



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Federal public service
**Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**

Activity Report 2010





CONTENTS

Foreword by Mr **Steven Vanackere**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

1. Resources

1. Internal organisation of the FPS	7
Security examinations	7
EU Presidency	8
Digital communication	9
Renewed website	10
2. Personnel	12
Presidency sets new challenges	12
Number of staff employed	13
3. Buildings	14
Buildings abroad	14
Buildings in Brussels	14
4. Budget and financial resources	15

2. Serving the public

1. Protocol	17
Preferential rights and immunities	17
Foreign dignitaries and the security of diplomatic missions	18
Egmont Palace, Egmont Conference Centre and Val Duchesse Chateau	20
Nobility and honours	20
2. Consular affairs	21
Electronic identity cards (eID) for Belgians abroad	21
Biometric passports and visas	21
Deeds issued at missions	22
Databanks against illegal migration	22
European coordination in crisis situations	23

3. Crisis management	24
Alert in the world	24
B-FAST in action	25
Travel advice for 171 countries	26
Crisis files	26
Interest groups	26
4. Peacebuilding	27
Projects for a more peaceful world	27

3. Policy

1. Belgium in a bilateral context	29
Western Europe and North America	29
Central Asia and Eastern Europe	30
North Africa and the Middle East	31
Africa south of the Sahara	33
Europe and the African Union	35
South and East Asia, Oceania	35
Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC)	37
South-east Europe	38
Diplomacy and economy	40
International treaties	42
2. Belgium in the European Union	43
Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union	43
Implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon	45
EU's economic strategy	47
Transposing Directives	48
Court of Justice of the European Union	51
3. Belgium in a multilateral context	52
Stronger EU participation in the United Nations	52
A key year for security policy	53
Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)	53
Civil Crisis Management (CCM)	54
The new NATO concept	54
OECD: the Corfu Process and the Astana Summit	55

G20 / reforming the IMF and OECD	55
Support for the International Criminal Court	56
Fight against cluster munitions	57
Non-proliferation back on track	58
Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC)	58
Active during the Climate Change Negotiations	59
Focus on human rights	60
4. Belgium and development cooperation	62
Leading the EU presidency	62
Peer review by the OECD: on the right path	63
Millennium Goals	64
Reforming humanitarian aid	65
Belgium as <i>sector lead donor</i>	66
Knowledge and development policy hand in hand	66
Biodiversity Year	67
Congo 2010 Biodiversity Expedition	67
Belgian Development Cooperation Evaluation	68
4. Annexes	
Organisational chart of the FPS	70
Map of worldwide FPS representations in Belgium and abroad (December 2010)	72
Acknowledgements	74



Foreword

During the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2010, Europe was on the foreground of our foreign policy more than ever before. The fiftieth anniversary of the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo focused our diplomatic attention on Central Africa in 2010. But at the start of 2010, another region drew our attention: on 12 January 2010, Haiti was hit by an earthquake, the likes of which had never been seen before. Our B-FAST team was one of the first there and it was Belgium that organised consular cooperation there.

The theme of the Belgian EU presidency (from 1 July to 31 December) was the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. For our FPS, this signified full support for the new institutions and actors and contribution to the development of a European External Action Service. Besides a fully-fledged implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, the challenges of the financial economic crisis also took centre stage during our presidency. The crisis forced the European Union into a dynamic approach which, in particular, led to new regulations on financial supervision and initiated reinforced economic coordination. The Belgian presidency also scored well in other fields, such as budget, innovation, trade policy, expansion, transport, social affairs, climate and the environment. Regarding the last two themes, Belgium, as EU President, played a prominent role in negotiating multilateral agreements, in particular in Cancun and Nagoya.

Shortly before the European presidency, our former colony, Congo, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of independence. The presence of our royal couple during the ceremony in Kinshasa sealed normalisation of our relations with the DRC. As bridge builder between the Congo and the Security Council, Belgium ensured that its mandate of the UN peace operation in the DRC, the current MONUSCO (United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), was extended. Belgium also followed the elections in Burundi and Rwanda with interest and concern. The Great Lake countries do, after all, continue to be a priority for Belgian diplomacy. That is why I put this region on the agenda of Europe and the international community. In addition, the Belgian European Union presidency put not only Central Africa, but the whole of Africa, on the European agenda. A 2011-2013 Action Plan, approved at the biennial EU-Africa Summit in Libya at the end of November, reconfirmed the strategic partnership between the two continents.

As regards security, the NATO summit in Lisbon approved a New Strategy Concept in the light of new security threats. Besides its essential assignment of political military alliance for collective defence, NATO also wants to contribute to crisis management and post-conflict recovery in cooperation with the UN and EU. At Belgium's instigation, nuclear non-pro-



liferation and disarmament were recognised as NATO target aims. When the summit was extended, state and government leaders of the NATO countries met with Russia on cooperation regarding, among others, missile defence. At the OSCE summit in Astana, all participating States “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” confirmed their devotion to the principles and values of human rights and democracy.

In August 2010 the Cluster Munitions Convention took effect. Belgium, the first country which forbade cluster munitions and destroyed its stock, exerted itself for a global prohibition and correct implementation of the Convention, with particular attention for aid to the victims. HRH Princess Astrid was honorary chairperson of the Belgian delegation at the first Convention Conference in Laos.

Ten years after UN Resolution 1325, which appealed to all countries to involve more women, the first victims of violence in armed conflicts, in peace operations, peace negotiations and democratisation, Belgium, in cooperation with the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, organised conferences in Brussels, New York and Geneva. These conferences contributed to a strong EU stance in the Security Council, which also made countries that were critical, accept a monitoring system.

Belgium advocates further development of humanitarian rights. At the Review Conference on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Kampala, our country was able to reach consensus on extending the list of war crimes in non-international armed conflict with (the addition) of “cruel weapons” (poison weapons, nitrogen gas and dumdum bullets).

The economic diplomacy had a prominent position in 2010. There were missions, led by HRH Prince Philippe, to India, Brazil, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. There was a free-trade agreement between the EU and South Korea. Both European and bilateral attention was paid to our presence at the G20 and the IMF. We determined our attitude on various problems of international trade: the raw materials issue, Global Compact and ethical entrepreneurship, fight against corruption, the EITI and the Kimberley Process.

In particular, there was continuous service provision to companies with market access or other problems, adjustments were made to our bilateral relations with various large countries and business summits were organised in the margin of the European summits and of the ASEM summit. An open economy such as ours is needs company support more than others. An ambassador or consul-general can make the difference to CEOs and compa-

nies in search of investments and trading partners, not only in new economies, developing countries and the BRIC countries, but also in the OECD countries.

Advice and assistance to Belgians abroad is, however, not only economic but, above all, consular in nature. There are no precise figures on the number of Belgians abroad. Besides the more than 350,000 Belgians who are registered in the consular registers of our diplomatic representations, there are many who temporarily travel or live abroad. Consular assistance is particularly important in emergency situations: in the case of loss of documents and money, accidents, disasters, repatriation and evacuation. The link with countrymen abroad also works in the other direction. On 13 June 2010, for the first time since the start of voting rights for Belgians, Foreign Affairs organised early elections for Belgians abroad. The current electoral law was not prepared for this. Despite the great time pressure and legal shortcomings, our staff locally and abroad still succeeded in registering 42,000 voters.

Steven Vanackere

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs



1. Internal organisation of the FPS

The Federal Public Service (FPS) Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, reinforced its organisational capacities in 2010. During the year in which Belgium had an important pioneering role – as president of the Council of the European Union – our services successfully faced up to all challenges.

Security examinations

The number of security examinations at the secretarial services of the National Security Authority (ANS/NVO) experienced a large increase once again as compared to 2009. The service completed 5,847 individual personal security clearances and had 713 pending applications. The number of company security clearances also rose considerably, to 150. The secretarial services also processed fifteen thousand applications for security certificates or recommendations. That gigantic number is particularly due to the Belgian EU presidency in the autumn of 2010.

The ANS/NVO received 840 security examination applications from foreign partners. This resulted in 1,055 letters being written. 518 applications are still waiting for the results. The waiting period to have a dossier coming from abroad dealt with amounted to four months in 2010, which, except for Italy, is the longest waiting period of all the partners.

The number of individual security clearance refusals amounted to 153. Due to the legal complexity and large number of files, 28 files could still not be finalised.

The number of refused security certificates and recommendations amounted to 125.

Regarding the online “Habil” application, the ANS/NVO had 2,292 manipulations. These actions related to applications to create files, recover or delete files and other applications for support. Security officers received 10 sessions of training in application.

Security agreements

The National Security Authority negotiated four bilateral security agreements with Luxembourg, Poland, Spain and Ukraine. These agreements are ready to be signed. In addition, the ANS/NVO prepared a few files to negotiate bilateral agreements during the course of 2011. This relates to: Israel (technical arrangement), the Netherlands (review), Slovakia, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia and Latvia.

Security committees

In 2010 the work load increased substantially due to, among others, participation as Belgian State representative on the security committees of international treaties and commitments. Within the European context, there were security committee meetings of the Council and sub-committees, for example. Within the Belgian EU-presidency context, the ANS/NVO assumed presidency of a conference organised in Antwerp. The security committee acted as advisory body for the European Commission and, as such, it participated in all meetings.

In November 2010, the Galileo Security Accreditation Board was established, with the ANS/NVO as representative for Belgium and as interim president. Belgium was also president of the EUROCORPS Security Committee.

The most important achievement under this presidency is the conclusion of a bilateral security agreement between the EUROCORPS and NATO. The ANS/NVO also participated in the security committees of NATO and the multi-national security committee for industrial security.

Besides international obligations, the ANS/NVO organised its own committee every month and extraordinary committee meetings during the Belgian presidency. In addition, the ANS/NVO also participated in various other committees where its presence was required, such as the Committee for Information and Security, BELNIS and ICGG.

Despite the increased workload, three persons who left were not replaced. The staff situation at the end of 2010 was precarious.

EU Presidency

The theme throughout the year 2010 was the Belgian EU presidency. During the first half of the year, the Security department worked out the scenario to secure all events at the Egmont Palace. Security for the World Economic Forum, from 9 to 11 May in a Brussels hotel, yielded the first valuable experience.

With the assistance of an excellent temporary employee, all events in the Egmont Palace and those organised by the FPS were closely monitored during the second half of 2010. Two highlights were the Gymnich in the Egmont Palace and ASEM summit in the Royal Palace and Palace of the Academies. Security at these events was efficient, both because of an intense cooperation with internal and external services such as the ANS/NVO, Brussels police, FPS Home Affairs crisis centre, etc.

Gymnich is a part of the German municipality of Erfstadt. An informal meeting of Foreign Affairs ministers – under German EU presidency – was held there for the first time in 1974. Since then, that informal Council meets twice a year to discuss current themes and this is called “the Gymnich”.

Since 1996, European and Asian leaders have been holding Asian Europe Meetings, ASEM for short, every two years. Belgium had the honour of preparing the eighth meeting on 4 and 5 October 2010. Our FPS organised interesting theme meetings: world economy management, sustainable development, non-proliferation, terrorism, etc. In addition, ASEM 8 welcomed the entry of Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

Security at Egmont I, the main building at 15 *Rue des Petits Carmes*, improved considerably, thanks to the installation of two security channels at the main entrance, of a luggage scanner and of two metal-detecting gates. Besides this, the private security company, Cobelguard, was responsible for the despatching tasks. The company was also responsible for increased round-the-clock security of the Egmont Palace for the entire course of the Belgian EU presidency.



Securing the missions

The further physical development of the secured network communication was started at both the missions and the central administration at the start of 2010, so that information could be protected against unauthorised consultation. This development will be continued in 2011.

A few buildings abroad were faced with particular threats and this confronted the Security department with new challenges. The aim was (and still is) to continually invest in physical security, together with the department responsible for buildings abroad. Numerous indiscriminate attacks and parcel bombs rocked cities such as Athens, Rome and Stockholm. The instructions on how to deal with suspicious parcels were refined and sent to the missions once again. This means to enable them to prepare as well as possible if they were ever to be targeted.

Together with the ANS/NVO, the Security department initiated security clearance reflection. The focal idea, which will be set out in 2011, is to limit the grant of such clearance to the strict minimum so that there is maximum guarantee as to the integrity of the information. This is a tendency that we have also established in other countries.

“Missions” is the collective name for places where the FPS Foreign Affairs sets up diplomatic and consular operations, both locally and abroad. For example, embassies, consulates-general, consulates, permanent representations (PRs) and cooperation offices (places where there are no diplomatic missions).

Digital communication

FPS Foreign Affairs focused on two large ICT projects in 2010.

Hermes 2

For the communication between the central administration in Brussels and the more than 130 diplomatic and consular missions, the FPS must at least be able to avail of a thorough and safe communications network around the clock.

Hermes 2 was the answer to the increasingly growing demand for more capacity, more security and more functionality. This new government procurement was allocated to *Orange Business Services* in 2009. It involves a seven-year contract, for which the FPS pays almost €50 million.

Because the assignment was not allocated to the same supplier as the one who had the previous contract, the entire network for all the missions had to be put into operation in barely six months. These were tense months for both Orange and the ICT department: not only was there the start of the Belgian presidency on 1 July, there was also the definitive end to the current contract on 31 July with the accompanying termination of the communication lines.

After the contract was signed on 19 December 2009, a project plan with extremely strict timing for both parties was developed immediately.

Orange still had to order all the equipment, which was then all put on a rack, tested and packed, after which ICT's services were required because everything had to be sent in diplomatic bags. After the mission had received it, a technician from Orange had to travel to the site to install the equipment and activate the connection with Brussels. It was essential that this activation follow a procedure in cooperation with a representative from the ICT department in Brussels.

In addition, the security of the line (encryption) also had to be activated simultaneously with the connection: for this purpose, there had to be encryption

keys at the mission and that required a special, individual despatch.

As is the case with every project of this magnitude, there were unforeseen circumstances: equipment that was blocked by customs authorities, difficulties in obtaining visas, early elections which undermined the project, a volcano that erupted and stopped air traffic, which delayed the transport of people and equipment, technical problems which sometimes caused delays, etc.

Thanks to the fact that the project was well prepared and that parties cooperated well, the support that the missions provided for this project, the creativity and voluntariness with which solutions were searched when there were problems, we were able to complete this project successfully and in good time. With Hermes 2, the FPS currently avails of an efficient communication network that works much faster and more reliably than its predecessor and is ready for the challenges which the near future holds.

Service 24/7

With Belgium holding the EU presidency, 24/7 availability and rapid exchange of information was essential. That is why numerous services and employees were given an informatics facelift: 75 missions received an entirely new server infrastructure; in Brussels, the first of two new data centres was equipped with a capacity of 22 TB (terabytes), 250 employees received access to e-mail facility and laptops with secured connections provided more than 350 employees with access to information on the Foreign Affairs secured network.

It appears from the large number of documents that were printed in 2010 that it is difficult for us to distance ourselves from the traditional way of spreading information, viz. on paper: almost 10,000,000 pages were printed on printers and multifunctional machines under ICT management.

Thanks to well-managed reorganisation and geographic distribution, the ICT service desk was available 24/7 during the EU presidency. The desk operated from three places – Brussels, Washington and

Bangkok – in keeping with the principle of *follow the sun*. In this way the clients, who ever-increasingly worked outside the traditional “9 to 5” schedule, received optimum service at a limited cost price.

Besides these two large projects, there were many others in the pipeline: the new visa application, deployment of the biometric infrastructure to the missions and IT developments made it necessary to integrate the FPS in the FEDCOM project (the IT project that is to modernise the federal budget), approval of the networks to transport classified information, etc.

Renewed website

On 6 April 2010, the renewed website www.diplomatie.belgium.be went on line. The quadrilingual website wants to furnish information that is geared to a diverse international audience.

Consular information draws the most visitors:

Belgians who travel abroad often check the website to see what documents they need and whether their destination is safe. Information on visa enquiries and on obtaining Belgian citizenship is also consulted very often. Foreign embassies and international institutions look under the Protocol column for administrative information intended especially for them.

Visitors to the Development Cooperation sub-website are particularly interested in international job offers (such as the JPO and UN volunteer programmes). Students from developing countries regularly consult the pages on study and trainee grants.

However, the website does want to meet other needs: all press releases and speeches by the three authorised ministers and state secretary are available. More than one thousand subscribers receive monthly overviews of the news reports on development cooperation by way of the “DGD INFO” newsletters. The *Belgium Unlimited* magazine increases the topical value of the website and is also distributed through newsletters. Furthermore, the website offers an abundance of



background texts on Belgian policy on international matters and development cooperation.

The innovation has clearly borne fruit: www.diplomatie.belgium.be is visited more than 13,000 times per day and users have viewed over 10 million web pages since 6 April. The visual appearance of the website has been made more attractive and a photo gallery has also been added since December. A web team, together with the ICT federal public service (FedICT) is currently working on innovating the websites of Belgian representations abroad. The first website will go on line during the first half of 2011.

2. Personnel

Presidency sets new challenges

For the EU presidency, FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation recruited approximately 80 temporary employees for Central Administration. Approximately fifty were appointed during the course of 2010. The diplomatic missions were also reinforced with approximately thirty temporary employees, of whom a little over half entered into employment in 2010. Almost all of the FPS staff members were involved in the presidency and have to a greater or lesser extent contributed to its success.

