Polish labour on order

The 220 employees of the food company Struik Foods in Schoten downed tools on 20 October. They were protesting at the dismissal of a number of Belgian temporary employees and their replacement by 10 cheap Polish workers, on top of the 11 Poles who had previously been ‘imported’. The difference in wage with the Belgian workers amounted to some EUR 10 per working hour. The Poles were hired by the Dutch temporary employment agency Covebo, which, by means of a legal sub-contracting structure, had seen to it that these were not temporary employees and that therefore no social security contributions had to be paid. What is more, the Poles were Slovenians, who held German passports and paid. What is more, the Poles were Slovenians, who held German passports and paid. What is more, the Poles were Slovenians, who held German passports and paid. What is more, the Poles were Slovenians, who held German passports and paid. What is more, the Poles were Slovenians, who held German passports and paid.

Most Poles working in the food industry and construction sector come here via Dutch temporary employment agencies that often have offices just over the border. The Dutch temporary employment offices distribute brochures in our country on a large scale, in which they recommend Poles and other Eastern Europeans as hard-working and reliable workers. To be able to put Poles to work in our country, the Dutch temporary employment agency must have a Belgian recognition, but according to Herwig Muylldermans of the temporary employment federation Federgon, there are only two Dutch temporary employment agencies that have such a recognition. Dutch temping agencies are chosen because in that way it is possible to get round the Belgian legislation. Until May next year, workers from the new Member States may only work in our country if they hold an employment permit. This is only issued if no Belgian workers can be found for the job in question. It is also possible for temporary workers from the new Member States to be seconded to our country via a local temping agency. In that case, they have to be paid under Belgian wage and employment conditions. By hiring a Dutch temporary employment agency, Belgian employers shirk their responsibility for the permit and remuneration.

INTRODUCTION

ACV Chairman Luc Cortebeeck failed to convince his grass-roots supporters that he had secured enough from the negotiations on career-end arrangements and social security. The majority of his militants appear to attach greater credence to the line taken by the ABVV, that with the current high youth unemployment, there is no point keeping older workers working for longer. So Cortebeeck followed his rank and file and referred to the generation pact as broadly adequate, and wholly unacceptable on some points. There is no youth employment policy, and he has not yet said enough about the transition to new, early retirement options. Yet the ACV is not the only union whose position has to be changed for the young to succeed. Rent opposition to the reform inevitably implies drastic austerity measures in the future. Evidently the only thing that people on the shop floor have retained from this debate is the fact that they will not have to work until sixty and that older workers will have to look for a new job in the event of restructuring. No doubt thousands of workers have each done their own sums to see how much longer they will have to work. No argument can be advanced against that concrete reality, says De Tijd (20 October). Employment benefit becoming welfare-linked and social security no longer being financed entirely from labour, but for example also from a 15% income tax advance levy, are developments that seem incidental. Nonetheless these are important social achievements that the trade union leadership has secured from the negotiations. Unfortunately they failed to sell them to their rank and file, and at least not palpably enough. There is no talk, either, of a rebellion on the part of young workers against older ones obstinately holding onto their early retirement. The perception that working longer reduces employability is another, albeit modest, step on the path towards increasing the level of activity. Broadly speaking there is unanimity on that. Opinions vary, however, as to why the ACV rank and file is not following its leadership. According to Het Laatste Nieuws (19 October), the reason is simply to be found in the rivalry between the unions. Every time there is a strike the leaders of the more moderate unions (ACV and ACLVB) fear a mass defection to the more radical union (ABVV), and therefore quickly succumb to the pressure of the rank and file, says the paper. According to De Morgen, the ABVV has cleverly played on the fear of loss of prosperity among workers, but fails to mention that its current opposition to the reform inevitably implies drastic austerity measures in the future.
Who gets the European agricultural subsidies?

