Ford Genk, of inestimable value to integration

the feeling is that the effect on multicultural society in Genk will be considerable

For decades Ford Genk functioned as the ‘great equaliser’ in Limburg’s multicultural arena and was the driving force behind a great many social, cultural and sporting initiatives. Not only local football, judo, photography, shooting and cycling clubs, but also immigrant organisations, youth clubs, districts and schools were given more breathing space through the plant’s sponsoring and support. A number of technical and vocational schools even received special machines from Ford. Two months ago all that was stopped. For the more than thirty associations it was a hard blow. Until two months ago, Genk and Ford were almost synonymous, says ACW trade union leader Gerard Ignoul. Although no one wants to come out and say it, the feeling is that the effect on multicultural society in Genk will be considerable. Ford has always had an important exemplary function in terms of antiracism and anti-discrimination. Hussey Aydintel, co-ordinator of ‘The Turkish Union’, sees the storm brewing. ‘What has happened here puts the future of many Limburg immigrants at risk. Even after the closure of the mines many immigrants could not find work or found a job in which they earned much less. Others had to wait for up to six years before they found work or got jobs on the illegal job circuit. Things were much easier for native Belgians. The poor economic situation now promises even more problems for unskilled workers. And if there is a surplus it is always the natives who are chosen first’.

The social drama at Ford Genk will hit the large group of Ford workers of foreign origin hardest, fear community workers and immigrant associations in the region around Genk in Limburg. As many as 25% of Ford workers are of foreign, mainly Turkish, origin. They are afraid that they will find it hardest to get other jobs. The car plant was also of inestimable value to the integration of immigrants in the area, not least through the support it gave to local associations. Ford recently stopped this support (FF).

PETER DUPONT • DE MORGEn • 3 OCTOBER

INTRODUCTION

October was a black day for the workers at Ford Genk. They will shortly find out if they are among the 3,000 who are to lose their jobs. For the time being the idea seems to be to dissuade them from taking part en masse in trade union action, concludes De Morgen (3 October). But the future is also uncertain for the remaining 4,600 workers. The trade unions are afraid that Ford will ultimately want to close the plant. The Ford drama also affects the whole central Limburg region. With its 9,000 workers and an annual turnover of 5.5 billion euros, Ford Genk is the area’s economic driving force. Forecasts predict the loss of a further 1,100 to as many as 6,000 jobs among supplier firms and other service-providers. Last year Limburg had to cope with the closure of Philips Hasselt (1,200 redundancies) and this demonstrated that re-employing workers in this region is far from easy. The comparison with the closure of Renault Vilvoorde (March 1998), where there were no problems re-employing workers, does not hold water. Vilvoorde lies in the economic growth pole of Flemish Brabant and the closure occurred in an economic boom period. Politicians at both Flemish and Federal level are falling over themselves to express their outrage over Ford’s broken word. The promised Flemish expansion support of 53 million euros will not be paid as long as Ford Europe does not provide guarantees that the new Mondeo will be assembled in Genk; they warn. KU-Leuven economics lecturer Paul De Grauwe sees this 53 million as wasted money anyhow (De Morgen, Het Laatste Nieuws, 2 October). Multinationals like Ford take their decisions on a global level. No government can change that with subsidies, he claims. De Grauwe believes that the government would be better off tailoring its policy (and financial support) to the unavoidable reorientation of the industry towards the service sector. In any case, Ford Genk is at the top of the agenda at the employment conference of governments and social partners that began a week ago. The day after the bad news, Premier Verhofstadt launched the idea of directing the announced cut in labour costs of 800 million euros towards shift work and overtime. But Het Nieuwsblad (3 October) warns the Premier that he should not expect miracles from his 800 million cut in social charges, at the most 1% of all taxes on labour. The paper hopes that Ford Genk will become a lesson in humility for the Prime minister, who recently promised somewhat recklessly 200,000 new jobs.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief

CONTENTS

Economy
3,000 jobs scrapped at Ford Genk 2
Ford Genk: cuts at supplier firms 2
The Port Package Directive 3
Dockers disappointed with compromise 3
Employers want partially privatised health insurance 4
Barco scraps 113 jobs in Belgium 4
Koramic profits increase tenfold 4
Technology industry loses 15,000 jobs 4

