Ford invests 550 to 600 million euro in Genk

Car constructor Ford is going to invest 550 to 600 million euro in its plant in Genk in infrastructure for an assembly line that is able to produce three models at the same time. The three models that will be built in Genk are the successors of the Ford Mondeo and the Ford Galaxy, and a third new model. The production of 3 models allows the company to meet fluctuations in the demand more flexibly. Now that the production of the Ford Transit is moving to Turkey, the plant in Genk depends entirely on the sale of the Ford Mondeo. As from 2006, the annual production needs to be raised to 300,000 cars again. As planned, 3,000 of the 8,400 jobs will still be cut though. Ford will receive 80 million euro in government support for its investment. The Flemish government will earmark an expansion grant of 23.1 to 25.2 million euro, up to 53 million euro for training and 2 to 3 million euro for outplacement (FF).

BART HAECK • DE TIJD • 14 NOVEMBER

Flemish government has earmarked an expansion grant of 23.1 to 25.2 million. ‘In principle, we agree to release this money as soon as Ford has effectively respected its obligations in Genk’, says Flemish Minister of Economy, Patricia Ceyssens (VLD). European laws stipulate that government subsidies are not allowed to exceed 4.2% of the investment. A second round of government subsidies will go to training. The exact amount has still not been determined because it depends on what Ford invests in training. The Flemish government will contribute up to 40 % of the cost. When the American group announced it was cutting 3,000 jobs in Genk, the Flemish government froze 53 million euro in training support that had not yet been paid out.

The third expenditure item is for outplacement, i.e. finding new jobs for employees. According to Flemish Minister of Employment, Renaat Landuyt [sp.a], a budget of 2 to 3 million euro is available for this. The money will be used to retrain factory workers to build the new Ford models and to train employees who were made redundant for other jobs. Whereas the Flemish government partly subsidises the new investment, the federal government will provide support for the social assistance of the employees who have lost their jobs. Of the 3,000 employees made redundant, 1,150 are eligible for early retirement.

www.automotivesuppliers.be

CONTENTS

Politics
A warm-up for election campaigns 2
Complicated scenarios for electoral reform 2
Constituencies at federal level? 3
Somers does not follow Verhofstadt 3
De Crem against Cordon around Blok 4
Leterme amends De Crem 4
No supporting of Blok proposals 4

Immigration Policy
Afghan refugees locked up 5
Immigration and development co-operation 5

Economy and Employment
More transparent banking services 6
Paul Janssen ‘Pharmaceutica’ dies 6
Slow growth of internet connections 7

Sports: Only Brussels can organise Games, Rogge says 7

INTRODUCTION

Since the disastrous elections of 18 May in which Flemish green party Agalev lost all its seats in the federal Parliament, it has still not been able to chart a stable course. In fact, the party is starting to resemble a rolling ship which, after bearing the brunt of the media storms, is barely managing to steer clear of the rocks. Political secretary Dirk Holemans has come to the conclusion that he is not the right man in the right place. Just before the crucial party conference of 15 November he will make way for Vera Dua. Holemans believes that Dua is more suitable to ‘convey the project of the party’ with a view to the campaign and the TV debates in the run up to the elections of 13 June. Dua, who resigned after 18 May as Flemish minister of the environment and agriculture, will not be nominated at the conference of 15 November as political secretary but as ‘party chairperson’. This will give the green party a chairman like every other party. Holemans did not lead the party long. At the end of June, he was put forward as the successor of political secretary Jos Geyssels. His main task was to raise the party’s profile in terms of content but in practice he had to act as crisis manager most of the time. Unfortunately, Holemans proved not to be the best communicator and according to de Tijd (13 Nov.) he lacked the necessary leadership qualities too. His legendary twisting and turning in the affair surrounding green Antwerp alderman Chantal Pauwels will be remembered for a long time. First she had to resign, two days later she was allowed to stay. A week later, Agalev decided that Holemans would be flanked by two spokespersons: youngster Tinne Vander Straeten and old hand Vera Dua would convey the message and Holemans would map out the political lines behind the scenes. By choosing for Dua, the party has logically opted for experience and seriousness, according to Het Laatste Nieuws (13 Nov.). The ever smiling Dua comes across well on TV and during her term as minister was commended for her expert knowledge of dossiers and her courage. After 18 May, heavyweights Geyssels, Vogels and Dua took a step back but soon observers inside and outside the party realised that sacrificing Dua had been a mistake. Against the Flemish trend, she had stood her ground in electoral terms in her City of Ghent and she did not bear the troubled legacy of the party as much, according to De Standaard (13 Nov.). Dua immediately stated that her future as chairman is linked to the election result. It is quite a challenge to take on though...

