Antwerp World Book Capital becomes ambitious project

After Madrid, Alexandria and New Delhi, Unesco has designated Antwerp as World Book Capital in 2004. This should come as no surprise, since where books are concerned the port city is able to submit more than enough patents of nobility. In addition to the annual book fair in the Bouwcentrum there is also a second fair, that of the Andere Boek and the literary events Saint-Amour, De Nachten and Het Boekenhal. The city employs a city poet and houses many literary associations and publishers. As World Book Capital, Antwerp will be expected to promote books and reading for a whole year. At the opening of the Book Fair (see p. 7), Mayor Patrick Janssens made the extent of the city’s ambitions clear. ABC2004 (Antwerp Book Capital 2004) must have the same impact as when Antwerp was the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1993. Museums and archives will play a part in the programme, and internationally renowned authors will be attracted. Financially the city, the province and the Flemish Government are contributing and a significant contribution from private sponsors is also being counted on (FF).

INGE SCHELSTRAETE • DE STANDAARD • 31 OCTOBER

There are three parts to the programme. The historical section places the emphasis on museums and exhibitions, an obvious choice with the Plantin-Moretus museum in the city, a cradle of the art of printing. With the Stedelijk Prentenkabinet the museum is organising an exhibition on Christoffel Plantin and old graphic techniques. The Museum Mayer van den Bergh also wants to attract exhibition-goers with its new look.

ABC2004 wants to devote most of its efforts to the contemporary programme. The aim is to bring many renowned international authors to the city. The organisation will announce extra, small events on specialised themes and there will also be interdisciplinary projects. ABC2004 appears to want to place the emphasis not only on the current book city, with the organisation making an effort to go beyond the one-off event. Considerable emphasis will therefore be placed on the future book city. The new central library the city is currently building on the De Coninckplein will play a major symbolic role in this. It must become ‘the library of the future’. The building will only be officially opened on the last day of the Book Year, as a sign that Antwerp intends to continue focusing on books.

WWW.ABC2004.BE

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INTRODUCTION

Belgium needs money, reads the title of Knack’s cover story (29 Oct.) this week. The Federal administration has been saddled with the Copernicus reform of former Minister Luc Vanden Bossche (SPA), but has no room for manoeuvre due to a lack of funds. The reform, which was intended to make the civil service more efficient and customer-friendly, has cost some 60 million euros in costly consulting jobs by agencies with overblown names such as Accenture, PriceWaterhouseCooper and KPMG, so that there aren’t two pennies left to rub together for the civil servants themselves to do their job properly. Under this government a social inspector has to pay his own travel expenses when he goes to carry out an inspection. The example in Knack comes from the PS’s Michel Jadot, Chairman of the Federal Government Service for Labour and known opponent of Copernicus. His fellow party member Marie Arena, who succeeded Vanden Bossche as Minister, is equally allergic to the ‘megalomania’ Copernicus reform. She herself has already scaled down 2 ‘excesses of the reform’. She cut the salaries of top civil servants by 20% and replaced the competence tests for minor civil servants with training. However, the whole reform left civil servants with a university education (level A) out in the cold, because her party blocked the last section of the reform. And it is precisely these civil servants who have to implement the reform in practice. On top of this, the Minister has to save a further 250 million in personnel costs. Things are just as bad in the largest government service, that of Finance. An incident in Antwerp illustrated this strikingly. A transport company with 20 uninsured lorries employed dozens of illegal Poles for five years at 40 euros a day and did not pay a single cent in tax all this time. How is such a thing possible? Quite simply because in Antwerp only 1% of companies are subject to tax inspections, says a trade union representative in the Gazet van Antwerpen (28 Oct). Malafide companies known that and are moving their head offices, where the inspections take place, to the city. The government now wants to do something about it, by sending the inspectors to the place of operations from 2004. But this will not solve Antwerp’s problems. On the contrary, this year the local tax authorities have to make do with 400 fewer civil servants despite the fact that the government has made tackling tax fraud a priority. Or how damaging savings can be for State revenue.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
Civil integration courses for newcomers compulsory from April

