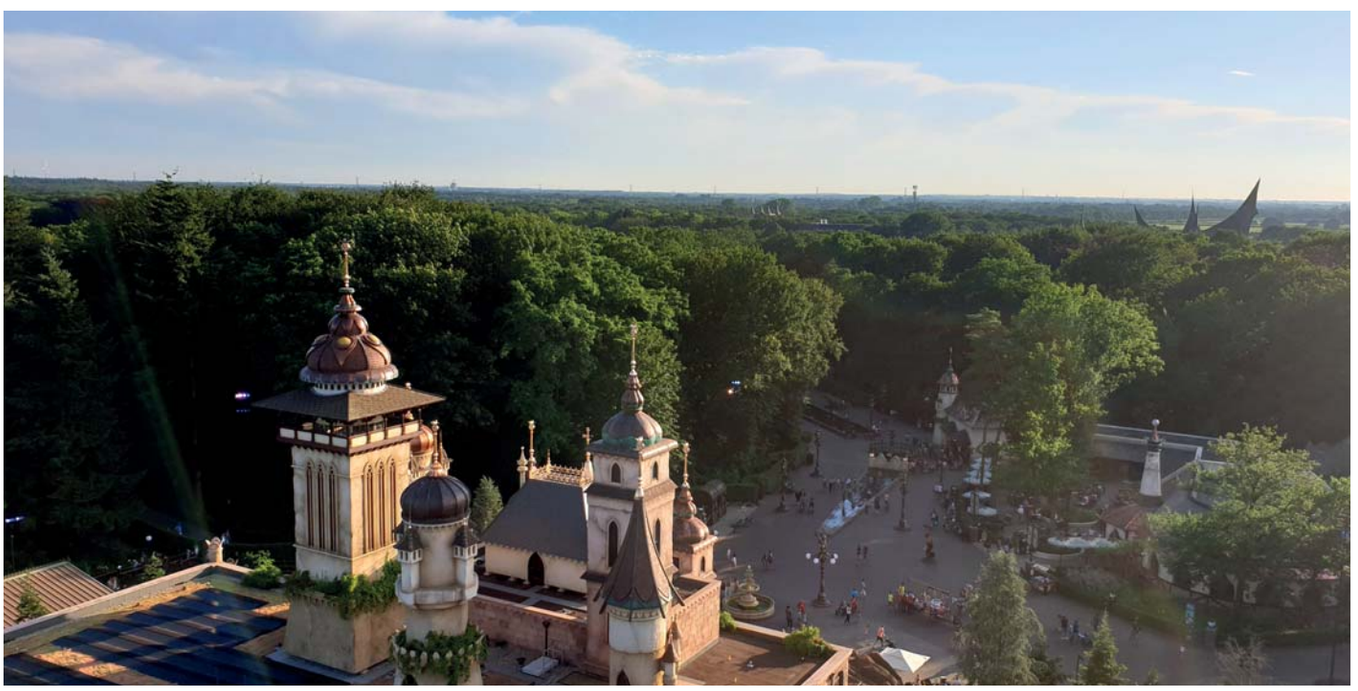
Also attributed to that ancient Greek are the Boy Who Cried "Wolf!", the Tortoise and the Hare, and the Goose that Laid Golden Eggs. Through these stories, we all learned as children the dangers of telling lies, the value of humility and persistence, and that greed can lead us to do foolish things.

There may be no better best place in Europe to explore the European fairy tale tradition than Efteling theme park in the Netherlands. The park quite rightfully describes itself as "the Keeper of Fairy Tales".

Although it is less known globally than that other theme park associated with a squeaky voiced anthropomorphic mouse in red shorts and a short-tempered duck in a blue sailor shirt and cap, it does have a longer history. Efteling's Fairy Tale Forest opened in 1952, fully three years before the original Disneyland in California. Today, the park welcomes more than 5 million visitors annually

Visitors to Efteling should not go with expectations to see Mickey or Minnie, Goofy or Daisy, but in Fairy Tale Forest they will encounter Langnek, a character from a Grimm brothers' tale able to stretch his neck to unthinkable lengths in order to see long distances; Holle Bolle Gijs, an insatiably hungry lad who begs passers-by to feed him with their rubbish; and Ezeltje Strekje, a donkey, who, well, ahem, shoots a coin out his hind side in exchange for an euro. (No, this definitely is not Disneyland.)

More conventionally in this modern day, visitors also will find the likes of Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Rapunzel, Snow White, and Pinocchio. Efteling also is home to fairy tales one is less likely to encounter elsewhere, like The Wolf and the



Seven Goats (although the big, bad wolf character will seem familiar), Guinevere's Bridal Gown (in which a blind weaver gets help from some good-hearted birds), The Red Shoes (a grisly tale of severed feet that dance in beautiful shoes), The Six Swans, and The Little Match Girl.

The story of how the Efteling park originated and has grown through nearly seven decades is a fine tale in and of itself. It all began in 1933 when the local priests Franciscus de Klijn and Emile Rietra decided that Kaatsheuvel should have a natural and recreational area for playing sports and enjoying the outdoors. They convinced the local parish to buy 5 hectares of land on the outskirts of the village in 1933 and another 2 hectares in 1935. A football pitch and children's playground came first (in 1935), then a nature park (1951), next a fairy tale forest (1952), followed by an amusement park (1978 through the 1980s). Live musical entertainment was added in the 1990s, and in 2018 the municipality approved yet another Walt Disney took inspiration from Efteling as he was designing his original theme park, but it is now known that Disney never visited the Dutch park and it is unlikely that Disneyland was influenced by it in any substantial way. While Efteling's style remains original, it nevertheless does have much in common with other gargantuan theme parks, especially in terms of size and variety. One difference from other such attractions is that this park is fully owned by a non-profit entity, the Efteling Nature Park Foundation. Another is that it is built into a real forest.

