

# The Flemish Republic

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

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**VLAAMS  
BELANG**

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## Rien Ne Va Plus

Belgium is unravelling. The supranational country has been in a political crisis since the elections of June 10, 2007, when the parties in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern half of the country, voted for more autonomy, while the parties in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern half, voted for a status-quo.

The Flemings constitute 60% of the Belgian population, the Walloons only 40%. The Walloons, however, can block every decision because the Belgian constitution gives them 50% of the decision powers.

is vetoed by the Walloon political parties and the Belgian establishment.

### Standstill

More than a year has passed since the elections. For six months, from June to December 2007, the Belgian politicians were unable to put together a government which is backed by a majority in both Flanders and Wallonia. Last December **King Albert II** called back **Guy Verhofstadt**, the previous Prime Minister, who had lost the elections, to form an "interim government."

On March 18 **Yves Leterme**, a Flemish

Christian-Democrat, formed a government without a government agreement between Flemings and Walloons on a common future for Belgium. The deadline of July 15 was set to reach this agreement. When the deadline passed Mr Leterme offered his resignation to the King.

The result is that legislative work in Belgium has come to an almost complete standstill. The stalemate has led to a hardening of the positions, with a majority of the Flemings declaring in opinion polls that they favour Flemish independence if Belgium proves to be no longer viable.

For thirty years the Vlaams Belang has been saying that Belgium is no longer viable. It is time to split up the country. Let Flanders and Wallonia go their own ways.

Since Socialist-dominated Wallonia is in economic decline and needs Flemish subsidies to maintain its extensive welfare system, it vetoes every decision of Flanders to reform the system. The democratic majority never counts.

As a consequence, Flanders is demanding greater regional autonomy, which would allow it to put its own house in order and introduce new policies. This, too, however

## Set Flanders Free

The June 10, 2007 elections were a clear signal that the Flemings have had enough. They want newcomers, whether these be Walloons or immigrants, to respect the Dutch identity of Flanders. This demand for respect on the part of the Flemish combined with the refusal of the French-speaking Belgians to renounce their "acquired rights" have led to a political stalemate. For six months it was impossible to form a government, then an "interim government" was formed, and after that a "real" government which was unable to agree on policies and fell as a consequence. More than 13 months have been lost. This situation cannot continue for much longer.

The Vlaams Belang advocates the breakup of Belgium. Flanders has to pull the plug on Belgium. The fundamental differences of opinion between Flanders and Wallonia prevent the application of efficient policies to deal with the problems facing our nations. It is in the interest of both Flanders and Wallonia, as well as Europe, that Belgium be abolished.

Our party, which is the largest party in the Flemish regional parliament, has been advocating Flemish independence since it was founded. More and more Flemings are backing this demand.



**Bruno Valkeniers MP,  
Vlaams Belang party leader**

**"It is time to abolish Belgium and  
set Flanders free"**

## French-speaking Demand 'Anschluss' of Flemish Villages

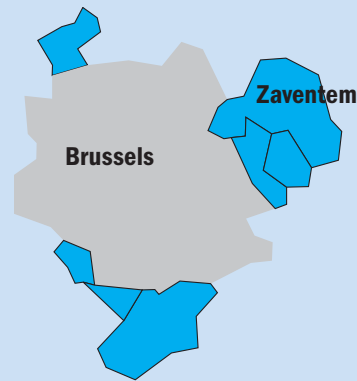
Politicians in Wallonia are preparing for the moment when Belgium falls apart. Flemings in the towns surrounding Brussels, the Belgian capital which is a French-speaking enclave within Dutch-speaking Flanders, fear that French-speaking extremists are planning to take over their towns by force.

Since Belgium's conception in 1830-31 when Walloon and French revolutionaries tore the country away from the Netherlands, its French-speaking minority has imposed the French language on the Flemings. This process was exacerbated since the 1970s when the massive influx of African immigrants from formerly French colonies, turned Brussels into a predominantly French-speaking city. The influx of immigrants in turn drove the French-speaking Brussels middle and upper

classes out of the city and into the surrounding Flemish countryside, the Halle-Vilvoorde region, where the newcomers demanded that the "peasants" address them in French.

### Wallobrux

The Belgian authorities introduced a special status – the "facility" regime –



■ Part of Flemish territory claimed by French-speaking politicians.

for a number of Flemish municipalities surrounding Brussels: To welcome the newcomers and make it easy ("facile" in French) for them to adapt to their new environment they were allowed to use the French language in their contacts with the local authorities. In fact, this meant that Brussels' bilingual status was extended into Flanders.

