Antwerp VLD puts bomb under coalition

‘It is five past twelve. This Antwerp City Council is even worse than the last one’, said Ludo Van Campenhout, Parliamentary Party Leader of the VLD in Antwerp’s City Council in Het Laatste Nieuws on 14 March. According to him, the monster coalition of Sp.a, VLD, CD&V and Agalev is not working. And if nothing changes, it will be punished in the local elections in 2006, says Van Campenhout. Like many other citizens of Antwerp, Van Campenhout has followed the victory of the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn in Rotterdam with considerable interest. He believes that a ‘right-minded right-wing’ party with a charismatic leader can also easily win 10% of the votes in Antwerp ‘and they will not get these voters from the Blok’. His Chairman Karel De Gucht is advising him to knock harder on the table and if that does not work, simply to withdraw from the bench of aldermen (FF).

LEX MOLENAAR • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 15 MARCH

The national VLD leadership reacted particularly harshly to Van Campenhout’s comments. ‘A parliamentary party leader must put out lines instead of kicking out at anything that moves,’ says Flemish Minister Dirk Van Mechelen (VLD). The VLD holds all the aces in Antwerp, with four senior aldermen. The level of energy urgently needs stepping up.’ National VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht: ‘The VLD must take the reins in Antwerp and if that fails, we must leave the coalition. Better a crisis now than in 2006.’ Antwerp Sp.a Chairman Robert Voorhamme wants discussions between the coalition partners in the very near future and reproaches Van Campenhout for letting fly at Mayoress Leona Detiège (Sp.a). Voorhamme feels that the Sp.a must take the initiative because we are still the biggest party. Detiège herself does not accept being attacked by the parliamentary party leader of the VLD whilst she is abroad. ‘This looks a lot like some sort of panic measure after the recent election result in Rotterdam,’ says Detiège.
Dewinter’s new attempt to break the cordon sanitaire: Leefbaar Antwerpen

Now the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn, the big winner in the Dutch local elections, is starting talks in Rotterdam with the liberal VVD and the Christian Democratic CDA on the formation of a local council, Filip Dewinter, leading candidate of the far-right Vlaams Blok in Antwerp, is claiming that he must make a fresh attempt to break the cordon sanitaire, the political protective ring around the Blok in Flanders. After the example of the local Dutch lists Leefbaar Nederland, he is proposing setting up "Leefbaar Antwerpen", a platform with community and safety committees and shopkeepers’ organisations, parents’ associations against drugs, etc. His main aim with this platform is to win over the liberal VLD and the Christian Democratic CD&V. The basis of the platform will be a plan of attack against aggression and crime, devised by the Blok. Ideas such as the immediate deportation of illegal immigrants, compulsory declarations of loyalty for foreigners, military-inspired discipline camps for young criminals, defence of property by citizens with firearms, police checks on the city limits, compulsory detoxification for drug-users in secure institutions are intended to produce a shock effect. To break through the cordon Dewinter himself will put on hold his great dream, to become mayor of Antwerp. But Dewinter is not Fortuyn (FF).

FRANK WILLEMSE • HET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 13 MARCH

DThat Fortuyn in contrast to the Blok does not want to send young criminals of foreign origin back to their countries of origin is not important to Dewinter. That his movement does not have any historical past of collaboration with the Nazi regime like the Blok, matters not to him. He is retaining the ties with the Flemish movement in all its sections. That Fortuyn is a funny homosexual, who consequently has the benefit of the doubt where tolerance is concerned, is true, but: "The Blok is just a conservative party that does not tolerate that sort of behaviour and permissiveness. Is that allowed?" Dewinter: "I foresee a scenario whereby the Purple-Greens will get a roasting in the elections (2003) and the coalition in Antwerp, which was the precursor of the Purple-Greens, comes under pressure. The question is then whether the CD&V and VLD will still be prepared to keep the Antwerp coalition together. I think not. A change of coalition in which an alliance of the Vlaams Blok and Leefbaar Antwerpen plays a role is then possible. If not we can still stand together in 2006 (local elections), break the cordon, put our programme alongside that of the VLD in Antwerp and within 24 hours we will have an agreement."

