

DIPLOMAT

MAGAZINE



L'ACADEMIE, LE DIPLOMATE, LA PAIX,
PROF. JEAN-MARC THOUVENIN, SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
DE L'ACADEMIE DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL DE LA HAYE

SINT MAARTEN:
**A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

FRANCE'S CANDIDATE TO THE ICJ:
AMBASSADOR FRANÇOIS ALABRUNE ON LAW,
DIPLOMACY, AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

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A CHANCE FOR DIPLOMACY

Our times are challenging—perhaps even more than we are ready to admit. We speak of peace while the world seems increasingly shaped by conflict. The drums of global confrontation are sounding, yet here in The Hague, international institutions, more than a hundred embassies, and their envoys work tirelessly under the banner of diplomacy.



Photography by Roy Strik for Diplomat Magazine

What if we truly gave diplomacy the space to resolve conflicts? What if negotiations could bring more prosperity, and save more lives, than the economies built around war? How can we persuade the current wave of confrontation to shift course toward dialogue? These are questions we must continue to ask. Let us work toward answers; let us keep faith in diplomacy.

In this issue, we give the floor to Professor Jean-Marc Thouvenin, Director-General of The Hague Academy of International Law, who reflects on today's global challenges and the role of international legal education.

We also feature ambassadors from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Armenia, Thailand, Hungary, Panama, Romania, Azerbaijan, the Dominican Republic, the Chief of the Palestinian Mission, the Representative of Venezuela to Multilateral Organizations, and the Chargé d'Affairs of the People's Republic of China, among others. They share insights on their relations with the Netherlands, their views on the international landscape, and their visions for prosperity and cooperation.

Diplomat Magazine continues its dynamic engagement with the diplomatic community: from an ambassadorial visit to Westland as part of the creation of the Global Horticulture Alliance, to the Ecuadorian Food Festival, and a variety of diplomatic events—from National Days from more than 13 countries to press conferences by Sudan, a conference by Senegal, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Colombia, a concert by Venezuela, exhibitions by Pakistan, and film screenings by Kosovo. We said goodbye to eight ambassadors and Father Sjaak du Boer invited new ambassadors to joint Societeit de Witte.

Diplomatic life remains rich, vibrant, and demanding.

As we present our final printed issue of 2025, we extend our warmest wishes for good health, prosperity, and happiness to our diplomatic community. We express our sincere gratitude to our sponsors and partners, and a special thanks to our dedicated team of photographers and editors who make each edition possible.

Dr. Mayelinne De Lara
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L'ACADEMIE, LE DIPLOMATE, LA PAIX

PAR PROF. JEAN-MARC THOUVENIN, SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL DE L'ACADEMIE DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL DE LA HAYE

Je pourrais parler pendant des heures de l'Académie de droit international de La Haye, institution dont j'ai l'insigne honneur d'être le Secrétaire général depuis 2017. Je pourrais notamment vanter les initiatives prises récemment par l'Académie, comme celle de lancer une nouvelle formule très prometteuse de cours en Amérique Latine, ou le succès du concours de procès simulé devant la Cour pénale internationale, mais, puisque je m'exprime ici dans « Diplomat Magazine », je me bornerai à partager quelques aspects utiles et importants de l'activité de l'Académie du point de vue des diplomates, avant de concentrer mon propos sur une conquête diplomatique majeure du siècle dernier dont l'Académie a été témoin, et qu'il faut absolument continuer à porter, à savoir l'interdiction du recours à la force dans les relations internationales, et son corollaire l'obligation de régler pacifiquement les différends, en interrogeant la formule qui semble désormais à la mode, celle de « la paix par la force ».

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L'Académie et les diplomates

Chacun sait que l'Académie offre depuis 1923 ses fameux cours d'été de droit international, public et privé, et depuis 2019 ses non moins fameux cours d'hiver de droit international. Chacun pressent aussi que l'Académie, dont le siège est au Palais de la Paix, est unique en son genre, mais sans nécessairement en mesurer les raisons. A vrai dire, elles sont nombreuses. D'abord, l'Académie n'est pas comparable à une université ou école de droit. Elle ne dispose pas de professeurs attitrés qui enseigneraient régulièrement dans son Auditorium, mais invite les enseignants et praticiens les plus érudits du monde entier à préparer puis à enseigner à ses auditeurs un cours sur un thème de leur choix. Ainsi, alors que l'enseignement au sein des universités ou écoles de droit est généralement assuré par les mêmes professeurs chaque année, souvent de la nationalité de l'État dans lequel elles sont actives, l'Académie, tout au contraire, renouvelle en permanence ses cours, en faisant appel pour chaque session à des professeurs différents et de différentes nationalités. C'est de cette pratique que découle la richesse des programmes de cours, tant en termes de contenu que de points de vue. Les cours de l'Académie ne reflètent donc pas une seule approche, nationale, régionale, ou doctrinale, du droit international, ce qui pourrait lui encourir le reproche de véhiculer certaines conceptions ou approches culturelles du

droit international (certains la croient, à leur grand tort, « europocentriste »). Tout au contraire, au podium de l'Académie la diversité des professeurs garantit que les cours reflètent une approche globale du droit international. Comme je le dis souvent car je l'ai constaté, au podium de l'Académie, tout peut se dire, tout peut s'enseigner, du moment qu'il s'agit de droit international et que c'est dit avec talent et à-propos.

Ensuite, les sessions régulières de l'Académie sont courtes, ne s'étendant jamais au-delà de trois semaines. Cela peut sembler insuffisant pour se former au droit international, mais nous nous assurons toujours qu'aucun des auditeurs n'est « débutant » car l'Académie n'ouvre ses portes qu'à ceux ayant déjà été exposés à des cours de droit international. Surtout, la structure des sessions de trois semaines est ainsi faite qu'elle permet aux auditeurs de naviguer dans de nombreuses dimensions du droit international, du général au spécial et de la théorie à la pratique. Car chaque session de trois semaines s'articule autour d'un cours général quotidien qui vise à donner à comprendre l'ordre juridique international dans son ensemble, tel qu'il est vu par un professeur de grande expérience. Six cours spéciaux sont également donnés par six autres professeurs, sur six thèmes différents, chacun d'entre eux donnant à voir une facette particulière du droit international. Les cours spéciaux peuvent aussi bien adresser des questions théoriques, pratiques, et explorer des domaines donnés des relations internationales sous le prisme du droit qui s'y applique. Les auditeurs ont également le loisir de suivre des conférences supplémentaires données par des ambassadeurs, juges, praticiens, et encore de visiter des ambassades pour rencontrer le monde diplomatique. Les plus avancés suivront également les directions d'études, à raison de deux séances de deux heures chaque semaine. Autrement dit, les trois semaines d'une session sont à la fois structurées et intenses, permettant aux auditeurs, comme ils en témoignent souvent, de vivre une expérience unique d'immersion intense dans le monde du droit international et de la diplomatie, expérience qui, bien souvent, est décisive de l'orientation de leur carrière.

Tout ceci est évidemment utile et important pour les diplomates. Certes, la plupart ont suivi au moins quelques cours de droit international durant leur formation,

tandis que d'autres ont été professeurs de droit international, et tous « font » du droit international au quotidien. Du reste, certains diplomates ont donné ou donneront des cours ou conférences à l'Académie. Mais le droit international évolue constamment et se vit différemment d'un bout à l'autre de la planète, de sorte qu'une mise à jour des connaissances en trois semaines ne peut qu'être pertinente pour un ambassadeur. C'est pourquoi nombre d'ambassadeurs profitent de leur présence à La Haye pour s'inscrire aux cours, souvent en ligne car la formule de suivi des cours en ligne offre une parfaite flexibilité horaire. Par ailleurs, nombre d'États soutiennent l'Académie à travers des contributions volontaires, comme le leur recommande chaque année l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, reconnaissant ainsi l'importance et la pertinence de l'Académie. Je note d'ailleurs qu'il n'est pas rare que des personnalités politiques établies de premier plan rendent visite à l'Académie sur initiative des ambassadeurs. Dernièrement nous avons reçu les Ministres des affaires étrangères d'Allemagne et du Guatemala, et le président du Portugal.

D'autres activités de l'Académie, parfois moins connues, présentent sans doute un intérêt pour les diplomates et, à travers eux, pour leur pays. L'Académie a en effet décidé il y a quelques années de répondre positivement, autant qu'il lui est matériellement possible, aux États qui sollicitent d'elle la conceptualisation et l'exécution d'un programme de cours de droit international « à la demande ». Les programmes « à la demande » peuvent porter sur n'importe quel(s) domaine(s) du droit international correspondant aux besoins de formation de l'Etat demandeur, qu'il s'agisse de ses juges ou autres acteurs de la justice, de leurs diplomates, de leur personnel, de leurs enseignants. C'est ainsi que des programmes de cours ont été réalisés, soit à La Haye, soit à l'étranger, à la demande d'États ou d'organisations internationales, sur les thèmes suivants : trafic de migrants et la traite des personnes ; droit international de l'environnement ; droit de l'arbitrage ; règlement des différends interétatiques ; expérience régionales d'intégration juridique ; droit international de la famille et de l'enfant ; reconnaissance des jugements étrangers ; sanctions internationales et arbitrage. Ces programmes ont été fort appréciés, et, à l'heure où le droit international est plus pertinent que jamais, il est bon que



les États puissent compter sur l'Académie pour mieux en appréhender des aspects particuliers.

La paix par la force, la paix par le droit
L'Académie est née d'un mouvement d'idées promouvant l'idéal de «la paix par le droit» porté par des juristes et diplomates, dont l'un des autres aboutissements a été le Palais de la Paix. On en trouve aussi la trace dans l'article 16 de la Convention de 1899 pour le règlement pacifique des différends, qui reflète la sagesse des nations : « [d]ans les questions d'ordre juridique, et en premier lieu dans les questions d'interprétation ou d'application des conventions internationales, l'arbitrage est reconnu par les Puissances signataires comme le moyen le plus efficace et en même temps le plus équitable de régler les litiges qui n'ont pas

été résolus par les voies diplomatiques ». Si la Société des Nations a lamentablement échoué à maintenir la paix par ses seuls textes, son expérience ratée a inspiré les rédacteurs de la Charte des Nations Unies née au sortir de la seconde guerre mondiale. Pour réussir là où la SDN avait échoué, on songea à une formule de paix par la force multilatérale. La Charte des Nations Unies prévoyait en effet que le Conseil de sécurité pourrait faire respecter ses décisions obligatoires prises en cas de menace à, ou rupture de la paix, en s'appuyant sur une force militaire mise à sa disposition par les États membres. Formidable, le projet reposait sur une présomption qui s'est avérée erronée, celle que les États parties à la Charte, en particulier les membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité, seraient fidèles et à son texte, et à son esprit.

Il est alors temps de tenter vraiment le vieux projet de paix par le droit. Car dans tous les conflits interétatiques ouverts ou en passe de surgir, chacun se targue d'avoir le droit avec lui et prétend le défendre. Que les belligérants aient alors le courage de soumettre leurs thèses respectives à la justice internationale, solution impartiale et efficace pour éloigner le fléau de la guerre, sauver des vies, et formuler une paix juste fondée en droit. Les juridictions internationales sont disponibles, en particulier à La Haye. Elles sont le fruit d'un lent, méticuleux, et précieux progrès de la Communauté internationale. Elles doivent être protégées contre les forces mauvaises qui s'en prennent à elles, et utilisées pour ce pour quoi elles ont été créées : régler pacifiquement les différends en disant le droit.



SINT MAARTEN: A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM AND THE CARIBBEAN

By H.E. Drs. Gracita Arrindell, Minister Plenipotentiary of Sint Maarten

Situated at the heart of the Caribbean, Sint Maarten embodies a unique bridge between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the wider Caribbean and Latin American region. As the world faces complex challenges, Sint Maarten firmly believes that true progress must be rooted in three key pillars: education, culture, and sustainability – the guiding principles of our island's vision for the future.

A VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Nestled at the crossroads of the Atlantic and the Caribbean, Sint Maarten has long been celebrated for its natural beauty, vibrant culture — home to more than 100 nationalities — and its world-class hospitality. “The Friendly Island is our calling card,” says Minister Plenipotentiary Arrindell, emphasizing that Sint Maarten’s evolving identity extends beyond tourism. Today, the government’s vision is to redefine Sint Maarten as a regional hub for sustainable development and innovation. Sustainability lies at the heart of the

national agenda, recognizing that long-term prosperity depends on preserving the island’s delicate ecosystems. Initiatives in sustainable waste management, coastal resilience, and renewable energy investments reflect a determined shift toward transformation — strengthening infrastructure while protecting natural assets such as the island’s iconic ponds.

“By promoting green policies, Sint Maarten is setting a benchmark for small island sustainability in the Caribbean,” Minister Arrindell affirms.

TOURISM WITH PURPOSE

Tourism remains the backbone of Sint Maarten’s economy, but its direction is evolving. The government seeks to embrace sustainable tourism practices that balance growth with cultural and environmental preservation. Through partnerships with regional and international organizations, Sint Maarten aims to diversify its tourism sector, attract quality visitors, and empower local entrepreneurs.

“This vision of tourism,” Minister Arrindell explains, “is applied with practical community engagement that creates long-term value for our citizens and our island.”

INNOVATION AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Beyond tourism, Sint Maarten is embracing innovation and digital transformation to build a resilient and forward-looking society. *“Investing in technology, education, and entrepreneurship — by integrating AI and STEAM education into our schools — empowers a new generation of innovators,”* notes Minister Arrindell.

With its open economy and strategic location, Sint Maarten positions itself as an ideal bridge for cross-Caribbean and European collaboration, advancing initiatives in the blue economy and sustainable development.

DIPLOMACY AT WORK

From The Hague, the Cabinet of the Minister Plenipotentiary continues to strengthen Sint Maarten’s diplomatic footprint. *“We extend our sincere appreciation for the continued engagement, collaboration, and friendship shared with the wider diplomatic community, local and international organizations, and the city of The Hague,”* Minister Arrindell remarks.

These relationships have been instrumental in amplifying Sint Maarten’s voice within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and on the global stage. The city of The Hague — the international capital of peace and justice — offers an ideal platform for constructive diplomacy, cultural exchange, and international cooperation.

“Our cabinet values the warm partnerships that have flourished in this setting, reflecting Sint Maarten’s commitment to collaborative progress and shared prosperity,” concludes Minister Arrindell.

Through sustainability, innovation, and diplomacy, Sint Maarten stands as a model for the future — a dynamic link between the Caribbean and Europe, and a proud advocate for a more sustainable and united region.



Photo: Kim Vermaat Photography

THE EVOLUTION OF AFGHANISTAN- NETHERLANDS RELATIONS

By **H.E. Mr. Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Afghanistan and the Netherlands first established diplomatic relations with the signing of a treaty in 1956, nearly 70 years ago, followed by the opening of formal diplomatic ties in 1965. Bilateral relations deepened significantly after 2001 due to the Netherlands' extensive engagement in Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts, including military and civilian missions between 2006 and 2010.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands opened its Embassy in Afghanistan for the first time in 2002. Afghanistan, in turn, opened its Consulate General in Amsterdam in 2003, which was later elevated to an Embassy in 2011 and relocated to The Hague. Prior to these developments, Afghan-Dutch diplomatic affairs were managed through the Afghan Embassy in London and later Brussels.

In 2006, the Dutch military contingent, operating under NATO and ISAF, was stationed in Uruzgan Province in southern Afghanistan to support security and strengthen governmental authority. The

Dutch forces withdrew in 2010, later contributing to the Resolute Support Mission and maintaining a presence in northern Afghanistan until their departure in 2021.

From 2001 to 2021, the Netherlands provided substantial humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan, particularly in agriculture and the training of professional agricultural staff. The positive impact of these contributions remains visible today, and we remain deeply grateful for the support extended to the Afghan people.

Following the change of government on 15 August 2021 and the return of the Taliban to power, the Kingdom of the Netherlands relocated its Embassy from Kabul to Doha, Qatar. At present, bilateral relations are maintained at technical and consular levels. Nevertheless, the Dutch government continues to provide humanitarian assistance through United Nations agencies and Dutch NGOs, for which we express our sincere appreciation.

Today, more than 80,000 Afghans reside in the Netherlands, and Afghan investors have made notable contributions to the local economy. Approximately 1,000 Afghan doctors and medical professionals serve in Dutch hospitals and clinics, while hundreds of highly educated Afghan youth—both women and men—are employed across Dutch companies and institutions.

The Embassy of Afghanistan in the Netherlands continues to provide consular services, facilitate humanitarian and development initiatives, and promote trade between the two countries through private-sector cooperation. The Embassy remains committed to all international agreements to which Afghanistan is a party. We strongly advocate and fully support the right of Afghan women to education and employment, recognizing that progress in this area is essential for Afghanistan's future.

Afghanistan—home to a population of forty million—is eager to strengthen relations with regional and international partners and to contribute meaningfully to global peace and prosperity. The current security situation across the country is stable, and development projects in roads and railways, electrification, water management, agriculture, mining, and energy are ongoing. Trade with regional partners and beyond continues uninterrupted. Poppy cultivation and trafficking have decreased by 90 percent since 2021. Moreover, more than three million Afghan refugees have returned from neighboring countries over the past year, and the process is ongoing.

Afghanistan's cultural heritage is among the richest in the world, shaped by its historic role at the crossroads of ancient civilizations. For millennia, the region has been a meeting point for diverse peoples, ideas, and traditions—from the Achaemenid and Greco-Bactrian empires to Buddhist, Islamic, Indian, and Persian cultural spheres. This remarkable legacy is reflected in its archaeological treasures in Bamiyan, Mes Aynak, Herat, and Balkh; in its art, music, and poetry; and in the enduring traditions of hospitality and craftsmanship passed down through generations.



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN OUR NATIONS

A Conversation with H.E. Mr. Almir Šahović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Diplomat Magazine had the pleasure of meeting H.E. Mr. Almir Šahović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW, for an insightful discussion on the evolving relations between his country and the Netherlands.

"The relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Netherlands are very good and friendly. We enjoy strong political and economic ties, and the Netherlands is the seventh most important foreign investor in our country. We are pleased to see a growing number of Dutch companies interested in working with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Bosnian companies starting to invest in the Netherlands."

"Another important link between our two countries is the Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora. Around 60,000 live in the Netherlands. They serve as a true bridge between our nations — real ambassadors of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Netherlands, and of the Netherlands in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

When asked about Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress toward European integration, Ambassador Šahović reaffirmed that EU membership remains the country's highest foreign policy goal.

"EU accession is the highest priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy. In this context, we highly appreciate the Netherlands' support for our European path. We are aware that the traditional Dutch approach to EU enlargement is summarized by the principle 'strict but fair,' and that the Netherlands sometimes

places greater emphasis on the full implementation of conditions required from candidate countries than some other EU partners.

All the more, we are pleased that the Netherlands has recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina's strong commitment to its European future. Over the past four years, we succeeded in securing Dutch support for the EU's decision to grant Bosnia and Herzegovina candidate status, as well as for the opening of accession negotiations with our country."

"We strongly support the Netherlands' participation in EU-level initiatives such as border security cooperation and institutional capacity building. These initiatives are crucial not only for EU member states but also for candidate countries, as they help strengthen overall regional stability and preparedness for eventual EU membership."

