Dewael and Dua in clinch over vulnerable areas

A row has broken out between the Flemish Minister for Agriculture and the Environment, Vera Dua (Agalev) and Minister-President Dewael (VLD). Dua is re-proaching Dewael for taking steps in her field without first consulting her. A lack of collegiality, in short. The point for discussion is the demarcation of vulnerable areas, where stricter fertilising standards apply. Dua wants to designate 54% of Flanders as vulnerable area. Dewael, who under pressure from farmers' demonstrations and after consulting with the Farmers' Union (Boerenbond) and the General Farmers' Syndicate (ABS) is openly siding with the farmers, is disputing the vulnerability of a number of areas and calling for new measurements. But Dua has a strong argument. The European Commission wants to cite Belgium (and therefore also Flanders) because it was too late in transposing the European Nitrate Directive (maximum of 50 mg nitrate per litre of water) and because the map of vulnerable areas is still not forthcoming. Dua says that a citation can still be avoided if the definitive demarcation of the areas is completed quickly. (FF)

BART DOBBELAERE • DE STANDAARD • 22 MAART

What is Dewael thinking? That Dua must step down from her 54% vulnerable areas. Only those areas with sufficient measurements may be vulnerable. Nothing may yet be decided as regards the other areas. ‘One is innocent until proven guilty,’ says Dewael. ‘Behind every area are farmers and their families,’ says the leader of the government. The fact that his province of Limburg also contains many vulnerable areas may have something to do with this. Dua reacted angrily. What is more, Europe is on her side. Europe has warned Flanders on several occasions to get on and transpose the Nitrate Directive. In any event, Flanders was supposed to have finished its map of vulnerable areas by the end of 2001. Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, for example, have done their homework. They have designated their entire territory as vulnerable and are requesting exceptions. Dua wants to go for 54% and request exceptions afterwards. If Dewael still wants less than 54%, he will have little success with Europe, says Dua. On top of that he is thwarting our efforts to request exceptions. (Bart Dobbelaere)

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INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation, forgiveness, tolerance. Those were the key concepts of the resolution on the war past which was ratified on 20 March after a remarkably serene debate in the Flemish Parliament. But reconciliation is not as simple as that. Admitting guilt is an essential step, the authors of the resolution found. ‘For all those who admit their guilt during the Second World War, we must be prepared to adopt a tolerant, understanding and forgiving stance,’ states the resolution. The lapses of the repression after the war are also recognised, but they are not as serious as collaboration. In the second part of the resolution the Flemish Parliament says that the memory of the war past must be kept alive to avoid repetitions. It also contains a vicious swipe at ‘organised intolerance’ and undemocratic opinions such as ‘Eigen Volk Eerst’ (Own people first, well-known Vlaams Blok slogan). De Morgen (21 March) regrets the fact that the Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, successor to the Volksunie, abstained from the vote. The symbol of a resolution supported by all the democratic parties is diminished as a result, De Morgen feels. The N-VA is also acting foolishly in terms of its political strategy, the newspaper feels. It is paying too much heed to the far-right rabble-rousers it has enticed away from the Blok and in so doing is frightening off a moderate public. The N-VA does not believe that individual guilt must be admitted, and instead is calling for collective atonement for the victims of repression. The Vlaams Blok is doing likewise and voted against the resolution for an obvious reason. The party feels that it is simply being stigmatised in the resolution. Gazet van Antwerpen (21 March) wonders why the warning against right-wing extremism had to be laid on so thickly. That is psychologically counter-productive as far as reconciliation is concerned, the newspaper feels. Nevertheless, an important step towards reconciliation has been taken, most commentators feel. Together with the initiative-taker Norbert De Batselier (Chairman of the Flemish Parliament, Sp.a) they are now waiting hopefully for a similar signal from the French-speaking side.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
Flemish government says no to ratification

