

# The Flemish Republic

*A quarterly newsletter explaining why Flanders is seceding from Belgium*

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## Flanders Blocks EU Constitution

Belgium has not yet ratified the European constitutional treaty. The Belgian federal parliament (Chamber of Representatives and Senate) as well as the Brussels and Walloon regional parliaments have approved it, but the Flemish regional parliament has not. In the Flemish parliament the Vlaams Belang (VB) is the largest party. The VB demands that the EU Constitution be submitted to a referendum.

Belgium's federal Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** is pressuring the Flemish Parliament to ratify the EU Constitution before the end of this year, which would allow Belgium to join the

does not get the EU Constitution ratified, because of the VB's refusal to cooperate, Verhofstadt's plans are not very convincing.

The VB is opposed to the creation of a federal European state, which it sees as a Greater Belgium. Its aim is for Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium where 60% of the Belgian population lives, to become an independent and sovereign member state of a confederal Europe.

### Two Monsters

The VB is not only the biggest party in Flanders, but also in Belgium as a whole. Owing to the Belgian federal structure, however, the Flemish majority is minorised within Belgium, where the French-speaking Walloon minority has half of the seats in government and can veto all decisions in parliament. The Flemings realise that the Belgian federal state is an artificial and undemocratic construct, and they do not want to replace it by another undemocratic artificial construct – a European superstate.

At present 70% of Belgium's legislation emanates from the Berlaymont Building – the so-called "Berlaymonster" – which is the seat of the European Commission, situated at the eastern end of the Brussels *Rue de la Loi* (*Wetstraat* in Dutch). At the western end lies the Belgian parliament and the office of Verhofstadt, whose residence is called Lambermont House – the "Lambermonster." The VB hopes to slay the two monsters and is not keen on replacing the little Belgian monster by the bigger European one. Some Flemings, including Mr Verhofstadt, however, do not care about little Belgium either, but would rather replace it by a bigger Belgium, called Europe.



small group of nations that has already approved the constitution. However, the VB will be able to stop the Flemish Parliament from taking a decision before at least the Spring of 2006.

### Confederal

This is a huge embarrassment for Verhofstadt. He has just authored a book *"The United States of Europe"* in which he proposes the establishment of a federal Europe. If this should prove impossible with all 25 EU members, Verhofstadt insists that a "hard core" proceed with the federalist agenda. He sees Belgium as a leading member of this group, which must also include France and Germany. As long as Belgium

## A Common Goal

The federal Kingdom of Belgium is basically a redistribution mechanism where taxes collected in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of the country, are distributed as subsidies in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern part, where the Socialists have their power base.

Belgium does not allow the Flemings, who are the majority in Belgium, to abolish this system, which is corrupting Wallonia, because the Belgian Constitution guarantees Wallonia vetoing power. What one can witness in Belgium is the phenomenon of (Walloon) voters who have been corrupted by their addictive shots of welfare subsidies and, as a consequence, do not mind voting for corrupt politicians who are able to veto every attempt to reform the system.

One need not be a Flemish-nationalist to realise that Flemish secession from Belgium is the only way to save both Flanders and Wallonia. This explains why a group of leading Flemish bankers, businessmen, captains of industry and academics – the so-called "Warande Group," named after the Warande Club in Brussels – recently launched an appeal for Flemish secession. These people are not members of our party, but they share our goal of Flemish independence.

A Flemish Republic would not only be to the benefit of Flanders and Wallonia, but also to the benefit of Europe. The Flemish have always been wary of attempts to create a federal European superstate because we know what Belgium is. Brussels' rule during the past 175 years has been bad for us. Being ruled by Brussels has corrupted Belgium. It will also corrupt Europe. That is why our fight for independence from Brussels will benefit more than Flanders alone.



**Frank Vanhecke, MEP**  
President of the  
Vlaams Belang

"Brussels is bad  
for you"

# Court Rules that Government Member is Genocide Denier

Belgium's laws severely restrict freedom of speech and opinion. Now, one of the major protagonists of these laws has fallen victim to them. On November 14, Brussels court ruled that **Emir Kir**, a Brussels regional government member, denies the Armenian genocide and hence is committing a hate crime.

