Teachers working harder and harder

Secondary school teachers work an average of 47 hours a week, compared with some 45 in 1990. Primary school teachers are even involved in their job for an average of 48 hours a week. This is far more than an average wage earner, who works some 39 hours a week. Despite the considerable pressure, teachers enjoy their job. No fewer than 94% of primary school teachers and 93% of secondary school teachers are happy with their choice of profession. The actual giving of lessons, the preparation of lessons and student counselling and support are far more to their liking than marking and administration. All this is to be found in a study looking into use of time and workload among teachers. Carried out by researchers from the Higher Institute of Employment and the University of Antwerp, the study involved some 1,500 teachers keeping a diary for two weeks to record their activities (FF).

The study was already carried out once, in 1990. Eleven years later, in 2001, an extensive questionnaire was again organised, and the results were published on 23 October. There are great differences among the teachers themselves. For example, there is one teacher with a full-time post who indicates that he works barely 18 hours a week. Others say they put in a 72-hour week. In general, a class teacher is much busier than, for example, a gym teacher or a religious studies teacher. Among primary school teachers, non-lesson-related activities such as training and consultation, in particular, give rise to extra work. In the primary schools approximately 40% of the working time goes into actually giving lessons, whilst in secondary school that is 36%, with lesson preparation here being more demanding (taking up 37% of working time). Teachers do not stop working at the weekend, either. 10% of the work of primary school teachers and 14% of that of secondary school teachers is completed on Saturday or Sunday. ‘You shouldn’t forget that teaching operates with peaks and troughs. Teachers have long holidays, too. When all is said and done, their situation will be comparable to that of the average worker’, says researcher Erik Hendrickx. Nonetheless, as many as 97% of kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers feel they have a heavy day’s work, and three out of every four secondary school teachers reckon that their job responsibilities are stressful. In comparison with other professions, teachers suffer more from psychological and physical complaints (table p. 5).

KIM HERBOTS • DE MORGEN
24 OCTOBER

INTRODUCTION

The Maastricht Treaty obliged all Member States of the European Union to grant voting rights in municipal and European elections to EU residents having resided in a Member State for at least five years. In Belgium this directive was implemented rather late, with the result that European citizens were only eligible to vote in the local elections of 2000. Since then the question of voting rights for non-Europeans has appeared on the political agenda at regular intervals. In the previous Purple-Green coalition, it was agreed in the coalition agreement that non-Europeans would be able to become naturalised Belgians more quickly by means of a simpler naturalisation procedure. In addition, the principle materialised in the ‘fast-track-Belgian’ law - in some people’s view, the most liberal naturalisation law in the world. However, the Flemish Greens, Socialists and Spirit and all Francophone parties declared themselves to be in favour of voting rights for non-Belgian immigrants who have resided here for a long time. Nonetheless, a bill was voted down in 2002 because the French-speaking Liberals (MR) voted together with the Flemish Liberals (VLD). Together with CD&V and Vlaams Blok, they achieved a majority. This time, however, the MR is not planning to help out its Flemish sister party, for the purple coalition agreement refers to the issue as ‘not a matter of the government’. What is more, Greens and Socialists seem prepared to support an MR proposal. The CD&V continues to insist on one condition, namely that the fast-track Belgian law be tightened up. Although the vote thus seems to be a lost cause from the word go, the VLD is still obstinately organising the opposition, strengthened by the conviction that a majority of the Flemish public opinion is against. They are therefore demanding a referendum on the matter, and want a vote in the regional parliaments. And should the proposal go through the committee, VLD parliamentary leader Hugo Coveliers is threatening procedural blows and delaying tactics. The alarm bell procedure is one of these. This is invoked if there is the threat of a conflict between the Flemish and French-speaking Communities, but does call for a three-quarters majority within a linguistic group. Why is the VLD choosing this tortuous, long drawn-out route, if necessary? Because everyone will have seen that they will have fought for it, according to De Standaard (22 Oct.), ‘as the words of Het Laatste Nieuws (22 Oct.), because they will lose the fight in terms of the actual result, but will win it in terms of perception. In the Senate committee Hugo Coveliers is not refraining from portraying major political rivals SPA-Spirit as an anti-Flemish force, which is joining in with Wallonia. Het Laatste Nieuws predicts that this will lead to bust-ups in the majority coalition.

