Leterme official candidate for the post of Minister-President

C

D&V chairman Yves Leterme is candidate for the post of Minister-President if his party wins the most votes on 13 June, he stated in an interview in De Tijd (4 June). According to the polls, the chances of that occurring are high. Nonetheless he fears that a good election result will not be enough, for the purple-green coalition will do everything in its power to keep the Christian-Democrats out of the government. Therefore he is calling on the current majority to respect the result. At the same time Leterme maintains that he himself aims to respect last year’s federal result and has no intention of ‘breaking into’ the federal government. Leterme’s moderate language is in sharp contrast to that of his party colleagues Luc Vanden Brande (former Minister-President) and Eric Van Rompuy (parliamentary party leader in the Flemish Parliament) in an interview in De Morgen (4 June). According to them, a ‘big bang’ is needed in the state reform and the CD&V’s coalition partner in the Government of Flanders will have to help it to bring that about at federal level (FF).

BART HAECK/WIM VANDE VELDEN
DE TIJD • 4 JUNE

Leterme is placing the bar at 26%. ‘If we achieve more than 26%, that’ll be a good result. All these higher polls are annoying because people will judge our result against them’, he says. Moreover, Leterme fears that a good election result will not be enough to break through the purple-green front. Even if the purple-green coalition suffers an election defeat, Leterme reckons that everything will be done to keep the Christian-Democrats out of the Flemish Government. ‘If we come out of the election as the largest party, people should stop viewing us as plague victims. That’s also why I’m making a call for the election result to be respected’, says Leterme. According to Leterme, it is clear that the VLD wants to join forces with Groen! again. Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt says that he wants to carry on with the Socialists, and will take the Greens on board if necessary. Why does he want to do that precisely in order to avoid the Christian-Democrats? At the same time Leterme claims that he wants to respect last year’s federal result. He feels that if asymmetric alliances come into being that cause tensions, the Prime Minister should be able to cope with the situation. This was the CD&V chairman’s reply to Verhofstadt’s warning of chaos after 13 June. According to Leterme the theme of this election campaign is credibility. ‘Who still believes in Verhofstadt’, Leterme asks. ‘The people just want a government that does its job’.

INTRODUCTION

Over fifty Flemish personalities from the academic, cultural and entertainment world have launched the campaign ‘Groen! is necessary’. Not that they are firmly behind the party and are promising to vote for it, but they feel that Groen’s presence in the political landscape is too important for democratic multiformality. ‘Groen! is necessary’ thus follows the example of an identical campaign in 1995 aimed at saving the Flemish Socialists of the then SP from too great an electoral humiliation as a result of its involvement in the Agusta bribery scandal. Thanks to the initiative Groen! hopes to attain the five percent electoral threshold and thus continue to be represented in the Flemish Parliament. For the party it is a question of survival. This threshold was introduced last year in the elections of 18 May, and unseated the Flemish green party from the federal government. Without federal representatives, it lost its federal party allocation and was therefore forced to lay off most of its staff. After the federal debacle the party even briefly considered withdrawing from the Government of Flanders as well, and regrouping, but practical drawbacks such as the maintenance of its Flemish ministerial offices dissuaded it from doing so. Their disappearance from the Flemish Parliament as well, if this were to occur, would mean that they would lose all remaining public financial aid, would lose the facilities for their MPs and would only be able to attract the media attention by means of actions and campaigns in the street.

Should the Greens manage to attain the electoral threshold, they could play a decisive role in the formation of a government. There would then be a reasonable possibility of the Socialists and Liberals being able to form a majority in the Flemish Parliament with the Greens, but not without them. Groen! itself at the moment seems to be leaning more towards a course of treatment on the opposition benches, but is not entirely excluding the possibility of taking part in the government. Prime Minister Verhofstadt (VLD) makes no effort to disguise his preference for the purple-green formula. For that matter, it is striking how positively the Liberals are treating the Greens in this campaign – in great contrast, at any rate, to their sessions of ‘Green bashing’ during the federal campaign. The VLD also has little to lose. If Groen! pinches votes from other parties, they will mostly do so from the Socialists of SPA and the Christian-Democrats of CD&V. Meanwhile Het Laatste Nieuws advances a host of arguments to stress the need for a Green party. They are the political embodiment of a worldwide Green movement who confront the established parties with policy’s other side, so the message goes. And although other parties have Green points in their manifestos or even Green candidates (such as the SPA), it is only Groen! that gives the Green ideology top priority. Whether this suits everyone (read SPA) from a politically strategic point of view, is not the issue, the newspaper concludes. ■