Politics
Poll: SPA-Spirit biggest party 5
Antwerp civil service top under suspicion 5
Temsamani’s resignation and the limits of political marketing 7

Environment
Anciaux spreads aircraft noise 7

Culture: Icons of Flemish design 7
Ford Genk: 3,000 jobs scrapped, unions fear worst

The promised investment of 900 million euros will not be forthcoming

In total, a further 3,000 jobs are to go at the Ford plant in Genk, in Limburg. That is on top of the 1,400 jobs that went in March last year. Ford Genk’s trade unions found out about this on the morning of Wednesday 1 October at a special Works Council with Ford’s European bosses. Furthermore, the promised investment of 900 million euros in Ford Genk will not be forthcoming, because the Ford Focus will not be assembled at the Genk site but at two other European sites, probably Saarlouis (Germany) and Valencia (Spain). The expected assembly of the new Mondeo model in Genk will be reconsidered by Ford Europe. Negotiations on the redundancy programme for Ford Genk may well begin on Monday.

The trade unions blocked all access to the car plant in Genk and announced tough action. According to the unions, the management has broken all existing agreements and is not even prepared to give guarantees that the new Ford Mondeo will be built in Genk from 2006. The unions are also afraid that the whole plant will close down within a few years. They announced a strike on Monday. Politicians expressed their disappointment and outrage over Ford’s broken word (FF).

JEROEN LISSENS • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 2 OCTOBER

Those who aren’t made redundant are declared outliers,’ said ACV Chief Representative Ignoul. According to the trade unions, the management at Ford Genk had been aware of the planned cuts for months. They claim that the management decided on Tuesday evening to close the plant until the end of the week to stifle protests by workers. Despite the closure, trade union representatives blocked all access to the plant. In doing so they wanted to prevent lorries carrying parts or finished cars leaving the plant. The trade unions also announced further action, but this is only likely to be next Monday, when production of the cars is to start again. Ford management yesterday announced that they want to reach an agreement with the trade unions by the end of March on the way in which the redundancies are to take place. In a report to the works council they made that a condition for bringing the new Mondeo to Genk. The trade unions are unhappy with this deadline: ‘It’s awful that a management dares to say: if you are good boys and want to help us get rid of as many people as quickly as possible, we’ll let you know in the spring whether there is still a future here for the Mondeo,’ says Ignoul.

DE STANDAARD • 2 OCTOBER

Lewis Booth, Director of Ford Europe, was ‘summoned’ yesterday by Federal Premier Guy Verhofstadt (VLD) and Flemish Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD). The Federal and Flemish Employment Ministers, Frank Vandebroucke (SPA) and Renaat Landuyt (SPA), were also present. Verhofstadt afterwards said he was disappointed and outraged over Ford’s broken word. But he does not have many policy instruments to change things. So far, crisis talks between senior government members and trade unions have merely resulted in the setting up of a task-force to help deal with the consequences of the restructuring at Ford Genk. The Flemish Government dare not simply cancel the subsidies promised last year - valued at 53 million euros. According to SPA Party Chairman Steve Stevaert, that sum must be reserved in order to try and safeguard the remaining jobs with the management of Ford Genk. According to Frank Vandebroucke, the current employment conference must now put even more effort into cutting labour costs and creating new jobs. ‘Hopefully this example will muzle all those who say that cost-cutting is nothing more than a gift to employers,’ says Patricia Ceysens (VLD), the Flemish Minister for Economic Affairs.

www.ford.be

Cuts at Ford Genk also cost jobs at supplier firms

At a press conference in Brussels Lewis Booth, Chairman of Ford Europe, said that the car manufacturer had to cut costs quicker than planned. Ford has lost a share of the market in Europe to Toyota and Peugeot Citroën (down from 9.1 to 8.9%) and is struggling with a production surplus of 20 million cars. In the second quarter Ford Europe suffered losses of 525 million dollars. After the 1,700 jobs in Germany, 3,050 in the US and 3,000 jobs scrapped in Belgium Ford announced that it would close down two plants (Cleveland, Michigan) in the US this year, one more next year (New Jersey) and another one gradually (Ohio). By the end of 2004 7,000 jobs must go in Ford plants throughout Europe, according to Booth. Ford has already closed a plant at Dagenham in the UK and a small production unit in Płonsk in Poland.

