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On the money

Student financial club Capitant moulds a new generation of investors



Linda A Thompson
Follow Linda on Twitter \ @ThompsonBXL

Most student clubs are focused on having a good time more than educational pursuits. But not Capitant, a club for university and college students who are seriously committed to learning about finance and investment.

On a recent chilly weekday evening, a crowd of some 180 people gathered in the heart of Antwerp for a lecture about investment diversification. It wasn't your typical after-work event. Instead, the chairs were slightly more uncomfortable, the lighting somewhat less flattering and the decoration even duller than in your usual event space.

And except for the two speakers, there were only students in the room.

That's because this event was organised by Capitant, a Flemish club that aims to introduce university and college students to the world of finance. Established four years ago, the student group distinguishes itself from other Flemish business and economics-focused clubs by way of its singular focus on finance topics.

“

Money is something you should know about

“I think they are *the* pre-eminent student club in terms of offering students valuable content,” says Marc De Ceuster, an economics professor at Antwerp University and the Antwerp Management School. “They are given a view of the financial world, presented by people who are active in it.” With roughly 1,700 members and chapters in four Flemish cities, the club appears to have tapped into a growing interest among younger generations in the financial markets. “The people I studied with, and the Capitant students and members, offer a pretty good image of the position students today take vis-à-vis the economy,” says Christophe Van Wichelen, 24, one of three Capitant co-founders. “The financial world has been in the news a lot lately. Students want to know more about it because it's a hot topic.”

It's a sentiment echoed by Francis Verhoeven, 20, a student in applied economic sciences at Antwerp University. Drawn

De Lijn reveals price hikes

Government must approve the new fees, including the scrapping of many free passes



Alan Hope
Follow Alan on Twitter \ @AlanHopeFT

Pensioners will have to pay €50 a year for a public transport season ticket with De Lijn from September next year, the company has announced. Until now, the over-65s have travelled free on buses and trams in Flanders. De Lijn unveiled its new fare proposal last week, which involves the loss of free travel for various groups and a hefty increase in single ticket prices. The changes, if approved by the government of Flanders, take place on 1 February, with the exception of the new charge for seniors, which comes into force next September. Other formerly free passes, such as for journalists and jobseekers, are also being scrapped. Free travel with De Lijn will be restricted to children under five, war veterans, the handicapped and their caregivers and members of parliament. Free transport for parliamentarians is guaranteed

by the constitution, but De Lijn has invited MPs to pay rather than accept the free pass. Motorists who give up their cars and hand over their licence plates will receive an annual pass at half price. The fare increases are the result of €35 million in cuts required because of a loss of government subsidy. “Cost cutting is never pleasant,” said CEO Roger Kesteloot. “We want to realise a large part of the savings via a change to fares, always with an eye out for the socially vulnerable.” The annual Omnipas goes up from €249 to €294 – “relatively cheap” said Kesteloot, compared to the same ticket in Brussels, where it costs €499 a year. The Buzzy Pazz for young people up to 24 years goes up from €183 to €195. The second and subsequent young people in the same family pay less. The cost of an ordinary ticket for



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a single journey will cost €3. At present a ticket bought in advance costs €1.30, or €2 if bought from the driver. The price of a ticket bought by SMS costs €1.80, up from €1.40 now. A Lijnkaart multiple ticket goes up from €10 to €14. “We have never seen such a price increase,” Jan Coolbrandt of the ACV union told VRT. “We will have to wait and see how passen-

gers react, but hopefully this will not lead to a downward spiral.” The union fears that passenger numbers will drop as a result, leading to further cuts in services. Public transport user group Trein-TramBus described the increases as “far too steep” and called on the government not to approve De Lijn’s proposals. Seniors’ organisation Okra said it was “cautiously

pleased” with the amount of the new charge for its members. “Originally there was talk of €180 a year, which is unacceptable,” said Okra spokesperson Niek De Meester. “We can get along with €50, as long as De Lijn gives us something for our money.” The Brussels-Capital Region also unveiled its transport fare plan for 2015 last week. Single ticket prices remain the same, as do discounted passes for children, students and pensioners. Tickets to the airport go up from €4 to €4.50. Tourist tickets for one, two or three days will increase by €0.50 or €1, depending on the pass. “An enjoyable city is one where there are fewer cars and more cyclists and pedestrians,” said Brussels transport minister Pascal Smet. “The only way to achieve that is if we have an extensive, timely and affordable public transport network.” The changes come into force on 1 February.

Special Last Post for 11 November

Flemish minister-president Geert Bourgeois was in Ypres last week for a special edition of the daily Last Post ceremony, held to mark the 96th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Bourgeois laid a wreath at the ceremony under the Menin Gate, in the company of West Flanders governor Carl Decaluwé, Ypres mayor Jan Durnez, speaker of the Flemish parliament Jan Peumans and ambassadors from Commonwealth countries. Exceptionally, the ceremony was held at 11.00, the hour at which the guns fell silent on 11 November 1918 following the signing of the Armistice. The Last Post ceremony has been held every evening at 20.00 since 1928 – with the exception of during the Second World War occupation, when it was moved to Brookwood Cemetery in England. Later in the day, there were remembrance ceremonies in Saint-Charles de Potyze cemetery in Ypres, at the Tyne Cot cemetery in Zonnebeke and at the Langemark German cemetery in Poelkapelle. In Brussels, King Filip took part in the traditional 11 November ceremony at the monument to the Unknown Soldier, which was followed by a 21-gun salute and a minute of silence. Wreaths were also




© Sandro Delaere/BELGA

laid by representatives of the parliament, the government and the judiciary, as well as police, military, Nato and foreign troops in Belgium. The king spoke to some of the surviving veterans of other wars who were present. The last Belgian veteran of the First World War, Cyrillus-Camillus Barbary, died in 2004 at the age of 105. Later in the day, a ceremony of remembrance was held in the federal parliament, attended by 500 children from the various provinces and by war veterans. \ AH


Moment of silence for victims of Flemish road accidents

Traffic in part of Flanders came to a standstill for 384 seconds on Sunday, in commemoration of the same number of people who died on the region’s roads last year. The event was organised by Rondpunt, an organisation that represents road traffic accident victims, and took place on World Remembrance Day in Edegem, Antwerp province. “In traffic, one second can be decisive,” said Sofie Hoenkamp, spokesperson for Rondpunt. “In 2013, 384 of those seconds marked the end of 384 lives. This action is intended not only to remember the victims but also to make drivers aware, so that perhaps next year we won’t have to stand still for so long.” During the event, while children read out their wishes for safer roads, Flemish mobility minister Ben Weyts, Edegem mayor Koen Metsu and members of the scouts handed out forget-me-nots to waiting motorists. “More people died on the roads in 2013 than there were days in the year,” Weyts said later. “On each occasion, the world stood still for one family, one class, one group of friends. It’s important, too, for us to stop and think and for road users to keep remembering.” He also suggested an insurance discount for drivers who take additional lessons. At the same time, the Belgian Institute for Road Safety called for more attention to be paid to road safety. In 2010, the government pledged to reduce by half the number of fatalities in the country by 2020. That would mean a maximum of 420 deaths a year. Last year the national figure was still at 724, according to traffic expert Koen Peeters of the institute. \ AH


25,083




4%




108,000



22



€5,000



new companies started in Flanders in the first eight months of this year, an increase of 1.5% on the same period last year. The largest increase, of 6%, was in West Flanders

tax paid on €150 million of foreign income brought into Belgium by AB InBev via a shell company. The deal is now being investigated by the special investigations unit of the finance ministry

tonnes of road salt stockpiled by the Flemish roads agency in preparation for the coming winter. The agency has 40 new spreading machines, which allow the salt to be more accurately dosed

pilot whales spotted off the coast of Blankenberge, the first time in 26 years that such a large group has been seen. The group appeared to be disoriented, witnesses said, and were dangerously close to shore

fine for Flemish public broadcaster VRT for product placement, thanks to the shirt-collar of former Red Devils goalie Jean-Marie Pfaff, which habitually carries advertising

WEEK IN BRIEF

Belgium scores **ninth for command of English** among 63 countries where English is not an official language, according to the annual English Proficiency Index by Education First. The countries of Scandinavia – Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway – did best, together with the Netherlands to fill the top five places. The lowest score in Europe goes to France in 29th place.

A 31-year-old Orthodox **Jewish man was stabbed in the street** in the Jewish quarter of Antwerp at the weekend. The man was stabbed in the neck, but the wound was superficial and he has been able to leave hospital, as police continue the search for his attacker. The Forum for Jewish Organisations said it was “horrificed” at the attack. “The chance is very real that we are dealing with an act of pure anti-Semitism,” it said in a press release.

The Hedwigepolder, an area of the Dutch province of Zeewu-Vlaanderen measuring 306 hectares, **is to be flooded under a 2012 agreement**, after the Dutch Council of State rejected the owner’s appeal against the order. The flooding of the polder was agreed to by the Dutch and Flemish governments under a treaty to deepen the Scheldt channel between the North Sea and the port of Antwerp. The area of recovered land will be returned to the tides as compensation for the land lost to nature by the dredging operation. The owner is now considering taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

The province of **Antwerp should change its name** to Midden-Brabant to avoid confusion between province and city, according to Flemish MPs Kris Van Dijck (N-VA), Koen Van den Heuvel (CD&V) and Bart Somers (Open

VLD). The historic name describes the province better than the name of its largest city and would allow other parts to better identify with the province, they said. Provincial governor Cathy Berx pointed out any change would require an amendment to the Constitution.

The **Brussels Beer Temple**, planned to take over the stock exchange building in 2018, will not include either of the capital’s two breweries, the Belgian Brewers Federation revealed last week. Neither Cantillon nor Brasserie de la Senne will be represented in the tourist attraction. According to Jean Van Roy of Cantillon, the project is being financed mainly by the large brewers. He also pointed out that the Beer Temple excludes artisanal lambic brewers in favour of Belle-Vue, owned by AB InBev; Mort Subite, owned by Heineken; and Boon, owned by Palm.

Brussels Airport handled just under **two million passengers in October**, an increase of 19.3% on the same month last year, bringing the year’s total to just under 19 million. The Airport company said that the increase was due to the expansion of low-cost flights, as well as the arrival of Emirates flights last month. The increase in through traffic was even larger, at just over 31% on the year.

There will be an **American remake of the Flemish comedy-drama Crimi Clowns**. The rights have been sold to Fox Television. At the same time, creator Luk Wyns learned that the series has been given a third season on Flemish TV. He will also be executive producer of the US series.

Dutch interpreters at the Justice Palace in Brussels stopped work for two hours last Friday in protest at unpaid fees of €136 million, as

well as what they describe as “difficult working conditions”. A number of court cases had to be adjourned as a result. The interpreters were due to meet with justice minister Koen Geens this week to discuss the issue.

A planned **renovation of Vilvoorde railway station** has been postponed by the rail authority NMBS as a result of budget cuts, federal mobility minister Jacqueline Galant informed mayor Hans Bonte. The platforms and passages in the station are in a lamentable state, Bonte said, and present safety problems. “Delay is not an option, unless they judge that the station ought to close,” he said. Work was due to start last month.

The **B-Fast rapid reaction team will travel to Guinea** with a mobile laboratory to help in the fight against Ebola, the ministry of defence has announced. The team of eight will remain for two months, when the lab may be passed on to another organisation on the ground. The team will depart once the French army in Guinea is able to guarantee their safety in the event of infection or other danger, defence minister Steven Vandeput said.

Telecommunications company Telenet has been ordered by the court of appeal in Brussels to **allow access to its cable network** to third parties, including arch-competitor Proximus. The rejected appeal is the latest stage of the Mechelen-based company’s resistance to an order made in 2011 by the telecoms regulator. Third parties must now be allowed to offer cable and digital TV as well as broadband internet using Telenet’s extensive cable network in Flanders. A final appeal to the Cassation Court on procedural grounds is possible but not yet decided.

