

The Flemish Republic

A quarterly newsletter explaining why Flanders is seceding from Belgium

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**VLAAMS
BELANG**

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Parliament Will Discuss Belgium's Dissolution

On 1 June the Belgian House of Representatives agreed to consider for debate a legislative proposal of the Vlaams Belang aimed at dissolving the Belgian state and splitting the latter up into two independent nations: Dutch-speaking Flanders (with Brussels) and French-speaking Wallonia.

Despite vehement opposition from Walloon parliamentarians, 77 of the 78 Flemish members of the House voted in favour of considering the issue for debate, while all 51 French-speaking members voted against debating the topic.

Gerolf Annemans, the parliamentary leader of the Vlaams Belang, said that Belgium was responsible for almost two centuries of linguistic and cultural oppression of Flanders. Mr Annemans also referred to the economic burden on the free-market oriented Flemings of having to subsidize Socialist-dominated Wallonia.

The Walloon parties, however, stated that it is their "democratic duty" to prevent discussions on the dissolution of Belgium because the latter would be undemocratic since the majority of the Walloons oppose it.

Good example

Meanwhile, many Flemings have been encouraged by the referendum in Montenegro. On 21 May 55.5% of the Montenegrin voters said they favour independence from Serbia. As a condition for the EU to recognize the referendum outcome, the European Union had demanded that at least 55% of the Montenegrin voters support independence.

The Flemings wonder whether the EU will impose the same 55% rule on Flanders as well, when the time comes that, as the Vlaams Belang proposes, the question of Flemish independence is put before the people in a referendum. The "democratic" arithmetic of the EU makes one wonder why the EU does not apply it to the converse situations, demanding a majority of 55% as a condition to recognize the continuation of a union between separate nations such as Serbia and Montenegro, or Flanders and Wallonia.



Vlaams Belang politician **Karim Van Overmeire**, who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Flemish Parliament, said that the Montenegrin referendum is yet further proof that countries "can gain independence in a peaceful, democratic and internationally recognized way." He added: "The Belgian federal model is not a model for Serbia and Montenegro. On the contrary, the referendum about Montenegrin independence is a model which Flanders must follow."

Bad example

The fact that the Belgians are questioning whether or not Belgium should be allowed to continue to exist has been noticed abroad. The major newspapers in the Netherlands and France devoted attention to the issue. On 31 May, when Belgian Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** told the plenary session of the European Parliament that the federal and multinational Belgian state is a model which the European Union should follow, **Nigel Farage**, a British Member of the European Parliament, retorted:

"I find it a bit rich for the Prime Minister of Belgium to come along here and tell 24 other nation states what they should do. I say that, because perhaps he ought to look a little bit more in his own backyard. The most recent opinion poll in Belgium, or should I say in Flanders, shows that 51% of people there favour independence from the Belgian state. The Vlaams Belang is now the biggest political party in Flanders. Is it, Mister Verhofstadt, that you're so embarrassed and ashamed that your own country is falling to pieces, that you've come along here to encourage the rest of us to self-destruct as well?"

Intolerance

After an unbalanced boy killed two people in Antwerp the Belgian authorities tried to blame the Vlaams Belang for the murders. Journalists called us to account because an aunt of the boy happened to be a member of parliament for our party. Some went even further. According to **Karel De Gucht**, the Belgian minister of Foreign Affairs, the one million voters of our party (a quarter of the Flemish electorate) are personally to blame for the killings by this madman. "They should," he said, "not have voted for a racist party."

Despite the insults and the assaults (**Francis Van den Eynde**, one of our parliamentarians, was attacked on the tram), despite the procedure to defund our party, polls indicate that the popularity of the VB has risen since the affair. Ordinary Flemings are indignant about the attempts to blame us for things we have nothing to do with.

We have always said that immigrants are welcome in Flanders if they assimilate. Those who are prepared to become Flemings with the Flemings are welcome, whatever the colour of their skin. That has always been our position. We do, however, want people to obey the law. We are opposed to no-go areas in our cities where Islamists preach hatred.

We all know, however, why the Belgian establishment hates us. It hates us because we are a threat to its power. Some thought that they could incite the people against us. But, as always, they have underestimated the people. The latter know where intolerance reigns.



