CD&V wins easily in latest poll too

The last opinion poll published before the elections, that of La Libre Belgique/Het Laatste Nieuws, broadly confirms the trends that emerged from the poll by De Standaard/VRT. The CD&V/V-N-VA cartel and the far-right Vlaams Blok make gains and the Liberal VLD significant losses. Among the parties on the left, Groen! makes slight gains and the SPA/Spirit cartel slight losses. The CD&V/V-N-VA (27.4%) retains a comfortable lead over SPA/Spirit (22.7%), but does 4% worse than in the De Standaard/VRT poll. The Vlaams Blok (22.6%) does around 3% better in this poll than the other, and is fighting it out for second place with the SPA/Spirit cartel. The Liberal VLD remains on 20.5%. Groen! (4.5%) fails to achieve the electoral threshold in this poll, though it managed to do so in the De Standaard/VRT poll (5.9%). In this poll Steve Stevaert is again the most popular Flemish politician. He is ahead of Guy Verhofstadt and Jean-Luc Dehaene. Mathematically a Purple government without the Greens is impossible, and only a combination of CD&V/V-N-VA and SPA/Spirit has a majority. If, however, Groen! does achieve the electoral threshold, a few percentage points would suffice for the Blues or Reds to continue the current coalition (FF).

LUC VANDER KELEN
HET LAATSTE NIEUWS • 11 JUNE

Yves Leterme and his team are continuing to make steady progress. The chance of another party ousting them from first place is small but not entirely impossible. With a margin of error of 2.2%, SPA/Spirit and the Vlaams Blok could still finish close. And yet Leterme has a 95% chance of the CD&V/V-N-VA ending up as the biggest formation, with him being the first to get the chance to form a Flemish government. In Brussels the Blok does not get half the Flemish votes, and can therefore not block the institutions. The battle for second place in Brussels is close between Chabert (CD&V), Pascal Smet (SPA) and Guy Vanhengel (VLD).

For one in two Flemings the Blok can safely share power. Also 47% of voters for the CD&V/V-N-VA, even with 30% of voters for the SPA and Groen!. With 27%, VLD/Vivant voters are the least in favour of a coalition with the Blok. Almost one quarter of Flemings (24%) want Steve Stevaert as leader of the next Flemish government. Only 10% want current Minister-President Bart Somers to keep his job. The tipped Flemish leader Yves Leterme is pushed to the front by 12% of Flemings.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
De Standaard/VRT opinion poll gives CD&V/N-VA wings

According to this poll, the Socialists and Liberals will not achieve a majority in the Flemish Parliament, not even with the Greens on board.

The CD&V/N-VA is sitting pretty. In fact, it is almost certain that CD&V Chairman Yves Leterme will be given the right of initiative to form a Flemish government. In the latest opinion poll by De Standaard/VRT the party continues to climb to 31.4%. In so doing it has opened up a gap of 9.1% with SP.A-Spirit (22.3%), which is down 1.3% compared with the last campaign. The VLD is over its low point and at 20.3% is already up one-and-a-half per cent on the April poll. The Vlaams Blok has lost almost 2%, falling back to 19.8%. In this poll Groen! achieves the electoral threshold for the first time, with 5.9%.

Of all the parties in government, the Green party is also the only one to record gains (+2%) compared with the federal elections of 18 May 2003. SP.A-Spirit is down 1.7% compared with last year, the Liberals and their coalition partner Vivant as much as 5.6%. The CD&V/N-VA cartel is up 5.1%, the Blok 1.6%.

According to this poll, the Socialists and Liberals will not achieve a majority in the Flemish Parliament, not even with the Greens on board, which means the CD&V/N-VA cartel is now inescapable.

For the European elections all parties achieve comparable scores, apart from the CD&V/N-VA cartel, which looks like it will do especially well with leading candidate Jean-Luc Dehaene and scores 33.7%. The Blok does badly on a European level, falling back to 15.5%. With these results in mind the parties will adjust their campaigns for the final week’s dash for the line.

Polls are obviously relative. This poll, for example, for which 1,038 Flemings were interviewed by telephone between 12 and 28 May, has a margin of error of 2%, while 25% of voters say they have not yet made their choice. Furthermore, every election over the past ten years had a surprise in store that was not predicted by any poll. Nonetheless, the rising trend of the CD&V/N-VA cartel is so strong that it cannot possibly be denied (FF).

