Flanders celebrates on 11 July

July 2002 is not just another celebration day for the Flemish Community. This year the 700th anniversary of the Battle of the Spurs is also being celebrated, when an army of artisans from Flemish towns a French army of knights. According to Prime Minister Patrick Dewael, the main aim is for as many Flemings as possible to take part in the celebrations. In the past the Flemish holiday was too much of an occasion for Flemish nationalists, he feels. It must be a celebration for all Flemings, not only this year but also in the future, like the Fourteenth of July is in France. Meanwhile there is no lack of participation, with festive activities being organised in 300 of the 308 municipalities. ‘Vlaanderen feest! (Flanders celebrates)’, as the celebration has been named this year, will also run for 11 days and the programme looks impressive (FF).

PETER GORLÉ • MET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 14 JUNE

The eye-catcher and clincher of the festivities is a massive spectacle in the Grote Markt in Brussels on 11 July. Famous singers will perform familiar and less familiar songs for three hours on stage accompanied by a 50-piece orchestra. At the same time images from Flanders’ rich past will be projected onto the walls of Brussels Town Hall in a sound-and-light show. The spectacle, arranged by Jari De Meuleneester, will not begin until 10 p.m., but activities will be taking place throughout the whole day in the capital. Those who prefer not to travel to Brussels can still join in the celebrations in the five provincial capitals. In the Groenplaats in Antwerp, the Korenmarkt in Ghent, in Hasselt, Leuven and Bruges the party will begin at 4 p.m. on 11 July. This year, Flanders also wants to involve its neighbours in the celebrations. Four border municipalities (Essen, Voeren, Hoegaarden, and Menen) are therefore inviting their neighbours to join in on 6 and 7 July with tables across the border. At the request of Culture Minister Bert Anciaux (Spirit), 84 museums will open their doors on the night of 10 to 11 July. Transport Minister Steve Stevaert (SP.A) is also chipping in. On 11 July the trams and buses of De Lijn will be free.
Dewael aims for summer agreement on environment

The Flemish government wants an agreement on environmental and town and country planning policy by 21 June. The ‘summer agreement’ is being prepared by a working group. The entire Flemish government believes that last week’s ‘Dua incident’ is not open to repetition. At the time the Green Minister for the Environment Vera Dua (Agalev) said in a number of Flemish newspapers that she felt that the Minister-president was stalking her and that he was organising opposition to her environmental policy. At the weekend the socialists also let fly once again at the attitude of the Green Minister, but the VLD’s Minister for Economic Affairs Jaak Gabriëls and the other Green Minister Mieke Vogels were also given a lashing by the SPA.

The Minister-president himself explained the position of the entire government at a press conference (FF).

MARK DEWEERT • DE FINANCIËLE- ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 8 JUNE

To the assertion that the incident has clearly sped things up, Dewael answered that the synthesis of economics and ecology formed the essence of the Purple-Green project. ‘The Flemish Government wants to succeed at all costs. If that results in a conflict: why not? For me the result is the main thing. But a collision like that of Wednesday is not open to repetition.’ Yesterday it was agreed that after the weekend the ministers would react in writing to two memoranda from Dewael on several questions relating to the environment and town and country planning on which opinions still differ. These mainly concern the delimitation of the Flemish Ecological Network, the draft decree on integral water management, the broaching of residential extension areas, the funding of environmental policy and the regulation of extra-zonal companies (that are not situated in industrial areas).

A working group headed by Dewael’s Principal Private Secretary, Jan Kerremans, is preparing the decision-making process. A summary memorandum will then be approved at the meeting on 21 June. For some files this may involve a finished draft decree. In other cases, such as the funding of environmental policy, the memorandum will limit itself to outlining main points that must be elaborated at a later date. ‘But any uncertainties must be resolved by then,’ said Dewael.

De Clerck (CD&V) wants coalition with liberals

Theo Rombouts is stepping down as Chairman of the ACW, the Christian workers’ movement. In his farewell interview in De Morgen (10 June) he takes stock of the movement. It has undergone a positive development, he says. The movement is no longer automatically linked to a single party, namely the Christian Democratic CD&V. The ACW has become more independent, which he also feels is a good thing. He also feels that mandates of the ACW can safely put themselves forward as candidates on Green and Socialist lists at the next elections. The liberal VLD, on the other hand, sees no forgiveness in his eyes. According to him, the Liberals are wrapped up in thoughts of power and markets. He adopts an expectant stance towards the CD&V. The theme of ‘human security’ which CD&V Chairman Stefaan De Clerck wants to take to the elections says nothing to him. By human security De Clerck means not only that the shortcomings of social security are filled in, but that security, housing, and medical care are also guaranteed. Rombouts wants to wait and see how strongly the social agenda will weigh on the socio-economic party conference of the CD&V in the autumn.

