Blok judgment: no violation of freedom of expression

All debates involving foreigners are now taboo. What is happening to us today, can happen to any other opposition party that criticises immigration policy tomorrow.’ This is the conclusion the Vlaams Blok leadership draws from the judgment by the Ghent Court of Appeal and against which it intends to conduct its ‘Freedom of expression’ campaign. But to say the least, that is a very free interpretation of the judgment. According to media law professor Dirk Voorhoof the judgment is by no means a violation of the freedom of expression and he also warns against jumping to conclusions. The party subsidy of 3 million euros remains untouched for the time being. The post office will continue to deliver election material and the TV channels will keep on broadcasting statements by their bigwigs (FF).

KOEN VIDAL
DE MORGEN • 23 APRIL

Voorhoof: ‘The Court has mainly emphasised that the Vlaams Blok uses the scapegoat phenomenon, that it systematically seeks to reinforce certain prejudices against immigrants. The Blok’s goal was not to inform the population, but to make an issue of xenophobia. Not all Blok statements about foreigners are automatically punishable since 21 April, according to Voorhoof. ‘The scope of the judgment is more limited. The judgment only involves 1999 and 2000. From this we should not deduct that a Blok publication today is by definition in violation of anti-racist legislation.’ The Post office is not allowed to stop printed material from the Blok, in Voorhoof’s opinion. The judgment will, however, influence future legal decisions as it will be considered a guideline, he believes. But the judgment has no immediate consequences on the law on party financing. It is nonetheless in the media’s best interest to take the ruling into account: ‘The judgment shows that the Vlaams Blok is a party like no other. Journalists should avoid enabling the Blok to encourage hatred through their media. Voorhoof: ‘Another question is if members of the Vlaams Blok can keep their seats on the Board of Directors of cultural institutions such as the VRT [public broadcasting company]. According to the Flemish cultural treaty legislation (cultuurpact) this right can be removed if basic democratic rules are not respected.’

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief

INTRODUCTION

This is no longer gagging a political party the way Putin and Berlusconi do it, this is political assassination. This is the DDR, the Soviet Union’, roared Antwerp Vlaams Blok leader Filip Dewinter after the ruling by the Ghent Court of Appeal that called the Vlaams Blok a racist federation. Blok President Frank Van Hecke accused Premier Verhofstadt of even having exercised pressure on the legal apparatus. And number three in the Blok leadership, Gerolf Annemans, suggested that Judge Smetyns could now look at a promotion after this ruling. This elicited the remark from the VLD chair Dirk Sterckx that Dewinter & Co were obviously unable to accept the democratic principle of separation of powers. Which other Flemish party leaders ostentatiously did do, by explicitly refraining from any comments on the ruling.

De Standaard calls the ruling a legal milestone. It makes the anti-racist law applicable to rulings and party platforms and sets decency standards for the way in which rulings can be made within the boundaries of freedom of expression about people and population groups. The consequences are politically far-reaching, on this all newspapers agree. The Blok’s carefully developed strategy to appear respectable and presentable was shattered, now that it is branded as racist. The political cordon sanitaire around the party will therefore stand firm (Laatste Nieuws) and an end will come to the careful advances from conservative circles, according to De Morgen (22 april). De Tijd extends the consequences to a financial and organisational level. Not only can this ruling encourage other parties – especially Francophone ones, as appears from the first reactions – to deny the Blok its federal and Flemish subsidies as a racist party, it can also make any cooperation with the party punishable, which would force the Blok to shut down.

Electoral things are different. The majority of commentators assume that this ruling will provide the Blok with electoral gain. Two out of three Flemings share this opinion, as appears from a small-scale poll by Het Laatste Nieuws (22 april). The party can return to its favourite role of victim targeted by the politically correct and the Belgian establishment. 24 hours after the ruling the party introduced its election slogan during a press conference: ‘Freedom of expression!’. The party does its utmost to make its continued existence the main issue of the elections. And that is what the other Flemish political parties fear the most. For the time being they keep a low profile, to the exasperation of some newspaper commentators (De Standaard, De Morgen). One thing is sure and that is that all opinion polls published so far can be chucked.