Looking toward the future, Ambassador Šahović noted several promising areas for bilateral cooperation, highlighting culture as a growing field of exchange:

"In general, I believe there is still much potential to further intensify cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Netherlands — not only in politics and the

economy, but also in the field of culture. A good example of this was the exhibition of the artwork *Bird of Peace* by the renowned Bosnian artist Mirza Morić, which was displayed in front of The Hague City Hall last summer. It demonstrated the great potential for cultural collaboration between our two countries."

"People-to-people connections are essential for building understanding and practical cooperation between our two countries. As Ambassador, I strive to encourage such activities by visiting various Dutch cities and institutions. We have established particularly strong cooperation between Sarajevo and The Hague, especially involving young people."

I have also visited Maastricht, Arnhem, Nijmegen, and Groningen to promote local-level cooperation. In addition, I regularly give lectures on Bosnia and Herzegovina at different Dutch universities, helping to deepen academic and cultural ties between our nations."

"In close cooperation with the Association of Survivors of the Srebrenica Genocide, as well as with the City of The Hague and several other cities and universities — particularly Utrecht University — we regularly organize and participate in various activities aimed at preserving the memory of and honoring the victims of the Srebrenica Genocide."

Reflecting on his tenure in the Netherlands, the Ambassador mentioned:

"Having served for over four years as Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW, I am proud of the results we have achieved.

Among other accomplishments, we successfully organized two official presidential visits from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina was, for the first time, elected as a member of the Bureau of the International Criminal Court.

I also had the honor of being elected Chairperson of the 29th Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW and was entrusted by the OPCW Member States to chair the Open-Ended Working Group on the implementation of rules governing the election of members of the Executive Council."

Ambassador Šahović's words reflect a vision of partnership built on dialogue, shared values, and human connection.



FRANCE'S CANDIDATE TO THE ICJ: AMBASSADOR FRANÇOIS ALABRUNE ON LAW, DIPLOMACY, AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

Ambassador Alabrune, whose distinguished career spans over three decades, is widely recognized for his legal expertise and commitment to the principles that underpin the international legal order. His candidacy for the ICJ, he explained, represents both a personal honour and a natural continuation of a career dedicated to the service of law and peace.

"I accepted the nomination as a candidate for the International Court of Justice both as an honour and as the outcome of a lifelong commitment to serving international law," he said. "My vocation in this field took shape early in my career, having been trained by mentors with experience as judges at the ICJ, such as Gilbert Guillaume and Ronny Abraham." "Throughout my legal and diplomatic career, I have witnessed how law contributes to peace. If elected, I would be honoured to place this experience at the service of the Court, with the aim of maintaining and strengthening its role. I will be eager to work to promote the values that underpin its legitimacy – in particular impartiality and the diversity of legal traditions – in the service of the international community."

Reflecting on the relevance of the Court today, Ambassador Alabrune acknowledged that the international legal system is being tested by a rapidly changing global environment.

"International law is today facing challenges, in particular to its universality and the risk of a weakening of multilateralism," he observed. "The issues brought before the Court are increasingly complex, intertwining legal, environmental, economic, and technological dimensions." Nevertheless, he remains confident in the ICJ's role as a pillar of stability and legitimacy in international relations.

The Ambassador of France to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. François Alabrune, recently spoke with Diplomat Magazine about his nomination as France's candidate for the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In a thoughtful and engaging conversation, the seasoned diplomat reflected on the challenges facing international law, the ICJ's evolving role, and his lifelong vocation of service to justice and diplomacy.

"Through the quality, coherence, and independence of its jurisprudence, the ICJ demonstrates that law remains the essential framework for relations between States," he added. "By maintaining close dialogue with other international courts and UN bodies, the Court strengthens the coherence and credibility of the international legal order." Ambassador Alabrune's long experience in The Hague has given him a unique vantage point on the delicate balance between law and diplomacy.

"For more than twenty years as a legal adviser and jurisconsult, I have applied international law in politically sensitive contexts," he said. "Law is never exercised in the abstract—it must be interpreted with rigour, while taking into account the diplomatic realities that shape its implementation." he said. "Serving as an ambassador in The Hague offers the privilege of daily dialogue with the actors of the International Court of Justice and many other actors within the multilateral system. This proximity has given me a practical understanding of how law and diplomacy interact: law sets the rules, while diplomacy creates the conditions for their elaboration and implementation."

France's longstanding dedication to international law also finds continuity in his candidacy.

"France's commitment to international law is reflected in its active participation in the negotiation and promotion of numerous treaties, as well as in proceedings before international courts," he noted. "My candidacy reflects this commitment to the promotion and respect of international law, drawing on my experience, particularly as the Legal Adviser of France and later as Ambassador to the Netherlands."

Looking toward the future, Ambassador Alabrune emphasized the moral imperative of upholding justice at a time of global uncertainty.

"In the current international context, marked by existential questions for Humanity, the need for justice is paramount," he said. "Today, more than ever, it is essential to demonstrate determination and courage to uphold the rule of law. The growing engagement of the international community in the proceedings before the ICJ offers hope. The work of the Court deserves the support of us all."

As France's candidate to the International Court of Justice, Ambassador François Alabrune embodies a vision of international law rooted in principle, inclusion, and service to the common good—a vision that resonates deeply in The Hague, the city of peace and justice.

I am filled with hope that in the next three, ten, even one hundred decades, the citizens of Armenia will be living in the long-awaited peace and prosperity to which we aspire.



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

ARMENIA'S PATH TO PEACE, DEMOCRACY, AND PARTNERSHIP

By H.E. Viktor Biyagov, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia

On August 8, during the Washington Peace Summit, we witnessed a historic moment: the initialling of the Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

While this marks a significant step toward enduring peace in our troubled region, it still requires consistent and unwavering efforts to bring our nations closer to peace with each passing day. Addressing humanitarian concerns and fostering trust-building initiatives remain of utmost importance.

One of the key steps toward broader regional engagement is the unblocking of infrastructure and communication channels, anchored in the universal principles of sovereignty, the inviolability of borders, equality, and reciprocity.

The TRIPP connectivity project aims to contribute directly to these efforts by enhancing regional cooperation, economic integration, and long-term stability.

As a country steadily progressing along the path of democracy, Armenia views peace as an integral and inseparable element of its democratic development—a path that will never be subject to compromise. Armenia's democratic aspirations have

increasingly taken root across various sectors of governance, driving reforms, strengthening institutions, and deepening our commitment to justice, transparency, and the rule of law.

Armenia's economy has emerged as one of the most promising and rapidly developing in the wider region. The country continues to demonstrate dynamic growth across sectors ranging from tourism and high-tech innovation to agriculture, renewable energy, construction, and infrastructure development—offering a favourable investment climate and diverse opportunities.

Despite our steadfast efforts, we deeply value and rely on the support of our allies, with the Netherlands standing out as one of the most committed partners in our pursuit of progress and resilience. This year marked a special milestone in our bilateral relations, elevating them to a strategic partnership. The document formalising this partnership was signed by Ministers Mirzoyan and Veldkamp in Yerevan on March 12—a landmark step for deepening cooperation in multiple sectors.

The Government of the Netherlands has consistently demonstrated invaluable support on issues of vital importance to Armenia. A recent example is the €14

million contribution through the Global Concessional Financing Facility, specifically allocated to address the immediate needs of a group of our compatriots.

For those displaced from their homeland, this contribution carries profound moral significance, reassuring them that they are not forgotten—even far from home. None of these achievements would be possible without our exceptional colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Dutch Parliament, too, has consistently shown steadfast support for Armenia and its citizens on matters of importance, standing as a rare and principled voice of justice on the international stage.

We take pride in our people, our projects, and our innovations that have made a lasting impact well beyond our borders. A recent example is the opening of the world-renowned TUMO Centre in Amsterdam, offering Dutch teenagers a unique opportunity to develop skills in design and creative technologies. Founded in Yerevan in 2011, TUMO has become a symbol of how Armenia is redefining the way young people engage with creativity and technology.

Long live Armenia!



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

Today, the Netherlands remains Thailand's largest investor from the European Union, while Thai companies increasingly use the Netherlands as their gateway to European markets. Bilateral trade between the two countries reached USD 7.4 billion (7,404.27 million) in 2024. These figures underscore the strong and growing economic interdependence between the two nations, built on practical cooperation and shared strategic interests that have deepened over time.

Connecting Two Nations

Strengthening the practical foundations of our partnership remains a top priority. Thailand and the Netherlands share a common vision to enhance connectivity and foster closer ties among our peoples, businesses, and institutions. In this spirit, we look forward to promoting greater mobility between our two nations, which will play a pivotal role in driving future exchanges — bringing government officials, entrepreneurs, researchers, and students ever closer together. Enhanced connectivity will serve as a powerful catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and enduring friendship between our two kingdoms.

During the recent Thailand–Netherlands Political Consultation held in The Hague in September 2025, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to advancing cooperation. As Thailand pursues its Ignite Thailand 2030 vision to become a regional innovation hub, the Netherlands offers complementary, world-class expertise in areas ranging from advanced manufacturing to sustainable agriculture.

Building on Proven Success

The strongest foundation of Thai–Dutch cooperation lies in areas where both countries have achieved concrete results. Dutch expertise in water management has contributed to Thai flood control systems and agricultural water efficiency. Similarly, Dutch innovations in precision agriculture, greenhouse technology, and sustainable food production address Thailand's specific needs in agricultural productivity and climate adaptation. These collaborations demonstrate what works: clear objectives, technical expertise, and measurable outcomes.

FOUR CENTURIES FORWARD: THE THAI–DUTCH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

By H.E. Mr. Asi Mamanee, Ambassador of Thailand to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

In 2024, Thailand and the Netherlands celebrated 420 years of diplomatic relations — one of the longest continuous partnerships between Europe and Asia. What began with 17th-century maritime trade has evolved into a multifaceted partnership spanning technology, agriculture, sustainable development, and innovation.

Exploring New Frontiers

Thailand is actively working to deepen partnerships in frontier technology sectors, particularly advanced manufacturing and semiconductors. Building on its strong electronics manufacturing base, skilled workforce, and strategic location at the heart of ASEAN, Thailand stands ready to collaborate with Europe's leading technology innovators to co-create resilient, sustainable, and future-oriented value chains.

The Netherlands hosts some of Europe's most advanced capabilities in semiconductor equipment manufacturing, precision engineering, and photonics. Driven by the global supply chain crisis and the geopolitical push for regional resilience, Thailand aims to position itself as a reliable, strategic partner in secure regional production networks.

Collaboration is being explored in areas such as advanced semiconductor assembly, packaging and testing, photonics, and green energy technologies. The Knowledge-to-Knowledge (K2K) model — which prioritises research partnerships and talent exchange before large-scale industrial commitments — offers a pragmatic pathway for initial cooperation in these complex, high-tech fields.

Translating Policy into Action

The Royal Thai Embassy in The Hague has initiated several targeted programmes to translate high-level policy into practical cooperation:

- **Investment Showcase:** In June 2025, the Embassy co-hosted a seminar on the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), showcasing investment opportunities and inviting Dutch companies to partner in clean energy and circular innovation. In September 2025, the Embassy participated

in the 5th Thai–Netherlands Business Forum, organised by Thailand's Board of Investment, to highlight investment opportunities in Thailand.

- **Human Capital Development:** In August 2025, the Embassy supported Thai engineering students to attend the Eindhoven Semicon Summer School, focusing on the critical development of human capital through hands-on training.
- **Technical Fact-Finding Mission:** In September 2025, Dutch representatives visited Thailand's semiconductor ecosystem. These reciprocal exchanges are vital for Dutch stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of Thailand's technical capabilities and to identify areas for future collaboration.

A Partnership of Mutual Interest

As Thailand and the Netherlands enter their fifth century of diplomatic relations, the partnership continues to thrive in line with shared strategic interests. Collaboration now spans a wide range of sectors, reflecting a joint understanding that sustainable partnerships rely on diversification. Success in long-established areas such as water management has built a foundation of trust and confidence — enabling both nations to explore bold new frontiers in future-defining, high-technology sectors.

The coming years will determine whether policy commitments translate into functioning partnerships. The 420-year history of Thai–Dutch relations offers a solid foundation, yet the partnership's future relevance will depend on what both nations choose to build together today. As Thailand and the Netherlands embark on this next chapter, they do so with a blend of ambition and realism — guided by the same mutual respect, trust, and practical cooperation that have sustained their friendship for over four centuries.



AMBASSADOR HOROGSZEGI SZILÁGYI-LANDECK ON DIPLOMACY, INNOVATION, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

How would you describe the current state of Hungary-Netherlands relations, and where do you see the greatest potential for cooperation?

Hungary and the Netherlands maintain strong economic foundations, substantial investments, and a shared commitment within the EU and NATO, even if political views occasionally differ. Both countries have open economies and a mutual interest in the single market and international trade. The Ambassador sees major opportunities in combining Hungarian innovation with Dutch strengths in AgriTech, water management, the circular economy, and advanced R&D—particularly in autonomous systems, AI, and deep tech.

Defence cooperation is also key, with room for joint innovation, cyber security collaboration, and participation in each other's modernisation projects. Cultural diplomacy remains a priority, supported by centuries of exchange—from Calvinist academic ties to contemporary mobility between both nations. With important anniversaries ahead in 2026, Hungary plans to further showcase its rich cultural heritage. For now, political cooperation is focused on preparing the ground while both countries await their respective coalition outcomes.

What opportunities exist today for Dutch companies investing in Hungary?

Hungary is one of Central Europe's most attractive investment destinations, hosting over 500 Dutch companies. Its economic stability, strategic location, skilled workforce, and favourable tax climate make it appealing. Hungary is emerging as a major hub for e-battery and vehicle manufacturing, offering opportunities across the entire supply chain. Dutch companies also benefit from strong talent pools in university cities, particularly in IT and languages—reflected in the presence of firms like FrieslandCampina and KLM. Dutch expertise in water management, waste

Hungary and the Netherlands enjoy a relationship rooted in strong economic ties, historic cultural links, and cooperation within the EU and NATO. In an interview with Diplomat Magazine, H.E. Mr. Dániel Horogszegi Szilágyi-Landeck outlines key areas of partnership—from innovation and defence to cultural diplomacy and community engagement. Since assuming office in 2024, the Ambassador has focused on building bridges, promoting dialogue, and highlighting Hungary's strengths in technology, investment, and culture. With significant anniversaries approaching in 2026, he underscores a forward-looking vision shaped by shared European values and a commitment to peace and competitiveness.

management, and energy storage aligns closely with Hungary's sustainability goals. The Ambassador also underlines Hungary's high quality of life, affordability, and cultural vibrancy.

How do Hungary and the Netherlands work together within the EU and internationally?

Both countries cooperate closely on safeguarding the EU's single market, maintaining European competitiveness, and strengthening international trade. Despite different energy mixes, they work together on solutions that enhance energy security and affordability. As NATO allies, they contribute jointly to missions and capability development. With the war in Europe, the Ambassador stresses Hungary's commitment to peace and diplomacy, and its willingness to work with partners, including the Netherlands, toward that goal.

How does the Embassy promote Hungarian culture in the Netherlands?

Cultural diplomacy is central to the Embassy's work. Hungarian gastronomy is showcased at every event, from traditional bites to classic dishes like chicken paprikás. Wine tastings promote Hungary's diverse regions while supporting cultural and business ties. The Embassy also collaborates with Hungarian and Dutch cultural organisations, maintaining close contact with the large Hungarian diaspora. Highlights include a major commemorative concert at the Kloosterkerk, featuring renowned Hungarian musicians, and annual initiatives such as the Advent Concert and

Hungarian Family Day. The goal is to make Hungarian culture visible, accessible, and appreciated by both Dutch and Hungarian audiences.

What have been your main priorities since arriving in the Netherlands, and what message would you like to share about Hungary's vision for the future?

Since spring 2024, the Embassy has advanced several milestones: high-level ministerial meetings, Hungary's EU Presidency, active engagement in NATO, and the establishment of new Defence and Agricultural Attaché Offices. The Ambassador's guiding principle is "building bridges"—between people, businesses, cultures, and even across difficult political topics. He highlights achievements such as presenting Hungary's EU Presidency in the Dutch Parliament, strengthening consular services, and deepening ties with the Hungarian community.

Future priorities include expanding trade, especially in high-tech and digital sectors, and enhancing cooperation in defence and agriculture. Hungary also plays an active multilateral role in The Hague, including at the OPCW, where the Ambassador serves as Vice-Chair of the Conference of States Parties.

His message to readers: Hungary remains a stable, dynamic, and future-oriented country at the heart of Europe—committed to competitiveness, sovereignty, partnership, and a diplomacy grounded in dialogue, connectivity, and a long-term vision for peace and prosperity.



THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE: A TEST OF THE WORLD'S COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

By Mr. Ammar M.B. Hijazi, Head of Palestinian Mission

The Question of Palestine is a story of compounded injustices that was ironically borne in the halls of the nascent United Nations in 1947. At the time, international law and diplomacy were used coercively to erase Palestine and the Palestinian people. But since then, the Palestinian people have been on a determined and impressive journey of setting precedents and building protections based on the very legal framework that was first employed to cast them out of international discourse and consideration.

This Palestinian pursuit was painstaking. For decades, many states abandoned their obligations under international law. The end result was tragically predictable: normalized criminality and entrenched impunity that regarded systematic violations of Palestinian dignity and human rights as an “unhelpful” part of the reality. States knowingly and irresponsibly rendered preemptory and *jus cogens* norms moot while claiming that this selectivity does not undermine the entire international law-based order. This transformed the Question of Palestine into a global litmus test of integrity and commitment to international law, especially because Palestine has insisted on this path despite political bullying, threats, and sanctions.

Palestine's determined efforts in the pursuit of justice and accountability at the World's Courts are conducted in this context. At the core, the target was and remains to preserve and elevate Palestine's rightful place in the rights and law-based international system. In the past years, this pursuit has come to embody a far larger endeavor with global reach. Today, this legal and diplomatic approach is more important than ever, especially in light of the genocide, ongoing dispossession and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and entrenched illegal colonial regime of occupation and apartheid.

The landmark rulings of 9 July 2004 and 19 July 2024, as well as 22 October 2025 by the international Court of Justice

corrected the narrative, legal framework, and perspective of the reality. The ICJ rejected the political gymnastics of side-tracking and minimizing fundamentals and put the core issues back where they belong: front and centre. It recognized the profound power asymmetries that define the situation on the ground, rejecting the erroneous presentation of the question of Palestine as “a conflict” where both sides have equal responsibility and claim. The ICJ determination addressed this once and for all and opened a pathway of hope.

In legal terms, the erroneous attempts to equate between occupier and occupied has been finally nullified, ending decades of normalized occupation and providing the colonizer with a free hand to pursue the ethnic cleansing of Palestine from its Palestinian people and annexing it, all while invoking the false flag of “self-defense” with minimal international resistance. Crucially, the ICJ determination on the illegality of occupation in the OPT laid out clearly what the obligations of states are under international law and they include ensuring accountability.

The Court's historic determinations stripped states of the excuses to avoid action before it. This is empowering to civil society organizations and legal experts around the world who now have a definitive

determination they can build on to ensure that their governments comply with their binding obligations in international law, including respecting and realizing Palestinian rights.

The battle is far from over but the way forward is irrefutable: ending the illegal occupation, in line with the historic ICJ ruling of July 2024, and UN resolutions, realizing the Palestinian people's inalienable rights including to self-determination, return, and an independent sovereign Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and providing reparations as required. This is the only path to achieving peace and security for all peoples in the region. Not genocide. Not sideshows. Not endless subjugation. And definitely, not privatized colonization.

