

Activity Report

2005



Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and Development
Cooperation



Forewords	5
• Karel DE GUCHT, Minister for Foreign Affairs	6
• Armand DE DECKER, Minister for Development Cooperation	7
• Marc VERWILGHEN, Minister for Economy, Energy, Foreign Trade and Science Policy	8
• Didier DONFUT, Secretary of State for European Affairs, attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs	9
1. Resources	11
1. Internal organisation of the FPS	12
2. Personnel	17
3. Buildings	18
4. Budget and financial resources	19
2. Serving the public	21
1. Consular affairs	22
2. Crisis management	23
3. Policy	25
1. Belgium in a bilateral context	26
2. Belgium in the European Union	34
3. Belgium in a multilateral context	39
4. Belgium and globalisation	41
5. Belgium and human rights	45
6. Belgium and development cooperation	46
Annexes	51
• Organisational chart of the FPS	52
• Map of worldwide FPS representations (Belgium and abroad) (December 2005)	54
• Acknowledgements	57

Forewords

F





Foreword by Karel DE GUCHT, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Rarely has our Federal Public Service (FPS) seen such a lively start to a year as in 2005.

Just before the new year, a tsunami claimed the lives of thousands, including ten Belgian citizens, and destroyed the houses and infrastructure of an entire region. This was a natural disaster on an unprecedented scale and our reaction had to be equal to the challenge.

The Crisis Centre and on-site operations, under the supervision of FPS Foreign Affairs, displayed great professionalism once again. Relief operations were under way quickly, information was processed efficiently and communications went without a hitch.

During the past year, other events have once again forced our departments to give of their best. The Theunis situation is just one example of the way in which our FPS has acted, appropriately and proactively, to defend the rights and interests of Belgian citizens abroad.

In this context, it is vital to maintain good relations with the countries in question. At the bilateral level, particular attention has been paid to our contacts throughout the world. In addition, Belgium's role within the major multinational institutions is often more important than one might imagine for a such a small country.

Accordingly, we continue to champion Central Africa on the international scene. The transitions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi, two countries which have made historic progress over the past year, urgently require international diplomatic and financial aid.

Since taking office, I have placed the emphasis on continuing to shore up existing links between Belgium and the EU as well as between Belgium and the United States. In 2005 we continued our efforts in this regard. President Bush's visit to Brussels symbolises the renewed cooperation between our two countries. We organised a 'transatlantic Gymnich' meeting, which appears to have marked the start of a promising tradition.

The year 2005 was also a difficult one for the European Union. Following the failure of referenda in France and the Netherlands, the future of the crucial European Constitution appears to have been called into question. The image people have of the European Union has declined considerably over the past few years. Integration and enlargement are seen as the problem, whereas really they are key parts of the solution. Problems with the EU's financial resources merely reinforced this image problem. Belgium, which has always been one of the EU's most ardent supporters, has played a key role in maintaining the dynamic that drives unification. For an example of this, one need only look at the discussions on the accession of Turkey. We will continue to fulfil this role in the future.

With its forthcoming chairmanship of the OSCE in 2006, Belgium will have yet another opportunity to play an important role on the international scene. Thanks to our assets and expertise, I firmly believe we will be able to rise to the occasion.

Karel DE GUCHT
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Foreword by Armand DE DECKER, Minister for Development Cooperation

While celebrating this, the 45th anniversary of Development Cooperation, it is striking to contemplate just how much our development aid policy has changed over the course of the last half century. Born out of decolonisation, for a long time it was a key charitable measure by which European countries, which were in the throes of economic development, could ease their consciences by coming to the aid of the world's poorest countries. Today, Belgium's development aid policy, like that of the entire European Union, has completely altered its profile. It has become a key component in a strategic measure whereby development aid is incorporated into an overall policy of stabilising the world and making it more secure.

Belgium's cooperation policy for sustainable human development is based primarily on the concepts of partnership and geographical concentration of bilateral and multilateral aid and complies with the relevance criteria for development by, in particular, remaining separate from any national economic interest and by focusing on priority sectoral themes:

- conflict prevention and community building with a view to good governance;
- basic health care including reproductive health and combating tropical diseases and the AIDS virus;

- basic education and vocational training;
- agriculture and food safety;
- basic infrastructure.

In allocating 0.46% of the country's gross national income to public development aid, Belgium ranks 6th in the world per capita and, in absolute terms, 11th among countries contributing to the international development aid effort.

The Millennium Development Goals remain the common thread running through all our development actions. The adoption of these eight goals has marked a major turning point in our efforts to achieve a more humane society. Not least because it has provided a harmonised framework to universal development action; also because – as Stanislas Geremek said at the *Doing Business in Central Africa* conference which we organised in Brussels this year – these Goals have created 'a sense of guilt at not acting'; and finally because they are comprehensible for all and quantifiable and constitute a commitment by all. Not only rich countries which have pledged to fund the realisation of these goals, but also the countries that receive our aid, which have undertaken to establish conditions in which these goals can be achieved.

Central Africa remains a priority area for Belgium. The unquestionably positive trend we are seeing today – with the stabilisation of Rwanda, the success of the electoral process in Burundi and changes in Congo – is, to a large extent, due to the policy Belgium has been pursuing in the Great Lakes Region

since 1999. Today, we must continue to help these countries to ensure that their democratic transitions are successful and improve the lives of all.

The urgency and the magnitude of these challenges should not cause us to lose hope or conviction – at a time when Belgium is celebrating its 175th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of federalism. At a time when we are also celebrating the 45th anniversary of Belgian development cooperation, we know that we can build on our experience and on the quality of our officials. We also believe that the ideas of freedom, democracy, justice, equality and generosity will triumph.

Armand DE DECKER
Minister for Development Cooperation



**Foreword by
Marc VERWILGHEN,
Minister for Economy,
Energy, Foreign Trade and
Science Policy**

The global economy is going through difficult times at the moment. The months and years ahead will be decisive for our prosperity and its future. Consequently, it is important that we boost our economy's resistance and enhance our competitiveness and industrial fabric. This is a task for every country in Europe.

Due to the globalisation of the economy and the enlargement of the EU towards Eastern Europe, Belgian companies are facing increasingly stiff international competition.

During the past year, the goal of foreign trade has been to strengthen defence of Belgian interests in the world, a defence accompanied by the provision of effective financial tools to assist Belgian companies.

Economic missions to India and Japan, led by members of the Royal Family, took place during the first half of 2005, bringing the Asia tour to a close for the time being (China received a visit in 2003). It is clear that in the future, Asia will play an increasingly important role within the world economy. Each country is, in itself, a veritable continent while Belgium is no more than a pocket handkerchief. But Belgium must not miss its chance. With more than 80% of its GDP exported, Belgium survives to a large extent on foreign trade. Wellbeing and the standard of living in Asia will continue to in-

crease alongside economic growth. This means that consumerism in Asian countries will also increase proportionally and the positive effects of this will rebound on Belgium. Asian peoples will learn to recognise Belgium as a country in which people have a good life. In this context, Asian tourists will come to see Belgium as a country famed for its fine cuisine and broad cultural diversity. Belgium must also pose a challenge for Asian entrepreneurs. In fact, Belgium has an excellent infrastructure and a high level of productivity. It is the gateway to Europe.

In addition to the royal economic missions, it is important to organise an intensive and ongoing campaign to promote Belgium's permanent visibility throughout the world. In the context of the assistance given to Belgian interests abroad, an economic mission was organised in 2005 to take Belgian fashion to Saint Petersburg (Russia). As a result, Belgian fashion designers will now be able to take part in the annual event Fashion Seasons.

In conclusion, I am pleased to announce that in 2005 investment agreements were concluded with Uganda, Congo, Guatemala, Nicaragua, China, Peru, Madagascar and Sudan.

**Marc VERWILGHEN
Minister for Economy, Energy,
Foreign Trade and Science Policy**



Foreword by Didier DONFUT, Secretary of State for European Affairs, attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Exactly a year ago, just after I had taken office as Secretary of State for European Affairs, I highlighted in this preface my duty to coordinate Belgium's European interests and my desire to establish an active bilateral link with the other Member States of the EU in order to provide a more effective response to the challenges of an enlarged Europe.

Today, I believe I can say that in terms of these two priorities, the past twelve months have seen largely positive results: thanks to many visits to my counterparts and to the important work in gathering information from our embassies, Belgium has been able to gain a better understanding of the state of mind of our partners on all major issues and, therefore, to prepare under the best possible conditions for major European events.

This has enabled Belgium to make its voice clearly heard in discussions which are fundamental to it, such as the revision of the Lisbon Strategy, which should set the European Union back on the path to growth, the preparation of the EU budget for the period 2007-2013 and the draft European directive on services.

Still on the subject of coordinating Belgium's European interests, it is also important to emphasise the significant progress made in transposing European directives into Belgian law: thanks to pro-

active management and ongoing monitoring, our deficit in this regard has been cut by half during the past year, a situation which is tangible proof of Belgium's motivation to push ahead with European integration.

But 2005 was not solely a year of success stories – far from it: the failures of the French and Dutch referenda on the European Constitution, the stagnation of crucial negotiations on the EU budget, and also the feeling that Europe remains powerless in the face of the major socio-economic problems engendered by globalisation (unemployment, relocation, degradation of the environment and so forth) have considerably affected citizens' support for the European project.

Therefore it is important that Belgium and its partners quickly find a means of giving fresh direction to the process of European integration and that they convince the 450 million citizens of the European Union of the benefits of the EU in their day-to-day lives.

However, in a context of globalisation, the European Union must be seen to be competitive in relation to the rest of the world so as to be able to generate growth and high-quality jobs: this is the only way to guarantee wellbeing for all. Therefore it is important to finalise and develop a single European market, the largest in the world, which is based on consumers benefiting from enhanced purchasing power and companies with strong potential for innovation. It will also be important to avoid the traps of intra-European fiscal competition and the levelling down of social and environmental standards, which simply

reinforce inequalities and erode the very spirit of the European project.

Over the coming year, then, I will be focusing my action on my firm resolution to convince Belgium's European counterparts of the need for greater internal convergence in the social, economic and environmental fields. Because it is only by ascribing to a strong social dynamic in which the Member States have sufficient budgetary resources to ensure compliance with an ambitious minimum basis for social protection, that the European Union will be able to guarantee the durability of the European project and to respond to the legitimate concerns of its citizens.

I have no doubt that an improvement in the wellbeing of Europe's 450 million citizens will strengthen their support for and understanding of the European Constitution. The Constitution's ratification status will be reviewed in 2006 and adoption of it is one of the necessary conditions for political enhancement of the European Union.

Didier DONFUT
Secretary of State for European
Affairs, attached to the Minister for
Foreign Affairs

1. Resources

1



1. Internal organisation of the FPS

Modernisation of the FPS

In 2005, the modernisation of FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation again required substantial efforts on the part of all officials. The 'improvement programmes' grouped under the Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) project again played a decisive role. In addition to day-to-day staff management, considerable efforts have been made to draw up staff plans, prepare for the introduction of the new assessment system, develop a training plan, continue implementation of the new career path A and adapt the status of external career paths. Security was also one of the key themes of 2005. Finally, we should mention the new management plan by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, which sets out the objectives for the FPS during the years to come.

Improvement programmes

2005 saw the start of the implementation phase of the improvement programmes outlined as part of the BPR project launched in our FPS in 2002. To recap, no fewer than 109 projects were outlined in 2004. Since January 2005, over 60 projects have been launched, 15 of which have now come to end or are nearing their conclusion. We can expect the modernisation underway to continue at an even greater pace in 2006. In order to complete these projects satisfactorily, our FPS can rely on the commitment of its hierarchical organisa-

tion and on the motivation and dependability of over 40 officials who have been appointed project leaders. The project leaders are responsible for one or more projects and call upon their colleagues for help in carrying out their mission.

During the course of 2005, FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation also received assistance in implementing its modernisation projects from FPS P&O (Personnel and Organisation) and from external consultants. All these efforts greatly facilitate the day-to-day work of officials and enhance the service provided to the public.

The ICT directorate has also helped to support implementation of the modernisation programme with 69 support projects. In addition, the Project Management Office (PMO) continues to provide methodological assistance to project leaders in monitoring and assessing projects as well as specific tangible support where needed.

Projects in a number of fields were completed during the past year. In general, several key areas can be identified:

- enhancing the quality of the assistance we provide to citizens;
- defining modern management tools (e.g. project-based management, management guidelines and so forth) and making management more transparent;
- promoting the exchange of information and data management using computerised tools and enhancing our communication policy;
- using the 'single point of contact' method to improve the work of sup-

port services (personnel, training and so on);

- developing a knowledge-management policy within our FPS;
- drawing up standard and simplified procedures for numerous tasks and modernising our logistical, financial and IT activities.

This implementation phase coincides with the entry of the FPS into a new 'learning-based' organisational structure in which concern for quality is an everyday affair.

Working to shore up security

Security is an issue of growing importance at international level. We should point out that by 'security' we do not just mean physical security in Brussels and in our missions abroad, but also of the security of information and communication channels. A special working group drew up a draft general policy for information security which was approved by the Board of Directors on 1 July 2005. Since then, the main points contained therein have been implemented step by step. The main change in terms of structures is the introduction of a Management Committee for Information Security (CGSI) on which sit representatives of all the departments within the FPS involved in security issues. The Committee's mission is to coordinate the various activities carried out by the departments concerned. It is chaired by a Chief Security Officer (CSO), who is a member of the Chairman's staff, and reports directly to him.