Staff evolution

The FPS must take cost-cutting measures into account in the staff budget. Almost no staff member who left was replaced in 2010. These savings will also be applied in the years to come. That is why the future staff plan will have to pay special attention to filling key positions that are vacated.

As regards foreign careers, the FPS appointed four attachés for international cooperation (development cooperation).

Taking cost-cutting into account, the FPS started a project for a new system of internal mobility. This system will be operative by the spring of 2011.

Certified training courses

Developing skills by organising certified training courses is an essential component of modernisation. Efforts to offer level A staff certified training were continued in 2010. In addition, tens of employees of other levels were encouraged to also follow training courses adapted for them. Within the context of the Belgian EU presidency, FPS and the Federal Administration Training Institute (OFO) jointly organised special training courses on European matters.

Job map

Further to the publication of the federal job map at the end of 2007, the FPS drew up the job organisational chart by directorate-general and policy support directorate. When combined with the application of development circles, these organisational charts make it possible to define and adapt the job descriptions of missing jobs. This enables one to take into account new duties for which the FPS is assuming responsibility or certain nuances that should be allocated to the jobs.

In addition, the FPS has started developing skills profiles. In future, these profiles, together with the job descriptions and staff organisational charts, must form the basis for a dynamic and sustainable staff policy.

Number of staff employed

The tables below show how the staff is composed at Central Administration and at the missions, the number and nature of the missions on 31 December 2010. The places where the different missions are located are shown in the world map at the end of this annual report.

1. Number staff employed at the FPS Central Administration and abroad

No missions were closed or opened in 2010.
(actual units as on 31 December 2010)

Total number of established officials and officials under contract at Central Administration

Established internal officials	650
Officials under contract	553
Diplomats	151
Chancellors (consuls)	49
Attachés for international cooperation (development cooperation)	27
Total at Central Administration	1,430

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

Diplomats	282
Chancellors (consuls)	103
Attachés for international cooperation (development cooperation)	42
Expatriate officials under contract	160
Officials under contract employed on site	1,412
Total in missions and Permanent Representations abroad and in Brussels	1,999
Grand total (Central Administration, missions and Permanent Representations)	3,429

Number and category of embassies and consulates

Missions	
Embassies	89
Consulates-general	20
Consulates	9
Permanent Representations	10
Cooperation Offices *	6
Total	134

*This refers only to cooperation offices in places where there is no Belgian mission: Bamako, Cotonou, Maputo, Niamey, Quito, La Paz. Twenty-one cooperation offices are in the grounds of embassies, consulates-general or Permanent Representations.

3. Buildings

Buildings abroad

Our new embassy in Tokyo was officially opened in April 2010. Both the Japanese and Belgian press afforded this considerable attention. Furthermore, a number of new chancelleries were acquired. In particular, this concerns the chancellery already rented in Vilnius and new premises in The Hague. The alterations to a floor in a building in Sofia are running according to plan and the property transfer is scheduled for the start of 2011. In Kiev, on the other hand, we have had to drop a new opportunity. At the end of 2010, the Council of Ministers approved the purchase of a residence for permanent Belgian representation at the European Union.

Drastic alteration or extension works were started or continued at missions of which our country is the owner, viz. in Amman, Budapest, Kigali, Kinshasa, Rome-Holy See, Vienna and Washington. Other work must start again at the beginning of 2011, such as in Athens, Berne, Cologne, Luxembourg, New Delhi, Paris and Rabat. Constructive works are scheduled in Islamabad, Luanda and, in principle, also in Dublin. Numerous missions have already undergone a series of smaller maintenance and renovation works.

Managing our artistic heritage is always afforded special attention. Various residences were furnished and refurbished. Various chancelleries were provided with new office furniture.

Vehicle fleet renovation is afforded continuous attention; a number of official cars and armoured vehicles have been replaced.

There were a number of purchases and work was started to bring supervision of access to classified information and communication security in line with EU and NATO standards.

Buildings in Brussels

Buildings in Brussels are rented. Egmont 1, the Central Administration, is located at *rue des Petits Carmes 15*. Egmont 2 is at number 24. Furthermore, two office buildings are rented at *rue de Namur 48* and *59*. The FPS also rents a floor in the building at *rue Bréderode 2*. The FPS manages the Egmont Palace and Val Duchesse in partnership with the Buildings Agency (*Régie des Bâtiments/ Regie der Gebouwen*).

RESOURCES

4. Budget and financial resources

Division	Programme	Area	Commitment credits (in € thousands)	Organisation credits (in € thousands)	Credit in ordonnance (in € thousands)	Ordonnance (in € thousands)
1		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs	4,811	3,782	4,811	3,753
2		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Development Cooperation	2,655	2,138	2,655	2,103
12		Strategic bodies of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs	1,323	1,264	1,323	1,209
21		Management bodies	88,615	72,279	90,322	72,881
	0	Management and supervision	88,615	72,279	90,322	72,881
40		General services	36,157	29,457	35,810	26,173
	1	Protocol	2,027	1,888	1,980	1,801
	2	Training	1,069	1,004	1,069	818
	3	Conferences, seminars and other events	20,422	15,818	20,422	12,857
	4	Humanitarian aid	1,200	733	1,200	707
	5	Representations abroad	3,843	2,904	3,543	2,828
	6	Communication, information and documentation	1,692	1,521	1,692	1,384
	7	International cooperation	5,904	5,590	5,904	5,779
42		Embassies, consulates and cooperation missions	194,424	190,366	209,571	191,430
	0	Subsistence programme	180,117	176,437	179,579	173,121
	1	Buildings fund	14,307	13,929	29,992	18,309
43		Directorate-General for Legal Affairs	513	513	513	392
	0	Subsistence programme	513	513	513	392
51		Directorate-General for Bilateral Affairs	44,991	21,844	31,337	23,958
	0	Subsistence programme	10	10	10	3
	1	Bilateral relations	4,929	4,657	4,729	4,639
	2	Economic expansion	40,052	17,177	26,598	19,317
52		Directorate-General for Consular Affairs	788	615	638	484
	0	Subsistence programme	504	332	354	276
	1	International institutions	84	83	84	83
	2	Humanitarian aid	200	200	200	124

53		Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation	145,380	138,591	140,969	132,931
	1	Multilateral relations	106,094	106,085	106,094	102,891
	2	Science policy	3,995	3,995	3,995	3,995
	3	Cooperation	497	497	497	250
	4	Humanitarian aid	29,858	26,972	26,624	24,760
54		Directorate-General for Development Cooperation	1,244,435	1,040,843	1,499,884	1,367,699
	0	Subsistence programme	7,401	3,353	7,306	2,582
	1	Governmental cooperation	458,713	378,165	456,331	385,882
	2	Non-governmental cooperation	116,981	97,768	246,457	229,591
	3	Multilateral cooperation	351,378	299,494	480,468	471,659
	4	Special missions	186,044	142,490	174,815	144,800
55		Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination	3,894	3,621	3,665	3,587
	1	European relations	3,894	3,621	3,665	3,587
	Date:	31/12/2010	1,767,986	1,505,313	2,021,498	1,826,600



SERVING THE PUBLIC

1. Protocol

At the end of 2010, the Protocol Directorate managed a total of 64,717 people with privileges (holders and their family members), of whom a third were from diplomatic missions and two-thirds involved in international organisations. More than 5,000 VIP visits were steered in the right direction. Full use was made of the Egmont Palace and Conference Centre after they had been properly renovated.

Preferential rights and immunities

The service that is in charge of the management and application of the preferential rights and immunities of the diplomatic missions in Brussels continued with the modernisation of operations and optimisation of services over the past year. Supplements were drawn up for circulars containing practical instructions for the diplomatic missions and all information was updated in 2010.

Last year, the service also paid special attention to observance of the traffic regulations and mediation in disputes involving diplomats and their members of staff. Despite the rise in the number of offences by persons with diplomatic immunity status, the percentage of the fines paid in the short term rose by 15% compared to 2009, thanks to Protocol intervention. The service also monitored the employment terms and conditions of the diplomats' domestic staff very well.

A large diplomatic community

Belgium has a substantial diplomatic community. There were 286 diplomatic missions in our country at the end of 2010. This comprises 187 bilateral embassies and 99 diplomatic missions that are accredited with international organisations.

These missions have a total of 8,052 staff members, of whom 5,267 are diplomats (and 6,906 family members), 1,947 administrative and technical staff (and 1,993 family members), 450 white-collar workers and 388 domestic staff. The total, including family members, is 17,315 persons. 585 civil servants and 549 family members at the missions must be added to this.

The service issued 22,574 identity cards in 2008. In mid-November 2009 there were 21,106 and in 2010, 21,820, which was 4,674 diplomatic, 165 consular, 14,798 P cards and 2,183 S cards.

Protocol also issues the CD number plates and adapted its procedures to the new regulations of the Vehicle Registration Service (new European number plates). Diplomatic missions currently have 6,079 in use, 3,980 of which are used as personal vehicles for diplomats and 2,099 as official vehicles.

Furthermore, the service experienced chronic shortage of staff and felt compelled to simplify operations. The validity term for the identity card was extended, for example. There was a shift in the nature of the cooperation with the Public Prosecutor's Office. There is a tendency for stricter prosecution for more serious offences.

Consulates

All applications submitted for service restructure of foreign consulates in Belgium led to an update of the databanks (digitally and on paper) and of the FPS consular yearbook. The FPS cleared the backlog of all pending files. Two consulates-general were opened: that of the Congo in Antwerp and Brazil in Brussels. All applications submitted to have honorary consuls re-appointed have been or are almost accepted. That also applies to applications to amend or open new areas of jurisdiction.

The service naturally also handled traditional administrative issues, such as applications for identity cards, proof of identity, "CC" plates for the vehicles of honorary and for career consuls and the quota for career consulates.

International organisations

Belgium hosts approximately 90 international organisations. The majority of these is established in Brussels.

Various organisations started negotiations in 2010 to conclude a headquarters agreement with our country. A number of organisations submitted applications for the purpose of examining possible establishment in Belgium. These negotiations take place in the Interministerial Committee on Headquarters Policy (ICZ).

Moreover, SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) submitted an application to Protocol to issue the special identity cards for the family members of its civil servants in future.

In 2010, the Protocol Directorate issued 11,000 special identity cards to international civil servants, for all categories. Driving licences and approximately one hundred CD number plates are to be added to that. The databank for international organisations was fully updated in 2010.

It must be noted that international organisations perform various administrative tasks, including passing on various documents and certificates requesting applications for the relevant authorised bodies. In 2010,

for example, it dealt with 300 judicial letters relating to traffic offences and approximately one hundred bailiffs' notifications pursuant to various legal disputes (non-payment, maintenance that had not been paid, etc.).

Equal opportunities

Belgium signed a reciprocal agreement with the Serb Republic, Montenegro, the Macedonian Government, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina within the context of the gender equality policy. This ensures that family members, often the spouses of diplomatic and consular civil servants, can seek paid employment in the host country. Agreements regarding paid employment for certain family members of diplomatic and consular staff that were concluded with Chile and Peru came into force in 2010.

Foreign dignitaries and the security of diplomatic missions

The service for Visits, Royal Journeys and Diplomatic Mission Security (P2) once again provided smooth follow-up of the visits by dignitaries to our country. There are approximately 5,000 VIPs from abroad who visit Belgium annually. These are heads of state, government leaders, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, other ministers and dignitaries. The number of visits in 2010 was naturally higher than the previous year because of the Belgian EU presidency.

In cooperation with the Crisis Centre of the FPS Home Affairs and the European Council, the service also organises European Council visits to Brussels. There were 7 European Councils in 2010.

No state visits were organised in 2010. However, there were eight official visits, viz. the following:

- > German Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel (11 May);
- > South African President, Jacob Zuma (28-29 September);
- > South Korean President, Lee Myung Bak (3-6 October);

- › Vietnamese Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung (3-6 October);
- › Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao (4-6 October);
- › Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev (24-26 October);
- › Russian President, Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev (9-11 December);
- › Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh (9-11 December).

This service deals with reservations for the VIP lounge, applications for admission badges for the lounge and for admission to the CD parking lot. During the Belgian EU presidency, the section in the VIP airport lounge qualified approximately 8,000 people as eligible for VIP treatment. A new agreement was concluded with the airport on the use of the CD parking lot.

A few figures

Applications processed in 2010	Total
Diplomatic airport parking card for Brussels Airport	425
Dealing with applications for temporary badges for Brussels Airport	2,681
Dealing with applications for permanent badges at the Brussels Airport	762

Security at the diplomatic missions

The P2 service plays an intermediary role in securing diplomatic missions. For this purpose it specifically contacts the FPS Home Affairs crisis centre. Applications for special security measures to protect missions and complaints relating to security problems are submitted to the service, which then contacts the crisis centre and other security services involved. A total of 533 security dossiers were processed: burglaries, security at official receptions, protests, etc.

Egmont Palace, Egmont Conference Centre and Val Duchesse Chateau

Egmont Palace and Egmont Conference Centre

The alterations and renovation work in the Egmont Palace, which had started in August 2008, were completed far in advance of the official opening of the Belgian EU presidency on 1 July. Numerous events were organised almost non-stop and at an increasingly higher rate towards the end of the presidency in the Egmont Palace and Egmont 2 complex as of that date. Noteworthy events are: diplomatic contact days, the launch of the Belgian presidency with the meeting between the European Commission and the various political persuasions of the European Parliament, informal Councils (EPSCO, JBZ, ECOFIN, European Development Days, COFACE, Culture, Development and Gymnich) the colloquium on 50 years of independence of the Congo and the LIBERTAD colloquium on 200 years of Latin-American independence, *the Senior Official's Meetings* (SOM) in preparation for the ASEM summit, the official reception of important political representatives from abroad (Korea, Kazakhstan, Russia, India and China), the important Gymnich meeting of the 27 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Val Duchesse

Intense use was made of the Val Duchesse domain comprising both the castle and priory. Belgium was able to show itself on the world stage during the numerous events on the domain. There were also various official receptions: Germany, China, South Africa, etc. Val Duchesse received various prominent figures at work meetings, including the Vice-President of the United States, Joe Biden, and the American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. Mrs Cathy Ashton, EU High Representative, enjoys making official use of the castle.

The Egmont Institute (IRRI – Royal Institute for International Relations) continued its research and analysis activities by organising large international conferences at both Val Duchesse and in the Egmont Palace.

Nobility and honours

The Honours department acts in implementation of the law of 1 May 2006 on the awarding of honorary distinctions in the Honours List and the Royal Decree of 15 October 2006 establishing the rules and procedure for the awarding of honorary distinctions in the Honours List. The law and decree were both published in the Belgian Official Gazette of 24 October 2006.

In close cooperation with the office of the Prime Minister and the administrations involved, the department once again prepared, finalised and published a series of specific regulations and equivalences in the public sector in 2010. In his capacity as Registrar of the Council of the Nobility, the Head of Department took charge of the publication of the book *Adelbrieven verleend door ZM Albert II, Koning der Belgen 2001-2008 / Lettres Patentes de Noblesse octroyées par S.M. Albert II, Roi des Belges 2001-2008 - Patents of Nobility granted by HM Albert II, King of the Belgians 2001-2008* (Lannoo-Racine, Tielt-Brussels, 2010). 24 patents of nobility were granted in 2010.

2. Consular affairs

Electronic identity cards (eID) for Belgians abroad

The Belgian Consulate-General in Lille switched to issuing electronic identity cards (eID) in June 2009. Between mid-August and 31 December 2010, other Belgian embassies and consulates also followed suit by issuing these eIDs to Belgians registered in their civil registers. Missions with the largest number of applications for eIDs received the equipment and software from Home Affairs and this was locally installed for them. In that way, they could personally deal fully with the applications. The other missions work with an intermediary step at Central Administration (Travel & Identity Documents department), which receives applications from the missions electronically and then processes them by using Home Affairs equipment and software.

eIDs issued to Belgians abroad are identically the same as the eIDs that Belgian municipalities issue - under the responsibility of Home Affairs. By contrast with the previous non-electronic identity card, the eID remains valid after having moved to another country or when one returns to Belgium. The card also makes it possible to use numerous electronic and Internet applications.

Biometric passports and visas

Biometrics is the establishment of people's measurable data, by which they can be irrefutably identified. Digital fingerprints and an identity photograph are the most measurable properties that are integrated in visas and passports.

Passports

Pursuant to a European directive, fingerprints of both index fingers must be filed on the chip of the passport as of the end of June 2009, over and above the passport holder's identity data and digital photograph. This means that all passport offices, both in Belgium and abroad, need equipment and software to take digital photographs and fingerprints. This project was split up into two government assignments.

There was joint collaboration with the Visa department to equip diplomatic and consular missions. Equipment and software roll-out, which had been started in 2009, was continued in 2010. To date, 38 of the 120 career consuls missions have received the necessary equipment and the new infrastructure has been tested in the meantime. They will switch over to mandatory issue of biometric passports during the course of 2011.

A procurement procedure was started up to equip municipality and provincial councils. The award procedure will probably be finalised by mid-2011.

The most important amendment for passport applicants, especially at the missions, is that they must report personally. Taking biometric data (particularly fingerprints) is impossible otherwise. The switch to

electronic despatch of the applications to the production centre is made simultaneously with the implementation of biometric passports. This saves time, especially for applications coming from the missions.

