



Special issue

Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Belgium Unlimited



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Belgium Unlimited



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The context in which the Belgian Presidency is taking place

From 1 July to 31 December 2010 Belgium will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the twelfth time. This will be a special Presidency for several reasons.

First of all Belgium will have to carry out its duties within the framework of the new **Treaty of Lisbon**, which came into force on 1 December 2009. This treaty involves a whole series of innovations. Our country will do everything in its power to ensure the smooth application of the new rules and regulations.

From 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011 Spain, Belgium and Hungary will preside the Council of the European Union. Together the

three countries form a team Presidency, also called the “trio”. As President, Belgium will have to work closely with the other two countries in the team Presidency, as well as with the new President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the High Representative who presides the Council for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton. Likewise, as President of the Council of the EU, Belgium will work closely with the Commission on the basis of

“This will be a special Presidency for several reasons.”

the work programme that it presented on 31 March this year. Our country will also work very closely with the European Parliament, which has been given a much bigger role by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Secondly, the Belgian Presidency takes place against a background of **financial and economic crisis** and fundamental changes in terms of international economic governance. Take, for example, the increasing importance of the G20, a forum for cooperation and consultation between countries on important global challenges, such as the fight against economic crisis and the reform of the international financial system.



Programme covering the 18 months of the Spain – Belgium – Hungary team Presidency

Joint programme

Drawing up a joint 18 month programme is a new requirement introduced under the Treaty of Lisbon that has actually been anticipated in recent years on the basis of a clause in the Internal Regulations of the Council as amended in October 2006. Under the Lisbon Treaty the President of the EU Council can call on the assistance of the other two countries in the group for the implementation of the joint programme.

Coherence and continuity

The joint programme of the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidency, which was approved by the General Affairs Council on 7 December 2009, covers the period 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011. It consists of two parts: a strategic framework and an operational part. It provides an overview of the themes that will be dealt with in all the configurations of the Council during the three

successive Presidencies. The joint programme reinforces the coherence and continuity of European policy in the medium term.

Strategic framework

The first part, the strategic framework, outlines the current context, in which the priorities have been established, and defines the long term objectives. This part concerns the following points:

- the revision of the Lisbon Strategy with the objective of constructing a Europe capable of getting out of the crisis and promoting sustainable growth, employment, innovation and competitiveness;
- greater supervision of the financial markets;
- a more comprehensive social agenda, targeted more at young people, equality between men and women, and combating poverty;
- implementation and revision of the

legislative package on energy and climate, taking into consideration the Copenhagen Summit;

- effective implementation of the Stockholm Programme for the establishment of an area of freedom, security and law and the development of a global and future-oriented European policy on immigration and asylum;
- greater effectiveness, coherence and visibility in the EU's external actions; with the emphasis on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Operational programme

The second part constitutes the operational programme, which presents the concrete elements that will be dealt with by the EU Council in the course of the 18 months of the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidency.

The text of the team Presidency's programme formed the starting point for the Belgian Presidency programme.



Consultation of civil society

To bring the European construction closer to its citizens and make it more tangible, the Belgian Government decided to consult civil society on a large scale as part of the preparations for the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The **first phase** was an e-consultation via the internet forum “You and Europe”. Through this initiative citizens were invited to give their opinions on all sorts of relevant and topical subjects via questions on five themes:

- Economy, employment and social policy
- Health, environment and energy
- Justice and security
- Citizenship, culture and education
- Europe in the world

The aim was to stimulate interactive debate on various European policy themes. Citizens’ concerns and expectations were then integrated



into subsequent phases of the consultations.

In the **second phase** the National Advisory Councils, including at the level of the Communities and the Regions, were given the opportunity to put their expectations and

priorities for the Belgian Presidency to the government.

The **third step** consisted of a series of seminars on seven themes:

- The financial-economic crisis
- Energy, environment and climate change
- Citizenship, culture and education

- Justice, security and judicial cooperation
- Conflict prevention and management Europe and the challenges in terms of development cooperation
- Expansion, neighbourhood policy and European borders
- The Lisbon Strategy

Over fifty civil society organisations and countless experts took part in each of the seminars. The seminars offered an opportunity for the NGOs to express their concerns and formulate policy suggestions.

Finally, the **fourth consultation** cycle was organised to satisfy the wish of civil society to engage in dialogue with the political authorities. Most of the Ministers who will preside a configuration of the Council in the second half of 2010 have met representatives of civil society in this context.

The priorities of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Imbedding in team Presidency programme and legacy programme

The programme of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union is, of course, completely imbedded in the **18 month programme of the team Presidency**.

Another essential source of inspiration for our programme can be found in the so-called **legacy programme**. This is the totality of the Council activities and agenda deadlines that are built up and passed on from one Presidency to another.