Frank Vanhecke,
MEP

**President of the
Vlaams Belang**

Belgium Starts Procedure to Defund Its Largest Party

On 11 May **Hans Van Themsche**, an unstable 18-year old boy, went berserk after being expelled from boarding school because he had smoked in the dormitories. Hans told friends that he was going to commit suicide. He left school, shaved his head, dressed entirely in black, took a train to Antwerp and bought a sporting rifle. Then he went on a rampage in Antwerp's city centre, imitating the computer game "Grand Theft Auto." He shot and killed a white toddler and her black nanny and wounded a Turkish woman before the police shot and arrested him. Because Van Themsche's aunt, **Frieda Van Themsche**, happens to be a Vlaams Belang parliamentarian, the entire Belgian establishment – from King **Albert II** to Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** and the left-wing and French-speaking media – blamed the VB for the "racist" murders.

The Van Themsche killing spree was the long-awaited excuse the authorities needed to go for the kill of the country's largest party. The following week all the French-speaking parties plus the Flemish Socialists initiated a procedure to get the VB stripped of its state funding. Belgian political parties are not allowed to receive private or corporate donations, but are funded by the state in accordance with their number of voters. Funding, however, is denied to "undemocratic" and/or "racist" parties.

The decision whether or not a party is "undemocratic" and/or "racist" is taken by the Council of State (CoS). The judges of this court are political appointees. They have six months to issue their verdict about whether or not to defund the VB. Half of the CoS judges are French-speaking. This means that judges from Wallonia, the French-speaking Socialist-dominated Southern part of Belgium, will decide which parties are al-

lowed to exist in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking free-market oriented Northern part of the country. The VB is Flanders' (and Belgium's) largest party. It aims for the independence of Flanders in order to end the flow of Flemish tax money to the South.

Corruption

Meanwhile the *Parti Socialiste* (PS), the largest party in Wallonia, is entangled in an ever widening corruption scandal. Major PS politicians have been using taxpayers' money to enrich themselves. Last Autumn the head of the Walloon regional government resigned. In May the *chef de cabinet* of the Mayor of Charleroi, a PS stronghold, as well as a number of PS councillors in the same city were arrested for corruption.

Expelled From the Union

The Belgian Christian Trade Union ACV, the largest trade union in Flanders, has announced that it will expel 43-year old **Guy Dirckx**, a local councillor in the Antwerp borough of Deurne, because Dirckx has said that he will stand for the Vlaams Belang in the coming local elections.

Belgium has three so-called "official" trade unions – one for each of the three traditional parties: Christian-D e m o c r a t s , Socialists and Liberals. The Belgian state has granted them the monopoly of distributing dole money. Each year the government provides the three "official" unions with the necessary funds to pay the unemployment benefits. The state

Christian De Valkeneer, the Public Prosecutor in Charleroi, said that 15 members of his staff are investigating the PS corruption case, but that he needs at least an additional 50 investigators to uncover the whole case. According to PS politicians the Belgian

judiciary is conducting an anti-PS "witch hunt."

While in Belgium it is possible to defund "undemocratic" and/or "racist" parties, the law does not provide for the defunding of utterly corrupt parties, such as the PS.

Sharing Common Values

According to its enemies the Vlaams Belang is a racist party that wants to discriminate people. The opposite is true, as **Aisha Van Zele** experienced. Aisha is a 21-year old coloured woman who was born in Sri Lanka. She worked for a clothes shop and a restaurant in her home town of Lokeren. Early in June both employers fired her after she announced that she will stand as a VB candidate in next October's municipal elections.

Aisha used to be an active member of Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt's** Liberal Party, but decided to join the VB. "I feel more Flemish than many ordinary Belgians," she says. "Being Flemish has nothing to do with the colour of one's skin, but with sharing common values. I have never experienced any racial discrimination in Flanders, but I have lost two jobs since joining the Vlaams Belang."



Aisha Van Zele:

"Being Flemish has nothing to do with the colour of your skin."



Local councillor **Guy Dirckx** receives his VB membership card from **Filip Dewinter** and **Guido Tastenhoye**.

also pays the unions a fee for every unemployed person they cater for.

