

The Flemish Republic

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

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info@flemishrepublic.org

www.flemishrepublic.org



Afgiftekantoor Gent X
P2A9779

Flanders Betrayed



Yes, Belgium still has a government. But Prime Minister **Yves Leterme** has had to pay a heavy price for it; he has had to betray his voters.

Belgium is a kingdom with 60% Dutch-speaking Flemings in Flanders, the northern half of the country, and 40% French-speaking Walloons in Wallonia, its southern half. The Flemish majority has been discriminated against ever since Belgium was created by the international powers in 1831.

In June 2007, Mr Leterme's Christian-Democrat Party won the general elections with the promise of a constitutional reform that would give Flanders greater regional powers, including the official recognition of the Flemish character of the Halle-Vilvoorde region, the Dutch-speaking area surrounding the capital Brussels.

Deadlock

Major state reforms need a two-thirds majority and a majority in both Flanders and Wallonia. However, Wallonia has consistently rejected any reforms that diminish the Walloon privileges. This has led to deep frustration in Flanders. The realization that the democratic will of the majority of the Flemings is being rejected, explains the growing popularity of parties striving for Flemish independence, such as the Vlaams Belang.

To counter the rise of the VB, Mr Leterme's Christian-Democrats teamed up with the New-Flemish Alliance (N-VA), a party of moderate Flemish-nationalists who aim to

transform Belgium into a confederal state. The Christian-Democrats and N-VA went to the elections on a common electoral list and won a huge victory.

No agreement

Following the elections, however, the Walloon politicians consistently vetoed all plans for constitutional reform. This resulted in a political crisis which dragged on for over a year. It took six months before, in December 2007, an "interim government" could be formed which, after three months, paved the way for a Leterme government last March.

For another four months the Leterme government tried to discuss reforming the constitution. Last July, realizing that no agreement could be reached, Mr Leterme offered his resignation to **King Albert II**. The King, however, refused to accept the resignation and Mr Leterme stayed on, thereby conceding that he would not be able to reform the constitution as he had promised his voters. Last September, the N-VA decided to end its agreement with the Christian-Democrats and join the opposition.

Broken promises

As a result, Belgium is currently being governed by a coalition which has no majority in Flanders but almost unanimous support in Wallonia. Only 42 of the 88 Flemish Members of Parliament support the government, while 53 of the 62 French-speaking MPs do. Indeed, the Leterme government is the least Flemish government in ages, although Mr Leterme won the elections by promising the Flemings more powers.

The Prime Minister says that the current economic crisis does not allow him to live up to his electoral promises. It is unlikely, however, that his voters will forget his promises as easily as he.

Imminent Independence

The Belgian establishment is trying to kill our party through the courts. The Belgian media are silencing us by not reporting our political activities in parliament.

Despite the dirty war of the Belgian authorities against us, the Vlaams Belang continues its fight for Flemish independence; for a free and democratic Flanders. The fierceness with which we are attacked indicates how frightened Belgium is of us. Paradoxically, the harder the battle becomes, the more optimistic we are. The birth of an independent Flanders is imminent.

The Vlaams Belang advocates the break-up of Belgium. The fundamental differences between Flanders and Wallonia prevent the application of efficient policies geared to the problems facing our nations. It is in the interest of both Flanders and Wallonia, as well as Europe and the world, that Belgium be abolished.

Our children will live in a new country, a free country, a democratic country. Our grandfathers, our fathers and we have fought for the preservation of the Dutch character of Flanders. Soon we will make their and our dream come true: the Flemish Republic.



Bruno Valkeniers
Vlaams Belang party leader

Prosecuted Because He Is A Symbol

The Belgian establishment does not shun dirty tricks to squash the opposition. Sadly, the European Parliament (EP) is complicit in this.

In early November, the EP decided to strip **Frank Vanhecke**, the leader of the Vlaams Belang group in the EP, of his parliamentary immunity. **Jo Vandeurzen**, the Belgian Minister of Justice, a Christian-Democrat, had asked the EP to do this. Belgium wants to prosecute Mr Vanhecke on racism charges.

