

The Flemish Republic

*A quarterly newsletter explaining why
Flanders should become an independent state*

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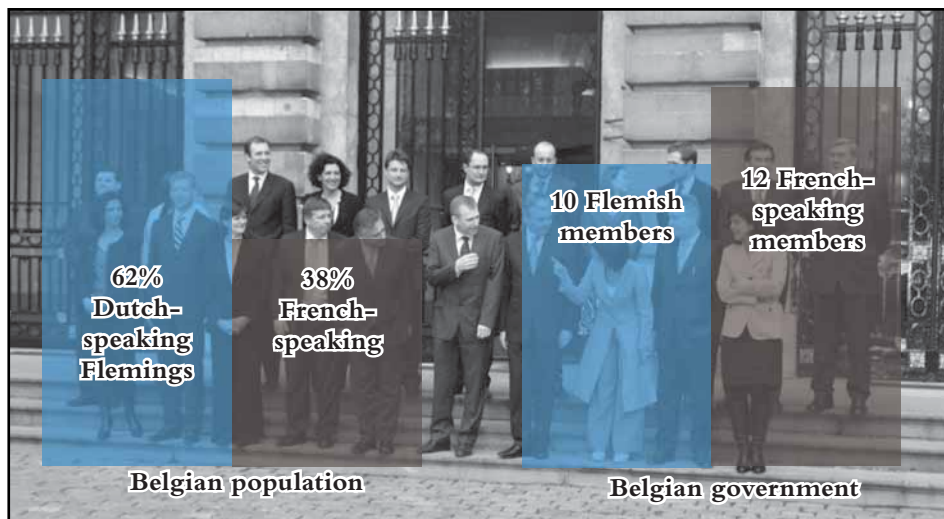
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Belgium Is Not a Model



On 20 March, more than nine months after the Belgian general elections, which were held on June 10, 2007, **Yves Leterme**, the Flemish Christian-Democrat leader, finally managed to form a centre-left government coalition of Christian-Democrats, Liberals and Walloon Socialists.

Belgium is a country composed of 62% Dutch-speaking Flemings in Flanders, the northern part of the country, and 38% French-speaking Walloons in Wallonia, the southern part. The Flemings are largely conservative and free-market oriented; the Walloons are predominantly socialist because they are at the receiving end of the Belgian state's welfare subsidies and want to keep it that way.

No programme

After more than six months without a government and three months with an "interim government" led by **Guy Verhofstadt**, the man who lost the June 10 elections but had been asked by King Albert II to return and help defuse the political crisis, Mr Leterme was able to form a coalition without a government programme.

The Belgian media do not expect the government to last long. The Flemish parties want a looser federation. The

Walloon parties veto this. The Belgian Constitution requires that a majority is needed in each of the regions to change the Constitution.

Rotten institutions

The Economist points out (March 27) that Belgium's institutions are "rotten" because the necessity to find political compromises "proved fatal to democratic accountability. [...] If the new government does not surrender more powers to the regions by July, Flemish separatists in the coalition could walk out, triggering a new crisis that edges Belgium a step closer to partition."

The Vlaams Belang favours the dissolution of Belgium and the establishment of two independent states: Flanders and Wallonia. *The Economist*, too, "see[s] Belgium's new government not as a relief, but as an awful warning. A political union hatched together by a fractious elite, and answerable only to itself, is not a model for anybody to follow."

During the past nine months more and more Flemings have come to share our (and *The Economist's*) view that Belgium should be dissolved. Sadly, Mr Leterme apparently chose to become the last Prime Minister of Belgium rather than the first President of an independent Flanders.

A Better Future

Apart from a tiny group of Germans along its Eastern borders, Belgium is inhabited by two peoples: 62% Dutch-speaking Flemings in Flanders, and 38% Francophones in Wallonia.

The new Belgian government of Yves Leterme, however, does not reflect the demographic situation. Twelve of the 22 members of the cabinet are French speakers. Does anyone know another country in the civilized world where the majority of the government does not speak the language of the majority of the governed?