The court proceedings began after Kir, the Turkish-born Secretary of State of the Brussels Region and a leading Socialist politician in the Belgian capital, lodged a complaint against a website which criticized him for taking part in a demonstration of Turkish immigrants denying the Armenian Genocide. The court ruling against Kir confirms that the Armenian Genocide was a crime against humanity and that, consequently, it is not protected in Belgium under freedom of expression.

The verdict said that the website was "by no means wrong"

in branding Kir as a genocide denier. It went on to note that this type of clear labelling serves the common good and advances the purposes established by Belgian law to pe-

nalize genocide denial. Secretary Kir said that he will appeal against the verdict.

The only genocide one is allowed to deny in Belgium is the one perpetrated by the Belgian King **Leopold II** in the Congo from 1885 to 1908. Though internationally historians hold that Leopold's rule cost the lives of up to 10 million people, Belgian historians maintain that there is no agreement among historians that there ever was a genocide in the Congo.

## Forbidden Opinions

Following Kir's conviction **Frederic Erens**, a member of the Brussels Parliament for the *Vlaams Belang* (VB), asked for the

Secretary's resignation. The *Parti Socialiste*, to which Kir belongs, has authored many of Belgium's "opinion crimes." These were written for the purpose of criminalising the

*Vlaams Blok*, the predecessor of the VB. The *Vlaams Blok* had to be disbanded last year after Belgian courts ruled that it was a criminal organisation.



Frederic Erens, MP

This ruling was based on 16 texts published by the party. Many of the texts simply quoted official statistics on crime rates and social welfare expenditure.

But they were, according to the court, published with "an intention to contribute to a campaign of hatred" against immigrants.

One of the texts, which dealt with the position of women in fundamentalist Muslim societies, was written by a female Turkish-born VB member who had herself been raised in such an environment and had been subjected to a forced marriage. The court said that, although the text was not necessarily untrue, the VB published it "not to inform the public about the position of women in the Islamic world, but to depict the image [of non-indigenous people] as unethical and barbarian."

## Islamophobia

The Belgian authorities are currently trying to outlaw the VB on similar charges. On November 22 two government-subsidized Brussels organisations lodged a complaint against **Filip Dewinter**, a member of the Flemish regional parliament and one of the VB leaders. They demand that Dewinter and his party be convicted for "incitement to racist hatred."

The reason for the complaint is an interview which Dewinter gave last October 28 to the New York magazine *Jewish Week*. When asked whether he espoused xenophobia, Dewinter replied: "'Xenophobia' is not the word I would use. If it absolutely must be a 'phobia' let it be 'islamophobia'. Yes, we're afraid of Islam. The islamisation of Europe is a frightening thing. Even distinguished Jewish scholars as Bat Ye'or and Bernard Lewis warned for this."

Genocide denial is a criminal offence in Belgium, but so is xenophobia, islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia and a whole range of other "denials," "phobias" and "anti-isms."

## Socialist Skeletons

Belgium is one of the most corrupt countries in Europe. Recently a number of skeletons have fallen out of the socialist closets in Wallonia. There was the Formula One scandal (see page 4). Last October **Jean-Claude Van Cauwenberghe**, the president of the Walloon regional government, resigned when it was revealed that he was implicated in a corruption scandal involving *La Carolorégienne*, the social housing company of the town of Charleroi. Local socialist politicians bought themselves presents, including SUVs, with money from the government housing company. A few days after Cauwenberghe's resignation, some of the judicial files relating to the case were stolen from the home of the public prosecutor in Charleroi. On 21 October **Laurette Onkelinx**, the Belgian minister of Justice, who is a leading PS politician, said in the Belgian parliament that "no premature conclusions can be drawn from this theft," as the thieves may also have taken the documents by accident, "when in their haste they took the bags that were nearest to them." In Flanders the Socialists were involved in a corruption scandal in the province of Limburg, where government subsidies, intended to help the former mine region recover economically, ended up in the pockets of socialist appointed civil servants running the economic recovery programs.

## The Multicultural Chimera

The recent riots in France's suburbs show that the left-wing ideology of the multicultural society is a chimera. The *Vlaams Belang* has always warned against an "open borders" policy which invited large groups of Muslim immigrants to settle in Western Europe. The numbers allowed in were so huge that assimilation into our societies was simply impossible. As in France, many neighbourhoods surrounding our cities have become no-go areas.