Likewise in De Morgen (11 June) Stefaan De Clerck tries to reassure Rombouts, but for the first time he plainly reveals his preference for a coalition of Liberals and Christian Democrats (FF).

FILIP ROGIERS • DE MORGEN • 11 JUNE

More than ever, CD&V Chairman Stefaan De Clerck wants to go to the country with the theme of ‘human security’. He feels strengthened by the election results in France and elsewhere in Europe. ‘The main common denominator is that of the value society, security. And we want to propagate that too. Each election shows that this is the line.’ The CD&V Party Chairman therefore feels that in Flanders a coalition between CD&V and VLD would be more logical than one with the Reds and/or Greens. ‘If you read the European map correctly, that actually seems to me to be the choice of the voter.’ However, De Clerck is not under any illusions: ‘The VLD has already said that it wants to continue the current unnatural purple coalition. And in any case we are not now in a position to choose who we take up with.’ De Clerck is not worried by the credit ACW Chairman Rombouts was prepared to grant the Reds and Greens. ‘Human security is a social theme par excellence,’ says De Clerck. And he adds that he will be able to convince Rombouts or his successor Jan Renders of this ‘in the short term’. The CD&V Chairman also affirms that he wants to secure a permanent voice in the party for the ACW.
Duquesne and Sarcozy refine co-operation agreements

In recent months South-West Flanders has been startled by a rise in particularly brutal attacks, ram-raids, and carjackings. Suddenly, the memory of the Kappa gangs was alive once more. In the first half of the 1990s the Kappa gangs carried out several violent attacks on luxury boutiques. Most of the offenders came from the impoverished suburbs of the French cities Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing. Thanks to a successful collaboration between the various Belgian police forces, the gangs could be dismantled and convicted. For six years the area was spared the ram-raids. But recently the plague struck again with great ferocity. So much so that Minister for Internal Affairs Antoine Duquesne (PRL) and Premier Verhofstadt (VLD) travelled to Paris for summit talks with their French counterparts Raffarin and Sarcozy.

As security is now top of the political agenda in France too, they found a willing ear there. A short time later the first mixed Franco-Belgian patrols turned out. Nevertheless, many of the conditions required for the collaboration to succeed appeared not to have been met. Belgian police officers, for example, may not carry weapons on French soil, cannot organise interviews and radio communication between both forces seemed impossible, etc. But on 10 June Minister Duquesne and his French counterpart again sat down to refine the existing agreements (FF).

DE STANDAARD • 11 JUNE

Points on which Sarcozy and Duquesne could not agree - such as the interviewing of nationals in the other country - were referred to a working group, which must sort things out by 1 September. The mixed border patrols were foundering on the question of whether the police may use their weapons. They may do so, but only in self-defence. A number of local police chiefs feel that something should first be done about the communication systems of the patrolling police cars: French and Belgians opted for different systems and these must first be brought into line with each other. The ministers agreed that a centre must be operational in Doornik by 1 September for police and customs co-operation. The deployment of the mixed patrols must be co-ordinated from there.

In any event, observers on both sides of the border felt a step in the right direction had been taken when Paris yesterday came to Lille itself to give the go-ahead and proceed with a high degree of consensus. Indeed, without the co-operation of centralistic Paris, the two prefects of North-French Lille could not do anything, however good their intentions.

Peeters circular in conflict with language legislation

A uditor Patricia De Somer of the Council of State finds that the Peeters circular is in conflict with language legislation and must be nullified. According to the controversial circular, local authorities in the Flemish municipalities with facilities for French-speakers must send administrative documents to their residents in Dutch. If French-speakers want a French document, they have to put in a special request on each occasion. According to the auditor it is the Federal, not the Flemish government that has jurisdiction over the application of language legislation and French-speakers only have to submit one request for French documents (FF).

