

Modernising Dutch diplomacy

*Progress report by the Advisory Committee
on Modernising the Diplomatic Service*

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Introduction

In spring 2013 the Minister of Foreign Affairs requested the Advisory Committee on Modernising the Diplomatic Service to draw up a progress report. The report, which outlines the Committee's initial findings since it was established on 9 March 2012,¹ is intended as input into reflections on the reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee emphasises that it will elaborate on its findings and check them in dialogue with stakeholders within and outside the Ministry, and in the light of further study.

The Committee aims to provide the Minister of Foreign Affairs with guidelines on the modernisation of the diplomatic service. Its advice is therefore based on measures designed to ensure that Dutch interests in the international arena are defended in the best and most effective manner possible. Pursuing an ambitious international agenda in which Dutch interests are paramount, as stated in the present coalition agreement, must be accompanied by a properly equipped foreign service and appropriate instruments. The Committee takes the view that the modernisation programme necessary to achieve this, as outlined below, will require financial investment. It therefore recommends that the costs be estimated and a cost-benefit analysis carried out.²

This report is divided into four parts. Part 1 briefly outlines the Committee's findings after an initial exploratory phase up to mid-2012. In Part 2 the Committee expands on these findings to produce a framework for modernising the diplomatic service. Part 3 sketches out the next phase of assessment. Finally, Part 4 contains specific recommendations.

The structure and timing of this progress report – the Committee expects to complete its assignment by the first quarter of 2014 – are determined by political reality. The Rutte-Asscher government's coalition agreement not only gives the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a clear, strong policy mandate, but also requires it to save a great deal of money. During the debate on the budget, Minister Timmermans agreed to present a vision on modern diplomacy and the network of missions by the summer. The Committee therefore wishes in this report to make a number of early recommendations on the modernisation of Dutch diplomacy.

¹ The Committee has been appointed for a two-year period. Its brief is to produce 'an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service, in light of the new thinking on diplomacy which has been evolving in other countries.' The focus is on (1) the diplomat of the future, (2) economic diplomacy and (3) processes of change within the organisation. The members of the Committee – Arthur Docters van Leeuwen (chair), Ko Colijn, Tineke Lodders-Elfferich, Pieter Marres and Victor Schoenmakers – were chosen for their expertise in various fields relevant to diplomacy and their years of direct experience with the Netherlands' network of diplomatic missions. The Committee's full terms of reference are set out in an appendix to this report.

² See recommendations and comments (p. 28).

This is not to say that no action has yet been taken since the Committee began its work in March 2012 or that nothing is happening at the Ministry. The Committee can see that efforts are being made in many places and fields to create an organisation that is more in keeping with today's realities. Promising examples include co-location of missions, the creation of collaborative digital workspaces, intensive interactive use of social media at a number of missions (such as Bucharest, Shanghai and Washington DC) and Ministry departments (such as the Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department) and experiments with regionalisation, including at policy level (e.g. the Central American and Baltic regions). The Committee is pleased to note that, despite the challenges the Ministry is currently facing, many people are working enthusiastically to modernise their organisation.

The following quote from the coalition agreement deserves special mention: 'From 1 January 2013 the Foreign Service will fall under the Senior Civil Service.' (p. 19, English translation). The chair of the Committee has been asked to produce his own advisory report on the detailed implementation of this decision.

Summary: modernising the diplomatic service

In the course of its activities to date, the Committee has begun to envisage a foreign ministry that:

- essentially thinks and works like a network organisation: open and flexible, and organised into groups of varying composition, around cross-border regions, themes or interests;
- can cope with the hybrid nature of 21st-century relations, is capable of not only classic but also network diplomacy (as well as combinations of the two). It makes this exceptional professional expertise available to whoever wishes to serve Dutch interests;
- operates in a single virtual space together with its diplomatic service;
- focuses on working in partnership with other ministries, government bodies, businesses, civil society organisations and individuals, actively seeking such partnerships and ensuring their quality;
- maintains regular, systematic contacts in the Netherlands, centred on a council working in the general interest and chaired by the Minister, as well as panels dealing with specific areas, which conclude and monitor agreements on the standard of performance expected of the Ministry;
- systematically ensures that the Dutch public is aware of its activities;
- is easily accessible to both Dutch citizens and nationals of other countries, primarily online but also through help desks.

To this end, the Ministry should create the following organisational, IT and management conditions:

- Training that facilitates and maintains professional expertise of exceptional quality. The goal should be to train fully fledged diplomats in seven years, with refresher and specialist training thereafter. There will be a diplomatic academy, with a dean. The academy will be accessible to anyone with the right qualifications who serves Dutch interests abroad, whether in the government, business community or civil society organisations or institutions.
- A promotion and placement policy that focuses on assessment and development, with a heavy emphasis on acquired specialist knowledge and expertise.

- Secure IT systems that allow informal internal communication and working methods, such as project groups that can extend across the world.
- Policy that is drawn up as close as possible to the place where it is intended to make an impact. Strategy and supervision will remain in The Hague, however.
- Management based on trust and placing maximum responsibility at lower levels of the organisation. Management rules will be reviewed regularly.
- Thinking on the composition and form of the network of missions is based on a model of regional units containing various local missions. This will allow efficient, effective local representations to be maintained. The aim is to be physically present in as many places as possible. Local embassies complete with chanceries and residences will no longer be created and maintained as a matter of course. Although ambassadorships will be more widely available, reflecting a high-level function, they will no longer be synonymous with prestigious residences and chauffeurs.

The horizon may seem a long way off, but by taking bold steps forward the Ministry can quickly move closer to its goals.

Phase 1: exploratory study

In June 2012, at the request of the then Secretary-General, the Committee presented an exploratory study for internal use, containing its initial findings (outlined below). Although the Committee emphasised that the report was based on first impressions and that further study would be needed, it made a number of observations and recommendations, arranged under six headings, or 'pillars'. The Committee tentatively concluded that the modernisation programme described in these pillars (see below) would require financial investment. Given the cutbacks introduced by the fourth Balkenende government and the new cuts implemented by the Rutte 1 and Rutte-Asscher governments, the Committee is aware that it will be difficult to find the necessary funds. However, it considers such funding essential.

1st pillar: Diplomacy as a profession

Diplomacy is a profession. Diplomacy must be defined, communicated and maintained.

It is essential to craft a clear profile for the diplomatic profession that speaks to everyone who is or wishes to be involved in international activities. Diplomats will only be included in such activities when their expertise is evident to other actors. Professionals with strong Dutch roots and knowledge of local conditions and customs in other countries are indispensable for the Netherlands.

Diplomats' professional expertise must be continually and visibly maintained. Success must be objectively quantifiable in order to further enhance Dutch diplomats' quality, focus and effectiveness and to keep their added value visible and demonstrable.

The Committee notes that this first pillar will require further study, and discusses it in more detail in phase 2.

2nd pillar: Position and profile

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must have strong roots in central government and in society.

Foreign policy is no longer a stand-alone sector with a clear boundary between 'home' and 'abroad'. Domestic policy without an international element is now a thing of the past. The business community and general public are active internationally to a great and growing extent.

The Committee notes that the Ministry has ceased to be automatically involved in all activities relevant to its work. At interministerial level, in Parliament, in the media and among the Dutch public, it is no longer a given that the Ministry naturally has a position of significance and a clear contribution to make.

The Ministry must therefore make systematic efforts to demonstrate its added value. To this end, it must increase its outside visibility, not only in The Hague but also elsewhere.

The Committee notes that this second pillar will require further study, and discusses it in more detail in phase 2, under the heading 'Interaction'.

3rd pillar: The internet and digitisation

Cyberspace must be conquered.

Digitisation and the internet are the tools of choice in an international environment made up of ever increasing numbers of contacts and coalitions that are changing increasingly rapidly. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be a leader in spotting new networks and the trends within them.

To be able to operate as effectively as possible in this context, the Ministry must become an organisation with a single virtual space of its own, easily accessible to anyone in or outside the organisation. The internet must be the public's main gateway to the Ministry's services and expertise. It is also an essential channel for active communication with the public. Use of social media as a matter of routine will provide opportunities for interaction and dialogue which must be seized. Among other things, a single virtual space will also ensure continuity within the organisation by unlocking access to the Ministry's institutional memory. Especially in an organisation where staff regularly change jobs, it is a wasted opportunity if people's experience and knowledge are lost when they are transferred elsewhere. The single virtual space will enable this problem to be tackled. The external contacts of the Ministry and diplomatic service in particular deserve such continuity.

4th pillar: Substantive questions and dilemmas

Some key questions in Dutch foreign policy need clarification.

Foreign policy risks being fragmented among different actors in The Hague. Within this process some substantive questions and unresolved dilemmas touch on the definition of the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomats.

A. Economic diplomacy

The Committee's first progress report, submitted to the Minister in June 2012, included a passage on economic diplomacy. At the time, the question 'What is economic diplomacy, and what role should the Ministry of Foreign Affairs play in it?' still needed to be asked.

The exploratory study by the Committee included a number of recommendations:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should develop a clearer vision of 'economic diplomacy', which in the past has too often been expressed in woolly terms like 'the Ministry's economic function'.
- Economic diplomacy should be broader than just commercial diplomacy or promotion of exports or trade. A more comprehensive promotion of Dutch economic interests in any case includes 'Holland branding' and access to raw materials, highly skilled labour and international public goods.

- Responsibility for coordinating economic diplomacy at Dutch missions should be assigned to the ambassador. Mission sections should be integrated to encourage cooperation and cohesion at missions. Management of the network of missions is part of the Ministry's core business.
- Steering mechanisms, such as three-way work planning between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the private sector (and if necessary including the Ministries of Defence and of Infrastructure and the Environment), regular consultative forums and frameworks for assigning the missions' tasks, should be introduced or perfected.

Since this exploratory study by the Committee, some progress has been made in addressing the initial question, and organisational, conceptual and policy measures have been taken, or new ideas introduced.