Mr. Vanhecke was the VB party leader from 1996 until early 2008. Under his leadership the party became the largest party in Flanders. The popular Mr. Vanhecke heads the VB list for the 2009 European elections. If convicted on the racism charges he will lose his right to stand for election in the European elections next June.

The racism charges, however, are merely a pretext. The Belgian authorities consider Mr Vanhecke to be a "racist" because they hold him responsible for the publication of a text in a local party publication in a provincial Flemish town. The author, a local party member, had blamed a wave of vandalism at the local Christian cemetery on immigrant youths. As the culprits were minors, Belgian law prohibits disclosing their identity. Though the author of the text is known and is NOT being prosecuted Mr Vanhecke is, even though he had nothing to do with the published text. The authorities hold him responsible for the sole reason that at the time of the publication he was the national VB leader, and hence the publisher of all party leaflets.

Cheap excuse

Guido Naets, a former chief spokesperson and head of the press office of the European Parliament (1980–1995), asked the EP to turn down the request to lift Mr Vanhecke's immunity. "In the almost 30 years that I have known Frank Vanhecke I have never been able to catch him out on any form of racism whatsoever," Mr Naets said. "Vanhecke will be prosecuted because he is a symbol for a party that wants to abolish Belgium. For all these reasons I beg the European Parliament not to become an accessory to a political lynching and an attempted smear attack of a radical Flemish party, in which racism is being used as a cheap excuse."

Such behaviour is "unworthy of the European Parliament," Mr Naets said, warning for a backlash against Europe in Flemish public opinion. Unfortunately, the EP decided to disregard its former spokesman's advice.



Turkey in the EU: A Bridge Too Far

Does it serve the interests of the Western world if the largest member state of the European Union becomes an Islamic country? **Philip Claeys** and **Koen Dillen**, two VB members of the European Parliament, oppose Turkish EU membership. They have written a book to argue the case against it.

Claeys' and Dillen's book, "A Bridge Too Far: Turkey in the European Union," was published in Dutch four years ago. An updated version has now been translated into English. It was presented in Washington DC on 22 November.

Four years ago, Brussels and Ankara started negotiations which should lead to Turkey becoming an EU member. Geographically, however, Turkey is not a European state. Culturally, it is not European either. Turkey is an Islamic state and a prominent member

of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Its attitude to human rights and democracy is also problematic.

Far-reaching consequences

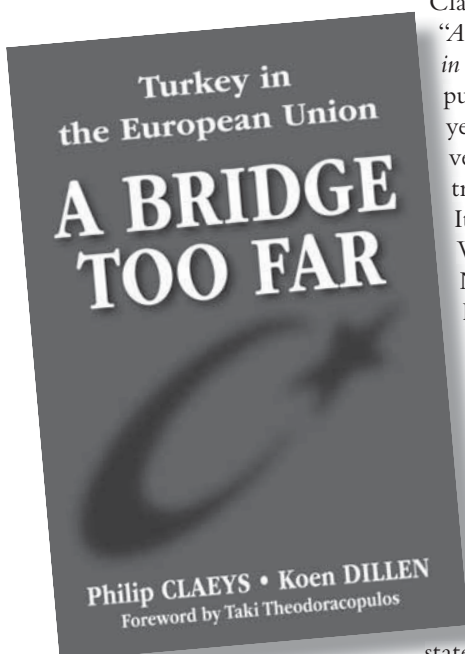
Some people in Washington seem to believe that Turkish EU membership will turn the country into a perfect democratic state and an example to other Muslim nations, thereby proving that Islam and democracy can be reconciled. But what if they are wrong? And what about European values?

The institutional and economic consequences of Turkey's admission will also be far-reaching. If Turkey joins the EU, an additional 80 million Muslims become EU citizens. As an EU member, Turkey will have the highest number of representatives in the European Parliament. In the European Council it will be on a par with the present Big Ones. Its foreign interests will dominate Europe's.