Opinion

BART STURTEWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 11 JUNE

Flanders received the news that the auditor of the Flemish Chamber of the Council of State wants to make firewood of the Peeters circular with a yawn. The Council of State almost always follows the advice of the auditor. There are various reasons for the Flemish apathy. Firstly it is anything but a surprise that the auditor has reached the opinion that the then Flemish Minister for Internal Affairs Leo Peeters (SP) was on thin ice when he issued his circular in 1997. Politicians of the Flemish majority have long been aware that the circular is not long for this world.

The circular has become something of a millstone. It was born out of the justified Flemish concern over the lack of Francophone federal loyalty. The French Community simply refuses to accept that it does not have any powers outside its territory. But in Flanders today there is no longer any support for a hard line on this sort of outdated border conflict. It is time for a change. Subsequent battles will be over more fundamental matters. The fight to further extend powers will continue. This institutional dynamic is unstoppable.

focus on FLANDERS • 8 June - 14 June 2002 • Number 22
Vanderpoorten wants local authorities to stop organising education

Education Minister Vanderpoorten (VLD) feels that local authorities would be better off from now on stopping organising education themselves. She sees local authorities’ role more as a co-ordinator of tasks in support of education. Education itself is better off being transferred to ‘an organising power that is a mirror of Flemish community (state) education.’ In the longer term this organising power would be combined with community education in an official network. Vanderpoorten reminds the municipalities that already perform a co-ordinating role where day care, combating poverty and road safety are concerned, across all networks (Catholic, municipal and community education). Because the municipalities currently also organise education themselves, there is a risk of a conflict of interests because they are simultaneously judge and defendant, the Minister feels. Vanderpoorten’s ideas are not to be taken or left, they are the main points of a working paper, which De Morgen had a look at, for the key tasks debate, a major conference with working groups, which will examine how the powers can be redistributed between the Flemish government, the provinces, and the municipalities (FF).

Certainly where primary education is concerned, there is no question of a transfer to municipal education, it appears. ‘Primary education is embedded in the local district or village. There is more to it than simply offering education, as these schools are a fundamental part of the formation of the district,’ says Mark Suyckens of the Union of Flemish Local Authorities (Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten, VVSG). The VVSG (and its education umbrella organisation, the OVSG) is opposed to a possible transfer of primary education. Freya Vanden Bossche, SPA Alderman for Education in Ghent and Vice-Chair of the OVSG, agrees. ‘A good municipal primary school can be very important in reassessing urban fabrics. If the local authority has to relinquish its control of these schools, it will also lose a powerful instrument of urban policy.’ According to her, the close involvement of municipal schools in the area also has other benefits: ‘New education initiatives, such as method schools, often grow out of municipal education because these sense local needs better and more quickly.’ Nor were the opposition CD&V and N-VA parties convinced by Vanderpoorten’s idea. In their view, the proposal would thwart the talks at the round table of education. In particular, CD&V education expert Luc Martens fears for the secret agenda of the VLD Minister. ‘This looks very much like an attempt to have urban education incorporated by community education.’ Martens would find that illogical. ‘In most places, municipal primary education is stronger and more successful than community education. It would therefore be better for community education to adapt to municipal education, and not vice versa.’ The CD&V member does, however, admit that municipal education would be better being brought under a separate non-profit organisation to avoid conflicts of interest. Beyond the boundaries of majority and opposition, however, a consensus is growing that the municipal level is less well suited to offer secondary education. ‘Secondary education recruits from a broader environment than purely locally. The question is whether local authorities are best placed to organise this,’ feels Mark Suyckens of the VVSG.

Clean Flemish beaches hoist blue flag

Together with several inland swimming lakes and marinas, a number of beaches along the Flemish coast may hoist the European Blue Flag again for the first time in ten years. This is a quality badge for clean and safe water. The coastal beaches not only satisfy the strict criteria of the European Bathing Water Directive, but must also organise educational and informative campaigns and draw up management criteria relating to sanitation, waste, maintenance, and safety to be able to lay claim to a Blue Flag. Marinas are governed by even stricter environmental criteria (FF).