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
A Warm-up for election campaigns starts
FF EDITOR

The next elections are still seven months away but several parties have already begun their election campaign. CD&V will literally send its representatives onto the streets and squares under the slogan ‘In every street’ to explain the CD&V alternative to ‘the politics of façade and strategy’ ofish politics’, which is dominated by ‘the politics of façade and strategy’ of the Purple majority, according to Chairman Yves Leterme (De Morgen, 10 November).

In an interview in De Morgen (10 November), VLD Chairman Karel De Gucht presented his party’s campaign plan. According to this plan, the VLD wants to lower personal income tax by 1.3 billion euros in the next Flemish Government and dramatically relax regional structural planning. All too often, the bureaucrats at Flemish level hold sway in Flanders’ regional structural planning, he feels. He wants the municipalities to be given a greater say in establishing land divisions and industrial areas.

The Greens of Agalev in turn presented their project, which is designed to contribute to the party’s electoral reconstruction. The party wants to adopt a Green-progressive position against centre-politics and shifts to the right and fight for greater tolerance. The campaign will be built around 11 concrete proposals. The party wants to give sustainable sectors greater opportunities and make SMEs greener. It also wants to re-open the debate on the 30-hour working week and draw up a Marshall plan for run-down districts. The project is designed to give the party a clearly sharpened and independent party profile and will be submitted for approval at the conference of 15 November (De Tijd, 8 November).

Electoral reform: complicated scenarios
CD&V has already stated it will vote against the expansion of the provincial constituencies. According to Party Chairman Leterme, there is little sense in reforming the electoral system so close to the elections. He calls it an exercise in ‘self-service’. The Christian Democrats have a strong local presence in Flanders and have absolutely nothing to gain from larger provincial constituencies. The Vlaams Blok, on the other hand, is prepared to help the Purples to a two-thirds majority in the Flemish Parliament but under certain conditions.

At their press conference on 7 November, the Greens took a vicious swipe at the Socialists ‘who are publicly calling for co-operation but have not contacted us about electoral reforms.’ According to Steve Stevaert, the Purples negotiated at Federal level because the introduction of an electoral threshold must be approved at that level. The introduction of provincial constituencies is being discussed in the Flemish Parliament. He does not accept that the Greens are making an issue out of the introduction of an electoral threshold: ‘Agalev is in favour of provincial constituencies. I’m prepared to go along with that, but only if there is an electoral threshold. Otherwise the political fragmentation will only get worse. If Agalev doesn’t want an electoral threshold, everything will have to stay as it is, with district constituencies. After all, without Agalev we won’t get a two-thirds majority [in the Flemish Parliament]!’ Stevaert does, however, oppose provincial constituencies without an electoral threshold, like Agalev wants, but: ‘I’m also against maintaining the existing district constituencies with a threshold. That would be fatal for Agalev.’ According to Stevaert, the Greens are looking for a stick to beat SP.A with because they want the cartel with SP.A to be voted down at their conference at the end of this week.

Voting potential and realisation of potential at the ballot box
(Survey by TNS, June-July 2003)

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SOURCE: DE TIJD
Verhofstadt: If reform fails in the Flemish parliament, take it to the federal level

If Agalev and opposition party CD&V vote against it, the majority will not obtain a two-thirds majority for the proposal.

