Disunity over Flemish Foreign Policy

Gabriëls called it illusory for Flanders to want to develop its own diplomatic representation

The change of course to be taken by Flemish foreign policy announced by Minister Jaak Gabriëls (VLD) this week in Johannesburg (see page 2) does not sit well with his predecessor and current Internal Affairs and Culture Minister Van Grembergen (Spirit). Gabriëls called it illusory for Flanders to want to develop its own diplomatic representation and feels that Flanders should concentrate on foreign trade. Van Grembergen is now reminding him that Flanders is already empowered for education, culture, agriculture, the environment and public works and that it is empowered to operate its own foreign policy in these fields. Van Grembergen also feels, in contrast to Gabriëls, that foreign trade belongs in a new Ministry of Foreign Policy and not in the Department of Economic Affairs (FF).

BART BRINCKMAN • DE STANDAARD • 8 NOVEMBER

Former Flemish Minister-President Luc Van den Brande (CD&V) yesterday denounced the conflicting signals from the majority. Thus, on Wednesday De Wael called for a Flemish front. This must streamline demands relating to fiscal autonomy and the defederalisation of transport, family and health care by the next elections. Where health is concerned, VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht even spoke of a redistribution of funds, giving equal amounts per capita in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels. At precisely that moment their fellow party member Gabriëls announced that he wanted to break with the “futuristic and illusionary” view of Flemish foreign policy.

The approach of the Flemish foreign minister has not just appeared out of thin air. Gabriëls is afraid that foreign trade will be snowed under in a new Department of Foreign Affairs. For him, foreign policy and foreign trade are all but synonymous, especially because Flanders accounts for almost 80% of Belgian exports. The Flemish Government rejects this strict economic vision. “We are standing by our strong foreign policy,” emphasises Bart Tommelein, Spokesman for the Minister-President. By Easter next year the new department must have been put in place. However, the Flemish Government does not have any plans to set up further Flemish houses’ abroad.

INTRODUCTION

Many eyes were directed at Bruges VLD MP Pierre Chevalier when on 6 November he was heard in the Great Lakes Committee, which is investigating the plundering of Congo by Belgian and other companies. Chevalier is Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federal Chamber, but he is also a director in the group of controversial Belgian entrepreneur George Forrest. Some committee members are openly wondering whether Chevalier can continue to combine both jobs, especially after the recent damning UN report on Forrest. This Belgian entrepreneur, resident in Congo and of New Zealand origin, is accused in the report of arms trafficking and of having appropriated a stock of germanium valued at some 2 billion euros together with the Finnish-American group OMG via a joint-venture with the Congolese state mining company Gécamines. Earlier, in a report by the Belgian Consul-General in Lubumbashi sent to Foreign Affairs Minister Louis Michel (MR), Forrest was reproached plundering Gécamines via crafty deals. Via a leak the report landed on Forrest’s desk that same day, who promptly accused the Consul-General and some directors of Gécamines of plotting against him. Forrest also reacted angrily to the UN report, mainly because the UN reporters had not even taken the trouble to question him personally. Knack (30 October and 6 November) is also critical about the report. In an interview in the magazine Forrest denies trafficking in arms and claims that he only acted as a mediator between OMG and Gécamines in the dispute over the germanium stocks, which was confirmed this week by a Gécamines delegation in Brussels. Knack draws a balanced picture of an entrepreneur, who breathed new life into the copper and cobalt production in Katanga in the mid-1990s. Today the Forrest group is the largest private employer in Congo, but has also carried out a number of impressive social and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and infrastructure projects: a hospital, markets, and repairs to roads. But Forrest was also born and raised in Congo and is more familiar than anyone with the (corrupt) practices there and knows his way around the entourage of President Kabila, reports Knack. And yet his opponents cannot deny that in the last ten years Forrest was the only one to invest in this chaotic country, while other foreign companies withdrew one after the other. MP Chevalier therefore is in no doubt. He will continue to support Forrest. Without him there is nothing left in Congo, he feels.