The course consists of Dutch lessons, social orientation and an ‘introduction’ to the job market

After long discussions the Flemish Government approved the executive act of the civil integration decree on 24 October. The civil integration decree was set in motion by the former Integration Minister Mieke Vogels (Agalev) and was intended to force all non-European newcomers and asylum-seekers whose application was processed positively to follow a modular integration course. More specifically, as soon as the capacity was available each newcomer would be allowed access to the course. The course consists of Dutch lessons, social orientation and an ‘introduction’ to the job market. Vogels’ successor, Adelheid Byttebier (Agalev), yesterday announced that from 1 April the capacity would meet requirements, and therefore the course would become compulsory from that date. The existing reception agencies will be converted into a single bureau per province and one for each major city (Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent). These can refer newcomers to the ‘Houses of Dutch’, which come under the aegis of the Education Minister (Vandepoorten, VLD) or to the VDAB, which is dependent on the Ministry of Labour (Landuyt, SPA). As a result the number of courses can be increased from 4,000 to 12,500. Only 4,500 courses will however be ‘intensive integration courses’. The sector involved in the implementation, is outraged, because hardly any checks were made to see whether all the organisations concerned possess the necessary capacity and budget (FF).

BART BRINCKMAN • DE STANDAARD • 25 OCTOBER

Byttebier recalled the agreement that naturalisation would become compulsory as soon as there was sufficient capacity. According to the naturalisation decree, recalcitrants could be taken to court and fined. Yesterday the sector reacted with outrage. According to the Minorities Forum and the Flemish Minorities Centre, the compulsory courses come too soon. The organisations have no confidence in the government’s intention to split newcomers up into a small group of the most vulnerable people who will receive intensive supervision and a much larger group of people who will be sent straight to Dutch classes. On top of their criticism of the quality of integration, the organisations can scarcely believe that the supply of Dutch lessons can meet demand by 1 April. Given the limited funds available, the two organisations do not believe that integration can develop into a success with these implementing acts. ‘The urge to introduce the compulsory aspect quickly is undermining the decree. Clearly all that counts for the Flemish Government is the compulsory aspect. It is not bothered whether the newcomers actually get what they need,’ says Ignace Fermont of the Flemish Minorities Centre.

ARE YOU IN FAVOUR OR AGAINST IMMIGRANT VOTING RIGHTS

80% of Flemings are against immigrant voting rights, ran the headlines in the Gazet van Antwerpen and Het Belang van Limburg on 25 October. The figures come from an opinion poll for which 800 Belgians (400 of whom were Flemings) took part in a telephone survey carried out by a research agency. Even a majority of those Flemings (62.5%) who voted for SPA-Spirit on 18 May are against them. And yet this party, headed by Steve Stevaert, intends approving immigrant voting rights. In Francophone Belgium, where pretty much all the parties are in favour of immigrant voting rights, 56.6% of the population is against them, according to the same poll. In Louis Michel’s party, the MR, as many as 85% are apparently against them. The results do not actually require comment, says the commentator in Gazet van Antwerpen. Since the Francophone parties together with SPA-Spirit have a majority in Parliament, immigrant voting rights will be approved against the will of the people. The paper adds that Francophone will is law in this country and that the Dutch-speaking parties, the VLD, CD&V, N-VA and Vlaams Blok, must submit to this diktat. It advises Steve Stevaert and Louis Michel to seriously reconsider their intention to shepherd immigrant voting rights through the Chamber.

Marc Swyngedouw, political scientist at KU Leuven, questions the scientific seriousness of the survey [De Morgen, 27 October]. He points out that an earlier survey by the General Bureau for Planning and Statistics of the Flemish Community shows that a fraction over 50% of Flemings are against voting rights for immigrants. Thus, the questions in the newspapers’ poll lead one to suspect that anyone who comes to our country will immediately be entitled to municipal voting rights, he concludes. Furthermore, the random sampling was based on an improbably low number of interviewees. Neither were mobile phones called, which immediately precludes a large number of young people. In short, for Swyngedouw the survey is more of a political statement by both papers, not a serious survey.

www.gva.be
www.hetbelangvanlimburg.be
Does VLD want to harm Stevaert with immigrant voting rights?

