

The glass is half full: The EEAS through Dutch eyes

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

On 5 November 2012 a new government took office in the Netherlands. In comparison to the previous conservative right-wing government, it is expected to be slightly keener to work towards consensus on EU issues. This viewpoint is confirmed in the recently published ‘state of the Union’ document which expresses the objective to strengthen the bridge-building role of the Netherlands within the EU.⁸² However, it is still rather early to give an overview of specific positions on EU foreign policy, and the general public continues to follow EU affairs critically. With regard to the vote on Palestine’s membership of the UN General Assembly, the Netherlands abstained, whereas the previous government voted against Palestinian UNESCO membership last year. This indicates that the Dutch can be expected to take a somewhat more moderate position on the Middle East. In general, EU foreign policy does not receive much attention in Dutch media. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is primarily judged by the government for its potential to rationalise budgets and the tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A specific point advocated by the Netherlands is a potential takeover of consular tasks by EU Delegations. The new EU foreign policy actors are considered to be of added value and receive support from the government, but there is some ambiguity about how this is related to a (perceived) decline of Dutch influence in the world. For the last two years, the Netherlands seemed almost in a state of denial about the need to rethink EU foreign policy questions strategically, to set priorities for this agenda and to redefine the division of labour between Dutch

⁸² The Government of the Netherlands (2013), Staat van de Unie “Bruggen slaan in Europa” (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.

and European diplomacies, and it would be good if the new minister were to devote more attention to this matter.

This contribution will discuss the relationship between EU and Dutch diplomatic actors. Firstly, it gives a general overview of Dutch foreign policy orientations. Secondly, it discusses the structure of Dutch diplomacy and, in particular, budget cuts and the organisational division between the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and other external relations, such as trade, aid and neighbourhood policy. Thirdly, it gives an overview of Dutch views on specific EEAS issues, such as consular tasks and the co-location of diplomatic missions. Fourthly, it devotes attention to what the Netherlands does to promote Dutch diplomats and how the latter view their posting to the EEAS. Fifthly, it touches upon perceptions of Ashton's performance so far and what to expect from new Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans. Finally, the sixth section draws some general conclusions.

10.2 THE MERCHANT AND THE VICAR

The Netherlands has a long tradition of linking its international diplomatic presence to promoting Dutch products and values. Since the 17th Century, the notion of the 'merchant and the vicar' characterised the image of Dutch diplomacy. Even though since then the relative size of the Dutch economy has downsized, the Netherlands still ranks 17th in terms of the size of its economy.⁸³ It is a large investor in third countries and has an open export-dependent economy.⁸⁴

Promoting 'Merchant Holland' has regained importance in the current economic crisis. Nevertheless, the Netherlands is also still keen to continue with its long tradition of promoting values such as human rights and the rule of law. The Hague likes to refer to itself as the legal capital of the world and is the hometown of the Peace Palace, several tribunals, Europol, Eurojust and the International Criminal Court. Another element of the Dutch 'vicar attitude' is the emphasis on the need for EU conditions for enlargement to be "strict and fair".⁸⁵

More generally, the Netherlands does not see itself a small country, and has convictions and positions on a wide range of foreign policy issues. Its contribution to development cooperation and international missions, not to mention the level of ambition of its armed forces, is still relatively high, despite severe budget cuts in recent years. This has not prevented the exclusion of the Netherlands from G20 meetings. The country lacks a seat on the UN Security Council and recently decided to share its seat on the IMF Executive Board with Belgium to make room for emerging economies. The government that entered office in autumn 2012 has restated its support for European cooperation in general, and for a larger degree of EU involvement in foreign policy and defence matters in particular. This can be seen – at least partially – as a compensation for the perceived loss of Dutch international influence. On the European continent, the Netherlands is one of the most pro-transatlantic countries in its orientation.