The catastrophe we are witnessing is entirely self-inflicted. The only way to stop it, is to adopt a policy of zero tolerance towards people who do not respect our values and want to establish independent Muslim enclaves in our country.



Filip De Man, MP

"Muslim enclaves cannot be tolerated."

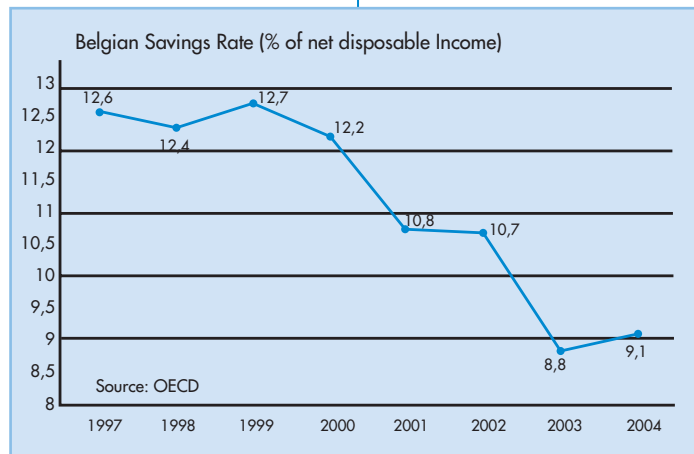
# Belgian Taxes Burden Flanders

At its party congress on November 26 the Vlaams Belang called upon the Belgian government to introduce economic policies that stimulate entrepreneurship. Since the coalition of Liberals and Socialists led by Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** came to power in 1999 it has been pursuing policies that are wealth destructive. The government, which according to recent polls has the support of only 35% of the population

thereby drying up all reserves for investment. Like work, saving and investing, too, must be profitable if people are to engage in these activities.

## Cooking the Books

Since 2002 the Belgians can no longer be considered the richest Europeans. In 2002 their financial capital represented 255% of GDP. Last year it had



in freemarket Flanders (the Dutch-speaking northern half of Belgium) is catering for heavily subsidized socialist Wallonia (the French-speaking south).

## Overburdened

The Belgian tax burden stands at 49.9% of GDP. It is the third highest in the world, after Sweden and Denmark, and is 9% higher than the OECD average and 15% higher than the tax level in the US and Japan. The Verhofstadt government recently proposed a new economic policy plan in which the stifling fiscal burden is not reduced, but shifted from one production factor (labour) to another (capital) which is already overburdened.

Taxes on savings will increase even further, discouraging every incentive to save. Since Verhofstadt came to power the Belgian savings rate has already dropped from 12.4% in 1998 to 9.1% in 2004. The savings rate will drop even further,

## Drug Abuse: Zero Tolerance

Twenty European countries have witnessed a significant rise in drug abuse from 1998 to 2003. The number of drug addicts in the EU is estimated to be between 1.2 and 2.1 million. 9 million Europeans are said to have experimented with drugs. Drug abuse is one of the things parents worry about most. The government has a responsibility in fighting drug abuse. It is a fact that so-called "soft" drugs lead to hard drugs. The rise in drug abuse is undoubtedly the result of the soft approach that many governments, including Belgium's, have adopted towards "soft" drugs in the past five years.



Gerda Van Steenberge, MP

"Drug abuse must be fought."

risen to 257%, but the Dutch, whose capital rose from 247 to 268% in the same period, and the British, whose capital rose from 252 to 270%, overtook them.

Meanwhile the European Commission is questioning the methods the Verhofstadt government uses to balance its books.

The Belgian government is currently selling tax arrears and future tax income to private banks. By selling a bank a substantial part of the taxes still to be collected, the government gains instant access to money, while the bank is given the right to collect the taxes.

## Cultural Difference



The Belgian authorities are subsidizing a play written by **Chokri Ben Chikha**, a young immigrant of Tunisian origin. The play, which is called "Our Lady of Flanders" (*Onze Lieve Vrouw van Vlaanderen*), is said to be about cultural differences and the difficulties faced by young immigrants.

The play has caused a lot of commotion because the poster which is used to advertise it shows disrespect for the Catholic religion many Flemings adhere to. It depicts a bare-breasted Virgin Mary sitting next to a shield with the arms of Flanders.