In European countries the agriculture and food sector has for decades been fed with billions in subsidies which, a number of non-governmental organisations claim, have disastrous consequences for millions of farmers in developing countries. A study commissioned by the European Commission shows that subsidies mainly benefit the richest regions of the EU and that large agri and food groups (Nestlé, Campina/Melkunie, Tiense Suiker) rake in massive sums in the form of export refunds. According to the Commission, it is up to the individual Member States to decide whether to publish the list of beneficiaries. In the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands this already happens. In the Netherlands you can examine the list on the Ministry of Agriculture’s website. Under pressure from Euro MPs Bart Staes (Groen!) and Johan Van Hecke (CD&V), who is also Flemish Agriculture Minister, only released the details of around 2,000 legal entities and is refusing to release the details of individual farmers for reasons of privacy. Of the 251.7 million euros that is being distributed via the Flemish agricultural administration, 215.5 million is going to directly support the income of cattle farmers and arable farmers.

The sums circulating at Flemish level are much more modest than at federal level, precisely because no export subsidies or interventions are paid here. Last year in Flanders there were only 35 farms or cooperatives that received between 100,000 and 200,000 euros in subsidies, six firms got between 200,000 and 500,000 euros and a grand total of two received half a million or more.

The big recipients on the Flemish side are dairy companies Campina and Belgomilk, each of which receives around 400,000 euros. What happens, however, is that they divert this to the farmers. The same applies to the Belgian Flax Federation, which last year received 3.8 million, and diverted it to the flax growers.

And then there are one or two large fat-teners or integrators, businesses which, for example, ‘put out’ calves with farmers who receive a breeding fee per animal. The company pockets the slaughter premiums and not the farmer. The prime example of this is Vilatca, pretty much Europe’s largest calf business, which received around 450,000 euros in subsidies in 2004. But a cattle breeder like Chanelca also does well, with around 450,000 euros in subsidies.

Another striking feature of the Flemish subsidy tables is that the biggest recipients are the banks: KBC is way out in front with 14.2 million, followed by Landbouwkrediet with 6.8 million, Fortis with 2.7 million and ING with 0.8 million. In total around 26 million euros found its way to the agricultural sector via a dozen banks.

That is part of a special programme, the so-called Flemish Agricultural Investment Fund (VLIF), for which European money is also used. Farms that borrow money from a bank to invest can receive so-called interest subsidies. Instead of paying 4% interest, for example, 3% is paid via the VLIF, so that the farmer only has to pay 1% of the interest. Each year this money goes straight to the bank. Leterme does not think it strange that the government pays the interest to commercial banks with tax money. After all, farmers receive investment support in every European country.

www2.vlaanderen.be/ned/sites/landbouw/

MARLEEN TEUGELS/INGRID VAN DALELE/HANS VAN SCHAREN • KNACK • 19 OCTOBER

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Laruelle yields to pressure from European Commission and prime minister

From 20 October the website of the Belgian Intervention and Restitution Office (Belgisch Interventie- en Restitutiebureau, BIRB) - www.birb.be - displayed the names of those Belgian and foreign firms that are to receive European agricultural subsidies from the Federal Government (559 million in 2003-2004). Siim Kallas, EU Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud, told the Belgian press that Europe did not want any secrecy over who was pocketing European subsidies. Openness of this sort of information only contributes to greater transparency and a more responsible policy, claims the Commissioner. Federal Agriculture Minister Laruelle (MR) initially refused to release the information, but after being pushed by Premier Verhofstadt (VLD) and Kallas she finally gave the BIRB permission to release the list.

www.birb.be

FF EDITOR
The Generation Pact: government again facing reunited union front

Although the government is not really inclined to make many further changes to the proposal, it hopes that the Christian union will approve the measures.