- *Organisational and procedural measures*: The Rutte-Asscher government's coalition agreement clearly confirms the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as reflected in the transfer of the Directorate-General for Foreign Economic Relations (DGBEB) from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- *Conceptual measures*: In its discussions, the Committee repeatedly heard that economic diplomacy should mean more than simply promoting exports or promoting foreign investment in the Netherlands, and that the concept should be approached in broad terms.
- *Policy measures and instruments*: Economic diplomacy is being expanded, but is still in need of improvement. Repeated recommendations to the Committee in this connection are:
 - a broadly rather than narrowly based use of economic diplomacy;
 - a focus on the Netherlands' image abroad: public diplomacy ('Holland branding');
 - customised solutions: in some countries economic development is business-driven; in others it is government-driven, and a different approach is required in each case;
 - choice of countries: be selective and focus on promising or emerging countries and regions. Seven of the world's ten fastest-growing countries are in Africa;
 - economic missions: the strategic travel agenda is a good first step, but it needs to be further developed, using smarter principles;
 - quality of service: this must become less dependent on individuals, and so the standard must be raised across the board. The basis is good (a score of 8.6 from Fenedex³), but standards must be developed for the whole network.

³ Set up in 1954, Fenedex is a private association of Dutch exporters and other internationally operating businesses (www.fenedex.nl).

B. Position and funding of development cooperation

The June 2012 exploratory study included a passage on the position and funding of development cooperation and defence within foreign policy. At the time, the Committee noted the following:

The changing environment within which development cooperation is conducted and declining support for it among the Dutch people raise the question whether the current budgetary relationships between development cooperation, defence and foreign policy are still justifiable. The Committee's impression is that the Ministry and its network of missions are facing reduced financial freedom caused by a lack of flexibility in shifting resources between these areas of activity. Different ways of striking a new balance among these budgets could be considered; in the Committee's view, a less rigid approach might possibly alleviate the current strain. Another pressing question, in view of the limited budgetary resources for the missions and bilateral instruments, is whether another look should be taken at the Netherlands' contributions to the UN organisations.

There have been a number of developments since this initial exploratory study. The field of development cooperation is changing rapidly: not only in its deployment, but also in its meaning and role. This is apparent from a number of choices made in the coalition agreement:

- the appointment of a Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, to affirm the importance of the links between the two policy fields. Given that this portfolio is now held by a single person, the Committee sees potential for a conflict of ministerial interests between trade and 'moral' issues;
- the establishment of a €750 million revolving fund (for the period 2014-2016) to support investment in developing countries, especially by SMEs;
- the establishment of a €250 million 'peace fund'. This fund (possibly in conjunction with the existing stabilisation fund), which has been introduced by the Rutte-Asscher government, may lay the foundations for a new 3-D profile⁴ in foreign policy based on articles 90 and 97 of the Constitution;
- the decision to cut the development cooperation budget by €1 billion.

In drawing up its final report, the Committee will look in more detail at what these developments mean for the diplomatic service and its modernisation. The Committee is aware that the policy document by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on Dutch trade and development cooperation policy has yet to be finalised at the time of writing.

⁴ Defence, Diplomacy and Development.

C. Position of the EU and the EEAS

The third dilemma the Committee identified in its 2012 exploratory study was the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the development of the European External Action Service (EEAS). It wondered to what extent the external activities of the EU, especially the EEAS, complement those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to what extent there is duplication of effort. Clearly the EEAS is still evolving. But what can the Ministry expect or ask of it at present?

A second visit to Brussels and additional discussions since June 2012 have left the Committee even more convinced that the EEAS cannot provide a complete alternative to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the short or medium term. Although the EEAS is now larger than the Ministry, it does not yet have a sufficiently stable basis to build on. The added value of the EEAS to the Dutch government cannot match that of our own missions.

Differences in culture and interests between the European Commission, the EEAS and EU member states are frustrating the achievement of a shared ideology and a genuine EU foreign policy. The EEAS primarily works for the High Representative and the European Commission, and so its organisation, working methods, design and culture are a reflection of its headquarters in Brussels. Aside from this already complex reality, serving the interests of 27 different countries is an almost impossible task. The Committee therefore recommends that opportunities for cooperation with the EEAS be considered gradually and without undue haste, or excessively high expectations.

Although the Committee does not see the EEAS becoming an alternative to bilateral missions in the medium term – or perhaps ever in some areas of activity (such as promotion of Dutch trade and supporting Dutch businesses abroad) – it does see opportunities for further cooperation in specific areas. Examples include:

- political reporting
- crisis aid
- consular cooperation
- EEAS support facilities for Dutch diplomats in countries where the Netherlands has no missions of its own. In talks with the EEAS's deputy chair, the Committee learned that an experiment of this kind has been launched in the case of Spain. The Committee recommends that this be monitored closely and that a similar Dutch experiment be launched should the opportunity arise.

As for political reporting, the Netherlands could benefit from the activities of the EEAS, whose greater capacity puts it in a better position to gather and process information. This can be made available to a Dutch embassy, which could then assess the report from the Netherlands' point of view and add any information of its own. For many thinly staffed Dutch missions this would be an increasingly welcome addition to their own information supply.

5th pillar: Structure of the network of missions

In times of regionalisation and digitisation, the network of missions needs the best possible structure.

The structure of the network of missions has an obvious impact on the effectiveness of Dutch diplomacy. In response to the financial cutbacks introduced by the first Rutte government in 2011 and with the support of the House of Representatives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has opted for a lean but extensive network, attempting to maintain a Dutch presence in as many places as possible, without taking a fundamental look at the organisation of the network as a whole.

The Committee notes that this fifth pillar will require further study, and discusses it in more detail in phase 2.

6th pillar: Leadership and management of the network of missions

Professionals need sufficient freedom to do their jobs. They need to work on a basis of trust, not of fixed instructions. The management burden must be reduced.

The Committee noted that the management burden at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is excessive. It heard complaints about this in nearly all its consultations. In the Committee's view, one reason why the management burden has got out of hand is the trend towards a large number of small missions in direct contact with The Hague. In addition, management is incident-oriented, and is insufficiently and inconsistently based on trust and individual responsibility. Staff reductions at the missions are only making the situation more urgent. The Committee has looked at the structure of the organisation in more detail in phase 2.

Conclusion

In the light of this initial exploratory study, the Committee decided, in this progress report, to look in more detail at some of the areas mentioned above: pillar 1 (professionalism), pillar 5 (structure of the organisation and network of missions) and pillar 2 (interaction - position and profile). Together these provide a three-point framework for modernising the diplomatic service as envisaged by the Committee.

In this connection the Committee has held many talks and consulted the available literature and reports, including the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) report 'Attached to the World', the Clingendael report 'Futures for Diplomacy', the conference report 'The Foreign Ministry at a Tipping Point', the US State Department's 'Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review' (QDDR) and an exploratory study of eight diplomatic services conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Committee's request.⁵

⁵ See Appendix 3 (Literature).

Phase 2: in-depth study

2.1 Basic principles

In its 2010 report 'Attached to the World', the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) notes that today's world can best be described as 'hybrid'. In the Council's opinion, this notion is based on two fundamental developments that call for a review of foreign policy. The Council's analysis also provides a valuable point of departure for rethinking or modernising the diplomatic service.

There are two dimensions to the hybrid world described in the WRR report. On the one hand there is the 'traditional world' of geopolitics and nation states, in which a fundamental shift in the global balance of power is now taking place. With the rise of such countries as China, India and Brazil alongside those with a traditionally strong power base, we are now living in a multipolar world in which such countries are rapidly gaining influence and coming to the fore as new leaders on the world stage. This development has been enhanced, and has become more visible, as the economic crisis in the eurozone persists. And we can sense this: the Netherlands is becoming a smaller part of a larger world.

At the same time, we have seen the emergence of a 'network world', with explosive growth in, and close links between, state and non-state actors and areas and channels of cooperation. Increasingly, this is taking place in informal networks, and on a varying scale. National borders are no longer natural limits to interaction. These networks are spreading across the world, in communities that make contact through shared themes, interests or interfaces, but often become visible in a regional context. In this network society, the classic hierarchical organisation of the state and its citizens is losing its relevance. The increasing complexity of the network society has had a profound impact on the position of governments and their ways of working. National borders are becoming blurred. What's more, these developments are taking place faster and more extensively than ever before.

In other words, we are seeing a paradigm shift: in addition to the physical world dictated by the classical rules of international relations, there is now also a virtual network world – and the two are interacting closely. In *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), the first part of his influential trilogy *The Information Age*, Manuel Castells describes how the dominant context in which much of human activity takes place has changed. Driven by technological innovation, especially the rise of the internet and other communication technologies, actions and interactions are increasingly detached from any specific geographical location. The sharing of information is no longer confined to a physical place (the 'space of places'), but flows through networks (the 'space of flows'), solidifying and becoming manifest at various places and times.

Among other things, this has had a major impact on how the world economy is structured. Multinational businesses, financial institutions and flows of capital, as well as the producti-

on of consumer goods have become detached from their physical locations and are now divided over numerous places and several continents. Whereas businesses once had 'foreign operations', they are now scattered over many countries and are only tied to a given location for administrative purposes. And what is true of businesses is equally true of other types of organisations. Thus terrorist 'organisations' are nowadays chiefly networks of small cells that are scattered across the world and mainly keep in touch online, bound together by a goal or source of inspiration that they share to a greater or lesser extent.

Besides Castells' geographical detachment, another typical feature of the network world is the changeability or transience of relationships in and between networks. There is, so to speak, a 'liquid' modernity alongside a 'solid' modernity (Zygmunt Bauman, 2000). Organisations and human interactions are now, in a sense, nomadic: they move, they are temporary and they are not tied to any particular place. This is reinforced by a third feature of networks in the 'space of flows': the phenomenon of 'unplanned dynamics' within networks. This is inherent in the manifestation of networks as horizontal, multiple structures without any clear hierarchy or leadership. Reciprocal and temporary links can develop infinitely within these networks, for example on the internet. Concentrations or accumulations of such links, or places where flows meet, then appear within the networks as hubs or centres of gravity. All this leads to a great variety in networks and ever-changing manifestations of networks in centres of gravity (whether in form, place or time).

