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**Introduction**

The statutory pension will not be enough to guarantee the vast majority of pensioners an acceptable standard of living. The story has been told a thousand times: the army of people entitled to a pension is growing like lightning. Within twenty years, one third of the population will be over the age of 65. People are giving fewer years earlier, living longer and therefore drawing pensions for longer. What is more, the statutory pension is not inflation-proof. As a result, it can do nothing more than raise people above the poverty line, claims Pensions Minister Bruno Tobback in De Morgen (17 November). To improve the standard of living of future pensioners, therefore, a supplementary pension is anything but a luxury. To boost the development of the Second Pensions Pillar, last year the Federal Parliament voted in the so-called Supplementary Pensions Act. This is aimed at giving as many employees as possible access to a supplementary pension. At present around half of all employees in the private sector (1.3 million) are counting on this. Executives and employees in certain sectors such as construction or metal enjoy group insurance, which is also tax-deductible. In other private sectors arrangements still have to be made in this respect. In the government sector, ‘statutory’ civil servants have a proportionally much bigger pension and there is no need for a second pillar, but all the more so among the contractual government staff of municipalities, provinces and regions. Minister Tobback (SPA) wants a clear picture of the state of affairs in all sectors by the middle of next year.

The Second Pensions Pillar is also on the agenda of the coming social dialogue between trade unions and employers. But in his concern for his retired fellow man the minister acted too hastily. It was no longer possible for him to take that supplementary pension in one go, because the aim was not for people to do stupid things with their cents. He therefore proposed paying the supplementary pension in monthly instalments and for the sake of solidarity called for the remaining capital to be paid back into the supplementary pensions fund in the event of the early death of the recipient of the pension. Obviously this met with strong protest from employers and the Liberal VLD, who found so much government patronising unacceptable. But the Socialist ABVV trade union also pointed out that it was a trade union demand that the freedom of choice between interest (instalments) and capital (one-off payment) should remain guaranteed. The protest had the desired effect. The next day Tobback’s Party Chairman Steve Stevaert announced to the same De Morgen (19 November) that the people ‘could do what they want with their supplementary and for the sake of flexibility called for the introduction of a third option, namely a monthly payment consisting partly of capital and partly of interest. On that day’s evening news Minister Tobback threw himself wholeheartedly behind Stevaert’s vision and swallowed his proposal to pay outstanding capital into a fund in the event of death.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief

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**Anti-terror services take shape after threats**

The man who threatened by telephone to ‘ritually slaughter’ Antwerp’s SPA Senator Mimount has been arrested, confirmed Justice Minister Onkelinx on 19 November. But in addition to Bousakla, at least four more Brussels politicians received threats from suspected Moslem extremists. Justice Minister Laurette Onkelinx (PS) received a letter in which she, the MS Mayor of Moleneek Philippe Moureaux and his right-hand man Mohammed Chahid are threatened, while the MR Mayor of Vorst Corinne De Permentier was sent an e-mail containing threats from Spain. The federal co-ordination crisis center felt the threats were serious enough to take safety precautions. Meanwhile, since the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh the

Justice Minister Laurette Onkelinx (PS) announced that a bill was finally been drafted designed to allow the State Security Police to use ‘administrative phone-tapping’ and other ‘special investigational techniques’, such as shadowing, observations and the use of informants. The State Security Police, the military intelligence services and the anti-terror division of the federal police will be given more people and resources, it was announced last week. The existing Anti-Terrorist Mixed Group (Antiteroristische Gemengde Groep - AGG) was converted into the nerve centre for terrorism and extremism, under the new name of the General Intelligence Service (Algemene Inlichtingendienst Veiligheidsdienst - AIV). Committee I, the parliamentary body that controls the intelligence services, and the monitoring committee of Committee I in the Senate reacted with pleasant surprise. ‘Suddenly a whole pile of documents we’ve been insisting on for years have gained momentum,’ says an insider. ‘Suddenly things can’t move quickly enough. It seems the government has finally got the message.’ Even the most fervent opponents of deploying the intelligence services against Moslem fundamentalism, such as Philippe Moureaux, have ceased their opposition. According to Justice Minister Onkelinx, however, it was ‘by chance’ that a series of measures was finalised in the days and weeks following Van Gogh’s murder.

