

# DIPLOMAT

MAGAZINE

BEING OPEN,  
DESPITE THE PAST

Vladimir Putin

THIRTY YEARS OF THE  
SOUTHERN COMMON MARKET

Felipe Solá, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina*

THE TOURISM REVIVAL AFTER PANDEMIC

Frank Rainieri

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT OF OUR COMMON MARKET

Euclides Acevedo, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay*

A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN COSTA RICA:  
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## REINVENTING DIPLOMACY

The pandemic gave the world's diplomatic community an opportunity to demonstrate its innate resilience, inventiveness, and sense of duty. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, diplomats kept on working incessantly to repatriate nationals, to look for vaccines for their countries, to ensure the logistics for saving the lives of millions, always maintaining diplomatic channels open regardless of the extremely difficult conditions. Over the last year and a half, we have all had the opportunity to discover new ways of living and working, moving ahead during critical times thanks to the discovery of new solutions and new ideas. Diplomacy has been reinvented - and Diplomat Magazine has been there all the way to support you in this process.

In this edition of Diplomat Magazine, you will find an impressive article by Russian President Vladimir Putin reflecting on NATO expansion and European security, as well as on ideas for international cooperation from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This masterpiece should be read together with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's article, "The Law, the Rights and the Rules". The edition also features four more Ministers of Foreign Affairs exposing their views on current issues. Argentina's Felipe Solá and Paraguay's Dr. Euclides Acevedo talk about the Southern Common Market and its 30th anniversary; Costa Rica's Rodolfo Solano Quirós celebrates his country's 200th anniversary; and New Zealand's Foreign Ministers reflects on whether diplomacy can work over a webcam. In addition, HH Sheikha Intisar al Sabah from Kuwait explains why mental health support needs to become a part of international humanitarian aid.

Other Ministers and Ambassadors from many countries also expose their views on a broad range of important topics, including – but not limited to – the following: Jewish heritage in Albania; the restoration of Nigerian arts from Germany; the new challenges faced by the Croatian ambassador; the 200th anniversary of Greece; Serbia's regional cooperation;

Peruvian maritime rights; Panama commitment to the Empowerment of Women; China's efforts to enhance its partnerships; the pillars of Romanian-Dutch relations; Georgia's 30 years' commitment to Euro-Atlantic Integration; the use of digital diplomacy by the Dutch General Consul in San Francisco; and Madagascar's efforts to improve business and investment ties with Europe.

Moreover, in this edition there is also space for other important topics. In a conversation with Punta Cana founder Frank Rainieri, we reflect on the revival of tourism after the pandemic; and in collaboration with IHE Delft Institute we explore the linkage between water, peace, and security. Other subjects include the expansion of ISIS, international cooperation from the UAE to Colombia, Russian trade with Germany, as well as the analysis of the COVID pandemic from different angles.

Besides these thematic articles, we also have wonderful stories from diplomatic spouses with unusual jobs, like Federal Agents or horse managers. And what about the next generation of diplomats? We explore the story of a worldwide famous designer, as well as that of two students from Indonesia in Europe.

To conclude, I would like to honour the memory of those who have left us, among the many the ambassadors of Angola, Dr. Luis Jose de Almeida, and Argentina, Dr. Guioconda Ubeda Rivera, as well as the General Manager of the legendary hotel Des Indes, Coen Masselink. You will all be remembered. I would also like to acknowledge the virtual support of ministers, ambassadors, diplomats, jurists, academics, politicians, students, and friends from all over the world: you all are Diplomat Magazine's permanent support team!

*Dr Mayelinne De Lara*

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## MAIN ARTICLES

By Vladimir Putin, The President of The Russian Federation Being Open, Despite the Past	6
By Sergey Lavrov, Russian Minister Of Foreign Affairs The Law, the Rights and the Rules	8

## DIPLOMAT VIP

H.E. Felipe Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic	14
H.E. Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica	16
H.E. Dr. Euclides Acevedo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay	18
H.E. Prof Kristina Sinemus, Hessian Minister of Digital Strategy and Development	20
Vangelis Vitalis, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Deputy Secretary, Trade and Economic	22
H.E. Mr. Didier Herbert, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in the Netherlands	25
Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague	26
HH Sheikha Intisar Al Sabah, Founder and Chairwoman of Intisar Foundation	28
H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Solano, Minister of Foreing Affairs of Costa Rica	30
Tina Beer, State Secretary for Cultural Affairs of Thuringia, Germany	32
Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut, Minister of Economy, Labour and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg (Germany)	33
H.E. Mr Frank Rainieri, Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Chairman and Founder of Grupo Puntacana in the Dominican Republic	34

## DIPLOMAT AMBASSADORIAL

ALBANIA H.E. Ms. Adia Sakiqi	36
NIGERIA H.E. Mr. Yusuf Tuggar	37
CROATIA H.E. Ms Dubravka Plejic Markov	38
GREECE H.E. Mr. Nicolas P. Plexidas	39
SERBIA H.E. Ms. Ksenija Milenkovic	40
PERU H.E. Ms. Marisol Agüero Colunga	41
PANAMA H.E. Ms. Elizabeth Ward Neiman,	42
ROMANIA H.E. Mr. Lucian Fatu	43
CHINA H.E. Mr. Jian Tan	44
MADAGASCAR H.E. Mr Jean Omer Beriziky	46
GEORGIA Mr. Giorgi Nakashidze	48
THE NETHERLANDS Mr Dirk Janssen	49

## MAGAZINE DIPLOMATIQUE

M. Philippe Couvreur Cour internationale de Justice: éternel bel âge?	56
Cristina Hoss Le Tribunal irano-américain des réclamations a 40 ans	59

## DIPLOMAT POUCH

Roy Lie Atjam	62
Susanne Schmeier	63
Razzaq K. Mansoor Al-Seedi	64
Mirjam Blaak	65
Patricia Pazos	66
Abu Dhabi Development Fund	67
Dr. Saifaldin Z. Al-Darraj	68
Leonardo Royal Hotel	69
John Dunkelgrün	70
Edgardo Sobenes	67
Barend ter Haar	68
Guido Lanfranchi	69
The Iijs Approach	70
Andrei Sobolev	72

AND MUCH MORE!





# BEING OPEN, DESPITE THE PAST

BY **VLADIMIR PUTIN**, THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*80 years ago, the Nazis, having conquered practically the whole of Europe, attacked the USSR. For the Soviet people the Great Patriotic War – the bloodiest one in the history of our country – began. Tens of millions of people lost their lives, the economic potential of the country and its cultural property were severely damaged.*

We are proud of the courage and steadfastness of the heroes of the Red Army and home front workers who not only defended the independence and dignity of our homeland, but also saved Europe and the world from enslavement. Despite attempts to rewrite the pages of the past that are being made today, the truth is that Soviet soldiers came to Germany not to take revenge on the Germans, but with a noble and great mission of liberation. We hold sacred the memory of the heroes who fought against Nazism. We remember with gratitude our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, participants in the Resistance movement, and German anti-fascists who brought our common victory closer.

Having lived through the horrors of the world war, the peoples of Europe were nevertheless able to overcome alienation and restore mutual trust and respect. They set a course for integration in order to draw a final line under the European tragedies of the first half of the last century. And I would like to emphasize that the historical reconciliation of our people with the Germans living both in the east and the west of modern united Germany played a huge role in the formation of such Europe.

I would also like to remind that it was German entrepreneurs who became "pioneers" of cooperation with our country in the post-war years. In 1970, the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany concluded a "deal of the century" on long-term natural gas supplies to Europe that laid the foundation for



supplies to Europe that laid the foundation for constructive interdependence and initiated many future grand projects, including the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline.

We hoped that the end of the Cold War would be a common victory for Europe. It seemed that just a little more effort was needed to make Charles de Gaulle's dream of a single continent – not even geographically "from the Atlantic to the Urals", but culturally and civilizationally "from Lisbon to Vladivostok" – become a reality.

It is exactly with this logic in mind – the logic of building a Greater Europe united by common values and interests – that Russia has sought to develop its relations with the Europeans. Both Russia and the EU have done a lot on this path.

But a different approach has prevailed. It was based on the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance which was itself a relic of the Cold War. After all, it was specifically created for the confrontation of that era.

It was the bloc's movement eastwards – which, by the way, began when the Soviet leadership was actually persuaded to accept the united Germany's accession to NATO – that turned into the main reason for the rapid increase in mutual mistrust in Europe. Verbal promises made in that time such as "this is not directed against you" or "the bloc's borders will not get closer to you" were quickly forgotten. But a precedent was set.

And since 1999, five more "waves" of NATO expansion have followed. Fourteen new countries, including the former Soviet Union republics, joined the organization, effectively dashing hopes for a continent without dividing lines. Interestingly, this was warned about in the mid-1980s by Egon Bahr, one of the SPD leaders, who proposed a radical restructuring of the entire European security system after German unification, involving both the USSR and the United States. But no one in the USSR, the USA or Europe was willing to listen to him at the time.

Moreover, many countries were put before the artificial choice of being either with the collective West or with Russia. In fact, it was an ultimatum. The Ukrainian tragedy of 2014 is an example of the consequences that this aggressive policy has led to. Europe actively supported the unconstitutional armed coup in Ukraine. This was where it all started. Why was it necessary to do this? Then incumbent president Yanukovich had already accepted all the demands of the opposition. Why did the USA organize the coup and the

European countries weak-heartedly support it, provoking a split within Ukraine and the withdrawal of Crimea?

*The whole system of European security has now degraded significantly.*

*Tensions are rising and the risks of a new arms race are becoming real. We are missing out on the tremendous opportunities that cooperation offers – all the more important now that we are all facing common challenges, such as the pandemic and its dire social and economic consequences.*

Why does this happen? And most importantly, what conclusions should we draw together? What lessons of history should we recall? I think, first and foremost, that the entire post-war history of Greater Europe confirms that prosperity and security of our common continent is only possible through the joint efforts of all countries, including Russia. Because Russia is one of the largest countries in Europe. And we are aware of our inseparable cultural and historical connection to Europe.

I reiterate that Russia is in favour of restoring a comprehensive partnership with Europe. We have many topics of mutual interest. These include security and strategic stability, healthcare and education, digitalization,

energy, culture, science and technology, resolution of climate and environmental issues.

*We are open to honest and constructive interaction. This is confirmed by our idea of creating a common space of cooperation and security from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean which would comprise various integration formats, including the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union.*

The world is a dynamic place, facing new challenges and threats. We simply cannot afford to carry the burden of past misunderstandings, hard feelings, conflicts, and mistakes. It is a burden that will prevent us from concentrating on the challenges at hand. We are convinced that we all should recognize these mistakes and correct them. Our common and indisputable goal is to ensure security on the continent without dividing lines, a common space for equitable cooperation and inclusive development for the prosperity of Europe and the world as a whole.





*The frank and generally constructive conversation that took place at the June 16, 2021 summit meeting between presidents Vladimir Putin and Joseph Biden in Geneva resulted in an agreement to launch a substantive dialogue on strategic stability, reaffirming the crucial premise that nuclear war is unacceptable. The two sides also reached an understanding on the advisability of engaging in consultations on cybersecurity, the operation of diplomatic missions, the fate of imprisoned Russian and US citizens and a number of regional conflicts.*

The Russian leader made it clear, including in his public statements, that finding a mutually acceptable balance of interests strictly on a parity basis is the only way to deliver on any of these tracks. There were no objections during the talks. However, in their immediate aftermath, US officials, including those who participated in the Geneva meeting, started asserting what seemed to be foregone tenets, perorating that they had “made it clear” to Moscow, “warned it, and stated their demands.” Moreover, all these “warnings” went hand in hand with threats: if Moscow does not accept the “rules of the road” set forth in Geneva in a matter of several months, it would come under renewed pressure.

Of course, it has yet to be seen how the consultations to define specific ways for fulfilling the Geneva understandings as mentioned above will proceed. As Vladimir Putin said during his news conference following the talks, “we have a lot to work on.” That said, it is telling that Washington’s ineradicable position was voiced immediately

following the talks, especially since European capitals immediately took heed of the Big Brother’s sentiment and picked up the tune with much gusto and relish. The gist of their statements is that they are ready to normalise their relations with Moscow, but only after it changes the way it behaves.

It is as if a choir has been pre-arranged to sing along with the lead vocalist. It seems that this was what the series of high-level Western events in the build-up to the Russia-US talks was all about: the Group of Seven Summit in Cornwall, UK, the NATO Summit in Brussels, as well as Joseph Biden’s meeting with President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

These meetings were carefully prepared in a way that leaves no doubt that the West wanted to send a clear message: it stands united like never before and will do what it believes to be right in international affairs, while forcing others, primarily Russia and China,

## THE LAW, THE RIGHTS AND THE RULES

BY **SERGEY LAVROV**,  
RUSSIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



The Russian leader made it clear, including in his public statements, that finding a mutually acceptable balance of interests strictly on a parity basis is the only way to deliver on any of these tracks. There were no objections during the talks. However, in their immediate aftermath, US officials, including those who participated in the Geneva meeting, started asserting what seemed to be foregone tenets, perorating that they had “made it clear” to Moscow, “warned it, and stated their demands.” Moreover, all these “warnings” went hand in hand with threats: if Moscow does not accept the “rules of the road” set forth in Geneva in a matter of several months, it would come under renewed pressure.

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These meetings were carefully prepared in a way that leaves no doubt that the West wanted to send a clear message: it stands united like never before and will do what it believes to be right in international affairs, while forcing others, primarily Russia and China, to follow its lead. The documents adopted at

the Cornwall and Brussels summits cemented the rules-based world order concept as a counterweight to the universal principles of international law with the UN Charter as its primary source.

In doing so, the West deliberately shies away from spelling out the rules it purports to follow, just as it refrains from explaining why they are needed. After all, there are already thousands of universal international legal instruments setting out clear national commitments and transparent verification mechanisms. The beauty of these Western “rules” lies precisely in the fact that they lack any specific content. When someone acts against the will of the West, it immediately responds with a groundless claim that “the rules have been broken” (without bothering to present any evidence) and declares its “right to hold the perpetrators accountable.” The less specific they get, the freer their hand to carry on with the arbitrary practice of employing dirty tactics as a way to pressure competitors. During the so-called “wild 1990s” in Russia, we used to refer to such practices as laying down the law.

To the participants in the G7, NATO and US-EU summits, this series of high-level events signalled the return by the United States into European affairs and the restored consolidation of the Old World under the wing of the new administration in Washington. Most NATO and EU members met this U-turn with enthusiastic comments rather than just a sigh of relief. The adherence to liberal values as the humanity’s guiding star provides an ideological underpinning for the reunification of the “Western family.” Without any false modesty, Washington and Brussels called themselves “an anchor for democracy, peace and security,” as opposed to “authoritarianism in all its forms.” In particular, they proclaimed their intent to use sanctions to “support democracy across the globe.” To this effect, they took on board the American idea of convening a Summit for Democracy. Make no mistake, the West will cherry pick the participants in this summit. It will also set an agenda that is unlikely to meet any opposition from the participants of its choosing. There has been talk of democracy-exporting countries undertaking “enhanced commitments” to ensure universal adherence to “democratic standards” and devising mechanisms for controlling these processes.

The revitalised Anglo-American Atlantic Charter approved by Joseph Biden and Boris Johnson on June 10, 2021 on the sidelines of the G7 Summit is also worth noting. It was cast as an updated version of the 1941 document

signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill under the same title. At the time, it played an important role in shaping the contours of the post-war world order.

However, neither Washington, nor London mentioned an essential historical fact: eighty years ago, the USSR and a number of European governments in exile joined the 1941 charter, paving the way to making it one of the conceptual pillars of the Anti-Hitler Coalition and one of the legal blueprints of the UN Charter.

*By the same token, the New Atlantic Charter has been designed as a starting point for building a new world order, but guided solely by Western “rules.” Its provisions are ideologically tainted.*

They seek to widen the gap between the so-called liberal democracies and all other nations, as well as legitimise the rules-based order. The new charter fails to mention the UN or the OSCE, while stating without any reservations the adherence by the Western nations to their commitments as NATO members, viewed de facto as the only legitimate decision-making centre (at least this is how former NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen described NATO’s role). It is clear that the same philosophy will guide the preparations for the Summit for Democracy.

Labelled as “authoritarian powers,” Russia and China have been designated as the main obstacles to delivering on the agenda set out at the June summits. From a general perspective, they face two groups of grievances, loosely defined as external and internal. In terms of international affairs, Beijing is accused of being too assertive in pursuing its economic interests (the Belt and Road initiative), as well as expanding its military and, in general, technological might with a view to increasing its influence. Russia stands accused of adopting an “aggressive posture” in a number of regions. This is the way they treat Moscow’s policy aimed at countering ultra-radical and neo-Nazi aspirations in its immediate neighbourhood, where the rights of Russians, as well as other ethnic minorities, are being suppressed, and the Russian language, education and culture rooted out. They also dislike the fact that Moscow stands up for countries that became victims to Western gambles, were attacked by international terrorists and risked losing their statehood, as was the case with Syria.



Still, the West reserved its biggest words to the inner workings of the “non-democratic” countries and its commitment to reshape them to fit into the Western mould. This entails bringing society in compliance with the vision of democracy as preached by Washington and Brussels. This lies at the root of the demands that Moscow and Beijing, as well as all others, follow the Western prescriptions on human rights, civil society, opposition treatment, the media, governance and the interaction between the branches of power. While proclaiming the “right” to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries for the sake of promoting democracy as it understands it, the West instantly loses all interest when we raise the prospect of making international relations more democratic, including renouncing arrogant behaviour and committing to abide by the universally recognised tenets of international law instead of “rules.” By expanding sanctions and other illegitimate coercive measures against sovereign states, the West promotes totalitarian rule in global affairs, assuming an imperial, neo-colonial stance in its relations with third countries. They are asked to adopt the democratic rule under the model of the Western choosing, and forget about democracy in international affairs, since someone will be deciding everything for them. All that is asked of these third countries is to keep quiet, or face reprisals.

Clearheaded politicians in Europe and America realise that this uncompromising policy leads nowhere, and are beginning to think pragmatically, albeit out of public view, recognising that the world has more than just one civilisation. They are beginning to recognise that Russia, China and other major powers have a history that dates back a thousand years, and have their own traditions, values and way of life. Attempts to decide whose values are better, and whose are worse, seem pointless. Instead, the West must simply recognise that there are other ways to govern that may be different from the Western approaches, and accept and respect this as a given. No country is immune to human rights issues, so why all this high-browed hubris? Why do the Western countries assume that they can deal with these issues on their own, since they are democracies, while others have yet to reach this level, and are in need of assistance that the West will generously provide.

International relations are going through fundamental shifts that affect everyone without exception. Trying to predict where it will take us is impossible. Still, there is a question: messianic aspirations apart, what is the most effective form of government for coping with and removing threats that

transcend borders and affect all people, no matter where they live? Political scientists are beginning to compare the available toolboxes used by the so-called liberal democracies and by “autocratic regimes.” In this context, it is telling that the term “autocratic democracy” has been suggested, even if timidly.

These are useful considerations, and serious-minded politicians who are currently in power, among others, must take heed. Thinking and scrutinising what is going on around us has never hurt anyone. The multipolar world is becoming reality. Attempts to ignore this reality by asserting oneself as the only legitimate decision-making centre will hardly bring about solutions to real, rather than farfetched challenges. Instead, what is needed is mutually respectful dialogue involving the leading powers and with due regard for the interests of all other members of the international community. This implies an unconditional commitment to abide by the universally accepted norms and principles of international law, including respecting the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in their domestic affairs, peaceful resolution of conflict, and the right to self-determination.

*Taken as a whole, the historical West dominated the world for five hundred years. However, there is no doubt that it now sees that this era is coming to a close, while clinging to the status it used to enjoy, and putting artificial brakes on the objective process consisting in the emergence of a polycentric world.*

This brought about an attempt to provide a conceptual underpinning to the new vision of multilateralism. For example, France and Germany tried to promote “effective multilateralism,” rooted in the EU ideals and actions, and serving as a model to everyone else, rather than promoting UN’s inclusive multilateralism.

By imposing the concept of a rules-based order, the West seeks to shift the conversation on key issues to the platforms of its liking, where no dissident voices can be heard. This is how like-minded groups and various “appeals” emerge. This is about coordinating prescriptions and then making everyone else follow them. Examples include an “appeal for trust and security in cyberspace”, “the humanitarian appeal for action”, and a “global partnership to protect media freedom.” Each of these platforms brings together only several dozen countries, which is far from a majority,

as far as the international community is concerned. The UN system offers inclusive negotiations platforms on all of the abovementioned subjects. Understandably, this gives rise to alternative points of view that have to be taken into consideration in search of a compromise, but all the West wants is to impose its own rules.

At the same time, the EU develops dedicated horizontal sanctions regimes for each of its “like-minded groups,” of course, without looking back at the UN Charter. This is how it works: those who join these “appeals” or “partnerships” decide among themselves who violates their requirements in a given sphere, and the European Union imposes sanctions on those at fault. What a convenient method. They can indict and punish all by themselves without ever needing to turn to the UN Security Council. They even came up with a rationale to this effect: since we have an alliance of the most effective multilateralists, we can teach others to master these best practices. To those who believe this to be undemocratic or at odds with a vision of genuine multilateralism, President of France Emmanuel Macron offered an explanation in his remarks on May 11, 2021: multilateralism does not mean necessity to strike unanimity, and the position of those “who do not wish to continue moving forward must not be able to stop ... an ambitious avant-garde” of the world community.

Make no mistake: there is nothing wrong with the rules per se. On the contrary, the UN Charter is a set of rules, but these rules were approved by all countries of the world, rather than by a closed group at a cosy get-together.

An interesting detail: in Russian, the words “law” and “rule” share a single root. To us, a rule that is genuine and just is inseparable from the law. This is not the case for Western languages. For instance, in English, the words “law” and “rule” do not share any resemblance. See the difference? “Rule” is not so much about the law, in the sense of generally accepted laws, as it is about the decisions taken by the one who rules or governs.



It is also worth noting that “rule” shares a single root with “ruler,” with the latter’s meanings including the commonplace device for measuring and drawing straight lines. It can be inferred that through its concept of “rules” the West seeks to align everyone around its vision or apply the same yardstick to everybody, so that everyone falls into a single file.

While reflecting on linguistics, worldview, sentiment, and the way they vary from one nation or culture to another, it is worth recollecting how the West has been justifying NATO’s unreserved eastward expansion towards the Russian border. When we point to the assurances provided to the Soviet Union that this would not happen, we hear that these were merely spoken promises, and there were no documents signed to this effect. There is a centuries-old tradition in Russia of making handshake deals without signing anything and holding one’s word as sacrosanct, but it seems unlikely to ever take hold in the West.

Efforts to replace international law by Western “rules” include an immanently dangerous policy of revising the history and outcomes of the Second World War and the Nuremberg trials verdicts as the foundation of today’s world order. The West refuses to support a Russia-sponsored UN resolution proclaiming that glorifying Nazism is unacceptable, and rejects our proposals to discuss the demolition of monuments to those who liberated Europe. They also want to condemn to oblivion momentous post-war developments, such as the 1960 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, initiated by our country. The former colonial powers seek to efface this memory by replacing it with hastily concocted rituals like taking a knee ahead of sports competitions, in order to divert attention from their historical responsibility for colonial-era crimes.

The rules-based order is the embodiment of double standards. The right to self-determination is recognised as an absolute “rule” whenever it can be used to an advantage. This applies to the Malvinas Islands, or the Falklands, some 12,000 kilometres from Great Britain, to the remote former colonial territories Paris and London retain despite multiple UN resolutions and rulings by the International Court of Justice, as well as Kosovo, which obtained its “independence” in violation of a UN Security Council resolution. However, if self-determination runs counter to the Western geopolitical interests, as it happened when the people of Crimea voted for reunification with Russia, this principle is cast aside, while condemning the free choice made by the people and punishing them with sanctions.

Apart from encroaching on international law, the “rules” concept also manifests itself in attempts to encroach on the very human nature. In a number of Western countries, students learn at school that Jesus Christ was bisexual. Attempts by reasonable politicians to shield the younger generation from aggressive LGBT propaganda are met with bellicose protests from the “enlightened Europe.” All world religions, the genetic code of the planet’s key civilisations, are under attack. The United States is at the forefront of state interference in church affairs, openly seeking to drive a wedge into the Orthodox world, whose values are viewed as a powerful spiritual obstacle for the liberal concept of boundless permissiveness.

*The insistence and even stubbornness demonstrated by the West in imposing its “rules” are striking. Of course, domestic politics is a factor, with the need to show voters how tough your foreign policy can get when dealing with “autocratic foes” during every electoral cycle, which happen every two years in the United States.*

Still, it was also the West that coined the “liberty, equality, fraternity” motto. I do not know whether the term “fraternity” is politically correct in today’s Europe from a “gender perspective,” but there were no attempts to encroach on equality so far. As mentioned above, while preaching equality and democracy in their countries and demanding that other follow its lead, the West refuses to discuss ways to ensure equality and democracy in international affairs.

This approach is clearly at odds with the ideals of freedom. The veil of its superiority conceals weakness and the fear of engaging in a frank conversation not only with yes-men and those eager to fall in line, but also with opponents with different beliefs and values, not neo-liberal or neo-conservative ones, but those learned at mother’s knee, inherited from many past generations, traditions and beliefs.

It is much harder to accept the diversity and competition of ideas in the development of the world than to invent prescriptions for all of humanity within a narrow circle of the like-minded, free from any disputes on matters of principle, which makes the emergence of truth all but impossible. However, universal platforms can produce agreements that are much more solid, sustainable, and can be subject to objective verification.

This immutable truth struggles to make it through to the Western elites, consumed as they are with the exceptionalism complex. As I mentioned earlier in this article, right after the talks between Vladimir Putin and Joseph Biden, EU and NATO officials rushed to announce that nothing has changed in the way they treat Russia. Moreover, they are ready to see their relations with Moscow deteriorate further, they claimed.

Moreover, it is an aggressive Russophobic minority that increasingly sets the EU’s policy, as confirmed by the EU Summit in Brussels on June 24 and 25, 2021, where the future of relations with Russia was on the agenda. The idea voiced by Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron to hold a meeting with Vladimir Putin was killed before it saw the light of day. Observers noted that the Russia-US Summit in Geneva was tantamount to a go-ahead by the United States to have this meeting, but the Baltic states, siding with Poland, cut short this “uncoordinated” attempt by Berlin and Paris, while the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry summoned the German and French ambassadors to explain their governments’ actions. What came out of the debates at the Brussels summit was an instruction to the European Commission and the European Union External Action Service to devise new sanctions against Moscow without referring to any specific “sins,” just in case. No doubt they will come up with something, should the need arise.

Neither NATO, nor the EU intend to divert from their policy of subjugating other regions of the world, proclaiming a self-designated global messianic mission. The North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation is seeking to proactively contribute to America’s strategy for the Indo-Pacific Region, clearly targeted at containing China, and undermining ASEAN’s role in its decades-long efforts to build an inclusive cooperation architecture for Asia-Pacific. In turn, the European Union drafts programmes to “embrace” geopolitical spaces in its neighbourhood and beyond, without coordinating these initiatives even with the invited countries. This is what the Eastern Partnership, as well as a recent programme approved by Brussels for Central Asia, are all about. There is a fundamental difference between these approaches and the ones guiding integration processes with Russia’s involvement: the CIS, the CSTO, EurAsEC and the SCO, which seek to develop relations with external partners exclusively on the basis of parity and mutual agreement.

With its contemptuous attitude towards other members of the international community, the West finds itself on the wrong side of history.



*Serious, self-respecting countries will never tolerate attempts to talk to them through ultimatums and will discuss any issues only on an equal footing.*

As for Russia, it is high time that everyone understands that we have drawn a definitive line under any attempts to play a one-way game with us. All the mantras we hear from the Western capitals on their readiness to put their relations with Moscow back on track, as long as it repents and changes its tack, are meaningless. Still, many persist, as if by inertia, in presenting us with unilateral demands, which does little, if any, credit to how realistic they are.

The policy of having the Russian Federation develop on its own, independently and protecting national interests, while remaining open to reaching agreements with foreign partners on an equal basis, has long been at the core of all its position papers on foreign policy, national security and defence. However, judging by the practical steps taken over the recent years by the West, they probably thought that Russia did not really mean what it preached, as if it did not intend to follow through on these principles. This includes the hysterical response to Moscow's efforts to stand up for the rights of Russians in the aftermath of the bloody 2014 government coup in Ukraine, supported by the United States, NATO and the EU. They thought that if they applied some more pressure on the elites and targeted their interests, while expanding personal, financial and other sectoral sanctions, Moscow would come to its senses and realise that it would face mounting challenges on its development path, as long as it did not "change its behaviour," which implies obeying the West. Even when Russia made it clear that we view this policy by the United States and Europe as a new reality and will proceed on economic and other matters from the premise that we cannot depend on unreliable partners, the West persisted in believing that, at the end of the day, Moscow "will come to its senses" and will make the required concessions for the sake of financial reward. Let me emphasise what President Vladimir Putin has said on multiple occasions: there have been no unilateral concessions since the late 1990s and there never will be. If you want to work with us, recover lost profits and business reputations, let us sit down and agree on ways we can meet each other half way in order to find fair solutions and compromises.

It is essential that the West understands that this is a firmly ingrained worldview among the people of Russia, reflecting the attitude of the overwhelming majority here. The "irreconcilable" opponents of the Russian government who have placed their stakes on the West and believe that all Russia's woes come from its anti-Western stance advocate unilateral concessions for the sake of seeing the sanctions lifted and receiving hypothetical financial gains. But they are totally marginal in Russian society. During his June 16, 2021 news conference in Geneva, Vladimir Putin made it abundantly clear what the West is after when it supports these marginal forces.

These are disruptive efforts as far as history is concerned, while Russians have always demonstrated maturity, a sense of self-respect, dignity and national pride, and the ability to think independently, especially during hard times, while remaining open to the rest of the world, but only on an equal, mutually beneficial footing. Once we put the confusion and mayhem of the 1990s behind us, these values became the bedrock of Russia's foreign policy concept in the 21st century. The people of Russia can decide on how they view the actions by their government without getting any prompts from abroad.

As to the question on how to proceed on the international stage, there is no doubt that leaders will always play an important role, but they have to reaffirm their authority, offer new ideas and lead by conviction, not ultimatums.

The Group of Twenty, among others, is a natural platform for working out mutually acceptable agreements. It brings together the leading economies, young and old, including the G7, as well as the BRICS and its like-minded countries. Russia's initiative to form a Greater Eurasian Partnership by coordinating the efforts of countries and organisations across the continent holds a powerful consolidating potential. Seeking to facilitate an honest conversation on the key global stability matters, President Vladimir Putin suggested convening a summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council that have special responsibility for maintaining international peace and stability on the planet.

Efforts to bring more democracy to international relations and affirm a polycentric world order include reforming the UN Security Council by strengthening it with Asian, African and Latin American countries, and ending the anomaly with the excessive representation of the West in the UN's main body.

Regardless of any ambitions and threats, our country remains committed to a sovereign and independent foreign policy, while also ready to offer a unifying agenda in international affairs with due account for the cultural and civilisational diversity in today's world. Confrontation is not our choice, no matter the rationale. On June 22, 2021, Vladimir Putin published an article "Being Open, Despite the Past," in which he emphasised: "We simply cannot afford to carry the burden of past misunderstandings, hard feelings, conflicts, and mistakes." He also discussed the need to ensure security without dividing lines, a common space for equitable cooperation and inclusive development. This approach hinges on Russia's thousand-year history and is fully consistent with the current stage in its development.

*We will persist in promoting the emergence of an international relations culture based on the supreme values of justice and enabling all countries, large and small, to develop in peace and freedom. We will always remain open to honest dialogue with anyone who demonstrates a reciprocal readiness to find a balance of interests firmly rooted in international law. These are the rules we adhere to.*



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BEFORE & AFTER



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The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) was founded upon the signing of the Treaty of Asuncion in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The bloc is a historic achievement in the region and one of the major milestones in Latin American economic integration, which was intended to overcome the previous logic of rivalry between the countries and establish cooperation dynamics.

**Republic.** With a population of almost 300 million and an area of about 15 million square kilometres (50 % larger than the European continent and almost as large as Russia), MERCOSUR is known for its great natural resource and food potential. The bloc exports 63 % of the world's soy and is the largest global exporter of beef, chicken, corn, coffee and iron, as well as the eighth largest global automobile producer. Based on its GDP, which in 2019 reached USD 4.467 trillion (measured by purchasing power parity), the bloc is the world's fifth largest economy.

Although the explicit goals of MERCOSUR upon its foundation were of an economic and commercial nature, the bloc plays an important role in the consolidation of democracy and the avoidance of conflict.

Peace is a necessary condition for development, and regional integration has historically been a key instrument for consolidating our region as an area of peace and cooperation, without armed conflicts.