Last year the Council of Europe sent Swiss politician Lily Nabholz-Haidegger to Belgium following a complaint by the radical Francophone FDF MP, Georges Clerfayt. Her task was to investigate whether there are actually minorities here and if so, whether they are adequately protected. After months of investigative work Nabholz-Haidegger finally published her report. At national level only the German-speakers form a minority, whereas at regional level the French-speakers in the Dutch-and German-speaking regions and the Dutch national minorities in the French-speaking region must be considered minorities, she concluded. The report, which was approved on 18 March by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Council of Europe, also contains a number of recommendations. It recommends that Belgium ratify the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities without further delay. For years the Belgian government has made this ratification dependent on internal agreement on the term ‘minority’ and feels that such ratification must not breach constitutional provisions on the State reform and existing language legislation. The report also recommends that the Flemish and French Communities urgently conclude a cultural co-operation agreement and also open Francophone schools in the six Flemish municipalities around Brussels with facilities for French-speakers to French-speakers from outside these municipalities. The Flemish delegates on the Committee succeeded in adding the recommendation to make teaching of the second national language compulsory once more. Nabholz-Haidegger is not the first politician to be sent to Belgium with such an investigative brief. In 1998 her compatriot Dumeni Columberg was given an identical task, also following a complaint by FDF member Clerfayt. At the time the report was toned down significantly by the Council of Europe. In the last week of April the Nabholz report will be voted on in the Plenary Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council. If the Assembly approves the Nabholz report unchanged, the Flemish Parliament will still not ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, says the Flemish Minister for Internal Affairs, Paul van Grembergen (Spirit). In Flanders there are no minorities, runs the standpoint of the entire Flemish government. Meanwhile, it sent former State Secretary Vic Ancaux (Spirit) as a lobbyist to the Council of Europe (FF).

PETER DE BACKER • HET NIEUWSBLAD • 18 MARCH

For Minister President Dewael things will not get that bad: ‘How could the rights of the Francophones be extended? That needs a two-thirds majority in the Federal Parliament, and that will never happen.’ Nevertheless, the Flemish government feels sufficiently strongly about the whole thing to send Vic Ancaux as envoy to members of the Council of Europe. ‘We are only doing that to get our arguments across to the Council correctly. I have met Mrs Nabholz-Haidegger and she seemed very biased to me,’ says Dewael. She knew in advance what the end result would be. But she is ignoring the fact that here in Belgium a regulation has been developed over the years, step by step, including facilities for Francophones. ‘Dewael refers with satisfaction to Louis Michel (the most influential Francophone politician in the government, ed.). The PRL leader had announced from Barcelona that the report did not need to threaten community peace. ‘He also said there were much more important matters to deal with. That seems to me to be the only sensible reaction.’

Opinion

STEFAN HUYSENTRUYT • DE FINANCIËL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 19 MARCH

Toning down the Nabholz report may well limit the damage, but it cannot undo it. The Swiss woman is reinforcing the image of Flanders as an extremely intolerant region, an image that has been carefully cultivated abroad by the Francophones and is reinforced with every election victory of the Vlaams Blok. An offensive, not a defensive, strategy is need to counter this image. The Flemish government must explain, uncomplicatedly and if necessary to the nth degree, why Flanders is not intolerant. And that explanation is simple: the Convention for the Protection of Minorities only concerns national minorities, and in Belgium apart from the German-speakers there are none of these, as even Nabholz admits. Regional minorities, which she is concerned with, are not mentioned in the Convention. National minorities can only exist in Flanders if Flanders is a nation.

BART STURTEWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 18 MARCH

After two ludicrous Swiss attempts, a conclusion has finally been reached: no foreigner is able to understand even vaguely what the Belgian model of society looks like after 40 years of constitutional carpentry. The provisional end result appears ineffectual, but has a not-insignificant merit: no shots have been fired, no single section of the population is threatened with ethnic cleansing, the country is just as dull as it is prosperous. Anyone who prefers the flawless Yugoslav method, simply has to say. If troublemakers such as Clerfayt want to pull the foundations out from under this hideous structure, let them do so. Their action will lead directly to the end of the Belgian equilibrium. (...) There are much more serious social problems in this country than those that Mrs Nabholz-Haidegger came to study. There really are sections of the population that have a much harder time of it than the villa residents in the green Sint-Genesius-Rode and environs. It would be a crying shame if even more time and energy were devoted to that luxury problem, while the time bomb continues to tick in our inner cities.
Paedophile trial collapses like a pudding