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THE DUTCH SPEAKING PART OF BELGIUM

weekly, does not appear in July • number 15 • 17 April – 23 April

focus on FLANDERS
Vlaams Blok is racist party, says court

The Court did indeed declare itself competent, allowing a judgment on the merits to be passed for the first time

According to the Court of Appeal in Ghent, the Vlaams Blok is a party that systematically incites racial hatred. The Court gave grounds for its judgment in a particularly long ruling with innumerable quotations from Blok publications, which were analysed and commented on. This ruling puts an end for the time being to a case brought by the Centre for the Fight against Racism and the League for Human Rights against the Blok’s three satellite non-profit organisations, namely the ‘Flemish Concentration’ (Vlaamse Concentratie), the Nationalist Socio-cultural Training Institute (Nationale Vormingsinstituut) and the Nationalist Broadcasting Foundation (Nationale Omroepstichting). The League and the Centre accuse the non-profit organisations of collaborating with an organisation (the Blok) that systematically stirs up racism and discrimination. No case could be brought against the party itself because it has no legal personality. The case dragged on for three years and was conducted mainly procedurally by the Blok’s defence, with success. In 2001 the Minor Offences Court in Brussels declared itself incompetent, and in 2002 the Court of Appeal in Brussels reached the same conclusion. The offence was considered a political one and consequently only a Court of Assizes with a people’s jury could rule on the case. At the end of last year, however, the Court of Cassation overturned this judgment and decreed that the offence was not a political one and that consequently the case had to be transferred to the Court of Appeal in Ghent. That Court did indeed declare itself competent, allowing a judgment on the merits to be passed for the first time. The non-profit organisations were each ordered to pay a fine of 12,394 euros. But the judgment has much more important consequences for the Vlaams Blok. Because the Blok has filed an appeal in cassation the order has been suspended, which means the party can still take part in the elections under its current name. The leaders of the far-right party now seem certain to make its continued existence the main issue of the elections (FF).

BART BRINCKMAN
DE STANDAARD • 22 APRIL

The Blok politicians reacted with indignation and had clearly not expected such a dressing down. As one they claimed that freedom of expression was at stake. According to Chairman Frank Vanhecke, after such legal reasoning it would now be impossible to continue the debate on foreigners.

The judge quoted endlessly from all manner of Blok publications to back up his opinion. Filip Dewinter remained fully behind the content of the publications. ‘We have the right to make these sort of comments in order to join the debate. If not we will end up in a situation like that of the former communist countries and democracy will cease to exist.’

The Blok felt ‘hurt’ by the judge. Party Leader in the Chamber Gerolf Annemans: ‘This looked like a meeting held by a political opponent.’ According to Vanhecke the Blok had no choice but to accept the judge’s ruling. ‘But this man’s either been living on Pluto or is a political partisan of the regime. He should pay a visit to some of the working-class districts.’ After this ruling the Vlaams Blok wants to make freedom of expression the main issue of the Flemish elections. The party is calling for the right to continue to have its say on foreigners. Vanhecke is therefore calling on all Flemings to support his party on 13 June, ‘even if you don’t entirely agree with all our views’. There were cautious reactions to the ruling in the Rue de la Loi. Meanwhile the Blok has gone to cassation. The ruling has therefore been suspended and its repercussions will for now remain limited. If the Court of Cassation follows the argumentation of the court in Ghent this autumn, the Blok will have no other choice but to disband and set up a new political entity with a different manifesto. The party is also running the risk of losing its government subsidies. Blok representatives could also lose their political rights.

The electoral and political consequences of the judgment

The chairs of the other Flemish parties refrained from commenting after the condemnation of the Vlaams Blok’s non-profit organisations. ‘The separation of powers’ must be respected, they said in unison. The press is focusing on the political and electoral consequences of the judgment (FF).

