



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation

Activity Report 2011



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Foreword

Looking at the events of the past year, we can safely say that the success of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union at the end of 2010 carried over into 2011.

Although it is a fact that internal politics were dominated by an apparent standstill because of the prolonged term of the caretaker government and budgetary caution, there was much more action on the international scene, often literally.

2011 will unmistakably go down in history as the year of great political upheaval in the Arab world. The unseen call for democracy started in Tunisia and was immediately followed in numerous other (neighbouring) countries, including Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria. While the transition in Tunisia translated relatively smoothly into the organisation of the first democratic elections, this required much more footwork in Egypt, and in particular in Libya; it also remains to be seen how the tense situation in Syria will continue to develop. An escalation of the conflict there not only threatens to turn into a full-scale war, but also to pull the entire region with it into a dangerous spiral.

I am still convinced that open dialogue and on-going deliberations are the most important weapons to offer the people's justified complaints with the opportunity of having a better and freer life.

Belgium has also continued to play a meaningful role in Central Africa over the past year.

In the run-up to the crucial presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, our country provided the necessary political and financial support to this election process.

Special attention was also paid to the voting results in Western Africa, in particular, in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger.

When the financial crisis raged in 2011, especially in the eurozone, our country did not watch from the sidelines but, on the contrary, devoted itself to an efficacious and shared European approach, which was founded on budgetary discipline and greater solidarity between the Member States.

Globally, our country continued to invest in preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. In particular by financing projects concerning mine clearance, disarmament, respect and awareness-raising for human rights, capacity-building and reinforcement of

the civil society, countries are assisted in preventing violent conflicts and achieving sustainable peace. In this respect, in 2011, special attention was paid to the countries in the region of the Great Lakes (through the Congolese elections, for example), Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Economic diplomacy continues to be another spearhead of image-promoting activity for this FPS. Typical examples of this are the missions to places such as Poland, Russia and China, the last two of which were led by Prince Philippe. The mission to China in particular, with a Belgian delegation of over 450 representatives from 223 companies, resulted in various cooperation agreements in the academic, scientific and port sectors.

Furthermore, two new image projects were initiated in 2011: the overhauled digital newsletter, e-gmont info, which provides important and wide-ranging information about our organisation, and the start-up of the revamped mission websites.

As the central point of contact for a large community of Belgian ex-pats and travellers, this FPS also bears an enormous responsibility regarding consular assistance through its diplomatic and consular missions. Whether this concerns issuing temporary passports, providing legalisations, recording acts or providing fellow nationals in need with legal aid and assistance, this task package forms a crucial part of the services we provide.

Since 2011, our missions issued only electronic IDs to Belgians and continued implementing biometric passports, featuring fingerprints and other means of identification. Within the scope of the joint European Union visa policy and the fight against visa shopping, consulates and embassies are now also obliged to issue only biometric visas.

The earthquakes in Fukushima (with the ensuing nuclear threat) and eastern Turkey, the war in Libya or, indeed, the continuing humanitarian aid to Pakistan once again also necessitated coordination between, among others, the crisis centre and all the other actors involved (consular services, B-FAST, diplomatic missions, the EU, etc.) These actions lend a human dimension to the Belgian policy concerned.

This is why the daily input and enthusiasm of our colleagues, both in Brussels and locally, is part

of this FPS's success. Upcoming challenges may appear daunting because, as is the case with the neighbouring countries, it will be necessary to make budgetary sacrifices, even in our country. These sacrifices are not always reconcilable with the objectives that we set ourselves. But if I look back at the past year, I cannot help but face the future with confidence.

Didier Reynders
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs



1. RESOURCES

1. Internal organisation of the FPS

National Security Authority (ANS/NVO)

Security clearances and verifications

In 2011, the NVO processed approximately 7,000 files on applications for security clearances for natural persons, 117 files on applications for security clearances for legal entities and over 4,000 files on security verifications within the context of security certificates and recommendations.

Overview of the statistics

	Security clearances for natural persons	Security clearances for legal entities	Security verification
Number granted / positive decisions	5,681	116	4,213
For a fixed time limit	29	30	N/A
For a certain level	1	N/A	N/A
Rejections / negative decisions	27	1	50

19 applicants appealed to the Security Clearance Appeal Board (for security clearances, certificates and recommendations) against decisions made by the ANS/NVO.

	Number of appeals lodged	Number of decisions overruled	Number of decisions confirmed	Appeal not yet decided	Appeal devoid of purpose
Security clearances for natural persons	13	7	4	1	1
Security clearances for legal entities	1	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Security verification	5	4	0	1	N/A

Multilateral and bilateral agreements on the exchange and protection of classified information

The 27 EU Member States signed the intergovernmental agreement on the protection of classified information (exchanged) in the interests of the EU. This agreement will also require amendments to be made to the Law of 11 December 1998 on classification and security clearances, certificates and recommendations.

The ANS/NVO conducted successful negotiations with Cyprus, Luxembourg and Slovakia on concluding a bilateral agreement and with Israel on concluding a technical arrangement.

Security committees

The Secretary's Office of the ANS/NVO represented Belgium on various security committees and working groups of the European Union, NATO, the European Space Agency (ESA), Eurocorps and Galileo.

The number of international meetings gradually increased, as did the impact of the international decisions on the national regulatory context.

Security

The Arab Spring made this an eventful year for the Security Service. The region required permanent monitoring in close cooperation with the various Directorates and external partners. An important file in this context was Libya, where the Minister decided to close the embassy in Tripoli at the end of February because the safety of our staff was no longer guaranteed. After the safety situation was evaluated, the embassy could once again be opened at the end of October 2011. In this regard, the Security Service provided various additional security measures, such as the use of an armoured vehicle and an armed protection team from the Ministry of Defence.

Furthermore, the Security Service once again processed 236 applications for security clearances for FPS employees. As of 2011, invitations for clearance renewals will gradually be sent automatically to all employees. Such clearance enables our employees to deal with classified information and is often absolutely essential to perform their task package correctly.



Compound of the former Libyan leader, Gaddafi, Tripoli, 3 October 2011

The Egmont Palace was and, after the Belgian EU presidency, has still remained, much sought after as a place for organising events. The Security Service permanently guaranteed appropriate security for every event.

Revamped mission websites

The web team launched the Central Administration's revamped website in 2010. Testing of the websites of the Belgian foreign embassies, consulates and permanent representations started in 2011. Approximately 120 of the outmoded websites must be replaced. The technology used is the same as that used for the main website. The advantage of this is that a part of that content, especially regarding consular matters, automatically appears on all revamped websites and this only needs to be adjusted once. For this project, the Communications

Service web team is once again cooperating with the ICT web team, FedICT and Passwerk (people with autism spectrum disorders).

The biggest change for the user is that the websites will now be country-specific, rather than specifically for an embassy or consulate. The fact is that it is not always clear to Belgians abroad which mission they must address for which problem. The intention of the country-specific websites is also to provide the information in a much more uniform manner. The user will always find the information in the same place on every country's website or on the Central Administration website, which creates user ease and confidence. Moreover, in principle, only one webmaster is then required for each website. The graphics of the new country-specific websites have naturally also been revamped, and they now all have the same look.

Italy came first: the revamped website <http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/multi/italia/> was baptised at the end of August. All the other websites will now be revamped one by one. The project should be finished by the autumn of 2013.



Italy was given the first of the revamped mission websites

E-gmont info, our FPS newsletter

Internal communication plays a major role in an organisation, especially if it is as big as our FPS and has branches all over the world.

Need to know, good to know and nice to know!
The overhauled digital newsletter, e-gmont info, (first published in 2011) provides our organisation with varied and essential information every week. All employees in Brussels and the missions therefore cannot do without it if they want to stay updated on changes in the FPS regarding procedures, benefits, projects, staff movements, etc.

The e-gmont info is also the product of good teamwork that has materialised within the Foreign Affairs FPS.

This teamwork was built up between an editorial committee at the Communications Service and a network of contacts (editorial members) at each of the Directorates and/or Directorates-General during a period of one year.



The logo for e-gmont info, our FPS newsletter

Interest groups

Since the 4th state reform in 1993, the Constitution has given the federated entities extensive powers regarding foreign relations, while simultaneously guaranteeing cohesion of Belgian foreign policy. The King presides over foreign relations, without prejudicing the competence of the communities and regions to regulate international cooperation as provided for in Article 167 of the Constitution.

Permanent consultation between the federal state and the federated entities is essential to guarantee Belgian foreign policy coherence and to regulate practical cooperation between the authorised actors at an international level. This permanent consultation is guaranteed by S3.2.

Being the hub for foreign-level relations between the FPS and the federated entities, S3.2 occupied itself with the following in 2011:

- daily consultation with the federated entities, FPS services, Belgian diplomatic missions and other FPSs to regulate practical cooperation;
- permanent structured and ad-hoc consultation and coordination with the federated entities;
- monitoring current affairs and state reforms to be able to evaluate and anticipate their practical consequences and evolution and formulate proposals.

Institutionalised consultation

ICFP (Interministerial Conference on Foreign Policy)
Given that there was only a caretaker government, there was no ICFP set up.

Working group on joint treaties

This is the only working group established permanently by the ICFP within the context of the Cooperation Agreement of 8 March 1994 between the federal state, the communities and the regions on the representation of the Kingdom of Belgium in the Council of Ministers of the European Union (regarding more detailed regulations to conclude joint treaties). This working group met eight times in 2011.

Ad-hoc consultation

Pursuant to the workshops organised by the Chairman of the Executive Committee with the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region, and with the French Community and Walloon Region in 2010, there were workshops with the German-speaking Community and Brussels Capital Region in April and November 2011, respectively. The intention of these workshops was to have a better perception of the organisation and functioning of the respective administrative services and to examine more closely the mutual policy priorities and challenges.



Workshop of the FPS with the German-speaking Community, April 2011



1. RESOURCES

2. Personnel

Staff evolution

In 2011, the FPS recruited 26 employees from among internal officials for the Central Administration (17 A level, 4 B level, 4 C level and 1 D level). As regards careers abroad, 25 employees from among the foreign officials (diplomats) and two expatriate officials (regional supervisor bookkeepers) were appointed.

Given the more limited room to manoeuvre and reduced staff budget, only a few of the leaving colleagues could be replaced in 2011. The gradual staff reduction at Central Administration, which had started in 2010, was also noticeable in 2011 and will be pursued during the years to come. That is why, now more than ever before, priorities will have to be established when replacing colleagues who leave.

Furthermore, the new system of internal mobility must make it possible to fill vacancies arising from some person or other leaving quicker and to respect the principle of the right person in the right place. That new system of internal mobility will be based largely on the selection principles used at the recruitment stage.

The FPS has set up the SeppMacro management system together with the FPS P&O and other government services to permanently monitor the staff budget and database. This must make it possible to continuously keep track of staff budget and evolution from now on and to ensure that appropriate and necessary measures are taken immediately.

New challenges

The FPS is continuing to work on a more modern staff policy.

For example, over and above the current job descriptions, the very first competence profiles have been developed. These profiles will be developed and implemented in stages. They are useful selection, recruitment, promotion and internal mobility tools.

The WinTime time registration system was fully operational in 2011. Within the scope of the employee self-service principle, this system affords the staff members and their supervisors the

opportunity to personally consult and manage the balance of holidays and overtime.

In 2011, the first preparatory steps were also taken with the FPS P&O to integrate administrative and financial staff management at Foreign Affairs in a new transversal eHR project. This project launches a centralised staff policy.

Number of staff employed

The tables below show how the staff is composed at Central Administration and at the missions, as well as the amount and types of missions on 31 December 2011.

The locations of the different missions are shown in the world map at the end of this annual report.

Number of staff employed at the FPS Central Administration and abroad (31 December 2011)

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

Established internal officials	645
Internal officials under contract	431
Diplomats	163
Chancellors (consuls)	47
Attachés for international cooperation (development cooperation)	19
Total at Central Administration	1,305

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

Diplomats	273
Chancellors (consuls)	98
Attachés for international cooperation (development cooperation)	46
Expatriate officials under contract	144
Officials under contract employed on site	1,326
Total in missions and Permanent Representations abroad and in Brussels	1,887
GRAND TOTAL (CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, MISSIONS AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS)	3,192

In 2011, the embassy in Asia-Caucasus was closed and an embassy was opened in Kabul.

Number and category of embassies and consulates (31 December 2011)

Missions	
Embassies	89
Consulates-general	21
Consulates	9
Permanent Representations	10
Cooperation Offices *	6
Total	135

*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.



1. RESOURCES

3. Buildings

Buildings abroad

New buildings were purchased in the past year.

More particularly, a residence in Brussels for the Permanent Representative to the European Union. Two purchase files are pending for chancelleries in Dublin and Kiev.

The renovations to a floor in a building in Sofia continued and the building was to be occupied at the start of 2011. Prospection has also been done in Mumbai and Buenos Aires.

Prospection and examination regarding an important building project for a new chancellery in Kinshasa were done in cooperation with the Department of Defence.

Drastic construction, renovation or expansion works were started or continued at missions of which our country is the owner, such as in Amman, Budapest, Kigali (work completed), Luanda, Islamabad, Algiers, Rome-Holy See and Luxembourg. Others were scheduled for 2011, such as Athens, Berne, Cologne, New Delhi, Madrid, Paris, Rabat, Sao Paulo, Vienna, Stockholm and Washington. Numerous missions have already undergone a series of smaller maintenance and renovation works.



Renovated Belgian embassy in Budapest

Managing our artistic heritage and the purchase of new works of art are always afforded special attention. Various residences were furnished and refurbished. Various chancelleries were provided with new office furniture.

Vehicle fleet renovation remains a point for attention; a number of official cars and armoured vehicles have been replaced.

There were a number of purchases and work was started to bring monitoring of access and security of the posts' communication in line with EU and NATO standards.

We must continue to negotiate with other FPSs and with the federated entities regarding a reasonable contribution that they pay when they use offices belonging to Foreign Affairs.