Flanders is divided over immigrant voting rights: two opinion polls

FF EDITOR

On Sunday 12 to 15,000 demonstrators marched for equal opportunities in Brussels. The public debate on voting rights for immigrants made the march particularly topical. It was above all a colourful march, in which a large political spectrum took part: from Christian Democratic trade unionists to Socialists and Greens. The blue of the Liberals was conspicuous by its absence. The Flemish Liberals, although many of their leaders are self-declared supporters, feel the time is not ripe in Flanders for immigrant voting rights. The vast majority of Flemings are against it, according to their Chairman Karel De Gucht. A study by KUL (Catholic University of Leuven) sociologists from the Institute of Social and Political Opinion Polls (Instituut voor Sociaal en Politiek Opinieonderzoek, ISPO) casts doubt on this opinion. Things are not as simple as De Gucht suggests, according to the sociologists Billiet, Swynghedouw, and Jacobs. The people of Flanders are divided and easily influenced by the public debate that is raging, they maintain.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>For voting rights</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
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<td>43.1%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP.A</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD &amp; V</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agalev</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlaams Blok</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: ISPO
**RUUD GOOSSENS • DE MORGEN • 9 MARCH**

A survey in which more than 2000 people were subjected to a face-to-face interview reveals that there are more supporters than opponents in Flanders. The information was gathered between September 1999 and March 2000. At the time the discussion among the majority still had to flare up. The view put forward was the following: Foreigners who have lived here long enough must be given municipal voting rights. 5% said ‘strongly agree’, as many as 39% simply chose ‘agree’. The opponents are in the minority: 11.4% answer ‘strongly disagree’, 24.9% say ‘disagree’. As many as 20% are undecided. In short: 43.8% for, 36.3% against.

But the figures must be put into perspective. After all, researchers form the Planning and Statistics Department (Afdeling Planning en Statistiek, APS) of the Flemish Community reach different conclusions on the basis of information in 2001. According to the APS figures, only 30.3% are in favour. As many as 50% are against, while here too around 20% are undecided.

Billiet, Swyngedouw and Jacobs do not believe that the opinion of the Flemings on this matter has changed so drastically over a period of one year. They put the difference down to the order of the questions. The APS survey began with the choice ‘strongly disagree’, while the KUL survey was exactly the reverse. Nevertheless, major conclusions can be drawn from the 2 surveys, say Billiet, Swyngedouw, and Jacobs. ‘The opinion of a large part of the population on this matter is far from a foregone conclusion and remains easily influenced by the course of the debate,’ they write. ‘It will be up to the elected politicians to show them the way.’

In the meantime, those elected politicians will look with Argus’ eyes at the split per electorate that was made in the KUL survey (see page 2).

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**IMMIGRANT VOTING RIGHTS**

**Senate committee votes down immigrant voting rights**

The VLD has got what it wanted in the Senate Committee for Internal Affairs. With the support of its Walloon sister party the PRL and the Flemish Christian Democrats the CD & V, the bill that introduces municipal voting rights for non-EU citizens was rejected by nine votes to six. The Socialists and Greens are now pinning their last hope on the vote in the plenary meeting of the Senate. Together with Spirit and the Francophone Christian Democrats (PSC), they have 34 of the 71 seats there. Two dissident votes will therefore be enough to have the bill ratified for the time being. Although this only involves 125,000 voters, the issue of immigrant voting rights has grown into a symbolic dossier with high political stakes. The Flemish Liberals of the VLD made the continued existence of the government dependent on it. The PRL did not vote out of conviction, but voted against it to save the government. Afterwards, PRL leader Louis Michel was quick to reiterate that his party did want to include immigrant voting rights in the coalition agreement of any subsequent Purple-Green government. The opposition CD & V followed the standpoint adopted at its party conference, although a large part of its grass roots support has been won over to immigrant voting rights and although Chairman De Clerck earlier let it slip that his faction would vote strategically to make things difficult for the majority. On 10 March the Christian ACV trade union was present en masse at the demonstration for equal opportunities. A number of CD & V politicians also put in an appearance. Louis Tobback, who sat on the Senate Committee on behalf of the Sp.a, spoke harshly of the PRL and CD & V. Theo Rombouts, Chairman of the Christian Workers’ Movement ACW, was also extremely critical of the CD & V (FF).

