

Towards a More Resilient Europe in an Uncertain World

Annual Report 2025



Clingendael

40 years of top knowledge and training

June 2026

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About the Clingendael Institute

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a leading think tank and academy on international affairs. Through our analyses, training and public platform activities we aim to inspire and equip governments, businesses, and civil society to contribute to a secure, sustainable and just world.

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**A Message
from Our
Executive
Board**

‘The law of the strongest prevails in the world, and the Netherlands is not ready for it.’ This is the title of Clingendael’s latest population survey *Between Hope and Fear*, for which fieldwork was conducted in December 2025. Every year, this representative survey asks Dutch respondents which international developments they consider both threatening and likely, and which they consider both hopeful and likely. When comparing the threat hierarchies of 2026 and 2025, primarily concerns regarding the international legal order and failing international cooperation have risen in the rankings. Respondents also expressed fear that the Netherlands is insufficiently resilient in the event of a crisis or war.

Against this backdrop, Clingendael remained firmly committed to its mission: contributing to a safe, sustainable and just world through research, training programmes and stimulating public debate on international relations. In the year 2025, in which the Global Peace Index recorded the highest number of violent state conflicts since the Second World War, we continued to direct strategic attention to diplomatic options, mediation and peace initiatives, and focused beyond the daily grind on training and research in service of long-term solutions to international issues.

In 2025, we saw a strong increase in demand for Clingendael’s knowledge products. To meet this demand, we adopted a strategy of controlled growth. This included the appointment of a dozen new programme leads within our Research department, leading specialised experts on themes including resilience, security and defence, critical raw materials, the geopolitics of high-tech and digitalisation, and the geopolitics of trade; for the regions of the US, China, Russia and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Sahel, West Africa, and the Horn; and methods in the field of surveys and foresight. Within the Academy, a similar decentralisation process was already underway, and demand for training grew substantially, particularly in the security programme and open enrolment courses.

The growing demand comes not only from our traditional partners – the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence – but also from other ministries, local governments, branches of the armed forces, the police, and the Dutch National Cyber Security Centre; from the business community, European organisations, humanitarian actors; and from individual professionals who wish to work on their own resilience. This requires a strategic focus on stakeholder management, business development with a thorough understanding of the needs of these new partners, entrepreneurship, product development, and capacity building at Clingendael.

To meet this new demand, Clingendael's Academy and Research departments increasingly work together, combining thematic and regional expertise with practice-oriented training methods, and translating analytical knowledge into concrete skills for professionals. The broadening of our client base also enables us to mitigate the impact of budget cuts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which partly affects our relationship with them.

Finally, we see an important societal role for Clingendael in strengthening and broadening the public debate on international relations in the Netherlands and Europe. Alongside our media appearances and lectures in 2025, we invested, among others, in public discussions in the region on the basis of the Clingendael Foreign Affairs Barometer surveys with senior officials from ministries and Clingendael experts; in broadening the circle of stakeholders in fora surrounding the NATO summit in June in The Hague; and in contributing to a programming with strong participation from the Global South at the European Commission's Global Gateway Forum 2025 in Brussels.

The Clingendael team sincerely thanks all our friends and colleagues, partners and stakeholders and feels strengthened by the inspiring collaboration in facing the major international challenges with which 2026 has begun.



Monika Sie Dhan Ho
General Director



Peter Haasbroek
Business Director



**A Message
from Our
Supervisory
Board**

2025 was once again a worryingly turbulent year in international relations, with ongoing bloody wars on and near the European continent and the erosion of the international legal order. Rising power politics and strategic competition, rapid technological changes combined with a concentration of power in the hands of a small number of big tech companies, and the return of President Trump to the White House and the subsequent shocks to the transatlantic relationship necessitate deepening European cooperation and strengthening international partnerships.

International turbulence is at the core of Clingendael's mission, and we have seen this reflected in the rising demand for its knowledge products. As a non-profit foundation, Clingendael has supported the general public, civil society, and a growing number of governments, businesses, and international partnerships in navigating an increasingly complex and uncertain world. In doing so, the teams strive for a keen understanding of the needs of diverse clients. The Academy team saw a significant increase in demand for training programmes. The context of escalating conflicts, shifting alliances, and the rise of AI translated into a need for strategic insight and practical skills that the Academy can offer for contemporary diplomacy. Global turbulence also led to a rising demand for both in-depth studies and rapid crisis analysis by the Research team. The researchers continued to meet this demand in 2025 with a combination of thematic, regional, and methodological expertise, thorough interdisciplinary analysis, and strong partnerships with local investigators. In 2025, Clingendael also demonstrated its key role as an independent, international convening power, including through the programming of a Thought Leaders Dinner on the key threats to Europe on the eve of the NATO summit in The Hague in June, and the programming of a high-level panel on the war in Ukraine during the Public Forum surrounding that same summit.

In 2025, we welcomed Martijn Pluim as Head of the Academy, succeeding Ron Ton after 34 years at Clingendael. The Supervisory Board thanks Ron Ton for his passionate leadership of the Academy; thousands of diplomats have been shaped by him and his team. Also in 2025, the procedure was initiated for the succession of Monika Sie Dhian Ho as General Director, following the conclusion of her second term on the board. Under her leadership, Clingendael has developed over the past ten years into an independent foundation that has grown and flourished in the international market for knowledge products. At the time of the publication of this annual report, the application process has been

completed, and it has been announced that she will transfer this valuable asset to Bob Deen, currently Head of the Security Unit at Research, effective 1 July 2026. The Supervisory Board is considering a future sustainable strengthening of the board, in light of the increased scale, complexity, and scope of Clingendael's activities.

The Supervisory Board thanks all relations and stakeholders, as well as the members of the Clingendael team, who together made the above work possible in 2025 and strengthened the foundations for relevance in 2026 and beyond.



Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
Chairman of the Supervisory Board

Executive and Supervisory Board



BOARD

Executive Board



Monika Sie Dhian Ho
General director



Peter Haasbroek
Business director

Supervisory Board



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former Director General NATO
International Military Staff



Inge Bryan
Independent security advisor,
supervisor



Ben Knapen
Former Minister of Foreign
Affairs



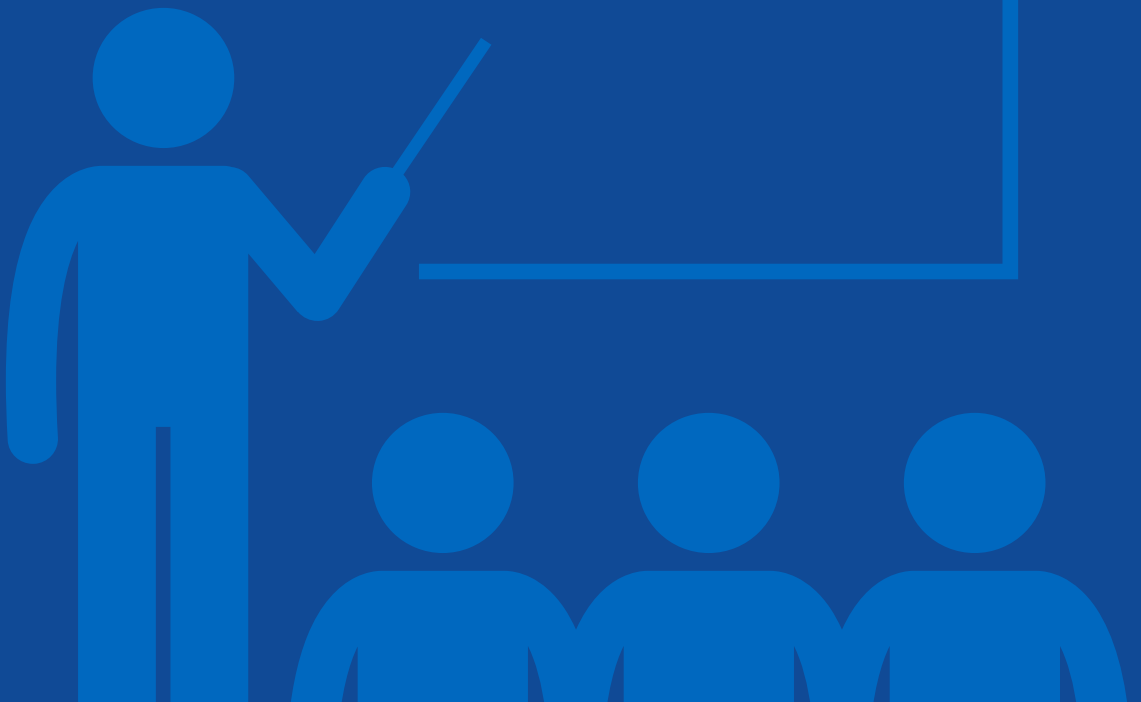
About Clingendael



The Clingendael Institute is located in the partially 17th century country manor house 'Huys Clingendael', which is surrounded by the Park Clingendael.

The Netherlands Institute of International Affairs 'Clingendael' is an independent think tank and academy for international relations. We contribute to a secure, sustainable, and just world through our research, training programmes, and by stimulating the public debate. We work with partners across public and private sectors, including policymakers, business executives, the Dutch armed forces, law enforcement agencies, diplomats, politicians and NGOs. Clingendael offers over forty years of top knowledge and training. The Clingendael Institute is an independent foundation, unaffiliated to any political, activist, commercial, or religious movement.