Impoverishment

Moreover, raising Turkey to a European standard of living will require enormous and sustained efforts of wealth redistribution from the European taxpayers, which will impoverish Europe without a guarantee of success in Turkey. On the contrary, the EU subsidies are likely to corrupt the Turkish establishment even further.

Claeys' and Dillen's book explains why Turkish admission to the EU would be bad for Europe, bad for Turkey and bad for the world. "A Bridge Too Far: Turkey in the European Union" costs US \$15.95, £ 10.50 or € 12.50. The book can be ordered at the online bookshop www.amazon.com.



Another Belgian Scandal

Corruption in the Police Force

Fernand Koekelberg, the head of the Belgian Federal Police, has been suspended. **Guido Van Wymersch**, the head of the Brussels Police Department, is also in trouble. The police chiefs are involved in yet another Belgian corruption scandal. The scandal has undermined the position of **Patrick Dewael**, the Minister of the Interior and one of the leaders of the governing Liberal Party.

Mr Koekelberg, who worked for the cabinet of Minister Dewael, promoted two of his secretaries to lucrative top jobs in the police force. The women were not qualified for the jobs. According to press reports, one of them was given the job because she had a romantic relationship with Mr Koekelberg, the other because she had a similar relationship with a cabinet bigwig.

Mr Van Wymersch is implicated in a similar affair. He had another woman, also a former collaborator of Minister Dewael's cabinet, promoted to a lucrative position, although the woman did not pass the exam required for the job. Mr Van Wymersch changed her examination report from "unqualified" into "qualified" so that she was ultimately promoted. One of the police officers who helped him change the report claims that the Dewael cabinet pressured the Brussels Police Department to give the woman the position.

Bad example

Senator **Hugo Coveliers**, a former member of Minister Dewael's Liberal Party, says that Mr Dewael made a habit of

surrounding himself with pretty women, who "for services rendered" were rewarded with well paid jobs. "Dewael should resign," Senator Coveliers says, "because he has set a bad example. But he will not resign, because the Liberals threaten to bring the government down if he is forced to resign."



Meanwhile, the two police chiefs can count on the unwavering support of the powerful *Parti Socialiste* (PS). **Marc Uyttendaele**, the husband of PS politician **Laurette Onkelinx**, the present Belgian Vice Prime Minister and until last year the Belgian Minister of Justice, is Mr Koekelberg's lawyer. The latter objects to his suspension and has gone to court to demand that he be reinstated. **Freddy Thielemans**, the PS Mayor of Brussels, refuses to punish Mr Van Wymersch. Mr Thielemans says that the Brussels police chief has done nothing wrong. The affair has led to a deep demoralisation within the Belgian police force.

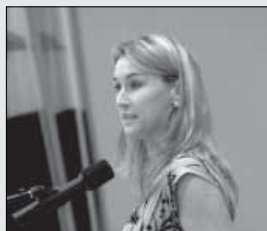
Meanwhile in Antwerp, Belgium's second largest city after the capital Brussels, **Patrick Janssens**, the Socialist mayor, has also promoted his girl friend to a high rank in the police force.

The Belgian Union(s)

The Belgian trade unions are pillars of the Belgian regime and of Belgian national union. In Belgium, the government pays the trade unions an annual fee of 130 million euros to hand out the unemployment benefits to people without jobs. However, only three trade unions are officially recognized by the state: one linked to the Christian-Democrat Party, one to the Socialist Party, and one to the Liberal Party.

Only these three unions are allowed to pay out the unemployment benefits. The result is that many Belgians, out of necessity, have become members of one of the three official unions. In order to preserve their privileges the unions defend the political status-quo. They dread the establishment of an independent Flanders which might abolish Belgium's trade union system. This is why the unions regard the Vlaams Belang as a deadly foe. They expel every union member whom they discover to be a VB member or sympathizer.