For VLD Parliamentary Party Leader in the Senate Hugo Covieliers (VLD) and other opponents of immigrant voting rights, the results of the poll provide new ammunition. Covieliers is using the results to intensify his crusade against immigrant voting rights and has announced he will use every means available to stretch out the public debate as long as possible, if necessary until the elections in June 2004. Covieliers is counting on a request for annulment at the Court of Arbitration, which could turn immigrant voting rights into the main theme of the electoral campaign. The main aim is to ensure main competitor SP.A-Spirit loses as many votes as possible. At the SPA they see this strategy as perversive, calling it a ‘harm Steve Stevaert’ operation (FF).

FRANS DE SMET • HET NIEUWSBLAD • 27 OCTOBER

‘As a Democrat, it seems normal to me that we respect the view of the majority. Something Steve Stevaert clearly doesn’t want to do,’ says Covieliers. In this debate in the Senate Covieliers will use all possible delay/abandonment techniques. One of his methods, the so-called alarm-bell procedure (three quarters of the MPs of a linguistic group can send a bill back to the government table), was floored last week at the insistence of Stevaert by VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht. But Covieliers will not simply abandon that resource, since it is enshrined in the Constitution. Furthermore, the VLD Parliamentary Party Leader is not counting so much on the ‘alarm bell’ as much as on the Court of Arbitration. An anonymous but authoritative source within the VLD party office has told our editorial team that first Covieliers and then Rik Daems (Parliamentary Party Leader in the Chamber) will deliberately obstruct the bill on behalf of the VLD leadership. After all, the Liberals only learned earlier from a confidential survey that the Flemings are generally opposed. The VLD leadership sees this as a way of knocking Stevaert and the SPA off poll position in next year’s Flemish elections. The fact is, the biggest party may supply the Minister-President.

Stevaert does not want to react harshly to this stratagem. ‘We have negotiated a coalition agreement with the VLD. Guy Verhofstadt, Patrick Dewael and Karel De Gucht were around the table. This agreement states that this matter will be decided by Parliament. I cannot imagine that the VLD leadership would be so unscrupulous not to implement that agreement. Coalition partners ought to deal with each other correctly.’ He readily admits that this can be a painful dossier for him: ‘This matter will undoubtedly cost us a lot of votes. But we are standing by our word. If we can’t manage to resolve such a minor problem dossier, how will we manage to resolve the real dossiers - employment, public health, pensions?… You don’t score any goals in destructive football. And those who play dirty and still win the game, will see their stadium empty. This will cost us voters, but it won’t be the VLD that gains. It will be the Vlaams Blok.’

Young GPs choose group practice or part-time work

Belgium has 14,000 qualified GPs, but only 8,700 have a genuine practice with a sizable case load and a business. So claims Professor Jan De Maeseneer of the General Practice Medicine Department at the University of Ghent. Most GPs are older than 45 and have a sole practice. But this sole practice is no longer popular among newly qualified doctors. They are opting for a life with more time for their family and other activities (FF).

DE STANDAARD • 29 OCTOBER

‘Doctors below the age of 45 are opting for group practices, joint ventures or part-time work, so they still have time for their families or other activities,’ says De Maeseneer. The problem is that doctors who are completing their studies today would also rather work part-time or in group practices. ‘At present, 75% of the doctors in Belgium are in sole practice, so the doctors who are currently qualifying and looking for a joint venture cannot find one’. Over the next few years, when the big group of sole practitioners retires, the problem will only get worse, says De Maeseneer. According to him, the government needs to provide tax incentives for joint ventures in the short term, local authorities must make more premises, such as small schools, available to GPs, to allow group practices to set up. ‘And the Flemish Community can make the subsidies it currently provides to hospitals available for GP practices’. Otherwise there is a risk that fewer and fewer doctors will remain in their profession.