With regard to the Dutch position on European integration, the 'no vote' on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 can be considered as a turning point. From then onwards, the Dutch government changed its

⁸³ According to the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook of 2011 and comparable lists of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

⁸⁴ Knapen, B., Arts, G., Kleistra, Y., Klem, M. and Rem, M. (2010), 'Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy', Scientific Council for Government Policy, The Hague, www.wrr.nl/fileadmin/en/publicaties/PDF-Rapporten/Attached_to_the_world.pdf

⁸⁵ The Government of the Netherlands (2011a), 'Staat van de Europese Unie 2011-2012', 'Nederland in Europa, Europa in de Wereld – Realistisch en Doelgericht', The Hague.

attitude from being a frontrunner in the integration process towards a more critical and reluctant stance. Points of criticism recurring in Dutch public debates on the EU include the Netherlands paying a relatively high share of the EU budget compared to the amount of EU funds it receives, the EU institutions being overly bureaucratic and keen on generating red tape, the inefficiency of having the European Parliament travel to Strasbourg for its plenary sessions, transfers and guarantees for Southern European member states since the euro crisis, and the transfer of competences on an ever-increasing number of issues to Brussels. Dutch citizens and politicians emphasise, in particular, that health care, education and pensions are topics in which Brussels should not intervene.⁸⁶

During the election campaign in August and September 2012, Europe was a leading topic. The outcome was considered pro-European, since the most Eurosceptic parties – Geert Wilders’ Freedom Party (PVV) and the Socialist Party (SP) – lost vote shares and ‘only’ received about 20% of the vote. At the same time, very outspoken pro-European parties, such as D66 and the Green-Left (Groen-Links), did not win much either. The big winners, the Conservative Liberals (VVD) and the Labour Party (PvdA), cannot be described as anti-European, but neither can they be considered ‘EU-lovers’. Their position on European integration in the last decade has followed the general trend in public opinion. Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the largest party, VVD, has, for instance, indicated his lack of interest in prospective thinking (‘vergezichten’) on European integration. Therefore, the Netherlands can be expected to stick to its slightly Eurocritical tone in policy debates, for example on the future of Europe.

10.3 THE EEAS AND DUTCH DIPLOMACY

Many questions remain as to the impact of the EEAS on the size of Dutch diplomacy. Initially, the Ministry of Finance saw the establishment of the EEAS as a means of justifying the closure of embassies and of handing over consular and visa affairs to EU Delegations. In previous rounds of cuts, which amounted to a 55 million euro reduction of the budget for diplomatic representation, the number of diplomats was slashed from over 3,000 to 2,500 in 2014. Further cuts of 40 million euros are foreseen to a total budget of 760 million euros. Several diplomatic missions were closed and more closures are expected. This is commensurate with a considerable reduction in development funding, which will bring down the Dutch ODA contribution from 0.7% to 0.6% of GDP in the coming years. As a consequence, diplomatic staff in third countries will be reduced in number from 1,138 in 2012 to 885 in 2015. The number of *attachés* will also be reduced and they are expected to number around 285 in 2015.

At the same time, it is recognised that it is still too early to rely on the EEAS and EU Delegations to take over a substantial proportion of national embassies’ tasks, and the Netherlands opposes an expansion of the EEAS budget. Nevertheless, the Netherlands still aims to explore the possibility of delegating tasks in the area of consular affairs and visa applications to EU Delegations in the years to come.⁸⁷ This point is reiterated in policy documents and debates with Members of Parliament, also in the context of further budget cuts to the diplomatic network of the Netherlands.⁸⁸ The option of co-locating embassies with EU Delegations is also considered as a viable one for those countries in which the Netherlands has a small diplomatic service. In cooperation with the Danish EU Presidency, a conference

⁸⁶ Clingendael (2012), ‘Rijk Achter de Dijken’, ‘Magazine on EU and International Affairs for the Election Campaign, Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague.

⁸⁷ The Government of the Netherlands (2011), ‘Beoordeling Nieuwe Commissievoorstellen Fiche Over: Mededeling Consulaire Bescherming EU Burgers in Derde Landen’, The Hague, and The Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Verslag van de Informele Raad Buitenlandse Zaken (‘Gymnich’) van 9 en 10 maart 2012’, The Hague.