Deeds issued at missions

In 2010, Belgian overseas missions issued 2,647 deeds in connection with choice of nationality or naturalisation. These were usually "declarations of attribution", (whereby Belgian parents request Belgian nationality for their children born overseas, and options (declarations opting for Belgian nationality). Our missions also received 147 naturalisation applications in 2010. Other deeds concerned marital status (245 deeds, mainly of acknowledgement) or were notarial in nature (830 deeds).

Databanks against illegal migration

As is the case with all other Schengen Member States, Belgium is bound to the European obligation of implementing biometrics in visas. In practice, all alphanumeric and biometric data of all visa files submitted to, handed in to or refused by all Schengen Member States, must be archived in the common European database (*Visa Information System* databank – VIS databank). This formalises and automates visa data exchange. With these data, the Schengen countries are better armed to combat visa shopping and illegal migration. The VIS system is expected to start operating in 2011.

Implementation

The first stage started in 2009, in particular at the North African missions. This is in accordance with the European decision to implement taking visa applicants' biometrics in different stages. In 2010 our departments implemented the second and third stages of the European plan: the Middle East and Gulf

States. A series of European countries were finalised simultaneously with the Passports department. Missions are important for issuing passports to our compatriots living abroad and they also regularly process a number of visa applications. For example, the following missions in this region are equipped to take biometrics: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Riyadh, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Teheran.

Biometrics have been installed in the following European missions: London, Vienna, Bratislava, Bern, Ljubljana, Geneva, Copenhagen, Cologne, Warsaw, Oslo, Stockholm, Tallinn, Helsinki, Berlin, Vilnius, Riga, Alicante, La Valetta, Rome, Lisbon and Barcelona. Furthermore, a few important African missions have received equipment to issue biometric visas. Addis Ababa, Dar Es Salaam, Nairobi, Kampala, Brazzaville, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

This means that at the end of 2010, a total of 44 missions will avail of the installation to issue biometric visas and passports. In addition, the personnel have also received the required training course to finalise these tasks.

The European Commission is co-funder of this important project.



European coordination in crisis situations

During the Spanish presidency in the first half of 2010, the European Consular Cooperation Working Group (COCON) worked towards improving EU cooperation coordination during crisis situations to provide EU subjects with consular protection. The necessity for improved cooperation in that field transpired clearly in situations such as the crises in Haiti, Peru and pursuant to the Iceland volcanic ash.

Initiatives

Various initiatives on European consular cooperation were started under the Belgian EU presidency. A few examples:

- › the “consular guidelines” of 2006 were adjusted to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon; this led to the definition of the role of the European Delegations (EUDEL) when locally coordinating consular meetings in Third-World countries;
- › a seminar was held on 22 and 23 September on European consular cooperation during crisis situations, where, in particular, it appeared that there was a need to work out best practices (coordination and protection of European citizens during times of crisis, financial aspects of consular assistance and the possibilities for efficient information exchange). Therefore, during the COCON presidency, which was shared by the Directorate-General for Consular Affairs and the Crisis Centre (S1.1), a paper was accepted to arrive at a “consular Erasmus programme”. In that programme, consular agents and crisis experts from all the Member States were granted the opportunity of participating in training programmes organised by European institutions or Member States. In this way, there will, in the long term, be a group of agents trained to manage consular crisis situations;
- › the European Commission, in cooperation with the Belgian presidency and Spain, compiled a training course kit (consular kit) within the same context. By using this kit, all consular agents in all Member

States will be provided with a document which gives an overall picture of the Community patrimony on consular cooperation;

- › the current Emergency Travel document (ETD) will also be updated. It has been in existence since 1996 but not all Member States use it because it no longer fulfils current security standards;
- › finally, the Belgian presidency organised a consular dialogue with the United States on 20 October. That EU-US dialogue wants to improve consular cooperation between the European Union and our American partners;
- › in March the S1.1 department participated in a European Consular Cooperation Working Group (COCON) crisis exercise in Tunis.

3. Crisis management

Alert in the world

Vaccination action

In 2009 the world was startled by a spectacular health crisis: the A/H1N1 virus. When the required amount of vaccines against influenza had become available by the end of 2009, Foreign Affairs ensured that all personnel members who were not included in the host country's vaccination plan could be vaccinated within the context of the Belgian vaccination plan. Sending vaccines to those missions was a large operation. This was done in cooperation with the Medical Department and was finalised in January 2010.

The earth is moving

In 2010, the world was startled by various earthquakes, floods and volcanic activity.

Haiti

On 13 January, a heavy earthquake hit Haiti. The crisis centre was opened to answer numerous calls from worried citizens. The centre also coordinated cooperation with the local B-FAST team, the consular team which had been sent to make arrangements to repatriate Belgians and other persons entitled to this service and with Defence. The centre operated for only ten days, thanks to the input of numerous volunteers in the FPS.

After the crisis was over, there was a reception in the castle in Laeken, at the invitation and presence of King Albert II, as a token of appreciation for helping in this humanitarian catastrophe.

Chile

At the end of February, the crisis centre was opened once again after a heavy earthquake hit Chile. The centre could then also count on the cooperation of numerous volunteers who answered incoming calls day after day.

Other times of crisis

The main theme in April was the Eyjafjallajökull. The ash cloud produced by the Icelandic volcano put a stop to a large part of the air traffic and caused great disruption to travelling Belgians. During this period, the S1.1 department processed numerous calls and provided useful information and contact data to the



Members of the B-FAST team in action in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after the heavy earthquake in early January 2010
© ImageGlobe

public. Missions all over the world helped stranded Belgians.

The airport disaster in Libya in May was followed closely. In August, the same happened with the evacuation of European citizens from India, which had been hit by floods.

There was even more distress caused by water in Pakistan, where more than 20 million people were affected. Our department followed the information on this disaster and aid, bundled the data and coordinated the various departments in the FPS.

In December, political instability in Côte d'Ivoire was mainly followed, with special attention being paid to a possible evacuation of the local Belgian community.

Establishment of FACT

During the crisis in Haiti, it once again became clear that there is a need for a mechanism to be able to rapidly send a team to send reinforcement to the local mission or, if there is no Belgian representation (as in Haiti), to personally provide full consular assistance. That is why the decision was made to establish a reserve of volunteers who can be quickly called up to be sent to crisis areas in a *Foreign Affairs Crisis Team* (FACT). In 2011, the further development of that concept, including selection, training and equipment of the voluntary FACT members, was one of the main challenges.

B-FAST in action

The permanent B-FAST secretarial services fulfil an important assignment within our department. They manage purchases, training courses and budget and must simultaneously ensure that B-FAST can quickly intervene in emergency situations.

In 2010, B-FAST executed five successful operations and supported a mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

After the heavy earthquake in Haiti at the start of 2010, B-FAST was one of the first teams on site to



The Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull spews enormous ash clouds into the air, causing major air traffic disruption in large parts of the world, April-May 2010.
© ImageGlobe

help with an *Urban Search and Rescue Team* and a field hospital led by medical personnel. B-FAST freed three live victims from the rubble and provided hundreds of people with medical treatment. B-FAST remained in Haiti in the long term by way of cooperation with the Belgian and German Red Cross.

In January, Albania was also hit by heavy floods. Two persons from B-FAST at the site transferred equipment and medicine to the Albanian authoritative bodies.

In July, B-FAST offered aid to Romania, which was also hit by floods. Approximately seven persons went to the site to install and transfer a water purification system, generators and engine pumps.

In July, B-FAST personnel also supported a medical mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo where an explosion caused numerous victims.

In December, B-FAST concluded the year with two missions: by way of the European delegation, two water purification systems were transferred to Haiti which was stricken with cholera and a team of two persons installed and transferred ten submersible

pumps in Montenegro, which had been hit by floods. Belgium has accumulated a substantial amount of expertise, including detecting and rescuing persons in urban areas (USAR). In order to meet the international standards and to put forward this expertise, B-FAST obtained a quality label by way of the United Nations IEC (*INSARAG External Classification*) procedure in 2010.

Travel advice for 171 countries

One of the department's core tasks is to update travel advice. The number of countries for which the FPS furnishes travel advice is currently 171. This service provision is much appreciated by the public. Our advice is a useful source of information to travellers. This is also apparent from the number of consultations of the website where the "Travel Advice" section is one of the most popular. Moreover, with the publication of the new website, travel advice was given a new and more orderly appearance. Besides that, the S1.1 section answers numerous telephone and written questions on travelling abroad.

Crisis files

The crisis files were updated and optimised in 2010, especially regarding structure and content. Although crises can normally not be predicted and can differ greatly from one another, we must prepare for them as well as possible. From that perspective, the files are an indispensable tool, upon which the section will also continue to build in 2011.

Interest groups

At the national level, the Crisis Centre cooperates with the Coast Guard for the international disaster plan and with Defence for the *Defense & Foreign Affairs Crisis Team* (DFACT). DFACT missions have been to Kigali, Bujumbura, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Also in cooperation with Defence, there was a large-scale evacuation exercise, called *Active Trip*. This was a role-play exercise with extensive military resources in a civil area. This was an ideal opportunity to optimise cooperation and exchange expertise between Foreign Affairs and Defence, with a view to possible interventions abroad.

At international level, the S1.1 section was also involved in various activities and initiatives. At European level, this is the case with, for example, with COCON and the Budapest Club for Open Source Intelligence (OSINT). The section also took part in the Non-combatant evacuation operations Coordination Group (NCG), which aims to achieve international cooperation in evacuation operations. The aim of that cooperation with Defence and international partners is to prepare quick and coordinated action for the benefit of Belgian citizens who might be in danger due to an outbreak of a serious crisis abroad. This action can vary from furnishing correct information to performing an evacuation operation from the crisis area if necessary.

4. Peacebuilding

Projects for a more peaceful world

The Peacebuilding department, which was established in 2006, focuses on financing projects on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This is done in accordance with the priorities of our foreign policy. In 2010, the total budget for this amounted to more than €30 million (30,614,000 euros). All submitted proposals were tested against various criteria approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. These criteria can be consulted at the FPS's website: <http://www.diplomatie.be/en/policy>.

In 2010, the department received 213 new proposals. In the end, 114 were approved with a view to financial support. If one adds the current (multi-year) project to this, then the employees dealt with 231 files this year.

Besides adequate monitoring – in terms of both content and administrative services - that implies, executing follow-up missions on site and regular contacts with the organisations concerned.

Themes

Within the broad spectrum of objectives which the Peacebuilding department covers, the following three themes were prominent in 2010:

- › capacity building and reinforcement of the civil society;
 - › de-mining and non-proliferation;
 - › respect for and awareness-raising of human rights.
- These jointly constitute over 60% of the annual budget.

Regions

In 2010, most attention was again paid to the African continent. More than half of the budget (55%) was used for this. The Great Lake Region came to the fore very strongly in this respect. However, there is also a clear focus on Asia (24% of the budget), especially on Central Asia and the Middle East. The remainder of the resources were spread over Latin America (7%), Europe (4%) and projects that are not restricted to only one continent (10%).

Practical examples

The Alternative Development in Antioquia of the UNODC (*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*) project was funded by way of our budget line in 2010. Antioquia is a department in the north-east of Columbia. The project succeeds in convincing farmers who previously grew illegal coca, to switch to alternative crops such as coffee, cane sugar, rubber and honey. They are granted ownership of their plantations in exchange. Supermarket chains are prepared to sell their products. National federations are encouraged to provide support by commercialising them.

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an international NGO which occupies itself with '*unarmed civilian peace-keeping*' (UCP) in communities with a conflict risk. NP deploys specially trained personnel who overcome that risk through proactive local presence and mediation. In Sudan, NP focuses on capacity building of the local civil society by way of UCP, on advance alert and action mechanisms and on promoting local dialogue. The Peacebuilding department supports the *Developing Civilian Engagement for the Prevention of Violence in Sudan*' project in the province of West-Equatoria (Mundi district).

1. Belgium in a bilateral context

Western Europe and North America

United Kingdom

The eleventh Belgian-British Conference - a bilateral conference which is organised every year - took place on 19-20 October 2010 in the Egmont Palace and the theme was *Player or Spectator? Europe's place and role in tomorrow's world*. Approximately one hundred distinguished political figures, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Steven Vanackere, managers, academics and journalists met to discuss the role and strategic influence of Europe in the international world of the future. Ministers of State Willy Claes and Count Étienne Davignon; Lord Patten of Barnes, *Chancellor* of Oxford University; Baron Frans van Daele, Chief of Staff to the President of the European Council H. Van Rompuy; and Peter Sutherland, international businessman and former EU Commissioner and Director of GATT/WTO participated in the conference as guest speakers. Two new Co-Chairmen made their debut to chair the Board of the Conference in the future: Ambassador (hon.) Lode Willems and Sir Stephen Wall.

France

In September, the *Université Lille-Nord de France* and the KUL-KULAK (K.U. Leuven Campus Kortrijk) signed an academic collaboration agreement. Both universities aim to have an ambitious expansion of the academic interaction on education, research and innovation.

In November it was decided within the context of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Euro metropole that from now on there would be cross-border participation in trade fairs and innovation events under the motto of *Invest in Eurometropolis*.

Benelux

In July, the Flemish Parliament approved the new Benelux Treaty of 17 June 2008 and in October the House of Representatives and the Senate approved it. Luxembourg had already ratified this treaty in 2009 and it was approved by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community. In October, the Netherlands ratified it. An agreement is still being sought on a distribution code for the Benelux budget and on new employment terms and conditions for the Benelux civil servants. The Walloon Parliament and the Parliament of the French Community is still to approve the treaty. When everything has been finalised, Belgium will also ratify the treaty during the first half of 2011.

In view of the start of the operations, cooperation targeted the three main themes of the new treaty as early as 2010: the internal market and economic union, sustainable development and justice/home affairs.

In 2010, under the presidency of Belgium and Luxembourg, countries conducted negotiations on modernising the Benelux Parliament and expanding the competence of the Benelux Court of Justice. The Committee of Ministers, which met on 13 December, decided to finalise the files in 2011.

Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)

In 2010-2011 Belgium fulfilled the office of the presidency of the CCNR. 8 July 2010, during a conference of the *International Safety Guide for Inland Navigation Tankers and Terminals*, saw the introduction of the security manual that inland shipping had long been waiting for, and on which all important inland shipping organisations and company associations had cooperated. Under Belgian presidency, negotiations on a regulatory context for EU-CCNR cooperation were also conducted in 2010.

Central Asia and Eastern Europe

One of the principal themes of 2010 was the boost for our bilateral political and economic relations with Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

As had been the case in the past years, Russia played an important part. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Steven Vanackere visited Moscow on 4 May, where the agenda included contact with his counterpart, Sergei Lavrov. In his turn,

the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev officially visited Belgium on 8 December. Bilateral contacts, for example with Prime Minister Yves Leterme, especially want to emphasise more intense cooperation, particularly on energy. This visit paved the way for the economic mission of HRH Prince Philippe to Russia, which will take place in the course of 2011.

The economic missions of HRH Prince Philippe to Ukraine (21-24 November) and Kazakhstan (11-15 October), in each case a "first", also contributed to developing our bilateral relations with those countries. The Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev officially visited Belgium on 25 and 26 October.



HRH Prince Philippe's economic mission to Kazakhstan, October 2010. From left to right, John stoop, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Steven Vanackere, Minister for Foreign Affairs, HRH Prince Philippe, Henk Mahieu, Deputy Head of Cabinet, and Daniël Bertrand, the Belgian Ambassador
In the background: the Bayterek tower in Astana
© ImageGlobe



HRH Prince Philippe's economic mission to Ukraine, November 2010
In the background: the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev
© ImageGlobe



North Africa and the Middle East

Maghreb countries

The situation in the three Maghreb countries was followed very attentively. The economic mission in Morocco, which was led by HRH Prince Philippe at the end of 2009, generated positive results for our companies. Commercial prospecting is continued in Algeria, while particular attention is paid to efforts that the country makes in combating terrorism. Algeria and Morocco are two partner countries in our bilateral development cooperation. In Tunisia, human rights are a particular point of attention. The FPS has regularly maintained contact with the civil society in Tunisia and with human rights organisations reporting on the evolution of those rights. The situation in Western Sahara was closely monitored. Furthermore, Belgium supported EU efforts to start up relations between the European Union and the Arab Maghreb Union. That cooperation can be a step towards solving the continuous difficulties between countries in the region and in the realisation of a real, unified Maghreb market.

Libya

Minister Steven Vanackere met his Libyan counterpart three times. With each visit, the organisation of the Africa-EU summit in Tripoli and during the Belgian presidency, which was a real success, was accentuated. Furthermore, bilateral contacts focused on the (re-)initiation of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Egypt

Egypt, which is one of the two countries that concluded a peace agreement with Israel, remains an important actor in the region. Egypt supports the peace efforts in the Israeli-Palestine conflict and tries to bring the two rival Palestine fractions (Fatah and Hamas) closer together. The Minister travelled to Cairo, where he also had an interview with the Secretary-General of the Arab League in the margins

of the official meetings. HRH Princess Mathilde participated in the International Forum against human trafficking in Luxor.

Arab-Israeli conflict

President Obama's speech in Cairo at the beginning of his mandate had raised hope. However, this died down under the impulse of the events and the irreconcilable demands of both protagonists in the conflict. The result was a failure, despite the many, direct and indirect efforts by Washington to bring both Israeli and Palestine authorities to the negotiation table. The deadlock was such that the United States announced in December that it would stop its efforts to let both parties negotiate directly again. During this period, the European Union, which was concerned but did not intervene, expressed its full support for the Washington policy. The Union concentrated its efforts on the dual issue: the Gaza Strip, on the one hand, where this region aims to achieve a lift of the Israeli blockade, and, on the other, the necessity for government structures which are indispensable in establishing a real Palestinian state, the so-called Fayyad plan.