In the seaside resort of Knokke-Heist, all seven of the beaches have been awarded a Blue Flag. Knokke-Heist shares this environmental distinction with Blankenberge (casino and Artanheelling beaches), Ostend [Raversijde] and Middelkerke [Sint-Laureins and Westende-Bad). The six inland bathing waters include De Blaaarmeersen in Ghent and the two lakes of De Lille Bergen in Lille. When the awards were announced yesterday, the Flemish Environment Minister, Vera Dua (Agalev), called on all bathing water operators to make extra efforts over the coming years. Dua regretted the fact that only six inland waters are eligible for the environmental distinction. The environmental organisations’ umbrella body, ‘Bond Beter Leefmilieu’, which is co-ordinating the Blue Flag campaign in Flanders, is reasonably happy. ‘Ten years ago the water quality along large parts of our coast was so terrible that no Blue Flags were awarded,’ says spokesman Wim van Gils. ‘A European report shows that the quality of our bathing water is on the rise. This is mainly due to investments in the treatment of waste water. But we are still scoring below the European average.’
600 jobs under threat at Alcatel

The loss of jobs in the Belgian telecoms sector is assuming serious proportions. In particular Flanders, which has invested heavily in high technology, is being hit hard. The fact that many telecoms and IT firms’ decision-making centres are located abroad is also a disadvantage. After Siemens, Alcatel now appears to be planning to make cuts in its Belgian plants. Six hundred jobs are under threat, reports De Standaard. Alcatel is apparently considering moving its telephony research activities from Antwerp to Germany, says the socialist white-collar union, the BBTK (FF).

DIRK DELMARTINO • DE STANDAARD • 13 JUNE

We want to move certain divisions gradually, says spokesperson Tru Lefever. Alcatel is now concentrating its activities in so-called competence centres. Alcatel Belgium has those for broadband and IP (Internet Protocol), ‘the areas of the future’. Of the 4,174 people who, after the far-reaching economic and structural changes of the past year, are still on Alcatel Bell’s wage list, some 1,600 work in research and development. Most are active in broadband research (DSL). Internet products are even more important for Belgium, with last year 42.3% of activities, compared to 25.3% a year earlier.

Historically, however, Alcatel Bell is known as a switching company, the developer of technology for telephone exchanges. ‘That activity is mature,’ says Lefever. ‘The fact that part of this telephony competence is moving to Germany will have an impact on staff, but we are trying to re-train people.’

According to Erik Schiets (BBTK), the decision to surrender classic telephone exchanges to Germany has been circulating for some time, and only the timing of the move is not yet known. Some 600 to 650 people still work in the switch 12-40 department concerned. ‘Alcatel has actually initiated a re-training programme, but this will involve at most 75 people,’ says Schiets. At a European Works Council at the end of this month the union man is expecting the timing for this ‘umpteenth far-reaching step’. ■

BWA takes over Sabena subsidiary Sobelair

Belgian World Airlines (BWA), the airline of Aldo Vastapane and Luc Mellaerts, is taking over the charter airline and Sabena subsidiary, Sobelair [Financieel-Economische Tijd, 12 June]. Vastapane made an initial bid for Sobelair back in April, but that was rejected by staff. In the second round of bidding the Brussels businessman beat off challenges from, among others, Tony Gram, the financial backer of VG Airlines, the Dutch group Melridge and the West Flanders travel agency Van Thuyne. Vastapane will become Chairman of the new Sobelair, Luc Mellaerts Managing Director. Last week trade unions and workers agreed to a wage cut of 5 million euros. A second saving of 5 million euros will come from the lower hire cost that Vastapane has agreed with a German leasing company for two Boeings. The total rehabilitation of 10 million euros should be enough to operate on a break-even basis for the time being. Sobelair will continue to operate primarily as a charter company for tour operators (in particular Jetair) to Mediterranean destinations, but Mellaerts is also considering starting flights to Johannesburg in the near future. Sobelair’s fleet consists of 2 Boeing 767-300s and 7 Boeing 737-300/400s, to which one Boeing 737-800 will be added each year, according to Mellaerts.

Umicore reorganises Overpelt site

Umicore, formerly Union Miniere, is reorganising its site in Overpelt. The production of zinc is being cut by 30,000 tonnes, threatening 66 of the 410 jobs. The management outlined the plan at the works council and announced it would be negotiating a social plan with trade unions. Temporary contracts that are not extended and formulas for reshuffling work seem the best ways of implementing the staff cuts (FF).