In its current form, the CGSI, which met for the first time on 23 November, is made up of representatives of

1. Resources

the Security, External Personnel, HQ Personnel, Buildings Abroad and IT Security departments. It is chaired by the deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors. Over the coming months, this select committee will be expanded and representatives of other departments may be invited to attend depending on the matters up for discussion.

In the field, the increased focus on security has been translated into tangible actions via the following measures: installation of the first RITZENTHALER security lock, installation and accurate tuning of alarm and surveillance systems in missions and awareness campaigns aimed at officials in Brussels.

Shoring up the National Security Authority (ANS)

In accordance with the provisions of a new law and a new royal decree, the number of members (FPS and public institutions) of the National Security Authority has almost doubled. The Authority meets once a month.

During 2005 (up until the end of October) the ANS issued 2,305 security clearances for members of staff of various FPSs, international institutions, nuclear centres and so forth.

Legislation makes access to certain information or certain sensitive materials subject to obtaining security clearance (TOP SECRET, SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL).

The ANS will now also be involved in issuing security certificates and notices. Shortly, certain specific requests for security clearance will be processed electronically and clearances themselves may also be issued electronically.

Modernisation of external career paths

While development of an administrative status for a new standardised 'external career path' continues, a royal decree is also being drafted which will bring together post adjustments and other allowances in a single financial status. The system of leave and the rules on periodic return are also being examined. The status for officials under contract in missions is still being finalised. Following a decision by the Council of State on the question of the appropriateness of language examinations when recruiting diplomats, it is now once again possible to begin recruitment. A selection procedure was launched for diplomats and cooperation attachés and a similar process will follow for consuls in 2006.

A new management plan

In early September, the Chairman of the Board of Directors presented his new personnel management plan. Although the main strategic points set out in 2002 remain, the plan also contains several new and important areas of focus taking into account, on the one hand, an international environment in the throes of change and, on the other, the process of modernisation within the federal authorities. The focus on developing a regional approach in terms both of management and of policy attests to this. The plan also incorporates several key BPR projects drawn up by personnel in previous years. It also details milestones for the future management style of the FPS

and lists various indicators which will be used to measure the progress made in relation to the stated objectives.

Diplomatic list on the Internet

The Protocol and Security Directorate (P&S), responsible for administrative management of diplomatic missions in Brussels, has also worked closely on modernising FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. One of the first improvements to be made was the diplomatic list which, until recently, was available on paper only and which in 2005 was posted on the Federal Public Service's website. This list can now be updated at any time and consulted much more easily, including by the general public.

In addition, a project was launched aimed at the diplomatic community: more information on protocol will be available on the Internet.

The rapid and efficient provision of services to the diplomatic community remains a top priority for the Protocol Directorate. At the present time, our FPS deals with 281 diplomatic missions (bilateral and multilateral) totalling some 17,000 people who all receive privileges.

1

1. Resources

More international organisations recognised

The list of international organisations officially recognised by FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation appears on the FPS website. Three additional organisations asked to be recognised as entities entitled to claim privileges and immunities. In the interim, negotiations have opened with three other organisations, negotiations which should culminate in the signature of a headquarters agreement. At the present time, some 40,000 international civil servants hold a special identity card issued to them by P&S.

Domestic personnel

During the past year, P&S also continued to monitor closely the issue of private servants of diplomats and took an active part in initiatives organised by the King Baudouin Foundation in this area.

Greater efficiency in the organisation of financial management

Within the context of the modernisation of our FPS, the Budget and Management Control Directorate (B&B) implemented several improvement programmes designed to simplify working procedures in the context of preparing and implementing our budget and optimising control procedures. These projects have had a positive impact not only on the internal organisation of B&B but also on the working methods of all the credit management departments.

The directorate has also been joined by

several new partners. The main changes, both for headquarters and for missions, has been in terms of the simplification of administrative procedures in respect of implementing the budget and improving control procedures.

Integration of the Finance Office and the management of consular income

In order to keep more abreast of financial flows in the context of consular activities, both at headquarters and in missions, the Board of Directors decided to incorporate into B&B the Finance Office and the team responsible for consular income. A new team will focus on rationalising consular financial flows between headquarters and missions. Within the framework of this change, consular income will gradually be incorporated into the missions' working capital.

The Risk Management Department pilots the internal control system

The introduction of a new internal control system in each FPS is a key aspect of reforming administrative, budgetary and management control. To this end, our FPS has created a special Risk Management Department which will be piloting implementation of an internal control system based on COSO methodology (assessment based on a set of standards).

The Internal Financial Control Unit within the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation has been transferred to B&B2. This department is currently responsible for monitoring two key projects in the context of the BPR project. The first should make it possible to define more efficient procedures for internal control within the Directorate for Indirect

Cooperation. The second seeks to standardise the procedures involved in implementing and controlling our FPS's budget. These new procedures will be applied from January 2006.

Establishing a Management Reporting Unit

The Board of Directors of our FPS wants to follow the improvement programmes under way in a structured manner and to assess how efficient all our activities are, both within Directorates-General and support directorates. To this end, B&B has drawn up a series of management charts incorporating the main performance indicators for Directorates-General and support directorates. These indicators will measure the quality of the services we provide and the progress made under the improvement programmes. These will be included in the Board of Directors' management plan.

Regional auditors support decentralisation

The gradual decentralisation of the FPS's budget management to missions amounts to a sort of administrative simplification which is welcomed by our officials in our missions and at headquarters. However, for this to succeed, we also need to decentralise our control and support powers.

To achieve this goal, the FPS has introduced the new position of regional auditor. These officials, who are experts in budgetary, financial and account management, will gradually be incorporated into our network of missions. They will each be responsible for a region comprising the districts of several mis-

1. Resources

sions. Although from an operational point of view they are answerable to the B&B Support Directorate, in administrative terms they report to the head of the mission to which they are attached.

AccountingNet optimises financial management

The modernisation of our organisation must go hand in hand with the modernisation of our IT applications. In partnership with ICT (Information and Communication Technology), B&B has developed a programme of budgetary, financial and accounts management called AccountingNet. This new system should enable missions, regional auditors and officials at headquarters to follow in real time changes in missions' funds, to anticipate problems and to make the necessary corrections and decisions in good time. The system will also include reports for our management bodies. Accountants will be appointed based on the deployment of the application in missions and at headquarters.

TravelNet and Amadeus now in charge of travel

Officials in missions and at headquarters are travelling more and more. In 2004, B&B3 purchased some 1,800 tickets to numerous destinations throughout the world. In order to cope with increasing complexity, the FPS has opted to install the Amadeus reservation system, which will allow us to find the best prices at all times and to perform basic reservations tasks internally; this will substantially lower costs. In order to simplify missions' administrative and budgetary management, ICT and B&B have worked together to develop the TravelNet

system. This system is already used to compile mobility orders, but in 2006 it will also make it possible to monitor the budget, pay amounts in advance and process and register outlay in the FPS's central system.

New approach to awarding honours

In the Honours Department, four BPR projects were finalised in 2005 and these resulted in more efficient circulation of information and greater efficiency in the awarding process. This improvement is due, in particular, to grouping requests for the awarding of honorary distinctions. The number of awards was also reduced from nine to three and the certificates given a new, more attractive format.

In addition, the department has worked closely with the Prime Minister's departments on a draft bill on the awarding of honorary distinctions within the Honours List. The government has now submitted this draft to Parliament.

There are now only three types of award

© FPS Foreign Affairs, Hassan Nasser



1

1. Resources

Cooperation in a federal context

Assessment of cooperation with the Regions and Communities

During the meeting of the Interministerial Conference on Foreign Policy (CIPE) held on 15 March 2005, it was decided, within the framework of the 'Committee on Article 15/22', to launch -- with the Regions and the Communities -- a project to evaluate and, where necessary, to adapt the 1994 Cooperation Agreement on regional economic and commercial attachés and the methods used to promote exports, and the 1995 Cooperation Agreement on the status of representatives of the Communities and the Regions within diplomatic missions and consulates. This project, the results of which will be communicated to the Interministerial Conference on Foreign Policy in due course, is coordinated and chaired by the Regions and Communities Interface.

International Conference on Federalism

Between 3 and 5 March 2005, Belgium hosted the Third International Conference on Federalism, a joint initiative between the federal government and the governments of the Communities and the Regions. The event was one of the high points of the festivities to mark the 175th anniversary of Belgian independence and the 25th anniversary of federalism. A special team from our Federal Public Service was in charge of preparing for and organising the conference.

The conference, held in the buildings of the European Parliament, was a resounding success. Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt and the Minister Presidents of the Communities gave the opening speech in the presence of HM King Albert. Over 800 participants from some 50 countries were in attendance: heads of state and government, foreign ministers, technical ministers and senior civil servants, representatives of civil society, academics, journalists and young people. The participants exchanged ideas and experiences on the question of how federalism in all its diversity can contribute not only to good governance, prosperity and wellbeing, peace and democracy but also to the emergence of a unique identity in an increasingly globalised world. Special emphasis was placed on various themes such as conflict prevention, efforts towards nation-building and federalist trends within international cooperation organisations. The closing speech was given by Karel

De Gucht, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the presence of Prince Philippe.

Exhibition on '175 years of Belgian diplomacy'

For Belgium, the year 2005 was one of commemoration. The country celebrated 175 years of independence and the 25th anniversary of federalism with a whole range of activities, both large and small.

The prestigious historical library at Egmont Palace housed an exhibition entitled *175 years of Belgian diplomacy: commitment throughout the world*. This exhibition looked back on a sometimes overlooked chapter in Belgium's history. The Press and Communication Directorate (P&C) was the linchpin in organising the exhibition. Visitors were able to 'travel in time' through 175 years of Belgian diplomacy, from the very beginnings of an independent Belgium to the multilateral context of the post-

Official opening of the exhibition *175 years of Belgian diplomacy* at Egmont Palace in Brussels in the presence of HM King Albert II

© FPS Foreign Affairs, Dominique Decuyper



1. Resources

war period and on to present-day federalism. All these milestones in Belgium's commitment on the scene of European and world affairs captured the public's imagination.

The exhibition also gave the public an insight into the development of the diplomatic and consular career path, day-to-day life within FPS Foreign Affairs and the working context of players involved in diplomacy both in Brussels and abroad.

The exhibition took visitors on a journey through a selection of archive documents, photographs, audio-visual souvenirs and objects of national symbolism. A festooned VIP table and an example of an ambassador's gala outfit lent a touch of realism to the event.

During the two months that the exhibition was open to the public, over 8,000 visitors both Belgium and further afield came to Egmont Palace. The design, presentation, setting and explanations from attendants/guides were much appreciated and P&C was justified in considering the exhibition one of the highlights of the past year.

2. Personnel

In partnership with FPS Personnel and Organisation, FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation continued its efforts to modernise personnel policy, specifically in line with the reform under way within the civil service.

The objective was better trained and more highly skilled staff and personnel structures which more effectively meet actual requirements.

The 2005 personnel plan for headquarters stipulated an increase of some 82 units, partly to offset departures. Implementation of the plan will be finalised in 2006.

The tables below show the composition of the FPS's staff both at headquarters and abroad as at 1 November 2005, and the number and category of missions. The map annexed at the end of the report shows the location of the different types of missions.

FPS staff at headquarters and abroad (1 November 2005)

Total number of established officials and officials under contract at headquarters:

Established internal officials	642
Officials under contract	523
Diplomats	150
Chancellors	62
Development Cooperation Attachés	16
Total at headquarters	1393

Total number of established officials and officials under contract in missions, Permanent Representations abroad and Permanent Representations in Brussels:

Diplomats	250
Chancellors	124
Development Cooperation Attachés	37
Expatriate officials under contract	153
Officials under contract employed on site	1515
Total in missions and Permanent Representations abroad and in Brussels	2079
Grand total (Headquarters, missions and Permanent Representations)	3472

1

1. Resources

In 2005, two embassies were opened in Doha (Qatar) and Astana (Kazakhstan) and a Consulate General was opened in Guangzhou (China). The following missions were closed: the Consulate General in Sydney, the Consulate in Malaga and the Permanent Representation to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague.

Number and category of embassies and consulates (1 November 2005)

Missions	
Embassies	92
Consulates General	17
Consulates	9
Permanent Representations	10
Cooperation Bureaus *	4
Totaal	132

* This refers only to cooperation bureaus in countries where there is no Belgian embassy: Bamako, Cotonou, Maputo and Niamey. 20 bureaus have been set up in the grounds of an embassy, consulate-general or Permanent Representation.

3. Buildings

Buildings abroad

The FPS runs approximately 350 buildings abroad, over half of which it owns. The total value of the FPS's fixed assets is almost € 375 million. Most of these are official residences of heads of missions. Other buildings, mainly chancelleries, are rented and cost between € 9 million and € 10 million per annum.

In 2005, an investment budget of € 11,979,000 was allocated. The purchasing budget totalled € 2.4 million.