Opinion

PAUL GEUDENS • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 22 APRIL

Is this a heavy blow for the Vlaams Blok? Undoubtedly. For the first time it has been officially established that the party has disseminated views and opinions that are in violation of human rights. The ruling will be held up by opponents as evidence of the undemocratic nature of the Blok. And as an alibi for the continued existence of the corona resistance.

Is the Blok politically dead, however? No. The campaign theme of Dewinter and Co. is obvious: the restriction of the right to freedom of expression. The party will argue that the traditional parties have failed in their political fight against the Vlaams Blok and were therefore forced to seek refuge in the courts. The party will wallow more than ever in its role as victim with which it has grown up. It is simply a question of whether this condemnation will stop this growth.

STEFAN HUYSENTRUYT
DE TIJD • 22 APRIL

The Blok itself has always maintained that a condemnation would come down to a de facto ban on the party. These are big words. But they do not alter the fact that the Ghent court has established a precedent that, if the Court of Cassation ratifies it, can be invoked to trigger a witch-hunt against anyone who, even indirectly, assists what will then be a ‘racist’ organisation. That could mean that a decision may eventually have to be taken to disband the party and start a new one.
Established case-law makes anti-racism law enforceable

The Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism is delighted with the ruling of the Ghent Court of Appeal. It is established case-law that gives the Anti-Racism Act of 1981 a field of application and to which many a lawyer will refer back in the future, says the Centre’s lawyer, Ingrid Aendenboom. According to her, the ruling will transcend this case against the Vlaams Blok (FF).

Gwen de Clerck
De Tijd • 22 April

‘The ruling is strongly underpinned and extremely complete. There’s no flaw in it at all,’ says Ingrid Aendenboom. Lawyers are now speculating that the ruling may well stand the test of cassation. The Vlaams Blok has already announced that it is taking this ruling to Court of Cassation. The highest court of justice does not rule on the ruling may well stand the test of cassation. The Vlaams Blok has already announced that it is taking this ruling to Court of Cassation. The highest court of justice does not rule on the

Established case-law makes anti-racism law enforceable

RACISM TRIAL

Stevaert precludes asymmetrical governments

With this position Stevaert is distancing himself from his Purple coalition partner, the VLD

If after the Flemish elections the SPA is not part of the Flemish Government, the party will also pull out of the Federal Government. With this message in an interview in Het Laatste Nieuws (17 April), SPA Chairman Stevaert provided the first pre-electoral excitement after the quiet Easter break. According to the Socialist party chairman, it is not possible to govern effectively if the Flemish and Federal Governments are asymmetrical, in other words if they do not consist of the same coalition of political parties. He also defended this position on radio and television last weekend. Stevaert also believes that a campaign for the Flemish Parliament does not necessarily have to focus on matters over which only the Flemish Government has power. People have got questions about federal matters such as pensions as well as about Flemish matters, claims Stevaert. Does that mean there will be new federal elections in the autumn if the SPA pulls out of the Flemish Government? Not necessarily, he says. A new Federal Government can be put together even with a motion of no confidence. With this position Stevaert is distancing himself from his Purple coalition partner, the VLD. Dirk Sterckx, the VLD’s new chairman, feels that Stevaert would be better off not commenting on the impact of the regional election results at federal level. Nor is CD&V Chairman Leterme not enthusiastic about Stevaert’s strategic move.

Koen Vidal • De Morgen • 19 April

‘You can’t govern with asymmetrical coalitions,’ Stevaert repeated last weekend in various interviews. ‘If the CD&V and VLD form a right-wing coalition at Flemish level, then we won’t be able to continue governing at federal level either. That’s simply logical. You can’t build things up on one level of policy that are knocked down by the other level. Important dossiers such as health insurance and the maximum invoice are matters for both regional and federal levels. Even if you want to provide clean air, the Flemish and Federal Governments have to agree. For my part the Federal and Walloon Governments can be put together differently, but not the Federal and Flemish Governments.’