Five theme clusters

The main lines of the Belgian Presidency have been developed round five theme clusters:

1. Combating the economic crisis and promoting economic and financial modernisation

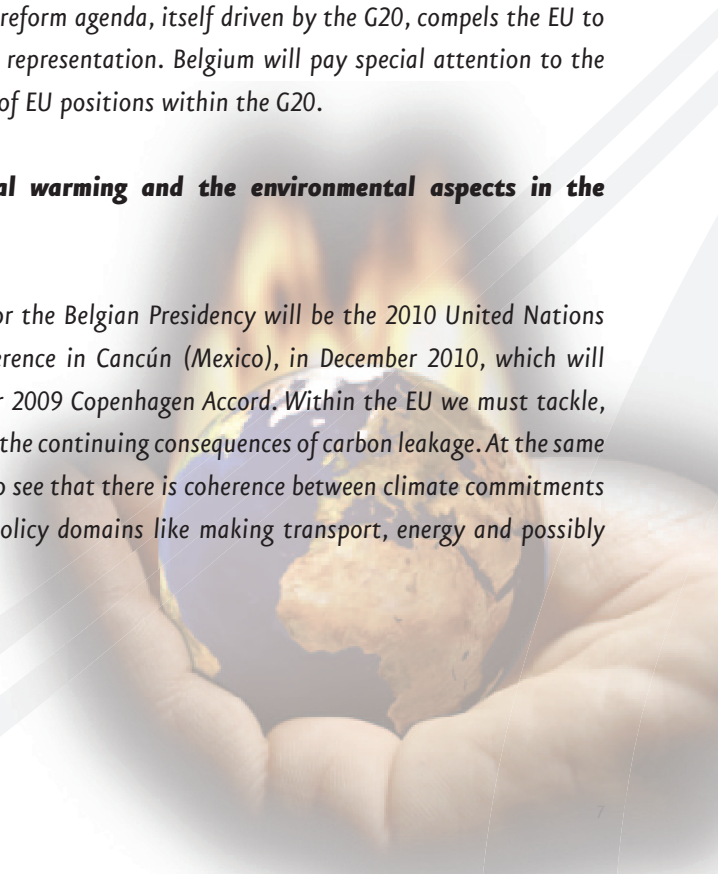
The acute Greek crisis in the spring of 2010 and the development of a European aid package on 7-9 May 2010 have brought the formulation of a sustainable crisis prevention mechanism and strong budgetary discipline right into the foreground. The Belgian Presidency will work on short-term crisis response measures and on long-term structural measures. Under the structural heading a great deal of attention will be paid to the continued development and implementation of "Europe 2020", the new European strategy for growth and employment.

The Belgian Presidency will follow-up on the proposals of the Task Force under the authority of the President of the European Council with a view to better economic coordination, budgetary consolidation, crisis prevention and dealing with inequalities in terms of competitiveness of the Member States.

Apart from that the Council will continue to work on an important legislative agenda concerning financial regulation and financial monitoring. Moreover, the IMF and World Bank's reform agenda, itself driven by the G20, compels the EU to reflect on its role and representation. Belgium will pay special attention to the internal coordination of EU positions within the G20.

2. Combating global warming and the environmental aspects in the broader sense

An important focus for the Belgian Presidency will be the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancún (Mexico), in December 2010, which will build on the December 2009 Copenhagen Accord. Within the EU we must tackle, amongst other things, the continuing consequences of carbon leakage. At the same time it is imperative to see that there is coherence between climate commitments and other European policy domains like making transport, energy and possibly taxation greener.



3. Expansion of the EU

Belgium will help to advance the accession negotiations already in progress and will strive, as an honest broker, for EU consensus. The integration prospects for potential future candidates will also be part of the agenda, based on the reports and advice that the Commission issues in the autumn.

4. Further strengthening of the social dimension in the EU

The Belgian Presidency will draw attention to the European Year for Combating Poverty (2010) and will strive for the continued execution of the Commission's 2008 Social Agenda.

5. Implementation of the Stockholm Programme's action plan for justice and home affairs, asylum and migration.

This programme establishes the framework for future activities with a view to



strengthening judicial cooperation in civil and criminal cases, combating crime on a Union-wide scale, access to the territory, asylum and immigration, and increased external action by the Union in these sectors. The action plan, which was presented in April 2010, comprises numerous initiatives.

Implementation and application of the Treaty of Lisbon

In addition to these five theme clusters Belgium will pay particular attention to an important horizontal theme, namely the implementation and correct application of the new rules of the Treaty of Lisbon, and will promote a smooth working relationship between the President of the European Council, the rotating Presidency, the Commission and the High Representative, Ms. Catherine Ashton.

Approval of the decision to set up the European External Action Service will have absolute priority. During the transition period Belgium will assist the High Representative and her team wherever necessary, in Brussels or in the field, at her request and under her authority. Belgium expects this transition period to be completed as soon as possible during the second half of 2010.