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**BART EECKHOUT • DE MORGEN • 13 MARCH**

Theo Rombouts is reacting particularly acerbically to the stance taken by the CD & V in the vote in the Senate Committee. ‘The party only took strategic considerations into account. I call that trite.’ Rombout’s hangover is considerable. ‘Voting rights have been made subordinate to all sorts of party-political considerations. Evidently some people think that basic principles of citizenship can be swept under the carpet for electoral reasons. …With these party-political games the commitment of a large group of young people has been turned into a joke. For a party such as the CD & V that is reprehensible.’

In the Senate Committee Tobback reproached his opponents one last time: ‘Never before have I seen so much cynicism in politics. Does the PRL thinks it can convince anybody with its principles if it haggles with them in this way? The VLD was reproached by Reds and Greens for ‘misunderstood opportunism’ because it allowed its voting behaviour to be determined by its idea of the will of the people. The CD & V opposition declared its dissenting vote from the unwillingness of the majority to first consolidate the Fast Track Belgian Act (the nationalizing act, ed.). CD & V amendments in this direction were rejected. This time Tobback lashed out at ‘the typical CD & V hypocrisy’. ‘One or two CD & V members can join in the demonstration for equal rights, but obviously these are not the ones who have to vote here.’That will be affected by this price hike. He estimated that it could result in energy costs rising by 10 to 15%.

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**focus on FLANDERS • 9 march - 15 March 2001 • Number 10**
Compromise in Wezembek-Oppem dispute

A compromise has been reached in the language dispute in the Flemish facilities municipality of Wezembek-Oppem. The dispute centres on an unlawfully collected household waste tax in 1998 with French-language documents for French-speakers and Dutch-language documents for Dutch-speakers. Wezembek’s bench of aldermen had the returns forms sent out by a private company and not by the municipal collector, as prescribed by the Local Government Act. In this way the bench of aldermen intended not to go along with the Peeters circular, in which the Flemish government orders facilities municipalities to send out official documents in Dutch only. Flemish Minister for Internal Affairs Van Grembergen (Sp.a) had threatened to send two special commissioners to Wezembek-Oppem to force the Francophone majority led by PRL Mayor Van Hoobrouck to repay the unlawfully collected tax. But this did not happen. On 8 March Van Grembergen and van Hoobrouck reached a compromise, which limits the loss of face on both sides. The collector will send out new returns forms, in Dutch, as they are distributed and therefore regardless of the form in which they are sent personally. The residents of Wezembek-Oppem will receive a bilingual explanatory letter, which refers to the possibility of requesting a form in French.

On Sunday the VLD in Kraainem-Wezembek rejected the compromise. The repayment of the unlawfully collected tax is the only correct way to proceed, says the party. The DWO (Democraten Wezembek-Oppem), the other Flemish opposition faction, yesterday also opposed the adjustment of the household waste tax. The DWO says that Van Grembergen is committing a conscious and targeted breach of the Local Government Act. According to the DWO, the Flemish government is changing its mind in laughable fashion under pressure from the Federal Government and following threats from Francophone politicians. The DWO also says that the bilingual nature of the accompanying letter is in violation of Languages Act. The Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) and the CD&V are also saying that the bilingual letter that will be sent personally to every household is a clear breach of the Peeters circular.

Minister Van Grembergen disputes that. He says that, according to the Administrative Languages Act, reports and correspondence to the population in Flemish facilities municipalities must be bilingual, regardless of the form in which they are distributed and therefore also if they are sent personally.

MARK DEWEERDT • DE FINANCIERECONOMISCHE TIJD • 9 MARCH

The Francophone parties are calling the Peeters circular unlawful. Several complaints have been filed with the Council of State. The bench of aldermen of Wezembek had sent French-language returns forms to residents who are registered as French-speakers. On Friday Minister Van Grembergen and Governor Lodewijk de Witte of Flanders-Brabant on the one hand and Mayor Van Hoobrouck on the other agreed that the municipality would send out a new returns form, this time in Dutch. The remittance form will show a zero tariff, so that residents will not have to pay the tax a second time and the municipality will not need to return the collected tax. At the same time as the returns form, but in a separate envelope, the residents of Wezembek will receive a bilingual explanatory letter, which refers to the possibility of requesting a form in French.