⁸⁸ The Government of the Netherlands (2011), *ibidem*, and The Government of the Netherlands (2012), ‘Answer Regarding Motie Ten Broeke c.s. and Motie Ormel and Ten Broeke’, The Hague.

for the European External Action Service was convened on this topic in The Hague in March 2012. Together with the Benelux partners and the Baltic states further progress on this topic is explored and the Netherlands aims to take part in a pilot-project to have a joint EU-visa office at Cape Verde.⁸⁹

Within the Ministry's structure, responsibility for EU neighbourhood policy, EU development cooperation and other topics on the agenda of the former EU external relations commissioners and services fall within the Directorate-General for European Cooperation. Responsibility for developing Dutch positions on Common Foreign and Security Policy issues, including the tasks of the European Correspondent and the Common Security and Defence Policy, falls within the Directorate-General for Political Affairs. The two main aspects of EU external action are thus the responsibility of two divisions of the Ministry that fall within different organisational entities of the same ministry. On EU external action, these divisions also coordinate regularly with other units of the Ministry, such as the Department in charge of multilateral affairs regarding EU representation in UN bodies, and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation for EU donor coordination and aspects of EU development cooperation policy, such as aid effectiveness, on which the Netherlands has its own viewpoints and considerable experience. There is also a considerable amount of coordination with the recently added Directorate-General for foreign economic relations that was transferred from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to allow a single minister to be responsible both for aid and trade policy issues. This minister, Lilianne Ploumen, is also a Social Democrat, just like Foreign Minister Timmermans.

The fact that issues falling within the remit of the Foreign Affairs Council and the EEAS are prepared by different organisational sub-entities within the Ministry risks undermining the Dutch objective of coherence in EU external policies, and it is the source of a considerable amount of intra-ministerial coordination. This aspect might be taken into account by a group of 'wise men' that is currently advising the minister on how to modernise Dutch diplomacy.

10.4 NATIONAL VIEWS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EEAS

After the 'no vote' in the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, the Dutch government supported the British position of no longer using the title 'EU Foreign Minister' for the upgraded position of High Representative. Despite the removal of this symbolism, the Netherlands did not oppose the idea of setting up a European diplomatic service and combining foreign policy tasks previously performed by the EU Commissioner for External Relations, the High Representative and the EU Presidency. A letter to parliament in 2010 on the establishment of the EEAS mentions that gains are to be expected with regard to the quality and coherence of decision-making in the area of EU foreign policy.⁹⁰ It also refers to the need to increasingly speak with one European voice due to the shifting tectonics of world order, and the emerging economies being increasingly assertive to the detriment of the EU's international influence.

Dutch support for the EEAS was also demonstrated by a high-level seminar organised by the Clingendael Institute in October 2010, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event brought together senior policymakers from over 17 EU member states with academic experts to discuss how the EEAS could be turned into a success.⁹¹ More in general, the Netherlands is among

⁸⁹ The Government of the Netherlands (2013), *Staat van de Unie "Bruggen slaan in Europa"* (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.

⁹⁰ The Government of the Netherlands (2010), *'Kamerbrief Inzake Europese Dienst voor het Externe Optreden'*, The Hague.

⁹¹ Van Ham, P. and Van Schaik, L. (2012), *'Heeft Nederland Nog Wel een Eigen Buitenlands Beleid (Nodig)? Of Zou de Europese Unie dit Moeten Overnemen?'*, Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague.

the strongest proponents of a role in consular affairs and visa services for EU Delegations. The Dutch government has strongly advocated this, but it also realises that a transfer of this task to EU Delegations is unlikely to happen overnight, given the opposition of key EU member states, including the UK, France and Germany. A recent letter to parliament mentions seconding a Dutch diplomat to the EEAS to work specifically on strengthening possible EEAS contributions in the area of consular crisis management and consular protection of EU citizens in third countries.⁹² Together with the Benelux partners and the Baltic States, an announcement was made in Brussels in December 2012 to underline the common desire for a larger European role in consular affairs.⁹³

The Netherlands has emphasised that local EU statements should always be made by the EU Delegation, preferably by the Head of Mission. Member states, particularly the 'big three', should not all of a sudden step in when offences are grave and they are willing to make a mark. The Netherlands also accepts a (leading) role for EU Delegations in coordinating development cooperation and (passively) follows the EU's policy in countries where it has no embassy of its own. The Netherlands is very much interested in obtaining access to the political reports of EU Delegations, including those with politically sensitive information. It realises the need for considerable investment in IT to ensure the safe transmission of data and it is willing to advise the EEAS on this matter and to provide technical support. At the same time, any additional funding for this matter would not be necessary, in line with the Dutch position on EU budget matters.