GUIDO CLOOSTERMANS • HET BELANG VAN LIMBURG • 12 JUNE

At the start of this year Umicore announced that it was looking for solutions for the pellets and thermal refining divisions. Both divisions process zinc for the production of batteries and are loss-making. Zinc prices are too low and the company is suffering from overproduction. The solution has now been found. The pellets division makes zinc cups or cases for producers of carbon batteries. Personnel Manager Daniel Motton: ‘The problem with that type of battery is that it has lost ground to alkali batteries, which last longer. Also, three quarters of all the major consumers are situated in Asia.’ Each year, 5% fewer carbon batteries are produced. More and more battery producers are making their own cases and of a total world market of 250,000 tonnes there are only 40,000 tonnes left. So Umicore decided to close this division. The second division that went under is the pickling division. This produces high-quality zinc that is then used as a raw material for zinc powder. That powder is then used for alkali batteries. Umicore is the world’s largest producer of this sort of zinc. Although the market for alkali batteries is growing, Umicore is wrestling with an excessively high production cost, making reorganisation likely in this division too.
Siemens scraps 290 jobs in Belgian plants

The German technology group Siemens, which employs 443,000 people worldwide, is scrapping 290 jobs in its Belgian plants in Herentals, Huizingen, and Brussels. The redundancies will mainly be in the Information and Communication Networks (ICN) division. The ICN divisions worldwide are being hardest hit. They are saddled with an overcapacity that dates from the ITC hype period. According to Siemens boss von Pierer, ICN’s 54,000 jobs must be cut to 38,000. The entire Siemens group employs 5,670 people in Belgium (FF).

JEROEN LISSENS • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 12 JUNE

The restructurings will be most strongly felt in the Siemens plants in Herentals (151 jobs) and Huizingen (65 jobs). These house Siemens’s sales, services, and research divisions. The Belgian head office in Brussels is also making cuts. There, 34 jobs are to go in central services. Redundancies have also been announced in the medical division (20 jobs) and the energy, industry, and transport division (20 jobs).

Most of the redundancies, however, will be in Herentals and Huizingen, divisions that mainly work for the telecoms sector. Because in recent years large telecoms firms have invested heavily in licences for new wireless networks, they are now having to make savings on investments in the infrastructure for these new networks. As a result they are massively postponing their orders with suppliers such as the German Siemens. At the end of April, Siemens boss Heinrich von Pierer therefore announced that 6,500 of the 44,000 jobs in the telecoms division Siemens Information & Communication Networks (ICN) had to go. ICN suffered an operating loss of 282 million euros in the first six months of the financial year.

KPNQWest continues to operate until buyer is found

It was therefore no surprise that there would also be redundancies in Belgium, all the more so because at the end of April von Pierer said that the large part of the cutbacks would take place outside Germany. However, the impact of the restructuring on Siemens Belgium is greater than staff thought. ‘A cold shower. There are more redundancies than we had expected,’ says Trade Union Secretary Leo Lauwerysen of the LBC.

Because Siemens does not have any real production plants in Belgium, it was assumed that Belgium would largely be spared, because many other telecoms firms such as Alcatel are only making cuts in their production plants. ‘That phase is already behind us,’ says Siemens spokesperson Vera Janssens. ‘The current restructuring is mainly the result of telecoms operators postponing orders and because there are still no signs of a recovery.’ WWW.SIEMENS.BE

JEROEN LISSENS • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 12 JUNE

The doom scenarios concerning the bankruptcy of the Dutch cable company KPNQWest can be put aside for a while. KPNQWest’s 25,000 km long fibre-optic network, which links 60 European cities, handles 60% of Europe’s Internet traffic. Employees of the KPNQWest plant in Hoeilaart, near Brussels, had warned that a large part of the Internet traffic would disappear (Gazet van Antwerpen, 10 June). But the Dutch administrators have managed to keep the company going until 1 July. The money for this is coming from outstanding invoices owed by the firm’s biggest customers, such as parent company KPN, Deutsche Telekom, France Télécom, BT Ignite, NQWest, and Telindus. Meanwhile the administrators are continuing their search for a buyer and more and more customers are switching to competitors such as BT, Colt Telecom, or Telia. In KPNQWest’s plant in Hoeilaart, 270 of the 340 employees were made redundant by the receivers last week. The other 70 were paid for a further 48 hours to keep the network running until 6 June. From Friday 7 June the staff owned the company and kept the network running off their own bat. Now there is more fresh money, the receivers are to pay 40 employees for a further 5 weeks to keep the network operational. They are being supported by 60 dismissed employees who will provide voluntary assistance and keep the company staffed. The Hoeilaart plant was originally part of Ebone, one of the pioneers of fibre-optic networks in Europe. Ebone had developed out of Hermes, the telecoms network of the European railways. Two months ago it was taken over by KPNQWest, a joint-venture between the Dutch KPN and the American Qwest. The fate of the KPNQWest workers in Hoeilaart and the Siemens workers in Herentals and Huizingen has already been suffered by thousands of workers in the Belgian telecoms sector. According to De Standaard (12 June), in the past one-and-a-half years some 6,000 jobs have been lost in the Belgian plants of Lucent, Versatel, IDT Europe, BT Ignite, Dolphin, KPN, and Alcatel and as a result of restructuring in Belgian firms such as Telenet, Belgacom and Telindus.