Clingendael Academy



FACTS & FIGURES

ACADEMY

3500+
participants



from
120
countries

40+ trainers



250+
Training activities

65

Diplomacy

74

Security and
capacity building

80

EU & Open
enrolment

18

Peace negotiation
and mediation

20

Humanitarian
negotiation

Introduction

In 2025, the Clingendael Academy strengthened its role as a leading provider of training on international affairs, diplomacy and security in a world marked by geopolitical tensions, war on Europe's borders and rapid technological change. Throughout the year, more than 40 internal trainers and close to 100 external experts delivered some 250 trainings for approximately 3,500 participants from 120 countries. Alongside diplomats, we trained EU and NATO officials, humanitarian practitioners, peace mediators, security professionals, and, increasingly, private-sector partners navigating a more unpredictable international landscape that requires an advanced skills set to operate within.

The Clingendael Academy is organised into five programmes – diplomacy; international security and capacity building; EU and open enrolment; humanitarian negotiation; and peace negotiations and mediation – that work closely together to ensure relevance and high quality while maintaining flexible to respond swiftly to changing demands.

Our approach remains practical and anchored in real work processes. Multi-week residential courses in the Netherlands were complemented by online courses and in-country trainings across more than 30 countries. Participants engaged in realistic negotiation and mediation simulations modelled on recent multilateral events, crisis management exercises based on hybrid threat scenarios, and strategic foresight workshops designed to anticipate long-term geopolitical shifts. Humanitarian practitioners strengthened their capacity to negotiate access and protection in politically volatile environments, and we supported national officials preparing for work with and in Brussels.

Several multi-year partnerships were renewed in 2025, ensuring continuity in a changing Dutch and European political context. Long-standing cooperation with national and international partners enabled us to continue longer-term institution-building projects with diplomatic academies, next to our regular training programmes. In this way, we could ensure that skills training translates into lasting organisational impact.

2025 also marked a leadership transition at the Academy. Martijn Pluim succeeded Ron Ton as Academy director, after 34 years at Clingendael. Ron Ton remains involved as a trainer and founding director of the Academy.

Looking ahead, we will further deepen cooperation with Dutch partners, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, the Dutch National Police, universities and think tanks, while continuing to engage internationally with diplomatic academies, international and humanitarian organisations, and (I)NGOs. We will also develop bespoke programmes to meet growing private sector interest. At the same time, we will expand our work on urgent topics such as international law and the impact of artificial intelligence on diplomacy, while investing further in training on security, resilience and strategic foresight, and broadening our work on conflict mediation and negotiation skills.

In this era of uncertainty and shifting alliances, the need for professionals who can negotiate under pressure, communicate strategically, and build resilient partnerships remains both clear and urgent.

Diplomacy

Empowering diplomats worldwide

The Clingendael Academy is one of the world's largest independent diplomatic academies, bringing together diplomats from across the globe. At times, they joined us on our campus; other times, our Academy experts met them where they work. We design bespoke training experiences that boost practical skills and expand knowledge of international affairs. Whether participants are just starting out or already operating at the highest level, we help diplomats grow with confidence.

In 2025, the Academy delivered a record number of 65 unique diplomatic training programmes, reaching nearly 900 participants, including over 800 diplomats. Many of them found their way to us through Clingendael's longstanding cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributing to stronger bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the more than 120 countries represented in our courses in 2025.

Through our regional programmes, we continued to bring diplomats from five continents together, strengthening regional cooperation and dialogue. Our flagship programmes combined skills and content tailored to participants' work environments, supporting both their professional

and personal development and enhancing their effectiveness. In our stand-alone programmes, we paired proven skills training with specialised thematic courses, such as climate and sustainability diplomacy, maritime security, and cyber and AI diplomacy.

[Clingendael Academy welcomed Indonesian junior diplomats for a four-week training programme.](#)



In all our 2025 training programmes, participants further developed the skills required in modern diplomacy: using AI safely and effectively, turning data into insights, and communicating with strategic impact. We supported them in staying ahead in areas like international law, regional cooperation, and economic diplomacy – fields which have been increasingly impacted by geopolitics and changing demands from capitals alike. In 2026, we will build on these topics.

Reinventing our programmes abroad and at home

Throughout 2025, we renewed and expanded our training activities

abroad. New initiatives included an Economic Diplomacy Course in [Albania](#) for women diplomats and negotiations trainings in, among others, Czechia, [Egypt](#), and Suriname. In India, we supported over fifty Indian entry-level diplomats with a training on the Law of the Sea. In Argentina and Chile, marking two centuries of bilateral relations with the Netherlands, we delivered hands-on negotiation workshops for diplomats and Trainings of Trainers for diplomatic academies. At the International Forum for Diplomatic Training in Peru, we explored curriculum design with training directors from all over the world.

“This was an excellent course. It greatly enhanced my skills and knowledge on climate diplomacy, and I would gladly recommend this course to other professionals, especially those from Small Island Developing States.”

– Participant from the third edition of our Climate Diplomacy training for mid-career diplomats from Small Island Developing States and other coastal nations in Central America and the Caribbean.

Alongside these new programmes, we continued bilateral cooperation with partners such as the WTO, Vietnam, and [Thailand](#), focusing on trade, maritime security, and cyber diplomacy, respectively. These three partnerships will continue in 2026, alongside the development of new bilateral cooperations.

Within the Netherlands, we further innovated our diplomatic training,

including renewed regional focus programmes for Ukraine and Moldova, and for [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#) and [Georgia](#). We also continued our well-established trainings for the [diplomatic corps](#) in The Hague, focusing on negotiations and the city as legal capital of the world. In 2026, we will expand these trainings, aiming to engage over fifty embassies in The Hague.



We delivered two successful [diplomatic training programmes](#) in Cairo, led by Ron Ton, Founding Director of the Clingendael Academy. During his visit, an important milestone was reached with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Clingendael Academy and the Institute of Diplomatic Studies (IDS) of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

International Security and Capacity Building

Keeping pace with a more uncertain and insecure world

In a year marked by geopolitical tensions, ongoing conflicts and growing security risks, the demand for security (sector) training grew significantly. New threats facing the Netherlands included intensified hybrid warfare by Russia and China through cyberattacks, sabotage and influence operations, deeper entanglement between state actors and organised crime, and rising technological vulnerabilities affecting defence, vital infrastructure and knowledge

institutions. In response, we expanded our International Security and Capacity Building programme, both in scale and scope, reaching a broader and more diverse group of clients.

To keep pace with the rapidly evolving international security environment, we further invested in serious gaming, with a focus on crisis management, NATO decision-making, and cyber attribution and response. We also continued to offer specialised programmes on [Cyber and AI](#) as well as Economic Security, both tailor-made



“What I really enjoyed during the training was learning how to deal with the aftermath of a cyberattack in practice”

Folkwin, a programme coordinator at NCC-NL, attended the Cybersecurity and Cyber Governance Course at the Clingendael Academy.



Upon the ESDC's invitation, we contributed to the Annual Training and Education Conference 2025 at the Royal Egmont Palace in Brussels, by facilitating a workshop on the evaluation of training in Common Security and Defence Policy.



and in open enrolment. Across both full courses and short workshops, we equipped participants to better understand the threat landscape, key risks and security challenges, national resilience, and international governance.

Because of the continued growth of the programme and the complexity of covering its many underlying themes, we expanded our team. Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, we will further develop our trainings on [pre-deployment](#), conflict analysis, and conflict sensitivity, both for Dutch partners as well as European networks, and potentially the corporate sector.

Enhancing national security and resilience

Throughout 2025, our trainings enhanced the response capacity of professionals working on national security and resilience for a wide range of Dutch security sector clients. Our specialised interventions

addressed issues including economic security, countering hybrid threats, disinformation campaigns, and foreign influence and manipulation. We also laid the groundwork for leading a multinational Executive Resilience Course for NATO, now acquired for 2026-2027.

Equipping NATO and EU professionals

In 2025, we launched a new skills programme for professionals at SHAPE (NATO's strategic headquarters), followed by additional contracts in 2026. These trainings – focused on international negotiations, effective influencing, and intercultural communication – helped professionals bridge gaps between civilian and military cultures, as well as between the 32 Allies and many partner countries.

Clingendael also joined the new European Training Initiative (EUTI), the re-established EU network for in-mission training, and [was admitted](#)

to the European Security and Defence College after formal application. By the end of the year, we had established ourselves as an active member by co-organising, together with the Netherlands Institute for Defence Education, a week-long module of the High-Level Course, bringing together over seventy senior security professionals from many backgrounds and EU member states.

Building capacity through effective training

Our longer-running, multi-year capacity building programmes – which were revitalised in 2024 – continued in 2025. These efforts focused on security sector training contributing

to Euro-Atlantic integration and human rights treaty implementation, respectively, under NATO's Defence Capacity Building fund, as well as for the police of Vietnam. In Vietnam, trainers from the central government delivered their own curriculum, focusing on the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) in regional-level trainings. This marked a move beyond the pilot phase and towards full Vietnamese ownership of these training obligations.

Furthermore, we supported the training capacity of the Dutch National Cyber Security Centre, strengthening its engagement with international partners.



We intensified our support for Vietnam's commitment to human rights by facilitating four regional training courses led by Vietnamese expert trainers on the UN Convention Against Torture.

European Affairs and Open Enrolment

Strengthening Europe's diplomatic and negotiation capacity

In 2025, our EU and skills programmes strengthened the capacity of policy-makers, diplomats and internationally operating professionals to navigate European decision making, conduct international negotiations and advance international partnerships in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Across our programmes, we trained more than 1,200 professionals from national governments, EU institutions, international organisations and the private sector.

A core component of this work remained our long-standing EU training portfolio. In 2025, fourteen editions of the four-day Insights into Europe course were delivered for Dutch civil servants, equipping policymakers with the knowledge and practical tools required to navigate EU decision-making processes and represent national interests effectively in Brussels. [Two editions](#) were organised specifically for members of the Dutch Senior Civil Service, reflecting the continued importance of strategic EU expertise at senior levels of government.

