Tax amnesty brings in EUR 496 million

The tax amnesty (‘EBA’) has brought EUR 496 million into the treasury by way of fines, according to an announcement made by the federal Finance Minister Reynders (MR) on 17 February. This is an unexpected success. When the scheme was launched, the government had admittedly expected EUR 850 million, but it adjusted this estimate downwards to EUR 200 million, after the poor results during 2004. However, the unexpectedly high surge in the last month has done a lot of good. 13,800 of the total of 18,500 regularisation files were submitted in December. Together these accounted for 80% of the income. Officially some EUR 5.7 billion has come back to Belgium, but according to Reynders EUR 10 billion also came back without regularisation. The action thereby led to growth of 0.1% to 0.2% in the Belgian economy in the second half of 2004. The government is paying the EBA revenues into the Silver Fund (aimed at absorbing the costs of the ageing of the population), with the exception of EUR 75 million, which is reserved for the regions. Flanders is entitled to EUR 39 million, but Reynders says that it has not yet been established whether it is entitled to this. The Flemish Government, on the other hand, claims that it signed up for the tax amnesty by means of a decree. The CD&V, which is in office in the Flemish Government but not in the Federal Government, ‘accepts’ the EBA at Flemish level, but continues to oppose it at federal level (FF).

RENAAT SCHROOTEN • DE TIJD • 18 FEBRUARY

Reynders says that he is not asking the Flemish Government for a decree, but for guarantees of the practical compliance with the EBA agreements. If a problem arises, the EUR 39 million intended for Flanders will remain in the federal kitty. It emerged yesterday that this watertight guarantee already exists. Without drawing any attention to it, the Flemish majority parties officially signed up to the tax amnesty in November. The last article of a decree on the Flemish budget states that Flanders will not make any difficulties about the way in which the federal tax authorities collect taxes in the framework of the tax amnesty. Flanders also recognises the certificates that the financial institutions give to repenting tax evaders, the text reveals. By means of these certificates they avoid subsequent prosecution for tax evasion. Thanks to the text the Flemish Government does not have to assume any political standpoint on the tax amnesty, but in practice it is not obstructing the operation.

CONTENTS

Social policy and Public Health
Minister Dewael’s trip to Denmark 2
Minister Keulen wants to punish refusers of integration courses 2
Vande Lanotte relaunches ‘active welfare state’ 5
Stevaert wants fixed budgets for medicines in hospitals 6

Local politics
Municipal elections: quota for female candidates, list vote less important 4

Economy and Environment
Flemish companies lodge good Kyoto report 4
Regions cooperate in foreign trade 5
Former Picanol CEO invoiced bogus services 6
CEOs of Belgian car industry warn 7

Culture
Front of small cinemas against Kinepolis 7

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of February the department of the Flemish Culture Minister Bert Anciaux (Spit) conceded that it had a problem. Their Fund for Cultural Infrastructure has a budget of EUR 15 million, but promises have already been made and expenses planned for maintenance and renovation of buildings. The scheme has come back without regularisation. Most major projects such as the restoration of the Museum for Fine Arts, the renovation of the Flemish Opera and the building of the Music Forum on the Stream (MAS) are facing doubt or not – in Antwerp. Together they account for EUR 56 million of the budget. If savings have to be made, it is obvious that this will happen in Antwerp, as persistent rumours in the press would have it. And more especially in the MAS, the great money guzzler, which has been promised EUR 71 million from the Flemish Authorities, in addition to EUR 18 million from the city and EUR 7 million from the Flanders Government but not in the Federal Government. ‘Accepts’ the EBA at Flemish level, but continues to oppose it at federal level (FF).

RENAAT SCHROOTEN • DE TIJD • 18 FEBRUARY

Reynders says that he is not asking the Flemish Government for a decree, but for guarantees of the practical compliance with the EBA agreements. If a problem arises, the EUR 39 million intended for Flanders will remain in the federal kitty. It emerged yesterday that this watertight guarantee already exists. Without drawing any attention to it, the Flemish majority parties officially signed up to the tax amnesty in November. The last article of a decree on the Flemish budget states that Flanders will not make any difficulties about the way in which the federal tax authorities collect taxes in the framework of the tax amnesty. Flanders also recognises the certificates that the financial institutions give to repenting tax evaders, the text reveals. By means of these certificates they avoid subsequent prosecution for tax evasion. Thanks to the text the Flemish Government does not have to assume any political standpoint on the tax amnesty, but in practice it is not obstructing the operation.