The EU clearly confirmed its point of view on a solution for the Israeli-Palestine conflict once again in its statement in December 2010, which had already been formulated one year previously: two states living next to one another within the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the capital. There is no alternative to a negotiated solution, nor is there room for unilateral actions in the peace process. That was Minister Vanackere's unceasing message on his tour and also during his subsequent contacts with high-ranking Israeli and Palestine authorities.

Lebanon

Belgium kept its military presence in Lebanon with a contingent of approximately one hundred soldiers within the context of UNIFIL (*United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon*). UNIFIL was established pursuant to Safety Council resolution 1701 and the intention was that it would put an end to the conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah. Belgian presence consists of a contingent of polyvalent sappers, a logistics support unit and a unit which puts communication and informatics system into operation. Belgian soldiers are cooperating to reconstruct the country and provide humanitarian aid and support to UNIFIL or the Lebanese government.

Belgium finds respect for international law important and is aware that only the truth on the murder of the former Prime Minister Hariri in 2005 will offer the country the opportunity of making a new start. Our country is an ardent advocate of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL). This tribunal was established specially for this purpose. Two Belgian magistrates succeeded one another in high positions on this tribunal. Belgium also contributes financially to the functioning of the STL. The "lawfulness" of the STL is strongly debated.

Jordan

The relations between Belgium and Jordan have been good for many years, as is apparent from frequent meetings at the highest level. In 2010, King Abdallah was HM King Albert II's guest for the second time. It was also during the Belgian presidency that Jordan acquired privileged status within the context of his Association Agreement with the European Union.

Gulf States

Belgium maintains excellent relations with the Gulf States region. We are famous for matters such as our know-how in state-of-the-art technology (construction, energy and the medical sector). A considerable number of companies benefited from the positive atmosphere in the wake of the economic mission to Saudi-Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

at the end of 2009, under the leadership of Prince Philippe. The desire of the Gulf States to diversify their economy offers many opportunities, as does organising the world football cup in Qatar.

A mission of top officials went to the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar to reinforce bilateral cooperation and to discuss the situation in the region.

The EU presidency, in absence of an EU delegation deputised by our embassies in Abu Dhabi, Doha and Kuwait, undoubtedly contributed to our country's increased visibility.

On 14 June, the EU Ministers and Cooperation Council of the Gulf approved a Joint Action Programme (2010-13), the aim of which is to reinforce cooperation in various fields. The meeting also decided to continue negotiations on a free trade agreement, which has hitherto always been a stumbling block between the two regions.

Yemen

The European Union is aware of the many threats confronting Yemen and that is why it drew up an extensive action plan to stabilise the country. Belgium fully supports those efforts.

Iran

The Iranian nuclear policy continues to trouble the international community. Belgium repeated its point of view within the European and international institutions. Our country expressed its concern on respect for human rights in the country. The internal situation worsened even more by the turnout at a large protest movement which says that the results of the presidential elections during the summer of 2009 were tampered with and that it therefore rejects the elections. Although the movement was strongly suppressed, it could not be destroyed. The Belgian embassy in Teheran, together with the FPS, succeeded in freeing three arrested Belgians. Under the Belgian presidency, the EU adopted new sanctions against Iran, not to "punish" the country, but to convince it to respect the signed international conventions on the use of nuclear energy.



Africa south of the Sahara

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

In 2010 our country strengthened its relations with the DRC, in the spirit of the statement signed by the premiers of both countries in 2009. That stipulates that a permanent, open, honest and constructive dialogue be conducted. That approach was confirmed in January during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Vanackere to the Congo and the meeting with President Kabila. The crowning achievement of that policy was the visit by HM King Albert II on the occasion of 50 years of independence. Both countries commemorated that with numerous events. The FPS often played an important role in this. The "biodiversity" expedition on the Congo River, which magnificently showed the far-reaching scientific cooperation between our two countries, is worth mentioning.

Maintaining our policy in the Congo

Still in keeping with the Common Declaration of 2009, Belgium was one of the most important actors which devoted itself to the cancellation of the Congo's foreign debt. That occurred after the country acquired the status of an HIPC country (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries). That is why Belgium also started with the Indicative Cooperation Programme 2010-2013. That focuses on agriculture, technical education and the bachelor's degree, undeveloped terrain and it encourages good governance.

Another sign of the good relations was the opening of the Schengen House in Kinshasa in April 2010. Most visa applications by Congolese who want to come to the Schengen area pass by way of this project. Thanks to the re-opening of the Consulate-General in Katanga, consular activity has once again gained momentum.

As regards reform of the security sector, our policy pursues the same trend as it did during previous years, with the introduction of a military partnership programme. One of the principal achievements in 2010 was the launch of the 3D programme in Kindu

(training by Defence, restoration of the family homes by Development Cooperation and restoration of the barracks by preventive diplomacy). Our support for EUSEC (support for the army) and EUPOL-RDC (support for the police) civil crisis missions was further intensified, in particular by appointing a Belgian as the head of EUPOL-RDC.

We appealed to multilateral organisations to develop our general policy. This was again apparent from the extension of the mandate of the UN mission in the DRC, the former MONUC, which was re-named MONUSCO in May 2010. Within that context we recommended an approach which considers Congolese sensitivity – which was very important at this symbolic 50-year independence – and what an efficient international presence requires, at the service of the population's security (definitely in Kivu).

At the end of 2010, the Belgian government decided to financially support the election process in the Congo. The Congo does, after all, plan four elections between 2011 and 2013: for the presidency, the national and provincial parliaments and for local representatives. This lies in the extension of our support for the democratisation process: large-scale assistance in 2005-06 for the referendum on the constitution and for the 2006 elections.

Belgium continues its commitment to good governance and transparency in the mining sector. It is worth mentioning the editing of the OECD publication "*OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*". We also made a Belgian expert available to the Congolese presidency of the Kimberley Process.

Rwanda

Belgium followed the preparations and course of the presidential elections closely. Our country had close deliberation with the Rwandan authorities, which is apparent from the visits of Ministers Vanackere and Michel to Kigali and the meeting of Prime Minister Leterme and President Kagame in the margins of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Our good relations, characterised by an important development programme, have nonetheless suffered under consular incidents.

Burundi

2010 was also an election year for Burundi, with five elections between May and September. Belgium invested heavily in accompanying this crucial process that should lead to a stable Burundi and managed three parliamentary observation missions. Our country deposited a contribution of €4 million in the management fund that the Development Programme of the United Nations (UNDP) established to fund the elections.

Belgium continued to pay much attention to human rights, good governance and security policy, although an official stop was put to the peace process at the end of 2009. Minister Vanackere still visited the country at the beginning of 2010.

Belgium is the most important funder of the bilateral fund for Burundi. That will still increase in the years to come seeing that various partner countries of Burundi want to cut down on their development programmes.

South Africa

The reinforced cooperation with South Africa continued unabated in 2010, with various bilateral visits and meetings. The official visit by President Zuma to Belgium at the end of September was the highlight, followed by an extensive visit to South Africa by Minister Vanackere. Political and economic cooperation took centre stage during those visits. In the political discussions the theme of "Peace and Security

in Africa", especially in the region of the Great Lakes, was a priority issue.

Sudan

Belgium supported the international efforts under the leadership of the United States and the African Union and expressed its opinion on the correct implementation of the North-South Peace Agreement (CPA/Comprehensive Peace Agreement). Our country funded projects promoting the reconstruction in South Sudan. As regards Darfur, Belgium emphasised the primordial importance of a political solution. The commitment in the fight against immunity from punishment for the most serious crimes was maintained. Within the context of the arrest warrant against the Sudanese President Bashir, Belgium continued its principled support for the International Criminal Court, also after the additional charge of genocide July 2010.

Somalia

Due to the recent increase in maritime piracy before the coast of Somalia, the EU launched the EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta at the end of 2008, within the context of its Foreign Security and Defence Policy. Belgium participated in this part between half October 2010 and half January 2011 with frigate Louise-Marie. Our country also made six officers available, including the second commanding officer.

OPERATION ATALANTA

EUNAVFOR stands for European Union Naval Force Somalia. Operation Atalanta emanates from the resolution of the UN Security Council and has the following objectives:

- to protect the ships of the World Food Programme, humanitarian actions and the military mission of the African Union in Somalia,
- to combat piracy and armed robbery;
- to protect vulnerable ships;
- to monitor fishing activities at the Somali coast.

The Gulf of Aden is one of the busiest navigation and economically most important routes in the world. The operation consists of teams from different countries, including Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.

West Africa

Belgium is concerned about the region of West Africa. The security situation in the Sahel has worsened and the numerous onslaughts on democracy, in particular in Ivory Coast, are closely monitored. The close cooperation with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) produced good results. That also appeared to be an adequate approach to manage delicate political crises.

Europe and the African Union

Minister Vanackere visited Addis Ababa at the beginning of February, pursuant to the 14th Summit of the African Union (AU). Contacts were also laid with the Chairman of the AU Commission and some African Heads of State and Ministers. The purpose of this was to underline Belgian commitment to Africa.

EU-Africa Summit

The third EU-Africa Summit took place in the Libyan capital, Tripoli on 29 and 30 November. Both Prime Minister Leterme and Minister of Development Cooperation Michel participated in this. In addition, Belgian diplomacy played an active role in the preparation for the purpose of supporting the new bodies established by the Lisbon Treaty. Also due to this, the joint declaration of Tripoli was approved, as was the action plan for the 2011-2013 period.

South and East Asia, Oceania

2010 was a transitional year in finalising external European Union action. The Asia department fully endorsed and supported the activities that the EU High Representative for this region deployed. This included preparing and presiding over EU internal political meetings, presiding over political dialogue with Japan, the US, North Korea and Russia, participating in the realisation of the political EU-China Summit, EU-Korea Summit and the EU-India Summit and co-organising the *Asia-Europe Business Forum*, the *EU-China Business Forum* and the *EU-India Business Forum*. It



The 6th EU-China Business Summit, Egmont Palace, Brussels, October 2010
From left to right, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, Wen Jiabao, Premier of China, Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, Yves Leterme, Prime Minister and Karel De Gucht, European Commissioner for Trade
© ImageGlobe

Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and Prime Minister Yves Leterme at the opening ceremony of ASEM8, the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting, in the Royal Palace of Brussels, October 2010 © ImageGlobe



also actively participated in all EU level meetings with Asia or for the benefit of working out a European policy for Asia.

Within European assignments, the eighth *Asia Europe Meeting Top* (ASEM8) was an important event and, with 46 State and Government leaders, one of the largest ever to be organised in Brussels. Numerous initiatives targeting dialogue and cooperation with the civil society and meetings with the economic and parliamentary world took place in the margins of this event.

In April, a regional diplomatic conference with all heads of mission was organised in Tokyo. The department prepared that conference, in which people

outside the diplomatic service also participated, and organised the follow-up.

The department prepared various bilateral contacts with political and economic discussion partners in connection with the visits and in the margins of multilateral events such as the United Nations General Assembly or during meetings such as the World Economic Forum in Davos. Particular attention was paid to meetings organised in the margins of ASEM8. The FPS prepared numerous visits. The joint visit of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs to China, South Korea and Japan in April was afforded full attention. Furthermore, the FPS supported the economic princely mission to India, the parliamentary delegation visit to Vietnam and



South Korea and Belgian participation in the Kabul Conference in Afghanistan. The Chinese Premier Wen JiaBao, the Korean President Lee Myung-Bak and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also came to Belgium on official visits. The department participated in the China reflection days which took place in Hong Kong in November and a contact programme for bilateral dialogue in South East Asia was completed. Finally, cooperation on the business seminar Brilliant India in Brussels in December and the support for the organisation of the Sri Lankan economic mission in Brussels also deserves to be mentioned.

Particular efforts were made to support Belgian policy on and presence in Afghanistan. The department participated in various meetings in Belgium and elsewhere on political commitment in Afghanistan. With reference to the floods in Pakistan and India, the department provided Belgian efforts with maximum support.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

EU-LAC Summit

This region remains a very important political and economic partner. During the sixth EU-LAC Summit of Madrid (16-18 May 2010), both continents strengthened ties again and government leaders decided on more cooperation on technology and innovation. Prime Minister Leterme led the Belgian delegation and participated in the meeting by the Heads of State and Government. During the summit they adopted the Madrid Declaration and approved an Action Plan for the next two years. They also reached an agreement on the establishment of an EU-LAC Foundation to thus strengthen cooperation between the two regions and make it more visible. Negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and Central America and an EU Multiparty Trade Agreement with Peru and Columbia was finalised in the margins of this summit. Negotiations for

an Association Agreement with the Mercosur countries were resumed. Finally, Prime Minister Leterme had a bilateral interview with President Chinchilla from Costa Rica.

Initiatives in various countries

In 2010, Haiti was the focal current affairs topic because of the painful disasters (earthquake and cholera epidemic) which the country was suffering. The presidential elections in November also mobilised the Latin-American & Caribbean department and other departments at the Directorates-General for Development Cooperation and European Affairs and Coordination. Our country was one of the first on stand-by to provide assistance after the earthquake. The B-FAST team was engaged on 13 January – the day after the earthquake. At the Donor Conference in New York, Belgium promised €20 million to reconstruct the country. Approximately half of that was secured at the end of 2010. The tedious electoral process and cholera epidemic in Haiti will continue to require attention seeing that reconstruction, consolidation of the community and support for institutions are closely related. HRH Prince Philippe led an economic mission to Brazil in May, which may be labelled as successful in the light of the large number of participants and the fact that various collaboration agreements were signed. These agreements involve nuclear research, waterways, harbour management and a framework agreement to organise *Europalia Brasil*.

Diplomatic missions in Buenos Aires, Havana and San José temporarily presided over the EU presidency on behalf of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton. The Latin America department in Brussels presided over the 6 COLAT meetings. Many themes were discussed, including the search for a new framework for EU relations with Cuba.

Belgium also led EU political consultations with the United States and Canada on Latin America and the Caribbean. These took place in Washington on 25 and 26 October and the agenda included security

aspects in Central America, regional integration and Haiti.

In relation to the European Union's Association Agreements with Mexico and Chile, Belgium took on the presidency of the political part of the 10th EU-Mexico Joint Committee (Mexico, 27-28 October 2010) and of the 8th EU-Chile Association Committee (Santiago, 25 November 2010). Both bilateral and multilateral topics were discussed during these meetings.

Belgium cooperated on CERCAL (*Centre d'Étude des Relations entre l'Union européenne et l'Amérique latine*) to organise an inter-disciplinary symposium, Libertad, which took place on 11 and 12 February 2010 in the Egmont Palace with reference to 200 years of independence of a number of Latin American countries. There were approximately 250 people who attended the symposium.

On 22 October, the Belgian Chamber of Commerce in Central America celebrated its 20-year existence in the presence of the Nicaraguan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

South-east Europe

Western Balkan

Belgium actively contributed to the international community efforts to facilitate the stabilisation process of the Western Balkan countries and their approach to the European Union and NATO. During the EU presidency, Belgium was able to reach consensus on certain breakthroughs in the stabilisation and association process which is to pilot each of the Western Balkan countries into the EU on own merits. This is why Montenegro acquired the status of Candidate Member State. The Serbian candidacy for EU membership was sent to the Commission for a recommendation. Negotiations on the admission of Croatia are making good progress. Thus, seven new chapters could be provisionally concluded, which brings the total of provisionally finalised negotiated chapters to 28 (out of a total of 35).

In this respect, Belgium supervises compliance with EU conditions such as human rights, minority group rights, rule of law and the fight against impunity (including cooperation with the International Criminal Court on ex-Yugoslavia).

Missions and visits to the Balkan

Belgium's commitment is expressed in contribution to multilateral missions in a few Balkan countries. In Bosnia-Herzegovina two fellow countrymen participated in the EU police mission (EUPM). In Kosovo, Belgium is participating in the civil EULEX mission, with thirty-odd police, magistrates and experts. Belgian EU presidency created more intense bilateral contacts. Prime Minister Leterme visited various places in the region and met the majority of the Heads of State and Government (Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, Croatia, FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - and Macedonia). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the Prime Minister represented the EU at the commemoration of the genocide in Srebrenica 15 years ago.



The Minister for Foreign Affairs Vanackere participated in an important regional conference in Sarajevo, where the European vision on the Western Balkan was confirmed. Furthermore, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs had numerous discussions with their respective counterparts in Brussels. Among others, FPS Foreign Affairs, in close cooperation with the European Committee and Serbian and Macedonian authorities, undertook many actions to curb the influx of asylum seekers from these countries. This partly succeeded and the influx has been declining continually.

Together with the competent federal and federated authorities and founded on numerous bilateral summit meetings, our FPS was able to strengthen the legal context of the relations with the Western Balkan countries by signing 15 new bilateral agreements. These are: 1 agreement to avoid double taxation (FYROM), 1 agreement on police cooperation (Montenegro), 2 agreements on the transfer of prisoners (Albania and Kosovo), 2 agreements on investment protection (Montenegro and Kosovo), 3 agreements on transport by road (Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo), 2 cooperation agreements on social security (Montenegro and Serbia), and so on.