According to Steve Stevaert (Sp.a), the figures show that a shift is occurring from road haulage to inland shipping. This also appears from the increase (+24%) in the number of containers handled at Flemish inland shipping terminals. According to Stevaert, the rise in inland shipping between 1997 and 2001 means that around 600,000 lorries have been taken off the roads. And that implies a saving for society of 22.8 million euros. According to Europe, every 1,000 tonne-kilometres that are kept off the roads equate to a saving of 19 euros.

Stevaert puts the success down to a significant reduction in navigation duties on the one hand and the subsidies for the construction of quay walls on the other. On 1 January 2000, shipping duties were cut by 90%. Previously these duties had represented on average 10% of the transport price per ship. This has significantly improved the competitive position of inland shipping, boasts Stevaert. The quay walls subsidy for companies has also proved a success. The government pays 80% of the construction costs and in return the company guarantees that a fixed tonnage of goods will be transported by ship for 10 years. Eighteen quay walls are now in operation, tenders have been invited for 29 projects and 25 are in preparation. Once all 72 quay walls are completed in 2005, the increase in tonne-kilometres will be multiplied by the number of kilometres, the number of tonnes transported multiplied by the number of kilometres, inland shipping rose by 4% to 4.2 billion tonne-kilometres. After the record year 2000, when the rise was as much as 16%, things continue to move in the right direction, claims Flemish Transport Minister Steve Stevaert (Sp.a) (FF).

WIM VANDE VELDEN • DE FINANCIEREECONOMISCHE TIJD • 12 MARCH

Inland shipping on Flemish waterways rises by 4%

Despite the major slowdown in the growth of the economy, inland shipping in Flanders again rose significantly in 2001. Sixty-five million tonnes of goods were transported, a rise of 2.1%. Expressed in tonne-kilometres, the number of tonnes transported multiplied by the number of kilometres, inland shipping rose by 4% to 4.2 billion tonne-kilometres. After the record year 2000, when the rise was as much as 16%, things continue to move in the right direction, claims Flemish Transport Minister Steve Stevaert (Sp.a) (FF).

Inland shipping on Flemish waterways rises by 4%
CD&V makes socio-economic themes election issue

The CD&V wants to base next year's election battle mainly on socio-economic aspects. This was announced by Party Chairman Stefaan de Clerck on the eve of the European socio-economic summit in Barcelona, where the EU Member States will assess the directives of Lisbon. According to the Christian Democrats, nothing has happened in Belgium in terms of a structural reorganisation of government finances. This government will regret that, claims the CD&V, because the ageing population and health-care are becoming very expensive and those extra costs will have to be covered. Employment policy is also failing, claims the CD&V. Belgium is lingering behind in Europe in terms of employment for older workers. If our country wants to achieve the European objectives, as many as 400,000 older workers will have to be re-employed (FF).

RUUD GOOSSENS • DE MORGEN • 9 MARCH

According to the CD&V, the government is hardly doing anything to reduce our legendary level of debt and increase the number of people in employment. And yet they should be, because the population is ageing and that will cost a lot in pensions and health-care. The CD&V claims that the Purple-Greens have underestimated these imminent challenges. ‘Soon they will have to raise taxes again to pay for all this,’ sneers former Deputy Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy. The CD&V is not alone in reaching this conclusion. The party refers to the recent reports of the Higher Financial Council (Hoge Raad van Financiën, HRF) and the National Bank of Belgium (NBB). The latest report by the HRF shows that the reorganisation of the public debt in the period 1999-2001 came to a standstill, as if one-off and temporary factors were being ignored. The increase in expenditure is clearly not under control, in particular the expenditure on health-care (+5.4% in 2001). Our country also has low employment levels. Where older workers are concerned, Belgium is even dawdling at the start of the EU peloton. ‘To achieve European target figures, the number of over-55s in work must increase by almost 400,000 units, more than twice as many,’ says the CD&V. The CD&V feels that the VLD is vulnerable on its socio-economic side. This partly explains why the Christian democrats are pushing that policy to the fore in the coming election battle. ‘After all, this government is not able to work towards the future,’ says Yves Leterme, CD&V parliamentary party leader. Herman Van Rompuy is more abrupt. ‘Unfriendliness towards industry drips from this government.’ In September the CD&V is organising a socio-economic conference.