Stevaert is making his comments not only out of fear of a Catholic-Blue government, but also to position his party as an attractive government partner: both for the CD&V and the VLD. After all: if the CD&V succeeds in breaking the Purple majority at Flemish level and enters into a coalition with the SPA, there will automatically be a Catholic-Red coalition at federal level thanks to Stevaert. For CD&V Chairman Yves Leterme that is two governments for the price of one. That immediately explains why VLD Chairman Dirk Sterckx is anything but happy with Stevaert’s comments: ‘These are Flemish elections and therefore we must discuss Flemish election manifestos. The Federal Government, on the other hand, must be able to carry on its work. We are currently seeing the first cautious steps on the road to recovery of an economy that is still extremely vulnerable. It is therefore important that the Purple government keeps its hands on the wheel. Stevaert is creating panic by throwing up all sorts of assumptions about the future of the Federal Government.’ CD&V Chairman Yves Leterme also dismissed Stevaert’s comments on asymmetrical governments. ‘We’re not joining in Stevaert’s strategic games, even if he’s come across as certain of victory in the past few days. The coming elections must be about the balance sheet of the Flemish Government and we believe this is inadequate. I note that the Purple government, and therefore the SPA too, has implemented a weak social policy. Just because Stevaert is putting himself forward as a partner for a Catholic-Red government doesn’t mean we will spare him in the campaign.’

In an interview with this newspaper Stevaert waved away the criticism of the VLD and CD&V. ‘It’s a question of honesty and clarity. I think our voters have to know that we are against asymmetrical governments.’

WWW.SP.BE
3 out of 5 Flemings in favour of European expansion

What is also striking is that seven out of ten Flemings want Turkey to join the EU if it satisfies all the conditions

O

ILSE DEGRYSE
DE STANDAARD • 19 APRIL

Premier Guy Verhofstadt [VLD] calls the reaction to the expansion of the EU ‘encouraging’, a feeling echoed by the leading candidates of the other political parties. Jean-Luc Dehaene [leading CD&V/N-VA candidate] is even positively surprised: ‘This is good. I would have predicted a little more reticence.’

CD&V/N-VA presents election manifesto

THE TWO MAIN THEMES ARE ‘GREATER FLAMISH AUTONOMY’ AND A ‘POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE FOR A WARM SOCIETY’

The CD&V/N-VA opposition cartel did not sit around doing nothing during the Easter break. On 16 April the Flemish cartel - N-VA Chairman Geert Bourgeois prefers this name - presented its election manifesto, a work by N-VA Vice-Chairman Bart De Wever and CD&V member Cathy Berx. The two main themes are ‘greater Flemish autonomy’ and a ‘positive alternative for a warm society’. The Purple governments are invariably depicted as quarrelsome and the negative alternative is the Vlaams Blok, it is suggested. ‘Respect’ is the slogan in the communication strategy, which appears markedly more professional than that of the 2003 election campaign (FF).

ANJA OTTE
DE STANDAARD • 17 APRIL

The primary axis of the manifesto is the community one. The cartel inherited from the former Volksunie the belief in a society built from the bottom up. It is therefore demanding that the resolutions of the Flemish Parliament on the transfer of a number of powers be executed as quickly as possible. These concern healthcare and family benefits, employment, transport - especially the railways [NMBS] - telecommunication, scientific policy and taxation.

We are not asking for autonomy for autonomy’s sake, stressed De Wever. ‘We too will benefit from a strong and prosperous Wallonia, which some are dead against.’

Part two of the manifesto comprises the ‘positive alternative for a warm society’. The cartel rejects the ‘Liberal me- society or the Socialist government society’. Both concentrate too much on materialism. Instead, the cartel proposes immaterial values such as friendship, solidarity, a sense of responsibility, hospitality and public-spiritedness. This is translated into five priorities, each of which comes with a series of proposals: education, family, work and business, care and social life.