New initiatives have been taken to allocate more responsibility to the missions and the manual on heritage management is being updated.

Buildings in Brussels

These buildings are leased. Egmont 1, the main building, 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 de Bréderode 2*.

The FPS manages the Egmont Palace and Val Duchesse in partnership with the Buildings Agency (*Régie des Bâtiments*).



1. RESOURCES

4. Budget and financial resources

Division	Programme	Area	Commitment cre
1		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs	
2		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Development Cooperation	
3		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs	
4		Strategic bodies of the Minister for Development Cooperation	
12		Strategic bodies of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs	
21		Management bodies	
	0	Management and supervision	
40		General services	
	1	Protocol	
	2	Training	
	3	Conferences, seminars and other events	
	4	Humanitarian aid	
	5	Representations abroad	
	6	Communication, information and documentation	
	7	International cooperation	
42		Embassies, consulates and cooperation missions	
	0	Subsistence programme	
	1	Buildings fund	
43		Directorate-General for Legal Affairs	
	0	Subsistence programme	
51		Directorate-General for Bilateral Affairs	
	0	Subsistence programme	
	1	Bilateral relations	
	2	Economic expansion	
52		Directorate-General for Consular Affairs	
	0	Subsistence programme	
	1	International institutions	
	2	Humanitarian aid	
53		Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation	
	1	Multilateral relations	
	2	Science policy	
	3	Cooperation	
	4	Humanitarian aid	
54		Directorate-General for Development Cooperation	
	0	Subsistence programme	
	1	Governmental cooperation	
	2	Non-governmental cooperation	
	3	Multilateral cooperation	
	4	Special missions	
55		Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination	
	1	European relation	
		Date: 2/02/2012	

redits (in € thousands)	Organisation credits (in € thousands)	Credit in ordonnance (in € thousands)	Ordonnance (in € thousands)	
4,634	4,058	4,634	3,914	
3,450	2,863	3,440	2,782	
620	64	620	64	
537	54	537	54	
303	235	313	253	
76,711	74,376	77,069	74,074	
76,711	74,376	77,069	74,074	
15,202	12,200	18,135	14,292	
1,980	1,790	1,980	1,840	
1,069	858	1,069	704	
166	82	3,099	2,306	
1,200	461	1,200	363	
3,253	2,027	3,247	2,183	
1,592	1,315	1,592	1,206	
5,942	5,668	5,948	5,690	
208,272	200,038	212,215	187,092	
193,965	186,020	194,350	178,334	
14,307	14,017	17,865	8,758	
760	760	760	685	
760	760	760	685	
45,219	42,577	31,765	31,336	
10	4	10	4	
5,139	4,729	5,139	4,719	
40,070	37,845	26,616	26,613	
298	244	298	189	
4	0	4	0	
94	93	94	93	
200	151	200	96	
142,294	128,332	141,083	138,347	
104,755	104,483	104,755	104,691	
4,125	4,125	4,125	4,125	
497	493	497	220	
29,858	19,232	29,824	28,802	
1,486,580	1,289,298	1,477,888	1,401,108	
6,500	1,880	6,787	2,232	
430,330	303,614	366,861	329,148	
245,828	231,059	248,443	240,580	
479,286	466,056	526,084	524,265	
174,025	149,519	169,894	149,062	
4,099	3,932	4,099	3,909	
4,099	3,932	4,099	3,909	
1,988,978	1,759,031	1,972,855	1,858,100	



2. SERVING THE PUBLIC

1. Protocol

On 1 September, Pierre Labouverie took up his new role as Head of Protocol.

To learn all about the largest diplomatic community in the world, the Head of Protocol took the initiative to present himself and his closest members of staff to the ACP ambassadors, to the ambassadors of the Arab and the Latin American countries and to the ambassadors of the Asian countries.

At the end of 2011, the Protocol Directorate managed a total of 66,544 privileged foreigners in Belgium (holders and their family members).

More than 3,000 VIP visits were steered in the right direction.

Full use was made of the Egmont Palace and Conference Centre after the renovation works were finished.

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 have continued modernising operations and optimising services over the past year.

Further supplements and updates were drawn up for circulars containing practical instructions for the diplomatic missions; a few of them have also already been put on the English-language website.

Last year, the service also paid attention to observance of the traffic regulations and handling disputes involving diplomats and their members of staff.

Thanks to intensive mediation, a few payments that were still outstanding were successfully collected, especially in favour of the National Social Security Office.

A large diplomatic community

Belgium has a substantial diplomatic community. There were 286 diplomatic missions in our country at the end of 2011 (187 bilateral embassies and 99 diplomatic missions that are accredited with international organisations).

There were 63,839 special identity cards in circulation at the end of 2011: 13,502 (diplomatic cards), 42,513 (cards for technical and administrative staff), 5,171 (children's cards), 438 (consular cards) and 2,215

(cards for white-collar workers and domestic staff).

Protocol adjusted its procedures for applying for a diplomatic (car) number plate within the context of the new European regulations on number plates. Diplomatic missions currently have 5,930 diplomatic number plates in use (3,769 are used as personal vehicles for diplomats and 2,161 as official vehicles).

Consulates

Due to the restructuring of the department of Foreign Consulates in Belgium, the databases (digitally and on paper) of the foreign consular missions in Belgium were updated (publication of the FPS consular yearbook 2011 is on the website). Three consulates-general were closed: the French one in both Antwerp and Liège and the Greek one in Brussels. All applications submitted to have honorary consuls re-appointed have been accepted. That also applies to applications to amend or open new areas of jurisdiction. In 2011, we are counting on 5 appointments of professional consuls(-general) and 12 appointments of honorary consuls(-general). The service also processed traditional administrative issues, such as applications for identity cards, proof of identity and CC plates.

International organisations

Belgium is host to approximately 100 governmental and non-governmental organisations. Most of them are located in Brussels.

This concerns a total of 47,000 people of all the categories jointly. Eleven additional international organisations were registered in 2011.

As of 1 September, the Protocol Directorate issued special identity cards to family members of the SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) staff. For example, 522 cards were issued between 1 September and 31 December.

The permanent representations and missions at the European Union have 2,636 diplomats and 658 technical and administrative staff.

The representations and missions at NATO have 1,116 diplomats and 691 technical and administrative staff.

In 2011, 18,550 special identity cards were issued or renewed: 14,150 to international civil servants and

4,400 to diplomatic missions at the EU and NATO.

White-collar workers and private domestic staff

The check on working conditions of private domestic staff in diplomats' residences was monitored as well as possible in 2011. The Protocol Directorate contacted colleagues of various European countries and the US who are interested in Belgium's approach to this matter.

A few figures:

White-collar workers: total number employed:

610 (371 workers and 239 family members).

Domestic staff: total number employed:

523 (425 workers and 98 family members).

Total number of applications for first issue/extension of the cards in 2011:

953

With the exception of slight fluctuations, this number has remained more or less stable over the past few years.

Civil servants at the missions

In 2011, 1,082 special identity (S) cards were issued: 577 civil servants at the missions and 505 family members.

Visits by foreign dignitaries and security of diplomatic missions

Visits

The second Protocol Directorate P2 (service for Visits, Royal Journeys and Diplomatic Mission Security) once again provided smooth follow-up and finalisation of the visits by foreign dignitaries to our country.

The service processed 3,241 files of visits by foreign VIPs in 2011.

There were no state visits by foreign Heads of State in 2011.

There were 3 official visits:

- His Excellency, Mr Yukiya Amano, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- His Excellency, Mr Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic;
- Her Excellency, Ms Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil.

There were also the following working visits:

- His Excellency, Mr Gervais Ruffykiri, Vice-President of Burundi;
- His Excellency, Mr Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- His Excellency, Mr José Mujica, President of Uruguay;
- His Excellency, Mr Alassane Ouattara, President of Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition, P2 provided the necessary support for the visits of Ms Nkurunziza, wife of the President of Burundi; His Excellency, Mr Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italy; and His Royal Highness, Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan.



The Czech President, Vaclav Klaus was in Belgium on an official visit, Egmont Palace on 24 and 25 May 2011

The service also organises a part of the security aspects of the European Summits in cooperation with the FPS Home Affairs Crisis Centre and the European Council.

In 2011, there were 8 summit meetings.

P2 also deals with reservations for the VIP lounge at the national airport, applications for permanent and temporary admission badges for this lounge and applications for admission to the CD car park.

A few figures:

Files for the reservation at the VIP lounge in Zaventem: 3,172

Files for permanent badges for the VIP lounge: 476

Files for temporary badges for the VIP lounge: 1,854

Security of diplomatic missions

The P2 service plays an intermediary role in securing diplomatic and consular missions; in this respect, it is in close contact with the FPS Home Affairs Crisis Centre, where there is a monthly coordination meeting that is dedicated to the safety of the various diplomatic and consular missions and the European and international institutions.

Applications for special security measures and complaints relating to security are sent through to the Crisis Centre and other security services via P2.

In 2011, 574 security files were processed.

Egmont Palace, Conference Centre and Val Duchesse Chateau

Egmont Palace and Conference Centre

During the second half of 2010, on the occasion of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union, the general public could visit the site and evaluate its qualities.

The result was that the number of reservations for the Egmont Palace and the Conference Centre increased substantially in 2011. All activities were a success, much to the satisfaction of the users. We organised numerous receptions, lunches and dinners for large companies operating in the industrial, financial, insurance, foreign trade and international relations sectors, as well as for NGOs and FPSs. With this income, it was possible to restore furniture and refurbish rooms to maintain the character of the Egmont Palace and Conference Centre.

The same staff simultaneously steered the FPS activities in the right direction. This concerns activities planned by the Minister, official visits by foreign Heads of State, Belgian and foreign Ministerial visits and meetings, meetings or conferences organised by various FPS's Directorates, internally or in cooperation with other FPSs or international organisations.

Val Duchesse Domain

In 2011, there were also fully discrete official and unofficial working visits and work meetings by foreign Heads of State, High Representatives of international organisations, the European Union, Belgian politicians and protocol receptions of NATO, the European Union and the Belgian State at the Val Duchesse Domain. In 2011, the arrival of the new Head of Protocol brought about the creation and development of a new intended use for Val Duchesse. The Royal Trust granted its approval of the decision to let the Val Duchesse fall under the authority of the Government Service with Separate Management CCEgmont. This will make it possible to rent out the site and have some minor renovation work done to the buildings.

Nobility and honours

In close cooperation with the services of the Prime Minister and the administrative services involved, the Honours Department once again prepared a series of specific regulations and equivalences regarding the granting of distinctions in the Honours List in the public sector in 2011. In addition, the service was very closely involved in the issue of decorations on the occasion of the financial mission of His Royal Highness, Prince Philippe to Russia, the US, China and Chile. In addition to this, the service cooperated in an episode of the American television series *History Detectives* broadcast by PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) in the US, which is dedicated to a Belgian decoration that was issued to an American soldier in 1950.



2. SERVING THE PUBLIC

2. Consular affairs

Visa Waiver

The US Visa Waiver Program - VWP - provides the citizens of 36 participating countries the possibility to enter the United States as temporary visitors for business or tourist purposes without having to be in possession of a visas applied for at the American consulate.

An American delegation (DHS - Office of Policy Development, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Customs and Border Protection) visited Belgium to evaluate it from 6 to 8 April 2011. The idea was to check whether our country still fulfils the conditions required to be able to let its citizens travel to the US without a visa.

Themes such as immigration and asylum, combating terrorism, organised crime, the procedure for the issue of passports and the fight against false documents were discussed. There was a visit to Brussels National Airport and the municipality of Beersel. There was also an in-depth study of the manner in which Belgium organises its border inspection.

Electronic identity cards (eID) for Belgians abroad

On 1 January 2011, the total switch to the issue of an eID to the Belgians abroad was a fact. From now on, only eIDs that are identical to the eID issued by the Belgian municipalities are issued at all Belgian embassies and consulates - under the responsibility of Home Affairs - to the Belgians who are registered in the population register of the Belgian embassy or consulate.

The 15 missions that issue the largest number of eIDs deal with the applications completely autonomously, with the aid of the locally installed Home Affairs equipment and software. The other missions work using an intermediary step at Central Administration (Travel & Identity Documents department), which receives applications from the missions electronically every day and then processes them by using Home Affairs equipment and software.

In 2011, a total of 20,997 eIDs were issued to Belgians abroad and 4,793 applications were processed using an intermediary step at Central Administration.

Biometric passports and visas

Passports

Pursuant to a European directive, fingerprints of both index fingers must be filed on the chip of the passport, 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 at the end of 2009, was continued and 106 of the 120 professional consular missions received the necessary equipment. The last 14 professional consular missions will be provided with the necessary registration equipment in 2012.

In addition, the progressive switch to mandatory issue of biometric passports was started in June 2011. The citizen is notified of this in advance by a personalised letter in the name of the mission where he or she is registered, which is despatched from the Central Administration. In 2011, 33 missions switched over to the mandatory issue of biometric passports and all other professional missions will switch over in 2012.



The photo booth at the entrance to Egmont 1, for the issue of biometric passports

The procedure for equipping the municipality and provincial councils will be finalised in 2012. The full roll-out is scheduled for a period of 6 months after a development period of 3 months and a trial period of at least 2 months. Therefore, all municipality and provincial councils should switch over to the mandatory issue of biometric passports during the course of 2012 and 2013.

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. A number of solutions were developed to reduce the inconvenience for the Belgians abroad in a number of missions having very large jurisdictions (e.g. the US, Canada, Russia, etc.) or where travelling is difficult or risky (e.g. the Palestinian territories): possibility to register the biometric data in advance, the possibility to submit the application to an administrative service other than the one at which one is registered, mobile biometric kits operated by a flying consul, etc. The preparations and necessary government assignments to compile the mobile kits have almost been finalised and the first kits will be ordered in the first quarter of 2012.

