

Open letter from the Zythos vzw beer consumers union to InBev: Hoegaarden beer must be brewed in Hoegaarden!

**There's more to beer than figures!**

A company, even a brewery, is a company. As a company, it has an economic reality and it needs to generate profit; otherwise it will not survive. InBev is doing well: in one year, its share grew from less than €28 to over €37 (i.e. a 32.2 % increase). *However, there's more to beer and brewing than naked figures.*

**Beer and brewing also represent (local) culture.**

Beer belongs to our culture. In our region, beer is *the* popular drink. It can be a thirst-quencher. It can be enjoyed. It can be used to prepare the most tasty dishes, or it can go with a nice meal. It can be part of a party among friends. A fine glass of beer can make you feel better. The role that popular bars play in social life cannot be overestimated. *The Hoegaarden brewery has its own role to play in that respect !*

**Beer and brewing are also (local) tradition.**

Beer is also about a region. Throughout history, every region has created its own beer speciality: the red-brown beers from West Flanders, the 'saisons' from Hainaut, the 'gueuze' beers from Payottenland, etc... Together with our brewers' inventiveness, these traditional styles of beer have made the whole world envy our beer heritage. *These local traditions must not disappear!*

**Beer and brewing are also (local) pride.**

At its peak (1750), Hoegaarden had 35 breweries. The last to remain were Tomsin (Oud Hoegaards Witbier), which was closed in 1957 and the Loriers brewery (Speciale DAS Ale), which was dismantled in the 1960s. In 1966, Pierre Celis revived the Hoegaarden Witbier, resulting in the founding of the De Kluis brewery in 1978. After fire damaged the brewery in 1985 it was taken over by Interbrew. The world learned about the 'Witte van Hoegaarden'. And the people of Hoegaarden are rightfully proud of their beer and brewery. *This brewery must not disappear!*

**Beer and brewing also mean (local) employment.**

Closing the Hoegaarden brewery would be a catastrophe, not only for the people who work there, but for the entire village. The tens of thousands of visitors and tourists have enabled the village to live for, and on, its brewery and its rich history. The community's tourism sector mostly relies on the brewery and its 'witbier' (Hoegaarden, Hometown of Witbier; the Hoegaarden Beer Village permanent exhibition; There's only one Hoegaarden, the Village of Beer and Brewers; the Beer Garden; etc...). Closing the Hoegaarden brewery would have a life-threatening impact on these activities. *This employment must not disappear!*

***The world's local brewer.***

When Interbrew (the current InBev) embarked on its international takeover campaign, this was their motto. Interbrew claimed to be the world's protector of local breweries and brands. They pretended to project the idea of the Belgian beer *nation* onto the entire beer *world*, creating an unprecedented richness in breweries and all sorts and types of beer. In that respect, Hoegaarden belongs to Hoegaarden. Jupille already has its own beer (Jupiler)! Or maybe, this slogan was a mistake? *Or worse even: a lie?*

***Appeal.***

***The Zythos beer consumers union calls on InBev not to think only in figures and profits, but also to invest in (local) culture, (local) tradition, (local) pride, (local) employment and humanity (here and in the rest of the world). Therefore, we earnestly request InBev to abandon its intention to close the De Kluis brewery in Hoegaarden.***

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