Both Flemings and Walloons are currently preparing for the post-Belgium age. Since Brussels is geographically surrounded by Flanders, French-speaking politicians are demanding the annexation of the municipalities with a "facility" regime and also the Flemish municipality of Zaventem, where the Brussels International airport is situated. In that way, Brussels and Wallonia can form a connected "Wallobrux" union.

## Order Your Free Flemish Flag

The flag of Flanders is a black lion on a yellow field. Last May the Vlaams Belang offered every family in Flanders a free flag to be sent upon request. By early July the party had already distributed 300,000 flags among the six million inhabitants of Flanders.

We gladly offer our national flag to foreign sympathisers as well. Readers of *The Flemish Republic* can order a free flag, which we will post to you free of charge, by sending us an e-mail with their address and the number of flags they would like to order, up to a maximum of three flags.



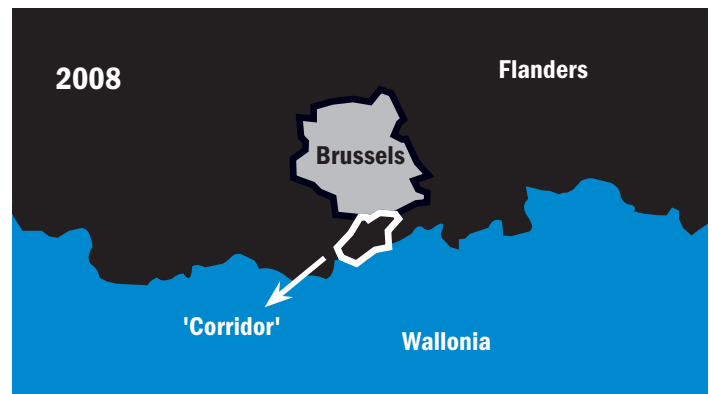
## 1938 and 2008

During the negotiations on the constitutional reforms, the Walloon politicians were demanding a territorial corridor through Flemish territory, thus linking Wallonia to the capital Brussels. First, a 2.5 kms wide corridor was claimed. Later, they demanded co-ownership of roads and railroads.

These Walloon demands remind us of the so-called Berlinka-Autobahn. In 1938, Nazi Germany requested the construction of an extra-territorial road and railway through Polish territory, connecting East Prussia to Germany proper. Poland agreed on building the highway and allowed German railway traffic.

However, only one year later, Poland was invaded and the second world war started.

Karim Van Overmeire (Vlaams Belang), who is chair of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Flemish Parliaments, said that he regrets that Walloon politicians still think this way. *"We are part of the European Union. Even after the dissolution of Belgium and the independence of Flanders and Wallonia, we want to remain in this single market with freedom of movement of people, goods, services and capital. What is the use of claiming corridors, roads and territory in a united Europe? Apparently, those people think they still live in the 19th century"*.



# Vlaams Belang Rejects Lisbon Treaty



The Lisbon Treaty, the revised European Constitution which was rejected in 2005 in referendums in France and the Netherlands, has in turn been rejected in Ireland, the only European Union member state that was allowed to hold a referendum on the Treaty.

The Vlaams Belang congratulates the Irish people on their wise verdict.

In early July, despite the Irish “No” vote the previous month, Belgium ratified the Lisbon Treaty. The Vlaams Belang was the *only* party to vote against ratification. The Vlaams Belang strives for an independent and sovereign Flanders. It does not want to replace Brussels by Brussels; it does not want to exchange the Belgian Brussels behemoth by the EU Brussels leviathan. The only acceptable Europe is a confederal Europe of sovereign nation-states.

## Walloons Back Corrupt Congo

Last May, **Karel De Gucht**, a Flemish Liberal and the Belgian minister of Foreign Affairs, openly questioned whether the 200 million euros which Belgium spends annually on foreign aid to Congo should not be cut until the Congolese authorities can guarantee that the money is well spent and does not end up with corrupt individuals.

Lo and behold, no sooner had Mr De Gucht said this or **Elio Di Rupo**, the leader of the Walloon Socialist Party with whom the Flemish Liberals are in government, accused the Foreign Minister of a “neo-colonialist mentality” and stated that foreign aid should be given unconditionally. Each year Flanders transfers 13 billion euros to Wallonia and the Walloons want this money, too, to be given unconditionally. On 25 May Minister De Gucht said on Flemish television: “The French-speaking Belgians are angry at me, but when Flemings talk to me about Congo I only hear things such as ‘Why do we keep putting money into Congo since it does not help anyway.’”

Flanders has never benefited from Belgium’s Congo colony, which was squeezed dry by the Belgian royal family and Belgium’s French-speaking establishment. The latter still has enormous financial interests in Congo and cares little about the fate of the ordinary Congolese.

