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The FPS Foreign Affairs has many different functions: to defend our political and economic interests within international bodies and in other countries, to foster peace, development and human rights, political, military and international judicial cooperation, assistance to compatriots in need in other countries, organisation of parliamentary elections for Belgians abroad ...

As of November 2009, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I was most impressed to learn about the work of the 3,400 staff at the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in greater detail.

In 2010, special attention will be paid to Europe (Belgian EU presidency), Africa (50th anniversary of the Congo and EU-Africa Summit), human rights (membership of the Human Rights Council). I shall shortly be describing some of the challenges awaiting us.

Europe
With Herman Van Rompuy as the first President of the European Council and the Belgian Presidency of the European Union in view, Europe is the top item on our agenda.

At the end of 2009, Spain, Belgium and Hungary presented the programme for their triple-shared presidency (which will run from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011). The Belgian contribution was defined further to intensive discussion with all parties concerned at the federal, community and regional level. Preparatory seminars were organised with representatives of civil society. This exchange of ideas on European themes will take place throughout 2010.

The Belgian Presidency will be quite different from our previous experiences. The Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009, has created a new institutional balance intended to improve the continuity, consistency and visibility of the Union. Belgium intends to avail itself of this presidency to ensure the smooth application of these institutional innovations.

Consular services
Consular services are the human face of the FPS Foreign Affairs. They add a human dimension to our country’s international relations by taking care of the needs and problems of our compatriots abroad, from the supply of legal and consular assistance to legalisation and the execution of deeds. As globalisation follows its course and the number of Belgians abroad increases, consular services form an increasingly important part of the FPS Foreign Affairs.
Belgium also plans to modernise its consular services, as part of the unification of Europe. The introduction of passports and visas with biometric data (digital photograph, digital fingerprint and signature) in the EU and Schengen countries, and of the electronic ID card for Belgians abroad, are important projects in this respect.

Biometrics make it more difficult to forge documents. Belgium is taking resolute action in this area: our consular offices and the municipal administrations have been supplied with equipment by the FPS Foreign Affairs which enables them to issue biometrically secure documentation.

The introduction of biometrics will also encourage EU consular missions to cooperate more closely with each other in third countries. The EU Member States will be strongly encouraged to cooperate with each other. The concept of joint visa departments is also gaining popularity. One instance is the recently opened Schengen House in Kinshasa, a project in which our country plays a leading part.

**Africa**

For obvious historical reasons, we take a particular interest in the Central African countries of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. All three are on the verge of new elections, and Belgium hopes that these will enable steps to be taken in the right direction. Belgian diplomats are supporting this development and are working to increase European involvement in Central Africa.

Congo will also be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2010. Belgium's participation in this commemoration offers a unique opportunity to strengthen our ties.

The Belgian Presidency of the European Union will also give our country an opportunity to place all of Africa on the European agenda. The biennial EU-Africa Summit will also be taking place at the end of 2010. We would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to give new impetus to the partnership between Europe and Africa.

**Human rights**

Human rights are an international concern which Belgium takes greatly to heart.

In June 2009, Belgium joined the United Nations Human Rights Council for three years, until June 2012. It will also be chairing this council for one year. This will enable Belgium to play an important role in the protection and development of human rights. The main task of the Human Rights Council, which has 47 members and is based in Geneva, is to record human-rights violations in the 192 member states of the UN and make recommendations for improvement, for instance in the Universal Periodic Review.
Economic diplomacy

One of the core tasks of the FPS Foreign Affairs is the protection of Belgium’s economic interests. For our country – according to the Swiss KOF Index the world’s most open economy – good economic relations are indispensable, especially in these times of globalisation.

In 2008, as the world’s eighteenth-ranking economy, Belgium exported 82.4% of all goods and services it had produced. Despite the crisis, Belgium continued to attract overseas investors. Together with the federal authorities, we are striving to efficiently support Belgian SMEs and companies and ensure that they are present on foreign markets, as well as foreign companies which invest in Belgium. For this purpose, we endeavour to improve cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional departments. Together with the regional authorities, we created the Image advisory council, which is intended to improve the image of our country abroad.

2010 promises to be an exciting year.

Steven Vanackere
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Institutional Reform
The FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation continued to reform its internal organisation to increase its efficiency and further improve the quality of its services.

### Increasing building security

In 2008, the FPS launched a programme to improve the security of its buildings. For this purpose, it contracted security firm Cobelguard. All visitors and staff in the FPS buildings are now under the protection of a highly experienced surveillance team.

**EU Presidency**

2009 was also the year during which the FPS prepared for the Belgian EU Presidency, which will begin in mid-2010 and run until the end of the year. Attention was also paid to security in this area. An information campaign was organised, which included the implementation of new security instructions for Central Administration. These were collected in the brochure “Security: What You Should Know, Do or Avoid”, in which all staff members can find the information they need to cooperate with their colleagues in order to make their own work environment safer.

### Information security

Instructions were also issued in order to improve the security of information systems. They were drawn up in close cooperation with ICT and form a major part of the general security policy at Central Administration. Both the smooth flow of information within the FPS and appropriate protection of data are of crucial importance to the operation of our services, which is why Central Administration applies stringent standards in this area.

To ensure everyone was aware of these issues, ICT had all staff computers display information messages about security whenever they are started.

**Clearance**

Between January and December 2009, 404 requests were sent to the National Security Authority (ANS/NVO) for the security clearance of Central Administration staff members and officials. In this respect, 2009 was a key year, as in the future only an electronic system will be used for this purpose.

**Improved protection for “vulnerable” officials**

Necessary attention was also paid to function security, with particular emphasis on the protection of “vulnerable” officials. In 2009, specialists were dispatched to locations such as Kinshasa, Bujumbura and Kigali in order to supply advice concerning physical security.

The FPS also signed a contract for the supply of armoured cars to missions in countries with an elevated security risk. The first cars will be delivered in 2010.
Evaluation of development cooperation

The Special Evaluation Unit for Development Cooperation had a particularly busy year, both in Belgium and internationally.

The internal evaluation unit of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGD) and the Special Evaluation Unit will be merged in 2010, and began to standardise their activities in 2009.

Evaluation of capacity building

An evaluation of capacity building in NGO programmes was begun in 2009. Its purpose was to clarify the reality behind the concept of “capacity building”. As yet, the evaluation has not been completed, but it is now certain that Belgian NGOs have an important role to play. Their expertise enables them to increase their partners’ abilities in terms of both content and organisation, and help them define the requirements of their target groups.

Finexpo

Finexpo was also evaluated. The OECD-DAC wishes to increase the number of developing countries to which the principle of delinked aid (aid not linked to orders) is applied. Although Belgium agreed to this extension, it requested a two-year moratorium. During this period, it would reconsider its state-to-state loan and interest-credit system. Until that time, it had been possible to include this form of export assistance in government aid to developing countries. The results of the evaluation will be known in 2010.

Debt relief under scrutiny

At the same time, the advantages and drawbacks of debt relief for developing countries are also being scrutinised in depth. This includes the review of case studies from Cameroon, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In the two latter cases, the FPS is cooperating with the Netherlands.

Evaluation of BTC

In 2009, a number of interventions by BTC (the Belgian Technical Cooperation Agency) were also scrutinised to assess the quality of the services supplied, as specified in the management contract.

The picture which had emerged from previous analyses was confirmed: BTC is an organisation which employs competent and skilled staff in the field and also maintains good financial and administrative control over its interventions. However, it also appeared that BTC’s activities were not yet sufficiently result-oriented. The expected results must be described specifically enough for their degree of achievement to be measured. However, the evaluated projects dated from the previous management contracts with the state. In the meantime, BTC has changed its modus operandi. We are therefore waiting for the results of the 2010 evaluation, which will analyse more recent projects and determine whether results have improved.

Capacity building

Belgium’s support to the development of sustainable agriculture, stockbreeding, fisheries and forestry was investigated. Around 30 specific cases in 6 different countries were subjected to a critical review. This showed that although modest, Belgian assistance has a strong impact. This is due to progressive and innovative initiatives and to our approach, which very early on was intended to strengthen local capacity.

International evaluations

The Evaluation Unit also plays a part on the international scene. It coordinates an international peer review which assesses the quality of the GEF (Global Environment Fund)’s evaluation department. This revealed that the evaluations performed by the GEF’s department are reliable and can be used by the FPS to shape its policy with regard to the GEF. Similar evaluations were also carried out for other multilateral organisations.

The Evaluation Unit is heading a multidonor evaluation which involves 6 bilateral donors and 5 multilateral organisations. Its subject is conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and its purpose to determine what works, what does not, and why, using examples of interventions by Belgian, foreign and multilateral organisations.

Belgium is also chairing an evaluation in Niger which involves four other donors. Together, they represent
over half of government aid to Niger. The evaluation is a complex project which uses information collected from over 1,000 documents and 300 individual interviews to draw conclusions concerning the effectiveness of aid in Niger.

This evaluation will be used for a high-level agreement with the donors concerned. The reason for this is that, overall, cooperation in Niger is not as effective as it should be: despite 50 years of uninterrupted international aid, the well-being of the population is decreasing.

All-in-one website

In 2009, the Internet team worked primarily on the new main website of the FPS, which merges the Foreign Affairs site (www.diplomatie.be) and the separate website of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (www.dgcd.be).

A new web content management-system is being used, in which all new or updated text is included. The graphics have been changed and the applications made more user-friendly.

As of March 2009, the technical development of the site was performed jointly with FedICT. The graphic design was contracted to a private firm. The design was approved by the Ministers and Secretary of State of the FPS in May.

The website copywriters were given the opportunity to attend a short training course on “writing for the Internet”. The 800-odd texts and their translations into two or three languages were ready by the end of the year, and were entered in the new site’s web content management-system by Passwerk.

The FPS’s new website is intended to streamline communication (one website instead of two) and optimise its services to two major components of its target audience: Belgians travelling abroad and foreign visa applicants.

On average, www.diplomatie.be was visited 9,700 times a day (i.e. 3,545,280 times a year, while www.dgcd.be supplied information to 250,000 visitors. Once more, consular information relating to visa applications, travel documents for Belgians travelling overseas and travel advice were the most popular headings on www.diplomatie.be. The most frequently consulted heading on the DGCD website was “Vacancies”.

http://diplomatie.belgium.be: the new website of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development cooperation © FPS Foreign Affairs
Modernisation continues

In 2009, the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation continued to modernise its personnel policy, mainly within the scope of initiatives launched by the federal public administration.

Certified training courses
Skills development by means of certified training courses is one of the essential components of this modernisation.

In 2009, a great many training courses were organised for Level A staff and almost all civil servants belonging to this group took part in them.

For Level B and Level C staff, a series of certified training courses replaced the old skills promotion measures. Furthermore, the first certified training courses were organised for Level D civil servants.

In preparation for the Belgian Presidency of the European Council during the second half of 2010, new certified training courses were organised on European issues in cooperation with the Federal Administration Training Institute (OFO/IFA).

Development in personnel
Despite the cuts imposed by the budget, and which will also affect us in 2010 and 2011, the FPS drew up a personnel plan in 2009 which includes the partial replacement of staff who have left the department. In view of the reversed age pyramid which is also affecting other public services, lowering the average age of the staff will be the main challenge of the coming years.

In 2009, the FPS and SELOR jointly organised recruitment examinations specific to the FPS. With regard to foreign-service careers, the FPS recruited 25 diplomats between October and December 2009.

Number of staff employed
The tables on the following page present the numbers of staff employed both at the Central Administration and at the diplomatic missions, together with the number and nature of missions, as of 31 December 2009.

The diplomatic missions are indicated on a world map at the back of this annual report.