First, in 1991, we created a free-trade zone so that our goods and services could move without restrictions, as well as a common external tariff so that we could manage exchanges with the rest of the world. This allowed for great expansion in our mutual trade. We were also able to promote the exchange of added-value products between the four member countries, which allowed for the stimulation of non-traditional export activities which create high added-value jobs (in the biofuel, chemical and petrochemical, plastics, pharmaceutical product, steel and automotive sectors, among others). Therefore, whereas MERCOSUR is a traditional and well-known exporter of primary products, many of the products traded between members of



## THIRTY YEARS OF THE SOUTHERN COMMON MARKET

By H.E. Felipe Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine

the bloc are industrialized products, among which automobiles, for example, stand out (representing almost 50 % of the total products traded between Argentina and Brazil).

We are also working on the harmonization of technical regulations so as to protect production and consumers without unnecessarily preventing trade. As to public health, coordination between our countries has always been important, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our citizens may also settle in other countries of the bloc and easily work freely, which is uncommon in the rest of the world.

In 2004 we created the Structural Convergence Fund of MERCOSUR, through which more than USD 1 billion has been allocated to non-refundable loans for infrastructure and productive development projects, among others, which has allowed us to enhance the competitiveness of our economies, especially in the less developed areas of the region.

Since its first years, MERCOSUR has negotiated and signed trade agreements with most of the countries in the Latin American region, which allowed for a free-trade zone that comprises most of the Latin American countries. We have also negotiated trade agreements with the European Union, EFTA, Israel, Egypt, India and the countries in the south of Africa, among others. MERCOSUR is not a bloc that is closed to foreign trade, but a platform created for our countries to be open to the rest of the world.

Cooperation within MERCOSUR covers many areas: culture, education, science and technology, the development of a common citizenship, the coordination of social and economic policies, etc. There are several and varied areas of joint work within the bloc, and they change as necessary, as the international context and the context of our countries change.

Obviously, all these achievements in its three decades of history do not mean that there are no challenges ahead.

Therefore, our strategic agenda makes us work to frame common and coordinated policies on productive development, increase our capacity to produce goods and services, create economies of scale and economies of specialization, as well as enter global value chains and attract global investment flows in a more intelligent manner.

In addition, MERCOSUR has a role to play in the international arena. Within the G20, the WTO, FAO and other international organizations, the unity of our countries helps us defend our positions on the global agenda. In an increasingly complex and fragmented global scenario, the coordination of positions enabled by MERCOSUR becomes increasingly important.

We believe that the purpose of integration is to reach agreements with due regard for the diversity of our countries, driven by the political will to achieve integration. MERCOSUR promotes supportive political, economic and social regionalism, because we know that facing difficulties together makes us stronger. MERCOSUR is the most important foreign policy instrument of the last thirty years for our countries. It is ultimately a State policy which has remained constant in spite of government changes. Throughout the last thirty years, we have achieved a great deal of common ground: a commitment to democracy as an essential condition for the lives of our peoples; respect for human rights as an essential and inalienable value for coexistence; the acknowledgement of our diversity; and the coordination of our growth policies in order to combine our productive structures.

The world is undergoing a reconfiguration of the global power structure, as well as a crisis of the international institutions that have governed us during the last seventy years. Given the challenges and uncertainties arising from this context, we are certain that the integration of our countries will continue to be the best way to boost our development, preserve our sovereignty, promote the well-being of our peoples and be integrated into the world.

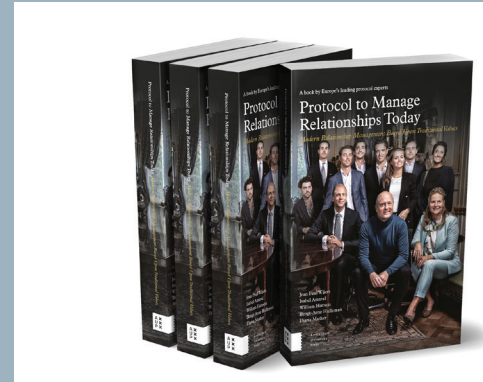
## PROTOCOL TO MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS TODAY

Amsterdam University Press recently published the book 'Protocol to Manage Relationships Today: Modern Relationship Management Based Upon Traditional Values', a book written by leading protocol experts from The Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom and with contributions from protocol experts at the European Union, the British Royal Household, the military, Gucci, ABN AMRO Bank, the cities of The Hague and Meijerijstad, UEFA and many others.

The book describes the successful application of contemporary protocol to build strong relationships by, among others, the Dutch King, at the Royal Wedding of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle and at the World Press Photo awards show. In the book Dutch fashion and lifestyle expert Maik de Boer explains the value of protocol in the world of fashion as well as the protocol of the famous Berlin techno club Berghain is described.

'Protocol to Manage Relationships Today' also describes the success of Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the recently re-elected President of the Portuguese Republic, to balance the protocol between tradition and modernity. The book explains that if the rules of protocol are applied too strictly, a meeting will be too formal and uncomfortable. Too casual and too little focus is also not good and applying too few rules leads to chaos. Also, too much symbolism in protocol will make people laugh and if there is no symbolism, we will not be able to recognise the story and/or understand why we are attending the event. Protocol is all about balancing between tradition and modernity.

'The night before the state visit to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Grand Duke Henri and the President of Portugal decided to go out for a few beers. The President felt right at home: an estimated 120,000 of the 550,000 people in Luxembourg are either born in Portugal or are of Portuguese ancestry. Even the Grand Duke himself has two Portuguese great-grandmothers. The President was welcomed with open arms and the unofficial and unorthodox start of



the state visit was the beginning of a very good friendship between the two Heads of state.

'This is a great example of how relations are built,' the Founder and director of The Standard Companion, the Australian-based etiquette school, Retallack explains in an interview in our book. 'Building diplomatic relations relies heavily on face-to-face interactions where true connections are made. I admire the approach of the Portuguese President.' The approach of the Portuguese President towards protocol is not about abolishing it but introducing small changes. It allowed him to achieve a lot and it is part of the reasons why he is so popular.

At the end of 2020 the authors of the book were granted the honour to hand out a copy to the President of the Portuguese Republic.

Order the book on [www.protocolbureau.com/book](http://www.protocolbureau.com/book).

*His Excellency the President of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa*  
Photo by Rui Ochoa, Presidência da República Portuguesa







# A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN COSTA RICA: THE CASE OF A SINGULAR DEMOCRACY

By H.E. Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Costa Rica is celebrating its Bicentenary of Independence in 2021. After signing the 1821 Act of Independence, our country has been characterized from the start for its clear institutional vocation.

From its foundation, a guideline for conduct was expressly established in the developing Costa Rican State, a rule that is still current in both internal and international relationships. This standard determines that Costa Rica “recognizes and respects civil liberties, property, and other legitimate national rights of every person and any state or nation.”

Today, two hundred years later, this small but ambitious Central American country effectively proves to the world that even with scarce economic resources and facing important threats and challenges, it is possible to live in peace, freely and democratically, while respecting the environment

Throughout its independent existence, Costa Rica has placed singular value on peace and harmony. This vocation for peace was confirmed in 1949 when the national army was constitutionally abolished. Another fundamental Costa Rican characteristic is its commitment to the rule of law. The country always seeks resolution in International Law as the only valid mechanism for promoting and defending universal values that should be accepted by the entire international community. We firmly believe in negotiation, arbitration and jurisdictional processes, and we have unrestrainedly supported the cause of disarmament, particularly in the nuclear context.

Respect for human rights was clearly stated in 1821 and characterizes our country’s very existence, as is proven by early milestones such as the 1869 declaration of primary education as free and obligatory and the constitutionally recognized abolition of the death penalty in 1882. Costa Rica proposed

creation of the Central American Court of Justice, the first permanent international court of Public International Law and the first international Human Rights Court in history, which was inaugurated in the City of Cartago in 1908. Costa Rica was among the countries unconditionally adopting the Universal declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and is party to the principal international instruments on this matter. The American Convention on Human Rights was signed in our capital city of San José and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has its seat there. Costa Rica has staunchly defended the cause for fundamental rights and liberties and actively promoted creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Our Constitutional Court has even ruled that international human rights agreements are hierarchically above our own National Constitution.

In recent decades and as host to great biological diversity, Costa Rica has also undertaken a serious commitment to protect the environment. National parks and protected areas constitute an important part of our national territory and the country places great importance on the fight against climate change and environmental deterioration. The High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People was recently officially launched, with the goal of conserving 30% of the world’s land and marine areas by 2030, stemming massive species loss, and protecting ecosystems that are key to human welfare and that of nature as a whole.

All of the above have provided a solid foundation for Costa Rica’s foreign policy as a singular case of a demilitarized democracy, with strong institutions, and respect for the environment, a pioneer in human rights and an internationally active proponent thereof, unique in the world.

Currently, the country is facing a special opportunity for projection of its values and principles that have served as a basis for its internal conduct and foreign policy.

Costa Rica is head of two important examples for regional cooperation. It currently holds the rotational presidency of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Central American Integration System (SICA, Spanish acronym).

At ECLAC, the Costa Rican presidency began in August of 2020. Since then, it has focused on the principles of international cooperation, solidarity and promotion of human rights, as well as concentrating on regional policy coordination and cooperation, cooperation with international financial institutions, support for the United Nations System, and protection of International Law and Human Rights.

For the SICA presidency, Costa Rica has determined that its priority actions will pivot around gender equality and human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable populations; economic and social post-pandemic recovery for the region, health and food security; and promotion of science and technology, creativity and innovation, with special emphasis on integrated risk management and the fight against climate change. Furthermore, Costa Rica considers that a greater and more effective integration among SICA Member States will harness substantial benefits. Additionally, efforts are being made to revitalize the steps Costa Rica has taken with SICA observer countries and cooperative partners to promote creation of a special fund for regional recovery.

In these and other international organizations in which Costa Rica participates, the country has consistently adhered to the principles that have given a unique identity to its foreign policy. Convinced of the importance of multilateralism for peace and cooperative development to prosper among nations, the country has been very active in the multilateral scenario, proposing implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) C-TAP (Covid-Technology Access Pool) initiative. This consists of a common repository for rights to technologies that countries have developed and that are useful for the detection, control and treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to ensure equitable access to respond to the crisis.

Costa Rica proposes undertaking its third century of independent life contributing towards new initiatives that reflect these same values and also responding to the changing needs of our world and the importance of resolving those challenges that await us with enthusiasm, responsibility, and a sense of innovation.

*H.E. Dr. Hisham Al-Alawi, Ambassador of Iraq.*  
Photography by Chris Ronteltap



## THE NETHERLANDS IS COOPERATING IN THE RETURN OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS TO IRAQ

By Tereza Neuwirthová

On May 6th, the Embassy of Iraq in The Hague organised a special ceremony for the return of seven archaeological objects from a Dutch private collector to the Iraqi government. During this ceremony, the artefacts were handed over by HE Arjen Uijterlinde, Ambassador for International Cultural Cooperation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Barbara Siregar, Director of the Information and Heritage Inspectorate to the Iraqi ambassador, HE Dr. Hisham Al Alawi.

All of the objects are expressions of Mesopotamian culture, and are of great value given that the region Mesopotamia was recognised as the cradle of modern civilisation. The cultural remnants include foundation cones, or large clay tablets that used to be placed in the walls of buildings or buried in the foundations of temples, as well as two very rare figurines. One is a representation of a ram and was used as an amulet, a stamp or a seal, and the second is a figure of Halaf – the mother goddess – that was used in sacrifice rituals.

The items appeared in an auction house, where they were offered by a Dutch private collector. Following an inquiry, The Information and Heritage Inspectorate, jointly with an expert from the Dutch

National Museum of Antiquities led an investigation that confirmed that the objects came from Iraq. The private collector gave up the items as he was not aware of their exact origin, and is now glad to see their return to Iraq.

The returned objects are protected under Iraqi cultural heritage legislation, as well as listed on the International Council of Museums' red lists. In Iraq, the ban on trade in its heritage prohibits selling the objects of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance that were designated as protected.

Similarly, in line with the UN Security Council resolution establishing a system of sanctions to protect Iraq's cultural heritage, these objects are protected under the Iraq Sanctions Order 2004 II. This system has been implemented in European law, and therefore the Iraqi government requested the Dutch government to return the artefacts of high historical and cultural significance. This return, which took place during the ceremony held at the Iraqi embassy in The Hague, was authorised with a transfer document that was signed by the Ambassador HE Dr. Al-Alawi and Mr. Uijterlinde.





# FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT OF OUR COMMON MARKET

By H.E. Dr. Euclides Acevedo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay.

The minister shared his views on the issue of the Covid vaccines, reactivation of the economy, 30 years of MERCOSUR and the role of Paraguayan ambassadors worldwide in promoting trade; he also sent a message to European investors.

I agree that the vaccines, which should have been universally available, were not well distributed and are not reaching everyone. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has tried to remedy this situation. To this end we have resorted to all our international contacts to obtain more vaccines. We should highlight the response and cooperation of Chile, India and Qatar, and the signing of a contract, that we can talk about today. India is sending two million doses, and of course, we signed a contract with the Russian Federation for one million doses almost a year ago. These vaccines have been coming in instalments. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made itself available to the Ministry of Health for the coordination not only of the acquisition of the vaccines but also for the logistics and the vaccination rollout.

The second point of the presidential proposal regarding the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in addition to health and Itaipu's Annex C, is in fact, the reactivation of our country's Economy. As you know, there can be no economic reactivation without investment, and with no investment there can be no development. This means planning and working towards a fair distribution of what is generated. In that sense the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not wasted any time and liaised with bilateral and multilateral organizations to identify new markets and set up long term projects. We turned to our neighbours, and to Mercosur, following the spirit of our common market. If we do not join forces in projects that lead to the economic prosperity of the block, it means that we are not really united. For this reason, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pooled its resources, its very competent professionals, liaised with the industrial union, with the FEPRIN, with the guilds, associations, with syndicates and with social organisations, seeking to work on a project of economic recovery. Fighting the virus, preventing its spread or setting up a health system that can handle this sanitary emergency, is one thing, but we also need to think about what to do about those who have recovered and are healthy. It is no use having a healthy country if we do not have an economic project that will provide what is necessary.

Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not neglected that aspect: to combat the pandemic and prevent the spread of the virus as much as possible, but at the same time stimulate the reactivation of our economy, using imagination, intelligence, and our human talents.

Thirty years of a Mercosur that started with great enthusiasm at a time when the countries in the Region were recovering our freedoms. After thirty years we have an aging Mercosur that is almost paralysed, still foreign and contradictory. This pandemic helped us realise that it is important to stimulate regional unity. Regional unity does not mean merely having a simpler customs system, or unifying our common foreign tariffs, it is not just that, but rather, setting up a development project for our continent, to face the challenges of the post-pandemic, a pandemic that caught us all unprepared. I believe that thirty years on, at a time when we cannot meet each other except through this channel, we gave it a blood transfusion and regained the lost tempo. In the end, Mercosur might be our problem, but Mercosur is also our solution and our way out of this crisis.

My political seniority has led me to the conclusion that the Ambassador is both a spy and a sales rep.

A spy because they must find information, share this information with their metropolis, their headquarters; and they are sales reps because they need to sell, and to do so, it is essential that they know well the markets where they operate, so that we can start producing in response to their specific demands. Why produce what other countries are not going to buy? In that sense, we with our ambassadors, who not only responded to last year's repatriation with selflessness and worked hard searching for vaccines this year but are now fully dedicated to the reactivation of our economy and the re-foundation of our Republic. We now must stimulate economic activities that are market-oriented and production-oriented. We do not want to limit ourselves to star products such as beef and soya, but also value-added products. I



I believe that our vision is very clear, and our ambassadors are in permanent contact not only with us but also through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with our Producers and the Republic's apparatus for the sector. This very morning, I had a conversation with all the ambassadors to discuss what you've just mentioned.

I think that at a time when information travels fast and where you can no longer lie, Europeans and non-Europeans know very well why they should come and invest in Paraguay. Here we will provide them with everything that they need in a State with political governance despite the ups and downs and the shortcomings typical of a democracy. I would like to address in particular the Europeans. There is an agreement between Mercosur

and the European Union, but that agreement has not yet been signed. It is important that Europeans understand that we can be an ally, rather than a dishonest competitor. Therefore, I think it is important for them to assume that what has been agreed has to be signed, otherwise, what has been agreed would become a fraudulent hope, which, I do not believe reflects the European culture and its tradition of solidarity.

## THE AMBASSADORS' VISIT TO THE PEACE PALACE, A SYMBOL OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD

Mr. Erik de Baedts, General Director of the Carnegie Foundation-Peace Palace and Treasurer of the Hague Academy of International Law since 2015, individually welcomed to the Peace Palace the ambassadors that have presented their credentials in the Netherlands throughout 2020 and 2021.

As part of a program started in 2019, the Peace Palace would normally organize, in collaboration with Diplomat Magazine, a private group reception at the Palace for the new ambassadors. However, in light of the anti-COVID regulations, the traditional group reception has now morphed into a set of individual visits to the Palace, under the personal guidance of its General Director Mr. De Baedts.

"Until now I've had the pleasure to welcome the ambassadors of Egypt, Panama, and Rwanda. They all showed a sincere interest in the Peace Palace and in all the activities that the institutions hosted here undertake to promote peace through law" – Mr. de Baedts said.

"The ambassador of Panama, H.E. Ms Elizabeth Ward Neiman, was very much interested in the architecture and the cultural heritage of the Peace Palace, whereas with the ambassador of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Hatem Elsayed Mohamed Kamaleldin, there was an interesting exchange on how to deal with extremist narratives and how to promote peace and tolerance between people with various backgrounds and faiths" – the General Director continued, describing his meetings with individual ambassadors.

"I met H.E. Mr. Oliver Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe, ambassador of Rwanda the day after I laid a wreath at the monument opposite the Peace Palace to commemorate the victims of the Second World War. I learnt

a lot from the dynamics that have taken place in Rwanda over the past decades. We share an interest to prevent dynamics of exclusion and persecution of minorities from taking place" – Mr. de Baedts said.

The Peace Palace hosts two of the most important Courts in the world: the United Nations' International Court of Justice, which is the only main UN organ located outside of New York; and the Permanent Court of Arbitration. In addition, the Palace also hosts The Hague Academy of International Law.

The Peace Palace was built after the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899. It finally opened its doors in 1913, thanks to a donation from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who established the Carnegie Foundation to build and maintain the Palace in perpetuity. The Carnegie Foundation also manages the Peace Palace Library and the Academy.

The Palace has been designated as a National Monument and carries the European Heritage Label – recognitions that testifies to its high cultural, historical and architectural value.

In addition to the aforementioned functions, the Peace Palace also facilitates conferences during which important international law concepts are elaborated. At the same time, The Hague Academy of International Law, since its establishment, has educated more than 50,000 students and lawyers from all over the world, including future ambassadors and judges of many countries.

The meeting between the Peace Palace's General Director and the new ambassadors, jointly organized by the Peace Palace and Diplomat Magazine, wants to symbolize the need for cooperation and solidarity in the complex efforts aimed at reaching peace among all countries in the world. "I wish the

### DIPLOMAT MAGAZINE EVENTS



ambassadors a successful tenure in The Hague and I hope to see them more often once the Palace can open up again after the pandemic" – concluded General Director de Baedts.

In the picture, the Ambassador of Panama, H.E. Ms. Elizabeth Ward Neiman, who came to the city's emblematic Peace Palace, with Mr. Erik De Baedts, Peace Palace & Carnegie Foundation Director-General.

Mr. Erik de Baedts, Director of the Peace Palace and the Carnegie Foundation, welcomes the Ambassador of Egypt, H.E. Hatem Elsayed Mohamed Kamaleldin, as he arrives at the Peace Palace for his visit.

Photography: Chris Ronteltap







# REBOOTING THE RULES FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN EUROPE – THE DIGITAL MARKETS ACT

By H.E. Prof. Kristina Sinemus, Hessian Minister of Digital Strategy and Development

Photography : HMinD Hessian Ministry of Digital Strategy

“Too big to care” – this is how Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Market, described the problem: Digital platforms with considerable market power exercise control over whole platform ecosystems. They act as “gatekeepers” by limiting access to digital markets for smaller businesses and start-ups. The dependency of many businesses on these gatekeepers often leads to unfair practices. This is why the European Commission presented the Digital Markets Act in December 2020, which is currently being debated in the European Parliament and the Council. The aim of the new regulation is to enable all market players to operate in a fair digital ecosystem. Indeed, the time is ripe for a new European framework that ensures fair competition on the Internal Market irrespective of the market power of the platform on the one hand but leaves sufficient room for innovation on the other hand.

Platforms significantly change the way our economies and industries have traditionally been organised. They are the bedrock of future value creation systems. They are already part of our daily lives – be it as a social networking platform, marketplace or content platform. The European Commission estimates there are over 10 000 online platforms operating in Europe’s digital economy. A recent study by the German Bundesnetzagentur – the authority ensuring compliance with the Telecommunications Act, Postal Act and Energy Act in Germany – confirms their importance for our economy and SMEs in particular. Between March and August 2020, during the Bundesnetzagentur’s public consultation a total of 210 business customers reported on their experience with marketing and sales activities via digital platforms in Germany. Nearly three quarters of business customers felt they would have considerable difficulties competing successfully in the German market without the use of digital platforms. Overall, half of business customers assume they would not even be able to exist on the market without digital platforms.

Against this background, it is worrying that only 12 out of the 100 biggest platforms in the world are European. Europe is dramatically lagging behind! It is urgent and important for Europe’s digital sovereignty that it strengthen its platform economy. New innovative platforms and digital services must increasingly be created in Germany and Europe. We have a strong industrial base in Hesse and Germany, and many innovative companies in the information and communications technology sector, for which platforms are becoming increasingly important. This is why the European Commission’s proposal for a Digital Markets Act is so important. The proposed regulation is designed to ensure contestable and fair markets in the digital sector by providing regulatory safeguards throughout the European Union against unfair behaviour by very large gatekeeper platforms towards other providers and clients with less market power. I fully support this vision: by creating the right regulatory framework, we allow smaller platforms and start-ups to enter the market and to grow, strengthening our European platform economy in the process. At the same time, we ensure fair market conditions for all companies on the Internal Market, in particular SMEs that need platform services for their business. However, we must strike the right balance. Yes, we need to tame the gatekeepers. Big platforms must not be “too big to care”. They have to respect European rules. However, we must not overregulate either. We need to avoid burdensome requirements that could hamper innovation. The behavioural obligations set by the Digital Markets Act should be complemented by a general clause that gives a certain flexibility regarding new business models and behaviour in order to make the new regulation future-proof.



# XXVIII IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT HELD IN ANDORRA

By Xavier Espot, Andorra's Head of Government

Under the motto "Innovation for sustainable development-Objective 2030. Ibero-America facing the coronavirus challenge", the Valleys of Andorra hosted its first international summit last April.

Andorra's Head of Government, Xavier Espot, dedicated his opening address at the Summit's Plenary Meeting to the victims of the pandemic, and emphasized the value of working multilaterally to overcome the health crisis and move towards sustainable growth. Espot reiterated Andorra's commitment to the Ibero-American space and to the defense of unity to face the challenges of the future. During his address, he urged the international community to guarantee universal access to vaccines against Covid-19 at a fair or affordable price.

The Ibero-American Secretary General, Rebeca Grynspan, thanked the Government of Andorra for the summit's organization. The large participation in the plenary meeting, according to the Ibero-American Secretary General, "reaffirms the importance of the Ibero-American Space as a space for dialogue, and for finding agreements on diversity." Grynspan stated that the Summit hosted by Andorra "is historic", as it is held in a pandemic context to which the Principality "has adapted with great agility and flexibility to meet the programming" of the Ibero-American Conference.

The work prior to the Summit, she added, has served to raise the sectoral proposals approved in recent months by the ministers of the 22

countries of the Ibero-American Conference, and have addressed the "urgencies" of the pandemic and at the same time "structural challenges such as the fight against inequality or climate change". These proposals are nourished by the Declaration of Andorra, which, explained Rebeca Grynspan, includes "the need for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, the importance of the innovative role of the State, the urgency to face the climate challenge and the differentiated impact of the crisis on women".

President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader reaffirmed the role of multilateralism in the distribution of vaccines. Spain's King Felipe VI and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez have shared the importance of the ties of Ibero-American countries, especially in a pandemic context, in order to join forces "in the defence of the Ibero-American Community in a global world."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, highlighted the role of the Summit as a "moment of hope in the face of the enormous challenges we face which must be a turning point that will mark the development of countries in the coming decades". The XXVII Iberoamerican Summit was held, due to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, in an adapted format- the three countries from the Iberian Peninsula, because of proximity, and Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, which make up the Troika, while the rest participated electronically. Thus, the President of Argentina, Alberto Fernández; the

President of Bolivia, Luis Arce; the President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera; the President of Colombia, Iván Duque; the President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado; the president of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel; the President of Ecuador, Lenín Moreno; the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando; the President of Panama, Laurentino Cortizo; the President of Peru, Francisco Sagasti; the President of Uruguay, Luis Lacalle; the Vice President of El Salvador, Félix Ulloa; the Executive Vice President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, Denis Moncada; the Secretary of Bilateral Negotiations in the Middle East, Europe and Africa of Brazil, Kenneth da Nóbrega; and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, José Antonio dos Santos.

The Principality of Andorra assumed the presidency of the pro tempore Secretariat of the Ibero-American Conference in 2018, after the Ibero-American Summit in Guatemala ended, with the aim of organizing, together with the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the XXVII Summit in 2020. However, due to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, the Summit in Andorra was postponed to April 2021.

Other Summit's participants included His Eminence The Episcopal Co-Prince of Andorra, Archbishop Joan-Enric Vives i Sicília, French President Emmanuel Macron; António Guterres, United Nation's Secretary General as well as Andorra's Foreign Affairs Minister, Maria Ubach Font.

Photography :Xavier Espot, Andorra's Head of Government





# OPCW SIGNS CONTRACT TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CENTRE FOR CHEMISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY



CEO of Dura Vermeer, Mr Job Dura and OPCW Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Dutch construction company Dura Vermeer signed in April the main construction contract for a new facility – the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (“ChemTech Centre”). The contract was signed by the OPCW Director of Administration, Mr Christopher Buck, and, on behalf of Dura Vermeer, by Mr David Snelleman. The contract signing was overseen by OPCW Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, and CEO of Dura Vermeer, Mr Job Dura.

The Director-General stated: “By entering into this contract, the OPCW has taken a significant step towards the establishment of the ChemTech Centre. This facility will strengthen the Organisation’s scientific capabilities, critical to our mission of safeguarding the Chemical Weapons Convention. In Dura Vermeer, the OPCW has found an experienced and reliable partner for turning the ChemTech Centre plan into reality.”

Director-General Arias also expressed his gratitude to the OPCW Member States and other donors that have supported the project so far. He further emphasised the important role the ChemTech Centre will play in developing the OPCW’s ability to address the threat from chemical weapons use and

enhance capacity building activities to the benefit of all 193 Member States – in areas like analytical chemistry skills, chemical safety and security, first response, sampling techniques, and emergency management.

The ChemTech Centre is an important upgrade to the OPCW’s research, analytical and capacity building capabilities in support of Member States. It will bring together the OPCW Laboratory, Equipment Store, and a range of state-of-the-art training facilities. The Centre will also serve as a knowledge repository to tackle chemical threats worldwide as well as a platform to promote expert dialogue, exchange, and collaboration in the field of peaceful uses of chemistry. In addition, a new logistics centre and training facilities will significantly enhance the professional development of OPCW inspectors, mission preparations, and support deployments.

The building will be located on a 6,400m<sup>2</sup> plot within the Heron Business Park in Pijnacker-Nootdorp, outside The Hague. Construction is scheduled to begin this summer and the Centre should become operational at the end of 2022.



Photography by Olly Coleman

New Zealand is hosting Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2021. Three years of planning went into producing a physical event that would have brought 20,000 people to New Zealand.

By mid-2020 it was anticipated the COVID-19 pandemic might stop a handful of economies from attending, and work began on introducing a virtual aspect to the meetings so economies that couldn’t travel could still take part. Those plans quickly became the foundation for the first ever fully virtual APEC, with New Zealand announcing in July that the entire year would take place virtually.

COVID-19 forced our economy, APEC’s second-smallest by GDP, to rewrite our script and become one of the guinea pigs for digital diplomacy.

Why not postpone APEC 2021 and wait for things to get better? The work facing our 21 economies was too important to shelve.

Instead, New Zealand worked with Malaysia, which became the trailblazer for virtual APEC meetings when it made the shift online partway through its 2020 host year. They generously shared their lessons with New Zealand, and it has been up to us to build on them.

# AS COVID-19 SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD, A QUESTION WAS ASKED: CAN DIPLOMACY WORK OVER A WEBCAM?

By Vangelis Vitalis, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Deputy Secretary, Trade and Economic. Through 2021 he is also APEC Senior Officials' Meeting chair.

Across the year, New Zealand will host hundreds of meetings with thousands of delegates. Many will be happening at the same time, and it is up to us as hosts to ensure the right people are in the right meetings, that they are engaged, that the process is seamless, and that they still get that sense of New Zealand.

While physical APEC meetings tend to run for 2-3 days at six hours a day, and that can be hard going in a virtual environment. So a lot of work has gone into structuring our meetings, and bringing them down to manageable three-hour blocks.

We're using digital technology in innovative ways, aiming to replicate the experiences and personal connections that APEC delegates, Ministers and Leaders encounter in a physical hosting year. This includes making time and virtual space available for in-person and small group discussions, and using digital content to welcome, host and farewell our guests and to showcase Aotearoa's landscape and dynamic economy.

Hosting virtually has also allowed us to be more inclusive in our engagement – widening our reach to include a range of experts and stakeholders who might not ordinarily be able to travel and attend APEC meetings in an in-person host year.

Despite the pressure of having less than 6 months to restructure, regroup and embark down a fully virtual path, there was a collective drive to make it work – because it had to work. APEC's primary goal is to support sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, to help turn policy initiatives into concrete results and tangible benefits for the region. This work is more important than ever as we respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

This year APEC is working on a regional response to COVID-19; including measures to allow medical supplies and vaccines to be easily traded across borders, and to ensure key supply routes remain open.

And as a forum, APEC must think about not only the short-term response to COVID-19, but also a sustained and sustainable long-term response.

That long-term thinking is reflected in the work that will contribute to APEC's agenda for the next two decades.

Last year, APEC Leaders adopted the Putrajaya Vision 2040, which will become a 20-year roadmap – a living document that will change and evolve with the region. Officials from all 21 economies are now working on a plan that will bring it to life by outlining the concrete steps economies will take towards fulfilment of the Vision. It is crucial work that will help drive prosperity through innovation, sustainable and inclusive growth, and trade and investment.

As APEC 2021 progresses, so will our work to improve what we do and how we do it.

Can diplomacy take place through a webcam? Absolutely.

Will virtual meetings replace physical meetings altogether? It's unlikely – however, they open a door to the possibility of a hybrid physical-and-virtual model which is more inclusive, and more environmentally sustainable.

As host of APEC 2021 it is on New Zealand to create an environment where people can join, work and grow together; to facilitate, build and advance relationships between economies, and turn policy initiatives into tangible results.

This is a crucial moment for our region and this valuable institution that we all care about deeply. It is a driver of economic and trade growth, jobs, income, innovation, regional integration and cooperation.

As host of APEC 2021 it is our job to not only support this important work, but to contribute to a long legacy in a way that makes APEC strong, more resilient, and even better prepared for whatever the future holds.

For further information  
<https://apcc2021nz.org>

## DIPLOMATIC EVENTS

### AMBASSADOR DENIS ROBERT PRESENTED CREDENTIALS IN DENMARK

Tuesday, 20 April 2021, Copenhagen, Kingdom of Denmark: The Dominion of Canada's top envoy to Denmark, Denis Robert, was accredited today after presenting credentials to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II at Amalienborg Palace's Christian VII wing.

Ambassador Denis Robert was most recently Director of Foreign Policy Research at the headquarters of Global Affairs Canada/Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development in Ottawa. Before that, he served in the capacity as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium, and non-resident to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg from 2012 to 2016. Ambassador Robert is a career diplomat who joined the then Department of External Affairs in 1989. He holds a Master degree in Political Science from the University of Montréal as well as a bachelor degree in the same domain from Laval University. He speaks fluent French, English and Spanish.







# AMBASSADORS' BRIEFING ON INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR DEVELOPMENT

By August Zeidman and Virginie Peccoud.

On Thursday 29 April from 15:00 to 16:30 IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and Diplomat Magazine organized an Ambassadors' Briefing on International Knowledge Sharing for Development. The theme of this meeting was to tackle water related challenges affecting a large number of countries in the world by developing capacity and sharing knowledge on the topic.

Firstly, Dr. Mayelinne de Lara, publisher at Diplomat Magazine, welcomed the ambassadors. Then, Professor Eddy Moors, Rector of IHE Delft, introduced the institution and its capacity development programs to address water challenges. IHE Delft has been providing practical education and training to water professionals for more than 60 years and is the most international Dutch University in terms of both the staff and students.