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
Flemish government gets end-of-term report

De Standaard views it as a government of average performers. Together they just pass, with a score of 52.4 out of 100

After its five-year term, De Standaard reckoned that the best way it could judge the Flemish Government's administration was by giving scores to the individual ministers in terms of vision, efficiency and communication. Ministers such as Patricia Ceyssens (VLD, Economic Affairs, Foreign Policy and E-Government, 45%), Marino Keulen (VLD, Housing, Media and Sport, 50%), Gilbert Bossuyt (SP.A, Transport, Public Works and Energy, 48%), Adelheid Byttebier (Welfare, Health and Equal Opportunities, 32%) or Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD, 57%) have had barely a year in which to outline their policies. Is this why no-one, with the exception of the Minister-President, emerges with a score over 50%? Of the nine ministers who entered the government in July 1999, only three have completed the full five-year mandate: Dirk Van Mechelen (VLD, Finance, Budget, Town and Country Planning, Science and Technology, 70%), Renaat Landuyt (VLD, Economic Affairs, Foreign Policy and E-Government, 70%), and Marleen Vanderpoorten (VLD, Education, 59%). Paul Van Grembergen (Spirit, Interior, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service, 56%), took up his post after two years. Whether coincidence or not, these four ministers all fared a good deal better, with Dirk Van Mechelen the outright winner. Because the heavyweights moved to the federal government (Dewael, VLD, Anciaux, Spirit), became party chairperson (Stevaert, SP.A and Dua, Groen!) or stepped down after the federal election defeat (Vogels, Groen!), this Government of Flanders was on occasions scornfully referred to by the opposition as a government of midgets. De Standaard views it as a government of average performers. Together they just pass, with a score of 52.4 out of 100 (FF).

Opinion

Peter Vandermeersch • De Standaard • 29 May

The departure of Minister-President Dewael, and that of others, left the impression that for the parties there was always something more important than the Government of Flanders. The federal government came first - or, in the case of Stevaert, the party. Thus the very promising team changed into a team consisting of nice but not very forceful veterans who had one last chance to speak at the tribune (Paul Van Grembergen and Gilbert Bossuyt) and in particular by souped-up juniors who had to become household names with a view to the next elections (Ceyssens, Keulen and Byttebier). It was, as Karel De Gucht (VLD) would say to anyone willing to listen, a 'government of pygmies'.

Credibility in politics is all about doing what you say and saying what you’re doing. A government has to govern. It cannot be a shop-window for electoral wares with a view to the next electoral showdown. The party strategists should not underestimate the voters. Shortly, in the privacy of the polling booth, they will be asking themselves who has respected his contract with the voter over the last few years and has worked with serious endeavour. They will remember who has bandied about the voter’s vote, and who has placed personal or party interests above the general interest, or the voter would not go amiss - even if only because the prizes are handed out at the finishing line, there is nothing that voters like less than arrogance, and politicians who are too big for their boots might yet be taught a lesson or two at the last moment.

www.standaard.be

VLD catches up with CD&V and SP.A in public enterprise directorships

Of the three governing parties in the Government of Flanders the VLD in particular has taken advantage of its position in office in order to increase its number of seats on the boards of directors of Flemish public companies. Its number of directorships has risen from ten to fifteen. Incidentally, there is little obvious evidence of a depoliticisation of state enterprises, if that is measured by the number of neutral directors (FF).

Xavier Carbonez • Trends • 3 June

When the purple coalition came to power, the Flemish coalition agreement stated that the state enterprises would be depoliticised. Four years later it appears that far-reaching shifts have nonetheless taken place in five of the seven largest public enterprises (De Lijn, VRT, PMV, Gimvindus and Vlaams Milieuholding).