In 2009, the consulate in Nice was closed. Two missions were opened: the consulates-general in Marseille and Lubumbashi. The consulate in Atlanta became a consulate-general. The plan to open a consulate-general in Sydney was dropped.
## FPS PERSONNEL AT CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND ABROAD
(physical units as of 31 December 2009)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established internal officials</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials under contract</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomats</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellors</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachés for Development Cooperation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total at Central Administration</td>
<td>1,429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diplomats</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellors</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachés for Development Cooperation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate officials under contract</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officials under contract employed on site</td>
<td>1,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in missions and Permanent Representations abroad and in Brussels</td>
<td>1,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total (Central Administration, missions and Permanent Representations)</td>
<td>3,426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number and category of embassies and consulates (31/12/2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missions</td>
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<td>Embassies</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulates-General</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulates</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent Representations</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation Offices*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This refers only to cooperation offices in places where there is no Belgian diplomatic mission: Bamako, Cotonou, Maputo, Niamey, Quito and La Paz. Twenty-one cooperation offices are in the grounds of an embassy, consulate general or Permanent Representation.*
3. Buildings

Buildings abroad

In 2009, as in previous years, the FPS’s real-estate policy ensured that we were able to provide a swift and adequate response to our foreign-policy requirements and market fluctuations.

No buildings were sold, unlike in previous years. This can be put down to the fact that a great many buildings had already been sold in recent years, in particular in Tokyo, where the sale of two-thirds of our site enabled us to finance the building of a new embassy (on the land we still owned) and still leave us with a very considerable surplus.

The new building was fitted and delivered at the end of 2009.

Negotiations also took place for the purchase of chancelleries in Kiev and Sofia. However, these have not yet been completed.

A number of buildings were repaired or refurbished, most recently in Algiers, Budapest, Paris, Saint Petersburg, Washington and Kigali.


More minor work was carried out at numerous missions, in the form of renovation and/or improvements in security. This was financed by the ordinary budget.

Decoration and improvement work was carried out in several residences, and a number of chancelleries received new furniture.

The department responsible for buildings abroad works in close cooperation with the Public Procurement Unit within the Personnel and Organisation policy support directorate.

Buildings in Brussels

The buildings in Brussels are rented. Egmont 1, the main building, is located at Rue des Petits Carmes 15. Egmont 2 is located at number 24. The FPS also rents office buildings at Rue de Namur 48 and 59, as well as a floor in a building at Rue de Brederode 2.

The FPS also operates the Egmont Palace and the Chateau of Val Duchesse in partnership with the Buildings Agency (Régie des Bâtiments/Regie der Gebouwen).
4. Budget and financial resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Commitment credits (in € thousands)</th>
<th>Organisation credits (in € thousands)</th>
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<td>Strategic bodies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Representation abroad</td>
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<td>International cooperation</td>
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<td>Embassies, consulates and cooperation missions</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Subsistence programme</td>
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<td>Directorate-General for Legal Affairs</td>
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<td>Subsistence programme</td>
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<td>546</td>
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<td>Directorate-General for Bilateral Affairs</td>
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<td>Directorate-General for Consular Affairs</td>
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<td>Subsistence programme</td>
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<td>Humanitarian aid</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation</td>
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<td>166,215</td>
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<td>110,299</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td></td>
<td>505</td>
<td>505</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Humanitarian aid</td>
<td></td>
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<td>51,490</td>
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<td>Directorate-General for Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>1,120,672</td>
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<td>Governmental cooperation</td>
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<td>424,443</td>
<td>366,532</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-governmental cooperation</td>
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<td>133,981</td>
<td>242,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Multilateral cooperation</td>
<td></td>
<td>403,802</td>
<td>462,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Special missions</td>
<td></td>
<td>154,785</td>
<td>277,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,599</td>
<td>3,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>European relations</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,599</td>
<td>3,599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|  |  |  | 1,583,931                          | 1,823,795                              |
1. Protocol

Services to a growing diplomatic community

The Protocol Directorate is in charge of the management and application of the preferential rights and immunities of the diplomatic missions in Brussels, and has continued with the modernisation of operations and optimisation of services over the past year.

The Protocol Directorate’s website, which was launched in 2005, already supplied the available diplomatic list as well as further information concerning rules of protocol and administrative rules. In 2009, circulars containing practical instructions for the administration were expanded, and all information was updated.

Last year, the service also paid special attention to observance of the traffic regulations and mediation in disputes involving diplomats and their members of staff. The employment conditions of diplomats’ domestic staff were also monitored.

284 diplomatic missions

The diplomatic community in Belgium is large. By the end of 2009, there were 284 diplomatic missions in our country. In addition to this, there are also 183 bilateral embassies and 101 other diplomatic missions, namely those accredited to international organisations.

The 284 missions in Brussels now have a grand total of 7,585 members of staff, including 5,226 diplomats, 1,948 administrative and technical personnel, and 411 others. Counting family members, the total comes to 16,667. All of these staff and the members of their families need an identity card, which is issued by the Protocol Directorate.

Protocol also issues diplomatic corps vehicle registration numbers. In the diplomatic missions, there are now 6,437 diplomatic corps vehicle registration numbers in use, of which 4,293 for diplomats’ private cars and 2,144 for diplomatic missions’ official vehicles.

In total, as of mid-November 2009, the Protocol Directorate managed 64,189 people with privileges (holders and their family members), of whom a third were from diplomatic missions and two-thirds involved in international organisations. This was a slight increase from 2008.

In 2008, Protocol issued 22,574 identity cards; by mid-November 2009, the number was 21,106. It should be added at this point that the Preferential Rights and Immunities department was feeling the unavoidable effects of chronic understaffing; despite its best efforts, certain tasks, in particular the updating of website information, had to be postponed.

More consulates abroad

In 2009, the response to most requests for the opening of an honorary consulate was positive and several honorary consuls were appointed. There were no requests for the closure of honorary consulates.
The request by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to reopen its career consulate-general in Antwerp was approved.

Besides the usual identity cards for consulate personnel, some 30 new-style "legitimation cards" (same format and type as Belgian identity cards) were issued to honorary consuls. In some cases, they replaced the cardboard cards used until that time, which have a validity period of five years.

Protocol also issued around 30 CC plates, which must be affixed next to the number plates of the cars of career and honorary consuls. New stocks of these plates were purchased.

The department maintained regular contact with the Belgian Consular Union, which attends to the requirements of honorary consuls in Belgium and issues an annual guide.

Yet more international organisations
Belgium is host to around ninety international organisations, most of which have their head offices in Brussels.

In 2009, seven organisations started talks with Belgium with a view to signing headquarters agreements. Two new organisations applied for permission to open a facility in Belgium.

The Protocol Directorate issued 11,000 special identity cards to the officers of international institutions of all kinds in 2009. It also issued driving licences and around a hundred diplomatic corps vehicle registration numbers.

Meanwhile, the department fully updated the database on international organisations.

There is a host of other duties with which Protocol concerns itself. One of these is the forwarding of requests for documents to the various relevant authorities.

In 2009 the department handled 300 cases relating to traffic offences. On top of this there were approximately one hundred writs of summons resulting from legal disputes (non-payment, failure to pay alimony, etc.).

Equal opportunities for diplomatic family members
Within the scope of its policy of equal opportunities for men and women, Belgium signed a reciprocal agreement with the Federal Republic of Brazil and the Republic of the Philippines which authorises certain family members of diplomatic and consular officials, often their spouses, to seek paid employment in the host country. The agreement between Belgium and Croatia on the same subject came into force on 2 May 2009.
Some figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processed applications for</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cards for Brussels Airport Company diplomatic corps car park</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for VIP lounge</td>
<td>3,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling of applications for temporary badges for Brussels Airport</td>
<td>1,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling of applications for permanent badges for Brussels Airport</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security cases (burglaries, official receptions, protests, etc.)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working visits

Eight official visits were organised in 2009:
- The Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs (3-5 February)
- The Vice-President of Indonesia (6-7 February)
- The President of Tajikistan (9-11 February)
- The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs (18 March)
- The President of Brazil (3-5 October)
- The Vice-President of the People’s Republic of China (7-10 October)
- The President of Ukraine (15-16 October)
- The President of Burundi (22-25 October)

Belgium did not host any state visits in 2009.
Protocol, in close cooperation with the Crisis Centre of the FPS Home Affairs, also organises the visits in connection with the European Councils in Brussels. Six top-level meetings took place in 2009.

**Security of foreign visitors**

The Protocol Directorate also takes care of the security aspects of visits by foreign guests. It is important that they have access to secure areas in airports, such as VIP lounges. The VIP lounge at Brussels Airport was reopened in 2009 further to refurbishment.

The use of badges and access cards also ensures that only trusted persons are admitted.

Some figures for 2009 clearly show the part played by the Directorate in ensuring the security of diplomatic missions.

**A full year for Egmont II**

As of August 2009, activity ceased at the Egmont Palace and the conference centre as restoration and conversion work began in preparation for the Belgian Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2010. On the other hand, it was a busy time for the Egmont 2 complex, which is home to the Europe Room (Europazaal/Salle Europe - capacity 450), as well as the Multifunction Room (Polyvalente Zaal/Salle Polyvalente) and the Brel and Toots Rooms.

A number of landmark events took place in 2009, such as the conference organised by NGO Payoke on human trafficking during the Swedish Presidency of the EU, which was attended by Queen Paola and Queen Silvia of Sweden.

Actiris, the Brussels Region’s regional job-placement agency, also celebrated its twentieth anniversary at Egmont II. The celebration was attended by King Albert II. A number of events were also organised in the building by NATO and the European Commission, including the EU-Japan meeting.

The Val Duchesse Chateau and Priory were also busy in 2009. Various European Councils were organised there, as well as grand receptions on the occasion of four visits, by the President of Brazil, the President of Ukraine, the President of Burundi and the Vice-President of China. Val Duchesse was also the venue for a meeting between Minister Steven Vanackere and Mrs Hillary Clinton, who had travelled to Brussels for the NATO Summit.

The traditional conferences organised by the Egmont institute took place at Egmont II and Val Duchesse.
Nobility and honours

In close cooperation with the office of the Prime Minister and the administrations involved, the Honours Department again prepared and published a series of specific regulations and equivalences in the public sector.

In accordance with the Law of 1 May 2006 on the awarding of honorary distinctions in the Honours List and the Royal Decree of 15 October 2006 establishing the rules and procedure for the awarding of honorary distinctions in the Honours List, both published in the Belgian Official Journal of 24 October 2006, the Honours Department, in close cooperation with the office of the Prime Minister and the administrations involved, prepared, amended and published a further series of specific regulations and equivalences in the public sector. The Honours Department also assisted with the exhibition Krása evropské faleristiky. Vyznamenání Členských Zemí Evropské Unie / The Beauty of European Faleristics. European Union Member States and their Honours (shown from 2 February to 1 March 2009 at the National Museum in Prague).
2. Consular affairs

The FPS is chiefly known to the general public for the services extended by consulates and embassies to Belgians and foreigners requiring visas or other documents. Once more, this was a busy year for our overseas missions and Central Administration, where staff occupied themselves with such matters as new methods for dealing more effectively with illegal migration.

Biometric passports and visas

Biometrics is the recording of measurable characteristics of individuals which enable them to be positively identified. The measurable characteristics used in visas and passports will be digital fingerprints and identity photographs.

**Passports**

A EU Regulation required the Member States to include a chip in all passports as of the end of June 2006, containing the holder’s personal information and digital photograph. As of the end of June 2009, as well as the chip, prints of both index fingers also had to be included. This meant that all passport offices had to be fitted with digital-photography and fingerprinting equipment. The project was divided into two separate sub-projects.

The supply of the equipment to diplomatic and consular missions was worked out in the course of a joint operation with the Visa department and the task was contracted to Zetes, a company specialising in identification systems.

The company has begun to supply the missions with the equipment.

A tender procedure was initiated for the supply of equipment to the municipalities and provincial administrations. This should lead to a number of test municipalities being supplied with the equipment by the end of 2010.

Passport-office staff will be trained in the use of the photographic and fingerprinting equipment. Thanks to an application developed by the ICT department, the procedure is a simple one.