Belgian commitment in the region fits in with its policy on preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. This was put into practice by a few projects, such as identifying persons who disappeared during the conflict, promoting a peaceful community in Mitrovica North, re-integrating the former KPC members (civil security force) in Kosovo, fighting human trafficking (Serbia), reinforcing Justice and fighting indemnity (Bosnia-Herzegovina). Belgium also responded to urgent requests for aid after the heavy floods in Albania and Montenegro.

Turkey

The EU has made commitments to Turkey in the past, both contractually (1963 Association Agreement) and politically (European Council's Final Conclusions in 2004). Belgium sides with this and supports Turkey's integration process in the EU. Our country continues to emphasise strict compliance with the criteria, particularly, in the first place, with those of Copenhagen. Furthermore, it has welcomed the reforms that have already been initiated and it systematically advocates that Turkey continue its efforts. Turkey should also build or further develop good neighbourly relations with all the countries in the region.

During the EU presidency, Belgium continuously played the role of honest broker, a role that was much appreciated by the various parties. Turkey made considerable progress on competition (Chapter 8) by approving a law on State Aid in October. However, that chapter could not be dealt with under the Belgian presidency because the criteria to be met are different, such as the inventory of current state aid to Turkey or the establishment of an independent body for state aid.

Minister Vanackere travelled to Ankara and Istanbul in August and was a speaker at the Bosphorus Conference in Istanbul in October. Furthermore, he met the Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoglu and Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bagis several times.

Greece

Bilateral relations between Belgium and Greece are excellent at all levels. This year it has also appeared that we often have the same points of view on Euro-Atlantic matters. Political contacts, which have to date been modest, were increased during the EU presidency. Greece does, after all, have great expertise and knowledge in certain dossiers: European candidacy of the Balkan countries and Turkey, and the Cyprian issue.

However, the country is wrestling with one of the greatest economic and budgetary crises in its history. That is why the Belgian government thought it expe-

dient to send out a strong European solidarity signal. Prime Minister Leterme travelled to Athens in June, Minister Vanackere in August and Secretary of State Wathélet in October.

Cyprus

Relations with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus are very good, there is no essential difference of opinion. Under the auspices of the UN, which took on the role of facilitator, Belgium continued to support the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot parties in 2010 to reach a negotiated solution. The purpose is to re-unite the island, create a bizonal and bicomunity federation with equal political rights, taking the corresponding UN resolutions into account.

Based on its own experience, Belgium has several times offered to play a role in this reflection process on the structure and operation of the future Cypriot federation. While Minister Vanackere went to Nicosia in August, Prime Minister Leterme, acting in accordance with his European and bilateral authority, visited the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Cyprus in Nicosia.

Diplomacy and economy

Finexpo

The assignment of the Finexpo Interministerial Committee (Export Funding) is to support Belgian equipment goods and services exporters. In this respect it cooperates with companies which conclude export contracts and banks that fund the transactions.

The committee's secretarial services are in the hands of the Financial Export Support Directorate, the Treasury Directorate is responsible for state-to-state loans and both fall under FPS Finance.

Finexpo has four financial tools at its disposal. One of them is used exclusively to support commercial credits, in particular, to stabilise interest rates. Three other tools concern aid credit: state-to-state loans,

interest indemnification (with or without additional donations) and donations. The purpose is twofold: to support our companies and aid developing countries. That aid aims to provide our exporters with improved means to arm themselves against foreign competitors who can count on support from their governments. Large budgets are released for this. Besides, with the continuing economic and financial crisis, exporters are still experiencing difficulties in concluding new contracts.

Independent consultants have evaluated the Finexpo tools. The study, which was initiated by the Special Evaluation Unit, came to an end in June. Not all proposals can be used. Administrative improvements can be implemented easily, whereas others only if Finexpo is allocated certain envelopes in its annual budget. Practical proposals will be made for this in 2011.

The B2 department took on the responsibility of the presidency of the EU working group on export credits in 2010. The Belgian presidency and the European Parliament's INTA reporter discussed the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, which provides the European Parliament with more powers in those matters, in addition to the traditional themes. These contacts took place in close cooperation with the Commission and Council Secretariat.

Image events

On the occasion of the EU presidency, the section responsible for economic interests additionally promoted our country's image and the quality of its goods and services. The budget for brand image stimulates the Belgian label abroad, defends its policy for providing seats to international organisations and increases its opportunities regarding the status of an international centre, among others, by subsidising projects and funding image-promoting actions. A few examples: celebration of the 50-year Congolese independence, the annual conference of the German

Start of the two-day World Economic Forum on Europe, Brussels, May 2010
Over 400 business people, politicians, academics and civil society representatives from more than 40 countries participated.
© ImageGlobe



Marshall Fund in Brussels, joint chambers of commerce, the EU-China summit, the ASEM Summit, a few BOZAR projects, the World Economic Forum (in Brussels and Davos), an exhibition on numismatics in Athens and the Global Compact Conference.

A few examples of funded actions: Belgian week in Bujumbura and Havana, the concert at the official opening of the embassy in Tokyo, the "Gossart" exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, a statue donated to the Europos Parka in Vilnius, the catalogue of the Ensor Exhibition in Madrid and the princely missions to India, Brazil, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. In addition, there were one hundred-odd cultural and PR projects initiated by our diplomatic missions. The FPS also contributed to operational

costs for 28 Belgian Chambers of Commerce abroad and to 6 *Belgian Business Clubs*.

Economic missions

HRH Prince Philippe led economic multiregional and multi-sector missions in India, Brazil, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The number of companies participating in these missions was the same as in 2009. The princely delegation, in which Princess Mathilde also participated, put many company managers into contact with economic decision-makers and local politicians.

Less suspicious diamonds

The Kimberley Process Certificate System (KPCS) is a voluntary cooperation agreement between international governments, NGOs and the diamond industry to guarantee that conflict diamonds are excluded from international trade. Our country played an important role at the start of the negotiations on a future KPCS reform debate. The FPS collaborated with the Egmont Institute on a follow-up study on traditional diamond extraction, focusing on Angola and Liberia. This report is expected in June 2011.

Global Compact (GC)

Belgium launched a local Global Compact Network in our country in 2009. The FPS established a focal point, which is a direct point of contact between the local network and the GC Secretariat in New York. The section supported organising a first Global Compact Regional European Conference, the theme of which was "European trends in corporate social responsibility (CSR)". The conference was meant to be a first step towards more European CSR cooperation. Italy is organising a sequel conference in 2011.

International treaties

The Treaty of Lisbon expanded its commercial EU policy to direct foreign investments. From now on, they will fall exclusively under the European Union. Within the context of the EU presidency, our services continued working on transposition measures meaning to enable policy adjustments. The important policy amendment that has not been put into effective operation, has in the meantime not yet prevented Belgium from being able to ratify and sign agreements. Two agreements with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mauritius on investment protection were ratified and came into force and two were signed with Montenegro and Kosovo.

Belgium ratified a treaty on social security with the Canadian province of Quebec and signed three similar treaties with Argentina, Montenegro and Serbia. Our country signed a treaty with the Netherlands on cooperation and mutual administrative assistance and initialled treaties with Barbados, Botswana, Uruguay and Panama on avoiding double taxation.

2. Belgium in the European Union

Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

In 2010, the highlight was obviously the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union, the twelfth already since the establishment of the EU. During the first six months of the year, the FPS Foreign Affairs was extremely busy preparing for this presidency. As of 1 July, the FPS played a crucial role as information desk, organiser and driving force behind numerous files and events.

The context of this Belgian presidency was completely different from previous editions. Belgium had to consider the Treaty of Lisbon, which had come into effect on 1 December 2009, and it had to face an economic and financial crisis.

This was the first time that Belgium formed part of a three-member presidency, together with Spain and Hungary. That is why the Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination (DGE) received reinforcement from one Hungarian and one Spanish diplomat to be able to simplify the coordination of the different actions for the course of the 18 months. Belgian diplomats were also sent to the Central Administration Offices for Foreign Affairs in Madrid and Budapest.

Preparation

Preparations for the "national" presidency programme started in January 2010 and marked the departure point for the joint presidency of 18 months and the deliberation with the Belgian 2008 mid-field. The programme was discussed and negotiated in the Follow-up Group, an internal steering committee

that the government had established specially for the presidency. Before the ministers explained the programme in the various Council Formations, the Council of Ministers of 16 June approved it and it was presented to the European Parliament on 7 July. Traditional meetings with the Commission and European Parliament took place at the start of the presidency. Substantial efforts were made some considerable time before the start of the presidency to establish good cooperation with the European Parliament.

The DGE made the internal preparations for the various presidency Council formations. They coordinated the compilation of a compendium of technical sheets. Every sheet outlined a subject that could be dealt with during the Belgian presidency and listed the president's objectives, possible trajectories to reach consensus and the key figures. This compendium consisted of approximately 500 sheets that were updated every month.

During the presidency, the DGE paid particular attention to sound communication with Belgian embassies in the EU. The missions were sent information and presentation papers to enable them to fully perform their supporting function in the different capital cities. To inform the public at large, the DGE, together with the Press & Communication Directorate (P&C), compiled a bundle of theme sheets containing all the topics to be discussed during the presidency.

Logistics aspects

The EU presidency also presented the FPS with a logistics and organisational challenge. The Presidency Logistics Unit, as decided by the Council of Ministers on 4 July 2008, was established at the DGE. This was allocated authority to do the following:

1. prepare Council of Ministers' decisions on the allocation of the presidency budget (only at federal level).

Based on a needs analysis and a research into the actual expenses, 4 Royal Decrees on the distribution of the presidency budget were negotiated with a view to their approval in February, June and November 2010. On 31 December 2010, only €59 million (of the €75 million that had originally been budgeted) was allocated to the various ministerial FPSs;

2. inform the Council of Ministers on the progress of the presidency preparations. Various papers providing information were presented to the Council of Ministers at its special sessions on preparation for the presidency (on 15 January, 19 March, 29 April, 17 May and 16 June 2010);
3. establish and manage the presidency's horizontal services.

A central body was provided to manage the services for accreditation, assistance (connection agents) and transport of the delegations taking part in the 16 informal Councils.

In this regard, the Presidency Logistics Unit was responsible for the following:

- › public procurements (limited and general procurement procedures) to grant contracts to private companies;
- › monitoring sound execution of these contracts;
- › financial finalisation of the contracts;
- › coordinating service providers and organisers of the informal Councils;

4. organise the Summit, informal Councils and political meetings.

The Presidency Logistics Unit organised the following events:

- › ASEM8 Summit. 50 Heads of State and Government from Europe and Asia met at the Royal Palace in Brussels (and at the Palace of the Academies and the SQUARE) from 4 to 6 October. There were over 3,000 participants;
- › the informal meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs (the "Gymnich") on 10 and 11 September in the Egmont Palace, under the presidency of Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the EU for foreign policy.

The Presidency Logistics Unit, together with the European Commission and DGD, also took part in preparing for the European Development Days on 6 and 7 December.

Various challenges

The Belgian presidency had to cope with a number of challenges such as the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon and the economic and financial crisis. Both fields are explored in further detail below. Yet, the presidency can also present other important results, at both legislative and non-legislative levels: the climate and environment conferences, execution of the multi-year programme on asylum, migration, justice and internal affairs policies, the expansion of the EU, the free trade agreement between South Korea and the EU, the European energy action plan, European patent, 2011 budget, directives on cross-border health care, falsified medicines and a considerable number of other themes. For more information on the balance of the Belgian presidency, please see: <http://www.eutrio.be/>



Implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon came into effect on 1 December 2009. It implemented a number of institutional reforms, but in many cases it remained limited to a general framework that required further development. A part of this work had already been finished in 2009. Another part of the dossiers were on the agenda for 2010: the establishment of the European External Action Service, European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European civil initiative and reform of the comitology procedures.

The follow-up of these dossiers are outlined below.

In 2009, Herman Van Rompuy was appointed permanent President of the European Council and Catherine Ashton High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. 2010 was dedicated especially to refining institutional arrangements emanating from the said Convention.

The Treaty of Lisbon envisaged radical Foreign Policy changes. The aim of these changes is to establish greater coherence in foreign policy to be able to speak with one voice and to provide the EU with more international influence.

As EU president, Belgium fulfilled a key role during this transitional period. Implementing the Treaty of Lisbon as absolute priority during the Belgian presidency.

European External Action Service

The High Representative, Catherine Ashton, had to rely on the European External Action Service to perform her tasks and this service had to be established step by step. Ashton submitted the draft directive for the establishment and functioning of the service on 24 March. The General Affairs Council reached a political agreement on this on 26 April. That directive formed the basis for the negotiations with the European Parliament, which indeed only had to be

consulted for the establishment directive, but it did have to attach its approval to two other essential tools (the financial regulation and the set of regulations for the staff) and dealt with the package as a whole. At the end of June, an agreement on the establishment directive was concluded between the High Representative, Presidency, Commission and the European Parliament, which was subsequently adopted by the General Affairs Council of 26 July under Belgian presidency. An agreement on allied dossiers was also reached under Belgian presidency and the Council formally approved this in November: amendment to the financial and staff regulations. The European External Action Service officially started on 1 December 2010.

Accession to the European Convention of Human Rights

The Treaty of Lisbon provides for the EU to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The Council meeting Justice and Home Affairs of 3 and 4 June 2010 unanimously adopted the negotiations mandate of the Commission which was also hereby appointed as negotiator. The Commission was supported by an advisory committee of Member States to whom they had to report regularly. Negotiations will be continued in 2011.

European Citizens' Initiative

This is one of the innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon to bring the EU closer to citizens. When at least one million citizens of the Union from a significant number of Member States are of the opinion that a legal act of the Union is required to implement treaties, they can request the European Commission – within the context of its authority - to submit an appropriate proposal on this. The principle of the citizens' initiative had already been established in the Treaty but the procedure and practical implementation was still lacking. The Commission launched its proposal at the end of March, negotiations with the Council and European Parliament took place partly

under Spanish and mainly under Belgian presidency. From the start, the Belgian presidency cooperated closely with the European Parliament reporters to be able to finalise this important citizens' dossier during the first reading. In December 2010, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached an agreement on the citizens' initiative regulation. In this way, European citizens can personally put subjects that they regard as important, on the agenda.

Reforming comitology procedures

The Treaty of Lisbon provides for two new articles that will serve as a legal basis for the Comitology procedures. Article 290 of the TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) concerns delegated actions and sums up a number of conditions that the delegation must meet and that must be laid down in the relevant legislative act itself. Article 291 TFEU concerns the implementation acts and stipulates that the conditions that these must meet must be laid down by regulation.

The Belgian presidency, together with the European Parliament, reached an agreement in the first reading on reforming and simplifying old comitology procedures. As of March 2011, only two procedures (recommendation and research procedures) will apply to the implementing acts. The Belgian presidency reached an agreement on the use of delegated acts.

2011 Budget

The amendments introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon substantially reinforced the role of the European Parliament in the annual budget procedure. In this way, Parliament was equated with the Council on the directives on European expenditure. After difficult negotiations the Council reached a formal agreement under the leadership of the Belgian presidency on 12 August 2010. This agreement provides for a general increase of 2.91% in the 2011 budget as compared to the 2010 budget. Due to the difficult internal budget situation, many Member States regarded the negotiation margin at European level as extremely limited. The European Parliament also adopted a rigid attitude and approved the 2011 budget only on condition that the Council would open a debate on new own assets and if there were to be more flexibility to temporarily adjust the financial context. Because both sides did not budge from their positions, the conciliation procedure of 15 November 2010 between the Council and the European Parliament failed. However, the Belgian presidency still unabatedly continued to study all possible trajectories to reach an agreement on the 2011 budget before the end of the year and so avoid a budgetary crisis and implementation of provisional twelfths. After Council had made some final small concessions, the European Parliament finally agreed to the 2011 budget in the plenary session on 15 December, with a payment credit increase of 2.91%. It simultaneously negotiated a commitment with the next four EU presidencies on the role of the European Parliament in future financial negotiations. Parliament also obtained the Commission's commitment that the latter would present the proposals on own assets to Parliament in June 2011. Despite all the Presidency's efforts, no solution could be found for the flexibility question.



EU's economic strategy

The financial-economic crisis was a priority concern for the Belgian EU presidency. The bank crisis, which had been fully developed during the course of 2008, rapidly made it clear that stricter regulations were essential for the financial sector.

Stepping up supervision

The most important practical result that was achieved in this context in 2010 was that new supervision of the financial system and of the general macro-prudential stability was established by way of the new European Systemic Risk Board. A European System of Financial Supervisors was drawn up and this consisted of three sector European Supervisory Authorities, assisted by the national supervisors. Those three authorities will apply themselves to one of the following micro-prudential aspects: stocks and markets, insurance, pension funds and banking services. The new European supervision architecture has been fully operational since 1 January 2011. The approval of this extensive legislative package in September 2010 is one of the great achievements of the Belgian EU presidency.

Stricter regulations governing the financial sector within the EU was further driven by the dynamics within the G20. Thus, the EU observed its commitment to establish a stricter policy on matters such as *hedge funds* and other alternative investment funds.

Ambitious objectives

The bank crisis also influenced the real economy in a negative way. In 2009, the EU had already been confronted with the largest economic crisis since the Second World War. That is why it was necessary to have a new socio-economic strategy that would draw the EU out of the crisis. This became the *Europe 2020* strategy, which was adopted with the aim of establishing clever, sustainable and inclusive growth.