FACE OF FLANDERS



© Michiel Hendryckx

Stefan Hertmans

Third time lucky for Flemish novelist and poet Stefan Hertmans last week in The Hague, when it was announced that he was this year’s winner of the AKO Literature Prize for his First World War novel *Oorlog en terpentijn* (War and Turpentine). Hertmans has been nominated twice before for the prestigious prize. Hertmans was born in Ghent in 1951 and studied Germanic philology at the university. On graduating, he taught at secondary school before becoming a lecturer in philosophy of art and literature at the city’s Fine Arts Academy. In 1981, his debut novel *Ruimte* (Space) related the story of his youth along the banks of the Scheldt river. It won him the prize for best debut in 1982, the first of many awards. That was followed by a veritable flood of work, including poetry, drama, essays and criticism. He is considered extremely literary, even difficult, yet his books sell well. *Oorlog en terpentijn* has sold 125,000 copies in Flanders and the Netherlands. The book tells the story of Hert-

mans’ grandfather and his experiences during the First World War, based on notebooks handed over to Hertmans as his grandfather lay dying. The book had already won the readers’ prize at Flanders’ Gouden Uil awards and was nominated for the Libris Literature Prize. This year Hertmans was awarded the Flemish Community’s culture prize for letters. “A lot of people see me as an elitist and intellectual writer,” he told VRT on hearing of his win. “This book comes from my youth, and everything my grandfather did for me. I’m happy to have been able to tell the story. Maybe now people will read my work in another way, more in the way I intended.” *Oorlog en terpentijn* is Hertmans’ “masterpiece, which has already gained the status of a classic,” according to former Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen, who chaired the AKO prize jury. The AKO Literature prize is one of the most important recognitions in Dutch-language letters. Hertmans takes away €50,000 in cash and a sculpture by the Dutch artist Eugène Peters. \ Alan Hope

OFFSIDE Sweet dreams and flying machines

The weekend’s landing of a probe on a comet brings to mind the works of Flemish artist Panamarenko, currently the subject of an exhibition in Antwerp (*see p14*). That show contains a fascinating document, which most people will walk right past to get to the spaceships and flying machines. Travel back with us now to 12 March, 1966, to the Groenplaats in Antwerp, where something known in those days as a “happening” is, well, happening. Police inspector Nikolaas Vereycken’s patrol gets wind of something due to take place at 15.00. “With the necessary personnel, we arrived at the spot on time,” he writes in the official police report. “Around 15.00, we noticed here and there, in ones and twos, boys and



girls standing around in striking modern clothing and long hair. At 15.10, a taxi van from the Antwerp Taxi Company arrived in the middle of the Groenplaats. When it stopped, out stepped someone known to us: Henri Van Herwegen”. Henri Van Herwegen is none other than Panamarenko (*pictured*). “The first man was wearing a white summer suit ... The three persons then began to unload the van of a quantity of sacks, apparently

containing white sand, a large cardboard box, a very large transparent plastic container, two batteries and an unrecognisable steel machine which they laid in the centre of the square. ... In the meantime, a circle of onlookers had formed, including about 100 long-haired youths and girls in extremely modern clothing.” The happening was the Lange Wapper Gas Monster in Action Again, and also featured Hugo Heyrman, Panamarenko’s regular happening confederate. The purpose was artistic, and the unknown machine was one of the first of Panamarenko’s now-famous flying machines. To find out what happened next with the bags of sand and the dangerous gathering of long-hairs, you’ll have to visit the exhibition. \ Alan Hope

FLANDERTODAY Flanders State of the Art

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5TH COLUMN

New faces, old questions

As a party, Groen stands out from the rest. The ecologists have a small but faithful electoral base and hold a unique place in Flemish politics. Now, their party president is one of its kind, too.

Meyrem Almaci, who was elected last weekend, is the first Flemish party president with an immigrant background: She has Turkish roots. That is not the thing she is most known for, though, as her passionate debating style is unforgettable to anyone who has seen her in action.

As a niche party, with a niche electorate, Groen supporters are mostly educated, have a higher income and are concerned about ecology and sustainability. Young hipsters, one might think, but a few years ago, the party became almost extinct because of its aging electorate.

In recent years, though, Groen's original founders have been replaced with a new generation, including Almaci, Wouter De Vriendt, Kristof Calvo and Almaci's predecessor, Wouter Van Besien. Now Groen seems to be back on track.

As a small, left-wing party, there is one question Groen can never get away from: Should it co-operate more with that other left-wing party, socialist SPA? This question about the "progressive front" remains unresolved.

So far, Groen has always resisted. The socialists have a long history of close relationships with trade unions and mutualities with which the ecologists feel uncomfortable. In the past, SPA also tended to be more concerned about employment and income than about the environment, although that has changed in recent years. Another difference is that the socialists aim for power, while the ecologists are quite happy to be in opposition.

Still, there is a lot that the two parties have in common, especially now that they are both in opposition. Also, there is the example of Ghent, where SPA and Groen joined forces at the 2012 local elections. The "progressive" government that resulted is now unique in Flanders – and the antithesis of that other city, Antwerp, which has a right-wing coalition.

So Almaci again will have to face the old question. SPA certainly is not letting her off the hook. One of the first to congratulate her on her election Saturday was SPA party president Bruno Tobback. And to ask if, per chance, she would not consider a closer co-operation? \ Anja Otte

Antwerp: Strike but no protest on Monday, say unions

Industrial action will not include violent protest, organisers promise



Derek Blyth

More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

Unions are not planning a demonstration in Antwerp, a socialist union spokesperson has said in response to rumours that Antwerp dock workers were planning violent protests on the provincial day of action planned for next Monday, 24 November.

Some sources blame Antwerp dockers for the violence that erupted during the demonstration in Brussels on 6 November when an estimated 120,000 people marched against government austerity measures. Several cars were set on fire and more than 20 people injured during the demonstration.

Antwerp mayor Bart De Wever has insisted that he would not allow violence on the streets of



© Raymond Clement/dewereldmorgen.be

Antwerp. But Dirk Schoeters (pictured) of the socialist union ABVV said that they have no

plans to march on 24 November. Their plan is to strike only, he said.

"We are not going to demonstrate, but we will do everything we can to make sure that no work is done in the port of Antwerp or in local companies," Schoeters said.

Police unions expressed relief at the announcement. "This is good news," said Michel Goyvaerts of the police union NSPV. "No one benefits from a violent demonstration like the one they had in Brussels."

De Wever said police would nevertheless be ready to take to the streets if necessary. "I welcome these comments by the unions," he said, "but it would be unwise to be unprepared. We're not going to take any risks."

Almaci voted president of Groen, De Wever re-elected for N-VA

Meyrem Almaci has been elected as the new president of the Flemish party Groen, with 60% of the vote at a party congress in Brussels. Her opponent, Elke Van den Brandt, obtained 40% of the total 761 votes cast.

Almaci succeeds Wouter Van Besien, who announced his resignation in August. After the elections last May, the party was excluded from both the Flemish and federal coalition governments.

Almaci, 38, from Antwerp, sits in the federal parliament. With the election results, she becomes Flanders' first party president with immigrant roots (Turkish). She described Groen as "the future for progressive Flanders".

"Now that our party has consolidated itself, we have to dare once again to show our face; we are no longer the little brother of progressive Flanders." The party must put itself forward as the main alternative to the "right-wing cutting policy" of the coalition of N-VA, CD&V and Open VLD in power at

both federal and Flemish levels, she said.

The party congress was also the occasion to celebrate the signing up of the 8,000th paid member – the largest membership the party has ever known.

Also at the weekend, Antwerp mayor Bart De Wever was re-elected as president of the Flemish nationalists N-VA, with 91% of the vote against 9% for opponent Geert Vertongen. De Wever, who now begins his fourth term as the party's leader, said his priorities would be "stability and continuity".

"Geert fought a worthy campaign, in which he rightly brought a number of concerns to the attention of members," De Wever said. "I intend to take work on a number of those points further."

Normally a president of N-VA may only serve two terms, but De Wever asked for and obtained an exception to the rule in 2011, when he ran unopposed, and again this time. However, he stressed that he had no intention of remaining as "eternal president". \ Alan Hope

Flemish Parliament calls for new food waste initiative

Almost all the parties in the Flemish Parliament have tabled a motion calling on the government to introduce measures to cut down on food waste.

The motion was tabled by Groen MP Bart Caron in support of a campaign launched by the Belgian aid charity 11.11.11. on World Food Day last month. The motion was backed by CD&V, N-VA, Open VLD and SPA.

"Too much food is being wasted," Caron said. "Each year, four billion tons of food is produced in the world, one-third of which is thrown away. Some 120,000 tons of food is wasted every year in Flanders. The average household with two adults and two children could save €300 a year by eliminating food waste."

The government of Flanders has already undertaken various plans to reduce food waste. But parliament is specifically calling for action to ensure that food is not wasted simply because "it doesn't look good".

"We're calling on the government to consult the sectors involved so that a binding code of conduct is introduced to prevent unfair trade practices that lead directly to food waste," Caron said. \ DB

Jobs and training are priorities, say Peeters and Thyssen

Kris Peeters, the Belgian minister for work, economy and consumer affairs, met European Commissioner for work Marianne Thyssen last week to discuss policy priorities for the coming years. Belgium and the European Union are united on the key importance of creating jobs and providing training, they said.

Both Peeters and Thyssen (pictured) belong to the Flemish Christian democrat party, although Thyssen has spent much of her career in the European Parliament. Earlier this year, Peeters gave up any chance of becoming the country's prime minister by backing Thyssen as a European Commissioner (as the same party could not have won two prestigious posts).

Thyssen met Peeters in his office at the beginning of a round of meet-

ings with all 28 ministers for work from EU member states. "Job creation and training are the key priorities for both Belgium and Europe," they said in a joint statement.

European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker recently announced that the EU would invest €300 billion in projects that improve Europe's competitive edge and tackle high unemployment levels.

Belgium has much to gain from drawing on this fund, Peeters said. "This huge investment plan can help to boost to the economy. It could also encourage the private sector to invest and so generate more jobs."

Thyssen said that the EU had focused in recent years on reducing debt and putting the economy on a sound footing. But the Euro-



© Courtesy VTM

pean Commission aims to put the creation of jobs and social welfare at the heart of policymaking. The same goes for Belgium. "I am pleased to see that EU Commissioner Marianne Thyssen has repeated her message that job creation is a key priority at a European level," said Peeters. Combining job creation and

social welfare requires a consensus to be reached, he continued, between employers and employees within Belgium and the EU. The ultimate goal is to create a functioning European job market that is not open to abuse. "Belgium has a historical role to play in implementing this policy," Peeters said. \ DB

On the money

Capitant teaches students about risks and rewards of investment

WWW.CAPITANT.BE

continued from page 1

by their speaker line-up, Verhoeven began attending Capitant events last year. Sitting between two of his friends during the reception after the recent Learn to Invest event, he said that he had come to learn. "I'm interested in this for my own portfolio."

Explaining that he hadn't yet invested in stocks or bonds but was just thinking ahead, he said with a grin: "I think you should invest with money that you won't need for another 10 years, and I don't currently have that type of money."

For Verhoeven, the appeal of Capitant was clear. "Money is something you should know about," he said. "When you have an event organised at a serious level like this with quality speakers, plus a bunch of your friends are going – I'm there."

Studentenkringen, or student clubs, in Flanders aren't typically associated with serious affairs. Instead, they are best-known for their *dopen* or hazing-like initiation events, the booze-filled song fests known as *cantussen* and their "TDs", equally booze-filled theme parties.

They focus on fun first and the occasional network event or lecture second. At Capitant, it's the other way round.

For instance, they do throw a massive shindig once a year, the BeursTD or Stock Party, but even there, the educational aspect is never far off. At a recent BeursTD, the prices of the drinks, aptly labelled Tequila STOCKrise and Sex on WALLSTREET, for instance, fluctuated in accordance with the beverage demand throughout the night.