The most important change for passport applicants, especially at missions, is that they must apply in person so that the biometric data can be taken.
Not only are passports going biometric: henceforth, application forms are being sent electronically to the production centre. This will save a great deal of time, especially in the case of applications made from the missions.

**Visas and the VIS database: combating illegal migration**

Like all other Schengen countries, Belgium is subject to the European regulation requiring the introduction of biometrics in visas.

In practice, all alphanumeric and biometric data for all visa applications submitted to and approved or rejected by any Schengen country will be stored in the joint European database (= Visa Information System-databank – VIS database).

This enables the exchange of visa information to be formalised and automated. The Schengen countries will be in a better position to combat visa shopping and illegal migration. The VIS is scheduled to begin operation in 2011.

In the meantime, to build up experience, Belgium has already begun to collect biometric data from visa applicants.

In 2009, the relevant departments drew up a detailed specification for the supply of equipment to the diplomatic missions. This was done jointly with the Passports department, as the biometric data will be used for both visa and passport applications. Further to a public tender procedure, the supplier contract was signed in September.

**Missions in North Africa already equipped**

At the end of the year, the six North African missions – Rabat, Casablanca, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers and Cairo – had been fitted with the necessary equipment.

The decision to begin with the North African missions is consistent with the European decision to phase in the collection of biometric data for visa applicants. North Africa is the first region where all Schengen countries need to be ready to begin operation when the VIS biometric visa comes into force.

The equipment was installed and tested and the consular staff trained. For this purpose, six sets of biometric data were sent.

**Deeds issued at missions**

In 2009, the Belgian overseas missions issued 3,611 deeds in connection with choice of nationality or naturalisation. These were usually declarations of attribution, the instrument used by Belgian parents to request Belgian nationality for their children born overseas, and declarations opting for Belgian nationality.

Our missions also received 296 applications for naturalisation in 2009.

Other deeds concerned marital status (389 deeds, usually of acknowledgement) or were notarial in character (812 deeds, mainly powers of attorney and marriage contracts).

**Inspection of Belgium by US in connection with visa issuance**

Under the US Visa Waiver Program (VWP) citizens of 35 participating countries may enter the United States as temporary visitors for the purpose of business or leisure without previously having to request a visa from an American consulate.

An American delegation from the DHS (DHS - Office of Policy Development, Office of Intelligence and
Analysis, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement) visited Belgium from 2 through 6 March 2009 for evaluation purposes. Its purpose was to determine whether Belgium continued to fulfil all conditions for its citizens to travel without visas to the US.

Issues such as immigration and asylum, the war on terrorism, organised crime, the passport issuance procedure and forged documentation were discussed. A visit was made to Brussels National Airport and the port of Oostende. Belgian border inspections were also observed.

**European coordination in crisis situations**

As part of European consular cooperation, the “lead state” concept was developed by the European consular task force (COCON). This means that when a crisis situation occurs in a third country, a EU Member State may take charge of consular coordination. Lead states are appointed on a voluntary basis. Two lead states may also be appointed if necessary. In 2009, steps were also taken to improve coordination between the capitals of Member States in crisis situations. During the Swedish Presidency, a checklist of actions to be taken during a crisis situation was drawn up, to ensure that all actions are appropriately coordinated.

The Council Secretariat also opened a newly overhauled website, Consular Online (CoOL) for the use of the crisis centres and consular services of the EU Member States. The website includes an information forum which enables information to be exchanged easily. This is very important as it enables information concerning EU citizens in crisis areas to be broadcast in times of crisis, and plans to be made for the evacuation of these citizens if necessary.
3. Crisis management

Crisis Centre reinforced

After a long period of understaffing, which was partly due to departures, the Crisis Centre was fully restaffed by the last quarter of 2009. This ensured normal continuance of activity and made it possible to consider the extension and improvement of its services.

Unrest caused by flu virus

In 2009, the world was disrupted by a health crisis. The A/H1N1 virus killed a number of people worldwide and the WHO went so far as to call it a pandemic. Panic broke out in some places. In close cooperation with the missions, the Crisis Centre collected information in order to achieve a global overview of the pandemic and its severity.

By May, the department had supplied many missions with large stocks of the Tamiflu vaccine. By the end of 2009, when the necessary quantities of vaccine were available, Foreign Affairs ensured that all staff members not included in the vaccination plans of their host countries could be inoculated under the Belgian vaccination plan. Together with the medical centre and the shipping department, the Crisis Centre sent the vaccines to the relevant missions. This ensured that expatriate and local staff were protected against the A/H1N1 virus by the end of the year.

B-FAST in action

Within our department, the B-FAST permanent secretariat has the very important task of ensuring the day-to-day management of purchasing, training, budgets and the like. However, it is best known for rapid response in crisis situations.

In 2009, B-FAST carried out two successful operations.

In January, children injured during the military operation by the Israeli army against Hamas were evacuated from Gaza to Belgium for medical treatment.

In October, B-FAST supplied assistance in Sumatra after an earthquake. The team set up two water-purification stations, which were then transferred to a local organisation.
Travel advice for 171 countries

One of the department’s core tasks is to update travel advice. The number of countries about which the FPS supplies advice has increased substantially over the past few years. At the end of 2009, it had reached 171. This service is much appreciated by the public as our advice to travellers is a valuable source of information. The number of times the FPS website is consulted supplies further evidence of this, as the “Travel Advice” section is one of the most popular.

Crisis files

Much attention was also paid in 2009 to the updating and optimising of crisis files. Although each crisis is different and usually cannot be predicted, it is advisable to be as well prepared as possible. With this in mind, “crisis files” are an indispensable tool, which the department will continue to develop in 2010.

Interest groups

At the national level, the Crisis Centre cooperates closely with Defence in the Defense & Foreign Affairs Crisis Team (DFACT), and with the Coast Guard, for the international disaster plan.

The department is also involved with various activities and initiatives at the international level. At European Union level, these include COCON and the Budapest Club for Open Source Intelligence (OSINT).

The department also participates in the Non-combattant evacuation operations Coordination Group (NCG), the purpose of which is cooperation during evacuation operations.

The purpose of this cooperation with Defence and international partners is to prepare fast, well-coordinated action in order to assist Belgian citizens who may be endangered by the outbreak of a serious crisis abroad. This may range from the supply of accurate information to, if necessary, evacuation from the crisis area.

Civil crisis management (CCM)

In this area, the FPS’s main activities were the development of a national strategy and the introduction of a financing mechanism for missions.

The national strategy is the result of teamwork by an interministerial group (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs and Justice) coordinated by Foreign Affairs. At this point, a task force of delegates from a variety of policy units are drafting the final version of this strategy prior to presenting it to the government for approval. Although the document is referred to as a strategy, it is in fact a working tool, which describes the structures and responsibilities of civil management, the preparation of missions, the training and hiring of personnel, and financing.

The Council encourages all EU Member States to implement a national civil-crisis management strategy, in order to be able to send enough personnel on an increasing number of CSDP missions.

The policy units of the FPSs involved in CCM missions have developed a mutual financing mechanism based on an interministerial budget. It has been agreed that as of 2010 the FPS Foreign Affairs will manage this budget. The other FPSs must prefinance their contribution, but will be refunded on the basis of the budget.
The number of personnel on missions in 2009 was:

EULEX Kosovo + EUSR: 40
EUPO DRC: 4
EUPM BiH: 2,5
EUPOL COPPS: 2
EUMM Georgia: 1
EUBAM Rafah: 0,5

To this should also be added the joint organisation by the FPS Foreign Affairs, the Egmont Institute, the Belgian Federal Police and the FPS Justice of two sessions of basic generic training and one training course (in Brussels and The Hague) for Iraqi magistrates and police officers, a contribution by the Benelux to the CSDP mission EUJUST LEX.
Projects for a more peaceful world

The Peacebuilding department is in charge of financing conflict-prevention and peacebuilding projects, in accordance with the priorities of Belgium’s foreign policy. The department’s budget for this purpose was €30,640,297.70 in 2009. All proposals for financing were measured against criteria approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. These are listed on the FPS’s website: www.diplomatie.en/policy/.

Subjects

In 2009 the Peacebuilding department paid special attention to the following areas of activity:

- development and strengthening of the rule of law
- development of free and democratic media
- efficient management of natural resources
- support for peace processes and electoral processes

- disarmament, mine clearance, and the fight against the proliferation of light weapons, antipersonnel mines and fragmentation bombs
- support to civilian victims of conflicts

Regions

Special attention was devoted to the following areas in Central Africa:

- sexual violence and child soldiers
- natural resources
- rebuilding of the judicial system and transitional forms of justice
- Security Sector Reform (SSR)
- light weapons, antipersonnel mines, disarmament and mine clearance.

Geographically speaking, in 2009 our interventions focused chiefly on the African Great Lakes Region, the Middle East, the Balkans and Asia, with special emphasis on Afghanistan.
1. Belgium in a bilateral context

The FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation ensures that Belgium is able to play its role on the world stage in accordance with the policies specified by its government. This is done in a bilateral or EU context, or within a wide variety of multilateral bodies.

Western Europe and North America

United Kingdom
On the occasion of its tenth anniversary, the Belgo-British Conference organised two half-days at which around 80 participants from both countries discussed a societal theme. This year, the subject was Innovating our Way out of the Crisis. Politicians, businesspersons, academics and journalists investigated ways of overcoming the crisis with innovations, and discussed such aspects as encouraging employment, promoting competitiveness and entrepreneurship, the use of environmentally friendly methods, etc. The Belgo-British Conference is an initiative set up by former Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Guy Verhofstadt in the course of a meeting in 1999. It is run by a Board and presided by two co-chairs, under the patronage of HRH the Prince of Wales and HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium.

United States
Father Damien was canonised in Rome on 11 October. The diocese of Honolulu (Hawaii) organised a trip to Belgium and Rome for approximately 550 people. Father Damien is an important and revered figure in Hawaii, and there are statues of him in front of the Capitol in Washington and of the Hawaii State Capitol Building. The canonisation of Father Damien was also reported in the American press, not only because he...
is an important figure in the history of Hawaii, but due to President Obama’s connection with the island. The link with Belgium was also emphasised in the news reports.

On 1 November 2009, our ambassador in Washington represented the Belgian government in Honolulu at the celebrations in honour of Father Damien, which were also attended by Cardinal Godfried Danneels.

**Germany**

In 2009, the German Ambassador in Brussels organised the first Belgo-German Conference, which took place at the Academïenpaleis/Palais des Académies from 14 to 15 October. Ambassador Reinhardt Bettzuege selected Partners in Innovation and Education as its theme. The purpose of this encounter was to increase both countries’ interest in scientific developments in each other’s country and encourage exchanges between academics. On the occasion of the opening, Prime Minister Leterme gave an address.

**France**

On 3 April 2009, the 13 bodies concerned signed the cooperation agreement for the Groupement européen de coopération territoriale (GECT), West-Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d’Opale. The signatories included the Belgian Federal Government, and among those present were Minister Hilde Crevits and the Prefect of the French Region, Jean-Michel Bérard.

The GECT headquarters are in Dunkerque (Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque), and the operational departments in Veurne. The GECT is a legal instrument created by the EU. Its purpose is to supply an appropriate institutional, technical and financial framework for transborder cooperation between the province of West Flanders, the Opal Coast and the urban community of Dunkerque.

**Benelux**

On 6 June 2009, the Federal Government signed an agreement with the regions and communities in Eupen. This was a cooperation agreement concerning the representation of the Kingdom of Belgium in Benelux bodies.

The supreme Benelux authority, the Committee of Ministers, met in Brussels on 8 December 2009 to set priorities and establish guidelines for cooperation within the organisation in 2010.

The Ministers approved the activity plan for 2010. Benelux hopes that this year will be as fruitful as 2009, in which a number of successes were recorded, such as the extension of cabotage (the free entry of backhaul into the other country) in road transport, the beginning of cooperation in the area of gas supply (the so-called gas platform) and the implementation of a joint youth policy.