Alongside Ford Genk are supplier firms such as Collins&Aikman (dashboards), Lear Automotive (car seats), SM/L/LMG (gearboxes) and TDS (upholstery) that are directly linked to the production lines at Ford Genk. Together all these supplier firms account for 3,000 to 4,000 jobs. But then there are the cleaning companies, security firms, transport companies and the catering firms that are indirectly affected. According to the research division of ING-bank, for every job in car assembly there are approximately two in the supplier firms to go, whereas the whole operation will cost 0.24% of Belgium’s gross domestic product (De Standaard, 2 Oct).

www.agoria.be

CAR PRODUCTION IN BELGIUM (1995-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Cars</th>
<th>Employes</th>
<th>Employes Ford Genk</th>
<th>Investments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,122,000</td>
<td>30,113</td>
<td>13,004</td>
<td>271</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,072,000</td>
<td>30,242</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>1,051,000</td>
<td>30,987</td>
<td>12,253</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1,035,000</td>
<td>30,276</td>
<td>12,533</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1,001,000</td>
<td>27,044</td>
<td>11,027</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,033,000</td>
<td>27,889</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1,132,000</td>
<td>26,910</td>
<td>10,114</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1,036,000</td>
<td>23,845</td>
<td>9,883</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INFOMARK CENTREXIA
Belgium isolated in European parliament

Belgian dockers are the only ones in Europe who can appeal to a law to enforce their exclusive rights to work in the port.

On 29 September dockers caused all major ports in Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain to close. In Denmark, France and Germany go-slow work was organised. Forty-seven buses from Antwerp and six from Ghent took 2,500 Belgian dockers to the international demonstration in Rotterdam against the Port Package Directive of the European Commission. Loyola de Palacio, Commissioner of the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. According to this Directive, a licence obligation with strict conditions for all those involved in port work, was accepted by the Parliament but rejected by European transport ministers. Belgian MEPs now risk being isolated in the Parliament. Belgian dockers are the only ones in Europe who can still brandish the text of a law to enforce their exclusive rights to work in the port (FF).

PASCAL SERTYN • DE STANDAARD • 29 SEPTEMBER

The protected status of dockers remains the main stumbling block for European policy-makers. It has led to massive differences of opinion between Member States. It has also resulted in a deep split between the three European policy-making institutions: the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Officially the unions want to exert pressure on the Council of Ministers with their actions to adopt the standpoint of the European Parliament. The spectre being raised by the trade unions is that doing away with the exclusivity of port work will lead to the use of underpaid and untrained sailors - cheap Philippines, say the dockers - in the unloading and loading of ships by shipping companies. And this, according to them, will leave the door wide open for social dumping and a greater risk of accidents.

The European Shipowners’ Association find such criticism totally misplaced. And they are striking back. They are wondering why the port unions are continuing to swear by the status of recognised port work, while self-handling has been the norm in various European countries for years. But in Belgium Flemish port employers also remain firmly behind the Wet Major, even though dissatisfaction is growing in employers’ circles over the repeated paralysis of Flemish ports by the day. In Flemish ports the dockers’ monopoly has for the past thirty years gone hand in hand with a highly efficient, fast and extremely flexible approach to the shipment of goods and social peace, was their argument until recently. But now they realise that this Law Major no longer guarantees them social peace.

Dockers disappointed with european compromise

In the night of 29/30 September, representatives of the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the disputed Port Directive. According to this Directive, sailors can perform all loading and unloading work themselves on board the ship. The licence obligation with strict safety, insurance and environmental conditions which the European Parliament wanted to impose on self-handlers was not retained in the compromise text. In the end the Member States are free to choose whether to impose a licensing system. Onshore work will remain the preserve of dockers. In the EU Council of Ministers Belgium was isolated in its opposition to the Directive. The European Parliament will vote on the text in December, but it is already assumed that all except the Belgians and Dutch will accept the compromise. In Belgium, dockers have reacted with disappointment (FF).