What does this mean for states and governments? For governments, the development of this hybrid world with its network dynamics has led to a situation in which the state no longer has a foreign policy. What used to be domestic affairs have now acquired a foreign component, and vice versa. All kinds of government bodies – ministries, agencies, inspectorates and so on – now operate internationally, with their own agendas and policies. They have their own autonomous cross-border networks. In the international arena, contacts are no longer maintained only through heads of state, foreign ministers or diplomatic channels. Anne-Marie Slaughter, the leading adviser on reforms to the US State Department under Hillary Clinton, has described this situation as the 'disaggregated state'. The result is a complex global web of government networks without central supervision of any kind. What we also see here is states' capacity for 'soft power' – a degree of influence achieved through information, persuasiveness and access to, or participation in, such networks. In this connection the WRR report rightly notes that governments that keep trying to coordinate relations with other countries like a 'gatekeeper' will by definition lose touch with reality. The hybrid world calls for a different form of control and coordination.

Yet many of our government structures date from a time when organisations were locally anchored and had sufficient time to develop into institutions with their own *raison d'être*, logic and fixed outlook, with corresponding patterns. In the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these have traditionally been in the international geopolitical dimension, with a clear hierarchy, fixed institutionalised relations and familiar, accompanying international networks with familiar mores. With an organisation and a culture that are firmly rooted in this 'fixed' or geopolitical dimension, the Ministry has continued to operate in that world,

and by its rules. It has thus failed to take account of the emergence of the network world, whose public and societal importance has increased exponentially over the past fifteen years. Should the Ministry continue to give this new world such low priority, then the debate will not remain limited to marginalisation, but will be about atrophy, and eventually the loss of ability to function altogether. It is no accident that, in the international debate on the role of diplomacy, there are some who believe that foreign ministries are a thing of the past.

This, then, is the main challenge for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It must adopt two paradigms. It must continue to meet the demands of the geopolitical dimension, but at the same time adapt to those of the new network dimension. It must embrace both dimensions of the hybrid world, and its diplomacy must become hybrid.

In fact, the notion of polycentrism and an overpopulated, completely heterogeneous market of international relations implies not only losses for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also functional gains. More than in the geopolitical world, there are opportunities here for diplomats from small countries because soft power and quality are of decisive importance in networks. Being small can even be an advantage, because geopolitical ballast is then less important. In this environment diplomacy is relatively open and unconventional, and is about being able to operate horizontally. Governments cannot afford not to invest in it – if only to avoid being taken unawares, and completely outmanoeuvred.

In the world as it has now developed, national interest is to an even greater extent a changing political selection of goals to be pursued. This selection involves a match of interests and capabilities, reflecting the national capacities for hard and soft power. This match determines the level of ambition, which remains fluid. Ambitions can be expressed as results from the ‘geopolitical half’ of the hybrid world: secure borders and institutions, safe citizens, guaranteed prosperity. But they can also be expressed as intended results from the ‘network half’ of the hybrid world: knowledge, standards (both industrial and non-material norms), cybersecurity, human rights, food security, climate management and so on.

Foreign policy is thus the sum total of government activity aimed at using both Dutch and non-Dutch resources to serve the national interest. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a less and less coordinating but more and more facilitating role in the orchestration of these activities, which, moreover, are increasingly taking place in a polycentric world in which non-state actors have an indispensable part to play. The question is how the Netherlands intends to organise its international function. To negotiate successfully in multilateral forums such as the EU and the UN, effective direction and a sound, comprehensive strategy are needed.

Ultimately, diplomats are as much as ever the sovereign representatives in governments’ foreign policies. In the geopolitical half of the hybrid world they are still the ‘vertical’ line managers in communication with other states. In the disaggregated state, their role has been reduced by the increased foreign policy function of other institutions; but at the same

time the role of diplomats has been enhanced, because in the network world they are the 'horizontal' facility managers in networks of vital importance to the Netherlands. They are also in a position to switch back and forth between the geopolitical world of states and the many diffuse, and sometimes informal, international networks. Obtaining access and being accessible to these networks will be an indispensable professional skill in the defence of national interests.

There is thus a key opportunity for diplomacy at the interface between the classic, geopolitical world of states and the network world with its lack of geographical ties, its changeability and its unplanned or unpredictable dynamics. In the hybrid world, diplomacy is as important as ever as a channel for relationships, influence and understanding. Growing geopolitical complexity, the increasing speed and density of information flows in online and other networks, and an ever greater interdependence and need for collective action in such areas as the environment, food, water and international crime will require more diplomacy rather than less.

Diplomacy is as relevant as ever, but it will have to develop into truly hybrid diplomacy. This means that the institutional form of the diplomatic service will have to evolve.

The Committee believes that the level of aggregation at which hybrid diplomacy should be designed is the region. Rather than precisely demarcated entities, regions are now arenas with fluid boundaries within which actors can operate and agendas can be developed. The hybrid world is often manifested at regional level – across borders and beyond the national context – but it is not all-embracing. In practice, this means that one of the ambassadors in a region will be assigned responsibility for the regional task.

We now know that networks, online or otherwise, are at times physically manifested and concentrated in 'places to be'. This happens at major conferences on, say, human rights, environmental treaties and climate talks. It cannot always be predicted where such a singularity will occur. If such a 'place to be' should spring up, it is unlikely that a given mission in a given country will be equipped to deal with it alone. Greater capacity will have to be available in the region. This is crucial, for it is precisely in such places that traditional and network diplomacy can blend.

Part of these networks is a broad local presence around the world; membership of, and access to, a network are achieved locally and in the course of direct contacts. This means being present on the ground. Given the changeability and unpredictability of networks, it is also important to identify the changing centres of gravity within networks, respond and gain access as quickly as possible. This can only be done through direct relationships. Paradoxically, building up the necessary relationships takes time and depends on a degree of familiarity with local conditions.

At regional level, advantages of scale will allow actors to operate effectively in the hybrid world and discover interactions between the world of 'spaces' and the world of 'flows'.

Within a network context it is easier to determine where you need to be, adapt and move flexibly as needed, respond to changing centres of gravity and identify ‘places to be’ in good time.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its network of missions will have to be organised thus in order to respond to the demands of the 21st century. This is a demanding task, and a fundamentally new one. The requirements for a modern diplomatic service based on regionalisation will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 A modern Dutch diplomatic service: from today’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a new organisational logic

The world is in motion. It is experiencing major geopolitical changes and hugely increased interdependence. Broad, fluid international networks, online or otherwise, have fundamentally altered the dynamics of the international order. This shift to a networked world has not replaced the traditional interstate order but has added a new dimension – and this will mean more work, rather than less, for the diplomatic service.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will require a different organisational and institutional form to meet today’s challenges: responding to geopolitical changes by making capacity and resources available on the spot, pooling and releasing resources and knowledge in order to meet major cross-border challenges, and identifying, joining and activating networks. Without a presence on the ground, the catalytic effect of accessing networks cannot be exploited. Without operating on an organisational scale that goes beyond national borders and is based on network thinking, the impact of the network world cannot be used to its full advantage. Without a regional context, the organisation will lack the flexibility and speed it needs to respond to the changing manifestations of what are sometimes disruptive network developments and technologies.

A brief survey of various diplomatic services shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not alone in this respect. Many countries’ foreign ministries are now reviewing the role of diplomacy in the 21st century and its fundamental principles. Various diplomatic services are involved in major processes of change and are experimenting with new forms of diplomacy. In many cases services have to be cut back, but even diplomatic services that are expanding are confronted with the same issues. There are a number of interesting similarities, as revealed, for example, in a survey of eight European and non-European foreign ministries conducted at the Committee’s request (see appendix 4). Many foreign ministries are wrestling with the question of what position they should occupy and many risk being marginalised because of their failure to connect with network dynamics. The organisation’s interaction with ‘grass roots’ opinion (i.e. the public), and by extension its legitimacy, are high on the agenda. Coping with the regional scale, being able to switch between a larger and smaller presence on the ground and gaining access to networks are recurring themes.

Another frequent issue is diplomats' professionalism and expertise –expressed in terms of knowledge and skills, public performance, acting responsibly within a given mandate, and giving trust. It is clear that expectations of what diplomats should be, and should be capable of, are changing.

There are differences between the various diplomatic services in their degree of defeatism and doubt about their *raison d'être*, but it is clear that thought is being given worldwide to the role and ideal form of diplomacy. The services we have consulted are experimenting with forms of diplomatic organisation and representation that differ from the traditional ones. Sometimes radical choices are made; sometimes earlier choices are revised; sometimes the focus is on regionalisation. In any case, the general impression is that the archetype has had its day – though that is not to say that traditional diplomacy no longer serves its purpose.

The modernisation of diplomacy thus involves a fundamental shift (one that is perceived worldwide) in the role and position of diplomats. It is no accident that many diplomatic services are asking themselves the same questions about their own function and relevance – although they do not doubt their necessity. They must take account of the paradigm shift to a hybrid world, in which hybrid diplomats must operate effectively, represent their countries and establish connections in both dimensions. A modern diplomatic service depends on two basic principles: (1) regionalisation (only a model based on operating within network units that are larger and more flexible than the traditional one-to-one relationship between missions and Ministry can respond to the speed and dynamics of today's networks); and (2) presence on the ground (in a borderless online world, a local presence and its resulting access to networks are vital assets).

There is therefore no doubt that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be reformed if it is to maintain, or regain, its relevance.

First, there is a new world order with a geopolitical and a network dimension (including online). Within the geopolitical dimension there is a shift towards a multipolar world with various centres of power. Furthermore, global issues and international political developments no longer only arise within or between states or otherwise demarcated frameworks. In the new world order, cross-border, regional and dynamically changing networks have become an organising principle. The traditional model of diplomatic missions is incompatible with this, and is incapable of responding adequately to developments (though the mission network does possess the quality necessary). In its present form it is not equipped for the future.