The VB has unearthed numerous scams and corruption cases in which the unions are involved. **Marie-Rose Morel**, a VB member of the Flemish Parliament, discovered that subsidies which the unions receive for educational purposes were spent on holiday outings for union employees.



Marie-Rose Morel MP:

"The monopoly of the trade union(s) must be abolished."

Independence Conference

On November 2nd, the Vlaams Belang held an independence conference in Ghent. In various workshops the party discussed how to prepare the independence of Flanders and examined the constitutional, economic, institutional and international repercussions. The Vlaams Belang is the only party which unambiguously opts for Flemish independence, thereby voicing the aspiration of an ever growing group of Flemings.



Karim Van Overmeire MP: "Thirty years ago when a small group of Flemish nationalists formed a new political party with Flemish Independence as its first priority, it was ridiculed. But times have changed. The idea of an independent Flanders as an alternative to the deadlock of the Belgian model has become widely accepted. This revolution in the minds of the Flemings is due to the influence of the Vlaams Belang."



Return of the Habsburgs?



Philippe what many members of the Belgian establishment think but dare not say: "He is incapable of doing the job."

Archduke

Kings do not need to be intellectuals. Belgium, however, is such a complicated and fragile country that many dread what might happen with the impulsive, utterly undiplomatic and stubborn Philippe on the throne.

Whenever **King Albert II**, who is 74, encounters health problems, the Belgian politicians begin to worry about the succession. Albert's eldest child, **Crown Prince Philippe**, 48, is known not to be very intelligent, even though Stanford University (USA) gave him an MA in Political Science in 1985 and Leuven University (Belgium) made him an honorary doctor in 2002. Many Belgians are convinced the degrees were bought. The Chancellor of Leuven University made a baron shortly after bestowing the Crown Prince with his honorary PhD.

In an interview a few years ago **Herman Liebaers**, the former head of the ceremonial office of the royal palace, said about

As the moment of King Albert's succession approaches, rumours are resurfacing that Albert might be succeeded by his second child, **Princess Astrid**, 46. She is brighter than her brother. Astrid is married to **Archduke Lorenz** of Austria-Este, a scion of the Habsburg family. The couple has five children. Hence, if Astrid succeeds, the unpopular Saxe-Coburg dynasty might be replaced by a Habsburg monarchy. The Habsburgs governed Flanders from 1482 until 1795. Indeed, if France had not invaded the country in 1795, the Habsburgs might still be the counts of Flanders today.

The King Flies

In Early November, Belgium's King Albert II went on an official visit to India. The Belgian airforce had to provide three planes for this trip. An Airbus A-310 flew the King and the 150 people who accompanied him to Delhi. A second Airbus was flown over as a back-up to fly the delegation home in case the first plane had technical problems. A third Belgian airforce plane, a Falcon 900, flew Karel De Gucht, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Delhi from Rwanda.

In the first half of this year, the King made 15 round trips to foreign destinations with an airforce passenger plane, mostly to his private villa in the South of France. The Vlaams Belang demands that the King take a regular airline when he goes on official visits and that he pays the bill for his private flights instead of having the airforce fly at the taxpayers' expense.

Doctors' Federation to Split

Belgium is gradually unravelling into two separate countries, Flanders and Wallonia. Last September, the Belgian Federation of Medical Doctors, membership of which is required for any MD wishing to practise his profession, decided to initiate the process to split the Federation into two separate federations, one for the Dutch- and one for the French-speaking doctors.

Erik Tack, a general practitioner who is a VB member of the Flemish Parliament, has long advocated the split of the Belgian Federation and the creation of an independent Flemish Doctors' Federation. The Belgian Federation announced that by splitting up it is following the "logic of the land."



Erik Tack MP:

"The creation of a Flemish Federation of Medical Doctors is long overdue."



Luc Sevenhans MP:

"The airforce is not the King's private airline."

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Madouplein 8/9 - B-1210 Brussels

Flanders - Belgium

Fax: + 32 2 217 52 75

E-mail: subscribe@flemishrepublic.org

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