Many might say that humanity is at an age where diplomacy and international law are dying. There is plenty of evidence to merit such a devastating conclusion, not the least of which is the two-year live-streamed genocide committed in Gaza with impunity. We believe this conclusion is premature. Humanity is fighting the battle of a lifetime between racist militaristic populism and responsible diplomacy that is anchored in international law. The battle is far from over. We owe future generations to ensure that legality wins.

PANAMA AND THE NETHERLANDS: FROM MARITIME HERITAGE TO GLOBAL SHIPPING GIANTS

By H.E. Ms. Sally Loo Hui, Ambassador of Panama to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Netherlands and Panama, though continents apart, share a profound connection to the sea, through the North Sea, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific. These waters have shaped their maritime cultures, defining a way of life and a vision for commerce.

The Netherlands was born from the sea, learning to coexist with it through dikes and canals, fostering a philosophy of balance between humans and nature. Panama stands as a global hub for business, finance, and logistics. Its position at the Isthmus has made it a vital crossroads for international trade, linking imports and exports across continents.

In maritime transport and industry, Panama offers world-class infrastructure. The Panama Canal, together with the world's largest fleet of Panamanian-flagged vessels, ensures secure and efficient operations. Investors in logistics and transport find in Panama a platform that connects global markets and supports growth.

Panama also offers an enviable quality of life, with a safe, multicultural environment ideal for professionals and their families. Investing in Panama means leveraging a strategic location, a favourable business climate, and a lifestyle that balances work and well-being.

The Multinational Headquarters Law provides fiscal, labour, and immigration incentives for companies establishing regional operations, including tax exemptions and streamlined hiring of foreign staff. Panama also hosts free trade zones and special economic areas, such as the Colón Free Zone, which grant significant tariff and logistical advantages.



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, effective since 2001; the 2004 social security coordination law allowing nationals to transfer benefits; and the 2010 agreement on double taxation and tax evasion.

Trade between the two countries is dynamic. Panama exports bananas, frozen shrimp, pharmaceuticals, teak, scrap metal, and palm oil to the Netherlands, while the Netherlands supplies electrical equipment, industrial machinery, specialized vehicles, and logistics technology.

Panama maintains a stable financial environment, with transparent banking laws, competitive taxation, and an ecosystem connecting Latin America to global markets. Through its embassies in Europe, Panama has worked with national authorities to share progress in strengthening financial transparency and compliance, efforts that culminated this year in Panama's removal from the EU list of high-risk third countries for money laundering and terrorist financing, which underscores its commitment to international cooperation and good governance.

Academic collaboration continues to grow. The Technological University of Panama (UTP) partners with Dutch institutions, including the "Holland House - UTP Master Class," where Dutch executives teach specialized courses. Panamanian students and professors also benefit from scholarships and exchange programs in the Netherlands, fostering a two-way flow of knowledge and innovation. The partnership extends to science: last year, INDICASAT and the University of Groningen signed a MoU for joint research on tuberculosis, an initiative already showing results, contributing to a projected decline in cases in Panama this year.

Panama invites Dutch investors to view the country not merely as a commercial partner but as a home for sustainable investment, offering a strategic location, a favourable business climate, and strong government support for foreign capital. Together, Panama and the Netherlands can continue building a future of shared prosperity, where every investment is a seed on fertile ground and every success a joint achievement.



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

Diplomatic Engagements and NATO Cooperation

The momentum of Romanian-Dutch relations has been underpinned by a series of high-profile diplomatic engagements. The Romanian and Dutch foreign ministers have met on various occasions strengthening their commitment to mutual cooperation. This interaction was further illustrated by Romania's active involvement in the NATO Summit held in The Hague in June 2025, where discussions focused on bolstering defense capacities amid the ongoing geopolitical challenges in Eastern Europe.

The ongoing war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has galvanized both nations to reinforce their commitment to NATO and European security. Both countries are united in supporting Ukraine firmly believing in the importance of European solidarity and the defense of common values. The NATO Summit marked a critical point in enhancing strategic military cooperation, with Romania benefiting from the stationing of NATO battle groups on its territory, further integrating into the collective defense framework.

Moreover, bilateral military cooperation has been strengthened through visits and meetings attended by Dutch military officials and their Romanian counterparts. A pivotal agreement emerged during the NATO Summit, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the expansion of the F-16 Training Center in Romania—highlighting the countries' joint commitment to improving their defense capabilities.

Economic Collaboration

Beyond security, the economic relationship between Romania and the Netherlands has been flourishing. The Netherlands is one of the largest foreign investors in Romania, accounting for approximately 20% of total foreign direct investments, with a social subscribed and paid-in registered capital of €9.9 billion and more than 25 billion euro total invested capital across various sectors. Over 6,200 Romanian-Dutch joint ventures and a

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC AND SECURITY TIES BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

By H.E. Mr. Nicolae Comanescu, Ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

In recent years, the diplomatic, economic, and security relationships between Romania and the Kingdom of the Netherlands have witnessed significant growth and development. Rooted in shared values and interests, the bilateral cooperation continues to evolve, reflecting both countries' commitment to enhancing their partnership in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape.

bilateral trade turnover in goods amounted to 9 billion euro in 2024 and around to 10 billion euro expected in 2025, signify the robust economic ties between the two nations. Based on this, Netherlands occupies the 7th place in the ranking of the trade partners of Romania, both on export and import.

In the ever-evolving European landscape, the two countries are currently identifying cooperative projects between their defense industries, leveraging new frameworks supported by the European Commission, such as the Readiness 2030 Plan (ReArm Europe) and the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) Regulation. There is unexploited potential for collaboration within these sectors, and both nations are poised to maximize resources to achieve NATO's capability targets.

A significant upcoming event, the NATO-Industry Forum set to be held in Bucharest in November 2025, serves to further enhance economic cooperation in the defense sector. This forum will create opportunities for increased engagement between transatlantic defense industries, allowing for extensive bilateral contacts.

Near-Shoring Initiatives

Further cooperation has erupted in the production industry, with Romanian and Dutch companies exploring joint ventures aimed at attracting new orders and relocating manufacturing from Asia. This "near-shoring" policy is particularly relevant in the current global and regional geopolitical and economic climate, and it promises to stimulate local economies while enhancing resilience in supply chains.

Supported by one of the largest pools of IT specialists in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania is emerging as a regional high-tech hub, with recent significant investments from the Netherlands in microchip and R&D projects underscoring the maturity of its tech ecosystem and the growing confidence of international investors.

The agri-food sector attracts strong interest from both sides, as numerous Dutch investors are already active in our country and Romania aiming to enhance the value of its high agricultural potential.

Cultural Ties as a Foundation for Cooperation

Cultural initiatives significantly complement the economic and security cooperation between both countries. In September 2025, a major exhibition was inaugurated and open to the public at the H-Art Museum in Amsterdam. This exhibition features over 30 sculptures by the renowned Romanian artist Constantin Brâncuși. The H-Art Museum in Amsterdam will host the exhibition until January 20, 2026.

The last retrospective of Brâncuși's work in the Netherlands was held 50 years ago, and the exhibition is expected to attract over 100,000 visitors, marking a significant cultural milestone.

The relationship between the two countries is characterized by dynamic cooperation across economic, security, and cultural dimensions. As they continue to navigate the complexities of the current geopolitical landscape, the future looks promising.

AZERBAIJAN'S URBAN EVOLUTION: FROM HISTORICAL HERITAGE TO SMART CITY VISIONS AT THE WORLD URBAN FORUM

As part of its coverage on sustainable urban development, Diplomat Magazine engaged in a conversation with H.E. Mr. Mammad Ahmadzada, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In his contribution, the ambassador reflected on Azerbaijan's urban evolution and preparations to host the 13th World Urban Forum (WUF13) in 2026. He highlighted the country's journey from a rich historical heritage to a new era of innovation, sustainability, and smart city development, offering valuable perspectives for global dialogue and cooperation.

As the world looks ahead to the 13th World Urban Forum (WUF13), to be held in Baku from 17 to 22 May 2026, Azerbaijan is preparing to showcase its distinctive path of urban transformation. From its ancient and medieval heritage to the transformative oil boom era to modern infrastructure advancements and today's pioneering smart city initiatives, Azerbaijan offers insights that transcend its borders. This is particularly relevant as WUF13 will address pressing global urban challenges such as housing - a key concern for the Netherlands and many other countries.

A Glorious Past: Azerbaijan's Architectural Heritage

Azerbaijan's urban tradition is deeply rooted in its architectural and cultural heritage, spanning from prehistoric times through the medieval era. One of the earliest testimonies to human settlement is found in Gobustan, a remarkable archaeological site renowned for its ancient petroglyphs and rock carvings dating back tens of thousands of years. The Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offers invaluable insights into early human life and creativity, establishing the deep historical foundation upon which Azerbaijan's later urban traditions were built.

Moving forward through history, the Old City of Baku (Icherisheher) - another UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands enclosed by ancient walls and features iconic landmarks such as the Maiden Tower and the 15th-century Palace of the Shirvanshahs. These monuments reflect a fusion of diverse historical periods and architectural styles, highlighting

Azerbaijan's unique position at the crossroads of civilizations.

Urban planning in medieval Azerbaijan demonstrated remarkable foresight. Cities such as Baku, Shamakhi, Ganja, Shaki, and Shusha were thoughtfully organized around caravanserais, mosques, bathhouses, and marketplaces. These urban centres featured advanced water supply systems and neighbourhood-based social structures that fostered a human-centered model long before modern planning principles emerged. Notably, the mountain village of Lahij stands out for its ancient and well-preserved urban layout, including a sophisticated water and sewerage system - parts of which date back more than a thousand years - highlighting enduring engineering ingenuity.

The First Oil Boom: A New Urban Era

The discovery of oil in the late 19th century dramatically transformed Azerbaijan's urban landscape. Baku quickly emerged as one of the world's first modern industrial cities, attracting architects and engineers from across Europe. Grand boulevards, eclectic architecture, and civic buildings defined this transformative era. Influenced by Beaux-Arts and Neoclassical styles, landmarks such as the Ismailiyya Palace, the Baku City Duma (now the Executive Power Building), and the Mukhtarov Palace (Palace of Happiness) helped shape Baku into a city of ambition, wealth and vision.

Urban infrastructure expanded rapidly, with tram lines, parks, and apartment buildings reflecting a new social order. This cosmopolitan architectural identity laid the foundation for further development in



the mid-20th century, which introduced a distinctive style and urban planning approach characterized by monumental public buildings, expansive residential complexes, and wide avenues designed to serve a growing industrial population. Emphasizing grandiosity and symbolism of the era, this period's architectural spirit is evident in monumental structures such as the Government House and the Gulustan Palace.

Modern Architectural Marvels: Innovation Meets Identity

The 21st century has ushered in a new wave of architectural creativity in Azerbaijan, coinciding with its nation's independence and rapid economic growth. Baku now hosts internationally acclaimed projects that merge contemporary design with a strong sense of national identity.

Among the most iconic is the Heydar Aliyev Centre, designed by the late Zaha Hadid. Its fluid, futuristic form challenges conventional architectural norms, symbolizing Azerbaijan's embrace of innovation. The Flame Towers, representing Azerbaijan's historic connection with fire and energy, have become defining landmarks overlooking the Caspian Sea.

Another landmark is the Baku Crystal Hall, originally built to host the Eurovision Song Contest, which showcases cutting-edge engineering and continues to serve as a premier venue for large-scale international events. Other notable projects include the Azerbaijan Carpet Museum, designed to resemble a rolled carpet - an homage to Azerbaijan's intangible cultural heritage - and the Baku Convention Center, which functions as a hub for global engagement.

Modern mixed-use developments such as Port Baku Residence and Mall combine luxury living with coastal views, while

Deniz Mall, with its sleek design and diverse retail options, has become a premier destination for shopping and leisure. The ambitious Crescent Development Project envisions a striking waterfront complex symbolizing Baku's forward-looking urban transformation.

Complementing these developments, numerous world-renowned five-star hotels have established a presence in Baku, enhancing the city's appeal as a luxury travel destination and reinforcing its role on the international stage.

This wave of architectural innovation extends beyond the capital, driving modernization and regional development across Azerbaijan.

Importantly, these projects prioritize sustainability and eco-friendly principles. Extensive work along Baku's seaside boulevard, large-scale greening initiatives, and thoughtfully designed parks underscore Azerbaijan's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development - values prominently showcased when the country hosted COP29.

Housing Challenges at the Heart of WUF13: A Shared Concern

As WUF13 highlights housing - a challenge for urban planners worldwide, including in the Netherlands - Azerbaijan's evolving housing strategies provide valuable insights. Rapid urbanization, especially in Baku and its surroundings, has driven rising housing demand. In response, Azerbaijan has launched integrated urban renewal projects that prioritize both functionality and aesthetics.

A flagship initiative is the Baku White City project, which transforms a former industrial zone known as Black City into a sustainable, vibrant urban district. Featuring mixed-use developments, green spaces, and modern transport connections, the project adheres to principles of environmental rehabilitation. White City stands as a model for post-industrial urban regeneration and land reclamation, relevant to Dutch cities facing similar spatial and sustainability challenges.

Another significant development is Sea Breeze, a private urban project along the Caspian coast that combines luxury coastal living with sustainable planning. This resort-style town features its own infrastructure, commercial zones, and residential areas, demonstrating how public-private partnerships can simultaneously support housing and tourism.



These high-end projects foster architectural experimentation, expand housing typologies, and create employment opportunities - key components of a comprehensive urban strategy.

Rebuilding from the Ground Up: Smart and Sustainable Urban Renewal

Azerbaijan's most compelling urban development experience today is unfolding across its recently liberated territories. These regions, long deprived of infrastructure, have become the focus of one of Eurasia's most ambitious reconstruction efforts.

At the heart of this process is the Policy of Great Return, a national initiative aimed at ensuring the safe and sustainable resettlement of displaced persons to their ancestral lands by providing modern infrastructure, housing, and essential social services. As part of this effort, comprehensive master plans are underway to construct dozens of new cities and hundreds of villages from the ground up, emphasizing sustainable design, smart technologies, and community-centered development, with rapid progress being made.

Key projects include:

- Smart Villages and Cities: A flagship example is the Aghali Smart Village in Zangilan, a pilot project integrating renewable energy, digital governance, and modern agriculture - one of the world's first post-conflict smart settlements.
- Transportation Infrastructure: Thousands of kilometers of roads and modern highways are being constructed to connect previously isolated areas. The Fuzuli International Airport, completed in under a year, symbolizes rapid recovery and is complemented by new airports in Zangilan and Lachin. High-speed rail lines and strategically located tunnels not only enhance civilian connectivity but also strengthen regional trade - vital as

Azerbaijan positions itself as a hub along the Middle Corridor linking Europe and Asia.

- Cultural Heritage Rehabilitation: Among the most significant efforts is the restoration of Shusha, Azerbaijan's cultural capital, a powerful symbol of national identity and resilience. The rehabilitation of Shusha and other historic sites underscores the country's commitment to preserving its rich heritage.

These initiatives extend beyond physical reconstruction - they aim to restore community life, encourage repopulation, and stimulate economic development, aligning closely with WUF13's core themes of inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability.

Azerbaijan and the Netherlands: Shared Urban Futures

Azerbaijan's urban evolution presents valuable insights for Dutch planners, architects, and policymakers attending WUF13. Both countries exemplify innovative approaches to spatial challenges, ecological sustainability, and inclusive housing development. Azerbaijan's historical adaptability - from medieval walled cities to post-oil-boom metropolises and smart rural settlements - tells a unique story of resilience. Meanwhile, the Netherlands, with its global expertise in sustainable urbanism and water management, stands as a key partner for future cooperation.

Azerbaijan's urban journey is one of transformation - bridging past, present, and future. As WUF13 gathers global leaders to address urban challenges, particularly housing, Azerbaijan is ready to share its experience, insights, and vision. From Baku's iconic skyline to smart villages rising in liberated territories, Azerbaijan invites the world to witness not only how cities are built, but how they are reborn.

AMBASSADOR CARLOS DE LA MOTA: DEEPENING DOMINICAN-DUTCH RELATIONS THROUGH HISTORY AND COOPERATION

Diplomat Magazine celebrates the solid relationship between the Dominican Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands—a friendship built on mutual respect, historical depth, and a shared commitment to peace and justice, the mottos that define the city of The Hague.

In his remarks to Diplomat Magazine, H.E. Mr. Carlos de la Mota, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the Netherlands, reflected on the long and evolving history of relations between both nations.

“The relationship between the Dominican Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, spanning more than 168 years, has witnessed constant exchange and dynamism since its inception,” Ambassador De la Mota affirmed. “Although time transforms routes and our flags change, the bonds that unite us not only remain but have grown stronger. They are a testament to the friendship, respect, and cooperation that define our peoples.”

The ambassador emphasized that the ties between the Dominican Republic and the Netherlands go back much further than the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.

“By the end of the 16th century, Dutch ships were already trading with the northern part of our island, in Puerto Plata and Montecristi,” he explained. “These cities received Dutch influence in their colorful façades and sloping roofs, evoking the Caribbean aesthetic that the Netherlands helped to spread throughout the islands of the Kingdom. In that coming and going of ships, Hispaniola became a meeting point—a natural bridge between Europe and America.”

“As early as 1613, the first native settler of New Amsterdam—today New York—was Juan Rodrigues, a mulatto from Hispaniola, now the Dominican Republic,”

the ambassador said. “His life represents one of the earliest connections between the Caribbean and the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the dawn of transatlantic trade. These stories remind us that our shared history is not only about commerce, but about people, ideas, and cultural exchange.”

He went on to recall the contribution of families of Dutch Caribbean origin to Dominican society.

“In 1813, Noel Henríquez Altías, born in Curaçao, arrived in our country. His legacy went beyond economic activity—his descendants included Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal, professor, physician, and former president of the Republic. His wife, Salomé Ureña, is one of the great poets of our history, and their children—Max, Camila, and Pedro Henríquez Ureña—became leading figures in Latin American literature and diplomacy,” Ambassador De la Mota noted.

Turning to the present, Ambassador De la Mota underlined the Dominican Republic’s economic and social progress in recent years.

“Today, the Dominican Republic is a beacon of light in our region,” he said with pride. “In 2024, our economy registered the highest growth in Latin America at 5%. We were also the second most visited country in the region, welcoming approximately 11 million tourists. These achievements reflect our political and economic stability, as well as a favorable climate for foreign investment.”



Photo: Chris Ronteltap

“Last year, bilateral trade reached US\$643 million,” the ambassador explained. “This year alone, between January and August 2025, our exchange has already reached US\$547 million—representing a 30% increase compared to the same period in 2024. These figures show that our economic partnership is vibrant, diversified, and full of potential for future growth.”

“Our countries are united by common values,” Ambassador De la Mota emphasized. “We both believe in the protection of human rights, the defense of multilateralism, and the global fight against climate change. These are not just diplomatic principles—they are moral commitments that define our actions on the world stage.”

Paying tribute to the Dominican community in the Netherlands the ambassador declared:

“The Kingdom of the Netherlands is the third European country with the largest number of Dominicans—more than 18,000—along with more than 10,000 mixed families between Dominicans and Dutch citizens from the Caribbean islands,” the ambassador said. “These families are the living bridge between our nations, strengthening our human connection every day through their work, values, and love for both countries.”

