Europe opens investigation into Flemish health care insurance

The Flemish health care insurance scheme is an initiative of which the Government of Flanders and the Minister for Welfare Mieke Vogels (Agalev) are keen to extol. It offers a full or partial reimbursement for home care and nursing in recognised centres or institutions, and is aimed in particular at elderly persons in need of care. For that matter, it is a useful instrument for tracing and combating pauperisation, in the opinion of Guy Peeters, Chairman of the Socialist Mutual Insurance Fund (Belang van Limburg, 30 April). Everyone who lives in Flanders or Brussels and has been paying social security contributions there for five years, can become a member upon payment of a contribution of 10 euros. The insurance scheme is a success. In fact the system is being called upon to such a degree that the government is now beginning to wonder how the almost empty care coffers will be replenished in the near future. However, European storm-clouds are gathering over the system’s legality (FF).

Johan Corthoutds • De Morgen • 3 May

The European Commission has announced that it is opening an investigation into the legality of the health care insurance scheme. After all, it considers care insurance as a supplement to ordinary health insurance. Consequently everyone working in Flanders should be given the opportunity to take part in it, even without payment. This would include, for example, Dutch nationals crossing the border to their place of work and Walloons with a job in Flanders. European commissioner Diamantopoulou has asked for a more detailed explanation from the Flemish Minister for Welfare Mieke Vogels (Agalev), who has two months in which to reply. ‘We had in fact anticipated that problems might arise. The obligation concerning the place of residence, which is applicable to the care insurance scheme, would constitute an exception to the European rules,’ said Guido Steenkiste, advisor to Vogels. And French-speakers and Dutch-speakers? ‘They can only join if they live in Flanders or in Brussels.’

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INTRODUCTION

The agreement on the constituencies and the reform of the Senate is the last major decision to be taken by the Purple-green government in this period of office, in the opinion of De Financiën-Economische Tijd (2 May). It is also an electoral rewarding agreement for the parties in power. The larger constituencies ensure that they can deploy their figureheads and thereby draw maximum profit from the greater media exposure that ministerial office simply produces. There seem to be many indications that the parties are indeed busy taking up their positions. The New Christian Democrats, who had had enough of the CD&V, are itching to be assimilated into the VLD once and for all. Of course they would like this to be accomplished before the party’s electoral lists are being drawn up. The VLD is also making overtures to Spirit, that other party that risks ending up below the 5% threshold, although they are not being thanked for their troubles by the Spirit chairperson Annemie Vande Casteele. In the home stretch to the elections, the VLD is making things even more awkward for the Greens in respect of the environmental policy to be pursued. If it were up to Minister-President Dewael, Environment Minister Du’s manuring and waste policy should be rather less green. The Socialists used Labour Day to launch their social electoral programme. The abolition of the household waste tax, free travel by train to and from the place of work, and an increase in minimum pensions are the new ideas. Security, too, is no longer taboo. The message now is that this is a public service just like any other, akin to health care or road safety. For the Social Democrats are the guardians of these public services, according to Frank Vandenbroucke in De Standaard (30 April). But the central theme of the Labour Day speeches on 1 May was the fight against the extreme right in Europe and the way in which to stem its tide. The answer was unanimous: a left-wing course, a back-to-the-roots approach, and solidarity, away from the centre. Are the socialists simply more socialist in the run-up to 15 June 2003, just as the Liberals become more liberal and the Greens greener? No, this is more than an electoral turn-around, according to De Standaard (2 May). The fathers of the third option, who said that the gulf between right and left could be bridged, have fallen from their throne: Wim Kok in the Netherlands, but especially Tony Blair, who also took the rap in many a speech in Flanders.

Frank Vandeveeye | editor in chief
VLD and NCD take a decisive step towards a merger

On Saturday, the New Christian Democracy (Nieuwe Christen Democratie), a movement of Christian Democrats that has broken away from the CD&V, took an initial decisive step towards integration into the liberal VLD, or rather the ‘liberal and open people’s party’ that will be christened in November. ‘Alea iacta est, the die has been cast,’ said the NCD leader and former CVP Chairman Johan Van Hecke, when he presented the project at the VLD headquarters on 29 April. The NCD and the VLD approved a joint ‘declaration of commitment’. From now on, five NCD members (Johan Van Hecke, Karel Pinxten, Reginald Moreels, Anne-mie Turtelboom, and Luc Willems) will have a seat in the VLD’s party executive with an advisory vote. The next step will be a joint conference on the party platform in November, which is being prepared by a working group of NCD and VLD members. In 2003, they will be presenting themselves to the electorate as a single political formation (FF).