Second, regionalisation offers new benefits for a flexible, resilient and future-proof organisation. The Committee has read analyses of the praiseworthy efforts that have been made to keep small missions open. Despite these efforts, internal analyses reveal that the current organisational model is not administratively viable, mainly because of the management burden. Many of the perceived problems can be addressed using a regionalisation

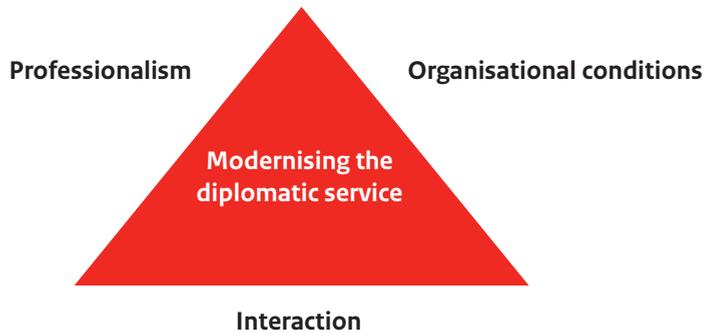
model. Local presence is the guiding principle, but the model for achieving this need not necessarily be the same everywhere. More customised solutions can be found, and the required level of diplomatic presence can be determined case by case. Changes can be made in response to needs within identified regions or networks. This will increase the organisation's flexibility, speed of action and adaptability. It will also enhance the level of professionalism if training and development are broadened and deepened so as to take fuller account of regional issues and interaction. The Committee also believes that efficiency can be increased by regionalisation.

Third, there are already good examples of regionalisation within the organisation – such as the missions in the USA and China, with Washington DC and Beijing as central hubs and a number of consulates-general as smaller missions in one region. This is a model that the Committee believes can be used more widely – not necessarily within one country, but within a region. Experiments with regionalisation are already taking place, for example in the Central American and Baltic regions.

What such regional arrangements will look like in practice is a question of customised solutions, an iterative process with room for adjustment. Any division into regions – geographically or thematically – needs to follow logical demarcations. Not all networks will be the same size. The composition of networks will vary in degree and type of presence, in scope and in density. A regional network may be adopted for various reasons, whether geopolitical (historical, cultural, geographical, economic etc.) or thematic (single issues reflected in global 'places to be').

2.3 Elaboration

All things considered, the Committee believes that modernisation of the Dutch diplomatic service will require organisational changes in three interrelated areas. Conducted on the basis of an iterative process, the modernisation of the diplomatic service will chiefly involve professional expertise, organisational conditions and interaction. As illustrated in the figure below, these three elements are connected and influence one another. To achieve success, changes will be required on all three sides of the triangle.



Professionalism

The Committee's first exploratory study in June 2012 noted that the practice of diplomacy needs to be more clearly defined and more visible. Diplomacy is a profession, and should be defined as such. Its key tasks are connection, negotiation and representation. The corresponding values and expertise must also be defined to take account of the demands of the hybrid world. In the Committee's view, knowledge of foreign countries, forums and local networks, and the negotiating and other skills required to find one's way around them, are in any case key to the further definition of the profession.

Today's hybrid world calls for diplomats who can switch back and forth between different worlds – who, as it were, have the chameleon-like ability to adapt to different networks. Other essential skills that they require in order to operate in networks are enterprise and an open outlook. Within the organisation, too, it is vital to find new organisational forms that are suited to the openness and elasticity of a network organisation – such as shifting, flexible links within horizontal networks of peers when dealing with specific projects or topics.

The concept of regionalisation also has an impact on professional expertise, especially when it comes to pooling knowledge. The Committee notes that the 'generalist' principle has been paramount in staff placement policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accumulated knowledge and expertise are considered of secondary importance, and everyone is expected to become an expert on a new subject within a matter of months. Whenever staff members are transferred, they effectively start from scratch. This is not a culture designed to generate knowledge on topics outside one's direct responsibility. The Committee considers this situation far from ideal, and believes that the Ministry could increase its added value by allowing its staff to specialise in a limited number of fields, such as a given region, theme, etc. At the same time, such knowledge can be preserved within the organisation through knowledge networks or circuits, regardless of where the staff member now happens to be.

Professional expertise must also be reflected in the way the organisation promotes results-based management. Openness, responsibility and trust as principles of management will create an environment in which diplomats can function and perform their tasks to the best of their ability. In a world in which the speed and density of information are increasing, and in which speed and an ability to improvise and adapt are needed in order to respond to local developments appropriately and in good time, the diplomat's profession will benefit from a high degree of autonomy and independence. Within predetermined limits, it is up to ambassadors and their teams to decide when and how the Ministry in The Hague should be involved in decisions. Policy and decisions will be made in a coherent, cooperative manner, on the basis of a regional model. Of course, responsibility and accountability are two sides of the same coin.

A clear, recurring theme in the Committee's discussions with stakeholders in the diplomatic service is their varying experience of personal contact with diplomats. There are great qualitative differences in how diplomats operate internationally. Nor is it always clear what can be expected of them (see also 'Interaction'). Individual impact will always be important (in fact it is the organisation's key strength) – provided that the quality of individual action is high and it is clear what can be expected. Diplomats' professional expertise must be more effectively and more visibly maintained. Success must be objectively quantifiable so that Dutch diplomats' quality, focus and effectiveness can be enhanced further. This will depend on clear standards that set the bar and that ensure added value remains visible and demonstrable.

Like other experts such as doctors and lawyers, diplomats will have to pass through a number of stages in their careers to establish their professional level. This is already the practice to some extent at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This means that diplomats must have clear qualifications from the outset and have received basic training at an academy that lays down clear career requirements, is run by a dean and uses objectively quantifiable 'diplomatic performance indicators' to set clear standards and allow performance to be assessed. The seven-year diplomat training programme now being developed by the Ministry is a good start.

Organisational conditions for hybrid diplomacy

In the Committee's view, a modern diplomatic service that can respond to the demands of the hybrid 21st-century world will need to fulfil the following organisational conditions. Clearly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not yet meet these standards, and, as outlined below, considerable effort will be needed in order for it to do so.

First, it must function as a single unit together with its network of missions. This will require a single virtual space in which the headquarters in The Hague and the network of missions can operate. The organisation will be a single institution within which all functions are located, and continual efforts will be made to optimise the form of organisation and to determine where functions should be located and where knowledge should be gathered and put to use. Optimum use must be made of the available technology to allow

open information exchange. The current strict separation between policymaking at the Ministry and implementation at the missions is obsolete. Policy will also be made, as well as implemented, at the missions and in the regions; The Hague's task is strategy and supervision of the Netherlands' international function.

Second, the network of missions must be structured in accordance with the aforementioned regional model. This additional dimension in thinking and organisation is crucial to a modern network. Embassies will no longer be stand-alone, individually operating missions whose main line of communication is with The Hague, but will form flexibly organised units together with other missions in a regional context. A hub-and-spoke model will allow larger missions – where staff, resources and policymaking are concentrated – to support smaller ones in the region. The result will be a varied network of missions within each region, still focused on on-the-ground presence but with more flexible ways of achieving that presence.

In order for this model to work, the 'hub' must be adequately staffed. It no longer goes without saying that each embassy must have its own chancery and residence; instead, the scale and form of diplomatic presence will depend on local circumstances and a set of criteria that remain to be determined. Particular attention should be paid to co-location of missions. The result will be a four-tier system of local presence within regions: (1) regional embassies, (2) medium-sized missions, (3) small missions and (4) minimum staffing (one diplomat posted from The Hague).⁶ Because the missions will operate on a regional basis, changes can be anticipated rapidly and appropriately by upscaling or downscaling local presence. However, the basic principle remains that a minimum presence should be maintained in a large number of places, for only thus can long-term relations be maintained and conditions created for optimum use of diplomacy. Other forms of diplomacy that are now becoming more common (such as roving bilateral ambassadors⁷ or 'laptop diplomats') are conceivable alternatives to on-the-ground presence, but will always be only a substitute for permanent presence. It is worth examining the added value of an entirely virtual presence in countries where there is no representation, focusing on technical applications that will allow specific types of service (such as an online helpdesk for consular affairs).

The regionalisation model calls for customised, varied approaches. There is no single regional template for the whole world. What works in Central America will not necessarily work in Asia; what is appropriate for economic diplomacy may not be appropriate for consular affairs or political issues. For the network of missions this will require a varied, flexible approach that takes account of the regional and local context. A hub-and-spoke model will have to be assessed against a number of criteria. Without attempting to be exhaustive, the Committee is thinking here of Dutch interests in a given region and

⁶ The Committee has noted that this concept of regionalisation quickly gives rise to misunderstanding. The idea is to give one existing mission a broader task within a region – not to create an additional tier between the missions and The Hague.

⁷ Roving bilateral ambassadors serving the country to which they are accredited from The Hague, rather than thematic ambassadors (such as the human rights ambassador, special envoys and so on).

concentration of certain themes or disciplines in one place, as well as such practical factors as infrastructure, a country's stability, and international links.

Third, modernisation of the diplomatic service will also have an impact on the Ministry in The Hague. Working within the regionalisation model will call for a different kind of organisation: an integrated unit that can respond rapidly and appropriately to emerging priorities and crises. The Ministry will operate as a network organisation, with policy teams on specific topics, composed of people who can contribute expertise from various places and backgrounds. This makes it possible to assemble a team on a given topic from staff at missions, in The Hague and at other ministries, and people seconded to international organisations. Surrounding this team, depending on roles and locations, there will then be a circle of networks and links to stakeholders and other relevant parties. The possibility of transferring policymaking to missions as regional or even thematic centres of expertise can then be considered, so that policy is formulated close to where it is needed. If thinking on a given theme is focused somewhere outside the Netherlands, that is the 'place to be' where policy should be made.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague will be small, with a key role for its international function. The Ministry will be the link between The Hague and the network of missions. Its role will encompass strategic management and setting operational frameworks. The current organisation (including the network of missions) does not meet this criterion, and will have to change. At present it is highly vertical (in terms of missions, directorates-general and directors), which is a serious obstacle to horizontal cooperation and coherence. The Committee heard this complaint dozens of times in the course of its interviews. Many of the people it spoke to feel that the practice of having documents initialled by several people – which supposedly reflects a coordinated, shared policy – in fact illustrates the compartmentalisation of the Ministry and the lack of shared principles within the organisation. The Secretary-General has said that task forces are now being used to deal with topics that require coherence. Many missions are already using integrated teams. The ministers and senior leadership have recently expressed the ambition of transforming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into a network organisation. Its structure will be adapted so that responsibilities are clearly assigned and even greater use is made of flexible, horizontal teams which include the missions under the authority of the most relevant director-general. The Committee sees these as steps in the right direction, and recommends that the organisation become even more horizontal, and hence a true network organisation.

The Committee believes this will require a great deal of sustained effort from all staff, but above all from the senior leadership.