The Benelux will be facing several challenges in 2010: the start-up of a website on transborder employment, increased cooperation between police departments, the combating of small dust particle emission by road traffic, all in cooperation with the Bundesland of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The ministers also intend to improve the efficiency of the railway link between Brussels, The Hague and Luxembourg. This will be undertaken by a task force in which all three countries are represented, with the support of the Secretariat-General of the Benelux. The Committee of Ministers has also initiated a modernisation of the Benelux Parliament.
CCNR: waste convention for inland transport
On 22 September 2009, Belgium was the last signatory to ratify the Convention on Collection, Storage and Disposal of Waste Generated during Navigation on the Rhine and Other Inland Waterways (CDNI), further to which the convention came into force on 1 November 2009. Environmental pollution by inland navigation will be further reduced, and the sector may advertise itself as environmentally friendly. The provisions now applicable are based on the “polluter pays” principle.

In 2010-2011, Belgium will be chairing the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR). It will be placing special emphasis on cooperation with the European Commission in order to encourage inland-waterway transport as a sustainable means of transport.

Central and Eastern Europe

Russia
Like Ukraine, Russia remains an important political partner in dialogue.

The Joint Committee with Russia met in Luxembourg in January.

The action plan for 2010-2012 was completed. Together with a planned visit by the Minister, this should breathe new life into our bilateral relations. An economic mission headed by Prince Philippe will follow in 2011.

Ukraine
The official visit by President Yushchenko and Foreign Affairs Minister Poroshenko in October 2009 were the culmination of several years of rapprochement. A halfway assessment was also made of the road map signed with Ukraine in 2008, and an honorary consulate was opened in Lviv in October.

Moldova
Moldova was a focus for the attention of both the EU and Belgium, which would like to ensure that the democratisation process becomes irreversible. Prime Minister Vlad Filat was received by Prime Minister Van Rompuy, and the Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation went on a mission to Chisinau.

In the meantime, our ambassador in Bucharest enhanced the Belgian presence in Chisinau by travelling more frequently to Moldova and organising the first King’s Day reception on 15 November.

Romania
Belgium also worked on strengthening its bilateral and multilateral ties with the EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe. A high point of relations with Romania was the state visit by the King and Queen of Belgium to the country from 7 to 9 July 2009. The visit was successful in terms of state-to-state relations, as well as economic relations and exchanges between universities and researchers. Five protocols were signed concerning economic relations, universities, and cooperation in scientific research.

Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – EU Presidencies
The Czech (first half of 2009), Hungarian (first half of 2011) and Polish (second half of 2011) Presidencies took up a great deal of the various bilateral contacts between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other members of the government with their counterparts from these countries. Not only did these encounters contribute to strengthening the basis for our own EU Presidency in the second half of 2010; they also helped improve our bilateral ties.
Poland

Much attention was paid to Poland in 2009. Various initiatives were taken to celebrate the 90th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, including a conference in Brussels on 18 March 2009. Events were also organised to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War II. In view of Poland’s economic and touristic potential, and with Euro 2012 – the European Football Championship – in mind, two honorary consulates were opened in Lodz and Gdynia-Gdansk (the others are in Poznan, Katowice and Bydgoscz).

Bulgaria

In 2009, Bulgaria celebrated the 130th anniversary of its diplomatic relations with Belgium. This was highlighted by a meeting between the Foreign Affairs Ministers of both countries in Brussels on 7 October.

Baltic States

Belgium also kept the Baltic States in mind. The six-monthly Benelux-Baltic talks took place in Vilnius in October, and were followed shortly afterwards by a meeting between Prime Minister Van Rompuy and Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaité.

South-east Europe

Western Balkans

Belgium played an active part in the endeavours by the international community to support the stabilisation process in the Western Balkan countries, as well as their applications to join the EU and NATO.

Belgium contributed directly to multilateral missions to the area. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU’s policing mission, the EUPM, included two Belgians.

In Kosovo, the NATO peacekeeping force (KFOR) included 200 Belgian soldiers. Our country also sent 45 police officers, magistrates and experts to EULEX, the EU’s civil mission.

Within the EU, Belgium continued to lend political support to the stabilisation and association process which should lead to the Western Balkan countries joining the EU. In this context, Belgium supervises compliance with the conditions set by the EU, in particular in the areas of human rights and minority rights, the rule of law and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Preventive diplomacy

Belgium also took a number of initiatives with a view to preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. These focused in particular on the identification of people who disappeared during the war, and the re-integration of former members of the citizens’ militia KPC (Kosovo Protection Corps), which was disbanded in June, combating human trafficking (Serbia), the strengthening of the judiciary and combating impunity (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Contribution to bilateral relations

At the same time, the FPS encouraged various federal bodies to reinforce the legal framework of our bilateral relations with the countries in the region, by signing agreements on the prevention of double taxation, police cooperation, the protection of investments, road transport, etc.

In preparation for the Belgian Presidency of the European Council during the second half of 2010, many bilateral encounters took place, both in Brussels and in the capitals of the Member States concerned. These encounters will continue in 2010.
Turkey
In accordance with its commitments – i.e. the 1963 Association Agreement and the conclusions reached by the European Council in 2004 – Belgium continues to support the Turkish integration process, without losing sight of the attached conditions, especially the “Copenhagen criteria”.

Belgium takes great satisfaction in the reforms achieved and is encouraging Turkey to pursue its efforts, as well as its endeavours to develop and maintain good relations with its neighbours.

In 2009, many meetings took place between Belgium and Turkey, the high point being the Prime Minister Yves Leterme’s working visit to Istanbul and Ankara in December, in the course of which he met Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gül.

Greece
The bilateral relations between Belgium and the Hellenic Republic are outstanding in all respects. This was evidenced once more in 2009 by the similarity of the Greek and Belgian positions at the Euro-Atlantic level.

Cyprus
The bilateral relations with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus are excellent. There are no differences of opinion.

Belgium confirmed its support for the Greek and Turkish Cypriots who, with the help of the UN, were endeavouring to directly negotiate the reunification of the island and the creation of a bi-zonal, two-community federation, in accordance with a number of UN resolutions. In this federation, both communities would have the same political rights.

Several times, Belgium has volunteered to assist both parties in designing the structure and operation of the future federation, and to share its own experience and know-how with them.

Georgia
In 2009, Belgium continued to support the principle of peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia with the international organisations, without violation of its territory. The EU’s fact-finding mission included Belgian personnel. Belgium also supported the talks in Geneva jointly chaired by the UN, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. There was a great deal of diplomatic activity concerning the issue of the South Caucasus, which was closely monitored by our FPS.

Central Asia
Tajikistan
Belgium also took measures to strengthen its ties with the Central Asian countries. Mr Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan, paid an official visit to Belgium on 9-11 February. Both countries signed a memorandum of understanding. The embassy also organised a business forum in which 60 companies took part.

Turkmenistan
On the occasion of a meeting between the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Belgium and Turkmenistan on 3 June 2009, a memorandum of understanding was signed on the subject of mutual cooperation. Energy cooperation was one of the main issues discussed.

Uzbekistan
The bilateral encounter with Uzbekistan which took place in Tashkent on 28 October gave new impetus to mutual relations, which had suffered further to the violence in Andijan.
Kazakhstan

In the course of bilateral consultations in Astana, Kazakhstan’s priorities were discussed. Kazakhstan will be taking over the functional presidency of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010.

North Africa and the Middle East

The Arab-Israeli conflict

The Gaza War from 27 December to 19 January was one of the defining events of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 2009. The Belgian government decided to supply humanitarian aid via B-FAST. Our country supplied material assistance via Jordan, and on 14 January six injured children and their escorts arrived in Belgium from El Arish (Egypt).

On the occasion of his tour, Israeli Home Secretary Meir Sheetrit took the opportunity to explain Israel’s position on the war, among others to Belgium.

At the donor conference for Gaza, which took place on 6 March in Sharm el Sheikh, the international community pledged large amounts of aid. Minister Karel De Gucht promised up to 6 million dollars. However, Israel prohibited the entry of most construction materials, so that little reconstruction was performed in 2009.

US President Obama attempted to set further talks in motion in 2009. The EU was active both in the field and politically. EU mission EUPOL COPPS, which includes two Belgian police officers, will now also monitor the entire process of the administration of justice. Minister Yves Leterme talked in New York with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

UNRWA anniversary

An academic conference was organised at the Egmont Palace on 29 and 30 June on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), the organisation which helps Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

The inaugural speeches were made by Minister Karel De Gucht and Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd. Academics then discussed the basic social, economic and cultural rights of the Palestinian people. On this occasion, the Palestinian national football team also played their first international match in Europe, which was organised on 6 May at the FC Brussels football stadium in Molenbeek.

Morocco

The economic mission to Morocco headed by Prince Philippe in November comprised 350 participants, including four ministers and almost 300 members of the business community, and was a great success. It was a demonstration of Belgium’s dynamism in the business world and the attention it pays to the fast-expanding Moroccan market.

Many high-level meetings took place between the ministers and Moroccan leaders.

Lebanon

In 2009, Belgium continued to take part in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon). The medical unit had to be withdrawn as the field hospital was needed for a European battle group. However, the remaining 230 soldiers were joined by Belgian frigate Leopold I, Leopold I, which commanded the Maritime Task Force from April to June. At the end of April, Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy visited Lebanon and the Belgian troops. This was his first official visit to a country outside the EU. The Prime Minister talked with the country’s highest authorities.
and confirmed that Belgian troops would continue to participate in UNIFIL until 2010.

Jordan
At the end of May, Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht made a short trip to Jordan to talk with his Jordanian counterpart Nasser Judeh about bilateral relations and the peace process in the Middle East.

Syria
In September, Foreign Minister Yves Leterme spoke in New York with his Syrian counterpart Wallid Mualem. They discussed the situation in the Middle East and the relations between Syria and the EU. Minister Mualem invited Mr Leterme for a visit.

Iran
Iran’s nuclear policy remains the chief concern of the international community. Belgium reiterated its position in the European and international bodies, and continued to emphasise its concern over respect for human rights in the country. Together with the FPS, the Belgian embassy in Tehran gave consular assistance to three Belgians detained in Iran.

Iraq
Belgium had not had an ambassador in Baghdad since the Gulf War of 1991. On 10 November 2009, after 18 years’ absence, a new Belgian ambassador presented his credentials. The Ambassador will reside in Amman (Jordan). The accreditation of a Belgian ambassador to Iraq is a further step in the rapprochement between both countries, and the result of a promise made by Minister De Gucht on the occasion of a visit in May 2009.

In February 2009, Belgium also decided to take in 50 Iraqi refugees from Syria and Jordan.

Saudi Arabia
The economic mission headed by Prince Philippe, organised on 23-29 October, demonstrated the strengthening of our ties with Saudi Arabia. The delegation of around 250 people from various business sectors visited Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam. The Saudis were given the opportunity to discover Belgian expertise in many different areas.

United Arab Emirates
At the end of October, Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde made a visit to the United Arab Emirates. The purposes of this visit were political, economic and cultural, with particular emphasis on the achievements of Belgian companies, for instance their role in the construction of Burj Dubai.

Africa south of the Sahara
In Africa, Belgium remained faithful to its commitment to lasting peace, good governance and development opportunities for all sections of the population.

At the beginning of February 2009, Minister De Gucht visited Addis Ababa, on the occasion of the 12th African Union Summit. This visit, and encounters with members of the AU Commission and a number of African ministers, was intended to emphasise Belgium’s commitment to the well-being of Africa.