In addition the Belgian Presidency will pay particular attention to the execution of the rules of the new Treaty regarding the Union's financial framework and its budget, and the approval, in 2011, of the first annual budget under these rules.

The work that the Spanish Presidency has done towards getting approval of the legislation for the creation of the European Citizens' Initiative will be completed. This Initiative enables EU citizens, by collecting signatures across Europe, to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them in an area of EU competence. Finally, every endeavour will be made to advance, as far as possible, the negotiations for the accession of the Union to the European Convention on Human Rights.

 trio.es

 trio.be

 trio.hu

Logo of the European team Presidency

Amongst other things, a logo has been designed for the European team Presidency. It was selected from entries to a national design competition in the three countries. This competition was open to students of art and design.

The lucky winner was Antoine Durieux (right on the picture), a young Belgian who had just graduated from the Institut Saint-Luc – Ecole Supérieure des Arts in Brussels.

The logo consists of two joined letters (“e” and “u”), which represent the solidarity and the harmonious ties between the three Member

States. The logo exists in three versions, i.e. in the national colours of each of the three countries, Spain, Belgium and Hungary. For Belgium it is black, yellow and red. The logo also reflects a modern view of the Union and its citizens. The cursive, seemingly handwritten letters are supposed to invite all European citizens to make the European project their own. The addition of the word “trio” in superscript is a reference to unity. “eutrio.be” is also the address of the Belgian Presidency website.

<http://www.eutrio.be>



The website of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union



live-streaming and a multimedia library, it all makes for a dynamic website and an attempt to bring citizens a step closer to Europe.

Belgium can be seen on the site in all its variety. The Communities and Regions have made their contributions too. The site is available in all three national languages (Dutch, French and German) as well as in English.

<http://www.eutrio.be>

The Belgian Presidency's most important communication channel, its official website, went online on 25 June. It is the right place for anyone wanting a front-row view of what is going on during the Presidency.

In concrete terms, the official website brings together information on the formal and informal Councils, conferences and cultural events like exhibitions and concerts. The Presidency website is the right address for both the results of the most recent configuration of the Environment Council and the date on which the International Film Festival of Ghent takes place.

The Presidency website is aimed first and for all at citizens of the European Union. Journalists, diplomats, academics or the man in the street can all use it to follow current affairs on the European stage in clear and simple terms.

With its interactive and modern applications the site has something to offer for everybody. From twitter, events calendars and SMS alerts to newsletters,



Countless events during the Belgian Presidency

In total over 500 events will take place during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, including 27 formal and 16 informal Councils at ministerial level.

Between 1 July and 31 December 2010 lots of meetings will take place at the level of heads of state and government: EU-Russia, EU-Ukraine, EU-United States, EU-Brazil, EU-South Africa, EU-China, EU-India, EU-South Korea, EU-Africa and the ASEM 8 Summit.

The 8th ASEM Summit, which will bring 48 heads of state and government from Europe and Asia together at the Royal Palace in Brussels on 4 and 5 October 2010, is the biggest political and logistical event of the Presidency at the international level.

