Statute of limitations for building offences on table again

A few months before the elections the sensitive building offences dossier is again on the table. Just when the Flemish Parliament’s Country and Town Planning Committee is beginning discussions on a draft decree from CD&V MP Kindermans that argues in favour of a limitation of building offences, VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht announced his own proposal at a press conference. De Gucht wants minor building offences from before 1995 to no longer be prosecuted. He is counting on reaching an agreement on this within the Purple-Green majority before 18 May. VLD Minister for Regional Planning, Dirk Van Mechelen has a draft decree ready. The Greens and Socialists are reacting with anything but enthusiasm, but are not precluding an agreement. The VLD would clearly prefer a difficult agreement within the Purple-Greens than to have to discuss a CD&V proposal, concludes De Standaard (FF).

Antoon Wouters  
De Standaard 7 February

There can be no statute of limitations on building offences. They are continuous offences, as long as the land or building is not returned to its original state. Claims are still occasionally made against a building offence that was committed twenty or more years ago. The CD&V - and since Wednesday the VLD too - feels this is unfair. The Government has to act quickly. The SPA rejects the statute of limitations in principle. Bruno Tobbback accused supporters of the statute of limitations of ‘bending over backwards to defend the interests of the 1% of Flemings who have broken the law. We want to stand up for the 99% of Flemings who build correctly.’ However, Tobbback has not shut the door completely. ‘We’re not entirely against the statute of limitations. But a statute of limitations must not get in the way of compensation for members of the public who are the victim of a building offence committed by a fly-by-night cowboy.’ Isabel Vertriest (Agalev) kept her options open and did not discount negotiations with coalition partner the VLD. ‘We won’t back the CD&V proposal. The VLD at least distinguishes between building crimes in vulnerable areas and those in other areas. That’s a start,’ said Vertriest. The Country and Town Planning Minister Dirk Van Mechelen (VLD) refuted the criticism that the Building Inspectorate did not take sufficient action against building offences.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
Van Keer no longer on N-VA senate list

Van Keer, until last year Chairman of the police trade union the NSPV, withdrew as candidate because this same police trade union had filed a complaint against him for abuse of trust and fraud. According to current Chairman Van Hamme in Knack (7 February), Van Keer used union money 'to visit restaurants and establishments with female escorts'. Also, under Van Keer’s chairmanship inexplicably large sums were spent with Formatio, a company owned by the NSPV. This also explains why in 2002 the NSPV convinced Van Keer not to aspire to a new term of office, claims Knack. According to N-VA Chairman Bourgeois, the timing of the report shows that people even wanted to harm the N-VA itself. Van Keer denies all charges and says he can explain everything before the courts.

Poll confirms neck-and-neck race VLD / CD&V

What is striking about this poll is that there are no real losers. Conversely, the Liberals’ desire to join the Federal Government with only two parties on the Flemish side seems unsustainable for the time being. The far-right Vlaams Blok remains remarkably stable on 14.4%, and many commentators are quick to point out that the Blok is generally undervalued in polls. The poll also brings good news for the other opposition party, the N-VA of Geert Bourgeois. For the first time the party has succeeded in obtaining the electoral threshold of 5%. What is striking about this poll is that there are no real losers. De Standaard does, however, point out that the ‘other’ parties and those voters who abstain or spoil their ballot papers are underrepresented. The next poll must give an idea, for example, of the number of votes the Liberaal Appel (LA) of Ward Biesen can pinch from the VLD, the N-VA, the Vlaams Blok and the CD&V.
CD&V Parliamentary Party Leader Yves Leterme expressed the opinion of many CD&V members when he announced that he would again be urging Jean-Luc Dehaene to put himself forward as a candidate on the Senate list at the Federal elections of 18 May. The idea that Dehaene’s immense popularity can ensure that the CD&V again becomes the biggest party and can form a government played a large part in this. CD&V MP Joke Schauvliege had a different idea of how to put Dehaene under pressure. She set up the website www.dehaene-erop.tk, where fans could ask Dehaene to stand as a candidate. The site was an unexpected success. CD&V MP Joke Schauvliege had a different idea of how to put Dehaene under pressure. She set up the website www.dehaene-erop.tk, where fans could ask Dehaene to stand as a candidate. The site was an unexpected success because of the number of visitors. But Het Laatste Nieuws doubts whether the stunt, apart from the considerable publicity it gave Dehaene and Schauvliege, will also benefit the CD&V’s government. She set up the website www.dehaene-erop.tk, where fans could ask Dehaene to stand as a candidate. The site was an unexpected success because of the number of visitors. But Het Laatste Nieuws doubts whether the stunt, apart from the considerable publicity it gave Dehaene and Schauvliege, will also benefit the CD&V’s campaign [FF].