The VLD has been the only one of the three parties to have increased its position, and has gone from ten to fifteen directors. However, this development has made the Liberals anything but dominant. On the contrary, the market leadership is now shared with CD&V (from 26 to 15 seats), and the SP.A (from 20 to 15). There is also a balance among the smaller parties: Groen! and N-VA/Spirit (the two successors to the Volksunie) each have five directorships. The Vlaams Blok remains largely excluded from the distribution of seats on boards. The two Blok mandates in the VRT are attributable to the composition of the VRT’s board of directors, which must reflect the balance of power in the Flemish Parliament. Nevertheless, there is a trend towards depoliticisation. The listed GIMV can permit itself few political games and is holding onto its independent directors. At the VRT one member of the board declared that the political skills were more important than the political colour (table p. 3).
Purple coalition or the chaos, says Verhofstadt

Christian-democrats will want to ‘break in’ and cause months of political instability, he believes. Just at a time when we should be using the economic growth to create jobs.

According to Prime Minister Verhofstadt, the opposition alliance CD&V/N-VA are using the Flemish elections to ‘break into’ the federal government. That would lead to political instability and thereby threatens bogging down the economic revival that is forthcoming, said the Premier. Like his opposite number, Jean-Luc Dehaene, Verhofstadt officially entered the electoral campaign with this warning in an interview in De Tijd (29 May). He refers to the CD&V’s criticism of the ‘purple’ coalition’s policy as the negativism of ‘embittered minds’. He therefore hopes that his party can continue to govern together with the Socialists at both Flemish and federal level (FF).

Opinion

STEFKAAN HUYSENTRUYT • DE TIJD
29 MAY

We are two weeks from the elections and gradually it is becoming clear how the VLD is nonetheless still trying to turn the electoral tide, despite everything. The party is following a twofold strategy: a positive one and a negative one, or indeed, an offensive one and a defensive one. The positive, offensive message was embodied in the ‘Pepper Plan’, the ‘positive economic project for Europe and our region’. On the assumption that the situation of the economy is a decisive factor in the elections (‘it’s the economy, stupid’), the Prime Minister anticipated the positive economic figures that the National Bank is due to publish later this month. Earlier, the Finance Minister Didier Reynders (MR) already spoke out approvingly of the rise in tax revenues. Furthermore, temporary employment is rising and short-term unemployment is falling. The economic good news show will be running at full tilt over the next couple of weeks, with the blue message that we all have the VLD, the purple coalition’s strong man, to thank for that.

The defensive strategy consists in two warnings directed at the voter. The first says that if CD&V comes to power again, it will turn back the clock so that all the ‘purple’ coalition’s efforts to change the country will have come to nought. Over the last few days the VLD’s leaders have been using an additional argument in the fight against CD&V: if the Christian-Democrats return to office, chaos will ensue. After all, they will not be content with their ministerial portfolios in the Government of Flanders, and will want to ‘break into’ the federal government.

That would bring with it months of political instability, just at a time when we should be using the economic growth to create jobs. The twofold warning is clear: it’s the purple coalition or prehistory and chaos.

FF EDITORIAL STAFF

In an interview with De Morgen (29 May), Dehaene explains the standpoint of his party CD&V. No conditions for the federal level will be attached when the Government of Flanders is formed. It is ‘patently obvious’ that the federal government has a mandate until 2007, as Dehaene sees it. According to him, there is therefore no question of the CD&V/N-VA alliance ‘breaking into’ the federal government. Dehaene also attributes a very small scope to Yves Leterme’s commitment not to enter a Flemish Government if there are no guarantees as to a new state reform: namely, as far as the Government of Flanders’ authority goes. State reforms can only be arranged at federal level, he concludes. In an interview in Knack (2 June), Leterme again explains the agreements with its alliance partner N-VA. The next Government of Flanders must include the implementation of the Flemish resolutions (the transfer of federal powers to the Flemish executive) in its coalition agreement and let itself be led by this in its actions in the Belgian federal establishment. His party will not enter a Government of Flanders as long as the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency is not split, even if there is the prospect of lengthy negotiations with the Francophones. He does not say in so many words that his party aims to ‘break into’ the federal government. What he does say is that it is not desirable for a party to be in office at Flemish level and in the opposition at federal level. Leterme does not rule out the N-VA also acceding to office with it if the CD&V were to enter the federal government, but the alliance agreements with the N-VA only apply to the Flemish and European elections.