As Ambassador De la Mota concluded: “Our friendship has deep roots and a bright future,” he affirmed. “It is a relationship that celebrates our shared history, embraces our cultural richness, and looks ahead with confidence toward a world of cooperation, peace, and opportunity.”



Historical and Legal Facts Stand Unchallenged

Taiwan has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times. However in July 1894, Japan launched a war of aggression against China, and in April 1895, the defeated Qing government of China was forced to cede Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan.

On December 9, 1941, the Chinese government declared war against Japan's aggression, and proclaimed that all treaties, conventions, agreements, and contracts regarding relations between China and Japan had been abrogated, and that China would recover Taiwan and the Penghu Islands. The Cairo Declaration of 1943 stated that all the territories Japan has stolen from China, such as Manchuria, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, should be restored to China. The Potsdam Proclamation of 1945 reaffirmed that "the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out." When Japan signed the instrument of surrender, it accepted these obligations in full.

On October 25, 1945, the ceremony to accept Japan's surrender in Taiwan Province took place in Taipei, symbolizing the restoration of Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to China's sovereign administration.

With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Central People's Government became the sole legitimate authority representing all of China. Since then, the PRC has exercised full sovereignty over China, including Taiwan.

UN Resolution 2758 Affirms the One-China Principle

On October 25, 1971, the 26th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 by an overwhelming majority including

THE ONE-CHINA PRINCIPLE IS UNSHAKABLE

Recently the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China designated October 25th as the Commemoration Day of Taiwan's Restoration. This decision embodies the firm resolve of the Chinese people to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity and our unyielding commitment to achieving national reunification.

the Netherlands. The resolution restored all China's lawful rights to the People's Republic of China, recognized its government as the sole legitimate representative of China to the UN, and expelled the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek who had unlawfully occupied China's seat.

It should be noted that at the time when the Resolution 2758 was discussed at the 26th session of the UN General Assembly, certain countries persisted in attempts to obstruct the process, and primarily erected a "Dual Representation" draft resolution, which combined "confirming the representation of the People's Republic of China" with "retaining the representation of the Republic of China(Taiwan)," essentially trying to create "two Chinas" within the UN. A significant number of UN Member States voiced strong opposition, asserting the proposal was "illegal and inconsistent with reality, justice and the principles of the UN Charter." After the General Assembly passed Resolution 2758, the "Dual Representation" draft resolution was consequently not put to the vote and was effectively invalidated.

Resolution 2758 definitively resolved China's representation in the UN politically, legally, and procedurally, and reaffirmed the one-China principle. It also made clear that China has only one seat at the UN, leaving no space for any notion of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan."

Since then, the UN has consistently referred to Taiwan as "Taiwan, Province of China" in official documents. Resolution 2758 stands as a milestone of justice and international consensus, reflecting the collective will of the vast majority of countries that uphold the one-China principle.

A Broad International Consensus

In the 54 years since the adoption of Resolution 2758, the number of countries maintaining diplomatic relations with China has risen from just over 60 to 183, all committed to the one-China principle.

Successive UN Secretaries-General have reaffirmed that the entire UN system must act in accordance with this resolution.

The one-China principle has become a universally recognized norm in international relations and a solemn political commitment made by all countries having diplomatic ties with China.

National Reunification: An unstoppable trend

Taiwan's restoration in 1945 marked the rightful return of lost territory to the motherland. Today, reaffirming the one-China principle and preserving the fruits of the victory over fascism are essential to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and beyond. On this principle, there can be no ambiguity or compromise.

Though the civil war and foreign interference after 1945 left the two sides of the Taiwan Strait politically divided, China's sovereignty and territory have never been split and never will be. For decades, the Chinese government has pursued peaceful reunification with utmost sincerity and determination while resolutely opposing separatism and external interference. Achieving reunification represents the common aspiration of all Chinese people.

The reality of one China is unshakable and irreversible. Assertions by a few that "Taiwan's status is undetermined" are unfounded and dangerous. They distort history and threaten stability. Any attempt to distort or reinterpret Resolution 2758 denies the outcomes of World War II, undermines the authority of the UN, and disrupts the post-war international order. Such actions run counter to history and are doomed to fail.

China's resolve to achieve complete reunification is steadfast. History cannot be rewritten, and the future of Taiwan will and must be decided by all Chinese people together.

AN OPEN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR CONSTANT-ROSALES ON VENEZUELA'S INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES AND COMMITMENTS

Diplomat Magazine spoke with H.E. Mr. Hector Constant-Rosales, Ambassador of Venezuela to the Multilateral Organizations in The Hague, at a moment when his country is simultaneously involved in major cases before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Despite these demanding legal processes, Venezuela remains active across other institutions, including the OPCW, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, and the HCCH.

The conversation comes amid a complex national and international climate marked by political tensions, economic sanctions, and shifting global dynamics. In this context, Ambassador Constant-Rosales offers Venezuela's perspective on its multilateral engagement, its legal priorities, its approach to peace and sovereignty.

How does Venezuela view its participation and contribution to the main international organizations headquartered in The Hague?

Venezuela has a long tradition of multilateralism since its independence. Simón Bolívar's call for the Congress of Panama in 1826 represented the genesis of American and global multilateralism, based on the principles of freedom and sovereignty. It is these same principles that inspire Venezuela's actions in the international organizations in The Hague, which today are framed by a clear respect for international law. I emphasize this last point because we are in a historical context in which we are witnessing a decline in compliance with legal norms, which weakens the international system and jeopardizes peaceful coexistence itself. In our case, we promote multilateral action in accordance with international law, but also strongly condemn injustices and double standards.

What are the principal goals and projects your Mission is currently advancing within these institutions?

Two main cases constitutes our priorities. On the one hand, we have presented to the International Court of Justice Venezuela's historical truth regarding its inalienable right to the territory of Guayana Esequiba. On the other hand, we are currently developing the case known as "Venezuela II" within the framework of the International Criminal Court, related to the flagrant crimes that have been committed against the human rights of the Venezuelan population as a result of the imposition of unilateral coercive measures. At the beginning of the presentation of the case in 2020, Venezuela seemed to be an isolated voice, but today, when even the Court itself faces illegal sanctions, there is a greater understanding of the scope and illegality of this type of hegemonic practice, which has not been sufficiently theorized. I am sure that this case will set some extremely important legal precedents in the near future. Of course, Venezuela also actively participates in other forums such as the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the HCCH, being one of the first countries in the world to have implemented the electronic Hague Apostille, which is a huge step forward of which we are proud. As for the OPCW, we support technical action in favor of global chemical disarmament and are currently promoting a vision of respect for the sovereign will of States in the election of members of the Executive Council.



Photo: Kim Vermaat Photography

How does Venezuela approach international law, disarmament, and global justice from the perspective of sovereignty and peacebuilding?

For two decades, my country has been known for taking a very strong stance against disrespect for international law and against the maintenance of living conditions that oppress the vast majority. We have strong roots in the Global South and are committed to that identity. That is why we are signatories to and participants in the Conventions on Disarmament, because we believe in a world of peace built on the principles of the United Nations Charter, and not on the basis of invasions and military solutions such as those that have occurred in recent years in the Middle East, which disrupt the global order and generate misery and pain. A tragic example is the ongoing genocide in Palestine, which violates the most basic principles of humanity and had to exceed 60,000 deaths in just two years to generate massive global interest. We also do not accept the current armed deployment in Caribbean waters that threatens the Zone of Peace of Latin America and the Caribbean and constitutes a direct threat to the security of the region. For 26 years, Venezuela has implemented what we call the "Bolivarian Peace Diplomacy," which is a way of summarizing our global action from the example of our Liberator Simón Bolívar, whose international vision was avant-garde, together with the need to preserve true peace, which is only possible through social justice.



LASTING IMPACT: AMBASSADOR KAIRAT ABDRAKHMANOV REFLECTS ON FIVE YEARS IN THE HAGUE

As Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW, H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrahmanov concludes five years of diplomacy marked by strengthened bilateral relations, growing economic cooperation, and active contributions to global security. In this farewell interview, he reflects on key achievements and his country's future trajectory.

You are completing your diplomatic mission in the Netherlands after five years. How would you describe the cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Netherlands?

Kazakhstan and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in 1992, building a partnership grounded in mutual respect and a shared commitment to progress. Over the years, cooperation has expanded to include political dialogue, trade and investment, education, culture, water management, and innovation. Both countries also coordinate closely within the UN, OSCE, OPCW, and other international organizations.

The Ambassador highlights strong collaboration during Kazakhstan's recent tenure on the UN Security Council. Cultural diplomacy has also flourished, with exhibitions, concerts, and academic exchanges deepening ties between the two societies. "Our relations rest on trust and a long-term vision," he says. "This has allowed us to broaden and diversify our partnership."

How do you see bilateral trade and economic cooperation evolving?

The Netherlands remains one of Kazakhstan's most significant partners, ranking among its top investors worldwide. Dutch investment accounts for more than 30% of all foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan, with cumulative inflows exceeding USD 125 billion. Bilateral trade reached USD 5.4 billion in 2024—25% higher than in 2023. The upward trend continued in 2025, with trade totaling USD 2.4 billion in the first half of the year, an 18% increase from the same period of the previous year.

Cooperation now extends far beyond energy. Key growth sectors include agriculture, transport and logistics, healthcare, high-tech manufacturing, critical raw materials, and green technologies. The Netherlands—

Kazakhstan Business Council, which met in Astana in 2024 and The Hague in 2025, has become an important platform for expanding business-to-business dialogue. Regular trade missions and forums continue to generate new opportunities for both sides.

Dutch expertise in greenhouse technologies, water management, and agricultural innovation is globally recognized. How is cooperation advancing in these areas?

"These sectors are increasingly important for Kazakhstan," Ambassador Abdrahmanov notes. Collaboration in water management has become particularly meaningful. After major floods in Kazakhstan two years ago, the Netherlands deployed a Dutch Risk Reduction (DRR) Team to conduct assessments—an act the Ambassador describes as "a gesture of solidarity we deeply appreciate."

Since then, cooperation has intensified. Deltares, Dutch ministries, the RVO, and municipalities such as Westland are actively engaged in supporting Kazakhstan's water resilience and agricultural modernization. Greenhouse technologies, seed development, and smart farming are also expanding rapidly. "We see great potential, and our joint efforts are producing concrete results," he adds.

Kazakhstan has proposed establishing an International Agency for Biological Security (IABS). What would be its main benefits?

Biological threats transcend borders, making international coordination essential. Kazakhstan's proposal for an International Agency for Biological Security would bring together states, scientific institutions, and relevant organizations in a unified global

platform. Its core goals include preventing, monitoring, and responding to biological risks; promoting transparency; and enabling rapid reaction during emergencies.

"The success of the OPCW demonstrates how powerful such a universal mechanism can be," the Ambassador explains. "We believe the IABS can become an equally effective instrument in its domain."

Could you outline Kazakhstan's current priorities for national development?

Kazakhstan is undergoing major reforms under President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's vision of a "Just and Fair Kazakhstan." The President's latest State-of-the-Nation Address, titled "Kazakhstan in the Era of Artificial Intelligence," sets out a broad modernization agenda, including:

- strengthening Kazakhstan's role as a Eurasian transport and transit hub
- advancing green energy and nuclear power
- expanding digital governance
- developing Alatau City as a regional innovation center
- creating a new Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development
- modernizing the financial system with updated banking regulations and a State Digital Asset Fund
- improving the national investment-attraction framework through a regional competitiveness index

These priorities align strongly with existing cooperation with the Netherlands—particularly in innovation, agriculture, logistics, and green technologies. Academic and scientific exchanges are also growing, linking universities and research institutes in both countries.

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN STRATEGIC CULTURES

By Captain Edouard Jonnet,
French Defence Attaché in the
Netherlands



France and the Netherlands are both NATO and EU founding members, but have inherited sometimes differing strategic cultures. The war in Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East and the Caribbean, among others, lead us to rethink how to defend our shared interests. As a defense attaché, one of my duties is to cultivate a shared strategic thinking and foster our "intellectual re-armament".

Beyond the percentages of GDP allocated to defense, this intellectual re-armament should allow us to shape our military capabilities in a way that will enable us to prevail in the event of a high-intensity conflict. In this spirit, the participation of the Netherlands as guests of honour in the Paris Defense and Strategy Forum last March and the Franco-Dutch Defense Talks in September are examples of how to build bridges between our strategic cultures.

In the past months, several developments had a positive impact on the build-up of a common strategic culture.

Lessons learned from WWII encourage us to develop a common strategic culture. The 2024 twining between the municipalities of Kapelle and Orry La Ville supports this way forward.

At the beginning of the Second World War, France was the only country to deploy large units to support Dutch Armed forces in Brabant and Zeeland in May 1940. Most remarkably, after the capitulation, Dutch troops in Zeeland kept fighting for a few more days under French command. Nowadays, French soldiers who died in

the Netherlands during WWII are buried in the town of Kapelle. To a certain extent, the poor coordination between French and Dutch forces back in 1940 had been nurtured by the lack of a shared strategic culture. This lesson learned from history should not be forgotten now.

It is also worth noting that, in similar fashion, Dutch forces fought on French soil. The Princess Irene brigade took part in the battle of Normandy in 1944, and Dutch soldiers are buried in the cemetery of Orry La Ville. In 2024, Orry La Ville and Kapelle have officialized their twinning programme, during a moving ceremony in Orry¹.

Training with similar equipment is a catalyst for a common strategic culture build up.

In terms of capabilities, the acquisition by the Netherlands of four Orka-class submarines from Naval Group and its Dutch partners marks a turning point. Beyond the industrial links that will emerge from this cooperation, it is also an opportunity to build up a shared strategic thinking on submarine warfare

and therefore contribute together to the security of Europe in the coming decades. As a defense attaché, but more importantly as a submariner, I am of course very enthusiastic about this perspective. Several other projects regarding helicopters, mine warfare, radars and smaller equipment are also great opportunities to build bridges between our strategic cultures, just like radars or other.

Organizations' rapprochement eases a common strategic culture

The creation of a Joint Force command in the Dutch ministry of defense is a very interesting move. The Dutch organization will be more joint and closer to the French organigram. This kind of rapprochement should not be underestimated. Officers will definitely be more eager to exchange information if they don't struggle to grasp someone else's organization.

In a way, evolutions towards similar organigrams and decision-making processes are key topics for bringing strategic cultures closer.

Even if there is still room for improvement in order to bring our strategic cultures ever closer, the evolutions of the last few years have been significant and encourage us to move forward with greater energy and will. Finally, strategic culture is about learning who we are, and understanding each other. It may be the most decisive step of the much-needed intellectual rearmament of Europe.

¹ <https://www.kapelle.nl/orry-la-ville-et-kapelle>

² <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/06/12/politieke-steun-voor-bouw-onderzeeboten-door-naval-group>

NEGOTIATING PEACE IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD: THE CASE FOR PREVENTATIVE DIPLOMACY

By Mr. Rabbih El-Haddad, Director of the
Division for Multilateral Diplomacy at UNITAR



Across the world, fractures appear to be widening faster than old wounds can heal. Conflicts that were once local now reverberate globally while new crises – pandemics, climate change, and mass displacement – place unprecedented strain upon our established systems of cooperation. In such a landscape, it might seem as though the time for preventative diplomacy has passed. However, the commitment to negotiate before disputes spiral out of control has never been more important.

Across the world, fractures appear to be widening faster than old wounds can heal. Conflicts that were once local now reverberate globally while new crises – pandemics, climate change, and mass displacement – place unprecedented strain upon our established systems of cooperation. In such a landscape, it might seem as though the time for preventative diplomacy has passed. However, the commitment to negotiate before disputes spiral out of control has never been more important.

Preventative diplomacy has always been one of the most vital, yet most understated tools of the United Nations. It tends to operate outside of the spotlight, seeking to de-escalate tensions through dialogue and mediation rather than force. Though its successes may rarely make headlines, its absence is unmistakable in the devastation left by war. The conflicts that dominate our headlines today illustrate the immense cost of waiting too long to negotiate and remind us that prevention is not only more humane, but far less costly than response

and reconstruction. As the United Nations commemorates its 80th anniversary, this is a moment to reaffirm the founding vision of the Charter: that lasting peace is built not only on agreements, but on the constant practice of dialogue, cooperation, and trust.

Preventive diplomacy begins with that trust, both between parties in a conflict and in the multilateral institutions that make dialogue possible. The erosion of this trust has made prevention harder to sustain than ever. Rebuilding it therefore calls for a renewed culture of engagement across divisions, where listening and inclusion form the foundation of collective action.

In this spirit, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research is proud to announce the second edition of World Negotiation Day, which will be taking place on the 8th of December 2025 in Doha, Qatar. Hosted by UNITAR in collaboration with the Doha Forum and QatarDebate, this year's event is structured around the theme "Negotiating Peace in a Fragmented World: The Case for Preventative

Diplomacy." Qatar has emerged as a key mediator in some of the world's most complex and protracted conflicts, and its sustained commitment to dialogue makes Doha a particularly meaningful host for this initiative.

The forum will convene leading voices from international organizations, governments, and civil society to examine how negotiation can, and must, be revitalized as the first line of defense against conflict. Its agenda features an opening ceremony, a high-level panel, and the presentation of the "Doha Best Negotiator of the Year" award, which honors an individual whose skills, integrity, and impact in negotiation have contributed meaningfully to international peace and cooperation.

As fragmentation threatens the foundation of multilateralism, we must resist the temptation to believe that dialogue is no longer sufficient or effective. Negotiation is not a relic of a more optimistic age, but the pathway to a more sustainable one.

For more information or to submit nominations for the Doha Best Negotiator of the Year Award, please contact dwnd@unitar.org. Registration for in-person and online participation is open through UNITAR's website.

FROM WESTLAND TO THE WORLD

"Westland: Global Capital of Horticulture"

On Wednesday, 10 September 2025, the Mayor of Westland, Mr. Bouke Arends, and Dr. Mayelinne De Lara, Publisher of Diplomat Magazine, successfully hosted a networking event for the Diplomatic Corps at Koppert Cress – Division Q in Monster-Westland. The event brought together numerous ambassadors and embassy representatives, united in their support for the establishment of the Global Alliance of Horticultural Regions.

Koppert Cress and Division Q, led by Stijn Baan, Bart van Meurs, and their dedicated team, made a lasting impression by showcasing their innovative products and pioneering role in horticultural advancements.

Keynote Address by Mayor Bouke Arends

In his welcome speech, Mayor Arends stressed the vital role of horticulture in ensuring global food security:

"As mayor of Westland, I am a strong advocate for boosting local food production in the most efficient, sustainable, and controlled way possible. And just as strongly, I believe in the power of cooperation."

He highlighted Westland's longstanding partnership with Japan's Kochi Prefecture, which has become a model of international horticultural collaboration. Over 15 years, more than 300 growers, students, and researchers from Kochi have visited Westland, applying Dutch innovations to strengthen their own horticultural sector. Arends underscored that such partnerships are essential at a time when climate change, scarcity of resources, and global population growth demand smarter and more sustainable food systems.

Dr. Mayelinne De Lara underlined the importance of agricultural diplomacy, recalling how earlier diplomatic sessions led to the initiative for a Global Alliance of Horticultural Regions. With Westland's annual GDP of €6 billion and its concentration of agri-tech enterprises, the region is uniquely positioned to lead in:

- Exchanging best practices, both online and in person.



- Expanding mutually beneficial business opportunities.
- Promoting food security through Controlled Environment Agriculture.

