

Interview Johanne Montay, Political Editor at the RTBF (Belgian French-speaking public TV)

INTRO

Johanne Montay showing around the VRT/ RTBF building.

(00:01) “So here you are the hall of the main entrance of VRT/ RTBF Building. On one side you have the French -speaking public TV, the “RTBF”, and on the other side the Dutch speaking public TV, the “VRT”.

(00:16) In front of us, you have the reception of the VRT, “ontvangst” in Dutch, and on the other side, you have “our” shop selling the DVDs and so on.

(00:32) So If you’d split the hallway in two, here I have a foot on each side, the lights follow the frontier between our two televisions (00:47). Here (*showing panel*) you have all the channels of the Flemish Radio/ Television, there you have all the channels of the RTBF, French-speaking radio/television. Let’s follow the frontier (01:06) (*walking down the hallway*)

INTERVIEW

(01:12) It is very important that the journalists (*of both sides*) keep in touch, keep in contact, to know what is thought, what is felt, what is being done on the other side. Otherwise at some point the red thread is lost. Also (*it’s important*) to understand better the expectations on the Flemish side. These days, with the State reform and the upcoming elections, the newspapers are constantly trying to see what the Flemish want, what are they afraid of, the Flemish papers are trying to see what the French speakers want and what they are afraid of. (01:42) It is acutely important to continue the dialogue, otherwise I think we are heading for disaster. (01:48)

(01:49) It is a campaign of which we know that the hardest part will come afterwards. If, on the Flemish side, the NVA wins with 25 or 26% as expected in the polls, this nationalistic party will play a decisive role. If it has to participate in the negotiations for a State reform, I think (the constitution of a government) will take some long months. (02:09)

(02:10) We cannot make forecasts about the time it will take to form a government but if, after the elections, we try to negotiate in one go about the institutional and the socio-economical and we wait until we reach a general agreement to have a government, then that won’t be happening for a while. (02:28)

(02:28)-(03:04) Cut Aways, Johanne Montay, RTBF Newsroom.