Professor Moors and Mr. Johan Aad van Dijk, Business Director of IHE Delft, highlighted the need for water expertise in a world increasingly threatened by risks of resource depletion exacerbated by climate change. By 2050, many regions will evolve from a situation of no water scarcity or water scarcity to severe water scarcity, which will have severe negative consequences, namely water quality,

and on food systems. Improving capacity development in people and in institutions is an accelerator of sustainable development and it was the aim of this meeting.

To reach this goal there are two possibilities; the first one is to help countries to identify water and sanitation capacity gaps and to enhance it and the second one is to implement development plans for example by providing training and institutional strengthening. IHE Delft has a crucial role in developing water capacity by providing an alternative and efficient approach to the matter.

Professor Moors and Mr. Aad van Dijk, said that countries can get involved easily by providing a capacity gap assessment of individuals and organisations, selecting training programs for individuals and analysing how to improve institutional capacity. In the Netherlands many governmental institutions have expertise in the water sector and are open for collaboration.

Furthermore, Professor Moors, also expressed the urgency of water related crises as not only some of the most likely natural disasters which will take place in the future, but as some of the most impactful as well. With alumni all over the world and partnerships with numerous United Nations institutions, the IHE Delft has an important and active role to play in the crisis management which is all too important going forward in not only in disaster relief and management, but also in preemptive action in order to mitigate the future of water shortages.

After the presentation, the floor was opened to discussion with many ambassadors and national representatives making remarks or asking questions. There was great interest from many ambassadors including Mr. Giorgio Novello of Italy and Mr. Fernando Grillo of Colombia, as well as others, in organizing greater coordination amongst their respective national graduates of the IHE Delft, expressing great pride in these individuals so widely spread across the globe.

Other ambassadors mentioned their nations' own unique national challenges and brought up other circumstances that may complicate any of the many water related challenges being faced today and in the near future. Ambassador of Egypt H.E. Mr. Hatem Elsayed Mohamed Kamaleldin discussed some of the challenges relating to water diplomacy and the challenges of fairly sharing global resources, mentioning the example of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance dam and the contentious diplomacy surrounding the project.

Almost every country in the world is already or will soon be facing challenges of water scarcity and quality making the work of IHE Delft all the more important. The University already collaborates with many national institutions across the globe, with projects in South Africa and Cuba being among those mentioned during the event, and is always interested in expanding their portfolio of partnerships for a changing world.

At the conclusion of the event, many ambassadors requested direct meetings with Rector Moors in order to facilitate opening greater dialogues between their national institutions and the IHE Delft in hopes of spawning further collaboration between the University and its many partners. These were met with enthusiasm, and the embassies in attendance were encouraged to make contact and organize bilateral meetings for mutual benefit.



Photography: Naldo Peverelli

# EUROPE IN THE NETHERLANDS

By H.E. Mr. Didier Herbert, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in the Netherlands.

## The Role of the Representation of the European Commission in the Netherlands

The European Commission has Representations in the 27 countries of the European Union. The role of the Representation is to be the 'ears, eyes and voice' of the European Commission in the Netherlands. What we do is listen, inform and report. The Embassies of the European member states in the Netherlands have similar tasks, among others, and with them, we naturally maintain narrow contacts through our regular meetings of the Heads of Missions of the EU Member states in The Netherlands.

The first aspect of our task consists in connecting with Dutch citizens and authorities at different levels on expectations and questions regarding European action. Secondly, we discuss and inform about European policy in general and important European policy topics that affect the Netherlands as a whole or Dutch regions and cities in particular. Last year, one of the main topics was about EU actions and cooperation in response to the coronavirus. Few people know how in the first months, when all borders were closed, we joined forces in the EU to bring back over a 100,000 citizens stranded outside the EU to their home country and created "green lanes" through which lorries could bring Dutch vegetables to

clients in neighbouring countries. Our work also means dispelling misconceptions in some cases. Some time ago, the newspapers reported that the EU was planning to force cat owners to keep their pets on a leash, because cats were said to be dangerous for biodiversity and for the survival of birds. There was, of course, absolutely no intention to do that - apart from whether the proposition is correct whether cats are dangerous for the survival of certain bird species. So there we clearly indicated that the Commission did not intend to submit anything on that.

In addition to listening and informing locally, we provide country-specific knowledge, analysis and advice to the President and all Members of the Commission. So that they are able to consider these elements at an early stage. Just imagine if the discussions about a common European Recovery Programme could have led so quickly to such an ambitious result had the negotiators not been aware of the expectations and sensitivities in each European country.

## How to involve Dutch citizens

We engage with citizens in several ways - we are active on social media, we organise trips and events, and we work together with our network of Europe Direct Information Centres

throughout the country. Citizens' dialogues and visits to various cities and provinces are also a fixed element of the Representation's menu. In recent years, for example, the Commission and the Representation have organized a large number of citizens' dialogues. A Commissioner, often Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans, comes to visit one or multiple places in the Netherlands. For example, we went to Emmen, Breda, and Leiden to talk to citizens about European policy. That gives you a good sense of what is going on in the Netherlands. I see it as part of my job to regularly visit various provinces and cities. Coming here in 2019, I intended to go to all the Dutch provinces; I still have that intention and I am planning to do so as soon as restrictions will ease. In The Hague, you only have one view of the Netherlands. As Brussels is not representative for Belgium, Paris not for France and Madrid not for Spain, I think it is essential to learn more about different aspects of the Dutch country and culture.

Our diversity is a plus in Europe. But explaining why and what we do together in the EU is equally important: in that vein, I want to draw your attention to the bi-lingual (Dutch and English) newsletter on the latest European policy developments, which we send out on Friday every week. People can register via this link.

## What is next on the agenda for the Representation?

Due to the corona crisis, some of our priorities temporarily moved to the background - health was the main priority for all of us the last months - but we are now also changing our focus towards the recovery after the pandemic. But essential issues, such as global warming have not disappeared. We managed to come to an unprecedented agreement on NextGenerationEU: based on the National Reform Plans that each country will draw up, this instrument should help to repair the economic and social damage caused by the pandemic. As well as catering for future challenges: this important Programme is to help ensuring a sustainable and inclusive recovery that promotes the green and digital transitions.

We furthermore look forward to the start of a vast exercise agreed on by all European countries, the European Parliament and the Commission. The aim is to reach out and engage with citizens in a wide-ranging debate on how they see and what they suggest for the future of the European cooperation project in the coming decade and beyond. We hope many Dutch people will participate and join this Conference on the Future of Europe.







# BRINGING LAW AND JUSTICE CLOSER TO HOME

The Hague is the international city of peace and justice. As symbolised by the iconic Peace Palace. There you will find the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Court of Justice of the United Nations, the Carnegie Foundation and The Hague Academy for International Law. To the outside world a mundane environment of which diplomacy is also a part.

By *The Honorable Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague*  
Photography: Martijn Beekman

Surrounding these institutions a cluster of more than 200 national and international organisations has grown up in The Hague. All of them have something to do with peace and justice, and everything that goes with that. All very important, but I strongly suspect that for at least half the people living in The Hague, this is a matter of no great concern to them.

That may well also apply to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) which in 2015 the United Nations agreed should be achieved by 2030. It is a wider agenda for a more sustainable world. The list ranges from combatting hunger and poverty, decent work for fair pay, to action against climate change, accessible justice for all and reliable institutions that citizens can trust.

More than half the world's population already live in cities and therefore cities have a particular responsibility when it comes to creating a more sustainable and just world. This is also where the power to make a difference lies. It is why cities have sought each other out in international alliances, like United Cities and Local Governments and the Global Parliament of Mayors. That was already so before the Covid-19 pandemic and is certainly the case now as we are finding our way out of the crisis.

This responsibility applies not just to cities far away but also to the city of which I am Mayor. It has been agreed in the 'Working together for the city' coalition agreement that The Hague will actively pursue the SDGs. Sustainability is now an important guiding principle in much of what the municipality does.

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) - of which I am also chair alongside my role as Mayor - is also committed to the SDGs. Not least, by bringing the Global Goals to us here. We do this, for example, through awarding prizes every year to municipalities that make the SDGs relevant to their own

citizens. The Hague was among this year's prize-winners with a project that ties in perfectly with the city's mission of peace and justice, and sustainability goal 16.3: Access to the law. This project related to a study that the municipality carried out in association with The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL).

*Just as elsewhere in the world, people living in The Hague come up against obstacles when seeking justice and satisfactory solutions. To gain an impression of where these obstacles lie and the solutions to them, at the request of the municipality, a survey was carried out in which almost 400 respondents completed questionnaires.*

These respondents were all people who have a computer, can read and write, and who were willing to take the time and trouble to respond to a survey about legal problems. This means, of course, that many vulnerable city residents were not included, while they are precisely the people who may be expected to have more difficulty in gaining access to the law.

To make sure that these vulnerable groups were properly included, a number of participants were selected from specific welfare target groups and HiiL researchers could attend local drop-in sessions in three of The Hague's community centres in the districts of Schilderswijk, Transvaal and Centrum. Community centres which remained open during the lockdown as a vital public facility. When visitors consented to take part in the study, they were also asked about any problems with access to law that they might have.

Despite the restrictions in force due to the pandemic, which meant that in-person interviews and focus groups could not be held, it became clear that most of the legal (and other) problems of those who took part in the study related to their housing situation, public nuisance, intimidation and vandalism.

*A remarkable result from the study so far is that most people do seek legal advice or initiate proceedings but in more than half of cases this does not lead to a satisfactory solution. The researchers referred to this as 'the justice gap'. Why that happens and what needs to change in the legal arena to close that gap, is the subject of phase two of the study.*

In the meantime, we're not resting on our laurels in The Hague. There are already encouraging signs coming from the district court judges. Judges who, rather than summoning people to court, seek them out in their own environment. We also bring together the various legal aid providers, social counsellors and community centres to create a more integrated approach to prevailing legal problems. And we are looking for forms of arbitration or mediation which those seeking justice will accept as fair and authoritative.

Because in a city where more than half the population has a migrant background and comes from all over the world, the 'justice gap' will always have to be closed from both sides. On the one hand, by formally affirming and strengthening the democratic rule of law and respect for that. And on the other, by looking for formal and informal forms of law and justice which people perceive as closer to home. Because ultimately it is a matter of finding a way to live together that will make the city stronger. This is how we bring law, justice and diplomacy from the Peace Palace to the citizens of The Hague, wherever they may live.





# WHY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT NEEDS TO BECOME A PART OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AID

By HH Sheikhha Intisar Al Sabah, Founder and Chairwoman of Intisar Foundation

Trauma is a consequence of being exposed to an experience that exceeds one's ability to cope with or integrate the emotions involved, leaving long-term negative consequences on the brain. Another explanation that I also appreciate is that it is a rupture in meaning making, a discrepancy between appraised and global meaning of a situation that affects the person's sense of the world as meaningful and their own life as worthwhile.

There are many potential causes of trauma over our lifetime, but wars definitely create a wide variety of traumatic events that result in many people developing different types and degrees of post-traumatic and/or mental disorders. The World Health Organisation states that 1 in 11 (9%) people who have experienced war or other conflict in the previous 10 years, will have a moderate or severe mental disorder, and that 1 in 5 (22%) people living in an area affected by conflict is estimated to have depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

I fall into a sub-category of people who were left with anger and violent feelings, even towards my children, after living through the state of war and all other traumatic events that happened in connection to it. I still remember that my every waking minute was consumed with fear of everything and everyone.

I also fall into a sub-category of people who consider themselves healed from it.

I know that I am not alone in this unusual box of how I choose to describe myself for the purpose of this article, but sadly, I also believe that the box is not crowded.

How did I get to this? To begin with, I was one of many who received the traditional humanitarian aid response which, until this day, includes the delivery of human, medical, food, shelter, water sanitation, and hygiene resources, but not any kind of psychological support - neither in the immediate aftermath of the traumatic experience I went through, nor later.

Over the years, I have been blessed with faith, mindset, willpower, and perseverance to subject myself to psychological support that has enabled me to eventually fulfill all the parameters of how mental health is defined today.

Yet, whenever I sit in a meeting to discuss psychological support programs for women affected by war and to explore how these are linked to Peacebuilding, I cannot help but

wonder how different my life would have been if my psychological recovery had started much earlier than it actually did. In a split second, my mind starts listing the implications that this lack of timely and adequate mental health care back then, as well as for many years later, had on my psychological wellbeing and, for instance, on the wellbeing of my children. However, I am not talking only from personal experience when I say that a person traumatised by the brutality of war and violence can rebuild their lives, revitalise their families, and spread peace in their communities, in a very short period of time - if and when given proper psychological support.

In 2021, I have evidence that further supports us advocating the inclusion of psychological support programs to people, and especially women, affected by war into international humanitarian aid and all our peacebuilding efforts, including international and national war and disaster preparedness and emergency plans.

**33% of Lebanese, 70% of Syrian, 44% of Palestinian suffer from PTSD. 15% of Lebanese population was a victim of an act of violence, while 28% witnessed an act of violence that affected their daily life.**

**24% of Syrian population was a victim of an act of violence, while 42% witnessed an act of violence that affected their daily life.**

**54% of Palestinian population was a victim of an act of violence, while 39% witnessed an act of violence that affected their daily life.**

*Source: "Living With Ongoing Political Trauma: The Prevalence And Impact Of PTSD Among Syrian Refugees" by Lina Haddad Kreidie, Mahmoud Kreidie, HayaAtassi.*

**-78% of our participants experienced increased self-esteem**

**-68.75% of our participants experienced reduction in PTSD**

**-93.75% of our participants experienced reduction in depression**

**-75% of our participants experienced reduction in anxiety**

**-43.75% of our participants experienced improvement in satisfaction with life**

**-75% of our participants experienced increased positive emotional experiences and decreased negative emotional experiences**

*Source: A pilot study conducted by Intisar Foundation in Shatila Refugee Camp in Lebanon between 2019 and 2020 using psychometric scales.*

The international community has been exploring innovative ways in which international organisations, donors, governments, and local non-governmental organizations can contribute to better conflict prevention and management, Peacebuilding and reconciliation.

However, one formula is simple but easily overlooked - offering immediate mental health support to survivors of war, and especially women among them, is the innovation in Peacebuilding that we need. Therefore, we must make mental health support an integral part of international humanitarian aid and any international and national war and disaster preparedness and emergency plans.

We must do it because, in 2021, we know that, if not treated, mental health issues increase with age and deprive war and disaster-affected populations of ever fully perceiving a future of Peace, stability, and hope for themselves and their families.

We are sad to witness that many of the world's emergencies have become longer-lasting and increasingly harder to address, exposing conflict and disaster-affected populations to years and decades of repeatedly experiencing psychological distress.

Intisar Foundation has been supporting Arab women traumatised by war and violence with its culturally competent, neuroscience-based, and socially impactful psychological support program based on drama therapy.

One of our current research projects analyses how tackling the psychological impact of trauma on women affected by war leads to their lower levels of aggression and higher impulse control at home, which then reduces the danger of them maltreating their children, and consequently, reduces the children developing any maladaptive behaviours that might lead to violence in the future. In this way, where there was conflict, we manage to raise Peaceful children.

The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

I would humbly add that "since our evidence shows that Peace begins in the minds of women, it is the minds of women that we need to support for Peace to flow forth to reach and affect all of humanity."



# TRIBUTE TO GIOCONDA UBEDA RIVERA

By H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Solano, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica.



The year 2020 will be a year of dark memories for Costa Rica and for all the countries in the world, suddenly shaken by a pandemic that still continues to leave a trail of deaths, layoffs, stagnation of activities and economic catastrophe.

For the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship this year will also be one of sorrow for the parting of valuable people who devoted to us much of their lives, with tremendous dedication, intelligence and discipline. Among them was Attorney Gioconda Ubeda Rivera, during times when she was fulfilling her position as Ambassador of Costa Rica in Panamá.

We gather to remember Mrs. Gioconda with respect and affection, and to dedicate a modest tribute to her memory. We will also unveil a plaque in her memory, in the office of

the Legal Directorate, one of the units of this Ministry that was brightly enlightened by her talent and knowledge and where she worked with great dedication and effort.

Mrs. Gioconda Ubeda was born in Jinotepe, Nicaragua, on December 23, 1959, in the home of Mr. Maximino Ubeda Aráuz and Mrs. Ercilia Rivera Zeledón. She came to this land when she was a child and made it her own, and gave it all. She graduated as a lawyer at the University Costa Rica, and also pursued her Master's Degree studies in the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences.

From a very young age, she revealed a great vocation for public affairs, and participated with great enthusiasm in university and national politics.

She entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship during the first administration of Mr. Oscar Arias Sánchez, and twice held diplomatic positions in commission. Later, at the time of Foreign Minister Mr. Fernando Naranjo, she took charge of the Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. First on an interim basis and then as the incumbent to the post. Endowed with an equally quick and analytical mind, she was always eager to strengthen and increase her knowledge of the law, she carried out this position with special dedication and a great sense of duty and responsibility. In addition to her mastery of Public International Law in general, she placed a special emphasis on the topic of Human Rights, a legal subject that she was passionate about and in which she could render notable services to Costa Rica.

In addition to fulfilling the position of Juridical Director, serving this Ministry, Mrs. Gioconda was commissioned by the President in the Mesoamérica Project, Ambassador in Mexico, Vice Minister from 2013 to 2014, and Acting Minister several times, Ambassador in the Republic of Argentina and lastly, our Ambassador in Panamá. In the international arena, it is worth mentioning that she was also Secretary General for the Agency for the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL in Spanish). She shone with her own light in all these positions, demonstrated her great professional capacity, her juridical wisdom, her negotiating talent and her inspiring drive.

She also ventured in journalism and teaching. She was a professor of Public International Law at the University of Costa Rica and also taught lessons at the Manuel Maria Peralta Institute.

As I highlighted when I learned of her death, Mrs. Gioconda distinguished herself by her dedication and commitment to the country and the Institution, and by her permanent fight for the defense and promotion of human rights. But today I would like to highlight that, in addition to her successful professional performance in this Ministry, in teaching and in all the other activities in which she participated, Mrs. Gioconda was characterized by a deep human sense and great solidarity with her fellow people. She knew how to earn the respect and affection of all the people who worked with her or were her students, for her cordial treatment and charisma, but above all for being genuinely interested in them, her team spirit, her conviction that loyalty and enthusiasm grow naturally when, in addition to duty, affection and understanding prevail.

*She endured severe trials in life. A painful family tragedy brutally affected her in highlighting moments of her career, but far from bending and breaking her, it made her renew her fighting spirit and give herself in love and solidarity to those in need.*

She was stricken by the disease when she with her usual capacity, was carrying out the position of Ambassador in Panamá. She could have retired or withdrawn from office to take care of her health, but that was not in her nature, in her intensely vital character. And she parted from this world last October 21, leaving an admirable example of dedication and commitment, responsibility, love and loyalty to the country.

As I reiterate our condolences to her daughters and her husband Jean Pierre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship pays tribute to Mrs. Gioconda with this unveiling of a plaque which will perpetuate her name and her contributions, but above all, in doing so we remember this extraordinary woman with respect and affection, we honor the indefatigable fighter that Gioconda Ubeda Rivera was, someone whose example is and will be an inspiration for those of us who work here.

# THE REPRESENTATION OF THE STATE OF RHINELAND-PALATINATE IN BERLIN CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

By the State Chancellery of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Germany is a federal state, whose competences are shared between the federal level and regional (state) and local governments. The Land of Rhineland-Palatinate, located at the heart of Europe with borders to France, Belgium and Luxembourg, has two representations outside of the state. One is located in Brussels and deals with EU policies and their impact on the Land.

The second representation is located in the federal capital Berlin and plays a key role in the federal legislative process. German federalism requires all 16 Länder to be represented at the federal level, in order to maintain a continuous link between the different levels of government.

After German reunification it was decided to move the Bundestag, a part of the federal ministries and other institutions from Bonn, former capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany, or Bonn Republic), to Berlin. Shortly thereafter all Länder opened new representations in Berlin. The former ministerial gardens of the Weimar Republic in the centre of Berlin became home to the new architecturally impressive buildings, including the new representation of Rhineland-Palatinate to the federal government.

Today the representation lies prominently near the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag building. It is neighbour to the Holocaust Memorial and has been built on the former death strip flanking the Berlin Wall, which separated the German capital for nearly three decades. The foundation stone was laid by the former Rhineland-Palatinate Premier Kurt Beck and the former long-time representative to the federal government, State Secretary

Karl-Heinz Klär.

For the last six years two women have been heading the regional representation – Premier Malu Dreyer and State Secretary Heike Raab, the Plenipotentiary of the Land of Rhineland-Palatinate for Federal Affairs, for Europe, the Media and Digital Affairs.

A part from its political role the Rhineland-Palatinate's "embassy" in Berlin, the representation can be perceived as a government institution with a wide range of tasks. It is a gateway between the Land's capital Mainz on the river Rhine and the federal capital Berlin. It is an important meeting point for members of the Bundestag, the Bundesrat, the federal government, NGOs, citizens and other policy actors. Furthermore, it is a space for political discussions, negotiations and networking. German Länder hold the competence for broadcasting matters and Rhineland-Palatinate, as an important media site, traditionally chairs the broadcasting commission of the 16 German Länder which frequently gathers in the representation.

In addition to intensive political activity, Rhineland-Palatinate is keen to display its culture and way of life. Therefore, the representation became a well-known address in Berlin for book presentations, concerts, performances within the Berlinale festival calendar and, for example, the exhibition for caricature and political photography "Rückblende", which is well-known throughout Germany and beyond. Many centuries ago, the Romans brought the tradition of wine making to the region that today covers our state. Rhineland-Palatinate is proud to produce two thirds of the annual



*Premier Malu Dreyer & Plenipotentiary Heike Raab, Photography: Staatskanzlei Rheinlandpfalz*

German wine production. The representation is an ideal place to combine politics, art, history and culture and its broad range of events is often accompanied by high quality regional wines.

In 2020 the representation of Rhineland – Palatinate celebrates its 20th birthday, an occasion which was supposed to be celebrated with an innovative event and numerous guests, partners and companions. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the representation finds itself pioneering in the realisation of a very special anniversary. Yet, with positive and creative force the series "20 Years–20 Moments" with different digital and analogue events was created mirroring the tasks of the representation and the merits of the state Rhineland- Palatinate.

## ANDERS AHNLIID PROMOTES SWEDISH TRADE

Since August 2020, erstwhile Swedish Representative to the European Union, and Ambassador to Finland, Anders Ahnliid, has been serving in the capacity of Director General of the National Trade Board (Kommerskollegium). The latter is the authority charged with promoting foreign trade, within the internal market as well as setting up the country's trade policy.

Ambassador Anders Ahnliid has been an ideal choice for the position, being an experienced negotiator in trade issues. As per statement, the Foreign Trade Minister Anna Hallberg highlighted that 'the authority

has an important task above all in improving possibilities for Sweden's international trade in many ways'

Ahnliid began his position as director general on 17 August 2020, for an authority that goes back to 1651. He has served as Swedish Permanent Representative to the European Union in Brussels, Delegate before the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, Adviser for trade issues at the Foreign Minister, and has served as diplomat at the Swedish Representation in Geneva, and at the kingdom's embassy to the United States.







# NINE CENTURIES OF JEWISH LIFE IN THURINGIA

By Tina Beer, State Secretary for Cultural Affairs of Thuringia, Germany

Between November 30th and December 4th, representatives of the OPCW's (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) member states convened for the 25th Session of the Conference of the State Parties (CSP) to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The aim of the conference was to oversee the CWC's implementation, promote its objectives, and reviewing compliance with the treaty.

Jewish life is an indisputable part of Thuringia. The Free State in Central Germany and its state government are proud it exists and flourishes. This is expressed in the current theme year "Nine Centuries of Jewish Life in Thuringia". Based on an initiative of the two large Christian churches in Thuringia, it was initiated to show the influence of Jewish culture in Thuringia over the centuries, the eventful history of its flourishing, its suppression and its revival, also and especially in the countryside, away from the large metropolises. Above all, however, the theme year is intended to sharpen the view of how enriching Jewish life is for our entire society in the present and the future.

Under the auspices of the Thuringian State Chancellery, stakeholders from science, education, culture, museums, archives, private and public institutions and associations came together in autumn 2019.

The result was a programme with over 150 events and projects throughout Thuringia. The main projects – in addition to "Torah is Life" and the three music festivals that have been firmly established in Thuringia for years, "Days of Jewish-Israeli Culture", "Yiddish Summer Weimar" and "Achava Festival" – are the virtual reconstruction of the Great Synagogue in Erfurt and the MENORA project.

The interactive portal MENORA ([www.juedisches-leben-thueringen.de](http://www.juedisches-leben-thueringen.de)), set up and maintained by the Thuringian University and State Library (ThULB) in cooperation with the Association for Jewish-Israeli Culture in Thuringia, provides information about historical testimonies, as well as current events. The portal functions as an event calendar, a topology of Jewish places in Thuringia and a digital exhibition platform all in one. Thanks to state-of-the-art technology, buildings can also be digitally resurrected and become virtually accessible. Therefore, one of the highlighted projects of the theme year is a "virtual reality" reconstruction of the Great Synagogue of Erfurt, which is being created under the direction of the Historic Museums of the City of Erfurt. The striking building was destroyed in the Pogrom Night of 1938 and later demolished.

"Torah is Life" is another unique project: Over a period of two years in total, a specially authorised sofer (a Jewish scribe) will write a new Torah scroll, which will be ceremoniously brought into Erfurt's main synagogue on 30 September 2021 as a gift from the two Christian churches to the Thuringian Jewish community. This 30 September originally marked the end of the theme year and, just like its beginning on 1 October 2020, is based on the Jewish calendar.

After the opening event for the theme year on 1 October 2020, which was still possible to hold as a face-to-face event in Erfurt's

Kaisersaal with restrictions due to the pandemic, practically all other projects from November 2020 onwards had to be cancelled or transferred to a digital format. In the digital formats, participants were welcomed from far beyond Thuringia. In order to be able to hold non-digital formats as well, it was decided to extend the theme year until 31 December 2021. All cancelled events are to be made up as soon as possible, as soon as the pandemic allows – even after 2021, if necessary. Although the digitalisation of event formats has taken a quantum leap forward due to the Corona pandemic, we miss coming together for music, culture, readings, discussions, visiting exhibitions. It will soon be possible again – *Thuringia is looking forward to it!*

*Old Synagogue Erfurt  
Photography: SK\_Paul-Philipp Braun*



Only a few months to go until, on October 1, Expo 2020 Dubai will open its doors to the public – almost a year later than originally planned. What was unthinkable last year is now becoming reality. As one of the first major international events, the Expo will enable millions of people from all over the world to come together again in person. Preparations are in full swing. 192 participants are currently making every effort to complete their pavilions in time so they can present their ideas and solutions for a more sustainable future to the world.

For the first time in the history of the world fair, one of the participants will be Baden-Württemberg. “We will be the only region among a large number of nations to be represented with our own pavilion, the Baden-Württemberg House. This is a great privilege and a unique opportunity. Fairs such as the Expo are one of the world’s most important platforms”, says Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut, Minister of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism of the state of Baden-Württemberg. “With our pavilion, we want to present Baden-Württemberg to the world and our international partners as a hub for science, culture, innovation and tourism. The Baden-Württemberg House sets out to show what we stand for, what is important to our citizens and why our companies and research institutions are so successful world-wide.”

With a powerful and self-confident presentation, Baden-Württemberg wants to draw attention to itself, present solutions for the world of tomorrow and remain in the memory of every visitor. The concept is impressive: The pavilion offers a host of exciting highlights. This includes not only the facade of the pavilion, which is modeled on a Swabian half-timbered house and was created using sustainable spruce wood from Baden-Württemberg.

## THE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG HOUSE AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

By Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut, Minister of Economy, Labour and Tourism of Baden Württemberg (Germany)

Inside the pavilion, visitors will find a cold-air lake, powered by regenerative energy. They will enter into a completely different environment, with the opportunity to retreat from the hectic Expo hustle and bustle.

In addition, the pavilion features a number of exciting exhibits with fascinating effects and light projections to not only shed more light on the history of innovation of the federal state, but also interactively present future-oriented solutions from the fields of infrastructure, mobility, architecture, Industry 4.0, energy, AI and bioeconomy. A variety of cultural and culinary events, children’s activities and special features on typical national festivities, such as Advent and Carnival, as well as trade and business events are planned to accompany the exhibition. Around 100 artists from Baden-Württemberg will be in Dubai to showcase the state’s rich cultural heritage.

Against the backdrop of the corona pandemic, Baden-Württemberg also wants visitors who are not in Dubai to be part of the Expo experience. Together with the Stuttgart-based Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, a “digital twin” of the Baden-Württemberg House was developed. “This way, people all around the world can visit our virtual pavilion and learn more about Baden-Württemberg”, explains the Minister.

Feel the Spirit of Innovation – that is the motto and mission of the Baden-Württemberg House at Expo 2020 Dubai. The project is supported by around 20 sponsors, including internationally renowned companies and innovative start-ups. Furthermore, about 120 partners from the worlds of science, business, education, arts, culture and politics are contributing to make the pavilion a must-see – both in Dubai and virtually.







# THE TOURISM REVIVAL AFTER PANDEMIC

DIPLOMAT MAGAZINE IN CONVERSATION WITH FRANK RAINIERI, UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TREND

H.E. Mr Frank Rainieri, Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Chairman and Founder of Grupo Puntacana in the Dominican Republic and a reference in the tourism industry around the world, shared with Diplomat Magazine his views about the inclination of the tourism market, and public preferences after the pandemic.

After more than a year of an unprecedented health situation that affected the global population, people are slowly going back to normal. While restrictions and regulations are relaxed following a massive vaccination, millions will travel somewhere to recharge, relax and recover energies but destinations and the way we used to travel changed, for good?

“The trend right now is more towards low density, and eco-tourism. In these times, we have observed a total movement towards outdoor sports and not closed areas, a proclivity of being in contact with nature,” said Rainieri. Punta Cana is characterized by its large outdoor areas, surrounded by kilometers of white sand beaches

“We have been working ceaseless in the implementation of hygiene and health measures” he declared. “The Ministry of Tourism in the Dominican Republic, instead of making an individual plan, invited the private sector, led by the Hotel and Tourism Associations, to actively participate in the design of these programs. We are all closely

observing that the protocols are strictly applied in the sector, which has allowed the Dominican Republic and Punta Cana to be deemed as safe destinations to travel.”

**“We have worked to reactivate international markets to ensure they understand the country's position regarding Covid-19.”**

A strict compliance with the protocols contributed to the Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) being recognized by the Airports Council International (ACI), for the implementation of the best hygiene measures implemented by the region for the prevention of Covid-19. To date, 100% of the employees who work at the Punta Cana International Airport and Grupo Puntacana have been vaccinated.

“This success story gives the airlines confidence; people feel confident and tourists have no reason to worry when passing through the airport. Likewise, we

are coordinating with the companies so that, as the borders are opened, more routes and flights are reincorporated, and thus air traffic will increase significantly.”

“The National Vaccination Plan for the recovery of the tourism sector has been very successful. In fact, the vaccination process has had the full support of hoteliers and business sector in the tourist area; several companies, including the Puntacana Group, collaborated with financial resources for the acquisition of vaccines in support of the Dominican Republic.

The Ministry of Public Health of the Dominican Republic began on March 8th, the National Vaccination Plan (Vacúnate RD) with 20 simultaneous stations located only in Terminal B of the Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ), facilitated by Grupo Puntacana. We also supported operational logistics with more than 100 volunteer collaborators in the daily operation, in aid of the Ministry of Public Health, the Dominican Red Cross and the neighborhood council.

“We have furthermore provided ambulances, cold rooms, medical supplies such as alcohol and cotton, medical support staff, food and accommodation for the Ministry’s medical team, which has enabled citizens to be vaccinated daily in an agile, organized and safe manner, and make it one of the vaccination posts that assimilate the highest volume of people per day.”

“I must also acknowledge the initiative of the National Reserve Bank (Banreservas), to ensure the traveler during their stay in the country and, if infected with Covid-19, to cover hospitalization expenses. It has been a message of tranquility that has encouraged many people to be motivated to come to the Dominican Republic.”

#### ‘LA ALTAGRACIA PLAN’: A RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

“We also created the ‘La Altagracia Plan’, through which we donated ventilators, masks, protective equipment for medical personnel, expendable material to equip public hospitals as well as some private ones that lacked the necessary equipment and resources in the months of crisis.”

“Meanwhile, we implemented a food program to distribute 45,000 boxes of food for families of five that would cover a week of food in that province, from Higüey to Verón. We also participate with mobile telemedicine units and cooperate with the hotel association and the Specialized Body for Tourist Security, in hot food programs; In short, we have continuously worked with the purpose of contributing and helping the most vulnerable communities during these difficult times.”