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

Visas

Following a European directive, the Schengen Member States are required to issue biometric visas (live photograph and fingerprints) at the diplomatic and consular missions after the Visa Information System (VIS) comes into force. The idea is to promote a common EU visa policy and the fight against visa shopping.

All European external border missions (official border crossings) must also be provided with biometric equipment to enable adequate control: based on a check of only the fingerprints at the external border, one can be 100% sure that the person who reports there is the same person to whom the visa was issued.

Europe has opted for a regional approach in light of the magnitude of this project. The VIS was launched in North Africa on 11 October. Since then, all Schengen consulates present in this region issue biometric visas.

After an evaluation period, the VIS will be launched during the course of 2012 in the regions that the EU Member States have defined as priority (Middle East, Gulf States, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.). The definitive dates have not been fixed yet.

In addition, the 13 Belgian external border missions (ports and airports) were provided with the necessary

equipment in 2011. Consequently, biometric visas can also be issued in the meantime at our external borders.

Passport production

The current contract for producing and personalising passport booklets expires on 31 October 2012. Before the contract is renewed, there is currently a limited tender application for the procurement of services and deliveries.

The government procurement was announced at the end of 2009. Candidatures from three interested candidates were received on 12 February 2010 and all three of these were invited to submit tenders. Two tenders were submitted on 20 October 2011 (one candidate dropped out) and are currently being evaluated in accordance with three allocation criteria: price, security measures in the company and analysis of the sample passports.

A multidisciplinary audit team carried out an on-site inspection of both the physical and IT security measures at the end of 2011. That team consists of experts from the National Bank of Belgium, the Federal Police and the Royal Military Academy, under the leadership of the Travel & Identity Documents department and the Legalisation department. The sample passports are analysed by an independent laboratory that was selected on the grounds of an additional government procurement in 2011. In 2011, the necessary preparations were made for these analyses (a list of the tests to be performed and evaluation tables were drawn up) in consultation with the appointed laboratory.

The final award decision is expected by mid-March 2012. The new manufacturer then has 150 days to start production.

Deeds issued at missions

In 2011, Belgian foreign missions issued 3,265 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 abroad) and options (declarations opting for Belgian nationality). Furthermore, 931 notary deeds and 255 civil registry certificates were drafted.

Asylum and migration

Directorate C5 was founded on 1 August 2011. It took over the powers that were previously exercised by the Migration C4 service. The Head of the Directorate is Ambassador Claude Rijmemans, Special Envoy for Asylum and Migration. Externally, he functions as the contact between the various migration policy actors. He is assisted by his two staff members, Jérôme Toussaint and Michaël Vlamijnck.



The new Directorate for Asylum and Migration introduces itself: (from left to right) Michaël Vlamijnck, Claude Rijmenans and Jérôme Toussaint

C5's principal activities between September and December 2011

During this period, C5 organised numerous internal (at the FPS offices) and external contacts with other Directorates, and national and international institutions co-authorised for migration and asylum, such as the DGB (Directorate-General for Bilateral Affairs), DGD (Belgian Development Cooperation), DGE (Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination), the Permanent Representation to the EU, the Permanent Representation to the UN in Geneva, policy cells, the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, Immigration Services (DVZ), Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), Fedasil (Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers), the Permanent Representative at the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) in Brussels, the special representative of the SG/UN for Migration, DG/IOM, DG/UNHCR, etc. The Directorate also regularly acted as the FPS representative in certain forums.

There was extensive consultation on matters such as asylum and migration, illegal immigration, secured flights to repatriate illegal immigrants, human trafficking, takeover agreements, political asylum, the European migration policy, migration and mobility, etc., which led to various agreements and arrangements.



2. SERVING THE PUBLIC

3. Crisis management

The earth on the move

In 2011, the world was shocked by various natural disasters. The disaster with the greatest impact was the earthquake in Japan, which was followed by a tsunami and caused problems for a nuclear reactor in Fukushima. The Crisis Centre was immediately activated and, in cooperation with the Department of Defence and other EU Member States, repatriation of Belgians was started during the days that followed.



Nuclear reactor in Fukushima encountered problems after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, March 2011

Heavy flooding hit Thailand and Cambodia in October and November, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people. In cooperation with the local ambassador, the ever-changing situation was followed very closely. It eventually appeared that it was not necessary to evacuate Belgian citizens.

Society on the move

Arab Spring

Developments in the Arab world gained momentum in 2011. The Department closely followed the security situation in the countries involved.

Tunisia

The protests that broke out in this country at the end of 2010 subsequently appeared to be the start of a wave of democratisation throughout the Arab world. However, political unrest did not last long in Tunisia.

Egypt

Large-scale demonstrations broke out in Egypt a few weeks after the protest actions in Tunisia. The Crisis Centre's call centre was opened to answer numerous calls from worried citizens. The unrest in Egypt caused tourism in the country to suffer greatly. There was intense consultation between the Crisis Centre and the tour operators who organised matters such as repatriation and alternative holidays.

Libya

Various groups of protesters from different regions in Libya called for the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi's regime. Fearing for the safety of the Belgians in Libya, it was decided to evacuate them in cooperation with the other EU Member States. The Belgian embassy in Tripoli was closed temporarily, but has been re-opened in the meantime.

Syria

There was no general rioting in Syria and the authorities are strongly suppressing any form of revolt. That is why the situation there differs strongly from those in the other Arab countries and is characterised by on-going insecurity and danger.

The impact of the Arab Spring on the Crisis Centre was much more limited in other countries (Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, etc.)

Elections pose a risk

Côte d'Ivoire

The Presidential elections at the end of November 2010 had even stronger consequences for safety in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011. Former President Gbagbo was only ousted in April, after which President Ouattara took control. This period was characterised by fighting and violence and, for a long time, it was feared that it would be necessary to evacuate Belgian citizens. The embassy in Abidjan was reinforced with a member of the Foreign Affairs Crisis Team (FACT, see below) for several months in case an evacuation within the French crisis plans would be necessary.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Presidential and parliamentary elections were held for the second time in the DRC on 28 November 2011. The situation was followed closely in light of the large amount of Belgians present in the area. The Department sent a FACT (see below) to Brazzaville, which, in close cooperation with the embassy, took the necessary measures to deal with a possible consular crisis and accompanying evacuation in the DRC. There was no real crisis, but the preparations were definitely worthwhile and meant that the embassy is better geared to deal with future crises.

FACT

In 2011, the further development of the Foreign Affairs Crisis Team (FACT), including selecting, training and equipping the voluntary FACT members, was one of the main challenges.

Various training courses for the FACT members were organised in cooperation with Defence to better prepare them for any crisis situations and evacuations. For example, the FACT members followed a 5-day training course in Leopoldsburg.

All aspects of crisis management with which the FACT members can be confronted during a mission were raised during this training course. The training course consisted of both theoretical and practical lessons. A 48-hours FACT mission was also simulated at a bivouac of the Leopoldsburg military base.



Members of the Foreign Affairs Crisis Team (FACT) during a 5-day training course in Leopoldsburg

In addition, three colleagues from other EU Member States were afforded the opportunity of following this training course within the scope of a *Consular Erasmus* scheme, which was started under the Belgian presidency.

The knowledge gained was also put into practice:

there were FACT missions to Abidjan, Seoul and Brazzaville in 2011 (see above).

B-FAST in action

At the end of August, a B-FAST team participated in an exercise organised by NATO in Moldavia. There was a simulation of a large earthquake, which cut Moldavia off from the outside world and for which international aid had to be coordinated.

On 23 October, the province of Van in eastern Turkey was shocked by a massive earthquake. After the Turkish government requested international aid, B-FAST sent out a team of 14 volunteers. The team set up a camp that was able to accommodate hundreds of families near Ercis.



A well-organised tent camp in Ercis, Turkey, after the massive earthquake in October 2011

Information and communication

Communication and information are indispensable in times of crisis. That is why the Department also afforded this issue a great deal of attention in 2011. For example, all diplomatic missions were equipped with the necessary crisis communication resources according to their needs.

A crisis programme has been developed for the missions to have a better overall view of management of Belgians abroad. Thanks to this programme, the diplomatic missions can keep a database with data on the Belgians within their area of jurisdiction to serve as a supplement to those registered in the Consunet.

Travel advice

One of the department's core tasks is to update travel advice. There are currently 175 travel recommendations published on the website. In addition, the S1.1 section answers numerous telephone and written questions on travelling abroad.

Travelling using the Foreign Affairs travel advice

As is the case every year, our FPS was also at the Brussels Holiday Show in the Brussels Expo (Heysel) at the beginning of February 2011. Our 24-m² stall, which was one of 700 exhibitors, attracted a substantial number of visitors.



Our FPS at the Holiday Show in the Brussels Expo (Heysel), February 2011

This is thanks to the knowledge test, which could win you a safety vest. Those who did not know the answers to the questions could find these on our new website. Over 3,500 people visited diplomatie.belgium.be in the *Healthy and safe travelling* in hall 7!

In addition to the normal questions and distribution of our informative brochures, there was also a great deal of interest in travel advice. The flyer entitled *Are you sure you know everything about your destination?* and a film on the screens referred to our FPS's updated Travel Advice section.

Our cooperation with the FPS Finance, which pointed out the dangers of counterfeiting, proved to be successful once again.

Crisis files

Further attention was also paid to updating and optimising the crisis files. To this end, there were, among others, joint missions by the FPSs Foreign Affairs and Defence (Defence Foreign Affairs Crisis Team - DFACT).



2. SERVING THE PUBLIC

4. Peace-building

Projects for a more peaceful world

Peace-building is an important point for attention in Belgian foreign policy. This is translated not only in purely diplomatic efforts; our country also finances external initiatives that can prevent violent conflicts and help bring about sustainable peace.

There are numerous such peace initiatives. In 2011, the competent Peace-building Department (S3.1) received more than 200 funding applications. That is why a thorough and high-quality selection process is essential. The resources available (approximately 20.5 million euros in 2011) must be apportioned to high-quality projects and programmes.

The selection is made on the grounds of a number of criteria approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. These criteria can be consulted on the FPS's website: diplomatie.belgium.be

The initiatives financed often take several years to finish. The results and impact are closely followed during that time. It is essential that a real difference is actually achieved in the field.

Priorities for 2011

The Congolese elections were afforded a great deal of attention in 2011. An amount of 3,040,000 euros, which corresponds to 15% of the Department's total annual budget, was allotted to this by the conflict preventions, peace-building and human rights budget line.

In addition, the following themes also featured prominently:

- mine clearance and disarmament;
- respect for and awareness-raising on human rights;
- capacity building and reinforcement of civil society.

The majority of the resources available went to initiatives in Africa (46.65%), more particularly to the African Great Lakes region (35.51%).

In addition, the focus was clearly also on Asia (31.62%), of which the largest part went to Afghanistan (10.46%) and the Middle East (6.59%).

The remainder of the resources were spread over Europe (10.16%), Latin America (4.67%), and projects that are not restricted to a single continent (6.90%).

A few practical examples

Support for the election process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Organising free and honest elections can peacefully put an end to either armed or unarmed conflict, which makes this an important element in democratically developing the rule of law. That is why the Peace-building Department supported the general programme of the United Nations (UN) DRC Electoral Process Support Programme (*Projet d'Appui au Cycle Electoral Congolais*). The programme provided for the review of the voters' lists, the organisation of the presidential, legislative and, later, provincial and local elections and the support of the National Independent Electoral Commission.

The Peace-building Department also supported the deployment of a very large number of international and, especially, Congolese election observers via, among others, the National Conference of Bishops of Congo (*Commission Episcopale Nationale Congolaise*) and the American NGO The Carter Center. A team of Belgian Members of Parliament (AWEPA - Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa) made it possible to organise election observance. Two staff members of the Peace-building Department formed part of this observance mission.



Supporting the election process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

In the future, more attention must be paid to equal access to the media for every candidate, to financing the electoral campaigns and political parties and to improved representation for female candidates.

Save the Children - Myanmar - Promoting children's protection rights and addressing the problem of child soldiers

Poverty and a lack of accessible social services makes Burmese children run a substantial number of risks in becoming the victims of human trafficking, exploitation, physical violence and sexual exploitation. Although there is legislation on child protection, the content sometimes creates problems (e.g. the minimum age for imprisonment is 7 years) and the implementation is not always as it should be. There is indeed good legislation on child protection against recruitment by armed groups, but knowledge of this is still too limited. There are also too few national and local child protection services. Save the Children wants to set up community and neighbourhood child protection systems, by way of the three-year programme of Promoting children's protection rights and addressing the problem of child soldiers, so that vulnerable children in two suburbs of Yangon are protected from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. Here, the emphasis is placed on children associated with armed groups (CAAF - Children Associated with Armed Forces).



3. POLICY

1. Belgium in a bilateral context

Western Europe and North America

United Kingdom

The twelfth edition of the Belgo-British Conference took place on 17 and 18 October 2011 in London. The theme was Employment and Growth: comparing UK and Belgian Policies inside the Europe 2020 framework.

The participants (business managers, representatives from the academic world, journalists and influential politicians from both countries) exchanged ideas on social and employment policies during a period of crisis, the situation of young people on the labour market and ageing, and they examined international labour mobility.

On the Belgian side, the Belgo-British Conference was organised by the FPS and the Egmont Institute and, on the United Kingdom's side, by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the British Council.

Germany

The Belgo-German Conference took place in Berlin on 13 and 14 January. The themes there were integration, religion and education.

The royal couple went to Germany on a two-day State Visit on 28 and 29 March. It was the second State Visit, after the first one in the summer of 1995. Departing Prime Minister Yves Leterme accompanied the king and queen.

Benelux

In 2011, all parties signed the new Benelux Union Treaty. Consequently, it came into force on 1 January 2012, when Belgium assumed the presidency of the Benelux Council.

At the same time, cross-border cooperation with a few neighbouring countries, specifically the Netherlands and France, was increased in many fields (justice, mobility, transport, etc.).