"When I hear Capitant, I think: 'That's serious'," says Verhoeven. Pointing to their strong presence at on-campus events, their matching hoodies and button downs and their sleek, black membership cards, he says: "Their image is impeccable; they come across as incredibly professional."



Capitant co-sponsored the 2014 Belgian Traders Trophy final, with students competing from universities across Flanders and the Netherlands

While it's hard to pry apart the relationship between the financial crisis and the wave Capitant has ridden to success, it's clear that there is one. The club was founded in 2010, just a year after the worst recession since the Second World

“You learn to live in the work rhythm and what the corporate world is like

War hit the global economy and as countries like Greece and Ireland were receiving €100-billion bailout packages.

Meanwhile, Belgium saw its credit rating lowered for the first time in 10 years. Headlines were dominated by the stringent austerity

measures national governments across Europe were adopting, but in Antwerp classrooms, it was a complete radio silence.

"With the financial crisis, there were a lot of questions among students," says Antwerp University student Michaël Wouters, 21. He has been with the club since 2011 and is one of four Capitant Belgium directors.

"How could this happen? What should we do to avoid this happening again in the future? And the academic courses that students were getting at the university or university college weren't offering answers to all those questions," he says.

Explaining that the university's applied economic sciences students received a course on financial markets as part of their curriculum but the business engineering students didn't, De Ceuster admits: "For a very large group of students in Antwerp, the financial markets were unfamiliar territory."

He has, in his own words, functioned as both a "sounding board" and a "godfather" to the group since the Capitant founders first came to him to discuss their idea for a finance-focussed student club.

Capitant was rewarded with the 2011 Unizo Laureate Higher Education Award just a couple of months after it was founded, with the jury praising it as "a unique project" and "a specimen of pure entrepreneurship". Today, its partners include leading institutions and companies like ING, EY (previously Ernst&Young) and the Vlerick Business School, while speakers at past events have included figures like BNP Paribas chief economist Peter De Keyser, ThromboGenics chief financial officer Chris Buyse and *Trends* editor Daan Killemaes.

The events the club organises now span everything from Investing 101 kind of lectures and networking events to mock stock games like the Traders Trophy competition and small, more exclusive workshops for the most committed members. The annual high point is a five-day trip to London, the financial capital of the world. Members can also apply both for internships and student jobs through Capitant.

The students Capitant appeals to fall into two groups. There are those who show up to the educational, on-campus events like Start to Invest and Learn to Invest because they're interested in taking their first steps on the stock market. Then there's the actual members, typically young strivers who plan to pursue careers in finance and see Capitant as a first stepping stone. They typically also attend the off-campus network-

ing events and take on leadership roles of some sort.

A quick look at their alumni page reveals that most of the "Capitumni" are still in school, completing advanced studies at institutions like the Solvay Brussels School, Ghent University and the University of Leuven, while others list jobs at companies like BNP Paribas, Deloitte, Cap Gemini and PwC.

Capitant director Wouters says that when finance is broadly defined – from financial consulting to banking positions – all their core members go into some type of finance job after graduation.

It's not yet clear whether Capitant has made any significant waves in the professional world yet. Asked if the club's alumni enter their jobs more prepared, Charles Symons' answer is simple – "No." He is the Ishares vice-president of BlackRock, the world's largest money manager, and he works out of their Brussels office.

For Symons, Capitant pushed the two alumni BlackRock recruited forward in the sense that it helped them obtain internships at the company, which in turn allowed them to become more familiar with the world of finance. "But it's not Capitant itself that gave them that knowledge," he says. "We all work very long hours, so you have to enjoy doing that, and I think that Capitant is more of a signal than anything else on that level." Capitant members don't finish their four years of university as fully vetted traders or junior bankers ready to hit the ground running. Rather, the alumni seem to have a better understanding of the different fields that make up the world of finance and have started building something of a professional network.

Van Wichelen is one of those two alumni who completed an internship at BlackRock through Capitant. Today he works as an analyst out of the company's Amsterdam office. "I felt more ready to begin working," he says. "You learn to live in the work rhythm and what the corporate world is like, and that really helped."

Although he sees a growing awareness of Capitant among local HR departments, Symons says it's far too early to make any conclusive statements about the value of the initiative to the financial world based on just two alumni. Instead, he sees the Capitant members as the leading edge of a curve.

"The coming generation will probably be much better trained and will know a lot more about what we do," he says. "We think this is a really great and worthwhile initiative. It would be good if more people knew about something that touches on their lives daily."



© Photos courtesy Capitant
The Capitant club invites top speakers in the field of finance



Experience gained as a member of Capitant instills students with the confidence they need to enter the workforce

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Chemicals \ Solvay

The Brussels-based plastics and chemicals group is considering the sale of its Acetow affiliate, a world leading producer of acetate cellulose, used in cigarettes filters. The asking price is believed to be €1.4 billion. Meanwhile, the company suffered a setback in Brazil when local authorities rejected the sale of its PVC affiliate Indupa to Braskem on competition grounds.

Fashion \ FNG

The Antwerp group, known for its Fred & Ginger and Van Hassels labels, has taken over the Dutch Steps and Superstar outlets and three purchasing offices in Istanbul, New Delhi and Hong Kong. The operation will be financed through a forthcoming bond issue.

Funerary

\ Down2Earth

The Antwerp-based private equity group has acquired the local company Funico, producing 60% of the 100,000 caskets used in Belgium every year. Funico, which also has operations in France and the Netherlands, was previously affiliated with the Flemish government's GIMV investment company.

Pharmaceuticals

\ UCB

The Brussels-based biopharma group has sold its US Kremers Urban generic drugs production affiliate to the US Avista Capital Partners fund for €1.2 billion to help finance its long-term growth strategy.

Retail \ Uniqlo

The iconic Japanese clothing store group has confirmed its plans to open an outlet in Antwerp, though it is pushing the date from early in 2015 to later in the year.

Supermarkets

\ Lambrechts

The Limburg-based distribution group, operator of Spar stores across Flanders, has taken over 78 small Prima neighbourhood supermarkets and 30 Uw Buurtwinkel convenience stores previously operated by the bankrupt Huyghebaert company.

Uplace plans opening for 2018

Town centres opposed to shopping and leisure centre in Machelen



Alan Hope

More articles by Alan \ flanderstoday.eu

Shopping and leisure complex Uplace in Machelen, just outside the Brussels Ring, has let more than half of its commercial space and is on track to open in 2018, developer Bart Verhaeghe said.

The controversial site is still fighting for approval of its environmental permit but hopes to have everything in order during the course of next year. Opponents include local retail organisations from nearby Vilvoorde and Grimbergen, as well as the more distant Leuven, supported by the self-employed organisation Unizo.

These groups claim that the complex will take business away from local shopping areas, while causing mobility chaos by adding to congestion on the Brussels Ring.

Verhaeghe said that a tram is planned linking Jette and Zaventem by 2020. In the meantime, Flanders' public transport authority De Lijn has agreed to lay on a shuttle bus between the airport, Vilvoorde station and the Uplace site. "Strictly speaking, we don't even need the tram to ensure outstanding accessibility," he said.



© Courtesy Uplace

Architectural rendering of Uplace in Machelen

A decision is awaited from Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege on the environmental permit. Verhaeghe remains optimistic and said that Uplace plans to break ground in 2016, with a view to opening in 2018.

More than 40% of the shop space has been allocated to names such as Zara, Berschka, Massimo Dutti, Mango and Tommy Hilfiger. Belga Films will operate a 10-screen cinema complex, and there will be a theatre and concert venue of

3,000 seats, offices and a 190-room hotel.

In related news, the auditor of the Council of State has issued a negative opinion in the case of the shopping complex Docks Brussels (formerly known as Just Under the Sky) in an appeal against the grant of a social-economic permit. The full council is not bound to follow the auditor's advice but does so more often than not.

The shopping centre is planned for the site close to the Van Praet bridge over the Brussels canal in the Laken district. The auditor's opinion raises serious doubts about mobility in the area and questions whether the project can be reconciled with the urban planning principles of the region's government. The original plan to open in October 2016 could now be in jeopardy. The social-economic permit was approved in 2013 by an inter-ministerial committee by a majority of five to three votes. The approval was brought before the Council of State, while the developer went ahead with the project. Last month Docks Brussels said it had 46 tenants lined up.

Volvo Ghent can "rest easy", say managers

According to reports out of Sweden last week, Volvo's trucks division could be on the verge of cutting 3,000 jobs worldwide, including at the factory in Ghent. The company, however, has described the media reports as "pure speculation".

The Swedish car manufacturer announced last month that it was extending an existing cost-cutting programme, with a view to saving €380 million by the end of next year, with cuts in IT, heavy machinery and the sales force.

It then announced last week that it would start production of the Volvo XC60 in a factory in Chengdu, China. Because the XC60 represents 45% of all production at the Ghent plant, speculations emerged about the future of the facility.

"I understand the concern, certainly in the light of what has happened in car production in Belgium in the last 10 years," Alain Visser, a Flemish manager at the Volvo headquarters in Göteborg, told *Trends* magazine. "But even in the best divisions of the group, we continually have to improve. Just because things are going well, you can't just leave well alone and concentrate elsewhere. That applies also to Ghent."

However, continued Visser, the company is one of the few in the industry not to suffer from overcapacity and in fact planned to expand capacity, with a view to producing 800,000 cars a year by 2020 – up from 430,000 last year.

"So we need our factories, particularly in Sweden and Belgium," Visser said. "The future of the Ghent factory is not up for discussion. I'm happy to repeat that. The Belgians can rest easy." \ AH

Boekenbeurs closes good year with 150,000 visitors

Antwerp's Boekenbeurs (Book Fair) closed to the public, following a successful 78th edition that attracted 154,000 visitors, about the same number as last year. The most successful day was last Monday, with 20,00 visitors, thanks to the long weekend.

The Boekenbeurs is Flanders' largest book fair and one of the region's annual cultural highlights. "It wasn't exactly a top edition," Boekenbeurs director André Vandorpe told VRT radio. "Probably because most of the fair fell outside the autumn school holiday. Still, people are happy with the turnout, including the stand-holders."

Among the highlights this year was the emphasis on cartoon strips; one in 10 of the books sold in Flanders is a comic strip, and strip artists and authors were special guests at the fair. The listeners to Radio 1 were invited

to vote for the best Flemish strip of all time, an honour that went to Album 26 of the Kiekeboes series by Robert Merhotte, who publishes under the name of Merho.

"I had never expected to leave my boyhood idols Willy Vandersteen, Jef Nys and Hergé behind me," said Merho. "Without them, it never would have occurred to me to make strips. I think this result says more about the popularity at this moment of the Kiekeboes series, rather than anything about the best Belgian strip."

As in previous years, most attention went to cookbook writers. The recipe collection *Mijn 200 klassiekers* (My 200 Classics) by TV chef Jeroen Meus was the festival's best seller in non-fiction, while the latest crime thriller by Pieter Aspe, *Zonder voorschrift* (Without a Prescription) topped the charts for fiction. \ AH

Flanders signs on to agreement to promote smart growth

Philippe Muyters, Flanders' minister for work, the economy and innovation, has signed up to the EU's Milan declaration on smart innovation. He committed the region last week at the annual meeting of the Vanguard Initiative for New Growth through Smart Specialisation.

Flanders launched the Vanguard Initiative during a conference last year aimed at jump-starting a European industrial renaissance by developing specialised technologies across Europe's regions. The Milan declaration was signed by leaders and ministers from 20 regions representing 12 countries. It committed the regions to developing world-class smart technologies and industrial clusters. Flanders wants to play a "cutting-edge role" in the development of expertise in 3D printing technology, said Muyters (pictured).

In related news, Belgium has been ranked as the fourth most innovative country among 35 industrialised nations, according to the 2014 Innovation Indicator published by the Mannheim Center for European Economic Research.