Opinion

LUC VANDER KELEN • HET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 5 FEBRUARY

The Internet campaign to get Dehaene on the list is having negative side-effects. CD&V campaign figurehead Stefaan De Clerck is now trying to make the best of it, but it is not strengthening his authority. The eagerness with which his party colleagues are calling for the return of the ‘Brabant cart horse’ is hardly convincing evidence of confidence in the current chairman, nor of belief in his project. What the CD&V is showing with the hype surrounding Dehaene is a great lust for power.

Website for Jean-Luc Dehaene is huge success

As for Verhofstadt, his appeal to voters who vote for other parties is much smaller.

The big winner of the popularity test in the January barometer is Flemish Vice-Minister-President, Steve Stevaert (SP.A). 58% of Flemings are considering voting for him. Way behind him, former Premier Jean-Luc Dehaene (CD&V) is second, Federal Premier Verhofstadt (VLD) third, Federal Minister for Social Affairs Frank Vandenbroucke (SP.A) fourth and CD&V Chairman Stefaan De Clerck fifth. It is now becoming clear to the CD&V that Jean-Luc Dehaene could make the difference in the battle with the VLD. For many voters, Dehaene appears to be above the party hustle and bustle. He is therefore in a position to steal a great many votes away from other parties. But for the time being Dehaene himself, in 1999 still good for 560,000 preferential votes for the Senate, is standing by his decision not to stand in the elections, although he invariably adds that he will play an active part in the election campaign. What Dehaene is to the CD&V, Stevaert is to the SP.A. He is doing extremely well among voters who have doubts about voting for parties such as Agalev, the CD&V or VLD. As for Verhofstadt, his appeal to voters who vote for other parties is much smaller [FF].

BART DOBBELAERE • DE STANDAARD • 1 FEBRUARY

Stevaert is everywhere. Obviously he is at number one among voters who are considering voting for the SP.A. But 63% of possible VLD voters are also considering voting for the Flemish minister. And 63% of those thinking about voting CD&V, are thinking of Steve. Even those considering Agalev are mostly considering Steve (which must be making them shudder at Green headquarters). The same is true of the N-VA. The Flemish minister is even cropping up in the lists of those who have already decided where to place their vote. The self-declared VLD voter would rather choose Stevaert than Dewael or Verwilghen. The self-declared CD&V voter would rather choose Stevaert than Van Peel or Vervotte. Even Agalev voters would rather consider Stevaert than Vera Dua or Magda Aelvoet. In any case, Stevaert’s popularity far outweighs that of his party. This means that he is the ideal man to steal votes away from other parties. Social Affairs Minister Frank Vandenbroucke (SP.A) is a different case. Vandenbroucke is identified very strongly with his own SP.A.

Comparable to Stevaert’s position is that of Jean-Luc Dehaene. He is also making guest appearances in the lists of other parties’ voters. Half of voters who are considering the VLD are also considering Dehaene. [Note: confirmed VLD voters do not like the former Premier at all.] But with the election date looming, potential voters are clearly more important that confirmed voters. If, therefore, the CD&V wants to filch voters from its main competitor, the VLD, Dehaene is the best man to do that. The Premier is again scoring badly with potential voters from its main competitor, the VLD, Dehaene is the best man to do that. Dehaene appears to be above the party hustle and bustle. He is therefore in a position to steal a great many votes away from other parties. But for the time being Dehaene himself, in 1999 still good for 560,000 preferential votes for the Senate, is standing by his decision not to stand in the elections, although he invariably adds that he will play an active part in the election campaign. What Dehaene is to the CD&V, Stevaert is to the SP.A. He is doing extremely well among voters who have doubts about voting for parties such as Agalev, the CD&V or VLD. As for Verhofstadt, his appeal to voters who vote for other parties is much smaller [FF].
The shortage of teachers in Flemish education is only temporary. Within a few years there will once again be a surplus, to be precise 921 nursery school teachers, 880 primary school teachers and 1046 secondary school teachers by 2005. That's what the report on the job market in education for 2003 says. Flemish Education Minister Marleen Vanderpoorten (VLD) attributes the reversal in trends among teachers to the measures she introduced. Since 1 September the retirement age has been 58 instead of 55. A linear pay increase was also included in the new Collective Labour Agreement, which will persuade more people to consider teaching as a career. And then the replacement pools, which deploy new teachers for an academic year as replacements, have begun operating at full speed. Finally, there was the 'Become a Teacher' campaign, designed to encourage young people to choose a job in education. And yet in the large towns and cities it will not be so easy to solve the problem of the shortage of teachers. Six out of ten teachers are still leaving education within five years (FF).