The Rhine (inland shipping and rail transport)

Belgium presided over the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) until 30 November. In that capacity, our country led operations in very diverse files, such as mutual recognition of the seaman's book for employed sailors, the impact of climate change on inland shipping, and the security of barge tankers and port terminals.

The file of the *Iron Rhine*, the railway connection between the port of Antwerp and the industrial Ruhr area, experienced an important breakthrough in 2011

after the decision by the three countries involved (Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany) to start operating the historical trajectory of this railway line once again. North Rhine-Westphalia, on the other hand, continued to object to this.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Relations between Belgium and this region were characterised by intense diplomatic activity.

Specifically:

- visits by Prime Minister Yves Leterme to Hungary, Romania and Estonia;
- visits to Belgium by the President or Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Armenia and Georgia.

Economic diplomacy made an increasingly strong impression on bilateral contacts with the region. The following were particularly important:

- Prince Philippe led one of the most important economic missions that went to Russia in April;
- the special attention for the strong growth market in Poland, where over 300 Belgian companies operate.



Belgian economic-cultural week in the Polish Hanzeatic City of Gdansk, April 2011 Ambassador Raoul Delcorde (on the right) with the Vice-Governor of the Pomorskie Voivodeship

Energy was also a cornerstone of our bilateral diplomacy, because of both the economic and geo-strategic importance of initiatives such as the Southern Corridor, which is necessary to open up and stabilise the Southern Caucasus.

Politically, we were particularly interested in the following:

- internal developments in Russia, the highlight of which was the parliamentary elections in December, undoubtedly the omen of a politically tumultuous 2012;
- the deterioration of democracy, the rule of law and the human rights situation in the Ukraine.

North Africa and the Middle East

The Arab revolt dominated current affairs in the region.

Although the evolution is different in every country, socio-economic and political demands form the foundation of the movement in all the countries. There was a little confusion at first, but after that, the EU reacted quite well by tuning its neighbourhood policy for the South into the needs of the countries involved. Belgium had a similar exercise under the leadership of Minister Steven Vanackere at a diplomatic regional conference in Tunis in September.



The Diplomatic Regional Conference on the Arab Revolution, Tunis, 13 September 2011

Tunisia, a very promising laboratory?

Minister Steven Vanackere twice visited Tunisia, pioneer of the Arab Spring, where Ben Ali's regime was overthrown in January. He first went to evaluate the situation after the political revolution in the wake of the EU so that the tools of our political and economic diplomacy could be attuned to the situation. Those economic and development dimensions were studied in further detail during his second visit.

The first democratic elections on 23 October were key because they brought about a Constitutional Meeting, which must now draw up a new constitution for the country. The all-out winner was the Islamic party, Ennahda, which formed a government with the top priority on the agenda being the recovery of the economy and the fight against unemployment.

Besides Morocco, where the transition had so far been very peaceful and Islamic parties also gained influence, Tunisia holds the promise of stability in our neighbouring region.

Egypt in a downward spiral again?

After Tunisia, Egypt was the second country in the region which, as of December 2010, overthrew a regime that had reigned for decades. In contrast to Tunisia, however, it is not so clear in what direction Egypt is moving. Many Egyptians fear that the army, which has a strong presence in most economic sectors, will take their revolution hostage. The first of three stages of the elections started at the end of 2011, which the Muslim Brotherhood, the only really structured opposition party, should normally win. Other than in the Maghreb countries, the European Union is not as highly praised in Egypt and it actually does not have the



After one of the meetings of the Libya Contact Group had finished, a reception was organised in Abu Dhabi and attended by the representatives of the Belgian community and local business contacts, 9 June 2011

resources to steer the on-going revolution in the right direction.

Libya, a difficult transition

Colonel Gaddafi's regime attempted to stifle the revolt that broke out in Benghazi in blood.

Belgium actively supported citizen protection within the scope of the Operation Unified Protector NATO mission.

At political and diplomatic levels, Minister Steven Vanackere invested all his effort in looking for a solution for the Libyan conflict by actively participating in various meetings of the Libya Contact Group.

Since Belgium has recognised the National Transitional Council, which has formed a government with numerous new people, our country has been carefully watching the following matters: balanced representation of the different tribes in the new government structures, disarmament of the numerous militias that were formed during the revolt, the establishment of the rule of law and economic recovery. Without wishing to get involved in the internal affairs of the country, it is indeed advisable to continue to remain alert to possible Islam radicalisation, the direction in which various leaders seem to be heading.

Syria on the verge of a civil war

Despite the efforts of the international community, with the Arab League leading these, the regime in Damascus has opted to ignore the people's protest. Various opposition movements have arisen, each of which claim to represent the opposition. After preliminary contacts with all current movements (and without any premature recognition), Belgium has adopted a careful attitude as to who does or does not rightfully constitute the opposition.

The Israeli-Arab conflict, a deadlock that must be solved!

The peace process in the Middle East is still bogged down. Israelis and Palestinians are not budging an inch and, in view of the presidential elections, the US will keep its distance until the spring of 2013. However, the European Union continues to support a solution whereby the two states can live side by side in peace, with Jerusalem as the capital. For this purpose, it is absolutely essential that the Israeli government is prevented from taking action that forms a threat to the hope that there is still left and to help the Palestinians consolidate the foundations of their state. Minister for Development Cooperation Olivier Chastel visited the Palestinian territories to sign a new indicative development programme there.

Gulf States

Certain Gulf States (Bahrain) had to contend with internal riots in the wake of the Arab Revolt. Others (Qatar and the UAE) emerged as diplomatic negotiators (Libya). Belgium is reinforcing its position in certain key sectors (construction, ports and the medical sector)

regarding bilateral economic diplomacy. For years, the EU and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) have been wrestling with the impossibility of finalising the conclusion of a cooperation agreement, due to two constantly recurring problems: a clause on export duties demanded by Saudi Arabia and a clause on human rights. The input is important, not only to guarantee the markets, which are increasingly eyeing Asia, but also due to the increasingly active role of the GCC in the search for solutions for crises in the region, with Yemen leading the way.

Iran, concern regarding the nuclear file

Due to its opposition to the nuclear file, the European Union imposed two heavy sanctions on Iran. Belgium continues to keep the pressure on and adheres to its two-track policy: dialogue if possible, pressure if necessary. Belgium wants Iran to observe its international obligations. It regrets the human rights situation in the country and is actively working on this matter.

Iraq at the crossroads

Three important facts dominated current affairs in 2011: the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq (which put internal security and stability at risk); the signing of the partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU and, finally, the problems with dismantling the Ashraf camp, which evoked strong responses in the various European parliaments, as well as in the Belgian one. Belgium wants to avoid any humanitarian drama.

Yemen, cautious optimism

Yemen is experiencing important developments within the scope of the Arab Spring, with a prospect of a political transition and presidential elections in February 2012. Belgium is examining how it can integrate the Friends of Yemen group at the right time and is putting the pressure on the GCC to hold a discussion on Yemen.

Africa

Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes

In 2011, the Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes paid particular attention to the action of the armed groups, the evolution of the peace agreements in Nairobi and Goma, compliance (or non-compliance) with human rights, illegal exploitation of natural resources (within the scope of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the OECD), the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) matter, the evolution of the security situation and its cross-border impact.

The Special Envoy had discussions on all these matters during his trips to the region or his meetings with the members of the Contact Group.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In 2011, we paid particular attention to the electoral process prior to the parliamentary and presidential elections of 28 November.

Belgium actively and steadily provided that process with financial (15 million euros) and political support. It made a C-130 available to the MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) to transport electoral equipment.

At the start of June, Minister Steven Vanackere officially visited the DRC, where he discussed the electoral process, human rights, good governance and military cooperation (training course for the 322nd Battalion in Lokandu) and signed the protocols for the remission of the Congolese debt in accordance with the Paris Club Agreement concluded in November 2010. In April, the Congolese government requested that Belgium establish a Commissioner's Department for neighbourhood policing for the city of Kinshasa and to train the future police officers. This programme, registered within the scope of the EUPOL-DRC mission (and led by the Belgian Jean-Paul Rikir), will last three years. Finally, Belgium also actively and practically supports all measures regarding good governance, and especially (measures) with regard to transparency in mining, more particularly within the scope of the OECD initiative aimed at carefulness in the extractive industry in conflict areas. Our country also makes financial contributions to the initiative aimed at more transparency in the extractive industry (EITI - Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) and presented to the Congolese government a reorganisation project for traditional mining in Katanga.

Rwanda

Rwanda remained an important partner country for the Belgian Development Cooperation in 2011. The numerous ties between our countries and between Rwandans and Belgians explain a number of consular and political-administrative problems that were raised at the regular diplomatic consultations.

Burundi

In 2011, Belgium also paid attention to the stages in peace development and supported internal political dialogue. The evolution of the human rights situation, good governance and security were also closely watched. Establishing systems for transitional justice, including the forthcoming establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, received our country's undivided attention.

Minister Steven Vanackere went to Burundi in June, and during the course of the year, our country received numerous Burundian dignitaries in Belgium. Belgium remains the most important financier of Burundi and asks other financiers, particularly in the (UN) Peacebuilding Commission, not to turn their backs on the country.

Central African Republic

Within the scope of its chairmanship of the (UN) Peacebuilding Commission and with the support of the World Bank, the United Nations Programme for Development (UNPD) and the African Development Bank, Belgium actively participated on 16 and 17

June in an international round-table conference with the government of the Central African Republic. In addition to President Bozizé, who was assisted by various government members, the round table in Brussels assembled over 150 high-level delegates from various countries, international organisations and civil society to support peace and development initiatives.

Sudan/South Sudan

Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement continued to receive a great deal of international attention. In accordance with the results of the referendum in January, South Sudan declared its independence in July. Our country recognised the new state of South Sudan a few days later. Diplomatic relations were established in October. From now on, in light of the intensive trade between the two countries, the new state of South Sudan falls under the jurisdiction of the Belgian embassy in Kampala. Furthermore, Belgium has funded a few projects to support South Sudan's reconstruction. The conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and the area surrounding the Blue Nile still cause rioting and violence. Therefore, normalisation of relations between Sudan and South Sudan continue to be a priority for the international community. In this file, the EU works in close consultation with the African Union.

Somalia

Due to increasing piracy along the coast of Somalia, the EU launched the EU NAVFOR Atalanta (European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta) at the end of 2008. From October 2010 to January 2011, our country participated in this operation with the frigate Louise-Marie and decided to participate again in the autumn of 2012.

As regards the political and safety situation in Somalia, Belgium financially supported the AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) military action via the EU and simultaneously appealed vigorously for the pacification of the country within the scope of a political-military strategy founded on a general consensus.

The Horn of Africa

Belgium spent over 12 million euros in the fight against the humanitarian crisis that raged in the Horn of Africa. Our country also insisted on more mutual cohesion between humanitarian emergency aid and the general development policy.

Uganda

Belgium followed the 2011 electoral year very closely. The EU Training Mission greatly appreciated the Belgian support of the Somali security force's EUTM in Uganda, which improves our image. Belgium also assists in training Ugandan soldiers who go to Somalia within the scope of AMISOM. In 2011, Uganda was Belgium's fourth development cooperation partner country.

Western Africa

Belgium kept an eye on the fragile and violent situation in Côte d'Ivoire and, via the EU and AU, ensured that the results of the presidential elections were respected.

Minister Steven Vanackere went to Côte d'Ivoire to attend the ceremony at which the elected President, Alassane Ouattara, was sworn in. The latter came to Brussels on a working visit in November. The fact that the EU afforded the worsening safety situation in the Sahel Region attention is evidenced by its strategy of focussing on development and safety. Belgium had a substantial role in organising the successful presidential elections in Benin in March by financially supporting the development of a computerised list of eligible political parties and having Belgian members of parliament participate in an AWEPA observance mission.

In 2011, attention was also paid to the Nigerian electoral process, which, since the return of democracy in 1999, is regarded as the most reliable in the region.

Prime Minister Yves Leterme met with the Togolese President, Faure Gnassingbé, in March.

Southern Africa

The strengthened cooperation with South Africa in 2010 was continued in 2011. This was done primarily on an economic level, more particularly through a visit to South Africa (and Mozambique) by an extensive delegation under the leadership of Minister-President, Kris Peeters. Furthermore, as has been the case in the past, there were bilateral contacts in 2011 at which the African Great Lakes region was discussed more extensively. As Honorary President of APOPO (Dutch acronym for Anti-Personnel Landmines Detection Product Development), Princess Astrid visited Mozambique in June. APOPO receives financial support from Belgium to help defuse landmines in Mozambique by using rats.

Zimbabwe

Relations between the EU and Zimbabwe did not experience any developments in 2011 due to pre-election tension. Belgium closely monitors the evolution of the political process and the diamond import file within the scope of the Kimberley process. In that respect, Belgium supports the Agreement in Kinshasa, which is once again allowing diamonds to be exported from the Marange region.

Relations with the African Union

Belgium supported the joint efforts for more feasible, up-to-date and fruitful relations between the African and European Unions, within the scope of a partnership based on good governance and accountability.

Asia and Oceania

Double jubilee celebration of diplomatic relations
Belgium celebrated 40 years of diplomatic relations

with China in 2011. There were numerous cultural activities (music, shows and exhibitions) in both Brussels and Beijing. More particularly, there was a concert by the Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra in the heart of the Forbidden City and a seminar on 40 years of diplomatic relations in the Egmont Palace in Brussels in October.

Belgium and South Korea also celebrated 110 years of diplomatic relations with, among others, cultural and artistic events in Brussels (dance performance in the *Théâtre National*) and in Seoul (concert by the Symphony Orchestra for Korean television).

Economic diplomacy

The Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) and India held a joint economic commission meeting in New Delhi in April. Besides trade disputes and administrative and consular problems, discussions were also held on the continued cooperation regarding the railway and port infrastructure, aviation, ICT and renewable energy. Belgium and Vietnam held their first joint economic commission meeting in June. This initiative followed the meetings between Prime Ministers Leterme and Dung in 2009 and 2010.