GEORGES TIMMERMAN • DE MORGEN • 19 NOVEMBER

Verhofstadt government has also quickly got behind the introduction of a set of anti-terror measures (FF).
**Vlaams Blok becomes Vlaams Belang**

Although there is a new name, a new declaration of intent and a new logo, the Vlaams Belang stands for ‘Own People First’ and ‘Belgium should Burst’ just like the Vlaams Blok.

Opinion

WIM VANDE VELDEN • DE TIJD • 15 NOVEMBER

The Vlaams Belang is misleading. Behind the façade of embellished basic principles and party statutes lie the same extreme ideas and people. This is most clearly expressed in the anti-foreigner stance adopted by the Vlaams Belang. Not all immigrants have to return home, only those who do not adapt, is the ‘politically correct’ message of the successor to the Vlaams Blok. The pertinent question of how immigrants should become ‘Flemings among Flemings’ remains unanswered.

Apparently it is no longer enough for them to abide by the law. It is an illusion to think that the Vlaams Belang would disarm. Figurehead Filip Dewinter has already reiterated several times: Moslem girls who walk around with headdresses on are demonstrating that they are not willing to integrate and must be sent their homeland. The rejection of a positive cultural identity has very little to do with integration, and everything to do with a monoculture and a single way of thinking in Flanders. The Vlaams Belang says its views are majority views in Flanders and even government views in the Netherlands. The fighting talk that emanated from The Hague in the wake of the murder of Theo Van Gogh could in fact have come from the Vlaams Blok. The consequences are as expected: successive attacks on mosques and Moslem schools. The prospect of living together seems further away than ever.

Terrorists, fundamentalists, Moslems, foreigners, Islam: all are increasingly being lumped together. The scale is tipping. If it was for far too long ‘wrong’ to talk of culturally related problems, it has now become ‘good form’ to zoom in primarily on those cultural differences and ignore socio-economic realities. It is high time that schemes and strategies were developed to break the vicious circle of ‘us against them’. That requires brave politicians who use policy to do something about the disquieting lagging behind of immigrants, for example on the labour market or in education.

[WWW.JUST.PGOV.BE](http://WWW.JUST.PGOV.BE)
Flemish parties not inclined to deprive Vlaams Belang of its allocation

Since a change in the law in 1999, the Federal Act on Party Funding has made it possible to refuse some of the allocation for a party that is opposed to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. At the request of the Parliamentary Commission that monitors party funding, the Council of State can withdraw some of the allocation to which a party is entitled. However, no one has yet made use of this regulation because a number of legal loopholes have had to be closed. Claude Eerdekens, PS Parliamentary Party Leader in the Chamber wanted to table a bill to neutralise the legal obstacles that it could be used against the Vlaams Belk. But first the Senate had to vote on the matter. The Francophone PS and CdH parties want to do that as quickly as possible, now that the Court of Cassation has convicted the Vlaams Blok for racism, but the Flemish majority parties, the VLD and SPA, can no longer see the point now the far-right party has changed its name. Meanwhile the Chairman of the Senate Commission, Ludger Vanhove (SPA), says that no Flemish party still backs the withholding of the Vlaams Blok's allocation (De Tijd, 12 November).