RUUD GOOSSENS • DE MORGEN • 30 APRIL

Since the intriguing in (right-wing) VLD circles has increased in recent weeks and since Van Hecke and Co. have realised that the foreplay has gone on long enough, the New Christian Democrats are now putting all their eggs in the basket of Karel De Gucht’s party. At the recent series of workshops, the former CVP members were able to familiarise themselves with the VLD culture, and work out whether there really were any ideological differences. The reflections on ideological content in particular had to counter the impression that the whole transfer had already been in the bag from the word go. However, just about all those involved gradually realised that it was inadvisable to maintain the uncertainty any longer. The basic principles of the joint declaration of commitment are freedom, responsibility, solidarity, and mutual respect. ‘Those are the VLD’s basic values,’ De Gucht declared. ‘But of course account has also been taken of the specific concerns of the NCD people, whose involvement in politics is coloured by a Christian-Democratic background.’ So Van Hecke stressed that the difference between believers and non-believers was a political fault line that had been surpassed, and that the importance of the social organisations ought not to be underestimated. The end goal is to combat the fragmentation of the political landscape. In the elections the Christian Democrats of NCD will be able to present themselves ‘recognisably’ to the voters. But De Gucht was at pains to stress that the name VLD would remain intact. The liberal chairperson feels that it would be folly to change a ‘name that is well known to the voters. But De Gucht also declared. ‘But of course account has been taken of the specific content.’ According to De Gucht, the NCD will become a ‘political movement’ within the fold of the Flemish Liberals, as is permitted by Article 7 of the statutes, but the VLD will remain a party with one chairman, one executive and one programme.

Opinion

FRANS DE SMET • HET NIEUWSBLAD • 30 APRIL

Van Hecke and his supporters are clearly not liberals. As Christian-Democrats they are further removed from the VLD than, say, free-thinking social democrats. Furthermore, the suspicion of opportunism hangs over them. Why would a frustrated but genuine CVP member such as former minister Karel Pinxten (who was forced to resign as Minister for Agriculture during the dioxin crisis, ed.) become a VLD member, unless he were given the promise of being able to hold ministerial office again? This personal redistribution will not serve the VLD well. The beautifying of the party façade with Flemish, Liberal-left or Christian finery, in which only those predisposed to Van Hecke are given the right to form a tendency within the party, only serves to foster more scheming behind that façade.

ERIC DONCKIER • HET BELANG VAN LIMBURG • 30 APRIL

The wedding will go ahead come what may, and the couple will be called VLD. This is because the NCD cannot go back to its former partner CD&V, because the NCD in itself is too small to stand on its own two feet, and because the NCD, despite being so modest, can give the VLD just enough votes for the latter to remain the largest party in Flanders and thus retain the right to lead the dance. With the latter point in mind, the possibility of this turning into a mariage à trois, with Spirit-or at least a part of Spirit-soon joining the VLD and the NCD, cannot be ruled out. Spirit will shortly be producing an advertising campaign aimed at finally securing some name recognition. If this is successful, Spirit might go to the voters on its own. If it is not successful, there is no doubt that Spirit, or at least a number of Spirit members, will join the VLD.

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focus on FLANDERS • 27 April - 3 May 2002 • Number 16
NMBS chief executive resigns after one week

The new chief executive officer at the NMBS/SNCB, Christian Heinzmann, has lasted barely a week in the post. ‘Severe pressure, intimidation, threats, and total obstruction from the management and the trade union representatives’ prompted him to conclude that the job was an impossible assignment. He clarified this somewhat on 2 May, saying that in particular ‘the French-speaking trade union milieu didn’t like the idea of my arrival. There were also people in the lower levels of management at the NMBS/SNCB who told me that I didn’t stand a chance and that I wouldn’t last long’. But most Flemish newspapers pointed out that the heavily politicised structure in the upper echelons of the railways, as this has been worked out in the new NMBS/SNCB Act, was at the root of Heinzmann’s decision. Heinzmann could not put together his management committees himself, as he had been promised, and moreover a second signature, that of general manager Vincent Bourlard, a PS man, was needed for all infrastructure work. Heinzmann, who had been retained after a selection procedure lasting scarcely three days by head-hunting bureau Korn/Ferry, now goes back to the Luxembourg airline Luxair. An insider from the head-hunting world had already denounced the rapid appointment in Trends (2 May) before his resignation was made public (FF).