After the Socialist ABVV, the Christian ACV and Liberal ACLVB have now also rejected the Federal Government’s Generation Pact. The increase in the age for early retirement and the lack of an employment policy for young unemployed people are the stumbling blocks. On 28 October there will be another day of action, with a national trade union demonstration in Brussels and a probably much more general strike than on 7 October. These are intended to force the government to make changes to its Generation Pact. ACV Chairman Luc Cortebeeck is therefore making a U-turn under pressure from his employees’ union the LBC and his metalworkers’ union. In contrast to the Socialists, there were no calls for a 24-hour strike, but the divisions are being left to strike if they so choose. This enabled a compromise to be reached within the ACV between the more strike-minded and the more moderate divisions. Meanwhile Premier Verhofstadt let it be understood that he was not considering shelving his Generation Pact. He said strikes were the wrong approach and warned that they would instead endanger new investments and jobs. The employers’ organisations VBO and Unizo are dismissing new negotiations with the unions (FF).

WIM VANDE VELDEN • DE TIJD • 19 OCTOBER

‘With the social partners if we can, without them if we have to.’ That was the arrangement between the Liberals and Socialists in the Federal Government, even before the start of the marathon negotiations with the trade unions and employers over the end of career and social security. The official line in government circles, therefore, is that it is not about to go back on the coalition agreement, not even now the leaders of the Christian union the ACV are having the whistle blown on them by their militants. In particular, the campaign with the ABVV that 60 has become the norm for early retirement did not leave the green scarves (ACV members) untouched. The ACV leadership did everything it could, including in eye-catching newspaper advertisements, to present the legal exception - early retirement at 58 - as the real norm. At the weekend Prime minister Guy Verhofstadt (VLD) dashed to the assistance of the ACV leadership. He agreed that many people will still be able to take early retirement at 58, but it was too late. It looks as if we are heading for a lively autumn, with action by Christian and Socialist unions. That could quickly overturn the image of a relaunched government. The position of the Socialists in the government is commanding most attention.

Traditionally it is difficult for the Parti Socialiste to run counter to grass-roots trade union support. Chairman Elio Di Rupo managed it, when at the end of last year the unions rejected the inter-professional agreement, but that was notable. Rubbing supporters up the wrong way twice in succession seems too much of a good thing, even for the new-style Parti Socialiste. Certainly now the PS in Wallonia is being hounded by one scandal after the other, they will want to avoid problems in their own trade union circles. The Flemish Socialists (SPA) are also having a hard time of it. Following the departure of figurehead Steve Stevaert, the party finds itself in a period of transition. Relations with the ABVV have not been this bad for years. The protest of ABVV militants at the doors of the conference in Hasselt, where Johan Vande Lanotte made his joyous entry as Chairman, was hard to take. Banners and stickers read: ‘SPA, you’re leaving us in the lurch. We’re turning our back on you.’ Vande Lanotte hit back: ‘Whoever turns their back to the left is looking to the right.’ He announced he would be sending SPA troops to the factory gates to defend the end-of-career agreement, even if it involved breaching ABVV pickets. Now the ACV is also threatening to change its mind, things are getting lonely for the SPA and the PS. Nevertheless Liberal circles are assuming that the Socialists will also keep to the arrangement that the reforms will go ahead anyway. That is also the message of the new Employment Minister, Peter Van Velthoven (SPA): ‘The government will implement the Generation Pact.’ At the same time, however, he wants further discussions with social partners.

Luc Cortebeeck’s U-turn nonsense, he says

FF EDITOR

It is a well-known fact that the competitive position of the Belgian car industry is under pressure and the objective is to gradually eliminate this handicap. To do so the reduction in advance levy, which currently stands at 2.5%, will be increased to 5.63% in 2006 and up to maximum 10.7% in 2007. However, the latter increase will be conditional. It will only be released providing the social partners in the industry set up a social agreement for 2007-2008 with a similar impact. This should ensure that the reduction in tax is not frittered away by wage increases. There will also be tax reductions for the over fifties and for young, unskilled workers. To this end the government is allocating 272 and 240 million euros respectively at speed. Employers will receive an additional reduction in tax of 50 euros per quarter for all employees below 50. This figure will be increased gradually up to the age of 65. In the case of young employees the criterion is the younger the employee the more reduction in tax. Employers are entitled to a reduction in contribution of 300 euros per quarter for employees aged 19. This figure gradually decreases at a rate of 30 euros per year, to a zero rate when the employee reaches the age of 29.
Vande Lanotte calls for thorough modernisation of the SP.A