A regulation, that deprives a party of its allocation, also applies under certain conditions in the Flemish Parliament. That regulation stipulates that a party that violates racism laws can lose its Flemish allocation. Parliament Chairman Norbert De Batselier (SPA) is therefore having the Parliament's legal department investigate whether the judgment of the Court of Appeal in Ghent and its ratification by the Court of Cassation comes under the terms of the regulation and whether a change in the Blok's name makes any difference. De Batselier has already announced that he himself is not in favour of withholding the allocation for the Vlaams Blok. He believes that the party should be tackled politically and not legally. Groen! Party Chairwoman Vera Dau disagrees. She feels the ruling should be applied. Because the Vlaams Blok obtained almost 1 million votes on 13 June, it gets around one-and-a-half million in state allocations from the Flemish Government. Together with the federal allocation this provides the party with almost 5 million euros per annum. On 10 November the Vlaams Blok's Parliamentary Faction leader in the Flemish Parliament, Filip Dewinter, read out a statement in Parliament in which he once again labelled the judgment of the Court a restriction of the freedom of speech. In a democracy it should be the voter, not the judge, who gives a ruling on the manifesto of a political party, claims Dewinter.

Annenmans’ threat stirs up ill-feeling

O’ all the fire-and-brimstone speeches and addresses at the inaugural conference of the Vlaams Belang, one stood out above all others in its wrath. Gerolf Annemans - according to some the most moderate member of the leading triumvirate - stated in no uncertain terms that the magistrates who had led the Blok trials were ‘etched in his memory’ and had been ‘warned for the rest of their career’. A threat that shows little respect for the separation of judicial and political power in this country, says Edith Vanden Broeck, Chairwoman of the High Council for Justice, which has been responsible for appointing judges and magistrates since 2000. ‘My heart will miss a beat if politicians with such opinions ever come to power,’ says Guy Dubrulle, Solicitor-General at the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Court of Cassation. Justice Minister Onkelinx (PS) called Annemans’ comments ‘unacceptable’ and ‘a totalitarian means of intimidation’. According to her, justice cannot function if judges are threatened by the far-right. According to Professor of Criminal Law Brice De Ruyver, legal expert to Premier Verhofstadt, such comments come down to defamation and are therefore liable to prosecution (FF).

WIM WINKELMANS • HET NIEUWSBLAD • 16 NOVEMBER

De Ruyver: ‘Annenmans calls into question the integrity of a magistrate [Marc Timperman, Court of Cassation] as if a senior magistrate is acting as an agent of his former employer [Minister Verwilghen, ed.]. Annemans adds further threats. That goes beyond ordinary criticism of a judicial ruling or the legal system. De Ruyver believes that the lawyer Annemans will have checked how far he could go. ‘He is speculating that he will never be prosecuted. Also, he is not running a risk because as an MP he can hide behind his immunity. But his words still boil down to defamation. According to De Ruyver, Annemans has also behaved reprehensibly from an ethical viewpoint.’ By expressing himself in this way about a judge as a member of the legislative authority he has been guilty of a flagrant violation of the separation of powers.’
**INTEGRATION POLICY**

**Turkish Unions open mosques to public**

The Union regrets that following the murder a mood of hostility has grown up in the Netherlands that threatens to spill over into Belgium.

On 15 November the Union of Turkish Associations condemned the murder of the Dutch film-maker Theo Van Gogh. The Union also regrets that following the murder a mood of hostility has grown up in the Netherlands that threatens to spill over into Belgium. It is particularly annoyed by the way in which Internal Affairs Minister Patrick Dewael (VLD) announced the Federal Government's anti-terrorism measures. His comment that Moslem culture is inferior to Western culture also caused a lot of ill-feeling. The Union has asked him to instead make an effort to improve the dialogue between foreigners and the native population. Meanwhile, the Union itself is taking a singular initiative by opening its mosques to the public (FF).