MARC DE ROO • DE FINANCIELE ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 1 OCTOBER

That the license obligation has been dropped from the compromise rankles Chairman Michel Bovy of ACV-Transcom. ‘This will create problems. If sailors can load and unload ships themselves, the Wet-Major risks falling flat on its face economically and becoming legally untenable.’ The port work system can remain in place if Belgium operates a strict licensing policy that is in line with the Wet Major, but ‘if the surrounding countries introduce systems with cheap crews without training being able to load and unload ships, Belgian ports will undoubtedly lose their competitive edge.’ Employers also fear the negative consequences of the compromise. ‘It will not be easy to maintain the social peace,’ says the Chairman of the Employers’ Association of Belgian Ports, Marino Vermeersch: ‘On 1 October the Collective Labour Agreement negotiations begin. Port strikes and actions are not conducive to everything passing off in a serene climate.’ On Tuesday there were further work stoppages in Zeebrugge and there was a tense atmosphere at the recruitment office of Dockers in Antwerp.

BELGIUM CAR ASSEMBLY INDUSTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYEES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ford (genk)</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opel belgium (antwerp)</td>
<td>5,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volkswagen (vorst)</td>
<td>5,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volvo cars (ghent)</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>renault (vilvoorde) closed in 1997</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: INFOGRAFIEK CONCENTRA

www.portofantwerp.be
**Employers want partially privatised health insurance**

The trade unions are rejecting a 'two-tier healthcare system'.

Economically speaking, the addition of 10 new Member States to the EU on 1 May 2004 is a good thing, says Vansteenkiste. But not in the short term. In particular, medium-sized production businesses will relocate to Eastern Europe because of labour costs. There, labour costs are only one tenth (Poland) to one twentieth (Romania) of ours. In Belgium growth will remain below 1% for 5 to 10 years as a result. Bad news for Premier Verhofstadt, whose '200,000 new jobs' Vansteenkiste finds unrealistic. If the government wants to create new jobs, labour costs will have to be cut sharply. According to the VBO chairman, the money for this can come from savings on healthcare. The concrete solution he is proposing is the same as for pensions. On top of the (basic) pension they receive from the government, many people also have a supplementary pension from their company. You could also work with a basic package, financed by the government, in healthcare. For supplementary healthcare the insurance principle could then apply, where you yourself pay directly, or via the company, for example by converting part of the wage increase into a 'healthcare insurance'.

www.vbo.be

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**Barco scraps 113 jobs in Belgium**

**FF EDITOR**

Flemish electronics manufacturer Barco is to scrap 113 jobs over the next three years. This is partly the result of the reorganisation of the Subcontracting division, which designs and assembles the electronics for Barco's core divisions. Assembly will now be carried out in the Czech Subcontracting site in Kladno. Some of the activities of Barco Subcontracting and 107 members of staff are moving to the Subcontracting site in Poperinge (West Flanders). Barco is also contracting the manufacture of some products for the medical market out to a firm in Taiwan and from next year part of the production of the LED wall displays is moving to China.

www.barco.be

**Koramic profits increase tenfold**

**FF EDITOR**

In the first six months the Belgian building materials group Koramic recorded a net profit of 24.1 million euros. This is ten times last year's net profit (2.2 million euros). The rise is a result of the sale of 50% of the roof tiles division Koramic Roofing to the Austrian Wienerberger and to the gains made on the sale of Wienerberger shares. This year Koramic reduced its interest in Wienerberger from 20.4 to 10.7%. This was combined with a drop in turnover from 681 million in the first six months of last year to 227 million euros this year. The intention is that in the short term Koramic will disappear from the stock markets. The investment company Koceram of boss Christian Dumolin recently made a public bid for all Koramic shares in public ownership. As a result of the bid, which ended at the beginning of September, the free float fell to 1.3% of the shares (De Financiell-Economische Tijd, 1 October).