Frank Van de caveye | Editor in Chief
Gabriëls: Flanders no longer needs to be put on the map

Flemish Foreign Policy Minister Jaak Gabriëls (VLD) is abandoning the idea that Flanders per se must develop its own diplomatic network across the world. Gabriëls said that in South Africa, where he is heading a trade mission. He claims that Flemish diplomatic representatives would be better off being integrated into Federal Belgian embassies. This increased co-operation between Flemish and Federal levels is currently being enshrined in a protocol agreement. Flemish foreign policy must focus primarily on commercial and economic relations, says Gabriëls. To streamline that policy he is bringing the existing services for export promotion (Export Vlaanderen) and for attracting foreign investment (DIV) together into the service Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT) (FF).

WIM VANDE VELDEN • DE FINANCIELE-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 7 NOVEMBER

‘Belgium is no longer the face of the enemy, but the Federal framework within which we can operate as an autonomous Flanders. The intention must not be to use foreign power to step out of the Belgian Federation. Flanders is not independent, it is autonomous. Flanders does not need fictions, but must strive for a presence abroad that pays economic dividends,’ says Gabriëls. Whether he will be followed in this by the Flemish Government remains to be seen. That will become clear in the ‘Better Administrative Policy’ operation, the reform of the Flemish administration. According to Gabriëls, the new service Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT) must be placed under the Department of Economic Affairs, even if the Flemish Government had in principle earlier agreed that a Department of Foreign Policy, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation would be set up. If the FIT is assigned to the Department of Economic Affairs and the Flemish foreign diplomatic representation is abolished, that would be an entirely different picture. All the more so because the Green Minister Vogels (Flemish) and Boutmans (Federal) are trying to thwart the Lambersmont Agreement on the regionalisation of development co-operation. As a result, there is a threat that no Flemish foreign policy worth the name will remain. Scenarios are being mentioned whereby foreign policy is simply subsumed under the Chancellery, under the political custody of the Minister-President. For European affairs that is already de facto the case.

New poll: CD&V and VLD in neck-and-neck race

The rise of the CD&V compared to the last elections lies outside the statistical margin of error

AFTER La Libre Belgique and Le Soir the public broadcasting company VRT and De Standaard have now also commissioned an opinion poll. The results are surprising and give hope to the CD&V, which in the two other polls even failed to match its results from the parliamentary elections of 1999. If certain political scientists were to be believed, the largest opposition party was heading for a crushing defeat. First finding of this poll: the Christian Democrats are once again the biggest party in Flanders, albeit with only a narrow advance on its major liberal rival, the VLD. The battle for the ‘political centre’ between these two parties has now become the main issue of the elections, conclude De Standaard and VRT. Second finding of this poll: the parties in power are making gains. The Liberals and Socialists are making progress, the Greens are stagnating. According to this poll, a continuation of the Purple-Greens therefore seems a foregone conclusion. Just as surprising as the progress of the CD&V is the loss of 1.4% for the far-right Vlaams Blok (+1.4%). In other polls the party has invariably gained ground since the last elections (FF).

THE POLITICAL TEAM • DE STANDAARD • 2 NOVEMBER

The rise of the CD&V compared to the last elections lies outside the statistical margin of error and is therefore notable. The same is true of the implosion of the Vlaams Blok - despite the existence of its two successors, Spirit and the N-VA. According to the poll the CD&V and SP.A are making progress, while Agalev remains constant. At the same time only a convincing return of the CD&V as the biggest party can stand in the way of a second term for the Purple-Greens. The Vlaams Blok is down slightly. This party traditionally does less well in telephone polls. Spirit and the N-VA are balancing each other out. Spirit found shelter with the SPA. The Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliance will find it incredibly difficult to make the electoral threshold of 5% in June. The battle between the VLD and CD&V promises to become very hard. ‘This is not about who will be the biggest,’ says VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht, ‘but who has the best candidate prime minister.’ His party is putting forward current Premier Guy Verhofstadt as a potential leader of the country against CD&V Chairman Stefaan De Clerck. The VLD wants straightforward ‘chancellor’s elections’ in June 2003.