FRANS CROLS/LUC HUYSMANS • TRENDS • 2 MAY
‘I find it quite simply scandalous that the head-hunter brings in this Heinzmann a few months before election fever takes hold. After the summer nobody will be interested in the NMBS/SNCB and transport minister Isabelle Durant (Ecolo) anymore. Then Heinzmann will be easy prey, and people in political circles know that. The Rue de la Loi has wantonly let Heinzmann get caught up in all this for the sake of peace and quiet and so as to be shot of a problem for a while’.

Opinion

YVES DESMET • DE MORGEN • 2 MAY
According to insiders, there are two reasons playing a role in Heinzmann’s resignation. The first is the barely concealed declaration of war by the Walloon wing of the Socialist trade union, which for some time has considered the railways as a private province and feared that the new boss would reduce the unions’ exaggerated position of power. The second, even more important reason is that the promises made were not kept. Heinzmann had asked for and been promised carte blanche to be able to put together a management committee of experts around him, a classic way of relaunching a company in the private sector. This did not happen. A front man from the PS was not only parachuted into the management committee but was also given so much autonomy there that there was reportedly little Heinzmann could do about it. The whole business once again illustrates the enormous cultural divide between Flanders and Wallonia, which resurfaces time and again in the management of the civil service and public administrations.

Opposition calls for resignation of minister Durant

The Flemish opposition parties CD&V and NVA are demanding the immediate resignation of transport minister Isabelle Durant (Ecolo). They criticise her bungling in the handling of the NMBS/SNCB dossier. The trade unions are reacting with surprise at Heinzmann’s statements. The Socialist ACOD claims that there had never been any talks with Heinzmann, but is asking that the former managing director, Etienne Schouppe, take over at the helm again. According to the Christian trade union, there is now a legal vacuum at the NMBS/SNCB, and Minister Durant would be well advised to stand down. However, the Liberal/Socialist/Green coalition continues to support Durant (FF).

IVAN BROECKMEIER • DE FINANCIËLE-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 2 MAY
Whatever the real reason for his premature resignation, Heinzmann can go back to Luxair. For Durant, there is no escape route. The Green minister doggedly maintained yesterday that she did not see how Heinzmann’s flight could have any consequences for her position. In reality, of course, she is wounded game. The opposition, which had already severely criticised the vaudeville surrounding the NMBS/SNCB, smelt blood yesterday. According to the political customs, it should indeed be extremely difficult for Durant to be kept on. But the liquidation and overly hasty replacement of Schouppe are of course decisions that were approved by the entire government. At the end of the day, the Green minister has largely played the role of ‘useful idiot’ for the Liberals, who were equally eager to see the back of Schouppe, and the Socialists, who conveniently upped the price for his departure. What is more, Durant was under the direct supervision of Prime Minister Verhofstadt throughout the procedure. It was therefore no surprise that yesterday it already became apparent that the government was maintaining its confidence in Durant. But the fact that the federal Ecolo figurehead has again suffered some serious collateral damage is certainly not going to be lamented by PS Chairman Elio di Rupo and MR figurehead Louis Michel. At the moment the staff of a head-hunting agency are again working overtime.
Pros and cons of reform electoral law and of Senate

After a marathon meeting, the Liberal/Socialist/Green majority reached an agreement on the morning of Friday 26 April on the reform of the electoral law and the new division of tasks between the Lower Chamber and the Senate. The federal Lower Chamber becomes the indisputable epicentre of political power and gains 50 extra members. The Senate loses its legislative power with the exception of constitutional and community affairs, and becomes ‘an assembly of the Communities’. It will have 70 representatives, made up of 35 from the Flemish Community and Region, and 35 from the French-speaking Community and region. For this reform of the Senate, the current government has to draw up a list of the articles of the constitution that need to be amended, and have this approved by a simple majority by April 2003. The actual amendment to the constitution will take place in the next period of office, and will call for a two-thirds majority (in the Senate, too). This means that, according to the Liberal/Socialist/Green coalition’s plans, the Senate will be elected for the last time in 2003 in a Flemish and Walloon constituency (and a special arrangement for Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde).