Employment level (in %) of active population

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<th>Population</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
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<th>France</th>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working age men</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working age women</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population 15 to 24 years</td>
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<td>Men 25 to 54 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women 25 to 54 years</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men 55 to 64 years</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women 55 to 64 years</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>67</td>
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Beaulieu has to repay 25 million euro subsidy

In 1983 Beaulieu, the textile group of the West Flanders family De Clerck, took over the bankrupt synthetic fibre factory Fabelta-Zwijnaarde. The then Minister for Economic Affairs, Mark Eyskens (CVP), was able to win Beaulieu over as buyer by granting BEF 725 million (17.97 million euros) in government support, which was paid in two instalments. Beaulieu undertook to invest BEF 1 billion and preserve 160 jobs. But the European Commission found this in 1988. Beaulieu was held liable. In 1994 the Commercial Court in Ghent issued its first order. Beaulieu lodged an appeal, but still kept an amount of 1 billion BEF in reserve. The Court of Appeal also ordered the money to be repaid. The Court of Cassation dismissed a request to rescind the order on 22 February 2002. The judgment was served on Monday. Later Beaulieu also took over the viscose factory Fabelta-Ninove from the government. It is the second time that Beaulieu has had to repay subsidies. The 274 million BEF in aid for the threads and fibres factory Idealspun had to be repaid after a long lawsuit. Fabelta-Zwijnaarde has now changed its name to Domo Zwijnaarde and is part of the textiles and chemicals group Domo, belonging to Jan de Clerck, son of Beaulieu founder, Roger De Clerck.
Telenet should not count on Flemish government support

The Flemish-American telecoms company Telenet is in a fix, or rather, the main American shareholder Callahan is in a fix. Callahan urgently has to find 300 million euros in cash. The electricity producer Electrabel declared itself ready to stump up 50 million euros in exchange for Telenet shares. Electrabel is the private partner of the municipalities in the mixed intermunicipal companies, which run the cable network in Flanders. In May 2000 the municipalities agreed that Telenet would buy the cable network this year. Callahan was supposed to put the money on the table, but has failed to do so. Richard Callahan himself has therefore gone running to various Flemish ministers, among them Steve Stevaert (Sp.a), Dirk van Mechelen (VLD) and the principal private secretary of Minister-President Patrick Dewael (VLD). Initially Minister Van Mechelen said that he wanted to examine a possible contribution by the government holding Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen or via the stock market-quoted holding GIMV, of which PMV holds 70% of the shares. But the next day Prime Minister Dewael cleared the matter up. Telenet should not count on Flemish government support, was the answer (De Morgen, De Standaard, 14 March). The PMV simply does not have the funds for it. The shareholders must now make do all by themselves.

The GIMV is taking the lead in this. The municipalities that were promised the money are panicking. Most had counted on the income from the sale of the cable network and already included this in their budget for this year. At a hastily convened meeting of the Board of Directors (11 March) main shareholder Callahan (54.2%) faced the other shareholders: the GIMV (12.1%), the financial consortium (12.1%: Gevaert, KBC, Lessius) and the intermunicipal companies (13.9%). According to Electrabel, the GIMV and the financial consortium would also be prepared to stump up funds. That would bring the total to 100 million euros. But that would leave Callahan some way short of the 300 million euros required to pay the municipalities. Trends, which earlier warned against the all too creative financing of the take-over by Callahan (‘the Denver cowboys’) remains sceptical about Callahan’s financial clout (14 March). On 15 March De Financieel-Economische Tijd reported that the minority shareholders had a proposal ready whereby Callahan’s interest is reduced to 24% and whereby the disputed high-interest-yielding bonds (vendor notes) they received on the take-over are converted into shares (FF).