RENAAT SCHROOTEN • DE TIJD • 18 FEBRUARY

Reynders says that he is not asking the Flemish Government for a decree, but for guarantees of the practical compliance with the EBA agreements. If a problem arises, the EUR 39 million intended for Flanders will remain in the federal kitty. It emerged yesterday that this watertight guarantee already exists. Without drawing any attention to it, the Flemish majority parties officially signed up to the tax amnesty in November. The last article of a decree on the Flemish budget states that Flanders will not make any difficulties about the way in which the federal tax authorities collect taxes in the framework of the tax amnesty. Flanders also recognises the certificates that the financial institutions give to repenting tax evaders, the text reveals. By means of these certificates they avoid subsequent prosecution for tax evasion. Thanks to the text the Flemish Government does not have to assume any political standpoint on the tax amnesty, but in practice it is not obstructing the operation.

Frank Vandecaveye | editor in chief
MINISTER DWEAEL’S MUCH TALKED-ABOUT TRIP TO DENMARK

The linking of the asylum policy and development cooperation with the countries of origin was the only issue that he wanted to discuss.

The working visit of Interior Minister Patrick Dewael (VLD) to Denmark on 11 February did not pass off unnoticed. The PS, in particular, was critical of Dewael’s visit, describing his proposal to review development aid to countries that refuse to take back deported asylum seekers as ‘cynical blackmail’. The NGOs were also irritated at the visit to Copenhagen. They found it alarming that Dewael should go there to gain inspiration for a policy ‘that is on the very bounds of what is admissible under international law’. The liberal-conservative government of Anders Fogh Rasmussen has its strict immigration and asylum policy largely to thank for its re-election this year.

In Denmark newcomers are given a resident’s permit and entitlement to unemployment benefit only after seven years’ residence. Family reunification via marriage is also extremely difficult in this country. Both the Danish citizen and the foreign partner must be at least 24 years old. The couple must have sufficient financial resources. The Dane must have a job, pay a security and be the owner of his own home. But after the visit Dewael appeared not to have any plans at all to copy the tough Danish approach. The linking of the asylum policy and development cooperation with the countries of origin was the only theme that interested him. During his visit he argued in favour of a stricter European asylum policy (FF).

We must relieve the pressure of immigration from the European kettle. There is only one way in which this can be done structurally: by giving greater support to the countries of origin. Don’t forget that Denmark also pays out a relatively high amount for support to development. We must act proactively rather than reactively’, Dewael proceeded, after concluding his study visit to the Danish Minister for Integration and Development Cooperation Bertel Haarder. This was conspicuous, since everyone had anticipated that Dewael went to Denmark to find out how he ought to go about organising a tough asylum policy. ‘I would like to see that asylum policy grow in a European context above all’, said Dewael. ‘A single harmonised European asylum procedure is needed, since Europe is now only as strong as its weakest link. We must put an end to the possibility of refugees ‘shopping’ for asylum in different European countries’. The minister went on to advocate the idea of Europe developing relief capacity in the countries of origin and in the countries of transit, ‘in observance of human rights of course’. On this Dewael is wholly in accord with the Danish standpoint, that Germany and Italy were also already defending at the end of last year. At that time Europe did not reach agreement, but the idea has clearly not been buried. He briefly reacted to the criticism expressed by government partner PS: ‘Politics is often a matter of perception. Our coalition partner proceeded on perception and opted for political profiling’. The PS must have misunderstood him, ‘for I have never argued in favour of repressive action, by removing development aid’. He limits himself here to ‘appropriate action’ against countries that categorically refuse to take back deported nationals. He will be having talks on this with Foreign Affairs Minister Karel De Gucht (VLD) and Development Cooperation Minister Armand De Decker (MR).