According to political scientist Stefaan Walgrave (UA), the chance is very small that the two gamecocks will form a coalition: ‘They are too similar, they are claiming the same central position and are therefore each other’s biggest enemy. They could work perfectly together in terms of content, but not from a strategic point of view. The battle between the two is crucial and decisive.’ At the same time there is a good chance that the winner of the duel will take his chance with the left. Walgrave: ‘All three majority parties stand to gain by keeping the CD&V in opposition. The CD&V is a barrel that is leaking on all sides: their voters are potential voters for both the VLD, SPA and Agalev. Everyone in the majority can catch votes in this pond.’
Which party can snatch voters from which?
THE RESULT FOR THE VLAAMS BLOK IN PARTICULAR MUST BE TAKEN WITH A LARGE PINCH OF SALT

FF EDITORIAL TEAM

Here and there critical remarks are being made concerning the reliability of the opinion poll. Firstly by the pollers themselves. They point out that there is a possible margin of error of 2.5%. The fact that the poll was conducted via a telephone survey and not in a face-to-face interview is unlikely to inspire confidence among sociologists, De Morgen notes.

The result for the Vlaams Blok in particular must be taken with a large pinch of salt. Even though the survey was anonymous, many Blok voters are nevertheless playing their cards close to their chest, several press commentators point out.

And on top of that, more and more consideration must be given to two recent phenomena in voting behaviour: zapping and split voting. There have been fewer and fewer loyal voters at recent elections, and increasing numbers of zapping voters. Whilst during the 1980s, 85% of voters displayed party loyalty, by 1999 that had fallen to 65%, reports De Standaard (2 November). In addition, voting for one party on the Senate list and another on the Chamber list has become a matter of course. In 1999, 30% of voters who could vote on four lists voted for more than one party.

The researchers therefore asked those interviewed not only for which party they intended voting but also ‘for which party they were able to vote’. That was translated into the potency of the parties. Here the scores highest, ahead of the CD&V, SP.A and Agalev. With 30%, Agalev in particular has a remarkably high potency, while the Blok has the lowest potency compared to the actual votes it receives. For positioning the parties themselves it is important to know in which other parties their voters are thinking of becoming acquainted with their direct rivals. This reveals that the VLD and CD&V are fierce rivals. That the CD&V is also running the risk of losing a great many voters to the Greens (25%) and even more to the SP.A-Spirit cartel (together 30%).

On the left, the Greens’ main threat comes from the SP.A, since 45% of their voters indicate that they could also vote for the Socialists. The Blok, which has the most loyal voters, appears to only be able to win votes from the VLD, while it can also lose the most votes to this same party.

The poll also investigated what topics are important to the voting public. There is not yet one single decisive election topic. Social security, health and employment were obvious, but one surprising newcomer is road safety.

According to De Standaard, for each party it boils down to basing the elections around their own topics as far as possible. The SP.A is currently best positioned on that front. According to political scientist Stefaan Walgrave of the University of Antwerp, it is SP.A figurehead Steve Stevaert who put road safety on the agenda. Potential voters also associate the party with social security, employment and the environment.

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### POLL RESULTS AND LAST ELECTION RESULTS

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### THE POTENTIAL VOTERS OF EACH PARTY

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<th>POTENCY (14%)</th>
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Landuyt calls for stricter control of career start plan

THE MINISTER WANTS TO INTRODUCE A JOB CARD

This year, the economic slump has ensured a record number of mass redundancies. In the first 9 months of 2002, 8,910 jobs have already been lost in this way in Flanders. That is more than in the whole of 2001. And yet there is no real reason to panic. The Flemish job market, for example, coped fairly well with the mass redundancy of the Flemish Sabena employees. Of the 4,000 employees dismissed, 67% have already found new jobs (2,816), while only 1,129 are still looking for work and 464 have been employed in the interim. In Wallonia (48%) and Brussels (34%), former Sabena employees are finding it harder to get new jobs. Flemish unemployment figures for October also show a slight change. True, over the past twelve months the number of people unemployed in Flanders rose by 13.4%, but compared with September the number of unemployed receiving benefit fell by 1.7%. And yet the rising number of young people out of work (+19%) is giving Renaat Landuyt (SP.A), the Flemish Employment Minister, cause for concern. He is urging stricter controls of the career start plan. The Flemish (VDAB) and federal (RVA) employment services are blaming each other for another control, that of the willingness to work of the unemployed, which according to a recent report by the OECD in Belgium is failing badly (FF).