focus on FLANDERS • 29 May - 4 June • Number 21

DIRECTORSHIPS IN FLEMISH PUBLIC COMPANIES

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SOURCE: TREMBE
Debate Verhofstadt - Dehaene ends unresolved

The ‘clash-of-the-titans’ debate - the first and only such head-to-head confrontation - between the candidates heading the lists for the European elections, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt and Jean-Luc Dehaene, on the Radio 1 programme ‘Voor de Dag’ did not produce a clear winner or loser, according to the views of press commentators. The two figureheads remained remarkably friendly towards each other. Verhofstadt wants to hold a referendum on the European Constitution fifty days after the signing, together with the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Dehaene is against that idea. There will be no second debate pitching the two against each other, due to Dehaene’s refusal, which he let slip last week when he said he would not debate with a ‘bogus candidate’ like Verhofstadt, who would never take up a seat in the European Parliament. Verhofstadt attempted to negate this position with the comment that a vote for Verhofstadt was a vote for Dirk Sterckx, the current VLD chairman, who is running as first follow-up candidate on the VLD’s European list. The Prime Minister again evoked the image of weeks of political instability if the CD&V were to ‘break into’ the federal government (FF).

BART BRINCKMAN • DE STANDAARD 2 JUNE

Verhofstadt made a proposal for European regulations henceforth to be tested against three criteria: no weakening of purchasing power, no creation of red tape and no loss of jobs. Dehaene found that a ‘valuable’ idea. A little later the two crossed swords on the need to hold a referendum in Belgium on the subject of the European constitution. Verhofstadt is for, Dehaene against. And then that was it (as far as Europe was concerned, ed.). The Prime Minister began to talk about the possibility of CD&V ‘breaking into’ the purple federal government if it were to win on 13 June, and the formation of a Flemish Government with a Christian-Democratic Minister-President. He again warned of the chaos that awaited the country. Dehaene reacted very sharply to this. A strong prime minister should simply know how to manage a situation like that. Clearly Verhofstadt was not convinced of his ability to handle this, sneered Dehaene.

The former prime minister thus let himself be talked into making comments about the Flemish campaign. Verhofstadt had challenged him on this area - a quite deliberate ploy in fact. The VLD campaign is aimed at stressing that the ‘old CVP’ (former CD&V) has not yet completely disappeared. And who could better symbolise that image than Jean-Luc Dehaene himself? Verhofstadt likes nothing better than removing Dehaene from his European pedestal and confronting him with domestic politics. In this kind of discussion it is not certain that Dehaene will lose, but he has nothing to gain from it. Dehaene does not want to play a role in national politics. So why would he take risks in a fight with an opponent who is absolutely unpredictable? From the word go the purple coalition has turned the Flemish elections into a referendum on itself. Now that there is a risk of this turning out badly, Verhofstadt is preaching the chaos theory and warning the electorate of months of political instability. It would be foolish of Dehaene to go along with his opponent’s tactics.

Argument for simultaneous elections wins support

After SP.A party chairman Steve Stevaert and Budget Minister Van Mechelen (VLD) had already done so, the federal Interior Minister Patrick Dewael (VLD) has now also proposed having the federal and Flemish elections coincide. Soon after the elections he wants to hold talks with all democratic parties with a view to amending the constitution to this end, so that the elections in 2009 can again take place simultaneously. Prime Minister Verhofstadt (VLD) backs the proposal and wants to outline the idea at the Forum for State Reform, which will be convened after 13 June. Dewael’s proposal, which sets in place a legislative parliament at federal level and makes premature interim elections possible, is very similar to Stevaert’s. It is also striking that CD&V heavyweights such as Dehaene and Leterme are now also prepared to discuss the issue. Jean-Luc Dehaene said that elections following one from another, in quick succession, are not good for policy (FF).