The above organisational conditions provide the basis for a vigorous, effective Dutch diplomatic service, with a small, flexible core for strategy, policy frameworks and the international function in The Hague, and a broad, extensive network of missions capable of adapting continually to fluctuating circumstances. Exchange of staff between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other ministries, the private sector, international organisations and

NGOs will enhance the Ministry's network function. The region can serve as a reservoir for this purpose.

Interaction

The third area that needs to be tackled is the way the Ministry of Foreign Affairs relates to the outside world. Not only is the outside world changing, but so is the Ministry's interaction with it. Visibility and presentation are increasingly part of diplomacy. One manifestation of this is public diplomacy.

Thanks to constant innovation in means of communication and virtual exchange (on the internet), there are now many different ways of gaining broad access to knowledge and establishing a network profile. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and other applications can be used to reach a wide audience. For example, a 'diplopedia' of the kind set up by the Americans allows knowledge to be easily shared and updated. The use of such communication resources is now an indispensable part of policy, but is still in its infancy.

Whereas people used to approach the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on matters relating to other countries, the boundaries between home and abroad have become blurred and the Ministry no longer has a natural monopoly within the disaggregated state. At a time when service provision is increasingly paramount, those the Committee interviewed repeatedly made clear that the Ministry does not have a clear sense of what its stakeholders want.

The Ministry is roundly accused by its peers – other ministries and government bodies – of being oblivious to the rest of The Hague and the Dutch people. Recurrent complaints are that foreign ministry staff invest considerable energy in their subsequent postings, that their instant response to questions and requests is still too often 'it can't be done', and that missions sometimes object to carrying out government policy. The Committee considers it alarming that this is the picture other ministries now have of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Although the Coordinating Committee on International Affairs (CoRIA) states that things are definitely improving, at other levels (both higher and lower) the Ministry is seen in a less positive, not to say negative, light. The Committee believes one reason for this is that people do not know what to expect of the organisation – at a time when the public clearly expects more in terms of transparency, service and results. Interaction is thus a fundamental prerequisite for the legitimacy of the diplomatic service and public support for it.

A network society is not just about *transmitting* information. The typical features of a network organisation are openness and exchange of information and contacts. To improve its relationships, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will have to become more visible to three groups: (1) the Dutch people, or the 'domestic market' (including public diplomacy), (2) the various sectors/stakeholders and (3) politicians.

To do this, it will have to take a number of steps, starting with the development of standards. It must be made clear to the outside world what can be expected of diplomatic

missions – what they can and cannot do. Such standards are also a guarantee of quality and continuity throughout the organisation – and that is crucial in an organisational model that by its nature is based on working in numerous small, semi-independent units.

To this end, the Ministry must increase its outside visibility, not only in The Hague but also elsewhere. One good step in this direction is the practice of having staff give talks at schools. Consular affairs are a readily identifiable point of contact with the Dutch people, and so can be used to highlight this and other ministry tasks. Further digitisation can not only assist Dutch citizens with consular problems more rapidly, and online, but also help Dutch companies find their way in other countries. Digitisation provides a valuable way to bridge the gulf between the Ministry and the Dutch people. For nationals of other countries the internet should be the instrument of choice for easily making contact with the Ministry and finding their way in Dutch society (e.g. in locating business partners) using information from the Ministry and the missions.

The Committee also recommends the establishment of an external council, to be chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This will keep the Ministry in touch with the various parties and aware of stakeholders' expectations and wishes, so that it can check whether it is on the right track. By institutionalising interaction, the Ministry can make sure it stays in contact and, at the same time, use this interaction to continually build public support. The Ministry should set up panels, modelled on the US State Advisory Board, that represent the various parties and networks and are regularly consulted.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a special function within the Dutch government. It has a leading role in shaping the international function, and should take the initiative in setting up appropriate digital or other networks for each region, theme and so on. To help the Ministry demonstrate its added value, other parts of the government must be able to obtain access to the information that is available through the network of missions. This will require personal assistance from 'account managers' to ensure that people actually obtain the information they need.

Phase 3: assessment

This progress report provides a summary of the Committee's findings so far. Between now and its final report, which is due by March 2014, the Committee plans to assess, refine and elaborate these findings.

This will involve the following activities:

- Consultations with people outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee is working 'from the inside out', and most of its initial interviews were within the Ministry. It has now started to talk to relevant external parties, and will continue to do so. So far it has mainly spoken to representatives of other ministries, but it also plans to interview representatives of the private sector, the political sphere, academia, the media, civil society, civic organisations and the diplomatic corps. The questions it will ask concern the image of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, people's expectations of the diplomatic service and the Ministry's organisational structure.
- Members of the Committee (working in various combinations) will visit a number of missions to learn more about the network of missions, the regional function and the variety of the missions (in terms of both staffing and function). Trips to Brussels, Luxembourg, Moscow and Baku are planned. The Committee has already paid visits to Washington DC, New York, Cairo, Nairobi and Brussels.
- In order to produce its final report, the Committee believes it needs to conduct more in-depth studies on a number of topics. These will in any case include the relationship between the EU's European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Dutch diplomatic service, now and in the future; the relationship between development cooperation and economic diplomacy; and the development of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) as a testing ground for integrated foreign policy.
- The Committee will also look at worldwide networks. President Obama is said to have asked which 100 networks are most important to the USA. The Committee likewise intends to examine (1) which networks are most important to the Netherlands, (2) how the Netherlands can access them and (3) how the Netherlands can find out which networks exist and are relevant, and what kind of mechanism can be designed to help it do so.
- The Committee will study the topic of professional expertise in greater depth: what form training at a diplomatic academy should take, based on the contours of this academy and its dean and on the seven-year diplomat training programme.
- The Committee will look in more detail at how the management burden can be reduced, and will make recommendations on the subject.
- Finally, the Committee's final report will make suggestions for the development of standards: what can stakeholders expect of the diplomatic service?
- If the development of standards involves exceptional levels of additional effort, the Committee will examine whether the costs can be passed on.

Phase 4: recommendations and comments

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has asked the Committee to submit a progress report. There would be little sense in such an exercise if the Committee did not now make a number of recommendations.

The Committee is convinced that the diplomatic service must be modernised, and that this is an urgent task. If the Ministry is to remain relevant rather than become marginalised, it will have to change. The Committee therefore fully endorses the Minister's reference at the ambassadors' conference in January 2013 to an 'existential year' for the Ministry.

The coalition agreement emphasises the Netherlands' international orientation, based on national interest as well as a broader outlook. It includes an ambitious international agenda that will call for more international action rather than less. The relevant passage in the agreement should not be seen in isolation. The Committee notes that politicians, and the Dutch people, require and expect more of the diplomatic service. At the same time, the Committee observes that the available instruments – the diplomatic network and funding – are now subject to a series of major cutbacks, in which new cuts under the coalition agreement come on top of earlier ones. Even in times of budgetary restraint, one cannot necessarily demand that more be done with less money. In recent years, bodies like the police and Rijkswaterstaat (the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management) have received additional funding to pay for the extra tasks they have been given.

This discrepancy between stated ambitions and cutbacks on the required instruments raises questions. Does the Netherlands intend to retreat behind the dykes? Or does the government believe that the same international ambitions can be achieved without a broad, permanent international presence based on the premise that the Netherlands will best be served by having "eyes and ears" all over the world?

Recommendations

- The modernisation programme will require investment. The cost of a broader, up-to-date, evolving diplomatic service should not be underestimated. Furthermore a virtual Ministry of Foreign Affairs will require investment. The Committee notes that the organisation has so far been slow to create a readily accessible virtual space both within and outside the organisation. Such a space has a dual purpose: a single helpdesk or contact point for Dutch people and a single point of access for foreign nationals in their contacts with the Netherlands. The principle behind this concept is a better organised – i.e. decompartmentalised and integrated – diplomatic service, with the Ministry and the missions operating as a single virtual network.

- A cost estimate and a cost-benefit analysis covering the network of missions will be required. At the moment the Committee lacks the data to assess the approximate costs of a modernisation programme, especially given the cutbacks prescribed in the coalition agreement. The first costs will be incurred in building up professional expertise in a world of hybrid diplomacy (including the diplomatic academy), the creation of a virtual space aimed at users both within and outside the Ministry, and the regionalisation process. The associated capacity and ‘teaching time’ will require investment. Eventually these measures can be expected to benefit the organisation directly: reducing the management burden, increasing efficiency through virtual workspaces, reducing hierarchy and introducing smart working principles. In general, the added value of having a mission in place has not yet been calculated. The Dutch private sector has made clear that in many countries businesses will suffer if missions are closed, but the amounts involved have not been estimated. At the same time, many benefits of the network of missions cannot be directly expressed in monetary terms. The Committee has the impression that the missions’ added value lies outside rather than within Europe, though there is no hard evidence to this effect. To allow a better assessment of the value and necessity of the network of missions and on-the-ground presence, the Committee therefore recommends that a cost estimate and a cost-benefit analysis be carried out. This will provide a context for the debate on cutbacks and the question of who should pay for them – the private sector, other government bodies or the Ministry itself.
- A change organisation is needed. Despite strong proposals and initiatives to reform parts of the organisation in recent years, essential changes have not yet been made. The long-standing consensus model in the Ministry’s senior leadership is not suitable for the implementation of radical change. For the Committee, this is a point of concern, for in processes of change the idea is to end with consensus rather than start with it. The radical changes now required at the Ministry are not compatible with the division of tasks across separate domains. The existing domains are not geared to areas of change and accordingly there is no change capability. The Committee believes that the necessary changes cannot be made without also tackling the Ministry’s capacity for change. At the very least this will mean abandoning the current decision-making model and assigning responsibility for the change process to one person. This may be either the Secretary-General or a separate project manager – provided that the ministerial mandate is clear and the person in question has authority to enforce decisions. The Committee therefore notes with approval that the Secretary-General, supported by a project team, is currently revising the Ministry’s organising principles and will present detailed proposals in the framework of the Minister’s letter to Parliament on modernising the diplomatic service by the summer. A change organisation will be set up after the summer to implement the proposals. Current change processes in the field of digitisation, reform of small missions, human resources policy and smart working will be integrated within it.