Opinion

BART STURTEWAGEN
DE STANDAARD • 5 JUNE

Seven days before the elections, this poll is more of a curse than a blessing for Leterme. It will now be a tall order for him to exhort the troops to composure and humility. And yet the already tangible inclination to pop the champagne corks and start handing out the jobs will only increase. The scent of arrogance given off by that spectacle could still cost votes in the last few days. The yawning gap between the CD&V/N-VA and the three others will turn the tone of the final week fairly sour.

The question of whether voters who are disillusioned with the Purples really want the return of the Christian Democrats will become the competition’s main theme. But these are clearly luxury problems. Politically, Leterme’s cartel is currently king of the hill. The three other main formations have more legitimate reasons to worry. The expected re-emergence of the VLD is out of breath. The time in which to make up lost ground is fast running out. But the loss of form of the SP.A-Spirit is also striking. With an unremarkable campaign, Steve Stevaert’s formation appeared to be en route to quietly repeat last year’s spectacular success. It is now clear that the announced final sprint will be essential. And another thing: the Vlaams Blok is growing, but has lead in its wings. The combination of the conviction for racism and the uncomplicated affairs of several local representatives is casting doubt in the minds of ‘decent’ Blok voters. European voting intentions suggest that the Dehaene factor will take on a decisive significance. The former premier is offering his winning party a further individual bonus and is getting those votes from the Blok. In so doing he is providing indirect proof of Verhofstadt’s assertion that good government, or at least the perception of good government, is able to drive back the far right.

One final thought: anything could still happen. A quarter of those interviewed admitted that they had not yet settled on a preference. The poll itself may encourage them to vote tactically. The personal campaigns are yet to get underway. The results of 13 June may yet throw up a surprise.

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
WWW.VRT.BE

POLL DE STANDAARD/VRT - JUNE 2004 WITH SIMULATION OF SEATS BY KU LEUVEN

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VLD/Vivant -5.6% SP.A/Spirit -1.7% CD&V/N-VA +5.1% Vlaams Blok +1.6% Groen +2%
SP.A and VLD launch new election promises

One week before the elections, the Purple SP.A/Spirit and VLD-Vivant cartels have come up with a number of new election promises. SP.A/Spirit believes it is high time the campaign focused on content once again. At its election conference in Hasselt last weekend, the cartel presented nine themes in its working document ‘de negenproef’ ('casting out niners') - including a cost calculation - that it wants to address. Top of the list is the proposal to gradually abolish road tax and at the same time reward good drivers with 25 euros a year. The maximum bill for care (of the elderly, the sick) is also an important, if not the most important key theme. SP.A Chairman Steve Stevaert also wants to abolish numerous absurd local corporate taxes and other ‘nuisance taxes’ such as the household refuse tax, the balcony tax, etc. or replace them by a non-lump-sum tax. The lowest wages will become exempt from social-security contributions, while these contributions will be lowered for wages up to 200 euros a month. Finally, to combat the speculation on building land, the cartel wants to introduce a tax on undeveloped land. The cartel also wants to make green power access available to 2 million Flemings by 2009, free compulsory education and a social Europe.

Premier Verhofstadt and Minister-President Bart Somers [VLD] in turn unveiled a proposal to allow employees to implement the 38-hour week as they see fit, either in five days or in four longer-working days. In addition, the leading Limburg VLD candidate Jaak Gabriëls proposed giving Flanders the option of lowering corporation tax by up to 6.75% on its own initiative to less than 30%. A similar ruling already applies to personal income tax in Flanders. On 8 June the VLD once again presented its project for more jobs and fewer taxes. By chance or otherwise, it has 9 main themes, just like the SP.A-Spirit manifesto. It calls for fewer taxes, less regulation and less strict environmental rules, more support for employment and research and greater investment in ports and airports. The VLD also wants to keep the courier firm DHL in Belgium, cut VAT on new buildings to 6%, a healthy budget and dialogue instead of battles in discussions with social partners and the other Communities.