MARK DEWEERDT • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 5 NOVEMBER

The number of people seeking work fell in October by 6,697 (3.3%) to 195,411 in Flanders. Compared to a year ago, however, there are 11,283 more people seeking work (+6.1%). In September the number of people seeking work had risen by 6.4% on an annual basis. The degree of employment - the ratio between the number of people seeking work and the working population - is now 7.36%, compared to 7.01% in October of last year. According to Minister Landuyt, one ray of hope is that long-term unemployment, at which his policy is primarily aimed, has fallen by 7.3% in a year. One alarming point is that the group of people seeking work who have been un-employed for one to two years rose by 5,246 or 21.5% in the past twelve months. This is a consequence of the economic downturn that began a year ago.

Also of concern is that the number of unemployed young people (-25 years) has risen by 19.3% over twelve months to 25,615. Minister Landuyt sees in that figure an indication of the suspicion that employers are not applying the career starter’s plan. According to that plan, companies with at least fifty employees are obliged to employ young people at a rate of 3% of their workforce. In Flanders the target group was expanded to the under-30s. Landuyt wants urgent discussions with Federal Employment Minister Laurette Onkelinx (PS) on controlling compliance with the career starter’s plan. There are signs that not all companies are meeting their obligations, said Landuyt.

To encourage the under-25s to look for work themselves, Landuyt wants to introduce the ‘job card’ on 1 January. He calls this ‘a driving licence for the job market’. Young people who cannot find work that matches their qualifications can get a ‘job card’ after receiving ‘job club training’ from the VDAB (Flemish Employment Office). With this they can apply to a company for training on the shop floor, which will be financed by the Flemish Government. For up to six months the young person will receive unemployment benefit, a bonus from the employer and a training payment from the VDAB. For the company, the young person will be eligible for the career starter’s plan.

Landuyt sees the ‘job card’ as a means of encouraging companies to take on young people. He is not precluding making the ‘job card’ compulsory over time. That will depend on another painful area that he wants to discuss with Onkelinx: controlling the willingness to work of unemployed people receiving benefit. Landuyt is keen that the VDAB provides the federal RVA with as much information as possible on unemployed people who refuse a job that is offered to them. ‘The problem is in following it up,’ he says.

Job of teacher valued highly by Flemings

A large-scale study by the University of Ghent and the Free University of Brussels shows that Flemings value teachers highly, in particular teachers in primary education and pre-school teachers. The esteem decreases the higher the level of education. The study is certainly a boost for teachers. In contrast to what was assumed, the profession appears to have lost little status. In particular its useful role in society and its educational task are held in high esteem by Flemings. However, the same study also shows that the average Fleming is not very aware of what a teacher actually does. Furthermore it appears that teachers themselves feel quite comfortable in their job. However, the so-called ‘well-being’ decreases with age and depends on relations in the working environment, from management to parents. It is mainly older teachers who complain about the pressure of work. The study was carried out at the request of Education Minister Vanderpoorten (VLD) in response to the threatening shortage of teachers. Hence why it also examined measures to make the profession more attractive. To make it more attractive in the job market the job description should no longer be based on the number of course hours, many teachers feel. The flat career should also be broken up and ‘teaching assistants’ should be responsible for the reception and supervision of children, currently largely the job of regular teachers.
Another study, this time by the OECD

The measures recommended are harsh: reduce payments and have employers and workers in each sector foot the bill for funding the system

The French newspaper *Le Soir* recently revealed a new report by the OECD. According to that report, Belgium must stop giving its workers early retirement. It embellishes unemployment figures, but makes pensions unpayable and even worse makes the economy splutter. Employers are abusing the system to let older and more expensive workers go and the workers themselves are clearly taking the system for granted. The report even clearly states that the systematic shifting of redundancies onto older workers is a form of discrimination. This is also the conclusion of *De Standaard* (4 November), which finds it just as discriminat-
ing as dismissing workers on the basis of sex or origin. The measures recom-

The number of elderly people in em-
ployment must be increased - for which reason the early retirement system must be scrapped. With this warning the OECD has thrown another spanner in the Belgian social works. But does the warning carry any weight? What are things like in international institutions? Two young workers, Frenchwoman Anne Sonnet and Canadian Marc Keese, spent a few months traveling around Belgium and then wrote a report. Belgium took up the organisation’s offer to carry out a study into older workers. Other countries, such as Germany and France, thanked her for it. The new liberal world has stirred up competition between international in-
stitutions. The OECD has to compete against influential competitors, against the G7/8, the World Trade Organisation and even against the European Com-
mission. They are defending tooth and

claw the liberal version of the free-mar-
ty economy.