Belgium is once again under the spell of a paedophile scandal. In the dock are six teachers and directors from the elite Saint-Pierre College in Uccle, who are accused of abusing boys aged between 4 and 15. The facts date from the period 1992-1997. The trial, which was characterised by highly emotional outbursts by the parents of the alleged victims, took a sensational turn on the second day, when the parents’ solicitor asked the chairman to summon no less a person than Cardinal Danneels as being civilly responsible. Danneels apparently received several letters from parents asking him to intervene, but always defended the school directors. On 19 March the indignation of the parents reached a high point when public prosecutor Pensiis declared that the parents of the alleged victims had never actually submitted hard evidence of the abuses. Four of the six accused were cleared by the public prosecutor. Against 1 teacher there is still a complaint of indecent assault and against 1 director a complaint of failing to assist persons in need. The statements of the children to psychiatrists and legal experts were inconsistent and the material evidence lacking, according to the prosecutor. The parents left the courtroom in protest. Because the parents’ solicitors suspect senior magistrates of meddling in the file to the benefit of the Uccle College, the renowned Examining Magistrate Damien Vandermeersch gave evidence. He stated he had never been hindered by his superiors. It now seems inevitable that the defendants will be acquitted. However, De Morgen is asking questions about Vandermeersch’s statement (FF).

Opinion

DOUGLAS DECONINCK • DE MORGEN • 20 MARCH

The paedophile case surrounding the Uccle College can be added to a long list that - rightly or wrongly - is put down to Dutroux hysteria. In his evidence Vandermeersch specified for the listeners that he had not experienced any intervention ‘outside what is in this file’. Now as luck would have it this file contains a great deal of information and the only one who could have placed these documents in it is Vandermeersch himself: letters from Procurator-General Van Oudenhove and Prosecutor Dejeimppe to the directors of the college in which they state as early as 1997 that no one need be concerned about the current investigation and that the directors ‘will be kept informed of any future steps Vandermeersch intends taking’. This trial did not revolve around what so many children at that time went through in that college. This was not a trial about paedophilia, but about magistrates and it was largely conducted by the subordinates of these magistrates. In the longer term Van Oudenhove and Dejeimppe may be held responsible for a new-and-serious dent in the confidence people have had in their legal system for so many years.

BART STURTEWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 21 MARCH

It was immediately clear that the burden of proof was not strong. In cases where child abuse is suspected, that is always a problem. That the defence immediately based its case on suspicions of influence by senior magistrates and the church was undoubtedly for want of stronger, more provable arguments. The suspicion of foul play reached its peak when the Counsel for the Prosecution dismissed the majority of the accusations as not adequately proven. Such dramatic turns raise the question of why such a weak file ever got to trial. But is it not better that the lack of evidence emerges at a public hearing? Imagine that such a weighty file was dismissed. Then it would become even more tempting to spread the theory of a cover-up operation.
Court journalist five days in the cells

On 15 March, court journalist José Masschelin was thrown into prison in Ghent. He stayed there for five days. According to Examining Magistrate Jacques Poppe, he had endangered 'the smooth running of the legal constitutional' by quoting verbatim in Het Laatste Nieuws from comments by the Dutch paedophile Joop Schafthuizen, who is accused of assaulting a thirteen-year-old boy. The boy's parents had allowed Masschelin to examine the criminal file. Together with the parents, Masschelin apparently violated the secrecy of the investigation. According to Dirk Voorhoof, Professor of Media Law at the University of Ghent, this is a breach of the Franchimont Act, which allows the victims of a crime to look into criminal files. The press reacted with considerable indignation. Colleagues protested on the stairs and rebelled with the 'leaker' to gain possession of the documents. 'And that could well be the case here,' suspects Voorhoof. 'It is probably also the reason why the court is being so thorough in this case. Examining Magistrate Poppe justified the detention by stating that there were contradictions between the statements of Masschelin and the parents. Also, Masschelin was apparently unaware of 'the seriousness of the acts committed'.

Opinion

LUC VAN DER KELEN • HET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 16 MARCH

It is not the court journalists that are endangering the country, but the courts. In past years the amateurs in the Public Prosecutor's Office mishandled major files so badly that the population all but rebelled. Every day there are magistrates and investigators who breach privacy. They leak, and are continuing to leak, with entire files ending up in the hands of the media. Often this happens to show suspects in a negative light. In some cases it appears to be a genuine vendetta against defendants.