In 2002 we trained 150 GPs in Flanders, of whom 75 had still not found suitable employment after six months. Even though there is a need for them, they don’t want to take up the sole practice vacancies that become available.’ The problem is more acute in (large) towns, where the work is sometimes more arduous due to poverty, immigrant populations, more patients with psychosocial problems, etc.
Jean-Luc Dehaene (CD&V) is apparently the leading candidate to succeed Romano Prodi as Chairman of the European Commission. So learned De Morgen (25 October) from sources within the European Commission. Dehaene gained a great deal of respect as Vice-Chairman of the European Convention and has many advantages on his side. For example, he forms part of the largest party in the European Parliament, the European People’s Party (EPP) of Christian Democrats and Conservatives. This gives him much more chance than, say, Guy Verhofstadt, who belongs to the much smaller Liberal family. Also according to the Chairman of the EPP and former Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, things look good for Dehaene. Almost ten years after the British veto against his candidacy at the Corfu Summit, the former Belgian Prime Minister may well get a second chance (FF).

**Johan Corthouts • De Morgen**

25 October

The EPP is hoping to be able to play a trump card. The future European Constitution requires the European Council of Heads of State and Government Leaders to take account of the results of the elections for the European Parliament. ‘That gives the biggest party the right to put forward a candidate for the chairmanship,’ says Martens. However, the European Constitution is not yet definitive. The EPP wants to wait until after the elections in June 2004 to decide whom it wants to put forward as its candidate. Dehaene is currently seen as a serious candidate, at any rate more so than Spanish Premier Aznar, who has lost a great deal of credibility since adopting his firm pro-American stance on Iraq. ‘Dehaene would be a very good candidate. He has a strong European profile,’ says Martens. The Flemish Christian Democrats have not yet decided on the composition of their European list. CD&V Chairman Yves Leterme says that the European list will only be compiled over several months. For the CD&V Chairman, however, it is clear that ‘Dehaene is the man best equipped to represent our country in Europe’. A plus point for Dehaene or another EPP candidate during the appointment procedure is the considerable presence of Christian Democrats and Conservatives in the European Council of Heads of State and Government Leaders (7 out of 15). In addition, unanimity is no longer required when nominating a new Commission chairman. A qualified majority will suffice.

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Discussing on red-green cartel stirred up again

 MEP Jan Dhaene feels his time is done at Agalev and is switching to the SP.A. He will continue to sit as an independent in the Green party of the European Parliament. Dhaene was a confirmed supporter of a cartel list between the Greens and SP.A-Spirit and defended this point of view at the Agalev conference in June. How many Agalev members will follow Dhaene is only likely to become clear after the conference on 15 November. According to Vera Dua, the green Minister for the Environment and Agriculture in the previous Flemish Government and self-declared opponent of a cartel, the party can no longer avoid the discussion. The Greens had already written off the idea of a cartel at their conference in June, but since then things have gone steadily downhill for the Green party. There were several rumblings in the large Antwerp division, which showed the party in a negative light in the press and caused it to slip even further in opinion polls. Dua therefore wants the discussion to be held one last time on 15 November and the matter settled once and for all. Dua also wants to accept the invitation of Els Van Weert, Chair of Spirit, the party that formed a cartel with the SP.A at the last elections. She wants to know from Deweer how such a cartel works, but there will be nothing more than an ‘informal chat’, says Dua in De Morgen (29 October). In the weekend edition of the same paper, the well-known Flemish author Tom Lanoye also called on Agalev to form a cartel with SP.A-Spirit (FF).