And undoubtedly also not by chance just before the election date Flemish Budget Minister Dirk Van Mechelen (VLD) launched the idea in De Standaard (9 June) of relocating two thirds of the Flemish civil service from Brussels to Ghent and Antwerp. According to the Minister, this will produce savings of 5.5 million euros, because office prices are much higher in Brussels than in Antwerp. At present Flanders is in the midst of reorganising its administration and a possible move should therefore be considered now, he claims. According to De Standaard, Van Mechelen launched his proposal primarily as Antwerp’s minister. He wants to develop the port city as a headquarters zone. Civil Service Minister Van Grembergen is questioning the proposal. Brussels is officially the Flemish capital and a Flemish presence there is therefore important, he says, without however precluding a discussion on the proposal.

Even if the Purples achieve a majority of seats in the Flemish Parliament together with Groen!, it is still far from certain that the Greens will be prepared to actually support the Purples. For the time being, the only concern Groen! has is achieving the electoral threshold. There is as yet no question of discussing participation in government, says Party Chairwoman Vera Dua. De Standaard recently sounded out the leading candidates and other important members of the party and concluded that almost all have doubts about participating in a government. Most have not yet forgotten how the VLD portrayed them as busybodies in last year’s election campaign. Former minister Mieke Vogels, meanwhile, feels that her party ‘must not be a Green sandbag for a Blue dike burst’.

Based on the poll and the mutual relations of the constituencies on 18 May, the Political Science Department of KU Leuven produced a simulation of the distribution of seats for the Flemish Parliament. This shows that a majority of at least 62 out of 124 seats are obtained by five combinations: SP.A/Spirit-CD&V/N-VA [67], SP.A/Spirit-CD&V/N-VA-Groen! [72 seats], VLD-Vivant-CD&V/N-VA [65 seats], VLD-Vivant-CD&V/N-VA-Groen! [70] and a tripartite VLD-Vivant-CD&V/N-VA - SP.A/Spirit [93].

**GOVERNMENT FORMATION**

Greens are not enthusiastic about participation in government

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Purples win debate of big guns

After the poor poll, this debate was undoubtedly a boost for the Purples

All studies confirm it: the election campaigns will no longer be conducted so much with poster campaigns, leaflets delivered to letterboxes and flesh-pressing politicians on village market squares, but in the media, and in particular the audiovisual media. Sunday 6 June was another high day for the campaign managers on the public network VRT. In the morning a debate with the leading European candidates and in the evening the main debate of the big guns, with Yves Leterme (CD&V), Steve Stevaert (SP.A) and Guy Verhofstadt (VLD).

According to communication specialist Frank Thevissen and political scientist Carl Devos in Het Laatste Nieuws [8 June], there was one clear loser: Yves Leterme. Devos highlights Stevaert as the winner, while Thevissen felt Verhofstadt was the winner. But in the debate it was clearly two against one. Verhofstadt and Stevaert left each other alone and aimed their arrows at Leterme’s cartel.

It was not so much Leterme himself, but comments by his party colleagues Luc Vanden Brande and Eric van Rompuy that were depicted as a real threat. On 4 June in an interview in De Morgen, the CD&V members threatened a big bang in state reform. They are refusing to form a Flemish government as long as powers such as employment, the economy, healthcare, family policy and parts of taxation are not Flemish. State reform, however, should be regulated at federal level. Steve Stevaert is in turn sees the attitude of Leterme’s coalition colleague N-VA Chairman Geert Bourgeois as the main threat. By shouting their ‘Flemish demands’ from the rooftops, Van Rompuy, Vanden Brande and Bourgeois will merely trigger a resolute ‘niet’ on the Francophone side and the cartel risks making any consensus at federal level impossible and plunging the country into ungovernability, claim Stevaert and Verhofstadt.

Verhofstadt was also able to press Leterme hard with the attitude of his party in the Iraq crisis and a short list of CD&V members who have already announced tax increases. When the debate became heated, Stevaert stayed out of it and again came to the point with a proposal to reward good drivers financially by granting them a discount on their road tax. After the poor poll, this debate was undoubtedly a boost for the Purples, although no one still seems to doubt that the CD&V/N-VA will emerge from the elections as the biggest formation (FF).