Frank VanDevaceveye | editor in chief

focus on FLANDERS • 18 October - 24 October 2003 • Number 36
VLD wants to prevent immigrants’ voting rights

It looks as though the minimum proposal advanced by the French-speaking Liberals (only right to vote, five years’ residence, municipal level) will have the best chance of success.

The debate on voting rights for (non-European) immigrants in municipal elections got under way in the Senate’s Home Affairs committee on 21 October. All majority parties are in favour, except for the Flemish Liberals of the VLD. The Greens and the French-speaking democrats of CD&V are also back the idea. In the opposition camp the VLD is in the company of the Vlaams Blok. The Flemish Christian-Democrats (CD&V) are in favour, provided the granting of Belgian nationality is made stricter than is the case at the moment under the ‘fast-track-Belgian’ law. Among those arguing in favour, the main argument is that anyone who pays taxes ought also to be able to have a say in deciding where that money goes. What is more, they reason, it would promote integration and is a human right. Nonetheless, there is no consensus in the purple coalition as to the extent to which the voting right should apply (municipal, provincial, regional, federal). There is also no agreement as to whether immigrants can also be elected and whether the right to vote should be granted after three or five years’ residence. It looks as though the minimum proposal advanced by the French-speaking Liberals (only right to vote, five years’ residence, municipal level) will have the best chance of success.

The other parties seem to be prepared for a compromise. In any case, VLD senators Hugo Covielers, Jeanine Lanotte and Freya Vandenbossche) and Jean-Luc Dehaene (CD&V, up 1%) and Socialists (SPA-Spirit, up 0.3%), although statistically no shifts could be described as significant (CD&V -0.5%; Vlaams Blok - 0.8%, N-VA - 0.8%).

The most remarkable development is the decline of the Greens [-1.2%]. After receiving a sizeable blow on 18 May [3.8%, down 6.7%] when they failed to win a single seat in parliament, they have slipped down even further in this poll, to 2.6%. For the VLD this poll is good news, since it still has them as the largest Flemish party (25.2%), up 1% on their result of 18 May last. Their main rival SPA-Spirit also posts a gain (taking it to 23.8%), but this advance is less marked (+ 0.3%).

In the September poll in La Libre Belgique the Liberals were overtaken by SPA-Spirit as the largest party. Less impressive is the personal score at- attained by Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (45%). He has been overtaken by no fewer than three SPA ministers [Frank Vandenbergroucke, Johan Van de Lanotte and Freya Vandervoorde] and the Christian-Democratic former prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene (CD&V, 49%)

Agalev loses ground in VRT-Standaard poll

De Standaard and the public broadcasting station VRT are again having four opinion polls carried out in the run-up to the Flemish and European elections of June 2004. This poll was held at the beginning of October when the news of the redundancies at Ford Genk were causing unrest. However, this social drama appears not to be affecting the popularity of the Purple majority. More than half of the population claims to maintain its faith in the government.

It is beginning to look like the CVP’s (Christian Democrats’) nightmare in the abortion issue. For the VLD, too, there is no honour to be gained in a matter that is as good as a debate on values - one on democratic values. The moment the VLD agreed (in the coalition agreement) that there could be a free vote on the matter in parliament, the result has been known. So the longer the VLD drags things out, the more the issue is focused in public opinion and the worse the outcome could be for the party in the run-up to the elections, if it loses. In fact the VLD here is playing the Vlaams Blok’s card. The VLD has apparently opted to turn a de facto defeat into a victory in terms of perception by the citizen, and shift all blame onto its greatest rival (SPA-Spirit, ed.). Losing the fight, winning the perception and branding Steve Stevaert as the party guilty of a so-called anti-Flemish policy - that’s what it’s about. It will lead to serious difficulties within the Purple coalition.
Greens start rescue operation

After the disastrous result obtained in the De Standaard/VRT opinion poll and the loss of face the party suffered as a result of their bad crisis communication during the incident concerning their Antwerp aldermen Chantal Pauwels, it has got through to the leaders of Agalev that it is time for action. Agalev is currently working on a genuine rescue plan for the party. At the members’ conference on 15 November the party will carry through a number of fundamental reforms. According to political secretary Dirk Holemans, the party will change its name and a new mission statement for the party will be produced. Holemans himself, who was anything but convincing in the Pauwels crisis, is henceforth to be flanked by two communication managers: former minister Vera Dua and Young Agalev spokeswoman Tinne Van der Straeten (FF).