Beyond the Dutch government, the Academy contributed to strengthening diplomatic cooperation across the European policy system. In Brussels, we delivered the negotiation component of the European Diplomatic Programme,



The Danish Ambassador to the Netherlands, H.E. Ulf Melgaard, visited Clingendael as the closing speaker of 2025's [final edition](#) of the Insight into Europe training.

training diplomats from EU member states and institutions to navigate EU negotiation dynamics. We also trained Members of the European Parliament and their staff and launched a new programme for the Flemish Diplomatic Academy. Together, these programmes support professionals working at the interface between national governments and EU institutions and contribute to more effective European cooperation.

Supporting policy processes in a changing geopolitical context

A notable example of the Academy's impact in 2025 was the delivery of [EU accession training for Ukrainian civil servants in Kyiv](#). The programme focused on the negotiation and implementation challenges related to the EU's internal market acquis and supported officials directly involved in Ukraine's EU accession process. Delivered at a time when discussions on Ukraine's future integration into

the European Union have intensified, the programme contributed to strengthening the capacity of Ukrainian policymakers to engage in complex EU negotiations.

The training also illustrates the growing collaboration between Clingendael's Academy and Research departments, combining policy expertise with practice-oriented training methods to translate analytical knowledge into concrete skills for policymakers.

Training practical negotiation and influence skills

Alongside our EU-focused programmes, we further expanded our portfolio of

practice-oriented skills training. The open enrolment portfolio grew in 2025 with three editions of the Advocacy and Effective Influencing course and two fully booked editions of the Course International Negotiations, alongside additional courses on intercultural communication, international politics, and EU interest representation.

More than twenty tailor-made programmes were delivered for partners including the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Public Prosecution Service (OM), the Dutch Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. These programmes



“We covered legal alignment across all chapters of Cluster 2, including competition law, consumer protection and the freedoms of movement of labour, capital and services. A panel discussion and negotiation simulation aided us in grasping the toughest political and technical aspects of EU integration.”

Max Eleveld, Head of the Academy's Diplomacy Programme, on the second edition of our training for Ukrainian civil servants on the EU accession process.

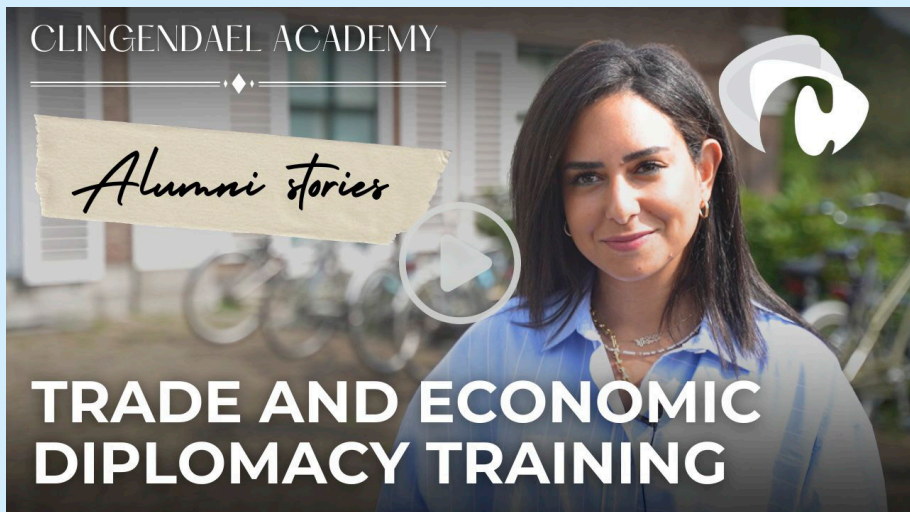
focus on developing practical skills through experiential learning, combining simulations, negotiation exercises, and structured debriefings that help participants translate theory into more effective professional behaviour in international cooperation and negotiations.

Advancing economic diplomacy and international partnerships

The Academy also continued its collaboration with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) through programmes focused on trade and economic diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa region. These programmes support policymakers

and diplomats working on economic cooperation, energy transition and emerging hydrogen partnerships, strengthening their ability to engage in complex international negotiations and partnerships.

Working with more than forty partners and delivering an extensive programme portfolio, the continued expansion of our activities contributes to Clingendael's broader diversification strategy, while responding to the growing demand for practical diplomatic and negotiation skills in a rapidly evolving international environment.



“Clingendael Academy helped me to attract more foreign investment”

Amira, who works for Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Investment and Trade, attended the Shiraka training programme for professionals in the Middle East and North Africa on trade and economic diplomacy. The sessions at Clingendael gave her the tools to promote investment.

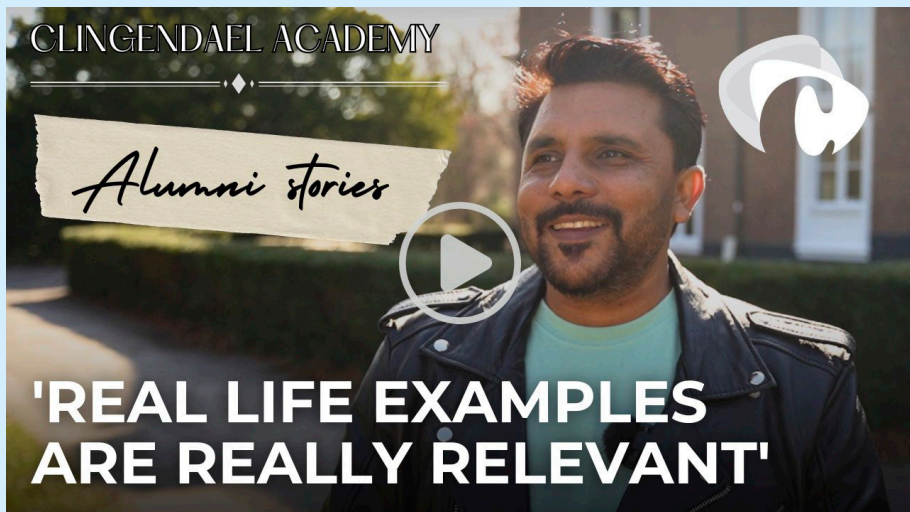
Humanitarian Negotiation

Strengthening humanitarian negotiation capacity

Through our courses, humanitarians from over forty contexts such as Gaza, Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and [Somalia](#) strengthened their strategic approach to negotiations. Agreements on humanitarian access and operations as well as the safety of civilians and aid workers are of vital importance in these settings. By working with humanitarian professionals ranging from local NGOs to the United Nations as well as with diplomats who work on humanitarian

dossiers, we support the sector in choosing their approach to these complex and sensitive environments.

Our Training of Trainers further extended this impact by equipping humanitarian professionals to train colleagues in their own contexts and languages. We helped develop training materials, coached the trainers in their training set-up and created a community of practice. Through an online platform, we stay in touch with this network of local and international trainers, who in turn reach hundreds of practitioners each year.



“One aspect of the training that I consider most relevant to my work were the real-life examples and scenarios”

Aftab is a programme officer for the German disaster relief organisation Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and improved his humanitarian negotiation skills at the Clingendael Academy.

In 2026, we will launch local leadership masterclasses to support our alumni leading humanitarian organisations in some of the most challenging contexts. This contributes to the empowerment of local response approaches whilst equipping them with the international skills needed to engage effectively with the international community involved in humanitarian action.

Advancing the importance of humanitarian diplomacy

Humanitarian diplomacy has become an umbrella term under which all

stakeholders in humanitarian action can discuss, plan and develop their approaches to ensure that assistance can be delivered in conflict zones. These diplomatic efforts focus on securing humanitarian access, protecting civilians, and maintaining the humanitarian space needed for aid operations in situations of active conflict. Recent crises such as in Gaza and Sudan have shown the consequences when access is restricted and humanitarian space is not protected.



“As global politics shifts and crises become more complex, the space where humanitarian action and diplomacy meet is rapidly expanding”

– Academy Fellow Elvine Miala on how Clingendael’s humanitarian diplomacy programme equips professionals to bridge both worlds.

Through a [series of courses](#), we brought together diplomatic officials and humanitarian professionals to better understand each other’s ways of working, identify common ground, and navigate necessary differences. These [programmes](#) – which generated overwhelming interest in 2025 – strengthened knowledge,

competences, and networks, and fostered mutual understanding. Following entry-level courses, alumni were invited to attend a joint programme in which they reflected together on thematic dossiers such as ethical dilemmas around humanitarian principles, and on supporting locally embedded responses.

In addition to these courses, we supported other networks such as Palestinian civil society organisations and the Dutch-based Sudan Platform in their strategic discussions, [contributing](#) to humanitarian diplomacy in practice.

Convening the humanitarian sector to discuss challenges and look ahead

Together with The Hague Humanitarian Studies Centre and KUNO, we hosted our [annual conference](#) for the Dutch-based humanitarian sector, providing the sector an opportunity to reflect on the impact of geopolitical developments and future challenges. We plan to host the next one in 2026, focusing on the challenges to the rules-based order and the

implications for safe humanitarian action. Alongside our own conference, we were represented at other large conferences such as the European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels and [Aid Ex](#) in Geneva.

We also conducted an extensive training needs analysis with representatives from the humanitarian, peace, and development sectors to map out how we can bring together policymakers and practitioners who work in what is known as the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, which refers to the importance of identifying and managing the overlap of these sectors through local or international programming in conflict settings. This [course](#) will be launched in 2026.



Our annual conference ‘The Changing World Order and its Impact on Humanitarian Action’ brought together a diverse group of key figures from across the Dutch humanitarian sector – including local and international NGOs, The Dutch Relief Alliance, UN agencies, policymakers and academics – for an in-depth exploration of how humanitarian action can remain effective, principled, and relevant amid shifting geopolitical dynamics.