Opinion

PAUL GEUDENS • GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN • 1 JUNE

We are hearing more and more people argue in favour of federal and regional elections being held simultaneously. In all objectivity, there is something to be said for a change. As things stand at the moment, there are too many elections. Between 2004 and 2015, we have just four years in which there are no elections. That is not good. We tumble from one election campaign into another. Politicians end up concerning themselves more with electioneering than with good government. What is more, elections cost the community a lot of money. And, let’s not forget, elections in rapid succession result in people tiring of them: many have a dim view of compulsory voting and just want to be left alone.

There are also sound arguments against elections being held simultaneously. For example, the voter will never learn to deal with the constitutional risks in a fight with an opponent who is absolutely unpredictable! From the word go the purple coalition has turned the Flemish elections into a referendum on itself. Now that there is a risk of this turning out badly, Verhofstadt is preaching the chaos theory and warning the electorate of months of political instability. It would be foolish of Dehaene to go along with his opponent’s tactics.
Homosexual teachers who give lessons in a Catholic school and are planning to get married may be in for problems. Such was the standpoint announced by Mieke Van Hecke, member of the Flemish Parliament for the CD&V and the recently-appointed director-general of the Flemish Secretariat for Catholic Education, on the VRT debate programme Canvas. According to Van Hecke, by marrying they would be promoting their sexual inclination. This comment caused a storm of protest, not only from gay, lesbian and bisexual organisations, but also from other parties. CD&V chairman Yves Leterme hastened to explain that Mieke Van Hecke was not speaking on behalf of his party. A survey of 1,000 Flemings for the VRT programme ‘Do the vote test’ showed that public support for such a comment is extremely small, concludes De Morgen (FF).

CD&V chairman Yves Leterme stressed in a statement that Mieke Van Hecke, who is still member of the Flemish Parliament for the Christian-Democrats, was not in any way speaking on behalf of his party. ‘Gays, lesbians and bisexuals have every right to opt for a permanent relationship and the law, which was also approved by the CD&V, gives them the right to marry. A discrimination or sanction on those grounds contravenes the law and is unacceptable for the CD&V’, said Leterme.

VLD MP Karel De Gucht took exception to the comments by the new director-general of the Catholic education network. He labelled them ’a retrograde step that sets us back decades in the tolerance that our society has experienced vis-à-vis gays and lesbians’. Spirit MP Jan Roegiers said he was considering tabling a complaint if ‘Mieke Van Hecke’s threats directed at married gays, lesbians and bisexuals have every right to marrying they would be promoting their sexual inclination’. The new chief executive wants a more visible Christian inspiration in Catholic schools. She regretted the fact that her fellow debater in ‘Nachtwacht’, the atheist professor Etienne Vermeersch, had narrowed her standpoint to the observations causes harm to his or her own party. CD&V chairman Yves Leterme could not be swift enough or verbose enough in distancing himself from Van Hecke’s ideas, which in any case do not tally with the party standpoint. There remains the lingering impression that for some Christian-Democratic spokespersons, homosexuality is still something dirty and unnatural. It’s called shooting yourself in the foot.

Opinion

BART EECKHOUT • DE MORGEN • 1 JUNE

What did Ms Van Hecke mean with her threat? That gay teachers who are keen on marrying and are counting on a permanent appointment in a catholic school can forget it? That those who already have a permanent position will be harassed out of their jobs in the staff room! Van Hecke’s comment is morally objectionable because it is a stab to the heart of many gays, lesbians and bisexuals - not just teachers - who in many cases have already waged a tremendous inner battle before daring to come out of the closet. The comment is also problematic on at least two counts. Firstly, Van Hecke is denying the social reality in Flanders, where homosexuality is happily no longer a social issue. Contesting equal rights for gays in our country has therefore become a rear-guard action. However, more important is the fact that the future boss of the catholic education system is setting herself above the law with her comments. The rights of gays to get married were recently guaranteed by the law in our country, and there is no reason whatsoever why teachers in the Catholic education system should be discriminated against. Furthermore, the comment is, politically speaking, very foolish. An outgoing MP who adopts a homophobic standpoint two weeks before the elections causes harm to his or her own party. CD&V chairman Yves Leterme could not be swift enough or verbose enough in distancing himself from Van Hecke’s ideas, which in any case do not tally with the party standpoint.