The negotiations on an agreement to protect and promote the investments between the BLEU and Indonesia made good progress after a third round of negotiations in Solo, Indonesia, especially as regards the social and environmental clauses. That agreement should be finalised in 2012.

Minister Steven Vanackere went to South Korea in October. The new free trade agreement between South Korea and the EU provided him with an opportunity to emphasise our country's economic assets.

Let us also not forget the impressive economic mission to China, led by Prince Philippe, in October. No fewer than 450 delegates from 223 companies concluded 45 contracts and agreements there on protecting investments and cooperating in the academic, scientific and port sectors.



The economic mission led by Prince Philippe commemorates 40 years of diplomatic relations between Belgium and China

Afghanistan-Pakistan

Within the scope of the EU, NATO and UN, Belgium continued its support of continued stabilisation and development of Afghanistan in 2011, more particularly by way of a series of projects on good governance, human and women's rights, agricultural development and conflict prevention. The FPS actively attended all meetings of the International Contact Group AF-PAK, which must find a solution for the Afghan conflict and the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn in December, which supports international aid to Afghanistan for the 2014-2024 period.

Belgium also provides humanitarian aid to Pakistan, which was hit by floods following the monsoon rains.

ASEM

After having organised the ASEM8 (Asia-Europe Meeting) summit in Brussels, Belgium continued its efforts to expand this cooperation forum between Europe and Asia. Minister Steven Vanackere participated in the meeting of the ASEM Foreign Affairs Ministers in June. He spoke with his counterparts from Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia.



Minister Steven Vanackere participated in the meeting of the ASEM Foreign Affairs Ministers, Budapest, June

Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC)

Latin America and the Caribbean are becoming more important for Belgium. Economic growth is on par, which is much to the benefit of Belgian exports and investments. Yet not all opportunities have been grasped and they do not have such a good image in all countries on the continent.

The LAC is continuing to work on its political stability, even if there are enormous challenges such as the citizens' safety (especially due to the fight against drugs), administrative weakness and the wide gap between rich and poor. Although extreme poverty has been forced back, there is still much work to be done, especially on education.

Brazil

The Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff, came to Belgium on an official visit on 2 and 4 October 2011. This was the second visit by a Brazilian Head of State

in less than two years. After animated discussions with the Prime Minister and other government members on matters such as academic cooperation, cooperation regarding aviation and space travel, energy and work on infrastructure, the President was received by the King and they jointly opened the Europalia Brazil festival. This occasion was the first time that Brazil was highlighted on Belgian soil with such a large-scale cultural event. An EU-Brazilian business forum was organised in the Egmont Palace on 4 October.

Cuba

Numerous bilateral meetings were held in 2011, in Havana (with the Director of Latin America & the Caribbean) and in Brussels, where Minister Steven Vanackere met his Cuban counterpart, Mr Rodriguez, twice and also Cardinal Jaime Ortega of the Cuban Catholic Church, a prominent figure in the current change process that the island is experiencing. As was the case during the EU presidency in 2010, Belgium and the other EU Member States are proactively making efforts to achieve a new institutional framework in EU-Cuban relations.

Caribbean

With the support of our mission in Kingston and after a trade mission by AWEX (Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency) in 2009, a delegation from the Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago) made a promising reconnaissance mission to Belgium, which concentrated on exchanging expertise on renewable energy sources.

Peru

Peru, which recorded the greatest economic growth in the LAC region in 2011, had a new Head of State after a moderate-left President, Ollanta Humala, was elected. A staff member of the FPS was one of the EU election observers.

Chile

The successful economic mission to Chile in December, which was led by Prince Philippe, shows the Belgian business world's great interest in this fast-growing market. No less than 160 business people and an extensive academic delegation participated in the mission, which showed particular interest in the infrastructure, mine extraction, public health, astronomy and higher education sectors. Nine cooperation agreements in various domains were signed.

Columbia

Minister Vanackere spoke to the Columbian Vice-President about progress in the peace process and about the coming into force of the free trade agreement with the European Union, initialled in March 2011, and the opportunities that this offers for more intensive trade relations and investments. To enforce arguments in favour of peace-building in Columbia, Belgium finances projects for NGOs and international organisations regarding mine clearance,

the fight against recruiting minors, displaced persons and the development of alternative cultivars within the scope of the fight against drugs.

Uruguay

In 2011, after the visit by President Mujica, Belgium succeeded in boosting its economic relations with Uruguay. The free trade agreement on which the EU and MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South, encompassing Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) are negotiating could signify an important economic stimulus for both countries.

Central America

The themes in 2011 were the elections in Nicaragua, where the FPS sent one of its staff as an EU observer and an international conference on safety in Central America (Guatemala City, 22-23 June). As regards economy and trade, Belgium hopes to benefit from the fact that the association agreement between the EU and Central America, which was initialled in 2011, will come into force in the very near future.

Mexico

In March, Minister Vanackere met his counterpart, Patricia Espinosa, in Brussels. The issues discussed most were those of changes in the climate and the environment, the fight against drugs and organised crime. Later in the year, a large delegation for the defence of human rights came to Belgium, together with dignitaries from civil society and high-level officials from the Justice and Home Affairs departments.

A preventive diplomacy project (Chiapas) was analysed and approved.

Haiti

A second preventive diplomacy project (pursuant to the earthquake in January 2010) was analysed and approved.

South-east Europe

Western Balkan

Belgium continues to actively support the international community's stabilisation efforts and European and Atlantic integration of the Western Balkan states. In this respect, Belgium explicitly monitors compliance with the EU conditions, especially regarding human rights, the protection of minorities, strengthening the rule of law and the fight against indemnity. In this regard, the good cooperation between the Western Balkan states and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is an important criterion.

Minister Steven Vanackere went to Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo on a working visit, while various bilateral discussions in Brussels continued to reinforce our bilateral ties.

The Belgian commitment was expressed in practice by the direct contribution to multilateral missions operating in some of those countries. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, two fellow Belgians participated in

the EU police mission (EUPM). In Kosovo, Belgium participated in the civil EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission), with approximately thirty police, magistrates and experts. Within the scope of its efforts for the smooth progress of the examination into organ trafficking in Kosovo, our country assisted in establishing a special EULEX task force in Brussels. At the beginning of February, Belgium hosted the twelfth meeting of the International Steering Group, consisting of 25 countries that supervise the independence of Kosovo by way of the International Civil Representative and his office.

Furthermore, Belgium's commitment also manifested itself in the fact that it finances projects within the scope of its initiatives on preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, our country supports a teachers' organisation that is attempting to promote social cohesion in an ethnically divided society by way of history lessons. In the new projects in Serbia, particular attention was paid to the consolidation of independent media in two regions where the residents are mainly ethnic minorities.

The competent Belgian authorities (including the FPS), in close cooperation with the European Commission, also undertook a series of actions with authorities from Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Albania to curb the influx of asylum seekers from these countries.

Turkey

Belgium continued to support Turkey's European integration process, but simultaneously insisted that the imposed criteria, particularly the Copenhagen criteria, be strictly observed. Belgium advocated that Turkey should continue its efforts in this respect and build and/or further develop good neighbourly relations with all the countries in the region. Turkey is an important partner for the Middle East, the Western Balkan states, the South Caucasus, etc. Turkey has a substantial amount of expertise in that respect. Prime Minister Leterme and his Turkish counterpart, Tayyip Erdogan, met one another on 9 May in Istanbul, in the margin of the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which Minister Steven Vanackere also attended.

After a powerful earthquake on 23 October in eastern Turkey, in the province of Van, which killed over 600 people and made numerous other victims (injured, homeless, etc.), Belgium sent tents within the scope of a B-FAST mission and assisted in building a camp in the city of Ercis.

Greece

Bilateral relations between Belgium and Greece are excellent at all levels. Furthermore, Belgium is supporting Greece at a point in time when it is being faced with one of worst economic and financial crises in its history and must face a true asylum crisis.

Cyprus

Bilateral relations with Cypriot authorities are very good; there are no disputes. Throughout 2011, Belgium supported the Greek-

Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot parties in their efforts to find an acceptable solution through direct negotiations under UN supervision (acting as facilitator). The aim is to reunite the island and establish a bi-zonal and bi-community federation, with political equilibrium for both and in accordance with the respective UN resolutions.

Diplomacy and economy

Finexpo

The task of the Finexpo Interministerial Committee (Export Financing) is to support Belgian companies exporting services and equipment goods. Finexpo therefore works with exporters who conclude export contracts and with the banks that finance them.

The Financial Export Support Directorate provides the committee's secretarial services and the Administrative Services of the Treasury Directorate is responsible for state-to-state loans.

Finexpo has four financial tools at its disposal: one that is exclusively intended to support trade credits by way of stabilising the interest rate and three tools for emergency credits, which are state-to-state loans, interest indemnification (with or without additional donations) and, finally, donations.

The aim of state-to-state loans, interest indemnifications and donations is twofold: on the one hand, they support our companies and, on the other, they help the developing countries.

Despite the increasing depths of the 2011 economic and financial crisis, exporters were able to sign various contracts for which negotiations had already been pending for two or three years. This gold vein in times of crisis meant that the Finexpo services were able to use the entire fixed budget that had been allocated to it in 2011. Thanks to Finexpo's evaluation of the tools, which was started by the Special Evaluation Office and was successfully completed by independent consultants, Finexpo drafted a Manual to Finexpo, which is now being finalised.

Defending economic interests and promoting Belgium's image

Last year, the Economic Interests Directorate focused on promoting our country's image and the quality of the goods produced and services provided. The image budget further raised Belgium's image internationally, supported our headquarters policy and our vocation as an international centre through the funding of projects and supporting image-promoting actions as dictated by operating resources.

What was funded? The annual conference of the German Marshall Fund in Brussels, joint chambers of commerce, the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Belgian-Chinese relations, various BOZAR projects and the World Economic Forum (in Brussels and in Davos). Numerous projects at our missions were also supported.

In joint cooperation with the network of missions, the Economic Interests Directorate, the Directorate-

General for European Affairs and Coordination and the professional associations actively participated in the work of the EU's Market Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) to encourage European institutions to actively better serve the interests of Belgian companies in foreign markets. Belgium was unable to sign any bilateral agreements on investment and social security protection in 2011. However, negotiations with Indonesia and Turkey (to protect investments) and with Albania, Morocco and Moldavia (social security) were simply continued.

In 2011, Prince Philippe chaired four multi-regional and multi-sector missions: in Russia (March), on the east coast of the United States (June), in China (October) and in Chile (December). The number of participating companies and signed contracts reached a record level, with 757 companies and 97 signed contracts. Princess Mathilde also participated in three of the four missions (Russia, the United States and China).



The Belgian delegation of the princely missions to the United States at Times Square, New York, June

The Directorate continued its consideration of the issues of sustainable and responsible raw materials management and corporate ethics.

In 2011, Belgium financially and logistically supported the Congolese chairmanship of the Kimberley process (KPCS). This process aims to combat the use of income from the diamond trade to finance conflicts. Our country played an important part in developing a pragmatic compromise that joins all parties who are divided on the embargo on diamonds coming from Zimbabwe (Marange region). The consensus on which this compromise is based gave new impetus to the process. The Diamond Office, which is established in Antwerp, is actually a prime example of how diamond import is controlled in Belgium and also of compliance with the KPCS standards.

Belgium also actively supports the initiative for transparency in the extraction industries (EITI), which aims to make cash flows in the extraction sector (mining, petroleum, etc.) more transparent. It is within this context that Minister Steven Vanackere participated in the EITI global conference in Paris on 2 and 3 March.

Belgium has put forward its candidacy to organise the 2017 World Expo in Liège, the theme of which is Connecting the World, Linking People.

This is the first time since Expo '58 that Belgium has been a candidate for such an event.

The Western Europe and North America Directorate and the Economic Interests Directorate actively support the diplomatic campaign for Liège 2017.

The winning country and winning city will be selected by the General Meeting of the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) in November 2012.

International transport policy

In 2011, Belgium concluded various bilateral agreements regarding civil aviation, especially with African countries, seeing that Brussels Airlines (SN) is deploying trade operations there, but also to make it easier for other Belgian airlines, such as TNT for freight transport, to expand their networks. Belgium consulted on aviation with the following countries: Australia, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, Congo Brazzaville and Senegal (with which an agreement was even signed). Negotiations with Angola and Qatar continued, but this has not yet rendered any definite result.

Belgium has also developed partnerships with the DRC and Burundi on civil aviation safety.

In May, the International Transport Directorate successfully finalised a project for the simplification of the driving licence procedure for Belgians abroad. A series of bilateral agreements on road transport could not be implemented because the regions in the internal legislative process need to be involved. This will be done in 2012.



3. POLICY

2. Belgium in the European Union

In 2011, the European agenda was dominated by two important files: firstly, the development of a number of new policy tools to manage the financial, economic and debt crisis and to reinforce the Economic and Monetary Union and, secondly, the formulation of a new European policy regarding developments in countries south of the Mediterranean Sea.

European semester

The introduction of a so-called European semester was one of the most important proposals made in 2010 by the Task Force on Economic Governance under the leadership of the European Council President, Herman Van Rompuy. This concerns a frame of reference that enables the Member States to chart their economic and budget policies in a manner that is coherent with European-level policy objectives.

This semester was put into practice for the first time in the spring of 2011. The most important steps in this semester are the following:

- the Commission's presentation of an Annual Growth Survey, which analyses the economic situation and sets policy priorities;
- the European Council's (*Spring Summit*) strategies for the Member States, which must enable them to simultaneously revise their National Reform Programmes and Stability or Convergence Reports;
- a proposal containing country-specific recommendations by the Commission, which the European Council must ratify and subsequently formally adopt. The aim is for the Member States to implement these recommendations when drafting their national budgets.