FF EDITOR

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Buying your own home is an excellent investment

Buying your own home is still the safest form of investment. In ten years’ time the value of small and medium-sized Belgian houses has risen by 75%. Last year the average rise in the sale price of a house was 5.2%, of a flat 4% and of a building plot as much as 11.6%. In the past 15 years, houses even rose 4.17% faster than inflation and 3.5% faster than gross wages. In total, 17.2 billion euros worth of houses, flats, and building plots were sold in 2001, 6.5% more than in 2000. So states the annual Stadim report, which monitors property developments and which is explained in detail in the weekly magazine Trends (13 June). The overall rise in the housing market (4.5 million homes) is declining. In the last 25 years the ratio of buyers (of existing houses) to builders has shifted from 40/60 to 80/20, reports Trends. The share of flats in this has risen. All this has to do with the drop in the size of families and the renewed success of town and city centres, according to Trends (FF).

Het Nieuwsblad • 13 June

Price rises vary considerably from region to region. In Flanders, house prices rose by an average of 5.8%, while Wallonia lagged behind with 4.6% and Brussels recorded a rise of 8.9%. What is striking is that the expensive regions, such as Antwerp and Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, have not risen spectacularly. Building or buying has become so expensive in these areas that people are relocating to cheaper regions. The reduction in registration fees this year will undoubtedly help determine the market. Stadim estimates that a total of 365 million euros worth of property purchases have been postponed until this year. That is around 2% of annual turnover. According to Philippe Janssens of Stadim, the influence of reduced registration fees may not be underestimated. ‘An average Flemish house costs less than 125,000 euros. That means that most prospective owners no longer have to pay registration fees, just solicitors’ fees. As a result, the costs of buying a house no longer correspond to 2 years’ rental value, but just 2.5 months.’

### BUILDING PLOTS

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<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>82,097 +36%</td>
<td>Antwerp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechelen</td>
<td>98,424 +46%</td>
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<td>80,478 +16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leuven</td>
<td>93,715 +38%</td>
<td>Mechelen</td>
<td>79,728 +27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hasselt</td>
<td>88,543 +42%</td>
<td>Ghent</td>
<td>69,748 +9%</td>
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### FLATS

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<th>Difference</th>
<th>Average Price 2005</th>
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</table>

Source: Trends

### EXHIBITION

#### Drawings by Flemish Primitives in Antwerp

Antwerp is not associated with the Gothic and the Flemish Primitives, but with the Baroque and Rubens. However, the Baroque master was a great admirer of the Flemish Primitives and the city itself has superior collections of fifteenth-century paintings in its Museum of Fine Arts and the more intimate Mayer Van den Bergh Museum. The idea therefore developed of establishing in Antwerp an addition to the Van Eyck exhibition in Bruges. The project was christened ‘Magnificent Primitives’ (‘Heerlijke Primitieven’). The exhibition ‘Master Drawings from Jan Van Eyck to Hieronymus Bosch’ in the Rubens House, the former studio of the great painter, is the project’s signboard. Fifty wonderful drawings by Jan Van Eyck, Rogier Van der Weyden, Hugo Van der Goes, and Jeroen Bosch have been brought to Antwerp from all over the world. The exhibition offers a unique chance to get to know this underexposed aspect of the Flemish Primitives. And the combination with the collections of paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts and Mayer Van den Bergh Museum makes for a splendid stroll, according to De Standaard (FF).

Jan Van Hove • De Standaard • 13 June

The Flemish Primitives are mainly known for their paintings. Most of what they drew was lost, and the little that survived ended up spread throughout all the major galleries and museums in Europe and America. These only rarely and reluctantly loan out drawings, because they are incredibly vulnerable and sensitive to light and moisture. The man who put the exhibition together, Fritz Koreny, has been involved in this area for twenty years. For a long time he worked at the Albertina, the immensely rich Viennese gallery, and now teaches at the University of Vienna the ‘Corpus der deutschen und niederländischen Zeichnungen’ that must now definitively map this entire patrimony.