Opinion

BART STURTWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 13 MARCH

Encouraged by then Prime Minister Luc Van den Brande (CD&V), the Flemish government helped the Telenet project get off the ground in 1996. Two years ago the new Flemish government sold part of its interest to the American company, Callahan. At the time that seemed like a logical step: give the company the necessary size and partners and at the same time collect the fee for services rendered. If there was any criticism at the time, it was that the sale price should have been higher, certainly if Callahan was to acquire a majority. However, all good things must come to an end. The euphoric expectations for the future, that were worked into the price, now seem further off. That could have meant that Telenet was sold just in time. But unfortunately the price was paid not in cash but in paper. That paper-shares and bonds-has fallen in value. Furthermore, the construction is so complex that Telenet itself has to finance Callahan’s credit. That same Telenet now needs pots of money to pay for its development. Given the current market conditions, the banks are more than reluctant to fund both the one and the other. They want to see profits, not dreams. Politically there are two frightening sticking points. One: the present Flemish government risks serious loss of face if it allows the adopted Telenet project to go under. But on the other hand, after its attitude in the Sabena dossier, it cannot be landed with the financial risks taken by the company’s shareholders.

Two, and even more explosive: the intermunicipal cable companies hold shares in Telenet. They are expecting not only money for the shares they have sold to Callahan. They are also supposed to sell their cable infrastructure to Telenet. Their shareholders, the municipalities, have long been making plans for the millions these transactions would earn them. Now they are facing an impasse. If Callahan pulls out, willingly or unwillingly, not only is there no money, but those who remain will have to dig into their pockets to allow the company to continue to grow. It makes sense for them to look to the Flemish government to save them. If the role of the Flemish government is limited to that of mediator and bridging financier, that is justifiable. But many lingering dossiers have begun in this way. If private shareholders and banks pull out, as a government you have to think very carefully before take up your place. However painful that choice may be.

PIET DEPUYDT/BRUNO LEYNSE/WILLY VAN DAMME • TRENDS • 14 MARCH

The financial hocus-pocus involved in the take-over of Telenet was not far off the mark: Callahan paid one third in cash, one third in shares and one third in ‘vendor notes’. The latter was a debt on the repayment date. In plain English: The sellers are lending Callahan itself a large proportion of the money to buy Telenet, ‘claimed a Trends journalist on 7 February (…). Callahan Investco Belgium 1 Sàrl, the holding that last year took over 54.2% of Telenet, has barely 5.48 million euros in capital. The difference with the take-over value of Telenet - 1640.8 million euros, not counting the 934 million euros for the cable companies-is therefore rather considerable. That did not prevent Calla-
Early Flemish painters in Europe

The exhibition Van Eyck, the 'Flemish Primitives' and the Mediterranean World, which opens its doors on 15 March in the Groeningemuseum, will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of Bruges 2002. The exhibition does not offer yet another overview of the Flemish Primitive painters, but goes deeper into the influence the Flemish painters had on fifteenth century painting in Europe. With their technical virtuosity, their unrivaled eye for detail and their brilliant colours they unleashed a veritable revolution in European painting. Visitors get to see 130 paintings, most of which come from museums in Bruges, but there are also magnificent loans from the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Louvre, the Art-Historical Museum of Vienna, and the State Museums of Berlin. There, the Flemings Van Eyck, Van der Goes, and Vander Weyden enter into dialogue with Fra Angelico, Giovanni Bellini, Jean Fouquet, Juan de Flandes, and many other illustrious foreigners. Look and compare is the message of this exhibition (FF).

JAN VAN HOVE • DE STANDAARD • 13 MARCH

Van Eyck, the Flemish Primitives and the South is a rather long-winded title. It indicates that there is more on the menu than an overview of the painter of the Lamb of God. The subject-matter is the impact of Flemish painting and the reactions of French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese artists to it. Because this much is clear, the crystal-clear, true-to-nature reproduction of reality, which the Flemings displayed on their canvases fascinated their colleagues abroad and persuaded them to follow this example. The exhibition therefore offers not only a Flemish, but also a European story. That is a conscious choice. Till-Holger Borchert, the German art historian who put the collection together, did not want to remain stuck in a glorification of the past, but interprets a contemporary version. He situates Flemish painting in an eventful time—the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era—and an international context. He tries to reconstruct what went on in the studios, how the paintings were sold, how the fame of the Flemish masters spread. A crucial role was played by the Burgundian dukes and their relationships with other European courts. Van Eyck painted in Bruges for Filips de Goede, on their orders he travelled to Portugal and Spain to arrange a marriage. Whenever possible, the dukes used the art of the early Flemish painters to increase their prestige—after all, the paintings made an impression everywhere thanks to their high quality and innovative style. Via the courts the innovations of Van Eyck, Vander Weyden, Van der Goes, and others found their way in Europe. A second factor was the commercial ties between North and South. Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese merchants did good business in fifteenth-century Bruges and came into contact with the local school of painting there. They placed commissions and took the paintings back home with them, where they caused a sensation. In this way artists in Naples and Evora also came into contact