NEW CHAIRMAN VANDE LANOTTE CALLED ON PARTY MEMBERS TO GO AND EXPLAIN TO WORKERS WHY THE GOVERNMENT’S DECISION ON ENDS OF CAREERS WAS THE RIGHT ONE

On Saturday more than two thousand people made their way to the Grenshallen in Hasselt, where they were told that in a written poll of members Johan Vande Lanotte had been elected as new Chairman with a Stalin-like score of 93.4%. Initially the party conference had all the appearance of a relaxed show, but there was no real evidence of a festive spirit. The SP.A is in a dip in the opinion polls, the departure of the highly popular former Chairman Steve Stevaert is still being felt and now the party is also being pressed hard by the Socialist trade union, which even had the nerve to come and demonstrate at the door of the party conference and literally ‘turn its back’ on the conference. The union is holding against the party not only the fact that it supported the government’s end-of-year plan, but that the person behind the plan also comes from the ranks of the SP.A, namely (former) Employment Minister Freya Vanden Bossche. New Chairman Vande Lanotte calmed feelings and called on party members to go and explain to workers why the government’s decision on ends of careers was the right one (FF).

LIESBETH VAN IMPE • DE MORGEN • 17 OCTOBER

‘These are turbulent times and you are here. Thank you for that,’ was how Vande Lanotte began his speech. ‘It hurts to see age-old friends standing on the other side,’ he went on, referring to the ABVV demonstrators who had settled outside the door in the morning to express their dissatisfaction with their party. Under the slogan ‘SP.A, you’re leaving us in the lurch. We’re turning our back on you’, a few dozen militants formed an inverted double row for the Socialist dignitaries and Employment Minister Freya Van den Bossche was treated to a chorus of whistles. According to Vande Lanotte, ‘the ABVV has got the wrong enemy’. He defended the decisions as necessary and justified and called on all those present to go and explain the measures together with him at the factory gates. Central to Vande Lanotte’s first speech as Chairman was the need for modernisation. ‘We have reached the end of an era. That Steve has become Governor makes all the more palpable.’ Therefore, there must be further modernisation with regard to content, communication and political personnel. By way of illustration, six promising young people from the youth movement Animo were allowed to sit in the front row and shortly after even mount the podium. They must ‘pester’ the Chairman like a youth cabinet with their own proposals and insights. ‘The SP.A is far too concerned with the problems of our, of my generation. We reflect on our own problems, not the future of subsequent generations.’

WWW.SP.BE

A tax on capitalisation funds that changes from day to day

A small poll of banks revealed that around one million small savers have an investment in such capitalisation unit trusts, worth a total of around 60 billion euros. Reynders advised the investors simply to come out of the funds in question (with at least 40% bonds) before the end of this year and invest in tax-free funds or shares. That would also directly benefit our businesses, he added. But that caused even more panic, much to the annoyance of the banks, which pointed out that their unit trust customers were mainly interested in secure investments and not at all in shares. The banks also demanded that the savings tax should be levied in accordance with the rules of the European Savings Directive to avoid a flight of capital abroad.

WWW.MINFIN.FGOV.BE
Outsider Bruno Tuybens big surprise in redistribution of portfolios

Johan Vande Lanotte was elected new Chairman of the SP.A at a party conference in Hasselt on Saturday with a comfortable 93.4%. At the same time Vande Lanotte stood down as Minister for the Budget, Public Enterprises and as Vice-Premier from the Federal Government. The scramble for places could then begin within the SP.A. The barely 30-year-old Freya Vanden Bossche, until now Minister for Employment and Consumer Affairs, is taking over the Budget from him and will become the new Vice-Premier. Her Employment portfolio is being taken over by State Secretary Peter Van Velthoven, who is promoted to Minister and brings with him the Information technology portfolio. Current Transport Minister Renaat Landuyt, just like Vande Lanotte a West-Fleming, is taking over the North Sea portfolio. The big surprise was the new State Secretary for Public Enterprises (NMBS and the Post Office), Bruno Tuybens. He is responsible for ethical business at KBC Asset Management and sits on the international council of Amnesty International. Tuybens was not a member of the SP.A. His appointment is a symbol of the modernisation within the SP.A announced by Vande Lanotte. (FF).