The discussion within the government on the reform of the electoral law focused largely on Brabant, and then mainly on the French-speaking side. From Nivelles, Louis Michel (MR) also wanted to be able to stand as a candidate in Brussels (the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde electoral district), but ran up against fierce opposition from the PS. In the end the two constituencies are to remain separate. On the Flemish side, there is to be one Dutch-speaking list for the districts of Leuven and Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, so that figureheads such as Frank Vandenbroucke (SP.A), Magda Aelvoet (Agalev) and Rik Daems (VLD), among others, can also stand for election in Brussels. The major-
Opinion

LUK VAN DER KLEN • HET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 27 APRIL

The clever idea of pairing off the Flemish residents of Brussels with the residents of Flemish Brabant in the elections is just what we want. Leuven is not letting Brussels go. It is the life insurance of the Flemish residents of Brussels, the certainty that Flanders is not dropping them. This is a very important Flemish achievement. Of course, something is given in exchange for this, but that does not weigh very heavily against the extra clout that the Flemish residents of Brussels are being given.

MARK DEWEERDT • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 27 APRIL

The reformed Senate is to be composed on the basis of equal representation. The Flemish majority is being eliminated. On top of the equal representation in the council of ministers and the special majority rules (a majority within each community for the voting of laws concerning state reform, ed.), the French speakers are getting an additional blocking mechanism. Both from the Flemish viewpoint and for the sake of sound decision making, that is a bad thing. The generalisation of provincial constituencies for the elections to the Lower Chamber does not have any consequences for the distribution of seats. The introduction of a provincial electoral threshold of 5% needs to be justified. The abolition of the grouping of electoral rest votes (‘apparentering’) does away with the capricious seat allocation across the constituencies. The voter sees more clearly what happens with his or her vote. Politicians are given greater career security. The reintroduction of successors, abolished a year and a half ago in order to give people greater participation, is also to the good of political career planning.

The division into provincial constituencies is not extended to Flemish Brabant, because the French speakers were opposed to the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency being split up. The Flemish parties in office have missed an opportunity to realise that old Flemish demand. The bilingual constituency, which is spread over two regions, is totally at odds with the principle of territoriality on which the federal state is built.

BART BRINKMAN • DE STANDAARD • 27 APRIL

It is a fair agreement. Provincial constituencies and an electoral threshold form a dam against political fragmentation and suffocate the accursed grouping of electoral lists. It encourages politicians to look further afield than their own barony. Moreover, the election of 50 national members of parliament will provide for a guaranteed spectacle. Critics condemn this craving for telegenic individualisation that overshadows the party manifestos. But in this media society, this arouses the voter’s interest in the electoral battle. Belgium is an uncommonly complicated country, so every simplification of its institutions should be applauded. It increases people’s involvement in politics.

Labour Day

Jerk to the left in May Day speeches

In the May Day speeches to mark Labour Day, the socialist big guns each placed emphasis on their own particular points. SPA chairman Patrick Janssens argued in favour of genuinely free education for everyone, also, and in particular, in technical and vocational training. Minister Steve Stevaert announced that, after having made public transport free, he now also wanted to abolish the household waste tax, and federal Minister for Social Affairs Vandebroucke redefined the social democrats as the guardians of public services, be it health care, social security, road safety or, yes, security. Speaking in Ostend, the federal Minister for the Budget Vande Lanotte reassured pensioners. Enough resources will be placed in his ‘Silver Fund’ to ensure that pensions can continue to be paid. Finally, in Leuven the chairperson of the socialist trade union ABVV, Mia De Vits, called upon the Socialist party to foster a more left-wing image. In fact, this proved to be the common denominator in all the addresses. The message, one year before the next elections and in the wake of the numerous defeats suffered by social democrats throughout Europe, was that social democracy has to abandon the centre. The third option appears to be buried. Tony Blair himself was toppled from his pedestal in the May Day speeches (FF).

Opinion

GUY TEGENBOS • DE STANDAARD • 2 MAY

The socialist party is still dominated by technocratically oriented leaders who are out for a share in government. They want to strengthen their position in the elections, they know how to choose their messages very strategically according to that, but they always speak in limited terms: they want to be non-committal, they know that they will have to make compromises tomorrow in order to be able to govern.