ALEXANDRA DE LAET • DE STANDAARD • 4 FEBRUARY

Both for nursery, primary and secondary education the 2003 Job Market Report predicts a surplus of teachers for the period 2002-2005. This is measured in full-time jobs and not in people, as many teachers work part-time. The main sticking point is the situation in the larger towns, in particular the capital. Various indications suggest that Brussels schools often find it extremely difficult to recruit staff. This means vacancies in the replacement pool are barely filled and many teachers do not have the qualifications initially required by education. These problems also occur in other towns - to a lesser extent. Also, to keep stocks of teachers up, it is not enough to attract people, you also have to hold onto them. This appears to be a big problem in Brussels. Six to seven out of ten new teachers in Brussels leave education within five years. In Flanders, an average of two to three out of ten teachers have had enough within five years. The reason Brussels finds it so difficult to convince teachers to carry on is mainly due to the difficult working conditions. The large number of foreign-speaking pupils, the travel required and the feeling of insecurity that Brussels creates in many people, the state of the school buildings, etc. The Job Market Report is also leading to caution amongst parents. There may well be a surplus of teachers on the horizon, but there are considerable regional differences. Like all sectors, education also needs a buffer: according to this forecast, only nursery education will receive the 3%, which the job market normally requires for this.

For nursery education the Job Market Report predicts that the minor shortage of nursery teachers will grow to a buffer of 921 full-time jobs within three years. Nursery education needs 2,168 new (full-time) teachers between now and 2005. This demand will be entirely met by the expected influx from the growing number of people in teacher training. The number of jobs will also fall because there will be fewer children in nurseries.

For primary education the department sees a reversal in the trend over the next five years. While there is currently an appalling shortage of teachers - two thirds of vacancies in the replacement pool are not filled - the Job Market Report predicts a reverse development over the next few academic years. In particular, the raising of the retirement age from 55 to 58 could have turned the tide, although that effect will be neutralised after 2005. The question is therefore whether the surplus will continue after 2005.

In secondary education the number of vacancies [9,728 in 2006, ed.] will grow over the next few years, because more pupils are expected, new jobs are created and the staff ages. The job market (influx of 11,786 teachers, ed.) in secondary education is less unambiguous than that of primary education. A global surplus of teachers [1,046 in 2006] says little about the different subjects and school years. Sticking points among general subjects are French, mathematics, moral philosophy and Catholic religious classes; among the practical subjects, technological education, nursing and electrical science in particular are causing problems. In the replacement pool, less than half of these positions are filled.

www.ond.vlaanderen.be

Favourable prospects for job market in education

Unemployment peaks in January

EVOLUTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN FLANDERS

In Flanders, the number of people unemployed rose in January by 1.8% compared with December 2002 and by 9.7% annually. Flanders now has 198,770 unemployed job-seekers. The unemployment figure, the proportion of unemployed in the working population, is now 7.47%. In January 2002 it was 6.8%. By way of comparison: in the entire euro zone the unemployment figure in December was 8.5%. The many corporate closures and restructurings that took place in 2002 are now being felt in the figures, claims Flemish Employment Minister Renaat Landuyt. But he is much more concerned by the fact that school-leavers are finding it harder and harder to get a job (De Morgen, 4 February). The number of young people looking for work rose to 51,772, an increase of some 17%. Of these, 18,308 are school-leavers in the qualifying period. In the category of over-55s who are looking for work and drawing a pension the rise is even sharper: 17.8%.
Under pressure from fierce protest, Minister Vanderpoorten announced in the Flemish Parliament on 5 February that she would amend her bill for a pupils’ charter. Pupils who contest their report must do so in conjunction with their parents. The Minister maintains the rest of her proposal. On the same day Education Decree XIV was also approved. Among other things, the Decree places the obligation on municipalities to organise education themselves and forces Catholic schools that take over municipal schools to continue to offer moral philosophy.