The three unions hate the Vlaams Belang because the party is opposed to the state paying the unions to provide welfare funds which the taxpayer has had to finance. As a rule the trade unions oust all members who join

the VB because, they say, the VB is "anti-social" and they are entitled to refuse protection for "anti-social" people. The VB will fight Dirckx' expulsion in court. According to **Filip Dewinter**, the Antwerp VB leader, "the trade unions discriminate against us by expelling our members."

Stop the Brusselization!

When Belgium was established 176 years ago Brussels was a Flemish, i.e. Dutch-speaking town. Today, owing to the “frenchification” policies of the Belgian regime, Brussels has almost become a French-speaking enclave within Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern half of Belgium.

Brussels is surrounded by municipalities belonging to the Flemish province of Vlaams-Brabant. French-speaking politicians want to expand the borders of Brussels in order to establish a territorial corridor linking Brussels to Wallonia, the French-

speaking southern half of the country. This would end the enclave status of Brussels and would attach the city to Wallonia.

The European Union authorities, who feel that Brussels’ contemporary borders restrict

its expansion into the capital of a fully-fledged pan-European state, are backing attempts to annex large chunks of Vlaams-Brabant to the Brussels region.

The Vlaams Belang aims for the independence of Flanders (including Brussels, which would get a bilingual status within the

Republic of Flanders). Last April the party launched a campaign to “Stop the Brusselization of Vlaams-Brabant.” This theme will be one of the major themes of the party in next October’s municipal elec-

tions in Brabant.

One of the most urgent problems the indigenous Brabant Flemings encounter is the rising price of real estate. Houses and apartments have become almost unaffordable for young Flemish couples, who



Knowing One's Languages

Dutch is the mothertongue of the Flemings, who constitute 60% of the Belgian population. Many French-speaking Belgians, or Walloons, refuse to learn Dutch. According to a recent survey by the Brussels University (ULB) 40% of the Flemings speak three languages: Dutch, French and English, 59% of the Flemings speak French and 53% speak English. In Wallonia only 7% of the population speak three languages: French, English and Dutch, and 17% of the Walloons are bilingual, speaking either Dutch or English in addition to French.

Petty Crime Is OK

Criminality has been on the rise for years. The police and the judiciary are no longer able to cope. In early April the Public Prosecutor of Oudenaarde sent the police departments in his district a list of “minor offences” which, “for opportunistic reasons,” the judiciary will no longer prosecute. Among the listed offences are: ordinary quarrels in pubs, minor cases of shoplifting, insults, raising false alarm, minor cases of swindle such as refueling a car without paying, ...

Patrick Dewael, the Belgian minister of the Interior, said he would like to see the Oudenaarde policy adopted in the whole country. He said the policy takes into consideration the capacities of police and judiciary who are inundated with rising crime. Laurette Onkelinx, the Belgian minister of Justice, specified that it is not the intention to install impunity for certain crimes, but simply to avoid police officers wasting their time on “useless work” such as writing detailed accounts of petty criminal offences that will never be prosecuted.

The Vlaams Belang parliamentarian Bart Laeremans says the Belgian authorities are giving criminals the wrong message. “They tell the criminals: you are free to do as you please. It is the duty of the state to protect the citizens against criminals, including shoplifters and people who fill up their cars without paying. If the state no longer protects the law-abiding citizens it loses all legitimacy.”

Latin Civilisation

The “Giro” is an annual three-week road bicycle race in and around Italy which takes place in May. It is almost as famous as the “Tour de France.” This year the Giro started in... Belgium. Seven towns in Wallonia paid the Giro organizers so they could be either a departure or an arrival place. All seven towns are home towns to prominent Walloon politicians. The money which they spent to bring the Giro to Wallonia – 1.3 million euro – came from Belgian and EU funds intended to boost the Walloon economy.



Philip Claeys, MEP

Philip Claeys, a Member of the European Parliament for the Vlaams Belang, protested to the European Commission against this abuse of European funds, which European taxpayers have to finance. Jean-Claude Van Cauwenberghe, the previous president of the Walloon regional government, who had to resign after being implicated in a corruption scandal, wrote that it was “only normal” to have the Giro in Wallonia as the latter is “a region that for centuries has actively participated in the continuation of the Latin civilisation.”

are unable to pay the exorbitant prices that Eurocrats are willing to offer for property in the countryside surrounding Brussels. Eurocrats should be aware of the fact that they are driving the locals out. As most Eurocrats speak French rather than Dutch they are a major factor in the “frenchification” of the province. This explains why Brussels and the EU are very unpopular in Flanders – and especially in Vlaams-Brabant, the area surrounding Brussels.

