

Brussels, 13 October 2015

KBC responds to article in “De Tijd” about regional advisory centres, accessibility and flexibility

KBC is providing the following clarification in response to an article (“Heibel om zondagswerk”) that appeared today in *De Tijd*.

KBC is preparing for the challenges of tomorrow and changing client expectations. KBC puts its clients first and builds sustainable, long-term relationships with them. With this ambition in mind, the company has introduced a whole series of initiatives in the past year (see also the relevant press releases at www.kbc.com and press conference at the start of June).

Since the end of September, every region has its own regional advisory centre (RAC). This service is popular among clients. The experiments with advice and sales by telephone or video chat are going well and are hopeful, making a further extension of the offering and opening hours a logical choice. That will not only benefit clients who are becoming increasingly used to continuous service but also traders who, because of e-commerce, need more extensive support.

It also offers KBC employees opportunities for wider employment, many of whom are prepared to work outside normal working hours in exchange for more free time during the week or during office hours. The RACs are currently accessible every weekday until 8 p.m. and on Saturday mornings.

The aim of the discussions with the social partners was to discuss further extending the opening hours for KBC clients to 10 p.m. on weekdays and to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. In addition, KBC would like to experiment with Sunday work, but only for a small group of staff and purely on a voluntary basis and with suitable working schedules (in very specific and limited circumstances and not as a general rule), and obviously responding to the needs and wishes of clients in the future.

For the sake of clarity, since the talks involve social consultation within the company, KBC wishes to hold them solely with its own social partners and, as always, does not wish for them to be carried out through the press.

KBC confirms that talks have been held in recent weeks with the social partners and unions about the regional advisory centres and the accessibility and flexibility that KBC wishes to offer its clients. (See our previous communication of 18 May 2015 at www.kbc.com).

It has become clear through the discussions that one of the unions does not wish to back KBC's proposal or offer the flexibility required to prepare the company thoroughly for the future. Management does not, therefore, wish to continue negotiations and is waiting for a clear sign from the unions.

The discussions on employment under the collective labour agreement (which ends this years) that were scheduled to start after the negotiations on the regional advisory centres have therefore not yet begun.

For more information, please contact:

Viviane Huybrecht, General Manager, Corporate Communication/KBC Group Spokesperson
Tel. + 32 2 429 85 45 – E-mail pressofficekbc@kbc.be

KBC Group NV

Havenlaan 2 – 1080 Brussels
Viviane Huybrecht
General Manager, Corporate
Communication/
Spokesperson
Tel. + 32 2 429 85 45

Press Office
Tel. + 32 2 429 65 01 Stef Leunens
Tel. + 32 2 429 29 15 Ilse De Muyer
Fax + 32 2 429 81 60
E-mail pressofficekbc@kbc.be

KBC press releases are available at www.kbc.com
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