Is this leftward movement of the left a good thing? It is difficult to work out, but there is something to be said for it. The jostling in the political centre is getting to be far too much, and the redistribution operations and defecting movements under way are making this throng all the greater. A bit more clarity and a bit more profiling can do no harm. But whether this will provide real clarity, and thereafter also better policy-and that’s what it’s all about at the end of the day-is impossible to predict as yet. One condition for this is that this new but confused policy-and that’s what it’s all about at the end of the day-is impossible to predict as yet. One condition for this is that this new but confused body of thought must therefore take shape to some extent. Vandebroucke made an attempt to this end by bringing the concept of public services to the fore, as a central point. This could bridge the gap between a social approach for the poorest-which attracts voters-and a social approach for everyone-which is too expensive. But that line of thought still has to ripen, if it wants to be in a position to appeal to a larger group of voters.
Agreement on demarcation of vulnerable areas

The Green Minister for Agriculture Vera Dua (Agalev) and the Flemish Minister-President Patrick Dewael (VLD) have reached an agreement on the demarcation of the vulnerable areas, where the manuring standards for farmers have to be stricter. Dua had originally marked out 54% of the surface area of farming land as vulnerable areas. This was met with vigorous protests from the farmers’ organisations. Dewael was receptive to the farmers’ arguments and advocated new measurements. In the end, 46.6%, or 311,500 ha, has still been retained as vulnerable areas. In those areas, manure has been firmly established that nitrate contamination is caused by the manuring of fields and meadows. This autumn a refined measuring network will come into operation, which measures the nitrate levels not only in the surface water, but also in the shallow groundwater. On the basis of these measurements, the map of vulnerable areas will then be adapted every year. Given that this measuring network covers the whole of Flanders, the whole of Flanders could potentially be declared vulnerable. This is the most extreme consequence of the new measurements that the farmers themselves had asked for. As a result, they appear now to have their fate largely in their own hands (FF).

ANTOON WOUTERS • DE STANDAARD • 30 APRIL

If the farmers flout the manuring rules or do not manure at the most suitable times, they will only have themselves to blame if their area becomes—or remains—a vulnerable area. Social control in rural areas will play a major role here. The farmers have every interest in keeping ‘cowboys’ in check. ‘But we will not penalise an entire area just because one farmer is obstructive. We shall take out the isolated incidents of contamination and tackle them separately,’ says Dua.

The results of the measurements are to be published every month, so that the farmers can adjust the manuring of the land. On the basis of the measuring network, the vulnerable areas will be demarcated afresh every year, thus giving us ‘variable’ vulnerable areas. This is totally new, from a European standpoint. According to the European nitrate directive, the vulnerable areas have to be demarcated for four years. The European Commission does not like working with annual changes out of a fear of the farmers becoming overly lax. Dewael and Dua are hoping that the European Commission will accept their compromise because it forces the farmers to assume their responsibility. Both ministers have already tested the waters to some degree. Europe can reportedly live with annual changes within a framework of vulnerable areas that are demarcated for four years. Since the whole of Flanders is indicated as a potentially vulnerable area, the two ministers are not expecting any major problems. Throughout Flanders ‘preservation measures’ therefore come into force (a longer freeze on manuring in the winter, obligatory green manuring after breeding or stricter top-dressing manuring rules for grassland).

In addition to these measures, the Government of Flanders is also working on the reduction of the pig population through financial incentives. An additional EUR 25 million of the budget is being earmarked. Manure processing is not being encouraged by financial incentives, but by promotional means. The Flanders Export Promotion Agency (Export Vlaanderen) is promoting a quality label for Flemish processed animal manure, which will then no longer be called ‘manure’, but ‘a soil enriching agent’. Wallonia will no longer be able to turn its nose up at that.

The Government of Flanders had given Dua the mandate to negotiate an early closure. She feels that there is still doubt as to the health risks, and says that the authorities are ‘historically to blame’ for the ‘foolish’ decision to build the incinerator near a residential area. As Minister Dua had earlier announced, she will be meeting with the inter-municipal company ISVAG, the affiliated municipalities, the local residents and other interested parties from next week, in order to talk about the willingness to go ahead with an early closure. According to a recent study, the closure would cost EUR 37 million, although the figure of EUR 125 million had previously been bandied about. Dua does not agree with Dewael that there are not enough alternatives for waste incineration and dumping. Three plants could be operational within a few months, Dua says.