While the theme park alone covers 72 hectares, the Foundation owns 400 hectares altogether, including a nature park with forest and grasslands and a golf course. In addition to operating the tourist attraction, the Foundation is involved in nature conservation and social projects. One of its conservation endeavours has been to develop the Loonsche Land, a nature area adjoining the theme park. The Foundation also supports Villa Pardoes, which provides holiday apartments to children with life-threatening health conditions so that they and their families can enjoy an Efteling dream holiday at no charge.

The Keeper of Fair Tales is situated at the village of Kaatsheuvel, just 90 minutes' drive south of Amsterdam and 2 hours north of Brussels.

Do you need space?

Do you need space for your business? If so, you might be interested in what options are currently available to you. We have prepared a brief overview of the current offer for leasing warehousing, logistics and manufacturing space in our parks. Please do not hesitate to contact us in case of any additional questions and to arrange a personal meeting.

CZECH REPUBLIC	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Olomouc	E	built to suit	3,721
	F1	built to suit	25,500
	I	built to suit	14,400
VGP Park Vyškov	A	built to suit	24,517
VGP Park Chomutov	A2	built to suit	5,100
	D	built to suit	5,309
VGP Park Prostějov	A	built to suit	14,965
	B	built to suit	21,810
	C	built to suit	9,969
VGP Park České Budějovice	A	built to suit	5,920
	B	built to suit	8,750
	C	built to suit	9,410
SLOVAKIA	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Zvolen	A	built to suit	23,272
	B	built to suit	20,384
	C	built to suit	8,049
VGP Park Bratislava	A	built to suit	24,192
	B	built to suit	27,360
	C	built to suit	41,760
	D	built to suit	28,512
	E	built to suit	40,320
	F	built to suit	40,320
	G	built to suit	24,192
	H	built to suit	20,736
ROMANIA	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Timisoara	B2	built to suit	3.200
VGP Park Sibiu	B	built to suit	13,700
	A	built to suit	11,700
	C	built to suit	16,000
GERMANY	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Magdeburg	A	built to suit	26,365
	B	built to suit	35,100
	C	built to suit	31,628
	D	built to suit	31,628
	E	built to suit	55,931
	F	built to suit	55,931
	G	built to suit	29,005
	H	built to suit	26,381
VGP Park Gießen-Buseck	A	built to suit	11,147

GERMANY	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Hamburg	E5	built to suit	7,300
	E6	built to suit	2,400
VGP Park Leipzig	C1	built to suit	2,375
	C2	built to suit	2,375
VGP Park Halle	B	built to suit	26,301
	C	built to suit	37,428
VGP Park Laatzen	C1	built to suit	23,633
	C2	built to suit	23,057
VGP Park Berlin–Wustermark	A1	built to suit	3,022
VGP Park Berlin–Oberkrämer	A	built to suit	13,689
	B	built to suit	10,985
	C	built to suit	22,753
	D	built to suit	7,921
	E	built to suit	5,882
	G	built to suit	27,917
VGP Park Rostock	A	built to suit	20,588
	B	built to suit	7,135
	C	built to suit	17,654
	D	built to suit	28,157
	E	built to suit	21,134
VGP Park Erfurt	A	built to suit	25,155
SPAIN	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Llica d'Amunt	D	built to suit	7,000
	E	built to suit	21,000
VGP Park San Fernando de Henares	C2	built to suit	5,000
	D	built to suit	41,000
VGP Park Fuenlabrada	A	built to suit	38,000
VGP Park Cheste	A	built to suit	15,000
	B	built to suit	25,000
	C	built to suit	28,000
VGP Park Zaragoza	B	built to suit	35,000
	C	built to suit	22,000
VGP Park Sevilla	A	built to suit	26,000
	B	built to suit	30,000
THE NETHERLANDS	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Roosendaal	A1	built to suit	20,484
ITALY	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Calcio		built to suit	22,908
PORTUGAL	BUILDING	OFFICE AREA (m^2)	WAREHOUSE AREA (m^2)
VGP Park Santa Maria da Feira		built to suit	30,500

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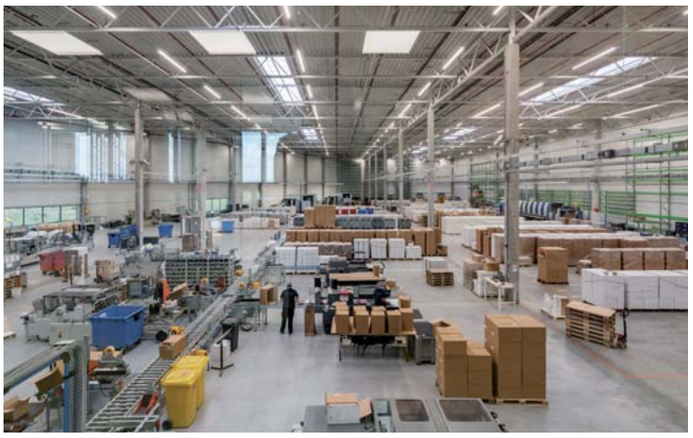
VGP Park Nijmegen, The Netherlands



VGP Location³

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