Belgian dredgers pay ransom money to Indonesia

The Belgian dredgers of Jan de Nul and DEME, which have been held on the Indonesian island of Sumatra since 26 July, will shortly be released. This was confirmed by spokesperson Indroyono Soesilo from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Jan de Nul and DEME have agreed to the demand for 15% of the value of their dredgers. They will pay 16 and 4 million dollars respectively in ransom money. On 26 July the ships were seized by the Indonesian navy because they did not have the necessary papers and because they should have extracted more sand than the amount they had indicated. The sand is used for major land-reclamation projects in Singapore. Confidential documents from the Indonesian Ministry of Maritime Affairs reveal that in the period from 23 May to the seizure on 26 July alone, the dredgers shipped to Singapore many times the amount they officially reported.

Dissatisfaction in schools takes disquieting forms. It is no longer about the grumblings of a limited group of weary teachers. The dissatisfaction is widespread, and also affects senior and middle management. It is largely directed towards the Minister for Education. The point is that people with a job in education are constantly getting messages from above which they perceive as negative. Take one of the most recent messages. Suddenly, pupils aged 14 and above are to be allowed to appeal against a bad mark on their report. Teachers, even those who are seriously concerned about pupils’ rights, went up the wall. Collectively. Does no one trust us any more! What are we still doing here! Have we nothing more to say! How can we maintain our position if 14-year-old whippersnappers are allowed to teach us lessons? For them this is the umptieth indication that society feels they are failing. The umptieth expression of a lack of trust. Many of them no longer dare say that they work in education. Almost all the decisions that rain down on them from above are met in this way. And recently there has been something else. Many better schools that were using modernising have stopped. So much is being dumped on them that they no longer have the energy to do anything themselves.

Education has to be given back to the schools. Changes and improvements must come from others. Just like the economy, education works best with soft hands from the government and plenty of space for initiatives for the grass roots. Then people are happy to work. Then they work well. Then they also stay in their jobs. Therein lies the solution to the shortage of teachers, and to many other problems in education.
Storage of nuclear waste is massive problem

AFTER TWENTY YEARS, SOME 426 CONTAINERS APPEAR NO LONGER ABLE TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME: THE BARRELS ARE RUSTING OR SWELLING

From 1960 to 1983 Belgium carried out a total of 15 sea storage campaigns, in which a total of 55,000 barrels of nuclear waste were dumped at six points on the seabed. Other countries did exactly the same. Scientists defended the dumping with the argument that the radioactive waste is extremely diluted if it escapes. In 1983 the International Atomic Agency rejected this principle and a moratorium was imposed on the dumping of nuclear waste at sea. Since then, Belgian nuclear waste has been stored temporarily in Dessel. Rather by chance the State Secretary for Energy and Sustainable Development Olivier Deleuze (Ecolo) learned that of the 49,000 barrels, each holding 400 litres, that are stored in Dessel, around 426 from Electrabel (nuclear power stations) and the Study Centre for Nuclear Energy in Mol (SCK) show serious flaws. After twenty years, the containers appear no longer able to stand the test of time: the barrels are rusting or swelling. Deleuze was furious that the competent body, the National Institute for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Nuclear Fuels (Niras) had never informed the Belgian Government of this. Niras ensures that there is no imminent danger to personnel and the general public, but De Morgen has some questions (FF).

FILIP ROGIERS • DE MORGEN • 1 FEBRUARY

The storage of nuclear fuel in Dessel remains temporary. The search for a final storage site is proving difficult for both technical and political reasons. No one wants nuclear waste in their back garden, and so the whole lot is still in Dessel. Niras acknowledges that further scientific research is needed. Some radioactive waste needs hundreds of years to degrade. The storage buildings in Dessel have a lifespan of 75 years. No one knows with 100% certainty whether the solution that is currently put forward most frequently, storage in clay soil, is actually the best. Thus begins the story of the 426 barrels that are causing all the problems today. It involves historical products, waste that during the 1980s was processed in packaging that was felt suitable for the use that was made of at the time. There are 96 barrels of low-active waste in carbon steel barrels from Electrabel intended for storage at sea but which are now rusting above ground. According to Niras, they are still ‘the property and responsibility of Electrabel’. The other barrels that are causing problems are the legacy of the Study Centre for Nuclear Energy in Mol, also from the 1980s. This involves 124 barrels that have been bitumenised, a variant of asphalt-like clay. The barrels are beginning to swell. Another batch (184 packages), from an SCK contractor, is showing signs of rust around the edges of the barrels. Niras itself attributes the problems to the continuing uncertainty as to what Belgium should do with its nuclear waste.