MARK DEWEERDT • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 2 MAY
FF EDITOR

Vande Lanotte wants windmills further from the coast

The federal Deputy Prime Minister and Ostend resident Johan Vande Lanotte (SP.A) is proposing that the planned Seanieg (Electrabel/De Nul) and C-Power (Interlectra/Dredging International) windmill parks, to be built in front of the Flemish coast, off Knokke-Heist and Wenduine-Blankenberge respectively, should be built further out to sea - to be more specific, on the Thornton Bank, 27 km offshore. ‘Then there will be less disruption for migratory birds and for fishing, and there will not be any visual nuisance, either,’ says Vande Lanotte. As the plans stand at the moment, the windmills will be placed respectively 12 to 17 km, and 6 to 11 km from the coast. Seven out of ten mayors in coastal municipalities and the CD&V parliamentary party in the Lower Chamber are behind his proposal, but the federal State Secretary for Energy, Olivier Deleuze (Ecolo), feels that Vande Lanotte ‘is giving the wrong signal to the investors.’ According to Electrabel, a windmill park on the Thornton Bank would not be economically viable. The Deputy Prime Minister agrees that his proposal is more expensive, but points to the criticism in the nonetheless positive environmental impact study (EIS). Magda Aelvoet (Agalev), the federal Minister for the Environment, pointed out that the concessions for the parks in Knokke-Heist and De Haan are already under way, and cannot be discontinued just like that. For the rest, State Secretary Olivier Deleuze recently received a negative opinion from the Commission for Electricity and Gas (CREG) on Electrabel’s application for the extension of its project and a negative opinion on the application by the French oil company TotalFinaElf for a 100 MW windmill park. The State Secretary has sixty days in which to decide whether to follow this advice.

Ghent’s Bijloke turns into major Flemish concert house

The city of Ghent wants to have the concert infrastructure of De Bijloke ready by June 2005, according to an announcement made by the Ghent alderman for culture Sas van Rouveroij at the press conference for the new season. The intention is to develop the historic building - originally a 13th century hospital with 19th century expansions - into a fully-fledged concert venue and music centre. The works, which will cost EUR 11.9 million, are scheduled to be completed by June 2005. The alderman for culture Van Rouveroij also said that the plans would not stand in the way of the possible advent of Gerard Mortier’s Music Forum. The centre appears to present itself as one of the most important concert houses in Flanders (FF).

JAN VANDENHOUW • DE STANDAARD • 2 MAY

The municipal concert hall suffers from a severe lack of comfortable accommodation, for public and artists alike. The library is just one of the many rooms ripe for a comprehensive facelift. For the modernisation of De Bijloke, architect Oswald Van de Sompel was called upon again, having already been responsible for the entrance building that was opened in 2000. He wants a centre with various halls, with a capacity ranging from 100 to 1,150. Total capacity should come to some 1,800 seats. There will also be new foyers and a block with boxes for the artists. The anatomical institute is being restored and the Kraakhuis is being converted into a concert hall with a capacity of 250 people, for small-scale musical productions and chamber music concerts. Large glass walls should ensure that the historic buildings and the new gardens to be planted are visible. Work is finally being done on the main hall’s acoustics. The sound should be electronically adjustable by September.

In the programme for the coming season, De Bijloke remains true to the still young tradition of season ticket series. New is the Recital series, which features performances by soloists of international renown, such as the pianist Dejan Lazic or the cellist Pieter Wispelwey. The traditional series Musica Antiqua, Contemporain, East of Eden and String Quartets are being fed with top international performers. The Flanders Symphony Orchestra, the Flemish Radio Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Flanders will each be presenting three Symphonic series again, based on their preferences. More attention will also be paid to music theatre and dance.

ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

EVOLUTION OF FLEMISH UNEMPLOYMENT (UNEMPLOYED JOB SEEKERS)

CONCERT HALL
Les Ballets C. de la B. and the Capil-
la Flamenc a are working together,
at the request of De Bijloke, for the
dance performance Foi, with music
from the fourteenth century Ars
Nova. On 14 September, the Festi-
val of Flanders and De Bijloke will be
joining hands for Continuüm, a
good eight hours of music at the
many locations that De Bijloke is
able to boast. At the end of August
there will also be a small-scale late-
summer festival that has been giv-
en the name Bijloke Festival.