The idea of introducing large constituencies determined in the Federal Parliament is encountering more and more opposition. Flemish Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD) stated on 12 November in the Flemish Parliament that he did not agree with Premier Verhofstadt and that only the Flemish Parliament could decide on this matter. He is supported in this by the Chairman of the Flemish Parliament, Norbert De Batselier (FF).

MARK DEWEERDT • DE TIJD • 13 NOVEMBER

Somers said about constituencies that it would be ‘indecent’ if there was no clarity before Christmas concerning the legal framework in which the parties head to the elections for the Flemish Parliament. It is the majority’s responsibility to create clarity for the opposition, he added. Somers said that it is ‘not a good thing’ that Premier Verhofstadt made comments about the Flemish constituencies and that he does not share the opinion of the Premier. ‘It is self-evident that the Flemish Parliament, and only the Flemish Parliament, should decide on its constituencies,’ said Somers. He received hearty applause from the VLD parliamentary party. After Somers had cut off the political route to Federal control of the provincial constituencies, Parliamentary Chairman De Batselier did the same for the legal route. By voting on the proposal of N-VA, the Flemish Parliament will be using its constitutive autonomy, even if the proposal is rejected. After the vote, the Federal Parliament will under no circumstances be able to introduce provincial constituencies before the Flemish Parliament elections.

MARK DEWEERDT/RENAAT SCHROOTEN • DE TIJD • 10 NOVEMBER

On Thursday evening it was decided to err on the side of caution and entrust the introduction of provincial constituencies to the Flemish Parliament. Last week, N-VA submitted a proposal for a special decree on the subject to the Flemish Parliament. VLD and SP.A have agreed to back the proposal. The fact that the Vlaams Blok would also do so is not an immediate concern for both parties. We cannot prevent the Blok from supporting a proposal by N-VA to which we are also favourably disposed, they are saying. If a two-thirds majority is not achieved in the Flemish Parliament, the Federal Parliament route will be taken in order to introduce provincial constituencies for the Flemish Parliament. The chairmen and senior ministers of the Purple parties agreed in advance that the Federal Government would table a bill regulating three other election matters. Primarily, an electoral threshold of 5% for the regional parliaments, as is the case for the Chamber and Senate. The threshold will apply in both provincial and district constituencies. In the latter case, a threshold of 5% will also apply to be able to participate at provincial level in the distribution of remaining seats, the so-called apportionment. Secondly, the age for being elected to all parliaments will be lowered from 21 to 18. Finally, it was decided to re-introduce separate lists of candidate-successors for the regional parliaments, as was previously the case for the Chamber and Senate. Separate successor lists were scrapped under Verhofstadt I. What is remarkable is that no changes are being made to the ‘regional apportionment’ provided for by the Special Act on the Reform of Institutions. If provincial constituencies are introduced in Flanders, the remaining seats in each province will be allocated at Flemish level. That is advantageous for - and clearly a concession to - N-VA. The Purple parties had agreed earlier that N-VA is still eligible for a government subsidy. However, because the party is still represented in the Chamber, but no longer in the Senate, it is not normally eligible for such subsidy. However, the law is being changed. This change is, however, linked to another change in the law which must form the basis for the practical implementation of the rule that far-right parties such as the Vlaams Blok can lose their government subsidy.

T he Liberals and Socialists have reached an agreement to introduce provincial constituencies and an electoral threshold of 5% for regional elections, just as in the Federal elections. The Green party, Agalev, which is still part of the Flemish Government but no longer of the Federal Government, was vociferous in its protest. After all, the introduction of the electoral threshold means that with the score they achieved on 18 May earlier this year they no longer have any seats in the Flemish Parliament. Agalev Parliamentary Party Leader Stassen even threatened to leave the Flemish Government, but a few hours later Political Secretary Dirk Holemans toned this down. He wants to wait and see how the discussion on the introduction of large constituencies in the Flemish Parliament turns out. After all, if Agalev and opposition party CD&V vote against it, the majority will not obtain a two-thirds majority for the proposal. Nevertheless, the Liberals (VLD) and Socialists (SP.A-Spirit) are not afraid of having the Flemish Parliament vote on the proposal. If the two-thirds majority is not achieved, Premier Verhofstadt (VLD) wants to have the Federal Parliament vote on the new electoral act. However, not all legal experts agreed that the Council of State will approve this route (FF).
De Crem wants to break ‘cordon’ around Blok