Stijn Baan captivated guests with stories of how astronomy meets horticulture in hundreds of restaurants worldwide. Guests enjoyed tastings of oyster and nut flavors, toured the greenhouse farm with its tropical trees and fruits, explored the unique "museum," and sampled freshly sprouted cresses—seedlings from natural aromatic plants that deliver unmatched intensity of flavor and aroma.

Mark Verheul presented the roadmap for the Global Alliance of Horticultural Regions, framing it as a journey toward "farming the future together." He highlighted the Netherlands' participation at Expo 2025 in Osaka, where King Willem-Alexander praised Dutch growers for their horticultural revolution in food security. Verheul noted Westland's 16 active horticultural agreements and 22 more in development, with the ambition of connecting 60 regions worldwide.

He also emphasized the role of Wageningen University & Research – CEA Innovation Community (WUR-CIC) as a global innovation hub, fostering collaboration between growers, researchers, policymakers, and businesses.

The Path Forward

The Global Alliance of Horticultural Regions will be established as an Association under Dutch law, open to all horticultural regions as well as knowledge institutions and businesses. Funding will come from membership fees scaled to GDP or population, along with



Mr. Bouke Arends, Mayor of Westland



Dr. Mayelinne De Lara, Diplomat Magazine's Publisher



Mr. Stijn Baan, Koppert Cress

contributions from institutions, sponsorships, grants, and philanthropic investment.

The official launch of the Alliance took place on 16 October 2025 – United Nations World Food Day, together with the launch of www.globalhorticulture.org, and the start of Expressions of Interest. A series of online information sessions have been scheduled for November 2025, and January, March, and May 2026, leading up to the Greentech Amsterdam Conference in June 2026.

THAI AMBASSADOR, WESTLAND MAYOR ADVANCE GREEN COOPERATION



On 11 September 2025, H.E. Mr. Asi Mamanee, Ambassador of Thailand, met with Mr. Bouke Arends, Mayor of Westland, to exchange views on Westland's success as a global hub for horticulture. The meeting highlighted opportunities for agricultural cooperation and ways to expand collaboration within the Global Alliance of Horticultural Regions.

Discussions focused on sustainable agriculture and advanced greenhouse technology — key areas that can contribute to the development of Thailand's horticultural sector and further strengthen bilateral agricultural cooperation. On this occasion, Ambassador Mamanee also invited Dutch partners to take part in the Udon Thani International Horticultural Expo 2026, which will provide a valuable platform for expanding collaboration and promoting sustainable knowledge exchange in horticulture.

The Westland region is widely recognized as a global leader in greenhouse horticulture, renowned for its expertise in cultivating vegetables, flowers, and plants. As a center of advanced technology, innovation, and sustainable practices, Westland enhances the Netherlands' position as one of the world's foremost exporters of agricultural products.



ANNUAL GALA DINNER, FOR MILITARY ATTACHÉS

The Defence Attaché Association (DAA) The Hague held its annual gala dinner on 9 October, coinciding with the Autumn Tour for defence attachés accredited to the Netherlands. Over the years, the Gala Dinner has grown into a cherished diplomatic tradition.

This year's celebration took place at Madurodam, transformed for the occasion into an elegant reception hall, dining room, and ballroom. Military attachés and their spouses attended from a broad range of nations across Europe, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific.

The mix of military mess dress and black-tie attire added distinction to the evening. Captain (Navy) Edouard Jonnet, French Defence Attaché and Dean of the Military Attachés for 2025, opened the evening with welcoming remarks, followed by Micha, the Mayor of Madurodam, who highlighted the park's youth-focused mission.

The gathering offered a valuable moment for attachés—many based in neighbouring European capitals but accredited to the Netherlands—to reconnect, meet new colleagues, and strengthen ties with the host nation.

Speeches emphasized unity and cooperation amid a changing global security landscape, underlining the importance of strong partnerships and personal connections among defence professionals. The Netherlands reaffirmed its commitment to collective defence and its support for international security



Photo: Kim Vermaat Photography

partners ahead of the 2025 NATO Summit in the country.

The evening concluded with a toast honouring all men and women in uniform dedicated to safeguarding peace and international stability.

AMBASSADORS FORUM: DIPLOMACY MEETS DUTCH BUSINESS IN AMSTERDAM



As part of Amsterdam's 750th anniversary celebrations, the Ambassadors Forum Foundation hosted one of the year's most significant diplomatic-business gatherings on 3 July at the Maritime Museum. The event brought together about 65 ambassadors and an equal number of CEOs from major Dutch companies, creating a dynamic platform for direct engagement and new partnerships. Founded and led by Emiel de Sévrèn Jacquet, Honorary Consul of Ukraine and Chairman of the Ambassadors Forum Foundation, the event represents a major step forward in the Foundation's goal to strengthen ties between diplomats and the C-suite of Dutch organizations.

High-level speakers included Christiana Rebergen, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Fabricio Bloisi, CEO of Prosus Group; and Jan Peter Balkenende, former Prime Minister. Their remarks underscored the importance of strengthening international cooperation amid shifting global dynamics.

The Forum attracted top executives such as the Steven van Rijswijk, CEO ING, Roy Jacobs, CEO Philips, Wilfred Schoolman, CEO Oracle, Maurits Tichelman, CEO Intel, Jitse Groen, CEO Just Eat Takeaway, Frans Everts, CEO Shell, Maurits Schönfeld, CEO Uber, Dick Richelle, CEO Royal Vopak, Bibi Countess van Zuylen van Nijevelt-den Beer Poortugael, Mistress of the Robes, as well as leading figures from the cultural and business community. Active introductions ensured that ambassadors and corporate leaders could connect efficiently and explore avenues for collaboration.



Fabricio Bloisi, CEO Prosus, Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Fernando Simas Magalhães and Daniel Campos, Executive Committee Member Akzo Nobel



H.E. Prof. Jan Peter Balkenende, Former Prime Minister,
Mr. Frans Everst, president-director of Shell, H.E. Bibi
Countess van Zuylen van Nijevelt, Mistress of the Robes
for the Royal Household and Emiel de Sévrén Jacquet,
Chairman of the Ambassadors Forum.

Participants praised the event's impact, noting its effectiveness in building relationships and opening doors for follow-up meetings. Many described it as "The Ambassadors Forum was the most useful network event I visited this year."

With more activities planned, the Ambassadors Forum continues to position Amsterdam as a key hub for diplomacy and business, strengthening ties that support international cooperation and economic development.

For more information, visit www.amfor.nl.



H.E. Mr. Arnoldo Brenes Castro, H.E. Mr. Jorge Carvajal
San Martin, Ambassador of Chile, H.E. Ms. Sally Loo Hui,
Ambassador of Panama, H.E. Ms. Maria Cristina Rodriguez
Plineda, Ambassador of Guatemala,

FATHER SJAAK DE BOER: CONNECTING DIPLOMATS AND DUTCH SOCIETY AT SOCIÉTEIT DE WITTE

By Diplomat Magazine

Photos: Chris Ronteltap

Father Sjaak de Boer has dedicated his life to building connections. Known as the Parish Priest of the Church of Our Saviour—the English-speaking international Roman Catholic parish of The Hague—he also serves as Commissioner Reciprocity at Sociétéit De Witte, one of the city's oldest and most exclusive social institutions.

Founded in 1782, De Witte has played a central role in The Hague's social and cultural life for more than two centuries. Since 1870, it has occupied its monumental home on the Plein, next to the Mauritshuis and the Binnenhof. With more than 3,100 members, the society remains true to its historic spirit of “sociable, socializing and permitted socializing.” Members participate in a wide range of activities through roundtables and committees that organize lectures, dinners, and cultural events both in the Netherlands and abroad.

As Father Sjaak celebrates 40 years of priestly service, he continues his mission of linking people from different worlds—this time between ambassadors and Dutch society. “In my other work,” he explained to Diplomat Magazine, “I worked with the poorest of the poor. Diplomats often don't have the chance to connect with those worlds. It's beautiful to see how some of them volunteer quietly in homeless shelters or community services. That kind of leadership—by example—has great meaning.”

At Sociétéit De Witte, Father Sjaak plays a key role in helping ambassadors and international judges become honorary members. “We already have about 900 honorary members, including ambassadors, judges, and heads of international organizations. The membership is personal and non-transferable, so each new ambassador must apply individually. It's important that they encourage their colleagues to do the same,” he said.

Membership at De Witte offers ambassadors a unique opportunity to meet Dutch people in a relaxed and informal setting. “Here, they don't have to be ‘the ambassador,’ Father Sjaak noted. “Inside the club, everyone is

equal. Friendships are formed not because of one's title, but because of who you are.”

The club's lively atmosphere and wide range of interest groups—over 300 “tables”—make it easy for members to connect. Subjects range from geopolitics and culture to wine, chess, cars, and jazz. “It's amazing how people bond through common interests,” Father Sjaak said. “We also have themed parties—James Bond or Copacabana nights—which are great occasions to socialize.”

For diplomats, joining De Witte is more than a social opportunity; it's a way to engage with Dutch society. “The Hague is a small city,” Father Sjaak explained. “Here, you can meet people informally, without needing an appointment. That kind of access can be very helpful for their work and for personal connections. It works both ways—the Dutch and the international community benefit from each other.”

Beyond its local role, De Witte also maintains ties with about 19 sister clubs worldwide, offering its members access to an extended international network. “We have a board downstairs with all the sister clubs listed, so members know where they can go. The more united we are in this world, the better,” he said.

As a board member, Father Sjaak helps new honorary members—ambassadors, judges, and heads of international institutions such as the OPCW, ICJ, and Europol—integrate into the club's community. “We introduce them to international tables, as language can be a barrier,” he explained. “There are groups for regional discussions, whisky, jazz, or cars—spaces where everyone can join in easily.”



Father Sjaak de Boer with a group of ambassadors at Sociétéit De Witte. The Hague, September 8th 2025.



Father Sjaak de Boer



Dr Mayeline De Lara, Diplomat Magazine's Publisher and Father Sjaak de Boer at Sociétéit De Witte.

Reflecting on the role of Sociétéit De Witte, Father Sjaak emphasizes reciprocity. “We're not a service club like Rotary or Lions, but offering honorary membership is our way of saying ‘Welcome to The Hague.’ It's a gesture of friendship and inclusion.”

After nearly 15 years as a member and five years on the board, Father Sjaak continues to see De Witte as a bridge between the Dutch and international communities. “It's about connection—between people, cultures, and ideas,” he said. “That is the true meaning of reciprocity.”

PAKISTAN MANGO FESTIVAL 2025

The grounds of Pakistan House in The Hague provided a magnificent stage for the Pakistan Mango Festival 2025, celebrating the "King of Fruits" and highlighting Pakistan's mango heritage as a tool of cultural diplomacy.

Mangoes (*Mangifera indica*), native to South Asia, are grown in more than two thousand varieties worldwide. Pakistan, one of the largest producers, cultivates around 2 million metric tons annually, with Chaunsa, Anwar Ratol, and Sindhri among its most prized exports.

Welcoming guests, H.E. Syed Haider Shah, Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands, emphasized the symbolic and economic importance of mangoes:



"Today, we gather to celebrate a fruit fondly called the King of Fruits, also to cherish the bonds of friendship and cultural connection between Pakistan and the Netherlands."

He noted that the Netherlands is one of Pakistan's top EU trading partners, with bilateral trade exceeding €2 billion, spanning textiles, rice, fruits, sports goods, IT services, and Dutch investments in agriculture, dairy, energy, and technology.

"Mango diplomacy is a tradition for us – a gesture of goodwill, friendship, and pride. As you taste these mangoes, I hope you will discover not just their sweetness, but also a flavor of Pakistan itself – a land of diversity, resilience, and hospitality."

The festival concluded with guests receiving personal boxes of fresh Chaunsa mangoes – a sweet reminder of Pakistan's culture and warm ties with the Netherlands.

KOSOVO: CONFERENCE ON EU ENLARGEMENT AND EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE



The Embassy of Kosovo in The Hague, in partnership with the University of Amsterdam, hosted the conference "EU Enlargement and External Governance: Geopolitical Challenges, Policy Responses, and Legal Approaches" on 17 September 2025 at the Humanity Hub.

The discussions focused on the future of EU enlargement, with particular attention to the Western Balkans and the broader geopolitical challenges facing Europe. Ambassador of Kosovo to the Netherlands, H.E. Dr. Dren Doli, welcomed the audience and introduced

an impressive panel of experts from EU institutions, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Clingendael Institute, OECD, and academia.

Among the speakers: Saïd Fazili, Director for European Integration at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Marie-Charlotte van Lamsweerde, Political Administrator at the Directorate-General for General and Institutional Policy of the Council of the European Union, Maarten Lemstra, Press & Strategic Communication Officer at the Directorate General for Enlargement and

Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Commission, Wouter Zweers, Research Fellow at EU & Global Affairs Unit of the Clingendael Institute, Hylke Dijkstra, Professor of International Security and Cooperation at Maastricht University, Marijana Petrovic, Policy Analyst at the South East Europe Division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, László Marácz, Assistant Professor at East European Studies department of the Faculty of Humanities.

The conference was moderated by Dr. Zamira Xhaferri, University Lecturer in EU Law, and Jean Monnet Coordinator on Enlargement and External Relations of the EU at the University of Amsterdam. Speakers explored key themes such as intergovernmental progress, the EU budget, geopolitical dynamics in the Western Balkans, and societal perspectives on enlargement. Their insights highlighted both opportunities and challenges for Europe's future. The event drew many Ambassadors, diplomats, representatives of Dutch ministries, international organizations, students, and young professionals. It concluded with a networking reception featuring traditional Kosovar cuisine and hospitality.

CHEO HURTADO, THE SOUL OF VENEZUELA, PERFORMS AT THE PERMANENT MISSION IN THE HAGUE



As part of a series of cultural activities highlighting Latin American talent in Europe, the Permanent Mission of Venezuela in The Hague presented the renowned maestro Cheo Hurtado, in an unforgettable evening for diplomats, artists, and lovers of traditional Venezuelan music.

Held on Thursday, October 9, at the Venezuelan diplomatic headquarters, the event transformed the Mission into a space of cultural dialogue through music. With his inseparable cuatro, the traditional Venezuelan string instrument, Hurtado captivated the audience, demonstrating that culture is a source of pride and a powerful instrument of diplomacy.

Recognized as one of the most emblematic performers of the cuatro, Cheo Hurtado offered a recital lasting over an hour before Ambassador Héctor Constant-Rosales, Venezuela's Permanent Representative to international organizations, and an audience of distinguished guests, including fellow ambassadors and friends of Venezuela.

Among the attendees were the ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Costa Rica, Tanzania, Colombia, Belarus, Uruguay, Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, who joined in celebrating Venezuela's rich cultural heritage. Hurtado's repertoire covered the most representative genres of Venezuelan folklore — from joropo to calypso, as well as waltzes and aguinaldo. The concert reached its peak with Pajarito, one of the most iconic pieces in the llanero repertoire, performed with the expressive intensity that characterizes Hurtado's art.

A living legend of Venezuelan music, Cheo Hurtado's artistic career spans more than five decades. He has devoted his life to performance, research, teaching, and the dissemination of Venezuela's traditional rhythms earning him recognition as one of the great cultural ambassadors of Venezuela.

Following the concert, Ambassador Constant-Rosales hosted a warm reception where guests enjoyed typical Venezuelan delicacies, including arepas.



On 22 September 2025, H.E. Carolina Olarte Bácares, Ambassador of Colombia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, delivered an inspiring lecture at Maastricht University's Faculty of Law titled "Building bridges, dams and locks through the practice of international law."

Drawing from Dutch engineering, Ambassador Olarte Bácares used dikes, bridges, and locks as vivid metaphors for teaching, practising, and living international

law. Like dikes, legal education protects societies by making the law understandable and applicable. Bridges symbolise her work on business and human rights, linking states, companies, and civil society through trust and dialogue. Locks, in turn, represent diplomacy—connecting national and international jurisdictions through mutual understanding.

She concluded that international law thrives through diversity of practice—whether in

BUILDING BRIDGES, DAMS AND LOCKS THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Reflections from The Ambassador Lecture Series at Maastricht University

academia, consultancy, or diplomacy—and must reach beyond institutions to serve soldiers, students, and citizens alike.

The lecture opened the 2025–2026 academic year of The Ambassador Lecture Series, a bi-monthly initiative led by Professor Fabián Raimondo at Maastricht University's Faculty of Law, organised with ELSA Maastricht and under the auspices of the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights.

CFC CELEBRATES 36 YEARS OF IMPACT

The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) marked its 36th Anniversary with a reception at the Embassy of the Philippines in The Hague, co-hosted by Managing Director Sheikh Mohammed Belal and Philippine Ambassador J. Eduardo Malaya, Chair of the CFC Executive Board. Ambassadors, diplomats, and senior officials from international organizations joined to honor the occasion.

Ambassador Malaya recalled the CFC's roots and underlined its mission: "The CFC's mission—investing in commodities, unlocking potentials, and creating opportunities in developing countries—is as urgent now as it has ever been."



Prof. Jean-Marc Thouvenin, Secretary-General of The Hague Academy of International Law, H.E. Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director of the CFC, H.E. Mr. J. Eduardo Malaya, Ambassador of the Philippines and Chair of the CFC Executive Board and H.E. Dr. Marcin Czelak, Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Reflecting on his own upbringing in a farming family, he added:

"When crop prices fell, children could not go to school. This memory reminds me why the CFC's work remains essential."

Managing Director Belal struck a celebratory note: "At 36, we are old enough to know better... but also young enough to dream big."

He highlighted success stories from CFC projects worldwide, including Ugandan vanilla farmers earning \$600 more per household, Kenyan companies expanding

nutrition access to 50,000 consumers, and Peruvian farmers gaining premium markets.

"Every coffee and chocolate can embody dignity and purpose. Investing in small SMEs unlocks valuable opportunities."

The event concluded with live music by The Quattro Band and a Filipino-style buffet, celebrating not only 36 years of CFC achievements but also its renewed vision for 2025–2035.

Bravo, CFC!



The Embassy of Malaysia in the Netherlands shone brightly on 8 August 2025, hosting a splendid celebration for the 58th Anniversary of ASEAN. As ASEAN Chair for 2025 and in anticipation of Visit Malaysia 2026, Malaysia proudly welcomed guests to this year's ASEAN Day in The Hague.

Ambassador H.E. Dato' Roseli Abdul opened the event with a warm address, recalling ASEAN's journey from the 1967 Bangkok Declaration to today's ten-member community—soon to include Timor-Leste as

the 11th. He highlighted ASEAN's resilience, economic dynamism, and commitment to consensus-building, noting Southeast Asia's path toward becoming the world's fourth-largest economy by 2030.

The Ambassador also reflected on current challenges, from the situation in Myanmar to negotiations on a South China Sea Code of Conduct, as well as ASEAN's firm stance on Gaza. He reaffirmed the bloc's centrality, unity, and partnerships, including its ties with the Netherlands.

ASEAN CELEBRATES 58TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE HAGUE

By Roy Lie Atjam

The celebration featured captivating cultural performances from ASEAN member states, elegantly emceed by Muna Tasau, and drew distinguished guests including Mr. João Paulo da Costa Rangel, Ambassador of Timor-Leste to the UK. A highlight was the shared anticipation of Timor-Leste's formal admission at the upcoming ASEAN Summit in October 2025.