www.niras.be

Colruyt and Laurus conclude take-over

The Belgian distribution group Colruyt is taking over the Belgian activities of the Dutch group Laurus. The negotiations [see FF 3] lasted several weeks and eventually resulted in an agreement that was signed on 5 February. Colruyt will become the owner of 21 Battard shops, 5 Central Cash shops and a service centre in Pommeroeul, in Wallonia. All these sites will shortly become Colruyt shops. In addition, Colruyt will also become the supplier for the 350 Belgian Spar stores, which are run by franchise-holders. The take-over will increase Colruyt’s turnover by 470 million euros and its staff by 1,300 employees.

www.colruyt.be

Environmental and Economy

Nuclear Waste

With the deregulation of the post markets imminent, the post office has to modernise very quickly. Delivery of the post has to be quicker, and this is possible using automatic sorting machines. The Post Office wants to buy four, two for Flanders (Ghent and Antwerp) and two for Wallonia (Liège and Charleroi). The existing machines in Brussels are to be upgraded. On 17 February the Post Office concluded the third round of talks for the contract for the four machines with a price tag of 300 million euro. Inevitably the operation will involve job losses. One machine can do the work of 1,000 manual sorters. The image of the postman sorting the post in his local post office will soon be a thing of the past (FF).

MARC BALDUYCK • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 5 FEBRUARY

Automatic sorting machines reach an unbelievable speed: more than 30,000 parcels, letters and packages each hour. Twelve letters a second. At an unimaginable speed they shoot through an installation that processes barely legible handwritten documents. Siemens and Solistic, a subsidiary of the American Northrop Grumman, are the only two remaining candidate suppliers for the four installations. Solistic bought the post-automation activities of the French Alcatel. The purchase is part of the modernisation programme envisaged by the Post Office’s boss, Johny Thijis. The Post Office has to increase its profitability. This also has to do indirectly with a reduction in staff. One machine can easily do the work of 1,000 sorters. Technological modernisation must, however, be fitted into the Post Office’s social restructuring. Thijs has in mind 8,000 redundancies, although this figure is not final. There is also the question of how far the old system of delivering the post will survive. New forms of communication such as email, the Internet and SMS are causing volumes of normal post to drop by 3% a year. The Post Office therefore has to offer alternatives. These could include personalised advertising folders, designed to make up for the drop in normal post.

www.post.be
Omega Pharma suffers growing pains

Three profit warnings in three months, that raises the question of whether the management still has everything under control.

The big success story of Omega Pharma, the producer and distributor of prescription-free drugs and medicines, took a blow on 31 January. Managing Director Marc Coucke presented profit figures for 2002 that fell below the profit forecast, which had already been lowered twice during 2002, the last time in December. The profit forecast for 2003 was also adjusted downwards. All of which creates disquiet amongst investors. The share, which was still worth 43 euro in December, had fallen to 17.66 euro by 3 February.

Three profit warnings in three months, that raises the question of whether the management still has everything under control, claims De Financieel-Economische Tijd (FF).

In 2002 Omega Pharma saw turnover rise by 33% to 583 million euros, while the profit per share rose by 43% to 2.3 euros. This meant Omega Pharma slightly exceeded its own turnover expectations, although profit remained below the twice-reduced profit forecast. At 30%, the rise in turnover in the fourth quarter was on the thin side. Internal growth slowed to 23% compared with 20% in the first six months of 2002 and 15% in the third quarter. ‘The growth in turnover in 2003 from 583 million euros to 740 million euros mainly has to come from internal growth,’ says Omega Pharma boss Marc Coucke.