**Pieter De Crem wants, from now on, explicitly target Blok voters**

CD&V Chairman Leterme has no kind words for the Purple majority’s attempt to reform the electoral system with the support of the Blok. Hypocrisy and political bartering, he calls it. According to him, by doing so the Socialists and Liberals are breaking the cordon sanitaire around the far-right party. Henceforth, his party will therefore ignore the cordon as well, he explained in Het Nieuwsblad (10 November). There will be no more automatic votes against proposals by the Vlaams Blok ‘that display sound realistic votes against proposals by the Blok. The cordon sanitaire encourages that. Therefore, from now on the CD&V is clearly saying: we do not want to continue frustrating Blok voters, most of whom feel wronged and deserted. If someone wants to express an alternative vote against the Purples, CD&V is that alternative. We no longer want to feel hindered from submitting proposals if the Vlaams Blok also agrees with them, from supporting their proposals if we agree with them. In doing this we want to strengthen our own position.’

To the question whether CD&V will from now on no longer preclude administrative agreements with Blok voters. They’re not 700,000 dung beetles (the pet name that VLD party chairman Karel De Gucht thought up for the Vlaams Blok, ed.) We must stop making people feel guilty.’ In his own words, De Crem is not afraid to publicly say clearly where he cannot follow party and have to try and win elections. Many people in the ACW camp feel the same way I do about the cordon.’

‘Approving Blok proposals is an entirely different matter’

The cordon sanitaire is an agreement between the democratic parties not to co-operate on any administrative level with the Vlaams Blok. A coalition or other political agreements are therefore out of the question. For the local elections of 2000, all Flemish democratic parties renewed their agreement. Among other things, this states that the approval by the Vlaams Blok of a proposal introduced by a democratic party does not represent a breaking of the cordon sanitaire. What the CD&V wants to do, namely support Blok proposals, does however break the cordon, say Steve Stevaert (SP.A) and Karel De Gucht (VLD).

HANNES CATTEBEKE/FILIP ROGIERS • DE MORGEN • 12 NOVEMBER

‘We can’t prevent the Vlaams Blok from approving a proposal we also approve of,’ is Stevaert and De Gucht’s answer to the criticism levelled by CD&V. ‘If SP.A approves something, and the Blok does the same, you don’t automatically get Red-Brown,’ says Stevaert. ‘If the Vlaams Blok submits a proposal itself the cordon sanitaire. What the CD&V party does not represent a breaking of the cordon sanitaire. Among other things, this states that the approval by the Vlaams Blok of a proposal introduced by a democratic party does not represent a breaking of the cordon sanitaire. What the CD&V wants to do, namely support Blok proposals, does however break the cordon, say Steve Stevaert (SP.A) and Karel De Gucht (VLD).

HANNES CATTEBEKE/FILIP ROGIERS • DE MORGEN • 12 NOVEMBER

According to Leterme, the confusion surrounding the cordon arose as a result of Pieter De Crem’s comments. ‘Pieter De Crem goes much further than I do. He can’t suggest that agreements and coalitions with the Vlaams Blok must be possible and say that we should no longer follow the charter of 2000. That’s a pity, but it is not the party line. The only one who speaks on behalf of the party is me.’ In an internal mail to CD&V members Leterme tried to clarify things further. ‘For me, the Vlaams Blok is not a party like the others because they still assume inequality between people. That is at odds with our Christian Democratic principles but in no way means that we should place Vlaams Blok voters behind a cordon sanitaire.’

Leterme calls De Crem to order

As was generally expected, the reaction of the Christian workers’ movement to Pieter De Crem’s unequivocal comments on the cordon sanitaire was not long in coming. ACW Chairman Renders promptly demanded an adjustment of the CD&V. If Pieter De Crem defends the party line, there is a problem, says the ACW Chairman. CD&V Chairman Yves Leterme knew what had to be done. His reaction was perfectly clear. It is not De Crem, but he who voices the party line, was the response (FF).