- Professionalism:
 - Set requirements for the profession of hybrid diplomat: (1) core tasks: representation, negotiation and connection; (2) ability to operate in both dimensions and link them together, especially in ‘places to be’.
 - Invest in knowledge and deploy diplomats on the basis of their knowledge.
 - Regionalisation: allow staff to use their knowledge and expertise and deploy them in areas where they have accumulated knowledge; staff should aim towards developing and expanding their expertise in a specific number of fields.
 - Introduce diplomats’ qualifications and accompanying development processes, as with lawyers. The seven-year diplomat training programme for new recruits is a good start.
 - Appoint a dean to head the new ‘diplomatic academy’.
 - The academy will also have a training programme for lateral entrants, who will have to meet the same standards as staff entering at the lowest level.
 - Diplomatic performance indicators must be developed to create clear standards and allow performance to be measured.
 - Titles cost nothing, and should be conferred if they are functional (ambassador, special envoy).
 - One issue the Committee would signal is staff conditions and terms of employment within the diplomatic service. In its interviews it has repeatedly been confronted with concerns about the impact of a career in the diplomatic service on people’s private lives. The recommendations in this progress report have no bearing on this situation – it is a problem that goes beyond the modernisation of the diplomatic service but should be signalled nevertheless.

- Organisation:
 - The organisation should be set up as a single (virtual) space that includes all the Ministry’s functions and allows their application to be considered case by case. This calls for a flexible, less rigid system of HR management.
 - A regional dimension should be introduced in the structuring and organisation of the network of missions. This regionalisation model is reflected in the organisation of the Ministry in The Hague. The aim is to build up networks using regional, thematic or issue-specific teams that are not necessarily confined to one place.
 - A different senior leadership structure should be introduced, with a different classification of directorates-general (at least those with line responsibility). To ensure that DGs are aligned with international structures, DGs outside the line management structure can also be created – titles cost nothing.
 - The organisation must be future-proof, resilient and able to vary its levels of representation. The basic aim is on-the-ground presence, but the specific form of each mission may vary. If no alternative is available, other kinds of representation (such as roving ambassadors) are conceivable substitutes.
 - A better ratio of headquarters to mission staff is needed. It is currently skewed in favour of The Hague. Regionalisation will ensure that more policymaking takes place at the missions.

- An identical regime should be in place for mission staff posted abroad, regardless of their ministry of origin. Staff posted abroad and local staff will work as a single team under the supervision and guidance of the ambassador.
 - Coordinating responsibility at missions for policy fields like economic diplomacy should be assigned to the ambassador and sections within missions should be integrated to encourage collaboration and coherence.
 - As staff levels at the missions shrink, action must be taken regarding fixed procedures and the management burden to ensure that staff can focus on policy priorities.
 - The role of inspections must change. Instead of monitoring and distrust being the guiding principles, inspections should be based on trust and assigning responsibility at lower level. It is important to strike a balance between freedom of action, accountability and assessment. Important questions here are whether responsibilities are properly assigned, and whether there is sufficient trust. The Ministry should move away from a preventive system of monitoring that is solely designed to avoid mistakes – this leads to risk avoidance, which comes at the expense of results.
- Interaction:
 - Panels should be set up: one generic panel, plus a number of thematic panels for consular affairs, culture, security and the international rule of law, economic affairs and development cooperation.
 - Use should be made of secondment (in both directions) among government departments, the private sector and civil society organisations and institutions. In this way, experience can be shared and networks linked.
 - Sharing information: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs possesses a great deal of relevant information gathered from all over the world. Embassies throughout the world report back to The Hague around the clock. This gives the Ministry a key function within the Dutch government. The huge value of this global information gives it scope to engage with the rest of the government. This provides an excellent opportunity for meaningful interaction between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the various other ministries, and for adding value where government policy is concerned by offering access to the ‘diplomatic database’. To start with, the messaging system database should be made easily accessible to all parts of the Dutch government, with the focus on information tailored to key decision-makers (secretaries-general, directors-general and so on). Account managers should also be appointed to enable the best possible use of this information service.
 - Policymaking in The Hague (at other ministries) should take account of the international angle at an earlier stage. At present, the international context often comes into play only when ministries have already largely determined their positions. As a result the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ input may be perceived as a hindrance. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to mechanisms allowing international factors to be identified and taken into account at an early stage of policymaking. This will only work if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs actually uses this early opportunity to make a contribution. As more policymaking is transferred to the missions, this will also require more direct interaction and contact between the network of missions and other ministries.

- No reason to delay:
Once the way ahead is clear there is no reason to delay, and action should be taken wherever it can be. The great enthusiasm for change which the Committee has noted in various parts of the organisation should be exploited, and the many good initiatives that the Committee has observed should be followed up. Task forces should be set up to add fresh input on professionalism, organisational conditions, and interaction, as well as the accompanying standards. Enthusiastic staff should be recruited, through open internal application procedures, to take part in processes of change. Available ideas should be used, and experiments carried out to identify the best solutions. The Ministry should start by:
 - setting up a stakeholder's council and thematic panels to act as external sounding boards;
 - experimenting with new types of representation, regionalisation and partnership;
 - setting up an academy that provides additional courses after basic training of new recruits, appointing a dean and conducting research studies;
 - implementing the recommendations regarding the career service, and drawing up an action plan that takes due account of developments concerning the Senior Civil Service;
 - setting up the Ministry's own virtual space;
 - introducing smart working principles, with non-hierarchical assignments and task forces for which staff can apply via the virtual space.

- Keep going!

Appendices

1. Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee on Modernising the Diplomatic Service
2. List of persons interviewed (not available in English)
3. Literature
4. Trends in diplomacy and mission networks: a survey of eight foreign services

1 Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee on Modernising the Diplomatic Service

The Minister of Foreign Affairs wishes to do more to modernise the Dutch diplomatic service. In this connection there are various projects under way at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Works Council is closely involved in this process.

The Minister has requested that an external advisory group, known as the Advisory Committee on Modernising the Diplomatic Service, be set up to provide him with independent advice and point out recent international developments. He has asked the Committee for an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service, in light of the new thinking on diplomacy which has been evolving in other countries.

The focus will be on:

- economic diplomacy: how can the network of missions support Dutch business as effectively as possible? Can a focus on economic diplomacy be further embedded in the Ministry's structure? How should the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs be linked?
- the diplomat of the future: what is expected of a diplomat? What are the core values of the diplomatic service? How can social media be used effectively?
- changes to the organisation: the Committee will give feedback on the processes of change that have already been set in motion through regular channels. Are these changes at the Ministry still on course?

Members of the Committee

The members of the Committee have been recruited on the basis of their long and wide-ranging experience in various fields.

- Arthur Docters van Leeuwen, the Committee's chair, is an experienced manager of processes of change, with an extensive track record in government and quasi-governmental organisations.
- Tineke Ladders-Elfferich contributes her extensive political and administrative experience.
- Ko Colijn has in-depth knowledge of international diplomacy.
- Pieter Marres is a former ambassador with personal experience of all facets of the craft of diplomacy at the missions and at the Ministry in The Hague.
- Victor Schoenmakers is Director of International Affairs at the Port of Rotterdam Authority.

This broad range of experience will enable the Committee to ensure cross-pollination among different approaches to international diplomacy.

Status

The Committee will officially advise the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pursuant to the Works Councils Act, the planned establishment of the Committee has been submitted to the Works Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its comments.

The Committee will meet regularly and will also provide the Minister with feedback on its findings at regular intervals. It will be supported by an executive secretariat provided by the Ministry.

Role

The Committee will function as a sounding board. It will not be directly involved in the implementation of the existing financial cutbacks. It will have an advisory, activating and galvanising role, focusing on the goals, outlook and tasks of the diplomatic service and more specifically on economic diplomacy. Where necessary, the Minister may also request the Committee to advise him on specific topics.

The Committee will act as an external think tank for the Minister and will report to him. It is up to the Minister to decide how he responds to the Committee's recommendations. Where appropriate, these will be fleshed out through regular channels within the Ministry, including employee participation.

Timetable

The Committee will be established with effect from 1 March 2012 for a period of two years, which may be extended.

Communication

The Minister will facilitate regular consultations with the Works Council on the appointment of the Committee. Any contact between the Committee and the media will be subject to prior consultation with the Ministry.

Contacts

The Committee plans to interview both individual staff members and staff organisations. It believes it should gather information as widely as possible and talk to the people directly involved, both at the Ministry and at the missions.

On the subject of economic diplomacy, fact-finding talks will also be held with strategic contacts in the private sector. There will be interviews not only with professional organisations such as the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, MKB-Nederland (the national association of SMEs) and FME (the national employers' organisation for the technological industry), but also with the owners and chairs of individual companies. Ms Meiny Prins, who was unable to remain a full-time

member of the Committee owing to other commitments, will help organise a meeting with internationally active SMEs that frequently work with Dutch embassies.

The Committee will also focus on foreign ministries in other countries (which have yet to be selected). Where appropriate, it will talk to other government bodies and civil society organisations in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Travel

In the course of their assignment the members of the Committee will (often individually) visit a number of missions to learn more about the different kinds of representations – from those staffed by just one diplomat and those with specialised tasks to large missions with multi-year interministerial policy frameworks.

Remuneration

The members of the Committee will be appointed under the standard arrangements applicable to governmental advisory committees.

The Committee chair will be subject to a working hours factor of 10/36. He will receive a fixed remuneration equivalent to 10% of the maximum in salary scale 18 in Appendix B to the Civil Servants' Pay Decree 1984.

The other Committee members will be subject to a working hours factor of 7/36. They will receive a fixed remuneration equivalent to 7% of the maximum in salary scale 18 in Appendix B to the 1984 Civil Servants Pay Decree.

Reasonable travel, accommodation and other expenses will be reimbursed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, subject to the rules applicable to Dutch government employees.

Implementation orders

If the work of the Committee gives rise to implementation orders by the Minister that require advice or approval pursuant to the Works Councils Act, these will of course be submitted to the Works Council in good time in accordance with the normal procedure.