www.koramic.be

**Technology industry lost 15,000 jobs in 2003**

**FF EDITOR**

This year 15,000 jobs have already been lost in the technology industry (ICT, metal, electronics). Ford Genk not included - according to the employers' umbrella organisation, Agoria. That is a loss of 5%. Last year the jobs lost came to 2.8%. The loss of jobs is greatest in loss-making firms (one in three companies with Agoria). In such companies as many as 14% of jobs have gone in the past five years. Only one in ten companies achieved profits of more than 10%. They created 4% more jobs. Nevertheless Agoria sees a positive trend: profitability seems likely to rise this year from 0.8 to 1.1%. This strengthens the employers' federation in its call for a cut in labour, energy and environmental costs. This will increase profitability (the ebit), which in turn will have a positive effect on employment, according to Agoria in De Standaard (1 October).

www.agoria.be
Almost entire Antwerp civil service leadership brought under suspicion

The question is clearly where do you draw the line, what is allowed and what is not

Ten top civil servants, three chiefs of police and the head of the fire service of the city of Antwerp are suspected of 'embezzling city funds'. They are suspected of having made personal purchases with a "professional" Visa card belonging to the city. When he was informed of the news by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, Mayor Janssens (SP.A) convened an emergency session of the Bench of Aldermen on 29 September. Afterwards it was decided that the Bench of Aldermen wanted to hear the civil servants concerned individually. It would then be decided whether or not to suspend them as a precautionary measure. The suspects also include Fred Nolf, Roger Bekaert and Freddy Vandekerkhove, who had previously been suspected of forgery and corruption in another fraud case.

This time the alleged offence is ‘embezzlement’, relating to the private use of the Visa card for all manner of expenses such as restaurant bills, books, tolls on French motorways, women’s clothing or perfume, etc. These purchases do not involve excessive amounts. As far as we know, they are all between 43 and 2,000 euros. The civil servants concerned deny fraud and say that tax collector Roger Bekaert, who supervised use of the Visa cards, should have told them that the cards could also be used for clothing and other private purchases, provided these were ‘job-related’. Earlier, Visa-card spending by aldermen of the previous Bench was spread across the press. According to De Standaard, they will undoubtedly be the next to be suspected by the Prosecutor’s Office (FF).

Opinion

YVES DESMET • DE MORGEN • 30 SEPTEMBER

We are not really dealing with intentional, large-scale corruption here, rather several hundreds to thousands of euros of what could equally well be described as ‘creative pay’. The question is clearly where do you draw the line, what is allowed and what is not. Well, in public service the answer is simple: nothing is allowed, and if you do not like it, you should look for a job in the private sector. Civil servants have a status with disadvantages, such as lower pay, but also advantages, such as a better pension and job security. That status is the way it is and it applies to everyone in public service.

That being said, the question is whether this out-of-hand corporate culture deserves such severe criminal terms as ‘embezzlement’, and whether these people should be treated as criminals. But in a climate in which everyone who accepts a public or private mandate can no longer allow themselves the slightest lapse, this type of exaggerated reaction has become the new blurring of standards, whereby ultimate and absolute purity is now demanded.

www.antdwerp.be

SP.A-Spirit becomes biggest Flemish party in LLB-poll

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Tem samani's resignation and the limits of political marketing

Kathleen Van Brempt (33) is to succeed Anissa Temsamani as State Secretary for Labour Organisation and Welfare at Work in the federal government.

FF EDITOR

SPA MEP Kathleen Van Brempt (33) is to succeed Anissa Temsamani as State Secretary for Labour Organisation and Welfare at Work in the federal government. SPA Party Chairman Steve Stevaert rejected the criticism that just like her predecessor, Van Brempt was chosen for her looks. He gives two reasons why the choice fell on Van Brempt. Firstly because as a labour sociologist she has the perfect academic background for the job and secondly because she is from Antwerp. To the irritation of a great many of its residents, it has been years since the city had a minister or state secretary in the Federal Government. The appointment of Van Brempt has put an end to this shortcoming. While the appointment of Temsamani was a complete surprise, that of Van Brempt is not. For some years she was political secretary to former SPA chairman Louis Tobbback, until she became Assistant Principal Private Secretary to Flemish Employment Minister Renaat Landuyt (SPA) in 1999. A year later she moved to the European Parliament, where among other things she defended the status of dockers. Van Brempt's move out of the European Parliament and Temsamani's switch to the Chamber have set in motion a game of musical chairs. Van Brempt will be succeeded in the European Parliament by Saïd El Kadraoui, the Leuven SPA MP of Moroccan origin, who in turn will be succeeded in the Chamber by Spirit spokesperson Stijn Bex. Temsamani is taking the place of Koen T’sjien in the Chamber, who will again become Spirit's spokesman.