The buildings Master Plan gives an indicative rundown of revenue and expenditure of the Buildings Fund over the next four years. This pertains primarily to major real estate transactions and priority renovation and construction projects.

Buildings in Brussels

These buildings are rented. The main building, Egmont I, is located at 15 rue des Petits Carmes. Construction of Egmont II, which began in June 2004, will be completed by the end of 2006.

Egmont II will replace several rented buildings at different locations on rue de Namur (nos. 48, 59 and 72), rue de Bréderode (no. 6), rue Crespel (nos. 2-4) and rue Haute (no. 139). The FPS also runs Egmont Palace and Val Duchesse Castle in partnership with the Buildings Agency.



4. Budget and financial resources

Overview of the Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation budget

Since the 2004 budget year, the resources for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation have been incorporated into a single budget.

Total budget for 2005 (adjusted)

• Commitment credits: € 1.230.931.000 • Organisation credits: € 1.260.761.000

Division	Programm	Area	Commitment amount (in € thousands)	Organisation amount (in € thousands)
01		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs	2.717	2.717
02		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Development Cooperation	2.396	2.396
11		Strategic bodies of the State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs	1.295	1.295
21		Management bodies	63.286	63.286
	0	Management and supervision	63.286	63.286
40		General services	11.458	11.458
	1	Protocol	653	653
	2	Training	1.690	1.690
	3	Conferences, seminars and other events	1.895	1.895
	4	Humanitarian aid	1.178	1.178
	5	Representation abroad	1.465	1.465
	6	Communication, information and documentation	1.557	1.557
	7	International cooperation	3.020	3.020
42		Embassies, consulates and cooperation missions	170.582	166.208
	0	Subsistence programme	157.250	157.701
	1	Buildings fund	13.332	8.507
43		Directorate-General for Legal Affairs	546	546
	0	Subsistence programme	546	546
51		Directorate-General for Bilateral Affairs	6.836	6.836
	0	Subsistence programme	395	395
	1	Bilateral relations	3.835	3.835
	2	Economic expansion	2.606	2.606
52		Directorate-General for Consular Affairs	11.193	11.193
	0	Subsistence programme	10.881	10.881
	1	International institutions	115	115
	2	Humanitarian aid	197	197
53		Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation	125.402	127.377
	1	Multilateral relations	73.621	73.621
	2	Science policy	3.294	3.294
	3	Cooperation	475	475
	4	Humanitarian aid	48.012	49.987
54		Directorate-General for Development Cooperation	831.872	864.101
	0	Subsistence programme	2.979	2.979
	1	Governmental cooperation	194.422	175.241
	2	Non-governmental cooperation	186.475	187.402
	3	Multilateral cooperation	282.816	399.619
	4	Special missions	165.180	98.860
55		Directorate-General for Coordination and European Affairs	3.348	3.348
	1	European relations	3.348	3.348

2. Serving the public

2



1. Consular affairs

Fresh momentum in the fight against terrorism

In 2005, the FPS was once again confronted by the problem of terrorism. In some cases, FPS Foreign Affairs can provide a useful contribution to action by other FPSs as well as the police and the justice system.

The fight against terrorism is one of the key action areas for consular affairs. Processing visa applications, issuing passports, making travel documentation secure, registering biometric data – all these activities have an important security aspect. Belgium is currently at the forefront in terms of applying new tech-

nologies: one year ahead of schedule, Belgium was the first country in the world to issue passports with a built-in electronic chip. We were also the first country to organise checks of such passports at borders (airports and ports). Together with France, Belgium is involved in the first experiment within the European Union to record fingerprints and digital photographs for visa applications.

Through these new initiatives, FPS Foreign Affairs once again sent out a strong message in 2005, proving that the fight against counterfeit travel documents and illegal immigration is high on its list of priorities. In 2005, cooperation with other countries was stepped up in

the exchange of information and judicial intervention. Many Belgian embassies and consulates made their own contribution, and in so doing received the support of headquarters in Brussels. FPS Foreign Affairs is now more involved than ever before with assisting other bodies, in terms of both collection and monitoring of information. Ongoing consultation with our main partners at national level and abroad is, essentially, the reason our FPS exists and we can often make a difference thanks to our support action and our vast network abroad.

Moreover, it is clear that over the coming years, considerable efforts will still be required when it comes to combating terrorism. Special attention will be focused on training for consuls, diplomats and visa officials in countering and preventing terrorism. All useful information from abroad will be forwarded without delay to the relevant Belgian authorities. Only by rapidly and efficiently disseminating all available information will our country remain secure for all inhabitants.

Issuing visas and monitoring

Over the past year, the Directorate-General for Consular Affairs (DGC) again invested a considerable amount in monitoring the issuing of visas at missions.

When monitoring an embassy or a consulate, special attention is paid to the way in which the Visa Section is organised and, in particular, to the service provided to customers. This entails verifying whether there are any superfluous stages in the processing of files, whether

The new Belgian passport with an electronic chip can be read and decoded by a portable or pocket computer. © BELGA



2. Serving the public

it is possible to notify the applicant of the progress being made on their file without them having to come to the mission in person, and whether applicants who have travelled long distances are dealt with as flexibly as possible.

Several missions have already received recommendations in this area.

Moreover, missions are strongly urged to post local visa information on their websites, including the paperwork required, practical information about applying for a visa, opening hours and so forth. This modern means of communication will enable the public to locate information in a clear and comprehensive manner and will often mean that they do not need to go to the mission in person. This also means time saved for the mission itself since it would receive fewer telephone calls and written requests for information and could, in most cases, refer enquirers to the website.

In 2005, the working method of the Visa Section in Kinshasa underwent a thorough review and was modified. This has meant a considerable amount of time saved for visa applicants and a reduction in workload for the mission. A similar process is currently under way at the Visa Section in Casablanca in a bid to reduce the time taken to issue visas there. The aim is to remove some stages of the file-processing procedure and to optimise the entire visa issuing system. At the two missions mentioned above, the investigation has dealt mainly with settlement files, since these are more complex in terms of the documentation required and the assessment procedure

than files for short stays and therefore entail a greater workload for all parties concerned.

In cooperation with the Immigration Service at FPS Interior, a working group has been set up, the aim being to reduce the time taken to issue visas both at missions and at the Immigration

Service itself. The working group has already met several times with positive results and discussions are continuing.

Comparing the figures for 2004 (12 months) to those of 2005 (9 months) gives the following results for all missions connected to the electronic VisaNet application:

	2004	2005
Visas issued automatically by missions	63 %	68 %
Files sent to the Immigration Service	37 %	32 %

All diplomatic and consular missions are included, apart from the embassy in Luanda which will be connected to the electronic network in the near future.

In the future, missions will again be asked to use automatic issuing as much as possible, insofar as current rules permit, and only to send files to the Immigration Service where there are justified reasons for doubt.

2. Crisis management

FPS Foreign Affairs: A lifeline in times of crisis

The Crisis Centre – Travel Warning Unit – B-FAST department has been in operation within FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation since 2003; the required additional provisions have now been made to provide a more effective response in emergency situations. In this context, there are three main areas of action:

- assisting Belgian citizens in crisis situations abroad;
- travel warnings for Belgian citizens;
- assisting local populations in distress, via B-FAST.

Assisting Belgian citizens abroad

In addition to difficulties encountered by individual citizens (theft, loss of documents, accidents) where the usual consular assistance comes into play, some situations may arise in which small or large groups of Belgian citizens are involved and which may potentially cause a threat to their safety. In such cases, the decision may be taken to activate the Crisis Centre.

The Crisis Centre acts as a coordinator and distributes information to victims themselves, their families and the general population. The Crisis Centre works closely with Belgian embassies and consulates in the individual countries concerned.

In 2005, the Crisis Centre was activated twice: the operation launched

in late December 2004, following the earthquake and tsunami in South-East Asia, continued in January 2005. Given the extent of the tsunami disaster, the Crisis Centre took more than 10,000 calls in just a few days from worried Belgian citizens. Most callers were reporting missing persons or were asking for help in finding them. Extensive and painstaking investigation enabled an initial list of 4,000 people reported missing to be reduced to a much smaller figure. In this respect, the FPS was assisted by valuable cooperation from the Red Cross and federal police.

The second time the Crisis Centre was activated was the day after the bomb attacks in London in July.

Naturally, other kinds of assistance can be provided in some situations and there is no need for the Crisis Centre to be activated. However, in some cases it is still placed on advance alert, such as, for example, during the epidemic of the Marburg virus in Angola (April 2005), the troubles in La Paz (June 2005) and during the period of tension coinciding with the end of the period of political transition (30 June 2005) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Finally, the FPS also played an important role in disseminating information on the bird flu epidemic, in particular in the form of travel warnings.

Travel warnings issued for more than 131 countries

FPS Foreign Affairs also endeavours to ensure Belgian citizens do not find themselves in problematic situations by providing information for those wishing

to travel abroad on the situation at their destination and by warning them of any problems or dangers they may encounter.

In 2005, the FPS published travel warnings for some 131 countries.

Since the demand for travel warnings is increasing and increasing numbers of people now have access to the Internet, FPS Foreign Affairs has been posting travel warnings since 2001 on the website www.diplomatie.be. This information enables travellers to assess the risks associated with travelling to certain countries (security, political or social upheaval, natural phenomena, health problems). The situation of countries in which problems are evident or are likely to arise is monitored closely. The portal to our Internet site also provides information on bird flu. On average, the site received some 500 visitors a day consulting travel warnings in 2005.

B-FAST activated seven times

Belgium does more than provide assistance for Belgian citizens in distress.

In the event of disasters and emergency situations abroad affecting primarily the local population, the local authorities sometimes ask for emergency aid from Belgium. To meet such requests, in 2000 the Council of Ministers approved the creation of a rapid reaction unit. This unit comprises emergency aid teams which can leave at short notice for a region affected by a man-made or natural disaster. The new unit was named the Belgian First Aid & Support Team and is better known as B-FAST.

Organisation

B-FAST is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and includes all the relevant federal public services (Prime Minister's departments and the federal public services Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation, National Defence, Public Health, Interior and Budget) and, where appropriate, experts, specialist NGOs and assistance services in the Regions, Communities and municipalities.

Tsunami, Katrina, Pakistan...

B-FAST has been activated 32 times since its inception and this has enabled it to amass a wealth of vital expertise. In 2005, B-FAST was active several times in the field: in Thailand and Indonesia (tsunami in December 2004), in Romania (flooding in July 2005), in Niger (famine in August 2005), in Bulgaria (flooding in August 2005), in the United States (Hurricane Katrina in August 2005) and in Pakistan (earthquake in October 2005). The key operations were those in the regions of South-East Asia affected by the tsunami.

3. Policy

3



1. Belgium in a bilateral context

Relations with neighbouring countries

Luxembourg

The third joint meeting of the governments of Luxembourg and Belgium was held on 15 July 2005. The aim of these summits is to analyse, at regular intervals, the progress made in deepening bilateral cooperation to enhance the day-to-day wellbeing of the country's populations. The two governments welcomed the entry into force of the new BLEU Convention (Convention on Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union) and the accession on 23 May of Belgium together with Wallonia, the French Community and the German-speaking Community to the SAR.LOR.LUX interregional cooperation initiative.

The Netherlands

The Thalassa II meeting

The second Belgo-Dutch summit known as *Thalassa II* was held in Brussels on 5 September 2005. These informal meetings aim to shore up the links between the governments of Belgium and the Netherlands. The *Thalassa II* meeting gave rise to a number of tangible actions such as meetings between Minister Vande Lanotte and Minister Peys, meetings between the ministers for cooperation, the meeting of the MPs contact group in The Hague on 12 December 2005, the regular staging of an annual *Thalassa* summit in late August/early September with a detailed agenda

somewhat along the lines of the Belgo-Luxembourg summit and, finally, the creation of a discussion group on the future of the Benelux region which will oversee various national discussions.

Federal Republic of Germany

Germany is a key partner in both political and economic terms, especially in the context of the European Union. Contacts with Germany have been enhanced at both the higher political level and civil servant level. The German President Köhler visited Brussels. The fruitful collaboration with Germany is reflected, among other things, in our joint efforts in the context of Afghanistan and Iraq and in Belgium's support for the initiative by Germany, Japan, India and Brazil for reform of the United Nations Security Council.

France

At the request of the French government, the Belgian authorities helped in setting up a working group of six Belgian and six French members of parliament. The group's mission was to identify, over a period of one year from 10 November 2005, the legislative and regulatory obstacles to developing cooperation and to come up with solutions to overcome such difficulties. In the same spirit and out of a concern to ensure that the French public are more aware of the way in which they function, the Belgian authorities organised an Open Day revealing information on the inner workings of Belgian institutions on Tuesday, 14 June 2005 in Bruges. The French au-

thorities organised a similar day in Lille to raise awareness among the Belgian public of the French institutional system. The Belgian authorities also organised in Kortrijk on 21 November 2005 the 'Second Belgo-French Interregional Cooperation Forum' in a bid to give an overview of cross-border cooperation with the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region and also to set out prospects for the future in terms of cross-border cooperation.