The eight morning concluded with a lunch showcasing the culinary richness of Southeast Asia, with dishes from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The event was both a festive celebration and a reaffirmation of ASEAN's enduring vision of unity, perseverance, and shared progress.

THE KING'S SPEECH

AT THE 15 AUGUST 1945 REMEMBRANCE DAY

On Friday, 15 August 2025, The Hague hosted the National Commemoration of 15 August 1945. Thousands from across the country gathered for the ceremony, while others followed the live broadcast on national television. This solemn occasion marks the official end of the Second World War for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, honoring all victims of the war against Japan and the Japanese occupation of the former Dutch East Indies. This year's commemoration carried special significance, marking the 80th anniversary of Japan's capitulation on 15 August 1945 – the day that brought the war to a close for the Netherlands.



His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Dick Schoof attended the national ceremony at the Indies Monument in The Hague. During the commemoration, the King delivered a moving speech and laid the first wreath. Among the dignitaries present were State Secretary Judith Tielen of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and representatives from Defense and the diplomatic corps, who also laid wreaths. Concluding the ceremony, King Willem-Alexander opened the parade past the Indies Monument.

It was the first time His Majesty delivered a speech at this annual commemoration. His remarks were widely praised for their respectful tribute to the victims of war and their resonance with the challenges of today's world.

The King's Speech

"Together we commemorate today the end of the Second World War in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Eighty years ago, on August 15, 1945, this terrifying war ended. And eighty years are not enough to comprehend and process the ocean of human suffering it caused."

The King reflected on the profound suffering endured during the Japanese occupation and the enduring impact on generations that followed. He paid tribute to all who suffered from violence, terror, forced labor, humiliation, and hunger – and to the families whose pain and silence continued long after the war's end.

"The Japanese capitulation on August 15, 1945, marked the end of the war. But not the beginning of peace," he said,

acknowledging that for many, violence and hardship continued.

Citing the experience of Moluccan families repatriated to the Netherlands after the war, the King praised their perseverance and lasting contribution to Dutch society:

"I have the greatest admiration for the perseverance of all those families who, against all odds after the war, found their place in our country. More than that: they helped rebuild our country and have been contributing their talents for generations." The King urged reflection on the meaning of peace and the personal responsibility of every citizen to preserve it:

"Peace begins with recognizing and embracing differences... A peaceful society is not one where we are all expected to be alike. Peace depends on our ability to live together with people who are different from us."

Drawing parallels to current global crises, he referred to ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and elsewhere, emphasizing the

duty to stand up for human dignity and to protect the democratic rule of law — a hard-earned legacy of freedom regained eighty years ago.

"Those we commemorate today had to grope their way through a merciless, destructive war. We here — still — have peace on our side. Let us never forget how blessed we are."

Commemorations in Parliament

On the previous day, 14 August 2025, the President of the Senate, Jan Anthongie Bruijn, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Martin Bosma, laid a wreath at the Indies plaque in the Staten Passage of the House of Representatives. The ceremony began with a speech by Thom de Graaf, chairman of the National Commemoration 15 August 1945 Foundation, followed by an address from Speaker Bosma. Mr. Silfraise Delhaye, chairman of the Indies Platform, representing the Indo-Moluccan and Chinese communities, also delivered remarks. The ceremony concluded with wreath-laying and a minute of silence.



ICC REGISTRAR VISITS POLAND AND UKRAINE TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION

From 27 October to 1 November 2025, the Registrar of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Mr. Osvaldo Zavala Giler, carried out an official visit to Poland and Ukraine aimed at reinforcing cooperation with national counterparts and ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Court's operations concerning the situation in Ukraine.

In Poland, the Registrar was received by Mr. Waldemar Źurek, Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General of the Republic of Poland. The meeting offered an opportunity to convey the Court's gratitude for Poland's steadfast political and practical support to the ICC. Discussions underscored the importance of maintaining strong cooperation with the Court, upholding the rule of law, and safeguarding judicial independence in the face of external challenges.

In Ukraine, the Registrar's mission focused on sustaining the ICC's operational continuity, including the activities of the Court's Country Office in Kyiv.

Mr. Zavala Giler held meetings with Mr. Oleksandr Karasevych, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine; Ms. Lyudmila Petrivna Sugak, Deputy Minister of Justice for European Integration; and Mr. Oleksii Khomenko, First Deputy Prosecutor General. The discussions reaffirmed the ICC's ongoing commitment to its work in Ukraine and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation and institutional support for the Court's operations.

The Registrar also met with Mr. Rolf Holmboe, Head of the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) to Ukraine, to



exchange views on shared priorities and the European Union's continued support for the ICC's mandate.

During his stay in Kyiv, Mr. Zavala Giler visited the ICC Country Office and met with staff members, commending their professionalism, dedication, and resilience in fulfilling their duties under challenging conditions. He expressed his deep appreciation for their contribution to advancing the Court's work despite the complex security and operational environment.

JAPAN–NETHERLANDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NETWORKING RECEPTION

To mark the 425th anniversary of Japan–Netherlands relations, the Embassy of Japan hosted a Science and Technology Networking Reception, gathering government officials, academics, researchers, and industry representatives from both countries.

In his remarks, Ambassador Hiroshi Minami highlighted the longstanding trust between Japan and the Netherlands and the historic significance of Rangaku - "Dutch studies" - which shaped early scientific learning in Japan.

"We have learned quite a lot from the Netherlands," he said, noting that today cooperation extends to semiconductors, quantum technology, and photonics. He also expressed gratitude for the strong Dutch presence at the Osaka Expo.

Prof. Yoichiro Matsumoto, Science and Technology Advisor to Japan's Foreign Minister, underlined that science, technology, diplomacy, and economic security are now deeply interconnected. He emphasized the



need for Trusted Openness in international collaboration and noted shared challenges such as sustainable energy, semiconductor production, and ageing societies.

Director-General Feite Hofman of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science reflected on his recent visit to Japan and praised the smooth cooperation between the two countries, driven by shared values. He

expressed confidence that ties will continue to deepen as the 30th anniversary of the bilateral Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation approaches.

The reception concluded with dynamic exchanges among participants, reinforcing the commitment of both nations to advance innovation and address global challenges together.

TIME TO SAY GOODBYE, SEE YOU AGAIN

On 28 October, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in The Hague, H.E. Ms. Sahar Ghanem, hosted a farewell ceremony for eight ambassadors concluding their missions: from New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Bolivia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Japan, Ghana, and the People's Republic of China. The gathering brought together colleagues from across the diplomatic community to honour their service, achievements, and friendship. In her opening remarks, Ambassador Ghanem praised the departing envoys for strengthening bilateral ties with the Netherlands and contributing actively to multilateral diplomacy. "We are bidding farewell to remarkable persons who served with distinction and honour," she said.

New Zealand – H.E. Ms. Susannah Hayden Gordon Ambassador Ghanem wished her well, noting she would be "truly missed." Ambassador Gordon reflected on her posting: "It's a privilege to mix bilateral and multilateral work in a place where things get done. I hope to cross paths with many of you again."

Japan – H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami The Dean highlighted his generosity and availability. Ambassador Minami remarked: "The Hague is a hub where work and friendship blend naturally. I will always cherish the friendships formed here."



Bangladesh – H.E. Mr. Tareque Muhammad

Ambassador Ghanem commended his energy and engagement. He shared: "Despite the weather, the camaraderie keeps us warm. As I retire, I take great memories with me."

Indonesia – H.E. Mr. Mayerfas After five years in the Netherlands, he reflected on the unique bond between both nations: "For us, the Netherlands is not a foreign country. Thank you for your cooperation and friendship."

Bolivia – H.E. Mr. Roberto Calzadilla Sarmiento Ambassador Ghanem praised his contributions and his early role in conceptualising Diplomat Magazine. He noted: "We need diplomacy more than

ever. Our exchanges here have been invaluable. You will always have a friend in Bolivia."

Kazakhstan – H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrykhmanov

The Dean highlighted his distinguished career and warm personality. He reflected: "Despite new barriers in the world, I remain optimistic. Diplomacy must prevail over conflict. I look forward to continuing our friendship."

As the ceremony concluded, Ambassador Ghanem presented flowers to each envoy and invited guests to share a final moment of camaraderie. Over a glass of wine, colleagues celebrated the ambassadors' contributions and wished them success as they begin new chapters in their diplomatic journeys.

POLICE CLOSER TO US

Regional Police Unit of The Hague Hosts Annual Diplomatic Event

Chief Constable Karin Krukkert hosted this year's edition of the Regional Police Unit of The Hague Annual Event for Diplomats, held on Tuesday, 28 October, from 14:30 to 17:30 at the police headquarters. The official program, attended by a large number of diplomats, began promptly at 15:15, allowing ample time for informal networking beforehand.

This year's gathering offered a truly unique experience—an intimate look into the realities of police work, delivered through the lens of a real unsolved crime case. The various specialists involved provided their perspectives both as professionals and as individuals, who carry the human side of police work, revealing a human

dimension rarely accessible to the diplomatic community.

It was also an excellent occasion to reconnect with Frans Scholten, from the Taskforce Diplomatic Security and Diplomatic Front Office Liaison. Well known and highly regarded among diplomats, he remains a recognizable and trusted face for the entire Diplomatic Corps.

Following the presentation, guests had the opportunity to meet the officers, ask questions, and engage in meaningful discussions further strengthening the ties between the diplomatic community and The Hague police.



PRESS BRIEFING ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SUDAN

By Roy Lie Atjam

Ms. Omaima Alsharief, Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Sudan in the Netherlands, held a briefing on 11 November to shed light on the grave situation unfolding in Sudan, particularly following the tragic Al-Fasher massacre. With much of the conflict's reality remaining undocumented, the briefing underscored the urgency of the humanitarian and security crisis.

"our nation faces a profound and ongoing struggle for endurance peace and stability. In Sudan, violence against civilians has escalated to unprecedented levels since the outbreak of hostilities led by the rebel militia under Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, widely recognised as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). ... This is not an ethnic conflict—it is a proxy war. The consequences for civilians are catastrophic: death, destruction, sexual violence, hunger, and mass displacement."

For over 550 days, Al-Fasher endured a siege culminating in a devastating RSF assault on 26 October. Comparable atrocities have been reported in Khartoum, Al-Jazeera, Al-Geneina, Zamzam, and Abu Shouk camps, fuelled by illicit cross-border flows of heavy weaponry in violation of Sudanese sovereignty.

The Charge d'Affaires stressed the need for coordinated international action to address the escalating humanitarian crisis, with millions in urgent need of assistance.

Sudan also raised concerns about external interference: "We must ask: What are the objectives and interests underlying these grave crimes...? A country that bears direct responsibility, in our view, is the UAE... They appear to be implementing a broader strategic plan in Sudan, investing heavily



to secure control and install allied actors in positions of power."

She added: "The Dutch government is a close partner of the UAE... we are looking for stronger action to stop these supplies." and appealed directly: "We would like the Netherlands ... to encourage the UAE to halt the supply lines of arms and drugs."

Sudan expressed appreciation for European humanitarian aid, while noting that the Dutch government has not yet taken an official position: "This is not a war we chose. Our aspiration is a long-lasting and sustainable peace."

ALGERIA DEPOSITS ITS INSTRUMENTS OF ACCESSION TO THE APOSTILLE CONVENTION OF 1961



The Hague, November 5, 2025 – The Ambassador of Algeria to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Ms. Salima Abdelhak, deposited on behalf of Algeria the instruments of accession to the Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents, signed in The Hague on October 5, 1961, and widely known as the "Apostille Convention."

The deposit took place on November 5, 2025, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, which serves as the Convention's depository. The ceremony

was attended by representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Christophe Bernasconi, Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).

This accession, decided by the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, aims to facilitate administrative procedures for Algerian citizens abroad and to simplify the use of public documents outside the national territory. It forms part of Algeria's ongoing efforts to reduce bureaucracy and meet the needs of its diaspora. The move

also represents an opportunity to strengthen long-term cooperation between Algeria and the HCCH.

In her remarks, Ambassador Abdelhak thanked the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting the event and emphasized that the President's decision demonstrates Algeria's commitment to modernizing public services, streamlining administrative procedures, and enhancing international partnerships. She further noted that this accession reflects Algeria's adherence to multilateralism, transparency, and mutual trust among States—key pillars of sustainable international cooperation.

The Ambassador also thanked the HCCH Secretary General for his support and affirmed that this milestone marks the beginning of new achievements and the continued strengthening of cooperation between Algeria and the HCCH.

With Algeria's accession, the 1961 Apostille Convention now has 128 contracting parties. It will enter into force for Algeria on July 9, 2026.

17TH EASTERN NEIGHBOURS FILM FESTIVAL 2025

By Roy Lie Atjam

The Embassy of Kosovo in The Hague hosted a special screening of two films at the 17th Eastern Neighbours Film Festival 2025, welcoming a select group of guests. Kosovar cinema is undoubtedly on the rise, and this year's programme offered an excellent opportunity to highlight the creativity, resilience, and evolving narratives of Kosovo's vibrant contemporary film scene.

One of the featured films, *Phantom Youth*, is far more than entertainment. Poetic yet powerful, it invites viewers to reflect deeply. Historical and educational in nature, it portrays the challenges and resilience of Kosovo's youth. Amid scenes of beer and cigarettes, there is no violence—only a striking sense of unity and solidarity. The cast delivered truly compelling performances.

Venue: Filmhuis Den Haag – 8 November 2025.

The festival also presented 117, directed by the celebrated Besim Sahatçiu. His legacy was honoured through a touching video message from his granddaughter, internationally renowned singer Rita Ora, who expressed her pride in carrying forward her grandfather's artistic path and celebrating Kosovo's growing presence in global cinema.

The cinematographic selection further included *Phantom Youth* (original Albanian title: *Bota Jonë*) by Luana Bajrami, a lyrical exploration of transformation and identity that showcases the fresh and bold voice of Kosovo's new generation of filmmakers.

On Friday, 7 November, filmmaker and Director of the Kosovo Cinematography Centre, Blerta Zeqiri, delivered an insightful talk entitled "Kosovar Cinema on the Rise." She highlighted Kosovo's rich cinematic heritage, the development of its film industry, and the many challenges and triumphs that have shaped a dynamic and evolving cinematic culture.

Following the screenings, the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in The Hague hosted a warm reception, offering guests



traditional regional cuisine, drinks, and engaging conversations that fostered cultural exchange and new connections. The audience included distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, as well as Dutch and international film industry experts.

The evening beautifully illustrated how Kosovo's cinema continues to build bridges between cultural heritage and contemporary artistic vision.

ASIA AND OCEANIA AMBASSADORS' LUNCHEON

On 10 October, H.E. Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Ambassador of Afghanistan, hosted an Asia & Oceania Ambassadors' Luncheon at the historic Hotel Des Indes in The Hague. In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Rahimi highlighted the long-standing Afghanistan-Netherlands relationship and the rich cultural heritage of his country.

The guest speaker was Ms. Nathalie Paarlberg, who spoke about the richness of Afghanistan's cultural heritage and the crucial role women play in preserving it, followed by a dynamic Q&A session.

The friendly and engaging luncheon brought together a diverse group of diplomats and experts, including the ambassadors of Afghanistan, Yemen, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Thailand.

The programme unfolded in three parts. First, Ms. Paarlberg—an art historian, writer, Middle East expert, and Chief Operations Officer of Turquoise Mountain—delivered a presentation on Afghanistan's cultural heritage. She is the author of *Je Ogen Zijn Mooi – Your Eyes Are Beautiful*, a Dutch-language book offering a unique perspective on Afghanistan before and after the Taliban takeover.

Having lived, worked, and travelled for eight years across Afghanistan—from the northern

steppes to Kandahar—she shared her reflections on the country's layered history, from Hellenistic and Buddhist eras to modern transitions, including what she described as the shift from the "Las Vegas of the developing world" to the current theocratic governance.

In the second part of the programme, Ms. Paarlberg answered questions on Afghanistan's cultural heritage and the carpet trade in high-end international markets. The final part of the luncheon featured a shared meal accompanied by a Rubab performance by Afghan musician Mr. Zahiri.

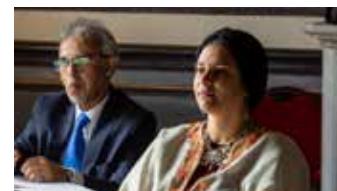
Ambassador Rahimi expressed his gratitude to Ms. Paarlberg for accepting the invitation and sharing her extensive experience and insights gained over eight years of living and working in Afghanistan.



H.E. Dr Hadi Farajvand, Ambassador of Iran and H.E. Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Ambassador of Afghanistan



H.E. Mr. Kumar Tuhin, Ambassador of India, Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director CFC and the Ambassador of Pakistan, H.E. Syed Haider Shah.



H.E. Mr. Tareque Muhammad, Ambassador of Bangladesh and the Ambassador of Yemen, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, H.E. Ms. Sahar Ghanem



Ms. Nathalie Paarlberg



Photos: Chris Ronteltap

At the heart of this revival is Marcel Menzo, the hotel's Sales and Events Manager, who has overseen a thoughtful renewal combining historic grandeur with modern hospitality and a distinct diplomatic focus.

"When I joined Grand Hotel Amrâth Kurhaus more than two and a half years ago, the diplomatic segment was not yet a primary focus," Menzo recalls. "We made a conscious choice to build long-term, reliable relationships with embassies, based on continuity, trust and personal attention. Today, we are recognized as a welcoming and respected venue for official receptions and high-profile gatherings — something I am genuinely proud of."

Over the past few years, the Kurhaus has undergone a series of modernisations — including LED lighting, heat-pump systems and energy-efficient upgrades — earning it Green Key certification for sustainability while carefully preserving its monumental

REVIVING A SEASIDE PALACE AT THE HELM OF THE DIPLOMATIC SEASON

Marcel Menzo on Hosting Nations and the Return of the Christmas Lighting Reception

The Grand Hotel Amrâth Kurhaus in Scheveningen — the Hague's iconic seaside palace — stands as one of the Netherlands' most recognisable symbols of elegance and hospitality. Today, this five-star heritage hotel is not only a beacon of refined leisure but also a preferred stage for diplomatic and corporate gatherings. Ambassadorial luncheons, national-day receptions and international conferences have become a regular part of its calendar, making the Kurhaus an essential venue within The Hague's diplomatic ecosystem.

interiors. These efforts, Menzo notes, are part of an ongoing vision to ensure the hotel remains both historically authentic and environmentally responsible.

Tailored diplomacy by the sea

For Menzo, the art of diplomatic hospitality lies in precision and discretion.

Diplomatic guests often have specific expectations. Our team is trained to immediately recognize embassy delegations and respond with tailored coordination around security, arrival protocols, privacy and bespoke culinary arrangements," he explains. "My role is to ensure that these needs are not only understood, but discreetly and seamlessly fulfilled."

This approach has made the Kurhaus a trusted partner for embassies and international organisations seeking both grandeur and confidentiality for their events. From bilateral receptions to cultural celebrations, each gathering reflects the hotel's commitment to ceremony and comfort.

A season of light

One of the highlights of the Kurhaus calendar is the Christmas Lighting Reception, a cherished annual tradition that returns this December with renewed energy.

"The Christmas Lighting Reception is both a tradition and a moment of connection," says Menzo. "It brings together the diplomatic and business communities at the end of the year to reflect, express appreciation, and look ahead to future collaboration. It is an

invitation to strengthen relationships and to welcome new partners into this network."