Opinion

Luc Vander Keelen

Het Laatste Nieuws • 8 June

Yves Leterme will have to state clearly once and for all how he considers bringing about the ‘community Big Bang’. And ‘we will not give in easily’ is not an answer to the question. If the Francophones in turn also ‘do not give in easily’, nothing is solved. What then? Muddle along for a couple of months! A Flemish government that does not get off the ground until the autumn! With every tough statement a solution to community questions is further away. Whoever talks tough and claims they can do better for once has to let us know what their strategy actually is. Otherwise we will class the ‘Big Bang’ under the heading of the election rhetoric of politicians for whom nostalgia for power dominates rational thinking. It is becoming another long week for the CD&V Chairman. In the big debate on the public network he was strong in the first half, when Flemish policy was being discussed. But Verhofstadt had come to engage in politics, for which read: to force his opponents into a corner. This he did with brio, it has to be said. Just as in 2003 he quoted all manner of comments by CD&V members. He threw them in Leterme’s face. The CD&V Chairman was not knocked out, like former CD&V Chairman Stefaan De Clerck last year, but it was not far out. Winning a debate, however, is not the same as winning an election. To do that you also need credibility and trust. Not just tricks.
Bourgeois wants coalition partner that agrees the most with Flemish demands

Geert Bourgeois was extremely annoyed by the comments made by Premier Verhofstadt in the election debate on 6 June. According to him, the First Minister simply lied. Bourgeois denies that he said that new federal elections should be held, as Verhofstadt alleges. If federal elections are held in the autumn, that is the responsibility of Verhofstadt himself, says Bourgeois, because he will have failed to hold his government together. But he repeats that he will not put his signature to a new Flemish coalition agreement as long as the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency is not approved in the Federal Parliament. That is also a condition of Yves Leterme for forming a Flemish government. In De Morgen (7 June) Bourgeois also denies that he has precluded a coalition with the Socialists at Flemish level. He wants to join forces with the partner that agrees the most with his cartel’s Flemish demands. De Morgen asks how he also intends pushing the splitting of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde through in the Federal Parliament. The Purple parties have an almost two-thirds majority there and all Francophone parties - this much is certain - will vote against the proposal (FF).

Opinion
YVES DESMET
DE MORGEN • 8 JUNE

It will only work if the Flemish coalition talks eventually lead to new federal elections, and these in turn have a result which puts the CD&V/N-VA cartel close to an absolute majority. Or failing this Geert Bourgeois has blind faith in the future coalition partner of the cartel, which must then sort this matter out at federal level while the cartel quietly awaits events in Flanders. These are scenarios which, granted, belong to the ‘politique politicienne’, and are therefore of no interest whatsoever to the general public, but they will shape the political climate of the summer and autumn. They are also scenarios of such improbable quality that you could almost believe there could be another strategy in the offing.

After all, the cartel knows that an attempt to break into the Purples and the inducement of yet more elections will do no good to the newly acquired popularity. Is it then not a better option to accept the leadership of a Flemish government, given the current state of the polls the logical outcome, and use that as a perfect opposition weapon against Verhofstadt, led by Yves Leterme, is not such an absurd strategy. Only, which partner is prepared to give the cartel the majority in such a construction?

Leterme and Bourgeois make adjustments

Thanks to the comments by Vanden Brande, Van Rompuy and Bourgeois, ‘Better Government’, the cartel’s central slogan, now suddenly appears synonymous with the slogan ‘Belgium Bursting’

 Barely a day after his comment that he would not sign a Flemish coalition agreement as long as the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency was not split, Geert Bourgeois toned down this statement. ‘Watertight guarantees’ for the split would suffice. In this way he wants to avoid the Flemish government not being able to govern for several months. CD&V Chairman Bart Somers and the Chairman of the Flemish Parliament, Norbert De Batselier, called for a Flemish front. But according to De Tijd, Leterme’s adjustment is a little late. Thanks to the comments by Vanden Brande, Van Rompuy and Bourgeois, ‘Beter Bestuur’ (‘Better Government’), the cartel’s central slogan, now suddenly appears synonymous with the slogan of the Flemish nationalists ‘België Barst’ (‘Belgium Bursting’). The paper doubts whether Leterme will yet be able to remove that from voters’ perceptions (FF).

Opinion
STEFKAAN HUYSENRUYT
DE TIJD • 9 JUNE

You have to seduce doubtful, undecided voters, not snub them. You must, to use the CD&V’s own words, treat them with respect and do not force a war against the Francophones on them. Those who want to go to war made their choice long ago. Those who do not will only be frightened off by tough Flemish demands. Moreover, linguistic community themes have never won elections. The priorities of the voter in general and of the as yet undecided voter in particular lie elsewhere. He simply wants proper government.

