

# The Flemish Republic

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

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**VLAAMS  
BELANG**

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## Belgian Establishment Fears Crack-Up

Belgium's political parties are getting prepared for the municipal elections next October 8th. There is little doubt that these elections will result in the 13th consecutive election victory for the Flemish secessionists. The Vlaams Blok party grew from 3% of the vote in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern half of Belgium, to 24.1% of the Flemish vote in June 2004, making it the single biggest party in Flanders as well as in Belgium as a whole.



In November 2004 the Belgian authorities declared the Vlaams Blok to be a "criminal organisation." The Flemish secessionists immediately founded a new party, the Vlaams Belang (VB), which will for the first time in its history participate in elections next October. Opinion polls indicate that the VB will become the biggest party in the country.

In several municipalities the party VB will stand for election together with the conservative Liberal party VLOTT of Senator **Hugo Coveliers**. Until recently Mr Coveliers was a prominent member of the governing Liberal Party VLD of Belgian Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt**. Mr Coveliers, who was the official VLD candidate to become mayor of Antwerp four years ago, left the VLD because he grew dissatisfied with its leftist policies. This time he will be a candidate on a joint

list of the VB and VLOTT.

### "Islamophobia"

The VB is the largest party in Antwerp. It is supported by more than one in every three citizens in Belgium's second largest city. The Belgian establishment is worried about the coming elections.

Government-subsidized organisations are demanding a prosecution of the party because of recent statements by Mr **Filip Dewinter**, its Antwerp leader. When asked in an interview whether he was a xenophobe he 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."

Since islamophobia is a criminal offence under Belgium's very broad Anti-Racism Act the VB might be convicted for Mr Dewinter's statement. Belgium is currently also prosecuting a Turkish-born Catholic priest, **Father Samuel**, on charges of racism because in his sermons he had warned against "the islamic invasion of Belgium." Ordinary Belgians, however, are disturbed by the islamisation of their country.

### Separatism

The true reason why the Belgian authorities are afraid of the VB, however, has nothing to do with "racism" or "islamophobia," but with the party's goal of Flemish independence. In an unprecedented speech on 31 January, the Belgian **King Albert II** warned for "overt or covert separatism," which he called "anachronistic and disastrous" because it would "jeopardize the international role of Brussels."

## Defending National Interests

The Vlaams Belang party defends the interests of the Flemish people. This is why our party is called "Vlaams Belang," which translates as "Flemish interest." We defend the Flemish people for the same reason that British, French, German and American parties defend their people. Democratic parties stand for the interests of their nations.

We oppose Belgium and the European superstate in the making because no Belgian or European people exists. A multi-national democracy does not exist because a multi-national people does not exist.

A multi-cultural people does not exist either. Pluralism exists, but not a society with incompatible cultures. As I have written here earlier: "We welcome everyone who is living in Flanders, no matter what is the colour of his skin or the language and religion he adheres to at home, but we demand that he becomes a Fleming with the Flemings."

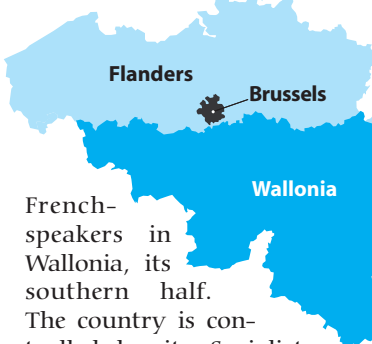
A people cannot accept that there are suddenly living two peoples on its territory. We defend the Flemish national interests against the Belgian state and the European superstate, but also against immigrants who abuse our hospitality to wage an anti-Western war. The Vlaams Belang is a party of Flemish patriots, defending Flanders' interests: its culture, its traditions, its values, its freedom.



**Frank Vanhecke, MEP**  
President of the  
Vlaams Belang  
"A multi-national  
democracy does not  
exist."

# Flemish Businessmen Call for Independence

Belgium is an artificial state, which prides itself on being the model of a federal Europe. It consists of 6 million Dutch-speakers in Flanders, its northern half, and 4 million



French-speakers in Wallonia, its southern half. The country is controlled by its Socialist-dominated French minority, which has a constitutionally guaranteed veto over all major decisions and a guaranteed share of half the seats in government and major administrations.