United Kingdom

Ahead of the British Presidency of the European Union, relations with the United Kingdom were the focus of particular attention in 2005. One meaningful example of positive collaboration involved Central Africa. The year also saw the sixth Belgo-British Conference, held in London in October, focusing on the future of the European Union. It was an opportunity to exchange views on medium-term political, institutional and economic developments. European and national environmental policies were another important theme. Ministers De Decker and Tobback and former Ministers Neyts and Eyskens, among others, represented Belgium.

Focus on Central and Eastern Europe

2005 was also the year that saw the full integration of eight Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union following their accession in 2004. The Baltic states, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia continued their significant efforts towards reform and EU integration. The

3. Policy

'old' Member States also had to adapt to the historic changes taking place in Europe. Since Belgian foreign policy is, generally, an extension of European foreign policy and since the position of each of the 25 Member States is important, the Belgian government decided to open embassies in the capital cities of countries in which Belgium was not previously represented, such as Latvia and Estonia.

The integration of Central European countries has also encouraged Belgian diplomacy to reorient its thinking and to focus more on Eastern Europe. This followed on from the move by the EU in 2004 to launch its European Neighbourhood Policy, aimed at Eastern countries and those in the Southern Mediterranean. In the east, the EU is seeking to shore up relations with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Following

the opening of the embassy in Astana (Kazakhstan) at the end of 2005, Belgium also intends to deepen its relations with the countries of Central Asia.

Russian Federation

Belgium's relations with the Russian federation remained extremely positive in 2005, as testified by the conclusion on 3 October 2005 of the 2005-2007 Action Programme, designed to boost trade and bilateral contacts in several fields such as energy, transport, customs and the environment. As an example of the importance accorded by Belgium to this particular neighbour and partner, the 2005-2006 EUROPALIA festival has been dedicated to Russia.

Belgium's policy falls squarely within the framework of the EU's policy of partnership and cooperation with Russia, which

led to the conclusion in May 2005 of an agreement on the four 'common spaces' (freedom, security and justice; economy; external security; research and education).

President Putin attends the official opening of Europalia Russia on 3 October in Brussels

© BELGA



Ukraine

In Ukraine, one of the key foreign policy objectives of the new government, which took power in late 2004, is to join the European Union and NATO as quickly as possible. President Yushchenko made this quite clear on 21 February 2005 at his meetings with the EU and NATO Heads of State and Government in Brussels. The appointment of Yuri Yekhanurov as Prime Minister in September 2005, replacing Yulia Timoshenko, has in no way altered this policy. Belgium is keen to use these changes not only to bolster its bilateral links but also to bind Ukraine to European values of democracy and freedom with a view to increasingly closer ties between the country and the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Belgium active in South-East Europe

Western Balkans

Belgium kept up its commitment to the Western Balkans in 2005. In terms of multilateral relations, Belgium continued to offer political support to the Stabilisation and Association Process, by which each country in the region moves towards EU membership at its own pace. Belgium is also providing human and material support to operations in the Balkans as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defence Policy. For example, it sent 50 soldiers and four Agusta helicopters to assist in Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Belgium also provided police officers

for Operation Proxima in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and for the EU Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It also has a 230-strong contingent in Mitrovica in Kosovo as part of the NATO operation there. In terms of bilateral relations, Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht visited Belgrade, Pristina and Zagreb in late March 2005. 2004-2005 also saw many bilateral meetings held in Brussels or on the fringes of international gatherings. These meetings led to the launch of several projects financed by the 'preventive diplomacy' and 'conflict prevention' budget allocations, focusing in particular on strengthening the rule of law, supporting decentralisation and providing technical assistance with adopting language legislation. Since January 2005, Belgium has had a new diplomatic mission in Sarajevo.

President Yushchenko of Ukraine at the NATO summit in Brussels

© BELGA



3. Policy

Turkey

In 2005, Belgium consistently defended Turkey's membership of the EU and therefore welcomed the start of accession talks on 3 October 2005. Bilateral relations with Turkey have been close. Several high-level meetings took place in 2004-2005, including the visit of Minister De Gucht to Ankara in early December 2004. Belgium is also supporting a number of preventive diplomacy projects, in particular to improve the economic situation in the south-east of the country.

Greece

Belgium and Greece enjoy excellent bilateral relations. The two countries often see eye-to-eye, particularly on the future of Europe.

Cyprus

Belgium and the Republic of Cyprus have continued to develop their bilateral relations, with many political meetings taking place at a high level. In addition, the volume of trade between the two countries has increased.

Strengthening links with the United States

The positive trend observed in our bilateral relations with the United States in 2004 continued this year. The foreign ministers of the two countries met on several occasions, both in Brussels and Washington. There were many consultations at administrative level, including about Central Africa, the Middle

East, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and politico-military issues relating to NATO and the European Union.

Visit by President Bush

The high point of the year was President Bush's visit to Brussels in February. During the visit, the United States and Europe renewed the tradition of Atlantic dialogue and cooperation in the framework of NATO and the EU.

Very significantly for Belgian-US relations, the visit also included a major bilateral element. Particularly memorable here were President Bush's audience with His Majesty the King, speeches by President Bush and Prime Minister Verhofstadt on relations between the countries, which elicited much attention in the media and political circles, and interviews between the heads of government. These interviews were a chance

for the two countries to give substance to bilateral dialogue and cooperation in many areas.

Strengthened dialogue

Over a year before the US President's visit to Brussels, the Prime Minister proposed strengthening dialogue and giving it a more strategic bent by organising regular informal meetings between the foreign ministers. The first of these was held in September during the United Nations General Assembly in New York. It took place at the invitation of Secretary of State Rice.

President Bush and Prime Minister Verhofstadt in February. Transatlantic relations were top of the agenda.

© BELGA



Visit by Prince Philippe

In April 2005, Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde visited Washington. The trip included a ceremony at the new 'World War II Memorial' to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Ardennes and the end of the Second World War. Their presence went down very well with the US public. Another gesture of solidarity - sending the B-FAST team to the areas in the south of the United States hit by hurricane Katrina - was also much appreciated.

Working for peace and reconstruction in the Middle East**Improved relations with Israel**

Following the revision of the genocide law, and the subsequent dropping of suits against Prime Minister Sharon, work could get under way in 2004-2005 on repairing bilateral relations with Israel. The visits by Minister Michel (February 2004), Minister De Gucht (February 2005) and Prime Minister Verhofstadt (March 2005) succeeded in normalising diplomatic and political relations. Bilateral consultations between senior civil servants were resumed following four years' interruption. The renewed dynamic at federal level had knock-on effects at regional level. Both the Flemish and French communities decided to renew formal cooperation with Israel after a four-year hiatus.



HRH Prince Philippe and HRH Princess Mathilde at a ceremony at the World War II Memorial in Washington © BELGA

Enhancing relations with the Palestinian Authority

Belgium has strengthened its relations with the Palestinian Authority by launching bilateral consultations. It is contributing actively to restoring security through its participation in EU COPPS, an initiative to reform the Palestinian police force. Belgium is also supporting the plan of the Quartet's (EU, USA, Russia, UN) Special Envoy and former President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, to reconstruct the Gaza Strip. Development Cooperation has freed up € 4 million for this purpose.

These bilateral activities are the result of a conscious policy decision on our part to offer sustainable support to international peace efforts for the Middle East conflict.

Contributing to the reconstruction of Iraq

2005 was a decisive year in political terms for post-Saddam Iraq. It was also witness to renewed commitment by Belgium in the process of reconstruction and political transition in the country. This commitment was made possible by the elections of 30 January 2005 which led to temporary but legitimate institutions. As of 30 June 2005, Belgium had contributed (via the European Union, UNDP - the United Nations Development Programme - and UNICEF) € 17.5 million to the reconstruction of Iraq. In the wake of President Bush's visit to Brussels in February 2005, and the Brussels International Conference on Iraq on 22 June 2005, Belgium also decided to focus on new contributions to re-establishing a rule-of-law state and security, two areas in which significant improvements are vital if reconstruction and political transition in Iraq are to be successful.

Encouragement and involvement in Africa

Democratic Republic of Congo

Belgium has closely monitored each phase of the transition process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rather than simply looking on, we have also encouraged and participated in the process.

We contributed to the creation of an integrated Congolese army by training two brigades, supplying equipment and playing an active role in EUSEC, the body coordinating EU involvement in this area.

Through our action within the transition support committee CIAT (*Comité d'Accompagnement de la Transition*), we helped lay the foundations of the ongoing dialogue between CIAT and the presidential space.

We also played a key role in terms of drafting the new Congolese constitution and providing financial support for the electoral process.

Belgium has also taken part in EUPOL (training units of the Congolese police) and encouraged the DDR process (Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) in Congo.

Bilateral support

Through many bilateral contacts (ministerial trips, visit by the Minister's Special Envoy, Jan Mutton, and interparliamentary meetings) the Congolese authorities have been continually and clearly informed that real progress is needed in the transition process and that the authorities are responsible for holding transpa-

rent elections and providing effective economic governance.

In the meantime, a substantial amount of research and preparatory work has been undertaken with a view to reconstructing the country, both economically and in other areas, once the current transition phase is over. Consultations have been held with Belgian economic experts. There has also been a considerable amount of work done on the legal system, made possible by the new constitution which institutes the separation of powers. Key sectors of the economy, such as the financial sector, have also received special attention. Collaboration between the National Bank of Belgium and the Central Bank of Congo will play an important role in this respect. Belgium has also worked on implementing a 'payment chain', which aims to ensure that soldiers and police officers are properly paid. The transport, mining and diamond industries have also been examined.

International initiatives

A special initiative has been set up for eastern Congo - the eastern Congo Contact Group, in which Belgium has played an active role. Belgium has also fought for the arms embargo against Congo to be strengthened and more effectively applied. It has supported international initiatives to tackle illegal mining activities in Congo and actions aiming to dismantle 'negative forces' and to end the impunity. In this context, we have always stressed that the situation in Congo should be referred to the International Criminal Tribunal. In collaboration with South Africa, we have set up an original form of trilateral coopera-

tion with a view to training an integrated brigade of the Congolese army and promoting civil service reform.

Great Lakes Region

The countries of the Great Lakes Region have been encouraged to cooperate fully in restoring sovereignty to Congo, in tackling arms trafficking and illegal mining activities and in dismantling 'negative forces'. Belgium has repeatedly informed Congo, Rwanda and Burundi that it is ready and willing to reactivate the CEPGL (Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries). The transition processes under way in Congo and Burundi and the change of president in Burundi have meant that a proper reactivation conference has not so far been possible. Within the Group of Friends, our country has been closely linked to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, key aspects of which were the preparations for the ministerial conferences, the Summit (postponed until the second half of 2006) and the meetings of experts. Belgium has encouraged all the efforts made by the UN and the African Union (AU) on the subject of Central Africa. It has been closely associated with developing the UN resolutions, monitoring the arms embargo, the initiatives put forward by the AU and *Francophonie* and, last but not least, all of EU policy on the Great Lakes Region.

Investing in good relations with Asia

Following the diplomatic conference of heads of missions in Asia (Singapore, 25 April 2004), the FPS compiled a memorandum in 2005 on Belgium's Asian policy. A fully-fledged 'strategy document' was published in November 2005

This noted that Asian countries were exerting increasing influence in international relations and in multilateral organisations. Economic growth in many parts of Asia is among the strongest in the world, and this is not set to change over the next decade. In the future, Belgium must invest more than ever before in establishing and strengthening political contacts with Asian countries and must ensure that these contacts have the broadest possible economic dimension.

Visits

In June, HM King Albert II made a state visit to China. In 2005, the Foreign Minister K. De Gucht visited Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China (during the state visit), Japan and India. Asia was thus once again a key focus of foreign policy, in line with the conclusions of the strategy document.

A deeper understanding of South America

Latin America has long had ties with Europe. Belgians have been present there since the 16th century and have formed close cultural, political and economic ties with the continent.

On 12-13 May 2005, an international academic seminar was organised at Egmont Palace by the AIB (Asociación Internacional Andrés Bello), the Belgian-

Chilean Chamber of Commerce and the Latin America department, under the auspices of the Universidad de Chile and the Universidad Central de Venezuela. The aim of the seminar was to promote mutual awareness and thereby to strengthen the shared roots and values that unite the peoples of Europe and Latin America.

The theme of the event was the 150th anniversary of the Chilean Civil Code, with a tribute to its author, Andrés Bello, who was born in Caracas in 1781 and died in Santiago de Chile. Bello was considered "the most eminent man in the history of Hispanic American literature, as a poet, humanist, scholar and jurisconsult".

Representatives from academia - rectors and professors from the Venezuelan and Chilean universities mentioned above, professors from ICHEC (Business

HM King Albert II and Chinese president Hu Jintao in Beijing in June

© BELGA



School) and the University of Paris - gave talks, and finally a round table discussion was held involving a panel of professors from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the Université Catholique de Louvain and other universities.

Economic diplomacy safeguards Belgian interests

Shortly after taking office, Minister De Gucht launched the idea of 'economic diplomacy'. This he defined as simply a dimension of Belgium's foreign policy. Supporting the country's economic interests abroad, in the broadest sense of the term, and throughout the world, is *one* of our basic missions. Economic diplomacy covers a whole series of activities ranging from qualitative support to export projects, removing obstacles to market access and creating conditions favourable to the flow of trade, to supporting investment abroad, offering practical assistance to entrepreneurs and providing mediation in disputes. Key to all this is the authorities' receptiveness to and willingness to meet the needs of the business world.