The survey, which looks at levels of R&D and innovation, puts Belgium ahead of the EU's industrial powerhouses France, Germany and the Netherlands. The ranking represents a huge improvement on 2010, when it managed 10th position.

The report examines five areas of innovation, with Belgium scoring best in science (sixth), the state (seventh), society (eighth), industry (ninth) and education (10th). The top three positions in the ranking were occupied by Switzerland, Singapore and Finland. \ Derek Blyth



© Courtesy N-VA

Any questions?

BlueAssist programme bridges communication barriers in daily situations



Katy Desmond
More articles by Katy \ flanderstoday.eu

WWW.BLUEASSIST.EU

Can carrying a simple blue card make the difference between being able to get to work on time or running errands by yourself? For 660,000 people in Flanders, it can. According to Geert Vandewalle, co-ordinator at the non-profit organisation BlueAssist, this is the number of people in Flanders who have difficulties communicating, whether due to an intellectual disability, a language barrier or speech or comprehension problems.

For these people, something as ordinary as taking a bus or navigating a city's streets can be extremely challenging. Aimed at increasing autonomy and social inclusion, BlueAssist recently rolled out a campaign to help people with communication problems to ask for support from strangers, be it on the street, in a train station or on a tram.

"It's a very simple idea," says Vandewalle. "BlueAssist is an icon with a message attached to it." At its simplest, this takes the form of a blue paper card with a few lines of white space where any question can be written in by hand – by the user or by someone else. For example: "I'm going to the library. Can you tell me which bus stop I need to get off at?"

“Our goal is to eventually create an international movement

The organisation has also launched a BlueAssist mobile application that allows people to type their questions into their phones and move between multiple questions with a swipe of the screen. The application also has a call function, which allows the person assisting the Blue-Assist user to easily reach a family member, social worker or coach.

BlueAssist works in two ways. From the user's side, it helps someone with difficulties speaking or being understood to show others that they have a question. On the other side, it's a handy icon to help someone in the public recognise that a person has a question.



© Courtesy BlueAssist

BlueAssist is aimed at encouraging people with communication problems to ask others for help

So the BlueAssist awareness campaign is not just directed towards BlueAssist users but towards citizens in general, explains Vandewalle. It is his goal to make the BlueAssist icon recognised by all of society and, by doing so, make people with communication problems feel more confident in doing things by themselves.

"Everyone knows that a sign with a wheelchair on it means that something is physically accessible for people with limited mobility," he says. "In the same way, if someone approaches you with a BlueAssist card, we want you know exactly what it is."

"Would you help someone who approached you with BlueAssist?" Vandewalle asked me. Of course, I answered. "Well, then you're a Blue-Assistant."

People can register to be BlueAssistants, but they are not volunteers, Vandewalle emphasises. They're everyone. "You help because you're there at the moment – in the station, the town hall, the shop. So you never step out of your role as citizen; you're already on the tram, and someone just asks a question."

Registering as a BlueAssistant does not impart any obligations. The aim is not for BlueAssist users to specifically search for registered members to approach with their questions. Rather, registering online as a BlueAssistant is more symbolic. "BlueAssist users can see the large number of people willing to sign on to help and feel confident in approaching anyone with their questions."

Funded largely by the Flemish government's Flanders' Care agency, BlueAssist's current focus is on making public transport more accessible. To this end, the non-profit has teamed up with transport authorities to promote the service.

Last month, Proximus also signed on, pledging to promote BlueAssist in the general public and to raise awareness among its own personnel. Part of this includes training its staff in skills that will help them respond to BlueAssist questions, such as listening with respect and patience, in addition to asking clear follow-up questions and confirming that the answer was understood.

What was originally a few small islands of users has now spread all over Flanders as the BlueAssist icon has become more and more known on the streets. Today 13,000 people are registered on BlueAssist.

The service has even gone international. "BlueAssist programmes are being started in the UK and in The Hague, and our goal, eventually, is to create an international movement," says Vandewalle. "Whenever it's picked up in new places, its use must be adapted to the specific situation of that country or region," he explains.

For Vandewalle, this means observing what difficulties people with communication problems experience in that country and which services they use the most. Then choosing partner organisations to target awareness-raising efforts towards the public as well as personnel using and working in these areas.

Q&A

Together with colleagues from KU Leuven's movement control and neuroplasticity research group, professor Werner Helsen has designed an app aimed at improving the decision-making performance of football referees

What is the purpose of the app?

The application, called Perception 4 Perfection, is a web-based training platform that uses real-life game footage to train referees' eyes and minds to quickly and consistently recognise offside infractions, fouls and goal or no-goal situations.

How does it work?

Once logged in, users are shown a series of game scenarios, and their calls are recorded in real time. The tool immediately shows the correct call for a given incident, then it gives direct feedback and a clear explanation for why the user's call was correct or

incorrect. This helps to continually refine the user's thinking process, which significantly increases both the uniformity and consistency of their calls.

How do you know it works on the pitch?

We looked at the decision-making accuracy of Belgian assistant referees who had completed four web-based training sessions of 60 incidents. We found that each improved by 23.3% for on-field incidents with players, just like in a real game. This clearly showed there is a positive transfer from web-based training to the real world. We are eager to optimise



the app and also use it for specific incidents, such as elbowing, and in simulations. It has already been used successfully for referees and additional assistant referees. And we want to offer an individualised approach. Not every referee

starts at the same level and needs constant feedback. Others flourish with it.

Are there other uses for this technology?

The platform could be used to train people making decisions in various stressful, time-sensitive scenarios. Think of driving in traffic, responding to emergency situations or performing surgery. People in these situations would all benefit from practice and learning opportunities. We think our method could significantly increase decision-making performance in all kinds of real-life situations. We are now exploring these possibilities with KU Leuven's experimental psychology research group and the instruction psychology and technology research group.

\ Interview by Ian Mundell

WEEK IN INNOVATION

ITM leads global Ebola study

The Institute for Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp will lead a unique international study in West Africa for the treatment of Ebola, the local chapter of Doctors Without Borders has announced. Doctors Without Borders will next month begin clinical studies in three of its Ebola centres in Guinea and Liberia. ITM will lead the study for a therapy based on blood and plasma taken from patients at the centre in Conakry, the capital of Guinea. "A similar technique has already been successful for other infectious diseases," said Johan van Griensven, who is leading the study. "We want to examine whether it works against Ebola, whether it is safe and whether it can be applied on a large scale."

Award for low-cost IVF treatment

A team of scientists from Hasselt University and the Hospital East-Limburg (ZOL) in Genk has received a prestigious award from American magazine *Popular Science* for the development of a low-cost IVF procedure. The technique to provide IVF treatment at about 15% of the normal price was launched last year by Flemish researchers and colleagues at the University of Colorado in the US. They submitted the project, known as The Walking Egg, in the Best of What's New Awards category and won in the Health section.

Electric car emissions still high

An electric car emits nearly as much fine dust as a modern car that runs on petrol, according to research by Transport & Mobility, a spin-off of the University of Leuven, announced by *De Standaard*. Fine dust is created not just by a motor but also by the wearing out of tyres and braking. Those non-exhaust emissions are higher in electric cars because most are heavier than other cars. They are a particular problem in the city, where drivers brake often. The research shows that a new small petrol car in the city creates less fine dust than an electric car of average size. "If electric cars replaced all diesel cars, there would definitely be an environmental benefit," said researcher Bruno Van Zeebroeck. "But the benefit is almost as much if all diesel cars are replaced by small, modern petrol cars."

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UGent plans new museum

Ghent University is gathering artefacts to build an all-in-one museum



Ian Mundell

More articles by Ian \ flanderstoday.eu

A new museum showcasing the rich cultural heritage held by Ghent University is under development, backed by a plan to help researchers and students get more out of the institution's diverse collections. If all goes smoothly, the museum will open during the university's bicentennial celebrations in 2017-18.

Universities accumulate all kinds of objects that can be considered cultural heritage, from rare books and manuscripts to scientific instruments and objects collected for research. In 2013 a survey reported that there were about one million such objects in Flemish universities, two-thirds of them in Ghent.

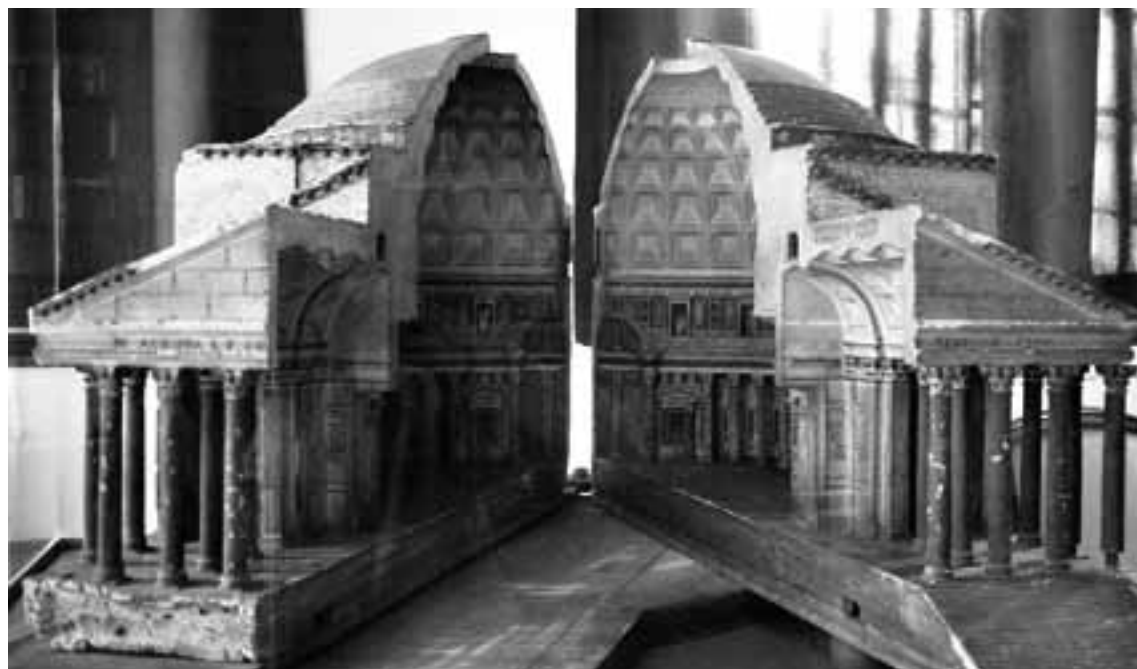
"So we bear a huge responsibility for academic heritage," says Jeroen Vanden Berghe, the university's chief logistics administrator. "We want to take up that responsibility and make it our own."

The present plan concentrates on Ghent's archives, museums and other collections, exempting its library which is already considered to be performing well. Seven major collections are currently managed within individual university faculties, covering archaeology, ethnography, zoology, animal morphology, botany, the history of medicine and the history of science.

The objects they contain range from the skeletons of large sea mammals to thousands of leaf samples, used to identify and name plants. There are ritual masks from Indonesia, Africa and Central America and recordings of Flemish dialects. There are microscopes used by generations of scientists and instruments linked to personalities such as moving image pioneer Joseph Plateau and Nobel prize-winning chemist Friedrich August Kekulé.

The seven faculty collections will be brought together so that they can be managed as a single university museum. "Then there are a lot of objects around the faculties -- in basements, corridors and cupboards. We want to make a complete inventory of them and integrate them in the professional management of this university museum," Vanden Berghe explains. As well as a single inventory, the university museum will help academics get the most out of the collections for their research and teaching. This support will be provided from depots and in work spaces across the university.

But there will also be a new space that will showcase the best of the collection and act as a focus for engagement with the public and professionals outside the university. Three floors of a building



One of Ghent University's holdings that will find its way into the new museum is a scale-model of the Pantheon in cork

on the Ledeganck campus, near Ghent's Citadelpark, will be renovated to house the museum. Two floors will be devoted to a permanent display, while the third will be for temporary exhibitions.