## To Turn Criminals into Belgians



**Jan Mortelmans, MP:**

**“Belgium grants Belgian citizenship to international criminals, thereby allowing them entry into every EU country.”**

In 2000 Belgium approved its so-called “Quick Citizenship Act,” which enables immigrants to become Belgians upon simple demand after as few as three (sometimes only two) years of residence in the country. Last April, 5,336 foreigners were made Belgian citizens in this fashion. One of them was an Afghan criminal who had been arrested for leading a network which smuggled non-European foreigners to Britain for a fee of 5,000 euros.

Vlaams Belang MP **Jan Mortelmans** protested against granting citizenship to the criminal Afghan. Parliament ignored his protests and went ahead with the procedure, at which Mr. Mortelmans informed the press. One week later, under pressure of the media, Parliament decided to revise its decision. It could do so because the King had not yet signed the decision. Because the proposal to revise the decision was submitted by a Vlaams Belang politician, the Walloon parties voted against it. They would rather turn criminals into Belgians than vote with the Vlaams Belang. Fortunately, the Flemings were able to gather enough votes to deprive the Afghan criminal of Belgian citizenship.

## Freedom and Responsibility

On 17 May the Vlaams Belang organized a conference entitled “Families, Values and Ethics,” on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the May ‘68 student revolt. Over 300 people attended the event in the conference room of the Flemish Parliament in Brussels. Politicians, writers and academics, such as **Prof. Boudewijn Bouckaert** and **Prof. Frank Thevissen**, discussed topics such as freedom and responsibility. **Gerolf Annemans**, the Vlaams Belang group leader in the Belgian House of Representatives said: “Our party wants to foster a public debate about the conservative values which we defend.”





## Senate to Investigate Royal Income

Last May, the Belgian Senate decided to establish a parliamentary investigation committee into the stipends paid by the state to Belgium's royal family. Belgium is one of the few countries where not only the monarch, **King Albert II**, and his likely successor, **Crown Prince Philippe**, but *all* the legitimate children of the king, including **Prince Laurent**, who is only 12th in line for the throne, receive an income from the public purse. This income is exempt from taxes.

In 2001, the Senate decided to investigate the extent of the royal family's public income. Owing to political manoeuvring the investigation committee was never installed.



### Benefits

The payments to the royals are substantial. This year the royal family

get a stipend of more than 13 million euro. This is a raise of 5 per cent compared to 2007. Apart from this tax free income, however, the Belgian royals also receive various benefits which do not figure in the books, such as a free passenger plane provided by the Belgian Air Force for their official but also their private travels.

Recently, the Belgian minister of Defence told the Parliament that during the past four years the royals had used this plane 105 times for private travelling.

The King goes on private holidays, mostly to his villa in the South of France, 10 times a year. Albert II is known to take life very easy. More and more taxpayers are beginning to wonder why they should pay for this.

## Belgians Quarrel over Poplars



The Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) has gained worldwide renown with a project for the genetic improvement of poplar trees to produce bio-ethanol. The VIB has asked the authorities for

permission to plant genetically manipulated poplar trees.

The Flemish regional authorities approved the planting, but **Paul Magnette** and **Laurette Onkelinx**, two members of the federal government, vetoed it. Both Mr Magnette and Ms Onkelinx are Walloon Socialists.

## More Than a Grain of Truth

"... there are longer-term explanations for the divisions in Belgian political and civic life. Flanders has steadily pulled away from Wallonia in prosperity over the past 50 years and the Flemish resent paying taxes to subsidise the poorer south. "The money has not helped the Walloons but turned them into welfare addicts," declared a recent editorial in *The Flemish Republic*, a newsletter that supports secession.

Such opinions are hotly contested in Wallonia but economists say there is more than a grain of truth to the argument that the south is more favourable than Flanders to government intervention in the economy. Such differences

of political philosophy compound the problems created by Belgium's geographical and linguistic divisions, its electoral system and the extreme decentralisation of the state.

The pressure for a formal split comes largely from Flanders, where some polls suggest that slightly more than half the population support independence. However, some Walloon political activists favour the union of their region with France – in spite of a not entirely happy experience of French annexation and rule between 1795 and 1815."

(Tony Barber, in *Financial Times*, 17 July 2008)

## Half of Walloons Want to Join France

49% of Walloons want to see their region join France if Belgium should cease to exist. That is at least 20% more than a similar survey of less than a year ago showed, the Flemish newspaper *Het Laatste Nieuws* reported (30 July 2008). Furthermore: 60% of the French want to see the Walloons do this, as polls by the Brussels newspaper *Le Soir* and the Northern France paper *La Voix du Nord* show. Currently 40% of all the large companies in Wallonia are in French hands, Walloons tune into French TV channels and they are culturally speaking much closer to France than to Flanders.

## Interested?

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