Why did the OECD’s warning appear in the press now? The work of Keese and Sonnet is no more than a preparatory study for the OECD’s Council of Minis-
ters on the employment of the elderly, sometime next year. It has been stamped ‘secret’ and is dated 16 No-

Vivendi is working on a counter-bid and

says that it does not need the support of prosperous Belgacom, but Belgacom is still prepared if required to provide fi-
nancial assistance, but only as a step to-
wards a later merger. If Vivendi coun-
ters Vodafone with a counter-bid it hopes to make its story more credible to its investors by announcing an (immi-
nent) operation with Belgacom. The merger could have significant benefits, says the Belgacom camp. Belgacom and Cegetel are negotiating at the highest level. Last week Belgacom boss John Goossens met Jean-René Fourtou, the head of Vivendi. There are, however, obstacles which are hindering progress. The American SBC has a share in the capital of Belgacom and Vodafone in that of Belgacom sub-
sidiary Proximus.

Belgacom and Cegetel negotiate merger

Has Belgacom finally found the strate-
gic partner it has been looking for all these years? According to *De Finan-
ciel-Economische Tijd* (5 November), there is a good chance it has. The future bride could well be the French Cegetel, after France Telecom the second tele-
coms company in France, the paper has heard from a well-informed source in the Federal Government. The Belgian state is the majority shareholder in Bel-

gacom. For years Belgacom has been looking for a partner to increase its im-
portance in the European telecoms

landscape. In the past few days Belgacom has been named as the lifesaver that could come to the aid of Vivendi, with 44% the main shareholder in Cegetel, in its bat-
tle with the British Vodafone over control of Cegetel. Vodafone has made a bid for the minority interests of the British BT and the American SBC in Cegetel. Vivendi is working on a counter-bid and

ff EDITORIAL TEAM

companies

focus on flanders • 2 November - 8 November 2002 • Number 38
Almost one year to the day after the bankruptcy of their former employer Sabena, the majority of Delsey Airlines’ 250 employees have taken another blow. For them, the bankruptcy of Delsey Airlines is the second in barely a year. On 5 November the staff received the news from Freddy Van Gaever, the man who started up the airline. A day earlier Managing director Freddy Van Dyck still held out some hope to the staff. An Asian investor - the Iranian company Mahan Air - would consider a capital injection of 20 million euros in exchange for a 65% interest in Delsey Airlines. The hope appeared to be in vain. The bank guarantee that had to be in place by 6 November failed to materialize. The owner, Tony Gram himself, who depending on the source has lost 25 to 37 million euros throughout the whole venture, is refusing to invest one single euro in the company. Initially the company was called Van Gaever Airlines. Later, Gram, owner of Kipling and Delsey cases, took it over and rechristened the company Delsey Airlines. Van Gaever, however, remained a Director of Delsey Airlines but was kept out of the day-to-day management by Van Dyck, who helped the company obtain an airline licence via political lobbying. Since then both men have been going at each other hammer and tongs, even in the press. For Freddy Van Gaever this is the third time that he has set up an airline. Delta Air Transport and the Flemish Air Transport Company (Vlaamse Luchttransportmaatschappij) were successes, VG Airlines is clearly not last. Nevertheless, Van Gaever is not giving up hope. Together with the administrators of the bankruptcy he wants to examine whether it would be possible to continue Delsey Airlines [FF].