BART DOBBELAERE • DE STANDAARD • 17 OCTOBER

When elected Chairman of the SP.A on Saturday, Johan Vande Lanotte promised modernisation and change. He also called on his party to throw open the doors and windows. With his first job as Chairman, Vande Lanotte made good this call. In the 44-year-old Bruno Tuybens, Vande Lanotte found someone from the business world with a social profile to take over the Public Enterprise portfolio. Since the end of 2002 Tuybens has been an asset manager for KBC Asset Management and head of the unit for sustainable and socially responsible investment. He worked on the development of this country’s sustainable investment funds. At KBC he headed up a research team that quotes major multinationals on long-term visions and sustainable and socially responsible business.

For some time Tuybens was also Chairman of the Belgian branch of Amnesty International. Two months ago he was elected to the association’s International Executive Committee in Mexico. As State Secretary he will have to abandon this post. The other reshuffles within the Federal Government are no surprise. Freya Vanden Bossche will become Vice-Premier, Minister for the Budget and will hold onto Consumer Affairs. Renaat Landuyt is taking over the North Sea. Peter Van Velthoven is being promoted from State Secretary for Information technology to Minister for Employment and IT.

A great many challenges await Tuybens in public enterprises

As brand-new State Secretary Bruno Tuybens is not part of the Council of Ministers. He is being added to new Vice-Premier Freya Vanden Bossche. It will be his job to steer the reforms of the Post Office, the Railways, airport operator Biac and telecoms operator Belgacom in the right direction. However, the main outlines of these reforms have already been sketched by his predecessor, Vande Lanotte himself. He managed to have the government take over 7.3 billion euros of NMBS debts, allowed former CEO Karel Vinck to split the company into three and push through restructuring measures. As his successor at the head of the umbrella holding company Vande Lanotte placed his own Principal Private Secretary, Janie Haeck. Just before his departure he was able to conclude another agreement with the NMBS to cut the cost of a season ticket for students by 40%. After all, transport, the pet subject of former Chairman Stevaert, remains a spearhead of the SP.A’S programme, Vande Lanotte pointed out.

For Tuybens the next few weeks will be a test-case for his relations with the railway unions. Negotiations are currently under way with train drivers over a retirement age of 55. And the policy plans for the NMBS companies must be complete by 15 December. The Post Office is facing even greater modernisation. Not only does it have to find compensation for the decline in the volume of post, the company also has to be prepared for liberalisation, which will take effect on 1 January when all post above 50 grams will be deregulated. Much is expected of the partnership with Post Danmark that was confirmed last week. The Danish Post Office is around ten years ahead in terms of modernisation and can bring a considerable amount of know-how to the table. For example, about how to modernise the network of antiquated post offices and at the same time make them profitable again. CEO of the Post Office Johny Thijs is expecting an annual staff redundancy of 3%. Here too Tuybens could be facing a confrontation with the unions. The newly listed telecoms operator Belgacom, which is much better off financially than the NMBS and the Post Office, is feverishly seeking new sources of income to compensate for the drop in income from telephony. Belgacom is currently looking for the answer in Triple Play, the joint offer of telephone, Internet and digital television via its ADSL network. Competition with Teletel is fierce. Belgacom also intends consolidating its position via a take-over of Telindus, but that is not currently going according to plan. There is also social unrest at Belgacom following 460 redundancies and an end-of-career ruling.