With regard to the issue of the EU's external representation in multilateral bodies, the Netherlands is pragmatic with regard to whom should represent the EU. EU coordination and external representation practices should be brought in line with post-Lisbon rules, but it is recognised that these can be interpreted in different ways. It also matters how far apart the interests and preferences of EU member states are, and whether the rules and culture of the relevant international organisation allow for a unified EU external representation. In practice, this means that the Netherlands does actively contribute to achieving common EU positions on most international issues, but not on those issues where it has strongly-held policy positions and consensus is difficult to achieve. An example is the agenda on sexual and reproductive rights, where the EU has trouble agreeing on common positions due to religious-ethical considerations in a minority of (Catholic) EU member states, whereas the Netherlands prefers a progressive policy and also openly advocates this position.

Together with Belgium and Luxembourg, the Netherlands drafted a non-paper in April 2011 in which it advocated:

- better cooperation with third countries and international organisations;
- increased information-sharing and joint analyses;
- consular cooperation;
- streamlined foreign policy decision-making with a strong role for the Political and Security Committee;
- logistical support in times of crisis;
- joint travel advice and cables;
- common communication;

⁹² The Government of the Netherlands (2012), 'Answer Regarding Motie Ten Broeke c.s. and Motie Ormel and Ten Broeke', The Hague.

⁹³ Government of the Netherlands (2012), 'Benelux en Baltische Staten willen meer consulaire samenwerking in Europa, 10 December 2012', The Hague. Cf: www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2012/12/10/benelux-en-baltische-staten-willen-meer-consulaire-samenwerking-binnen-europa.html [accessed 24 January 2012].

- more coordination between the EU and national development cooperation programming; and
- common training of EU and national diplomats.

At the same time, the Netherlands has underlined its longstanding demand for the budget of EU's external action to stay within the limits of the overall budget, which, in light of the economic crisis, should not be increased at this point in time.⁹⁴ This demand is consistent with the objective of budget neutrality as enshrined in the decision on the establishment of the EEAS.⁹⁵

At the beginning of 2012, the Netherlands asked for more clarity on the status of certain internal EEAS documents, such as Heads of Mission (HoMs) reports that are agreed upon in third countries by the Heads of Embassy of EU member states and the EU Delegation. This matter arose after an incident in which the (former) minister was displeased at the leaking of a HoMs report in Gaza.

In December 2011, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, together with 11 colleagues from other EU member states, co-signed a three-page letter to Catherine Ashton on the EEAS.⁹⁶ Some observers viewed this as a criticism of the Service, even though ministers emphasised their objective of being constructive and supportive. The letter mentions, amongst other things, that “the setting up of a secure communications network should be a major priority” and that “the creation of defence and security *attachés* in EU Delegations ... should be considered”. In response, Ashton presented a report in which she pointed to the administrative and budgetary challenges facing the EEAS and highlighted achievements made thus far.⁹⁷

It seems as if Dutch criticism focused mainly on organisational aspects. For instance, in October 2011, the Minister of Foreign Affairs assured the parliament that HR/VP Ashton had made an active and valuable contribution to international policies, including to the Middle East peace process, the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo, and in the Arab region⁹⁸. In an informal meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in March 2012, he underlined the need for “more synergy between the EEAS and Member States’ diplomatic services”.⁹⁹

In the most recent policy statement on EU policy the EEAS is said still to suffer from birth pains, even though it has passed the stage of early birth. According to the Dutch government the service seems to be suffering from obligatory expenses eating up most of its budget, limited political room to manoeuvre, bureaucratic internal structures and processes, turf wars and call for more external visibility.¹⁰⁰ It expresses its intention to actively contribute to the mid-term review of the EEAS foreseen for this year. In terms of policy priorities the contribution to promoting human rights is highlighted. At the same time it is recognised that the times at which the EU could base its international position on normative objectives and international payments are over. The EU needs to become more focused on promoting its interests in the world. Topics such as non-proliferation, raw materials, climate change, water and energy require global answers given their destabilising effects. The Common Foreign and Security Policy can be expected to concentrate on the neighbourhood

⁹⁴ The Government of the Netherlands (2011), ‘Verslag van de Raad Buitenlandse Zaken van 12 April 2011’, The Hague.

⁹⁵ European Union (2010), ‘Council Decision of 26 July 2010 Establishing the Organisation and Functioning of the EEAS’, 2010/427/EU, Brussels.

⁹⁶ Reitman, A. (2012), ‘Ministers Identify Glitches in EU Diplomatic Service’, EU Observer, 6 January 2012.

⁹⁷ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2011), ‘European External Action Service: Report by the High Representative to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission’, Brussels.