“Let’s keep hope and don’t lose faith. The tourism industry is strong and resilient. 51 years ago, there was nothing here, and in the Dominican Republic nobody believed in tourism. However, little by little this destination was created, which has become the most important in the Insular Caribbean. It is a testimony that with effort and hard work great things are possible.”

## FRANCE CONTRIBUTES €1M TO OPCW’S TRUST FUND FOR SYRIA MISSIONS

France provides further support to the work of the OPCW’s special missions and contingency operations in the Syrian Arab Republic

The Fund supports the Organisation’s special missions and contingency operations related specifically to the Syrian Arab Republic. France’s new contribution aims to assist in full elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and clarification of facts related to the alleged use of chemical weapons, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs of the OPCW. The contribution will support the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM).

The voluntary contribution was formalised on 7 May by the Permanent Representative of the French Republic to the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Luis Vassy, and OPCW Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, at the Organisation’s headquarters in The Hague.

Ambassador Vassy remarked: “I am really pleased to make this year a further significant contribution to the activities of the OPCW in Syria in order to enable its mechanisms to pursue independently their investigations. It is in line with France’s steadfast determination to put an end to the threat of chemical weapons in Syria, which is fundamentally unacceptable – as the Conference of State Parties recently reaffirmed in adopting the decision tabled by my delegation on behalf of 46 countries.” The Director-General expressed his gratitude to the Government of France and noted: “This contribution will help the OPCW to continue its vital work in Syria where both the DAT and FFM face a host of issues that require a coordinated international response to ensure that the norms and principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention are upheld.”



Photography: Gaetan Luci



# ALBANIA

## THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE HOLOCAUST: A UNIQUE STORY OF SOLIDARITY AND COURAGE

By H.E. Ms. Adia Sakiqi, Ambassador of Albania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

*Albania is the only Nazi-occupied country that had a larger Jewish population after the Holocaust as compared to before. In this article, H.E. Ms. Adia Sakiqi, Ambassador of Albania to the Netherlands, recounts the efforts made by Albanians to rescue their Jewish brothers and sisters who faced persecution at the hands of Nazism.*

The Republic of Albania has always enjoyed excellent relations with Israel and the Jewish people. The history of the Jewish community in Albania dates back about 2,000 years; the Jewish people have sought refuge in Albania three times, in the first century, in the 15th and 17th centuries.

In 1932, when anti-Semitism was widespread, Albania was the first country in Europe to recognize the right of the Jewish community to live in peace. After Hitler's rise to power in 1933, many Jews found refuge in Albania. No accurate figures exist regarding their number; however, different sources estimate that 600-1,800 Jewish refugees entered the country from Germany, Austria, Serbia, Greece and Yugoslavia, in the hope to continue on to the Land of Israel or other places of refuge. Following the German occupation in 1943, the Albanian population, in an extraordinary act, refused to comply with the occupier's orders to turn over lists of Jews residing within the country's borders. Moreover, the various governmental agencies provided many Jewish families with fake documentation that allowed them to intermingle amongst the rest of the population.

The Albanians not only protected their Jewish friends, but also provided sanctuary to Jewish refugees who had arrived in Albania, when it was still under Italian rule, and now found themselves faced with the danger of deportation to concentration camps.

While counting only 200 Jewish families before the WWII, by the end of WWII, Albania was home to more than 2,000 people of the

Jewish community. Albania it is thus, the only country that counted more Jewish population after World War II than before the war began.

At the international level, it was through former US Congressman Joe Di Guardi – who, together with Congressman Tom Lantos, was the first to chair the Human Rights Committee in the US Congress – that the fact that every Jewish person who passed on Albanian soil during the Nazi occupation escaped the Holocaust, was first recognized.

As for the recognition in Israel, Albania appreciates the inclusion of Albania's contribution to the protection of Jews in Israeli high school curriculum, which will help younger generations recognize it, contributing to the continuation and consolidation of friendship between the two countries. For this contribution, the Raul Wallenberg Foundation decorated Albania as the "House of LIFE".

Under the auspice of the Albanian Chairmanship of the OSCE, (2020), in Tirana, was held the High-Level Conference on the Fight against Anti-Semitism. This conference provided a good opportunity for dialogue and discussion between the participants on current challenges and good practices related to the fight against anti-Semitism, and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. During the conference, Prime Minister of Albania Mr. Edi Rama, said that our small country has a lot to show to the OSCE countries about the values and the people who saved the Jewish people.

In October 2020, the Albanian Parliament, in partnership with the Movement Against

Anti-Semitism and the Agency for Jews of Israel, organized the first Balkan Forum Against Anti-Semitism. Guests and special speakers at the Forum were high level government officials from Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Israel, as well as the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and European Parliament President David Sassoli, the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Miguel Angel Moratinos, United States Senator for Nevada, Mrs. Mr. Jacklyn Rosen, United States Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism Mrs. Elan S. Carr, President of the Center for Jewish Influence Robert Singer, President of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Mr. Isaac Herzog, Chairman of the Board of the Congress of Eurasian Jews, Mr. Aaron Frenkel, as well as activists in the global fight against anti-Semitism.

*In July 2020, an inauguration ceremony was held for the new Holocaust Memorial established in Tirana. The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of Albania, Mr. Edi Rama, the US ambassador, Yuri Kim, the Israeli ambassador to Albania, Noah Gal Gendler, the Mayor of Tirana, Erion Veliaj, representatives of all religious communities in Albania, etc. At the base of the Memorial is written in golden letters the following expression in the scriptures: "He who saves a life, saves the whole world."*



*H.E. Ms. Adia Sakiqi, Ambassador of Albania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.*  
Photography: Tom Vandercastele

# NIGERIA GROTIUS WOULD HAVE SUPPORTED RESTITUTION, HEGEL WOULD OPPOSE IT

By H.E. Yusuf Tuggar, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Germany

The subject of restitution of Africa's stolen cultural properties is not a new one; African countries like Nigeria have been calling for the return of such assets since they gained independence from colonial rule. The momentum the subject has gained of recent, is an attestation to the progress we have made as humans in recognising and observing universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, irrespective of race, sex, language or religion. When Nigeria became independent in 1960, many African countries were still under colonial bondage—Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa were ruled by racist regimes. It was as part of the struggle to liberate such countries that Nigeria hosted the Festival of Black & African Arts & Culture in 1977 (FESTAC '77). Culture was at the very centre of the struggle against colonialism because of the manner it was used to racially segregate people under colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa. African cultures and their memetic manifestations were considered inferior by colonial overlords. An epistemology was created that promised integration and social mobility to the 'native', if she or he abandoned her or his inferior culture and adopted that of the European overlord and mastered it. Exclusive European living quarters were created that Africans could aspire to live in only if they abandoned their culture and traditions wholesale and adopted European ones. The educational system also emphasised this epistemology with a historiography that presented sub-Saharan Africa as tabula rasa with (to paraphrase Hegel) no history worth studying prior to contact with enlightened outsiders. Such an epistemological foundation to newly independent African nation-states made nation building for countries like Nigeria all the more challenging, even as they struggled to help liberate others.

But in most cases the best evidence to demonstrate to young Africans that African culture and history were neither inferior nor non-existent before contact with 'enlightened outsiders' was not available; it was in the possession of northern hemispheric museums and private collectors.

Nigeria, the most populous African country with over 350 different languages (and the largest economy today), was not even allowed to borrow the famous Queen Idia mask to use as the symbol of FESTAC 77 from Britain. The mask was part of the huge loot stolen by British soldiers during the murderous attack on Benin City in 1897. Some of these items were sold on to museums in Germany that are today finally beginning to respond positively to Nigeria's demand for their return.

Restitution has not been short of international legal premises over the last 50 years; the United Nations General Assembly, UNESCO, International Council of Museums (ICOM) have all enacted resolutions and conventions that were for the most part ignored. Although Germany was not a signatory to a 1970 UNESCO Convention prohibiting the export of cultural properties, in 1972, the German Bundesgerichtshof (Supreme Court) in Karlsruhe it upheld the provisions

of the Convention as well as Nigerian domestic law in a decision on six bronze statues illegally shipped from Port Harcourt to Hamburg. The court maintained that the UNESCO Convention was representative of international public policy and "the export of cultural property contrary to a prohibition of the country of origin for the reason merits, in the interest of maintaining proper standards for the international trade in cultural objects, no protection from [German] civil law".

Nigeria is happy with the support restitution of its stolen cultural properties is receiving in Germany and the all-important cooperation of the German government. The discourse further presents an opportunity for a global re-evaluation of the ontology of Museums in the 21st Century. The time is rife.



Photography: Marie Staggat





Croatia H.E. MS. Dubravka Plejic Markovic.  
Photography: Roy Strik.

# CROATIA A LOCK-DOWN AMBASSADOR

By H.E. Ms Dubravka Plejic Markovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to the Kingdom of the Netherland

of Croats who have settled permanently in the Netherlands and who, with their skills and application of hard work, became inseparable part of this successful society.

In my mind, I dearly held memories of 1990's exhibition commemorating centennial of Van Gogh's death. Not only I was impressed by his masterpieces; tranquility and civility of life in the Netherlands and stillness of the canal waters in Amsterdam resonated hugely for someone who grew up on banks of the Danube River. Coincidentally, geopolitics played its hand here as well. That was a year which was about to bring profound changes in Europe and upheavals were palpable everywhere.

*As a young person from a communist country who was yet to witness the war, I saw these dramatic emotions emanating from Van Gogh's panels as a harbinger of my own uncertain future.*

Almost three decades later, back in the Netherlands, my mind was overtaken by enormity of the task of representing the country which Dutch people know so well from holidaying and doing business and which begins with presenting credentials to His Majesty, the King.

As Croatia was about to assume the EU Presidency and with 2020 quickly approaching, my task of drafting local protocols and implementing national plans for the first ever Croatian Presidency kept me busy. There was not much time left for usual diplomatic courtesies, I had to quickly take over the role that some of my EU colleagues have already carried out so efficiently.

In January 2020, with my small team in the Embassy, I embarked on a journey that would, I hoped, see Croatia, EU and the Netherlands as close partners in making Europe stronger in a challenging world. About that time compounding stories of mysterious illness and terrifying pictures of virus stricken hospitals started to creep in. I can now clearly point out to a moment when I awkwardly stopped shaking hands at official gatherings, contrary to my intrinsic multilateral attitude.

Then my work in The Hague was further impacted by the devastating earthquake in Zagreb of such a magnitude that was not registered for in one hundred and forty years. This nightmarish scenario of having both global pandemics and disastrous tragedy meant applying great deal of flexibility in searching for new solutions to continue with work. Soon emergency crisis mood settled in the Embassy further needed for repatriation efforts. The times were calling for coordination, solidarity and innovation. Adaptation as well.

The physical meetings had to be substituted by new operating platforms and we discovered VTCs, Webinars, ZOOM and other platforms while learning how to navigate through them. Laptop screens and online meetings conducted from isolations of our homes turned out to be regular way of communication for a longer than expected with smart phones and facetime replacing meeting boards. In the meantime, fragmented social life in The Hague continued, with colleagues leaving and coming, while we were bidding virtual farewells to them.

*Discovering virtues of virtual diplomacy meant also learning that technology has its limits and its own, less rational way of functioning. I learned that painfully during some stressful moments while being unable to join meetings that I was supposed to host.*

That made me realize how vulnerable at the hands of technology we might become and how critical it is that with seemingly limitless abilities of our minds we do not forget who we are. However great technological perspective for the 21 century might seem to be, I see diplomacy based on social interaction and people-to-people contact at the core of our profession and truly hope that it will survive and raise above all these exceptional challenges.

*Back in October 2019, at the beginning of my new posting in The Hague, my and most of my colleagues' professional lives and careers seemed to be structured and guided by a certain degree of predictability, planning and application. It all revolved around contacts and human interaction. All of this was destined soon to see dramatic changes.*

Coming from the multilateral hub in Vienna, I was anticipating The Hague mandate not to be much different from the one my predecessors effectuated, being about bilateral issues and multilateral negotiations. I was eager to meet new colleagues and to embark to discover this famous Dutch tolerance and openness which is attracting so many young Croats who come to study here. Not to mention great number

# GREECE 1821-2021: CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF THE GREEK REVOLUTION

By H.E. Mr. Nicolas P. Plexidas, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

*March 25, 2021 is a fundamental historic milestone for my country, marking 200 years since the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821, which led to the creation of the modern Greek state in 1830.*

The Greek Revolution was born amidst the emergence of nationalism and liberalism in Europe, largely inspired by the French and American revolutions. Contrary to other radical national movements of the time, it did not seek to overturn the European order. Instead, it was the result of the uprising of a people that had preserved its national consciousness and religious identity through the centuries against the Ottoman oppressor. It was an armed struggle aiming at creating a "shell state" for the Christian Greek nation by breaking the chains of its multiethnic Ottoman rule. In this sense, the Greek Revolution was ideologically related to German romantic nationalism, rather than French enlightenment.

During the first two years of the Revolution the Great Powers, to avoid engaging in power struggles among themselves, were opposed to it, thus supporting the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. However, in 1823, a shift in British diplomacy occurred, when they started to perceive the new Greek state as a useful ally in the south-eastern Mediterranean and recognized the Greeks as "nation in war". Soon after that, the rest of the Great Powers became more involved in Greek affairs, claiming also a share in the resolution of the "Greek Question".

*It was not only political agendas and timing that left their mark on the Greek Revolution, but also Philhellenism, an international movement of sympathy for the struggling Greeks, which became a crucial instrument for moral and financial support to them.*

With liberal ideas of the French Revolution spreading in Europe, admiration for ancient Greece and abhorrence for the Ottoman atrocities against the unarmed people, as well as the successes of the revolted Greeks in the battlefield during the first two years of the Revolution, contributed to Philhellenism steadily gaining ground. Its enormous contribution to the Greek struggle for independence was intertwined with the increasing Greek Diaspora, as prosperous Greek communities of merchants and intellectuals scattered around the world formed "Struggle Committees" to secretly contribute to the independence cause. In fact, many Philhellenes participated in the struggle with some giving their lives fighting for the Greek cause, most prominent among them the English poet and philosopher Lord Byron, who died in the besieged city of Messolonghi in 1824.

During the Greek Revolution Dutch Philhellenes were also active throughout the Netherlands. The "Amsterdam Philhellenic Commission" was founded to support the cause of Greek independence, with existing evidence proving transfer of funds and goods to the Provisional Government of Greece. Similar "support committees" were also founded in other Dutch cities, such as Rotterdam, with relevant documents relating to the period of 1825-1828 preserved in the City Archives.

An important role in the spread of Philhellenism in the Netherlands is attributed to the scholar Adamantios Korais, the father of the modern Greek enlightenment, who lived in Amsterdam for 6 years (1770-1776) as member of the Greek community of merchants settled in the city since 1750. Korais attended the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam, as well as the University of Leiden, discipline of classical literature Professor Daniël Wyttenbach, whose widow, Danielle Jeanne, a philosopher and writer herself, became a renowned Philhellene. Her work is housed in the Collection of Manuscripts of the Department of Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam



*H.E. Mr. Nicolas P. Plexidas, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.*

*Photography: Roy Strik*

Central Library, headed by the Department of Greek Studies.

In our contemporary world the Greek Revolution of 1821 remains an eternal symbol of an ancient people's struggle for independence, freedom and statehood. The emerging new Greek state, the first ever nation-state in the eastern Mediterranean until the late 19th century, was founded from scratch on an ideological basis: to become an advanced outpost of the developed West in what was at the time perceived as underdeveloped East. Two hundred years after the Revolution, Greece has found its place again in world history, along with its ecumenical cultural heritage of values and principles that gave birth to today's western civilization and has since inspired people all over the world.

**1821-2021**

**Celebrating 200 years  
of the Greek Revolution**



# SERBIA

## INVESTING IN REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTENSIFYING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE NETHERLANDS

By H.E. Ms. Ksenija Milenkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

*Looking back at 2020, it was a year of challenges, fears and losses for the whole world. However, 2020 was also a year of resilience and determination. It was also a year in which the principle of solidarity, although tested, became an ultimate value in itself.*

My country Serbia faced similar difficulties and challenges like any other country in the world. Still, Serbia succeeded in preserving its economic stability and continued to grow in spite of unfavorable objective circumstances. Serbian economic growth in 2020 was above 5 per cent GDP, which is a remarkable result especially considering the overall economic climate. Our public debt remained low. In the year of corona, Serbia attracted 2,9 billion Euro worth foreign direct investments, which further demonstrates the high quality of the country as a desired investment destination.

While we still cannot say we emerged victorious against the virus, the first steps of vaccination in Serbia show more than promising results. Serbia commenced with vaccination of priority categories of citizens on 24 December 2020, while on 19 January 2021 a mass vaccination began. The system of registering for vaccination is fully digitalized and our citizens can choose between three different vaccines - Pfizer Biontech, Sputnik V and Sinopharm. Serbia is currently ranked second in Europe by the number of vaccines administered per 100 citizens. The strategy of our president and our government to negotiate directly with the producers thus providing vaccines quickly proved to be a highly successful one. Moreover, we are part of the Covax system and Serbia in 2020 donated more than 2 million Euro to the global coalition for vaccination.

Throughout 2020 Serbia remained committed to the European integration which remains the strategic priority goal for our government.

The government elected in the end of October 2020 following parliamentary elections in Serbia set the reforms in the area of rule of law as one of its six top priorities, which already resulted in a number of concrete steps and activities. Serbia accepted the new European Union methodology for accession negotiations with candidate countries and we look forward to its implementation for the overall benefit and higher quality of the accession process. While 2020 was a difficult year for the enlargement overall, we are hopeful that in 2021 we will see steps forward for all candidate countries in the region of the Western Balkans.

Serbia continued to invest in regional cooperation, with the main goal of achieving better connectivity and less obstacles for citizens and economy in the Western Balkans. An initiative by Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia known as the so-called Mini Schengen continued to contribute to creating the area of free movement of people and workers between the three countries. In a region where in the past more borders were created than lifted, the governments of three countries decided to enable movement without passports and with IDs only. Serbia is hopeful that the initiative will be accepted and joined by all in the region because it is aimed at benefiting all our citizens without exception. Serbia continued to actively participate in the Berlin process and all other initiatives created to foster regional cooperation.

Serbia is fully committed to the continuation of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina based on the understanding that the only viable solution is a compromise and readiness

of both sides not to be fully satisfied with the end result. Unfortunately, almost eight years after the achieving of the so-called Brussels Agreement its part on the creation of the Association of Serbian Municipalities has not been fulfilled by Pristina. Still, Serbia will continue to play a constructive part in the dialogue and maintain its role in securing regional stability. We are ready to explore different and creative solutions and hopefully move forward with the political dialogue under the EU facilitation.

In 2020 and early 2021 we succeeded in further developing and intensifying our bilateral relations with the Netherlands. With help and support from our colleagues from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs we continued the bilateral dialogue and jointly explored ways to continuously improve political, economic and cultural relations between Serbia and the Netherlands.

In January 2021, the first bilateral political consultations were held between our two ministries, when Serbian and Dutch colleagues exchanged views on bilateral relations, European integration of Serbia, economic cooperation and other issues of mutual interest. On the Serbian side we are confident that this is the first step in building close relations and a substantial political dialogue with the Netherlands in all relevant areas.



H.E. Ms. Ksenija Milenkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.  
Photography: Roy Strik.

# PERU

## OCEANUS PERUVIANUS

### THE AMAZING PERUVIAN SEA

By H.E. Marisol Agüero Colunga, Ambassador of Peru to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Oceanus Peruvianus was the name given by the Dutch-Flemish astronomer, cartographer and theologian Petrus Plancius to the Pacific Ocean in 1594. This was an extension of the America Peruana, expression he used to designate virtually the whole South American continent in times where the news about the Inca Empire and its gold and silver wealth made the Viceroyalty of Peru the centre of interest in Europe. The work of Plancius was of utmost influence among European cartographers and the expression Oceanus Peruvianus was widely used until the first decades of the 18th century. Nevertheless, the riches of that sea were yet to be discovered.

In modern times, the so-called Peruvian Sea runs along the 3,080 km of Peru's coastline and extends to the West up to 200 nautical miles (M). Although nowadays the maritime rights of every coastal State over 200 M is not contested, Peru was, in 1947, the first country in the world in setting forth by a piece of legislation its rights over the adjacent sea and its resources to that extension, opposing to the maritime powers that used to send fleets to the coasts of South America for purposes of intensive fishing and whale hunting. The aim of the Peruvian legislative act was to avoid depletion and to preserve the marine resources particularly for the benefit of Peru's coastal population.

Together with Chile, that through a presidential declaration had claimed such rights one month before, and since 1952 also with Ecuador, Peru deployed efforts to defend and promote around the world the principles supporting their maritime claims. Colombia adhered in 1979. After several years of tireless negotiations, in 1982 the rights of the coastal States over 200 M of the adjacent sea and the resources therein were universally recognized and enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

But, why the extension of 200 M? The number is related to the maximum width of the Peru's Current, also known as the Humboldt Current in honour of the Prussian polymath Alexander von Humboldt, who was the first in scientifically studying it in 1802 by measuring

its temperature and speed. This current runs along the western coast of South America but mainly along Peru's coast bringing cold waters together with plankton to the surface and to latitudes that otherwise would register temperatures between 5 and 10 Celsius degrees higher. This explains the riches of the Peruvian Sea, the world's most productive fishing area.

**In the waters washing Peru's coasts there are more than 1,000 fish species, more than 1,000 types of molluscs and crustaceans, more than 200 of echinoderms, 32 different marine cetaceans and 5 of the 7 species of the sea turtles that exist in the world.**

Not surprisingly, the fishing activity in the Peruvian Sea started as early as 5,000 years ago when the people of Caral, the oldest city in the Americas, located north of Lima, practiced fish and molluscs catching using an advanced technology that included fishing nets made of cotton, hooks and boats. Other pre-Incas civilizations in Peru and the Incas also benefited from the wealth of the sea, which inspired many pieces of pottery, gold and silver, as well as patterns on textiles.

At present, Peru is the first world producer of fishmeal made of *Engraulis ringens*, also known as Peruvian Anchovy, a fish rich in vitamins A and D, Iron and Omega 3 and 6 and which is exported to different markets around the world. It is estimated that around 250,000 Peruvians are related to fish activities and Peru's fleet counts almost 850 vessels.

**The wide variety of marine species has contributed to the enrichment of the Peruvian gastronomy. In fact, Peru has been awarded eight consecutive times as the World's Leading Culinary Destination by the prestigious "World Travel Awards".**

There is also much to say about the submarine areas of the Peruvian Sea but we leave it for another opportunity.

Finally, I would like to mention that Peru completed its maritime boundary delimitation with a Judgement of the International Court of Justice in 2014. That way, the last boundary of the truly Oceanus Peruvianus was established in Dutch land 420 years after a Dutch cartographer deemed it appropriate to extend Peru's demonym to the whole Pacific Ocean.

Photography: Chris Ronteltap





# PANAMA COMMITTED TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

By H.E. Ms. Elizabeth Ward Neiman, Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



H. E. Ms. Erika Mouynes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama.

Photography: Ministry of Foreign Affairs de Panama

In the 1960's, a cigarette company launched a marketing campaign tapping into the beginning of the women empowerment movement. Sixty years later, the shift against cigarette smoking has come a long way, but so has the empowerment of women and gender equality shifted remarkably as well. This shift is especially recognizable within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama.

The Republic of Panama is a State Party of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and has ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) of 1951.

In 2012, the World Economic Forum (WEF) created the Initiatives of Gender Parity (IPG) with the objective of accelerating women's equality integration in the work force

combining public and private sector initiatives. However, it was not until 2016 that the efforts moved to Latin America with Panama as a frontrunner along with Chile and Argentina.

In constituting public-private alliances including people from public institutions, multilateral organizations and public and private organizations, the goal of Panama's Initiatives of Gender Parity (IPG Panama) was directed towards promoting best practices to close the economic gender gap by increasing the number of women in the labor force, reduce the wage gap and promote women in leadership positions.

One of the leaders of the nine institutions that form part of the Panamanian alliance is the governmental National Institute for Women (INAMU). By creating the program, "Mujer, Cambia tu Vida" (Woman, Change your Life), INAMU has provided the necessary environment and opportunities for women to achieve economic independence aimed at an integral economy and a sustainable social environment in a competitive means.

In order to measure achievements aimed towards the international and national gender parity goals, Panama created a system of indicators with focus on gender in Panama (SIEGPA).

**Through INAMU the government proposed a Gender Parity Certificate, as an initiative within the framework of the Institutional Strengthening Project of the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP) within the public institutions.**

Although there is a clear shift in gender parity among the labor force in all public institutions as well as in the private sector, nowhere is this as obvious as in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs!

Appointed in December 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MIRE) is currently led by HE Erika Mouynes. It is selected women who accompany Minister Mouynes; HE Dayra Carrizo Castellero and HE Ana Luisa Castro as Vice Chancellor and Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation, respectively. In addition to the three highest authority positions being occupied by outstanding internationally

experienced women, 57% of the 14 appointed Department directors in the Ministry are highly qualified professional women.

The Minister Mouynes promotes the agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of all women with her participation in the campaign "#YoAlzoMiVoz" supporting the generation of equality as part of the collective call to action of the UN Women Decade of Action. She is also committed to the EPIC initiative (Equal Pay International Coalition) as a member of the steering committee, representing 1 of the 8 countries that globally leads actions for equal pay between men and women.

In addition to this, Panama is represented in several multilateral organizations by women holding commendable positions. Ambassador María Roquebert is Permanent Representative of Panama to the Organization of American States (OAS). Just recently, Vivian Fernández de Torrijos was elected to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Conference of State Parties.

Out of over 1,580 women participating, All About Shipping selected HE Natalia Royo de Hagerman, Ambassador of Panama to the United Kingdom, as one of the 100 Most Influential Women in the global shipping industry. Not forming part of a multilateral organization, nor part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama, but equally relevant on the international scene is Ilya Espino de Marotta, Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal and Vice President of Operations, who is of influence in almost all international trade.

And last, but not least, I have recently joined the prestigious organization, International Gender Champions, a leadership network that brings together high-level women and men decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality.

**It is with great honor and pride that we, as women, represent our country, the Republic of Panama, around the world as an example to other nations of the importance of gender parity.**

# ROMANIA FROM THE BLACK SEA TO THE NORTH SEA

By H.E. Mr. Lucian Fătu, Ambassador of the Republic of Romania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

*This March 27, one of the economic headlines in Romania, The Netherlands and Australia referred to the Nuyina icebreaker starting a trial voyage in the North Sea before being delivered to serve in the Antarctica. The 160 meters long state-of-the-art research vessel was commissioned by the Australian Government and built by Damen Naval Romania in the Galați shipyard over a period of three years. This is only the most recent token of the Romanian-Dutch investment and economic cooperation, and it highlights The Netherlands' position as the strongest foreign investor in the Romanian economy by capital residence, with almost 10 bn Euro.*



Photography: Kim Vermaat

However, it is not by chronological order of events that I open my comments with the economic pillar of the Romanian-Dutch relations. Their strength articulates and, in turn, is made possible by a profound convergence of values and aspirations that the two countries share at bilateral, European and international levels. As European Union members, NATO allies and partners in regional and multilateral organizations, Romania and The Netherlands build their cooperation on a diplomatic dialogue that celebrated its 140th anniversary one year ago.

We cooperate closely on a number of important issues such as global politics, security (including cyber), trans-border crime, trade and agriculture. We coordinate our positions on the European agenda items such as the future of our continent. We are exploring better options on issues such as the EU neighborhood, climate changes or migration.

*The current corona crisis and the struggle to ensure a fair and far-reaching vaccine distribution at national, EU and global levels pose one of the greatest challenges, and opportunities as well, to our authorities and to the global multilateral system. We are working together towards the most appropriate EU response to this test.*

Working in The Hague, every diplomat has the unique opportunity to experience the vibrant multilateral organizations and NGO activity and to showcase their countries' positions and goals. Romanians have ample opportunities to do so, based on a set of values and principles we strongly believe in and have shaped our history.

My country remains committed to all efforts aimed at reinforcing the rule of law and supporting the delivery of justice. As such, we closely follow the development of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisprudence. Acquiring constructive international relations requires adherence to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. We thus express our hope that more countries will follow in the practice of accepting the ICJ's compulsory jurisdiction. Romania did so in 2015. Additionally, the ever-changing landscape of international relations calls for more practitioners of international law. In this spirit, we are happy to have been one of the main supporters of the establishment of a Trust Fund for the Judicial Fellowship of the ICJ, a mechanism for sponsoring young candidates from developing countries to access the ICJ Traineeship.

As we know, the International Criminal Court (ICC) lies at the heart of international efforts aimed at fighting impunity. We acknowledge the important role of the ICC in this regard, and firmly support it in achieving its mandate. The adoption last December of the Resolution

on the review of the ICC and the Rome Statute system is of great international significance. As current members of the Bureau, we are honoured to be directly involved in all aspects concerning not only such review, but the overall activity of the Assembly of States Parties.

Another multilateral level where Romania is active in The Hague is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), whose aim is the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Convention came into force on April 29th, 1997, and Romania was one of the 65 original signatories. All of Romania's actions at this level reconfirm our commitment to actively contributing to multilateral diplomacy in the service of world peace. Currently, Romania holds one of the vice-president seats at the 25th session of the OPCW Conference of the States Parties to take place between 20 and 22 April this year.

In the end of the day, it is all about people. Romanians living in The Netherlands are a well adjusted and well respected community.

*As a symbol of integrated culture and identity, a tulip named after Romanian Princess Maria Brâncoveanu was created in 2018 in Groningen, and can be admired in the garden of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Schiedam.*



# CHINA

## ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP

By H.E. Mr. Jian Tan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

It is a great honour as well as heavy responsibility for me to serve as ambassador of China to the Netherlands.

In my more than three decades of service in foreign affairs, I spent most of the years in multilateral development field. I worked in Geneva and New York. Yet my first posting was bilateral, in Indonesia. My previous one was ambassador to Ethiopia, the roof of Africa. So, I flowed from the highland to the lowland -- the Netherlands.

Since my arrival on the Christmas day of 25th December last year, I have reached out to the government, business and academia in the Netherlands. I am quite impressed by the perseverance and openness of the Dutch people. With perseverance, they have turned the lowland into beautiful homeland; with openness, they are the driving force for multilateralism and free trade.

Although situated on the opposite side of the Eurasia continent, our two peoples share many similarities, and the two countries have been building the "Open and Pragmatic Partnership of Comprehensive Cooperation". There are many bright spots of this partnership and cooperation.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, leaders from China and the Netherlands have been in close contact through telephone conversations and exchanges of letters. The two governments have worked together in establishing a special cargo air bridge to ensure essential medical supplies to the Netherlands, maintaining a stable industrial and supply chain, and promoting economic recovery.

Climate change is an important area of our close cooperation. In 2019, the Global Center on Adaption based in the Netherlands set its first overseas office in China. In January 2021, China's Vice Premiere Mr. Han Zheng virtually attended the Climate Adaption Summit held in the Netherlands. China has set the goal of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. The job is hard, but our commitment is firm. The Netherlands has been a champion on sustainable

*H.E. Mr. Jian Tan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Photography by the Embassy of China in The Hague*



development and our cooperation could make a difference in combating climate change.

Both countries support multilateralism. The Netherlands is a role model in international development cooperation. China is for North-South, South-South and Tripartite Cooperation. The two countries maintain consultations on major international and regional issues within the frameworks of the UN, G20, WTO and WHO. There are also practical exchanges and cooperation like on Mali peacekeeping and Somali anti-piracy operations. Together, China and the Netherlands could make important contribution to the international system with the UN as its core, the international order with international law as its basis, the multilateral trading system with the WTO as its cornerstone.

Our bilateral trade last year, against all odds, grew by 7.8% to a historical high of 91.8 billion dollars, and Dutch export to China expanded by 14.2%. Our mutual direct investment is also larger than other EU countries. This extraordinary performance during the pandemic is a testament to the resilience and the potential of our economic relations. The sky is the limit. Last year, China was the only major economy registering a positive growth, and became the largest trading partner of the EU. This year it is projected to grow by more than 6%. More importantly, China's reform and opening up will only be further deepened and widened.

While being optimistic, I am very sober-minded about the challenges ahead.

Both China and the Netherlands commit to protect human rights, though our approach may not be the same given the level of development. While acknowledging people's political and civil rights, China attaches great importance to the right to development and people's well being.

**We prioritize the improvement of people's living standard. Over the past four decades and more, China has lifted over 800 million people out of poverty, including about 100 million in the past 8 years.**

China has completed, 10 years in advance, the goal of poverty reduction set in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is a historical achievement for China and for humanity.

We prioritize the protection of people's life. Faced with the sudden onslaught of Covid-19, the government took quick decision to lockdown Wuhan, a city of more than 10 million people; and Hubei, a province of about 60 million people. There was no hesitation in weighing the health and the economy. Life first.