**KOEI VIDAL • DE MORGEN • 16 NOVEMBER**

Co-ordinator Selamet Belkiran: ‘Native Flemings are welcome at meetings of the Boards of Directors of our Mosque associations and we will discuss and publish the speeches of our imams in advance. In this way we want to accept our responsibility and make it clear to society that our places of prayer are not hot-beds of extremism.’ The invitation to take part in the life of a mosque is also open to non-believing natives, says Belkiran. ‘As well as being places of prayer, our mosques are also socio-cultural meeting places. Non-Moslems are welcome to take part in events or can even help organise activities. It comes down to us wanting to throw open the doors to our mosques.’ Will the Turkish Union also link its openness operation to its call for state subsidies for mosques? ‘Let’s see what the future brings,’ says Belkiran cautiously. ‘That’s actually a matter for the Moslem Executive.’ As a matter of fact this Moslem Executive yesterday came under heavy fire. A platform of around two hundred Moslem organisations - the Federation of Mosques of Brussels and Brabant, the Union of Turkish Associations, Umiva - is to lodge complaints against several members of the outgoing Moslem Executive and the General Council of Moslems in Belgium. Critics claim the Moslem Executive failed to defend the interests of the Belgian Moslem community.

**WWW.WVC.VLAANDEREN.BE**

**Cardinal Danneels condemns extremism**

15 November was King’s Day (Koningsdag), and that was celebrated in all provincial capitals with a Te Deum service in the presence of members of the Royal Family and leading political figures. Brussels’ ceremony in the Sint-Michiels and Sint-Goedelekerk was led by Cardinal Danneels. In his homily the Cardinal hit out at religious fundamentalism. ‘Whoever hates in the name of God hates God, and whoever commits violence in the name of God commits violence against God,’ said the Cardinal. The truth needs no violence, marketing or publicity, claims the Cardinal. It has enough with its inner pulling power. God asks that we should accept one another, as we are, in particular the poor, the outcast and strangers. It is high time that everyone accepted their responsibility, listened to their conscience and learned to live together with their fellow man, he called for finally.

**WWW.KERKNET.BE**

**Senator Bousakla receives dead threat**

At the request of Antwerp Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Crisis Centre for Internal Affairs has decided to place SPA Senator Mimoun Bousakla under police protection. For years Bousakla has championed the rights of Moslem women. She is also known for her critical stance towards the Moslem community in our country. For example, the Senator, who is of Moroccan origin, recently called for the abolition of the Moslem Executive following the murder of Dutch film-maker Theo Van Gogh. For almost two years Bousakla has been receiving death threats by telephone and letter. She recently lodged a complaint against parties unknown after someone threatened by telephone ‘to ritually slaughter her.’ The Minister for Internal Affairs, Patrick Dewael admitted to De Morgen (18 November) that the measure was not entirely unrelated to the tense situation in the Netherlands and Belgium following the murder of Theo Van Gogh. But this context should not be exaggerated, says the Minister. According to him, just one concrete case is for the time being involved.

**Focus on Flanders** 13 November - 19 November • Number 40
Dexia investigates merger with Italian Sanpaolo IMI

According to De Tijd, the Dexia bank is holding negotiations with the Italian bank Sanpaolo IMI on a possible merger. The talks are apparently at an advanced stage. If a merger is involved and comes about, it will create the fourth bank in the eurozone with a market capitalisation of 37 billion euros. According to the paper, these negotiations may well explain why Karel De Gucht, the present Foreign Affairs Minister, extended his mandate on Dexia’s Board of Directors until 1 January. From this week the Board of Directors will also include PS Chairman Eljo Di Rupo. Both political heavyweights clearly have to add their weight to the dossier, says De Tijd (FF).

MICHÆL SEPHIA/NICO TANGHE • DE TIJD • 18 NOVEMBER

The possible merger between Dexia and Sanpaolo IMI comes after the recent takeover of the British Abbey National by the Spanish bank SCh. The explanation for the sudden merger fever in Europe may well be found in the US. Thanks to the recent wave of mergers across the Atlantic, more and more American banks can easily absorb a medium-sized European bank. To resist this, European banks urgently have to combine forces.

The Italian group includes a retail bank, a business bank, a life-assurance company and an asset management company. Sanpaolo IMI also finances local authorities in Italy via its subsidiary Banca OPI. Sanpaolo IMI has a market capitalisation of 19.6 billion euros, slightly more than the 17.7 billion euros of Dexia. Dexia is the second biggest bank in Belgium and the world-leader in the financing of local authorities, which provides the group with half its income. The rest comes mainly from retail banking and asset management.