4 January 2012

2 List of persons interviewed

(not available in English)

De Adviescommissie Modernisering heeft sinds haar oprichting vele honderden formele en informele gesprekken gevoerd met o.m. medewerkers van de Rijksoverheid, Europese instellingen, bedrijfsleven en maatschappelijk middenveld. Met de bewindspersonen en de ambtelijke top (d.w.z. het SG/DG-beraad) van het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken heeft de Commissie herhaaldelijk gesproken gedurende haar onderzoek. Ook voerde de Commissie groepsgesprekken met VDBZ, FEE en VerYBZ. Naast vele bilaterale gesprekken en daarbij aansluitende verdiepingssessies, heeft de Commissie ook opgetreden/gesprekken gevoerd tijdens grote evenementen, zoals de MKB rondetafelbijeenkomst van de haven van Rotterdam, de ambassadeursconferentie van 2013 en de 'Futures for Diplomacy' conferentie van Instituut Clingendael. Voorts heeft de Commissie verschillende dienstreizen gemaakt naar o.m. Brussel, Washington, New York en Caïro.

Onderstaand overzicht geeft, wegens de grote hoeveelheid gesprekken, voornamelijk de bilaterale gesprekken weer die hebben plaatsgevonden.

Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Naam	Functie/Organisatie*
Agotha, Tony	Woordvoerder PV EU Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Alkemade, Ellen	Lid FEE vrouwen netwerk BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Arnoldus, Peter	Directeur Financieel-Economische Zaken – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Baak, Mascha	Lid FEE vrouwen netwerk BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Barnard, Johan	Hoofd ECOFIN-Coördinatie PV EU Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Beaujean, Jan Willem	Plv. Hoofd Bureau Secretaris-Generaal – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Beer, Karel de	Vml. DG Taakstelling – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Bekink, Rudolf	CdP Peking – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Berg, Job van den	Voorzitter Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Bont, Emiel de	Forward Strategy Unit – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Bonzel, Matthijs van	Nederlandse ambassadeur in Boekarest – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Coppoolse, Ines	Hoofddirecteur Personeel en Organisatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Daalen, Monique van	DG Consulaire Zaken en Bedrijfsvoering – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Davidse, Koen	Directeur Directie Multilaterale Instellingen en Mensenrechten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Dijksterhuis, Robert	Lid Onafhankelijken Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Naam	Functie/Organisatie*
Faber, Eeuwke	Hoofd Afdeling Uitbreiding PV EU – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Fazili, Said	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Flamand, Joost	Vereniging Dienst BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Frank, Paul	Online Strategie Directie Communicatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Geelen, Marloes	Lid Advakabo Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Gerards, Marisa	Plv. DG Politieke Zaken – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Gierveld, Aldrik	Plv. Directeur Directie Multilaterale Instellingen en Mensenrechten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Gooijer, Pieter de	CdP Permanente Vertegenwoordiging bij de EU in Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Gregoire, Lise	Antici - Permanente Vertegenwoordiging bij de EU in Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Groot, Jochem de	Beleidsmedewerker Directie Multilaterale Instellingen en Mensenrechten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Groot, Robert de	DG Europese Samenwerking – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Hartogh, Karel	Directeur Directie Azië en Oceanië – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Heijden, Barend van der	Projectleider Kader Kleine Posten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Heuvel, Maryem van den	Directeur Directie Westelijk Halfmond – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Hornstra, Eimert	PV NAVO Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Jones-Bos, Renée	Secretaris-Generaal – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kaai, Geran	Hoofd V&J Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kingma, Wepke	Plv. PV EU Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kliest, Ted	Inspecteur Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Klompenuwer, Kees	Inspecteur Inspectie en Evaluatie Bedrijfsvoering – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kok, Peter	Nederlandse coördinator EU-topbenoemingen – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kop, Dirk Jan	Projectleider Kleine Posten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kronenburg, Ed	Vml. Secretaris-Generaal – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kuiper, Hanjo de	Voorzitter Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Kwaastniet, Marjanne de	Nederlands Permanent Vertegenwoordiger bij het Politiek en Veiligheidscomité van de EU in Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Meer, Jorn van der	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Naam	Functie/Organisatie*
Majoer, Frank	CdP Nederlandse Permanente Vertegenwoordiging bij de NAVO – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Molen, Erik van der	Lid Abvakabo Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Nijhuis, Ivar	Directeur Directie Communicatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Oosterom, Karel van	DG Politieke Zaken – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Ploumen, Lilianne	Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
Plug, Gilles	Directeur Directie Noord-Afrika en Midden-Oosten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Rebergen, Christiaan	Plv. DG Internationale Samenwerking – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Reynders, Michiel	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Röling, Tanja	Voorzitter FEE vrouwen netwerk BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Rosenthal, Uri	Vml. Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken
Rosing, Jan Reinder	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Roza, Vincent	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Scheepers, Klara	Hoofd SZW PV EU Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Schippers, Marjan	Hoofd Afdeling OS PV EU Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Schouten, Erica	Plv. PV NAVO Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Schuer, Henne	CdP Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Soest, Anne van	Directie Multilaterale Instellingen en Mensenrechten – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Soons, Natascha	Lid FEE vrouwen netwerk BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Steeghs, Renilde	Directeur Internationale Cultuur Eenheid – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Swartbol, Rob	DG Internationale Samenwerking – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Tarqaat, Kenza	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Timmer, Ed	Lid Abvakabo Ondernemingsraad – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Timmermans, Frans	Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken
Toorn, Willemijn van der	Lid FEE vrouwen netwerk BZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Triest, Hermien van	Hoofddirecteur Personeel en Organisatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Velde, Janna van der	PV NAVO Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Versteeg, Jan	Nederlands plv. Permanent Vertegenwoordiger bij de NAVO – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Voorneman, Blanche	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Naam	Functie/Organisatie*
Vos, Reinout	Directeur Bureau Secretaris-Generaal – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Vries, Pieter de	PV NAVO Brussel – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Wel, Frans van der	Inspecteur Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Werner, Jaap	Directeur Directie Europa – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Wiers, Jochem	Hoofd Eenheid Strategische Analyse – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Wissels, Erlijne	Lid VerYBZ – Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Andere Ministeries Rijksoverheid

Naam	Functie/Organisatie
Barnard, Herbert	Directeur Internationale Zaken – Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport
Berg, Marten van den**	Plv. DG Internationale Betrekkingen – Ministerie van Economische Zaken
Blok, Stef	Minister voor Wonen en Rijksdienst – Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties
Bonnet, Dirk Jan	Hoofd Internationale Zaken – Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties
Buiteveld, Anke	Directeur Internationaal Beleid – Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Dekker, Karin	Hoofd Afdeling Mondiale Zaken – Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Donker, Marianne	Directeur Publieke Gezondheid – Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport
Hammersma, Marjan	DG Cultuur en Media – Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Hell, René van**	Directeur Directie Internationaal Ondernemen – Ministerie van Economische Zaken
Jansen, Wim	Plv. Directeur Buitenlandse Financiële Betrekkingen – Ministerie van Financiën
Leijten, Manon	DG Algemene Bestuursdienst – Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties
Meijenfeldt, Hugo von	Plv. DG en Klimaatgezant – Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu
Smits, Simon**	DG Internationale Betrekkingen – Ministerie van Economische Zaken
Terstegen, Jan	Directeur Europees en Internationaal – Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie
Twiss, Jack	Raadsadviseur Kabinet Minister President – Ministerie van Algemene Zaken
Wall Bake, Jan Willem van den	Vervanger van Dhr. Jansen in de CoRIA – Ministerie van Financiën

Vertegenwoordigers Caribische Koninkrijksdelen

Naam	Functie/Organisatie
Candelaria, Robert	Directeur Curaçao – Kabinet van de gevolmachtigde Minister van Curaçao
Geerlings, Perry	Adjunct-Directeur Sint Maarten – Kabinet van de gevolmachtigde Minister van Sint Maarten
John, Shandra	Wvd. Directeur Aruba – Kabinet van de gevolmachtigde Minister van Aruba

Maatschappelijk middenveld

Naam	Functie/Organisatie
Engel, Paul	Directeur European Centre for Development Policy Management
Grotenhuis, René	Chief Executive Officer Cordaid
Gruiters, Jan	Chairman of the Board of Directors van IKV Pax Christi
Ham, Jack van	Vml. Directeur ICCO
Koonstra, Anton	Directeur Price Waterhouse Coopers
Pont, Yannick du	Directeur organisatie Spark
Veldman, Dianda	Directeur Rutgers WPF

Overige functionarissen

Naam	Functie/Organisatie
Achten, Dirk	Secretaris-Generaal Belgisch BZ
Daele, Frans van	Kabinetschef Van Rompuy
Doherty, Kathleen	Deputy Assistant Secretary of State European and Eurasian Affairs
Geerkens, Frank	Ambassadeur van België in Nederland
Grauls, Jan	Belgische PV VN
Gualtieri, Roberto	Lid van Europees Parlement
Hartingh, Thomas Mayer	Oostenrijkse PV EU
Kaag, Sigrid	Assistent Secretaris-Generaal voor UNDP
Kerchove, François de	Kabinetschef Minister Reynders
Korte, Joost	Plv. DG Uitbreiding – Europese Commissie
Middelaar, Luuk van	Kabinet van Rompuy
O'Sullivan, David	Chief Operating Officer – Europese Diplomatieke Dienst
Ross, Alec J.	Senior adviseur voor innovatie van State
Verbiest, Hugo	Kabinet van Secretaris-Generaal Dirk Achten
Wortmann, Corien	Lid van Europees Parlement
Wouters, Dirk	Belgische PV EU

Overige gespreksgenoten

Naam	Functie/Organisatie
Ham, Peter van	Senior onderzoeker – Instituut Clingendael
Hocking, Brian	Auteur rapport “Futures for Diplomacy”
Melissen, Jan	Hoofd Clingendael Research/Auteur rapport “Futures for Diplomacy” – Instituut Clingendael
Okano-Heijmans, Maaike	Senior onderzoeker – Instituut Clingendael
Putten, Frans Paul van der	Senior onderzoeker – Instituut Clingendael
Quaedvlieg, Winand	Secretaris Internationaal Economisch Beleid – VNO NCW
Scholte, Jan Aart	Professor of Politics and International Studies bij Warwick University
Silvis, Lennart	Directeur Netherlands Water Partnership
Slaughter, Anne-Marie	Architect eerste Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
Stienen, Petra	Vml. BZ medewerker
Talbott, Strobe	Vml. Deputy Secretary en president van Brookings
Ton, Ron	Hoofd Clingendael Academy – Instituut Clingendael
Wheelock, Arthur	Directeur National Gallery Washington D.C.
Wientjes, Bernard	Voorzitter VNO NCW
Wilke, Paul	Senior onderzoeker – Instituut Clingendael

* Gesprekspartners zijn vermeld met functie die zij ten tijde van het gesprek bekleedden.