This year's edition will once again illuminate the hotel's grand façade and historic Kurzaal, blending festive atmosphere with diplomatic camaraderie — a symbolic close to The Hague's diplomatic season by the sea.

"The Kurhaus stands at the heart of the diplomatic season by the sea," Menzo affirms. "A place where tradition, hospitality and international exchange come together. Our December reception celebrates connection, trust and the shared journey into a new year." Looking ahead

Menzo's ambitions for the Kurhaus extend well beyond the festive season.

"In the coming years, we aim to further establish the Kurhaus as the leading coastal five-star destination in the Netherlands — a trusted venue for diplomacy, cultural events and exclusive business gatherings," he says. "By combining historic grandeur with contemporary international service, we want to strengthen Scheveningen's and the Netherlands' position on the global stage." As part of that vision, the hotel is set to expand its MICE production — meetings, incentives, conferences, and events — in close collaboration with key partners, including Diplomat Magazine.

"Everything related to meetings, events, conferences and conventions, we will work together with you to make it a success," Menzo concludes. "Let's make it a wonderful and successful year!"



DIALOGUE OF RELIGIONS: SYNERGY FOR THE FUTURE

THE 8TH CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

By John Dunkelgrün

The tragic attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 triggered deep divisions between civilisations and religions, aimed particularly at Muslims. In response, Kazakhstan took the initiative to create a forum bringing together leaders from various faith traditions. With the endorsement of Pope John Paul II, the initiative gained support from many prominent representatives of world and traditional religions.

Since its inception, the message of the Congress has remained consistent: dialogue and cooperation are essential to shaping a better future. Organised by the International Center for Interfaith and Interreligious Dialogue (ICID) based in Astana, the first Congress took place in 2003. Held every three years, it has steadily grown in scale and influence, reflecting a deepening commitment to mutual understanding among faith communities.

This year's VIII Congress gathered over 200 delegates from 60 countries at the Palace of Independence in Astana. Following a video message from UN Secretary-General António Guterres, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered an impressive opening address reaffirming Kazakhstan's commitment to balanced diplomacy amid what he described as a "crisis of civilisation." He warned of hybrid warfare, the dangers of nuclear escalation, and the ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence. Tokayev made a strong plea against those who misuse religion to justify violence, calling this era a turning point in which faith must play a constructive role in guiding humanity.

Representing Pope Francis, Cardinal-Deacon George Jacob Koovakad conveyed the Holy See's message that "there can be no peace between peoples without peace between religions," underscoring the vital role of dialogue in healing a fractured world. The event brought together a remarkable group of religious leaders, including Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, and Mr. Li Guang Fu representing Taoism. Rabbi Ber, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel, spoke

movingly about the ongoing conflict in Gaza, stressing that "this is not a religious war. Jews do not oppose other religions; we respect them." He appealed for collective efforts to secure the release of hostages and to alleviate human suffering.

Bishop Jo Bailey Wells, Anglican Bishop for Episcopal Ministry in London, urged participants to move beyond declarations toward tangible action. She called on leaders to "stand in the discomfort of difference," engaging meaningfully across divides to nurture understanding and peace.

Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, emphasized that "values without action are not values." He called for stronger interfaith cooperation to uphold human dignity and to transform shared principles into concrete initiatives that celebrate diversity rather than division.

Echoing this theme, Cardinal-Deacon Koovakad reminded delegates that "united, we stand; divided, we fall," urging faith leaders to use their influence with humility and courage.

Speakers reflected on critical issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. These topics were addressed with empathy and restraint, avoiding blame and focusing instead on shared moral responsibility.

At the close of the Congress, delegates inaugurated the Park of Peace and Reconciliation in Astana, symbolising unity and renewal. The final declaration echoed



Cardinal-Deacon George Jacob Koovakad, Prefect of the Dicastery for Inter religious Dialogue.



Christophe Kamp, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



3 - Rabbi David Yosef, Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel



4 - Sheik Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Sec Gen of the Muslim World League

President Tokayev's call for a Movement for Peace, rejecting any link between terrorism and religion, nationality, or ethnicity.

Held in Kazakhstan — a predominantly Muslim nation uniquely positioned between East and West — the Congress reminds us of the importance of inclusive dialogue reaffirming that peace is possible when diverse voices come together around shared values.

UZBEKISTAN IS SOARING AHEAD!

By Roy Lie Atjam

The IV Tashkent International Investment Forum (TIIIF), held from 9–12 June 2025, once again affirmed Uzbekistan's position as one of the most dynamic emerging markets in the region. The flagship event, organized by the Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade, brought together more than 8,000 participants – including nearly 3,000 international guests from almost 100 countries.



The forum officially opened on 10 June with a powerful keynote address by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who underscored Uzbekistan's ambition to become a leading hub for sustainable investment. He highlighted four strategic priorities: the transition to a green economy, the rise of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, the modernization of the financial sector, and the development of critical minerals.

"We have all necessary capabilities to transform our region into a hub for the production of high value-added goods from minerals," President Mirziyoyev stated, adding that Uzbekistan is constructing "Metals of the Future" techno parks in the Tashkent and Samarkand regions. He announced a new incentive under which investors implementing full-cycle operations – from geological exploration

to the production of finished goods – will receive a 10-year rent tax refund.

President Mirziyoyev further noted that Uzbekistan's GDP has doubled in the past eight years, while trade with neighbouring countries has grown more than 3.5 times. Calling for deeper regional cooperation, he proposed advancing a "Concept of an Integrated Region for Investment and Trade" in Central Asia. "For us, investment is not just a financial resource," he emphasized. "It encompasses technology, knowledge, qualified personnel and integration into the international production chain – in other words, real development."

TIIIF 2025 concluded with exceptional results: 35 agreements worth a total of USD 31 billion were signed across energy, infrastructure, agriculture, mining, digital technologies and more – a resounding indication of investor confidence in Uzbekistan's reform-driven economy.

The forum also featured the First National Exhibition of Uzbekistan's Industrial and Investment Potential, showcasing 90 companies from over ten high-growth sectors including petrochemicals, engineering, construction, and food processing.

Prominent leaders in attendance included Bulgaria's President Rumen Radev, Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov, and other regional heads of government, alongside Odile Renaud-Basso, President of the EBRD, and Dilma Rousseff, President of the New Development Bank.



President Shavkat Mirziyoyev opens Tashkent International Investment Forum 2025



This year's opening concluded on a celebratory note with the FIFA World Cup qualifier between Uzbekistan and Qatar, attended by President Mirziyoyev and high-level international guests. Uzbekistan's national team triumphed 3–0, securing its first-ever qualification for the FIFA World Cup – a historic moment for the nation.

SENEGAL AT SOCIÉTEIT DE WITTE

By Diplomat Magazine

Her Excellency Ramatoulaye Ba Faye, Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal to the Netherlands, delivered a remarkable lecture in French to the Africa Table at Sociétéit De Witte on 9 September 2025. Her presentation, titled "Successful Electoral Transition: Building on the Positive Experience of Senegal," offered a masterful and deeply insightful overview of Senegal's modern political evolution.



Addressing an audience that included the Ambassador of Venezuela, a former Dutch Ambassador to Senegal, writers, politicians, retired public servants, and members of De Witte with a keen interest in Africa, Ambassador Ba Faye created a uniquely personal and interactive exchange. She carefully explained the foundations of Senegal's political stability, highlighting how the country's democratic system—one of the most resilient in Africa—has advanced through consensus, negotiation, and respect for institutional continuity.

The Ambassador detailed Senegal's transition from decades of single-party dominance to a competitive multi-party system, underscoring the significance of the 2016 constitutional reform that limited presidential mandates to two consecutive five-year terms. This evolution, she emphasized, occurred not through coercion but through dialogue among political actors and a commitment to democratic principles. Senegal's history

of peacekeeping, regional mediation, and constitutional reform contextualizes the democratic transition culminating in the election of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who took office in April 2024.

Franck Diafouka, Founder and Chair of the Africa Table, welcomed the invited guests to Sociétéit De Witte. He recalled that the Africa Table operates under the Chatham House Rule and serves as an engaged multidisciplinary forum exploring the issues, dynamics, and opportunities shaping the African continent. Its debates—held quarterly in English or French—bring together academics, practitioners, and experts from diverse fields, from culture and philosophy to diplomacy, economics, and security.

The next Africa Table keynote will be delivered by H.E. Mr. Vusi Madonsela, Ambassador of South Africa, on Tuesday 13 January 2026.

On 18 November 2025, the Africa Table also hosted a panel discussion on "The Future of Architecture in Africa," featuring architects Ms. Hilary Lukose (Kenya/UK), Mr. Steve Dingui (Ivory Coast/France), and Mr. Miguel Correia (Portugal).



CHINA CHOSE OPENNESS OVER PROTECTIONISM-AND TRANSFORMED ITS EV INDUSTRY.

CHINA CHOSE THE SECOND PATH: HOW OPENNESS, NOT PROTECTIONISM, TRANSFORMED ITS EV INDUSTRY

When China began its rise in the electric vehicle (EV) sector, it stood at a critical crossroads. The domestic market was dominated not by high-tech, high-performance electric cars, but by low-speed, low-quality vehicles—locally known as laotoule. These were inexpensive, basic, and ubiquitous in smaller cities. China faced two strategic choices. It could close its market, shield its domestic producers from global competition, and preserve a vast consumer base through protectionist policies—much like several countries have historically done.



Or it could choose the second, far more challenging path: open its market wider, invite the world's most advanced EV companies into China, and expose local firms to direct, intense competition.

CHINA CHOSE THE SECOND PATH.

This decision—bold, counterintuitive, and politically risky—ignited one of the most rapid industrial transformations in modern economic history.

PHASING OUT THE OLD: REGULATION AS A CATALYST FOR INDUSTRIAL RENEWAL

By the late 2010s, low-speed EVs accounted for millions of units on the road, but they offered limited safety, range, or technology. Their prevalence helped early electrification but threatened to trap the industry in a low-tech equilibrium.

To break the cycle, China implemented a series of regulatory shifts:

- New mandatory safety standards for braking, lithium battery safety, and chassis durability
- Higher performance thresholds for range, efficiency, and crash resistance
- A national push for intelligent driving capabilities
- Elimination of subsidies for low-speed EVs (which peaked around ¥120 billion Yuan total for EV subsidies from 2009 to 2022)

The results were dramatic:

- Hundreds of low-speed EV manufacturers exited the market.
- Non-compliant vehicles were removed from production catalogs.
- Consumer expectations shifted toward safer, larger, technologically sophisticated cars.

Regulation cleared the field. But regulation alone cannot create innovation. The true transformation came from competition.

OPENING THE DOOR TO TESLA: A RADICAL BREAK FROM INDUSTRIAL CONVENTION

In 2018, Beijing made a historic decision: allow Tesla to build a fully foreign-owned automobile factory in China, something never before permitted in the auto sector.

The project became:

- China's first wholly foreign-owned auto plant
- The fastest-built automotive factory in history (completed in 10 months)
- A facility reaching an annual production capacity of over 950,000 vehicles by 2024
- A benchmark for global supply chain efficiency

Most nations, when faced with strategic industries, protect domestic producers. China did the opposite. It invited the world's strongest EV competitor into the heart of its market.

The message was unequivocal: “We want the world’s best here—even if ours are not as good yet.”

This decision contradicted decades of industrial policy orthodoxy, which typically advises shielding infant industries until they mature. China instead put its domestic firms under maximum pressure—pressure that would force them to reinvent themselves.

THE TESLA EFFECT: COMPETITION RESETS CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Once production started in Shanghai, Tesla triggered what Chinese analysts call the “catfish effect”—the idea that introducing a powerful competitor stimulates the entire ecosystem.

Tesla set new standards for:

- Software-defined vehicles
- Long-range battery technology
- Autonomous driving systems
- Manufacturing efficiency (Shanghai Gigafactory’s cost per vehicle is among the lowest globally)

Consumers responded immediately:

- In 2019, Tesla sales in China were around 40,000 units.
- By 2023, sales exceeded 600,000, making China Tesla’s largest global market.
- Chinese customers began rejecting low-tech EVs and demanding intelligent cars with advanced driver assistance, seamless connectivity, and high safety.

Two historical forces converged:

1. Regulations eliminated low-speed EVs.
2. Competition raised consumer expectations dramatically.

This dual transformation forced domestic automakers to evolve—or disappear.

DOMESTIC AUTOMAKERS RISE: FROM LAOTOULE TO GLOBAL CHAMPIONS

The arrival of Tesla coincided with a wave of aggressive innovation among Chinese EV manufacturers. Companies that once built budget EVs now invested massively in R&D, design, and intelligent systems.

From 2020 to 2024:

- Chinese automakers increased R&D spending by over 35 percent annually.
- The number of Chinese EV patents doubled.
- More than 80 percent of new models released were high-tech, intelligent EVs.

Brands that emerged or transformed during this period include:

- ZEEKR (premium intelligent EVs backed by Geely)
- Aito (Huawei-backed smart EV line)
- Avatr (Changan/Huawei/CATL collaboration)
- Yangwang (BYD’s ultra-luxury performance brand)
- Xpeng, NIO, Li Auto—leaders in autonomous driving and smart cockpit technologies
- Zunjie S800, symbolizing China’s highest-end intelligent EV tier

The transformation was not incremental—it was exponential.

A comparison between a 2017 mini EV and a 2024 premium Chinese intelligent EV reveals an industry that has reinvented itself from the ground up.

THE EV ECOSYSTEM REINVENTED: FROM BATTERIES TO SOFTWARE

The impact of China’s openness extended far beyond individual companies. It reshaped the entire automotive ecosystem.

CHINA BECAME THE WORLD LEADER IN EV BATTERIES

By 2024:

- China produced over 76 percent of the world’s lithium-ion EV batteries.
- CATL and BYD became the two largest battery manufacturers globally.
- Chinese firms dominate production of cathodes, anodes, separators, and electrolytes.

The global EV industry is now structurally dependent on Chinese battery technology. A supply chain unmatched in completeness

China’s supply chain now covers:

- Advanced materials
- Motors and power electronics
- Inverters and sensors
- Lidar and autonomous driving chips
- Integrated software ecosystems

The result:

China can build an EV 30–40 percent cheaper than Europe or the US, even with comparable or superior performance.

RAPID CONSUMER ADOPTION—FUELED BY INNOVATION

China is now the world’s largest EV market:

- 2023 EV sales: 8 million units
- 2024 projected EV share: over 40 percent

of all new car sales

- EV penetration in top tier cities reaches 50–70 percent

This is innovation-driven adoption—not subsidy-driven.

CHINA BECOMES THE WORLD’S LARGEST AUTO EXPORTER

In 2023:

- China exported 5.22 million vehicles, surpassing Japan.
- Of these, 1.2 million were EVs—the highest number in global history.

This export boom is built on competitiveness, not protectionism.

THE STRATEGIC LOGIC: WHY OPENNESS WORKED

China’s EV strategy succeeded because openness created several reinforcing effects:

- Benchmark Pressure: Tesla forced Chinese firms to match global best practices.
- Technology Transfer by Osmosis: Domestic firms learned from competition, not compulsory transfer.
- Consumer Education: Tesla educated the market about what a premium EV should be.
- Ecosystem Upgrading: Suppliers aligned to meet higher standards across the board.
- Cost Efficiency: Scale and competition drove dramatic cost reductions.

Far from undermining domestic industry, competition pushed it into global leadership.

WHAT EUROPE CAN LEARN: OPENNESS AS A DRIVER OF INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH

Europe today faces deep concern about Chinese EV competitiveness. Yet China’s experience offers several lessons that Europe may find uncomfortable—but crucial.

The Strategic Cost of Europe’s Economic Policy Choices

At this critical moment, Europe’s economic policy decisions carry long-term consequences far beyond the automotive sector. A growing reliance on defensive instruments—tariffs, anti-subsidy investigations, procurement restrictions, and industrial “fortress” strategies—risks creating unintended structural weaknesses. By prioritizing protection over competitiveness, Europe may inadvertently deepen its productivity gap with global



innovators. When political energies are spent on shielding legacy industries rather than upgrading them, investment flows slow down, supply chains lose dynamism, and technological renewal becomes fragmented. The result is a continent that appears stable in the short term but risks entrenching a long-term competitiveness crisis. If Europe continues down this path, it may face smaller markets, reduced consumer choice, slower innovation cycles, and ultimately a loss of global relevance in future-defining industries such as electric mobility, AI, batteries, and renewable energy technologies. Economic history shows that once a market falls behind in scale and innovation tempo, catching up can take decades—or prove impossible. Europe's strategic dilemma is therefore urgent: pursue protection and risk permanent stagnation, or embrace competition and accelerate modernization.

EUROPE'S CHALLENGE IS NOT A LACK OF TECHNOLOGY, BUT A LACK OF SPEED.

European automakers are technologically strong—arguably stronger than Chinese firms in some areas.

But they are slower in:

- Digital transformation
- Product iteration
- Software integration
- Autonomous driving deployment
- Battery cost breakthroughs

Competition accelerates all these processes.

PROTECTIONISM OFFERS SHORT-TERM COMFORT BUT LONG-TERM DECLINE.

A protected market reduces pressure to innovate.

China once protected its automakers—and they fell behind. Competition forced their renewal.

CHINESE COMPANIES COULD BE EUROPE'S "TESLA EFFECT."

Just as Tesla triggered China's transformation, Chinese EVs could push Europe to:

- Accelerate its electrification timelines
- Invest more heavily in software-defined vehicles
- Rationalize supply chains
- Reduce costs
- Innovate at greater speed

THE REAL TEST IS COMPETITIVENESS, NOT INSULATION.

Europe's goal should not be to "keep Chinese EVs out," but to make European EVs good enough that consumers prefer them.

Building walls slows progress. Competing against the strongest accelerates it.

WHY CHINA'S STRATEGY MATTERS GLOBALLY

China's EV transformation is more than a national success story. It has reshaped global climate goals, energy security, and industrial competitiveness.

GLOBAL DECARBONIZATION ACCELERATED

Since 2021, Chinese renewables and EV products helped other countries reduce an estimated 4.1 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

EV AFFORDABILITY INCREASED WORLDWIDE

Chinese competition has lowered global EV prices.

A 2024 BloombergNEF report notes a 40 percent decline in battery pack prices, driven primarily by Chinese production scale.

MORE DIVERSE SUPPLY CHAINS

Global automakers now rely on Chinese partnerships for:

- LFP batteries
- Sodium-ion batteries
- Energy storage systems
- Sustainable material recycling

FASTER INNOVATION CYCLES

China has established the fastest product cycle in the world:

- New energy vehicle models refresh every 12–18 months
- Over-the-air software updates occur monthly or weekly
- Driving assistance systems improve continuously

The global industry cannot ignore this pace.

The Power of Choosing Openness

China's EV revolution is often explained through investment scale, policy support, or manufacturing strength. These are all factors—but they are not the decisive factor. The real turning point was strategic courage: China chose openness over protectionism.

By letting Tesla operate freely, raising domestic standards, and trusting competition to drive innovation, China transformed its EV industry from low-speed laotoule vehicles into some of the world's most advanced intelligent cars.

It is a lesson with global relevance:

- Competitiveness grows from pressure, not protection.
- Innovation accelerates through exposure to the world's best.
- Industrial strength is earned, not sheltered.

China chose the second path—and in doing so, reshaped not only its automotive industry, but the global future of mobility.