The conservative, free-market oriented Flemings have been complaining for decades that they are forced to subsidize the south, while no improvement of the economic situation of the Walloons has been visible. On the contrary, Wallonia has become one of the most corrupt regions in Europe, with hardly any economic growth. While Flanders votes predominantly for parties of the right, Wallonia votes consistently for the left. Flanders has to foot the Belgian bill, while Wallonia exists like a parasite on Flemish money which the Belgian state diverts to the south.

An ever increasing amount of Flemish subsidies is flowing to Wallonia each year

(3.8 billion euros in 1990; 10.4 billion euros in 2003). Last November the **Warande Group**, a group of Flemish intellectuals and businessmen, published a manifesto proposing to transform Belgium into two states.

## Solidarity

The Warande Group proposes transforming Belgium into two states, Flanders and Wallonia. The members of the group are not affiliated with any political party, but include of well-known Flemings such as **Remi Vermeiren**, the former CEO of KBC Bank, one of Belgium's major banks, **Baron Hugo Vandamme**, the former CEO of Barco and chairman of the board of Roularta Media Group, **Professor Erik Suy**, the former Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, and various others.

According to the Belgian establishment, which is in league with the Walloon Socialist leaders, the splitting up of Belgium would be a disaster. The Brussels newspaper *Le Soir* accused the Warande Group of intending to "bury Belgium." **Tony Vandeputte**, the former director of the Federation of Belgian Employers, wrote that the group consists of "nostalgic Flemish-nationalists who take advantage of every opportunity to promote their goal." The Belgian bishops issued a document saying that "if we do not succeed in main-

Transfers from Flanders, in billion euros				
	1990		2003	
	To Wallonia	To Brussels	To Wallonia	To Brussels
Social security	1,1	1,1	2,1	1,6
Federal budget	0,5	0,1	1,9	-0,4
Regional funding	1,0	0,0	1,3	0,0
Government debt	-	-	2,8	1,1
Total	2,6	1,2	8,1	2,3

taining a reasonable degree of solidarity between the North and the South in Belgium, we cannot expect solidarity on a larger, worldwide scale."

The Belgian **King Albert II** also stressed the need for "solidarity," saying that a situation of social inequality between regions by definition leads to financial transfers between these regions. He added that these problems cannot be solved by "disastrous separatism."

## European District

The Belgian establishment, however, did not limit itself to verbal arguments. It also forced one of the Warande Group's mem-

bers, **Herman de Bode**, the Belgian CEO of McKinsey, to resign. Many Belgian government agencies are clients of McKinsey's. They threatened to take their business elsewhere if Mr de Bode remained in charge.

A split up of Belgium would probably lead to the establishment of two republics, Flanders and Wallonia. Brussels, which is a territorial enclave surrounded by Flanders, could either join Flanders, become an independent city-state or become a district governed by the European authorities. The Warande Group proposes the transformation of Brussels into a European district, after the example of Washington DC.

## No Arabic in Our Schools

The Socialist Party wants to introduce Arabic lessons in Flemish public schools. The *Vlaams Belang* opposes this, as do, according to a recent poll, over 90% of the Flemish voters. If people want to settle in Flanders they should integrate and assimilate. At home people can speak whatever language they like. In public, however, the language of Flanders is Dutch.



An Michiels, MP

"We do not want Arabic in our schools."



Karim Van Overmeire, MP

## In the Interest of the People

"The European Union is bound to become a Greater Belgium, in which the fate of the Flemish people will be decided by a majority of German, French, Polish, Italian (and later perhaps even Turkish) politicians. There is no majority in Flanders to support such a construct. There was no majority in France and the Netherlands in last year's referendums either. The free peoples of Europe are fighting the same multi-national monster. By fighting Brussels (the Belgian as well as the European Brussels) in order to save Brussels (the real, historic, Flemish city) the *Vlaams Belang* is doing what is in the interest of Flanders and all the other peoples of Europe."