YVES DESMET • DE MORGEN • 16 MARCH

These techniques of intimidation, for that is what they are, are placing an enormous burden on the freedom of the press to report on ongoing criminal investigations. Apparently in Ghent they only want the press to report on what they are told. The journalist in the role of honest recorder of the statements the Procurator-General wants to release. We can ensure those people in Ghent that as long as there is freedom of the press in Belgium, that will never, ever happen.

Antwerp publishes crime figures

FF EDITOR

Last year, 56,460 offences (+0.19%) were committed in Antwerp, of which 11,316 were cleared up. This was announced by the Chief Officer of Antwerp Police, Luc Lamine. The number of drug offences (-33%), indecency offences (-16%), housebreakings (-15%) and injuries and wounds (-7%) fell, but street crime rose sharply by almost 40%. And yet this rise must be put into perspective, claims De Morgen (21 March). A greater willingness on the part of victims to report crimes, more attention to the phenomenon from the police and the recording method can seriously affect the figures. Of the number of offenders caught, 56% were Belgian and 44% foreign. Among the foreigners, the Moroccans (25%) represent the most. The Vlaams Blok immediately seized the occasion to convene an extra meeting of the municipal council to discuss safety. On the occasion of the publication of the figures, Mayor Leona Detiège (SP.A) announced that she had reached an agreement with Federal Minister for Internal Affairs Antoine Duquesne for the recruitment of 115 additional police inspectors.

HOLD UPS IN 2000 AND 2001

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SOURCE: GVA
Almanij takes investment company Gevaert off the stock market

Almanij, the holding behind KBC, KB Lux, Almanin and Gevaert, announced that it was launching a public take-over bid for all 5,471,224 Gevaert shares it does not yet own. Almanij, which now holds 78.78% of the shares of Gevaert, is offering 48.10 euros per Gevaert share in cash, a bonus of 27.4% on top of the stock market price of 37.75 euros. The entire operation will cost Almanij 263 million euros. Because of the sharp drop in the share price it had become impossible for Gevaert to continue to obtain money from the stock market. Being quoted on the stock exchange therefore offered more disadvantages than advantages. In September 1997 Gevaert came under the aegis of Almanij. 1998 was another excellent year on the stock market, but since 1999, partly due to an extremely unfortunate investment of 200 million euros in the dashing German construction group Holzmann, the Gevaert share went downhill. The Gevaert holding has interests in, among others, Agfa-Gevaert, Philipp Holzmann, Telenet, Telerelay, Materialise, Remi Claey's Aluminium, VUM and Option (FF).

TOM PEETERS • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 20 MARCH

The take-over bid is unconditional. Almanij wants to acquire 100% of Gevaert and will also launch a compulsory buyout bid if it holds at least 95% of Gevaert’s capital after the first bid closes. ‘We are taking Gevaert off the stock market because being quoted became more and more of a burden than a blessing,’ says Ferdinand Verdonck, Managing Director of Almanij. The share price fell sharply over the past few months. It was almost impossible for Gevaert to continue to obtain capital from the stock market.’ Since its high point in February 1999, the Gevaert share lost almost 48%. At the start of this month the disagio, the difference between the stock market price and the intrinsic value of Gevaert, was 21.3%. The bid is close to Gevaert’s intrinsic value. At the beginning of March this was 48 euros, but in the past few days the Agfa-Gevaert share, in which Gevaert has 25%, rose sharply.

Even analysts feel able to side with the bid. ‘The bid is in cash and that is always attractive,’ says Loïc de Caters of Fortis Bank. ‘It is also close to the intrinsic value and simplifies the structure. With Almanij, KBC, KB Lux, Almancora (the family anchor holding behind Almanij) and Gevaert the group had five stock market listings. That is far too many. The question now is whether this operation is the advance bid for further streamlining within the Almanij group. In the past there was repeated speculation over a merger between Almanij and KBC or KBC and KB Lux. The delisting of Gevaert does not change the strategy at all. The investment company itself is continuing its strategy. That strategy changed in recent months. Gevaert is investing more in star shares and taking more interests in small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Almanij’s profits fall by one quarter

FF EDITORIAL TEAM

Last year Almanij saw its net profit drop by 25.6% to 689.8 million euros. The operational result lost 13% and finished up at 2.07 billion euros. This was no surprise, because the main participations, KBC, KB Lux, and Gevaert, had already announced their results for 2001. Last year the bank insurer KBC, in which Almanij has a participation of 68%, saw its profit fall by 12.3%. The profits of the Luxembourg subsidiary KB Lux, on the other hand, rose by 8.1%. The net result of the third major company, Gevaert, ended up heavily in the red. The holding posted a loss of 78.6 million euros, while one year earlier the profit was still 135.6 million euros. The main cause of this loss is the huge restructuring costs of the image group Agfa-Gevaert.