**Alexandra Colen**, a VB member of the Belgian federal parliament, has protested the fact that the authorities are subsidising something which is deeply offensive to a large part

of the population. Mrs Colen also takes offense at the fact that the government is encouraging schools to attend the play. "Pupils will have to sit and watch how their and their parent's values are ridiculed," she said.

## Children have to watch moral values being ridiculed

According to the Belgian media the author is an immigrant who is fully integrated in the secular European culture. Perhaps the fact that, like many left-wing Europeans, he pokes fun at Christians is considered to be ample proof of this.

To mock the religion of Mr Ben Chikha's parents, however, is more dangerous, as Dutch artist **Theo van Gogh** experienced last year. Van Gogh was ritually slaughtered by a Muslim extremist because he had made a movie showing the backs of naked women with verses from the Quran written on them.



Alexandra Colen, MP



## Royal Travel Agency

The Belgian **King Albert II** has a holiday home near Nice in the South of France. In 2002 and 2003 members of the Belgian royal family flew to Nice at least 32 times with a passenger plane of the Belgian air force. On one of the flights the royal group was composed of 67 people. **Karim Van Overmeire**, a VB member of the Belgian Senate, has been pressuring **André Flahaut**, the Belgian minister of Defense, for the exact number and other details of the private trips that the King and his family make with army planes. The VB wants to know how often the royals use the free services of the air force, who accompanies them and where they go.

Mr Flahaut, a Walloon Socialist, refuses to provide details. At first the minister told the senator that "the Belgian army does not keep records

of who boards its planes." However, the senator has learned from sources within the air force that the army keep records of all passengers on its flights.

### Privacy

When Senator Van Overmeire again confronted the minister about this matter, the latter replied that the king is entitled to privacy. True, the senator said (in Dutch), "but a free trip with 67 persons on an army plane does not seem to me to be a matter of the privacy of these

persons."

"Have you finished worrying about details?" the minister snapped (in French). "You can ask me fifteen, twenty times if you please, I will not answer you. Your party is stupidly poking its nose into matters of

detail."

"In the Senate, Mr Minister, it are the senators who question the government, and not the minister who questions the senators," Van Overmeire replied (in Dutch).

"I respect all senators and especially those senators who respect our monarchy," the minister said (in French).

The Belgian taxpayers have to pay for the private trips of King Albert and his extended family, but they are "stupid" when they want to know how often their tax money is used and for what purpose.



Senator  
Karim Van Overmeire

### What does the King do with our taxes?

## Bernie Ecclestone Grows Fat on Belgium

Two years ago the *Parti Socialiste* (PS), the ruling party in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern provinces of Belgium, threatened to bring the federal government down if the ban on tobacco advertising was not modified. Tobacco advertising had just been banned at the request of the Greens and... the Socialists, when, after reading the new government bill, **Bernie Ecclestone**, the organiser of the *Belgian Formula One Grand Prix* in Spa-Francorchamps (Wallonia), threatened that he would withdraw the annual race if tobacco companies were no longer allowed to sponsor teams participating in the Belgian Grand Prix.

At the demand of the PS the law was altered: tobacco advertising remained banned except during the Formula One Grand Prix. Simultaneously, in October 2003, the Walloon authorities signed a contract with Ecclestone, guaranteeing that the Grand Prix would remain in Wallonia until 2010.

### Indemnity

Exactly two years later the Socialist-dominated regional government of Wallonia revealed that in the

same contract it had agreed to subsidise Mr Ecclestone for organising the Grand Prix with 20 million euros annually.

The regional government has asked the federal Belgian government to help it out because it does not have the money. Discontinuing the race is impossible, it turns out, because in the same contract the Walloon authorities guaranteed they would pay Mr Ecclestone an indemnity of 20 million euros for every year the championship is missed.

Moreover, the contract stipulates that Ecclestone is unilaterally entitled to extend the commitment (including Wallonia's obligation to pay him) until 2015. In

addition all legal disputes emanating from the contract must be submitted to British courts.

### No English Spoken

The contract was signed on behalf of the Walloon authorities by the Socialist politician **Jean-Marie Happart**. When asked on November 16 why he had signed such a disadvantageous contract Mr Happart, who speaks only French, replied that he had not read the clauses of the contract as these were written... in English.



## Interested?

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