# Belgian State Security Keeps Blundering

On 28 February a Belgian court sentenced a group of Turkish terrorists, belonging to the Kurdish organisation DHKP-C, to prison sentences. **Fehriye Erdal**, one of the terrorists standing trial, was sentenced to four years in jail. She had not been arrested before the trial because she was under constant surveillance by agents of the Belgian state security, the *Sécurité de l'Etat* (SdE). The trial against the Kurdish terrorists had been going on for 7 years.

When the police came to pick her up after her conviction, however, Mrs Erdal had disappeared. The SdE had lost track of her. This affair embarrassed the Belgian authorities. According to the SdE the Kurdish terrorists were not likely to commit attacks in Belgium, which is why watching them was not a high priority.

The SdE recently lost its chief, Mr **Koen Dassen**. He resigned on 30 January, when it was revealed that a Belgian company had exported a

machine to Iran which will help Teheran to build (nuclear) missiles. The CIA had warned the SdE that this was about to happen, but the SdE failed to take action.

Mr Dassen succeeded **Godelieve Timmermans** as head of the SdE in 2002. Mrs Timmermans resigned after the publication of a report commissioned by the Belgian Parliament which revealed that the SdE was failing to screen Islamic terrorists.

The SdE does, however, make a good job of scru-

tinizing Flemish nationalists and secessionists. In 2003 it had **Soetkin Collier**, the lead singer of Urban Trad, Belgium's entry in the Eurovision Song Contest, banned from taking part at the contest.

According to the SdE, Ms Collier had participated in a Nazi rally commemorating Rudolf Hess in 1996. This allegation later proved to be false. Ms Collier, though not politically active herself, came from a Flemish secessionist family.

## Law Enforcement

Brussels is historically a Dutch-speaking city. Apart from being the capital of Europe and Belgium, it is also the capital of Flanders. As Brussels has a bilingual status – French and Dutch – the mayor must by law be fluent in both French and Dutch. This is usually no problem. The city is situated in Flanders and the local dialect is a Dutch dialect, which the present mayor, the Socialist **Freddy Thielemans**, speaks well.

Last January, however, Mr Thielemans had to go to hospital for surgery. He was replaced by **Faouzia Hariche**, an Algerian-born politician, who is bilingual as well: she speaks French and... Arabic. In an attempt to persuade the Muslim immigrants to vote for them in next October's elections, the Socialist Party is catering to the Muslims. This is the reason why Mrs Hariche was appointed acting mayor, though she was only 7th in line to replace the mayor. Mrs Hariche immediately appointed **Mohamed Laghmiche**, her own husband, as the well-paid director of one of the city's heavily subsidized non-profit youth organisations over which she presides.



On 5 January a group of Flemish activists, protesting against the fact that the acting mayor does not speak the language of her Flemish subjects, wanted to make her a gift of a Dutch-language course. Mr Hariche, however, had them arrested. Among the people arrested were **Guido Tastenhoye** and **Frederic Erens**, two Vlaams Belang members of Parliament. They had to spend a few hours in jail. In Belgium, people who demand that the law be respected are arrested by those who break the law.

## Danish cartoons

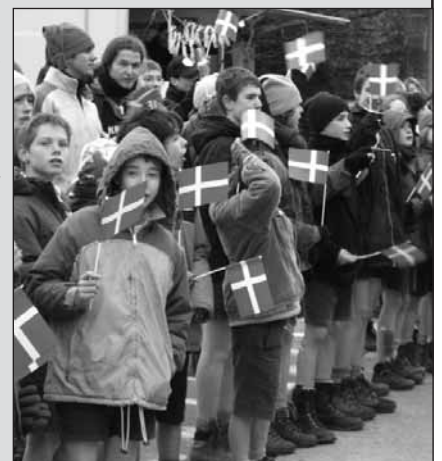
The Vlaams Belang defends freedom of expression. We support Denmark in its fight against Islamic extremists who want to prohibit private newspapers in Western countries from publishing depictions of **Mohammed**. Muslims have the right to protest the Danish cartoons, but only in a non-violent way. Radical imams who abuse our hospitality by calling for a Jihad against the West must be expelled. Europe is not allowed to repeat the mistake of appeasing totalitarians.