Euro Plus Pact

In March, the Euro Area Heads of State or Government launched the Euro Plus Pact to deal with the ever-expanding debt crisis in the spring of 2011. In practice, it was agreed that the Heads of State or Government will make annual national commitments that will be included in their National Reform Programmes. These commitments must be selected in such a manner that they aim to achieve the following four objectives:

- improve competitiveness;
- stimulate employment;
- further contribute to the sustainability of public finances;

- strengthen financial stability.

The countries in the Eurozone were required to enter into this Euro Plus Pact. Countries not having the single currency could do so voluntarily. The Euro Plus Pact is implemented in a total of 23 EU Member States.

The Six Pack

The final report of the Task Force to strengthen economic governance also advocated for more budgetary discipline and to extend economic supervision. In October, a political agreement based on the Commission proposals was achieved between the Council and the Parliament on a package of six regulatory texts, the so-called Six Pack. This meant that, among others, a stronger preventive and corrective budgetary measure came into force. One of the components of this constitutes an excessive deficit procedure that compels more action, which, besides budgetary deficits, now also takes into account Member States' debt levels. In addition, economic supervision was preventively and correctively strengthened by, among others, a macro-economic imbalance procedure. Both procedures also provide for sanctions against the Eurozone countries that do not observe the new game rules. Finally, a set of rules with which the national budgets must comply were also agreed.

Reinforcing crisis management tools

After the European Council of December 2010 had already laid down general principles on what the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) should look like, the European Council of 24-25 March concluded a treaty on the provisions for the functioning of the ESM. These provisions were refined in the declarations of 21 July, 27 October and 9 December by the Euro Area Heads of State or Government. The most important elements of this are the following:

- this is an intergovernmental treaty between the Euro Area Member States that comes into force as soon as Member States representing 90% of the subscriptions have ratified it. The intention is that the Treaty comes into force in July 2012;
- the ESM aims to be given the highest rating (AAA) by the most important credit rating agencies;
- the ESM has a total authorised capital stock of 700,000 million euros and a paid-up capital of 80,000 million euros, to which Belgium shall contribute at a rate of 3.4771%. In addition, there

shall be supervision to ensure that the ESM, together with the current temporary emergency fund (European Financial Stability Facility - EFSF), shall have a credit lending capacity of 500,000 million euros;

- the ESM offers financial assistance within the scope of a macro-economic adjustment programme, under strict conditions strengthened in the form of loans. In this respect, active IMF participation will be one of the main objectives;
- the ESM shall be able to intervene on primary and secondary markets. It shall be able to finance re-capitalisation of financial institutions and shall be able to trade on the basis of a proactive programme;
- in general, decisions shall be adopted by mutual agreement. Moreover, an emergency voting procedure is created whereby a qualified majority of 85% of the subscriptions represented is required.

Continued reinforcement of the economic union

During the European Council of 27 October, the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, was given a mandate to compile a report in close collaboration with the European Commission President, Manuel Barroso, and President of the Euro Group, Jean-Claude Juncker, to arrive at a greater economic convergence in the Eurozone, to improve the budget discipline and to deepen the economic union. The intention was to implement this with a limited amendment to the treaty. Pending the final report, it was decided at a meeting of the Euro Area Heads of State or Government on 9 December, among other things, to conclude a new budgetary pact. Negotiations for this treaty had already been started before the end of the year.

As a founding country of the European Union, Belgium closely follows operations on the strengthening of the economic union. This process must be understood in a broad and balanced manner. All important economic and social policy fields must have better coordinated management and cooperate more closely at a European level. Equilibrium between a responsible fiscal economy, on the one hand, and more solidarity between the Member States, on the other, must be pursued. Moreover, that debate, which is fundamental for Europe, has an important institutional dimension. In this regard, our country advocates that the appropriate role of the European institutions be recognised and that the community method be maximally valorised.

The Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination plays an important role in informing and coordinating numerous Belgian institutions involved in this file.



Herman Van Rompuy participated in the debate at the regional diplomatic conference to strengthen economic management of the European Union; (from left to right: Lilliane Bloem (DGE), Herman Van Rompuy and Steven Vanackere), 17 and 18 November 2011

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

The Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union was given a special dimension in 2011. The lessons learned and the essential support for the new democracies south of the Mediterranean Sea resulted in the entire process (in the South and the East) being adjusted. In practical terms, this means that there are stricter conditions, more responsibility and more ownership. Based on these principles, the EU will in future provide assistance to governments which, among others, adopt political reforms, but cut down on their relations with those who opt for the opposite. This new approach has been included in the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 20 June and the European Council of 24 June.

This new partnership is based on four principal objectives with an important mutual connection:

- to promote and support the establishment of sustainable democracies;
- to increase political and security cooperation;
- to support shared and employment-promoting growth;
- to ease mobility while simultaneously guaranteeing essential border security.

Partnership for democracy and shared prosperity (ENP for the South)

Achieving the objectives of the new partnership with the Mediterranean countries brought about various implementation measures:

- redistribution of the available means in consultation with the countries in transition (Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan) to better deal with the new priorities;
- making new funds (350 million euros) available to support democratisation and civil society, which will be able to count on more extensive resources from now on;
- additional support for economic and social development by raising the ceiling for loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and an extension of the operations of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the Mediterranean Sea area;

- negotiations (to be started in 2012) on far-reaching free-trade agreements, which ease commercial exchanges and create jobs;
- negotiations on mobility partnerships that ease the traffic between people, especially young people and professionals.

Country-specific task forces have been planned to coordinate and achieve these objectives. The first was successfully held in Tunisia on 28 and 29 September. The second, for Jordan, is planned to take place at the beginning of 2012. New plans of action are also currently being prepared.

Belgium supports the new principles of the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular, strong differentiation, ownership and shared responsibility. It also lauds the action that the EU took regarding the new challenges of the Arab Spring. Our country fully supports the assistance and increased commitment from the European Union to the Mediterranean Sea area, but simultaneously advocates for responsible action regarding mobility and commercial openness. It is relying on the European Union flexibly adjusting to the changing situations in the different countries, while also seeing that it remains fair.

Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership Summit on 29 and 30 September in Warsaw was one of the highlights of the Polish EU presidency. A declaration largely reflecting the Belgian points of view was adopted there. The following points were clearly agreed upon:

- no prospects of the Eastern Partnership countries joining, although a number of Member States and partner countries had steered towards still keeping a reference to the European perspective in the text;
- visa-free travel at the appropriate time, as soon as requirements have been met;
- an encouraging signal on trade issues, without the EU binding itself to a date on which agreements must be reached;
- a rearrangement of the financial applications within the scope of the forthcoming discussions of the Multiannual financial framework.

2011 was also the year in which the Eastern Partnership was implemented. Negotiations with a view to concluding association agreements were continued with all Partnership countries, except Belarus. The negotiations with the Ukraine were finalised. The implementation of the first stage of the plans of action aimed at short-stay visa-free travel for the Ukraine and Moldavia (consisting of establishing and implementing a legislative framework that guarantees the essential conditions in a secure environment) was also on the agenda throughout the year in 2011.

Debates on the practical application of so-called shared values were held repeatedly. The failed attempt at the Warsaw summit to adopt a joint declaration on Belarus and the consequences of the

Ukrainian political and legal system have both shown that there is still much work to be done before the principles of the Partnership can be applied.

Therefore, the issue of the prospects of the Partnership countries joining continues to be a moot point, seeing that a number of Member States are still clinging to the idea of offering certain countries of the Eastern Partnership that prospect.

Multiannual financial framework

Furthermore, another theme in 2011 was also an important stage in the future of the European Union. The European Commission actually made its first proposals for the future financial framework of 2014-2020. The financial framework lays down the resources that the European Union can access over the next seven years to finance its policies (Research & Development, infrastructure projects, Common Agricultural Policy, Cohesion Policy, external actions of the Union, European citizenship, etc.). The financial framework is therefore the financial reflection of the EU's political policy objectives.

The framework determines the maximum amounts that may be spent in any given sector. This does not mean that the total amounts in the budget will be used. Working with maximum amounts (expenditure ceilings) excludes even the slightest deficit in the European budget.

The Commission is also considering drastically reforming the European Union's financing system. Currently, the Union is being financed mostly by every Member State's contribution (proportionate to its wealth) and by customs duties collected at the Union's borders. The Commission wants to reform this system and introduce new own resources, particularly a new tax on financial transactions. In this way, the financial world would also have to pay for the European policy.

The financial framework and financing of the Union is being negotiated between the 27 EU Member States. In this way, every country is afforded the opportunity to express its priorities and concerns.

Belgium makes its presence known at the negotiations on the financial framework. An ambitious European budget is extremely important to revive our country's economy. The European budget is, after all, mainly an investment budget that can stimulate growth and create jobs.

It is the task of the Directorate-General of European Affairs and Coordination of the FPS to coordinate Belgian negotiations. For example, it informs the various European forums concerning the points of view held by the Belgian institutions, the federated entities and, in particular, the citizens.

Implementing the Lisbon Treaty and cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS)

The European External Action Service (EEAS), the European diplomatic corps at the service of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mrs Catherine Ashton, started operating in 2011. The EEAS structure could be set up after 2010 and when the legal texts had been approved. The executive positions were appointed as of the end of December 2010 and the transfer of the staff coming from the Commission and the Council commenced on 1 January 2011. The organisational chart was subsequently completed as recruitment progressed. At the end of 2011, the EEAS had 1,600 staff members who came from the Commission, the Council and the Member States. A network of delegations represents the European Union in the world; 125 are established in third countries and 8 at international organisations. Belgium currently second a dozen diplomats to the EEAS, half of whom are in Brussels and the other half of whom are at foreign delegations.

The end of the EU presidency did not mean the end of the priority implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and, more particularly, the establishment of the EEAS for Belgium; quite the contrary! In April, Belgium, together with its Benelux partners, constructively assisted in improving the functioning of the EEAS and the interaction with the Member States, on which this Service is based. This constituted the foundation for the start-up in the spring of a process that led to the draft of guidelines for cooperation between the EEAS and Member States. In December, a new contribution, which was developed in cooperation with 11 other partners, was sent to the High Representative for her annual report and pending the evaluation in 2013 of the 2010 decision that had established the EEAS.

Progress was also made in the international forums. In May, the General Meeting of the UN adopted a resolution that gave the EU delegation the permission to address the meeting together with the representatives of the regional groups and no longer at the end of the debate, after the Member States, as its observer status prescribed. As a matter of fact, for the first time, this provision afforded the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, together with Heads of State or Government, the opportunity of holding the EU speech at the opening of the 66th session in September 2011.

Establishing a European diplomatic service is a real challenge. For the first time in history, countries have actually decided to establish a non-national diplomatic corps to represent them. Its magnitude and ambition make this a long-term effort, but the EEAS can rest assured that Belgium will give it all the necessary support.

Deteriorating transposition and increase in the amount of Belgian transposition acts

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

It has been ascertained that there is a deterioration in the transposition of directives at both European and Belgian levels. The European Commission published the figures of 10 May 2011 on the 23rd Scoreboard on the Internal Market. According to its calculations, the EU Member States have an average deficit of 1.2% non-transposed directives. The EU average has exceeded the 1% EU standard for the first time since May 2008. The increase in the number of directives to be transposed, the complexity of many of these directives and the short time limits for the directives in the financial-economic sector in light of the crises explain this deterioration.

The intensive nature and complexity of the transposition is apparent from a rise in the number of legislative or regulatory acts that the Belgian authorities recorded. In 2011, our country reported 433 legislative or regulatory acts to the European Commission. There were 251 in 2009.

Of the 143 directives that had to be transposed in 2011 or previously, our country finalised 120, and in 2011, there was a backlog of 23 non-transposed directives.

Drastic reduction in the number of Commission infringement proceedings against Belgium

In 2010 and 2011, measures were taken to reduce the high number of the Commission's infringement proceedings against our country for (non-)conformity of the transposition of the application of EU law. Prevention, proactivity, planning and awareness-raising were emphasised in this regard. This led to a substantial reduction in the number of infringement proceedings by the Commission against Belgium in 2011.

The Belgian decision to enter the Commission's pilot programme on managing the pre-infringement stage (EU pilot hereafter) on 3 January is in keeping with this policy. It is indeed important to limit the number of new infringements against Belgium. The traffic between Belgium and the Commission within the scope of the EU pilot led to a solution for cases that would otherwise have given cause for lodging an infringement. The objective was achieved because the number of new infringements for reasons other than delay in transposition fell from 36 to 7 cases.



Minister Olivier Chastel at a workshop on Internal Market Law

Current infringements on the Internal Market were further reduced by 35% from 109 to 71 infringement proceedings in 2011. Infringement proceedings must be limited as much as possible to those files where there is a dispute between Belgium and the Commission. The abovementioned 35% are largely infringement proceedings where the Belgian authorities accepted the Commission's stance and took measures to set things right with the European law.

Representing Belgium before the Court of Justice of the European Union

Belgium attempts to defend its interests and indirectly influence the interpretation and application of the European law by way of its interventions before the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg.

Belgium was very active at the European legal institutions in 2011. For example, it was involved in 76 cases pending before the Court on 31 December (+ 1 EFTA - European Free Trade Association case).

There was a drop in the number of appeals instituted against Belgium by the European Commission for non-compliance because our country had incorrectly applied European law or incorrectly transposed European directives (9 appeals against Belgium on 31 December 2011 as opposed to 11 on 31 December 2010).

As a matter of fact, Belgium's interventions before the Court particularly concern prejudicial proceedings, i.e. when a judge of a Member State appeals to the Court of Justice for an interpretation or the validity of European law (56 pending cases on 31 December 2011). As regards prejudicial interventions before the Court, our country is 5th out of the 27 Member States, a place that it shares with France and ahead of Member States such as Spain and Poland.