WWW.DEXIA.BE
WWW.SANPAOLO.IT

Management of Mechelen hospital encourages medical over-consumption

The target is an increase in turnover of 1.4 million euros. Doctors will be obliged to bring in new patients. More must be sold per client, so that income can rise by 7% per annum over the next few years. If this were an ordinary business, this would seem to be a plausible business plan. But it is not because a hospital cannot suffer structural losses that prescribing superfluous treatment becomes legitimate. And this is why: a hospital’s income is largely covered by medical insurance, i.e. by the community. If a hospital cannot keep its head above water, the solution is not to fleece the community but to hold the running of the establishment up against the light and if that does not help, to restrict the services provided.

Also particularly enlightening is that the draft agreement forces doctors at the hospital to refer patients to colleagues at the AZ-VUB umbrella organisation, to which Dodoens belongs. Doctors’ associations and hospitals and also the competent minister, Rudy Demotte (PS), believe that is in conflict with the freedom of treatment. The question is can this freedom remain absolute if we want to do something about galloping healthcare expenditure. But an even more important conclusion is that hospitals are clearly fighting for scarce patients. This means that despite the wave of mergers there are too many hospitals. This leads to inefficiency and consequently to greater costs.

A hospital that has to lower itself to medical over-consumption bordering on fraud and also wants to trap patients in an invisible web to keep as much income as possible within the group. This is not an unfortunate blunder, but the rigorous extension of the rules of our system. It is all too easy to now mock the management of this mercantile institution. Opportunity makes the thief.

ECONOMY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Opinion

BART STURTEWAGEN • DE STANDAARD • 17 NOVEMBER

Dodoens is in the red. For it to get back on its feet, turnover has to increase. If the number of clients cannot increase,
The plundering of Sabena by Swissair

The action drawn up by a team of Swiss lawyers sometimes reads like a manual for plundering foreign subsidiaries

According to Sabena receiver Christian Van Buggenhout, Saigroup, the parent company of Swissair, has cunningly bled Sabena dry since 1996 to embellish its own accounts. In 1996 the Swiss transferred their interest in Sabena, which meant they no longer had to include Sabena's future losses in their accounts. What is more, that only happened after Sabena was ordered to set aside 1 billion euros for the extensive restructuring of its fleet. After this accounting operation Swissair began to siphon off assets from Sabena to Swissair and dump loss-making activities on Sabena. Because Sabena was never consolidated, Swissair manipulated its results and in so doing jacked up its share price. The plundering of Sabena took place under the leadership of the Swiss Paul Reutlinger and Peter Ramel, respectively Managing Director and Financial Director of Sabena but on the payroll of SairLines, a subsidiary of Saigroup. With the creation of the Airline Management Partnership (AMP) in 1999 Swissair gained control over the fleet, network, marketing, staff policy, price-fixing and sale of Sabena and also acquired its nationally promised landing rights at Zaventem. In anticipation of a bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the European Union, the Swiss gained unrestricted access to the European market via Sabena. Knack gained access to the action of the receivers' lawyers, which they are using to try and force a judicial inquiry in Zurich (FF).

Frank Demets • Knack • 17 November

The action drawn up by a team of Swiss lawyers sometimes reads like a manual for plundering foreign subsidiaries. IT supplier Atraxis, catering firm Gate Gourmet, baggage handler Swissport and garage firm SR Technics - all subsidiaries of Saigroup - and even Swissair itself systematically invoked Sabena way above the market price - a textbook example of transfer pricing, a contentious accounting technique. But it did not stop there. After that, profitable Sabena activities were transferred to Switzerland. In 1996 Paul Reutlinger ordered that Sabena had to make all its cargo available to the Swiss, but that these only had to pay if they also used the cargo space up to a maximum of 55% of turnover. Through this transaction the previously profitable cargo was saddled with 37 million in additional costs between 1997 and 2000, while providing Swissair with 187 million euros in extra profits.