Renders: ‘The Vlaams Blok remains an intolerant party that unfairly abuses people’s fears. The Christian Democrats stand for fraternity and tolerance. They must not sell their identity for strategic reasons. The Blok has not changed, so attitudes towards the Blok must not change either. CD&V must make it clear that De Crem has put his foot in it. Chairman Leterme must simply say clearly where he cannot follow his Chamber party leader and position himself squarely behind the cordon sanitaire.’
Afghan refugees locked up in secure asylum centre

Dewael is sticking to his view that failed asylum-seekers must comply with the decision of the asylum authorities

Opinion

WIM WINCKELMANS • HET NIEUWS-BLAD • 10 NOVEMBER

What in Heaven’s name are you supposed to do with hundreds of illegal Afghans, who are not even requesting asylum in Belgium but who simply want to cross the Channel to the UK? The Belgian solution is simple: we shove a piece of paper into their hands ordering them to leave the country within five days. And if they then actually try and leave the country - albeit illegally, crammed in amongst the cargo of a lorry - we arrest them, only to release them again later. This game has been going on for years, and is ridiculous and inhumane. Illegal refugees, but also potential asylum-seekers whose case has been rejected, get a stupid piece of paper, model B annex 13. And they have to make do with that despite often not even knowing how to leave the country. Many have spent their last penny getting to Europe. Nor claim Dewael and Verwilgen. On Monday morning, both PS and SP.A announced that they do not want to link development aid to taking back turned down asylum-seekers. Dirk Vandermaelen, SPA Parliamentary Party Leader in the Chamber, said that such measures penalised not the leaders, but the people of those countries. Claude Eerdekens, Parliamentary Party Leader of the PS, took the same view: ‘People don’t flee their country with the consent of the country of origin.’ CD&V, CDH, Agalev and Ecolo are also against Dewael’s idea, who admitted on Monday that his proposal does not offer a solution in a great many cases. For example, Belgium has no agreements for development co-operation with Iraq, Iran or Pakistan. Forcing these countries to take illegal immigrants back because otherwise they will lose their development aid is not an option in these cases.

No linking of immigration to development co-operation, says Dewael

Returning turned down asylum-seekers who are locked up in an asylum centre presents a problem. Belgium can only repatriate them with the co-operation of the country of origin. Many countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, make an issue of this. Even Congo refuses to co-operate. Home Affairs Minister Patrick Dewael (VLD) now wants to put pressure on these countries by linking Belgian development aid to the willingness to take such people back. But not everyone agrees with Dewael’s proposal. It has met with considerable opposition from Socialist government partner SP.A, from non-governmental organisations such as 11.11.11 and from the Congolese embassy. The Congolese Ambassador in Brussels pointed out that the embassy was working on a system to trace the nationality of expelled Congolese people. Many Africans claim to be Congolese because they believe it increases their chances of asylum. Dewael and Development Co-operation Minister Marc Verwilgen (VLD) promised that Belgium will help Congo in this identification process. In a press release sent jointly with Verwilgen, Dewael refined his proposal [FF].

BART HAECK • DE TIJD • 12 NOVEMBER

The fact that certain countries refuse to co-operate in the repatriation of illegal immigrants must be given much more attention in Belgium’s foreign policy, can they cross the border into neighbouring countries, because they applied for asylum in Belgium. In other words, for years the Belgian Government has employed a blinkered asylum policy which leaves thousands of helpless people to their fate. Obviously they then go into hiding. For them, Europe is not only a land of milk and honey, often they simply have no other choice. The most fortunate among them are given shelter by a well-meaning compatriot, others get lost or are exploited. There is no proper solution to this problem, only a less bad one, which consists of accompanying undesirable foreigners back to their country of origin humanely. In this sense the measures currently being taken by the government are heading in the least bad direction. Clandestine foreigners who are caught a second time end up in a secure centre, waiting to be repatriated.