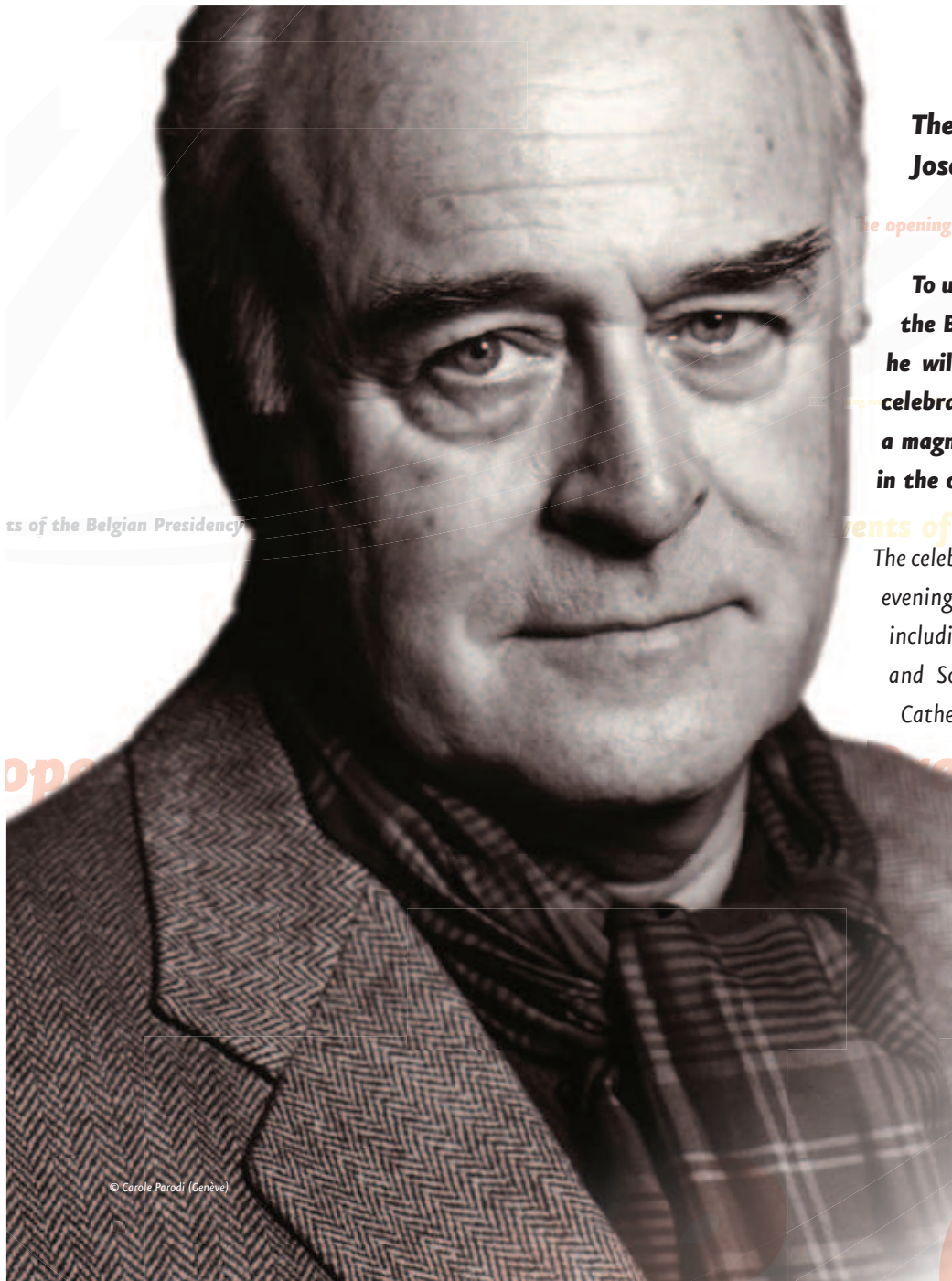
Socio-cultural events strengthen the image of the Presidency in the eyes of the wider public and specific target groups. The opening ceremony of the Presidency - for VIPs - at Laeken Castle on 2 July and the popular celebrations near the European Parliament in Brussels and in various other cities on 3 July contribute to this, as do the symbolic light shows in front of 27 Belgian town halls at the start of the Presidency.

There will also be countless cultural events, conferences and seminars organised during the Presidency that have been given the Presidency label. They will be announced on the Presidency website.

Belgian diplomatic representations abroad will also organise events in the context of the Presidency.

For the organisation of these events both government services and private organisers are being encouraged to bear in mind their sustainable nature with a voluntary charter and a practical handbook.





**The opening ceremony at Laeken Castle:
José van Dam & Friends concert, 2 July 2010**

The opening events of the Belgian Presidency

The opening events

To usher in the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Belgian bas-baritone José van Dam will give a concert, during which he will also celebrate his professional golden jubilee. This spectacular celebration will take place at Laeken Castle and the Royal Greenhouses, a magnificent setting that will do full justice to the most beautiful voices in the country.

Events of the Belgian Presidency

The celebrated José van Dam is one of the most famous singers of his generation. That evening he will be in the company of artists from the country's three Communities, including the baritone Werner Van Mechelen, the sopranos Hendrickje Van Kerckhove and Sophie Karthäuser and violinist Yossif Ivanof. The jazz guitarist Philip Catherine and singer Maurane make a surprising duo too. The participation of the Spanish mezzo soprano Sylvia Tro Santafé and the Hungarian tenor Slabozc Brickner are a symbolic reference to the two other members of the trio Presidency. This impressive line-up will be accompanied by the orchestra and chorus of the Brussels opera, La Monnaie/De Munt, and conducted by Patrick Davin.

This prestigious concert on 2 July 2010 will be part of a weekend of festivities celebrating the Belgian Presidency in all of the country's provinces.

Celebration for the wider public, 3 July 2010



On Saturday 3 July the whole country will burst into celebration, from the coast to the German border. In twelve cities, as many as there are stars on the European flag, there will be a big dance party from 20.00 to 21.30. Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Charleroi, Doornik, Eupen, Ghent, Hasselt, Liege, Leuven, Louvain-la-Neuve and Ostend will participate. A similar party was organised in 2005 to celebrate Belgium's 175th anniversary. In each of the twelve cities the participants are rehearsing the same choreography and at a pre-arranged moment the same dance will start all over Belgium.