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SOURCE: TIJD-GRAPHICS

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SOURCE: CHAMBER DOCUMENTS
Telenet shareholders set up rescue operation

On 15 March some progress was finally made in the search for a solution to the financial worries of the Flemish telecommunications company, Telenet. On that day the management announced that the company was heading straight for a judicial settlement. The shareholders, who had already been engaged in intense negotiations for days, woke with a start. By 17 March an agreement had been reached. The American majority shareholder, the American Callahan, which is unable to come up with the 303 million euros for the takeover of Flemish cable, will see its participation drop from 54 to 24%. The mixed intermunicipal companies, which own the cable, made the rescue possible by granting a suspension of payment for 131 million euros. The shareholders, the cable companies, the Regional Investment Company of Flanders (GIMV) and a Financial Consortium with KBC, Lessius and Gevaert – will stump up 170 million in fresh funds and at the same time increase their participation in Telenet. For many municipalities, which have a share in a cable company and had counted on the income from the sale when drafting their budget, that is good news (FF).

PASCAL SERTYN/JOHAN RASKING • DE STANDAARD • 18 MARCH

The other shareholders are strengthening the company’s net assets by converting 500 million euros in paper into Telenet shares. Telenet’s principal shareholder, the American Callahan, is contributing a further 70 million euros in fresh capital, but is reducing its share in Telenet from 54 to 24%, as a consequence of the conversion of the paper (vendor notes) into shares. Callahan will, however, receive some compensation: warrants that will allow it to make additional purchases – at a later date and with a discount of 25% on Telenet’s value as stipulated last year when Callahan signed up (100 euros per share), up to 46% of the total. Electrabel is contributing 70 million euros in capital, thereby entering the shareholdership of Telenet. Via its partnership in the mixed intermunicipal companies Electrabel actually controls 11.3%. Fresh capital is forthcoming from the GIMV and the Financial Consortium, 15 million euros each, and from the pure intermunicipal companies (2 million euros). Banks and shareholders are also providing a bridging loan of 51 million euros. With 30%, the mixed intermunicipal companies will become the biggest shareholder in Telenet. They made the rescue possible by granting the firm a suspension of payment for 131 million euros. The amount, in instalments, plus interest, must be paid between October of this year and June of next year.

According to Telenet’s General Manager, Duco Sickinghe, Telenet’s finances have been put in order in the long term. The agreement is designed to clear the way to conclude the loan of 1.35 billion euros. The shareholders reason that the banks will now be much more accommodating. On top of this is the fact that a further 328 million euros must be found for the mixed cable companies. They granted a suspension of payment for that amount. The majority of this (195 million) must come from the completion of the 1.35 billion. For the rest (133 million) we are looking to amend the business plan so that we can find the money within the 1.35 billion”, says Sickinghe. Another option for the 328 million is to dip into the money that Telenet itself will generate. If no solution is found for the 133 million, the shareholders agreed, there will be a capital increase at the end of June 2003.

Contaminated figures on contaminated environment

When the World Economic Forum (WEF) published its environmental report on the state of the environment in 142 countries of the world, the national press was startled. Belgium figured in only 127th place in terms of environmental sustainability (environmental sustainability index) in the company of mainly African and Asian back-markers. Water and soil quality were disastrous, and we only reached 141st place. Those responsible for Flemish environmental policy promptly pointed to the report’s compilers. Alain Vande Lanoote, Environmental Manager of the Flemish water purification company Aquafin, checked the reliability of the figures and could not believe his eyes. Each year Flanders publishes a mass of information and figures on the quality of the environment, but these have never reached the WEF. There they are still using figures on the water quality in Flanders from the period 1991-1993. He went to check 9 measuring points that were used by the WEF for water quality in Flanders. This revealed that only 2 were really relevant to the quality of Flemish watercourses. Furthermore, for 100 of the 142 countries, the report appeared to possess hardly any information on water quality.