Support for Belgian companies

The FPS coordinates all the players involved with organising the economic missions that take place several times a year. These missions, which are headed by HRH Prince Philippe, are meeting with increasing success in the business world. Participating companies have been highly satisfied with the trading results achieved. In 2005, week-long

missions were organised to Japan, India and Brazil. The FPS also prepared the Prime Minister's 'Road Show', which took him to four countries in South-East Asia in November 2005, to explain Belgium's tax system and attract foreign investment to the country.

Better protection of investments

In 2005 the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) signed eight agreements with other countries to mutually protect and encourage investment. The countries were Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Nicaragua, China, Madagascar, Peru and Sudan. Similar agreements were concluded with Syria and Nigeria. Negotiations with South Korea are still ongoing. Belgium also signed agreements to stop double taxation, an area that has seen much activity in 2005.

Mechanisms to fund Belgian exports

Finexpo, a department of FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, has the task of supporting Belgian companies that export capital goods and services. It uses three instruments to achieve this: a mechanism to stabilise interest rates, state-to-state loans and interest credit. The interest stabilisation mechanism allows exporters to offer a guaranteed fixed rate throughout the period that the credit is being paid back; however, this activity is very sluggish due to the low market interest rates. State loans and interest credit are a means of supporting Belgian companies whilst also helping

developing countries. These two instruments are used frequently and require considerable funding. Finexpo works in close collaboration with the departments of the National Delcredere Office; a joint form has been designed for companies and/or banks applying for state assistance with tied aid ('tied aid' means that the country receiving the aid must buy goods or services from the donor country). The form can be found on the Delcredere and Finexpo websites (www.finexpo.be); these sites also contain all the legislation relating to Finexpo's work as well as the annual activity reports. The tied aid questionnaire can also be found there.

Projects to strengthen Belgium's image

2005 witnessed 22 projects designed to strengthen Belgium's image, including a Léopold I exhibition in Berlin, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie's tour to Japan, an Ensor exhibition in Bratislava, a film on Belgium and a Memling exhibition at the Frick Museum in New York.

Diplomacy helps to limit the impact of bird flu on exports

Further bird flu outbreaks in South-East Asia, Siberia, Turkey and Romania have led to new export restrictions on Belgian products in this sector. As far as the FPS is concerned, the priority here, taking account of the demands of the affected sector, must be to convince veterinary experts abroad that exported Belgian goods do not carry any risk. This operation has been successful thanks to the swift and efficient

action of diplomatic missions in passing on technical analyses and thanks also to the vigorous intervention of the Food Agency (AFSCA/FAVV).

2. Belgium in the European Union

Ratification of the European Constitution fails following negative referenda results

The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was signed in Rome on 29 October 2004. Before it can enter into force, it must be ratified by all EU Member States.

For the constitution to be ratified in Belgium, it must be approved by the Federal Parliament and by the parliamentary assemblies of the different Regions and Communities.

The two chambers of the Federal Parliament have already passed the Treaty: the Senate on 28 April 2005 and the Chamber of Representatives on 19 May 2005. The Treaty has also been approved in most of the regional and community parliaments.

At EU level, a majority of 13 Member States have already approved the European Constitution.

However, the ratification process has been overshadowed by 'no' votes in the French and Dutch referenda. This failure - which seems to have more to do with people's mistrust of the direction being taken by Europe than by the actual text of the Constitution - has thrown the EU into a state of uncertainty. To give all those concerned time to think carefully about the future course of European integration, the European Council in June 2005 instituted a one-year period of reflection.

Belgium believes that the European Constitution, for all its shortcomings, is a suitable basis for pursuing integration

within the 25-member EU. It has encouraged other Member States to continue with the ratification process, believing that the future of the EU requires each Member State to adopt a clear position on the European Constitution.

In the immediate term, Belgium believes that people's confidence in the European project must be restored by proving that the EU can take concrete decisions to meet the real needs of its citizens.

The period of reflection should also give everybody the chance to think about what the European project means. In Belgium's view, the EU cannot simply be reduced to a large free trade zone combined with various types of cooperation. In a world dominated increasingly by globalisation, the EU must assert itself as a political unit capable of developing an economic and social strategy that benefits its citizens, of creating an area of security and justice and of pursuing a foreign and defence policy worthy of the name.

The EU's financial prospects for the period 2007-2013

Throughout 2005, the European agenda was dominated by the negotiations on the first financial framework of the enlarged European Union. The challenge was to determine new expenditure ceilings which the Council and the European Parliament will have to respect when deciding annual budgets over the next seven-year period (2007-2013). Alongside this, there were negotiations on the complex instruments and mechanisms used to allocate resources and on how to guarantee the financing of expenditure via the own resources system.

Following some extremely difficult negotiating, the European Council reached a general agreement early on the morning of Saturday 17 December. The most important - and certainly the most arduous - phase of the process is therefore over. Nonetheless, the outcome of this phase still has to be incorporated into an interinstitutional agreement with the European Parliament. Negotiations are therefore set to continue under the Austrian Presidency and the expenditure ceilings decided on at the European Council (€ 862 billion or 1.045% of the EU's gross national income (GNI)) may still be revised slightly upwards.

At the start of 2005, there were still wide variations between Member States' proposals, so much so that the proposals seemed irreconcilable. Since the Commission's first proposals were put forward in early February 2004, the situation within the Council bodies had remained unchanged with each country simply stating and restating its own national position. Besides offering an in-depth analysis of the proposals, these discussions did little but reveal the lines of division between Member States: on the one hand there were strong signals from the six countries wishing to 'tighten the purse strings' (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, France and Austria), which insisted that the EU's expenditure be capped at 1% of its GNI. Opposing these countries were the Commission, which defended its initial proposal (capping expenditure at 1.24%), and the majority of the remaining Member States, which argued for adequate funding both for the Lisbon Strategy and for a cohesion policy suited to the enlarged EU.

Belgium's positions were drafted and continually amended to take account of the latest developments in the negotiations. This took place at around 50 coordination meetings organised by the Directorate-General for European Affairs and attended by all the relevant bodies. The basic position defended by Belgium was that enough funding had to be provided to cover all new and existing policies (with a ceiling of 1.15% of GNI suggested as a compromise). Belgium gave priority to the following categories of expenditure: 'Competitiveness for growth and employment' (Heading 1a) and 'Cohesion for growth and employment' (Heading 1b). As regards cohesion policy, it focused in particular on the appropriation for 'statistical phasing out regions' (Hainaut) and for 'Objective 2' (regional competitiveness and employment). Belgium also believed that the agricultural agreement concluded in October 2002 should be adhered to in full.

In view of the time needed to plan the cohesion policy in the new Member States, every effort was made to reach an agreement at the European Council in June 2005.

In December 2004, an attempt was made to determine 'the general principles and guidelines' for the negotiations under the Luxembourg Presidency. The failure to reach a consensus meant that the draft text on the issue was totally absent from the Council's conclusions.

However, the Luxembourg Presidency's proactive decision, instigated by Prime Minister Juncker, to make this a key

issue in January 2005, led to renewed hopes of reaching an agreement. Hopes were boosted by the Spring Summit's successes in reviving the Lisbon Strategy and reaching a compromise on the Stability and Growth Pact. However, the Luxembourg Presidency strategically sidelined one essential issue: a compromise was perilously dependent on the UK's willingness to pay its share of the cost of enlargement and thus make a concession on the annual rebate it has received since 1984.

In the run-up to the June European Council, the Luxembourg Presidency skilfully and expertly managed to propose creative draft texts that made major cuts to the Commission's proposals whilst maintaining a delicate balance on the cohesion policy. In that way, the Presidency tried to concoct a general agreement that would divide up the bitter pill equally among all the Member States.

This all turned sour when, a few weeks before the June European Council, the French and Dutch voted no in their referenda on the Constitutional Treaty. The political climate needed to reach a compromise acceptable to all had changed drastically. In the Netherlands, the country's role as a net contributor to the EU, felt to be excessive, was cited as one of the reasons for the disappointing outcome of the referendum. Claims for €1 billion annual 'compensation' immediately intensified. London, meanwhile, felt that the time was not right to make the slightest concessions on the British rebate, citing, in particular, the absence of additional reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy.

Despite the efforts of the Luxembourg Presidency and the major concessions that many Member States were prepared to make, the June European Council ended in failure. Nonetheless, the 'Juncker package' would play an important role in future negotiations under the British Presidency.

In early June, Prime Minister Tony Blair set the ball rolling with a much commented-on speech in favour of a reformed, more modern EU. The multiannual budget yet to be agreed was to foreshadow this new Europe, which should focus on future-oriented areas like 'Research & Development', the EU's external action and 'Justice and Home Affairs'.

However, it turned out to be unfeasible in the short term to implement a fundamental reform of budget structure. For many Member States, chief among them France, compromising the agricultural agreement of October 2002 was absolutely out of the question. In addition, there was a broad consensus on the need to stick as closely as possible to the Juncker package.

The solution ultimately adopted by the British Presidency was to carry on lowering the overall expenditure ceiling whilst also providing additional assistance for the main net contributors. Because it was only possible to give substantial 'compensation' to the big net contributors by also cutting back the current British rebate, the Presidency opted to continue reducing the overall volume of expenditure. Because it was argued that the new Member States had a low absorption capacity, the cohesion funds

in those countries were considerably reduced (by 1.03% in the first Blair package). In the 'old' Member States, cuts were made in rural development. Apart from this, the 'Juncker package' remained largely untouched.

The success of the European Summit on 15-16 December 2005 depended first and foremost on whether Tony Blair would be willing to accept a reduction in the British rebate. A general agreement on the multiannual budget was finally made possible under a compromise deal based on the Juncker proposal, whereby there would be a permanent structural reduction to the British rebate excluding expenditure linked to enlargement.

Pursuing enlargement of the European Union

After 10 new Member States joined the EU on 1 May 2004, ending many years of division in Europe, 2005 saw more major developments linked to enlargement.

Signing of the accession treaty with Romania and Bulgaria

Following the completion of accession talks in December 2004, Romania and Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Accession at an official ceremony on 25 April 2005. Accession is planned for 1 January 2007. This said, the EU has set up a mechanism to ensure that the two countries actually meet their commitments. If they do not, accession could be postponed for a year until 1 January 2008.

Any decision to postpone accession will be based on the results of extensive in-depth monitoring by the Commission to assess the progress that each of the countries has made. The Commission presented its annual monitoring report on 25 October 2005. Although Romania and Bulgaria have made significant progress, further effort is still required. Adopting the 'acquis communautaire' is not enough: they must actually apply it as well. This means creating the administrative and legal resources needed to implement the acquis and make it binding.

Negotiations opened with Turkey

At the December 2004 European Council that marked the end of the Dutch Presidency, the decision had

already been taken to open accession negotiations with both Turkey and Croatia, provided a number of conditions were met.

Turkey had to adopt a number of legislative instruments (Law on Associations, new Penal Code, Law on Intermediate Courts of Appeal, Code on Criminal Procedure, legislation establishing the judicial police and law on the execution of punishments) and sign the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement on the customs union between the EU and Turkey. This Protocol had become necessary due to the enlargement of the Union to 25 Member States. Turkey met these two conditions and on 3 October 2005, the EU, its Member States and Turkey reached an agreement on the negotiating mandate, which meant that negotiations could officially begin.

It is expected that the negotiations will be long and Turkey will have much additional work to do. These negotiations are an open process whose outcome cannot yet be guaranteed. However, the start of the negotiations is a clear signal to Turkey and an invitation for it to commit fully to the developments of the European Union and the *acquis communautaire*.

Negotiation process also launched with Croatia

In December 2004, the EU made it clear that opening talks with Croatia was conditional upon Croatia's cooperating fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the case of General Gotovina. In March 2005, the Council adopted the negotiating mandate but felt that, as yet, there was still no real sense of cooperation. It was

only in early October 2005 that the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla Del Ponte, reported a real spirit of cooperation. The Council could then take a positive decision with regard to Croatia. However, the Council clearly emphasised on 3 October 2005 that continued cooperation with the Tribunal would be a key condition for continuing the accession process. The arrest of General Gotovina on the Spanish island of Tenerife, 7 December 2005, was a crucial event in this respect.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) draws closer to the European Union

On 9 November, the Commission issued its opinion on FYROM's accession application, recommending that it be given candidate country status. The European Council of 15-16 December 2005 granted the country this status.

Formal signature in Luxembourg of the Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, April 1

© BELGA



Belgium supports the accession process and implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy

In 2005, FPS Foreign Affairs organised courses and training seminars for diplomats and civil servants from the candidate and partner countries. A seminar was held in Bucharest in May and senior civil servants from Turkey and Ukraine were invited to Brussels in October and November. The course for Ukrainian senior civil servants was organised as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (implementation of the EU action plan for Ukraine).