Over and above these two categories of legal cases, Belgium also lodged an appeal to have a Commission decision that earmarked agricultural subsidies as a government subsidy declared null and void and to claim that these be reimbursed. Our country is also involved in two appeals against decisions by the Court on broadcasting rights for the World Cup and the Eurocup football competition. Finally, our country has also acted various times in direct appeals to support other Member States or institutions, such as the Council, within the scope of an appeal to have its decision to allow closer cooperation on patents declared null and void (6 interventions were still pending as at 31 December 2011).

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



3. POLICY

3. Belgium in a multilateral context

OECD

At the Ministerial Meeting in May under American chairmanship, the OECD presented its vision for the future on the occasion of its 50th anniversary: to strive to achieve better policies for better lives, introduce a new paradigm for development and set itself up as a true global policy network for public action.

This is no small challenge in light of the economic prospects that were announced at the end of 2011, which indicate that there is a general global economic delay requiring all Member States to quickly take appropriate budgetary and structural measures. In this particular context, Belgium advocated strict budgetary discipline at the OECD and other multilateral forums.

The newest economic study on Belgium, which appeared in June, was presented by the OECD Secretary-General, Angel Gurría, and Prime Minister Yves Leterme. The latter transferred to the OECD General Secretariat as Deputy Secretary-General in charge of Social Affairs, Education, Governance and Entrepreneurship.

Reformation of the IMF

The reform of the IMF management bodies, which was agreed at the G20 Summit of Heads of State or Government in South Korea, will be implemented. As is known, this agreement makes particular provisions for a reform of the voting right in favour of the up-and-coming countries and for two European seats for developed countries less in the Executive Council. In this regard, Belgium negotiated intensively to maintain the country group in the Council, but, to date, these negotiations have not led to a proposal that is acceptable to all members of that group of countries.

G20

Is it still necessary to mention the fact that Belgium does not belong to the G20, although it actually forms part of the 25 largest economies in the world? Our country is officially represented by way of the European institutions listed in the Lisbon Treaty. The FPS is of the opinion that in light of the evolution, such as under the French chairmanship in 2011, that the G20 operations are experiencing, the

Commission should approach the G20 matters more horizontally and maintain closer contact with the Member States to involve all Member States in the process, not only after but also especially before the meetings.

Disarmament and non-proliferation

Nuclear non-proliferation

2011 was a transitional year between the last testing conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2010 and the commencement of the new cycle of international meetings in 2012. However, the most important files were indeed constantly monitored: the coming into force of the new START Treaty between Russia and the United States, the serious risks of proliferation by countries such as Iran and North Korea and the perspectives of international nuclear cooperation for peaceful objectives. The latter element was obviously also strongly influenced by the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, which led to fast international action.

Belgium remains a vehement protagonist to have the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty quickly come into force and also wants the Disarmament Conference in Geneva to deal with negotiations on a balanced agenda, whereby a new treaty that would put an end to manufacturing new nuclear weapon equipment must be afforded the most attention.

There was an important international seminar, organised by the EU, in Brussels in July, on the theme of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. All countries of the region attended this. There will be an international conference on this in Finland in 2012 in implementation of a decision made at the Test Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2010.

Chemical weapons

Belgium has always attached a great deal of importance to the correct and timely implementation of the obligations included in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention). Our country was the first victim of the use of such weapons during the First World War. We therefore also fully support the role allocated to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons. The Director-General of this organisation participated in the memorial event in Ypres on 11 November.

Biological weapons

Belgium played an active role in the preparations for and implementation of the 7th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BTWC) in December. The EU took an extensive joint stand on this, also at our country's instigation. In cooperation with the Belgian Biosafety Association, the FPS organised a seminar in June for industrial stakeholders such as the biotech and pharmaceutical industries and their sectors' federations. The innovative proposal that ensued from this seminar, i.e. to improve biosafety and biosecurity by means of adjusted industrial quality standards, was included in the final document of the Review Conference. An Egmont Paper was also published on the theme.

International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities

Belgium invested effort within the European Union in support of the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. This will be discussed at a meeting of international experts in 2012, where all interested countries will be able to participate and the intention is to have everyone endorse the Code. The Code contains confidence-building measures between parties and an official exchange of information on all types of outer space activities.

Fight against anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs

The most remarkable fact in 2011 was that Belgium once again chaired the universal application of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, better known as the Ottawa Treaty.

Belgium will coordinate the action of the parties and NGOs to the convention to promote the principles of humanitarian international law and to ensure that new countries enter the Treaty during the years to come. A strategy to that effect was adopted by the States Parties to the Convention at the 11th Conference in Phnom Penh at the end of 2011.

Belgium simultaneously continued to work on correctly implementing the recent Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took effect in August 2010. In practical terms, this means that our country analysed the first initial reports submitted by the States Parties to the Convention as based on an ad-hoc form that was drafted by Belgium. At the 2nd Meeting of States of Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Beirut in September, Belgium proposed to draft a guide, based on all the stakeholders' contributions, on the correct use of the reporting form. This will be officially submitted during the course of 2012. Moreover, Belgium contributed to the universal application of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, especially on the European continent.

International Arms Trade Treaty

During the course of 2011, Belgium actively participated in the two negotiation sessions on a new legal tool for the UN on international arms trade. Together with the EU partners, our country supports a treaty that is as ambitious as possible to create more accountability regarding global arms trade. This is also being intensively deliberated with civil society.

Fight against illicit trade in military firearms (small and light weapons)

The marking, registration and tracing of firearms was the theme of the Expert Meeting within the context of the UN Programme of Action against Illicit Small Arms Trade (UN PoA) in June. Our country was able to present an extensive report and actively participate in the meeting, thanks to successful inter-departmental coordination with, among others, the Liège Test Bench and the Police.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The United Nations want to prevent atrocities such as those in Rwanda and Srebrenica with Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The standard was unanimously accepted by the world leaders. R2P links national sovereignty to the responsibility to protect citizens from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. This responsibility includes tasks such as prevention, protection and recovery. When a country defaults in this respect, it is up to the international community to take measures. R2P is based on three pillars:

- every State is obliged to protect its own population against the four crimes stated;
- the international community expands its capacity and provides support where this is required;
- the international community must act in good time if the previous two pillars fail.

We may not lose sight of the importance of the first and second pillars. R2P puts particular emphasis on preventing the four crimes, which is not to be reduced to pure military intervention. An international intervention is the last resort and requires a mandate by the UN.

Belgian contribution in Libya

Riots broke out in Libya in the spring of 2011. The protesters demanded that their leader, Gaddafi, resign. He tried to suppress the opposition by force, whereby human rights were repeatedly violated. On 26 February, the UN adopted resolution 1970, in which there was a clear reference to R2P. The resolution pointed out to the Libyan leader what his responsibilities were and used sanctions to put him under pressure. The situation in Libya did not improve. The UN adopted a more extensive resolution two weeks later, i.e. resolution 1973. The third pillar of the R2P was key here: with the exception of ground troops, the international community could take all necessary measures to protect the Libyan population from Gaddafi's insanity. R2P was the legitimisation for the military intervention that

started shortly afterwards. Belgium also participated in this operation with six F-16s and the minesweeper Narcis.

Libya was not the first case in which R2P was enforced, but it was indeed the most far-reaching and visible application. This has implications for the manner in which R2P is perceived. Today, many associate the standard only with the third pillar, i.e. an intervention. The merits of military operations are questioned because they also create victims and cause destruction. Moreover, countries such as Russia and China are of the opinion that R2P is a tool used by the West to impose regime change. Brazil launched its appeal for Responsibility while Protecting on these perceptions. In this matter, they emphasise prevention and the fact that all peaceful means must be exhausted. A military operation must respect the UN mandate. According to the Brazilians, minimum use of force and maximum sense of responsibility are indispensable.

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), which is established in New York, recognises that there are challenges for the future. Firstly, they want to clarify the R2P concept. The second challenge is much more institutional: governments and inter-governmental organisations lack the capacity and planning required. This must change. Spain, which designed an R2P scenario, is even mentioned as a role model for R2P. The third point to be worked on is a broad international consensus and consistency in applying R2P.

Although R2P is not uncontroversial, it is currently the most appropriate approach to protect citizens from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Belgium's main priority in 2011 was to present its Universal Periodic Review on 2 May. To recap, the Universal Periodic Review is a United Nations Human Rights Council mechanism that checks the human rights situation of every UN Member State every four years. The other countries pose questions during that inspection and make recommendations to the country being evaluated, based on the report that the country itself has compiled, a UN report (with recommendations by the human rights bodies) and a report by civil society organisations. The Belgian delegation was chaired by Minister Steven Vanackere, which goes to prove that our country attaches a great deal of importance to this Human Rights Council tool. Belgium received 121 recommendations, of which it accepted 88, i.e. to establish a national institution for human rights and to ratify additional protocols at the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Furthermore, there were recommendations for improvement - which are mostly being implemented - regarding

the justice system, prisons, asylum, the fight against all forms of discrimination, rights for women, children, the disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights. All Belgian institutions, i.e. the federal, community and regional ones, cooperated in this exercise, in which civil society organisations were and continue to be closely involved.

Belgium made recommendations to the following countries within the same UPR context: Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Rwanda, Syria, Georgia, Burma/Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Denmark, Hungary, Australia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Haiti, Venezuela, Suriname and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, or 23 countries out of the 48 that were evaluated in 2011.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Belgium continued its efforts for the protection and universal application of human rights, in particular, regarding the situation in Libya, Syria, the Middle East, Belarus, Sudan, Central Africa and the countries in transition pursuant to the Arab Spring. Furthermore, our country was one of those responsible for the greater freedom of religion and convictions, for association and assembly, the development of a legal system pursuant to a conflict situation, the fight against impunity and the application of Resolutions 1325 et seq. of the UN Security Council regarding women, peace and security. In that context, on 12 December Belgium evaluated its national plan of action, *Women, peace and security*, and it will make additional efforts to promote the rights of women in the world and their part in security.

Belgium rounded off its persistent efforts for LGBT rights with a double success. For the first time ever, the Human Rights Council adopted a *human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity* resolution, a key stage in the fight against criminalising LGBT persons, thanks, among other things, to Belgian diplomatic lobbying. Thanks to our country, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), a non-governmental organisation which fights for LGBT rights and is established in Brussels, was granted observer status at the UN Economic and Social Council.

In 2011, Belgium took the initiative and organised three European Union campaigns, one for the abolition of the death penalty, one against forced marriages and one for the ratification of two protocols at the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Belgium simultaneously cooperated on drafting a third additional protocol to this Convention. In addition, our country organised two events in the United Nations in favour of abolishing the death penalty, one in the margin of the Human Rights Council and the other on the occasion of the World Day Against the Death Penalty in Geneva.

Finally, the fight against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination continued to be priorities, as did the phenomenon of children and sexual violence in armed conflict. For example, on 22 September, Minister Steven Vanackere participated in the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and on 23 September, in the mini-summit on the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict, organised by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in the margin of the 66th General Meeting in New York.

Headquarters agreement

An international governmental organisation that wants to establish or open its registered office (headquarters) or an administrative office at another organisation, for example the European Union, can request that Belgium allocate the organisation a privileged status. The usual internationally accepted privileges and immunities are laid down in a headquarters agreement. The current template text that Belgium, as host, uses was thoroughly reviewed and modernised last year. The FPS is actively cooperating on realising this new template for the headquarters agreements.

Benelux cooperation

Pursuing the renewed dynamics of Benelux cooperation and in implementation of the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the Benelux Union, Belgium made efforts to construct a bilateral headquarters agreement with the Benelux Union. This draft headquarters agreement was concluded after intense negotiations. The FPS made efforts to propose a balanced agreement to the Benelux Union. In addition, the work on the organisation and functioning of the Benelux Court of Justice has been completed and the Amendment Protocol is ready to be signed. The FPS provided active input during the negotiations.

International Law Commission (ILC)

The annual report of the International Law Commission is discussed during operations of the UN Sixth Committee. Belgium intervened on three points during the discussions of the different chapters of the report of the 63rd session. It concerned the following themes:

- expulsion of aliens;
- *Aut dedere aut judicare* (the obligation to extradite or prosecute);
- immunity of State officials from the foreign criminal court;
- immunity of foreign State officials from criminal jurisdiction.

These interventions took place thanks to the cooperation between the Directorate-General for Legal Affairs of the FPS and the various Belgian law faculties.



3. POLICY

4. Belgian Development Cooperation

New cooperation programmes with three partner countries

In 2011, Belgium signed a new Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) with Vietnam, Rwanda and the Palestinian Authority. The three cooperation programmes jointly amount to a total sum of 291.6 million euros. In its new ICPs, our country strives mainly to achieve further specialisation in sectors in which, because of its experience, it can offer added value and continuity of previous efforts.

Rwanda

In most of the partner countries, the Belgian Development Cooperation opts to limit its interventions to two sectors. After all, it is better to do certain specific things well than risk giving a whole host of different projects only half the attention they need. This is known as sector specialisation. But in Central Africa, where Belgium's involvement stretches back over many decades, it chooses to be present in three sectors.

In the new ICP with Rwanda, Belgium will therefore concentrate on three sectors during the 2011-2014 period: health care, energy and decentralisation. The total sum of the agreement amounts to 160 million euros spread over 4 years. The previous ICP (2007-2010) amounted to 145 million euros. Rwanda is therefore receiving 15 million euros more than it did during the preceding 4-year period. The largest part of that 160 million euros will be spent on health care and energy. These two sectors will receive financing in the amount of 55 million euros each.

The new agreement pays special attention to good governance. By investing in decentralisation, Belgium is demonstrating that governance and democracy are important facets of its development policy. The approach is intended to result in particular attention being paid to participation, transparency and accountability.

The bilateral cooperation programmes attach increasingly more importance to political and economic management and human rights, not only in terms of determining the budget, but also by way of specific support and political dialogue. In the ICP with Rwanda, Belgium has included a system of

incentive tranches. The aim is to encourage reforms and progress regarding governance, which is an indispensable element for development.