Temsamani's resignation was the subject of extensive comment over the weekend. Temsamani resigned on 25 September because she had lied about her diploma in the monthly magazine 'Deng’ and felt she was no longer able to do her job properly in the stream of gossip and controversy triggered by the news. According to many commentators, the appointment and the 'swift and efficient way in which the incident was handled' painfully demonstrated the limits of political marketing and gave Party Chairman Steve Stevaert a first blemish on his label of master-strategist.

BART EECKHOUT • DE MORGEN • 27 SEPTEMBER

It is a perfect circular argument: Temsamani should not have resigned because of the things of which she was accused, but the way in which she reacted to the publication of the facts shows that she is not suitable for the job and was therefore better off resigning. The real drama of her resignation is that she should never have been allowed to become state secretary, or not yet, at any rate. Stevaert, looking for “surprises” in his own party, must have thought that he could fulfil a dream with Temsamani. Just imagine: a single mother of three children, emerged resolute from an unhappy marriage, thick-skinned but not bitter, an uncomplicated immigrant speaking the language of “the people”, a new face for socialism in Mechelen, which is as good as dead, and on top of that pretty. Temsamani was not expected to display much administrative vigour. Her power was surrounded with a certain vagueness, her cabinet was made up of friendly politicians and entirely embedded in the super-cabinet of Employment Minister Vandenbroucke. But dreams also have a dark side. Together with the stupid diploma story, the unsavoury bankruptcies of the clothing shops Temsamani co-ran in the 1990s also rose to the surface, although she was “excused” for this by the commercial judge. Rumours about the bankruptcies are not new, the SPA leadership was aware of them and knew that sooner rather than later they would again cross the path of their immigrant state secretary.

VLD campaigner and spin doctor Noël Slangen is often accused of being the source of this development. But it was Patrick Janssens who as SPA Chairman (and former director of an advertising agency, ed.) was the first in Flanders to tailor an entire party to the marketing techniques of regular business. His successor and natural political talent Steve Stevaert subsequently perfected this strategy. Ideologists and the conscientious were replaced at the heart of the party by communication specialists. They brought the party’s communication into line with the various media formats. The resounding election victory of 18 May was the fascinating result of all this. The consequence is that all parties and politicians are now copying the same formula. In that scenario, state secretaries are no more than pawns manipulated by party headquarters. This gives the picture of a party leader who has immediately removed this accosted pawn from the board to avoid more serious image damage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABOUR MARKET LIMBURG</th>
<th>number of jobs</th>
<th>limburg (%)</th>
<th>flanders (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agriculture/ horticulture</td>
<td>10200</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
<td>85000</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td>73000</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public service/ well being</td>
<td>78700</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| agriculture/ horticulture | 10200 jobs (4%) |
| industry | 85,000 jobs (34%) |
| services | 73,000 jobs (29%) |
| public service/ well being | 78,700 jobs (32%) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNEMPLOYMENT DEGREE IN %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flanders</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.15</td>
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focus on FLANDERS • 27 September - 3 October 2003 • Number 33
Anciaux spreads aircraft noise pollution

Federal Transport Minister Bert Anciaux (Spirit) has a plan to spread the noise from overflying aircraft that take off and land at Zaventem. The flights will now be spread as far as possible in a wide circle around Zaventem. To this end he is making optimum use of all runways, having new routes worked out and studying investments for new infrastructure. The hitherto troubled zone to the north of Brussels (Vilvoorde, Diegem, Meise, Grimbergen), over which most night flights were concentrated, would be free from night flights at the weekend. There, noise will drop from 48 to 31%, while in the municipalities to the east of Brussels (Tervuren, Sterrebeek, Wezembeek-Oppem) it will rise from 5 to 15%. Othmore (Tervuren, Sterrebeek, Wezembeek-Oppem) it will rise from 5 to 15%. Other zones such as the hitherto almost 'quiet' northeast (Park) will get new routes (+14%). Anciaux stressed that the spreading of noise pollution had been tackled as objectively as possible, and is aware that he cannot please everyone. The residents of the northern districts have already reacted positively to the plan but, as expected, harsh criticism has been forthcoming from the northeastern areas (FF).