Recently there have been intensive exchanges on issues related to Xinjiang and Hong Kong. Please allow me to touch each briefly.

# PRINCESS BAJRAKITIYABHA JOINS MILITARY RANKS



Photography: Thai Royal Office

His Thai Majesty **King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X)**, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Armed Forces installed his eldest daughter, HRH Ambassador (ret.) **Princess Bajrakitiyabha**, The Princess Rajasarinisiribajra, in the Thai Armed Forces with the rank of 'General' after having accepted the appointment as 'Chief of Staff of The King's Close Bodyguard Command' during a ceremony held at Amphorn Sathan Throne Hall in Dusit Palace, last February in Bangkok. Her Majesty Queen Suthida was present during the ceremony.

Princess Bajrakitiyabha (b. 7 December 1978) holds a doctorate in law from Cornell University (New York State, USA). After her studies she was trained in diplomacy at the Thai Permanent Mission to the UN. Thereafter he continued her career under the umbrella of the Thai Ministry of Justice until she was despatched to Austria as Royal Thai Ambassador, serving from 4 September 2012 until 1 October 2014. She was concurrent head of mission as non-resident ambassador to Slovakia and Slovenia as well as Permanent Representative to the UN organisations in Vienna.

After her ambassadorship, he joined the Office of the Attorney General in Bangkok. After her half-brother, **HRH Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti**, Princess Bajrakitiyabha is second in the line of succession to the Thai throne. Popularly she is known as **Princess Pa**, or **Princess Patty**.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates the protection of human rights, the protection of the spoken and written languages and the preservation of traditions and customs of all ethnic groups, the prohibition on discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group. Over the past two decades and more, Xinjiang was plagued by terrorism and violence. Thousands of terrorist attacks have caused huge casualties and property losses. Terrorism is the common enemy to the world. The UN Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism points out that, poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and distortion of religious belief, among others, are causes for violence and extremism. We therefore have taken measures to address the root causes by providing education and training to those affected, help them get jobs and stay away from violence and religious extremism. Since 2014, over 3 million people in Xinjiang have been lifted out of poverty. The Uyghur population in Xinjiang increased by 25 percent between 2010 and 2018, and doubled over the past 40 years. China is firmly against forced labour. Besides, given the quality and quantity of Chinese labour force, it just makes no sense, politically or economically, to use forced labour.

**Hong Kong has enjoyed a high degree of administrative, legislative and economic autonomy since its return to China in 1997. The implementation of "one country, two systems" is a big success.**

Still, with the lapse of 24 years after the handover, it's time to take stock and improve. This is especially necessary given that over the past years, the anti-China radicals in Hong Kong committed vandalism, robbery and arson. They attempted to paralyze the Legislative Council, the government, and the airport, and went so far as to call for independence. Riots are riots, be it in Hong Kong or other places. Those moves have crossed the bottom line of "one country, two systems". The decision of the National People's Congress of China to improve Hong Kong's electoral system and uphold the principle of "patriots governing Hong Kong" are in line with the Constitution and the Basic Law of HKSAR as well as the established international practices. It is a common sense that a country's citizens and public servants in particular should love their country and observe the Constitution. "Patriots" covers a wide scope and will not drive out diversity. For sure, Hong Kong's tomorrow will be much better.

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Under its leadership, China has realized the task of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and will embark on a new journey toward fully building a modern

socialist country. In its newly unveiled 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), China aims to foster a new development paradigm for high quality growth. China is focusing on achieving its development goal, including that of the climate change. China is getting more and more connected with the rest of the world, now being the major trading partner for over 120 countries and regions. In 2019, there were as many as 155 million outbound Chinese tourists. As the most populous country, China is becoming the largest consumption market in the world. China's development is a huge opportunity for other countries.

Recently, we have heard a lot of rhetoric about decoupling, isolation, containment, even a new cold war. It seems that China bashing has become a political correct in some countries. Our goal is to meet the growing aspiration of the Chinese people for a better life. To replace any other country is never our national strategy. We export goods, not political system. It is universally accepted that there is no one-size-fits-all development model and China will continue to develop in a way suited to its own national conditions. This is a diversified world. Countries may differ in civilization, culture, political system and level of development, but no one is to be excluded or isolated. Developing countries have the right to develop, integrate into the global value chain, move up and have a place in high-tech. Of course they are required to play by the rules including respecting intellectual property rights. Alleging some hi-tech companies from China of spying without evidence is a far cry from free and fair competition. The unprecedented global challenges today require unprecedented cooperation. We aim to build a community of shared future for mankind. Climate change affects every country, virus respects no border. We are living in a global village, and share our fate in the same boat. International cooperation is the only way out.

Next year, China and the Netherlands will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our ambassadorial diplomatic relationship. Our relations have withstood the changes in the international landscape over half a century. Our bilateral relationship is termed by our leaders as "Open and Pragmatic Partnership for Comprehensive Cooperation". We have shared interests, no fundamental interest conflict. As ambassador, I am committed to enhancing understanding and promoting partnership.

**The Netherlands is a beautiful place, the Dutch are great people. So, while working hard, I will find time to explore the country, know the people and have a good time.**



# MADAGASCAR

## IMPROVING THE BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT IN MADAGASCAR

By - H.E. Mr Jean Omer Beriziky, Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar

“Business relations between the Netherlands and Madagascar are generally good, although not very extensive,” said Arne Doornebal of the Netherlands-African Business Council. “Over the past few years we have been working together with the Malagasy Embassy on two programmes aimed at increasing these business relations. In the past editions of Biofach in Nuremberg-Germany, the largest trade fair for organic food products in the world, we brought a group of Malagasy entrepreneurs that jointly participated in a country pavilion: ‘Madagascar - truly authentic.’ This enables them to highlight a united business sector internationally” according to Mr. Doornebal.

Then there is a 3-year programme called New Origins for Sustainable Spices (NOSS), whereby six international companies, active in spice trading, jointly work on improving the quality and the quantity of spices that are sourced from Tanzania and Madagascar. “We often see a mismatch between supply and demand,” Mr. Doornebal explained. “Spices traders in Europe have high expectations on the quality and how the spices are handled. The aim of NOSS is to increase the quantity and quality of spices from Tanzania and Madagascar, by way of knowledge transfer, demonstrations, farmer capacity building and the development of standards. Currently NOSS, together with the CTHT (Centre Technique Horticole de Tamatave), is operating 3 clove/cinnamon demo farms in eastern Madagascar and training 4 Malagasy spice exporters in food safety and quality control by way of blended learning. Furthermore, the NOSS program maintains a dialogue on quality improvement on sector and exporter level, aiming for a group visit to Madagascar in November to reignite this dialogue and visit potential new suppliers.”

The NABC and the Economic Development Board of Madagascar ([www.edbm.mg](http://www.edbm.mg)), the Malagasy Government’s investment promotion agency, have established a



strategic partnership which is “essential for the promotion of the spices and essential oils sectors in Madagascar”, according to Andry Ravalomanda, General Manager of the EDBM. “In more than one way, it is a growth lever on which the Malagasy private sector can rely to contract with leading international buyers”.

### E-GOUVERNANCE, MAJOR REFORMS UNDER WAY

H.E. Jean Omer Beriziky, Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar accredited to the Kingdom of the Netherlands underlines that “one of the Malagasy Government’s priorities is to improve the business climate and to facilitate investments”.

A major reform has been launched for several years to set up an e-governance system that will lead Madagascar to the digitalization of its public administration. The Reform Program for Administration Efficiency (PREA) is the spearhead of this reform with the mission to developing Malagasy public administration efficiency. Financed by the World Bank in the amount of 140 million dollars, all the changes that the program is

willing to accomplish should systematically go through the overhaul of the civil status to set up a unique identification system.

One part of these reforms will be carried out under the Malagasy Identity Digital Governance Project (PRODIGY). The PRODIGY plans to award a unique identifier number to physical and legal entities. This will facilitate information management on citizens, but also it will avoid any kind of corruption that may occur in the public sector. Through the unique identifier, social welfare will be more spontaneous and easier.

This would improve as well the public service for the benefit of Malagasy citizens, national and foreign investors.

As regards investment facilitation, the EDBM is equally undertaking a digital shift to assist economic operators. With the support of the World Bank, the PRODIGY project, and the Digital Governance Unit (UGD) under the aegis of the Presidency of the Republic of Madagascar, EDBM is dematerializing the company creation process through the implementation of the digital platform [www.orinasa.edbm.mg](http://www.orinasa.edbm.mg).

Eventually, the other services of the EDBM's One stop shop, dedicated for investors will be equally available on the platform namely visas, work permits, resident's cards, specific approvals, and authorizations, etc.

The Ambassador Jean Omer Beriziky (info@ambassademadagascar.be) encourages investors and operators in

the Benelux countries to develop their businesses in his promising country, suitable for all markets thanks to its huge and untapped potentialities among them agribusiness, energy, ITC, infrastructure, tourism, mines, etc.



## A GOLDEN JUBILEE, THE PROMENADE AT FIFTY NOW THE LEONARDO ROYAL HOTEL, A DIFFERENT NAME BUT THE SAME DEDICATED STAFF

By John Dunkelgrün

On the very spot where guests have been treated to comfort and quality for over 200 years, Patrick Aarsman and his team are proud to make this jubilee year something truly special. Their annual herring party on the 22nd of June showed their inventiveness in the time of Covid restrictions. Not one big party for the 150 invitees (mostly ambassadors and other diplomats), but three separate shifts. There was of course plenty of freshly caught and cleaned herring (the quality is superb this year!), which the mainly non-Dutch guests first sampled and then enjoyed with gusto. The herring was followed by a sit-down lunch at tables for two or four with the mandated 1.5 meters between them. Lunch consisted of a series of very original small dishes that were a delight to the palate and beautifully made up. Chef

Sido and his équipe had really outdone themselves in showing what they can do for parties, dinners, and receptions.

While a sit-down lunch isn't ideal for networking, everyone was simply delighted at being able to meet in person once again and the sense of re-found freedom was palpable. General Manager Patrick Aarsman proudly announced that in a year that is so special for his Leonardo Royal Hotel he is planning extensive renovations to the ground floor to give their guests a truly world-class experience. And to make it even more attractive to the diplomatic community, there will be a separate dining room for diplomats only. Expressing regret that she couldn't be present due to the Covid restrictions, he honoured Dr. Mayelinne de

### DIPLOMAT MAGAZINE EVENTS



Photography: Chris Ronteltapl

Lara of Diplomat Magazine in gratitude for the close cooperation in bringing together the Diplomatic Corps at The Hague and the hotel.

Life is slowly returning to normal and this relay herring party showed that the Leonardo can adapt to unusual circumstances as only a Royal host can.





# GEORGIA

## GEORGIA'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND 30 YEARS TO EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

By Mr. Giorgi Nakashidze, Chargé d'Affaires a. i., Embassy of Georgia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

sphere of influence and hinder its pro-western foreign policy. Even today, Georgia continues its fight for territorial integrity. The Russian Federation continues the illegal occupation of the indivisible regions of the country - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia. In a historic judgment in January 2021, the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights found that Russia is exercising effective control over Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia and it is responsible for the mass violations committed against the Georgian population.

### Relations between the European Union and Georgia started soon after Georgia regained its sovereignty.

The European Union and Georgia's close relationship is based on the EU-Georgia Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which entered into force in July 2016 and strives for political association and economic integration. Besides, since 28 March 2017 nationals of Georgia are exempt from visa requirement to travel to the Schengen zone for a short-stay. As a next benchmark, Georgia is preparing to apply for full EU membership in 2024.

Georgia is a thriving Eastern European democracy and as a successful case of European integration, it carries an important benefit for the EU as a value-based transformational power. Georgia is the EU's gateway to the Caucasus, to the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. As a Black Sea littoral state, it can play a significant role as Europe's alternative transport hub and an alternative energy route. Georgia is also a contributor to tackling global and regional security challenges. A Framework Agreement on Georgia's participation in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy operations entered into force in March 2014, and Georgia has since made remarkable contributions to several operations.

Accession to the NATO is another top foreign and security policy priorities of Georgia. Shortly after Georgia restored independence in 1991, the country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992. At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, the Allies agreed that Georgia will become a NATO member. This decision has been reaffirmed at successive NATO Summits. By actively involving in NATO-led operations, Georgia aims at becoming not only the consumer of security, but also an important player for strengthening common Euro-Atlantic security.

During past three decades, Georgia demonstrated significant progress in the economic and cultural diplomacy. As of now, country has free trade with 2.3 billion-consumer market. Georgia is a leader in the region in terms of stability and investment attractiveness. The elements of Georgian intangible cultural heritage, among others, include the ancient Georgian traditional Kvevri winemaking method. In 2017, 8,000-year-old pottery fragments revealed the earliest evidence of grape winemaking in Georgia, which entered Guinness World Records as the 'oldest wine'.

### 30 years after regaining independence from the Soviet Union, Georgia has become a reliable partner in the international community to which world also presents differently.

Country's geopolitical, economic and cultural interests have spread across the globe while its security, political and economic stability are in the interests of the majority of the countries in the world. In pursuit to bridge Georgia and the world, Georgia continues to maintain a persistent foreign policy and conduct proactive diplomacy guided by predictability, sustainability and continuity.

*26 May 2021 marks 103rd year of the Democratic Republic of Georgia as well as 30th anniversary of the restoration of independence from the Soviet Union. On 26 May 1918, Georgia declared independence. Despite the short period of its existence (1918-1921), the Democratic Republic of Georgia had a significant impact on the development of the Georgian statehood in a long run.*

At the referendum in 1991, Georgian voters (99.08%) answered 'yes' to one single question: 'Do you support the restoration of the independence of Georgia in accordance with the Act of Declaration of Independence of Georgia of 26 May 1918?' Consequently, the country gained back its sovereignty in 1991. Since then, Georgia has made a substantial success in multiple directions, including on the path to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Due to Georgia's Euro-Atlantic course, maintaining of independence, unfortunately, turned out to be harder than gaining it. Since regaining independence, Georgia has been target of full-scale military aggression and hybrid warfare from the Russian Federation aiming to destabilise the country, keep it in the

# DUTCH eCONSULATE IN SAN FRANCISCO EMBRACES DIGITAL DIPLOMACY DURING COVID

By Consul General Dirk Janssen Francisco

Photography by Joukje Baur for Consulate General of the Netherlands in San

No more meetings, trade delegations, or cultural events. The emergence of Covid-19 a year ago halted business as usual for many in the diplomatic world.

The restrictions also had a major impact on the Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco. But a year later, the consulate has embraced digital diplomacy by organizing digital trade missions from its own webinar studio. Consul General Dirk Janssen explains how his team launched the so-called e-Consulate.

Based in the heart of Silicon Valley, the consulate used to welcome monthly trade delegations and several government officials per year. All that action came to a sudden stop in March 2020: "With the economic uncertainty that was ahead, we were determined to continue providing our economic services to Dutch and American companies," said Consul General Janssen. "Meeting and connecting people is our core job, so our challenge was to adapt to a new world without travel and handshakes for the time being."

The consulate's team followed the example of innovative tech companies in Silicon Valley and pivoted, or made a quick turn of its business. "We launched the eConsulate, in which we offer the same services for businesses, but online. Companies could book online meetings, we opened a WhatsApp number for questions, and started hosting online events on a variety of topics," said Consul General Janssen. "We also launched an online platform through which Dutch startups were mentored by Dutch tech entrepreneurs. Surprisingly, we started to expand our audience, from the US East Coast, to Iran and even Australia. Online we could connect even more people to Dutch innovation."

Forced into a strict lockdown in San Francisco, team members organized all this from their own homes. "It was quite an adaptation for all of us: from hosting events at the consulate to being a webinar moderator from your kitchen table. Suddenly, our economic staff had to be communications experts and our events

manager had to do technical assistance," said Consul General Janssen. "All our jobs changed, just to keep the consulate open and be of service of the Dutch and American business community. Our motto was: just do it and learn on the way. I think this pivot really represents the Netherlands, showcasing the smart Dutch flexible approach to problem solving."

In June, the consulate hosted the first Dutch virtual trade mission, on smart and e-mobility. The consulate was transformed into a TV studio, and offered the 100 participating companies five days of webinars, and online match making and networking. Minister Kaag (Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation) and California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis opened the mission.

"Discussions went well, and there was a lot

**"From a content perspective, I think the virtual format is a great substitute, as it was easier to find a wide variety of speakers,"** said Consul General Janssen.

of knowledge exchange and contact sharing. It turned out that for many Dutch entrepreneurs, it was less of a hurdle to participate, as they didn't have to travel across the globe."

They did, however, miss the social part. "Networking online is different than in a room where you can shake each other's hands," he said. "We also noticed some cultural differences in meeting people online for the first time. Even now, we continue working on the perfect format for online interaction."

Almost a year after the start of the corona crisis, the eConsulate has developed from a temporary solution to a more structural approach. It has hosted multiple trade missions, a network reception with live music, a naturalization ceremony, a film screening, a Nobel Prize lecture, a startup incubator program with Prince Constantijn, and alumni events all online from its own webinar studio built in one of the consulate's meeting rooms. "The skyline of the city is our background,



giving people in the Netherlands the feeling that they're really visiting San Francisco," said Consul General Janssen.

**Consul General Janssen foresees continuing online meetings and events even once the pandemic recedes: "I really miss offline human contact; it's an essential part of diplomacy."**

However, the world has changed. People don't want to fly that often anymore and many companies here allowed work from home indefinitely. As a consulate we have to facilitate these wishes from the business community. So I expect trade missions to become more hybrid: first an online preparation program, then getting on a plane to actually meet possible partners."

**"Offline and online will go hand in hand."**





*In the photo : Kristine Celorio*

# STOP, FEDERAL AGENT!

By Alexandra Paucescu

Stop, federal agent! ... Who did not hear that phrase, at least once? Hollywood action movies, one of America's best cultural diplomacy tools, are popular all over the world and fascinate us all. Men and women in dark blue uniforms, catching the 'bad guys' and saving the world from catastrophe, are kind of modern days heroes.

**Kristine Celorio** was until not too long ago one of them.

Beautiful Californian girl, with big dreams and high career goals, great at her job, she decided to follow a Master degree program in Spain and there... she lived one of those famous encounters, that changed her life 180 degrees. She met her future husband, Mexican born diplomat and what started as a long distance relationship turned later into a solid marriage. However, it took her six years to decide and make the move.

**Being a federal agent and working in a team that specialized on investigating fraud and 'white collar' crimes was greatly rewarding and fulfilled Kristine's early career aspirations, but eventually love won.**

After all, most of us, diplomatic spouses, have been through this at one point in our life... facing this big dilemma: what should I do, is it worth it?

'I really enjoyed my job' she says. 'It was exciting, different every day and I was helping people, making a difference. But one thing I loved more was travelling. So, leaving my job to marry a diplomat was like leaving a dream for another.'

She tried to find a way to transfer her previous highly trained skills into a corporate job, but it

proved to be more difficult than imagined. She then decided to focus on family and her two adorable children.

Raising bilingual children is a rich and diverse experience. But she warns us: 'Pay attention to what local traditions your kids are embracing, which may not be your own! As they grow up in a country different from yours, some things and customs become important to them, which normally wouldn't even cross your mind. You have to constantly pay attention, get out of your normal comfort zone and immerse into a new day-to-day reality of a foreign country, where you are posted for just a limited time'.

While she is now 'home in Mexico', she started blogging. In her blog, 'Irish I were Mexican', she likes to present her beautiful adoptive country, which she says 'is often unfairly portrayed in the media and has countless marvelous places and traditions to offer to the world! Her blog also generously hosts other diplomatic spouses' experiences from around the Globe, picturing beautiful places through the eyes of others and offering great travel tips, too.

'Also, I have recently become interested in how foreign born spouses, like myself, help represent a country different from their own, often with zero guidance or training. I often argue that being a diplomat's spouse is the only job that is not a job there is. You simply step into a role just based on your relationship alone.'

Her investigative nature and previous training determined her to run a survey and study the percentage of foreign born spouses into the diplomatic world. The results were quite surprising, showing a lot of our fellow diplomatic partners actually living this experience, sometimes quite demanding and delicate.

She says that she found the diplomatic community largely warm and welcoming. 'People often equate diplomatic life to sticking to conventions, but we really constantly bend and flex to accommodate and celebrate difference'. I can imagine it wasn't easy for her. Learning a new language, traditions and trying to be a good host on foreign territory, under foreign rules. But we all face our challenges at a certain point, once we started our way on this life long road.

**Indeed, like snowflakes dancing with delicate moves into the wind, finding their way to the ground, we make our way graciously into the diplomatic world, often unknown, and try to be our best versions, reaching high expectations, to best represent our countries (of birth or not) and complete the greater diplomatic world puzzle, to which we all belong.**

# DIPLOMACY AT A HORSE TROT

By Alexandra Paucescu

*I've always loved horses. I admire their beauty and pure elegance. I remember, as a young girl, I was watching horse-jumping championships on TV, together with my grandma, and imagined myself making that perfect team with the animal, competing for world's glory and admiration. Well... it never happened to me, except for a few months of horse riding lessons, it remained a dream... but recently I had the pleasure to meet someone who lived my childhood fantasy, at high levels.*

She is **Jaizel Selleslaghs**, born in the Netherlands, married to a Belgian

She says she has loved horses all her life and first rode one when she was only 4! Although she admits that it is quite an exclusive and expensive sport, she was lucky enough to have her own horse at 7. And that's how her life passion for horses took off.

'Netherlands had always a great tradition in horse riding', she says.

**'Horses were everything to me. I would spend every day with them, taking care of them, riding, and I was competing in jumping and dressage competitions almost every weekend.'**

Meanwhile I was also studying 'Horses management' and with my certificate as horse instructor I was also giving lessons to adults and children.'

She confesses to me that one of her proudest moments was when she became champion of Utrecht, in the '1 meter class' and also when she reached 'Level Z' in horse dressage. But, although she had all these great results, she looked for a slightly different career later. Leaving horse riding just as a hobby, she studied 'Logistics and Economics' and started her career in the retail industry.

But life, especially when it comes to diplomats, is rarely predictable and soon showed its surprising twists. She knew that, by embracing a diplomatic career, her husband will take her to a life long journey around the Globe...first stop: Peru.

Although on the other side of the world, she quickly became comfortable with her new 'home', learned the local language (Spanish) in record time and started riding and teaching classes again.

Of course, such a talent and love for horses never fades... I see her pictures full of love, I watch her riding in videos and almost feel the extraordinary connection she has with her beloved horse, Ginger, which in fact she brought to Peru. 'Although terribly expensive, I could never leave her behind! And it was definitely all worth it', she tells me, with her eyes shining with joy. 'I get to ride daily, make friends and meet new people every day. I was also recently interviewed by the prestigious Dutch horse magazine "Hoefslag" on this topic.'

Peru is a country with an incredibly rich history, which she is eager to discover. In fact, that's one of the things she likes most about diplomatic life.

'While living this experience, you get to know the world, see how other people live and also appreciate more what you have at home. As a diplomat, you learn to adapt easily to new situations, adapt to each person you talk to, you become more open and willing to meet new people, find out their stories, you learn how to make connections and "break the ice" in a conversation.'

It's also sometimes hard... leaving your family and friends behind, passions and habits, embracing the novelty of each new diplomatic destination. She had to make changes too, and, with this new life, she started her own portable business. She helps now riders from all over the world to train their horses. By designing personalized training plans, she helps dressage competition riders to train in an effective and structured way and grow towards the next level. 'Although I have only recently started my portable business, I already have clients from Peru, The Netherlands and Dubai and the results are very promising.'

There are always differences between horse management in different countries, sometimes you have to learn new ways of doing things. 'While back home in the Netherlands you have to do everything for and with the horses, in Peru you have certain people taking care of your horse. I had to adapt to new rules but kept my horse close and tried to keep my old routines, as much as possible.'

As I write down these lines, I hear again her passionate words in my ears and then I look again at her photos. Such joy, such grace and elegance, such an admirable and united team: a young, beautiful and ambitious lady and her black horse, riding around the world on their diplomatic journey!

([www.instagram.com/jaizelselleslaghs](https://www.instagram.com/jaizelselleslaghs))

In the photo: Jaizel Selleslaghs





# LILLI JAHILO NO PLAN B, JUST THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DRESSES IN HEARTH

Amal Clooney owns a Lilli Jahilo classic, a black dress named after her, the 'Amal' dress and many others; Princess Sofia of Sweden and the President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid also possess Lilli Jahilo dresses, just to name a few personalities dressed up by Lilli. Her brand has penetrated various markets, and is linked through collaborations with brands across the globe - from Finland and Sweden, to the US and Dubai.

Lilli Jahilo is the daughter of an Estonian diplomat father and mother working in the field of media; she grew up in different countries in a cosmopolitan family of four kids, being constantly surrounded by changes, influenced by new languages, and cultures. In fact, she discovered her tailoring talent living abroad at early age, and that her destiny would be linked to pulchritude and quality.

"I've never really seen myself as a 'diplomatic kid' - does anyone?" she declared. "As a child, you follow your parents and that can take you to different places. This journey teaches you a lot, makes you lose fear of new places and gives you confidence that you can tackle anything.

As eldest out of four kids, I've lived abroad during two of my father's postings. The first time, it was quite a shock moving from the newly independent Estonia to London in 1995. Literally everything was like in the movies - even cereals and orange juice for breakfast!

Lilli Jahilo's memories from London are still fresh and her school at that time made her discovered art at early age. "For some reason, the smell of chrysanthemums and eucalyptus will always remind me of our life in London. School was so different, and because of the language, was also a struggle at first. My school's art class was really well equipped and it was during this time that my talent in art started to stand out more. When I returned to my homeland, I took up additional art classes and I guess this was the beginning in laying the foundation for my later studies in design. By the time we moved to Norway three years later and I was in high school, I had already fully decided to pursue studies in Fashion Design.

What I think back to the most in London was definitely the retail scene. We lived in the vicinity to Kensington High Street, and it was blooming with great stores in the 90s. I still remember how classy Jigsaw's store looked liked, and how good the service everywhere was. It also introduced me to the concept of quality, the woollen suits my mum bought and sense of classic aesthetic. As a kid you absorb life around you and you only see the influences later in life. The studies in Norway taught me the idea of well thought out design, that form follows function. And their love of nature and the outdoors definitely stuck with me. Like Norwegians, I'm convinced that there is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothes! Clothes should be always there to support and bring the best out of you."

Her decision to go after a career in fashion was natural and for Lilli it was not another possible option; she spent teen years building a strong portfolio.

"I was sure by the time I was in high-school that I wanted to pursue studies in fashion design. Hence I dedicated all of this time to perfecting my portfolio, as I had heard so many stories of how impossible it is to enrol in fashion design, as it's always been a popular choice at art academies. Yet so it happened that I was accepted to all four universities to which I applied, and decided to go Oslo National Academy of the Arts. I didn't have a plan B, this was the only thing I wanted to do."

"The world of fashion is a tough one to be in, so you need maximum motivation and inner drive to do it. Already when I was a kid, I loved drawing and making things, sewing with my grandmothers, working with all sorts of materials, and I've always been organising things, so fashion in a way brings together everything that I love doing. There's a saying there are two type of artists in the world, those who destruct and those who build. I'm definitely the latter - I love creating harmony. All of our products are made with attention to detail and the perfection of fit which have become the hallmarks of my design together with modern and feminine style. We don't only create the most beautiful dresses in the world, we empower women.



Photography: Tallinn Design House





I set up my fashion brand two years after graduating from Fashion MA in Tallinn, prior to that I had interned with numerous brands and designers to learn about the craft and trade. I won the best young designer award with my graduate collection and that brought attention and opened doors for me. I also started getting requests from private clients and so setting up my studio to do those things was sort of inevitable. I still worked a full-time job at the Art Academy when I started with my studio. At one point it was all too much, and then decided to fully dedicate on my brand.

My cousin Tene joined me in working with the brand so that I could focus more on the creative work. It's been ten years now. My family was always there to support me which I'm very thankful for, because being an entrepreneur and artist at once and running a team is a tough journey full of challenges. Out of all the four siblings I'm the only one living in Estonia, my twin sisters are finalising their master studies in Mathematics and Aerospace Engineering, one of them lives in the UK, the other in The Netherlands, and my brother who is an environmental specialist lives in Belgium.

My studio is like a creative hub that includes an atelier, studio for creative work and showroom

with fitting rooms that also acts as a store. We are very proud of our in-house atelier with the best tailors so that we can truly guarantee the best quality in our pieces, we also alter dresses quite a lot according to the clients' measurements and needs and this goes for orders placed either in-store or online. Online business has really grown a lot during this Covid-year as customers are mainly shopping online - and this is true for both small items such as face masks and made-to-order dresses. Therefore managing the online store and shipping is an important part of our management side. I love working on collections but also on creative collaborations - Volvo is our long-term partner, as well as Saaremaa Opera Festival, our latest two collections are done in partnership with the National Art Museum of Estonia and our anniversary event this year was held in partnership with Samsung. Design is a universal language that crosses all borders and cultures and, like politics, everybody has an opinion about it.

We truly have clients across the globe. We are currently working on developing the first menswear collection which I'm very excited about. And a very special Ramadan and Eid Collection is also in the works which will hopefully be launched in Dubai next year.

For further information

<https://shop.lillijahilo.com>



Photography: Riina Varol

**DIPLMATIC EVENTS**

**KSA TO HOST 2034 ASIAN GAMES**

The 2034 twenty second edition of the Asian Games were awarded to Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh during a ballot held at the JW Marriott Hotel in Oman under the auspices of the state's Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, HH Sayyid **Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tariq Al Said**.

This would be the first time for Saudi Arabia to host the Asian Games.

HRH Prince **Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal Al Saud**, President of Riyadh 2034, Minister of Sports and President of the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee, said:

"Riyadh and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are overwhelmed with joy to have been awarded the 2034 Asian Games today. We applaud this dual award decision by the OCA and the NOCs of Asia. It is the best outcome for the OCA and the two great bid cities who campaigned competitively and in the spirit of great sportsmanship. Most of all, this historic decision is great news for Asian sport and our

athletes - who will be able to train and prepare for 2030 and 2034 knowing they are in great hands with two amazing host cities.

"We would like to thank the OCA and NOCs of Asia for handing us this important responsibility. We will treasure this opportunity and work hard every day to deliver an Asian Games that the whole of Asia can be proud of.

Riyadh 2034 Director-General and SAOC Vice President, HH Prince **Fahd bin Jalawi bin Abdul Aziz**, said:

"Today is a great moment for the future of Asian sport and the Asian Olympic Movement with Riyadh 2034 opening the door to a new audience and a new era for the OCA. With our transformative plans for Riyadh 2034, we are proposing a sustainable, financially responsible and interconnected hosting concept that blends Riyadh's rich history and cultural heritage with modern and state-of-the-art stadiums and sports venues.



HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said  
Photography: Oman Olympic Committee

"The Riyadh 2034 sports zones, including the Diriyah Historical Zone and Qiddiya, will ensure an exciting and convenient festival of sport for all that inspires and captivates a new generation of sports fans across the region.



# DIPLOMATIC LIFE BEHIND THE SCENES

By Kateryna Denysova

We often hear stories about captivating and fascinating diplomatic life, but how is it experienced by those who are behind the scenes? This month, we begin our new article column dedicated to sharing diverse life stories of diplomatic offspring.

Our first guests are Roes Lirizky Lufti (Kiky) and Roes Ebara Gikami Lufti (Regi), daughter and son of Army Attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in The Netherlands. They were born and raised in Bandung (Indonesia). However, at the ages of 6 and 9, following their father's assignment, Kiky and Regi moved to Australia. There, they had attended a private Islamic school of Canberra but, later, transferred to a public school.



Roes Lirizky Lufti (Kiky) and Roes Ebara Gikami Lufti

## *Did you experience culture shock?*

**R:** “Yes, definitely. What shocked me the most was the national development of the country and overall quality of life. Compared to our home country, Australia has great infrastructure and availability of public facilities.”

**K:** “I was younger than Regi, so my memories are very childish. However, I was amazed to find out Australians to be very welcoming and genuine; everyone was willing to help. Indeed, most surprisingly, I experienced actual culture shock when I returned to my home country, Indonesia. It might sound paradoxical but adapting to life back in my country was harder than I imagined. The mentalities are different. This does not only refer to the overall surroundings and lifestyle but also language confusion. I often unintentionally code-switched English and Indonesian, which caused giggles of my fellow students. At that time, it seemed to be a struggle.”

## *How many languages can you speak?*

Smiling, Kiky and Regi answered: “A lot! Indonesian is our mother tongue, and English can be considered as the first foreign language. In Australia, we learned some Arabic in the Islamic school and French in a public school. After returning to Jakarta, we had to take language classes of German and Mandarin. Then, before moving to The Netherlands, we completed intermediate Dutch. This might be astonishing, but we don't have any solid knowledge of languages, with the only exception being Indonesian and English, which we use on a regular basis.”