Opinion

BART EECKHOUT • DE MORGEN

The old ideas industry of study departments in the political world is losing out, in terms of importance, to the new insights provided by the science of communication. It is the socialists Patrick Janssens and Steve Stevaert who have introduced this ‘political marketing thinking’ in Flanders, and with spectacular success. Just like those other opposition parties CD&V and N-VA, the Greens have never wanted or been able to devise an answer to this shift in political thinking. The Greens’ criticism of the importance of marketing and communication in the political establishment is worth listening to, but at the end of the day you do have to communicate. Evidently Agalev have opted to see that now. With a new name, new programme and new spokesman, the party finally wants to get a turn.

Somers advocates co-operation between regions

SCOTLAND, A REGION WITH LEGISLATIVE COMPETENCY, LIKE FLANDERS, COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

This year for the first time the regions were allowed to take part in the Anglo-Belgian Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Diplomats, academics and people from the business world met there for a two-day conference on the major challenges facing Europe. It was the Minister-President of the Government of Flanders Bart Somers (VLD) who opened the conference with his address. Somers made an impassioned plea for greater co-operation between European regions such as Scotland and Flanders to exert a greater influence on European decision making. Scotland, a region with legislative competency, like Flanders, could play an important role here because next year it will be taking over the presidency of European regions with legislative competency. The Minister-President also used the opportunity to visit a Scottish research project of four universities and SMEs, which also works together with the Leuven technology centre IMEC. A visit to a financial call centre, set up by Scottish banks, was also on the programme (FF).

BART HAECK • DE FINANCIEEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 18 OCTOBER

The Belgian co-chairman of the conference, the Bekaaert Chief Executive Baron Buysse, was delighted with Somers’ opening address. The federal delegates were less pleased. ‘He hardly used the word Belgium,’ someone was heard complaining. Like Flanders, Scotland is a region with legislative competency. The Scottish Parliament came into being in 1999, after Tony Blair’s government had held a referendum on the issue during its first term in office. The region can approve laws on most subjects on which Flanders also has competency, but can also decide on justice-related matters, for example. However, unlike Flanders, Scotland does not receive exclusive authority, meaning that the Federal Government (the United Kingdom) may also have a say in decisions on regional matters. According to Somers, Scotland is one of the regions that are taking the lead in Europe. In 1999, together with Flanders, it set up a partnership to have the standpoint of regions in European matters geared to each other. Wallonia, Catalonia, North Rhine-Westfalen, Beieren and Salzburg were the other participating regions. Since then the network has grown to a group of 70 European regions with legislative competency. Scotland will be taking over the presidency next year. Next month the group will meet in an attempt to have regional themes included in the European constitution. The meeting should result in a common position of the 70 regions. One of their demands is that the regions, too - and not just nation states - should be able to go to the European Court of Justice. They also want greater involvement in decision making. In the fields for which they are competent, the regions convert European legislation into local rules and regulations, but they may not participate in the negotiations when European legislation is created. That remains the privilege of the nation states. The regions are asking that they at least be consulted. ‘Europe has to learn to live with the idea that there are also regions as well as nation states,’ said Somers. ‘We are not rivals, but associates of the nation states.’ The regions are also working together in the field of economic innovation, one of the keynotes of the Government of Flanders’ September statement. ‘Two Asian and two American regions will be coming to Brussels in February 2004 to discuss the subject with Flanders, Scotland, Catalonia, Lombardy and Baden-Württemberg.’

VOTING INTENTIONS: POLL OCTOBER 2003

SOURCE: TNS-MEDIA/DIMARSO

WEB: WWW.FLANDERS.BE
The commentary writers of De Morgan and De Standaard are paying a remarkable amount of attention to the standpoints advanced by VLD chairman Karel De Gucht in an interview in the weekend edition of De Standaard. A week after an agreement on the budget was reached within the government, the chairman of the majority party explains why the federal budget is structurally untenable. The health care sector receives an additional EUR 900 million, which corresponds to the annual increase of 4.5% as agreed in the coalition agreement. But that rate of increase in health costs is not tenable, certainly not with a debt burden such as Belgium’s, according to De Gucht. Not only must the costs in the sector be kept under tight control; regionalisation of health care is inevitable, he says. The French-speaking PS chairman Elio Di Rupo reacted resentfully. De Gucht helped negotiate the coalition agreement, so his comments smack of schizophrenia, says Di Rupo. He rules out a regionalisation of health care, but is willing to co-operate in a cost management effort. De Standaard opines that whilst fundamental reforms in health care, unemployment and pensions are under way in France and Germany, there is a lack of political courage in this country to do the same (FF).