The Flemish cartel had grasped that, but fell with open eyes into the community trap set by the Purples. Leterme realises this and is now trying to adjust, but it is likely that the Big Bang will remain in people’s ‘perception’. If the CD&V/N-VA scores worse on 13 June than in the latest polls, this will be down to the fact that the currently undecided voter has finally chosen the relative security of the Purples over community adventure.
Verhofstadt addresses open letter to Flemings, Di Rupo warns of separatism

**VERHOFSTADT WARNS THAT THE OPPOSITION IS GOING TO RAISE TAXES**

With his letter to six million Flemings that appeared as an advertisement in all the Flemish papers on 10 June, Premier Verhofstadt [VLD] addressed the voter personally. In it he talks of the fantastic record of achievements that the Flemish government brought about in ethical dossiers such as euthanasia and gay marriages. He also warns that the opposition will again raise taxes and asks whether that opposition does not realise that you first ‘have to bake the cake before you can cut it up’, that you have to lower taxes before you can create jobs. The Premier asks the voter whether he wants to continue along the path of renewal and modernisation or opt for a return to ‘the suffocating harness of saving, rising taxes and a paralysed government’, a reference to past years of CD&V governments. In the meantime he continues together with Minister-President Somers to warn against the consequences of the tough confrontation strategy of N-VA Chairman Geert Bourgeois towards the Francophones in connection with the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency. Somers calls it a strategy of decay inspired by a separatist programme. In principle the Flemings in the Federal Parliament could approve the split by simple majority (Flemings against Francophones). But if the Francophones trigger the alarm procedure there will be no Flemish government before October, they warn.

Steve Stevaert [SP.A], Yves Leterme [CD&V] and Jos Geysels [Groen!] all reacted negatively to Verhofstadt’s letter. Geysels found it a bit rich that the word ‘Europe’ does not occur in the entire letter, despite Verhofstadt being the leading European candidate.

In an interview with De Standaard [10 June], PS Chairman Elio Di Rupo goes even further. The N-VA’s separatist body of ideas is dangerous and destructive for Belgium, he warns. Di Rupo wonders whether a majority of Flemings, Brussels residents and Wallonians want to split the country into several republics. ‘Put the question to people in a referendum and the answer will be straightforward. People don’t want separatism, they want quality of life, prosperity and social protection. Whether they live in Hasselt, Ostend, Liège or Mons.’

**PROPERTY**

Price of building plots, flats and small houses on the up

**MORE AND MORE FLATS ARE BEING BOUGHT INSTEAD OF RENTED**

According to the 26th annual report of the property agency Stadim, published in Trends (10 June), last year 21.1 billion euros worth of houses, flats and plots were purchased in our country, a sum that is 7.5% higher than in 2002. The increase is considerably less than in the exceptional year of 2002, when it was 14.5%. 61% of sales are in Flanders, 22% in Wallonia and 17% in Brussels. What is also striking is that more and more flats are being bought instead of rented. In five years, their share of sales rose from 17.3 to 20%. But in Flanders (31.1%) and Brussels, where four flats are sold for every house, this share is much greater. On average, the price of a flat rose by 6.6%, that of small and medium-sized houses by 7.2% and that of building plots by 9.2%. What is also striking is that people are still investing heavily in properties, despite the recovery of the stock market. This is evident from the fact that profitable and commercial properties account for almost 13.5% of sales (FF).

**TRENDS • 10 JUNE**

In the three regions the flat gained ground. In Flanders the flats market took up a strong position, with 31% of sales, one third of which were on the coast. The housing market performed exceptionally, with 48,355 houses sold, a rise of 1.4% compared with the record year of 2002. Following the slump of recent years (-54% compared with 1989), the building plots market managed to hold its own, with 21,238 parcels. A decline that compared with 1989 amounts to 62.4% in Flanders and as much as 71% in Brussels, while in Wallonia this is limited to 31%.

Overall the reference price of houses across the country rose 8% (12% in Brussels, 10% in Wallonia and 6% in Flanders). The price in the most expensive areas in the country (Walloon and Flemish Brabant, the border regions of Turnhout and Maaseik, the coastal district of Veurne) is growing more slowly, while the price in the less costly areas is on the up. The wave of high prices is swamping the whole country, thereby intensifying the catch-up effect of the less costly areas.