Two years ago, Kiky (18) moved with the parents to The Netherlands, whereas Regi (21) decided to stay and undertake his undergraduate studies in Indonesia. Kiky finished Indonesian school in The Hague and also enrolled in the same university as Regi. However, they chose different career paths.

## *Do you see your future career related to the diplomatic sphere?*

**K:** “Not at all. I'm proud to be the first generation of doctors in my family. I always have been passionate about the field of medicine. Thus, when it was time to decide on the degree, without any doubt, it was dentistry. I haven't regretted it.”

**R:** “My career interests diverge from Kiky's. I'm specializing in economics, similar to my mom's profession. In the future, I would like to improve the quality of life for Indonesians, and I believe that economy plays a fundamental part in it. Living in Australia and The Netherlands have just convinced me even more that Indonesia needs good economic policy implemented.”

During the pandemic, Kiky and Regi reunited with their parents in The Hague and have followed online classes since then. They acknowledge that being family members of a diplomat is tough with continuous life on the go, but it always brings adventures, the aspect they enjoy the most.

# TURKEY'S MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU INTENSIFIES COOPERATION WITH GERMANY

5-6 May 2021, Berlin, Germany: Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu encountered Germany's Interior Minister Horst Seehofer, and held a meeting to assess the steps to be taken regarding irregular migration on the first day of his visit to NATO partner country Germany.

Later on Wednesday, Minister Çavuşoğlu met with former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and former German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and held a friendly discussion on Turkish-German relations.

On the second and last day of his programme in Berlin, Minister Çavuşoğlu spoke with his German counterpart Heiko Maas about the deep-rooted Turko-German relations, the state of the Turkish community on the 60th anniversary of the immigration agreement and reliable tourism. The meeting was followed by a joint press conference.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stated during the conference that bilateral trade volume has increased despite the pandemic, and will exceed 40 billion US dollars, that Germany is making a constructive contribution to Turkish relations vis-à-vis the European Union, and that we expect concrete steps from the EU.

Minister Çavuşoğlu then met with the Federal Government Commissioner for Tourism, Thomas Bareiß, and provided him

with information about Turkey's tourism programme, and discussed with him the development regarding the vaccination passport in the EU and the measures undertaken in Turkey.

Later the same day, Minister Çavuşoğlu was received by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and stated that they assessed the further development of their cooperation and discussed the situation and achievements of the Turkish community on the 60th anniversary of the Immigration Agreement.

On Thursday, 6 May NRW Premier Armin Laschet received Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu for talks that took place at the State Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia in Berlin. The talks with Premier Laschet focused on the pandemic, the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey and the situation in the Mediterranean region.

Relations between Turkey and Germany are very close. Last year, Turkish students formed the largest group of foreign students at German universities. In 2019, Turkey ranked first among the main investor countries for the first time with 73 investment projects.

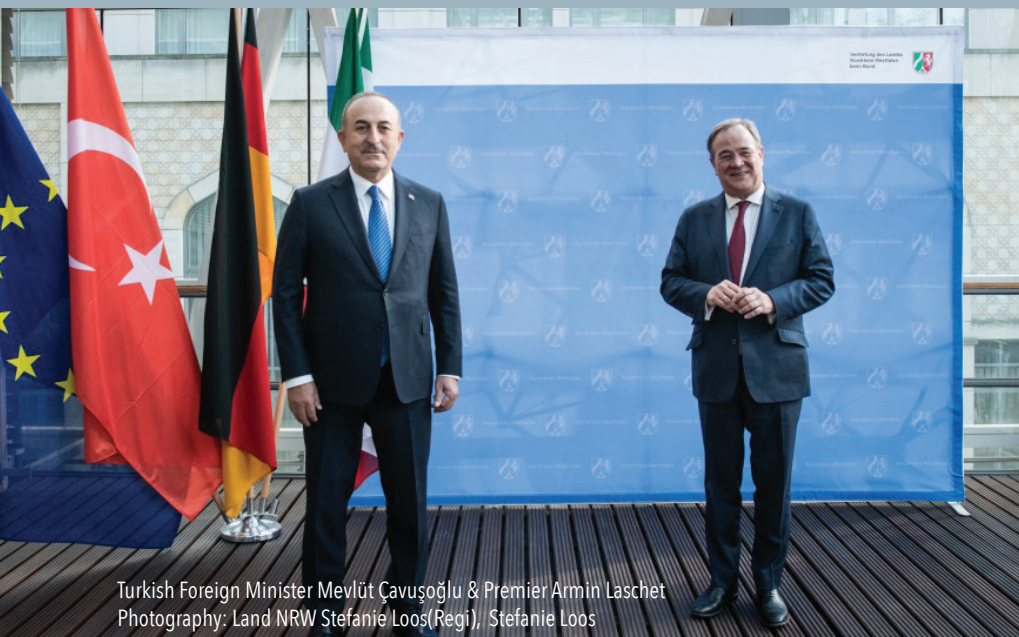
## NEW AGREEMENTS

Looking back to some public diplomacy duties before the Covid-19 lockdown, featured here the signature of a collaboration agreement between the Embassy of Paraguay in Canada and Diplomat Magazine Europe

Her Excellency **Inés Martínez Valinotti**, Ambassador of Paraguay to Canada, recipient of the "Ambassador of the Year and Public Diplomacy Award 2020" by the Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa, signed the agreement together with **Dr Mayelinne De Lara**, Diplomat Magazine's publisher on 14 January 2021.

Both associates agreed for an indeterminate period of time to support investigative academic journalism producing media research, organising press trips to provide editorial quality content for Diplomat Magazine in a framework of understanding, freedom of speech, political neutrality and journalistic ethics, common interest. It was likewise noted that no exclusivity, no costs involved or compensation of any kind, no legal responsibility, and respecting Intellectual rights while remaining independents, was paramount to the announced cooperation.

In the framework of this agreement His Excellency, **Dr Euclides Acevedo**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, shared his views with Diplomat Magazine EU on a series of public affairs issues such as in Covid vaccines regional distribution, reactivation of the economy, 30 years of MERCOSUR, and the role of Paraguayan ambassadors in promoting international trade. Minister Acevedo concluded his intervention addressing prospect European investors in his country.



Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu & Premier Armin Laschet  
Photography: Land NRW Stefanie Loos(Regi), Stefanie Loos







Photography: Hester Dijkstra

Décidément, les mois passent et se ressemblent... La pandémie de Covid-19, que l'on n'avait guère attendue, et dont d'aucuns avaient pensé qu'on pût se libérer promptement, grève toujours aussi sévèrement, si pas dramatiquement, nos existences.

Dans le monde de la justice internationale, elle avait rendu impossible, en 2020, la célébration d'événements historiquement aussi significatifs que le centenaire de l'adoption du Statut de la Cour permanente de Justice internationale (CPJI) ou le soixante-quinzième anniversaire de la signature de la Charte des Nations Unies, dont le Statut de la Cour internationale de Justice (CIJ) fait partie intégrante. Aujourd'hui, elle menace de plonger dans l'oubli une autre étape importante du processus de développement du règlement judiciaire international: l'entrée en fonctions de la CIJ, en avril 1946.

On se souviendra que la CPJI avait tenu sa dernière séance privée en octobre 1945, non sans prendre toutes les mesures requises à l'effet d'assurer la continuité de la juridiction internationale ainsi que le transfert de ses archives et de ses biens à la nouvelle Cour. Les juges de la CPJI avaient remis leur démission au Secrétaire général de la

Société des Nations (SdN) fin janvier 1946 et les premières élections à la CIJ se tinrent à Londres le 6 février suivant. Ceux des juges élus qui se trouvaient présents à Londres se réunirent sans attendre, de façon officieuse, et le Dr. Guerrero, ancien Président de la CPJI et doyen d'âge, fut chargé d'organiser la première réunion formelle de la CIJ le 3 avril 1946, à La Haye, au cours de laquelle devaient être examinées diverses questions pressantes telles que l'établissement du Règlement de la Cour, les privilèges et immunités des juges, le budget de l'institution, ainsi que l'élection du Président et du Vice-Président et la préparation de l'audience solennelle d'ouverture de la Cour. Cette audience fut fixée au 18 avril 1946, date à laquelle la vingt-et-unième Assemblée de la SdN décida la dissolution de la CPJI. Entre-temps, aux termes d'un accord conclu entre le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies et le président de la Fondation Carnegie, les locaux occupés, au palais de la Paix, par la CPJI, furent remis à la CIJ.

La séance inaugurale de la Cour se tint comme prévu le 18 avril, dans la grande salle de Justice du Palais, archi-comble pour l'occasion, en présence d'éminentes personnalités au nombre desquelles LL.AA.RR. la Princesse Juliana et le Prince Bernhard des Pays-Bas, le Président de la première Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, Paul-Henri Spaak, le Ministre des affaires étrangères des Pays-Bas, M.J.H. Van Roijen, ainsi que M. de Monchy, Bourgmestre de La Haye et l'ensemble du Corps diplomatique. Dans son discours, imprégné de cet art oratoire dont il avait le secret, Paul-Henri Spaak lança ces mots: « je n'oserais pas affirmer que la Cour internationale de Justice est l'organisme le plus important des Nations Unies, mais je crois pouvoir affirmer qu'il n'y en a pas dans tous les cas de plus important »; et d'ajouter: « il n'y a pas de monde civilisé et de paix durable s'il n'y a de respect absolu et complet devant la juridiction internationale et ses arrêts ». Dans la foulée, il formula le vœu suivant: « que, dans

## COUR INTERNATIONALE DE JUSTICE: ÉTERNEL BEL ÂGE?

PAR S. EXC. M. PHILIPPE COUVREUR, JUGE AD HOC ET ANCIEN GREFFIER DE LA COUR INTERNATIONALE DE JUSTICE

les années (qui viendraient), (l') activité (de la Cour) (devint) chaque jour plus importante ». C'est cette séance inaugurale que la Cour a désormais pris coutume de commémorer solennellement à fréquence quinquennale; elle l'a fait pour la dernière fois en 2016. Mais que dire aujourd'hui, soixante-quinze ans plus tard, du vœu de M. Spaak? Le succès croissant qu'a connu l'activité de la CIJ depuis 1946 ne souffre aucune controverse: on peut donc conclure sans hésitation qu'à ce jour ce vœu a été exaucé! Mais peut-être est-il utile de rappeler ci-après, à grands traits, les étapes les plus caractéristiques du développement de cette activité au fil des trois quarts de siècle écoulés.

Le monde face auquel la CIJ s'est trouvée en 1946 différait radicalement de celui qui avait présidé à la naissance de sa devancière. Les nouvelles données sociologiques de l'immédiat après-guerre, le système de sécurité collective original institué par la Charte des Nations Unies et les réalités institutionnelles spécifiques qui en sont dérivées ont contribué à privilégier le règlement politique des différends sous l'égide des « puissances victorieuses », siégeant en permanence, avec un droit de véto, au Conseil de sécurité.

La « paix par la justice et le droit », si présente dans les esprits en 1899-1907, puis en 1919-1920, passa quelque peu au second plan, et ainsi en alla-t-il du règlement juridictionnel. Aucun traité de paix, à l'issue du second conflit mondial, n'avait confié à la CIJ de responsabilité particulière pour en traiter les séquelles. Cet état de fait global et la survenance rapide de la guerre froide ont sérieusement pesé, dans un premier temps, sur la velléité des Etats de porter devant la Cour leurs différends (politiquement) les plus importants: les grandes crises internationales, qui posaient des problèmes de sécurité immédiats, ont ainsi largement échappé à l'examen de la Cour pendant ses premières décennies d'activité.

A cette date, la CIJ a rendu un nombre impressionnant de décisions: pas moins de 143 arrêts et 28 avis consultatifs, ainsi que de très nombreuses ordonnances, dont certaines à contenu normatif substantiel, tranchant avec effet obligatoire diverses questions se posant dans le cadre de procédures incidentes (indication de mesures conservatoires, admissibilité de demandes d'intervention ou de demandes reconventionnelles, etc.). Le rythme auquel les affaires et les prononcés se sont succédés, ainsi que leur nature, ont considérablement varié dans le temps. Avant

de revenir brièvement sur leur évolution, deux observations s'imposent d'emblée. Tout d'abord, il appert que l'activité contentieuse de la CIJ a été singulièrement plus intense que son activité consultative, en net contraste avec la pratique à l'époque de la CPJI, laquelle était fréquemment saisie par le Conseil de la SdN de demandes d'avis, y inclus sur des différends pendants: ce déséquilibre s'est d'ailleurs progressivement renforcé avec temps, ce qui ne laisse de susciter des interrogations et doit être regretté, compte tenu des vertus préventives avérées de la procédure consultative en matière de solution pacifique des différends, et du fait qu'elle constitue un instrument inestimable de promotion de l'état de droit et de développement du droit international. Deuxièmement, eu égard aux changements profonds qu'a subis la communauté internationale depuis les années 1960, les affaires contentieuses soumises à la CIJ sont rapidement sorties du cadre européen dans lequel la CPJI avait été largement confinée: quelque 100 Etats, appartenant à toutes les régions du monde, ont aujourd'hui été parties à des affaires devant la Cour (dont près de 30 Etats africains et 20 asiatiques, ainsi qu'une quinzaine d'Etats latino-américains).

S'agissant de l'évolution de l'activité judiciaire de la Cour dans le temps, deux périodes peuvent être globalement distinguées: de 1946 à la fin des années 1970; et des années 1980 à ce jour. La première, quoi qu'on ait pu en dire, a été fondamentale pour la Cour. Il est vrai qu'après la fameuse affaire du Détroit de Corfou (1947-1949), la volonté des Etats de soumettre à la Cour des différends juridiques à « haute densité politique » a largement fait défaut. Jusqu'à la fin des années 1970, ses arrêts ont principalement porté sur des questions territoriales (titres historiques, conventions de délimitation, « effectivités », coutumes locales, acquiescement) et maritimes (lignes de base, délimitation du plateau continental, extension unilatérale de droits de pêche), ainsi que de protection diplomatique (nationalité effective, protection des droits des actionnaires). Sans doute peu spectaculaire, cette activité, de nature plutôt préventive, a eu raison, de manière durable, de nombreuses tensions et a efficacement concouru au développement du droit international. En même temps, la Cour a donné une série d'avis consultatifs hautement marquants dans des domaines aussi variés que le droit de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (conditions d'admission, personnalité juridique internationale et réparations, contributions étatiques), les réserves à la Convention pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide, l'interprétation de traités de paix, les conséquences des décisions du Conseil de sécurité (concernant spécifiquement la Présence continue de

l'Afrique du Sud en Namibie) ou l'acquisition de la souveraineté territoriale et le droit à l'auto-détermination (problème du Sahara occidental): tous ces avis ont contribué de façon notoire au renforcement de l'état de droit et de l'Organisation. Durant cette période, la Cour a rendu 42 arrêts (dont 16 sur des questions de compétence ou de recevabilité), 16 avis consultatifs et 8 ordonnances en indication de mesures conservatoires. Son rythme d'activité judiciaire modéré lui a permis de réexaminer en profondeur son Règlement et ses procédures à partir de 1968, un exercice de longue haleine qui a débouché sur une révision partielle du Règlement en 1972 et l'adoption d'un Règlement entièrement révisé en 1978 (lequel, légèrement retouché depuis, est toujours en vigueur): le but en était d'accroître l'attractivité de la Cour, en simplifiant les procédures et en facilitant l'accès aux chambres ad hoc.

A la fin des années 1970, des changements significatifs se sont produits. La Cour a commencé à connaître de différends associés à des menaces plus immédiates pour la paix et la sécurité internationales.

Des affaires telles que celles du Personnel diplomatique et consulaire des Etats-Unis à Téhéran (1978-1979), des Activités militaires et paramilitaires au Nicaragua et contre celui-ci (1984-1991) ou du Différend frontalier (Burkina Faso/Mali) (1984-1986) ont donné à la Cour l'occasion d'exercer ses fonctions judiciaires en situation de crise internationale aiguë. Dans ce contexte, elle a précisé que le recours parallèle à un autre mode de règlement pacifique (en particulier le Conseil de sécurité) n'était pas en soi un obstacle à l'accomplissement de sa mission. Par la suite, elle a été saisie de certains aspects de conflits parmi les plus graves des dernières décennies, tels ceux de la région des grands lacs en Afrique (affaire des Activités armées sur le territoire du Congo) ou des Balkans (affaires concernant l'Application de la Convention pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide). La Cour n'est pas seulement intervenue de façon urgente dans ces affaires (notamment par la voie de l'indication de mesures conservatoires de portée sans précédent), alors que des atrocités étaient commises sur le terrain, mais aussi ultérieurement, aux fins d'établir la responsabilité des Etats intéressés et de faciliter la restauration de relations apaisées, voire amicales, entre eux. Elle a été amenée, dans ces circonstances, à sensiblement développer sa jurisprudence en matière de recours à la force et d'exercice du droit de légitime défense, ainsi que d'application du droit humanitaire, une jurisprudence qu'elle a pu confirmer et affiner dans quelques avis



consultatifs de grand retentissement (Licéité de la menace ou de l'emploi d'armes nucléaires; Conséquences juridiques de la construction d'un mur en Territoire palestinien occupé). Par ailleurs, tout au long de cette période ont été soumis à la Cour maints différends qui, sans porter directement sur le recours à la force, s'étaient matérialisés dans un contexte armé, en divers points du globe, du Caucase à l'Asie du Sud-Est. En parallèle, la CIJ a continué de développer, de façon chaque fois plus substantielle, et à un rythme accéléré, sa jurisprudence dans ses domaines d'activité traditionnels: différends territoriaux (par exemple sur la relation entre titre écrits et « effectivités »), questions de délimitation maritime (cristallisation des nouvelles normes du droit de la mer et établissement d'une méthodologie de délimitation claire et efficace, en trois étapes, d'application générale quand la configuration des côtes le permet) et protection diplomatique (protection des droits des sociétés et des droits propres des actionnaires ou des gérants). Il échet d'ajouter qu'au-delà, le champ opératoire de la jurisprudence de la Cour s'est logiquement étendu à mesure que s'étendait celui du droit international lui-même, et que la Cour a récemment rendu des décisions innovatrices dans des matières telles que la protection des droits fondamentaux de la personne humaine (Ahmadou Sadio Diallo) ou celle de l'environnement (Usines de pâtes à papier; Construction d'une route au Costa Rica le long du fleuve San Juan), en formulant pour la première fois des considérations de

grand intérêt sur la réparation du dommage environnemental (Certaines activités menées par le Nicaragua dans la région frontalière). Au cours de la période 1979-2021, la Cour a prononcé 101 arrêts (dont 40 sur des questions de compétence ou de recevabilité), 12 avis consultatifs et 45 ordonnances relatives à des mesures conservatoires. Pendant les 40 dernières années, elle a traité trois fois plus d'affaires contentieuses qu'auparavant et rendu plus du double d'arrêts; en revanche, le nombre d'avis consultatifs donnés a diminué et est tombé de quasi 40% du total des décisions de la Cour (hors ordonnances) à quelque 12%; enfin, autre développement significatif, le recours aux procédures incidentes (en particulier les demandes en indication de mesures conservatoires) s'est très nettement accru.

L'aperçu qui précède, nécessairement sommaire, montre à suffisance qu'en soixante-quinze ans l'activité de la CIJ s'est considérablement renforcée. Assurément, depuis les années 1990, la communauté internationale s'est progressivement « juridictionnalisée » et le contexte général est redevenu globalement plus favorable au règlement judiciaire. La Cour a indubitablement bénéficié de ce nouveau climat, plus propice à l'accomplissement de sa mission en qualité tant d'organe judiciaire principal des Nations Unies que d'« organe du droit international ». Mais elle a également su gagner la confiance de ses justiciables en témoignant, par son action propre, de ce qu'elle

constituait un mode de solution pacifique des différends efficace face aux réalités complexes du monde contemporain, et très peu onéreux (son budget demeure inférieur à 1% du budget régulier de l'ONU), qui n'en sacrifie pas pour autant ses impératifs immanents de développement continu d'une jurisprudence cohérente et de haute qualité. La CIJ est ainsi apparue comme étant non seulement garante de sécurité et de prévisibilité pour les Etats, mais aussi capable de leur offrir des solutions concrètes et durables non disponibles ailleurs. La paralysie dont les organes politiques ont souvent à pâtir lui est étrangère; et les limites que peut engendrer le caractère éphémère ou spécialisé d'autres juridictions n'affectent en rien son action.

Le 18 avril 1996, le Président Mohamed Bedjaoui, ouvrant la cérémonie du cinquantenaire de la Cour, se félicitait du « bel âge » qu'elle avait atteint. Ces mots évoquent inmanquablement la célèbre mise en garde de Fénélon dans les Aventures de Télémaque: « Souviens-toi que ce bel âge n'est qu'une fleur qui sera presque aussitôt séchée qu'éclos ».

Heureusement, force est de constater, un quart de siècle plus tard, qu'échappant aux outrages du temps, la CIJ, riche de sa fertile expérience, s'épanouit avec une sereine autorité dans ce « bel âge »...On lui souhaite qu'il en soit longtemps encore ainsi!

## DIPLOMATIC EVENTS

# JAIME DE PARME TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

HRH Prince Jaime from Bourbon de Parme

The Dutch Ministry of Interior and Royal Relations has announced the appointment of Jaime de Bourbon de Parme as 'Climate Envoy'. From the summer 2021, he shall be responsible for international climate diplomacy on behalf of the central government.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands joins other major countries in tackling climate change, and appointing erudite envoys to advise them on suitable policies on sustainability, and climate change.

US President Biden appointed erstwhile 68th Secretary of State John Kerry at the outset of his presidency. Already in November 2020, the UAE appointed Minister of State, Dr Sultan Al Jaber to an analogous position.

HRH Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme (b. 1972 in Nijmegen, The Netherlands) works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is currently on secondment at the UNHCR-Refugee

Agency in Geneva; wherein he serves in the capacity of Senior Advisor Private Sector Partnerships. He has held various positions at home and abroad, such as Ambassador to the Holy See in Vatican City (2014-18) and Special Envoy for Natural Resources.

Jaime de Bourbon de Parme is a son of HRH Princess Irene of the Netherlands (alias Irene van Lippe-Biesterfeld) and the late Duke of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, Carlo Ugo. He pursued his tertiary studies at Brown University (Rhode Island, USA), and completed them with a Master in International Economics and Conflict Management at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA (MA).

He speaks Dutch, English, French, Spanish and Italian.



Photography: Chris Ronteltap for Diplomat Magazine

## LE TRIBUNAL IRANO-AMÉRICAIN DES RÉCLAMATIONS A 40 ANS

PAR CRISTINA HOSS

Depuis bientôt quarante ans, une institution arbitrale bien discrète œuvre dans le but de régler les différends entre les États-Unis d'Amérique et la République islamique d'Iran nés de la révolution islamique. Une belle occasion pour braquer les projecteurs sur cette institution peu connue du public hagueois et pourtant membre apprécié de la famille des institutions qui font de la ville de La Haye la ville de la justice internationale. En effet, le Tribunal quadragénaire contribue encore non seulement au règlement des différends entre les deux États qui lui ont donné mandat de ce faire, mais il aura également contribué de manière incidente -peut-être même involontaire- mais significative au développement du droit de l'arbitrage international.

On ne peut parler du Tribunal irano-américain sans rappeler les circonstances qui ont entouré sa création.

La crise qui en est immédiatement à l'origine a été déclenchée par la révolution islamique ainsi que par l'événement traumatisant de la prise en otage membres du personnel diplomatique et consulaire de l'Ambassade américaine à Téhéran. Mais l'histoire est complexe et les

causes plus lointaines de la crise sont liées au régime instauré par le gouvernement du Shah d'Iran, régime à la réputation redoutable, notamment du fait des agissements de sa police, la SAVAK, et par son association étroite avec les États-Unis dont il était un allié fidèle avec lequel il entretenait d'excellentes relations économiques, militaires et politiques pendant de longues années. C'est dans ce cadre qu'il avait conclu avec les États-Unis des contrats de fournitures et assistance militaires et lancé de grands projets d'infrastructure à la réalisation desquelles avaient été associée de nombreuses sociétés commerciales américaines. Pendant les années 1960 et 1970, de très nombreux ressortissants américains, hommes d'affaires, investisseurs, ingénieurs etc., s'étaient installés en Iran, Le rôle joué par les États-Unis n'était pourtant pas toujours bienvenu et fut source de tensions considérables ; dès les années 1960, l'opposition contre le Shah commença à s'organiser au sein de la société iranienne, une opposition pas seulement islamique mais de toute couleur politique. Le soulèvement populaire devait culminer dans la chute du gouvernement du Shah, le retour en début de l'année 1979 de l'Ayatollah Khomeini jusque-là exilé, l'accueil du Shah aux États-Unis pour

traitement médical, et enfin la prise en otage de 52 membres du personnel de l'Ambassade américaine à Téhéran par des manifestants militants, le 4 novembre 1979, date qui restera ancrée dans la mémoire de ceux qui l'ont vécu - sans doute aussi parmi les lecteurs du Diplomat Magazine.

Cette prise d'otage et le soutien qu'elle reçut du nouveau gouvernement iranien déclencha une crise internationale majeure. En réaction à cette violation flagrante du droit international, les États-Unis tentèrent alors de jouer toutes les cartes : le Conseil de sécurité adopta deux résolutions condamnant les actes, le Secrétaire général de l'ONU fut sollicité pour faciliter des missions humanitaires et mettre sur pied une commission d'enquête, une série de mesures unilatérales adoptées par le président Jimmy Carter fut alors mise en place, avec notamment le gel des avoirs iraniens aux États-Unis, l'interdiction d'importation et d'exportation ainsi que l'interdiction de toute transaction financière. Le 29 novembre 1979, les États-Unis saisirent la Cour internationale de Justice, lui demandant de régler le différend et d'obtenir la libération des otages par une ordonnance en indication de mesures



conservatoires. L'ordonnance rendue par la Cour resta sans suite, tout comme son célèbre arrêt de 1980 constatant la responsabilité du gouvernement islamique du fait de sa décision de pérenniser une situation créée par des personnes privées. Ces mesures n'eurent pas l'effet escompté. Dans une tentative désespérée de libérer les otages, les États-Unis envoyèrent huit hélicoptères pour libérer les otages, cette opération dite « Eagle Claw », tourna à la débâcle totale.

Toutes ces démarches des États-Unis ayant échoué, c'est par l'intermédiaire de la République fédérale d'Allemagne d'abord, puis de la République populaire et démocratique d'Algérie, qui accepta d'assumer ce rôle, que les deux Parties entamèrent des négociations, sans jamais se rencontrer. Ces négociations débouchèrent sur ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler les « Accords d'Alger » du 19 janvier 1981. Il s'agit de déclarations de la République d'Algérie que les deux Parties au différend s'engagent, séparément, de respecter. Les Accords d'Alger consistent en deux déclarations principales et deux plus techniques, mais leur ensemble constitue bien un traité au sens de la Convention de Vienne du droit des traités avec tout ce que cela implique, y compris en matière d'interprétation. Ils visent à mettre fin à un différend politique majeure par le règlement arbitral. L'acceptation des Accords d'Alger permit la libération des otages après 444 jours, le 20 janvier 1981, qui se trouva être la date de l'investiture de Ronald Reagan, vainqueur de Jimmy Carter aux élections. C'est ce dernier qui accueillit lui-même les otages sur une base militaire américaine en Allemagne.

Par la Déclaration générale, l'Iran s'engageait à libérer les 52 otages retenus depuis le 4 novembre 1979. Les États-Unis acceptaient les conditions de l'Etat iranien, à savoir : la non-intervention dans les affaires intérieures de l'Iran, l'annulation du gel des avoirs iraniens, la levée des sanctions contre l'Iran et l'annulation des réclamations contre l'Iran devant les juridictions des États-Unis ainsi que la restitution à l'Iran des biens du Shah. Enfin, les États-Unis devaient se désister de l'instance devant la Cour internationale de Justice, laquelle avait rendu son arrêt sur le fond mais demeurait saisie de la question des réparations.

La deuxième déclaration, la Déclaration sur le règlement du contentieux (Claims Settlement Declaration), est celle qui créa le Tribunal irano-américain, donnant mandat à celui-ci de se prononcer sur les réclamations de ressortissants de l'un des États contre l'autre (réclamations privées), ainsi que sur les différends juridiques entre les deux États

concernant l'interprétation et l'application des Accords d'Alger (réclamations dites « A Claims ») et les différends entre les deux Etats concernant l'acquisition contractuelle de biens et de services, les official claims (réclamations dites « B Claims »).

La première séance du Tribunal s'est tenue le 1er juillet 1981 au Palais de la Paix, dans la petite salle de justice, fréquemment utilisée par le Cour permanente d'arbitrage, qui avait offert ses services à cette nouvelle institution arbitrale en attendant qu'elle puisse se doter d'un secrétariat et de locaux propres. Compte tenu du volume de réclamations attendues, il avait été convenu que l'Etat hôte mettrait à la disposition du Tribunal des locaux plus ou moins permanents, bien que l'on estimât à l'époque que les réclamations seraient traitées dans une période de cinq à dix ans...

Les promeneurs du quartier de Stoltpark connaissent sans doute le bâtiment emblématique qui sert de siège au Tribunal, situé entre les bois de Scheveningen et le Westbroek Park, un bâtiment qui a arbitré le Parkhotel puis, selon une rumeur non-confirmée, la Gestapo pendant l'occupation allemande.

On peut imaginer sans grande peine l'ambiance tendue qui régnait au Tribunal pendant les premières années. Cette expérience assez unique aurait facilement pu tourner à l'échec, mais elle est en réalité une belle leçon de l'effet pacificateur du règlement des différends par la voie arbitrale. En grande partie, cela est dû, qu'on me pardonne cette analyse de juriste, à l'existence d'un règlement de procédure permettant au Tribunal de continuer son travail malgré certaines difficultés rencontrées. C'est par une coïncidence fortuite que la création du Tribunal est à peu près contemporaine de l'adoption d'un règlement procédural de l'arbitrage sous l'égide de la Commission des Nations Unies pour le Droit Commercial International, la CNUDCI. Le Tribunal n'aurait pas pu mieux tomber. Le Règlement d'arbitrage adopté par la CNUDCI en 1976 présentait un ensemble complet et détaillé de règles de procédure pouvant être utilisé dans la conduite d'arbitrages commerciaux mais aussi, comme le Tribunal le prouve, internationaux. Les commentateurs en conviennent, l'existence de ce règlement a largement contribué au succès du Tribunal qui en a adapté quelques articles mais qui, s'est essentiellement servi de ce règlement pour résoudre des questions de procédure. Il fut ainsi l'un des premiers à

devoir appliquer et interpréter les dispositions, faisant du Tribunal une référence en matière de procédure arbitrale.

Les Membres du Tribunal, leurs assistants et le secrétariat ont ainsi su surmonter les obstacles et ont réussi un remarquable tour de force : progressivement, le Tribunal s'est organisé pour traiter les quelques 3800 réclamations déposées par des personnes privées, naturelles et juridiques. Selon nos dernières informations, le Tribunal est venu au bout d'un nombre impressionnant d'affaires -près de 4000- dont toutes les réclamations privées, 72 affaires de la catégorie B et 21 affaires de la catégorie A. 16 affaires inter-étatiques demeurent pendantes. Le Tribunal a pris la décision, fort heureuse, de publier les sentences dans des Recueils et de les rendre ainsi accessible, non seulement au public intéressé mais aussi au monde de l'arbitrage à large. C'est d'ailleurs l'une des raisons pour lesquelles la jurisprudence du Tribunal a pu asseoir son autorité et influencer sur le développement du droit de l'arbitrage :

La contribution du Tribunal au monde de l'arbitrage ne se limite pas aux questions de procédure. Des décisions du Tribunal irano-américain fréquemment citées dans les sentences arbitrales de tribunaux du CIRDI, ou encore de tribunaux ad hoc, notamment quand il s'agit d'analyser la notion d'expropriation, la nationalité effective, la force majeure, le droit de la responsabilité internationale, ou encore en matière de méthodes de calcul de la compensation (quantum).

Compte tenu de l'étendue du mandat du Tribunal, la nature des affaires traitées par celui-ci n'est pas homogène ; il s'agit parfois d'affaires simples, à caractère commercial, parfois d'affaires d'un degré de complexité juridique et factuelle des plus sophistiqués. Le lecteur du Diplomat Magazine est invité pour s'en assurer à consulter la dernière décision rendue dans l'affaire A :15, une affaire inter-étatique qui comportait des réclamations multiples, rassemblées en clusters thématiques. Sans même lire les près de sept-cents pages de la sentence partielle (opinions séparées non-comprises !), le lecteur pourra parfaitement mesurer la fascinante combinaison de questions factuelles et juridiques traitées par le Tribunal dans cette affaire, et ce n'est qu'une seule affaire !