The action also criticises several contentious decisions. In the past they were often explained as evidence of the incompetence of the Swiss. But they were in fact well thought-out. For example, Sabena's Board of Directors never saw the contract between Virgin Express and Sabena with a code sharing agreement - an agreement to operate flights jointly. Over four years that contract cost Sabena between 100 and 110 million euros. But Swissair profited from it. Internal memos betray the fact that in the weeks before the code sharing agreement Virgin had made a request to fly to Zurich and Geneva, two destinations on which Swissair pretty much had a monopoly. Shortly after the contract Virgin Express withdrew this request, says the receiver's solicitor, Philippe Meier.

Another example: the ordering of the 34 Airbuses that finished off Sabena in 2001. During discussions on the purchase the Belgian directors received incomplete or inaccurate information from the Swiss, the action claims. Thus, the documents given to the Board of Directors gave the additional cost of the purchase at BEF 56 million, but in reality it was BEF 623 million. On 2 April 1997 Swissair boss Philipp Brugisser had already confirmed the purchase of 34 Airbuses by Sabena in a letter to Airbus. Six months before the Board of Directors met to discuss the matter. Two days later Brugisser states to Swissair's Board of Directors that Sabena was unable to come up with the funds for this purchase (Sabena only had the means to purchase 13 aircraft, ed.). That made it possible to secretly pass 21 options on Airbus aircraft on to Sabena.

However, whether the examining magistrate in Zurich will believe the lawyers and begin an inquiry depends less on the perception of whether Sabena was prejudiced and more on whether he believes that Swissair also pulled the wool over investors' eyes. If the judge concludes that this is the case, the case has a chance before the Swiss judge.

www.Sabena.com

Compulsory publication of management pay approved in senate commission

FF Editor

From 2006 the members of the Boards of Directors and Management Boards of listed companies and state enterprises must publish their salaries. The share transactions of Board members and family members and acquaintances must also be published. The Senate Finance Commission approved the bill of Senator Patrick Vankrunkelsven (VLD) on this matter. This bill was tabled in response to the announcement of the exorbitant salary payments, bonuses and share options received by the former manager of the loom manufacturer Picanol, Jan Coene. Apart from the MR, which had objections on grounds of privacy, all parties voted for the bill.
Belgian investors miss stock market rise train

The stock market value of the twenty most important listed Belgian companies has doubled over a period of twenty months, notes De Tijd (13 November). Over this period, the Bel 20 has risen by 100% to 2,862 points. The Belgian All Share index of all shares listed in Brussels has performed even better, rising by 109%. Admittedly, in March 2003 the stock market was in a deep trough as a result of the ongoing Iraq crisis and the Ahold accounting scandal, but shortly afterwards rose sharply following America’s attack on Iraq. But other factors also played their part in the rapid recovery. Many Belgian companies had completed restructuring programmes and were beginning to turn a profit again, and the large international investor discovered the Brussels stock exchange. De Tijd points, for example, to the success of Trackers among American investors. Such listed investment funds combine the characteristics of shares and investment funds. They can be continually traded and allow investors to invest in a region, country or sector via a single transaction. One such success story is that of iShares MSCI Belgium, which brings together all Bel20 shares and the CMB share and has already risen by 116% in nine months. The average Belgian, on the other hand, failed to capitalise on last year’s success story. Which is a shame, says De Tijd (FF).

Opinion
PIERRE HUYLENBROECK • DE TIJD •
13 NOVEMBER

The average Belgian did not share in the major stock market success of the past year. Worse still, he was hardly even aware of it. The difference with the period 1996-1998 is striking. Then the stock market was a favourite topic of conversation and discussion between friends, neighbours and family, and in the media. Not this time. The ordinary newspapers, weekly magazines and TV news are not interested. The malaise from 2000 to the beginning of 2003 gave the stock market such a bad image that not a single top politician wanted anything to do with stock market dossiers. Bankers made no attempt to draw customers’ attention to the undervaluation of the Brussels stock exchange. And many investors from a few years ago lost their money on the stock market and want nothing more to do with it. They merely want shares in the safe construction of a capital guarantee fund, where returns remain largely limited. What is more, they have property and fixed-interest investments.