WWW.POST.BE
WWW.NMBS.BE
WWW.BELGACOM.BE
Telindus wants to remove from stock exchange

TELINDUS WILL NOW CONSIDER MAKING A BID FOR THE SHARES CURRENTLY HELD BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT A PRICE THAT IS 5% HIGHER THAN THE 13.5 EUROS OFFERED BY BELGACOM

The Board of Directors of network integrator Telindus has rejected Belgacom’s bid. The directors found the bid of 13.50 euros per share too low and pointed out that an independent price could bring much more value to the company. From the time the announcement was made Belgacom’s bid was quoted at below the stock market price of the Telindus share, which was 14.54 euros on 14 October. The directors, headed by the group of shareholders based around the Cordier family, announced that in any event they would not add their 23.22% interest to the bid. And yet they are not yet calling the bid hostile. According to De Standaard, Telindus will now consider making a bid for the shares currently held by the general public at a price that is 5% higher than the 13.5 euros offered by Belgacom (FF).

PASCAL DEN DOOVEN • DE STANDAARD • 18 OCTOBER

According to observers, the bid could be partly financed with the Mobistar shares which Telindus owns. Nor does the group based around the Cordier family, which owns 23.4% of Telindus, need to be bought out, bringing the required investment to around 200 million. The management would also play an active role in the scenario. Telindus itself is not looking to join forces with an industrial player such as British Telecom or France Telecom. The project’s only chance of success is if Belgacom releases its quarry. Market specialists are not discounting that.

Didier Bellens, CEO of Belgacom, has already received a political signal to calm things down. This means Bellens’ hands are tied. It seems highly unlikely that Bellens can increase the aggression even further, for example by declaring Belgacom’s bid unconditional in combination with a higher bid price. Legally, however, Bellens cannot withdraw his bid. That means the clock is ticking at Telindus. Belgacom’s bid could begin within a couple of weeks and will remain open for at least ten working days.

Meanwhile, Telindus is still quoted at 7.4% above Belgacom’s bid price. Leverage funds could already have up to around 20% of the shares. The funds cannot exclude the possibility of no alternative scenario emerging for Belgacom, in which case they will ultimately have to choose between selling to Belgacom at a loss (13.5 euros) or holding onto the shares.

Belgacom talks with Telindus

FF EDITOR

Belgacom has got itself stuck. There is a bid for Telindus on the table that cannot be withdrawn and CEO Didier Bellens has had the political whistle blown on him for his impetuous approach that his bid for the network integrator actually is. Now according to De Standaard (19 October) Belgacom is opting to reach an agreement with Telindus through negotiations. Such a negotiated agreement would mean, among other things, that a better price would be paid than the official bid and better guarantees would be given for Telindus staff.

WWW.BELGACOM.BE
WWW.TELINDUS.BE
Sweeping restructuring and job losses at De Tijd

In April the business newspaper was taken over by De Persgroep

A special works council the management of the business newspapers De Tijd and L'Echo announced a drastic savings plan. In April the press company De Tijd, which publishes a newspaper and also sells financial information, was taken over by De Persgroep (Het Laatste Nieuws, De Morgen) and Rossel (Le Soir, Sud Presse). The new owner combined both groups in the holding company Mediafin and was recently given the go-ahead by the Competition Council to take over De Tijd. However, the savings plan will mean significant job losses. 91 of the 351 jobs are in the balance, 67 of them at De Tijd and 24 at Editeco, the publisher of L'Echo. The restructuring will hit staff at De Tijd hardest. 35 jobs are due to go there in supporting and administrative services, 14 in the Stock Market Media department (stock market information) and 18 in the editorial team. The press company is also moving from its permanent spot in Berchem (Antwerp) to Brussels, where it will take up residence in the Tour & Taxis office building along with Editeco.

With the economy measures the management hopes to restore the profitability of Editeco, but above all of De Tijd. The information and consultation period of the Renault Act has begun (FF).