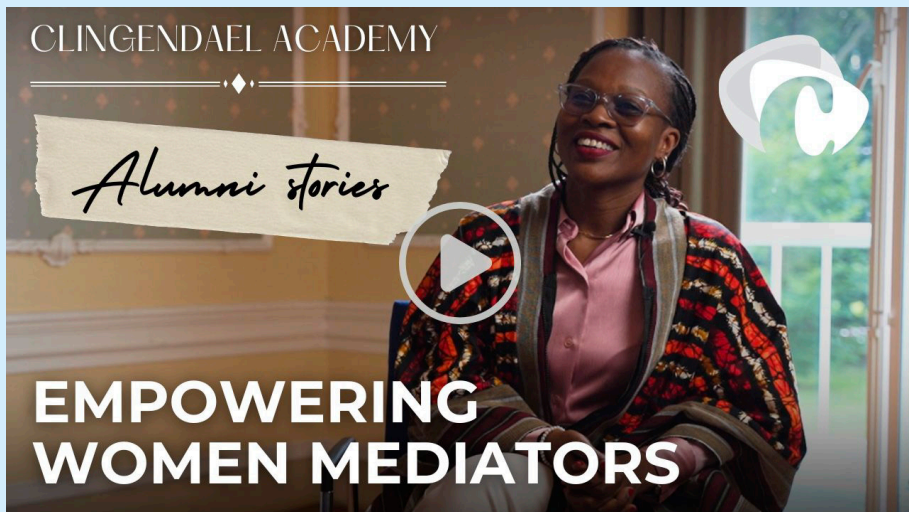
Peace Negotiations and Mediation

Responding to a growing landscape of violent state-based conflict

The year 2025 saw the highest number of violent state-based conflict since the Second World War. Peace negotiations and mediation are ways to resolve conflicts without violence. While peace negotiations involve direct talks between opposing sides to reach an agreement, such as a ceasefire or a political settlement like power-sharing, mediation involves a neutral third party that does not take side or make decisions but supports dialogue and helps keep talks on track. Clingendael trains both negotiators

and mediators who contribute to peace processes worldwide.

Throughout the year, we worked with conflict parties, mediators, mediation support professionals, trainers, and partner organisations around the world to strengthen the effectiveness of peace negotiations and mediation processes. Through skills-based training, we helped participants in building the capacities needed to engage constructively in peace processes. In addition, our Training of Trainers programmes enabled participants to transfer knowledge and skills within their own



“The training has provided an incredible space and platform to reflect on how we can strategise and position ourselves for tomorrow”

Nina is a member of FemWise-Africa and has enhanced her mediation and peace negotiation skills together with female peers at the Clingendael Academy.

organisations and networks, amplifying the reach and impact of both their activities and our programmes.

Delivering impact in peace negotiations

Over the year, we delivered training to conflict parties at the negotiation table, (insider) mediators, and mediation support professionals on the skills required for effective negotiation and mediation. This included programmes with (insider) mediator networks in Somalia and Syria, mediators from the [Economic Community of West African States](#) and the African Union, and mediation (support) organisations and institutions across the globe, such as [The Gambia's Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat](#). We also hosted our sixth global [Training of Trainers programme](#) for insider mediators.

More than 80 per cent of participants reported increased knowledge, skills and confidence in negotiation processes. Partner organisations observed that, in all cases, the gained knowledge and skills contributed to improvements in negotiation and mediation efforts.

Participants also reported leading or supporting a wide range of peace-making and dialogue initiatives. Many facilitated community dialogues, including intergenerational dialogue processes, while others contributed directly or indirectly to negotiations, mediation efforts, or informal talks. Examples of such engagements (some anonymised for confidentiality reasons) included:

- drafting a conflict resolution initiative between two neighbouring countries for presentation to the COMESA Committee of Elders;



For the first time, the Clingendael Peace Negotiations Programme delivered a specialised training in Banjul, Gambia, on Alternative Dispute Resolution for staff of The Gambia's ADR Secretariat (ADRS) in cooperation with the EU-UNDP GREAT Project.

- talks between armed groups and the government in Ethiopia;
- dialogue facilitation between police and demonstrators following large-scale protests in Tunisia related to migrant protection at sea;
- mediation support to the Luanda peace process;
- mediation between communities aimed at ending communal violence in South Sudan; and
- negotiations between the central state authorities and a secessionist region in Europe.

Providing advisory and convening support

Beyond training, we continued to provide advisory, research and convening support to advance peace efforts. In April 2025, for example,

we convened a roundtable on the Netherlands' role in peacemaking processes, bringing together policy-makers, practitioners and experts to explore how Dutch diplomatic, mediation and peace support efforts could become more coordinated and mutually reinforcing.

Adapting to a shifting geopolitical context

Growing geopolitical polarisation and a weakening multilateral peacemaking architecture are placing increasing pressure on international norms, leadership and consensus-building. In this context, organisations supporting peace processes must operate in adaptive, politically informed ways, while remaining attentive to issues of legitimacy and credibility.

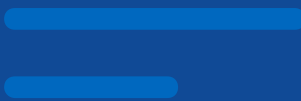
“The focus on the mental health dimensions of mediation is extremely valuable given the evolving demands of peacebuilding work”

– Participants expressed strong appreciation for the inclusion of mental health and psychosocial support in our peace negotiations programmes in 2025.

In response to these challenges, we are expanding our training portfolio to strengthen participants' strategic capabilities such as scenario planning, risk mitigation, and digital literacy, while also introducing thematic specialisations such as [mental health](#) and [psychosocial support](#) and water

conflict mediation. At the same time, we continue to develop our advisory and capacity-building services to remain responsive to practitioners' needs and sustain our role as a trusted partner within the global peace and mediation community.

Clingendael Research



FACTS & FIGURES

RESEARCH



140+
Publications



4
Briefings to committees of
the Dutch house of representatives



135.000+

Website pageviews publications



70+

Researchers



950+

Media appearances

Introduction

In 2025, the turbulence on the global stage led to a significant increase in demand for Clingendael’s research, both for in-depth studies and shorter-term analysis and advice. Within Clingendael – one of Europe’s leading think tanks – the research team has met this need by combining thematic, regional, and methodological expertise with thorough, interdisciplinary analysis, strong partnerships, and a sharp understanding of clients’ needs.

Due to the pervasive uncertainty and the proliferation of risks and threats, our work on security, strategic foresight and resilience was in particularly high demand. We were also entrusted with updating the Conflict Sensitivity Guidelines of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sharpening its operational focus and embedding a stronger emphasis on political economy analysis to support more informed engagement abroad. New researchers further enriched Clingendael’s capacity to respond to increasing demand in areas such as cyber security, strategic stability, scenario building, and Gulf and US politics.

Clingendael also strengthened its work for the private sector by expanding geopolitical risks analysis and briefings. We developed a new course for the Executive MBA at Rotterdam School of Management and organised many boardroom sessions. Commissioned by the Foundation of Management Studies (VNO-NCW) and in cooperation with trusted partner PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a book was published on geopolitics to help companies navigate turbulent times with an unpredictable US administration, a new trade war, and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Multi-annual research frameworks have continued to provide the stability and independence that underpin Clingendael’s core policy research. These include PROGRESS (jointly financed by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence), the Legitimate Stability Research Programme, the China Knowledge Network, the Russia and Eastern Europe Knowledge Alliance, Horizon Europe projects, as well as contributions to Leiden University’s Advanced MSc programme in International Relations and Diplomacy. This longer-term funding has been complemented by a range of commissioned research projects as well as smaller assignments and speaking engagements across the private, philanthropic and public sectors.

Within the Institute, we strengthened our organisation and quality assurance by appointing a new tier of programme leads. These senior researchers coordinate programmatic work streams, embedding leadership and responsibilities more firmly at the programme level. The programmes are organised under Clingendael's three main units (EU & Global Affairs Unit, Security Unit and Conflict Research Unit), with active coordination between them.

Finally, we continued to explore new ways of sharing our knowledge. We made greater use of visualisations, interactive formats such as serious games, and shorter publications to reach a wider, time-constrained audience. In 2025, we also stepped up our work on how to use generative AI, setting up a working group to investigate how it can enhance our research, productivity, and presentation. This will remain an important focus in 2026, including by engaging our main partners in discussions on the ethical and effective use of AI for research purposes.

Security and Defence

Amid heightened geopolitical turbulence in 2025, our Security and Defence team focused on analysing evolving security challenges and their implications for Europe. Against this backdrop, military capabilities formed a central focus, particularly with regard to strengthening resilience within NATO and addressing emerging threats and grey-zone tactics.

Our study on [countering hybrid warfare](#) highlighted the growing use of disinformation, cyber operations, and covert influence by state actors. Exemplary was the Russian drone incursion into Poland, on which we provided [timely insights](#) to inform public debate and policy responses. In parallel, our research on [the Arctic](#) underlined how climate change is



We were pleased to welcome EU Commissioner for Defence and Space Andrius Kubilius and the Netherlands Chief of Defence Onno Eichelsheim as keynote speakers at the [Reimagining European Defence](#) conference in The Hague, which brought together more than 250 participants and 300 [online viewers](#) to discuss Europe's evolving security landscape. The conference was co-organised with the Representation of the European Commission in the Netherlands.

reshaping strategic competition, creating new maritime possibilities and increasing the geopolitical importance of the region for both NATO and potential adversaries. Furthermore, contributions to debates on [the future of European defence](#) stressed the urgency of deeper cooperation and accelerated capability development within the European Union.

Together, these insights supported policymakers in navigating a rapidly

shifting security environment and reinforcing the need for stronger collective defence and strategic resilience. Our aim is to timely respond to unfolding crises and incidents, not only to public partners but also [private organisations](#), by facilitating scenario exercises and studies. As such, the Security and Defence team focuses on bridging the gap between deep strategic insights and unfolding situations in times of geopolitical turbulence and uncertainty.