TOM YSEBAERT • DE STANDAARD • 1 OCTOBER

In the next few days Anciaux will outline his plan to the municipalities. He wants to offer them shareholdship and therefore a say in the airport operator Biac. He is also commissioning two studies to supplement his spread model. The first is an environmental and health study into noise, in collaboration with two fellow ministers. The second is a study by Biac into the importance of night flights. The results of these studies could limit the growth of Zaventem, says the minister. Anciaux is setting up an independent inspection body to supervise the implementation of his plans. Such a neutral aviation inspectorate is welcome because both airport operator Biac and Belgocontrol, which supervises air traffic, depend for their income on the night flights of the courier firm DHL.

Opinion

BART STURTEWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 1 OCTOBER

Whether peace will now return to Zaventem and its environs remains to be seen. There is a massive difference between a statistical overload model and the understanding of a sleepless citizen. What good is 2% less noise pollution? In any case people are less aware of the noise itself than of the knowledge that there will be another roar overhead in x minutes and that that will be exactly the same tomorrow, the day after tomorrow and the day after that. That cannot be taken away by spreading the burden more evenly. The biggest risk is that no one is happy and the total number of dissatisfied people increases.

Icons of Flemish design

One of the exhibition's trump cards is that it makes use of design in the broadest sense of the word.

Since March 1996 the Flemish Parliament has been housed in the well-known building with the spectacular glass dome in the Hertogstraat. This is where committee and plenary meetings take place. Last year on the Flemish Feast Day, 11 July, the 'House of Flemish People's Representatives' also opened. It is home to the administrative and logistical centre of the Flemish Parliament and was previously the building of the Postcheque, designed by architect Victor Bourgeois. As well as offices the building also has two restaurants, a mail office, a printer's office and a restored counter hall, which was given the name 'De Loketten' ('the counters') and houses an information centre, a cafeteria and an exhibition area. In this room the Flemish Parliament wanted to organise a major exhibition once a year as part of the Parliament's 'open-house policy'. This year the choice fell on contemporary design in Flanders. The man responsible for the exhibition concept and course of 'Icons of Design in Flanders' is Danny Venlet, himself an internationally renowned designer and interior architect (FF).

NICA BROUCKE • DE MORGEN • 2 OCTOBER

Venlet's idea of an icon is "something or someone to which the public can refer to create an identity for themselves". A good number of the objects are familiar to the public, generally without them realising that the creator is a fellow Belgian. This is certainly the case with 'Tupperware' designs (Victor Carufereels and Bob Daenen), electronic Bancontact terminals (Verhaert), Samsonite luggage (Maxime Szyf and Eric Sijmons) and Kipling bags (Tine Debo). Lovers of design will immediately recognise 'the' chair of Maarten van Severen, the synthetic ottomans by the duo Quinze&Milan or the Theobril of Patrick Hoet. But who knew that the tramcars of Lyons, Dublin and Brussels' metro cars were designed by Philippe Neerman, who also collaborated with genuine icons such as Le Corbusier and Saarinen? And that Dirk Van Braeckel designed the Fabia and the new Octavia for car manufacturer Skoda? One of the exhibition's trump cards is that it makes use of design in the broadest sense of the word. As a result, the so-called 'applied arts' such as consumer goods, electronics, graphics, ceramics, silver and glass are also on show, together with makers of accessories (hats by Christophe Coppens) and textile designers. All the objects are presented in small cabinets in a whimsical labyrinth. The visitor is shown around with an audio guide by the voices of the designers themselves, who talk about their sources of inspiration and choices of materials. Another plus is that this tape is available in three languages.