MICHAEL SEPINA • DE TIJD • 11 OCTOBER

For the past few years Editeco has only just made a profit, and publishing company Tijd has made a loss for the last four years. ‘This year Tijd is reckoning on making an operating profit (ebit) of 600,000 to 700,000 euros, but the company has a structural profitability problem,’ says General Manager Hans Maertens. To resolve that the management wants to restructure the company. 67 jobs are under threat at Tijd and if the employees who have left since the start of this year and who have not been replaced are taken into account, the figure rises to 100, or more than one third of the work-force. At Editeco 3 editors out of 53 and 21 of the 46 employees in supporting services may lose their jobs. From mid-2006 Medaiﬁn wants to relocate the remaining 260 employees of both groups to the Tour & Taxis office building in Brussels. The group is aiming for maximum synergy between De Persgroep, Rossel, Tijd and Editeco, with editorial collaboration also being studied. Staff at Tijd are disappointed. ‘The plan doesn’t tie in with what was held up before us a few months ago. This is a social bloodbath that comes on top of the significant pay sacrifices made by staff earlier this year. We feel threatened and are looking at all the options, including possible action. We’re looking to avoid compulsory lay-offs and keep the site in Antwerp,’ says the spokesperson of the staff delegation.

WWW.TIJD.BE

Flemings love culture

For the first time a large-scale survey has been carried out in Flanders into the cultural consumption - participation is a less disrespectful word - of the Fleming. Re-Creatief Vlaanderen asked more than 2,800 families how many times they had attended a cultural event in the past six months. The survey shows that 68% had done so at least once. 23% of those questioned had even done so more than seven times in this period. The cinema is the most popular (42%), followed by musicals, revues and shows (30.2%), theatre and dance (29.1%), non-classical concerns and (20.7%) and museums and exhibitions (19.1%). Classical concerts and festivals score a reasonable 7.5%. However, 33% of those questioned claimed never to participate in culture. Culture Minister Bert Anciaux (Spirit) feels strengthened by the figures in his policy, which is primarily aimed at stimulating cultural participation. Anciaux maintains that the third of Flemings that do not participate in culture can be reached by providing an even more diverse range of options, so that their tastes and expectations are also taken into consideration. (FF).

WILFRIED EETEZONNE • DE MORGEN • 15 OCTOBER

Within Europe Flanders scores above average. Only the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Luxembourg do better, but we are more involved in culture than the French. In the field of dance and ballet, concerts, museum visits abroad and heritage we are even at the head of the peloton compared with other countries. We visit theatres, monuments, Belgian museums, libraries and cinemas less compared to the leading European countries. The results shatter a number of myths. For example, the culture-lover disregards the prejudice surrounding high and low culture, but ploughs straight through the cultural offer. Instead, schooling, upbringing, education and a large circle of friends seem decisive in determining someone’s interest in culture. Flemings do not therefore go to the theatre or concerts alone. More than half of those questioned experience culture with their partner, and friends and acquaintances are important too. This includes visits to restaurants and cafés.

In theatre the taste of those questioned is mainly for the classic works of Flemish writers: 32% "enjoy that". Experimental work or contemporary treatments of classics score significantly lower (9 to 8%).

This remarkably conservative reflex is also evident with regard to visual arts. 66% do not like conceptual art, but the Flemish primitives and landscape artists from the nineteenth century possess great appeal. It is impossible, however, to draw any simplistic conclusions from this survey, since as many as 32% believe it is important that the government supports new art forms, 57% expressed no opinion. The group of non-participants accounts for one third of those questioned. That is the group that is completely uninterested in culture or prefers staying at home and also participates less, if at all, in social life.