focus on FLANDERS • 8 November - 14 November • Number 39
Minister Vanden Bossche wants more transparent pricing of bank services

From 1 January, holders of a classic sight account with Fortis Bank will pay six cents if they withdraw money from a cash machine. Other major banks have been charging a fee for such withdrawals for some time. KBC, for example, charges 7 cents, and BBL 5 cents. Fortis customers who withdraw money from self-banking machines will also pay a fee for each transaction shortly. Fortis' other services and transactions are also set to become more expensive. For instance, the administration fees for a simple sight account will be increased from 7.5 to 8.5 euro per annum, the use of a credit card will cost 22 euro instead of 19.8 euro per annum and all counter transactions will become more expensive. This last move is to discourage manual transactions and encourage electronic ones. However, account holders who have an average amount of at least 12,500 euro per annum in their savings and sight accounts together will still be able to withdraw money electronically free of charge. The Christian democrats and SPA Chairman Steve Stevaert have already reacted angrily at Fortis’ decision. First the banks chase everyone away from the counters to the walls, and as soon as everyone is used to using cash machines, they put up the costs, says Stevaert. The fact that people with 12,500 euros in their account are exempt from the fee increases is a particular source of annoyance to the SPA. His fellow party member, Consumer Affairs Minister Freya Vanden Bossche, is currently investigating how she can force the banks to make their pricing more transparent and fairer. Just this weekend the consumer organisation Test-Aankoop published a critical survey of the quality of services and information on rates used by the banks. 45% of branches falls short in terms of providing information on services and rates, concluded Test Aankoop.

DE STANDAARD • 12 NOVEMBER

‘Today it is perfectly legal to use different rates on the basis of objective conditions,’ acknowledges the SPA Minister. ‘But the fact that a customer needs to have 12,500 euro in his or her account to be exempt from certain charges may well be an objective condition but that doesn’t make it fair.’ Van den Bossche feels it is right for basic services [not only for banks or insurance companies, but also suppliers of electricity, gas and water] to examine what the correct criteria are for discriminating in terms of pricing. The Minister also wants to make people more aware of the law on basic banking services. Under this law, even someone who has been refused everywhere must still be able to open a bank account. ‘Thousands of people are eligible but up to now only a few hundred have taken advantage of it,’ says Van den Bossche. The Minister also objects to the fact that it is very difficult currently for consumers to compare prices. ‘Because each provider of basic services provides information about its rates in its own way, comparing rates is very difficult. But people must be given a choice and they should be able to find out who is the cheapest,’ says Freya Van den Bossche. As a result, she wants to impose a uniform information system on every provider of basic services [such as banks, electricity suppliers and telephone companies]. ‘People must be able to switch provider more quickly,’ says the Minister. Changing banks and keeping the same account number should be possible, she claims. The Minister will hold talks shortly on her proposals with each of the sectors concerned.

FOUNDER OF JANSEN PHARMACEUTICA DIES

Paul Janssen, founder of pharmaceutical company Janssen Pharmaceutica, died in Rome on Tuesday afternoon. As the inventor of various drugs, Paul Janssen had more than 100 patents in his name. Janssen began researching drugs fifty years ago in his father’s company in Turnhout. He then became Managing Director and Research Director at Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, which has been part of Johnson & Johnson since 1961. Paul Janssen and his teams created breakthrough drugs in many areas, including anaesthetics and pain control, psychiatry, fungal diseases and gastro-intestinal diseases. Janssen himself received 22 honorary doctorates worldwide and was awarded more than 80 medical prizes. Janssens Pharmaceutica today employs 4,450 people (FF).
Rogge: only Brussels can organise Olympic Games

In his eyes, Minister-President Bart Somers’ ambitious plans have little chance

On 12 November the Chairman of the International Olympic Committee, the Belgian Jacques Rogge, invited Flemish Minister of Sport Marino Keulen (VLD) to Lausanne in Switzerland. The IOC Chairman sounded optimistic about Belgium’s chances of hosting the 2016 Olympic Games but would not hear of a purely Flemish candidacy. Olympic Games in Belgium could only be held in one place, and that is Brussels, says Rogge. In his eyes, Minister-President Bart Somers’ ambitious plans have little chance, but Flemish Minister for Sport Marino Keulen is not giving up hope (FF).