La composition du Tribunal est des plus classiques en matière d'arbitrage international, et n'est pas sans rappeler celle des Commissions mixtes créées à l'issue de la première Guerre mondiale. Le Tribunal est composé de neuf membres, trois nommés par les États-Unis, trois nommés par l'Iran et trois nommés conjointement par les six arbitres

déjà nommés, les membres ressortissants de pays-tiers, les « TCMs », third-country Members. Il se trouve que, depuis la création du Tribunal, les membres de pays-tiers ont été, à l'exception de l'Argentin José Maria Ruda, des ressortissants de pays européens de tradition de droit civil. Parmi les juristes internationaux appelés à siéger en tant que « membre de pays tiers » on retrouve des noms familiers : Michel Virally, José-Maria Ruda, Willem Riphagen, Karl-Heinz Böckstiegel, Gaetano Arangio-Ruiz, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Hans van Houtte ou encore les membres actuels, les professeurs Nicolas Michel, Herbert Kronke et Bruno Simma.

Eu égard à la nature hétéroclite des affaires portées devant le Tribunal, ses Membres doivent être de fins juristes, spécialistes non seulement du droit international public et du droit de l'arbitrage, mais aussi du droit comparatif, du droit international privé et du droit des contrats, avec un intérêt particulier pour les transactions commerciales, et disposer aussi une certaine expertise en matière pétrolière, militaire et aéronautique. Enfin, il leur faut également avoir « la bosse des maths », lorsqu'ils ont à déterminer le montant des compensations à accorder selon des méthodes de calcul parfois très

élaborés. Pour ce qui est des connaissances linguistiques, de nos jours, les Membres du Tribunal s'expriment en anglais seulement, les décisions étant en revanche rendues dans les deux langues officielles du Tribunal.

Quarante ans après la première séance du Tribunal, il est temps de célébrer cette belle réussite de l'arbitrage international. Il est vrai que, lors de sa création, personne n'aurait imaginé que le règlement de ce contentieux durerait autant d'années, mais ce qui compte, ce sont les milliers de sentences rendues, dans des circonstances parfois difficiles. Les relations entre les deux États parties ont connu des hauts et des bas (des bas surtout) les forces politiques ont pu changer, des gouvernements sont tombés, des administrations avec, d'autres les ont remplacés, car les données géopolitiques subissent d'incessants changements, mais au cours de toutes ces années, quelle qu'ait été la situation politique du jour, le Tribunal a continué à travailler sans relâche, à rendre des sentences d'un haut degré de complexité juridique et factuelle, et qui plus est, les deux États concernés, les États-Unis et l'Iran, ont tenus à coopérer avec le Tribunal, ont contribué à son budget, participé aux procédures et audiences, et exécuté ses sentences arbitrales. Après des débuts quelque peu difficiles, c'est

dans le cadre de débats sereins que les Parties et les Membres du Tribunal s'acquittent de leur mission commune : trouver une solution aux différends divers qui fondent la compétence du Tribunal. Le Tribunal peut en témoigner : le règlement des différends par la voie arbitrale ou judiciaire est une voie fort prometteuse – quelle que soient les circonstances extérieures.

Il ne nous reste qu'à adresser nos vives félicitations au Tribunal irano-américain des réclamations, ainsi qu'aux deux États parties, pour avoir contribué au règlement pacifique de ce différend majeur de notre époque – contre vents et marées.

Site internet : [www.iusct.nl](http://www.iusct.nl)

*\*Cristina Hoss est juriste au Greffe de la Cour internationale de Justice et, entre 2015 et 2017, a été conseillère juridique de S.Exc. M. Bruno Simma, Membre du Tribunal. Elle garde de son passage au Tribunal un souvenir ému et saisit cette occasion pour saluer ses anciens collègues et amis. Les vues exprimées sont strictement personnelles et ne reflètent pas nécessairement celles des Nations Unies ou de la Cour internationale de Justice.*

## BELIZEAN DR CARLA BARNETT APPOINTED SECRETARY- GENERAL OF CARICOM

By Roy Lie Atjam

Port-of-Spain, 11 May 2021. Statement from the chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), **Dr the Right Hon. Keith Rowley**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the selection of the new CARICOM Secretary-General. It has been unanimously agreed to appoint **Dr Carla Natalie Barnett** as the 8th CARICOM Secretary-General.

She will replace Ambassador **Irwin LaRocque** who is completing his second term. She will assume office on 15 August 2021.

Dr. Barnett attained her Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the University of the West Indies, (UWI) Mona Campus in Jamaica. She also holds a Master of Economics degree from the University of Western Ontario in Canada,

and a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in Jamaica.

Dr Barnett has extensive experience at the executive level of the public service in Belize and the CARICOM Region. Her work experience includes service as Financial Secretary and Deputy Governor/Acting Governor at the Central Bank of Belize. She has also served as a Vice President at the Caribbean Development Bank and is now a Senator in Belize's Upper House. Moreover, Dr Barnett, who served as the first female Deputy Secretary-General of CARICOM from 1997 to 2002, has now taken her distinction to the highest level as the first female to become Secretary-General.



Photography: Guyana Chronicle Newspaper

DIPLOMATIC EVENTS





# THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DIPLOMACY

## NEED FOR REFORMS AND ADJUSTMENTS !

By Roy Lie Atjam.

As has been the case in many sectors of public and private life, diplomacy has also been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The virus has spread all over the world from Alaska to the remote Andaman archipelago and beyond with tremendous consequences. The high-level meetings of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, was a video messages spectacle of leaders delivering pre-recorded video presentations. There was certainly no room for boring and unstimulating presentations.

Foreign Ministries without any doubt will learn vital lessons from the pandemic. Consular services, for instance, have surpassed most other business at embassies worldwide in 2020. Consulates played an important role in assisting their citizens by steering them through a world replete with pandemic restrictions. Besides, consular work facilitates opportunities to interact closely with the diaspora.

Due to lockdowns, curfews and other restrictive measures, diplomatic functions such as receptions, conferences, seminars, book launchings and the like have been scaled down and have been reorganized via Zoom conference or other digital platforms.

These new measures have served as an avenue for the diplomatic community to pivot and continue networking and explore business opportunities. Additionally, the pandemic has prevented diplomats from gathering in person to celebrate their respective National Days.

Interesting to note that no one can escape video conferencing, not even the Queen of England. Last week HM Queen Elizabeth II took time out of her busy schedule to join a Zoom conference to discuss matters relating to science, technology and space travel. The virtual conference was part of an event to

celebrate British Science Week which was held from 5th -14th March 2021. The event celebrated the role played in society by science and aims to inspire a new generation of British scientists. The monarch was joined by space scientist Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock, Professor Caroline Smith and schoolchildren from Thomas Jones Primary for the virtual presentation.

No need to give up in despair, digital diplomacy is not the end of diplomacy, rather, it is the re-discovery of diplomacy! Because of the coronavirus, diplomats can interact without meeting face-to-face. Digital diplomacy is now perceived as a medium of diplomacy and involves the use of various digital platforms and features of communication in the exchanging of ideas. Diplomacy had to change and the role of the ambassador continues to change accordingly.

The pandemic and you: There is no doubt that the pandemic has had an impact on your life for over a year now, right? Why not try beating the pandemic fatigue by making the best of your current circumstances. Using your time wisely can help you to stay positive and avoid excessive worry. Rather than focus on what you can no longer do, look for ways that you can take advantage of your current situation. For example, are there projects that you now have time for or hobbies that you can now pursue? Can you spend more time with your family and friends?

The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted diplomacy and the lives of diplomats. You may wonder, will digital diplomacy be the way of the future? Well, take courage, sooner or later the pandemic will peter out and life will go back to (a new) normal. Nevertheless, there will be some changes in the diplomatic sphere.

# ANTICIPATING WATER HOT SPOTS IN THE WORLD WILL HELP PREVENT CONFLICTS

By Susanne Schmeier, Associate Professor in Water Law and Diplomacy

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education



Water insecurity is rising worldwide. This affects people's, communities' and entire countries' livelihoods, food and energy security as well as overall economic development. Moreover, it challenges relations between people, communities or entire countries as they compete over perceived scarce water resources.

Media as well as international organizations, including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum, have already warned of water-related threats escalating and possibly affecting stability and peace in entire countries or regions. Examples from Syria to Central Asia and from the Horn of Africa to Iraq demonstrate this.

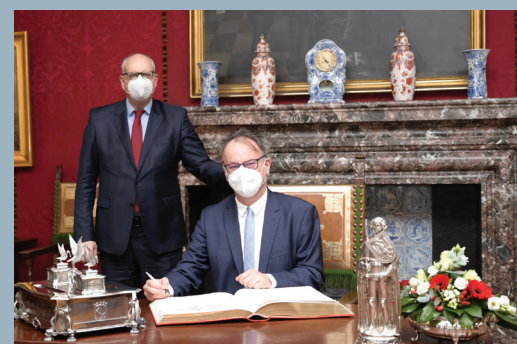
The Water, Peace and Security (WPS) partnership was established in 2018 to address

these challenges. Funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it brings together a group of renowned organizations from the water, security and peacebuilding sectors, led by IHE Delft Institute for Water Education. Together, they are developing innovative tools and approaches to prevent, mitigate and resolve water-related insecurity and tensions before they turn into full-fledged security threats.

In this context, WPS has developed a global early warning tool which tracks places around the world that are at risk of emerging or intensifying water-related insecurity and conflict. It does so on the basis of artificial intelligence, using a machine learning model to digest numerous indicators determining such risks – such as drought onsets, decreasing crop productivity, sudden population growth or existing instability. The tool will help to raise awareness among high-level policy makers of the urgency to act on water-related conflict risks. It has already been presented to the UN Security Council, other UN actors, as well as various national governments.

Acknowledging that solutions for water related risks can only be found on site, WPS has also developed a set of local tools that allow decision-makers to understand the current and future water resources situation and the impacts of development plans (such as new dams or irrigation schemes) as well as the human responses to those, possibly ranging from migration and displacement to local people deprived of their livelihoods joining illicit or terrorist groups.

**In combination with intensive capacity development and dialogue support, WPS and its partners hope to turn vicious cycles of water insecurity and conflict into virtuous cycles of climate and conflict sensitive water management and cooperation.**



## BREMEN WELCOMED AMBASSADOR KAFKA

Tuesday, 13 April 2021, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Germany: The Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Germany, **Tomáš Kafka**, was welcomed by Mayor **Andreas Bovenschulte** for his inaugural visit to Bremen City Hall.

At the beginning of the appointment, the diplomat signed the Golden Book of the City of Bremen. This was followed by an exchange of ideas in the Senate Chamber. Kafka was accompanied by Cultural Attaché **Zuzana Chrištofová**.

Among other things, the Ambassador's visit to the Research Centre for Eastern Europe (FSO) at the University of Bremen was a topic of discussion. The FSO's extensive archive contains more than 100,000 documents, photographs and works of art by dissidents from the former Soviet Union, Poland and the former Czechoslovakia.

Ambassador Kafka very impressed by the estates of several dissidents who were important to him in his personal and diplomatic biography. "I was particularly fascinated by the documents of Czech-Polish *Solidarność*," says the top Czech envoy. Founded in 1982 in the midst of the "Cold War", the FSO today studies the Eastern Bloc and its societies with their culture, as well as analysing current developments in the post-Soviet region.

Mayor Bovenschulte emphasised how important the exchange with a diplomat from Central Europe on the pan-European situation was to him.

Further appointments took Ambassador Kafka to the Bremen City-State Diet (Landtag) as well as to the Bremen Chamber of Commerce (IHK for Bremen and Bremerhaven).



# ROOSEVELT'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING AND POST WAR: FROM NEUTRALITY TO ENGAGEMENT- HIS ROLE IN ACHIEVING VICTORY AND SIMILARITY TO OBAMA

By Razzaq K. Mansoor Al-Seedi, First Secretary, Embassy of Iraq in The Netherlands.

In spring 1940, as the War spread throughout Western Europe, driving the British and French armies out of the continent, slowly the public opinion moved toward supporting a more effective American role in the conflict. FDR was no exception. Subsequently, he managed to convince the Congress to repeal the Neutrality Acts that was passed in the 1930s. This made it possible for the US to sell weapons to Britain.

On 8 December 1945, FDR asked the Congress for approval to declare the war against Japan that attacked Pearl Harbor, and the Congress approved within hours. In turn, Germany and Italy declared war on the US and the Congress as well reciprocated.

This prompt coordination between the Democrat and the Republican was not a coincidence. A year before the attack, In FDR's efforts to bring more support to his policy, he appointed two Republicans for important positions, former Secretary of State Henry Stimson was Secretary of War and Frank Knox was Secretary of the Navy. Moreover, according to Robert Dallek, an American historian specializing in American Presidents, "Historians generally give Roosevelt high marks for his direction of wartime strategy. As this and other recent studies conclude, Roosevelt was the principal architect of the basic strategic decisions that contributed so heavily to the early defeat of Germany and Japan" (p. 532).

When the War ended, FDR was extremely keen on creating the UN. However, he did not want to repeat the mistake of League of Nations. One conditionality for the new democratic body was that world peace to be maintained by few countries that he trusted, namely China, Russia, the UK, and the US. In his Christmas Eve speech in December 1943 he captured that image;

Britain, Russia, China, the United States and their Allies represent more than three-quarters of the total population of the earth. As long as these four nations with great military power stick together in determination to keep the peace there will be no possibility of an aggressor nation arising to start another war. (p.609)

This indicates his vision of these four countries as "four policemen" who would maintain the world peace, and eliminating the possibility of rising new "aggressor nations" who would threaten the world peace.

## Similarity between Roosevelt and Obama:

Some scholars have pointed out that the former President, Barack Obama and Roosevelt have several in common. Both are democrats; both show a jaunty sense in the middle of despair, as E.J Dionne, American journalist and political commentator, wrote:

(I)t would seem that Obama has been studying the 1932 campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The key to Roosevelt's victory was not a big program but a jaunty sense of optimism in the midst of despair...(Obama) seemed to be channeling FDR when he told a crowd in Indianapolis on Wednesday: "This isn't a time for fear." McCain, however, was attempting to freighting voters about Obama, exactly what Herbert Hoover trying to do with Roosevelt. (p.300)

<sup>i</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center, Attack on Pearl Harbor, retrieved on December 2, 2012, available at < <http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdrbio.htm#top> >

<sup>ii</sup> Dallek, Robert. Franklin D. Roosevelt and



American Foreign Policy: 1932-1945. Oxford University Press, (1995).

<sup>iii</sup> Frost, Bryan-Paul & Sikkenga, Jeffrey, (2003) History of American Political Thought, Lexington Books. MD-USA.

<sup>iv</sup> Leuchtenburg, William Edward, In the Shadow of FDR: From Harry Truman to Barack Obama, (2009), retrieved on November 11, 2012. Available at < <http://books.google.com/>

# NEW BOOK ABOUT UGANDA HIGHLIGHTS THE ROLE OF AMBASSADOR BLAAK

It isn't common for African countries -perhaps with the exception of South Africa- to be represented in the Netherlands by an ambassador who speaks Dutch. Mirjam Blaak is the exception: born in the Netherlands, she has switched nationality and she has been representing Uganda as an ambassador since 2003. In the Dutch book 'Oeganda onder President Museveni' she tells her remarkable life story.

The story starts in the early 1980's, when Mirjam Blaak, in her mid-twenties, first visits Africa as a KLM flight attendant. After graduating in International Law, Ms. Blaak took up a job in Kenya at UNHCR, the United Nations body that takes care of refugees. 'I started working there in 1982 at the age of 26,' Ms. Blaak recalls. 'There were thousands of Ugandan refugees entering Kenya at that time and that is when I first heard about a young rebel leader called Yoweri Museveni. The refugees told me that he was trying to liberate Uganda from murderous regimes.'

Mirjam Blaak describes how she became sympathetic to the Ugandan refugees, some of them linked to Mr. Museveni's rebel organization, known as the National Resistance Army. While fighting his rebellion, Museveni's wife Janet and their children stayed in Nairobi, the city where Blaak was based. In November 1983 Kenyan security forces raided the house of Janet and the children, while they were away. The story of how Blaak helps Janet and the children flee to Sweden is then described in the book by Ms. Blaak, while Janet Museveni's side of the story is retrieved from her autobiography.

In the same month, Mirjam helped two young members of the NRA's 'external committee' flee the country. Both men later became senior politicians, with one of them, Ruhakana Rugunda, currently serving as Prime Minister. Mirjam Blaak also informally established contacts with Western embassies on behalf of the NRA, showing her diplomatic skills. 'At that time very few people knew what was going on in Uganda. When I was given a video tape showing images of the war in Uganda, I showed it to the Kenyan authorities and to diplomats, who for the first time saw video footage of Museveni.'

After five years of fighting, the NRA managed to capture the capital city of Kampala and Yoweri Museveni was sworn in as the Ugandan president in 1986. At that time, he stated that leaders who overstay in power are one of the reasons that certain countries in Africa lag behind. 'I first met Museveni in 1985. He thanked me for helping his family leave Nairobi,' Ms. Blaak said. 'I was later asked to establish diplomatic contacts on behalf of the young government.' Although Mirjam was working as a consultant at that time, she didn't send an invoice for that. 'I did that because I believed in the principles of the NRA.'

Mirjam Blaak maintained close ties to the presidential family and the ruling party, partly because of her relationship with the then minister of state of Defense. A few years after the couple separated Mirjam Blaak wanted to go back to the Netherlands. 'When the president heard that, he asked me to become his ambassador. So, I gave up my Dutch nationality and was posted to the Ugandan embassy in Brussels as the ambassador responsible for the Netherlands in 2003,' said Mirjam Blaak. Her position included being the contact person for the Hague-based International Criminal Court, which picked the then ongoing conflict in northern Uganda as a first case to take on.

**Ambassador Blaak was appointed head of mission in 2012 and has since been responsible for Uganda's diplomatic relations with the other Benelux countries and the European Union as well.**



Although the book initially focuses on the positive turnaround that was caused by the NRA-after taking power in 1986, there is also attention for the increasing discontent with the current regime staying in power this long. Ugandan Members of Parliament belonging to the ruling party have adjusted the constitution twice, scrapping the maximum of two terms a president can stay in office, as well as the age limit. Mr. Museveni, now 76 years old, was reelected in disputed elections in January 2021.

'With this victory, Mr. Museveni has extended his rule to 2026, exactly 40 years after capturing power,' said author Arne Doornebal. 'He is facing increasing criticism, not only because of his long rule but also because of the violent crackdown on the opposition before and after the January election. Ambassador Blaak will need all her diplomatic skills explaining these things to the EU and the governments of the Benelux,' said Mr. Doornebal.



Photography: Arne Doornebal





# ISIS: HOW THE GROUP IS GETTING STRONGER

By Patricia Pazos.

The threat of ISIS is escalating worldwide, slowly but firmly. ISIS has proven effective and adaptable over the years, and while the pandemic has impacted the group, it has not deprived its capabilities: ISIS no longer controls territory, but still controls groups, inspires attacks and continues to radicalize. Along this article, we will assess how the ISIS machinery currently works and what to expect in the coming months.

The actual leader or “Calif” remains Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, who succeeded Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as leader in October 2019 following a raid by US special forces in Syria which led to al-Baghdadi’s death by suicide. Al-Qurashi is an ISIS veteran and while little is known about him, we can confirm that he is the mastermind of the Yazidi genocide in Iraq and he is behind major international operations.

The core of the group remains strong and there are no internal fractures or leadership fights of power, showing a high level of coordination with no major defections. Currently, ISIS has an estimated number of 8,000 to 16,000 foreign fighters. This number is inferior in comparison to January 2020, reaching a total of 14,000 to 18,000 fighters. The geographic restrictions due to the pandemic and the group’s financial situations have impacted these high recruiting numbers.

The group no longer holds territory in Iraq, where it once controlled 40 per cent of the country, or Syria, where a third of the country was under ISIS control. In addition, eight million people have been liberated from its control in these countries. This being said, ISIS is far from being eradicated: its growing affiliate branches are gaining power and

supporters, and inspiring attacks. In conflict zones, the group operates as a low-level insurgency and its fighters are organized in small operative cells, controlling rural areas and using mainly small weapons and IEDs in its attacks.

The number of attacks in Iraq and Syria have increased in the past months and have proven effective and sophisticated, targeting civil population, local leaders, and security forces. This increase is threefold: inconsistency in military operations due to the pandemic; reduced coordinated international actions

(allocating adequate military and civilian resources); and lack of solid support to stabilize liberated areas. It is important to note that addressing the factors that make ISIS proliferate, such as lack of governance where the groups operate, lack of economic and employment opportunities, lack of basic infrastructure and services for the population, and sectarian division will help in the fight to combat the terrorist group. If the international community does not address those factors, ISIS will keep thriving.

ISIS financing system is solid and well structured - according to the US Treasury Department, ISIS accumulates 100 million dollars in cash in Iraq and Syria alone. The resources come from extortion, intimidation, smuggling, kidnapping and taxing the population. The money flows easily from Iraq and Syria, and the transfers are often made using the hawala system (underground banking system that is traceless, and based on trust).

Outside of conflict zones, ISIS is still relying on crime, private donors, and funds generated under the cover of legal business or charities, which are then transferred to the group using cash, money services or hawala, or a combination of all. And what about terrorist attacks with low-level of preparation and logistics? Terrorists inspired by ISIS with no direct links to the core, as well as small cells, are often able to fund their activities through legitimate sources of income, fraud or petty crime.







## ABU DHABI DEVELOPMENT FUND CONTRIBUTES USD 10 MILLION TO COLOMBIA

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) on behalf of the United Arab Emirates signed in Bogotá a USD 10 million agreement to support recovery and growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Colombia.

This is the second major project that is part of the Memorandum of Understanding between APC-Colombia and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development for a total of USD 45 millions.

The project contributes to the efforts of the Colombian government to reactivate this sector affected by the covid-19 pandemic. This project seeks to support more than 1600 MSMEs, so that these companies can better connect with local and global value chains, and improve their access to export markets.

His Excellency Khalifa Al Qubaisi, Deputy Director General of ADFD, described the agreement as a new milestone in the strategic relations between the Fund and the Government of Colombia. "The project, like the others that we have financed in Colombia, will have a great impact on the economy, since it will promote innovation in the MSMEs sector, increase its productivity and export volumes, increase competitiveness, and generate hundreds of jobs. work thus boosting their contribution. to sustainable economic development "

.Likewise, he pointed out that the integral development of the sector will allow Colombia to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda in SDG 8 and 9, which are related to "decent work and economic growth" and "industry, innovation and infrastructure", respectively, as well as those of many other SDGs, directly and indirectly.

For the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, José Manuel Restrepo, "this donation will further strengthen international

cooperation relations between governments and work in a coordinated manner to strengthen the micro-business segment in the country, a line that constitutes a key element for industrial development."

For her part, Ángela Ospina de Nicholls, APC-Colombia director, indicated that "from APC-Colombia we have sought to speed up the execution of these non-reimbursable resources from the Abu Dhabi Development Fund, which are important in this process of safe reactivation of the country and in the fulfillment of a Colombia with equity. The Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Fund have been great allies of Colombia, especially in overcoming the effects caused by the covid-19 pandemic, and for this we appreciate their contribution to the government's efforts "

The main memorandum of understanding has also supported the early childhood policy, with more than USD 10 million invested in the construction and provision of 37 child development centers (CDI) in 15 departments of the country that are benefiting almost 5,000 children.

The Abu Dhabi Development Fund (ADFD) is a leading national economic development aid entity owned by the Abu Dhabi government. Its objective is to help emerging countries by providing concessional loans to finance sustainable development projects. Since its inception in 1974, ADFD has set milestones in 97 developing countries. Over the past 49 years, the Fund's development projects and investments, valued at \$ 28.3 trillion, have helped the international community achieve sustainable economic growth, as well as drive the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ( SDG) of the United Nations.

The project that will benefit MSMEs will begin in the second quarter of 2021 and will be executed by Bancoldex and Colombia Productiva.

ISIS is still radicalizing in conflict zones, in third countries, and online. The pandemic has slowed down more traditional -in person- radicalization processes, but in Europe the pandemic has led to an increase in radicalization content online (both salafi-jihadi and far right). Combined with socio economic drivers of terrorism, this creates the perfect cocktail for a resurgence in terrorist attacks once the physical restrictions relax and larger in-person gatherings are back. We can affirm that more terrorist attacks with low level preparation are expected in the West, specially in France, the UK, and Germany.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS still indoctrinates, radicalizes, and recruits the local population. Prisons and refugee camps are a hot spot for radicalization, and refugee camps like al-Hol in Syria, which currently has a population of more than 60,000, are at risk of forming small caliphates due to the increasing radicalization of refugees. ISIS has one objective in mind: to re-establish the power of the organization and to create a new generation of leaders and fighters.

ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates are gaining control and expanding their influence throughout sub-Saharan Africa, successfully recruiting and even capturing territory in the worst cases. These groups exploit political transitions, lack of economic opportunities and security, creating a perfect breeding ground for terrorism and radicalization in unstable countries.

- ISIS's capabilities have been reduced but the threat is mutating and adapting to the new societies during the pandemic.
- Addressing lack of economic and employment opportunities, lack of basic infrastructure and services for the population, and sectarian division is key to reduce the groups success.
- When geographical restrictions ease and we slowly return to life as it was pre-pandemic, we will witness an increase in terrorist attacks worldwide, a majority of them being by lone wolves or small cells linked to ISIS.





# DIPLOMACY AND THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

By Dr. Saifaldin Z. Al-Daraji, Iraqi Diplomat, Member at the UK Royal College of Defence Studies RCDS

"Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions." . Winston Churchill.

The post-Cold War era witnessed a remarkable development in the form of international relations, especially with regard to the affairs of the global defense system and its traditional constants, which imposed a new vision of national security strategies as a main factor of countries' foreign policies to manage conflicts, support interests, expand influence and make decisions at the international and regional levels.

Diplomacy is one of the most important elements of national power that states follow to formulate their foreign policies and expand their scope of influence by using the principles and foundations of directed dialogue and effective negotiation strategies, tactics and methods, to contribute to achieving their national and political goals, and to finalize an international and regional public opinion that supports and back their positions aimed at protecting their interests and those of their subjects in the other countries.

Diplomacy is defined - from the writer's point of view - as "one of the elements of national power that states use to achieve the goals of their foreign policies, in accordance with a set of rules, customs and laws that regulate their relations within the international environment."

The role of diplomacy in facing the challenges and threats to which the state may be exposed is no less than the role of the security and military system. Rather, it may be considered the first phase to prevent the growth of armed conflicts and the risk of direct confrontation,

as a result of the conflicts of its interests with the interests of other countries, in addition to what may result from security, political, economic and demographic repercussions.

Strengthening the bilateral and multi-part diplomatic role to assume the responsibility of defending the interests of supreme states and their national security requires a team with a high level of capacity, competence and integrity, equipped with basic political directives, and the necessary visions and information, for a broader understanding of the shape of the global order and the nature of international relations, including an evaluation of Risks, analysis of situations, and exploration of issues that affect, in one way or another, the position of the state within its international and regional surroundings.

In light of the foregoing, and in order to achieve this, members of this team, especially diplomatic personnel, must possess special skills, which are considered professional principles for diplomatic work, including:

- 1- The ability to understand, analyze and evaluate situations and challenges.
- 2- Skill and good planning in gathering information from its various sources.
- 3- Accuracy and objectivity in presenting opinions, ideas and proposals, and telling the truth to the authority without bias, favoritism or weakness, taking into account the etiquette of dialogue and the responsibilities of the job hierarchy.

4- The ability to create and innovate in solving problems, managing crises, and making decisions under pressure and in difficult situations.

5- Extensive knowledge and comprehensive understanding of international affairs, taking into account cultural and social norms, in addition to full knowledge of the customs and traditions of the host country.

6- The ability to form and manage cohesive teams to accomplish the assigned tasks, with the assurance that within these teams there is someone who plays the role of critic and determinant of failures and weaknesses, or the so-called (red team).

7- Firmness, listening, decency, tact, calm and good looking. With good negotiation skills and the ability to learn languages, communicate effectively, build relationships and form alliances in times of peace and war.

8- Accuracy of observation, quick wit and caution against falling into the trap of the intelligence services that usually put diplomatic personnel as a target for them, especially in dictatorial regimes. Some studies have indicated the need to develop security and intelligence skills for employees working in diplomatic missions.

Diplomats should be influential leaders to those around them, able to formulate visions, set goals, expand networks of communication, mobilize supportive positions, and build alliances according to win-win theory.

# LEONARDO ROYAL HOTEL DEN HAAG PROMENADE: 50 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION KEEPING FRIENDS ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Leonardo  
Royal Hotels



Known to many as “The Hague’s Diplomatic Hub”, the international vocation of the Leonardo Royal Hotel Den Haag Promenade is truly embedded in its roots. In earlier times, the hotel used to be a private royal lodge owned by the first King of the Netherlands, and later by his son – King Willem II. The name “Promenade” made its first appearance in the building’s history in 1876, with the opening of the Hôtel de la Promenade – carefully designed by architect-engineer L.A. Brouwe.

For decades, Hôtel de la Promenade was a home away from home for a great number of important people, from royals and chief of states to diplomats, politicians and VIPs. Between 1940 and 1945, as World War II swept through the Netherlands, the Hôtel faced major challenges, as its ideal location made it a sought-after target during the German occupation. Unfortunately, this had such a disastrous effect on the hotel that it was eventually decided to demolish it.

The story of this historical building, however, could not end this way. Luckily, in 1968 Bertus Meijer decided to rebuild the Promenade Hotel, which eventually re-opened its doors on January 11th, 1971 – thus starting a new era. Over the past 50 years, the Promenade has grown to become a place where boundaries are crossed and friendships from all over the world are built. Numerous remarkable international guests have sojourned at the hotel, and high-end events have been held there – endowing the Promenade Hotel with a first-class reputation as “The Hague’s Diplomatic Hub”.

Within the first months of the opening year, Mr. Meijer had the honor of welcoming a royal guest – Prince Henrik of Denmark. In the following years, other well-known figures – including heads of state, diplomats, and international VIPs – had the opportunity to benefit from the top-class services and hospitality of the Promenade. Personalities like Nelson Mandela, George Bush, and Bill Gates are just a few of the well-known guests that have stayed at the Hotel. And surely, one of the Hotel’s highlights of the past decades was the stay of Bill Clinton, former President of the United States of America, who visited the Hotel – then known as Crowne Plaza Den Haag-Promenade – to host a reading session and to attend a special dinner during his visit to the Netherlands.

The number of diplomatic guests that have been welcomed at the Promenade Hotel is truly exceptional. Multiple prime ministers and royals from the Netherlands and abroad have been delighted to visit the Hotel or to stay there for a few nights – some of them even quite frequently. Ambassadors and representatives of an embassy would wait at the Promenade Hotel before they would present their credentials to the Dutch King or Queen. There, they would be picked up by carriage. This was an awe-inspiring sight, captivating all of those fortunate enough to witness it.

When a great international reputation such as that of the Promenade Hotel is earned, it is extremely important to act on it. One of the many events with which the Hotel honored its name was the Sri Lanka Cultural Food

Festival held in March 2004, when the Hotel collaborated with the country’s embassy in order to organize a grand celebration of the over 400-year long alliance between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

In 2017, these Food Festivals were revived and upgraded. The Hotel’s current General Manager, Mr. Patrick Aarsman, and Diplomat Magazine’s Publisher, Ms. Mayelinne De Lara, closely worked together to organize a variety of culinary evenings that earned the Hotel a spot in the heart of The Hague’s gastronomic scene – thus gaining a reputation as “the International Culinary Center of The Hague”.

These Food Festivals were more than just an international dining experience: in addition to the culinary element, they incorporated a display of traditions and habits from the specific countries that were celebrated. Hence, every Festival was aimed at delivering a complete and unique experience of the represented country – to the pleasure of the invited participants, who would travel to The Hague from all corners of the world.

Today, Leonardo Royal Hotel Den Haag Promenade still proudly features the international perspective that has characterized the Hotel since its creation. From the guests to the cuisine, from its traditions to its events, the Promenade Hotel overcomes obstacles and happily welcomes guests from all around the world.





# GREENING OUR PLANET TOGETHER

By John Dunkelgrün

Almost everyone knows our planet's climate is changing. Temperatures are rising, weather patterns are becoming unpredictable and storms are more violent. Arctic ice is melting, threatening a dramatic rise in sea level. Droughts, wildfires, and other scourges leave millions of people homeless and hungry.

The main human causes are the emissions of carbon dioxide and methane. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas, but it doesn't remain in the atmosphere all that long. CO<sub>2</sub> is there for the long haul (see Steven E. Koonin, 'Unsettled'). The main focus to avoid a catastrophe is on reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. According to "Paris", we must halve the emissions by 2030, and stop them altogether by 2050 to keep the warming up to a maximum of 1.5. But the climate is already changing under the current concentration of the stuff in the atmosphere and it isn't going away. Moreover cutting output in 'the West' is easily overtaken by growth in countries like China, India, Indonesia, etc. Just slowing down emissions to a full stop some thirty years from now is not enough. We must take CO<sub>2</sub> back out of the atmosphere. There appear to be some chemical ways to do that (direct capture), but they haven't been tested on the massive scale required and are prohibitively expensive (Koonin). The best route appears to let nature do the work by planting trees or fostering the growth of aquatic organisms.