MARC BALDUYCK • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 6 NOVEMBER

Van Gaever quickly wanted to profit from the bankruptcy of Sabena to set up his own airline. A few days after Sabena was declared bankrupt on 7 November, the Antwerp businessman came up with the idea of filling the vacuum left by Sabena with his own Flemish airline. But evidently he was not quick enough. Just before Sabena, City Bird had also been declared bankrupt and a few days later the former owners of the low-cost carrier, Gutelmann and Hanson, were back in the air and shortly afterwards managed to hatch a joint venture with the newly created SN Brussels Airlines, the successor to Sabena. The Belgian market now appeared full again. Nevertheless, Van Gaever carried on. His own company, Van Gaever Airlines, was to fly to America. The target was New York, Boston and Los Angeles. However, he failed to take sufficient account of the fierce competition in the transatlantic market. Furthermore, demand for tickets to America was terribly low after 11 September. Even large American companies such as American Airlines were flying at a loss. From the first flight on 23 May the occupancy rate of Delsey Airlines’ planes was so low that it immediately became clear that the company would never make a profit. Aviation specialists calculated that Delsey Airlines was losing at least 250,000 euros on each flight.

Opinion

GUIDO MEEUSSEN • FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 6 NOVEMBER

Right from its false start, everything about VG Airlines suggested it would not last: an unclear strategy, too little money, commercial inexperience and an unfavourable environment. The company was undercapitalised. Van Gaever himself said that an initial capital of 12.4 million euros was needed, but that never came. Even when Tony Gram acquired all the shares, VG Airlines was not recapitalised: since then the airline has been living on advances and loans from its sole shareholder. VG Airlines chose the United States as its main destination at a time when the transatlantic market was the hardest hit by the crisis in air travel. With New York, Van Gaever also launched a full-frontal attack on major companies such as Continental Airlines and Delta Air Lines, which also flew from Brus-
Interbrew pays 61.5 million euro for take-overs in China

In a very short time, Belgian brewer Interbrew completed two significant take-overs in China. At the end of last week Interbrew took a 70% interest in the Chinese K.K Brewery (annual volume: 3 million hectolitres), paying USD 42 million. This week De Financieel-Economische Tijd announced that the Leuven brewery was paying a further USD 19.5 million for a 24% interest in the Zhuijiang Brewery. As far back as mid-July Interbrew had signed an agreement with Zhuijiang on the purchase of the 24% interest. The Leuven brewer’s investment in Zhuijiang’s capital is part of the Chinese brewer’s floatation on the stock market, which is planned for 2004. With a volume of 7 million hectolitres in 2001, Zhuijiang Brewery is the fifth largest Chinese beer group and according to Interbrew the most profitable per hectolitre. With these take-overs, Interbrew is hoping to be able to play a part in the consolidation currently under way in the Chinese brewing world.

The animal and human world of Jan Fabre

The Flemish choreographer/theatre designer/visual artist Jan Fabre has a thing for animals. In his shows people play dogs or become spiders, owls, and frogs. Man and animal are constantly interchanging. People are animals, Fabre feels and the spectator is regularly confronted with this animalism in a bewildering game of desire, power, and subjection. Even his new production ‘Parrots and Guinea Pigs’, the first performances of which are taking place in Bruges, is permeated by this vision. Under the all-seeing eye of a real parrot, large stuffed animals perform their ritual (FF).

Interbrew is hoping to be able to play a part in the consolidation currently under way in the Chinese brewing world, says De Financieel-Economische Tijd (FF).

The idea that people are themselves animals comes to the fore when four performers at the front of the stage cry out louder and louder that they are not animals. They repeat the words until they become nothing more than shrieks. Even when the performers dance naked wearing animal’s head masks, something is being said about this human animalism. Or when the boys run around in the buff and undertake the thrilling search for their sexuality and corporeality in public. The desire is great. They are harshly punished by women in grey suits, or end up in the corner with donkey’s ears on their heads. When the actors are simply people, they are incessantly swallowing pills and throwing up their bodily fluids. These are stored in bowls that are suspended on meat hooks above the stage. A sort of museum is created, one of the innumerable possible references to Marcel Broodthaers and Fabre’s own visual work. Fabre is not concerned with telling a simple story about human-animal relationships. Rather, it seems to be about the lasting effects that are obtained by staging these relationships again and again but each time in a different way in a bewildering but ingeniously constructed game of repetition and metamorphosis.