**Yves Desmet • De Morgen**

25 October

Agalev is beginning to resemble more and more the terminal phase of the Volksunie, in which internal uncertainty and the ensuing clan fighting are only surpassed by an advancing paranoia, loosely translated as: everyone is against us. Tom Lanoye comes to exactly the same conclusion. Expectations for the elections are dramatic, and then Agalev tends to score better in the polls than in the actual elections. The greatest danger is therefore that the still valuable Green body of ideas risks disappearing from the Federal and Flemish Parliaments for several years. Not the best time to organise an internal ‘who’s the greenest’ competition, but high time to find a way out of this impasse. For Tom Lanoye Agalev has no other choice than to throw itself headlong into a cartel with Steve Stevaert. Because in fact far too many Agalev voters had made it clear that cartel at the last elections, because the SP.A of Stevaert is perhaps more populist but also more progressive and more ecological than the SP of Louis Tobback, because the lack of a cartel at the last elections gifted three seats to the conservative parties, because you can now still ask for something in exchange, but not after the elections. These are all valid arguments.
A flanking economic policy for businesses

**Somers is launching the idea of providing an investment co-ordinator for every business**

On 7 November the Flemish Entrepreneurs’ Conference begins. For Flemish Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD), this conference (*De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 28 October) will be entirely dedicated to economic recovery. He wants this conference to spread the idea in Flanders that entrepreneurship is the breeding ground of our welfare. Nevertheless he is aware that the power of the Flemish Government remains largely limited to employing a flanking economic policy. He translates this into investments in the physical and virtual accessibility of businesses and in innovation.

For the Entrepreneurs’ Conference he himself is launching the idea of providing an investment co-ordinator for every business that makes an investment of 5 million euros. The co-ordinator’s role will be to help businesses find their way through the bureaucratic red tape. He/she will apply for environmental, building and other permits for the business and will be the point of contact between the business and the government administration (FF).

**WIM VANDE VELDEN/BART HAECK DE FINANCIËL-ECONOMISCHE TIJD 28 OCTOBER**

The Entrepreneurs’ Conference, where the Flemish Government, the trade unions and employers’ organisations will meet to discuss a better investment climate in Flanders, begins a week on Friday. Somers is expecting concrete support measures in four areas: new companies, investment policy, a flanking economic policy and innovation. He himself is launching the proposal of the investment co-ordinator. ‘I want the co-ordinators to be free of charge,’ says Somers. ‘Their task will be to discuss the dossier with the company, establish framework conditions and then bring all the government administrations into line. Then they can shepherd the investment dossier through the administration quickly. They’ll actually be mobile counters. Somers is waiting until the actual conference to indicate how many investment managers will be needed. Meanwhile, 75 million euros have been set aside in the Flemish budget for the conference. I expect concrete measures that can be implemented in the short term. We’re not writing a five-year programme. That’s the job of the next government.’

The investment co-ordinator is another form of administrative simplification, claims Somers. ‘Often it is not feasible to adapt the rule yourself. But we can take over the mass of paperwork for businesses,’ says the Minister-President. ‘This is already the case in Northern France. The new call system for expansion support, which operates with a pre-determined budget, is also on the conference agenda. Businesses compete with each other for support.’

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530 jobs go at Ford Genk suppliers

**Flemish Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD) attributes the redundancies at Ford Genk to the poor choices made by Ford (De Financieel-Economische Tijd, 28 October). They are not an indication that Flemish investments in car assembly have come to nothing, he claims. The massive investments in Opel Antwerp, Volvo Ghent and Volkswagen (Vorst) demonstrate the opposite. Meanwhile, the repercussions of the disinvestment for the 530 jobs go at Ford Genk has therefore cost the supplier companies a tremendous amount of money.**

The earlier decision by Ford, namely the relocation of production of the Transit van to Turkey in January (FF), already sent shockwaves through the industry. Everyone suspected that the layoffs among suppliers would be comparable on a percentage level with those at Ford. Not so. While at Ford Genk staff levels are being cut by around one third, the figure is around one half among suppliers. SML is being particularly hard hit, with almost 60% of the staff set to go (262 of the 462 workers, ed.). SML finishes the engines that come from England for the Transit and the Mondeo. Lear Corporation (156 of the 330 jobs scrapped) makes the seats for the Mondeo. Collins & Aikman assembles cockpit modules (54 of the 155 jobs scrapped). TDS performs assembly work for the Transit and the Mondeo (80 of the 204 jobs scrapped). On 24 October the delivery did not go as planned. Here and there workers refused to work, which also created considerable delays in production at Ford Genk. ‘People forget that the average age of workers in suppliers is less than 30. They don’t have to think about early retirement and often they’re unskilled, which lessens their chances on the job market,’ says Rohny Champagne of the so-called ABVV trade union.