Bart van den Berg, Programme Lead Security and Defence, on [NPO Radio 1](#) about how NATO should respond to Russian drone activity and airspace violations in Europe.

Foresight and Intelligence

We started 2025 by publishing the [Strategic Monitor 2025-2030](#), titled *Resetting the World Stage*. This report provided a key analytical framework for understanding the shifting geopolitical landscape and formed the basis for numerous presentations and keynote lectures, helping to inform debates on the implications for Europe and the Netherlands.

Throughout the year, new foresight research further focused on the

role of middle powers in shaping geopolitics. This resulted in January 2026 in the publication of Clingendael's [Geostrategic Perspective 2026-2040](#), which presents eight scenarios outlining possible futures the Netherlands may face. Both publications underscore the importance of future-proof thinking by presenting plausible yet challenging scenarios that broaden perspectives and inform long-term policy planning.



Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs David van Weel receives the '[Geostrategic Perspective 2026-2040](#)' from Clingendael Director Monika Sie Dhian Ho and report author and Programme Lead Foresight and Intelligence Koen Aartsma. © Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Additionally, our foresight alerts – such as the analysis of the [uncertain transatlantic relationship](#) – provided timely insights into emerging developments, enabling stakeholders to anticipate and respond to geopolitical shifts. At the same time, we expanded our activities in the field of serious gaming, working with a growing range of clients – including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as security services such as the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) – to support decision-makers

in exploring plausible tomorrows, thereby improving its strategic readiness.

The Foresight and Intelligence team also strengthened Clingendael's role within the National Network of Safety and Security Analysts, contributing to the geopolitical and international foresight and impact components of the National Risk Assessment, which will be published mid-2026. This assessment will serve as core input for the development of the new Security Strategy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



Koen Aartsma, Programme Lead Foresight and Intelligence, speaking at the 'Netwerkdag Samen Weerbaar', organised by the AIVD, NCTV and NCSC at the Louwman Museum on 17 November 2025.

Resilience

Heightened geopolitical turbulence continues to underscore the need for a more resilient Dutch society. In 2025, this urgency was widely recognised across the Netherlands, from local governments and ministries to executive agencies and security services – such as the police and the NCTV – and the private sector. Clingendael contributed visibly to both

the understanding and practice of broader societal resilience.

Our research played an important role in this effort. The yearly [Between Hope and Fear](#) population survey gave a first glimpse into how international trends unite and divide the Dutch population in a post-Trump election world. In addition, we analysed the prevalence



“Your concerns about the state of the world are exactly about the threats we at the ministry are confronted with day in, day out, and that we are working hard on. The better we understand how you view these issues, the better policy we can make.”


Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Christiaan Rebergen at the well-attended event ‘Nederland in de Wereld: in gesprek over dreiging en hoop’ at the public library in Breda, where he and Clingendael experts discussed wars, geopolitical tensions and global shifts with the audience. Clingendael Director Monika Sie Dhian Ho opened the evening by sharing insights from Clingendael’s [Foreign Affairs Barometer of 2025](#). © Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of [anti-Western narratives on X](#), using an in-house AI model to examine more than 600,000 messages. We also contributed significantly to a [company survey](#) on economic security, led by Clingendael's Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation programme.

Furthermore, we invested in scenario-building and resilience training. In 2025, we worked closely with the Ministry of Interior to develop three resilience-themed scenarios, including impact assessments, for both the ministry and local governments, and delivered a series of scenario and resilience workshops for eight directories. And building on the successful [Nederlandse Weerbaarheid](#)

[Top 2025](#) (Mauritssymposium), we strengthened our cooperation with [Rabobank](#). Together with the Security and Defence and Clingendael Russia and Eastern Europe Centre teams, we worked with Rabobank on geopolitical scenario-building and resilience.

Finally, we contributed to thought leadership and knowledge dissemination. In early 2025, we published an often cited [essay](#) in [Staat van het Bestuur 2024](#) on the impact of geopolitical turbulence on municipalities and their resilience agendas. The team also delivered many lectures on geopolitics and resilience to national and local governments, the police, and the private sector.



Clingendael contributed visibly to both the understanding and practice of broader societal resilience.

Clingendael Russia and Eastern Europe Centre

Throughout 2025, the global geopolitical arena was marked by the unpredictability and assertiveness emanating from Washington. The resulting tumultuous international environment affected many corners of the world, and Russia and Eastern Europe were certainly no exception. As Russia's war against Ukraine continued to define European politics, it simultaneously ran the risk of fading away from the global spotlight.

In these turbulent times, we continuously monitored and analysed an ever-expanding set of key international developments in – or affecting – Eastern Europe. By sharing our assessments and engaging in discussions with policymakers and the public, we sought to contribute to a better understanding of our changing geopolitical context.

Our publications helped inform both policy and public debate on Russia and Eastern Europe. Key topics included the strength and stability of the [Russian regime](#), the positioning of [Belarus](#), and scenarios for potential [European military engagement](#) in Ukraine, including a [briefing](#) to the Dutch Parliament.

Our team also actively engaged in international dialogue and knowledge exchange. In September, Clingendael

hosted the annual [REKA conference](#), bringing together experts, policymakers and the public to discuss a great variety of topics related to developments in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, as part of our continuing work within the International Expert Group on comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine, we participated in the [Paris Peace Forum](#) in November, in addition to the many meetings and discussions within the group itself. We further hosted multiple high-level visits throughout 2025, including those of Moldova's President [Maia Sandu](#) and Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs [Andrii Sybiha](#), and [participated](#) in high-level sessions and public discussions at the NATO Summit in The Hague.



Clingendael [welcomed](#) the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, for a roundtable discussion. The conversation focused on Moldova's EU candidate status since June 2022 and the progress made in the process. The discussion addressed democratic reforms, foreign interference and the road ahead. © David van Dam



Clingendael China Centre

In 2025, the second Trump presidency disrupted established alliances, prompting renewed European interest in China. At the same time, China continued to expand its global influence and was increasingly perceived in Europe, and beyond, as a (potentially) stable partner in a turbulent world. This exposed persistent gaps in China expertise and coordination capacity across EU member states and in Brussels.

In response, the Clingendael China Centre strengthened European coordination and knowledge-sharing. As part of the Dutch [China Knowledge Network](#), we

co-established the [European China Knowledge Network](#) with partners in Germany ([MERICS](#)) and Sweden ([UI](#)). Through roundtables, briefings, and brainstorm sessions in Brussels, we connected EU policymakers, experts, and stakeholders, expanding China expertise at the EU level. We also convened key stakeholders through the second [ReConnect China Conference](#) in The Hague, bringing together over 190 participants from 25 nationalities, including representatives from policy, diplomacy, academia, media, and business, to advance dialogue on EU-China relations. The [livestream](#) attracted more than 1,500 viewers.



The Reconnect China Conference 2025: [Rebalancing EU-China Relations in an Age of Global Turmoil](#). © Studio Oostrom

Our policy reports and briefs supported policymakers on a range of pressing issues, including the [BRICS expansion](#), [EU-UAE relations](#) (together with a [local think tank](#)), open strategic autonomy and the [aviation](#) and [drones](#) industries, [China's status](#) in international climate negotiations, the [EU-China Summit](#), and [economic security toolkits](#). We also contributed to the [Dutch chapter](#) of the European Think-tank Network on China's annual report, which focused on strategic

autonomy, and [briefed](#) members of the Dutch Parliament during a closed-door panel discussion on China.

Our work was cited by [PubAffairs Bruxelles](#) and the [Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), as well as in Dutch parliamentary documents and leading international media such as the [Financial Times](#) and [South China Morning Post](#). It also fed into EU-level discussions on port strategy and strategic autonomy.



The Clingendael China Centre strengthened European coordination and knowledge-sharing.

Clingendael US Programme



In June 2025, NATO leaders met in The Hague at a critical moment for the Alliance. As part of the summit, Clingendael co-organised the [NATO Public Forum](#), a two-day event that brought together hundreds of delegates from think tanks, universities, and policymakers from across the Alliance. The forum created a platform for direct exchange with national leaders and informed discussions on NATO's trajectory and European security. Organised in close cooperation with NATO institutions, the Dutch Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and other think tanks, the event was the result of several months of intensive preparation to deliver a programme that reflected this critical junction in the Alliance's history.

In the run-up to the NATO Summit, we further strengthened greater national

understanding of NATO's role and the future of the transatlantic relationship by organising, and contributing to, several events and conferences across the Netherlands, working with partners such as Studio Europa Maastricht, the European Commission Representative in Netherlands, and the public library in Breda. These engagements addressed key issues such as the [war in Ukraine](#), [port security](#), the [EU dimension](#) of transatlantic security, and [alliance cohesion](#).

Furthermore, throughout 2025, Clingendael's expertise on US politics and the transatlantic relationship was widely sought by partners from the public as well as private sector, particularly in the form of speaking engagements varying from industry, pension funds, and cosmetics to consultancy and online retailers.



Clingendael teamed up with Studio Europa Maastricht in organising a public discussion on NATO with Ingeborg ter Laak, Thijs van der Plas and Roberta Haar.



One of the pre-events was about the role of ports in European security and resilience. Tom Berendsen spoke about the need for a comprehensive European port strategy.

Scenes from the NATO Public Forum 2025



Clingendael's General Director Monika Sie Dhian Ho moderated the discussion at the Defence Industry Forum between President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on EU-NATO cooperation.



Clingendael and the Munich Security Conference joined forces to create a hub for strategic dialogue, 'NATO in the Huis', in The Hague, bringing together stakeholders across the transatlantic community to discuss Ukraine, NATO, and the shifting global order.