At 22.00 the evening will continue at the heart of the European quarter of Brussels on the esplanade of the European Parliament and the Place du Luxembourg with the extraordinary show "I ♥ EU" (pronounced "I love you"). It will be a great mix of music, dance, fireworks, son et lumière and countless other surprises, in the presence of many Belgian and international artists.

From 23.30 partygoers will be able to round off the evening with a huge after party on the Place du Luxembourg.

All of these events are free of charge and will be broadcast live on several large Belgian and European television channels.

BNP Paribas Fortis - Best of Belgium, 8 July 2010



The "BNP Paribas Fortis - Best of Belgium" event will present all the best that Belgium has to offer in terms of tennis and music. It will take place on 8 July 2010 in the Roi Baudouin Stadium in Brussels. Numerous top Belgian musicians will perform there, followed by a tennis match between Justine Henin and Kim Clijsters. The event will be opened by the Prime Minister and will finish with a firework display.

During the tennis match the aim is also to break the world record for the largest audience. At the moment the record is 30,472. The stadium is being equipped for the event.

This event will mark the end of the opening week of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which will be officially launched on 2 July at Laeken Castle.

<http://www.best-of-belgium.be>



ASEM 8 Summit, Brussels, 4-5 October 2010

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) has been a forum for dialogue between European and Asian partners on the major political, economic and financial, and socio-cultural issues - the three pillars of ASEM - since 1996. ASEM stimulates cooperation amongst partners, encourages mutual trade and investment and aims to multiply the contacts between its citizens.

In 2010 ASEM has 48 partners. These include the 27 Member States of the European Union, 16 Asian countries (Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam,

Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan and Mongolia), the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. During ASEM 8 Australia, Russia and New Zealand will also officially accede to ASEM. These meetings between the 48 partners are the only ones where Europeans and Asians can meet each other exclusively.

ASEM is based essentially on a biennial Summit of heads of state and government. Since the first ASEM Summit in Bangkok (Thailand) in 1996 this biennial arrangement has been adhered to with remarkable regularity. It is an indication of the growing

realisation that Asia and Europe have a lot to gain from each other. The ASEM Summit at the Royal Palace in Brussels on 4-5 October 2010 will be the eighth meeting at this level where Asia and Europe concretise their common views. These meetings always finish with a Chair's Statement and one or more additional official statements on an important or topical theme.

In addition to the Summits, the ministerial meetings and other high-level political meetings, many follow-up activities are organised in more specific and technical areas. Moreover, meetings held in the framework of ASEM are suitable opportunities for bilateral

contacts between representatives from Europe and Asia.

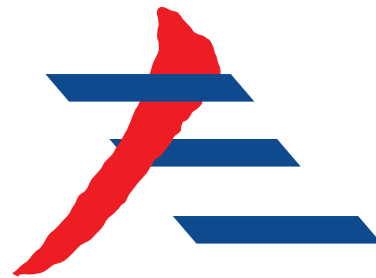
Together they represent around 58% of the world population, 50% of global GDP and over 60% of international trade. Given the circumstances and the figures the ASEM Summit in Brussels should endeavour to be a source of inspiration for the wider international community.

The ASEM 8 agenda has been drawn up in a completely transparent manner through an extensive process of consultations, whereby each ASEM partner without exception is involved. This makes ASEM 8 effectively a Summit

for each and every European and Asian partner. This joint process continues through to the day of the actual Summit itself. In Brussels the heads of state and government of the ASEM partners will discuss international challenges as well as relations between the two regions. The intention is to continue to develop ASEM as a shared strategic asset.

In the trail of ASEM 8 parallel events will take place in Brussels which will essentially complete the ASEM process. The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership is a two-day meeting between Asian and European parliamentary delegations (including

the European Parliament). This time round the Asia-Europe People's Forum involves not only the classic dialogue between partners from civil society, but a trade union day will be organised too. The Asia-Europe Business Forum



Asia-Europe Meeting ASEM 8 - BRUSSELS 2010

will deal with financial services and will welcome CEOs from the biggest financial organisations of the ASEM

partners. ASEM 8 also has an eye for culture. In June BOZAR opened its doors for a prestigious exhibition. "A Passage to Asia" exhibits high-class artworks that bear witness to centuries long contacts between Asia and Europe. Finally, the host country, Belgium, is organising and running a series of outreach and preparatory events. This is important as it encourages other similar initiatives. All of these activities are linked to ASEM 8 and are directly relevant to bringing Europeans and Asians closer together - which is, after all, the purpose of ASEM.

Organising ASEM 8 and the parallel events in Brussels is a unique

opportunity to spotlight the host country, Belgium, and Brussels in particular. The prestigious Royal Palace, the elegant Palace of the Academies and the well-known Egmont Palace will be the scene of the activities. The newly renovated Congress Palace, now Square Brussels Meeting Centre, will host the press centre and welcome thousands of interested people. The historic setting in the heart of our capital city is sure to contribute to the prestige of ASEM 8.