**CHRIS NELIS • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN 25 OCTOBER**

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Source: De Morgen
Belgian Banks invest in arms industry

SEVERAL FLEMISH POLITICIANS ARE ENDORSING THIS DEMAND FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY

A report by the non-profit organisation Netwerk Vlaanderen reveals that the banks Fortis, KBC, ING, Dexia and AXA together have invested 1.28 billion euros in the arms industry. The money is invested in 9 different companies, including manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and BAE Systems. In addition, these same banks also hold 7.92% of the shares in the Flemish technology firm Barco, which produces hi-tech equipment for military applications such as fighter helicopters and submarines. The organisation argues that consumers have no way of telling whether the money in their savings books is being used to produce weapons and is therefore demanding greater transparency from the banks. Several Flemish politicians are endorsing this demand for greater transparency and are prepared to create a legal framework to this effect. The organisation is awaiting the banks' answer (FF).

KOEN VIDAL • DE MORGEN • 30 OCTOBER

Vankrunkelsven: 'Someone who invests money, opens a savings account or joins a pension fund has the right to know what is being done with his or her money. Military investments must be open and exposed and there must also be greater Parliamentary controls.'

Vankrunkelsven feels that under no circumstances should the banks invest in companies that export to sensitive countries and is proposing taking the Belgian legislation on arms exports as a guide. SP.A Parliamentary Party Leader Dirk Vander Maelen wants to place certain obligations on banks: 'It seems to me a good idea to publish an annual report showing how much money the banks are investing in the arms sector and other sensitive sectors,' but thinks this report should not go too far. No detailed information on exactly how much is lent to which company, for example. Vankrunkelsven believes that the banks 'are leaving a gap in the market' and should offer more ethical investment funds.

INVESTMENTS IN MILLION DOLLARS

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A CD&V counter-proposal for relaxation of divorce

DIVORCE CAN BE FILED FOR ON THE BASIS OF THE ‘IRRETRIEVABLE BREAKDOWN’

The Purple coalition agreement includes a passage on the government’s plans for Belgian divorce law. These will apparently introduce the possibility of a no-fault divorce. In our country, the question of blame is still asked in divorce cases, except in ‘divorces by mutual consent’. The question of blame can be decisive when granting custody and maintenance. Under the Verhofstede I government a number of bills were tabled, but never got as far as a vote. The Purple majority supports the underlying idea of a Dutch divorce law, which determines that it is sufficient for one of the partners to feel that the marriage has ‘irretrievably broken down’ to obtain a divorce. But now the christian-democratic CD&V has come up with its own bill. MP Servais Verherstraeten expressed the new party standpoint. While the old CVP (former CD&V) always defended the traditional family at any price, the new CD&V is now taking social realities into consideration. Not only is the number of marriages continuing to fall and the number of divorces increasing year after year, there are also a great many couples who do not marry and simply live together and large numbers of divorced men and women join newly composed families. The CD&V wants to take account of this reality, says Verherstraeten, and that is also expressed in the bill the party has tabled. In that bill divorce can be filed for on the basis of the ‘irretrievable breakdown’ of the marriage (FF).
ISABEL ALBERS • DE STANDAARD • 30 OCTOBER

However, the notion of ‘fault’ has not entirely gone away. An ‘irretrievable breakdown’ is presumed to exist – according to the bill – if adultery is demonstrated or if the couple have been separated for two years. ‘These are two legal presumptions, but blame is no longer the basis,’ says MP Liesbeth Van der Auwera. ‘The partners can also both simply claim that the marriage has irretrievably broken down.’