Government Duty?

“How to Fight the Vlaams Belang” is the title of a series of four half-day lessons which the Belgian Department of Justice organizes for judges and magistrates. Apparently the Belgian government sees it as its duty to fight the largest party in the country by inciting the judiciary against elected politicians who represent one in every four Flemish voters.



Bart Laeremans, MP:

“The state is losing its legitimacy”



Crown Prince's Popularity Plummet

Prince Philip, the 46-year old Belgian crown prince, is a nincompoop. That is the harsh verdict of a group of Belgian businessmen who were accompanied by the Prince on a trade mission to South Africa. The prince accompanied the mission last March, but the businessmen complained afterwards that his presence had "closed many doors rather than opening them." They said the prince openly flaunted his lack of interest when the Belgians were received by

their South African hosts and that, wherever he went, he always gave the same speech.

Many newspapers in Flanders published the businessmen's criticism. This angered the Belgian King **Albert II**. During an official visit to Lithuania the latter told Belgian journalists that the criticism in the press "had hurt him personally." The king's words were printed in the Walloon newspaper *La Dernière Heure*.

The popularity of the royals continues to decline in Flanders. According to a poll commissioned by the television companies VTM and RTL, 53% of the Flemings no longer feel any affinity with the Belgian royals, while 65% of the Flemings think that Philip is not fit to be King. Two years ago only 28% of the Flemings were of this opinion. In Wallonia, on the contrary, 68% of the people still feel an affinity with the Belgian royals.

The State Listens In

The Belgian authorities have confirmed media reports that during several months in 2005 they "registered" the conversations that **Filip Dewinter**, a Vlaams Belang parliamentarian and the leader of the party's Antwerp chapter, held on his mobile phone.

The authorities wanted to know whether Dewinter was receiving information from Antwerp police officers. They



say that they had not eavesdropped on Dewinter's conversations, but had only registered who was talking to the politician.

Dewinter says that not only his mobile phone, but also those of his personal assistant, the secretary of the VB parliamentary group and the head of the party's security service were screened.

Muslims Occupy Churches in Belgium

During the past months over 30 Belgian churches have been occupied by illegal aliens. The squatters were invited to take over the churches by local priests, who want to pressure the Belgian authorities into giving the illegal immigrants permanent residence permits.

Many of the squatters are Muslims. They have turned the churches into dormitories. They pray in the aisles and have decorated the walls with banners displaying the name of Allah.

Since the late 1990's individual Belgian Catholic priests have been opening their churches and chapels to immigrants who by Belgian law are subject to expulsion. From the beginning the church occupations shocked many ordinary Catholics, who complained about the desecration of churches by men and women sharing beds in

church, lighting fires and cooking on the floors, installing radios and televisions, removing altars and tabernacles, covering images of Saints and displaying Islamic banners.

Nevertheless, the movement was successful. In 2000 the Belgian government of Prime Minister **Guy Verhofstadt** decided to "regularise" every illegal immigrant who could prove that he or she had lived in the country for five years. Last March **Patrick Dewael**, the Belgian Interior Minister, granted resi-



dence permits to a group of 60 squatters in the Saint Boniface church in Brussels, after they had threatened to go on a hunger strike.

The Vlaams Belang is opposed to giving in to the squatters' demands. **Alexandra Colen**, a Catholic VB parliamentarian, said that Cardinal Danneels should realize that a mass regularisation of immigrants will lead to the collapse of the social security system. Catholics like Colen, also wonder why the Belgian bishops have never bothered to take any action against Belgium's legislation regarding abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage and gay adoption. On the contrary, when a Catholic organisation asked for permission to organize a Mass against the impending euthanasia legislation in Brussels Cathedral on 2 March 2002, Cardinal Danneels refused to let them use the Cathedral.

Interested?

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