BART BRINCKMAN
DE STANDAARD • 18 OCTOBER

Clever members of the opposition were quick to note that the primary balance (the balance of income and expenditure excluding interest charges) has melted away by almost a third in the space of two years [from 7.1 to 5.1%]. But in actual fact these observations avoid the core of the problem: the growing gulf between the falling tax and para-fiscal revenue and the rising expenditure for health care. The federal budget is a ticking time bomb. The economic climate in the coming months will determine when it explodes. Structurally, the budget is critically ill. The equilibrium is missing, and it could tip over at any moment. Smart politicians – and this includes those within the majority – know that only too well. But hardly anybody dares to make this analysis in public - let alone have the courage to concede that they cannot tackle the problem with the current political relationships of power. What is it actually that makes the budget situation so hopeless? On the one hand everyone argues in favour of an easing of taxes and charges. Belgians contend with the highest tax burden in the world, and that sucks an awful lot of oxygen out of the economy. The high wage costs also make Belgian employees extremely expensive. That is not a pleasant observation against a background of high unemployment, either. The upshot is that income is falling. On the expenses side, the annual 4.5% net increase in health care expenditure seems to be sacrosanct. The federal authorities also have to pay more and more money to the federal states. And finally Belgium pays an enormous sum in interest every year, although this year, for the first time, it is slightly less than the total expenditure on social security.

In the long run this gulf is untenable. No budget can bear the hefty increases in expenditure when the income structurally lags behind. It might be possible to make some savings here and there, but the rate of growth of the medical insurance is fundamentally too high to stop up the gap in that way. And Belgium could talk of being lucky in that the interest rate is at historically low levels, which means that the debt mountain is not growing.

MARK DEWEERDT/RENAAT SCHROOTEN
DE FINANCIËL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD
23 OCTOBER

There is now nonetheless a good chance that this matter will now be introduced, in full or in part, by means of a parliamentary initiative. In VLD circles it is being said that the negotiations are progressing well and an agreement is probable. Sources close to PS Chairman Elio Di Rupo confirm that there is talk of things gaining momentum. The PS still feels that it is actually up to the Flemish Parliament to introduce the provincial constituencies with a special majority. But the party is prepared to make the introduction possible via federal channels ‘out of loyalty with its partners in office’. ‘The French-speakers do not want these constituencies. But we are loyal to our Flemish coalition partners. There is no longer any political problem. However, we do first want the certainty that the federal scenario is completely in order from a legal and technical point of view for the Flemish reform’. Such is the message from the French-speaking Socialists. An ordinary majority in the federal parliament is all that is needed for the provincial constituencies for the Flemish elections. But a two-thirds majority is required in order also to introduce the electoral threshold and separate lists of follow-up candidates, and to abolish the grouping of electoral lists. The federal majority falls three seats short of this special majority in the House.
Ford Europe gives Genk plant hope again

The joint trade union front is prepared to call a halt to the internal work stoppages. The blocking of the Transit will be partly lifted

An investment in a new platform would also guarantee the arrival of the Galaxy and the crossover model, according to their reasoning. The new investment programme replaces the old investment protocol of 15 November 2002, which the management terminated three weeks ago. The old plans promised that Ford Genk could build four models: the Mondeo, the Focus, the successor to the Galaxy, and the crossover model. Ford Genk would invest EUR 900 million for this until 2006. Up till now it is certain that the Focus will not be produced in the Genk plant.