** Gesprekspartners zijn overgegaan naar DG Buitenlandse Economische Betrekkingen van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken.

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4 Trends in diplomacy and mission networks

A survey of eight foreign services

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ) faces a difficult task over the next few years. The Rutte I and Rutte-Asscher coalition agreements laid down cuts at the Ministry of €107 million in total, at least €40 million of which will be directed at the interministerial mission network. BZ has appointed an independent *Advisory Committee on Modernising the Diplomatic Service* to advise foreign minister Frans Timmermans with a view to implementing these cutbacks as efficiently and effectively as possible.

To help the Committee in this task, a number of missions were asked to consult their host countries' foreign ministries about developments at their missions and in their practice of diplomacy. Four European missions (Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and Sweden) and four non-European missions (Australia, Canada, Turkey and South Korea) were consulted. A number of overarching conclusions can be drawn from the responses submitted by the missions; our initial findings are set out below.

It is important to note that there are wide variations between the organisational structure of most foreign services and their mission networks. This makes it difficult to draw comparisons. It is clear, however, that other foreign services are – like the Netherlands – facing difficult decisions.

1. Chronic underfunding vs. substantial investment

The responses revealed that, like the Netherlands, many foreign ministries are being affected by cuts to a lesser or greater degree. This has resulted in reorganisations within ministries, closure of or cutbacks at missions (mainly consulates-general) and reductions in staffing levels. In addition some are embarking on co-location arrangements with other countries, or are exploring this idea. Whatever the ultimate outcome, it is clear that foreign ministries are wrestling with the question of what cuts to make, and how.

Co-location

Four of the eight ministries – Canada, Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom – referred to possible co-locations with partner countries.

- Canada is currently exploring the possibility of co-location with the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Not much progress has been made to date; according to the Canadian foreign ministry the concept of embassies shared by two or three different countries is currently an unrealistic ambition. For the time being, cooperation with other countries is currently focused on shared services.
- Denmark is also looking into co-location. Its foreign ministry is focusing first on co-location with other Nordic countries. Unofficially, the idea is circulating of 'a single Nordic ambassador sharing a mission with representatives (not ambassadors) of the other Nordic countries'.

- In principle, Germany has no preference for European or bilateral cooperation when it comes to its mission network. Co-location is an option for Germany, where practical. One example is the plan and preparations for German-Dutch co-location in Rabat.
- The United Kingdom has mainly focused on clustering missions. For example, the Nordic-Baltic network (of eight missions) is managed by the head of mission in Stockholm, and the Benelux missions by the head of mission in The Hague.

Deployment of local staff

One clear trend, which to some extent can be linked to the wave of cuts, is the use of local staff at the missions. In some cases, local staff account for 50% or more of all employees. This applies to the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Canada and South Korea. The British foreign office employs the most local staff: in 2012/2013, 10,500 of its 15,000 staff were local employees.

Other measures associated with cutbacks

Certain measures specific to foreign ministries were mentioned in addition to the measures referred to above. For example, Denmark's 'flexible representation initiative' enables the foreign ministry to adjust its international presence in line with the changing expectations and wishes of its external partners. The basic principle is that the administration of individual Danish representations will be regionalised (for example, in the Baltic region), resulting in significant cost savings.

Sweden, on the other hand, has opted for Stockholm-based Ambassadors (SBAs). There are currently 10 SBAs, covering 33 countries. They are assisted by a special department/support office in Stockholm. Although this construction is cheaper than maintaining embassies (an SBA costs SEK 2 million a year, compared with SEK 10 to 12 million for an average embassy), Sweden has said that in principle it prefers to have permanent ambassadors in countries of accreditation.

Australia and Canada have also been hit by cuts, but are trying to spare their missions wherever possible. Interestingly, in addition to traditional measures associated with cutbacks, Canada is turning to far-reaching cooperation and regionalisation as a way of accommodating the cuts. It is currently running a pilot project involving two regional service centres (in Washington and London), with the centre in London taking responsibility for human resources in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Initial experiences have so far been positive, and the centre will undergo its first evaluation in the spring. The Canadian foreign ministry also charges other ministries for their use of its missions, meaning they share responsibility for rent, administrative support and facilities services; even printer paper is paid for out of a joint budget.

Substantial investment in mission network/foreign ministry

No cutbacks are being made at the Turkish or South Korean foreign ministries. In fact they (and the German foreign office) have a clear ambition to leave a large 'geographic footprint' in terms of their mission networks. To achieve this, they are investing, for example, in more

staff (Turkey) and in social media, online presence and digitisation (South Korea). South Korea recently opened a 'social networking service/communication channel' to inform the public about foreign policy, provide them with travel advice, etc.

Comparing the two extremes

'In recent years, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has suffered from chronic under-funding. The Australian diplomatic network is the smallest of all the G20 countries.'

vs.

'Turkey operates a wide network with ambitious levels of growth, and it is investing heavily in its missions. The rationale behind this is the wish to leave a clear geographic footprint.'

2. Economic diplomacy: focus on BRICS?

One observable trend among European foreign ministries is the establishment and expansion of missions in strategic areas, i.e. emerging markets (such as the BRICS countries, Next 20 etc.) This new focus is partly being financed at the expense of consulates-general and embassies in Europe. This is the case, for example, with Germany and the United Kingdom.

In recent years, the German foreign office has been reducing the staff complement at embassies in Europe while increasing staffing levels in the BRICS countries, the Next 20 and countries rich in raw materials. Berlin has also stated that it believes in the power of its own network of missions, especially where German economic interests are concerned. The United Kingdom is closing European consulates-general in order to finance the expansion or opening of missions in emerging markets. It is also posting 100 'prosperity officers' to emerging economies.

In Denmark there has even been a shift in the foreign ministry's policy priorities: 'There is less focus on political work; priorities have shifted to promoting trade and employment in Denmark.' Accordingly, expanding political and economic cooperation with Asian partners has been identified as one of the country's five policy priorities for 2013.

Non-European foreign ministries are also focusing on economic diplomacy:

- Turkey aims to be among the top-ten global economies by 2023. Consequently, its foreign presence will largely be determined by trade (this is reflected by the presence of Turkish Chambers of Commerce in various countries).
- South Korean missions are no longer focusing as much on politics, turning their attention instead to economic diplomacy and 'nation branding'. The average embassy

allocates 50% of its time to the economy, 20% to cultural/public diplomacy, 20% to consular work and 10% to politics. The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) – which falls under the Ministry of Knowledge Economy – has offices in many countries, offering Korean businesses a range of services (e.g. matchmaking).

- Despite facing similar levels of cuts to the Netherlands, Canada is not cutting back on consular services or trade promotion/economic diplomacy (e.g. in emerging markets). In fact, since 2006, 15 new trade offices have been opened in emerging markets.
- Even the Australian foreign office – which has limited means at its disposal – is striving to achieve a bigger diplomatic footprint in Asia by opening missions in Chengdu (China) and eastern Indonesia (potentially Surabaya), and by appointing an ambassador to ASEAN (based in Jakarta).

3. The foreign ministry's role within the government

In their responses, four of the eight ministries referred to a shift in their level of influence in some areas. In fact, the Canadian and Turkish foreign ministries are no longer by definition responsible for determining foreign policy in all aspects.

The Danish foreign ministry is unusual in terms of its close cooperation with parliament. These ties are strong, particularly when it comes to the role of Danish diplomats in negotiations both within the EU and further afield, and parliament is consulted often.

In South Korea, the foreign ministry is the recognised coordinator of foreign policy, with line ministries often responsible for the substance of specific policy. However, the foreign ministry's position is reliant in part on the president, who has considerable executive powers.

4. Image problems

Some of the ministries consulted for the survey (Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom) are experiencing the same sort of image problems as the Dutch foreign ministry. They are wrestling with the issue of how to make diplomatic work transparent, and how better to explain what they do. Some services are working to present a more frugal and business-like public image, for example in terms of the buildings chosen as residences and offices.

5. Human resources policy and outreach

It is notable that many ministries (Turkey, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Australia) do not provide any concrete details in their responses regarding training, or other staff development processes. There is also little information on outreach activities.

The South Korean foreign ministry, on the other hand, sets out in meticulous detail its ideas on how to improve human resources policy, investment in training and outreach, and encouraging open competition. By encouraging open competition, the ministry hopes to recruit and retain staff who are able to take advantage of the global changes Korea has observed (including the rise of China and increasing competition for export markets, energy and raw materials). The aim is also to use open competition to make Korean diplomacy

more effective and so strengthen the country's international position. Interestingly, training courses at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) are available not only for new diplomats but also for more senior officials within the government. For example, the KNDA offers a 10-month executive programme for managers at DG level.

6. Internet and digitisation

Most ministries (75%) are active on the internet through social media, or are exploring the options for digitisation. These activities vary from Twitter/Weibo to online discussion forums and a Cyber Business Service. The non-European ministries appear more advanced in this sense than their European counterparts, but one cannot draw such a conclusion with certainty as Denmark and Sweden did not refer to digitisation in their responses.

South Korea has one of the most advanced ministries in terms of digitisation. All South Korean missions use the Cyber Business Service (for supplying Korean businesses with digital information on certain countries), plus the social-communication channel referred to earlier (for providing the public with travel advice and information on foreign policy).

It is worth noting at this point that not every ministry is equally open to the use of social media (for example, because of security concerns). In Australia, a cautious approach is taken to the use of social media by individual ministry officials, and only a limited number of designated ambassadors have been granted permission to Tweet.

In Canada, too, the use of social media is in its infancy, partly because of strict supervision from above. There is little scope for using social media for professional purposes, and many elements need to be agreed in advance. This means there is a tendency to keep information general, as the most interesting details are perceived to be too confidential. The UK has decided that the foreign office will not operate this kind of control, working on the principle that, If you can't trust an ambassador to blog, how can you trust him to deal with the president?

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