WWW.STANDAARD.BE
WWW.VRT.BE

WWW.CDENV.BE
WWW.N-VA.BE
Verhofstadt reaches agreement on minimum pension for self-employed

On 20 April Prime minister Verhofstadt (VLD) reached an agreement with the country's main organisations for the self-employed, Unizo and the Francophone UCM, on an increase by 30 euros of the minimum pension for the self-employed. This operation will be repeated at the end of 2005, 2006 and 2007, so that by 2008 the gulf between the minimum pension of a wage-earner and a self-employed person will be down to only 80 euros. In addition, the Prime minister explained, the measure will not cost the self-employed a thing. The stalemate between the Premier and the organisations for the self-employed that arose following the introduction of 'the social pact for the self-employed' at the Gembloux Super-Council of Ministers thus appears to have been broken. The Premier also seems to have scored an important success with the agreement among the most important electoral target group of his party, the VLD. All other self-employed dossiers of the social pact, which organisations for the self-employed and the government are still discussing, are being farmed out to working groups. Unizo boss Kris Peeters appeared satisfied. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, were his words (FF).

Opinion
EVELYNE HENS • DE TIJD • 21 APRIL

The agreement is a toned down copy of the 'historic social pact for the self-employed' unveiled by the government some three months ago. At a special Council of Ministers in Gembloux it decided on an increase in minimum pensions, full health insurance for all self-employed and a new pension pillar tailored to the needs of the self-employed. The government spoke of 'revolutionary measures' comparable to the Social Pact that the government and social partners concluded for wage-earners after the Second World War. The euphoria did not last long. On closer inspection there appeared to be a lot of catches to the Gembloux package, and the price tag in particular caused a great deal of concern. A furious discussion broke out between the government and the organisations for the self-employed over who should pay for what. The self-employed criticised the fact that they should pay 3 euro for each euro the government puts on the table. The government denied this but failed to provide any real financial clarity.

The row was extremely inconvenient for the Liberals. The VLD and MR had hoped to make their self-employed supporters happy with a nice present, but these supporters declined what they saw as a poisoned chalice. A stalemate to be avoided, so close to the regional elections. Verhofstadt again tried to unblock the dossier with extra government funds, but it was too late. The Socialist coalition partners would hear nothing more of it.

Yesterday the Premier tried a different approach. The social pact will be thrashed out, and the best presents will be offered to the self-employed first. The 'free' increase in minimum pensions will be introduced from 1 September. The other social improvements, which do require financial contributions from the self-employed, are being farmed out to working groups. They can worry about those later. After the regional elections, probably.
Tax burden did not fall under previous government

**Despite the lowering of income tax which the Liberals unveiled at the 2003 elections**

Figures from the Nationale Bank show that the tax burden in Belgium did not fall under the Purple-Green Verhofstadt I government. At 45.1% of Gross Domestic Product, the fiscal and parafiscal burden was just as large in 2003 as in 1999 when that government took office, *De Tijd* noticed. And that despite the lowering of income tax which the Liberals unveiled at the 2003 elections. The opposition CD&V gladly made use of the NB figures and added the figures of the European Commission to them to highlight the Purples’ failure (FF).

**Verhofstadt annoyed by opposition figures**

Apart from Sweden and Denmark, Belgium has the biggest tax burden in the European Union, says CD&V Chairman Leterme.

The detailed information from the Nationale Bank demonstrates that the drop in indirect taxes was offset by the increase in social contributions and capital transfer tax. The revenue from indirect taxes fell from 13.2% of GDP in 1999 to 12.9% in 2003, although consumption grew more quickly than GDP. Over the past four years social contributions rose from 14.4% to 14.5% of GDP, despite the fact that the government cut social security charges.

The explanation is that wages, which are heavily taxed, rose more than other incomes, which are taxed less. Capital transfer taxes - in particular death duties - rose from 0.4% to 0.5% of GDP. That is also remarkable, since Flanders cut death duties. In spite of the cut in personal income tax, the revenue from direct taxes remained stable at 17.1% of GDP.

What is more, the government was unlucky. The radio and TV licence tax, which now only exists in Wallonia, has only been viewed as a tax in the national accounts since 2002. This statistical adjustment increased the tax burden by 0.2%. Yesterday the CD&V also reported that the tax burden had not fallen. Based on figures from the European Commission, the opposition party said that the tax burden had stabilised at 46% of GDP.