Clingendael kicked off the 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague by bringing together thought leaders, like fellow think tank experts, policymakers, and journalists, at a special dinner at the Huys. The guest of honor for the evening was the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrii Sybiha, who was accompanied by the new Ukrainian Ambassador to the Netherlands, Andriy Kostin.



Rem Korteweg, Lead of Clingendael's US Programme, discussed NATO's near future in the expert panel 'Great Expectations: Looking Ahead at Today's North Atlantic Council'.



Rem Korteweg chaired the Defence Captains of Industry Dinner, which brought together defence industry leaders from across NATO member states to discuss how to strengthen both our economic resilience and security.

Bob Deen, Head of Clingendael's Security Unit, moderated the panel 'A Strong Ukraine for a Just and Lasting Peace' with Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Caspar Veldkamp and UK Secretary of State for Defence John Healey.



EU and Neighbourhood

Much of the research conducted within the EU and Neighbourhood programme in 2025 centred on EU enlargement. This included publications on [labour migration and EU enlargement](#), the impact of enlargement on the [rule of law and fundamental rights](#), and [gradual EU-integration](#) of candidate countries. In addition, we advised

policymakers on engagement with candidate countries and the wider neighbourhood through policy briefs and reports on a [geopolitical mapping](#) of the Western Balkans, [Albania's](#) and [Serbia's](#) EU-accession paths, and security in the [Black Sea](#).

Beyond enlargement, we helped shape policy stances on other EU policies and



Clingendael welcomed the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, to the Institute for a conversation centred around 'Albania in the fast-lane to the European Union?'

institutional dynamics with research on the next [multi-annual financial framework](#) of the EU, the geopolitical potential of [Europe's internal market](#), the EU's [crisis toolbox](#) and its [foreign policy](#), and the impact of US [techno-libertarian ideology](#) (the latter three analyses were published in early 2026).

In 2025, we furthermore finalised our work for the Horizon-funded RED-SPINEL research project on dissensus towards liberal democracy in the EU. This resulted in three advisory papers for the European Commission on the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), preserving the [rule of law in an enlarged EU](#), and the [annual rule of law report](#).

This work was complemented by direct engagement and visibility of our researchers. We contributed to Clingendael Academy's [EU-accession training](#) for Ukrainian diplomats in Kyiv, convened an [in-house meeting](#) with Moldova's President Maia Sandu,

and strengthened public debate on EU enlargement through public events with Albanian Prime Minister [Edi Rama](#) and [Gert Jan Koopman](#), Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations at the European Commission.

We further strengthened and expanded our visibility and network through regular media contributions, for example on the importance of [geopolitics for business](#), and participation in several conferences, including the [Munich Security Conference](#), a conference on [three years of war in Ukraine](#), and two Pre-Presidency Conferences of the Trans European Policy Studies Association in [Denmark](#) and [Cyprus](#). We also contributed to the [Fit for 35 Forum](#), a series on EU enlargement coordinated by the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, with a [publication](#) on how to prepare EU democracy for enlargement.



Beyond enlargement, we helped shape policy stances on other EU policies and institutional dynamics

Geopolitics of Trade

2025 was a turbulent year for international trade policy. From tariffs to supply chain disruptions and from a focus on economic security to the pursuit of new market opportunities and new trade agreements – trade was high on the agenda. Through numerous briefings, boardroom sessions and speaking engagements, we supported government ministries to better understand the role of trade in strengthening European economic security and helped private sector actors to assess risks and opportunities

in a changing trade landscape. Much of our work was inspired by research into how businesses in the Netherlands deal with changing geopolitical circumstances, which resulted in the book [The Impact of Geopolitics](#), published in April 2025. Additional research contributed to policy discussions on the geopolitical importance of a [strategic European approach to standardisation](#), with findings shared among Dutch and European stakeholders, including the European Commission.



US Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota visited Clingendael to discuss trade-related issues between the US and Europe and broader political trends.

We supported government ministries to better understand the role of trade in strengthening European economic security and helped private sector actors to assess risks and opportunities in a changing trade landscape.

Furthermore, we convened high-level meetings to support discussion on international trade and industrial policy coordination, most notably the bilateral [Van Wittel/Vanvitelli Roundtable](#). The fourth edition of this policy dialogue between the Netherlands and Italy brought together senior government officials from both countries as well as executives from the semiconductor industry and agri-tech sector.

2025 also marked the first year of the Clingendael Sanctions Network, aimed at strengthening Dutch and European sanctions policy. We organised a [public conference](#) and published analyses on [reducing sanctions evasion](#), the mechanics of [undoing sanctions regimes](#), and [lessons drawn](#).

[by China](#) from US-European sanctions against Russia.

In 2026, we will continue our work to build deeper understanding of the way in which geopolitical developments influence trade and industrial policy, and the options for Europe. Amongst other things, we aim to increasingly collaborate with European partners to explore the dynamics surrounding European strategic autonomy and economic security, and new trade initiatives that are emerging as global trade is being reconfigured.



Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation

In 2025, we played an active role in shaping Dutch and EU debates and policy agendas on economic security, digital sovereignty, and tech competitiveness. We assessed the digital Global Gateway's potential in the Global South, proposing actionable ways to align [national strengths](#) with [local needs](#). We revised Europe's tech autonomy, advocating for EU-based ['building blocks'](#) to reduce dependencies, such as those on [AI chips](#). We prompted policymakers to [integrate](#) AI foresight into national security planning. We strengthened understanding of [China's role in tech standardisation](#). And we measured how Dutch companies deal with [economic security](#) and the impact of geopolitics on the [private sector](#).



Programme Lead Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation Maaïke Heijmans in a [roundtable](#) with H.M. King Willem-Alexander on cloud sovereignty.

Our work was also reflected in a range of high-level engagements throughout the year. These included participation in a [roundtable](#) with H.M. King Willem-Alexander on cloud sovereignty, as well as an official partnership and a policy spotlight discussion at the [Politico AI & Tech Summit](#). We also, among others, contributed to the opening of the academic year at [TU Eindhoven](#), the Munich Security Conference [Technology Roundtable](#), the [AI Regulation Congress](#), and the AI & Policy event [Scaling AI in Europe](#).



We further co-hosted and contributed to a variety of Track 1.5 dialogues with international partners, including the US, Japan, South Korea, India, the UK, Germany, France, and Denmark. In addition, we participated in the Advancing Economic Security Forum with global partners, the European D9 Forum, and a range of bilateral exchanges.

In 2026, we will continue to strengthen collaboration with industry leaders and policymakers, transforming research into actionable tools that keep Europe's tech policies agile and future-proof. We will maintain our broad thematic scope while closely monitoring the rise of new global actors, such as Gulf nations, and developments in critical tech domains.

Critical Resources

Energy, food, water, and critical raw materials are increasingly subject to geopolitical power plays and used as instruments of power. In 2025, we continued our work on energy transformation in relation to security and defence questions, including through a strategic seminar in November on strengthening resilience. Through the [Planetary Security Initiative](#), we contributed to the debate by sharing insights and interviews with practitioners in the field.

Our international collaboration also expanded. Together with the Delhi-based Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, we initiated new

activities to deepen understanding of regional cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response in South Asia – an area increasingly affected by extreme weather events. In addition, ahead of the [Raising a Dialogue](#) in which we participated, we co-hosted an event at the Embassy in New Delhi on how India and the EU can enhance strategic autonomy in the fields of energy and critical raw materials.

We furthermore brought together policymakers, experts and stakeholders to address pressing challenges in food security and agriculture. A conference on European food and agricultural



Clingendael and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) co-hosted a high-level [roundtable](#) in Brussels titled 'The Geopolitics of the Clean Industrial Deal: New Guidance for EU Energy Security and Diplomacy'.

policy gathered representatives from the sector, ministries, and renown experts from fellow European think tanks. During NATO Summit Week, we partnered with Wageningen University & Research to host an event in Nieuwspoord on food security in times of conflict.

Critical raw materials remained a central theme throughout the year, taking centre stage in debates on Ukraine and Greenland and

highlighting continued concern over dependencies on China-dominated supply chains. In cooperation with Delft University, we advanced research on the sustainability of these supplies, including the potential of recycling and diversification of resources. Additionally, we contributed to water diplomacy through a project with IHE Delft for diplomats from Central Asia and an [alert](#) on the temporary suspension by India of the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan.

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Migration

Throughout 2025, we closely tracked the displacement of Ukrainians, [informing](#) the Ministry of Asylum and Migration's post-Temporary Protection strategy, which addresses the future of Ukrainians in the EU once temporary protection ends. By publishing quarterly analyses, we provided policymakers, local authorities, and civil society with up-to-date insights, while also contributing to the broader public debate through [media coverage](#).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Asylum and Migration [invited](#) us to become a partner in its Migration Knowledge Platform. Through this online platform, Clingendael helps connect government questions on migration to expertise, ensuring that policy discussions are grounded in timely and well-informed analysis.

Our research also contributed to the political and public debate. A timely




In January 2025, Clingendael Director Monika Sie Dhian Ho and Sietske Duller, Director of Migration Policy at the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, officially [marked](#) the start of the Migration Knowledge Portal, which was officially [launched](#) in May 2026.

[policy brief](#) on the criminalisation of illegal stay equipped politicians with evidence before the parliamentary vote and generated attention in outlets such as [Trouw](#) and [De Volkskrant](#).

In response to [parliamentary motions](#), we launched research into the feasibility of externalisation policies and the potential need to revise the Refugee Convention. By clarifying policy options and identifying practical challenges, this work feeds into upcoming debates on reforming asylum frameworks.

Finally, with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we expanded our research on strengthening migration partnerships by exploring [ICT nearshoring opportunities](#) for Dutch firms. This initiative deepens Clingendael's engagement with the economic dimensions of migration and labour migration. In 2025, [Egypt](#) and [Nigeria](#) were the first of in four countries to be studied.