In addition, Belgian civil servants continue to participate in European support programmes such as Twinning and TAIEX (Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office) – organised by the Commission – within the framework of institution building, a process that aims to develop modern and efficient public services capable of applying the *acquis communautaire*. These two programmes have been greatly expanded: they are now aimed not only at the 10 new Member States and the four candidate countries, but also at the Western Balkans and the countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy (i.e. countries bordering the EU to the east and south).

To step up Belgian involvement in these European support programmes, our FPS organised its third major information and awareness-raising session in May 2005, aimed at federal and associated bodies and semi-public institutions.

A security and defence policy focused on Europe

Belgium's security policy is geared towards developing a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) that itself forms part of a European Security Strategy based on the idea of collective security. The ESDP is formed around a 60,000-strong military pillar, for which a headline goal has been defined, and battle groups, a rapid intervention force of 1,500 soldiers, capable of intervening in complete autonomy within a radius of 6,000 km. Belgium participates in these battle groups in collaboration with France, Germany and the Eurocorps countries. The European Defence Agency works to support the development of military capabilities. The last crisis management instrument is a civilian pillar, associated mainly with the police, strengthening the rule of law, civil administration and protecting civilians as part of stabilisation and reconstruction initiatives in conflict zones. The Federal Policy Declaration of 11 October 2005 calls for additional efforts in this area over the coming months to strengthen coherence and cooperation between the various ministries involved, including Defence, Foreign Affairs/Development Cooperation, Interior and Justice.

The ESDP very clearly serves the interests of citizens and will be an important integrating factor within the EU in the years ahead.

NATO still has a key role

As a military alliance, NATO has undergone some profound changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nowadays, greater emphasis is placed on the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and rogue states. As far as Belgium is concerned, NATO remains an essential instrument for the collective defence of the Alliance's territory, for protecting the Allies' vital interests and as an organisation capable of contributing to UN peacekeeping operations. Thus Belgium is involved in the ISAF operation in Afghanistan and KFOR in Kosovo. NATO is also an excellent means of ensuring interoperability between national forces.

The ESDP and NATO complement one another. Within NATO, Belgium is keen to develop the ESDP as a European component of the Alliance, guaranteeing balanced dialogue and decision-making.

More effective transposition of European directives

Belgium has taken a number of measures to improve the process of transposing European directives.

A proactive working group examines each draft directive from the point of view of future transposition. Meetings of this working group (proposed directives) and those of the working group on transpositions (directives now in force) are attended by the European coordinators. The coordinators each represent a FPS, Region or Community. They monitor European legislation rela-

ting to their particular FPS, Region or Community and work to ensure that this legislation is correctly transposed into national legislation.

Eurtransbel, which has been operational since 11 July 2005, is an interactive database developed by FPS Foreign Affairs in collaboration with Fedict (Federal Public Service Information and Communication Technology). It is a high-quality mechanism that allows the European coordinators to monitor the transposition of European directives into Belgian law, from the time the directive is proposed right through to transposition and application. The database also catalogues the pre-litigation procedures (procedure between the European Commission and the Member State concerned before a case is referred to the Court of Justice) and the procedures pending before the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

These measures together have reduced the number of late transpositions.

3. Belgium in a multilateral context

United Nations Millennium +5 Summit

The Millennium +5 Summit was held in New York between 14 and 16 September 2005. Belgium was represented by the Prime Minister, Mr Verhofstadt, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr De Gucht, and the Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr De Decker. Preparations for the Summit

had been ongoing for almost two years, in Brussels as well as in New York.

FPS Foreign Affairs and IRRI/KIIB (Royal Institute for International Relations) organised two seminars, one on the Report of the High-level Panel entitled *A more secure world: our shared responsibility* and the other on implementing the Millennium Goals. The Minister for Foreign Affairs presented his opinion in January 2005 to the Chamber's Foreign Affairs Committee. The Senate adopted a substantial report on the reform of the United Nations and Belgium's associations for the United Nations (*Vlaamse Vereniging voor de Verenigde Naties and Association pour les Nations Unies*) also organised a number of activities on this issue.

Non-governmental organisations were kept informed of the preparations.

Given the wide range of topics on the Summit agenda, FPS Foreign Affairs had to coordinate between the various departments so that joint Belgian positions could be reached. A document containing these positions can be viewed on the FPS Foreign Affairs website.

The Summit itself, which was initially intended to assess implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, was also given the task, by the UN Secretary General, of establishing the UN's priorities in the current international context and approving the reforms needed to implement them.

Results

Although some of the compromises reached fell below what had initially been hoped, the Summit did achieve some major successes. The interdependence between peace and security, development and the respect for human rights was reaffirmed unanimously. The achievements of the 2000 Summit, the key role of the Millennium Goals in the development strategies and the need to make Africa a priority issue were all consolidated. The decision to set up a Peacebuilding Commission should make it possible to offer better support to countries emerging from conflicts so that they go on to achieve long-term stability and development. The 'standing Human Rights Council', if negotiations on the practical details yield the desired outcome, should be a more efficient, legitimate and credible body than the Commission on Human Rights had become.

Other reforms will require further work, based on the principles adopted at the Summit i.e. reform of the Economic and Social Council, management reform at the UN Secretariat, creation of a UN Environment Organisation, reform of the UN development system, strengthening humanitarian organisations and developing relations between the UN and regional organisations.

Failures

However, the Summit also failed in a number of areas. Plans to expand the Security Council to include new members fell through as the various proposals failed to attract the necessary

support. It also proved impossible to agree on a definition of 'terrorism' acceptable to all parties. Further, discussions on the important issue of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament ended in stalemate.

In early October, the IRRI/KIIB (Royal Institute for International Relations) and the EPC (European Policy Centre) organised a joint public seminar to assess the outcome of the Summit. The work of the United Nations Department over the next few months will focus on implementing the decisions taken at the Summit.

Towards the Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE

In 2006, Belgium will take up the chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

This Pan-European body has 55 member countries spanning the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. They are united in pursuing the same objectives: promoting security, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, a free economy and environmental protection. In view of this, the task awaiting Belgium is not to be taken lightly and our FPS has put a great deal of effort this year into preparing for the Belgian Chairmanship.

The OSCE is totally compatible with Belgium's vision of international cooperation i.e. a multilateral approach with the focus on respect for human rights, democracy and social development. The forthcoming chairmanship is another chance for Belgium to further strengthen its commitment within the OSCE.

With this in mind, a special representative, Pierre Chevalier, has been appointed to provide assistance to the Minister. An OSCE unit has been set up within our FPS and our Permanent Representation in Vienna has been expanded. As a member of the Troika (comprising the previous, current and succeeding chairs) Belgium has also been able to monitor the activities of the current chair, Slovenia, and to prepare its future policy.

Minister De Gucht and his special representative have already made political contacts ahead of the chairmanship. They have also taken part in various forums and conferences, including the OSCE Economic Forum in Prague (May), the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance in Cordoba (June) and the Mediterranean Seminar on migration and integration in Rabat (September).

Presidency of the FSC

As far as the politico-military aspects - the chief dimension of the OSCE - were concerned, the most important task was to prepare for and execute the presidency of the dialogue body, the FSC (Forum for Security Cooperation). The presidency of the FSC rotates every four months and Belgium held the post from 1 September until the end of December 2005.

Our presidency focused on two themes: combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the issue of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons are trafficked in considerable quantities with very destabilising consequences. It is

high time that the OSCE stepped up its action to help curb such trafficking.

Economic dimension: spotlight on transport

As regards the economic dimension, Belgium proposes to pursue the policy of modernisation. In view of this, the first step was to appoint Bernard Snoy, a former member of the World Bank Board and the EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), as general coordinator for the OSCE. At the 13th meeting of the Economic Forum in Prague, where Belgium was represented by Pierre Chevalier, we floated the idea that priority should be given to 'transport in the OSCE zone'. Our proposal was very favourably received. Belgium's aim is essentially to help open up the southern Caucasus and Central Asia and to foster regional cooperation. The Permanent Council approved the proposal on 7 July 2005 and transport is now the central theme of the economic and environmental dimension in 2006.

Combating intolerance

The human dimension was, to a large degree, devoted to the ongoing fight against intolerance. These efforts culminated in the Conference on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance in Cordoba. The focus of the conference was on the need to be more active in implementing previous commitments. The following topics were also on the agenda: respect for

human rights in the fight against terrorism, democratic elections and new technologies, guarantees of a fair trial and migration and integration. A seminar on the latter issue was held in Rabat in the framework of the Dialogue with the OSCE's Mediterranean partners, which Belgium chaired in 2005.

Providing expertise and financial resources

Belgium testified to its belief in the OSCE's approach by supplying the organisation with expertise and financial resources. This year, some 15 Belgians took part in OSCE missions in the Balkans and held posts at the Secretariat in Vienna. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) benefited from the services of 77 Belgian observers, who were present at elections in Albania, Macedonia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Belgium also shouldered its responsibilities in financial terms, in particular by providing extrabudgetary resources for a number of projects on the ground. Particular attention was focused on the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), a joint OSCE/UN/NATO project whose aim is to catalogue environmental problems in a bid to prevent conflicts. As part of this initiative, Belgium supported the Moldova Trust Fund, set up to finance the destruction of hazardous chemicals in Moldova, the project 'Network Development of Local Actors from the Sava River Basin on Water Resource Management', the 'Aarhus Centres' project on environmental protection

in Central Asia and the launch of the ENVSEC initiative in Eastern Europe.

Belgium also provided extrabudgetary funds to tackle human trafficking, thereby reaffirming its firm commitment to this issue. Our financial aid was invested in a project to help Ukrainian orphans, in police reform in Kyrgyzstan and in the publication of a manual to help transition economy countries to improve their business and investment climate. In the conflict zone of South Ossetia (Georgia), Belgium is helping to finance needs analysis for the reconstruction and economic development of the region. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) also benefited from Belgian financial aid this year. To promote press freedom, Belgium financed an OSCE campaign for the decriminalisation of libel and defamation and against excessive compensation. In Serbia-Montenegro, Belgian financial aid was used to help combat money laundering.

4. Belgium and globalisation

Although technological developments have led to increasingly globalised trade, powers over economic activities are still generally limited to individual countries and their national territories. Such political fragmentation not only prevents many countries from joining the world economy but also presents an obstacle to the establishment of peace, security, development and prosperity.

The increasing awareness of the need to better manage 'global public goods'

was clearly in evidence during preparations for the United Nations Summit (New York, 14-16 September 2005) mentioned above.

Where policies linked to most globalisation-related issues are concerned, FPS Foreign Affairs deals with the international dimension whilst the policy foundations are the responsibility of other FPSs. In this area, our FPS fulfils a support and coordination function and ensures the coherence of the policies being applied.

As a firm believer in effective multilateralism, Belgium has opted for an approach to globalisation-related issues that involves international institutions and organisations. This has proved especially successful in areas such as sustainable development, with efforts being focused on achieving a harmonious blend of economic growth, social progress and a responsible environmental policy, and also in relation to sensitive issues where human lives and happiness are often at stake e.g. asylum, international migration and combating human trafficking.

FPS Foreign Affairs has also often exercised its support and coordination role in defending and following up Belgian positions within international organisations such as UNCTAD, the FAO and the OECD, and in such areas as science policy, general development issues and economic cooperation, including topics like raw materials and energy.

In the same way, the international dimension of the fight against terrorism also comes within the remit of the Globalisation Directorate.

Doha Development Agenda: difficult progress

Following the failure of the Cancún Conference in September 2003, the Doha Round of negotiations (begun in 2001) entered a period of reflection. The different groups that had formed in the run-up to Cancún were consolidated: the G20, including the most advanced developing countries and the emerging economies: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Tanzania, Thailand, Venezuela, Zimbabwe and South Africa; the G10, comprising the net importers of agricultural products: Bulgaria, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway, Taiwan, South Korea and Switzerland; and the G4, made up of the EU, the USA, India and Brazil.

Late July 2004: framework agreement

Although it took some time for the Doha Round negotiating 'machine' to start up again, the key players surprisingly succeeded, thanks in particular to the help of Brazil and India, in concluding a framework agreement in late July on the negotiating modalities (no actual figures specified) for:

- industrial goods (Non-Agricultural Market Access - NAMA);
- services;
- trade facilitation by reducing regulations;
- development-related aspects.

The EU set itself the target of attaining a balanced result in the various sections of this framework agreement.

In September 2005, the former EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy became the new Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. He called on the key players to get the negotiations moving again by a series of parallel, politically tricky, concessions, in the following areas:

- for the EU, market access for agricultural products;
- for the USA, internal support for farmers and anti-dumping measures;
- for Brazil, services and industrial tariffs (NAMA);
- for India, industrial tariffs (NAMA).

This method aimed to produce tangible, identifiable results that would breathe new life into the negotiations. In early October, the large trading blocs put their agricultural proposals on the table. Agriculture was seen as a key sector that could spur on progress in other sectors, such as services and industrial products.

In mid-November, however, it became clear that the various positions would remain so divergent that it would not be possible to reach concrete arrangements, involving actual figures, at the Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

At the Hong Kong Conference, the EU managed to achieve a balanced result whilst fully preserving the level of ambition decided on at Doha. However, much political will will be needed if the deadlines agreed on at Hong Kong are to be met.