Belgium has made stability in the Great Lakes region the top priority of its Central African policy. Our country continued to play a highly active part in relaunching the Economic Community of the Countries of the Great Lakes (Communauté Économique des Pays des Grands Lacs/CEPGL).
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Contrary to 2008, 2009 was a highly positive year for our relations with the DRC. Not only were bilateral relations normalised, they were intensified. This normalisation was sealed on 24 January 2009 when both Prime Ministers signed a declaration in which both countries undertook to begin an ongoing, sincere, open and constructive dialogue with each other, in which both countries would respect each other’s democratic and legitimate institutions. They also committed themselves to ensuring that relations between both countries would be managed in accordance with the principles of sovereign equality of states and reciprocity. The restarting of mutual cooperation was also discussed. Since then, relations have been improving in all areas, as evidenced by the reopening of the Belgian Consulate-General in Lubumbashi on 14 September 2009.

Stability and pacification

In the meantime, Belgium had worked to consolidate the democratisation process, implement durable stability and generate the best possible opportunities for the entire population. For this purpose, our country called on all partners in the international community.

Belgium attentively monitored the military operations against the FDLR in East Congo, pleading constantly for an integrated approach, and paid special attention to the humanitarian consequences of military operations, in particular the issue of sexual violence.

As well as diplomatic action and support to specialised NGOs, Belgium also contributed €10 million to the Stabilisation and Reconstruction Programme for East Congo (STAREC/Stabilisation et Reconstruction de l’est du pays) for the purpose of combating impunity. More specifically, this aid was intended for the regions of North and South Kivu, Maniema and North Katanga, as well as Oriental Province. The activities of the programme include combating impunity, socio-economic reintegration, psychosocial assistance and medical support to victims.

If pacification is to be achieved, Security Sector Reform (SSR), – i.e. the reconstitution of the army, police and judiciary – is an absolute priority. In this connection, Belgium also continued to pay special attention to the DDR process (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration).

Good governance and development opportunities for all

Belgium has continued to maintain its demands for good governance. These are listed in the new Indicative Cooperation Programme for 2010-2013 signed by Congolese Minister of International and Regional Cooperation Raymond Tshibanda and the Belgian Minister of Development Cooperation, Charles Michel, on 21 December 2009. The agreement specifies that €300 million will be paid over a four-year period, as well as an additional sum of €100 million for 2012-2013 if the DRC fulfils a number of conditions relating to
good political and/or macroeconomic governance. Good governance is also included in all development actions, for instance via the strengthening of the institutions.

Belgium also continues to support good governance in the mining sector. In 2009, it was able to implement its initiatives within the scope of the Belgian Task Force on Mineral Resources in Central Africa (TF MIRECA).

**Rwanda**
Relations with Rwanda remained good, as shown by the extent of our development cooperation. Belgium is pleased at the increasing closeness of Rwanda and the DRC. This was one of the subjects discussed during the meeting between Ministers Michel and Leterme and President Kagamé on the margin of the UN General Assembly.

**Burundi**
Belgium pursued its efforts in favour of the peace process in Burundi, which made great strides in 2009. Our FPS is closely monitoring the preparation of the general election, which is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2010.

The high quality of our bilateral relations, which are based on an extensive cooperation programme, was demonstrated by the visit by Minister Michel to Burundi in February, and the signing in October of the new Indicative Cooperation Programme on the occasion of the visit by President Nkurunziza to Belgium.

**Sudan/Chad/Central African Republic**
Belgium closely monitored the situation in Sudan. Our country pronounced itself in favour of the correct implementation of the North-South peace agreement (CPA/Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and supported projects for reconstruction in Southern Sudan.

As far as Darfur is concerned, Belgium emphasised the primordial importance of a political solution. Our country also took part in combating impunity for the worst crimes. Belgium continued to support the International Criminal Court in principle after the issuance in March 2009 of the arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Bashir.

Up to mid-March 2009, 80 to 100 Belgian soldiers took part in the EU peacekeeping force intended to prevent the crisis in Darfur from spilling over into Eastern Chad and the North-East of the Central African Republic.

As chair of the Central African Republic Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, Belgium is making considerable efforts to foster political stability, safety and economic development in the country. Bilateral initiatives are also being taken in the areas of SSR and DDR.

**West, East and Southern Africa**

**West Africa**
The West African region was not forgotten. The deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel area and the attacks on democracy were closely monitored. Coordination with the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) appears to be a highly effective way of managing this extremely delicate political crisis.
Somalia
At the end of 2008, in response to the recent increase in maritime piracy off the Somali coast, the EU, within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), launched the Eunavfor Atalanta operation. Belgium took part in this operation from September to mid-December 2009 with its frigate Louise-Marie.

As the root causes of the piracy are to be found on the mainland, a donor conference was organised in Brussels in April 2009 in the presence of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, in support of the Somali security institutions. Belgium made a contribution of €500,000 via the UNDP-Trust Fund and also promised €2 million of extra humanitarian aid for the Somali population.

South Africa
Increased cooperation with South Africa continued in 2009. On 13 October, the third meeting of the Joint Committee took place in Brussels. Its themes were political and economic cooperation, as well as development cooperation. The subject of “Peace and Security in Africa”, especially in the Great Lakes Region, took up a considerable part of the political discussions.

South and South-East Asia and Oceania
The financial and economic crisis led to a renewal of interest in events in Asia. Bilateral meetings and talks with political and economic representatives enabled our FPS to gain an accurate vision of the state of the world economy. Discussions on the margin of events such as the UN General Assembly or the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009 provided opportunities for gathering information.

The economic situation was also the major theme at the ministerial conference of the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) in Hanoi on 24-26 May 2009, as well as the subsequent EU-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in Phnom Penh.
At the European level, the Asia Department took part in the activities of the COASI (Asia Oceania Working Party), including the monthly meetings of the COASI capitals.

In 2009, Belgium also began to reconsider its Asian policy.

**Visits**
The FPS devoted a great deal of energy to preparing the visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Australia on 3-8 May, as well as his visit to Vietnam and Singapore on 11-14 August.

Other important visits were made by the Minister of Development Cooperation and the Prime Minister to Afghanistan, in November and December respectively.

The visit to Belgium by Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping on 7-10 October was a high point of the FPS’s year. The Vice-President opened the Europalia China event, demonstrating that our mutual relations are cultural as well as political and economic.

At the same time, a Chinese Trade and Investment Mission also visited Belgium.

The relevant departments took part in the discussion of China organised in Beijing on 28-29 November and helped organise a training course for Indonesian civil servants.

In September, the Indian mission *India Calling* visited Brussels, as well as the Governor of Java and a number of Thai trade delegations.

**Economic mission**
Further evidence of Belgium’s focus on Asia in 2009 was supplied by the sending of an economic mission headed by Prince Philippe to South Korea (10-13 May) and the organisation of the Joint Committee with India in Brussels (4-5 May). The FPS also organised meetings with various companies and professional federations, to help improve the operation of Belgian companies in Asia and foreign companies in Belgium.

**Latin America**
The main focus of the Latin America department in 2009 was its attempts to revitalise relations with Latin America and the Caribbean countries, due to the increasing economic role played by the region.

The draft action plan drawn up during the regional diplomatic conference in Mexico on 12 and 13 April 2008 in Mexico City was based on an earlier policy memorandum on Latin America, and was reworked in 2009.

Belgium also played a part in strengthening ties between the European Union and Latin America, for instance by taking part in the fourteenth Ministerial
Meeting between the EU and the Rio Group. The Rio Group includes all Central and South American countries except Suriname, as well as Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica. The meeting took place on 12-13 May in Prague. The main discussion themes were renewable energy sources and a sustainable approach to energy security and climate change, as well as the restoration of financial stability and global economic growth. The Belgian delegation was led by Olivier Chastel, the Secretary of State in charge of preparing the European Presidency.

**Economic diplomacy**

Within the framework of economic diplomacy, the Latin America department organised an Economic Round Table on 11 June 2009 dedicated to the subject of “Crisis and Opportunities”. The meeting was attended by approximately thirty interested parties from the public and private sectors.

The intensification of our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean countries was also emphasised by the economic mission led by Prince Philippe, which visited Mexico and Panama on 21-28 March 2009. The Prince was accompanied by a large delegation, including over a hundred representatives of the Belgian business sector.

**Visits**

Finally, the Latin America department organised the official visit to Belgium of Brazilian President Ignacio Lula da Silva in October, as well as a working visit by Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa in November 2009.

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**RATIFICATIONS IN 2009**

The following treaties were ratified in 2009:

- Bilateral treaty with Hong Kong on the transfer of prisoners (Law of 12 February 2009)
- Complementary protocol with Morocco on legal aid (Law of 16 February 2009)
- Complementary protocol with Morocco on transfers with Morocco (Law of 12 February 2009)

**TREATIES SIGNED IN 2009**

**Brazil**

- Bilateral treaty on legal aid in criminal cases, signed in Brasilia on 7 May 2009
- Bilateral treaty on the transfer of prisoners, signed in Brussels on 4 October 2009

**Dominican Republic**

- Bilateral treaty on the transfer of prisoners, signed on 5 May 2009 in Santo Domingo

**Congo**

- Bilateral treaty on legal aid in criminal cases
- Bilateral treaty on the transfer of prisoners
- Both treaties were signed in Brussels on 29 April 2009.

**TALKS BEGUN IN 2009**

Draft texts were sent to the following partners with a view to future talks:

- The Philippines (legal aid and transfer)
- United Arab Emirates (legal aid, transfer and extradition)
- Pakistan (legal aid and transfer)
- China (legal aid)
Diplomacy and economy

Finexpo evaluates its operation
The task of the Finexpo committee is to support Belgian exporters of capital goods and services. To this end, it works with companies which sign export contracts and the banks which finance these transactions.

Due to the economic crisis, there was less demand for support in 2009. However, the number of applications increased sharply as of the beginning of 2010.

Finexpo cooperates closely with the Delcredere departments. Both departments have issued a joint form for companies and banks requesting compensation within the context of tied aid.

This questionnaire is available on the Delcredere and Finexpo websites (www.finexpo.be). Interested parties can also consult the legislation applicable to Finexpo refunds, as well as the annual report. The website also contains a questionnaire relating to non-tied aid.

Within the framework of the management plan of the Bilateral Affairs Directorate-General, Finexpo began to screen its own activities in 2008. The Finexpo Secretariat, which was in charge of performing this task, spoke with around 30 exporters, as well as a number of bank representatives.

This led to the issuance of a report in 2009, in which concrete proposals were made to improve the operation of Finexpo.

A major information session was also organised for the benefit of companies.

Economic diplomacy under way
The FPS’s Economic Interests department also cooperated in a number of events intended to showcase the quality of Belgium’s products and services, and support our exporters abroad.

Image-related events abroad
In 2009, a series of “image-related events” was organised. The FPS was instrumental in organising exhibitions of works by famous Belgian painters such as James Ensor at New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) or Luc Tuymans in Moscow.

The FPS was also involved in the organisation of a Belgian Week involving activities of all kinds in Lisbon and Havana.

Europalia 2009-China also involved the organisation of a number of image-boosting events in both Beijing and Brussels.

Foreign Affairs also supported Belgian films during film festivals in the US (Los Angeles), as well as in other world cities such as Brasilia and New Delhi.

Belgian concerts were organised at a number of Belgian missions such as Seoul, Beijing, Berlin, Addis Ababa and Kuala Lumpur.

Economic missions
A total of four economic missions headed by Prince Philippe were organised in 2009. The first of these was to Mexico and Panama in March. Another mission visited South Korea in May, and yet another was organised to Saudi Arabia in October. Finally, a visit was made to Morocco in November. On the latter occasion, an exhibition of photographs, Traces & Empreintes belges au Maroc was organised in close cooperation with the Consulate-General in Casablanca.
Memorable events in Belgium

The Brussels Forum of the German Marshall Fund took place at the Conrad Hotel on 21 and 22 March 2009. An exhibition of works by Olivier Strebelle gave this event an extra Belgian touch.

On 26 and 27 March, the Tour & Taxis buildings hosted the European Business Summit 2009. Its theme Dare and Care highlighted the economic crisis, eco-innovation and energy. Together with the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the FPS Finance, the FPS was represented at the Belgian stand.