www.vlaamsparlement.be
Diary

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

• 9 October: Eavesdropper & Neotropics, Concertgebouw, Brussels; info: www.concertgebouw.be
• 10 and 11 October: Mathilde Monnier and Centre chorégraphique de Montpellier, Déroules, dance, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 10 October: Concertino Armonico, Philip Emmanuél Bach, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 12 October: Miklos Spanyi (Clavichord) with PE Bach and J. Haydn, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

EXPO

• From 22 March to 17 January: Jacques Brel, ‘The right to dream’, exhibition, Schildknaapstraat 50, Brussels; reservation required; info: www.jacquesbrel.be 02/511.10.20
• Until 7 November: Guided by Heroes, exhibition, Z33, Hasselt
• Until 16 December: The museum evenings, every Thursday; www.museumvereniging.be
• Until 26 October: Master prints: 6 centuries of engravings (150 pieces by Rembrandt, Goya, Picasso, Henry Moore and many others), exhibition, De Markten, Brussels; info: 02/219.19.80 www.europalia.be
• Until 10 January: L’Amour toujours, exhibition, Schilderswijk, Hasselt
• Until 26 October: Maya-textile, mirror of a world vision, ethnographical museum, Antwerp; info: 03/220.86.00
• Until 9 November: L’Amour toujours, exhibition, Schilderswijk, Hasselt
• Until 9 September to 30 November: Urban Dramas, photo and film exhibition on urban life, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• Until 2 November: Fashion, evening and party dress, exhibition, CC, Knokke-Heist; info: 050/630.430
• Until 28 March: Genoanversaevicerce, exhibition about Fashion, Museum and Genova, Fashion Museum, Antwerp; info: 03/407.27.70 www.momu.be
• Until 9 November: John Isaacs (UK), exhibition with sculptures, installations and video-shows, CC, Bruges.
• Until 29 February: Vietnam, Art and culture from Prehistorical times to today, exhibition, Royal Museum of Art and History, Jubelpark, Brussels; info: www.kmk-mrah.be
• 3 October to 11 January: Europalia, Italy: a particular Renaissance, Ferarra and the dukies of Este, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
• Until October: Master prints: 6 centuries of engravings (150 pieces by Rembrandt, Goya, Picasso, Henry Moore and many others), exhibition, De Markten, Brussels; info: 02/512.34.25
• 4 October to 4 January: Anversa e Genova, A summit in Baroque art, exhibition, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp; info: www.europalia.be
• 4 October to 30 November: Michelangelo Pistoletto and Citadellarte, exhibition, Muhka, Antwerp; info: www.muhka.be/www.europalia.be
• 7 October to 4 January: The breath of soul. Morandi and still life, exhibition, Groeningemuseum, Bruges; info: www.europalia.be
• Until 30 November: Fort Wheeling by Hugo Pratt – Guido Buzelli, exhibition, Centre Belge de la Bande dessinée, Brussels; info: 02/219.19.80 www.europalia.be
• Until 10 September: Pictures of Vietnam, exhibition, Memento Museum, Brussels; info: 02/770.53.33 www.europalia.be
• Until 30 November: Il Nuovo Rit-tratto d’Europa, new horizons of Italian contemporary art, exhibition, Anciennes Ecuries Royales, Brussels; info: 02/550.22.55 www.europalia.be
• Until 15 November: Questions of women, Jef Geys, exhibition, Kunsthalle, Loppem; info: www.kunsthalloppem.be
• Until 16 November: Travellings by Ann Veronica Janssens, Open Air Museum Middelhearn, Antwerp.
• Until 16 November: 2003 Beaufort, Seasscapes in painting with Turner, Courbet, Monet, Ensor, Spilliaert, Magritte, Permeke, Tuymans, Kiefer and others, PM MK, Ostend; info: 059/70.11.99 www.pmkmk.be
• Until 31 December: Art-deco Jewels, Diamond museum, Antwerp; info: 03/202.48.90
• Until 10 March: Icons of Flemish Design, Lokettenzaal, Flemish Parliament, Brussels; info: www.vlaamsparlement.be

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