An agreement was also reached on a package of development-related measures including real concessions on assistance and new aid for the Least Developed Countries. Japan and the US – under pressure from the EU, amongst others – made significant concessions to the Least Developed Countries on duty and quota free market access.

As Belgium is very much in favour of enhanced legal protection and developing countries becoming more involved in world trade via more appropriate regulations, it has continued to emphasise that the commitments it has undertaken imply, in return, equivalent commitments on the part of other developed countries. At the same time, Belgium wants the largest and most developed of the developing countries to no longer benefit automatically from the advantages given to the Least Developed Countries.

Belgium has an open, export-based economy, in which industry and the service sector play a key role. It is therefore in its interests that the Doha Round ensures Belgian industrial goods and services better access to foreign markets.

Sustainable development and environmental protection: an ongoing concern

The United Nations Millennium Summit confirmed the horizontal and across-the-board nature of sustainable development: in other words, this topic, which covers human rights amongst other issues, has become a general concern in a whole range of political fields.

The declaration confirms the aim being pursued, namely to achieve sustainable development by implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Action Plan. These actions should result in the integration of three components of sustainable development – social development, economic development and protection of the environment – as mutually supporting pillars. Combating poverty, altering unsustainable production and consumption patterns and protecting and managing natural resources are both the aim and the underlying principle of sustainable development.

Within the United Nations, the Commission on Sustainable Development monitors implementation of the Johannesburg commitments. In 2005, the round dealing with water, sanitation and human settlements led to a negotiated outcome, with countries and international institutions pledging to implement the Johannesburg commitments in a more efficient way. The negotiators have already started preparing for the round on energy, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change. The theme of sustainable development has

also been placed on the agenda in other organisations, namely the OECD, UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), the Council of Europe and the EU.

The harmonisation of Belgium's positions on sustainable development takes place at monthly meetings organised by Coormulti. This is a permanent coordination and consultation body for multilateral and global issues, the area covered by the Directorate-General for Globalisation. Consultation takes place with the other directorate-generals in our FPS and with the federal and regional partners.

The UN Millennium Summit gave the go-ahead for examining the possibilities of creating a more consistent institutional framework, i.e. making the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) into a fully-fledged UN environment organisation.

As regards environmental topics, the climate has been given a prominent place on the international agenda. It was one of the main topics discussed at the G8 meeting in Scotland during the British Presidency of the EU. Since the Kyoto Protocol came into force on 16 February 2005, countries have been able to participate in the emissions trading system. FPS Environment has launched an appeal on this subject via our diplomatic missions.

Another topical theme of importance for the environment is creating links between different multilateral treaties. Currently, work is under way to examine possible synergies between the Basel Convention on waste, the Rotterdam Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain

hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade and the Stockholm Convention on 'persistent organic pollutants' (POPs). Funded in part by our Directorate-General for Development Cooperation, a UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) study is currently looking into possible synergies between the various treaties on biodiversity.

Belgium attended a number of other meetings at which the problems of sustainable development and environmental protection were major themes. Our FPS helped to draw up the Belgian position defended at the following events:

- 23rd Session of the Governing Council of the UNEP/Global Ministerial Environment Council, which delivered a strong message on environmental issues ahead of the Summit;
- Advisory Board meeting of the 'Environment and Security Initiative', a joint UNEP, OSCE, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and NATO programme (Belgium is now one of the donors);
- negotiating a global management strategy for hazardous chemicals;
- eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
- first Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);
- 11th Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention and first Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;
- second Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity;

- 28th Conference of the Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and 24th session of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources;
- fifth United Nations Forum on Forests;
- meetings of the International Whaling Commission;
- meetings of the 'Green Diplomacy' network of experts (contact persons within the foreign ministries of EU countries);
- first preparatory meeting for the Pan-European Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which will be held in Belgrade in 2007.

Asylum and immigration: enhanced cooperation

As regards international migration policy, it has become clear that developing international dialogue, improving consistency at both national and international level and enhancing coordination by bolstering national and international governance are vital goals.

The regional hearings of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), in which our FPS took part, have helped to achieve this. The report on the hearings was published in October.

At the prompting of the Belgian Presidency of the OSCE-Mediterranean partnership, a seminar was organised in Rabat on the theme of 'Migration and Integration'. The IGC (intergovernmental consultations on asylum, refugees and migration) drew up a new strategy. Portugal's António Guterres became the new United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Our FPS closely monitors discussions within the various international bodies dealing with issues of immigration and asylum, human trafficking and illegal immigration, namely the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), UNHCR, IGC, GCIM, ICMPD, the United Nations, OSCE and the Benelux Economic Union.

As regards the EU, high-level discussions were held with Russia, the United States and the Western Balkans on the issue of migration. On 21 November, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted the Council's conclusions on immigration and external relations and the new strategy on Africa, which contains a major section on migration. The Council's conclusions calling for a strategy on the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice were also approved.

The December European Council discussed the 'Global approach to migration: Priority actions for improving migration management'.

A strategy to facilitate the visa process was also developed and priorities on readmission were defined, thereby giving the external dimension of European immigration policy a major new boost. In line with these new priorities, Belgium, together with the IOM and the future Austrian Presidency, Belgium will organise a ministerial conference in Brussels on 24-25 January 2006 on Security, Freedom, Justice, Prosperity and Migration. Countries bordering the EU will be invited to attend. The Conference, and the nine or so expert meetings that will suc-

ceed it in 2006-2007, will give the EU's neighbourhood strategies, which for most countries include a section on migration policy, a more concrete focus.

The high-level Asylum and Migration working group, in which our FPS acts as Belgian spokesperson, is working on an 'overall migration strategy' that aims to create a partnership with third countries as part of an integrated approach. To this end, migration management capacity needs to be stepped up in these countries, mainly in the Euromed zone but also in countries such as Ukraine and Libya. As regards Ukraine, it has been agreed to start up a pilot project to assess the regional protection level (i.e. the level of refugee protection in the region). In 2005, the link between migration and development received particular attention, at both national and European level, and within the various federal public services. NGOs also focused on the theme, as emerged from the joint seminar organised by the King Baudouin Foundation and our FPS during the visit of the Deputy Director General of the IOM, Mrs Ndioro Ndiaye. A ministerial conference on the same theme is also planned in Brussels in March 2006. It will be jointly organised by our FPS and the IOM. The European Commission has published a communication on Migration and Development, which sets out concrete guidelines for a future action plan. Coherence between migration policies was also on the agenda at the December session of the IOM Council. 'Migration and Development'

was one of the key issues at the meeting, where Belgium's Ambassador for Immigration and Asylum Policy was a guest speaker.

Belgium had to set out its position on a European 'approach' to economic migration, following publication of the Commission's 'green paper' on the subject. As the meeting showed, the idea of a debate on the need for or appropriateness of this type of migration is still encountering reluctance in Belgium.

In 2005, a number of bilateral problems relating to the identification and readmission of illegal immigrants came up for discussion. Talks were held with India, Morocco, Algeria, DRC, Russia, Liberia, Guinea, Pakistan, Armenia, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Turkey. There is regular dialogue with these countries on migration-related issues. With Bosnia-Herzegovina talks were opened on a readmission agreement with the Benelux countries. Discussions resumed with Nigeria and a new Benelux proposal is now on the table.

Our FPS made contacts in Morocco with immigration officials and with the Hassan II Foundation and the international organisations (UNHCR) and NGOs (*Médecins sans Frontières*) working in the field. Belgium intends to develop a more strategic approach with Morocco to the issue of migration. At the suggestion of the Ambassador for Immigration and Asylum Policy and the Foreign Affairs Policy Unit, an interdepartmental meeting was held in connection with the new three-year development programme, the

aim being to incorporate into the programme various activities linked to immigration and migrants.

Our FPS has helped fund a number of projects on immigration, asylum, human trafficking and illegal immigration and is in regular contact with civil society organisations involved in these issues.

It plays an active liaison role in monitoring secure flights organised by FPS Interior to repatriate illegal immigrants and asylum seekers whose applications have been denied.

Combating terrorism

Since 11 September 2001, combating terrorism has become a priority at both international and national level. Our FPS plays an important role in this respect, given that terrorism strikes internationally and has no borders.

The knowledge and information that our diplomats, with their unique inside view of events abroad, have amassed on terrorism and radicalisation can sometimes be extremely useful for Belgium's specialist anti-terrorism units. Our diplomats keep a very close eye on political and geopolitical events in the countries where they are based, on the training of extremist and terrorist groups and on the measures and initiatives taken by the local authorities.

Strengthening the Anti-Terrorism Unit

However, our FPS does more than simply collect information via Belgium's diplomatic missions abroad. In Belgium too, terrorism is increasingly in the spotlight. Accordingly, the

Anti-Terrorism Unit at the Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation has been strengthened by the addition of a coordinator, an attaché and a Consular Affairs contact person.

The Anti-Terrorism Unit is responsible for the internal coordination of all aspects of the fight against terrorism and is the central point of contact for our diplomatic missions abroad. It also liaises with other FPSs linked to combating terrorism, including in the framework of the College for Intelligence and Security.

The Unit's coordinator represents Belgium in various international bodies and conferences (EU, UN, Council of Europe), and works together with the relevant departments to draw up the positions that Belgium will defend at these meetings.

The Unit also monitors major international security developments at both political and diplomatic level. It allows our FPS to be more actively associated with the work of national and international NGOs that specialise in fighting terrorism and studying terrorist phenomena.

5. Belgium and human rights

The International Criminal Court

The Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court was adopted on 17 July 1998 at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The

Statute now has 100 member states, including Belgium.

The Rome Statute took effect on 1 July 2002, since which time individuals guilty of crimes stipulated in the Statute may be brought to trial before the Court. The crimes involved are extremely serious, for example war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The International Criminal Court has the status of a permanent international organisation; it is independent of the United Nations but is linked to it via the UN-ICC Relationship Agreement signed on 4 October 2004. By virtue of its status, the International Criminal Court is different from criminal tribunals set up under the auspices of the United Nations to investigate crimes such as those committed in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. The ICC 'supplements' national jurisdictions, i.e. the national court issues a definitive ruling provided that it is considered able to pursue – and wishes to pursue -- alleged criminals.

In addition, access by victims to the ICC's judicial procedures is provided for under the Rome Statute. This is not the case for the special international criminal tribunals. The unique feature of this institution is that its Articles of Association provide for a special fund to help victims (and their families) of crimes falling within the remit of the Court. The fund is managed by high-level and internationally renowned specialists in protection of human rights.

Belgium was very active in the negotiations which led to the adoption of

the Rome Statute and continues to contribute actively to the smooth running of the ICC, in particular at the annual sessions of the Assembly of States Parties. Belgium is also represented on the staff of the International Criminal Court by Mr Serge Brammertz, who was appointed by the Assembly of States Parties to the senior positions of Deputy Prosecutor and Head of Investigations with the Prosecutor's Office.

Investigation into crimes committed in Darfur

On 31 March 2005, the Security Council referred the situation in Darfur, Sudan, to the International Criminal Court. After carefully examining the documents supplied by the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, amongst others, the Prosecutor decided, on 1 June 2005, to open an investigation into the crimes committed in the region since 1 July 2002. This brings the number of situations being investigated by the Prosecutor of the ICC to three (Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan). In October 2005, as part of its investigation into the situation in Uganda, the International Criminal Court issued its first arrest warrants against five leaders of the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army).

In 2005, the Court became fully operational and began the specifically judicial phase of its work.

More information can be found on the website of the International Criminal Court at www.icc-cpi.int

6. Belgium and development cooperation

Of the many development cooperation projects undertaken by Belgium in 2005, we have chosen three to present here. If you would like more information on this subject, please visit the development cooperation website at www.dgdc.be

Fast Track Initiative

The Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was set up in 2002 in the wake of the Monterrey Consensus.

It is a global partnership that brings together developing countries, development agencies and donor countries to ensure accelerated progress towards the second Millennium Goal of universal primary education for boys and girls by 2015. All low-income countries that demonstrate serious commitment to meeting this target can receive FTI support.

The FTI aims to promote more effective aid for primary education by maximising donor collaboration, alignment and harmonisation in the supply of aid and by cutting transaction costs for beneficiary countries. It fosters dialogue between all partners around educational policies and aims at sustained growth in aid in the primary education sector for countries that demonstrate they can use this aid effectively. It promotes adequate and sustainable internal funding for education and encourages the sector to take more responsibility by presenting annual reports on policy developments and the results achieved.

The bulk of the funding remains bilateral. However, the FTI has also set up two trust funds:

The Catalytic Fund, which provides short-term funding (two or three years) to countries with too few donors. These countries, which are specially selected by the fund management committee, can use the aid to implement their policies and, based on the results obtained, attract new donors. The Education Programme Development Fund, which enables countries that have no credible education plan - and are therefore not eligible for the Initiative - to prepare one.

To be eligible for the Initiative, a country must have a finalised Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and a credible, effectively implemented comprehensive strategy plan for education sector development.

Organisation of the FTI

The FTI Secretariat is managed by the World Bank under the guidance of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee provides overall policy guidance to the FTI, gives direction to the Secretariat between partnership meetings and helps ensure coordination. It is composed of two co-chairs, UNESCO, the World Bank and the last former co-chair (Sweden). Belgium has been chosen as a co-chair from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. The UK was co-chair between January and December 2005.

The Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and the Fast Track Initiative

The DGDC has been actively involved with the FTI from the outset. As part of this initiative, the DGDC contributes to the Catalytic Fund set up at the World Bank in November 2003. The Fund provides short-term funding (two to three years) to help countries that cannot mobilise enough donors to fund their education plan, the ultimate aim being to attract other donors to provide long-term funding for the education plan. The DGDC's annual contribution over the period 2004-2007 is € 1 million.

The Fast Track Initiative includes most of the donors active in the education sector, i.e. around 30 countries and international organisations. Participation in local dialogue is not conditional on being an FTI contributor. The FTI has seven bilateral donors: the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Italy, the UK, Sweden and Spain. Some USD 239.19 million has been pledged over the period 2005-2007, including USD 192.19 million by the Netherlands.

The total allocated for 2005 is USD 77.2 million. Nine countries have received FTI support since March 2004, including Niger, a DGDC concentration country. There are 13 eligible countries including Mozambique and Vietnam, both concentration countries. There are plans to extend access to the FTI to a further 25 countries in the years to come. Of these 25 countries, nine are Belgian concentration countries, namely Benin, Bolivia,

Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda in 2005, and Burundi and DRC in 2006.

Missions by Belgian Cooperation to help tsunami victims

In addition to the B-FAST missions to assist tsunami victims, regeneration and reconstruction projects took place in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Seychelles and the Maldives, funded by the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation. With a total budget of € 15 million, Belgium could make a significant contribution to the large-scale international aid effort.

Right from day one, rescue teams and first-aid equipment bought by the Red Cross were sent out to Indonesia and Sri Lanka; with the help of Ministry of Defence, food aid was distributed to victims via the WFP (World Food Programme).

However, whilst this emergency aid was important, the priority soon had to shift to minimising the aftermath of the disaster. To this end, actions were undertaken, and are still ongoing, right across the affected area, with the support of international organisations and Belgian humanitarian NGOs. These actions included:

- funding projects to relaunch economic activity, via the FAO, in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives. These projects purchased fishing material (engines, nets, etc.) and repaired damaged boats, thereby enabling fishermen to get back to work;
- building houses out of durable materials, as soon as plots - based on a

3

3. Policy

new cadastre - were declared safe for building;

- rebuilding a port in the Maldives with the UNDP;
- funding various activities offering new means of subsistence to population groups, in conjunction with the ILO and the UNDP;
- involvement in the World Bank's Trust Fund for reconstruction in Indonesia, and more specifically in the region of Aceh on the island Sumatra, to the tune of USD 10 million over three years.

Obviously, this government aid came on top of the very considerable amount given by the Belgian public through the 12-12 Consortium and similar initiatives, which Belgian NGOs used to assist the victims of the tsunami. The high level of media exposure for this

extraordinary natural disaster certainly contributed to the success of fund-raising initiatives among the general public.

The Follow-Up, Evaluation and Statistics department

Follow-Up, Evaluation and Statistics (D0.2) is one of the departments of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation. It was set up as part of the ambitious project to foster a results-based management culture at all levels of the DGDC. This aim was set out in the Director General's management plan. Created in mid-2003, the department really got into its stride in 2005.

As regards evaluations, the department has three basic tasks: to draw up a sui-

table evaluation schedule that yields results, to carry out thematic evaluations and to provide methodological support to operational departments during targeted evaluations (D0.2 is also referred to as the 'internal evaluation department'). Overall development cooperation policy and strategy, covering the wide variety of players in the field, is the responsibility of the special evaluator, S0.4.

The evaluations are planned in consultation and collaboration with the operational departments. The annual plan is approved and amended by the DGDC's management committee. The official in charge of each evaluation is either a representative of the operational department concerned or a D0.2 staff member.

B-FAST helps relieve the distress caused by the tsunami in South-East Asia

© BELGA



Besides carrying out evaluations, D0.2 also works to expand the background to the evaluations. This part of its work is based on three main factors:

1. The expansion of the public procurement market has paved the way for expert consortia and the increasingly international nature of consultancies.
2. Balanced steering committees are set up for each evaluation, and provide support throughout the evaluation process. This offers a wider perspective and ensures a participative approach.
3. As regards content, special attention is paid to planning and analysing relevant evaluation topics with the various players and in the various partner countries. This means that more emphasis can be given to the really critical issues within Belgian development cooperation.

D0.2 also provides support with results-based follow-up. In the broadest sense, this covers developing and operating the management data processing system, which brings together all the statistics on Belgian development aid so that reports can be produced on the subject for the OECD. In a more limited sense, it involves supplying methodological support in connection with the expanded remit of project and programme managers. This can range from developing instruments to assist project managers in their follow-up tasks to providing advice on revising procedures and evaluating subsidy requests.

D0.2 represents the Belgian authorities within the OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate (DAC) in four areas:

- Network on Development Evaluation
- Managing for Development Results
- Working Party on Statistics (the D0.2 member in charge of statistics was elected vice-chair of this working party in 2005)
- 'Task Force for the Triple C initiative' (European Union): six evaluations on application of the Maastricht Treaty

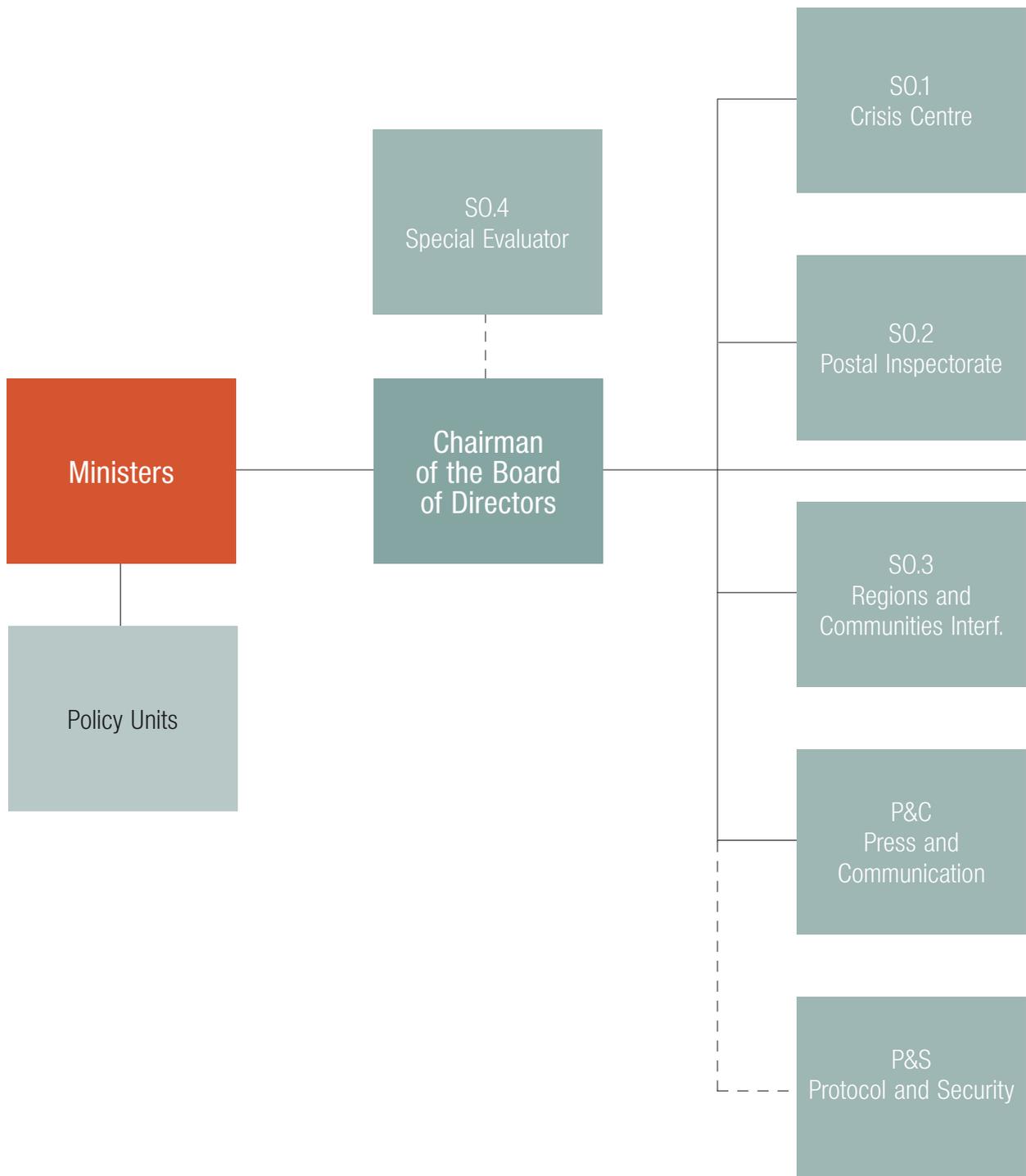
3

3. Policy

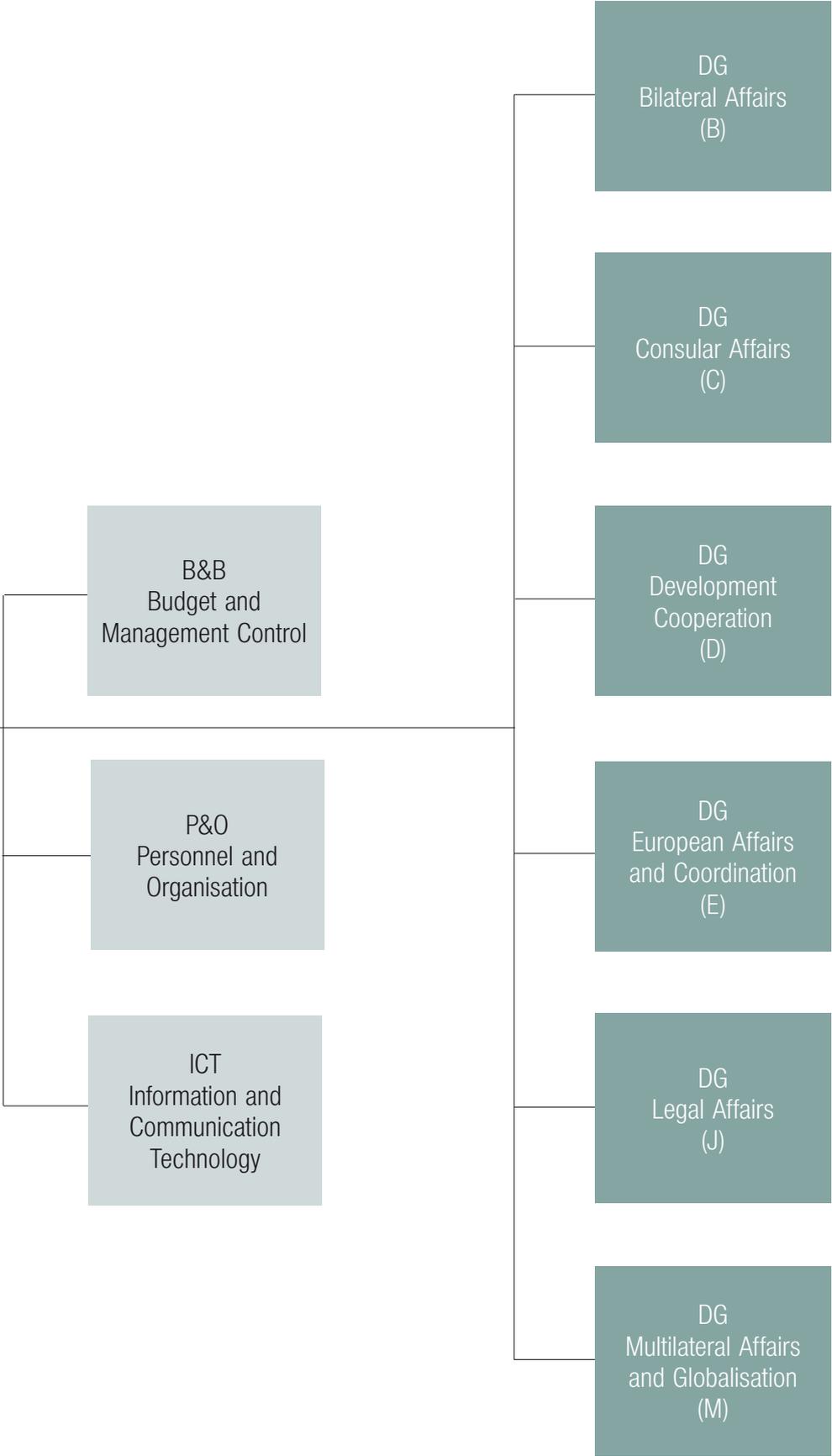
Annexes

A





**Organisational chart of the FPS Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation**





Acknowledgements



Photos:

- FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
- BELGA

Graphics, layout, printing and binding:

CIBE, centrum voor overheidscommunicatie v.z.w. (Government Communications Centre), Ghent

Content Officer:

Jan Grauls, rue des Petits Carmes 15, B-1000 Brussels

The information contained in this report is for information only. The Federal Public Service is in no way legally bound by it.

Legal registration: 0218/2005/17

This brochure is published by Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.