Clingendael helps connect government questions on migration to expertise, ensuring that policy discussions are grounded in timely and well-informed analysis.

Middle East

In 2025, our research on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories reached a wide audience and contributed to informed debate. An open-access [edited volume](#), bringing together a range of regional perspectives, reached over 41,000 online accesses by early 2026. We also provided regular briefings on the state of Israel's occupation to Dutch parliamentary factions, contributed [expertise](#) to events on this topic, and appeared regularly in high-profile media. In the fall of 2025, our analysis further [highlighted](#) at an early stage the risks that Iran and Israel were increasingly posing to [regional instability](#).

The year's most impactful event was a timely [workshop](#) on the need to lift EU and US sanctions on Syria, organised together with the Bourse

& Bazaar Foundation, after the fall of the Assad regime late 2024. The event was followed by a [policy brief](#) on the sanctions problem and how it could be resolved, which was widely shared within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliament.

We also deepened our work on the Gulf region this year, including supporting Dutch embassies in the region through frequent briefings and conference calls based on ongoing analysis of competition between [Gulf Cooperation Council](#) states, alongside deep dives into specific sectors and countries. In addition, our blog [Iran in transition](#) remained a steadfast source of quality analysis on Iranian foreign and security policy, as well as the state of its economic, intra-elite and state-society relations.



“It is a matter of hoping for the best while preparing for the worst.”

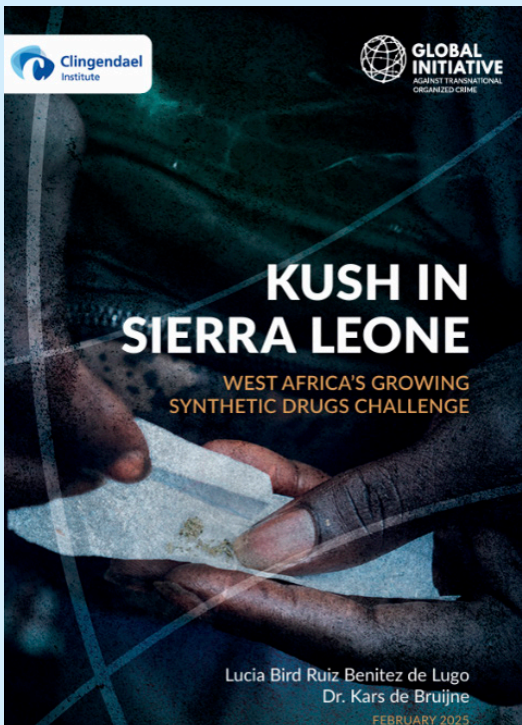
Erwin van Veen, Programme Lead Middle East, discussing the announcement of a ceasefire in Gaza on Nieuwsuur.

West Africa and Sahel

In 2025, West Africa and the Sahel faced a combination of political transitions, key electoral moments and heightened security pressures. Against this backdrop, we helped audiences make sense of fast-paced regional developments through timely, evidence-based analysis.

Our researchers were widely featured across Dutch, European and international media, including [The Guardian](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [NRC](#), and [Nieuwsuur](#), offering clear insights into regional dynamics and

evolving security risks. Long-form publications further anchored this reach. One [major study](#) exposed the expansion of extremist networks along the Benin-Nigeria border, while [another](#) interrogated plausible European links to the chemical ingredients used in the lethal synthetic drug ‘kush’, now at the centre of a widening public health and security emergency in Sierra Leone and neighbouring states. In addition, we contributed expertise to numerous conflict-sensitivity trainings for analysis on the Sahel, as well as in-depth research on governance in the region.




“Sierra Leone has been in the dark about what was in kush for years and (the country lacks) the necessary testing capacity. The research can help authorities fight overdoses (...) and identify ‘points of production’ abroad and curb kush’s prevalence in Sierra Leone.”

Kars de Bruijne, Programme Lead West Africa and Sahel, to [Reuters](#) about Clingendael’s major research study to the deadly drug ‘kush’ in Sierra Leone, together with Lucia Bird, Director of the Observatory of Illicit Economies in West Africa at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

Alongside our public work, we engaged closely with Dutch, European, and transatlantic communities by delivering briefings, including to numerous ambassadors and EU representatives in the region. Highlights included a detailed briefing on Maghreb-Sahel relations for the European Union and the presentation of research findings to the UNDP Atlantic Corridor Community of Practice. These engagements ensured that our grounded insights directly informed policy deliberations.

Looking ahead to 2026, as the region navigates intensifying pressures from organised crime and extremist networks, we will continue to strengthen our analytical focus on the intersections of politics, violence and crime. Through this work, we aim to ensure that insights from our research and collaborative regional engagements continue to translate into more informed, coordinated and forward-leaning policy responses across West Africa.



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Horn of Africa

As the conflict in Sudan escalated into one of the world's worst humanitarian and political crises, Clingendael remained a leading source of analysis. Throughout 2025, we reached wide audiences through extensive presence in [Dutch](#), [European](#), and [international](#) media, translating a complex and fast-moving conflict into clear, evidence-based analysis – including on the [legal dimensions](#) of responsible business conduct in conflict settings. At the same time, we engaged closely with Dutch and European policymakers, INGOs, and international partners, ensuring that our analysis was available to help shape more informed and politically grounded responses to the crisis. A [briefing](#) to the Dutch Parliament in December 2025 marked a key moment, directly connecting our research to national policy discussions.



Beyond Sudan, we cemented our role as a key interlocutor for the Dutch

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and forged new connections with the Ministry of Defence on [Ethiopia](#), [Somalia](#), and the increasingly volatile [Red Sea corridor](#). Drawing upon our regional networks and political economy expertise, we provided context-sensitive insight that supported Dutch and European actors in navigating complex and shifting alliances, fragile political settlements, and emerging security risks.

With Sudan's trajectory remaining deeply uncertain and tensions in the Red Sea showing no signs of easing, demand for the programme's expertise is likely to remain high. In 2026, the team aims to deepen its structured partnerships and expand its convening role, bringing together policymakers, regional actors, scholars and practitioners to turn analysis into more effective, coordinated engagement across the Horn.



[“The conflict has already become not only the largest humanitarian catastrophe, but also the largest refugee crisis.”](#)

Clingendael's Sudan expert Anette Hoffmann on German broadcaster ZDF, commenting on the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

Business and Peace

As geopolitical pressures prompted a recalibration of Dutch foreign economic policy in 2025, we strengthened our engagement with key stakeholders across the Dutch investment and trade landscape. We worked with actors spanning the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, implementing agencies such as the Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, Atradius, Invest International, the International Finance Corporation, and private sector actors such as pension funds, financial institutions and other Dutch companies. Central to our work is ensuring that trade priorities remain grounded in [conflict sensitivity and responsible business conduct](#). Engaging a broad range of stakeholders reflects Clingendael's unique position with expertise in both policy and the realities of operating in high-risk markets.

As pressure on responsible investment frameworks intensified and geo-economic strategy rose ever higher on the policy agenda, we were also well-positioned to deepen our

advisory role. Building on earlier work on the [interlinkages between food systems, power, and political economy](#) (initially published in late 2024, and further explored in 2025), we continued to support Dutch and European actors with the analysis needed to responsibly navigate an increasingly complex global investment landscape.

A key contribution in 2025 was the publication of a [report](#) on alleged human rights violations by Mozambican security forces in the context of TotalEnergies' LNG project in Northern Mozambique. The findings fed directly into deliberations on whether to finance the project, a rare and significant instance of research shaping a high-stakes investment decision with major implications for both Dutch public finance and the broader responsible business agenda.

“A rare and significant instance of research shaping a high-stakes investment decision with major implications for both Dutch public finance and the broader responsible business agenda.”

Human rights violations by Mozambican security forces in Cabo Delgado in the context of the Mozambique LNG project

CRU Report



Outreach and Strategic Partnerships



In 2025, Clingendael significantly strengthened its convening power and international network. The following highlights illustrate some of the key achievements and activities from the past year.

In the margins of the NATO Summit in The Hague, we curated three flagship initiatives that broadened debate and deepened partnerships. Prior to the NATO Public Forum¹, the [Clingendael Thought Leaders Dinner](#) brought together leading analysts, policymakers, journalists and leaders, including Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, to discuss strategic challenges not addressed in the official NATO programme. This high-level, off-the-record setting reinforced Clingendael's role as an agenda-setter

and created the opportunity to explore new partnerships with other institutions from NATO member states.

Together with the Munich Security Conference, we launched [NATO in the Huis](#), a dedicated hub that enabled partners to host thematic sessions aligned with summit priorities that complemented the Public Forum programming. The hub facilitated new cooperations, further expanding our convening power. Adding to that, it created the opportunity for attendees to participate in sessions without being invited to the official NATO events.

Beyond NATO, Clingendael played a central role in shaping the programme of the [EU Global Gateway Forum 2025](#), alongside the Brussels Institute for



¹ See more about the NATO Public Forum in the 'Clingendael US Programme' section.



Andrii Sybiha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, addresses the audience during the Clingendael Thought Leaders Dinner at Huys Clingendael. © Clingendael

Geopolitics and the Egmont Institute. The consortium was key for the EU Directorate General International Partnerships to [renew](#) the Forum's thematic and strategic focus, ensuring it reflects today's evolving geopolitical and geo-economic context.

Furthermore, Clingendael and HCSS again jointly organised the annual [Dag van PROGRESS](#), which connects researchers directly with policymakers through interactive panels and breakout sessions explicitly designed to identify policy dilemmas and develop concrete courses of action in the field of foreign and security policy.