**Philip Claeys, MEP**  
"We oppose appeasement."

## Carnival Parade Supports Denmark

Flanders' largest carnival parade, which was held on the 26th of february in the town of Aalst, 35 kms to the west of Brussels, became a **statement of solidarity** with Denmark. All the floats participating in the parade were adorned with at least one Danish flag, while many of the onlookers waved Danish flags as well.





"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" the great **Shakespeare** wrote. So it is. **Albert II of Saxe-Coburg & Gotha**, the King of the Belgians, sees his kingdom – and with it his and his family's livelihood – unravelling before his very eyes.

Every year the King addresses the Belgians on three occasions, somewhere in late January, on the national holiday of 21 July, and on Christmas Eve. Last January 31st the King gave his most dramatic speech ever. He warned against Flemish secessionism. Belgium was founded in 1830 after a secession from the Netherlands. Armies of French thugs forced the Dutch-speaking Flemings to join this secession, though many of them would rather have remained Dutch. 175 years of oppression and humili-

ation followed. Today the Dutch-speaking Flemings

these regions. He added that these problems cannot be sol-



want to secede from Belgium. They are growing increasingly frustrated with the extremely high taxation rate which is needed to supply Socialist dominated Wallonia with state subsidies.

The King said that "social inequality" between regions by definition leads to financial transfers between

ved by "overt or covert [...] anachronistic and disastrous separatism." The King is worried because a collapse of Belgium might leave him without a job.

The result of the King's outspokenness, however, was general indignation in Flanders. The left-liberal Flemish minister of Culture

**Bert Anciaux** called the royal speech "stupid" and "unfortunate." **Eric Van Rompuy**, the parliamentary leader of the Flemish Christian-Democrats, said: "The King is afraid." The Christian-Democrats said the royal speech would not prevent them from demanding more autonomy for Flanders.

Politicians of all Flemish political parties, from Greens to Socialists to Liberals to Christian-Democrats, demand that the powers of the Belgian monarchy be restricted as in the "Swedish model" where the King has nothing to say and his function is purely ceremonial. The **Vlaams Belang** favours a republic, but all Flemish politicians are growing dissatisfied with the King's interference in Belgian politics.

## Belgians Fool Americans

Last January a delegation of the Belgian government headed by Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** visited Washington. One member of the delegation was **Vincent van Quickenborne**, a junior Belgian minister.

As Mr van Quickenborne wanted the media to cover his trip, he was always accompanied by journalists. At a certain point during his visit to an American government building in Washington DC, however, the Americans told the Belgian delegation that journalists were not allowed in. Mr van Quickenborne fooled the Americans by telling them that the journalists were members of his staff.

The Belgian press reported how easy it was to fool the Americans. For security reasons they checked the passports of the Belgians. One journalist had forgotten his papers in his hotel room. Mr van Quickenborne helped him out by giving him a false document to the name of **Homer Dupont**. "The document was fake, but it worked," wrote the Brussels newspaper *De Standaard* (19 January).

## Constitution Blues

On 8 February the Flemish regional parliament approved the European Constitution, with only the **Vlaams Belang** voting against ratification. The Belgian Constitution requires that not only the Belgian federal parliament in Brussels, but also the parliaments of the country's different regions (Dutch-speaking Flanders, French-speaking Wallonia, and bilingual Brussels) ratify international treaties. While the Belgian federal parliament and all the other regional parliaments voted in favour of the European Constitution last year, the Flemish Parliament had been postponing the vote. The VB, which is the biggest group in the Flemish Parliament, delayed the vote for months by insisting that the EU Constitution be submitted to a referendum.

Had Belgium been the third of the original six EU members, after France and the Netherlands, to be unable to ratify the EU Constitution, the latter would have effectively been killed.

Belgium's federal Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt**, the Belgian King and the entire establishment put enormous pressure on the Flemish Parliament to ratify the Constitution. They consider Belgium to be the prototype of a federal European state. Mr Verhofstadt recently authored a book "The United States of Europe" in which he proposes such a superstate. For the Belgian establishment this will be a solution to their problem of how to keep "the united states of Belgium" together: just submerge the Flemings and the Walloons into something bigger, so that Belgium's past might ensnare Europe's future.

## Interested?

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