⁹⁸ Parliament of the Netherlands, ‘Modernisering Nederlandse Diplomatie, Lijst van Vragen en Antwoorden’, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 32 734, No. 2, The Hague.

⁹⁹ Bulletin Quotidien Europe 10571, 2012.

¹⁰⁰ The Government of the Netherlands (2013), Staat van de Unie “Bruggen slaan in Europa” (State of the Union: building bridges within Europe), 15 February 2013.

countries and the broader circles of countries surrounding them, notably the Western Balkans, the Middle-East and North-Africa, the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, the Eastern neighbourhood countries and Iran.

Frequent contacts with the EEAS, but hesitation to join the service

In general, the attention given to the CFSP has not increased, but diplomats at the Ministry are in contact more often with diplomats from the EEAS and EU Delegations, which may slowly create greater awareness. This is particularly the case for regional departments and country desk officers. The 'EU coordination' reflex is on the rise; more often Dutch diplomats realise the need to ask whether an EU position on a particular issue exists or should be developed. Some complain about the obligatory character of EU coordination and preparatory documents for Council meetings arriving from the EEAS being late or of low quality. More recently, this is said to be improving.

A small group of people within the Ministry are really interested in EEAS matters; they would also be the people one would expect to join the EEAS at a certain point in their career. Positions in the EEAS feature in regular postings of jobs linked to the rotating system applied within the Ministry (with career diplomats and some of the support staff having to rotate every four years). One senior staff member at the Permanent Representation to the EU is responsible for promoting Dutch nationals in senior EU positions, including those within the EEAS. This person aims to increase the number of Dutch nationals at EEAS Headquarters.

It is not clear whether taking up a position in the EEAS is beneficial for national career prospects. In general, being outside the core structure of the Ministry is considered less beneficial for the career path and stories about a bad working atmosphere at the Service with many turf wars and less interesting tasks for seconded national diplomats are no recommendation. It would furthermore be difficult to obtain a management position, whereas experience with supervising diplomats is a requirement for further promotion within the Dutch system. An extra complicating factor is that the new government decided to include top positions at the Dutch MFA in a rotating pool of top officials working for Dutch government institutions. Senior staff with experience in other ministries are less likely to move on to the EEAS, since they lack long-standing experience in diplomacy, which is a typical requirement for EEAS positions. Dutch diplomats who are still interested emphasise that a posting at the EEAS provides an extraordinary opportunity to learn from other diplomats and to help shape EU positions on sensitive foreign policy matters, somewhat out of reach of direct Dutch influence. Joining the EEAS would provide a steep learning curve and would therefore be considered a good step in a balanced career path, similar to being based for instance at the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU.

10.5 LONG LIVE ASHTON! WHO DO YOU MEAN?

Ashton is rather invisible in Dutch media sources. The CFSP plays only a marginal role in debates on foreign policy, which centre around the Dutch position on the euro crisis, the budget and effectiveness of development aid, cuts made to the defence budget, and the need for economic diplomacy to promote the Dutch business sector.

According to the Dutch government, Ashton could be more assertive in setting the EU foreign policy agenda on specific issues, such as the relationship with strategic partners. The previous Dutch government had little appetite for a revision of the European Security Strategy as it believed there was no need for new strategies, but rather new policy activities in specific fields. It is not yet clear whether the new government will depart from this position, but a radical change appears unlikely.

On the Middle East peace process, the position of the Netherlands was expected to change when pro-Israel Minister Rosenthal (backed by the Freedom Party of Geert Wilders) left his position. The new minister, Mr Timmermans, was expected to take a more pro-Palestinian position on the basis of viewpoints expressed during his term as a Member of Parliament. Nevertheless, on the initiative of a small radical Christian party (SGP), a resolution was adopted in parliament in which the continued support of the Netherlands for Israel was emphasised.¹⁰¹ Whereas the Netherlands voted against Palestinian membership of UNESCO in 2011, it abstained from voting at the UN General Assembly when the same matter arose in November 2012. Minister Timmermans explained on Dutch television that, despite having advocated a different position before, he now had to respect the majority wishes of the parliament.¹⁰² He also hinted that the Dutch had persuaded Germany too to abstain that time around. It thus appears that the Dutch position has only become slightly more moderate with regard to questions concerning the Middle East peace process, and that Timmermans attaches more importance to the Dutch position being in line with those of other EU member states. In general, he seems keen to underline the need for European consensus.