WWW.RE-CREATIEFVLANDEREN.BE
WWW.CULTUURNETVLANDEREN.BE

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**MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE**

- Until 10 November: Klapstuk, 12th Internationale Dance Festival Leuven, Dance meets visual arts, Stuk, Leuven, info: www.klapstuk.be 016/320 320
- 29 October: Maceo Parker, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels, info: www.abconcerts.be 02/548.24.24
- 29 October: Constantijn Lefschitz (Russia), piano with Xi Ziyun and Liseet, De Handelsbeurs, Ghent, info: www.handelsbeurs.be
- 3 November: Frank Gratkowski Double Quartet, Jazzlab, De Singel, info: www.desingel.be 03/248.28.28
- 5 November: Ashra, De Handelsbeurs, Ghent, info: www.desingel.be
- 5 November: Maria Farantouri, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels, info: www.desingel.be 02/548.24.24
- 6 November: Approximations/contradictions in concert, Lieder by H Eisler, web project by Svend Asmussen, De Singel, info: www.desingel.be
- 8 November: Alexei Lubimov, piano with Mozarte, Haydn, Weinbrenner, Schobenm, Clementi, Polcen, De Handelsbeurs, Ghent, info: www.handelsbeurs.be
- 9 November: Vinicius Cantuaria Quintet, Flagey, Brussels; info: www.flagey.be www.audijazz.be
- 9 November: Approximations/contradictions in concert, Lieder by H Eisler, web project by Svend Asmussen, De Singel, info: www.desingel.be 03/248.28.28

**EXPO**

- From 5 February onwards: The memory of Congo, the colonial period, exhibition, Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren), info: www.centrumvoorcentraalafrika.be
- Until 24 April: Art at the Frontline: fascinating facts about the many cultures and towns on the route to Vladivostok, KMKG, Cinquantenaire, Brussels, info: 02/742.72.11
- Until 8 January: Sabena, Air Nostalgie, Photo Museum, Antwerp, info: 03/242.93.00

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**CULTURE**

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**Until 31 December: Master pieces from the Dutch treasure room, KMSK, Antwerp; info: www.kmsk.be
**Until 2008: Art at the Frontline 1914-1918, Royal Army and Military History Museum, Brussels; info: 02 737 78 33 www.klm-mra.be
**Until 31 December: Art nouveau and Design 1830-1958, Royal Museum for Art and History, Cinquantenaire, Brussels; info: 02/741.72.11 www.kmkg.be
**Until 23 December: The art nouveau front as a complete work of art, Museum voor Architec- ture, Brussels; info: 02/642.24.75
**17 September to 20 November: Contour, second bi-annual exhibition of video art, Mechelen, info: 070/22.88.00 www.mechelen2005.be
**17 September to 27 November: Angels of History: Conceptualism from Moscow with Oleg Kulik and others, Mulka, Antwerp; info: www.mukha.be 03/260.99.99
**Until 31 December: Between Film and photo, exhibition, KMKG, Cinquantenaire, Brussels, info: www.kmkg.be
**Until 4 December: The big umbrella by Aleksandra Mis, SMAK, Gent, info: www.smak.be
**Other Smak exhibitions:
- Until 20 November: Simonne Decker (Lux) and Giovanni Anselmo (It)
- 8 July: Serj Tankovoy (Russ), www.smak.be (0)9 221 17 03
- Until 9 January: Panamarenko, retrospective, KMSK, Brussels; info: 02-508.32.11
- Until 18 December: Iconocity, exhibition, by Aglaia Konidri, Photographic impressions of Peking, Katro, Chicago, Mexico City, De Singel, Antwerp; info: www.desingel.be 03/248.28.28
- Until 22 January: Avant-garde from Russia 1900-1935, exhibition, Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be www.europalia.be 02/507.85.95
- Until 22 January: From Tsar to Emperor: 300 objects that illustrate the period of Russian history from Ivan the Terrible to Catherine the Great (1547-1796), Bozar, Brussels; info: www.bozar.be www.europalia.be 02/507.85.95
- Until 30 April: Pain, exhibition, Museum Ghislain, Gent, info: www.museumghislain.be
- Until 26 February: The Trans-Siberian Express: fascinating facts about the many cultures and towns on the route to Vladivostok, KMKG, Cinquantenaire, Brussels, info: 02/742.72.11
- Until 8 January: Sabena, Air Nostalgie, Photo Museum, Antwerp, info: 03/242.93.00

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