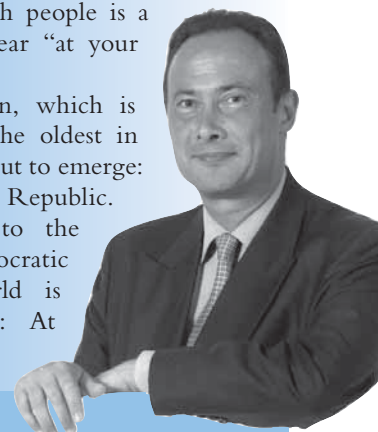
Flanders is also underrepresented in the Belgian parliament where more votes are needed to obtain a Flemish seat in parliament than a Walloon seat. A growing number of Flemings votes for the Vlaams Belang because they want to change this undemocratic situation.

Our party offers the Flemings a message of change. It offers the people hope for a better future for their children because it stands for a sovereign and independent Flanders where the Flemings, like all other peoples, are allowed to decide their own future.

I am honoured that the members of the VB have appointed me as their leader, because the VB is the party which will lead Flanders to freedom and independence. Like my predecessor, Frank Vanhecke, and the other VB politicians my message to the Flemish people is a sound and clear "at your service."

A new nation, which is also one of the oldest in Europe, is about to emerge: The Flemish Republic.

Its message to the free and democratic Western world is equally clear: At your service.



Bruno Valkeniers, MP
Leader of the Vlaams Belang

Only in Belgium



In order to improve its tarnished international reputation Belgium has launched an international campaign, called *Only in Belgium*, “to promote a positive image of Belgium.” The campaign, referring to famous Belgians such as the surrealist painter **Rene Magritte**, the lonesome cowboy **Lucky Luke** (a character created by the Flemish artist **Maurice de Bevere**, aka **Morris**) and **Adolphe Sax**, the inventor of the saxophone, presents Belgium as a model state where investors can make a lot of money.

Propaganda vs Reality

That, however, is propaganda. Here is the reality of things that happen “only in Belgium”:

- ★ Where do convicts escape from prison in helicopters?
- ★ Where do criminals find a paradise, terrorists a safe haven and drug traffickers a transit hub?
- ★ Where do the losers of the elections form a new government as if nothing has happened?
- ★ Where does the minority rule the majority?
- ★ Where over 13 billion euros (relatively more than what West Germany pays to East Germany) are transferred annually from one half of the country to the other half?
- ★ Where is a political party (the *Parti Socialiste*) involved in numerous corruption scandals and still a member of the governing coalition?
- ★ Where is the largest opposition party prosecuted and outlawed after a political trial?
- ★ Where has a peaceful demonstration in

memory of the 9/11 victims been beaten up by the police and have democratically elected members of parliament been put in jail at the order of the Brussels mayor?

- ★ Where did a Muslim extremist acquire citizenship, become an informer of the state security services, assassinate six political and religious opponents and establish a terror network?
- ★ Where does the royal family not speak the language of the majority and actively interfere in politics?

The answer: Only in Belgium.

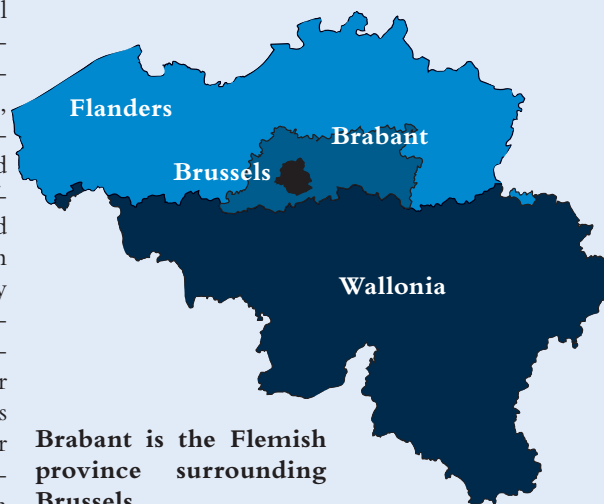
Flemish Independence will end this charade

Belgium equals corruption, never-ending linguistic quarrels, a failing state. Belgium has six governments, sixty ministers and seven parliaments. It is a surreal joke, an artificial state that is almost dead. Flanders equals art, tradition, history, future, employment, dynamism, competence. A growing number of Flemings are claiming independence, their own state. Because the Flemish people want democracy, a better future and a country they can be proud of.