2001 was a good year for Interbrew

Last year was a good one for Leuven brewer Interbrew. Profit (+65%) and turnover (+29%) rose sharply and there were several successful acquisitions abroad. In the case of the UK’s Bass Brewers Interbrew got what it wanted via a legal battle and on the German market Interbrew took its first steps with the otherwise successful takeovers of Beck’s and Diebels. This year will be the year of integration, claims Chairman Everaert in De Morgen (14 March). In the UK Whitbread and Bass must be attuned to one another, in Germany that is the case for Beck’s and Diebels. And yet external growth is not being completely precluded this year. Interbrew has taken its first steps in Spain and has its eye on a Thai brewer. The impressive acquisitions mean Interbrew is now the second largest brewer in the world in terms of volume of beer produced, behind Budweiser, but ahead of Heineken.

YEAR RESULTS INTERBREW

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<th></th>
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<td>7,303</td>
<td>5,657</td>
<td>+29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oper. profit</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>+65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net profit</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>-964</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In millions of euro*
with the Flemish ars nova. As a result, a small region like Flanders exerted an influence on the whole of Europe. Even the Italian painters, who in the fifteenth century reached an enviable level, were seduced and told their friends about it. This whole artistic exchange became an extraordinarily fascinating process and this is precisely what the exhibition in Bruges wants to show. Confrontation is the watchword.

WWW.BRUGGE2002.BE

DIARY

MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE

• 20 February until 17 November: Brugges 2002, Cultural Capital of Europe
info: 070/22.33.02 www.brugge2002.be
22 March to 23 April: Jan Fabre, The Swan’s Lake, Concertgebouw, Bruges
22 March: Jazz! Greetings from Mercury, De Werf, Bruges
6 to 15 March: Jan Lauwers & Neeccompamy, Images of Affection, theatre, in English, Kaatheaterstudio’s Brussel; info: 02/201.59.99 www.kaattheater.be
20 March: Spreekstukkelkwartet with Teodoro Anzelotti (accordeon) with compositions by Pintscher, Veermersch and Scannella, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 04/238.24.28 www.desingel.be
• 14 to 24 March: Cinema Novo Festival, Bruges, info: 050/33.54.86 www.cinema-manovo.be
• 21 March: ITUS with compositions by Carter, Mochikuzi and Maresz, Kaatheater, Brussels; info: 02/201.59.99 www.kaattheater.be
• 23 March: Tindersticks, Stadschouwburg, Kortrijk; info: 0900/26060
• 20 to 22 March: Pina Bausch and Tanztheater Wuppertal with Sigwald Kuijken, Johannes-Passie and Oratoria by H. Schultz; De Singel, Antwerp; info: 04/238.24.28 www.desingel.be
• 25 March: Prakaz Quartet and Qurien Vieren (Cello), F. Schubert, Der Tod und das Mädchen and Quintet in C, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 04/238.24.28 www.desingel.be
• 26 to 30 March: Vooruit Geluid Festival, De Vooruit, Ghent; info: 09/267.24.24 www.vooruit.be
• 22/23 March: Zuiderpershuis Antwerp: Steely Pan (contemporary music) info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
• 27 March: La Petite Bande conducted by Jan Van Imschoot, Steve Anderlechts – in search of art in Africa, photo exhibition, Etnografisches Museum, Antwerp, info: 03/220.86.00
• 26 to 29 March: William Forsythe and Pina Bausch and William Forsythe and Total Techomeze, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 04/238.24.28 www.desingel.be
• 25 March: Joe Lovana Trio (jazz), CC Luchtab, Antwerp; info: 03/543.90.33
• 27 March: Lenny Popkins Trio (jazz), Cha teua Vilaan XIII; info: 089/76.97.97
• 25, 26 and 27 March: Flemish Radio Choir with music by Ligeti, Chapd Romaanse Poort, Leuven/Chapel O.L.Vrouw van Blindeneks, Bruges and SMAK, Ghent; info: 016/29.41.91
• 25 March: Bilal, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be
• 28 March: Cachato Lopez, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abcon certs.be
• 29 March: The Cranberries, Vost National, Brussels; info: 0900/26060
• 29 March: Mariza, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be
• 28 March: Raga’s for the evening, Vilayat Khan (sitar) & Ensemble, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28
• Until 30 March: Frankie & Johnny, Women’s voices, exhibitions, work shops and concerts with Amy Kota (Ma), Ulia Baybousinova, Sahila Dalotsheva, Feghana (Central Asia) and Noche Latina with Tot Luis Nymphesina, Barbara Luna and Lila Downs, Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp; info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
• Until 30 March: 20th Festival of the Horror Movie, Passage 44, Cinema Nova, Film museum and Kulturkafeef VUB, Brussels; info: 02/204.00.13 www.bff.org.