If the question of blame is removed, how will maintenance pay be allocated? The CD&V is working on the principle that the financially strongest will support the other parent. Who pays how much maintenance after a divorce must be separated from who is at fault, unless manifest bad faith is proven. The judge can also limit the duration of the maintenance payments. Adultery alone is not sufficient for ‘manifest blame’, say the MPs Jo Vandeurzen and Servais Verherstraeten.

The CD&V has also submitted a proposal on custodial parenthood. ‘We want to grant a new partner parental authority if he or she has helped raise the child for two years and there is a bond of affection between the two,’ says Van der Auwera. The custodian must be jointly responsible for housing and supporting the child. The new partner can be of the same or opposite sex. Up to now the CD&V was firmly against adoption by ‘homo/lesbian/bi’ couples. ‘With custodial parenthood we are taking a step forward, but it does not mean the child is part of the new partner’s family. The party is still debating adoption,’ says Van der Auwera. The subject of ‘no-fault divorce’ will be dealt with within the new, yet to be formally set up Family Rights Sub-Committee of the Federal Parliament.

JUSTICE AND CULTURE

67th edition of Antwerp book fair

Last year the Antwerp Book Fair attracted 175,000 visitors; this is the second highest figure in its history. According to De Standaard, there is absolutely no reason to assume that the 67th edition, which runs from 30 October to 11 November, will not do as well. The Book Fair is a must for any Flemish bibliophile or even casual reader who want to keep up with what has appeared over the past year. With its 140 stands, the Fair offers also a unique opportunity for an overview of the Dutch-language book landscape. Debates, interviews and chats are grouped into several themed days. So, on 1 and 2 November literature is the focus, on 8 November attention switches to Europalia host country Italy and 9 November will be devoted to erotica. Anyone who does not speak Dutch can find something to suit them in interviews with Maj Sjöwall (of the Swedish writing pair Sjöwall & Wahlöö), with the Swedish authoress Barbara Voors (1 Nov.). On 8 Nov. there is an interview with the best-selling British author Redmond O’Hanlon, with Sean French, the male half of the writing duo Nicci French and with the Italian writers Carlo Lucarelli and Marcello Fois. On the day of erotica (9 Nov.) there will be a talk with science journalist Catherine Blackledge and successful American authoress Erica Jong. Finally, on 11 November feminist Germaine Greer will unveil her view of male beauty on the occasion of her latest book (FF).

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The Fair does not need much identity. You go because everything is there. Although an impressive list of authors will be signing books there, the face of the Book Fair is not determined by the readings and debates, as is the case with the other fair ‘Het Andere Boek’. There is no central theme or leitmotiv. The most important news on the Book Fair is the outstanding transport plan produced by Boek.be and De Lijn to take visitors smoothly into the Bouwcentrum, which is struggling with a dire lack of parking spaces. There are three park&ride areas where drivers can change to the tram; those coming to Antwerp by train will get a book token worth 5 euros with their B-daytrip. But precisely because the Fair is so good it is - for those willing to explore the extremely user-friendly website - more than simply organising a fascinating daily programme. The literature-themed days on 1 and 2 November are sparing no expense, with Maj Sjöwall, the duo Gerrit Komrij/Jan Mulder, Harry Mulisch and Hafid Bouazza. We cannot imagine that the erotica-themed day on 9 November will not attract any curious people. While nostalgic feminists can shake the hand of both Erica Jong [9 November] and Germaine Greer [11 November] at this fair. The Book Fair 2003 is therefore a sort of Ali Baba’s grotto, a market where you will find almost anything, given a bit of targeted searching in advance.

Book Fair, 30 October to 11 November.