Opinion

JEROEN LISSENS • DE FINANCIEL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD • 22 OCTOBER

First of all it has already been established for some time that new models would be coming to Genk. If Ford does not want to slump even further below its now already critical market share of 8.8% in Europe, it desperately needs a car in the Mondeo segment. Ford does not have the capacity in its other European plants to add that Mondeo, and building a new plant is too expensive. So mathematically, Ford cannot get around Genk. Secondly, it is far from certain that a new Ford Mondeo will vouchsafe Genk’s future. Poor sales are the reason why 3,000 employees are currently losing their jobs. The jobs at Genk will not be guaranteed as long as it is not certain that Ford’s new models will sell. Finally, it is not only the Mondeo’s sales figures that will determine the factory’s future. The real story of the future is written by the sales statistics for the entire automobile sector. As long as the economy sputters, consumers will put off the purchase of a car. The malaise on the European car market demonstrates that.

www.ford.be
www.febiac.be

FF EDITORIAL STAFF

After the Ford Genk management promised to accede to the unions’ demands as quickly as possible, the unions decided on 22 October to call a halt to their actions. Among other things, the management will provide a written guarantee that the new Mondeos will be built at Ford Genk. The contract is being presented to John Fleming, Deputy Chairman of Ford Europe and Lewis Booth, Ford Europe’s CEO, for signing. After this pledge, the joint trade union front is prepared to call a halt to the internal work stoppages. The blocking of the Transit will be partly lifted. The daily production can now leave the factory and the parts can be removed. The first moulds for the pressing plant have in the meantime arrived back in Genk. These were hastily removed by the management at the end of September and transferred to other Ford plants.

WORK PRESSURE OF TEACHERS

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SOURCE: HIVA (HOGER INSTUUT VOOR DE ARBEID)

EMMANUEL VAN BRUSSL
DE MORGEN • 22 OCTOBER

For the unions it is vital that the new Mondeo be built on a new-generation production platform. Such a platform costs 600 million dollars. ‘If the new Mondeo is built on the existing platform, it will mean that Ford Genk only has a future until 2012,’ say the unions.

focus on flanders • 18 October - 24 October 2003 • Number 36
Nacebo, the Flemish SME building federation, fears that up to 7,000 jobs could be lost if the reduced VAT rate of 6% for the renovation of houses between five and fifteen years old is replaced by the standard rate of 21% again from 1 January 2004. In addition, many customers are now already putting off having any restoration done until their home is fifteen years old, since the reduced VAT rate is the general rule for houses more than 15 years old. The reduced rate is part of a European pilot project with lower VAT rates for labour-intensive sectors, which comes to an end at the end of the year.

The European finance ministers have to decide on a new list of services with the lower rate, whereupon each Member State will choose which of them it actually applies. But it seems that the European ministers cannot agree on this list (FF).

**JOHAN VAN GEYTE • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 21 OCTOBER**

Some countries, including Germany, are currently contending with a major budget deficit. They cannot afford any VAT reduction, as a result of which they immediately begrudge other countries such a reduction when the latter do see such a low VAT base as being possible, according to Karel Van Eetveld, managing director of Nacebo. The consequences can be far-reaching. A survey carried out by the federation among its members reveals that around half of Flemish building companies have the 6% rate to thank for more than a quarter of their orders. According to Van Eetveld, the raising of the VAT rate for renovation work to 21% will result in a surge of extra undeclared work. Since the VAT was cut from 21% to 6% three years ago, 73% of the contractors questioned have seen a shift of business from undeclared work to declared work. That trend will now be reversed. Two hundred and twenty-four jobs would have to be shed in the 704 companies that took part in the survey. Extrapolated to the entire construction sector, this would mean the loss of 7,000 jobs.

www.nacebo.be

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**Banks to overtake 76% of Real Software**

The end of the struggle for power is in sight at Real Software, the largest Belgian software company. The group of reference shareholders led by founder Rudy Hageman and former operations manager Michel Fontinoy – together accounting for 51.8% of the shares – was threatening to choose a new board of directors at the general meeting of shareholders in November. But last week managing director Theo Dilissen was able to arrange a favourable debt-rescheduling agreement with a consortium of five banks, so that the company appears for the time being to have been saved. However, the coalition of reference shareholders was not satisfied, because their share would be diluted too much as a result of an exchange of shares for liabilities. As far as the banks are concerned, former managing director Hageman was ‘branded’ after the disastrous takeover of the American company Tava had cost Real Software EUR 200 million. Hageman was forced to step down in 2001 as a result of the affair. For that matter, a complaint has been lodged against Hageman for misuse of company property to the tune of EUR 26 million. The majority shareholders then announced that they supported Dilissen’s and the banks’ proposals, but laid down their demands. In exchange for a capital injection they demanded a controlling position on the board of directors. However, the banks rejected this ‘complementary plan’. The presence of Rudy Hageman in the coalition appeared to be the main stumbling block. As the biggest creditors, it is the banks that have the last word (FF).