EXPO

• Until 2 June: 2002: Brains in action, exhibition, Museum of Natural Sciences, Brussels; info: 02/627.42.52 www.natuurwetenschappen.be
• Until 2 June: About The Head, exhibition, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent; info: 09/216.35.95 www.fracarita.be
• Until 24 March: Woman’s business – Business Women, exhibition, St-Pietersabdij, Ghent; info: 09/243.97.30
• Until 31 March: Frans Odebrechts – in search of art in Africa, photo exhibition, Etnografisches Museum, Antwerp, info: 03/220.86.00
• Until 31 March: Joseph van Imschoot, Steven Aalders and Yshai Jusidman, SMAK, Antwerp; info: 09/225.24.25 www.vlaamseopera.be
• Until 30 March: Fashion, exhibition, Stadsschouwburg, Brussels; info: 02/279.64.34 www.antwerpen.be/cultuur/kmska
• Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition, KMSK, Antwerp; info: 02/238.78.99 www.antwerpen.be/cultuur/kmska
• Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.psks.be
• Until 12 May: Muiba exhibitions: Guy Mees, Dimitri Vangrunderbeek and Paul de Vree, Antwerp; info: 03/238.59.60 www.antwerpen.be/cultuur/kmska
• Until 26 March: Elke Boon, Spots and Foam, photo and video exhibition, De Witte Zaal, Ghent; info: 09/225.42.90
• Until April: Erwin Olaf, Paradise 2001, Photo Exhibition, CC Scharpoort, Knokke-Heist
• Until 1 April: Eurantica Brussel 02, Antiques Fair, Brussels Expo, Heizel; info: 0800/30.007 www.artexis.com
• Until 21 April: Seen from outside: Flanders Opera in Ghent, exhibition, City Hall, Brussels; info: 02/279.64.34
• Until 26 May: James Wellin Abstract, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.psks.be

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Museum Esene, info: 02/515.64.21
• Until 12 April: The non-conformist city by Luc Deleu, exhibition on urban design, Mercator Gallery, Antwerp; info: 03/248.24.28
• Until November: Living Tomorrow, wherever visions meet, the house of the future, Vilvoorde; info: www.livtvom.be
• Until 21 April: Bert De Beule & Honour d’O, exhibition, MUHK, Antwerp; info: 03/238.59.60
• Until 14 April: Berlinda Bruckecke, les liedjett en timwerk, exhibition, Caemerskooster, Ghent (Patershol), info: 09/269.29.10
• Until 23 April: Francky Can, Jan Declerck/Fred Verhors, Patrick de Spiegelear, exhibition, De Zwaerte Panter, Antwerp; info: 03/233.13.45
• Until 26 March: Fashion Designers, exhibition Goethe-Institut Intern Nationales Brussels; info: 02/230.39.70
• Until 13 May: M. Brugges 2002: exhibition, Attachment, ±, contemporary art, Nemo&school

Until 30 June: Jan Van Eyck, The Flemish Primitives and the South, Groeningemuseum, Bruges
• Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition, KMSK, Antwerp; info: 02/238.78.99 www.antwerpen.be/cultuur/kmska
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