It is a shame that the average Belgian missed this fantastic ride. But perhaps the ride is not yet over. Shares have the habit of going too far and may therefore continue to climb until they are much too expensive. The appetite of Belgians for the stock market will then most likely return.

WWW.BXS.BE

Abolition of duty to publish for companies costs newspapers 10 million euros

Up to now there has been a duty in this country to invite the partners of a limited liability company (BVBA) and the shareholders with registered shares of a public limited company (naamloze vennootschap - NV) to the annual general meeting by registered letter. Public limited companies and other companies with bearer shares also have a duty to publish the convocation of the general meeting in the Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, two national newspapers and two regional newspapers. Finally, companies listed on the stock exchange also have to publish their results in the newspapers. With the exception of public publication in the Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, the Council of Ministers scrapped this duty, replacing it with cheaper, electronic forms of publication. State Secretary for Administrative Simplification (Vincent van Quickenborne) hopes that these measures will allow companies to save 80 million euros. Both the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB) and Deminor, the office that represents the interests of minority shareholders, are delighted. Newspaper publishers are far from happy with the measure. De Tijd, the financial and economic newspaper par excellence, is likely to be hit particularly hard. According to General Manager Hans Maertens, the abolition of the duty to publish will cost his paper 3 to 4 million euros a year, which equates to around 10% of turnover (FF).

LUC COPPENS • DE STANDAARD •
17 NOVEMBER

In recent months there were discussions between publishers and the office of State Secretary Vincent Van Quickenborne (VLD). ‘We never actually got to see the State Secretary himself,’ says Maertens, ‘but we got the impression we were heading towards a combination of electronic and paper publication. So the report was particularly hard to take.’ In a total market of 14 million euros, the measure threatens to cost Belgian newspapers around 10 million euros. De Tijd is facing a loss in turnover of 3 to 4 million euros. ‘Maertens is facing a loss in turnover of 3 to 4 million euros.’ Maertens admits that that is the worst possible scenario, in which pretty much all convocations would in reality also disappear, which will not necessarily be the case. ‘It’s not only papers like De Tijd and L’Echo, which are traditionally strong in this market, that will be hard hit,’ says Maertens. ‘Also De Standaard, for example, and actually the entire Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij (VUM), increased its presence in this segment of the market enormously in recent years, alongside Le Soir and La Libre Belgique on the Francophone side.’ ‘From a really simple, transparent and cheap system,’ says Maertens, ‘we’re now moving to something where for many companies it is unclear what exactly they have to do.’ Transitional measures, while awaiting greater clarity, are the minimum that newspaper publishers are hoping to pull out of the fire in the coming weeks.