Parrots and Guinea Pigs by Jan Fabre, Magdalenazaal, Bruges, info: www.tinck.be

DIRK VANDENBERGHE • DE FINANCIËL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 2 NOVEMBER

With an annual volume of almost 3 million hectolitres, K.K. Brewery is the largest brewer in the province of Zhejiang, with a 50% share of the market. The main brands are the Pils beer K.K. and the export beer Zizhulin. In the fiercely regional Chinese beer market, Interbrew hopes the new take-over will allow it to play a leading role in the consolidating move of the Chinese brewing world. Earlier this year Interbrew also bought 24% of the shares of the Zhuijiang brewery, with the intention of increasing its participation further over time. The Belgian brewer also holds the majority of the shares in Nanjing Jinning, a brewing group which increased its volumes by 66% in the first nine months of this year.

Just like Interbrew, the other world’s largest breweries are trying to get their piece of the pie on the Chinese market, after the United States the biggest beer market in the world. Last month the American Anheuser-Busch, which brews Budweiser and Bud Light, announced that it wished to invest more in Tsingtao, China’s biggest brewery. The world-wide number three, the Dutch Heineken, is also looking to expand into the Chinese market. Interbrew has been active in China since 1984, helping Chinese breweries with know-how, but it was 1997 before the group was able to invest in Nanjing Jinning. However, the latest move on the Chinese market was unable to convince investors. Shortly after the announcement the share price fell slightly, closing at 22.22 euros, a loss of 2.33%. This year, Interbrew has already lost 26%.
Focus on Flanders provides a weekly overview of articles from the Flemish press and appears in English and French, and German. This newsletter is published by Uitgeverij Lannoo nv, Kasteelstraat 97, 8700 Tielt and can also be obtained by e-mail.

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MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

• 20 November to 1 December: Festival by Van Bronckhorst, performed by Frank Van den Bergh, Flan- ders Opera, Ghent; info: 09/225.24.25 www.lannoo.be

• Until 14 November: Night of the Prions, Sport- paleis, Antwerp with Fine Fleur, Foreigner, John Miles, Michael Mc Donald etc. www.sport- paleis.be

• 13, 14, and 15 November: Parrots and Guinea Pigs in Jan, Magdalenaalza, Bruges, info: www.tinck.be

• 13 to 16 November: What do you want by Angord with four male dancers, video performance and theatre, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/428.28.28 www.desingel.be

• 13 November: Happy Apple (USA) and Satoko Fuiji Quartet (JP), New Jazz, De Vooruit, Ghent; info: 09/267.24.24 www.vooruit.be

• 8, 9, 14 and 15 November: Bot-Festival, ritual music and dance, with Bori (Niger), Diwan (Al- gier), Vodun (Benin), world culture centre Zuidpoldershuis, Antwerp, info: 03/248.01.00

• 8, 9, 10 and 11 November: Sigiswald Kuijken and La Petite Bande, Cantates and Concerto by JS Bach, Lommel, Mininmink (Brussels) and Cathedral of Hasselt; info: 02/507.82.00 and 01/32.99.31

• 13 November: Sezuo-concerts, De Beethoven Acoustic Society, inaugurated by Jan Caeckes with music by Mozart, van Beethoven and Westerlinck, CC Hasselt; info: 01/12.99.33

• 13 November: 8/1! Mascins, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab- concerts.be

• 13 November: Girls against boys, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.ab- concerts.be

• 13 November: James Last, Vorst National, Brussels; info: 0900/009911

• 18 November: Magnificat Midage, Miniatures and manuscripts from Charlemagne to Charles the Brave (800 - 1475), City Museum, Louvain; info: 02/279.64.45

• 21 to 23 November: Edward Lock, La LaLa Hu- man Steps, dance, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/428.28.28 www.desingel.be

• 22 November: Jazzanova, Cactus Club, Brugge; info: 050/33.20.14

• 22 November: Violent Femmes, Royal Circus, Brussels; info: 0900/00991

• 22 to 24 November: La Traviata by Verdi, di- rected by Frank Van den Bergh, Vorst National, Brussels; info: 0900/009911

• 12, 16 and 18 November: Yoel Levi and the Flemish Radio Orchestra with the 9th symphony by Mahler, PSK Brussels, Bijloke Ghent and Kortrijkse Schouwburg, info: 02/507.82.00, 09/266.70.40 and 056/23.99.55

• 24 November: Umberto Tozzi, Royal Circus, Brussels; info: 0900/00991

• 24 November: Youssef N’Dour, Ancienne Bel- gique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be

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