Finally, the strong turnout and high-level participation at the [Sam. Rozemond Seminar](#) underscored growing public engagement with Dutch foreign policy. These events combine expert input with moderated discussion formats that encourage exchange across institutional and disciplinary boundaries, including between ministries, think tanks, academia and practitioners. These initiatives provide a strong foundation for deeper strategic partnerships in 2026.

Clingendael Spectator: Fostering public debate

The *Clingendael Spectator*, our online magazine, strengthened its role as a key platform for independent opinion-forming on international relations

from a Dutch perspective, adopting a more dynamic format to quickly bring together insights from experts and other relevant voices on pressing current issues. In 2025, 69 experts contributed on 5 pressing topics, including the [German elections](#), [transatlantic relations](#), [national resilience](#), [NATO Summit](#), and [Gaza war](#). The [website](#) recorded 176,212 visits from 117,634 unique visitors. The Spectator translated its expert publication on resilience into public dialogue through the first '[Clingendael Café: De Wereld in de Bieb](#)' at the library in Amersfoort. The event attracted over sixty participants, generated strong [local media attention](#), and led to new requests from other municipalities.



Christopher Houtkamp, Clingendael's Programme Lead Resilience, explains the concept of 'resilience' during the Clingendael Café at the public library in Amersfoort.
© Julian Fillekers / Nieuwsplein33

Marketing and Communications



FACTS & FIGURES

Communication

MEDIA & CHANNELS



950+
media appearances



Newsletter
15 K
subscribers



+ - same



LinkedIn
55 K
followers



20 %
growth
in 2025



X
23.5 K
followers



0.8 %
decline
in 2025



Instagram
4.2 K
followers



40 %
growth
in 2025



Website
537 K
pageviews



13 %
growth
in 2025



YouTube
58 K
views



132 %
growth
in 2025

Clingendael felt the effects of a turbulent year in domestic politics under the very short-lived Schoof cabinet. Since late 2024, budgets and attention to foreign affairs had already been frozen, and the media too focused primarily on domestic issues. On 3 July 2025, the cabinet fell, and all PVV ministers left, followed shortly thereafter by all NSC ministers. This had a negative impact on, for example, invitations from the House of Representatives to receive briefings from Clingendael experts and the effective dissemination of policy-relevant reports to ministries and in parliament. Nevertheless, Clingendael managed to generate significant attention for cross-border

dynamics and their implications for the Netherlands through other means.

In January, the first successful [Dutch Resilience Summit](#) took place at Rabobank (Utrecht), in collaboration with other parties. *De Telegraaf* led with the story in its edition that day. For the first time, all sectors in the Netherlands were invited to collectively consider how to improve the country's resilience and take steps towards that goal.

The fact that Clingendael was a co-organiser of the Public Forum of the [NATO Summit](#) in The Hague did not go unnoticed. With a dedicated website launched in late 2024, participation



“This conference gave me hope. Because what is happening here should be the next step: hundreds of citizens and companies taking matters into their own hands. We should not scare each other but raise awareness.”

Chair of Clingendael's Supervisory Board Jaap de Hoop Scheffer during his closing speech at the first Dutch Resilience Summit.

and moderation by many Clingendael experts on the podiums during pre-events and the summit itself, a series of video explainers, and expert commentary in more than 100 (live) media broadcasts, Clingendael successfully showcased both its expertise and its independence from the NATO narrative.

After the summer, following the [ReConnect China Conference](#), Clingendael launched a series of [China video explainers](#) in collaboration with international China experts from the Clingendael's China Knowledge Network. Internationally, there was enormous interest in the CRU reports on the [new highly lethal drug Kush](#) (and the Netherlands' role in the international drug trade) and the [human rights violations in Mozambique](#) surrounding the controversial construction site of Total Energies' LNG project.

In the fall, Clingendael also welcomed government leaders from dynamic regions in Europe, including [Edi Rama](#) (Albania – a highly viewed [YouTube broadcast](#)), [Alexander Stubb](#) (Finland), and [Maia Sandu](#) (Moldova).

The [Foreign Affairs Barometer](#) took centre stage at a well-attended event in a packed library in Breda, where Clingendael experts, together with the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, engaged in a [discussion with the audience](#).

The year concluded with the pilot episode of the new Clingendael podcast [Wereldupdate](#) in collaboration with media partner CortiMedia, and a two-page [Young Clingendael special](#) in AD, in which young Clingendael experts offered a look ahead to 2026 – one of the newspaper's most-read articles.



Clingendael welcomed Alexander Stubb, President of Finland, for a [discussion](#) with experts on the European security situation and the economy in the current geopolitical context. © David van Dam

FACTS & FIGURES

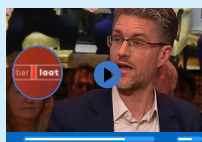
Communication

TV AND RADIO



950 media appearances

TV



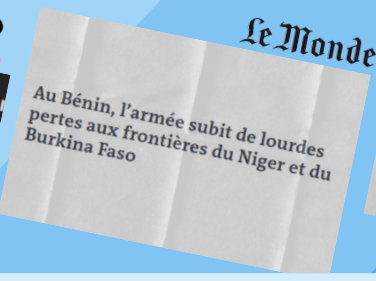
Radio



FACTS & FIGURES

Communication

INTERNATIONAL NEWS OUTLETS



A stylized, blue line-art illustration of two people, a man on the left and a woman on the right, wearing business suits. The lines are thick and the style is minimalist. The background is a solid dark blue.

Human Resources

FACTS & FIGURES

Human Resources



116

**Clingendael
employees in 2025**



51%



49%



12

**Different
nationalities**



34

**Students on
internship**



21

New hires



20

Employees left

In 2025, we continued to invest in the development and integration of our teams, building on initiatives launched in 2024. Our focus remained on fostering a culture of continuous improvement and supporting colleagues in contributing effectively to Clingendael’s mission.

We strengthened leadership capacity by providing all newly appointed programme managers with tailored management training, a first step to equip them with the necessary skills to drive our mission forward. This investment in leadership development will continue in the coming years.

At the same time, we started expanding and improving our induction and onboarding programme for new employees and interns. By incorporating insights from exit interviews and the 2025 employee survey, we enhanced how new colleagues are introduced to the organisation, supporting faster and more effective integration within teams. Additionally, we automated the onboarding workflow, improving efficiency and consistency.

Through these efforts, we have continued to create a workplace that is agile, well-connected and able to respond effectively to evolving challenges.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Employees <i>(per 1 January 2022/2023/2024/2025/2026)</i>	116	117	115	107	93
Total number of new employees hired	21	30	23	29	18
Total number of departing employees	20	29	13	15	27
Employees on fixed-term contracts <i>(per 1 January 2022/2023/2024/2025/2026)</i>	49	52	52	49	41
Employees on permanent contracts <i>(per 1 January 2022/2023/2024/2025/2026)</i>	67	65	63	58	52
Male/Female ratio % <i>(per 1 January 2022/2023/2024/2025/2026)</i>	49/51	49/51	45/55	48/52	47/53
Male/Female ratio management % <i>(per 1 January 2022/2023/2024/2025/2026)</i>	56/44	39/61	40/60	43/57	45/55
Number of vacancies <i>(incl. internship vacancies)</i>	49	55	53	50	32
Total number of interns	34	36	33	30	33
Absence %	4	3,5	4	7,4	3,9

Finance



Demand for Clingendael's expertise increased significantly in 2025, reflecting a growing need for analysis, strategic advice and academic support in a rapidly changing geopolitical context. This demand for our knowledge and products expanded across a broad range of stakeholders. In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this included other ministries, European institutions, international organisations, local authorities, executive agencies, and the private sector. As a result, Clingendael further diversified its client portfolio. In total, the Institute carried out more than 600 projects in 2025, generating total revenues of approximately €21 million.

At the same time, the unsettled international environment had financial consequences. Global disruptions affected the management of Clingendael's assets, while the rise in digital threats required additional investments in cyber security to safeguard continuity, reliability, and operational security.

2025 was also an exceptional year in terms of the investment in and recruitment of new Clingendael leadership, with the appointment of a new group of programme leads to better channel the significant turnover growth and diversification within the Research department, a new director of the Academy, and a new general director, who will succeed Monika

Sie Dhian Ho as of 1 July 2026, upon the completion of her second term on Clingendael's Executive Board. Clingendael closed 2025 with a negative result of €286k.

The higher turnover in 2025 was driven by increased demand for both the Academy and Research activities. The rise in costs, primarily related to staffing, reflects this growing demand for our expertise. In addition, there were one-off additional costs associated with the recruitment of a new director for the Academy, the appointment of a new general director effective from 1 July 2026, the hiring of around ten new programme leads within Research, transition costs resulting from reductions in the activity grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and legal costs related to a case involving a supplier.

While this represents a setback, the Institute's robust equity position allows this loss to be absorbed without affecting organisational continuity or core activities. Clingendael is a not-for-profit, mission-driven foundation. Over many previous years, the Institute realised modest annual surpluses, cumulating in a solid financial buffer that allows it to absorb incidental setbacks in an increasingly turbulent environment affecting both Clingendael's business and assets.

Looking ahead to 2026, the outlook remains positive. Interest in Clingendael's services continues to be strong, supporting further revenue growth and providing a solid

foundation for the Institute's ongoing contribution to the interpretation of global developments and the strengthening of international cooperation in the years ahead.

	Actuals 2025	Actuals 2024	Actuals 2023	Actuals 2022	Actuals 2021
Turnover	21.224	19.925	18.804	15.736	12.699
Total costs	21.516	20.048	18.269	15.527	12.050
Operational result	-292	-123	535	209	649
Result after taxation	-286	29	434	239	446
Equity / total assets	43%	37%	43%	41%	36%
Full time equivalents	113	112	108	101	87

Note: amounts x €1.000



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