Flanders Wants to Preserve Its Heartland

Brussels, the capital of Europe as well as Belgium and Flanders, is an enclave within Dutch-speaking Flanders. The city used to be Flemish, but during the 19th and 20th centuries the Belgian authorities imposed French on the population in an effort to replace Dutch by French and transform Brussels from a Flemish into a French-speaking city. They were successful to the extent that today the majority of the Belgian citizens in the city speak French rather than Dutch. Half of the Brussels population, however, is no longer Belgian but foreign. Many are Europeans, others are Muslims of North African or Turkish origin, who also prefer French to Dutch. The result is that only 15% of the population still speaks the city’s original language.

The islamification of Brussels is driving many Belgians out of the city. French-speaking Belgians who used to live in Brussels are settling in the surrounding Flemish countryside of the province of



Brabant is the Flemish province surrounding Brussels

Brabant.

In order to safeguard the Flemish character of Brabant, the Flemish regional authorities request that newcomers adapt to the Dutch-speaking people living there. The newcomers are welcome if they respect the Flemish character of the region.

Human Rights

To facilitate this the Flemish government offers *free* Dutch language courses. The Flemish government requests people who are given social housing by the Flemish authorities to speak Dutch or be willing to learn this. Is this an unreasonable demand? The Vlaams Belang does not think so, but the Human Rights League (HRL), a non-profit organisation funded by the Belgian authorities, does.

The courts, including the Belgian Council of State, the country’s highest administrative court, upheld the Flemish government’s position, but the HRL brought the matter before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). This institute expressed its concern about the demand to learn the language of the region where they settle and want to live. It’s not the first time international organisations such as the Council of Europe or the United Nations are abused for domestic policy goals.

Bruno Valkeniers Is the New Chairman



On 2 March, Bruno Valkeniers was elected party chairman of the Vlaams Belang. Mr Valkeniers (52) succeeds Frank Vanhecke (48), who stepped down after three 4-year terms as party chairman. The Flemish Republic interviewed Mr Valkeniers.

You became a politician only recently. What did you do before?

BV: I was elected a member of the Antwerp provincial council in 2006 and a member of the Belgian Parliament in 2007. Before that I worked in the maritime and port business for 26 years, as a director of a global port operator which is active in the ports of Antwerp and



Zeebrugge, and as the CEO of a maritime consulting company. In this capacity I travelled the world.

Why did you become a politician?

BV: As a businessman I know from first hand experience how Belgium thwarts the economic progress of Flanders. I am also appalled by the lack of democracy in Belgium and by the way in which the Belgian authorities undermine the cultural and national identity of Flanders. It is my firm belief that an independent Flanders can and will improve its social and economic performance and become one of the benchmarks in the world. I want to help turn the tide. Our priority is the independence of Flanders.

Why?

BV: Every nation has a right to freedom and is entitled to the sovereignty to decide about its own future. This is the only way to ensure that our Christian and humanitarian values, our language and our culture are safeguarded in Flanders. People who come to live in our midst must adjust to and accept our way of life; not the other way round. Foreigners are welcome but should accept Flanders is not Islamic and it is not French. Flanders is Western and Dutch-speaking.

Isn't that a parochial mentality?

BV: Not at all. I am a cosmopolitan. I have travelled the globe and worked

with people of many languages, cultures and races. However, one cannot be open to the world if one has no roots of one's own. One cannot be a European, let alone a citizen of the world, if one is not a Fleming, an Englishman, a Basque, a Catalan, a Frenchman, a German,... first. If we renounce our past, our traditions, our parents, we jeopardize our future, our capabilities and those of our children.

Do you intend to change the party?

BV: The Vlaams Belang will remain what it is: a Flemish-nationalist party defending family values and morality, standing for sound economic principles and for the introduction of a direct democracy in an independent and free Flanders. As a businessman I want to see results. I aim to professionalize the party and make it a more efficient tool to combat the Belgian state.



Frank Vanhecke and Bruno Valkeniers. The Vlaams Belang elected a new leader.