The issue resurfaced in the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held on 18 and 19 December 2012. Minister Timmermans stressed the need for a united EU position on the Middle East peace process and the EU's role in establishing a better labelling system with regard to products from illegal settlements in Palestinian territories. In his view, the Netherlands will not be able to play an influential role on these matters on its own. Regarding the issue of human rights violations, *inter alia* in Tibet, he also referred to EU efforts given the lack of a diplomatic presence for the Netherlands in many parts of the world. Members of Parliament referred to cooperation with other EU member states and the EEAS in relation to the increased need for co-location in order to save costs.

According to the foreign policy scorecard of the European Council on Foreign Relations the Netherlands punched above its weight on EU foreign policy matters in 2012 pointing to a sustained contribution to promoting human rights (e.g. towards Russia), humanitarian assistance and its willingness to share its IMF Executive Board position with a view of reducing Europe's overrepresentation in this body.¹⁰³ This may point to the Netherlands doing better on the ground than in terms of its contribution to the strategic thinking and is likely due to the choice of topics looked at. With the ongoing budget cuts in the area development cooperation and diplomatic staff the picture is likely to be less positive in the future.

10.6 CONCLUSIONS

When talking to Dutch diplomats and foreign policy specialists more generally, as well as when bearing in mind Dutch media, the Netherlands does appear still to be downplaying the potential of the new HR/VP position and the EEAS. The country almost seems to be in a state of denial with regard to rapid developments in the field of EU foreign policymaking. For instance, it is not participating in the European Global Strategy initiative launched by Sweden, Poland, Italy and Spain. Government officials use the perception of the EEAS not functioning very well as an excuse to justify the limited amount of strategic thinking. However, sooner or later the transatlantic middle-power will have to decide its course on EU foreign policy and the implications of the new structures for the

¹⁰¹ Parliament of The Netherlands (2012), 'Motie van het Lid van der Staaij' (Resolution on Dutch Support to Israel), Kabinetsformatie, 33410, Nr. 55, The Hague.

¹⁰² Interview with Minister Timmermans at Pauw & Witteman (a Dutch late night show), 29 November 2012.

¹⁰³ Vaisse, J. and Dennisson, S. (2013), European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013, European Council on Foreign Relations, London.

tasks and scope of Dutch national foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ We are still waiting to hear the views of new Foreign Minister Timmermans on many issues of EU foreign policy. Given his background as a career diplomat, a Social Democrat and Minister for Europe (which is now combined with Foreign Affairs), he can be expected to be more keen on supporting an active EU foreign policy in comparison to his predecessor, but only time will tell.

¹⁰⁴ Van Ham, P. and Van Schaik, L. (2012), *ibidem*.

Quantitative data – The Netherlands

MFA budget

Year **2011**: Total budget: 11 bn €, of which:

- Contribution to the EU: 6.8 bn €
- Administrative costs: 720 mln €

Number of missions

Total: 158

Outside the EU: 127

Inside the EU: 31

Number of staff employed by the MFA

Total: 2,500, of which

- Staff in missions: 997

Number of staff seconded to the EEAS

Total number of Dutch nationals: 31, of which:

- 8 seconded national diplomats
- 23 officials (AD level)

These include:

- 7 Heads of Delegation
- 1 Director for Security
- 1 Head of EU Military Staff
- 1 Head of Legal Service

In addition: 26 SNEs

Number of arrangements of cooperation/burden-sharing with diplomatic missions of other member states (sharing premises, consular services etc.)

- The Netherlands shares its premises with Denmark in Harare (Zimbabwe) and Vilnius (Lithuania). In Astana (Kazakhstan) one Belgian diplomat is located at the Embassy of the Netherlands. Currently, several other options for co-location are being negotiated or investigated.
- One Dutch diplomat was incorporated in the staff of the EU Delegation in Damascus (Syria) after the Dutch Embassy closed down. This lasted until the Syrian Embassy in The Hague stopped to be operational.
- In countries where Dutch embassies were closed, the handing out of Schengen visas is delegated to other EU member states. In Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Cameroon, Zambia, Guatemala, Bolivia and Uruguay, visas are handed out by Belgium, Spain and Sweden.

Sources: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; European External Action Service (2012). 'Staffing in the EEAS'. Brussels .