In particular, the segment of small and medium-sized houses saw a sharp increase. Thus Stadim recorded a rise in Flanders of 10% in the price bracket of 50,000 to 75,000 euros, from 5 to 8% for the other categories with the exception of the 300,000 euros and above category, where prices are stagnating. The reason: thanks to relatively low interest rates, many people have been able to buy a house, thus boosting the demand for small and medium-sized houses, which was reflected in prices. In Flanders there is another reason: the revision of the registration fees and the right to transfer these fees (up to 12,500 euros) to the purchase of the next property, which offers the owner who wants to move house greater flexibility.

[Created by FF EDITORIAL STAFF]

**focus on FLANDERS • 5 June - 11 June • Number 23**
ECONOMY AND CULTURE

TAX POLICY

The actual tax burden of Belgian companies

BETWEEN 1993 AND 2002 THE ACTUAL TAX BURDEN HAD RISEN, WHICH MEANT THAT THE EFFECT OF THE RATE CUT REMAINED MORE OR LESS NEUTRAL

Between 1993 and 2002 three researchers from the universities of Leuven and Maastricht investigated the tax bills of 12,197 representative Belgian companies (61% in Flanders, 22% in Brussels and 16% in Wallonia). 2002 was the year in which the Verhoest government lowered the rate for corporation tax from 40.7 to 33.99%. But the rate is not the real tax burden. The actual tax burden differs from one firm to another and is the result of legal tax facilities or facilities negotiated with the taxman. It also varies from region to region. On average it came to 26%, but in Flanders it was higher (27%) than in Brussels (24%). In Wallonia it amounted to 26%. Another important finding was that between 1993 and 2002 the actual tax burden had risen, not fallen. According to the researchers, this was as a result of a broadening of the taxable basis, which meant that the budgetary effect of the rate cut ‘remained more or less neutral’ (FF).

FRANK DEMETS
KNACK • 9 JUNE

The study distinguishes between tax rate and actual tax. For the period investigated, 1993-2002, the rate was 40.17%, but more costs were tax-deductible. This meant the average firm only paid 26% taxes. Walloon and Brussels firms were also around 6% cheaper than their Flemish counterparts. Such differentiation in tax systems is not typically Belgian: it is applied pretty much throughout Europe. The new members from Eastern Europe, but also peripheral countries such as Spain or Portugal, also use lower interest rates for firms to continue to attract investors despite the inferior quality of their infrastructure. The reasoning that holds true for the East and the periphery of Europe also applies to a lesser extent to Wallonia. Except: the way in which Wallonia and Brussels make the distinction is much too arbitrary. There must be clear rules that apply to all: whether a generous or greedy tax collector comes to the firm’s door should be directly dependent on company profits. Unfortunately the rate often depends far too much on tax agreements with the client and the laxity of inspections. The fiscal benefits are therefore for those firms with the cleverest accountants and bookkeepers who are most familiar with the fiscal labyrinth. That is completely antisocial and harmful to the economic development of Belgium.

WWW.ECON.KULEUVEN.AC.BE/LICOS/

HISTORY

Stanley’s archive inventorised

IT WAS STANLEY WHO BY ORDER OF KING LEOPOLD II HAD MAPPED AND THEREBY LAID THE BASIS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LEOPOLD’S CONGO FREE STATE

In 1982 the auction house Christie’s of London offered the family archive of the explorer Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) for sale. It was Stanley who by order of King Leopold II had mapped and thereby laid the basis for the establishment of Leopold’s Congo Free State and the subsequent Belgian colony of the Congo. The then Generale Maatschappij, which for a long time dominated the Belgian and Congolese economy, therefore decided, together with several subsidiaries, to stump up the BEF 30 million for the archive. Herman Liebaers, the former Field Marshal of King Boudouin, brought the archive over to Belgium, where for years it lay dormant in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren. Only now have the many letters, notebooks, maps, photos and other documents been inventorised under the impetus of the King Boudouin Foundation (FF).