This site places the museum adjacent to the university's botanical garden, with its important collection of plants. More significantly, it will be a stone's throw from the city's museums of contemporary and fine arts, building the neighbourhood's status as a museum quarter.

A lot of thought has also gone into the presentation of the new museum. "We want to find a niche in the museum sector," explains Vanden Berghe. "We don't want to have a hands-on museum like Technopolis in Mechelen. We are also not interested in telling the story of a university; that is something that other universities do. We want to find something unique that will add something extra to the cultural scene in Ghent."

So the museum's story will be the nature of science, in all its complexity. "We are going to focus on scientific practice and the meaning of science," explains Willem Dedobbeleer, a researcher who is working on the project. Questions to be addressed range from definitions of science to its relationship with the humanities, the border between science and pseudo-science and the interaction between science and society. "Within these themes, we also want to highlight some ethical questions, such as the use of animals in experiments," Dedobbeleer says. "And we want to have an honest view on science - not just the big success stories but also where science fails."

Vanden Berghe agrees that this will be challenging. "But this is what a university is for," he says. "Critical thinking about our own practice

is very important. And by introducing this scientific profession to young adults or new students, it should be thought provoking for their futures as well."

He also thinks that visiting the museum should be an aesthetically rewarding experience. "When you enter the museum, you have to be overwhelmed by the richness of the collections, but at the same time come out saying: I've learned something about science, about being a good researcher and what it lends to society."

The cost of the project, including the museum, will be met in a number of ways. Its support for education, research and public outreach all contribute to the university's core mission and so it will be able to draw on the central budget. It is also expected that the museum will be recognised by the regional and provincial authorities and receive some structural support.

The business plan envisages additional income from tickets and the museum shop and that the museum will be appealing in the university's fundraising efforts.

The Ledeganck campus as a whole is already under redevelopment, with work on the museum building due to begin at the start of 2016. "But that's the easy part," says Vanden Berghe. "The difficult part will be the storyline and how to bring it physically into the building."

The next step is administrative, moving people from the various faculties so that they are working together in a distinct university museum team. These changes are expected to be approved by the university's board of governors next month.

There will also be new posts to fill with specialists in museum design and public outreach. "We are building a new museum, and that is difficult," says Vanden Berghe.

WEEK IN EDUCATION

Coaches to boost technical interest

All primary schools in Flanders can now request the assistance of one of 100 engineering coaches, who will aim to encourage interest in technical and scientific subjects among pupils and teachers. The project, which is part of the STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) action plan, was presented last Friday by education minister Hilde Crevits at the Centrumschool in Kuurne, West Flanders. With the school team, the coaches will develop programmes that revolve around concrete applications inside or outside school, like recycling drinking cans, developing a website or analysing the purity of the water in the city park. The goal is to encourage youngsters throughout their school careers, so that more of them choose a technical or scientific study later on.

No exception for index leap

The federal government's introduction of an "index leap" – skipping the automatic indexation that links pay rises to the cost of living in 2015 – will also apply to education staff. Flemish education minister Hilde Crevits confirmed the news on *De zevende dag*. "The index leap will apply to everyone if introduced by the federal government," she said. "The measure shouldn't lead to competition between employees, sparing teachers but not factory workers." The secretary-general of the Christian education union, Jos Van Der Hoeven, had earlier told VRT that only the Flemish government had the authority to introduce this measure for the education sector in Flanders.

Puurs pupil is Best Mini-Inventor

Eight-year-old Louis Robeyns from Puurs in Antwerp province has been named Belgium's Best Mini-Inventor for his drawing of a *vouwto*, a car that folds up, allowing users to carry it with them like a suitcase. The contest, in which more than 900 Belgian pupils participated, was organised by the Technopolis museum in Mechelen, children's channel Ketnet and the chemical and pharmaceutical company Bayer. At the start of the school year, organisers launched a call for children aged from six to 14 to draw an invention that would improve quality of life. Robeyns told *Het Nieuwsblad* that he got the idea because his mother often has trouble finding a parking spot. \ Andy Furniere

TREASURES OF GHENT

Ghent University's various buildings are home to more than 600,000 objects of academic heritage, including:

- A scale-model in cork of the Pantheon in Rome, by Italian architect Antonio Chichi (1743-1816), one of only three remaining in the world (*pictured above*)
- Over 700 Gallo-Roman medical instruments, collected in the 19th century by Victor Deneffe
- An original Phenakistiscope and discs made by 19th-century moving image pioneer Joseph Plateau (*pictured right*)
- A mounted skeleton of horse and rider (*pictured on cover*), demonstrating their comparative anatomy, by Jan Cools (1956-2001)



WEEK IN ACTIVITIES

Science Day

The big annual science event in Brussels and Flanders, with activities, workshops and demonstrations at dozens of museums, universities, innovative companies, research labs and more. Most activities are free but some require payment or reservations. 23 November
www.dagvandewetenschap.be

Winterland

The seventh edition of Hasselt's annual holiday fair features an extensive Christmas market with more vendors and craftspeople than ever before. Large outdoor ice-skating rink, carousel, food and drink stalls and more. Santa's House opens on 7 December. Until 4 January
www.winterland.be

Beer Capital Walk

A guided tour of Leuven's brewing history, covering the importance of beer to the city's development and of Leuven's beers to the rest of the world, ending in the vicinity of the famous Stella Artois brewery. 22 November, 14.00-17.00; €12 includes tasting
www.leuvenwalks.leuvenleisure.com

Ice Magic

The popular ice sculpture festival returns to Bruges for its 15th edition with a magical theme inspired by the works of JRR Tolkien. 21 November to 4 January, daily 10.00-18.00, Stationsplein; €15
www.ijssculptuur.be

Forest in One Day

Organised by the Jane Goodall Institute of Belgium, trees will be planted simultaneously in Bertem, Flemish Brabant, and in the Tchimpounga nature reserve in Congo. For €5, you can sponsor a tree or plant one yourself. Register via the website. 22 November, 9.30-16.00, 1 Ruwaalstraat, Bertem (Flemish Brabant)
www.janegoodall.be

Winter Moments

Indoor flower show at the historic Old Saint John's Hospital site in Bruges. Winter decorating ideas, holiday centrepieces, workshops, demonstrations and more. 21-30 November, 10.00-18.00, Zonnekemeers, Bruges; €15
www.happenings.be

GMOs under the microscope

Activists await appeal as another GMO test site is planned in Flanders



Alan Hope

More articles by Alan flanderstoday.eu

The European Parliament last week approved a law that would allow EU member states to ban genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on their territory, even if the crops had been approved within the EU.

The vote was greeted with cheers from opponents of GMOs because, while some countries, like the UK and Spain, are unlikely to ban them, others such as France and Germany probably will, with the effect that the technology will not take off in Europe in a substantial way.

In Belgium, the issues of agriculture and the environment are the responsibility of the regions, and, at this point, it's not clear which way Flanders might go.

Earlier this month, the Flemish farmers' union Boerenbond came out cautiously in favour of GMOs, providing they had been approved by the European Food Safety Authority, and where they had been shown to contribute to more profitable and more sustainable agricultural production.

In an editorial in the union's magazine *Boer & Tuinder*, Boerenbond chair Piet Vanthemsche said that the union "clearly understands the important social sensitivity of this technology and considers that this needs to be taken into account. That could be, among other methods, by working out a good regulation of co-existence for GMO crops and non-GMO crops."

He also called for government investment in open knowledge research where results would be available to all, to escape the problem of patents and intellectual property rights.

As Flanders' farmers were taking in Boerenbond's position statement, the appeal hearing was beginning of 11 anti-GMO activists who had been convicted of conspiracy and damage to property during a protest in Wetteren, East Flanders, in 2011. The protesters had invaded a test field of GMO potatoes being grown for research reasons in a project involving the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB), Ghent University and the Flemish Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (Ilvo), destroying about 15% of the crop and clashing with police.

Whatever the measured judgements of the Boerenbond position paper, Vanthemsche has



© Nicolas Maeterlinck/BELGA

Activists set up shop outside the court house in Dendermonde where activists were on trial

no sympathy for such actions. "Whatever the courts may think, I find these actions fundamentally unacceptable," he said. "They are opposed to innovation, and against social progress."

“There are no discernible differences as far as food safety is concerned

The actions of "saboteurs," he said, threatened to place Europe in an isolated position. "In other continents, roughly half of crops are GMOs, sometimes with advantages, sometimes with disadvantages. Producers and consumers are not dropping dead like flies; there are no discernible differences as far as food safety is concerned."

The potato protesters were sentenced to three months suspended and ordered to pay over €20,000 in damages. They are appealing both the conviction and the sentences. "They wanted to

avoid a greater evil, which is why they broke the law," said lawyer Mieke Van den Broeck. A ruling on the appeal is expected soon.

But while the farmers' union is cautiously in favour of GMOs, other sectors of society are not. At the start of the potato protesters' appeal, 50 organisations ranging from development charity 11.11.11 to Oxfam, Greenpeace and Bioforum Vlaanderen signed a letter of support for the activists. The letter claimed that the population as a whole has no desire for GM crops coming to market and called on the government(s) "to invest as a matter of urgency in sustainable agriculture and food systems that are democratic and based on an agro-ecological approach."

Meanwhile, research continues. VIB has filed an application for a new field test of GM corn, in conjunction with Ghent University's plant systems biology department. The field test aims to follow up on results already obtained in greenhouses, but those tests were on too small a scale to be conclusive. The modification involves "switching on" a gene already present in the corn that controls growth.

"It's only when a plant is tested under real conditions, in real soil, exposed to wind and rain, that useful scientific and agricultural data can be gathered," a spokesperson for VIB explained. "In this case, we'll be looking in the field test at the size and the content of the cobs that are formed."

BITE Sweet Sundays

Chocoholics, rejoice: Flanders' pop-up bar and restaurant trend has finally extended to chocolate. During Sweet Sundays, taste a variety of chocolate dishes, desserts and delicacies from Belgian Chocolate Ambassador Bart Van Cauwenberghe (pictured).

The owner of De Zwarte Vos in Deinze has been sharing his passion for good quality chocolate for years, with tastings, lectures and demonstrations in countries all over the world. Now he's hosting Flanders' first pop-up chocolate bar around the corner at café Carroesel, every Sunday until 14 December.

"It became clear that there was enough interest in the concept of a pop-up bar in Deinze," he says. "On many of my trips abroad, I noticed that chocolate bars are becoming a



real trend."

He thinks the interest in bars dedicated to chocolate is due to positive press, "including the so-called 'happy' effect it has on our body and mind and its antioxidant powers. The demand for chocolate contin-

ues to rise worldwide."

For the Sweet Sundays pop-up bar, the chocolatier does not intend to create anything overly complicated or fancy. Instead, he will focus on providing a fun variety of simple creations that incorporate chocolate.

Tasters can choose from "choctails" (cocktails made with chocolate), hot or cold desserts and, of course, just good old chunks of solid chocolate from different continents – including silky milk chocolate from Java and pure dark chocolate from Ecuador. The menu varies, and each week there is a new suggestion.

"We have the best milk chocolate from Ecuador and Brazil," Van Cauwenberghe says, "and honey-chocolate flan with rosemary and caramelised apples, chocolate souf-

flé with passion fruit-banana cream filling, whisky paired with pralines and brownies with blueberries." He's also selling NIBS, his own cacao liqueur.

"The idea behind the pop-up bar is to provide a unique chocolate experience in a cosy setting with nice background music," explains the chocolatier. "A place to go after the Sunday walk and reminisce about the weekend, next to a blazing fire, all the while enjoying the velvety texture of chocolate and aromas of cinnamon, coffee, chocolate and roasted nuts." www.dezwartevos.be

Sundays from 15.00 until 14 December, Carroesel, Karel Picquélaan 10, Deinze

Food for thought

Free breakfast lecture series CreativeMornings is getting Brusselaars out of bed



Katrien Lindemans
More articles by Katrien \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.CREATIVEMORNINGS.COM

While you might prefer to quietly sip your coffee in the wee hours of the last day of the work week, thousands of people in some 100 cities all over the world gather for CreativeMornings in their respective hometowns. Brussels recently joined the pack, and it is welcoming designer Alain Gilles at the Beurscafé this week for a talk about chance.