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• Until 14 May: Pat Metheny Group (jazz), Anci-
enne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
• 14 May: Lloyd Cole, Botanique, Brussels;
info: 02/218.37.32
• 14 to 17 May: William Kentridge/Kevin
Volans/Handspring Puppet Company (USA),
Confessions, Kaaitheater, Brussels
www.kunstenfestivaldesarts.be
• 14 to 17 May: Jenny and Ralph Manz
Pampered Goods, Alibi, De Singel, Antwerp;
info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 11 to 14 May: Lynda Gaudreau, Document
5, dance, Théâtre Varia, Brussels;
info: 070/222.199 www.kunsten-
festivaldesarts.be
• 10 May: Mari Boine, Ancienne Belgique,
Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.
be
• 11 May: Supertramp, Sportpaleis, Antwerp;
info: 0900/00091
• 9 May: Sfinks roots rally, market of world
cultures with Djamel, wawadadakwa, sonba-
can, Nama, Mec Yec, Itzan etc., on 12 stages
in Boechout [near Antwerp]; info:
03/455.69.44 www.sfinks.be
• 10 May: Arabo-Andalusian Conservatory
Orchestra of Tetouan, CC Belgica, Dender-
monde; info: 02/20.26.26
• Until 12 May: Opera: Orfeo by
Monteverdi, directed by René Jacobs, De
Munt, Brussels; info: 070/233.939
• Until 17 May: La Fanfulla del West by
Puccini, directed by Robert Carsen, Flanders
Opera, Ghent and Antwerp; info:
03/253.65.05 and 09/225.24.25
• 13 May: Roger Waters (ex-Pink Floyd),
Sportpaleis, Antwerp; info: 0900/26060

CULTURE

• Until 12 June: About the head, exhibition,
Museum Dr Chihuly, Ghent;
info: 09/216.35.95 www.fracarita.be
• Until November: Living Tomorrow, where
visions meet, the house of the future, Vil-
voorde; info: www.livtom.be
• Until 30 June: Bruges 2002 Impact, 1902 Re-
visited: The Flemish Primitives at Bruges, ex-
hibition, Arenthuis, Bruges; info:
070/223.33.02 www.brugge2002.be
• Until 30 June: Jan Van Eyck, The Flemish
Primitives and the South, Groeningemuseum,
Bruges.
• Until 13 May: exhibition: Attachment +,
contemporary art, Normalchool
• Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition,
KMSK, Antwerp; info: 03/238.78.09
www.antenwerpen.be/cultuur/kmska
• Until 26 May: Rik Wouters, exhibition,
PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66 www.psikpa.be
• Until 12 May: Mukha exhibitions: Guy
Mees, Dimitri Vangrunderbeek and Paul de
Vree, Antwerp; info: 03/238.59.60
• Until 2 May: Photo Festival Knokke-Heist
with Erwos Olaf, Paradise 2001, Photo Exhibi-
tion, CC Scharpoord, Knokke-Heist
• Until 18 July: Rubens and the Flemish
Baroque painters, exhibition, City Hall, Brus-
sels; info: 02/279.64.34
• Until 26 May: James Wellinr Abstract, ex-
hibition, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.84.66
www.psikpa.be
• Until 14 July: Silver work by the De Vecchi
Family, Provincial Museum Sterckshof-
Zilvercentrum, Antwerp; info:
03/360.52.50
• Until 23 June, The Brueghel Farm,
exhibition, Royal Museums of Fine Arts,
Brussels; info: 02/508.32.11
• Until 16 June: Surrealism with Emilie Salkin
(Bel), Desmond Morris (GB), Ergin Inan
(Turkey) and Clavvis Trouille (Fr), exhibition,
PMMK, Ostend; info: 059/50.81.18
www.pmmk.be
• Until 16 June: Affinity and Individuality,
exhibition Holland-Belgium between 1890 and
1945, Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent;
info: 09/240.07.50
• Until 9 June: After Sprawal, the contempo-
rary city, exhibition, De Singel, Antwerp;
info: 02/248.29.29 www.desingel.be
• Until 23 June: Desire in a cage, Jane
Gravelor, Rachel Baes and surrealism, KMSK,
Antwerp; info: 03/238.78.09
• Until 5 June: A glance at pianos, 60
pianos from the historical collection of Chris
Maene, Bijloke, Ghent with concerts, Bijloke,
Ghent; info: 09/266.70.40
• Until 2 June: Viewmaster, video-art,
exhibition, NICC, Antwerp

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