Rik Van Welden • Het Nieuwsblad • 13 November

‘Personally I think we have a chance,’ says Rogge. ‘But the candidacy must always come from a single city. They may not want to hear it in Antwerp and Ghent, but in Belgium Brussels is the only option. And that city must be able to count on the support of the surrounding region and ultimately the whole country.’ ‘A stadium with a capacity of 80,000 is required, which is possible by expanding the current capacity (60,000) of the King Boudewijn Stadium. Building a new stadium in Flanders would be a waste of money and could never be used to its capacity afterwards. Also, for sports such as mountain-biking you are forced to head out to the Ardennes and you cannot ignore the stadiums at Charleroi and Liège for the early football rounds,’ said Rogge, exploring several trains of thought. In the same breath, Rogge also called for a stronger sports policy in Belgium.

‘If 2016 represents the beginning of a revamped top sports policy for Belgium, I can only welcome that. But we have to begin working towards that today. The athletes who will have to make it come true are now aged between eight and twelve. We have no time to lose in establishing structures to identify and support these talents,’ he explained. According to Rogge, Belgium has the potential to win five or six medals at the Games in Athens. ‘Not too bad, but we can safely say that sport in Belgium is not at the level it should be. The poor physical condition of our young people has a lot to do with that.’ The IOC Chairman referred to Norway, a country of barely five million inhabitants that managed to win 28 and 14 medals at the Winter and Summer Games respectively. If Belgium wants to be appointed by the IOC in 2009 it will have to win more than six medals at the 2008 Games in Peking. ‘The IOC will not give this event to a country that is insignificant on the sporting world map,’ said Rogge, not mincing his words.

Flemish Minister Keulen does not share Rogge’s vision that Brussels is the only option. He sees other possibilities. ‘In Belgium, the Communities are responsible for sport. They have to push through such projects. This is our job, we work for our region,’ says Keulen.

Number of Internet connections comes to a standstill

According to ISPA, the Belgian Internet Providers Association, the number of high-speed Internet connections in Belgium has come to a standstill. At the end of September, the number of broadband connections (via ADSL or television distribution cable) to the Internet was 1.16 million. This is the second quarter in succession to show a smaller increase than in previous years. In the period between July and September there were 95,000 new high-speed Internet connections. The 9% increase in the third quarter is not much more than the 7.3% of the second quarter.

Source: Het Laatste Nieuws

www.ispa.be

AGFA-GEVAERT (RESULTS IN MILLION EURO)

(3 QUARTERS)