WWW.TIJD.BE
Diary

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

- Until 16 January: Turkish Festival, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 22 November: Maxim Vengerov (violin) and Lilya Zilberstein (piano) with Brahms, Paganimi, Saint-Saëns and Wieniawski, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 23 November: Iris Night: Michel & Benjamin Legrand, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 23 November: Maceo Parker, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.audijsj.be
- 23 November: Branford Marsalis, De Warande, Turnhout, info: 014/41.69.91 www.audijsj.be
- 23 and 24 November: She she Pop with What’s wrong?, dance, Kaaitheater, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be
- 23 to 28 November: As if (it was beautiful), Deuffert + Plischke/Frankfurter Küche (Leipzig), dance, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- 24 November: Mori Kanto (Guinee), Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 24 November: Symphonic Orchestra of St. Petersburg Philharmonia conducted by Alexander Dinyegani with Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Chostakovitch, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- 25 November: Hagen Quartet with Haydn, Bartok and van Beethoven, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- 26 November: Zimar (Palestina), Zuiderpershuis, Antwerp, info: www.zuiderpershuis.be
- 27 November: Stimmhson in land with Christian Zender and Balbatar Streiff, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: 070/22.53.02 www.concertgebouw.be
- 28 November: The Ex @ Friends, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 25 November: Archive, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 25 November: Sivan Perwez @ Alim Qasimov [Azerbaijan], Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 26 November: Stella Bella Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 27 November: Ali Slimani feat. Natacha Atlas @ Ue! Arab Groove Night, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 28 November: Resistance Tour (hardcore and punk) Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 29 November: Brodsky Quartet with van Beethoven, Bartok and Britten, Conservatory, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 30 November: Lambchop, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 30 November: Carmen by Georges Bizet, State Opera of Bucarest, Timisoara; Constan, Tokyo, info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 4 December: Maceo Parker, CC’S T Poorthuis, Peer; info: 011/61.07.20 www.desingel.be
- 27 November: Iris Night: Michel & Benjamin Legrand, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be
- 27 November: Stimmhson in land with Christian Zender and Balbatar Streiff, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: 070/22.53.02 www.concertgebouw.be
- 28 November: The Ex @ Friends, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 25 November: Archive, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcer
- 25 November: Sivan Perwez @ Alim Qasimov [Azerbaijan], Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 26 November: Stella Bella Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 27 November: Ali Slimani feat. Natacha Atlas @ Ue! Arab Groove Night, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 28 November: Resistance Tour (hardcore and punk) Ancienne Belgique, Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 29 November: Brodsky Quartet with van Beethoven, Bartok and Britten, Conservatory, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- 30 November: Lambchop, Handelsbeurs, Ghent; info: 09/265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
- 30 November: Carmen by Georges Bizet, State Opera of Bucarest, Timisoara; Conservatory, Tokyo, info: 02/548.24.24 www.abconcerts
- 4 December: Maceo Parker, CC’S T Poorthuis, Peer; info: 011/61.07.20 www.desingel.be
- 27 November: Iris Night: Michel & Benjamin Legrand, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be
- 27 November: Stimmhson in land with Christian Zender and Balbatar Streiff, Concertgebouw, Bruges; info: 070/22.53.02 www.concertgebouw.be

CULTURE

EXPO

- Until 27 February: Tatoo-Tattoo, exhibition, Royal Museum for Art and History, Cinquantenaire, Brussels; info: 02/741.72.11 or www.kmkg.be
- Until 16 January: Exhibition: Mothers, goddesses and sultanes from prehistory until the end of the Ottoman empire, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- Until 28 November: Luc Deleu @ TOP Office – Values, Mukha, Antwerp; info: www.mukha.be
- 13 October to 16 January: Karel Appel, exhibition, Rudi Fuchs on a journey through the art of the low countries, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
- Until 19 December: Alphavillesii, exhibition by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (Fr); De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
- Until 28 November: Joseph Germain Dutali, Silversmith of King William I, Silver Museum Sterckshof, info: www.zilvermuseum.be
- Until 28 November: Massimo Vitalo and Clark Craryse, PMMK, Ostend, info: 059/50.81.18 www.pmmk.be
- Until 4 May: Rudolf Lange, war witness, In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres; info: www.inflandersfields.be
- Until 9 January: John Me Cracken, exhibition, SMAK, Ghent, info: www.smak.be
- Until 28 February: Maarten Van Severen, exhibition, Design Museum, Ghent, info: http://design.museum.gent.be
- Until 13 March: The Heart, exhibition, Museum Dr Guislain, Ghent, info: www.museumdrguislain.be
- Until 28 November: Living and Interior Fair ‘Cocoon’, theme: design, Brussels Expo, Brussels, Hall 5.6, 9 & Expo, info: www.cocoon.be
- Until 19 December: Alphavilles?, exhibition by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, De Singel, Antwerp, info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be

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Focus on Flanders provides a weekly overview of articles from the Flemish press and appears in English, French and German. This newsletter is published by Uitgeverij Lannoo nv, Kasteelstraat 97, 8700 Tielt and can also be obtained by e-mail.

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