CreativeMornings first saw the light of day six years ago in New York, when designer and Swissmiss blogger Tina Roth Eisenberg decided to create an accessible event for the local creative community. One Friday a month, she'd invite a speaker for a short talk, followed by a discussion with the audience and a free breakfast. The event steadily grew and is now up to nearly 100 cities, with Brussels joining the CreativeMornings community a couple of months ago. "I came back to Brussels after a period in Amsterdam and realised the city needed its CreativeMornings, too," explains Carmen Vintilescu, a Romanian expat and host of the Brussels sessions.

"There are so many awesome people and events, but everybody seems to be doing stuff in their own language," she says. "People don't take advantage of the diversity of the city, and I really think



© Facebook

Organiser Carmen Vintilescu (right) with a lecture participant at a recent CreativeMornings session

that CreativeMornings could change this."

Setting up the event proved a little tricky. "As the event is entirely free of charge, I had to find a venue, a videographer who'd film the session to be put online later and a sponsor to provide us with coffee," Vintilescu says. "It took me about four months to find a location, but once I got in touch with Beurs-Schouwburg's director, Tom Bonte, things proceeded at a gallop."

First up to address the creative community was professor Eric Corijn of the Free University of Brussels (VUB) on the issue of freedom. About 40 people showed up at Beurscafé to hear him talk about how cities foster freedom. "It was a mix of both expats and people who regularly frequent events at Beursschouwburg," says Vintilescu. "It was a good showing, as we feared people would be put off by an event starting at 8.30."

The talks are held in English so that the largest possible audience can be reached. "We try to be as inclusive as possible and make sure we invite both male and female speakers from Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia," Vintilescu explains. "For the event to be successful, we need to collaborate with the different communities – and hopefully even bring them together." And while the first edition welcomed around 40 people,

nearly 60 made it to the last one. "There is still potential to grow, as there are people we haven't reached yet," Vintilescu says. "It might take a while, as, unlike in Paris or Amsterdam, everything in Brussels seems a bit hidden."

“People don't take advantage of the diversity of this city

The next CreativeMornings talk on 21 November will see Red Dot award-winning designer Alain Gilles talk about chance. He started off his career in the financial sector, but gave himself a second shot at making his dream come true by studying industrial design.

"Even if you're not a morning person, you'll find these sessions quite rewarding," Vintilescu says. "Many of the people who made it to one of the previous talks come back the next time."

But if you really can't make it, you can always watch the video of the talk online later. You'll miss out on the discussion, the people, the vibe and the free breakfast, though.

Abandoned Ghent factory repurposed as community space

As blueprints for a new residential area lie on a planning table in Ghent's Ledeborg district, the non-profit group Springtuig has seized the opportunity to create a temporary creative and community space by appropriating a soon-to-be-transformed derelict plastics factory.

The project, called Kerk, or church (named not for religious reasons but because the factory lies on Kerkstraat), opens up the space to artists, artisans and other members of the community to use as they wish. Anyone familiar with the Ledeborg district, known in Ghent as a rather run-down concrete jungle with hellish commuter traffic, will know how welcome such an initiative is. Standing at Kerk's gate, it is immediately clear this is no longer a factory. The side buildings are covered in colourful graffiti, as a large iron spider stands guard further on. The rest of the industrial site looks empty. And yet, it's obviously no abandoned factory either. It's too neat, the graffiti too well arranged.

On a tour with Jules Gahide, one of the people behind the project, music sounds from one of the former factory halls. A dozen children are busy studying dance steps in front of a large mirror. This place is for classes and other sports, explains Gahide.

In the adjacent space, someone is hammering on a wooden construction. The large, white hall is used as an exhibition space where a series of furniture made from wood and cardboard is on display.

Until recently, the site – an open concrete space the size of a small office building with storage sheds on both sides – housed Sidaplast, a company that made the little plastic windows fitted on envelopes. When the company moved, the grounds were bought by Re:Vive, a building developer specialised in buying brownfields (properties that have been polluted by hazardous materials), with the idea to clean up the site and build a new residential area.

When word got out that the factory would be renovated, Springtuig thought it would be a shame to



© Courtesy Kerk

Kerk is bringing the residents of Ledeborg together

let the space go to waste while waiting for ground to be broken. "We knew someone at Re:Vive and knew that they always try to work out a temporary use for their projects," explains Gahide. "That way the building doesn't just deteriorate while it's empty. It also increases neighbourhood support for the building project."

This is Springtuig's first project

of such magnitude. "We started more focused on nightlife, organising parties and stuff. With this project, we have a wider focus. It's not like we're organising everything ourselves, on the contrary; we have mainly brought together a number of other people's projects. For the most part, it's people knocking on our door needing space to do something."

Take the second hall, for example. Part of it is occupied by a workshop for furniture-making, while another section is home to Inktopus, a collective of graphic designers and artists.

For inspiration, Gahide and his colleagues have looked to similar projects, especially across the border in the Netherlands, where temporary projects of this kind are more common.

They also do their best to bring in the local community. "Many of our activities are focused on the neighbourhood. We hold table tennis evenings, for example, but also cooking and sewing classes. We get positive reactions, and we hear that they are going to miss us when it's over. So that's a good sign for sure."

There is still a long list of projects in the pipeline, from an open-air cinema to a retail outlet for an organic farmer. It should all be doable; works on the site don't begin for another year. Until then, a neighbourhood sorely in need of community-building has found it.

\ Toon Lambrechts

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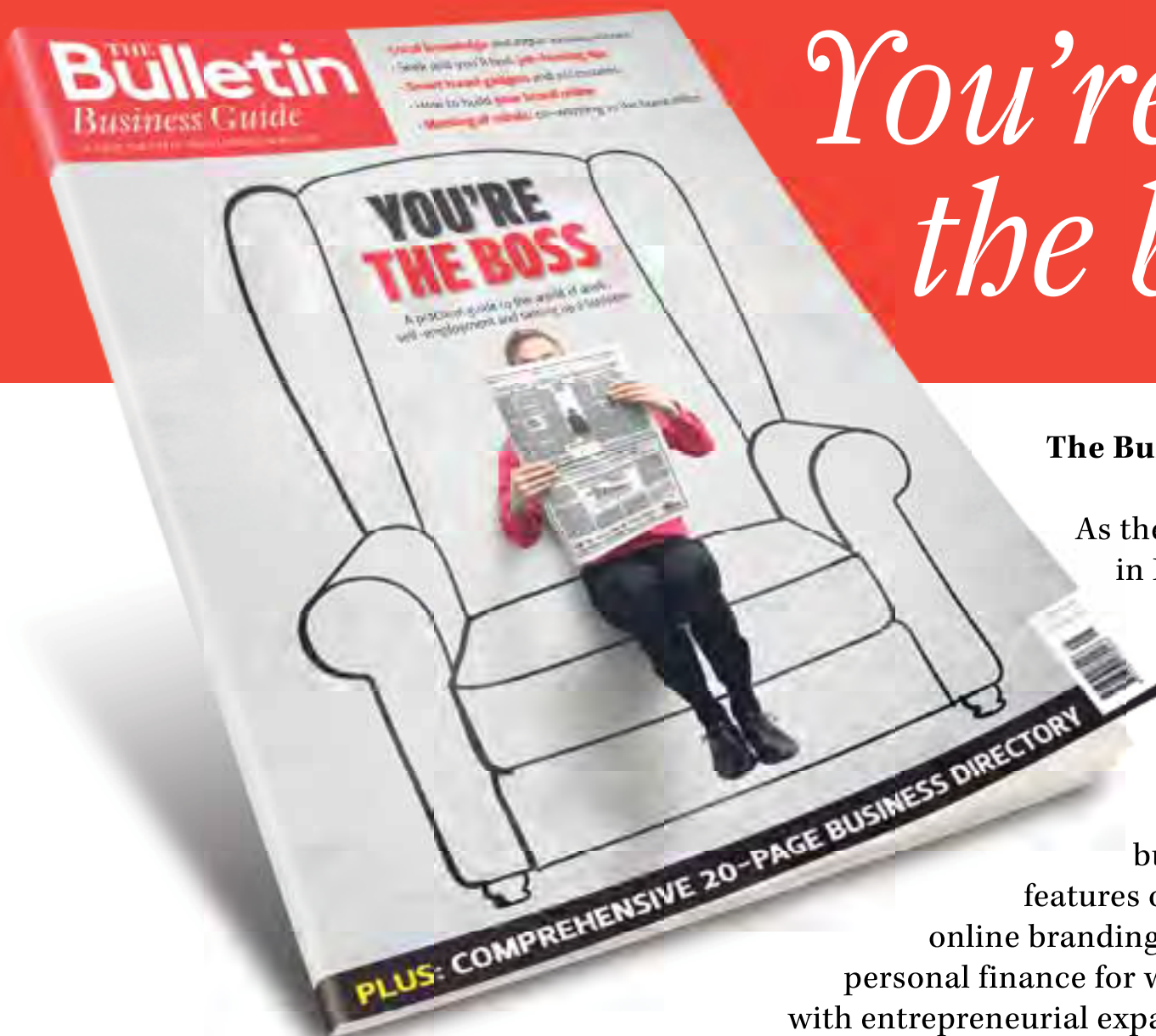


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My mother, my self

Antwerp performance artist Sachli Gholamalizad takes her award-winning play on tour



Débora Votquenne
More articles by Débora \ flanderstoday.eu

When I meet Sachli Gholamalizad in a diner in Antwerp, one of the first things she tells me is that, although *A Reason To Talk* tells the story of a young Iranian family finding their way in a small town in Flanders after fleeing the Iranian Revolution, she doesn't want to be pushed into that little box of "immigrant artist". Born in Iran, Gholamalizad has been living in Belgium for more than 25 years. "I have Iranian roots, but that label is too restrictive," she explains. For her, *A Reason To Talk*, which won the TAZ theatre festival's Circuit X award this year for new playwrights, is much more than an immigrant story. Through video projections and text, a defiant Gholamalizad engages in a conversation with her mother on stage. "I'm telling a universal story," she explains. "It is the story of a mother and a daughter unable to communicate, unable to ask each other certain questions or to understand the answers they get."

“My family was different, and I was different, but all I wanted was to fit in

Although Gholamalizad and her mother were both born in Iran, they don't share the same culture. "Growing up in Belgium, I couldn't tell my mother I was in love with a boy or, god forbid, had sex with one. There were so many taboos that alienated us from one another." So she turned to the stage to confront her mother. Her mother was not afraid to see her daughter's play, making her antagonist and audience at the same time. "Call it a gesture of motherly love," says Gholamalizad. "My mother hopes it helps me to get the answers I am looking for and to better understand the choices she made in life." The 32-year-old confesses that it sometimes makes her angry that she can't get more out of her mother, get her to really share what she thinks. "I would like her to respond to my



© Sarah Oyserman
Iranian-born Sachli Gholamalizad tackles the strained bonds of family in *A Reason To Talk*

provocations with anger, but she won't, which makes me even more rebellious." It must be said that the gentle, soft-voiced Gholamalizad sitting in front of me sipping her tea is not at all like the hostile version she shows us on the stage. We take a little break. The puzzle Gholamalizad is trying to complete is still missing some pieces and reflecting on it still evokes

emotions. She only slept for a couple of hours, she confides, as an excuse for her watery eyes. As for me, I become a little emotional myself.

It is a genuinely fragile and honest story she is sharing. Being a daughter and a mother myself, I can't help but react. We laugh with our sniffing, and then she sets off again.

"I have some vague memories of our house in Anzali." Gholamalizad was only five when she left Iran for Belgium. "First we spent some time at the Klein Kasteeltje in Brussels, where many asylum seekers go when they first arrive here. Then we went to live in Essen [northern Antwerp province]. That's where my mother, my two older brothers and I had to start a new life."