INTEGRATION COURSES: KEULEN WANTS TO PUNISH REFUSERS

Integration Minister Marino Keulen (VLD) wants to adapt his integration decree. On 16 February Gazet van Antwerpen reported on its front page that the public prosecutor’s offices hardly ever take any action against foreigners obliged to report to a reception office and follow an integration course (a package of language classes and practical information on rights and duties) but failing to do so. They can be fined up to EUR 137.5, but almost all cases are dropped. To a question posed by Gerold Annemans (Vlaams Blok) in the federal parliament, Justice Minister Onkelinx (PS) replied that 108 of the 167 cases had already been dropped. The Flemish minister responsible for integration policy Marino Keulen (VLD) laments the attitude of the public prosecutor’s offices and wants to adapt his integration decree to enable the Flemish Authorities to impose sanctions on foreigners not fulfilling their integration duty, and to do so on their own, independent of the public prosecutor’s offices. Out of a total of 726 asylum seekers whose application was originally declared admissible, and who are therefore obliged to follow such a course, 185 have not shown up, according to the minister. Yet the minister feels that the integration courses are a success. In addition to the 541 people following the course because they are obliged to, a further 3,000 immigrants are doing so voluntarily (FF).

Peter de Backer • Het Nieuwsblad • 17 February

Keulen: ‘I want to tackle the structural approach by adapting the integration decree, as agreed in the coalition agreement. The Flemish Authorities must be able to punish offenders themselves. This can be done by opting for administrative fines, the amount of which we still have to determine. But the sanction can also consist in the removal of the entitlement to social housing. We also want to oblige a wider target group to follow the integration course. I am thinking here of all those who come to live in our country on account of marriage or because they already have family living here. Also those who reside here for more than a year and who have to live off subsistence allowance or unemployment benefit. Integration increases their chances on the job market. We have an extra budget of EUR 3 million at our disposal. With that we can cope with around 7,000 courses a year’.
Today, 16 February, the Kyoto treaty comes into effect. In it, 141 countries undertake jointly to emit 5% fewer greenhouse gases by 2012, and in so doing help curb global warming. The United States, which produces 36% of emissions, is not taking part in Kyoto. Russia, on the other hand, decided in extremis to join in, because the trade in emission rights could be very lucrative for this enormous country. Belgium has to ensure its CO2 emissions fall by 7.5% by 2012 in respect of 1990. The distribution ratio between the regions determines that Flanders has to reduce its emissions by 5.2% and Wallonia by 7.5%, whilst Brussels is allowed to let emissions rise by 3.4%.

In Flanders industry produces 23% of emissions, energy production 22%, traffic 19% and households 16%. Industry has already amply assumed its responsibility. Figures from a policy meeting (a so-called benchmark agreement) between the 180 largest energy-consuming companies and the Flemish Authorities show that the chemical, steel, paper and textile industry has made its contribution as regards Kyoto compliance.

According to Flemish Environment Minister Kris Peeters (CD&V) it is now the turn of traffic. Peeters himself pins his hopes on the introduction of a green road sticker. His federal colleague at Transport Bruno Tobback (SP.A) expects big things from the introduction of biodiesel. For Flemish households, energy rules have been laid down for houses and buildings as of 1 January 2006. From this year there are extra tax advantages for those who build or renovate using energy-saving techniques (FF).

DOMINIQUE MINTEN • DE STANDAARD • 16 FEBRUARY

160 Flemish companies have submitted an energy plan and 40% of them are among the best companies in the world as regards energy efficiency. ‘Moreover, the energy efficiency of companies will increase by a further 8% by 2012’, says the Flemish Environment Minister, Kris Peeters (CD&V). In concrete terms this means that those companies consume 1.3 million fewer litres of fuel oil (or 11 million megawatts per hour). That corresponds to the heating of 400,000 homes. Every year 2 million fewer tons of CO2 will be coming into the air as a result of that. The environmental organisations also admit that industry is on the right track.

The situation is less rosy as regards households and road traffic, where there is no noticeable improvement at all. On the contrary. To make road traffic more environmentally friendly, Peeters believes firmly in the introduction of the roads sticker. ‘From the moment we introduce the sticker, the environmental aspect must be involved in it. Environment-friendly lorries should be given a discount. The German system provides for such a discount’. Peeters dares not predict when the roads sticker will come into force.