It contains five ambitious quantified objectives that Europe must achieve by 2020:

- › an employment rate of 75% for women and men between the ages of 20 and 64, including by means of a greater participation of young people, the elderly and semi- and unskilled workers, and through the better integration of legal immigrants;
- › conditions for research and development must improve, public and private joint investments in this sector must be established at 3% of the GDP;
- › carbon gas emission must be reduced by 20% as compared to 1990; the EU must increase its share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption to 20% and energy efficiency by 20%;
- › educational levels must be raised, including by means of the aim towards reducing school drop-out rates to below 10%, and by raising the number of people in the age group 30-34 years who have completed third level or similar education to at least 40%;
- › social inclusion must be promoted, particularly by reducing poverty by way of offering at least 20 million people an escape route from poverty and exclusion.

An important innovation in the governance aspect of this strategy is the introduction of the European semester as of the spring of 2011. This means that the Member States will jointly compile their National Reform Programmes and Stability or Convergence Reports based on general principles agreed by the European Council. Subsequently, based on the analysis of these documents, the Commission will make proposals on country-specific recommendations which Council must approve.

The debates that many joint committees conducted during the Belgian presidency on various aspects of the enforcement of the Europe 2020 Strategy were summarised in a summary report on the presidency in December 2020.

Naturally, the bank and economic crises added to the declining confidence in the financial markets. That confidence also diminished in respect of a few Member States in the Eurozone regarding the capacity to still provide for their own funding needs. In that sense, 2010 was also a year in which the sovereign debt crisis originated in the Eurozone.

When, after the Greek elections in 2009, it became clear that that this country had worse budget and debt figures than imagined, the interest on Greek government securities started rising to such an extent that an intervention by other Eurozone countries was essential. Europe showed its solidarity with Greece and a rescue package, which consisted of €110 billion, of which €80 billion was for bilateral loans from other Eurozone countries and €30 billion by way of the IMF, was quickly offered.

To send a clearer signal to the financial markets, a European Financial Stability Mechanism was established in May 2010. This consists of a European Financial Stability Facility in the amount of €440 billion, on the one hand, and a contribution from the community budget based on Article 122 of the TFEU in the amount of €60 billion on the other. This mechanism was supplemented by €250 billion provided by the IMF. By creating this package, strict conditions for its use were emphasised. Because this facility will cease to exist at the end of 2012 and also because of a possible contradictory interpretation of Article 122 TFEU by the German Constitutional Court, the European Councils of October and December 2010 decided to implement a limited amendment to the treaty, which may leave no doubt that financial support between Eurozone countries is possible by way of legal treaties.

This experience with Greece encouraged the Union to reinforce its budget policy. Thus, in March, the European Council commissioned Herman Van Rompuy to compile a Task Force which had to present measures to the Council for an improved context to solve

crises and enforce improved budget discipline. The European Council approved the final report of the Task Force on 28 October 2010. After that, the Belgian presidency immediately commenced negotiations with 6 legislative proposals to implement the Task Force's recommendations.

The extensive bank rescues performed by Ireland also contributed to a sharp increase in the Irish government debt. That rose so sharply that, in November 2010, Ireland felt compelled to appeal to the European Financial Stability mechanism that had been created in May. In this context, the Euro Group of 28 November 2010 also established a few basic principles for the future European Stability Mechanism.

Transposing Directives

As EU Member State, Belgium is obliged to transpose directives into national legislation within the fixed time limit. As coordinating administrative service, the FPS monitors this. Transposition per se is the task of the different authorities competent in the areas to which the directives apply.

Belgian transposition results

In 2010 Belgium reported 367 transpositions to the European Commission. In 2009 there were only 251, which meant that there was an increase of almost one third. Of the 104 directives that had to be transposed in 2010 or previously, 70 were finalised in 2010. Consequently, there is still a backlog of 34 directives. Belgium strives to achieve a transposition deficit that is as small as possible, which is an exceptionally difficult assignment. Using the biannual Member State transposition score measurement for internal market directives, only one single Member State (Bulgaria) has ever succeeded in transposing all directives within the time limit since this test was instituted in 1997.



Conference on the Transposition of European Directives, Egmont Palace, Brussels, November 2010 © Foreign Affairs/DGJ

The European Commission measures various European Member States' transposition results every six months and lists this on a score board. The past year was the first one during which Belgium was able to respect both political standards that the EU sets for the transposition of internal markets, viz. a maximum permissible transposition deficit of 1% for internal market directives in general and a zero tolerance for directives exceeding two years' transposition delay.

For the May 2010 score board, our country limited the deficit to 0.7% and for the November 2010 score board, the deficit, according to own calculations, was limited to 0.8%. Furthermore, in 2010 there was no directive with a transposition delay exceeding 2 years. In 2009, this figure had been reduced from three directives to one by the end of the year. Therefore, this positive trend continued during the

past year. With these results, Belgium puts itself in the EU Member States team. This result is a breakthrough, certainly in the light of the fact that transposition is a complex matter.

Transposition conference

On 22 and 23 November, the Belgian EU presidency organised a conference on the Transposition of European Directives in Brussels. More than 150 civil servants from all EU Member States and representatives of the European institutions further explored the various tools available to them to accelerate or facilitate the transposition process. The conference, which took place in the Egmont Palace was a great success. Poland is prepared to organise a follow-up conference in October 2011.

INFRINGEMENT PROCEEDINGS

If the Commission is of the opinion that a Member State has not complied with one of its obligations pursuant to the Treaties, it can act against the Member State on the grounds of Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The Commission will put the Member State in default. If it does not agree with the Member State's remarks, the Commission can publish a substantiated recommendation against this Member State. If the Commission does not agree with the Member State's answer to this substantiated recommendation, it can submit the case to the European Union Court of Justice (see next point).

The Commission can close the infringements if the latter accepts the Member State's arguments or if the Member State in question has taken the necessary measures.

The mere existence of infringement proceedings does not automatically mean that the Member State was negligent or, if such is the charge, that it incorrectly transposed or applied a European legal regulation. Only in cases where directives were not transposed and judgements by the Court of Justice EU were not executed in good time, is it certain that the Member State is at fault.

Infringement proceedings

Unfortunately, Belgium has a high number of infringement proceedings (124), compared to the European average (65). Yet, the Federal Council of Ministers and the Consultative Committee had adopted an action plan in September 2009. During the second half of 2010, the FPS succeeded in stopping the rise in the number of infringement proceedings. In addition, a reflection process was started with the authorities concerned to permanently reduce the high figures.



Court of Justice of the European Union

During the past year, Belgium appealed to the Court of Justice of the European Union quite a few times to defend Belgian interests or to indirectly influence European law by way of the jurisprudence of the European institutions. Belgium was thus involved in 80 cases pending before the Court of Justice at the end of December (as compared to 76 in 2009).

Our participation focuses on prejudicial proceedings, viz. when a judge of a Member State appeals to the Court for an interpretation or the validity of a European law provision (59 pending cases on 31 December 2010).

The other cases concern appeals due to non-compliance, which cases were submitted by the Commission (i.e. due to incorrect application of the European law or incorrect directive transposition, which constitutes the largest group – 11 appeals due to non-compliance on 31 December 2010).

Besides these two main legal case categories, Belgium is also involved in recommendation proceedings on an international draft agreement that is to introduce a European dispute settlement system for patents. In addition, our country is also involved in a higher provision against a decision by the Court on state aid. Finally, Belgium intervened a few times in direct cases to support other Member States (7 pending interventions on 31 December 2010).

You will find more detailed information on interventions by Belgium as Member State at the European legal institutions in 2009 in the most recent report on department J2.2's activities issued by our FPS.

COURT OF JUSTICE

Since its establishment in 1952, the Court of Justice of the European Union has been entrusted with “respecting the law when interpreting and applying” Treaties. Within the context of this assignment:

- the Court of Justice of the European Union supervises lawfulness of the acts of the institutions of the European Union;
- ensures that Member States comply with obligations emanating from the Treaties;
- and at the request of the national judges, interprets the law of the Union.

This means that the Court is the European Union's institution which administers justice and, in cooperation with the legal institutions of the Member States, ensures that the law of the Union is applied and interpreted in a uniform manner. The Court of Justice of the European Union, established in Luxembourg, comprises three jurisdictions: the Court of Justice, the Court (established in 1988) and the Civil Service Tribunal (established in 2004). Since the establishment, these three institutions have made approximately 15,000 judgements.

3. Belgium in a multilateral context

Stronger EU participation in the United Nations

The implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon is still seriously impeded in a few international institutions where the European Union only has observer status. That is particularly apparent in the Union's external representation by the President of the European Council, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission and delegations of the European Union. The limitations for the EU refer to the ranking order of the speakers' list, submission of texts, a guaranteed seat in a number of meetings, etc. The country that has the rotating presidency speaks and acts on behalf of the EU at those institutions.

This is the case in the General Assembly of the United Nations, where only states are fully-fledged members. Yet, the General Assembly may decide to grant non-members some prerogatives, which means that they are in a better position to participate in UN operations. Such privileges have been granted to the Vatican City or the Palestine Authority in the past.

Draft resolution

That is why Belgium, supported by all 27 EU members, submitted a draft resolution to the UN Secretariat at the beginning of September. There was a long run-up period of "outreach" to the broad UN membership. The permanent Belgian representation played a leading role in this. The text was adjusted to take other partners' sensitivities into account.

In the initial text, the EU, as observer, requests the following possibilities to act within the UN:

1. actual participation in operations of the General Assembly, commissions and working groups, international meetings and conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly;
2. the right to speak at the appropriate time;
3. the right to circulate documents;
4. the right to make proposals or submit amendments;
5. the right to propose order motions;
6. seats that enable the exercise of those rights.

It does therefore not concern full membership, but indeed functional adjustments that must enable the EU to exercise the tasks of the previously rotating presidency.

During the discussion of this proposal for a resolution in the General Assembly of the UN on 13 and 14 September, a number of UN Member States requested more time to think, however, and supported a motion to adjourn the debate for that purpose. The motion was adopted with a limited majority of 76 versus 71 votes, and 26 abstentions.

The text was revised to eradicate the fear of a number of countries (e.g. the Caribbean, Pacific and Africa) that they would lose influence in the UN and to meet other countries' complaints. A period of thorough "outreach" to all UN Member States followed, both by way of bilateral political initiatives in the capital cities, in New York and Brussels, to explain the exact intentions and scope of the resolution. On 22 November, under the presidency of Belgium and of the EU delegation, there was subsequent in



formal consultation of the entire UN membership in New York, which once again made it possible to answer questions and on the grounds of the comments by third-world countries, to further refine the text. Afterwards, an information and outreach campaign by way of the capital cities, New York and Brussels, was initiated once again in preparation for a second general round of consultations in New York, which was scheduled for February 2011, under Hungarian and EU presidency.

Formal submission of the revised resolution, consultation and voting will take place later in the year, if possible by consensus. As of that moment, the EU will be able to make a real contribution by way of its representatives (President Van Rompuy, High Representative Catherine Ashton, EU Commissioners and the European Delegation in New York) to the operations of the General Assembly, which corresponds to its actual global influence and importance.

A key year for security policy

Regarding security, 2010 emphasised four challenges:

1. developments of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (during the semester in which Belgium was the President of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the Political-Military Group (PMG) and the *Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM)* on behalf of the High Representative Catherine Ashton;
2. Belgian contribution to the civil crisis management of the EU;
3. Belgian contribution to the new strategic NATO concept and other NATO decisions;
4. the coordinating role that Belgium took upon itself in the Corfu Process, alongside the EU delegation at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the preparation for the Astana Summit.

These challenges are described in further detail below.

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

In the second semester of 2010, Belgium made every effort to assist the High Representative. Our departments proposed a CSDP development programme to Ms Ashton. She launched various reflection documents and seminars on the most important challenges facing this European policy. For this purpose, M1 and BRU-COPS cooperated symbiotically with the Ministry of Defence on the CSDP political and military aspects and with FPS Home Affairs (Federal Police) and FPS Justice (on the political and civil aspects).

Seeing that the High Representative did not afford the CSDP much priority in 2010, Belgian reflections on these challenges were all the more important to prevent the trend of the last six years from dying down. That is why Belgium emphasised the themes of "institutions", "capacity", "partnership" and "operations" most from the start.

Institutions

- > determining which tools of the Treaty of Lisbon are of essential importance to developing the CSDP (military and civil strategy);
- > cohesion between the CSDP and *Freedom, Security & Justice*, in other words, between internal and foreign security.

Capacity

- › How does one define military skills in relation to the EU security strategy to thus expand the *Headline Goals 2010*? How are they to be achieved within the context in which Member States must take strict budgetary measures? What trumps do the Treaty of Lisbon ("permanently structured co-operation") deliver? What forms of *pooling, sharing & specialisation* are realistic between the Member States' forces?
- › Civil capacity: how are the *Headline goals 2010* continued? What are the recruitment and training strategies in the Member States? What type of internal coordination is advisable with the support of the European institutions? Which information tools (are to be used) for the police on missions (*Intelligence Led Policing*)? Which EU concept (should there be) for the CSDP *Justice* missions?
- › Civil-military synergy on capacity: how is this co-operation (also civil-military) to be developed in practice after "Lisbon"? Is a planning and approach capacity for operations advisable (permanently operational civil-military headquarters)? How is synergy to be developed in the training course, in particular, by reinforcing the European College for Security and Defence?

Partnership

- › EU-US cooperation regarding crisis management;
- › strategic EU-NATO relationship;
- › EU-Africa partnership for peace and security (EU-Africa Summit).

Operations

We constitute in various Member States (not in the least, for example Denmark and the United Kingdom) that there is strong doubt as to whether new missions and operations should be launched. Some even want to close down or cut down on current missions. Belgium strongly advocated that EUPOL DRC be maintained.

Civil Crisis Management (CCM)

In the past Belgian contribution to CCM missions depended especially on the circumstances. The time had come to consolidate and systematise that policy. Our departments first outlined a national CCM strategy. This has not been politically approved yet because of the caretaker government. On the one hand, the aim is to expand the number of experts posted to EU missions and, on the other, to give them training courses that correspond to requirements of the operations on site. Thus, the number of experts of FPS Foreign Affairs rose from 9 in 2009 and 2010 to 14 as of 2011. Furthermore, the mission of Belgian experts to the EUPOL mission in Afghanistan is more than symbolic. Our departments contributed the substantial part of their conscientious work to this cooperation.

The new NATO concept

Nuclear NATO missions

Together with the Benelux, Germany and Norway, Belgium was able to convince NATO to review the Allied nuclear architecture. The aim is to achieve an equivalent level of dissuasion based on fewer nuclear weapons. The NATO will commence this thinking exercise in 2011.

Implementing a new strategic concept

- › in close cooperation with Defence and after having consulted various civil society experts, our departments proposed political policy priorities for a new strategic NATO concept.
- › The Belgian priorities are: the central role of Article 5, reinforcing political consultation by way of Article 4, responding to new threats, emphasising, in particular, allied political and military added value, the necessity of developing a political link between NATO and the EU, making an authentic Allied partner of Russia and (finding) the equilibri-

um between political ambitions and financial possibilities. These Belgian priorities were largely incorporated in the new strategic concept and approved at the Lisbon summit in November.

Reform of the Alliance

This exercise is essential for the future of the Alliance. Belgium and its partners want to define the main principles for the *Host Nation Support (HNS)* policy. This deals especially with resources made available to NATO infrastructure by the countries where it is established. With the NATO and SHAPE (*Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe*) headquarters on our territory, Belgium is naturally very much involved in HNS, which is itself a part of the broader NATO reform.

OECD: the Corfu Process and Astana Summit

In 2010, it became distinctly apparent at various meetings, such as the Ministerial Conference in July, the Reform Conference and the Astana Summit, that there are indeed principles, commitments and the will to continue the Corfu Process and make it succeed. Seeing that the Treaty of Lisbon is not yet in full force, M1 and the OSCE team assisted the EU in Brussels.

Furthermore, the department made the arrangement for us to take part in electoral observation missions, funded OCSE projects and delegated Belgians to OCSE institutions and missions.

G20 / reforming the IMF and OECD

G20

It is only after the 2008 financial crisis that the G20 adopted its current form regarding the level of Heads of State and Government. It is the most important inter-governmental forum for economic cooperation. In 2010, there were two G20 summit meetings, one in Toronto in June (at the same time as the G8 summit in Muskoka, both in Canada) and the other in Seoul in November. The G20 Ministers of Finance and Governors of the Central Bank met six times and the Employment Opportunities Ministers met once.



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper addresses the press after the G20, Toronto, June 2010
© ImageGlobe

The G20 considers mainly economic and financial issues: international cooperation, financial market regulations and the reform of international financial institutions. There is a tendency to expand the operations, however. Thus, for the first time, the G20 Seoul Summit considered development issues.

Belgium, as such, is not a member of the G20, even though the EU does indeed represent our country. As president of the Ecofin Council, the Belgian Minister of Finance participated in meetings with colleague ministers alongside the Commissioner responsible for

economic and financial issues and the President of the European Central Bank.

Thanks to its diplomatic missions network, the FPS Foreign Affairs was able to gather information on the G20 points of view and it informed the Belgian institutions concerned of this.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

As of 2008, the G20 had undertaken to provide developing and emerging countries with better representation at the IMF. The Finance Ministers' summit in the South Korean Gyeongju reached an agreement on this. This provides for matters such as voting right rearrangement in favour of those countries and for "two developed European seats" less in the Executive Council. If the schedule is followed, the reform will be put into practice by the end of 2012. Belgium supported the reform and accepted a lower voting right percentage.