There remains the lingering impression that for some Christian-Democratic spokespersons, homosexuality is still something dirty and unnatural. It’s called shooting yourself in the foot.
New study calls Olympic games in Flanders madness

According to Brauers, the Games would cost at least EUR 6.5 billion, which makes the profitability of the project highly doubtful (FF).

DOMINIQUE MINTEN • DE STANDAARD 1 JUNE

In his September statement of last year, Minister-President Bart Somers (VLD) announced that his ambition was to have the Olympic Games held in Flanders in 2016. The opposition saw this largely as a stunt to divert attention from the fact that the Government of Flanders was under-performing. Somers promptly commissioned Deloitte to carry out a feasibility study. In April this study was ready and the report revealed that Flanders could cope with the organisation of an event on this scale. According to the study the whole event would only cost EUR 4.1 billion, compared to EUR 1.8 billion in income. Other parties such as the SPA, VLD, Spirit, Vivant and even the opposition party N-VA ranged themselves behind the initiative. But on Whit Monday the N-VA produced a much more critical analysis carried out by professor Willem Brauers of the University of Antwerp. According to Brauers, the Games would cost at least EUR 6.5 billion, which makes the profitability of the project highly doubtful (FF).

The expansion of De Lijn is based on a policy largely trumpeted by the Socialists, but endorsed by a broad consensus in the Flemish Parliament: the basic transport decree. The aim of this in the medium term is to guarantee that every Fleming has access to public transport within a reasonable distance from his home. Perhaps this is a visionary decree which will see Flanders leading the rest of Europe in twenty years’ time: fewer cars and traffic jams, and yet greater ease of getting round. That aim is far from having been achieved, it is true. There are people who have very good access to public transport and there are those who pay just as much every year in taxes but have nothing to do with it. Just try travelling from a corner of Limburg to the coast and back in a day. You can’t. Or try commuting from a medium-sized town to an industrial estate in the suburbs of a large city. But if all those who are paying but receiving nothing can be appeased just a little longer, in ten years we just might have a decent public transport network. Then a mass switch-over from the car to public transport might be feasible and it will turn out that the policy was indeed visionary. In the meantime the success of De Lijn is based not so much on that, but on the fact that many can travel free or almost free of charge. And this is where questions can be raised. Is it good for a service to be offered free of charge at all? Is it environmentally responsible to act as though no environmental costs are associated with ‘public travel’? Is it good to make public transport so dependent on the government? If that government quits the next day, the fairy tale will be over. The same also applies if the European authorities were to say that the bus and tram market is to be liberalised, like the rail market. Therefore it is surprising that there is scarcely any political debate about De Lijn and that EUR 500 million, which amounts to EUR 80 per Fleming per year. There is also hardly anything on the subject in the Flemish election programmes.
A week ago PS party chairman Elio Di Rupo invited thirty Flemish industrialists to his head office on 1 June, to talk about the PS’s political plans and the economic strategy in Wallonia and Brussels. Twenty-two accepted his invitation. Philippe Muyters of the Flemish enterprise network Voka (chambers of commerce and VEV) did not, because the date was too close to the elections. The captains of industry who attended were given an exposé of Wallonia’s economic assets and an explanation of the PS’s belief that prosperity is created by companies. Di Rupo denied that he wanted to placate Flanders because he had ambitions of becoming Prime Minister, and added that the regional elections had nothing to do with the federal government (FF).

Di Rupo illustrated his after-dinner speech with graphs and charts. These showed that Wallonia has for some years now been doing better than Flanders on a number of points: greater growth, faster growth in exports, more innovation in the business community, and so on. He conceded that Wallon unemployment was higher than the average, ‘but the trend is downwards, whilst it is climbing in Belgium as a whole’. He vehemently denied the cliché image of the ‘lazy’ Walloons. ‘The amount spent per capita on health care is scarcely more in Wallonia than elsewhere. The number of early retirements is higher in Flanders than in Wallonia’.