‘In April we will be getting the study on which kind of system we should best introduce. In Germany a system for lorries is in force. It would be ideal if we were to arrive at as uniform a system as possible. Therefore we will also be consulting with Brussels and the Walloon Region’. Peeters does see a hierarchy for the introduction. ‘Initially foreign lorries will have to buy a sticker. Then Belgian lorries will follow suit. And finally we will have to think of private cars’.
Quota for female candidates, order on list unimportant

Whether a candidate is actually voted onto the council will now only depend on his/her number of preference votes

On 8 October 2006 the next municipal elections will take place. Flemish Internal Administration Minister Marino Keulen (VLD) must therefore urgently make the necessary adjustments to the Municipal Election law for the organisation of the elections and the composition of the lists. Two thorny issues have already been resolved. His cabinet colleague, Equal Opportunities Minister Kathleen Van Brempt (SPA) announced the quota for the number of female candidates, which has been increased, as it was in the federal election of 2003 and the Flemish elections of 2004. Half of the candidates on the electoral lists have to be women, and at least one woman must figure among the first three places on the list. Van Brempt hopes that in this way the current councils and benches of aldermen will gain in terms of female presence. The second new rule was announced by Keulen himself. The list votes for the party will in 2006 no longer be distributed among the best placed candidates. Whether a candidate is actually voted onto the council will now only depend on his/her number of preference votes. But this will not result in much changing. 85% of the votes cast in the last municipal elections were preference votes. Finally a number of rules have not yet been completely determined. For example, there will most probably not be direct elections to the post of mayor, although this is not 100% certain. Decisions also still have to be taken on voting rights from the age of 16 and the method used for allocation of seats (FF).

But the minister is of the view that quotas have proved their worth at federal political level, among other things. This opinion is shared by political analyst Johan Ackaert (Limburg University Centre): ‘Quotas are not a very elegant solution, but they do work’. In Scandinavia, for example, they have very quickly led to an equally balanced representation of men and women. ‘It would also happen in other circumstances, but more slowly. Women traditionally participate less in politics, but perhaps that is changing in the younger generations, where women are as well educated’. Even so, some parties continue to complain that they virtually have to implore women to run on a list.

Keulen was also able to announce a measure yesterday; the list vote is neutralised. The vast majority of voters, 85%, already cast a name vote in local elections for one or more parties. But the votes that simply went to the top of the list, were put into a pot and half of them were shared out among the candidates in the first places. In this way someone in second place could be elected, whilst further down in the list someone had received more votes. That can no longer happen from 2006 onwards, and, according to Keulen, this will in particular be to the benefit of transparency. ‘People do not like the idea of voting for someone who then ends up not being elected because of this kind of rule’.

One look at the election results of 2000, however, shows that the neutralisation of the list vote will not make that much difference. The list vote is particularly important for smaller parties with less well-known faces. The place on the list in theory therefore no longer makes any difference, but Ackaert nonetheless does not expect the formation of lists to suddenly become a lot easier and quicker. ‘Candidates prefer to be on top than somewhere in the middle. That is a psychological effect.’ Hence the obligation to have at least one woman among the three candidates heading the list in the new system.
Vande Lanotte relaunches ‘active welfare state’

Budget Minister Johan Vande Lanotte (SP.A) has written down his answer to the growing ageing of the population in a discussion text ‘Beyond the Ageing of the Population’.

预算部长Johan Vande Lanotte (SP.A)写下了他对人口老龄化的答案，他认为人口老龄化是一个必须解决的问题。


The Flemish Foreign Trade Minister Fientje Moerman (VLD) has concluded a new cooperation agreement with her Wallon and Brussels counterparts, Jean Claude Van Cauwenbergh (PS) and Charles Picqué (PS) on foreign trade. The networks of economic representatives abroad of the three regions will work more closely together. As a result, Flemish companies will henceforth be able to call on the services of 22 additional foreign trade posts, including Abidjan, Algiers, Belgrade, Birmingham, Bucharest, Bogota, Bratislava, Damascus, Geneva, Islamabad, Kiev, Kinshasa, Kuwait, Manila, Montevideo, Munich, Nairobi, Sofia, Tashkent, Toronto, Tunis and Zagreb.