The Business Council, - an initiative by Minister De Gucht to bring together the main figures in Belgium’s business life (around 40 CEOs) and advise the federal government on foreign policy and economic diplomacy - issued a position paper with recommendations. This document was presented at a press conference at the Egmont Palace on 25 May 2009.

In the latter part of 2009, a Chinese Trade and Investment Mission, the business delegation accompanying President Lula of Brazil and an economic task force from India (India Calling) were received.

Within the framework of the activities intended to boost Belgium’s image, a conference and debate were organised on 1 December 2009, the main guest of which was Dutch Professor Cees van Riel from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

International treaties

Talks were initiated in 2009 with a view to signing bilateral investment treaties with Turkey, Kenya and Kosovo. Similar treaties were signed with Colombia, Tajikistan, Panama, Barbados and Togo, while investment agreements with Azerbaijan, Mozambique and China came into force.

Social-security agreements were discussed with Tunisia, India, Brazil, Quebec, Morocco, Montenegro, the FYROM and Serbia. The social-security agreements with India, the FYROM, South Korea and Uruguay came into force. An agreement was signed with Australia on healthcare insurance.

Belgium was on the G20 “grey list” (version of 2 April and 17 May 2009) for the prevention of double taxation. Our country had signed a mere 12 agreements with other countries/jurisdictions which permitted the exchange of bank information. Belgium did its utmost to negotiate and sign a supplementary protocol with a large number of countries in order to be removed from this list before the G20 meeting of September 2009. 25 protocols were signed and a number of other initialled during this period. This ensured the compliance of the existing treaties with the OECD standard on the exchange of information. Compliance with the G20 criterion is now more than adequate.

Conflict diamonds

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is a voluntary cooperation agreement between international authorities, NGOs and the diamond industry intended to guarantee that conflict diamonds are excluded from the international market. Belgium also played an active part in the KPCS in 2009, and, with a large delegation, took part in the annual plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process.

The FPS is working with the Egmont Institute on a follow-up study of artisanal diamond mining, a subject on which it had already presented a study in 2008. It is now at work on a follow-up study focusing on Angola and Liberia.
2. Belgium in the European Union

The Treaty of Lisbon takes effect

The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon stood at the top of the European agenda. Belgium did its utmost to ensure that this could be achieved by the end of 2009. The Treaty of Lisbon is important in that its purpose is to make Europe more democratic, more efficient and more transparent.

Further to a negative referendum outcome in Ireland in June 2008, the European Council of December 2008 sought remedies to the criticisms voiced by the Treaty’s opponents. In order to breathe new life into the ratification process, it was agreed that Ireland should be given a number of legal guarantees which would enable the population's objections to be removed.

At the European Council of June 2009, the heads of state and government reached an agreement concerning these guarantees. Belgium’s main concern was that the guarantees should be consistent with the Treaty and that new ratification should not be required.

The guarantees concerned military neutrality as well as tax and ethical issues. The principle of a single Commissioner per Member State was also maintained. Although this idea was not supported by the Benelux, the concession was made so that the other provisions of the Treaty could be maintained.

Ireland organised a new referendum in October 2009, and this time the Treaty was approved by the Irish people.

The Czech Republic was the last of the 27 Member States to ratify the Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009.

New leadership functions

The Treaty of Lisbon created two important new functions: the Permanent President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Belgium has always emphasised the importance of the candidates’ profile. Above all, the Permanent President of the European Council must be able to hammer out a consensus and prepared to work in close cooperation with the Commission, the High
Representative and the rotating presidency. The then Belgian premier Herman Van Rompuy was appointed the first Permanent President of the European Council at the European Council of October 2009. British EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton was appointed High Representative.

Implementing Lisbon: a tough assignment

Although the Treaty of Lisbon effects a number of institutional reforms, it frequently limits itself to sketching out a general framework, which means that the concrete conditions of implementation remain to be worked out. These activities were resumed during the second half of 2009, under the Swedish Presidency. In order to contribute to the talks, Belgium drew up a joint memorandum with the Netherlands and Luxemburg, in which the Benelux countries emphasised the importance of the “Community method”, the EU’s unique decision-making process, which is very different from intergovernmental agreement. In the view of all three countries, the European method must be maintained. The profile of the President of the European Council was described as that of a consensus-builder with a gift for cooperation. Finally, the Benelux countries expressed their concept of the operation of the European External Action Service.

To enable the institutions of the European Union to continue functioning under the conditions of the Treaty of Lisbon, it was necessary to introduce or change a number of instruments when the Treaty came into force.

The Benelux vision

The Treaty of Lisbon made the European Council a formal institution with its own rules of procedure. In their memorandum, the Benelux countries described how the European Council and Council should operate, and how the various bodies should work together. Much of this vision is expressed in the rules of procedure which were ultimately approved.

In 2010, further work will be performed on other aspects of the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. A number of important points remain to be addressed, such as the setting-up of the European External Action Service, the EU’s entry into the European Convention on Human Rights, the so-called “citizens’ legislative initiative” (which enables citizens to request the Commission to propose European legislation) and the reform of comitology.

The European External Action Service

A report by the Presidency containing guidelines for the formation of the European External Action Service was approved at the European Council of October 2009. These guidelines constituted a framework on which High Representative Ashton could base her proposals for the creation and operation of the Service.

Preparing for the Belgian EU Presidency

As of 1 July 2010, Belgium will be taking on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for a period of six months.

The FPS is the chief coordinator and organiser of this momentous event. 2009 was a year of preparation for this presidency, in terms of logistics and budget as well as content.

Together with the Spanish and Hungarian Presidencies, the Belgian Presidency forms the trio presidency which runs from January 2010 to June 2011.
This type of presidency is a recent development created by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Programme of the Trio Presidency
The programme of the trio presidency for these 18 months was drawn up in 2009. It includes a strategic framework and an operational section, and describes the issues which will be put forward by the Council in the course of its various meetings (ministers, heads of state/government) during this period. Work on the programme began in January 2009 with a series of meetings between representatives of the three countries concerned. The follow-up group, an internal body created for this purpose, was then able to issue a draft programme, which was approved on 7 December on the occasion of a General Affairs Council.

Consultations
At the Belgian level, preparations for the Presidency programme begin in January 2010. The 18-month programme and the consultations of representatives of civil society, which began in 2009, will form the basis for this work.

The consultations were coordinated by Task Force 2010, which is intended to make the construction of Europe more accessible to citizens and enable them to understand it better.

The project began in October 2008 with a consultation of the official advisory bodies, which were asked what their priorities were for the Belgian Presidency. The Task Force then set up a ‘You and Europe’ Internet forum to generate a citizens’ debate concerning a number of European projects. The forum remained on-line from November 2008 to January 2009.

The concerns of the representatives of civil society were recorded between March and June 2009, on the occasion of seven seminars, each on a different subject. These were organised in cooperation with the Egmont Institute (the Royal Institute for International Relations).

The Belgian government paid a great deal of attention to these consultations. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Belgian Presidency. Meetings will be organised in 2010 between representatives of civil society and the ministers who will be chairing the various configurations of the Council of the European Union during that time.

Special unit, extra personnel
2009 was also an important year in the preparation of the practical organisation of the Presidency. All aspects were managed by a special unit within the Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination, under the supervision of the follow-up group.

The unit also helped hire extra personnel and draw up the budget and official agenda for the Presidency.

The extra personnel began work in July 2009 to support the teams in charge of preparing the Presidency. All staff concerned attended a special “Presidency” training course organised by the FPS in cooperation with the Federal Administration Training Institute (OFO/IFA).

The budget
The budget of the EU Presidency is €74.066 million, to be distributed to all FPSs concerned.

This sum will be used to pay all extra staff, as well as the costs of the meetings the Presidency is expected to organise, the departments which will be taking on the practical tasks associated with the Presidency (ICT, accreditation system, liaison staff, etc.), the costs of the various forms of communication with specialists and the general public: website, opening ceremony, cultural events, etc.

In agreement with all FPSs and Federal Programming Services (POD/SPP), Foreign Affairs agreed to distribute the budget to the various FPSs concerned. A task force drew up a distribution key for the distribution of the joint financing of the Presidency by the federal and federated levels. The Council of Ministers of 13 November approved the budget and distribution method of the proposed joint financing plan.
The timetable
At the end of December, the official timetable of the Presidency was presented to the Council. This includes the dates of the two European Councils, the formal sessions of the Council, the plenary sessions of the European Parliament, meetings of the high-level preparatory bodies and the informal Councils.

Preparatory activities
A number of preparatory activities were also carried out in 2009. Joint departments were set up, the Egmont Palace was refurbished, a public call for tenders was issued for the accreditation system, and preparations were made for the opening ceremony and the website, which will be playing an essential role in communication during the Presidency. The website will be managed by a team of specialised writers from the FPS Foreign Affairs.

A “sustainable” Presidency
A charter and guide were also drawn up concerning the organisation of “sustainable” events during the Presidency. The people in charge of organising events must sign the charter and be awarded the “Presidency” label. Both are intended to ensure that the Belgian Presidency will be “sustainable”.

Increasing impact of the Court of Justice
The number of cases in which Belgium has been called upon to defend its interests before the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg has grown exponentially. At the same time, our country’s contribution to the making of European law via the case law of the European courts has also increased considerably.

Most of this growth can be accounted for by “references for preliminary rulings”, in which a magistrate of a Member State consults the Court of Justice concerning the interpretation or validity of a provision of European legislation.

On 31 December 2009, Belgium had participated in 76 cases pending before the Court of Justice, including 58 references for preliminary rulings.

This growth trend will continue in the future, as the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force on 1 December 2009, has extended the powers of the Court of Justice to new areas such as cooperation in judicial, civil, criminal and policy matters, as well as asylum and migration.

All Belgium’s actions in the European judiciary bodies in 2008 are included in the first annual report of the EU Court of Justice Department J(2.2), DG J.

Transposition backlog now almost cleared up
As a Member State of the EU, Belgium is under an obligation to transpose EU directives into national legislation within a specified time. The FPS monitors this transposition of directives. The actual transposition is the task of the authorities responsible for the area of application of the directives.

Belgium used to have a considerable backlog in this area. However, since 2007, it has reversed this trend. In 2009, Belgium sent 251 transpositions to the European Commission. Out of the 92 directives requiring transposition in 2009 or earlier, 78 were processed in 2009. By the end of 2009, the backlog had been reduced to 14 directives.

It is very difficult to completely avoid a transposition deficit. Since this criterion was introduced in 1997, the transposition scores for internal-market directives by the Member States have been measured every six months. Only one Member State (Bulgaria) has been able to transpose all directives within the specified time. However, this does not mean that Belgium should not strive to keep its deficit as small as possible.

This was all the more important as two new challenges made their appearance in 2009.

Stricter standards
First of all, the European standard was raised. The authorised transposition deficit for internal market directives was limited to a maximum of 1%.
Secondly, the Treaty of Lisbon came into force on 1 December 2009. This means that should a Member State fail to supply notification of transposition proceedings, the EU Court of Justice may impose payment of a penalty and/or fine as of its first sentence.

The FPS took the opportunity to organise a thorough review of existing structures, and as a result the following measures were taken at the federal level:

- Transposition is to begin as soon as possible, and to be monitored. A realistic and concrete schedule is drawn up at an early stage. In 2009, 114 directives were published further to a transposition period of 1 month to 2 years and 7 months.
- The setting-up of the high-level task force “Transposition” at the interministerial level, in which all relevant federal authorities take part. In 2009, this task force met five times.
- Regular monitoring of transposition cases at the highest administrative level of the federal government, i.e. during the meetings of the FPS Chairs.
- The extension of the network of European coordinators (points of contact for transposition for all authorities) and the reinforcement of their central role in the transposition process. The members of this network are in contact on a day-to-day basis, and the individuals concerned met 6 times in the course of last year.
- The further development of interactive federal database Eurtransbel, which will become operational sometime in 2010.