Corrupt Socialists

Laurette Onkelinx, one of the leading politicians of the Walloon *Parti Socialiste* (PS), is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs in the new Belgian government led by **Yves Leterme**. Ms Onkelinx was minister of Justice in the previous government and was voted out of office by the Belgian electorate on June 10, 1997. Despite the PS's implication in various corruption scandals, the party is a member of the new coalition. Mr Leterme's Christian-Democrats do not want to have anything to do with the Flemish independence party Vlaams Belang, the largest party in Flanders, but have no qualms about corrupt Socialists.

Ms Onkelinx's husband, **Marc Uyttendaele**, is one of Belgium's most expensive lawyers. One of his most important clients is the Belgian state. Mr Uyttendaele acted not only on behalf of the Justice Department, but also of other departments led by Socialist ministers, such as the Defence Department.

The Vlaams Belang has asked for a parliamentary inquest – a request which the governing parties refuse to back.



Gerolf Annemans, MP: Prime Minister Leterme has no qualms about governing with corrupt Socialists.

The Only Solution

Belgium recognized the independence of Kosovo. The federal minister of Foreign Affairs Karel De Gucht told us that independence is the only solution for Kosovo. I don't know about that. But if independence is the only solution for 2 million people in the Balkans, it should surely be the solution for 6 million Flemings in Western Europe.

Karim Van Overmeire
Flemish MP



Royals on Vacation

Every year the Belgians pay their royal family a royal sum of 54 million euros. Ten million is given through the Civil List, the remaining millions via other sources. Unlike other countries, Belgium pays not only the king and the crown prince, but it provides for all the legitimate offspring of **King Albert II**, including his youngest son, **Prince Laurent**, even though the latter is only 11th in line for the Belgian throne. No wonder the Belgian Saxe-Coburgs so ardently defend their artificial country. Like the corrupt Walloon Socialists they stand to lose a lot if the country falls apart. Who will support them then? Almost half a million euros was spent on air travel for the royal family in 2007. Half of

the flights were to France and Spain, where the royals own a number of holiday houses. Last March the Belgians learned that Prince Laurent has used his stipend to invest in real estate on the Italian island of Panarea. Meanwhile his brother, **Crown Prince Philippe**, is involved in a quarrel with the Flemish regional government over antique furniture which the prince removed from the former royal palace in Antwerp. Since 1970 the building is the property of the Flemish Ministry of Culture. In 1995, the prince had the most valuable pieces of furniture brought to his palace in Brussels. The Flemish authorities are demanding them back, but the Crown Prince refuses to hand them over.

Morocco Arrests Belgian Terrorist

For several years the *Sûreté de l'Etat*, the state security services, had **Abdelkader Belliraj** on their payroll as an informer. Belliraj, a 51-year old Moroccan-born Belgian citizen, was arrested last February in Morocco for terrorist activities. He confessed to the Moroccan police that he committed six murders in Belgium between 1986 and 1989, including the assassination of the president of the Belgian Coordination Committee of Jewish Organisations.



Jan Mortelmans, MP:
The Vlaams Belang voted against extending Belgian citizenship to the terrorist Belliraj. We are also the only party which wants to revoke his citizenship.

Belliraj became a Belgian citizen by an act of Parliament in 2000. All the parties in parliament, except one, had voted in favour of extending Belgian citizenship to this man. Guess which one did not.

Friends of Flemish Independence

friends of flemish
INDEPENDENCE



Friends of Flemish Independence (FFI) is a worldwide network of non-Flemings and Flemish expats who support and promote

Flemish independence, chaired by Karim Van Overmeire, also chairman of the Committee for Foreign Policy and European Affairs of the Flemish Parliament. FFI members sympathize with Flanders' aim to become a sovereign state. FFI members organize events and write letters and e-mails to the politicians and media of their country of residence in support of Flanders.

You, too, can become an FFI member. If you join you will receive a Flem-

ish national flag (the Flemish Lion) and an information package together with your membership card.

If you would like to join, please contact: Friends of Flemish Independence, Madouplein 8/9, B-1210 Brussels or friends@flemishrepublic.org.



Interested?

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