MARC REYNEBAU
DE STANDAARD • 10 JUNE

The archive ended up in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, which Leopold II had had built as a display window for his colonial glory. There the archive disappeared into anoubliette, if we are to believe Stanley’s heir. It flattered them that Belgium gave Stanley the recognition that England denied its famous son. The good relations between the heirs and the museum led to a pile of memorabilia ending up in Tervuren at that time. With the 1982 purchase the museum thought it had acquired the whole Stanley archive, but even more of it surfaced at a later date. These were added to the collection with money from the King Boudouin Foundation. Today the Foundation is full owner of the archive and has given it to the museum for long-term safekeeping.

‘Stanley wrote an astonishing amount,’ says Maurits Wynants. ‘He noted everything down.’ The archive even contains

focus on FLANDERS • 5 June - 11 June • Number 23
Diary

MUSIC, DANCE THEATRE

• 15 to 22 June: Venetian Journal and Satyricon by Bruno Maderna, director: Georges Lavraudant, Flanders Opera House, Ghent; info: www.vlaamseopera.be
• 15 June: Yes, Koningin Elisabethzaal, Antwerp; info: 0900/26060
• 17 June: Warp project, London Sinfonietta plays Aphex Twin & Squarepusher, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
• 17, 18 and 19 June: defiharmonic conducted by Daniele Calligari with world creation by Stefan Van Eycken and 9th symphony by Mahler, PSK, Brussel (www.psk.brussels), Koningin Elisabethzaal, Antwerp (www.defiharmonic.be) and Basileik Tongeren (012/23.57.19)
• 18 June: Roland, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: www.abconcerts.be
• Until 30 June: Retrospective Federico Fellini, Film Museum, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.filmmuseum.be
• 19 June: Boxing and Jazz, Matthew Shipp Trio, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be 070/22.33.02
• 19 June: Flemish Radio Orchestra conducted by Hervé Niquet with Véronique Gens, concertante with compositions by César Franck, PSK, Bruges (www.psk.brussels), Museum of Art, Antwerp (www.defiharmonic.be) and Brussels (www.concertgebouw.be)
• 21 June: Festival de Music, De La Vache Der Alpenjäger Liesbeth contest, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be

• 22 June: Summer Opera Alden Biesen, Bilzen, Limburg with Don Pasquale by Donizetti; info: 011/45.03.12
• 24 June: Paco de Lucia, Royal Circus, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.springsessions.be
• 24 June: Foi by Ballets C de la B, dance, PSK, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
• 25 June: Ensemble Ambrosius with Uncle Meat, Zoot Allures and other compositions by Frank Zappa and compositions by Olli Virtaperko, Finlandia, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be
• 26 and 27 June: Defiharmonic conducted by Philippe Herreweghe with Andreas Staier, WA Mozart, symphony nr. 38 and piano concerto nr. 19, Concertgebouw Bruges (www.concertgebouw.be) and De Bijloke, Ghent; info: www.bijloke.be

EXPO

• Until 28 August: The Realm of the Dragon, exhibition, St Pietersabdij, Ghent
• 30 April to 20 June: Abalos & Herreros, architects from Madrid, exhibition, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• Until 17 October: Animals in Architecture, Museum of Architecture, Brussels
• Until 26 June: The rest of the world, Colors magazine shows photography, Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent; www.guislain.be
• Until 5 September: Speaking Sculptures, the Songye, Museum of Africa, Tervuren; info: www.afrikamuseum.be

• Until 3 October: Olympic Games for animals, Museum of natural sciences, Brussels; info: 02/627.42.38 www.natuurwetenschappen.be
• Until 26 September: The Thomas Neyrinck Collection, exhibition, Belleveumusea, Brussels; info: 070/23.37.28
• Until 26 June: Pretty World, exhibition, Aeroplastics, Brussels; info: www.aeroplastics.net
• 18 to 20 June: Antiques and Brocante in Brussels, Paleis 1, De Heizel, Brussels
• Until 18 August: Honoré d’O and Toon Versas, Muhka, Antwerp; info: www.muhka.be
• Until 27 September: The fall of the New Troy, exhibition Venetiasean Gaanderijen, Ostend; info: 059/56.20.15

Is obviously not part of the family archive, apart from the copies he made. ‘The prices now being asked for this stuff are crazy,’ says Wynants. ‘A map made by Stanley will easily fetch more than 100,000 euros, a postcard with a couple of lines of text several thousand euros.’

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