佛兰德外贸部长Fientje Moerman (VLD)与她的华伦和布鲁塞尔的伙伴Jean Claude Van Cauwenbergh (PS)和Charles Picqué (PS)达成了一个新的合作协定，用于外国贸易。三个地区经济代表在海外的网络将更紧密地合作。结果，佛兰德公司将能够使用22个额外的外国贸易代理，包括Abidjan, Algiers, Belgrade, Birmingham, Bucharest, Bogota, Bratislava, Damascus, Geneva, Islamabad, Kiev, Kinshasa, Kuwait, Manila, Montevideo, Munich, Nairobi, Sofia, Tashkent, Toronto, Tunis and Zagreb。

The cooperation means that Flanders will be represented in 17 additional countries, Brussels in an extra 15, and Wallonia in an extra three. All together, the three regions will be cooperating at 31 posts, whereas at the moment this is only the case in three. Moreover, the three ministers have decided that foreign trade missions organised abroad by one of the regions separately will be open to companies from the two other regions. In this way Flemish missions will be open to receive companies from Wallonia and Brussels, said Moerman.

这种合作意味着弗拉姆德将在17个国家代表，布鲁塞尔在额外15个国家，瓦隆尼亚在额外三个国家。三地区总共将配合31个地点。此外，三名部长已经决定，被地区之一在国外由该地区单独组织的外国贸易代表处将对另外两个地区公司的开放。这种方式将使佛兰德机构可以接受来自Wallonia和Brussels的公司。

Moerman, Van Cauwenbergh and Picqué said that the cooperation is to the benefit of the three regions, but stressed that it was not the intention to make foreign trade a federal area of competence again. The Flemish enterprise network Voka reacted positively. According to Voka, the cooperation shows that regionalisation does not mean each region having to work separately alongside the others.

Moerman, Van Cauwenbergh and Picqué表示，这种合作对这三个地区有利，但强调这不是要使外交贸易成为联邦能力的问题。佛兰德企业网络Voka对此持积极态度。根据Voka，这种合作表明区域化并不意味着各地区必须单独工作，而是要与其他地区合作。

Charles Picqué, the Brussels Minister-President who is also competent for foreign trade, also announced that he would be sending a letter to the National Bank with a request for the indicators and statistics on foreign trade to be fine-tuned. Picqué wants exports of services to be incorporated - an area in which the Brussels Region is particularly strong.

布鲁塞尔的部长兼外贸部长Charles Picqué也表示，他将代表其地区向国家银行发送一封信，要求对外国贸易的指标和统计数据进行微调。Picqué希望将服务出口纳入其中，因为布鲁塞尔地区在这方面特别强大。

WIM VANDE VELDEN • DE TIJD • 16 FEBRUARY

www.export.vlaanderen.be
www.fffio.be

Focus on Flanders • 12 February - 18 February 2005 • Number 7
Stevaert wants fixed budget for medicines in hospitals

A ‘pure’ fee for doctors and the direct payment of the other costs to the hospital itself, is the solution. But nobody dares to tackle this major reform

P.A chairman Steve Stevaert lashed out at hospitals in Het Laatste Nieuws on 16 February. He accuses them of entering into price agreements with the major pharmaceutical companies and thereby securing discounts of up to 30% on medicines, but nonetheless passing on the full price to their patients and the health insurance funds. The hospitals are thus earning a lot of money on the medicines. According to Stevaert, this is also creating a perverse effect. It is prompting hospitals to sell as many pills as possible. However, Stevaert concedes that the hospitals need the profit they are pocketing to stay out of the red, because they are structurally under-funded. Stevaert proposes alternative funding whereby for every operation carried out or disorder treated, the hospital has a fixed budget at its disposal in terms of relevant medication. What exceeds that amount is no longer reimbursed by the health insurance funds. Luc Van Roye, chairman of the Association of Public Hospitals, quoted in De Morgen (17 February), shifts the responsibility onto doctors prescribing too many medicines. He himself says why Stevaert is ranting so against hospitals and doctors. He wants the increase in health insurance payments to come out at no more than 4.5% above inflation, which is what was agreed in the federal government (FF).