According to Dexia analyst Vantieghem, the lower growth in turnover in the fourth quarter shows that the more difficult economic market conditions in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany are continuing. This susceptibility to the economic climate is new. ‘At the beginning of 2002 it still looked as if the weaker economy would not cause Omega Pharma any trouble,’ says Paul van Eetvelt, analyst at Delta Lloyd Securities. Van Eetvelt has questions about the management’s grasp of things. ‘After three profit warnings in three months you almost have to conclude that the management has no real idea about sales. And that’s worrying. Especially because until recently, Omega Pharma had a cast-iron reputation when it came to figures,’ says Van Eetvelt.

www.omegapharma.be

Brussels stage arts close ranks

The ‘Brussels Arts Platform’ came about through a typical Brussels frustration: there is plenty of quality, but it is never seen as a whole

Seventeen Brussels organisations that stage podium arts (dance, theatre, music) will be meeting more than previously. They have joined together to form the ‘Brussels kunstenoverleg’ ‘Brussels Arts Platform’, designed to be a sort of deliberation platform for common topics and questions. The initiative is intended to throw up a dam against the hopeless fragmentation of the Brussels cultural landscape and wants to generate co-operation in terms of infrastructure and broad educational initiatives for schools. Robert De Lathouwer, the politician responsible for culture in the Flemish Community Commission [Vlaamse Gemeenschapscmissie, VGC] in the capital sees this as a representative partner. But the Flemish Community, the Brussels-Capital Region and the nineteen Brussels municipalities are also partners. The mutual consultation of the seventeen cultural organisations will now take place within a non-profit structure and with a separate co-ordinator, Geert Cochez (FF).

The ‘Brussels Arts Platform’ came about through a typical Brussels frustration: there is plenty of quality, but it is never seen as a whole. For a long time the Brussels theatre sector had the image of a collection of independent satellite-operators. After the capsize of Brussels 2000 cultural capital] came the reproach that the cultural sector in Brussels consists mainly of subsidised bickerers.

‘Government policy and sectoral initiatives come across as hardly co-ordinated at all,’ says Chairman Hugo Vanden Driessche, Director of the Kaaithéater. He has, however, noticed that the mood has changed for the better. The working atmosphere in Brussels has improved, and directors are talking together more than before. The Kunstenoverleg must counter fragmentation, not eliminate competition. ‘Brussels’ strength is that it is full of big egos all trying to achieve something,’ says Vanden Driessche. The initiative proved contagious. Other organisers and disciplines joined in. The Brussels Arts Platform currently has seventeen members. These are Ultima Vez, KVS/De Bottelarij, Beursschouwburg, Neelcompany, Nadine, Kaaithéater, Rosas, KunstenFESTIVALdesArts, Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Ancienne Belgique, Damaged Goods, Bronks, Vlaams Theater Instituut, Het Beschrijf, Corban, Zoo and Dito/Dito.

The organisations all have ties with the Flemish Community or the VGC. That is a condition for entry. According to Vanden Driessche, the ‘Brussels Arts Platform’ must not be confused with a Flemish bastion aspiring to a policy of presence in the capital. ‘We work from a pragmatic position, but the main thing is the day-to-day Brussels reality. The ‘Brussels Arts Platform’ is perfectly placed to talk with the French-speaking cultural sector.’
**CULTURE**

**Diary**

**MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE**

- • 31 January to 14 February and from 21 February: Werther by Jules Massenet, conductor: Patrick Fourmilleur, Flanders Opera, Antwerp; info: www.vlaamsoperab.be
- • 11 to 13 February: April Me, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, dance, Flanders Opera, Ghent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.24.24
- • 12 February: Fase and the Making of April Me, Film, De Vooruit, Ghent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.24.24
- • 13 February: English Tastings (UK), di Muzak Meewin (Hol) and Stillulpties (Iceland), De Vooruit, Ghent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.24.24
- • 12 February: The Datsuns, AR, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be
- • 1 February: Soft Cell, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.68 www.handelsbeurs.be
- • 12 and 14 February: Brussel by Wim Vande Keybus and Ultima Vez, dance, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 02/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- • 12 February: Symphonic Orchestra of De Munt conducted by Joseph Swinnen with compositions by Haydn, Berg and Schönb erg, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 02/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- • 12 February: Jan Boeke and Julius Drake [piano], Lieder by Brahms and Wolf, Flanders Opera, Antwerp, info: 02/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- • 11 and 16 February: Symphonic Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Jan Stulen, with Saint-Saëns [Danse macabre], Lalo [symphonie espagnole] and Reger, Concertgebouw, Leuven; info: www.symfonienoise-kest.be
- • 12 and 14 February: Recital Kurt Gysen with Shotokawitch, Piet Swerts and Vaughan Williams, Flemish Opera Antwerp and Ghent; info: www.vlaamsoperab.be
- • 13 February: Gustavo Gancedo septet (Argentina), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
- • 13 February: Until 23 February: Werther and from 21 February to 2 March, Flanders Opera, Ghent
- • 13 to 15 February: Kulturama, cultural happening, Leuven; info: www.stuk.be 01/02.03.20
- • 15 February: Artefact new media festival, Stuk, Leuven; info: www.artefact.vlaamsbrabant.be 01/02.03.20
- • 14 February: Konono (Congo), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
- • 14 February: Brentano Quartet, with compositions by Wolf, Dvorak and Haydn, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 02/248.28.28

