



Dutch Press Review Friday 11 November 2011

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The Dutch papers end the week as they started - full of fears of a euro meltdown. Bring back the guilder: anti-Islam MP has a new mission. Elderly murderer is not going behind bars, but a school principal is arrested for removing a trouble-maker from the class. To lighten the doomsayers' tidings, there's 'Mamademos', Dutch mother of all Greeks.

Five scenarios of euro doom

On Monday, it was Greece, then it was Italy, with Berlusconi hugging the limelight. Now it's changing to France and Belgium. "The blackest week" headlines *nrc.next*. *De Volkskrant's* frontpage splash goes the whole hog: "Europe on the brink of recession." Think we had figured out that one.

"This is the last wake-up call," says EU economic and monetary policy commissioner Olli Rehn after he presented a gloomy picture of Europe's economic growth prognosis for 2012 - 0.5 percent on average.

The Netherlands is getting shivery as the contagion approaches - neighbouring Belgium and France came under fire yesterday.

Nrc.next presents a script with five different scenarios, indicating which one is likely to happen. In the first one, financial markets restore trust in Greece and Italy and the euro lives happily ever after: rejected.

In the second, with Rehn getting a major role, the European dream comes true and we all live in harmonious economic - and political - unity: rejected.

The third scenario is an option - the euro lives on, but Merkel and Sarkozy rule the roost (what's new?) in the "nub of Europe".

Enter the "neuro" and the "zeuro" - two new currencies in the fourth scenario, also considered an option, albeit a "very problematic" one. Yes, the few well-behaved countries of Northern Europe form the neuro, presumably including the Netherlands, while the southern big spenders are banished to the zeuro zone.

Scenario five: D-Day. The Deutschmark returns to Germany, the guilder to the Netherlands. France tries to have its franc nouveau pegged to the Deutschmark, fails, France is tossed on a high sea of economic storms and the euro sinks forever more.

Wilders' new mission: the guilder

Geert Wilders is not letting the grass grow under his feet. The xenophobic populist politician supreme of the Netherlands has a new mission - bring back the guilder. It has been his script all through the financial crisis.

Now his Freedom Party (PVV) has hired an international consultancy firm to investigate whether the Netherlands would fare better if it exits the eurozone, *De Telegraaf* reports. "The

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government is trying to scare us by telling us the light goes off if we leave the euro. Of course, it would cost money, but I want to find out if a return to the guilder would have more long-term benefits."

The PVV is putting the government – which it supports from parliamentary backbenches – under pressure, writes *De Telegraaf*. "The minority coalition cabinet considers a withdrawal from the euro an unacceptable route." And Wilders is not stopping with a report – if his research confirms the future is rosier for the Dutch under the guilder, he wants to hold a referendum on the question.

Police cart away vice principal of school

AD gives extensive coverage to a story about a vice-principal of a school in the eastern town of Nieuwegein. "Rob Wesselingh has been accused of assault by a 13-year-old pupil. The boy was removed from the class on Wednesday morning after a brawl with another student. The boy's parents reported the teacher for assault."

"A nasty piece of work" is how fellow pupils describe the fighting 'victim'. "The schoolchildren are reluctant to talk about it in the school yard, but on Twitter they're not afraid of giving their opinion. '[The boy] has been terrorising the class for ages.'"

Another teacher was giving a lesson when the brawl broke out. The teacher told both boys to leave the class. One did what he was told, but the 'terrorising' boy refused, even though he was told ten times. Wesselingh was called in to restore order and grabbed the boy by the scruff of the neck.

The CNV trade union representing teachers calls the incident "a new low point" in education and deplores that the "parents reported it and even worse, that the police took the vice principal away."

The incident has come to the attention of parliament. Teachers – increasingly the victims of verbal and physical abuse – are afraid to take action, "while the harsh reality is that the pupils are brazenly impudent," says Socialist Party MP Manja Smits.

No prison for murdering mother

Trouw follows the denouement of an ongoing story about an elderly woman from Amsterdam who killed her 47-year-old Down syndrome daughter, Dominique, in February 2010.

The mother had cared for her daughter at home for 35 years. When Dominique was a child, she had lived in an institution for several years where she was badly treated and sexually abused. Her mother promised her – never again.

When authorities contacted the 85-year-old woman in 2010, she was afraid Dominique would be taken from her and slit her throat.

"The judge admitted panic played a role, but still ruled the killing was premeditated, carried out after calm deliberation," reports *Trouw*. Despite the guilty verdict, the mother doesn't have to go to prison because "she was slightly of unsound mind at the time of the crime, she's old and the chance of her committing a murder again is nihil".

The judge added that the trial was "a traumatic confrontation for the woman with the enormity of her act".

Dutch first lady for the Greeks

The new Greek prime minister, Lucas Papademos, has a Dutch wife: Shanna Ingram Papademos, reports *De Telegraaf*. "As new mother of all Greeks, 'Mamademos' let it be known that she prayed her husband, even though he only has three months, would make a difference."

'Mamademos' is an artist and held an exhibition last year at an interesting gallery – the Dutch Central Bank. "Her paintings are colourful and full of emotion, with a clear Greek angle," says the chairman of the bank's art commission. "They're optimistic works of art."

Hang them in Brussels for inspiration?

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DISCUSSION

P.A.

17 November 2011 - 7:50am

"the xenophobic populist politician"... Is that an official diagnosis Dr. Nolan, or just a demonstration of ignorance of journalistic objectivity?

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Joseph Hiddink

11 November 2011 - 9:26pm / Canada

All people from Holland have been complaining how expensive life became when it joined the EURO organization. Holland was much better off before.

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Yvette

11 November 2011 - 4:24pm

And who would be backing this report on the long-term benefits of returning to the guilder? The PVV? Unless we truly know and understand what those benefits could be a referendum would simply become a platform for promoting isolationist values.

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