GUY TEGENBOS • DE STANDAARD • 17 FEBRUARY

The politicians have been found wanting. For the funding of hospitals they have designed a system that does not at any time urge doctors and hospitals to be frugal: as regards either the number of medicines or the choice of medicines. It gives hospitals the chance to haggle with the suppliers to secure discounts, and then keep the proceeds themselves. They need these revenues to keep out of the red. They have to scrape together and beg for a part of their income.

Why? Because hospitals are ‘under-funded’: they receive too little money and for that very reason they are forced to resort to other moneyspinners. So they tend no longer to be opposed if their doctors want to charge supplements to their patients: the hospitals can keep a part of that, after all. That, too, is scraping around in order to keep out of the red.

So what is wrong with hospital funding? First of all hospitals receive too little money. They have to pay the ‘hotel costs’ (accommodation and ordinary care of the patient) with the ‘lay day subsidies’, which at the moment are not sufficient. A second source of income is the allowances that health insurance pays for the treatment of patients. The hospitals do not receive these directly, they go to the doctors. The hospital may oblige its doctors to give up a part of this amount, in exchange for which the doctors demand ‘involvement’ in hospital management. However, if hospitals withhold what they really need, their doctors impoverish. The system has perverse effects. It leads to improper practices such as doctors finding that they have to give up more and more and therefore channelling ‘profitable’ operations to their private practice.

A ‘pure’ fee for doctors and the direct payment of the other costs to the hospital itself, is the solution. But nobody dares to tackle this major reform.
Belgian car industry must become more efficient, say senior executives

Norbert Steingräber, the general manager of the Volkswagen plant in Vorst told De Tijd (14 February) that the German car manufacturer will be investing hundreds of millions of euros in the Belgian plant between now and 2010. The investments will make the plant suitable for the building of new models. Before long a start will be made on the building of an industrial estate for suppliers near the plant in Vorst. This most unexpected positive news was a fillip for the plant in Vorst where 600 of the 5,750 jobs were lost last year and rumours of closure were rife. But there was less encouraging news in the Belgian car assembly sector as well. The chief executives of VW Vorst and his colleagues from Opel Antwerp, Volvo Ghent and Ford Genk together announced that wages will have to be cut by 12% in Belgium in order to remain competitive with the foreign production centres. The overproduction of more than 10 million cars worldwide every year and the rising prices of raw materials are forcing car manufacturers to implement major reorganisation operations (FF).

Opinion
JEROEN LISENS • DE TIJD • 15 FEBRUARY

That VW will continue to invest in Vorst certainly does not mean that things are going well for the car industry in Belgium. Employment in the four major car plants has fallen in the last five years by almost 28,000, to 22,000 people. And in 2007 low-wage-cost country Slovakia will overtake Belgium as the largest European car manufacturer per number of inhabitants. There is also a second reason why a Belgian car plant has to be more efficient in the future than it is today. With the prospect of the 4.5% wage rule from the inter-sectoral agreement, car-producing Belgium definitively loses its price advantage vis-à-vis Germany, where various manufacturers have their decision-making centres. There the trade unions in the major car manufacturers, including VW, have agreed to a wage freeze for two years. At the same time car manufacturers such as Opel have announced radical reorganisation measures. These far-reaching measures will in the long run make German car plants a good deal more efficient. The 100,000 Belgians who directly or indirectly work for the four major car plants, are therefore warned: with the disappearance of the wage difference vis-à-vis Germany (the decision centre of the major manufacturers), a Belgian car plant will from now on have to be more efficient and more competitive, and in particular will have to work more cheaply than is the case at the moment.