**PASCAL DENDOOVEN**

**DE STANDAARD • 21 OCTOBER**

The banks are de facto putting an end to a power struggle at Real Software between the group of shareholders and the company’s senior management led by managing director Theo Dilissen. This struggle, which looked like leading to a day of reckoning and threatened to do the company irreversible damage, has been settled in Theo Dilissen’s favour. The banks are keeping to the debt agreement on which they negotiated with Real Software, and are even prepared to extend credit, under certain circumstances, if the Antwerp IT group finds itself strapped for cash. After informal contacts between the coalition and the banks, the banks made the final decision: no alliance with the coalition. The person of Rudy Hageman appeared to be the main stumbling block. It is expected that the shareholders’ coalition will now definitively fall apart. The major shareholders in Real Software can do nothing but support the management’s plan at the extraordinary meeting of shareholders to be held in three weeks’ time. Rejecting it would result in bankruptcy. Ironically enough, the opposition of the coalition around Rudy Hageman may have prompted the banks to make concessions that are seldom seen.

www.realsoftware.be

**FF EDITORIAL STAFF**

In a last-minute proposal the majority shareholders put forward four new directors at the board of directors’ meeting on 21 October. If Real Software accepts this proposal, the most independent directors will bite the dust. The majority shareholders are also showing themselves to be prepared to invest EUR 4 million in fresh funds in the form of a convertible loan. The banks would be able to sell a part of their accounts receivable, secure new warrants and extend an extra loan. On 23 October came the countermove from Real Software and the banks. Theo Dilissen announced that an agreement was in the making under the terms of which the banks would convert liabilities to the tune of 35 million into shares, whereby they would acquire 103 million shares at EUR 0.34 per share. In so doing they would gain a 76% controlling interest in the company and the stake held in the company by the current majority shareholders would be reduced from 52% to 12%. Dilissen said that he could not imagine the majority shareholders rejecting the plan. ‘They constitute a group of 1,600 people, 1,100 of whom are working in Belgium’, he added (De Financieel-Economische Tijd, 24 October).
Monitoring of unemployed must curb social fraud

Within the Socialist family there are widely divergent opinions on the way in which unemployed people’s readiness to work should be checked

Anyone who has not made any effort to find a job after two years on the dole risks losing his or her entitlement to unemployment benefits. The federal National Employment Office (Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening - RVA) is planning to recruit 120 extra inspectors to monitor unemployed persons. It is the first measure against social security fraud that Employment Minister Frank Vandenbroucke (SP.A) has announced, and should already yield EUR 49 million next year. The existing checks made on cohabiting people who are long-term unemployed, based on the notorious Article 60, are being scrapped. Within the Socialist family there are widely divergent opinions on the way in which unemployed people’s readiness to work should be checked, reports De Standaard. The unions feel that the idea of unemployed people being subject to checks is only justifiable if there are enough jobs available and sufficient efforts are made in the field of counselling and support of the unemployed. PS Chairman Di Rupo is of the view that the inspectors should be deployed in particular to combat moonlighting (FF).

Johan Raskin • De Standaard 21 October

Vandenbroucke put forward a similar plan during the employment conference with the social partners and the regional governments. He wanted to give the RVA’s inspectors direct access to the databases of the regional employment offices, such as the Flemish VDAB (the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency). However, the conference did not reach a consensus on this. The employers’ federations have for years been asking for a tighter control on unemployed persons. They point to studies revealing that 30% of Belgium’s unemployed do not (ever) look for work and have ‘withdrawn from the job market’. Vandenbroucke appears to want to oblige them with the measure. He is in favour of the Scandinavian model, with rights and obligations for the unemployed. PS Chairman Di Rupo is of the view that the inspectors should be deployed in particular to combat moonlighting (FF).