Her father was only able to join them a few years later. "Trying to settle down, we experienced some kind of shift in the traditional roles children and parents fulfil in the family," Gholamalizad explains. "Suddenly, the children had to be responsible. We had to be the interpreters when going to the doctor, school or when dealing with administration. We had to be a kind of bridge between our home and this new world."

It was a responsibility to which Gholamalizad responded with years of rebellion.

"Rebellion, yes! Against everything and by any means. Most of all I was rebellious against being so different than everyone else. My family was different; I was different, while all I wanted was to fit in. It took me a couple of years before I saw being different as an asset, a richness. It took a trip to Iran to truly find myself"

In Iran in her 20s, she met with what she calls her soul mates, giving her much pursued insights into who she was and where she was heading. "Spending time in Iran at that age and stage in life helped me to be more at peace with myself. Maybe I needed to take some distance in order to come closer to the person I really am. Anyway, it somehow set me free and gave me the confidence to start telling my story."

Sachli Gholamalizad's A Reason to Talk is performed in Dutch. Check with venues for surtitle information

21 November, 20.00

29 November, 20.00

Daarkom
Wolvengracht 18, Brussels

Theater Zuidpool
Lange Noordstraat 11, Antwerp

MORE PERFORMANCE THIS WEEK

Augustus ergens op de vlakte
(August: Osage County)

Toneelhuis, KVS & NTGent

The Weston family lives in rural Oklahoma. The family is a group of intelligent and sensitive people who end up coming together because of the sudden disappearance of the father in August. Being united, they appear to have the strange ability to make each other's lives miserable. A translation of the 2007 play *August: Osage County* by American playwright Tracy Letts, the play is peopled with top Flemish actors. Gilda De Bal (pictured) in particular is praised for her performance, both humble and hilarious in turns (in Dutch). *Until 20 December across Flanders and in Brussels*
\ www.tinyurl.com/august-ergens



© Kurt Van der Elst

The Dog Days Are Over

Jan Martens

Touring Flanders for more than six months now, *The Dog Days Are Over* has proven incredibly popular. Through mathematically complex choreography, the piece reveals the person behind the dancer. The piece is so demanding that, despite their dedication and discipline, the eight dancers on stage are bound to ultimately fail in their strive for perfection. This is a dance performance with a philosophical touch. *20 November, CC De Werft, Geel; 3-4 December, Campo Gent. Tours other cities from February to April*

\ www.janmartens.com

De koning van de paprikachips
(The King of the Paprika Crisps)

Bronks and Pascale Platel

After 16 years, the Brussels children's and youth theatre Bronks has decided to revive its legendary play *De koning van de paprikachips*, in which Flemish actor Pascale Platel enters the jungle to encounter a bizarre combination of creatures. Recommended for children aged seven and up (in Dutch). *Until 21 December, across Flanders*
\ www.bronks.be

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Flemish doc nominated for European Film Award

The documentary *Waiting for August* by Antwerp-based director Teodora Ana Mihai has been nominated for Best Documentary by the European Film Awards (EFA), after having already won a slew of awards this year at festivals around the world. The film gives an intimate glimpse into the lives of seven Romanian brothers and sisters caring for each other while their mother works abroad to support them. Other EFA nominations include, for Best European Short, *A Town Called Panic: The Christmas Log*, a frenetic holiday tale from the popular animated series co-produced in Brussels by La Parti. In the category Best Animated Feature is *Minuscule: Valley of the Lost Ants*, co-produced by Brussels-based Entre Chien et Loup.

\ www.europeanfilmawards.eu

Hof van Cleve Belgium's best restaurant

In the new edition of the Gault-Millau's guide for Belgium and Luxembourg, Peter Goossens' restaurant Hof van Cleve in Kruishoutem, East Flanders, takes the title of best restaurant in Belgium for the fourth year running. However, this year it must share its top spot with Bon-Bon in Brussels. Souvenir in Ypres was named among the best discoveries of the year, while The Jane in Antwerp earned the title of most talked-about newcomer. Roeselare's Boury – together with Samourai in Brussels – snagged most improved. Ghent also walked away with several mentions: Michaël Vrijmoed was named best young chef for his restaurant Vrijmoed and Publiek won in the price/quality category.

\ www.gaultmillau.be

Eric Antonis dies at 73

Eric Antonis, former alderman in Antwerp for culture and one of the driving forces behind the Summer of Antwerp festival and the city museum MAS, has died in hospital after suffering a heart attack. He was 73. Antonis first came to public notice as manager of the 1993 European City of Culture project in the port city and was elected as an independent to the city council a year later, when he was made alderman. His successor, current alderman Philip Heylen, described him as "a mentor and a friend" who "was the first to grasp that major cultural events are an outstanding method of city marketing".

The art of failure

Retrospective of idiosyncratic artist Panamarenko pulling in crowds



Christophe Verbiest

More articles by Christophe \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.MUHKA.BE

Nine years ago, at the opening event of a big retrospective of his work in Brussels, Panamarenko announced the ending of his active career as an artist. Since then, he seems to have only become more popular. When I visited the new exhibition *Panamarenko Universum* at M HKA, Antwerp's museum of contemporary art, the rooms were crowded with visitors both young and old, almost all of whom were snapping pictures.

Is that because Panamarenko, born as Henri Van Herwegen in Antwerp in 1940, appeals to the child in us? A considerable part of his creative output – mostly drawings, sculptures and objects made from all sorts of materials – is dedicated to his desire to fly. But it goes far beyond that. Panamarenko can't complain about the attention he has received in past decades, but this retrospective distinguishes itself through the clear overview it offers of his oeuvre.

Panamarenko Universum is divided into seven themes, but it also follows a more or less chronological approach. It starts with events like the "Ijsblokkenactie" or Ice Block Action, the 1968 occupation of the square in front of Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts, and so-called "silent objects", which span everything from a polystyrene sculpture of pin-up model and former Bond girl Molly Peters to a pair of magnetic shoes.

In the 1960s, Panamarenko was already obsessed with flying machines, but it would be 1971

before he finished his first one – the zeppelin-like "Aeromodeller".

The original is too large to be included in this show, but a later miniature version is on view.

After that first attempt to construct an airship, there was no stopping Panamarenko. He designed and built dozens of variations. They come in the form of steerable lighter-than-air crafts, delta planes and jets – from small-scale models to life-sized.

Panamarenko also experimented with motors, and from the late 1970s, he started directing his attention beyond our atmosphere. His space machines were often variations on the flying saucers shown in 1950s American sci-fi films.

Cinema Zuid, also in Antwerp, is showing a few movies that inspired Panamarenko in conjunction with the exhibition, including the Robert Wise classic alien epic *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

It's telling that, when Panamarenko turned 60 in the year 2000, the national post office released a stamp picturing one of his flying saucers.

Still, Panamarenko's sources of inspiration encompass more than just flying objects. He has designed cars, the "Prova

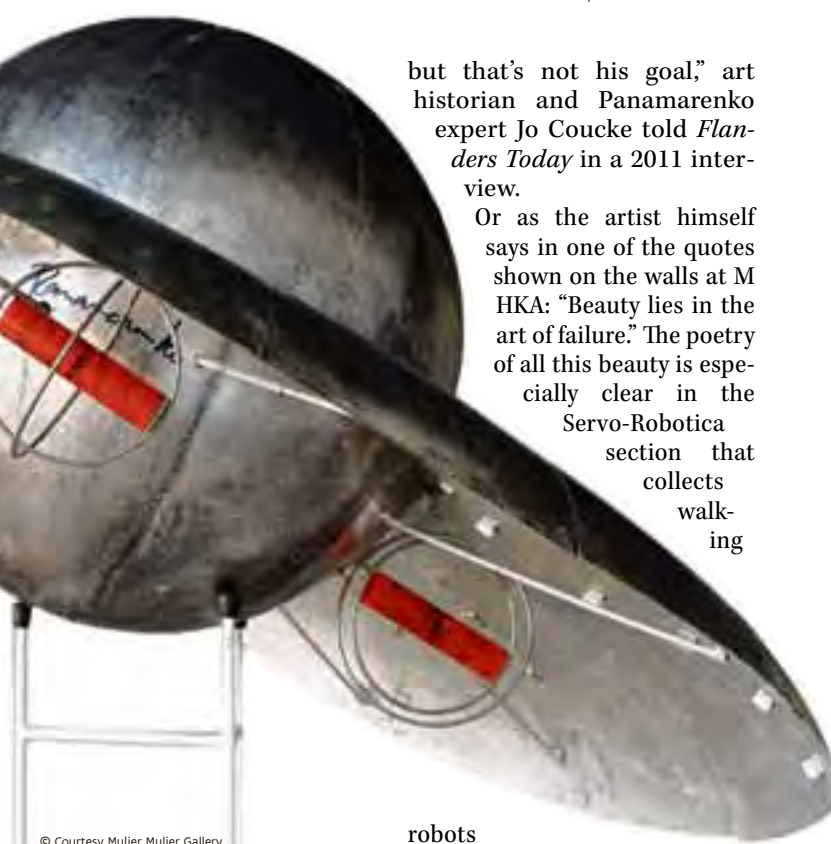
but that's not his goal," art historian and Panamarenko expert Jo Coucke told *Flanders Today* in a 2011 interview.

Or as the artist himself says in one of the quotes shown on the walls at M HKA: "Beauty lies in the art of failure." The poetry of all this beauty is especially clear in the Servo-Robotica section that collects walking

robots inspired by both birds and the prehistoric semi-reptile archaopteryx.

In addition to objects, *Panamarenko Universum* includes myriad drawings. They were created as preparatory sketches but eventually became artworks in their own right that certainly deserve as much attention as the works the artist is best known for.

All this makes *Panamarenko Universum* a show that offers another reminder that Panamarenko is an incomparable artist, one who can't be squeezed into any particular style or trend but instead, as the title suggests, has fashioned a universe of his own.



© Courtesy Mulier Mulier Gallery

Car" being the most famous. He built the sculpture "Whale" as early as 1967, though it would be the 1990s before he really started constructing vessels to explore the seas. It's one of the most exciting chapters in *Panamarenko Universum*, with "Pahama, Spitsbergen, Nova Zemblaya" as its highlight. That 1996 submarine might not look very seaworthy, but an actual ability to fly, move or dive was never really the point of the constructions and contraptions that sprang from the artist's wild imagination. "He's perfectly capable of building a plane that really works,

Until 22 February

M HKA
Leuvenstraat 32, Antwerp



© Courtesy Collection Fondation Cartier, Paris/photo: M HKA

The best of the best of Panamarenko is on view in Antwerp, including a model of "Bing of the Ferro Lusto" (top) and the submarine "Pahama, Spitsbergen, Nova Zemblaya" (above left). Panamarenko pictured in front of his "Aeromodeller" (above right)



© Michiel Hendryckx

Men in black

Anton Kusters: Yakuza

Until 14 December

CC De Werf, Aalst

WWW.CCDEWERF.BE

Ten months of negotiations were needed for Anton Kusters to be the first Westerner to gain access to the hermetically sealed world of Yakuza, the Japanese mafia. The result is a photography exhibition that gives unique insight into a subculture completely unknown in the west.

The image that was chosen for the poster of the exhibition sums up what the name Yakuza brings to mind. A broad-shouldered man, full of tattoos, portrayed statically from behind. But it is actually an atypical image in the series documented by Kusters, with the help of his brother. The rest of the photos are dynamic and agile, almost like snapshots.

The images in the exhibition are grouped by theme; some are printed on long strips of fabric hanging from the ceiling, an arrangement that lends the space an Eastern atmosphere.



A first series shows a training camp for Yakuza recruits. Their day begins with meditation on the beach, the rest is filled with combat training. Kusters continues with images from Kabu-

kicho, Tokyo's red light district, which Yakuza controls.