Small cinemas form a front against Kinepolis

ALL ART HOUSE CINEMAS HAVE CONCLUDED A COOPERATION AGREEMENT, AIMED AT COUNTERACTING IN TERMS OF BOTH PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Since last year the largest Belgian cinema operator Kinepolis has included in its range ‘better’ films for film enthusiasts, alongside its commercial blockbusters. To this end it has started up the Cinémanie programme. Fans of ‘better’ films no longer have to go to the alternative cinemas in the city centre, but can also visit the Kinepolis complexes. ‘The alternative cinemas such as Studioskoop in Ghent or Cartoon’s in Antwerp view this as an attempt to steal their cinema-going public. Therefore all art house cinemas have concluded a cooperation agreement, aimed at counteracting Kinepolis’ attack in terms of both promotion and distribution (FF).

LARS BOVÉ • DE TIJD • 15 FEBRUARY

‘Since the beginning of 2004 we have been showing at least one Cinémanie film every day in each of our Belgian complexes’, says Myriam Dassonville, the spokesperson for Kinepolis. ‘Lovers of alternative films are also entitled to comfort: a high-quality image, good sound, comfortable seats, and so on’. But the ‘alternative’ cinemas cannot tolerate the idea of Kinepolis stealing their customers.

Studio Skoop [Ghent], Sphinx [Ghent], Cartoon’s [Antwerp], Lumière [Bruges] and Studio Filmtheaters [Leuven] are concluding a cooperation agreement. ‘From September we are setting up joint actions, such as national promotion campaigns’, says Henk Cluytens, programmer at Studio Filmtheaters, the cinema company of the Rastelli family. The alternative art house cinemas are exposed to stiff competition from Cinémanie. ‘During the first few weeks that a film is shown, we record around 70% of our sales. If a mammoth like Kinepolis also screens our most successful films in all its cinemas during those crucial weeks, that is a severe drain on our resources’, said Henk Cluytens.

With their cooperation agreement, the alternative cinemas also want to get the distributors of alternative films on their side again. ‘Some independent distributors find it beneficial to use Kinepolis’ national network. To counter that, we must pool our forces’, says Cluytens. ‘But the independent distributors must also realise that we genuinely invest in their films. We screen all their films, not just their box-office hits. And we show them for more weeks than Kinepolis does’.

www.kinepolis.be
www.studioskoop.be
Diary

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

• 16 to 23 February: Richard III, by Giorgio Battistelli [composer] and Ian Burton [librettist], director: Robert Carson, Flanders Opera House, Ghent; conductor: Luca Pfaff; info: 070/22.02.02 www.vlaamscopera.be
• 21 February: Low, Ancienne Belgique Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 (www.abconcerts.be)
• 22 February: Capilla Flamenca (B) & ensemble Oltremontano Obrecht, Josquin, Kaaitheater, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be 02/201 59 59
• 22 February: The Mars Volta, Ancienne Belgique Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 (www.abconcerts.be)
• 22 February: Flemish Radio Choir conducted by Erik Van Nevel with Monteverdi, Selva Morale e spirituale, Billoke, Ghent; info: www.billoke.be
• 22 February: The Dresden Dolls, piano adventures, Handelsburs, Ghent; info: www.handelsburs.be
• 22 February: Les Peuples de l’Herbe, Vooruit Gent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.82.00 www.bozar.be
• 23 and 24 February: Wim Vande Keybus and Ultima Vez with Les portuèses de mauvaises nouvelles; Vooruit, Ghent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.82.00 www.bozar.be
• 23 February: Cradle of Filth, Ancienne Belgique Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 (www.abconcerts.be)
• 23 February: Artemis Quartett with juliane Basne, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.18.28
• 24 February: Tim Berne, Acoustic Hard Core, Vooruit, Gent; info: www.vooruit.be 09/267.82.00 www.bozar.be
• 24 February: DKT/MCS, Ancienne Belgique Brussels; info: 02/548.24.24 (www.abconcerts.be)
• 24 February: Fhinghin Collins, Handelsburs, Ghent; info: www.handelsburs.be
• 25 February: Night of the Gypsies: Kocani Orkestar, Bea Palya & Kal, Handelsburs, Ghent; info: www.handelsburs.be
• 24, 25, 26 and 27 February: Claude Régy, les ateliers contemporains, theatre, French language: De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 24 February: Konstantin Sierbakov (piano) with Shostakovich, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 24, 25 and 26: Jan Fabre, Angel of Death, Bozar, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.bozar.be
• 25 February: Ensemble intégrales, Minimal Music – Now and then, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 25 February: Aka Moon and Sound Plaza (Kris Defoort, Jim Black), Bozar, Brussels; info: 02/507.82.00 www.bozar.be
• 26 February: Symphonic Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Etienne Siebens with Mozart, Ravel, Brewaeys, Billoke, Ghent; info: www.billoke.be
• 26 February: Brussels Arts Weekend, La longue nuit de la danse, Kaaitheater, Brussels; info: www.kaaitheater.be 02/201 59 59
• 26 February: Animia eterna conducted by Jos Van Immerseel with concertos by Mozart, Corelli, J. Bach, Bruges; info: www.concertgebouw.be
• 26 February: Konstantin Sierbakov (piano) with Preludes and fugues by Shostakowitch, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 24 February: Defilharmonie conducted by Ed Spanjaard with compositions by Copland and Adams, De Singel, Antwerp; info: 03/248.28.28 www.desingel.be
• 28 February: The handsome family (USA), Handelsburs, Ghent; info: www.handelsburs.be