Hannes Cattebeke/Kristof Demasure De Morgen • 23 October

To reinforce the suspicions of a conflict of interests, Mary got involved in these matters, which, according to Carl De Caluwé (CD&V), is proof that there is indeed a conflict of interests here. Minister Keulen replied that it was not within his competence to intervene between the two. As he himself says, he is in a Catch-22 situation. ‘If I take action, I will be exceeding my authority as en-

VRT: conflict between board of directors and chief executive

After a seven-hour meeting and against the advice of his board of directors, the managing director of the public broadcasting company, Tony Mary, has appointed Aimé Van Hecke, the current VRT strategist, to the post of director of television. This places Mary very much at odds with his politically composed board of directors, which had asked that the search for a director of television be entrusted to a headhunting agency. The opposition parties CD&V and Vlaams Blok are calling for Mary’s resignation, but the Flemish Media Minister Marino Keulen (VLD) is continuing to support Mary, at least for the time being. In the Flemish Parliament the opposition gave him a grilling on this issue. Van Hecke’s appointment is controversial, because the agency of his wife is indirectly involved in some VRT events (FF).

Hannes Cattebeke/Kristof Demasure De Morgen • 23 October

To reinforce the suspicions of a conflict of interests, Mary got involved in these matters, which, according to Carl De Caluwé (CD&V), is proof that there is indeed a conflict of interests here. Minister Keulen replied that it was not within his competence to intervene between the two. As he himself says, he is in a Catch-22 situation. ‘If I take action, I will be exceeding my authority as en-

employed. The trade unions continue to defend the same argument: strict controls and sanctions can only be implemented if an adequate range of jobs, placements and training courses are offered to the unemployed. And that is not the case. PS chairman Elio Di Rupo says that the 120 additional inspectors ‘should be deployed not only to check unemployed people’s availability to work, but also to combat social security fraud’. In Di Rupo’s view, the struggle against moonlighting should be the policy priority. Just like the socialist union ABVV, he feels that ‘account should be taken of the level of employment in certain regions and sub-regions, the family situation, age and degree of fitness for work.’ Flemish Employment Minister Renaat Landuyt (SP.A) sees ‘no problem’ with extra checks on the availability of unemployed persons, ‘provided that my ambition of being able to offer all Flemish job-seekers an individual support and guidance course after three months can be fulfilled.’ However, Landuyt feels that ‘it is not necessary’ for the RVA to bring in extra inspectors for these checks. ‘The perception should not be that we wait two years before doing something. The VDAB and the Authorities of Flanders are prepared to pass on all the data on job-seekers if the RVA so requests. This would make this additional RVA inspection superfluous.’

www.rva.be www.vdab.be
CULTURE

Diary

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

• 29, 30 October and 6 November: Night of the Proms with INXS, Tot, En Vogue etc

• 28 October: Arid, De Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.24.24

• 28 and 29 October: Zoo and Thomas Hueart, VeroSsimile, dance, Kaaitheater, Brussels, info: www.kaaitheater.be

• 28 October: Gloria Banditelli and Ensemble Salomone Rossi, Jewish Baroque music, Concertgebouw, Bruges, info: www.concertgebouw.be


• 29 October: Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, Limelight, Kortrijk, info: 056/22.10.01 www.audivjazz.be

• 29 October: Ana Moura (Por), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be

• 29 October: Nuits Musette, AB, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

• 30 October: Ana Moura (Por) Handelsbeur, Ghent, info: www.handelsbeur.be

• 30 October: Jony Ivel o Band (Bul), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be

• 31 October: Ensemble Luigi Nono, Das at-mende Klarsein, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be


• 3 November: Ray Blue Quartet, Sounds Jazz Club, Brussels, info: 02/512.92.50 www.audivjazz.be

• 4 November: Le roi Arthus by Ernest Chaussé, director: Mathias Jocelyn, De Munt, Brussels, info: www.desingel.be

• 2 November: Mickey 3D, AB, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

• 3 November: Starsailor, AB, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

• 3 November: Leon Konitz-Ohad Talmor, Flagby, Brussels, info: 02/507.82.00 www.flagby.be www.lazy里斯ue

• 4 November: Capella della pietà de Turchi, Festa Napolitana con Piccinni, Caresana, Lontrum, info: www.muhka.be

• 4 November: Skatalites Handelsbeur, Ghent, info: www.handelsbeur.be

• 4 November: My Morning Jacket, AB, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