He follows them on their patrol of the streets: Men in black suits, with invariably expressionless faces, making them more intimidating. In the background, Tokyo figures as a frantic decor.

But Kusters goes beyond the clichés of suits and tattoos. He also shows the Yakuza's human side in a series about the death of one of the leaders of the Miyamoto clan. The pictures show their farewell and mourning.

The Yakuza series shows the work of a photographer with a talent for telling a story. But more importantly, Kusters touches on the essence of documentary photography: the ability to penetrate social environments, to see beyond the superficial and to capture the essence of the subject. A must-see. \ Toon Lambrechts

CLASSICAL

Khatia Buniatishvili & The Vienna Symphony

26 November, 20.00

Bozar, Brussels

WWW.BOZAR.BE

As she approaches 30, Khatia Buniatishvili is happy to shed the title "child prodigy". From the tender age of six, the Georgian pianist has been astonishing classical audiences, first in her hometown of Tbilisi and then throughout Europe. She has been featured on the BBC series *New Generation Artists* and won the award for Best Newcomer of the Year at Germany's prestigious Echo



© Esther Haase / Sony Classical International

Klassik in 2012. Now she joins forces with the Wiener Symphoniker and its new director, Philippe Jordan, to present Liszt's Piano Concerto No 2, as well as works by Wagner and Bruckner.

\ Georgio Valentino

PERFORMANCE

Vita Nova Brussels

28-30 November

Bozar, Brussels

WWW.BOZAR.BE

Bozar's exhibition *Paintings from Siena* explores the evolution of Italian painting during the early Renaissance period. To summarise some two centuries in a single sentence, let's say that the Sienese School broke from religious iconography and pioneered new, humanistic forms of storytelling that would change the course of European art history. Italian choreographer Virgilio Sieni is invited to bear witness to the legacy of these centuries-old masterpieces. Throughout the weekend, he and his dancers perform site-specific interventions inspired by the works on display. The theme: mothers, children and angels. \ GV



VISUAL ARTS

Paul Van Hoeydonck: From Zero to the Moon

Until 13 December

Callewaert-Vanlangendonck Gallery, Antwerp

WWW.CALLEWAERT-VANLANGENDONCK.COM

Except for the occasional blip on our radars, such as last week's headline-grabbing comet landing, people have largely lost their fascination with space travel. But in the 1960s, the imagination soared. Sputnik had made orbit, and Neil Armstrong was poised to take his first step on the moon. Space-age modernism (now retro-futurism) was all the rage in architecture, fashion and the visual arts. Antwerp artist Paul Van Hoeydonck (*pictured*) takes us back to those heady days with this exhibition of his far-out output during the period. He was a member of the influential Zero network, a European collective of techno-

optimistic artists, and is known the world over for his little sculpture "Fallen Astronaut", the only work of art lying on the moon. \ GV



EVENT

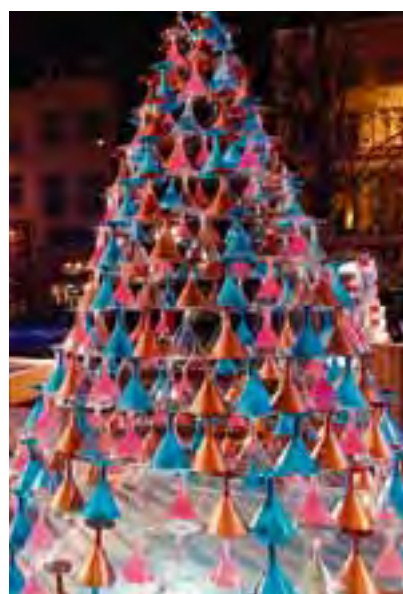
Nocturnes van de Zavel

27-30 November

Grote Zavel, Brussels

WWW.SABLON-BRUXELLES.COM

The neighbourhood around Brussels' Grote Zavel has long been known for its art galleries and antiques dealers. In recent years, the annual Nocturnes have put it on the culinary map, too. Organised by local business boosters and their partners at Culinaria, this open-air food festival features 16 (mostly) Michelin-starred chefs offering up street-food versions of their signature dishes. This year's theme is multiculturalism and is reflected not just in the menu, which is brimming with exotic flavours, but also the musical programme, curated by the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation. \ GV



CONCERT

Brussels

Moussem Sounds: Second edition of the world music festival, featuring a screening of the documentary *Electro Chaabi*, concerts by Algerian singer and guitarist Souad Massi and Moroccan group Oum, DJ set by Caïro Liberation Front and sound art by Younes Baba-Ali. 22 November 18.30-00.30, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23

\ www.bozar.be

CLASSICAL

Brussels

Duos by Beethoven: Véronique Bogaerts and Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden perform Sonatas 1, 5 and 8 by Beethoven, followed by a drink in the presence of the musicians and a look at the old-timer cars on display. 21 November 20.00, D'Ieteren Gallery, Maliestraat 50

\ www.tinyurl.com/dieterengallery

EVENT

GET TICKETS NOW

Brussels & Ostend

Harlem Globetrotters: The world-famous exhibition basketball team is coming to Europe as part of its 2015 tour, a spectacular show of incredible basketball skills, featuring slam dunks, quick passes, technical ball manoeuvres and hilarious antics. 14 April 19.00, Sleuyter Arena, Ostend; 15 April 19.00, Vorst Nationaal, Brussels

\ www.sherpa.be

FILM

Brussels

Waste Land: Premiere of the third feature film by, and in the presence of, Flemish director Pieter Van Hees, a psychological thriller set amid the criminal underground of Brussels and starring Jérémie Renier, Natali Broods and Peter Van den Begin (in Dutch with subtitles in French). 25 November 20.00, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23

\ www.bozar.be

LITERATURE

Brussels

Literary homage to Rubens: Six Belgian writers seek inspiration in a painting by the Antwerp master – now on display in the exhibition *Sensation and Sensuality: Rubens and His Legacy*. Hear their work in a video guide, then listen in on this round-table discussion featuring Annemarie Estor, Peter Holvoet-Hanssen and Pjeroo Roobjee (in Dutch). 22 November 15.00-17.00, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23

\ www.bozar.be

Talking Dutch

One man's hesp is another man's ham



Derek Blyth
More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

It's getting hopeless. I have no idea how to speak Dutch anymore. But at least I'm not the only one. It seems that a lot of people in Flanders are speaking bad Dutch. Only it might actually be good Dutch.

You sometimes don't realise you are speaking bad Dutch until a Dutch person tells you. Take the word *solden* – sales. You see this in every shop window in Flanders and Brussels during the sales periods in January and July. But it looks wrong to a Dutch person. The right word, they will tell you firmly, is *koopjes*.

There are other examples, too, of words we use in Flanders that Dutch people consider wrong. We talk about the *autostrade*, the motorway. But they say *autosnelweg* up in the north. We spread *confituur* on our toast, but the Dutch tell us we should call it *jam*. A survey into attitudes on using Flemish expressions was recently organised by the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) in collaboration with local media and the language organisation De Taalunie. The aim was to find out how language experts felt about the use



of common Flemish expressions. More than 3,000 people were given 50 sentences to read, *waarvan veertig met typisch Vlaamse woorden of uitdrukkingen* – of which 40 were typical Flemish words or expressions. They were asked a simple question – “*Vindt u deze zin aanvaardbaar in de krant of in het journaal?*” – Do you find this sentence acceptable in a newspaper or a news report?

“*De resultaten zijn verrassend*” – The results were surprising, said Johan De Schryver of KU Leuven; “*58 procent van de Vlaamse taal-professionelen heeft niets tegen meer Vlaams in de standaardtaal*” – 58% of Flemish linguists had no objection to more Flemish expressions being used in standard Dutch.

But not everyone was so pleased

with the results. One Dutch writer said that it was “*een zwarte dag voor het Nederlands*” – a black day for the Dutch language.

Maybe. But then who is really speaking correct Dutch? When you order bottled water in the Netherlands, you have to ask for *een Spa blauw* or *een Spa rood*, depending on whether you want normal water or sparkling. But no one in Flanders would ever say this. Here you ask for *niet-bruisend water* or *bruisend water* – much clearer than Blue Spa and Red Spa, which refers to a brand, after all.

The same goes for orange juice. The Dutch use the French term *jus d'orange*, whereas the Flemish insist on using the more correct Dutch word *sinaasappelsap*.

Sometimes the differences can be quite striking. We ask for a *broodje hesp* – a ham sandwich – whereas the Dutch call it a *broodje ham*. We take our clothes to be dry cleaned at a *droogkuis* whereas the Dutch use a *stomerij*. We pay for stuff with a *bankkaart*, whereas the Dutch use a *Pinpas*.

It sometimes makes you wonder if anyone knows what is correct Dutch and what is not.

VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY



Marta Majewska @princessmisia
So if you happen to watch TV (Een) at 11.40, I will be on Fans of Flanders with my first of 3 recipes SPANNEND!



sabrina nelson @nelsonsabrina
Lessons in Hip Hop and overnight fame | Stromae | TEDx Brussels <http://youtu.be/iDGvWX-tFGM>



Chris Reed @chrisreedstoss
Off to KU Leuven for a #ProjectiveEcologies talk, come on out if you're in the hood! <http://architectuur.kuleuven.be/2014/10/mahs-mausp-chris-reed/?lang=en...>



Guardian Travel @GuardianTravel
Gare du Midi: where to eat, drink and stay near Brussels' Euro-star terminal <http://gu.com/p/4399q>



Sam Sparro
Last nights show at the sportspalais was incredible. Thanks to the wonderful crowd. #notp14 #antwerp



Jon Baines @designdefined
Just over a week till Koksijde and then Ghent Six, pretty good weekend! #xciscoming (a little later for me)



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Poll

One in four secondary school students in Antwerp drops out. Who is responsible for changing that staggering statistic?

a. Parents. They should have been instilling the proper attitude towards school since early childhood

50%

b. Teachers. Students who are slow learners or not motivated are often allowed to drop out to make life easier in class

10%

c. The government. An anti-drop-out programme and campaign is obviously needed in the port city

40%

Earlier this month, it was revealed that about 25% of secondary school students in Antwerp do not leave school with a diploma. This was a figure that shocked even us hardened news journalists.

It's the parents who need to step up, according to half of you. On the one hand, it's good that readers who may be parents are recog-

nising their responsibility. On the other hand, research has shown that parents have much less influence on their offspring than their peer group, especially in their mid-to-late-teen years.

Almost as many, though, think the government could turn the tide. This is already in motion, in fact, as Antwerp's education alderman,

Claude Marinower, is working on an action plan.

Finally, hardly any blame goes to the teachers, which is interesting, given that we hand over our kids to them seven hours a day for 12 years. Do they really have no responsibility in keeping them there?

\ Next week's question:

Member states will probably soon have the power to ban genetically modified (GM) crops. Should Belgium ban them? Log in to the Flanders Today website at www.flanderstoday.eu and click on VOTE!

THE LAST WORD

Quiz master

“Am I an exception? I know a lot of Moroccans who are smarter, more handsome and funnier than me.”

Filmmaker Adil El Arbi is being called the “Smartest Moroccan in the World” thanks to his gangbusters performance in the TV quiz show *De slimste mens ter wereld* (The Smartest Person in the World)

Staying put

“I'm happy here. I'd like to stay another 30 years. And the food is good.”

Josée Van Puyvelde, 83, has been a resident in the Sint-Antonius nursing home in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw for 30 years and has seen more than 700 of her fellow residents pass on

Tourist trap

“In 2013, there were on average 107 people checked, 43% of them of French nationality. Of those detained, 58% were French.”

Brussels-North police chief Benoit Blanpain on police from the north of France patrolling with their Brussels counterparts in the red light district near North Station

Better late than never

“I started out pretty late as a solo artist. I was 30 and had the feeling I had lost at least 15 years. That's why my motto is: A late bloomer should at least know how to bloom well.”

Flemish singer Daan, interviewed in *De Morgen*