**Compliance with deficit standard**

Endeavours in this area paid off. The new European deficit standard has been 1% since November 2009, and Belgium scored 0.9%, its best result since the introduction of the internal market scoreboard. The scoreboard was closed on 10 November. In July 2009, Belgium was still processing three directives which had exceeded the zero-tolerance standard of 2 years. At the end of 2009, this number had been reduced to 1. This directive is still awaiting transposition by the Brussels-Capital and Walloon Regions.
Human-rights endeavours at the UN

The FPS pays the greatest possible attention to supporting human rights and basic freedoms. Far from being a fashionable slogan, this is a description of our daily task, which the FPS assiduously endeavours to fulfil. One instance is Belgium’s commitment to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the most important body in charge of promoting and protecting human rights and basic freedoms.

**Chaired by the Belgian ambassador**

Ambassador Alex Van Meeuwen, Belgium’s permanent representative in Geneva, was unanimously elected chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Council for a period of 1 year (June 2009 – June 2010).

In his role as organiser and facilitator, Ambassador Van Meeuwen is doing sterling work at the Human Rights Council. He is also constantly endeavouring to establish links between various regional and other groups, and depoliticise debate whenever possible.

Belgium’s conviction that human rights are essential to respect for the human value of each individual led it to apply for membership of the UN Human Rights Council. Our work in favour of human rights was rewarded when our country was elected one of the Council’s 47 members by a strong majority.

For three years (2009-2012), our country will use its expertise, credibility and commitment to further establish the universal character of the United Nations’ action in favour of human rights. To counter criticism of the Council’s activities, Belgium will endeavour to
improve its efficiency from within, in preparation for the evaluation of the Human Rights Council, which should take place around 2011. Belgium will endeavour to ensure that the Council addresses serious violations of human rights, wherever they may occur.

Within the context of the Human Rights Council, Belgium is also working to guarantee the independence of the special rapporteurs - the so-called “ears and eyes of the Human Rights Council”. The rapporteurs are in charge of detecting potential human-rights violations. Belgium, which is convinced of the importance of the added value of well-developed regional systems, primarily in the reinforcement of human rights as a universal standard, continues to work for regional systems for the encouragement and defence of human rights. In this connection, dialogue and improved cooperation between human-rights instruments are a primary tool.

Belgium also strongly supports the Universal Periodic Review, which investigates human rights in all countries and requires further support. Belgium itself will be the subject of the UPR’s attentions in May 2011. The FPS is preparing thoroughly for this important event, involving all governmental and non-governmental actors concerned in a fully transparent manner. The dialogue will begin in Belgium.

Climate issues high on the agenda

In 2009, climate issues were high on the international agenda. The conviction that global warming is one of the most pressing challenges of the future continues to grow. Climate change also affects food security and energy supply; problems in these areas may generate instability and increase the factors which contribute to conflict. In 2009, the department in charge of climate issues took part in all negotiation sessions on the subject.

Two areas of negotiation

Negotiations took place in two separate areas. One was derived from the Kyoto Protocol and focused on future quantitative-reduction goals for developed countries. On the other hand, the “Convention” approach favours an overall approach and uses the concept of “bricks”: mitigation (combating climate change by reducing emissions by country and sector), adaptation (adaptation to climate change), technology and financing. In this case, general principles and long-term vision need to be defined by means of a “shared vision”. This shared vision and the bricks are described in the “Bali Action Plan”.

Difficult negotiations

The first global negotiation session, which took place in Bonn from 28 March to 8 April 2009, was extremely difficult.

This was mainly due to the opposing strategies of the developed and developing countries. The developing countries had little interest in the Convention approach and were keen to have new target figures set for developed countries, in accordance with the Kyoto model.
The developing countries wish to prevent the Convention negotiations from opening the way for a new, comprehensive, global instrument which lifts the strict distinction between developing and developed countries.

A global negotiation session took place in Bonn on 1-12 June (Bonn 2). Although this, too, proved difficult, a consolidated negotiation text was produced for both approaches.

From the moment it came into office, the Swedish Presidency of the EU made the preparation of the Copenhagen Summit a top priority. For this purpose, a process was set up via COREPER (cooperation between the permanent representatives of the Member States), the Councils of Ministers for the environment and finance (Ecofin), and finally the European Council, to systematically resolve problematic issues and fill in blanks in the EU’s position on international climate financing.

The G8 Summit and major-economies forum took place in L’Aquila from 8 to 10 July. The main importance of L’Aquila was that it confirmed the strong commitment to reaching an agreement evidenced in Copenhagen. A step forward was also taken in terms of content, in that a clear target was acknowledged: the maximum average temperature must increase by no more than 2 °C. The concept of a low-carbon growth plan was also confirmed for all countries, including the developing countries.

**Crisis**
A third round of climate talks took place in Bonn on 10-14 August (Bonn 3). This began with a reading of the basis for negotiation agreed at Bonn 2. However, Bonn 3 proved to be a time of crisis in the multilateral negotiation process. The developed countries were not sufficiently willing to take on a leading role, and the stance of the developing countries was hyperdefensive. This led to a stalemate. The purpose of both the Ban Ki-Moon talks (22 September, New York) and the G20 (24-25 September, Pittsburgh) was to give new impetus to the dialogue.

Although it led to few concrete agreements, the Ban Ki-Moon summit confirmed international commitment, and also enabled the key components of a future agreement to be identified: increased action in the area of adaptation, ambitious emission-reduction targets for industrialised countries, appropriate national mitigation actions by developing countries (which would receive appropriate support), a considerably increased financial and technological contribution, and a fair management structure.

Although the fourth global round of talks (Bangkok, 28 September-8 October) was highly constructive, it did not lead to any breakthroughs on essentials. Generally speaking, Bangkok confirmed the strong polarisation between developed and developing countries.

**Progress in the EU**
On 21 October, the Environment Council of the EU approved a new series of conclusions in preparation for the Copenhagen Summit. These added a number of elements to the Union’s earlier positions: on long-term goals (reduction of emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050) and reduction of emissions from navigation and air transport by 20% and 10% respectively by 2020 compared with 2005.

The Member States also reached an agreement at the European Council of 29 and 30 October concern-
ing the sticking-point of climate financing. The conclusions of the European summit confirmed that Europe is prepared to take on a “fair share” of the financing requirements.

**No binding agreement in Copenhagen**

A last round of global talks was organised in Barcelona from 2 to 6 November in preparation for Copenhagen. Again, no breakthroughs were achieved.

The Copenhagen Summit did not lead to a legally binding agreement. However, it would be unfair to call it a failure. The rate of attendance by heads of state and government shows that the world platform for a joint approach to the issue of climate change is increasing. The conference led to the Copenhagen Accord, which among other things acknowledges the fact that average global warming must not exceed 2 °C, addresses the role of combating deforestation and additional financial resources, and makes plans for a special fund.

In the Accord, the developed countries undertook to reduce their current emissions of greenhouse gases, while the developing countries agreed to ensure that their own greenhouse-gas emissions would increase less than in a business-as-usual scenario. The commitments of all countries will be measurable and subject to reporting and verification.

In the meantime, Belgium and the EU have signed the Copenhagen Accord and committed themselves to a 20% cut in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2020. Should a comprehensive agreement be reached under which other industrialised countries are prepared to do likewise, the EU would increase the figure for reduction to 30%.

**Belgium supports the International Criminal Court**

From the beginning, Belgium has supported the International Criminal Court and its goals. In 2009, this consistent support took various forms.

**A Belgian judge**

One significant event was the appointment of Professor Christine Van den Wyngaert as a judge further to the election organised on the occasion of the first resumption of the seventh session of the Assembly of Treaty States in New York in January 2009. Christine Van den Wyngaert was formerly a judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

This was the outcome of a campaign organised by the Belgian Permanent Representation to the United Nations and the Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Legal Affairs and the relevant departments of the FPS Justice.

**Proposals concerning armed conflicts**

Belgium also demonstrated its dedication to the International Criminal Court by making three proposals for amendments to provisions of the Rome Statute concerning war crimes (Article 8 of the Rome Statute), i.e. the list of weapons, the use of which constitutes a war crime.

The first Belgian proposal was intended to harmonise current provisions concerning international and internal armed conflicts. The subject was included by the Assembly of Treaty States in the agenda of the First Review Conference on the Rome Statute, which will take place in Kampala from 31 May to 11 June 2010. Together with the proposal concerning the crime of aggression, it is the only proposal made by a member state to be listed on the agenda of the Review Conference.
This success is due to a campaign to ensure that our proposals are always made in partnership with another party.

**Peaceful resolution of disputes**

True to the founding principles of the United Nations Charter, especially that concerning the peaceful resolution of disputes, Belgium twice initiated proceedings at the International Criminal Court at The Hague.

*Prosecution of Hissène Habré*

The first set of proceedings, begun in February, opposes Belgium and the Republic of Senegal on the issue of the latter’s failure to prosecute the former President of Chad, Hissène Habré, or extradite him to Belgium for trial, in accordance with international law. After proceedings were initiated against Hissène Habré in Belgium, the latter’s judiciary has, since the end of 2001, requested many times that he be investigated by the Senegalese authorities, and even issued an international arrest warrant in September 2005, which has been ignored by the Senegalese judiciary.

In the opinion of Belgium, the failure of Senegal to prosecute Hissène Habré or extradite him to Belgium to answer accusations of torture constitutes a violation of the UN Convention against Torture.

By neglecting to prosecute or extradite Habré for the crimes against humanity of which he stands accused, Senegal is also violating its obligation to prosecute crimes against international humanitarian law.

*Consequences of the Sabena bankruptcy*

The second dispute opposes our country and Switzerland. Its origin lies in a difference of opinion concerning the interpretation and application of the Lugano Convention of 16 September 1988 concerning legal jurisdiction and the application of decisions of a civil and commercial nature, as well as the application of the provisions of general international law relating to the jurisdiction of states in the judicial area. Both relate to the decision by Swiss courts not to recognise decisions by Belgian courts, and not to suspend proceedings begun in Switzerland as a consequence.

The dispute arose from the fact that legal proceedings were started at the same time in Belgium and Switzerland further to the civil and commercial dispute between the two main shareholders of Sabena, the now defunct Belgian airline. The Swiss shareholders involved are the SairGroup Company (formerly Swissair) and its subsidiary Sairlines. The Belgian shareholders are the Belgian state and three companies in which it is a shareholder.
4. Belgium and development cooperation

A small country can still make a difference to a great many people. For this to happen, an appropriate development policy is essential. Belgian Development Cooperation constantly seeks to ensure that the resources available to it are utilised in the most efficient way for the benefit of the population of developing countries.

**More consistent policies and increased effectiveness**

In 2009, the budget for Belgian development cooperation rose even closer to the target of 0.7% of the gross national income set for 2010.

The main priority remains the fulfilment of the Millennium Goals, the purpose of which is to halve world poverty by 2015. To ensure the quality of the aid, special attention was paid last year to consistency and effectiveness in Belgian development cooperation.

**Indirect actors aim for more effective aid**

The indirect development actors – mainly NGOs, but also universities and scientific institutes – work independently of the authorities. However, much of their funding is supplied by the state. In accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness signed by donor and recipient countries in 2005, they will be aligning themselves more closely with the policies of the Belgian authorities and the Southern partners. For this purpose, the Minister for Development Cooperation signed two agreements in 2009: one with the non-governmental organisations and one with the universities and scientific institutes. The new agreements are intended to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation by concentrating efforts, increasing complementarity and making the fullest possible use of synergies.

Its most important component is the geographical concentration of activities. The universities and scientific institutes will ultimately concentrate their development cooperation in no more than 15 countries. Ultimately, 70% of the budget must be spent on the partner countries in government cooperation.

The activities will also be better integrated into the political, socio-economic and cultural context of the recipient countries.