<http://www.asem8.be>

Third EU-Africa Summit, Libya, 29-30 November 2010

The 3rd EU-Africa Summit will take place in Libya on 29 and 30 November 2010. In fact at the last meeting, in Lisbon in December 2007, the heads of state and government decided to meet every three years in future, in Africa and the European Union alternately. These Summit meetings illustrate the importance that the two parties attach to their relations. They are also an appropriate opportunity for assessing progress made in the implementation of commitments and for drawing up a political outline for further activities by, amongst other things, approving action plans.

The EU-Africa Summit will take place two months after the New York Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and a few days before the start of the Cancún Conference on climate change. So the Summit is an important political happening and shows that the African Union and the EU can tackle the major global challenges together.

The Summit will be chaired jointly by Malawi, the current President of the African Union, and by the permanent President of the European Council. Apart from the institutional context Belgium will actively participate in the preparations for this event, which is also important in the framework of our bilateral relations with the African continent.

During the 2nd EU-Africa Summit in 2007 a new strategic partnership was concluded (the EU-Africa strategy), whereby a commitment was made to implement a first action plan (2008-2010) in 8 key sectors or partnerships, subdivided into 22 priority actions. This action plan involves all aspects of the

relations between the two continents. One of the main objectives of the November Summit is the approval of a second action plan (2011-2013), which is intended to be more operational and will be able to further strengthen the privileged ties between the two continents and better mobilise the many players in the Africa-EU partnership.

Apart from the revision of the EU-Africa strategy the themes on the agenda of the Summit in Libya will illustrate the added value of European-African cooperation. Discussions currently underway show that the partners attach particular importance to the following subjects: peace and security; climate change/energy; migration/mobility; transport and communications infrastructure; science, and information and communications technology (ICT); agriculture and food security; the Millennium Development Goals; and partnerships between the public and private sectors. The positive political messages that will be transmitted to the African partners will undoubtedly be the main element of the forthcoming Summit.

Finally, it is already clear how important it is to involve civil society and the private sector. Parallel to the Summit all sorts of additional events and visibility actions will be organised, the Meeting of the Parliaments, for example, the Civil Society Forum, the Youth Summit and the Business Forum.



European Development Days, Brussels, 6-7 December 2010

History

The annual European Development Days (EDD), organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the President of the Council of the European Union, will take place in Brussels on 6 and 7 December 2010. This major event is right at the top of the European and international development agenda and is also one of the most important events during the Belgian Presidency.

The aim of the EDD is to make public opinion aware of the importance of development cooperation and values such as solidarity, themes that are very important for Belgium, which has always played a leading role in these areas. Belgium was at the cradle of the European Union and we are an important aid donor. Moreover, the first EDD, in November 2006, were an initiative of the Belgian Louis Michel, the then European Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.



Active participation by everyone

The 2010 edition of the EDD is expected to draw more than 5,000 visitors. Everybody will have his say – politicians and parliamentarians, international institutions, local authorities, NGOs, heads of business, academics, researchers, representatives of the media and young people. Half of the agenda will be determined by the participants themselves. They will be able to suggest speakers, events, networking events or exhibitions. Equal representation of men and women and the various regions has been ensured in the composition of discussion panels.

Learning from each other

Participants in training sessions and discussions can increase their skills, get up to date on the newest ideas and events, and increase their insight into the “who”, “what”, “where” and “how” of international development cooperation. They can also find out more about the hundreds of organisations participating in the “Development Village”.

Policy making

This event is in essence a policy forum where the focus is on the most noticeable trends and the newest

initiatives are explored. To be sure, a different theme is chosen each year, but nonetheless an attempt is made to focus attention on the most recent policy developments in all the important areas: global and local government, climate change, international finance, trade, food security, water, energy, the role of the media, human rights and social security. The 2010 edition intends to give out a strong political message on these themes. Moreover, this year the EDD will be geared mainly towards the future of European development cooperation and the new actors in the period 2010-2020.

Involving citizens

The EDD is also aimed at European citizens, by offering them socio-cultural activities (workshops, concerts, exhibitions etc) on development cooperation and international solidarity. This “Off” or “Outreach” programme, organised by the Belgian Presidency, runs from the end of November to mid-December and will take place in Brussels.

<http://www.eudevdays.eu>

Women's rights high on the international agenda

The United Nations will hold a number of important meetings on gender and women's rights. The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union coincides with some important high level events on gender:

- ECOSOC meeting (July 2010) on the gender-related Millennium Development Goals;
- the General Assembly will negotiate the establishment of a new gender institution at the UN;
- the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);

- the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Action Platform, which comprises 12 objectives for promoting women's rights and equal opportunities;
- and, last but not least, the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Resolution 1325 is often summed up under the 3 Ps. These are Prevention of violence and conflict, the Protection of women and children and the Participation of women in conflict resolution and reconstruction.