Vande Lanoote also noted that not only the WEF uses old and outdated information. The European Environmental Agency in Copenhagen also does so. On the EMA’s website, the figures for Belgium date from 1995 (FF).
Anno 02, the little brother of Brugge 2002

This year, West Flanders is very much under the cultural magnifying glass. The provincial capital, Bruges, is Cultural Capital of Europe and is celebrating that with an impressive range of international cultural events. However, Kortrijk, the eternal rival from the south of the province, has just as much reason to celebrate. Seven hundred years ago, in 1302, the Battle of Spurs took place there. According to tradition, an alliance of artisans from the Flemish towns and an army of French knights defeated. For the thriving economic region it is an opportunity to also put itself on the cultural map with the festival Anno '02. Because culture has been undervalued in the area for too long, claims General Coordinator, Luc Delrue (FF)

In spite of everything, Delrue and his colleagues have managed to create what for Flanders is a fairly unique cooperation between 15 towns and municipalities. 'Anno '02 must serve as a platform to increase the visibility of the region,' claims Delrue. 'We will provide a mix of what we in the trade call 'high' and 'low' culture,' says Delrue. Perhaps that mix is also the great strength of Anno '02. A good example are the Stijlstraten (Style Streets). In 5 streets in the same number of municipalities-Roeselare, Kuurne, Wevelgem, Izegem, and Bruges-residents of a district are opening their houses and gardens to young artists. For an entire weekend this neighbourhood will not only be the stage for arts, but also for a rejuvenating town party with music, sport, and public entertainment. In addition, Anno '02 is also a combination of events, long-running activities, and sustainable projects that will continue after 2002. The entire programme is built around six main themes. Kortrijk is the center for design and architecture. Indeed, in this town the Interior design fair "Biennale Interieur" is held every two years. The shop-window project was set up with the organisers of the Biennale. Young designers will exhibit in shop windows and public spaces in Kortrijk's inner city. The programme in Ypres plays on the peace theme. One high point will be 'Dead. lines', in the Flanders Fields museum, an exhibition on media, war, and propaganda in the twentieth century. In Roeselare and Tielt young people are preparing their own productions under professional guidance, which will end in a five-day young people's arts festival 2002 in Tielt. A fourth pillar of Anno '02 is the town parties. Thus, on Saturday 6 July in Kortrijk the 'GuldensporenSplash' will take place. Finally, there are the isolated events, such as the opening of 'Anno '02' on 23 March with the 'Bal Moderne extra large'. Brugge 2002 (budget: 25 million euro)
Focus on Flanders provides a weekly overview of articles from the Flemish press and appears in English, French and German. This newsletter is published by UItgeverij Lannoo nv, Kasteelstraat 97, 8700 Tielt and can also be obtained by e-mail.

Focus on Flanders • 16 March – 22 March 2001 • Number 11

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**MEDIA**

**MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE**

- **20 February until 17 November: Bruges 2002, Cultural Capital of Europe**
  - info: 070/22.33.02 www.brugge2002.be
  - Jan Fabre, The Swan’s Lake, Concertgebouw, Bruges
  - Until 29 March: Royal Ballet of Flanders, tour around Flanders

- **26 to 30 March: Vooruit Geluid Festival, with Trio Grande, Ellery Eskelin, Dave Douglas, Ictus-ensemble, Assif Matar and Moker Jazz Band De Vooruit, Ghent**

- **27 March: La Petite Bande conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken, Johannes-Passie and Oratorie by H. Schütz; De Singel, Antwerp**
  - info: 03/428.28.28 www.desingel.be

- **26 to 29 March: William Forsythe and Ballett Frankfurt, Artfact, dance; De Singel, Antwerp**
  - info: 03/428.28.28 www.desingel.be

- **27 March: Lenny Popkins Trio (jazz), Chateua Villain XIII; info: 089/76.97.97**