EXPO

• Until 27 February: Tattoo-Tattoo, exhibition, Royal Museum for Art and History, Cinquantenaire, Brussels; info: 02/741.72.11 or www.kmkg.be
• Until 4 May: Rudolf Lange, war witness, In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres; info: www.inflandersfields.be
• Until 28 February: Maarten Van Severen, exhibition, Design Museum, Ghent;
• Until 26 February: Dedicated to a proposition, Extra City, Antwerp; info: 0494/42.10.70
• Until 28 February: Fake/not Fake, Jef Vander Veken, restorer of the Flemish Primitives, Groeningemuseum, Bruges; info: www.brugge.be/musea
• Until 10 April: Retrospective Floris Jaspers, exhibition, PMMK, Ostend; info: 059/50.81.18 www.pmmk.be
• Until 27 February: Dear ICC, aspects of contemporary art in Belgium, exhibition, Muhka, Antwerp; info: www.muhka.be
• Until 3 April: Anton Corbijn, exhibition, Fotomuseum, Antwerp; info: 03/242.93.00 www.fotomuseum.be
• Until 17 April: Jazz in Little Belgium, MIM-museum (musical instruments); Brussels; info: www.mim.fgov.be
• From 5 February onwards: The memory of Congo, the colonial period, exhibition, Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren); info: www.tervuren.be 091/75.25.25
• Until 17 April: SMK-exhibitions: Orla Barry, Michael Borremans and Bernd Lohaus + opening Art Now exhibition with Ivo Provoost & Simona Denicolai, SMK, Ghent; info: www.smk.dk
• Until 10 April: 25 years of press photography, Fotomuseum, Antwerp; info: 03/242.93.00
• Until 25 February: Bart Stolle – Low fixed media show, Het Stuk, Leuven; info: 016/32.02.20 www.stuk.be
• Until 22 February: From Cézanne to Dubuffet, the Planque collection, Museum of Elsene, Brussels; info: 02/515.64.22
• Until 15 May: The Maroccan Jews, Jewish Museum of Belgium, Brussels; info: 02/512.19.63
• Until 15 May: Particular visions, exhibition with work from studios of disabled people; Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be
• Until 15 May: Belgium 175-25, a celebration programme with music, dance, theatre, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be

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.

Focus on Flanders • 12 February - 18 February 2005 • Number 7

Focus on Flanders

CULTURE

Editor in chief: Frank Vandecaveye

Translation: Eurologos

Printing: Drukkerij Lannoo nv, Tielt

Responsible editor: Luc Deconinck, Marke

Subscription rate by post and e-mail: 220 euro

Either transfer the sum to account no. 473-1010001-19 with the KBC in Roeselare

Or give us the number and expiry date of your credit card (Visa/Eurocard).

Telephone: 051/41.42.99
Fax: 051/40.11.53
E-mail: frank.vandecaveye@lannoo.be

E-mail: frank.vandecaveye@lannoo.be