In the late Middle Ages, drawings had a completely different function from the one they acquired during the Renaissance. They were not autonomous works of art, in which artists were led by their inspiration, but exercises. Most drawings were copies of existing paintings made by pupils and imitators to improve their technique or to learn more about a certain subject. By drawing, you acquired the necessary technical knowledge to begin on the main work. But even the masters themselves must have drawn, for example when preparing a portrait. After all, producing a panel painting de-
manned a great deal of time, and it seems likely that the people to be painted were not available at all times. Artists therefore sketched a preliminary study, such as the beautiful Portrait of a young woman [Portret van een jonge vrouw], which, due to its lighting and plasticity, can be assigned with a reasonable degree of certainty to Rogier Van der Weyden. Because only two of the fifty drawings come from our country - the Holy Barbara [Heilige Barbara] by Van Eyck, without doubt the jewel of the collection, from the Museum of Antwerp, and a Kneeling King [Knielende koning] after Rogier Van der Weyden from the University of Liège—there is much to discover.

www.heerlikeprimitieven.be

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Focus on Flanders • 8 June - 14 June 2002 • Number 22

MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE

• Until 17 November: Bruges 2002, Cultural Capital of Europe; info: 070/22.33.02 www.brugge2002.be
• 22 June: Izicano Ferro, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be
• Until 30 June: Fables of the Frontier, theatr.e at the French–Belgian Border in Rekkem, info: 056/51.84.74 www.grensrock.be
• 25, 29 and 30 June: Rock Werchter with The Chemical Brothers, Nelly Furtado, Bush, Rammstein, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Heather Nova, Lamb, Coldplay, Faithless and many others [more than 50 bands and dj’s], info: 0900/26060 www.rockwerchter.be
• 28 and 29 June: Couleur Café, Festival of world music, funk and soul, Thurn & Taxis, Brussels; info: 0900/26025 www.couleurcafe.be

EXPO

• Until 23 June: Retrospective exhibition Janis Kounellis, SMAK, Ghent; info: 09/211.17.03 www.smak.be
• Until November: Living Tomorrow, where visions meet the house of the future, Vilvoorde, info: www.livtom.be
• Until 25 June: Photo Festival Knokke-Heist with Erwin Olaf, Paradiso 2001, Photo Exhibition, CC Sparoord, Knokke-Heist
• Until 18 July: Rubens and the Flemish Baroque painters, exhibition, City Hall, Brussel; info: 02/279.64.34
• Until 14 July: Silver work by the De Vecchi Family, Provincial Museum Sterckshof-Zilvercentrum, Antwerp; info: 03/360.52.50
• Until 23 June: The Retina Diamond by Frederik Vercruysse and Light Scores by Lucia Rumoldi (It.), exhibitions MUHKA, Antwerp; info: 03/238.59.60 www.muhka.be
• Until 29 September: Een Snaeere Enterprise, exhibition on the East-Indian Company in the 18th century, Venetiaanse Gaanderen, Ostend; info: 059/55.00
• Until November: Dead lines: War, media and propaganda in the 20th century, exhibition, Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres
• Until 15 September: Being Young in ancient times, exhibition Gallo-Roman Museum, Tongeren
• 14 June to 18 August: Master drawings from Jan Van Eyck to Hieronymus Bosch, Rubenshuis, Antwerp; info: 070/23.37.99 www.heerlikeprimitieven.be
• Until 15 July: Allias, performances of contemporary art, Taverne PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.psk_pba.be
• Until 1 September: Group exhibition ‘Humanism II’ with Wim Delvoye, Berlinde De Bruyckere and others, Orion Gallery, Thermen, Ostend; info: 059/19.19.52
• Until 30 June: Blend, 11 Belgian photogra- phers, Cacermansklooster, Ghent

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Editor in chief: Frank Vandecaveye

• Advisory panel: Luc Demeester (Lannoo), Rik Van Cauwelaert [director Knack], Koen Clement (Managing director, De Morgen), Frans Crols [director, De Morgen), Frans Crols (director, De Morgen), Jan Van Doren [Deputy Director, Vlaams Economisch Verbond], Bernard Bulcke (De Standaard)

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CULTURE