• 5 to 8 November: Niels Radte Klein, Nick and Sarah, video, performance, animation, Kaaitheater, Brussels, info: 02/201.59.59 www.kaaitheater.be

• 5 and 8 November: Richard Galliano, Piazzolla Fest en Voix, Roslera!, De Warande, Turnhout and CC Hasselt, info: 015/26.57.00, 014/61.99 and 01/22.99.33 www.audivjazz.be

• 5 to 8 November: Piotr Fomenko and Atelier Piotr Fomenko, War and peace by Tolstoi, the-atre, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

• 6 November: The Ravenettes, AB, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

• 6 and 7 November: Dreamtime and Danel Kwartet with Kris Defoort (piano) and Claron Me Fadden (Soprano), De Singel, Antwerp and Bijloke, Ghent, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

• 6 to 8 November: Colloquium umberto eco, the italian contribution to European culture, PSK, Brussels, info: www.europalia.be info: 02/770.53.33 www.europalia.be

• 7 and 8 November: Arco Renz, Dreamlands, dance, Kaaitheater, Brussels, info: 02/201.59.59 www.kaaitheater.be

• 9 November: Fred Wesley Funk Band, At the Beebop, Leuven, info: 016/206.106 www.audivjazz.be

EXPO

• From 22 March to 17 January: jacques breel, ‘the right to dream’, exhibition, Schildmaa-straat 50, Brussels, reservation required, info: www.jacquesbrel.be 02/511.10.20

• Until 9 November: guided by heroes, exhibition, 23A, Hasselt

• Until 18 December: The museum evenings, every Thursday, www.museumvereniging.be

• Until 9 November: L’amour couris, wedding pictures from the 20th Century in Antwerp, Museum van Volkskunde, Antwerp, info: 03/248.4.77

• 11 September to 30 November: Urban Dance, 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: 050/650.430

• Until 28 March: Genovanversaevicerose, exhibition about fashion, Antwerp and Gene-va, Fashion week, Antwerp, info: 03/470.27.70 www.momu.be

• Until 9 November: john Isaacs (UK), exhibition with sculpture, videos and video-shows, CC, Bruges www.west-vlaanderen.be/brok

• Until 29 February: Vietnam, Art and culture from Prehistorian times to today, exhibition, Royal Museum of Art and History, Jubelpark, Brussels, info: www.kmkg-mrah.be

• 3 October to 11 January: europalia, Italy: a particular renaissance, Fatarella and the dukes of Este, exhibition, PSK, Brussels, info: www.bozar.be

• 4 October to 4 January: Anversa e genova, A summit in Baroque art, exhibition, Royal Mu-seum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, info: www.europalia.be

• 4 October to 30 November: Micheleangelo Poesia, reception and Celladellarte, exhibition, Muhka, Antwerp, info: www.muhka.be www.europalia.be


• Until 30 November: Festival, woolley wheeling by Hugo pratt - Guido Buzzi, exhibition, Centre Belge de la Bande dessinée, Brussels, info: 02/219.19.80 www.europalia.be

• Until 10 January: Nel Mezzo del camin... Dante in seven centuries of texts and images, Bibliotheek Wittekindia, Brussels, info: 02/770.53.45 www.europalia.be


• Until 11 November: Questions of women, lef Geys, exhibition, Kunsthal, Loppem, info: www.kunsthalloppem.be

• Until 16 November: Travellings by ann veronicka linnemann, Open air museum Middelheim, Antwerp

• Until 16 November: 2003 beaumont, seascapes in painting with Turner, Courbet, Courbet, Ensor. Spilliaert, Magritte, Permeke, Tuymsans, Kiefer and others, PMMK, Ostend, info: 059/70.11.99 www.pmmk.be

• Until 31 December: Art-deco jewels, Dia-mond museum, Antwerp, info: 02/302.48.90


• Until 11 January: venus unvelled, PSK, Brus-sels, info: www.europalia.be www.bozar.be

• Until 11 January: Giotto and the art in 14th century Padova (La Capella degli Scrovegni), ING, CC, Brussels, info: www.europalia.be

• Until 21 December: In search of the perfect lover, exhibition with Louise bourgeois, Paul Mc carthy, marlene Dumas and raymond pet-tibas, Museum lhond-damens, Deurle, info: 09/283.51.23

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