**ECONOMY**

RUUD GOOSENS • DE MORGEN

21 APRIL

According to the Premier’s cabinet, in 1993, at the start of Jean-Luc Dehaene’s first government, the total fiscal and parafiscal burden was 43.70%. In the last full year of government [1998] of the CVP (formerly the CD&V) that figure had risen by 1.73% to 45.43%. After that, in other words when Verhofstadt took office, came the turning-point. At the end of last year the tax burden had fallen by 0.33% to 45.10%, and by the end of this year it will have fallen by a further 0.23% to 44.87%. In total, therefore, the tax burden under Verhofstadt has fallen by 0.56%: ‘And that despite the poor economic climate.’ But much more important is the evolution of the implicit tax burden on the total wage and salary bill, says Verhofstadt. The Purples and Purple-Greens score especially well there, is the claim. At the start of Dehaene the implicit tax burden on the total wage and salary bill was 53.49%, and by the end [in 1998] that figure had risen by 0.88% to 54.37%. After four years of Verhofstadt the implicit tax burden was 52.35% [down 2.02%], and after five years it will be 52.11% [down 2.26%]. Even if corporation tax is taken into account in the above figures, his government outscores Dehaene, claims Verhofstadt. Under Dehaene the percentage of direct taxes and social contributions rose by 3.89% to 61.24%. After which comes the turning-point under the Purples: at the end of this year we will reach 58.22%, or a drop of 3.02%.

Www.nbb.be

**INCOME TAXES AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS (as % of total wage)**

Dehaene governments Verhofstadt governments
More and more Flemish plays on German stages

Have we suddenly become so tremendously good at writing, or at self-promotion?

Ten years ago the only Flemish plays shown in German theatres were those of Hugo Claus. More recently, however, things have clearly changed. That may have something to do with the successful Schlachten by Flemish director, Luk Perceval. Schlachten is the German version of Ten Oorlog, an adaptation of the royal dramas of Shakespeare by Flemish author, Tom Lanoye. Since then Perceval has been offered one directorial job after another in different German theatres. Following his departure as artistic director to the Antwerp Toneelhuis in 2005, Perceval is moving to the Berlin Schaubühne. There he became permanent in-house director alongside Thomas Ostermeier until 2008. Since then it is not only Perceval and Tom Lanoye who have become well known in the immense German theatrical landscape, which numbers around 400 stages. In the past two years plays have also been put on by authors such as Peter Verhelst, Arne Sierens, Jeroen Olyslaegers and Pieter De Buysser. In total around ten Flemish plays. Have we suddenly become so tremendously good at writing, or at self-promotion, wonders De Standaard (FF).

GEERT SELS • DE STANDAARD
17 APRIL

When Dutch-language literature was the focal point of the Frankfurter Buchmesse in 1993, the translation of Kartonnen dozen by Tom Lanoye was on the shelves. It was the work of translator Rainer Kersten. Since then he has continued to follow the work of Tom Lanoye. In addition to Lanoye, Kersten also translates the work of Peter Verhelst. He took on his Romeo en Julia, AARS! and Red rubber balls. As of recently the dramatist Heike Wintz can also count herself among the Flemish specialists. She works for the Stadttheater Aachen and has recently been reading more and more Flemish authors: 'The plays are more human,' she finds. 'The writers are more interested in human stories and relationships. Perhaps it’s because they’re closer to the actors. In Germany, a writer works at home. When he’s finished, he delivers his text to the publisher. Flemish writers often attend rehearsals. They can see the actors in front of them as they are writing, or take inspiration from improvisations on the shop floor. It’s no bad thing that German theatre is getting some external input.' The plays don’t live up to expectations. Now some authors are becoming known, it all seems really easier.‘

Some of the support comes from Flanders. The Flemish Theatre Institute [VTI] has a translation fund for new Dutch-language texts. In 2002, 14,800 euros were spent on this. Of the sixteen projects, seven were for translations into German. The Flemish Fund for Letters has also discovered dramatic writing as a separate area. Elsa Steegmans: 'We recognise dramatic work as a literary genre. The playwright is a fully-fledged author. He is eligible for translation subsidies, travel grants, author’s visits. He can also obtain working grants so that he can work on his texts independently without a commission.'