The international pictograms for the MDGs
A similar strategy has been worked out for the NGOs. The activities of individual “programmes” – spread over 3 years – must be limited to 10 countries, and the programmes as a whole must cover no more than a total of 50 countries. “Projects” – spread over 2 years – must be limited to 22 countries.

The NGOs will continue to supply their expertise, endeavour to improve their synergies with other development actors, and concentrate more on developing the capacities of their Southern partners.

**Lightening administrative tasks**

The indirect actors also stand to gain from the new agreements, as for instance their administrative burdens are lightened.

In the case of the universities and scientific institutes, the authorities are switching to multi-year programmes. This will increase their autonomy and enable them to plan their work more efficiently.

The Belgian authorities have also promised the NGOs that their policies will be more consistent in future. For instance, in the case of trade agreements, development will be systematically taken into account. They will also endeavour to have the debt of the least developed countries cancelled in full.

**A new approach to the multilateral donor policy**

Last year, in order to better integrate the principles of the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability) in multilateral development cooperation, Belgium resolutely opted for a new approach to its multilateral donor policy. In 2009, this amounted to 34% of the total budget for Belgian development cooperation.

The new financing policy for multilateral bodies now gives priority to core funding over earmarked funding. Core funding is the financing of the general budgets of multilateral partner organisations. In future, Belgium’s main contributions will be made to these general budgets, which amounts to increasing the organisations’ independent core budgets.

Earmarked funding - the funding of individual projects – will be reduced to a minimum. This measure is intended to increase the effectiveness of multilateral development cooperation. The advantage for the partner organisations is that their funding will be more predictable and less prone to fragmentation – a consequence of maintaining large numbers of small projects. This measure will also increase Belgium’s say in the bodies concerned, and its influence on their general policy.

**Six new governmental development cooperation programmes**

2009 was a busy year in the area of governmental development cooperation. No less than 6 cooperation programmes with partner countries were renewed for 2010-2013: with Burundi, the DRC, Morocco, Peru, Senegal and Tanzania.

**Ownership**

All new programmes adhere as closely as possible to the international trends defined in the Paris Declaration. One important concept developed during the open-dialogue part of the talks was “ownership”. This means that the authorities of the partner countries have control over the projects.

Belgium has opted for open, equal dialogue with its partner countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner country</th>
<th>Total amount (in EUR)</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Special focus</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>150 million</td>
<td>&gt; Health</td>
<td>&gt; Good governance</td>
<td>&gt; A further €50 million in 2011, subject to conditions (honest election and good governance)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Education</td>
<td>&gt; Combating corruption</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Agriculture</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>300 million</td>
<td>&gt; Country roads and ferries</td>
<td>&gt; Good governance</td>
<td>&gt; Extra funds during the last 2 years, subject to conditions (progress in democratisation and financial management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Agriculture</td>
<td>&gt; Combating corruption</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Education</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Agriculture</td>
<td>&gt; Sustainable development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Health</td>
<td>&gt; Climate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Health</td>
<td>&gt; Support for trade</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>80 million</td>
<td>&gt; Water</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
<td>&gt; Budget doubled</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Agriculture</td>
<td>&gt; Sustainable development</td>
<td>&gt; Delegated cooperation with King Mohammed VI’s human-development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>40 million</td>
<td>&gt; Health</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Sustainable economy</td>
<td>&gt; Children’s rights</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Social economy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>52.5 million</td>
<td>&gt; Basic healthcare</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Hydraulic infrastructures</td>
<td>&gt; Children’s rights</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Microfinancing (expiring)</td>
<td>&gt; Sustainable environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>60 million</td>
<td>&gt; Formation of new local administrations</td>
<td>&gt; Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Sustainable management of natural resources</td>
<td>&gt; Combating corruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Increased geographical concentration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Concentration on two sectors**

One of the constant concerns of Belgium’s Development Cooperation authorities is effectiveness. In accordance with the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour, our country has made a firm decision to concentrate its efforts on two priority sectors per partner country: one which concentrates on production, the other more social in character.

Only in the three Central African countries - the main focus of Belgian development cooperation – may action be taken in three sectors.

Belgium also intends to increase geographical concentration within partner countries, to ensure more efficient aid.

Our development cooperation also aims to achieve as many synergies as possible. For this reason, Belgian indirect actors (universities, NGOs) active in a partner country will be more closely associated with government cooperation.

The choice of sector will depend on the partner country’s priorities. For instance, Peru has opted for healthcare and a sustainable economy, two sectors to which, although of major importance to the Peruvian government, it was able to allocate few resources.

The choice of sector also depends on Belgium’s own capacities: in order to efficiently support the selected sectors, it needs to have the corresponding expertise.
Support for government institutions
The new cooperation programmes are increasingly switching from project aid to the financing of government budgets (“budget aid”), which improves the sustainability of development cooperation.

Belgium’s approach is consistent with recent findings, which suggest that it is better that local institutions develop capacities in order to implement the necessary projects themselves. However, the bodies in charge of Belgian development cooperation will be monitoring the situation closely, to determine whether this genuinely improves the living conditions of those in need.

Delegated cooperation
A number of programmes are implemented by development agencies which are more specialised in a particular field than the Belgian Technical Cooperation Agency (BTC), which has the primary responsibility for government cooperation.

For instance, “delegated cooperation” is applied in Senegal, where an agency from Luxembourg will be implementing the current Belgian vocational-training programme for girls and women.

Focus on Central Africa
Belgium continues to consider Central Africa its focal point for development cooperation. In 2009, our country worked very hard to initiate cooperation with the DRC. The agreement for the 2010-2013 programme was signed just before the end of the year.

In the DRC, Belgium will be concentrating its efforts on agriculture, in order to improve the food security of around 15 million people. The “country roads and ferries” component will support this endeavour, as the 10,000 km of repaired roads will improve access to markets. The programmes will take into account the various limitations and requirements of men and women. Education is another priority sector: thousands of young people – boys and girls – will be given the opportunity to attend high-quality technical and vocational training courses.

This extensive cooperation with the DRC (€75 million) also involves close attention to good governance and the fight against corruption. Belgium is prepared to increase the amount of support during the latter years of the programme, provided the Congolese authorities can demonstrate that concrete progress has been made in the areas of democratic governance and financial management.

Burundi
The amount of aid to Burundi has been considerably increased, from €60 million under the previous programme to €150 million for 2010-2013. This makes Belgium the largest bilateral donor in the country.

In 2011, another €50 million may be paid, under strict conditions: an honest election in 2010 and acceptable results in the area of good governance.

Rwanda
Belgium did not sign a new cooperation programme with Rwanda in 2009. However, five new agreements were signed for a total of approximately €39 million, among others for support to the raising of small livestock, the supply of drinking water and sanitation.

Belgium renews its efforts... against hunger
The world hit a historic low in 2009: 1 billion of its inhabitants were suffering from hunger. The global economic and financial crisis was undoubtedly a contributing factor.

The achievement of Millennium Goal 1 – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 - therefore remains a long way off.

“Agriculture and food security” has been one of the priority sectors of Belgian development cooperation for a long time. In 2009, Belgium decided to add a proviso: in 2010, 10% of the total development-cooperation budget must be spent on agriculture and food security, and the percentage must increase to 15% by 2015.
A record amount of food aid
In 2009, Belgium increased its contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to an absolute record amount.

The World Food Programme received €27.7 million from Belgium, its highest ever contribution, almost 50% more than in 2008. Belgium also paid the record sum of €7.25 million to the FAO, which rightly referred to our country as “one of the most generous donors”.

Belgian food aid mainly went to the people of Afghanistan, Burundi, the DRC, Kenya, Somalia, Niger, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Laos, Zimbabwe, the Palestinian Territories and Ethiopia.

Fund for Food Security
The Belgian Survival Fund was replaced by the Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFVZ/FBSA).

The Fund operates mainly in the areas of Belgium’s African sub-Saharan partners which suffer from severe food insecurity. More than ever, the Fund’s long-term goal is food security in all its dimensions. In accordance with the Paris Declaration, the Fund endeavours to synergise with actions by national actors and other development partners. More emphasis is placed on the role of local administrations and cooperation with local organisations.

... in favour of fair trade
To combat poverty, Belgium has also made trade a major focus point. As the concept of fair trade gains popularity, the Fair Trade Centre has been replaced by the Trade for Development Centre, and its tasks altered accordingly.

The mission of the Trade for Development Centre includes:
> The professionalisation of producers in the South, and improvement of their access to markets
> The constitution of a knowledge centre on trade aid, fair trade and sustainable trade
> Dissemination of information and awareness-raising.

Each year, the Centre gives a number of awards. Since 2009, a new award has been added to the Be Fair Awards: the Be Sustainable Award. Belgium’s view is that trade must not only be fair; it must be sustainable.

... with the Belgian people
The Belgian development-cooperation bodies also have the task of keeping the population informed and encouraging solidarity between North and South. For instance, this is done by means of the Kleur bekennen/Annoncer la Couleur programme, which promotes a sense of world citizenship in young people aged 10-18. The Infocyclus/Infocycle is a short, intensive training course on development cooperation for young adults.

Both programmes were amended in 2009 so that they could meet new requirements in connection with e-learning and the digital supply of educational material.

Development Cooperation also cofinances TV and film productions to ensure that the Belgian public is made aware of development issues. In 2009, such programmes included Leefwereld in beweging on Vijf TV and 8, a compilation of 8 short films on the Millennium Goals by Gael Garcia Bernal, Jane Campion and others. The film was also shown at the Namur Film Festival.

In order to improve the population’s awareness of development cooperation, the Belgian municipalities were given the opportunity to take development initiatives in 2009. As a result, 19 awareness-raising projects were organised in Belgium and 59 in the South.

In the wake of the new impetus given to cooperation between the DRC and Belgium, Dimension 3, the Belgian Development Cooperation magazine, published a special issue on that country, much of which was written by Congolese journalists.
In 2009, special attention was devoted to agriculture and climate. For that reason, the Belgian Development Cooperation department was present at the Agribex trade fair in Brussels, to show the diversity and challenges of agriculture in the South to its 100,000 visitors. The embassies of Bolivia, Burundi, the DRC, Ecuador and Morocco were also present and supplied information concerning the agricultural potential of their countries.

**Improving information to support policies**

**Three research platforms**

Development Cooperation is a learning organisation. In 2009, several research platforms were set up in order to collect further information concerning various areas of knowledge, and achieve more durable results in the field.

**KLIMOS** is a research platform on climate adaptation and climate mitigation in development cooperation. The platform investigates the manner in which the subjects of energy, food security and forestry can be integrated into the development policy in a sustainable manner.

**PULSE** investigates bases for development cooperation. Belgium invests a great deal in strengthening the bases for development cooperation by means of awareness-raising and worldwide training. However, little is as yet known about the evolution of these bases within the target groups and the impact of the various awareness-raising activities.

Aid Effectiveness informs, advises and trains Belgian policymakers and development actors with a view to increasing the effectiveness of aid.

**States General**

The “States General of Belgian Development Cooperation” were organised for the second consecutive year. This is a forum in which policymakers, development actors, representatives of civil society, MPs and academics exchange views on the policy options for Belgian development cooperation. The aim of this gathering is to find answers to future challenges by discussing present trends in the sector.

The central theme of the 2009 States General was the impact of the financial and economic crisis on low-income countries in Africa. On the basis of a number of case studies, specialists discussed the consequences of the crisis in Senegal, the DRC and Tanzania. The internationally renowned speakers included Donald Kaberuka (President of the African Development Bank), Louise Cord (World Bank), Andrew Mold (OECD) and Luc Rigouzzo (EDFI). Rudy Demeyer (11.11.11) was the spokesman for the NGOs.
Organisational chart of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

- Special Evaluator
- DG Bilateral Affairs (B)
- DG Consular Affairs (C)
- DG Development Cooperation (D)
- P&O Personnel and Organisation
Organisational chart of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.
ANNEXES

Map of worldwide FPS representations (Belgium and abroad) (31.12.2009)
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