Vietnam

The new cooperation programme strengthens our cooperation with Vietnam, the only Asian partner country of the Belgian Development Cooperation. The agreement amounts to a sum of 60 million euros for the 2011-2015 period. The renewed cooperation emphasises the reform of the government administrative service and water and sanitary provisions, sectors in which Belgium already operates and which are very important to Vietnam.

Vietnamese society is characterised by fast industrialisation and urbanisation and is extremely vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. A coherent policy regarding water, waste processing and urban planning is therefore of vital importance. Belgium contributes to a great extent by investing in water and sanitary facilities.

The modernisation of government administration is an important reform for better governance and an essential component of sustainable socio-economic development. Strengthening capacity is therefore also an important component of the new ICP. The aim is to gradually strengthen the institutional and organisational capacities in the central development sectors.

A contribution will also be reserved, as part of a delegated cooperation, for a United Nations programme. The UN programme must support Vietnam in its efforts to improve parliamentary follow-up and monitoring, in increasing its fight against corruption and in increasing the involvement of citizens, the media and local civil society in issues such as policy planning.

The Palestinian Authority

In 2008, Belgium signed a cooperation programme worth 50 million euros with the Palestinian Authority. The emphasis there was on education and local authorities. The new programme (2012-2015), with its 71.6 million euros, amounts to over 20 million euros (40%) more than the previous Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP). By prolonging its presence in the same two concentration sectors (education and

local government), Belgium ensures the continuity of its previous development efforts in the Palestine Territories.

The 33 million euros for education will primarily be used to build schools and support the improvement in education quality. This aid will be provided via the Joint Financing Agreement and the Education Development Strategic Plan.

The 20 million euros for local authorities are intended to enable the local Palestinian governments to effectively implement their own development policy using the Municipal Development Program and must lead to a revitalisation of the local economy. In this area, work will also be carried out on regenerating historic village centres.

Before the delegated cooperation, 14 million euros was reserved to support the fight against poverty via the European Commission's PEGASE fund (9 million), contributions for sewage water treatment in Gaza via the World Bank, a UNDP environmental project and an intervention by UN Habitat in East Jerusalem. Belgium, just like the EU, considers it important to be present in all Palestinian regions, thus including Area C on the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Belgium is also providing the Palestinian Territories with substantial financial support through UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the region) as well as through humanitarian aid actions and NGOs.



Belgium has an Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) running with the Palestinian Authority

4th Stakeholders Meeting of the Belgian Development Cooperation

The States General is an annual forum for the Belgian Development Cooperation policymakers, the government, civil society, politicians and academics. This event aims to provide information on the international development trends and to stimulate reflection on the Belgian development policy.

These are difficult budget years; there is no guarantee at all that the socio-economic progress of

the past 50 years has finally been achieved and we are being confronted with a fast-changing world with new challenges, new developments and new players. Within this context, development cooperation must also question its specific role and be able to prove itself now more than ever before.

Hence the choice for *Recent trends in international development efforts* as the central theme for the 2011 Stakeholders Meeting. This theme was raised in a plenary debate in the morning. During the afternoon session, working groups were more targeted and debated two specific themes:

- Towards a new role for the private sector?
- Humanitarian aid and structural development aid - Converging agendas?

Speakers included Kristalina Georgieva (European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response), Brian Atwood (Chairman of the OECD Development Assistance Committee - DAC) and Piet Vanthemsche (President of the *Boerenbond* [Catholic Belgian Farmers Union] and of AgriCord).



The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which was held in December in Busan © UN Eskinder Debebe

Busan: working on effective aid

At the beginning of December, the international community met in Busan at the fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Busan was the umpteenth crossroads in the search for effective development cooperation. It resulted in a new global partnership, including new actors such as Brazil and China. Belgium made practical contributions regarding fragile states, gender, aid architecture and the private sector. Here is a list of the most important matters:

- the outcome document, Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, introduces a period during which we increasingly place development in a strategic context and involve new actors, each with its own role;
- new actors such as China, India and Brazil had to be kept on board by intense consultation until a few hours before the outcome was approved. This provides a formal basis for the growing necessity of entering into development dialogue with these actors;

- 19 fragile countries and countries hit by conflict, which are referred to as the G7+; a group of donors, including Belgium, want to cooperate more emphatically on peace- and government-building. They ratified a New Deal for Fragile States. 1 out of 3 of Belgium's partner countries is in a fragile situation;
- participants in the conference declared that they agreed that they would develop a transparency standard and apply it. The emphasis by developing countries on budget transparency is new;
- there is greater recognition of civil society's role. Busan recognises that civil society offers people the possibility to demand their rights and that it offers supplementary service provision, i.e. supplementary to the government's;
- the emphasis on results was universal. Busan promises to work on data split-up according to gender and to support local statistical capacity;
- host country South Korea is a perfect illustration that economic growth is of fundamental importance to development. Busan made a joint statement in which participants recognise the increasing role of the private sector - internationally and within the countries - in the development field;
- the outcome document is addressed explicitly to the donors who are on the side of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Action Agenda (AAA). The developing countries insisted on continuing to deal with this agenda of unfinished points;
- Busan recognises the growing complexity of aid architecture. There is a proliferation of initiatives and aid providers. It is advisable to have more cooperation in the developing countries and more coherence between the international institutions and their programmes;
- South-South Cooperation was recognised as a welcome supplement to the more traditional North-South cooperation;
- a targeted Gender Action Plan was approved, for which Belgium also expressed its approval.

Climate conference in Durban

After marathon consultations, the Climate Change Conference in Durban decided to postpone the successor to the Kyoto Protocol - the international agreement between the EU and a few other States to globally force back the emission of greenhouse gases - to 2015. Not much of a success, according to Belgium and the EU.

Besides fighting global warming, following up the Climate Treaty is especially important for development cooperation so that it is able to adjust to the consequences of climate change, take measures against deforestation, transfer knowledge and technology and to finance all of this.

However, Durban did start off with the Green Climate Fund which, by 2020, must collect a part of the promised 100 billion euros per year to protect the developing countries from the consequences of climate change. The fund is temporarily being jointly managed by the secretarial services of the

Climate Treaty and the Global Environment Facility. A committee of representatives from the North and South will supervise the cash flows. A similar committee will monitor the global adjustment efforts.

A climate-friendly development policy

In 2010 and 2011, Belgian Development Cooperation donated 60 million euros to meet the most urgent needs in the South by means of various climate funds and the Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO). The Flemish and Walloon Regions also contributed to this.

Since 2008, the Belgian Development Cooperation has been making increasingly more efforts to make its operations climate-friendly. The KLIMOS research platform (KUL, VUB, UA, UGent and KAHO) is helping to develop a climate policy. Belgium also invested in climate-related sectors, such as renewable energy, agriculture, water supply and forestry.

Awareness-raising campaign on 21 July, the Belgian national holiday

We celebrate our national holiday on 21 July every year. There are fun activities in which everyone can participate free of charge on that day. Various government services, such as the police, the Department of Defence and Development Cooperation organise activities in which citizens can learn about the work that these services do by practical examples.

In 2011, the Belgian Development Cooperation once again participated in our national holiday celebration. As was the case in 2010, there was a large DGD stand in the *rue de la Régence* in Brussels. Young and old alike could find out more about the Millennium Goals and the North-South issue by participating in interactive games.



Belgian Development Cooperation also participated in celebrating our national holiday on 21 July

This is an ideal opportunity for the Belgian Development Cooperation to put its themes in the limelight and to rouse citizen interest in the South. We built a huge stand with 8 educational games and an interactive quiz, all within the context of the 8 Millennium Goals. Passers-by could climb a Moroccan date palm, fish for trash in a sandpit, push a globe forwards, take photographs of themselves, play a shivering game, throw balls at malarial mosquitoes and build a true-to-life jigsaw puzzle. A T-shirt was given to those who had played six games.

The crowds of people at and around the stand clearly showed that this was a success. Hundreds of young people climbed the ropes of the date palm and threw balls at the malarial mosquitoes. A total of approximately 6,000 people visited the stand and participated in the activities. The games were played 5,000 times in total and, by doing so, 500 T-shirts were won.

But that's not all. We even received important visitors. Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde visited the entire stand, showed their genuine admiration for the concept and even participated in a few games. The royal couple's visit to the stand became a news item in various media platforms.

Professional, targeted humanitarian aid

From emergency aid to humanitarian aid

With every crisis, it appears that the world is not adequately armed to help victims of natural disasters or violence. However, since the enormous tsunami in 2004, thorough analyses are made of what works and what does not. This means that the response is better every time. This also means that humanitarian organisations must integrate the lessons learned in their daily work and that donors finance only operations which integrate the lessons. The most important lessons have been compiled in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

Targeted and based on needs

Firstly, aid provided in accordance with humanitarian principles (neutral aid targeting the worst needs) works better. This principled approach is essential to Belgium's acceptance and ability to provide assistance in emergency situations by way of partner organisations. The perception of Belgium and its humanitarian action are also linked to the conduct and commitment of all Belgian-supported actors in the field.

In addition, most needs occur during long-term, complex crises and not in the case of sudden natural disasters. It is also extremely important that aid can be predicted and that input is flexible. Partners must be able to perform the work expected and be accountable. Belgium must be able to count on their professionalism.

In the case of a crisis, the administrative services analyse the needs by using the reports made by

ECHO (the European Community Humanitarian Office), ICRC (the International Committee of the Red Cross), UN-OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), etc. A financial proposal is made on the basis of such needs and Belgian expertise. This then forms the foundation to finance particular projects.

An important part of the allocation for long-term crises or a speedy response to a sudden crisis is made in cooperation with partners who are personally responsible for the allocation. This results in a much faster allocation of the money. Examples of this are the core financing of the UNHCR and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent.

Visit to the refugee camp in Dadaab

The largest humanitarian crisis in 2011 was the famine in the Horn of Africa. Because the rains held off, the Horn of Africa suffered from extreme drought. As a result, and also because of the war in Somalia, the worst famine in the past 60 years has arisen. Therefore, the large refugee camps of Dadaab in north-eastern Kenya also increased to over 500,000 people in 2011, which makes Dadaab the largest refugee camp in the world.



Minister for Development Cooperation Olivier Chastel visited the refugee camp in Dadaab in September.

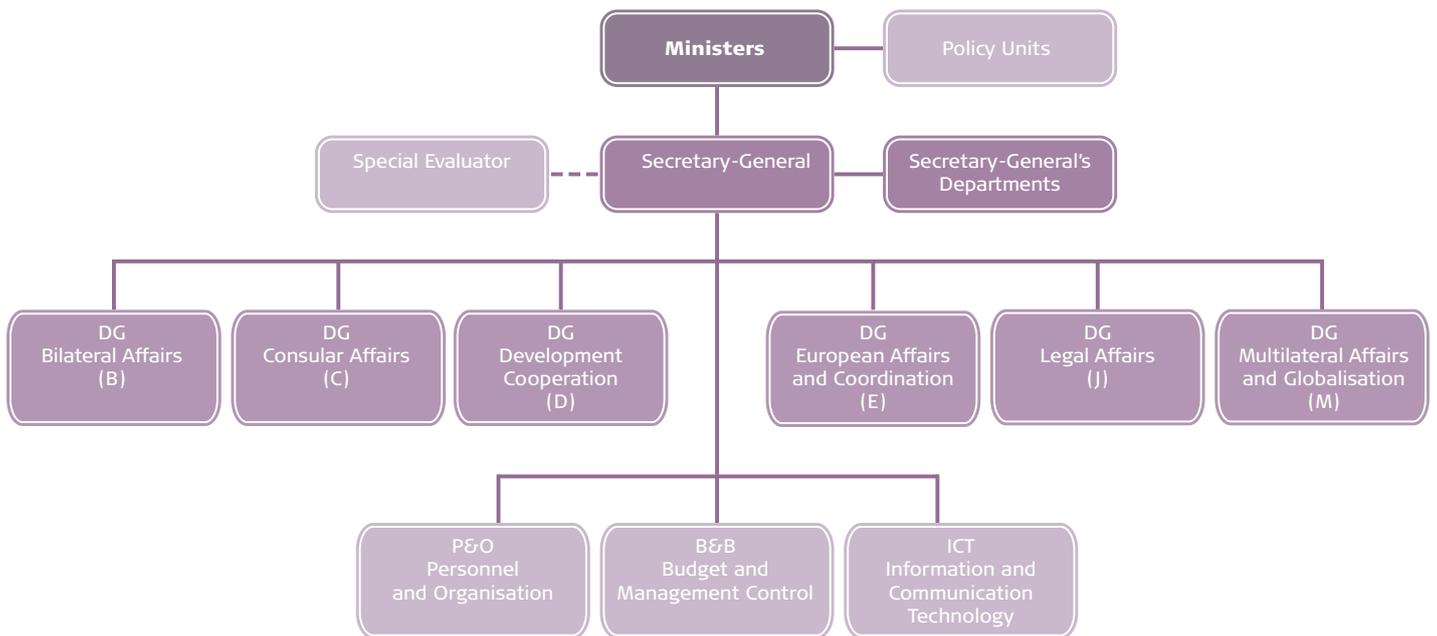
Minister for Development Cooperation Olivier Chastel visited the refugee camp in Dadaab in September. The Minister did so in the company of representatives of the Consortium for Emergency Relief 1212. Journalists from the VRT (Flemish Radio and Television) and *La Libre Belgique*, *Le Soir*, *Metro* and *Sudpresse* (Belgian newspapers) accompanied him on the journey. The Minister gauged the needs of the refugees by visiting the operations of the various aid organisations (UNHCR, WFP, Oxfam, CARE, UNICEF, Handicap International, etc.): refugee registration, medical check-ups, food distribution and setting up a new tent camp.

The visit by the press was an opportunity to update the Belgian population on our efforts. The Belgian Development Cooperation has already freed up an additional total of 12 million euros for humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa.



4. ANNEXES

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





4. ANNEXES

2. Map of worldwide FPS representations in Belgium and abroad (31.12.2011)





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4. ANNEXES

3. Acknowledgements

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