Planting trees is wonderful, but areas with the right soil and water conditions for trees to grow, that are not currently used for farming, are limited. Yet we must find a solution.

Therefore let's go on a little thought experiment. There are plenty of empty spaces

on our planet with enough sun, but hardly any water.

Yet our planet is awash in water. Two-thirds of its surface shows blue from space. Unfortunately, most of it is salty. While desalination technology is improving, it is still an expensive and energy-consuming process. But there is hope. Renewable energy by all known technologies is rapidly getting cheaper, and people all over are working on still better methods. It is not at all impossible for abundant renewable energy to become virtually free in the near future. Norman MacRae, a former editor of *The Economist*, once pointed out that most shortages, once recognised, are turned into surpluses within ten years. Look at how dramatically technology and costs can change. In the late sixties the workhorse of computing, the bulky IBM 360/30, had 30K bytes of memory and cost well over \$100,000, not far from a million dollars in today's money. My current smartphone has 256 Gigabytes, almost nine million times as much, and costs about \$1,250.

Assume that in the next few years the cost of energy drops down so dramatically that we can ignore it. Then think about building massive desalination plants financed by the world community. At current prices, it would take about one billion dollars to build a plant that produces one million tons of freshwater per day. Tropical savannas need 100cm

of rainfall per year or 0.275cm a day. This translates into 2,750 tons of water per km<sup>2</sup> per day. That one million tons per day plant produces enough water to turn more than 360,000 km<sup>2</sup> of desert into savanna. Build one on either side of Africa (at a fraction of the World Bank annual budget for investment in water projects) and you get enough water to create a swath of 100km wide from East to West as a green barrier against the encroaching Sahara. The benefits would be stupendous. It would provide work to thousands of Africans planting trees. The growing trees and shrubs would gorge on the CO<sub>2</sub>, the herdsmen in the Sahel would have water for their cattle and maize. The green area might even change the soil and the weather patterns so that less desalinated water is needed and can be used to "green" ever more of the Sahara.

Desalinating two million M<sup>3</sup> a day would need about 400 megawatts of electrical power. At what price of renewable energy is this idea viable? If compared to the cost of tornadoes, droughts, the rising sea level, and hunger relief programs, it should be feasible at today's prices. And if this is seen to work in Africa, the deserts of the Arabian peninsula, the Negev, Chile, and China could also become centers for storing CO<sub>2</sub> and allowing more food production for the planet's growing population.



# ABU DHABI, THE WASHINGTON DC OF THE EAST

By Mohammed Karim, currently a diplomatic Protocol Manager  
at Expo Dubai 2020

The capital of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, now more than ever before, serves as the political capital of the Middle East.

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince is admired by everyone in the UAE. Under his political leadership, Abu Dhabi holds a role stabilizing diplomatic relations among various nations. Abu Dhabi for instance normalized diplomatic relations with Israel. Beyond the latter, Abu Dhabi has strengthened its diplomatic ties with military powers such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to build a fortress of stability for the region.

Furthermore, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), which invests funds on behalf of the Government of Abu Dhabi, has financially helped and developed many neighboring countries and international businesses through heavy investments that further set forth Abu Dhabi as the political capital of the Middle East.

Abu Dhabi has kicked off a historic project named "The Abrahamic Family House", that will have a church, a mosque and a synagogue all side by side creating a beautiful landmark of peace, tolerance and solidarity.

Analogous to the Abraham Accords, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi has been proactively mediating between Pakistan & India. Both nations are great allies of the UAE and the population of both Pakistanis and Indians constitute to nearly 15% of the UAE's

total population. It is vital for both countries to shy away from cold wars, and be closer to hot business negotiations.

Since the Founding Father of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi had also maintained strong diplomatic relations with many world leaders, and in particular the Arab leaders since the 1960's. Sheikh Zayed's investment at the time had led to the UAE's successes now politically and economically.

Egypt is an example of one of the UAE's allies since the rule of the founding father. Now, MbZ & Egypt have formed very solid ties, focused on economic development and military relations. "The Promised Land", a book by former U.S. President Barack Obama described MbZ highly as per his one-to-one experience as "Young, sophisticated ... and perhaps the savviest leader in the Gulf". In addition, Obama reminisces that MbZ did not dither when it came to defending Egypt and Bahrain, having their backs as he shares a strong alliance with those nations.

HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE, visited Egypt in 2019 to boost economic development and serve the mutual interests of both nations. In addition, new partnerships through military firms such as IDEX helped

Abu Dhabi and Egypt strengthen defense ties, with the two nations practicing joint military drills since 2015.

A paragon of how MBZ shares a stark solidarity with the region is the recent incident wherein several senior Jordanian officials were arrested on security grounds for attempting to destabilize the Jordanian government. In response, MbZ telephoned King Abdullah II of Jordan to reassure him that Abu Dhabi will always support Jordan.

Further a conquest for world peace; the UAE insisted in having every nation to be part of the world EXPO 2020 that will be hosted in Dubai from October 2021. Nations that do not have a set budget for such a vast event have been aided by the government of the UAE, assisting them in building their own country pavilions for the vast event. The purpose of such a generous offer is to bring every nation on earth, to one joyful event, hosted by the UAE. A sign for world peace.

It may seem surprising that the UAE only became a nation in the year 1971. For being in such a young nation, Abu Dhabi leads the entire Middle East politically – leading nations whose histories go back to ancient historical times.



# DIPLOMACY AND THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN TRADE AND ECONOMIC BUREAU IN GERMANY AS A SYMBOL OF THE STABILITY OF THE RUSSIAN GERMAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

By Andrei Sobolev, Minister Counselor, Head of the Trade and Economic Bureau of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Federal Republic of Germany



On May 6, 2021, the Trade and Economic Bureau of Russia in Germany celebrated the 100th anniversary of its establishment shortly after the signing of the Rapall Treaty between the RSFSR and the Weimar Republic on the restoration of diplomatic relations. The treaty was a landmark event in European history that demonstrated the potential for mutually beneficial exchanges and the formation of a system of economic ties amidst reparation ultimatums and political pressure back then.

The overall history of Russian trade missions in Germany goes back even to 1912, when the foreign offices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Empire were established

by a decree of Emperor Nicholas II. In keeping with historical continuity, today Trade and Economic Bureau is also a foreign office of the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade. It is important to note that at that time 3 of 14 foreign offices were situated in the German cities of Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt-am-Main, because even back then Germany accounted for about 38% of the Russian trade turnover. A good metaphor for these historical roots of special cooperation between Germany and Russia which runs through the 19th to the 21st century is the fate of the family of Andrea von Knoop, author of the fundamental work on Russian-German economic relations "Great Future - the Germans in the economic life of Russia. A History of a Reliable Partnership for Many Years". Her husband's ancestor Ludwig von Knoop (1821-1894) was one of the founders of the Russian textile industry who participated in the construction of 187 weaving factories in Russia and was the owner of the largest textile factory back then. Back to modern history Andrea von Knoop was the chairman of the Board of the Union of German Economy in Russia from 1995 to

2007, attracted German investments in the economy of new Russia and created what is known today as AHK Russland.

The foundations of modern economic cooperation between Russia and Germany were laid in the 1970s at the height of the Cold War when the political conditions for economic cooperation were comparable only with the Rapallo accords. After the accession of Chancellor Willy Brandt, Germany abandoned the tough confrontation with the USSR and its allies in favor of its new "Ostpolitik" under the motto "Wandel durch Annäherung" (change through rapprochement), which resulted in the "gas-tube deal of the century" for supplying large-diameter pipes and other equipment for a gas pipeline to Germany and paying for that with gas from fields in Western Siberia. The deal was named so because it was the largest in the history of Russian-German agreements involving cooperation over many decades.

Russian-German economic cooperation is an objective historical constant. Even today notwithstanding any political circumstances

Germany remains Russia's second largest foreign economic partner - its share in Russian foreign trade in 2020 accounted to 8%. Russia remains one of the largest suppliers of gas, oil, petroleum products and coal to Germany. Germany is one of the largest investors in Russia and has 4 274 companies with German capital there. In turn the largest Russian companies have their foreign headquarters and subsidiaries in Germany - Gazprom, Rosneft, VTB, Sberbank, Russian Post (all members of the Russian Economic Council in Germany).

The volumes of mutual accumulated investments, mutual trade turnover, and various institutional forms clearly shows solid objective of Russian-German economic cooperation. The prerequisites of this cooperation for the private sector are so objective that the chairman of the Eastern Committee of the German Economy O. Hermes promotes the need to create a coordinated industrial strategy between Russia and the EU and major German and Russian companies supports the initiative of a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok. Bilateral cooperation is also supported at the highest level by the governments. In 2019 a declaration of the "Russian-German Partnership for Efficiency" was signed which is now a strategic document for the development of bilateral economic and technological cooperation. At the end of 2020, in conjunction with the establishment of the Russian-German Economic Council, the German and Russian foreign ministers announced the Russian-German year of Economy and Sustainable Development in 2020-2022.

The 100th anniversary of the Trade and Economic Bureau as a part of the Russian diplomatic mission providing conditions for the further development of Russian-German trade and investments is a good occasion to look back on the glorious past notwithstanding any circumstances and become confident in the future of these relations. The Trade and Economic Bureau will continue to be a hub for various initiatives in the field of mutual trade and investment and remain one of the most important houses that will carefully preserve the living memory of the previous pages of the bilateral economic relations and actively contribute to writing new ones.

For further information

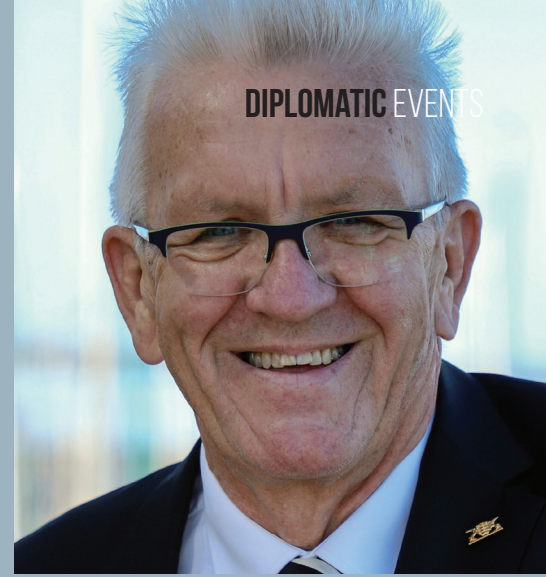
Trade and Economic Bureau of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Federal Republic of Germany: <https://de.minpromtorg.gov.ru/de/>

## KRETSCHMANN REMAINS AT THE HELM OF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

May 2021, Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany: Baden-Württemberg's State Diet has re-elected Winfried Kretschmann in the capacity of premier (Ministerpräsident) and confirmed the state government he formed. The coalition agreement between Alliance 90/The Greens and the CDU forms the basis of the government's work from 2021 to 2026.

This is Kretschmann's third term at the reins of the Southwestern German state with capital in Stuttgart. He was first elected in 2011, and remains hugely popular.

Cabinet members are: Deputy Premier and Minister of the Interior, for Digitisation and Local Authorities: Thomas Strobl, Minister of Finance: Dr. Danyal Bayaz, Minister for Culture, Youth and Sport: Theresa Schopper, Minister for Science, Research and the Arts: Theresia Bauer, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Energy:



Thekla Walker, Minister for Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism: Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut, Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Integration: Manne Lucha, Minister of Justice and Migration: Marion Gentges, Minister for Transport: Winfried Hermann, Minister for Food, Rural Areas and Consumer Protection: Peter Hauk, Minister for Regional Development and Housing: Nicole Razavi.

In Berlin, State Secretary and Plenipotentiary of the Land to the German Federation, Federal Policy Coordination is Rudolf Hoogvliet.

In Brussels, State Secretary at the Ministry of State and Representative of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the European Union: Florian Hassler.

## PRINCE CLAUS AWARD HONoured TONGA

The Prince Claus Award 2020, an international recognition, honouring outstanding achievements in the field of culture and development, was presented to the Dowager Lady Tunakaimanu Fielakepa at a special ceremony held at Liku'alofa Resort, Tonga National Cultural Centre in the kingdom's capital.

HRH Princess Pilolevu, The Honourable Lady Tuita of 'Utungake, presented the award at a function hosted by the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The annual awards are usually presented in the Grand Hall of the Royal Palace in Amsterdam by HRH Prince Constantijn of the Netherlands, the Honorary Chair of the board of the Prince Claus Fund, however travel was not possible this year due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The Honorary Consul, Mrs Petunia Tupou KC, said that 83 nominations had been submitted from around the world. Forty five were short-listed. "Only seven laureates were selected based on their inspirational leadership, and this is the very first laureate for the Pacific islands," she said.

Tunakaimanu Fielakepa was honoured for her immense contribution to the ongoing vitality of women's textile arts, demonstrating that koloa is a living cultural form and an integral part of Tongan culture.

She received the award in an online ceremony from the Royal Palace in Amsterdam on 2 December for being a committed activist for Tonga's living cultural heritage, its language, traditions, values and customs.

The awards are supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and thus non-resident Dutch Ambassador Mira Woldberg in dispatched a video message to Tonga for the event from the embassy based in Wellington, New Zealand.

*Dowager Lady Tunakaimanu Fielakepa at Langafonua Womens Center Nukualofa Tonga 2020. Photography Mary-Lyn-Fonua*





L'Acte constitutif de l'UNESCO proclamait que « les guerres prenant naissance dans l'esprit des hommes, c'est dans l'esprit des hommes que doivent être élevées les défenses de la paix ». Lorsque les fondateurs de l'UNESCO ont tracé ces grands mots en novembre 1945, ils avaient certainement à l'esprit les ravages provoqués par la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Depuis, il est clairement apparu que le hard power ne pouvait, à lui seul, être le garant de la paix et que les hauts dignitaires des différentes puissances mondiales devaient penser à diversifier leurs stratégies pour améliorer les relations entre pays et pouvoirs souvent antagonistes. De manière progressive, le soft power ou « force douce » de la culture, la diplomatie culturelle, s'est avéré un outil précieux. En effet, dès 2007, par exemple, la Commission européenne a proposé d'étudier le rôle de la culture dans les relations internationales de l'Union européenne, mettant ainsi en exergue sa capacité à tisser des liens à long terme, fondés sur la confiance et compréhension mutuelles.

Guidée par cette conviction, la Commission nationale andorrane pour l'UNESCO (CNAU), en étroite collaboration avec le Ministère des Affaires étrangères de la Principauté d'Andorre, a créé en 2008 le premier ArtCamp Andorre. L'objet de cette résidence d'artistes peintres du monde entier est de participer à la construction d'un monde plus pacifique en s'attachant à promouvoir le dialogue interculturel, les échanges de vues et d'idées, à encourager une meilleure connaissance des autres cultures et créer des liens respectueux entre communautés traditionnellement en situation de conflit. Ces rencontres visent in fine à encourager une vision positive de la diversité culturelle, conçue comme une source de richesse, de dialogue et de paix. Depuis sa création, 6 éditions ArtCamp ont déjà eu lieu et la 7e, initialement prévue en juillet 2020, se tiendra en Andorre du 14 au 25 juillet 2021, si la situation de la crise sanitaire causée par la COVID-19 le permet. Plus de 150 artistes provenant de 80 pays différents se sont ainsi déjà rencontrés en Principauté en laissant derrière eux plus de 600 œuvres originales en témoignage de leur passage en Andorre et de leur engagement envers les valeurs universelles de l'UNESCO.

En cette période de crise du secteur culturel, la CNAU et le projet ArtCamp ont tenu à s'impliquer activement au sein du mouvement RésiliArt lancé par l'UNESCO. Par le biais de



## ARTCAMP ANDORRA, VECTEUR DE DIPLOMATIE CULTURELLE

courtes vidéos, des artistes du monde entier ont pu faire entendre leurs voix pour penser la relance et l'avenir de la culture, qui se révèle aujourd'hui plus que jamais nécessaire pour aider la population à mieux supporter les mesures restrictives de confinement imposées pour essayer d'enrayer la pandémie.

ArtCamp Andorre bénéficie du haut patronage de l'UNESCO dans le cadre de la Convention sur la diversité des expressions culturelles de 2005. D'autre part, et suivant le Plan stratégique national de la Principauté d'Andorre pour la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030, les artistes sont aussi sélectionnés en tenant compte de leur attachement aux Objectifs de développement durable.

À partir de cette édition 2021, et dans le cadre de la célébration du 75e anniversaire de l'UNESCO, une nouvelle proposition sera faite pour les artistes sélectionnés en organisant un débat sur « les arts plastiques et créations artistiques en période de crise et en situation d'urgence culturelle ». L'Université d'Andorre, et d'autres universités sensibles à la thématique de la diplomatie culturelle, se

joindront donc à cette nouvelle proposition en faisant intervenir des penseurs et intellectuels du monde entier. D'autre part, le Département des Affaires multilatérales et de la Coopération du Ministère des Affaires étrangères andorran offre dorénavant aux artistes la possibilité de postuler à une subvention pour mettre en œuvre un projet social mariant l'art, la culture de la paix et le développement durable.

Au fil des années, et grâce à l'enthousiasme et proactivité de la marraine du projet, Madame Hedva Ser, artiste et Ambassadrice de bonne volonté pour la diplomatie culturelle, le projet a pris son essor au-delà des Pyrénées et jouit déjà d'une édition méditerranéenne à Malte depuis 2015. D'autres pays et régions ont manifesté leur intérêt d'organiser un ArtCamp, conscients du rôle que ce beau projet peut jouer dans le rapprochement des cultures et en tant que levier de diplomatie culturelle.

Jean-Michel Armengol, Secrétaire général de la Commission nationale andorrane pour l'UNESCO et Jordi Canut, Ministère des Affaires étrangères

# HOME IS A FEELING

By Yvonne Cocco from Style Me Cocco

Leaving your home country and settling abroad can be overwhelming, it requires a very open-minded and positive attitude. There are days when you absolutely love where you are and others when you feel homesick; it can be difficult to deal with so much change at one time : culture, language, weather, making new friends, among others.

Being an expat myself, I believe home is a feeling and I encourage you to stay positive and nest in your new location by embracing your new surroundings.

I remember when I moved to Stockholm I did my best to find a spaceful apartment outside the city center and made it warm and charming, with a couple of additions. I was always happy to come back from work and sink into my very own sanctuary, despite the extreme winter months. The fact that I felt so “at home”, made my whole experience a fantastic and rewarding memory abroad.

A home definitely demands to be created, so enhancing your living abroad experience means having a place you love. If your new rental seems dull and colourless, have fun with your decor and interior decoration. The range of experience gained from living in multiple



cultures is quite valuable, display it and make it more personal.

An easy way to create an intimate, elegant and/or warm atmosphere is by bringing accents of color and balance with: throw pillows, plants, books and rugs. All these placed purposely can elevate and lift a room, particularly when painting walls is not an option.

Let me help you bring cosiness and style to your living space (even if you feel it's cold and uninviting). By adding texture, delightful materials and pleasant lighting, I can create for you a home away from home that you look forward to be in everyday.

Style Me Cocco is my home styling company and it delivers a multisensory experience : how you feel in a styled room, what you see is pleasing to the eye, what you touch has a

pleasant texture and what you smell transports you to a happy place. Thus, adding home scents to the home styling service completes our mission of delivering feel-good-homes by providing a sense of well-being. We work exclusively with fragrances Made in France that provide the best and most sustainable quality.

We also offer an exquisite range of furniture and decor objects from Spain that will make a unique statement to any property.

Remember, happiness is an inside job and self care begins with your intimate space. Having an alluring home wherever you are is not an expense, it's definitely an investment.

Visit our website : [www.stylemecocco.com](http://www.stylemecocco.com) For your convenience, we can accomodate your needs in a virtual consultation.

## JOHN KERRY AS CLIMATE ENVOY

Erstwhile 68th Secretary of State (2013-2017), John Kerry began his commission as special climate envoy. The position is a cabinet-level one with authority over energy and climate policies.

Kerry's appointment does not require US Senate confirmation as he is deemed as a 'presidential envoy' since January 2021. Nonetheless he shall hold a seat on the National Security Council in the White House. President Joe Biden has pledged to reverse course on climate from President Donald Trump, who doubts mainstream climate

science. Trump pulled the United States out of the 2015 Paris agreement on climate, and dismantled Obama-era climate and environmental regulations to boost drilling, mining and manufacturing.

Whilst serving as secretary of state under former President Barack Obama, Kerry, 76, called climate change “the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction.” In travels from glaciers in Greenland to the Solomon Islands, Kerry has emphasized cooperation on tackling climate change.

## DIPLMATIC EVENTS



Photography: Gaetan Luci



# HOW 429 WOMEN IN AFRICA PARTICIPATE IN A PAINT CONTEST

By Carine Ouvry-Bormans.



429 women! This year 429 women took part in the yearly paint contest in Siby, a village about one hour driving from Bamako, the capital of Mali in West-Africa. These women compete for the most beautiful natural decoration on walls, houses, grain containers or enclosures of the concessions where they live. Each year it gets more beautiful. Each year the rain washes away the beautiful decoration and the next year the women of Siby start all over again.

The first time I arrived in the village to follow up the work of these women I was overly impressed by this yearly process. Each year the rain washes it all away and the next year the women paint again, like so many before them. Generations have been decorating walls and houses with natural colours they find in nature. It is a feast for the eye to see all this creative work.

Initiated by the Cultural Centre, Bougou Saba, 8 years ago, the competition engages the village people in making their homes a place of art. Bougou Saba wants to preserve the traditional mural art on mud houses of the people of Mandé. The whole process, starting with the information sessions, the enrolment, the

preparation of the houses, the painting itself and the deliberation of the jury engages the women's associations of each neighbourhood, and the local and traditional authorities. The announcement of the winners and the distribution of the prizes during the weekend Festival Bogo Ja in February is a major tourist attraction in the region.

Respect for the natural environment and the traditional way of constructing with mud bricks encourages the village people to become aware of the need for them to contribute to a better and cleaner environment. Therefore the quality of sanitation around the houses is taken into account by the jury.



This year five of the most experienced women took up the challenge to pass the knowledge to the younger generation by becoming a trainer. They decided not to participate anymore in the competition but to supervise a series of workshops for women and children and teach them how to prepare the houses, trace the patters, find the colours, mix them, and apply them on the walls.

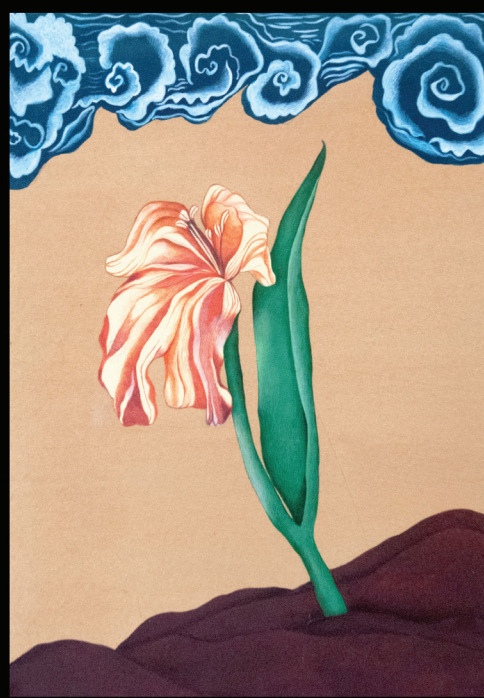
And I decided to contribute by allowing outsiders but also future generations to know about all this by starting to make an inventory of all the 429 houses participating in the competition. When I first arrived in the village, I had the intense feeling this had to be recorded. The next generation must know about this tradition and research must be possible. With my background as a history teacher, I immediately volunteered to make an inventory of all the works. 'You want to go around the village and make photos of all the works with the women. Do you really want to do that?!' Julie, the co-ordinator of the project, asked me. As if I was crazy. And yes, this was what I really wanted to do.

So, for 5 days I left Bamako at 6:30 in the morning to arrive at the countryside and started taking pictures. Very quickly, I started to be so impressed by the pride these women take in the result of days, or weeks of labour to make the most beautiful mural painting. They all wanted to be on the picture. They wanted to be seen, to be recognised. Some just stopped with their household activities and you still can see the water on their clothes as they were washing, or were cooking, peeling the peanuts, or even breast feeding. Some quickly went inside to put on their best dress though. And all of them made sure to have shoes. Being seen barefooted is clearly not done in Siby.

Soon the rain season is going to start. And gradually the colours will all wash away. I am looking forward next year to be a privileged witness again of this creative and community process.







# ALIA BILGRAMI' STORMY TULIPS

On 20th January 2021 at 4:00 p.m. a meeting with the Mayor of Den Haag, Honorable Jan Van Zanen took place. The purpose of this auspicious ceremony was to handover a set of paintings that had been pledged to the city of Den Haag and to the Mayor as a gift by Pakistani-Canadian artist, Alia Bilgrami.

The work is a triptych, called Stormy Tulips. The painting is very special to the artist as it narrates the journey or cycle of life and is rendered in gouache in the miniature painting style, a reflection of her South Asian heritage. In the triptych, the two tulips are the protagonists, braving life together, one storm at a time and coming out stronger at the end. Even when one tulip survives the other, life must go on as reflected in the background of the last painting.

Over the summer of 2020, Bilgrami got in touch with the Mayor's office because she and her spouse had recently become residents of this beautiful city and they were keen to express their gratitude in some shape or form. The artist's father inspired them with the idea of giving one of her paintings as a gift to their new city. Since Bilgrami is a professional artist who loves painting tulips, this seemed like a very good idea indeed and the rest as they say, is history!

As explained to Mayor Van Zanen during the meeting, she never tires of using tulips as a symbol in various styles, and through a myriad of media. He took a keen interest in learning more about why she and her spouse moved to the Netherlands and said that he always loves to hear why expats choose to

move here, admitting that like them, he too is new to Den Haag having only taken office for the past 6 months. After this they spent a little time discussing Bilgrami's career as a visual artist and curator. She has a background in contemporary miniature painting that she often combines with analogue photography techniques.

Working with the notion of displacement for over a decade, her artwork often expresses a duality – the simultaneous feeling of belonging and of being scattered – that translocation can bring. Bilgrami's research is ongoing, working with the notion of displacement, her artwork often expresses a duality – the simultaneous feeling of belonging and of being scattered – that translocation can often bring.

The Mayor was happy to receive the triptych and Bilgrami felt very honored to have been given a private audience with him. The meeting, which only Mayor van Zanen, Alia Bilgrami and Mr. Kevin Verbaas attended due to Covid-19 restrictions, was a lovely and successful afternoon in which they both took a keen interest in her art practice.

The artist feels content that Stormy Tulips have found a home in the land of tulips and after the meeting was over said "I am honored and happy that the work has found its way to the Mayor's office walls where I hope they contribute to the positive atmosphere and cheer him up on a daily basis!" Maybe one day the paintings will adorn the walls of a museum in the Netherlands, or at least that is what the artist aspires to.

For more information about the artist go to: [www.abilgrami.com](http://www.abilgrami.com) or follow her on Instagram: [@aliabilgrami.art](https://www.instagram.com/aliabilgrami.art)



The Mayor of The Hague, Jan van Zanen and Alia Bilgrami



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## DIPLOMATIC EVENTS

# XXVI SUMMIT OF TOURISM MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS

Friday, 7 May 2021, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic: President of Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader invited the tourism ministers participating in the XXVI Summit of Tourism Ministers of the Americas, convened by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), to “show the world that we are redesigning the future of tourism, that this is Latin America’s moment”.

President Abinader affirmed that, “today I feel prouder to be part of Latin American leadership. Seeing this commitment inspires me to move forward, to get up every day and bet on the future of our region”.

Tourism leaders in the Americas committed to jointly addressing the reactivation of tourism, making the sector a priority and adopting international protocols. Additionally, they agreed to emphasize innovation and digital transformation, develop sustainable tourism and strengthen support mechanisms for workers and impacted companies.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Secretary

General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Zurab Pololikashvili commended the way Dominican Republic has handled the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted that “re-establishing trust in travel is a key first step towards tourism recovery, bringing hope to millions of people in the Americas and igniting the economic recuperation in general.”

Among the main topics of discussion included re-establishing confidence in travel, protecting businesses and jobs, and ensuring that the benefits of the tourism revival are felt beyond the industry itself. The working sessions were attended in person by ministers and vice ministers of Brazil, Colombia (Vice Minister of Tourism, Julián Guerrero) Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico (Secretary of Tourism, Miguel Torruco Marqués), Panama, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela, and virtually by government officials from Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Nicaragua, and Peru.

The meetings were developed with the coordination of the host country through the Ministry of Tourism of Dominican Republic, with the participation of representatives of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Association of Hotels and Tourism of Dominican Republic, among other sector organizations.

The summit ended with attendees signing the Declaration of Punta Cana which sealed the commitment of the regional leaders to make tourism a pillar of sustainable development and ensure an effective recovery plan post-COVID.





# AZERBAIJAN A TOP-TOURISM DESTINATION



Versatile, cosmopolitan, prosper; Azerbaijan is an extraordinary place where you can find ancient and modern, urban and rural, mountains and beaches, and nevertheless, this country is always ready to amaze, charm you with its beauty and people.

As soon as you put your feet on the Azerbaijan soil, arriving at Skytrax awarded Heydar Aliyev International airport you can feel the breeze of the Caspian Sea and you will be immediately treated with the highest hospitality. On the route to the city you can stop at famous 17th century temple "Ateshgah", which was used as a Hindu, and Zoroastrian place of worship. Ateshgah was a pilgrimage and philosophical center of Zoroastrians from Northwestern Indian subcontinent. The pentagonal complex is consisted of a courtyard surrounded by cells for monks and a tetrapillar-altar in the middle with the natural eternal flame. "Ateshgah" is in the Tentative List of UNESCO since 1998 and was declared a state historical-architectural reserve in 2007.

Azerbaijan is also interesting for Formula 1 fans. Just recently, the fans witnessed a

grandiose race that astonished everyone. Besides the interesting moments of the game, the spectators all over the world could see the magnificent ancient walls of Baku and the modern skyscraper reminding the flames wrapped into Azerbaijani tricolor. Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan has become one of the most popular tourist destinations of the decade. Considered to be the bridge between East and West, the modern and the ancient, Azerbaijan has a great touristic potential for all tastes.

In this regards, if you are interested in medical tourism, then you should visit Naftalan city that is located in 320 kilometers west of Baku in the foothills of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains. Naftalan is also the name of a unique grade of black oil, found in that city. It is known for its naphthalene content and has been used for its health-giving properties since the ancient times. The spa-hotels in the city are equipped with special baths. People using the oil generally sit in that bath and are covered in oil up to their necks. It is proven to be an effective treatment of the diseases of musculoskeletal system, skin diseases, and rheumatism. The nature surrounding the town is spectacular as well and gives an extra feeling of bliss.



**SERDAR BERDIMUHAMEDOV JOINS TURKMEN CABINET**

Azerbaijan is rich for its healing mineral waters. One of such resorts- Istisu sanatorium, located in Kalbajar region at an altitude of 2,225 metres was included in the list of all-union importance resorts during the Soviet period. At that time, about 50 thousand people were treated in Istisu every year and more than 800 thousand litres of mineral water were produced daily. The springs were formed as a result of swelling and cracking of the earth's crust after a large earthquake in the 12th century. The healing properties of the springs have been known to the local population since then. Right now the government of Azerbaijan is working on revitalising the Istisu resort and Kalbajar region and in the nearest future this renewed touristic spot will occur on tourist top-lists.



Ashgabat, Republic of Turkmenistan: HE President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov issued a decree in February appointing LtCol Dr Serdar Berdimuhamedov 'Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan for Innovation and Digitisation', a novel position in charge of bringing new technologies to Turkmenistan.

He was simultaneously appointed a member of the National Security Council, and in the capacity of Chairman of the Supreme Control Chamber of Turkmenistan. Chairman Serdar Berdimuhamedov's career has been remarkable. He was appointed head of the newly established Ministry for Construction and Industry in February 2020.

The previous year, in June 2019 he was promoted to Governor of Ahal province, six months after being appointed Deputy Governor in January 2019. Before that, Serdar Berdimuhamedov had been serving as a Deputy Foreign Minister since March 2018, after holding the chairmanship of the parliament's legal affairs committee starting in March 2017. In 2016 he gained a seat in Turkmenistan's parliament in snap elections and led the foreign ministry's international information department.

Serdar Berdimuhamedov (b. 22 September 1981) holds a PhD from the Turkmen Academy of Sciences, studied at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and spent time as a counsellor at the Turkmen mission to the U.N. in Geneva. He holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Turkmen Armed Forces.







## A NEW CHAPTER LEONARDO ROYAL HOTEL DEN HAAG PROMENADE

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