**www.desingel.be**

- 15 February: Han Tang Yuefa (Taiwan), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp
- info: www.zuiderpershuis.be

- 16 and 18 February: Orchestra and Choir of the Opera conducted by Ivan Törzs with Variations by Elliott Carter and Requiem by Brahms, Bijloke, Ghent and Flanders Opera, Antwerp, info: www.vlaamsoperab.be

- 16 February: Mendelssohn-happening with Collegium Vocale and Dechifharmonic conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, Beethoven Academy conducted by Jan Caeyers and Daniel Quaret: a programme with Lieder, symphony nr. 3, violin concerto in e and string quartet (11 am until 11 pm); De Singel, Antwerp, info: 02/248.28.28 www.desingel.be


- 19 February: Anthony Braxton Standards Quartet (Jazz), De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

- 17 February: Sophie Ellis Bextor, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 05/48.24.24 www.abconcerts.be

- 19 to 22 February: Wurst by Radiohole (New York), a camp version of the Nibelungenlied, kaaitheater, Brussels; info: 02/201.59.59 www.kaaitheater.be

- 20 February: NAS, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 05/48.24.24 www.abconcerts.be


**EXPO**

- • Until 16 February: Selection 1/Backstage, Fashion exhibition, Antwerp Modemuseum (MoMa), Antwerp; info: 03/470.27.71 www.mooma.be

- • Until 30 March: Twins, [the fascination by scientists, artists and the public] exhibition, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent, info: 09/222.17.03 www.museumbgguislain.be

- • Until 23 February: Nick Andrews and Tom Liekens, De Zware Panter, Anwerp, info: 03/463.57.30

- • Until 13 April: Jacques Charlier and Leo Copers, exhibitions, SMAK, Ghent; info: 09/222.17.03 www.smak.be

- • Until 9 March: Russian Modern, Russia during the Belle Epoque, Fashion Museum, Hasselt, info: 01/12.96.21 www.modemuseum.be

- • Until 16 February: Antiques Fair, St. Pietersabdij, Ghent; info: 070/233.74.00 www.antiekgilde.be

- • Until 22 February: Horror Vacui, Photography and the empty city, exhibition, Witte Zaal, Posteernestraat, Ghent;

- • Until 20 April: ‘Abroad’, exhibition with work by Ravel, Richter, Pistoleto and Tapiés, Roger Raveelmuseum, Machelen aan de Leie (near Deinze), www.rogergraveelmuseum.be

- • Until 30 March: ‘Minnelijk Akkoord’, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the literary life from the 14th to the 17th Century in Brussels, exhibition, City Hall, Brussels

- • Until 20 April: Navalepsy, retrospective exhibition with work by Dave Me Kean, Auditorium Tweebronnen, Leuven, info: www.beeldbeeld.org

**Focus on Flanders**

Focus on Flanders provides a weekly overview of articles from the Flemish press and appears in English, French and German. This newsletter is published by Uitgeverij Lannoov, Kasteelstraat 97, 8700 Tielt and can also be obtained by e-mail.

**Translation**

- Eurologos
- Printing: Drukkers Lannoov nv, Tielt
- Responsible editor: Luc Dezemere, Marke
- Subscription rate by post and e-mail: 220 euro
- Either transfer the sum to account no.: 473-1010001-19 with the KBC in Roeselare
- Or give us the number and expiry date of your credit card (Visa/Eurocard)
- Telephone: 0511.42.42.99
- Fax: 0511.40.11.51
- E-mail: frank.vandecaveye@lannoov.be