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Source: Gazet Van Antwerpen

PRICE OF BANK SERVICES 2003

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2003 | FROM 2004

Source: Het Laatste Nieuws

FOCUS ON FLANDERS • 8 November - 14 November • Number 39
CULTURE

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

• Until 19 November: Homo and Lesbian Filmfestival, Leuven, Corso, Filmfestival
• 22 November: The symphonic Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Ettore Sieni with Egnont by Van Beethoven.
  Dvorak and Tas, De Bijloke, Ghent, info: www.bijloke.be
• 18 November: Schöngen Ensemble, with Maurizio Kagel composition, De Bijloke, Ghent, info: www.bijloke.be
• 18 November: Alfred Brendel (piano) with compositions by van Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert, PSK, Brussels, info: www.bozar.be
• 18 November: Charles Mingos Orchestra.
  Théâtre 140, Brussels, info: 02/507.82.00 www.audijsazz.be
• 19 November: Philip Catherine Group, Théâtre 140, Brussels, info: 02/507.82.00 www.audijsazz.be
• 20 November: Octurn Electric Quintet.
  Sounds Jazzclub, Brussels, info: 02/512.92.50 www.audijsazz.be
• 20 November: Thé Lêu du, AB, Brussels, info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts.be
• 20 November: Tenores de Bitti (Sardegna), vocal polyphony, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 21 November: Ensemble Daudelles, conducted by Roberto Festa, Musa Latina, De Bijloke, Ghent, info: www.bijloke.be
• 21 and 22 November: Xavier Leroy with Project (dance), Kaaitheater, Brussels, info: www.kaaitheater.be
• 21 and 20 November: Berbet festival, Belgium-Marocco, Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
• 19 to 21 November: Collect-If by Collect-If, dance, Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be
• 20 November: Blindman plays Maximalist.
  Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be
• 20 November: Thérapyl in concert, Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be
• 21 November: Utroula Rucker, Cactus Club, Brussels, info: 0900/00600 www.audijsazz.be
• 22 November: Steve Lacy and the Burton workshop.
  Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be
• 23 November: Soul Massi (Algeria), Handelbeurs, Ghent, info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelbeurs.be
• 24 November: Absynthe Mindel, At the Be- st, Leuven, info: 016/20.61.06
• 25 November: Greetings from Mercury/Youngblood Brass Band (US), Vooruit, Ghent, info: 09/267.28.28 www.vooruit.be
• 24 November: Anima Eterna conducted by Jos Van Immerseel with Mendelssohn, Von Weber and van Beethoven, PSK, Brussels, info: www.bozar.be
• 26, 27 and 28 November: Compagnia Pippo Delbono [it] with Guerra and Rabia (8 Nov), theatre, PSK, Brussels, info: www.bozar.be
• 27 to 29 November: Meg Stuart and Dam- aged Goods. Visitors only, dance, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 28 November: Badiyi Ensemble [Iran], Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
• 27 November: Spiegel String Quartet with Dvorak, Schumann and Brahms, De Bijloke, Ghent, info: www.bijloke.be
• 30 November: Flemish Radio Orchestra conducted by Yuol Levi with Symphony nr. 7 by Chostakovitch, De Bijloke, Ghent, info: www.bijloke.be
• 30 November: Choir and orchestra Col- legium Vocale conducted by Philippe Her- rewege, 5 cantates by JS Bach, 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, Schildknaap- genova, Fashion Museum, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 27 November: Ennio Morricone's Life, exhibition, De Bijloke, Ghent; info: www.bijloke.be
• 30 November: Schönberg Ensemble
  Schouvll, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
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Focus on Flanders provides a weekly overview of articles from the Flemish press and appears in English, French and German.
This newsletter is published by Uitgeverij Lannoo nv, Kasteelstraat 97, 8700 Tielt and can also be obtained by e-mail.

• 7 October to 4 January: The breath of soul.
  Morandi and still life, exhibition, Groeninge- museum, Bruges; info: www.europalia.be
• Until 15 November: Questions of women, Jeff Gey's exhibition, Kunsthalle, Loppem, info: www.kunsthalloppem.be
• Until 16 November: Travellings by Ann Veronica Janssens, Open Air Museum Middel- heim, Antwerp
• Until 16 November: 2003 Beafort, Seascapes in painting with Turner, Courbet, Monet, Ensor, Spilliaert, Magritte, Permeke, Tuymans, Kiefer and others, PMMK, Ostend; info: 059/70.11.99 www.pmmk.be
• Until 31 December: Art-deco Jewels, Diamond museum, Antwerp, info: 03/202.48.90
• 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
• 15 to 23 November: Cocoon, House and Interiors Fair, Brussels Expo, www.cocoon.be
• Until 18 January: Luigi d’affezione, exhibi- tion, City Hall, Brussels, info: www.eu- ropalia.be
• Until 7 December: Korpus, Glass like you never saw it before, Fragile durability, exhibi- tions, Museum of Design, Ghent, info: 09/224.45.22 www.design.museum.gent.be
• Until 4 January: Exhibitions in SMAK, Ghent: Luigi Ontani with Gentura (europalia) – Fassa Italia (young Italian artists, europalia)
• Until 11 January: Johan Talhon, Self self, sculptures – Silvia Schreiber, Head Quarters, Smak, Ghent, info: www.smak.be
• Until 30 November: Michelangelo Pistoleto and Citadellette, exhibition,