- **25, 26 and 27 March: Flemish Radio Choir with music by Ligeti, Chapel Romaanse Poort, Leuven/Chapel O.L.Vrouw van Blindeken, Bruges and SMK, Ghent**
  - info: 016/29.41.91

- **28 March: Caclait Lopez, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab-concerts.be**

- **28 March: The Cranberries, Vorst National, Brussels; info: 0900/26060**

- **29 March: Mariza, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab-concerts.be**

- **29 March: Raga’s for the evening, Vilayat Khan (sitar) & Ensemble, De Singel, Antwerp**
  - info: 03/428.28.28

- **Until 30 March: Festival Women’s voices, exhibitions, work shops and concerts with Ami Koita (Ma), Uljan Baybousinn, Sahiba Dolaletsheva, Feghana (Central Asia) and N Ochii, Lilia Latina with Tot La Memposina, Barbara Luna and Lila Downs, Zuidershuis, Antwerp**
  - info: www.zuidershuis.be

- **Until 30 March: 20th Festival of the Fantastic Movie, Passage 44, Cinema Nova, Filmfestival and Kulturfabriek VUB, Brussels**
  - info: 02/204.00.13 www.bff.org

- **4 and 5 April: Arco Renz, Think Me Thickness, dance, Kaaitheater, Brussels; info: 02/201.59.59 www.kaaitheater.be**

- **6 April: Le concert spirituel conducted by Hervé Niquet with Hervé Niquet and Messe pour Mr. Maury by MA Charpentier, De Singel, Antwerp**
  - info: 03/428.28.28 www.desingel.be

- **7 April: Belle Sebastion, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab-concerts.be**

- **8 April: Jean-Louis Murat, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab-concerts.be**

- **8 April: Mary J. Blige, Vorst National, Brussels; info: 0900/00991**


**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. Ghisi, Ghent; info: 09/216.35.95 www.fracarita.be**

- **Until 31 March: Frans Olibrecht’s – in search of art in Africa, photo exhibition, Ethnographical Museum, Antwerp; info: 03/220.86.00**

- **Until 14 April: Jan Van Imschoot, Steven Aalders and Yshai Jusidman, SMU House, Antwerp; info: 03/220.86.00**

- **Until 30 March: Focus: the search of art in Africa, photo exhibition, Etnographical Museum, Antwerp; info: 03/220.86.00**

- **Until 21 April: Primitives and the South, exhibition, Arentshuis, Bruges; info: 09/269.29.10**

- **Until 30 June: Juan Van Eyck, The Flemish Primitives and the South, Groeningemuseum, Bruges**

- **Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition, KM, Antwerp; info: 03/238.78.09 www.antwerpen.be/culturen/kmska**

- **Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.pskpba.be**

- **Until 12 May: Muha exhibitions: Guy Mees, Dimitri Vangrunderbeek and Paul de Vree, Antwerp; info: 023.238.59.60 www.guymees.com**

- **Until 30 March: Elke Boon, Spots and Foam, photo and video exhibition, De Witte Zaal, Ghent; info: 09/225.42.90**

- **April: Erwin Olaf, Paradise 2001, Photo Exhibition, CC Scharpoord, Knokke-Heist**

- **Until 1 April: Eurantica Brussels 02, Antiques Fair, Brussels Expo, Heizel; info: 0800/30.007 www.artexiss.com**

- **Until 21 April: Seen from outside: Flanders Opera in Ghent, exhibition; info: 02/238.59.60 www.guymees.com**

- **Until 18 July: Rubens and the Flemish Baroque painters, exhibition, City Hall, Brussels; info: 02/279.64.34**

- **Until 26 May: James Welling: Abstract, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.pskpba.be**

- **Until 19 April: From Dürrer to Goya, exhibition with graphic work by Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Goya, Ribera, Piranesi and others; Instituto Cervantes, Brussels; info: 02/737.01.90 www.bruselas.cervantes.es**

- **Until 21 April: William Christenberry, Disappearing Places, PSK, Antichambres, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.pskpba.be**

- **Until 14 April: Aphrodite and Hermes, exhibition by sculptor Johan Tahon, CC Elzenveld, Antwerp**

- **Until 14 July: Silver work by the De Vecchi Family, Provincial Museum Sterckshof-Zilvercentrum, Antwerp; info: 03/360.52.50**