OECD

New countries joined the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD): Chile, Estonia, Slovenia and Israel. Furthermore, the OECD made a few theme contributions for the G20.

On the occasion of its 50-year existence, the OECD is holding an extensive debate on its future. That debate will take place during the Ministerial Council Meeting under presidency of the United States Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Support for the International Criminal Court

Belgium continues to support the International Criminal Court. Our country actively participated in the first Reform Conference of the Rome Statute (Kampala, 31 May to 11 June 2010). That conference was a success, partly because there was consensus to approve the Belgian proposal to amend Article 8. In this way non-international – in addition to international - armed conflict was incorporated in the list of war crimes. The crimes that are added to the list concern the use of certain cruel weapons: poisoned weapons, suffocating gas and munitions causing exceptional suffering (dumdum bullets).

One can ascribe its accomplishments particularly to successful awareness-raising of the Rome Statute Member States, coordinated by the direct International Public Law, in close cooperation with other FPSs and with the assistance of the International Red Cross. After difficult negotiations in which Belgium was actively involved, the conference also approved a definition of the crime of aggression concept.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

This independent, permanent, international criminal court prosecutes individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The Criminal Court only deals with cases if the country where the crime was committed or the country from where the criminal comes, is a Court member. The condition is also that national states, which, in principle, do have jurisdiction, are not prepared or able to investigate or deal with the case. The crimes must have been committed after 1 July 2002.

The International Criminal Court was established in 2002, after 60 countries had ratified the Statute for an International Criminal Court ("Rome Statute"). In the meantime, 108 countries have signed the Statute. The International Criminal Court does not form part of the United Nations but does cooperate with it. The Court is located in The Hague.

Fight against cluster munitions

As the first country in the world having a national prohibition on cluster munitions, Belgium made particular efforts to realise the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Our country signed the convention as early as 3 December 2008 and ratified it at the end of 2009, which made Belgium the 22nd party to the Convention treaty.

Belgium has in the meantime destroyed its entire stock of cluster munitions.

After the new convention came into effect (1 August 2010), the parties to the treaty met for the first time in the Laos capital of Vientiane from 9 to 12 November. The fact that HRH Princess Astrid was honorary president of the Belgian delegation, shows how important Belgium regards this. As active vice-president of the conference, Belgium promoted universal application of the convention.



*Convention on Cluster Munitions
HRH Princess Astrid and Werner Bauwens, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, listening to an Afghan victim of cluster munitions. Mr Bauwens was the deputy president of the first meeting of the Convention on the prohibition of cluster munitions in Vientiane, an international recognition of Belgium's role in the formation of this disarmament treaty.
© Foreign Affairs/DGM*

The Laos President, Choummaly Sayasone, had an audience with Princess Astrid. He thanked Belgium sincerely for its role in implementing the convention and for its contribution to the conference. Princess Astrid later had the opportunity of meeting victims of cluster munitions.

Belgium annually spends €6 million on humanitarian projects in the fight against land mines and cluster munitions. In 2010, this amount reached the €8 million mark. Protecting the physical integrity of citizens in conflict areas and humanitarian concerns are distinct priorities for our country.

It is worth mentioning that this includes the fight against illegal trade in small and light weapons (SALW). Our country drafted a report for the UN. The FPS Foreign Affairs supported the inter-FPS coordination on this matter and contributed to tracing illegal weapons within the UN context.

Non-proliferation back on track

"NPT back on track" That was the challenge facing the test conference for this treaty (New York, May 2010). The latest substantial result in the NPT process dates back to 2000, when thirteen practical steps were accepted on disarmament in particular. However, the "9/11" attacks, defensive and offensive reflexes of the US, which had global consequences (relations with Arabian countries, Namibia, Russia and China) rapidly made the reduced priority of the NPT clear.

After a deadlock of 10 years, the parties are now explicitly confirming their renewed commitment.

A substantial and balanced result was achieved for the three pillars of the Treaty – nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Together with the High Representative, Belgium continually pointed out the necessity of actual points of action. Belgium submitted proposals for each of the three NPT pillars, par-

tial aspects of which were eventually included in the final result.

For the "non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" pillar, the necessity of consciously complying with the obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency was now stated explicitly. This is a fundamental step forward, seeing that non-compliance with the treaty by countries such as Iran and North Korea has been endangering the international non-proliferation system for some time now.

The outcome statement also signified a breakthrough in a dossier for which there has been little progress since 1995: the Middle East. In 2012, the UN Secretary-General will convene a conference with the region's countries on the establishment of a zone that will be free of weapons of mass destruction. The EU will actively contribute to this and has offered to organise a preparatory meeting on this in 2011.

Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC)

In 2010, Belgium contributed to a solemn, ambitious and visible EU attitude in the run up to the Reform Conference of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 2011. The Belgian position was tested in advance in the relevant industrial sector.

Active during the Climate Change Negotiations

Re-sit in Cancun

In accordance with the 2°C objective, the Copenhagen Agreement (December 2009) requested developed countries to formulate absolute reduction objectives on greenhouse-gas emission. It also requested the developing countries to take action in accordance with their development and capacity. Furthermore, the Agreement contains clear political commitments on climate funding. In the short term (2010-2012), this concerns approximately \$30 billion of global funding. For the medium term (by 2020), the agreement requests public and private funding in the amount of €100 billion per year. In general, not much consensus was to be found for far-reaching measures.

RE-SIT IN CANCUN

The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), Climate Convention for short, is a so-called framework convention that was finalised under the responsibility of the United Nations in 1992 and signed during the *Earth Summit* in Rio de Janeiro. The aim of the treaty (or "convention") is to reduce greenhouse gas emission and, in doing so, to prevent unwanted consequences of climate change. The most important decision-making body is the *Conference of Parties* (COP), in which all parties annually deliberate on the progress of the work under the convention.



The official logo of the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico, November 2010. Representatives from 194 countries participated in the conference. © ImageGlobe

It was decided in Copenhagen to further explore two negotiation tracks and to present the result of these negotiations at Cancun, Mexico, for approval. The two tracks are: the Kyoto track with absolute binding reduction objectives for developed countries and the Convention track with a broad approach which comprises mitigation, adaptation, technology and funding that target both developed and developing countries.

Approximately all countries formulated limited ambitions for Cancun, namely: to achieve a balanced package of decisions whereby all building blocks (mitigation, adaptation, funding and technology) are raised. For the greatest majority of the developing countries and for the EU, this package was meant to offer a view of a legally binding outcome that should have to comprise the two negotiation tracks. Countries such as China and India, on the other hand, still had reservations regarding the perspective of a binding outcome under the Convention track. To an important extent, this was also fed by the reticence of countries such as Japan, Russia and Canada in respect of the new contract period under the Kyoto Protocol.

Belgian EU presidency

As EU president, Belgium put forward the following strategic lines: in the first place, the EU had to regain its traditional mediatory role. That is why the EU had to display an open attitude regarding a second contract period under the Kyoto Protocol. Subsequently, the EU was in urgent need of a vision for a balanced package of decisions on the building blocks (mitigation and the like) for both negotiation tracks.

EU's contextual position was explained by the Council Conclusions of the Environment Council and confirmed on the European Council. The EU continues to strive to achieve a comprehensive binding climate agreement based on the objective of limiting climate change to a maximum increase of an average of 2°C. Cancun had to make a decision on the progress (to be made) when developing the building blocks.

Excellent diplomacy

Cancun was an extraordinary conference. By means of informal deliberation, Mexico attempted, in the first place, to rebuild the damaged confidence between the negotiating partners. Under the hosting country's guidance, all delegations clearly expressed willingness to reach a compromise. Both China and the US explicitly wanted to avoid being blamed for any failure and opted for a constructive position. India paved the way for a meaningful agreement on transparency of the policy measures and it was also a leading figure on technology.

The EU found itself in its traditionally best position: that of mediator between North and South and of safe keeper with an adequately high level of ambition. Mexico's sublime diplomacy finally piloted climate negotiations into a result which was nonetheless seriously surprising from more or less all points of view.

The Cancun result is a balanced package comprising both negotiation tracks. In global terms, "Cancun" universally approved the contents of the Copenhagen agreement. It also took important steps forward re-

garding climate policy building blocks. The totality fits in with a vision which focuses on the 2°C objective. Both the developing countries and the non-governmental sector remarked that the EU had reorganised itself contextually. There was also distinct coherence on the contents within the EU. It was clear that the Belgian climate team was strong and efficient on subjects ranging from strategic choices, contextual expertise to logistic organisation.

Focus on human rights

Human Rights Council

In March, Minister Steven Vanackere addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council on Belgian priorities. In his speech, he referred to matters such as the necessity for all States to apply human rights as universal, indivisible and common standards to everyone, the contribution of the Universal Public Review (UPR) as new tool in promoting human rights, the importance of the fight against all forms of discrimination, finding a balance between the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion, women's rights, children's rights, the fight against torture, random detentions, forced or involuntary disappearance and human rights in the fight against terrorism.

Belgium is a member of the Human Rights Council for the 2009-2012 period. Alex Van Meeuwen, the Permanent UN Representative in Geneva, was elected President of the Council for one year, from June 2009 to June 2010.

The Human Rights directorate based its Belgian actions on Minister Vanackere's priorities. Our country supported all General Assembly Council resolutions on mandates against countries violating human rights.

A broad perspective on human rights

Besides the civil and political rights, Belgium also specialised in economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to water. Belgium made efforts for an optional protocol to supplement the Convention



on the Rights of the Child. Together with Slovenia, Belgium was able to let the UN General Assembly approve a consensus resolution in support of the International Convention on Eradicating all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Within the context of the Universal Periodic Review Belgium intervened on the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Angola, Guinea, Kenya, Kuwait, Kirghizia, Laos, Spain, Belarus, Jamaica, the United States, Bulgaria and Lebanon.

Belgium contributed financially to the United Nations' ordinary budget which funds the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Furthermore, our country also voluntarily transferred substantial additional amounts to the OHCHR (*Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*). This puts Belgium in the sixteenth place of the most important donor Member States.

The Directorate closely followed human rights in all states where Belgium is diplomatically represented. Every mission had to compile a detailed report and annual sheet on human rights. This documentation is used to prepare high-level bilateral meetings or in determining points of view in the EU or UN.

The directorate also worked on a report on human rights in 18 partner countries, which was presented to Parliament by the Minister of Development Cooperation.

Human Rights Policy in the EU

For the entire year, the Human Rights Directorate – Humanitarian Actions (M3) worked on editing the UPR (*Universal Periodic Review*), which will be presented in May 2011. It also focused on preparing for and fulfilling the presidency of the Council's Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) on behalf of the High Representative.

Important results were achieved in that working party. For example, the EU human rights policy at the coming into effect of the Treaty of Lisbon was reviewed. The High Representative received practical proposals to arrive at a policy which focuses on

human rights in foreign EU actions. In these proposals the European Parliament and civil society are also

involved in a better manner.

Furthermore, the EU achieved all its objectives in the Human Rights' Council and the UN General Assembly. This concerns matters such as: approval of a resolution against the death penalty, country resolutions (Sudan, Somalia, Kirghizia, Iran, DRC, Myanmar and Ivory Coast), a new mandate on the freedom of association and a new mandate on women's rights. The EU has maintained great unanimity on these matters, also as regards the Middle East, which is a traditional divisive element within the EU.

4. Belgium and development cooperation

Leading the EU presidency

Informal and Formal Councils

The theme of the EU presidency was the smooth transition to the new “post-Lisbon” institutional structure. At the end of October, Belgian Development Cooperation (DC) organised the first informal Council of Ministers for Development Cooperation. This took place under the presidency

of the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, which was an indication that development cooperation constitutes an important EU policy cornerstone. Belgium paid particular attention to two dossiers: general budget support and innovative means of funding. In November, the formal Council of Ministers of Development Cooperation considered the European Commission’s Green Papers, a view of the future of the European development policy.



*The European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, and the Belgian Minister of Development Cooperation, Charles Michel, identifying the headlines of the debates at a highly acclaimed edition of the European Development Days, Brussels, December 2010
© Dimitri Ardelean/Foreign Affairs/DGD*



International summit meetings

Belgium participated in a few important international summit meetings. The UN Summit on Millennium Goals took place in New York in September. In October, there was the World Summit on Biodiversity in Nagoya (Japan), which examined the Convention on Biological Diversity. Our country, together with the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, played an important role there. At the Climate Summit in Cancun in December, the Belgian Development Cooperation delegation also assisted in securing a good outcome for climate negotiations.

European Development Days

From the time they were created in 2006, the European Development Days have become the annual meeting par excellence for professional collaborators in the sector. Belgium organised two keenly attended, high-level political panels, one on the consequences of the Treaty of Lisbon for development cooperation and another on the particular needs of the Least Developed Countries. Belgium was also responsible for two successful seminars on aid efficiency and child labour in the cocoa sector. For the public at large there was a wide range of cultural activities which focused on international cooperation: a fashion show, concerts, films, workshops, exhibitions, etc. A Belgian stand that drew particular attention and was honoured by a visit by HRH Prince Philippe, grouped Belgian development cooperation together with its main partners: universities, NGOs, federal research institutions, etc.

Peer review by the OECD: on the right path

Belgium on track

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluates a Member State's development cooperation every four years. This produces recommendations to improve the operation of the aid policy. Canada and Switzerland assessed Belgian

Development Cooperation in 2010. The peer review lasted 9 months and, in addition to an intensive programme in Brussels, also included an on-site visit to Burundi.

The DAC is delighted with the great diligence with which Belgium wants to raise its aid to 0.7% of the GNI and wants to improve its quality. The reforms that Belgium has recently implemented enjoy a great deal of support in political circles and in civil society. In this way, the aid is beneficial, first and foremost, to Belgium's poorest partner countries. A start was made to modernise the cooperation two years ago. This entails more strategic multilateral support, programmes that are more in line with partner countries' priorities, new contracts to cooperate more closely with non-governmental actors and more effective ways to send aid to the destined places.

The review pays a great deal of attention to Belgium's intervention in vulnerable States. It recommends that Belgium outline an inter-ministerial approach, and therefore, aim at achieving greater coherence between the different policy fields (commerce, migration, climate, etc.) that influence the development of vulnerable states. The DAC is satisfied that Belgium has increased its humanitarian budget by 71% since 2004. When Belgium reforms its currently rigid legislation, it will be in a better position to determine priorities for its humanitarian action and in that way make a more important contribution to development in the long term.

More joint vision

According to the review, Belgian aid would gain in effectiveness and efficiency if a large number of development actors were to develop a more joint vision. The position of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation must be reinforced so that it can adequately fulfil its strategic and coordinating role.

The peer review also stated that we must allow the lessons learned in the field to weigh more upon development policy. By delegating more decision-mak-

ing authority to local offices, policy is better able to take the local context into account and make its administrative services more effective.

Millennium Goals

From a development point of view, 2010 was especially a year of evaluation for the Millennium Goals (MDGs), United Nations' development goals to be achieved by 2015. With 5 years to go, the international community has recorded interim results and studied the long road yet to be travelled.

MDG Summit in New York

Everyone who is concerned about the North-South issue cast their eyes on New York in September. A UN summit meeting which inspected to what extent the MDGs had been realised and how progress could be accelerated was held there.

Hundreds of reports were made, debates conducted and policy documents written in the run-up to New York. This resulted in greatly improved knowledge of "what works and what doesn't". For example, the Summit made the approach to achieve the MDGs much more efficient.

Yet it still appeared that it is not easy to compile a strong outcome text. There was a major difference between standpoints of the North and the South on crucial points such as human rights, gender equality and additional development aid. New York therefore also produced a rather vague outcome document. Nevertheless, Belgium aimed at achieving a short outcome statement containing a strong political commitment.

Does this mean that the Summit was a flop? The Belgian Development Cooperation thought not. Let us pinpoint six positive results:

- › all 192 Member States went to New York to express their explicit support for the Millennium Goals. This means that poverty eradication is now the focal point on the global development agenda. In

that sense, the meeting was historically important because this was definitely not the case 10 to 20 years ago;

- › the atmosphere in New York was exceptionally constructive, which is no comparison with the confrontational atmosphere that sometimes prevailed at other recent summits. Much rather than hammering on the fact that donor countries did not meet their obligations for aid, the developing countries worked out their own efforts. It now seems to be a generally accepted fact that achieving the Millennium Goals is a collective responsibility;
- › gender was, justifiably, the most recurrent theme. Also the outcome document "*Keeping the Promise: united to achieve the MDGs*" repeatedly discusses gender inequality and women as indispensable actors in development;
- › the Summit paid a great deal of attention to what works in the field and what does not. The debate clearly states that progress is best served when countries translate Millennium Goals into strategies adapted to their own situation;
- › the link between peace, safety, respect for human rights and development no longer appeared to be a taboo in the South. As a matter of fact, the outcome document explicitly discusses human rights as a vital factor in achieving Millennium Goals.
- › Our country's active support caused a great deal of attention to be paid to new development funding systems. A team of experts has already been able to show the world that, technically, it is perfectly possible to tax international financial transactions.

Reforming humanitarian aid

Humanitarian aid differs from other types of aid offered by the Belgian Development Cooperation. The only humanitarian aid objective is to provide an urgent response to an emergency situation irrespective of the place where the need arises or the interests that Belgium defends there.