Di Rupo’s current proposal) boils down to a more limited ‘purchasing power’ of the arts decree. Decisions have to be concrete pronouncements now about the arts decree. Decisions have to be taken on the first round of decisions in June 2005, and that is no longer that far away. Chairman Stefaan De Ruyck put Peeters’ idea that the regionalisation of the corporation tax was on the way into perspective. It was a successful afternoon for Elio Di Rupo, and the participants talked of repeating the initiative (table p. 6).

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CULTURE

MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE

- 9 June and 16 to 27 June: *Tannhäuser* by Richard Wagner, Director: Jan Fabre, De Munt, Brussels; info: www.demunt.be
- 13 June: Sarah Bettens Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: www.abconcerts.be
- 15 to 22 June: *Venetian Journal and Satyricon* by Bruno Maderna, director: Georges Lavaudant, Flanders Opera House, Ghent; info: www.vlaamseopera.be
- 10 June: *Avanti! o Avanti*! Tango, Finlandia, Concertgebouw, Bruges, info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
- 10 June: *Poets in the Elzenveld*, [ABC2004], with hommage Pablo Neruda, Maagdenhuis, Antwerp; info: 03/223.56.20
- 11 June: *International poetry evening with Frāj Bayrākdār (Syria), Elsa Cross (Mex), Mark Strand (US) en Alfred A Yusson*, Philippines, Het Paleis, Antwerp, info: 03/202.83.60
- 12 and 13 June: *Lahti Symphony Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vänskä*, Finlandia
- 17 June: *Warp project*, London Sinfonietta plays Aphex Twin @Spacex, Concertgebouw, Bruges, info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
- 18 June: Roland, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: www.abconcerts.be
- Until 30 June: *Retrospective Federico Fellini*, Film Museum, Brussels, info: 02/507.83.70 www.ledoux.be and www.filagey.be
- 18 June: *defilharmonie* conducted by Daniele Callegari, with World creation by Stefan Van Eycken and 9th Symphony by G. Mahler, Koningin Elisabethzaal, Antwerp; info: www.defilharmonie.be
- 19 June: *Boxing and jazz*, Matthew Shipp Trio, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
- Until 22 June: *Summer Opera Alden Biesen*, Bilzen, Limburg with Don Pasquale by Donizetti; info: 011/45.03.12

EXPO

- Until 6 June: *Hans Arp, the invention of the form*, exhibition, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- Until 13 June: *German silver after Bauhaus*, Zilvermuseum Sterckshof, Antwerp-Deurne, www.zilvermuseum.be info: 03/360.52.50
- Until 28 August: *The Realm of the Dragon*, exhibition, St Pietersabdij, Ghent
- 30 April to 20 June: *Ahalos o Heretos*, architects from Madrid, exhibition, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28
- Until 17 October: *Animals in Architecture*, Museum of Architecture, Brussels
- Until 26 June: *The rest of the world*, Colors magazine shows psychiatry, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent; www.guislain.be
- Until 5 September: *Speaking Sculptures*, the Songye, Museum of Africa, Tervuren; info: www.afrikamuseum.be
- Until 6 June: *The Wherehouse project with the Rugs media collective* (India), contemporary art, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- Until 3 October: *Marcel Breuer, Design & Architecture*, exhibition CIVA, Brussels; info: www.civa.be
- Until 22 August and 5 September: SMAK exhibitions: *Juan Uslé*, *Open Rooms* and *Sam Durant with ’12 Signs. Transposed and illuminated*, Ghent; info: www.smak.be
- Until 22 August: *Flee from the War*, historical exhibition, Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres
- Until 30 June: *Models by Ludwig Vandevelde*, Groeningemuseum, Bruges; info: www.brugge.belmusea.be
- Until 31 July: *the Brueghel track*: exhibitions on locations in Bruegel’s paintings, Brussels
- Until 5 September: *Sam Durant, 12 Signs, SMAK*, Ghent; info: 09/221.17.03 www.smak.be
- Until 26 September: *The Thomas Neyrinck Collection*, exhibition, Bellevuemuse, Brussels, info: 070/23.37.28
- Until 13 June: *Paul Cadaert and Joachim Brohm*, Photo Museum, Galerie, Antwerp; info: www.fotomuseum.be

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