The implementation of Resolution 1325 and combating sexual violence and impunity are an absolute priority for Belgian foreign policy and

Belgian development cooperation. That is why our country is organising several events in September 2010 to highlight the 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325:

- High Level Conference focussed on participation (Brussels, 9 September 2010);
- A ministerial meeting focussed on prevention (New York, during the ministerial week at the end of September);
- a colloquium focussed on protection, in cooperation with the UN agencies (Geneva, 15-16 September 2010).



Cultural events

**Exhibition “A Passage to Asia”
25 Centuries of Exchange between Asia and Europe
Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR)
25 June – 10 October 2010**

In the run up to the ASEM 8 Summit (Asia-Europe Meeting) in Brussels on 4 and 5 October 2010, our country together with its Asian partners, will present the exhibition “A Passage to Asia”. This exhibition deals with the historic, philosophical, economic and cultural ties between Asia and Europe, and between the various Asian countries. Trade and religion form the leitmotiv of this wonderful voyage of discovery through Asia.

Asia and Europe have maintained intensive relations for thousands of years. Commercial and political networks between the East and West developed both overland – via the Silk Route – and by sea. Conquerors like Alexander the Great, Attila and Genghis Khan went off in search of glory, wealth and power. Travellers like Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Magellan were also fascinated by commodities such as tea and spices, silk, porcelain and so on. The Chinese Admiral Zeng He sought diplomatic contacts with the West via the sea. Trade opened the way for the spread of major religious and philosophical

trends, inexhaustible sources of inspiration for art and culture.

“A Passage to Asia” throws light on 2,500 years of exchange between Asia and Europe with an extraordinary selection of over 300 artworks that have never been seen before in Europe. From the oldest periods there are impressive funeral urns, ritual bronze “Dongson” drums and elegant jewellery in gold, glass and semi-precious stones, unique fabrics, as well as Buddhist and Hindu prints from India and South-East Asia.

The spread of Islam and Christianity led to an intensive production and trade in ivory, manuscripts, miniatures and liturgical objects. Old maps and illustrated travel stories give an idea of travelling conditions in those days. Other highlights include expensive “trade textiles” from India, superbly woven and decorated and which were used as a means of payment until the 19th century.

Finally, the exhibition also shows some recent discoveries by underwater archaeology: cargoes of shipwrecks that have preserved merchandise from the East down the centuries, as in a time capsule, untouched by human hand.

<http://www.asem8.be> • <http://www.bozar.be>



Giant Bronze Drum 2nd C: BCE Laos National Museum

Cultural events

Visionary Africa, a cutting-edge programme for cultural cooperation between Europe and Africa **BOZAR, Brussels**

30 May – 26 September 2010

The Belgian government gave the Brussels-based multi-disciplinary Centre for Fine Arts, BOZAR, the task of producing an alternative cultural programme during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In 2010 the eyes of the world will be turned on Africa. At least 17 African countries will celebrate 50 years of independence this year; the biggest sporting event of the year, the football World Cup, takes place for the first time on the African continent; and on 29 and

30 November 2010 the 3rd EU-Africa Summit will be organised in Libya.

Bozar opted for a future-oriented exchange project with Africa. Its **“Visionary Africa”** Festival draws attention to African culture now and in the past. At the same time, though, it is the start of a long-term vision of how to deal with African cultural heritage and African culture today, in both Africa and Europe.

“Visionary Africa” takes a look at the whole African continent and offers a platform to organisations in Belgium and Africa that can give African culture a new dynamic. It was developed in close cooperation with cultural organisations, music festivals, film festivals, universities and scientific institutions, NGOs, the African community in Belgium and the embassies of the 53 African countries. The result is a richly varied programme, from cultural heritage to contemporary art, from photography to film, from performance art to colloquia, and from African cuisine to the football World Cup.

In the main exhibition, **“GEO-graphics”**, on which BOZAR and the Royal Museum for Central Africa

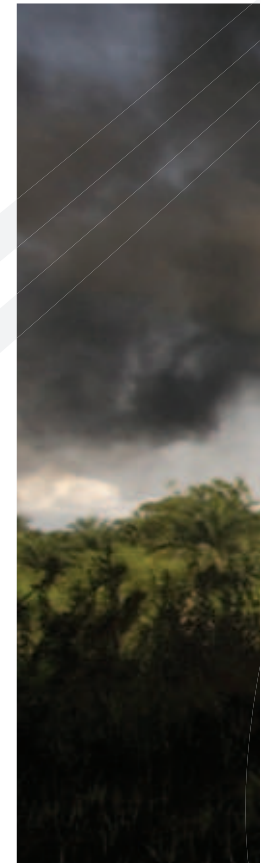
collaborated, around 200 ethnographic masterpieces from public and private Belgian collections are exhibited in a whole new way. The focus is on these traditional artworks in relation to cultural life in Africa now. They are given a new context by combining them with contemporary African works and the urban photos of artistic director David Adjaye. Eight African cultural institutions present artists and artistic projects and engage in dialogue with the past.