WWW.BOEKENBEURS.BE

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**ECOLOSTYLES**

**Diary**

**MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE**

- 4 November: *Capella della pietra di Turchi-ni. Festa Napolitana* with Piccinni, Caresana, Jommeelli,

- 4 November: *Skatalites Handelsbeurs*, Ghent; info: www.handelsbeurs.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, Kaattheaterstudio’s, Brussels*; info: 02/201.59.59 www.kaattheater.be

- 5, 6 and 8 November: *Richard Galliano, Piazzolla Forever, De Spil, Roeselare/ De Warande, Turnhout and CC Hasselt*; info: 051/26.57.00, 014/41.69.91 and 011/22.99.33 www.audiazz.be

- 5 to 8 November: *Piotr Fomenko and Atelier Piotr Fomenko, War and peace by Tolstoj, theatre, De Singel, Antwerp*; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

- 6 November: *The Raveonettes, AB, Brussels*; info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24

- 6 and 7 November: *Dreamtime and Daniel Kwartet with Kris Defoort (piano) and Claraon Mc Fadden (soprano), De Singel, Antwerp and Bijloke, Ghent*; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be and www.bijloke.be

- 6 to 8 November: *Colloquium Umberto Eco, the Italian contribution to European Culture, PSK Brussels*; info: 09/267.28.28 www.desingel.be

- 8 November: *Isabelle Faust and Florent Bofard with Sonates by van Beethoven, Janacek and Bartok, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be


- Until 8 November: *Berbelfestival with Khaled Bououdi, Abdelkader Benali, Baly Othmani concerts, lectures and films, Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp*; info: 09/267.28.28 www.desingel.be

- 9 November: *Capitola Vena 40 ensemble (Jndia), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp; info: www.zuiderpershuis.be*

- 9 November: *Jan Michiels/Musikalisches Operer with JS Bach, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be*

- 10 November: *Ensemble Resonanz with WA Mozart, Igor Stravinsky, Conservatory, Brussels*; info: 02/507.82.00

**EXPO**

- From 22 March to 17 January: *Jacques Brel, ‘The right to dream’, exhibition, Schildkraatstraat 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 fou 2 with Gior gio Battistelli and Studio Azzurro, Heine Avdal and Christoph De Boeck, Kriss Verdonck and Aernoudt Jacobs, Mario Caroli, Anne Daems and others, experimental word and music, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be*

- 14 November: *Symphonic Orchestra of De Munt conducted by Kazushi Ono, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 02/548.24.24 www.desingel.be*

- 14 November: *Anthony Braxton Standards Quartet 2004, De Vooruit, Ghent; info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be*

**CULTURE**

- 11 and 12 November: *Mountains are mountains by Philip Gehmacher, dance, De Vooruit, Ghent; info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be*

- 12 November: *Misha Mengelberg and the ICO Orchestra, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be*

- 12 November: *Mauro Pavlovski o, The Groons, AB, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be*

- 12 November: *Jazzpower, AB, Brussels; info: 03/248.24.24 www.abconcerts.be*

- 13 November: *Gil Shaham, Akira Eguch and Aaron Copland with JS Bach and Gabriel Fauré, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.bozar.be*

- 13 November: *Antonio Banderas with Piccinni, Caresana, PSK, Brussels; info: 02/219.19.80 www.europalia.be*


- 15 November: *Questions of women, Jeff Gexs, exhibition, Kunsthalle, Loppem; info: www.kunsthalloppem.be*

- Until 16 November: *Travellings by Ann Veronica Janssens, Open Air Museum Middelheim, Antwerp*

- Until 16 November: *2003 Beaufort, Seaescapes in painting with Turner, Courbet, Monet, Ensor, Spilliaert, Magritte, Permeke, Tuymans, Kiefer and others, MMB, Ostend; info: 059/70.11.99 www.mmbk.be*

- Until 31 December: *Art-deco Jewels, Diamond museum, Antwerp; info: 03/202.48.90*


- Until 11 January: *Venus Unveiled, PSK, Brussels; www.europalia.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 McCarthy, Marlene Dumas and Raymond Pettibon, Museum Dhondt-Daenens, Deurle; info: 09/282.51.23*

- Until 11 November: *Antwerp Book Fair; info: www.boekenbeurs.be*

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