Transition and innovation

Belgian humanitarian aid is in the middle of a fully transitional process. DGD was once again made responsible for managing all humanitarian aid streams in 2010. The budgets were restructured and a new regulatory umbrella context, based on peer review, evaluations and consultations with local and international stakeholders and experts, was developed. Magnitude, strategy, funding and management were gradually adjusted.

Based on an evaluation of the severity of the crisis, the population's needs and the capacity of the humanitarian multilateral partners and NGOs, countries experiencing on-going crises are allocated the most aid. Humanitarian dramas in DR Congo, Afghanistan and Sudan could once again count on Belgian assistance this year. A framework within which Belgium can prepare populations for disasters was also put into operation this year.

Watchful efforts when disasters strike

Regarding the speedy response to natural disasters, Belgium continued to invest in projects that enable vulnerable populations to handle disasters better. Our country increased its contribution to funds that can be deployed as soon as disaster strikes. This is why our contribution to the UN *Central Emergency Response Fund* and the *Red Cross Disaster Response Emergency Fund* made it possible to release money for the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan, the most important crises in 2010.



In addition to making record contributions to food aid to the World Food Programme (WFP), structural changes were also made to Belgian humanitarian aid in 2010.
© WFP

In addition, investments were also made in specific projects when certain needs exceeded the capacity of the other tools. For example, the Pakistan crisis gradually grew worse, and contributions were therefore also made according to the evolving needs and by using transparent allocation processes. The earthquake in Haiti caused immediate destruction, whereby our service responded flexibly to immediate needs and, with competent partners, developed a coordinated reconstruction agenda for the next three years.

European Working Party

The theme of the Belgian Presidency of the European Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) was, in particular, the improvement of its power. Additional attention was paid to reinforcing the humanitarian message as input for political policymakers in times of important humanitarian crises. The working party's activities were particularly important for European coordination and exchange of information on the crises in Haiti and Pakistan. Furthermore, agreements were made on rapid European response to crises and on the negotiation of a new Food Aid Convention.

Belgium as sector lead donor

Belgium acted as *sector lead* (or co-lead) *donor* for the donor community in 13 of our 18 bilateral cooperation partner countries. This means that the international cooperation attaché presides over a sector consultation group on, for example, agriculture or health care, intrinsically manages and coordinates donors within that sector.

Recognising sector expertise

Such consultation and coordination groups are presided over and managed by either the Technical Ministry of the partner country - the ideal scenario - or by an active (bilateral or multilateral) donor. They are platforms for consultation with donors and the partner country's government. The parties involved discuss sector programmes and follow them up, programme and coordinate aid and hold policy and politically related dialogue. "*Sector lead*" therefore forms part of the Belgian image. In a number of cases, it even endorses a particular Belgian sector's expertise, for example, health care in Rwanda. In addition, if sector budget support is concerned, the lead is also allocated an important (political) responsibility. The attaché is then assisted by a sector expert from the Belgian Development Agency, BTC. Such arrangements, where Belgium acts as the lead with sector budget support, apply to countries such as Rwanda (health) and Tanzania (local governance). Belgium can also be the lead where there is no budget support, such as agriculture in Benin and health in Burundi and Niger.

Lead donor arrangements

The Paris Declaration on harmonising and coordinating aid refers to the lead donor and makes it responsible for coordinating and distributing tasks among donors and with the partner countries. The EU Code of Conduct goes one step further in this regard and also proposes lead donor arrangements for priority sectors, including the reduction of transaction

costs for aid. Then, by way of delegated cooperation from the other donors (ideally, silent partners), the lead is then given the authority to act in their name to use the resources, policy dialogue, follow-up and reporting.

Knowledge and development policy hand in hand

Research platforms with results

Since 2009, three new research platforms have been providing the Belgian Development Cooperation with assistance in knowledge and development preparation. This resulted in the following specific projects during the course of 2010.

KLIMOS, the Research Platform Climate Change and Development Cooperation, developed a handy analysis tool that will henceforth be used to monitor the impact and risks of Belgian development projects and adapt them where necessary. The tool was tested with case studies in Limpopo, South Africa. KLIMOS also provides DGD with input to monitor REDD, the mechanism that is meant reward developing countries that protect their forests and, in so doing, reduce CO₂ emissions.

The platform on **aid effectiveness and aid architecture** made a practical contribution to the European Commission's Green Paper on Budget Support by way of an internationally recognised study of "budget support and policy/political dialogue". This research platform also worked on integrating gender in the new indicative cooperation programmes in which the focus was on rural development.

PULSE, which researches the level of support for development cooperation in Belgium, conducted a survey among the Belgian population. This showed, for example, that Belgians still feel very much in-

volved in the poverty in the South, but adopt an increasingly critical approach on development cooperation and budget spending.

States General

This year, the theme of the third edition of the "States General of the Belgian Development Cooperation", which, with 400 participants, is the most important forum for Belgian development professionals, was the UN Millennium Summit in New York. Speakers such as Daniel Kaufmann, Jan Vandemoortele, Andris Piebalgs and Amina Az-Zubair proposed important courses of thought to help determine the Belgian point of view on Millennium Goals.

Biodiversity Year

The UN declared 2010 as the *International Year of Biodiversity*. The countries that signed the Biodiversity Treaty met in Nagoya, Japan, in October. Belgium represented the EU and therefore played a major role. After prolonged negotiations, three crucial dossiers were adopted: the Nagoya Protocol on the access to genetic resources, the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and mobilisation of financial resources. With these historic agreements, Nagoya is recorded in history as a milestone in protecting our biodiversity.

Federal scientific institutions designed special projects to raise attention for and knowledge of biodiversity. 2010 was characterised by expeditions, exhibitions, events, publications and research projects that drew particular attention to the importance of our biodiversity. Development cooperation also paid additional attention to this in its awareness-raising activities.

Congo 2010 Biodiversity Expedition

The Congo River Expedition 2010 was begun in April. 67 scientists and a number of journalists sailed the Congo River and its tributaries by boat to research the biological resources of the Congolese Equator Forest – one of the world's least known rain forests – for 47 days. DGD was the most important subsidy provider because the project entails considerable capacity reinforcement for Congolese scientists: scientific and material support, the establishment of a Biodiversity Centre, the accumulation of reference collections and the opening of the Congolese scientific world.



A boat full of scientists of the 2010 Congo Biodiversity expedition moors at the riverside village of Yaekela, near Isangi on the Congo River.

© Thomas Hiergens/Foreign Affairs/DGD

Congo's 50-year independence

The Year of the Biodiversity and the 50th anniversary of Congolese independence not only appeared to be the ideal context for an expedition, but also for numerous socio-cultural activities. With the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation, the 50th anniversary mobilised tens of thousands of people both in the Congo and in Belgium.

Belgian Development Cooperation Evaluation

In January 2010, there was a decision to integrate the DGD internal evaluation office in the Special Evaluation Office. Henceforth, the new Special Evaluation Office will be responsible for all the Federal Development Cooperation's strategic evaluations.

BTC's achievements

The achievements of the Belgian Development Agency were audited in 2010. Projects that arose under the third management contract between BTC and the State were evaluated for the first time. In this way, the office could check whether procedures stated in that contract produced results on intervention quality. The evaluation shows that the preliminary stage of new projects is considerably shorter than under previous management contracts. There is still room for improvement in the process starting from the ICP the intervention is performed. The evaluation makes the necessary recommendations for this.

A study was also conducted to prepare discussions on a fourth management contract. Various foreign donors were examined closely to find inspiration from their good practices. One of the most important recommendations for new contracts concerns importing indicators to improve monitoring the cooperation between BTC and the State and have a more performance-oriented working method.

NGO capacity building

The Belgian NGO partners' capacity building was evaluated. It transpired that there were a few sticking points. For example, it was recommended that NGOs make a contextual analysis of the environment in which their partners work and thus record their needs. NGOs must also have a clear perspective of those needs: they can be institutional (how can my organisation function better?) or contextual (how can I improve putting my message across?). The required knowledge is to be found more and more in the partner countries. Partnership quality is allied to mutual long-term confidence. And when a partnership is at an end, it is crucial to work on an exit strategy in good time.

Belgian development cooperation is encouraged to pay particular attention to capacity building in evaluating programmes. Targeted criteria can help fathom complex capacity-building processes. NGOs can also be encouraged to approach capacity building professionally.

A new view of development cooperation in Niger

Belgium coordinated common evaluation in Niger on behalf of the other principals: the European Commission, Denmark, France and Luxembourg. The most important recommendation proposes a radical approach. For example, coordination between donors must be reinforced to improve response to Niger's priorities. Development cooperation must support adequately strong economic growth and thus compensate for demographic growth. Technical support for the economic policy and careful budget support are adequate tools. Social sectors targeting the poorest groups must be funded by international transfers in the long term. That aid will only have a long-term effect if the country can achieve an annual economic growth rate of 3% over 30 years. The success of the cooperation depends on the donors' long-term commitment.



Finexpo¹

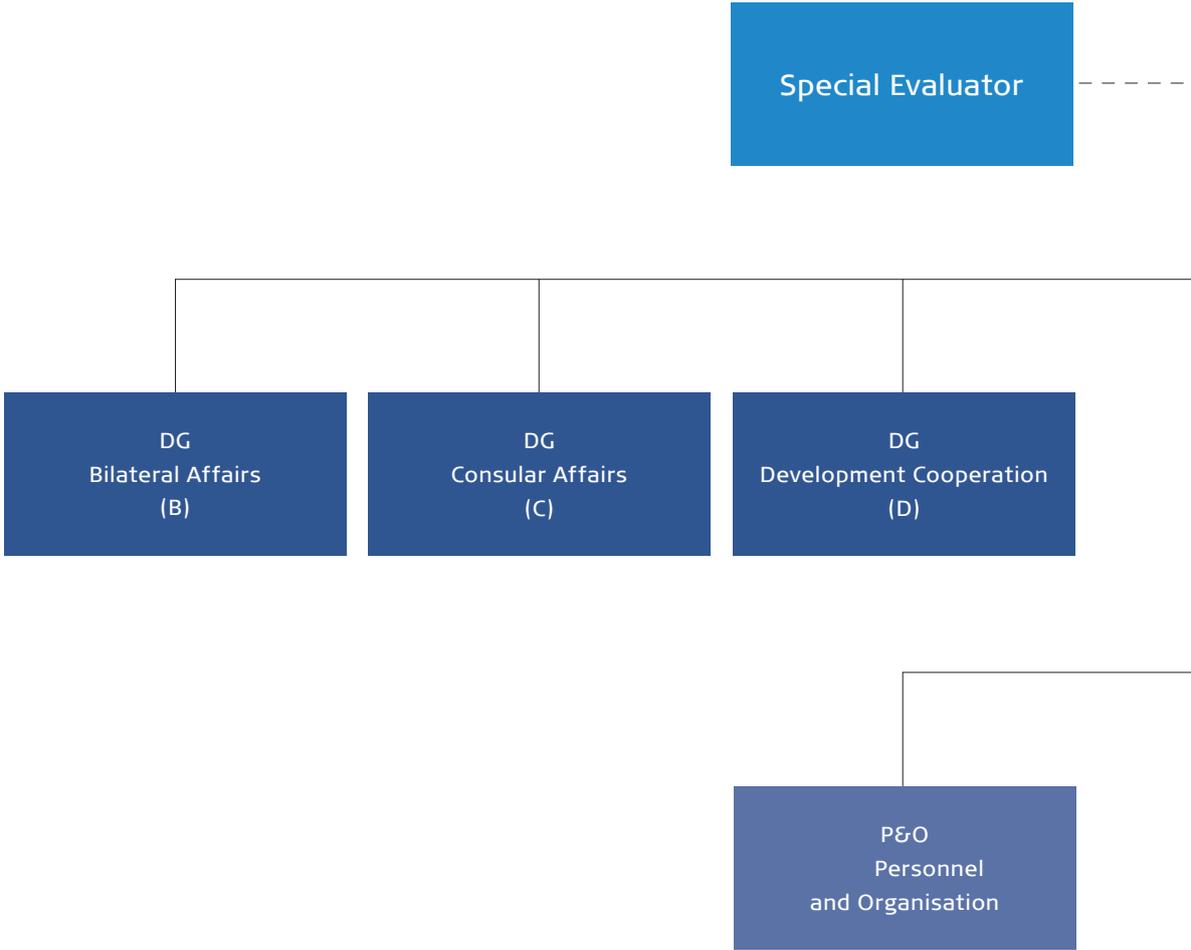
Finexpo is the structure that supports foreign trade, manages mutual state loans and interest payments. These are two tools that can be included in official development aid (ODA). Finexpo's purpose is two-fold: on the one hand, export support and, on the other, development. The evaluation recommends that Finexpo formulate strategic choices in the form of a mission statement. That strategy can then serve as a guideline for projects that have been submitted. The evaluation also proposes selection criteria. Finexpo must guarantee that financial projects be monitored to make it possible to capitalise on experience.

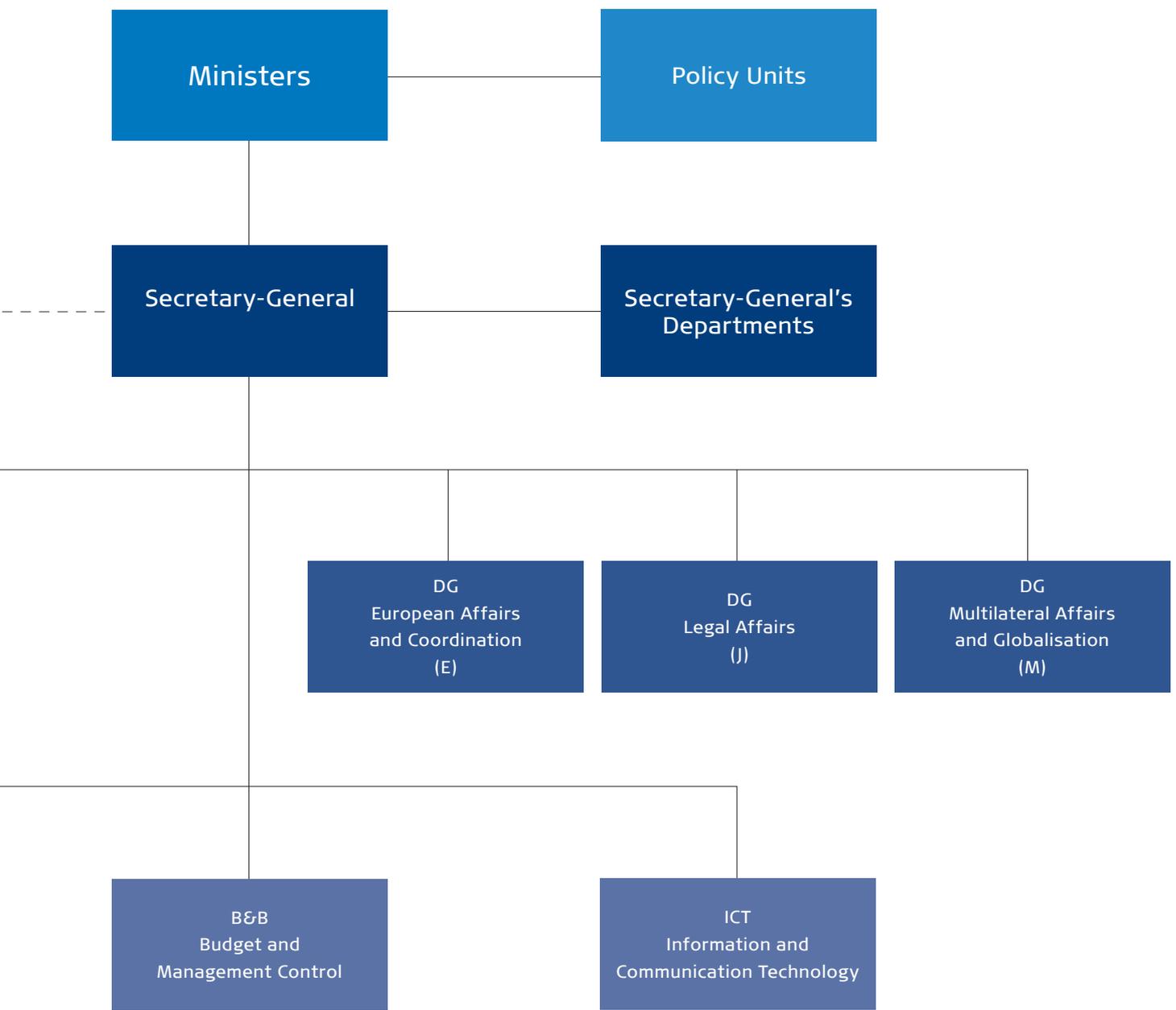
¹ See also p. 40 Diplomacy and economy



ANNEXES

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







Acknowledgements

FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
Communication Department
Rue des Petits Carmes 15
1000 Brussels
Tel. + 32 2 501 81 11
<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

Photographs:

- * ImageGlobe
- * FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (DGJ/DGM/DGD)
- * WFP

Graphics, layout, printing and binding:

- * CIBE vzw communicatie op maat van de publieke sector (Government Communications Centre)

Content Officer:

Dirk Achten, Rue des Petits Carmes 15, 1000 Brussels

The information contained in this publication is for information purposes only and does not legally bind the FPS in any way.

May 2011

Legal registration: 0218/2011/27





KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Federal public service

**Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**

<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