In the framework of the Summer of Photography 2010 there will be a retrospective of contemporary African photography (1960-2010), **“A Useful Dream”**, portraying 50 years of African photographers' views of their continent. The exhibition is curated by Simon Njami, the author of, amongst other things, “Anthologie de la photographie africaine”.

Roger Ballen, a South African photographer with American roots, has spent nearly 30 years producing



Yoruba, Nigeria. Collection MRAC Tervuren.
© MRAC Tervuren



his masterly, constantly evolving oeuvre. His particular universe, which goes from the documentary style of his early period to more pictorial compositions, steers a course between dream and reality. A mysterious oeuvre that is both amusing and confusing. Discover it through 200 photos.

“PÔZE III/Africa Town” focuses on African life in Brussels. All the Africans and other people in Brussels with a heart for Africa were invited to photograph their everyday environment. Since the end of November 2009 disposable cameras have been made available free of charge for this project. The best photos were selected by a professional jury and will

be exhibited at the Centre for Fine Arts from 25 June to 26 September.

Committed artists and voices like **Rokia Traoré**, **Angélique Kidjo**, **Didier Awadi** and the cutting-edge choreographer **Germaine Acogny** will be on stage at the Centre for Fine Arts as well.

Take note, too, that the Centre for Fine Arts will participate in the festivities to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Congo under the title **“CONGO@BOZAR”**. The emphasis will be on 50 years of Congolese music and will feature Congolese stars.

The last word goes to the artists of the festival. During their **“48 hours in Brussels”** artists from the African continent and the diaspora will be invited to dedicate themselves to the development of the African artistic sector. They will be given the opportunity to debate the role of culture in the development of Africa. Day in day out they embody “Visionary Africa”.

<http://www.bozar.be>



George Osodi,
Ogony Boy, 2007



Cultural events

The Flower Carpet on the Grand Place in Brussels, 12–15 August 2010

As the biennial tradition requires, Brussels' Grand Place will be covered with a carpet of flowers in August. This year, however, the theme of the traditional flower carpet will be the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Visitors who go on to the Grand Place via one of the seven roads leading to it will be treated to a dazzling spectacle with a surface area of over 2,000 m². This magnificent flower composition demands months of preparation. About a million begonias are needed for it, placed close to each other to create motifs and provide contrast and tones for the design of this artwork, which has no equal anywhere in the world. 120 volunteers carry out this delicate task. They create a microclimate with a constant level of humidity to ensure the freshness and colour tones of these typically Belgian flowers. All the work is done in a period of 48 hours.

So, what will the flower carpet show this year? First of all, in two diagonally opposite corners, visitors will see St. Michael felling the dragon, the symbol of the city of Brussels, which was established over 1,000 years ago. In the other two corners they will see a stylised yellow and blue iris, the emblem of the Brussels Capital Region. Between the two there will be a synthesis of the gothic architecture of the buildings surrounding the carpet of flowers. In the middle the three different versions of the logo of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union will be portrayed - the "eu", a creation of Antoine Durieux, a young

Belgian designer. Finally, twelve fountains will round the whole thing off.

The opening ceremony will take place on 12 August at 20.30. This fleeting masterpiece can be admired for just three days. In keeping with tradition visitors will be able to look at the flower carpet from the balcony of the city hall.

To add lustre to the opening ceremony six young singers, "The Brussels Vocal Project", will interpret a repertoire of Belgian composers written especially for them. The project developed from the vocal ensemble lessons led by David Linx at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. Each piece has its own universe, from jazz to contemporary, ballads and groove. Surprising harmonies and rhythms are passed in review, all constructed round one central theme, a composition by the great Belgian composer Pierre Van Dormael, "the Art of Love".

<http://www.flowercarpet.be>





European walking tour in Brussels

From July 1 to 31 December 2010, to mark the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the King Baudouin Foundation – which aims to make a sustainable contribution to the promotion of justice,

democracy and respect for diversity – has created a European walking tour in Brussels. It offers a chance for walkers to discover, at their own pace, an informative and colourful route through the Brussels of Europe, its institutions and buildings and to explore topics such as: Cosmopolitan Brussels, Brussels as a city under construction, the urban evolution of the European district, etc.

The Foundation has designed the walking route around:

- 10 urban points of reference (Place Royale/ Koningsplein, Square de Meeûs/de Meeûsquare, Cinquantenaire/Jubelpark, Rond-point Schuman/ Schumanplein, etc);
- the “coloring in” of the station Arts-Loi/Kunst-Wet;
- public art



em trio.be