WWW.VTI.BE
WWW.VERLAG-DER-AUTOREN.DE

Staal Vlaanderen sells participation in Arcelor

FF EDITOR

The holding company Staal Vlaanderen, in which the Flemish Government has shares in the steel group Arcelor via the Participatiemaatschappij Vlaanderen, has sold more shares. As a result, Staal Vlaanderen’s interest in Arcelor has dropped from 2.4% to 1.3%, good for 7 million shares. All this can be found in Arcelor’s annual report, reports De Standaard (17 April). With the major steel merger of Arcelor at the end of 2001 the Flemish Region still held 20.5 million Arcelor shares. With the proceeds of the sale Staal Vlaanderen will, among other things, pay off a deferred debt to the Flemish Region of 195 million euros. Staal Vlaanderen also wants to invest in new initiatives, such as in steel research. In addition to the remaining shares, Staal Vlaanderen still holds an interest in Arcelor co-ordination centre (140 million euros) and a package of non-voting shares in the Flemish steel company Sidmar valued at 112 million euros.

WWW.SIDMAR.BE
WWW.ARCELOR.COM

ECONOMY AND CULTURE

COMPANIES
CULTURE

MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE

• 28 April: Recital Paul Groves, piano: Roger Vignoles, De Munt, Brussels; info: www.demunt.be
• 28 April: John Zorn Electric Masada, Royal Circus, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.springsessions.be
• 27 April: London Sinfonietta & The Kamkars with Bertio: contemporary art music meets traditional folk music; Concertgebouw, Brugge; info: www.concertgebouw.be
• 27 April: Bash! by Neil Labute (USA), London Sinfonietta & The Kamkars, director: David Mc Vicar, Flanders Opera House, Antwerp; info: www.vlaamseopera.be
• 27 April: deFilharmonie conducted by Michael Schwanandt and Ralph Kirshbaum (Cello) with Friedrich Kuhlau, Barbara Bonney (piano) with Lieder by WA Mozart, Antwerp; info: www.zuiderpershuis.be

EXPO

• Until 15 May: Étienne Decroux: Mon premier film (Bollywood), Open Doek, Turnhout; info: www.opendoek.be
• Until 29 May: Exhibition on the art of the Islam, exhibition, Museum of the Cinquantenaire, Brussels; info: www.museumdrguislain.be

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• 1 and 2 May: Daniel Kwarter: Bartok integrale, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
• 2 May: Budapest Festival Orchestra with Mahler 9 and Schubert 4, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
• 3 and 4 May: Madhavi Mudgal, Odissi, three generations, Indian dance from Orissa, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 4 May: Sonny Rollins, jazz giant, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
• 4 May: David Byrne & Band, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
• 6 to 8 May: Artemis Quartett with Beethoven, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
• 7 May: Trio Maddelfa with Messe de Tournai, Bijloke, Ghent; info: 050/63.04.30 www.knokke-heist.be
• 7 to 10 May: Forced entertainment with Bloody Mess, kaaitheater, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be
• Until 25 April: International Festival Knokke-Heist; CC Scharpoord; info: 050/63.04.30 www.fotomuseum.be
• Until 28 August: The Realm of the Dragon, exhibition, St Pietersabdij, Gent
• Until 31 May: Christophe Moutré, Photo exhibition Scharpoord, Knokke-Heist; info: 050/63.04.30 www.fotofestival.be
• Until 31 May: Short stories, FotoMuseum, Antwerp, info: 03/242.93.00 www.fotomuseum.be
• 30 April to 20 June: Abarlos @ Heteres, architects from Madrid, exhibition, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be