SAUDI ARABIA'S 95TH NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED IN THE HAGUE



On 23 September, His Highness Prince Jalawi bin Turki Al Saud hosted an elegant reception to celebrate the 95th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, attended by members of the Dutch government, ambassadors from around the world, members of the diplomatic corps, heads of international organizations, distinguished members of society, Saudi nationals, and friends of Saudi Arabia, as well as leaders from the cultural, artistic, business, and scientific sectors.

Traditional Saudi hospitality was evident at every stage of the evening, creating a warm and gracious atmosphere that reflected the Kingdom's rich heritage.

In his address, His Highness Prince Jalawi bin Turki Al Saud welcomed the guests and emphasized the ongoing journey of unity and development that began with the unification of the Kingdom by the late King Abdulaziz Al Saud. He highlighted the nation's continued progress under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

His Highness noted that the National Day serves as a time to renew loyalty, pride, and belonging, reaffirming commitment to national development and global engagement under wise leadership. He emphasized the Kingdom's far-reaching transformation driven by Vision 2030, which aims to diversify the economy, empower citizens, and promote sustainable development.

The Prince also highlighted the historic and growing bilateral relations between

Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands, dating back to 1872 with the opening of the Dutch consulate in Jeddah and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1930. Today, cooperation spans key sectors including economy, culture, energy, education, technology, innovation, and food security.

At the international level, His Highness reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to global peace and stability. He referred to the High-Level International Conference hosted by Saudi Arabia in July 2025 in partnership with France, which led to the New York Declaration—calling for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The declaration was endorsed by 142 UN member states.

His Highness reiterated Saudi Arabia's firm stance against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, citing its active role in the



Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and its steadfast support for international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes through institutions such as the International Court of Justice.

He also underscored the Kingdom's transformation under Vision 2030, highlighting efforts to empower youth and women and to invest in technology and innovation. Initiatives such as the creation of the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA) and the hosting of the Global AI Summit demonstrate Saudi Arabia's leadership in the digital economy.

In the fields of energy and environment, His Highness noted Saudi Arabia's pioneering role through OPEC and major sustainability programs such as the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative. These efforts aim to reduce carbon emissions by 278 million tons annually by 2030, achieve net zero by 2060, and generate 50% of the Kingdom's electricity from clean energy sources by 2030.

Following His Highness's remarks, guests engaged in warm conversation while enjoying a lavish dinner showcasing the variety and richness of Saudi gastronomy—a vibrant blend of Bedouin roots, Middle Eastern influence, and regional flavors that delighted every palate.





H.E. Fernando Simas Magalhães, ambassador of Brazil.



H.R.H. Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme



3 - Matilde Simas Magalhães, H.E. Fernando Simas Magalhães, ambassador of Brazil and the Mayor of The Hague, Jan van Zanen.

THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY BRAZIL CELEBRATES 203 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

In celebration of the 203rd Anniversary of the Independence of the Federative Republic of Brazil, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhães hosted a reception at the Grand Hotel Amrâth Kurhaus in Scheveningen-The Hague on Friday, September 5, 2025. Ambassador Simas Magalhães warmly welcomed the numerous guests, expressing sincere gratitude for their presence.

The reception brought together approximately 350 guests, including government authorities, senior representatives from the private sector, cultural leaders, members of the diplomatic corps, and the Brazilian community. The Embassy was honored by the presence of H.R.H. Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, who delivered a keynote address alongside the host of the evening, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhães. The master of ceremonies for the evening was Brazilian diplomat Felipe Ferreira Marques.

This year's celebration highlighted Brazil's commitment to sustainability and climate action in the lead-up to COP30, to be held in November 2025 in Belém, Pará. The historic Kurhaus in Scheveningen, overlooking the North Sea, provided a symbolic setting to reaffirm shared responsibility in addressing global climate challenges, including sea-level rise.

Ambassador Simas Magalhães emphasized the growing strength of relations between Brazil and the Netherlands, describing them as a forward-looking partnership grounded in shared values and a common vision for the future. He underscored Brazil's commitment to global climate action, noting that the country will host COP30 in the Amazon region, a milestone demonstrating Brazil's leadership and collaboration with international partners on sustainability.

The Ambassador also highlighted the steady expansion of cultural, academic, trade, and people-to-people exchanges between both nations, citing a notable 17% increase in Dutch visitors to Brazil earlier in the year. Themes such as renewable energy, Indigenous heritage, and sustainable development featured prominently in his remarks, reflecting the diverse and dynamic areas of cooperation. Altogether, his address reaffirmed Brazil's determination to deepen its bilateral engagement with the Netherlands and to promote friendship through diplomacy, dialogue, and shared progress.

"Brazil remains further engaged in advancing the cause of international cooperation mediated by diplomacy and law through peaceful means," he concluded.

The artistic program featured the Brazilian national anthem, performed by soprano Carla Maffioletti (formerly a soloist with conductor André Rieu), and the Dutch national anthem, performed by Femke Smit, Edison Prize 2024 winner (Best Vocalist), who has previously performed for former Queen Beatrix alongside the group Roda da Holanda.

The cultural segment also included a lively performance by Roda da Holanda, a renowned ensemble dedicated to Brazilian music that will celebrate its 10th anniversary

in 2025, enriching the evening with a festive spirit of cultural exchange.

Guests enjoyed a curated selection of Brazilian wines and gastronomy, presented with the support of Miolo. Brazilian wines continue to gain international acclaim: at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2024, Brazil increased its medal count by 39, and in 2025 the country achieved a Gold Medal (96 points) for Maria Maria Isabela Syrah 2023 and 48 Silver Medals. Brazilian producers are also advancing sustainability; in the country's main southern wine regions, most vineyards are rain-fed (without irrigation), and peer-reviewed life-cycle assessments are mapping environmental hotspots to reduce energy, water, and packaging impacts across the winemaking process.

The evening also showcased the excellence of Brazilian orange juice, with Cutrale offering guests the opportunity to experience one of Brazil's most emblematic and globally renowned products.

BOLIVIA'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATED IN THE HAGUE



To mark the 200th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, H.E. Ambassador Roberto Calzadilla Sarmiento hosted a National Day reception at the Embassy of Bolivia in The Hague. The event reflected Bolivia's deep cultural richness and the pride of a nation commemorating two centuries of sovereignty.

Diplomats, academics, members of the Bolivian community, and friends of Bolivia filled the embassy and its garden to share an evening of art, music, and hospitality. The La Plata Ensemble opened the celebration with a performance of Chiquitano baroque music, followed by Ambassador Calzadilla Sarmiento's remarks on Bolivia's historical journey and commitment to unity, inclusion, and social justice.

He underlined Bolivia's transformation into a Plurinational State, recognizing 36 indigenous nations, their languages, and traditions, and reaffirmed the country's foreign policy of peace, dialogue, and diplomacy for Living Well, grounded in harmony with nature and multilateral cooperation.

Alma Latina dance group.

Ambassador Roberto Calzadilla Sarmiento during his Bicentennial address at the Embassy of Bolivia in The Hague.

prepared by Iskay and chef Rodrigo Arandia, alongside tastings of Bolivian wines and singani, presented by Dutch ethnologist Cees van Casteren.

Awards were also presented to individuals and organizations for their contributions to promoting Bolivia's image and culture in the Netherlands.

The Bicentennial celebration, under Ambassador Calzadilla Sarmiento's leadership, stood as a meaningful tribute to Bolivia's history, diversity, and enduring commitment to peace and solidarity.

¡Jallalla Bolivia! Viva Bolivia.



SPAIN'S NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED IN THE HAGUE



On the occasion of the National Day of Spain, H.E. Ms. Consuelo Femenía, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain, hosted a well-attended reception at the Residence of Spain in The Hague on October 14. Ambassadors, national and international authorities, and distinguished members of the Spanish community filled the elegant rooms adorned with works by Spanish masters, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage.

In her address, Ambassador Femenía reflected on Spain's growing diplomatic role in an increasingly complex international environment.

"This year," she said, "we continue to witness a deterioration of international relations through a less cooperative diplomacy and, at times, a fierce use of force. In this scenario, Spain is increasing its diplomatic and political profile to show that another reality is possible. In front of today's challenges, we must uphold our vision with a long-term perspective, and respond united — as Spaniards and as Europeans."

Quoting His Majesty King Felipe VI's recent speech before the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Femenía recalled:

"Spain is a nation with millenary roots and a clear universal vocation that has contributed decisively to shaping the history of the world. It stands at the historical origin of both globalization and international law, as well as of medieval parliamentarism and contemporary liberal democracy."

"With the perspective that centuries give us," the King added, "we can clearly see that our best moments come when we move forward open to, and engaged with, the world

— driven by a Spanish society that is an example of commitment to human dignity and solidarity with the most disadvantaged." The Ambassador emphasized her firm belief in diplomacy's transformative power:

"After more than thirty years in diplomacy, I cannot think any other way. We must remain faithful to our values of openness, plurality, and respect for others. Yet, when our wellbeing and prosperity can no longer be taken for granted, we must become stronger actors, not mere spectators. It is time for Europe's awakening and for deeper cooperation with our partners."

Ambassador Femenía expressed gratitude to countries that offered assistance during recent natural disasters in Spain, notably the Netherlands, which swiftly extended technical help after the devastating DANA storm in Valencia.

Addressing global crises, she reaffirmed Spain's commitment to peace and human rights:

"When bombs fall over a territory and its people, we cannot look the other way. In the Middle East, we are witnessing a humanitarian tragedy of immense proportions. We must continue to work toward a credible peace process and the two-state solution. Spain remains steadfast in its support for Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations and in fighting impunity for atrocities."

She also reiterated Spain's unwavering support for Ukraine, highlighting her country's involvement in negotiations in The

Hague, including efforts to establish a register of damages and a claims commission.

Spain, she noted, remains a committed member of NATO and continues to strengthen its development cooperation and humanitarian action in line with the Foreign Action Strategy 2025–2028. The recent 4th Conference on Financing for Development held in Seville served as an important platform to mobilize support for the world's most vulnerable nations.

The Ambassador reminded the audience that this year also marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the dictatorship in Spain and the adoption of the Spanish Constitution, milestones that symbolize the country's democratic resilience. To commemorate this, the Embassy will organize a conference at the Clingendael Institute featuring high-level speakers, followed later by a cultural event with acclaimed film director Pedro Almodóvar.

Addressing her compatriots, Ambassador Femenía shared a heartfelt message:

"A mis conciudadanos, quiero saludarlos y reconocer una vez más que sois ejemplo de solidaridad. In this changing global landscape, each of us—businesses, students, civil society, and public servants—has a role to play. As we move from an era of globalization toward one where resilience and risk diversification are essential, Spain's strong economic performance and the achievements of our companies abroad are more strategic than ever."

Concluding her remarks, she thanked all attendees for joining in the celebration and reaffirmed the spirit of friendship that unites both nations:

"Long live the friendship between Spain and the Netherlands!"



MALAYSIA CELEBRATES ITS 68TH NATIONAL DAY IN THE NETHERLANDS

By Roy Lie Atjam

On 22 September 2025, the Embassy of Malaysia in the Netherlands celebrated the nation's 68th National Day and 62nd Malaysia Day. The evening brought together ambassadors from Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Thailand, Morocco, Yemen, the Philippines, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and many other friends of Malaysia, along with members of the Malaysian diaspora.

His Excellency Dato' Roseli Abdul, Ambassador of Malaysia, warmly welcomed his guests and highlighted the significance of August and September for Malaysians, marking both independence in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963.



Structural reforms under Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim have propelled Malaysia to become the third-fastest-growing economy in Southeast Asia in 2024, with GDP growth of 5.1%. The country also climbed 11 places in the 2025 World Competitiveness Index, now ranked 23rd. Looking ahead, the recently tabled 13th Malaysia Plan (2026-2030) aims to drive technological leadership, inclusive growth, and governance reforms in pursuit of high-income nation status by 2030.

This year also holds special importance as Malaysia assumes the Chairmanship of ASEAN, focusing on peace, security, and prosperity in the region.

Ambassador Roseli further emphasized the strong bonds between Malaysia and the Netherlands, forged on 31 August 1957, the

very day Malaysia gained independence. Today, the Netherlands remains a leading trading partner and investor, particularly in semiconductors and agriculture. Recent milestones include the repatriation of the Guar Kepah Neolithic remains and the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation in the Semiconductor Industry.

The Ambassador called upon Malaysians in the Netherlands to serve as "mini-ambassadors," strengthening ties between the two nations: "While we may not be many here, I am confident that each of you can make a difference. Little drops make an ocean."

The celebration concluded with a vibrant cultural performance and a sumptuous Malaysian buffet, offering guests a true taste of Malaysia's diversity.

THE 2025 HUNGARIAN NATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION

By Roy Lie Atjam



The Hungarian National Day commemoration, concert, and reception took place on 30 October 2025 at the Kloosterkerk in The Hague.

H.E. Ambassador Dániel Horogszegi Szilágyi-Landdeck opened the evening with a commemorative welcome speech, followed by a festive concert featuring outstanding artists from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. The event attracted a significant crowd among them Ambassadors and diplomats of India, Malta, Kosovo, Philippines, Turkey, El

Salvador, Portugal, Burundi, and embodied a spirit of remembrance and celebration.

Further, the concert paid tribute to the national heroes of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, simultaneously celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.

Featured performers include violinist Márta Ábrahám, pianist László Borbély, and pianist Máté Lachegyi, an alumnus of the Academy now residing in the Netherlands.



Attendees were treated to an engaging program of works by Liszt, Bartók, Hubay, Kodály, Dohnányi, and Brahms, showcasing the richness of Hungarian musical heritage and the unwavering spirit of freedom.

To cap off the festive evening, guests were invited to a reception and a specially curated exhibition dedicated to Franz Liszt, presented by the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.



CYPRUS MARKS 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

His Excellency Dr. Spyros Attas, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus, and Madam Domna Paschalidou-Attas hosted a reception to celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Cyprus. The festive event took place on 1 October 2025 at the iconic Hotel Des Indes in The Hague. Cyprus, formerly known as Kittim or Cethima, is an ancient country strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia,

and Africa. Once a British colony, it gained independence in 1960 and joined the European Union in 2004.

In his address, Ambassador Dr. Attas warmly welcomed the Attorney General of Cyprus, Mr. George Savvides, and the Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Savvas Angelides, honouring their presence at the celebration. He also expressed gratitude to the Jazz Trio led by Marios Charalambous, who performed the national anthems of Cyprus and the Netherlands in a creative and engaging way.

Reflecting on the country's history, Ambassador Attas stated:

"Cyprus, born out of a bitter anti-colonial struggle in 1960, has preserved its independence under exceptionally difficult circumstances. As Ambassador to the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, I am proud to represent a democratic nation and EU member that upholds the values of the rule of law, human rights, and freedom."

He emphasized Cyprus's humanitarian efforts, highlighting its assistance in recent evacuation operations from Sudan and Lebanon, in cooperation with the Netherlands and other nations. He also noted the historic visit of Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima to Cyprus in March 2025 as a milestone in bilateral relations.

Ambassador Attas reaffirmed his country's principled position on international law, addressing the continued occupation of one-third of Cyprus's territory and expressing solidarity with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. He also referred to Cyprus's role in facilitating humanitarian aid to Gaza through the Amalthia Maritime Corridor.

Looking ahead, he announced Cyprus's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union in January 2026, reaffirming his country's commitment to a "stronger, more secure, and more resilient European Union."

The reception brought together ambassadors, diplomats, and international officials in a warm atmosphere of friendship and solidarity, concluding with fine beverages and appetizers — a fitting tribute to 65 years of Cypriot independence and unity.



Domna Paschalidou-Attas, the Ambassador's spouse, Mr. George Savvides, Attorney General of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Savvas Angelides, Deputy Attorney General, and H.E. Dr. Spyros Attas, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the Benelux.



CAPITÁN MIRANDA FROM URUGUAY AT SAIL AMSTERDAM

As part of the SAIL Amsterdam 2025 celebrations, the Embassy of Uruguay welcomed the arrival of the Capitán Miranda, the country's training ship, which made an official stopover in the Port of Amsterdam from 20 to 24 August.

Held every five years, SAIL Amsterdam is one of the world's most iconic maritime events. The participation of the Capitán Miranda held special meaning this year, coinciding with the Bicentennial of Uruguay's Independence.

More than 1,000 vessels—including historic tall ships, naval frigates, and traditional Dutch boats—filled the port, drawing over three million visitors. The atmosphere was festive, with fireworks, concerts, and long lines of visitors eager to tour the ships.

Marking its 50th anniversary, and Amsterdam's 750th anniversary, the event became one of Europe's largest cultural and touristic celebrations. The Capitán Miranda proudly joined the opening parade, her crew waving Uruguayan flags to the rhythm of national music as the Dutch national television broadcasted the spectacular SAIL-In Parade, watched by more than a million viewers.

The Ambassador of Uruguay, H.E. Dr Alvaro Gonzalez Otero, together with the ship's commander, Captain Andrés Debali, participated in the Official Reception aboard the Royal Netherlands Navy ship on Wednesday, August 20, and in the Captains'

Dinner, held at the Maritime Museum in Amsterdam on Thursday, August 21.

The Embassy co-organized with Captain Miranda crew on Saturday, August 23, as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations in the Netherlands, a cocktail party aboard the ship, attended by ambassadors and diplomatic representatives, Dutch authorities, Sail Amsterdam authorities, businesspeople, and members of the Uruguayan community.

H.E. Mr Alvaro Gonzalez Otero gave a brief welcome speech, highlighting the symbolism of the ship as a traveling maritime ambassador, which helps to spread the international principles that are part of Uruguay foreign policy, its culture, and the defense of international peace in a complex international scenario.

During his youth, Ambassador González Otero, recalled visiting his uncle who served as a ship's official. Later, during his diplomatic career, he had the honor of welcoming the Capitán Miranda on four separate occasions—first while serving in USA, then in Brazil, and more recently during its last two visits to the Netherlands.

During the event, the ship's commander, Captain Andrés Debali, recounted the history of the Capitán Miranda. Ordered in Spain in 1930, the vessel began her career as a cargo ship and was officially delivered to the Uruguayan Navy on 21 November of that year. She was named after Captain Francisco



Miranda (1868–1925), a distinguished Uruguayan hydrographer who served as a cabinet officer, war secretary, and later as a professor of marine geography at the Naval Academy of Uruguay.

For nearly five decades, the Capitán Miranda served as a hydrographic survey ship. In 1978, she underwent a major refit and was transformed into a sail-training vessel, a role she continues to fulfill with pride as part of the Uruguayan Navy.

After the formal part, participants were offered a tasting of typical dishes, an "asado" and a candombe show performed by the ship's crew. The participation was highly valued by the organizers of Sail Amsterdam and the Mayor of Amsterdam, who highlighted the warmth and professionalism of the Uruguayan delegation.

NATIONAL DAY OF URUGUAY 2025: CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE HAGUE

On the occasion of Uruguay's National Day and the bicentennial of its independence, H.E. Ambassador Álvaro González Otero hosted a distinguished reception at Nieuwspoort, the renowned political and media center near the Dutch Parliament.

More than 300 guests attended, including representatives of the diplomatic corps, international courts, Dutch politics, media, and the Uruguayan community. Among them were the President, Vice-President, and Registrar of the International Criminal Court (ICC); the President of the Mechanism

for International Criminal Tribunals; several ICC judges; and the Director General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCCH). Ambassadors from across Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa joined the celebration.

Guests were welcomed with the aromas and flavors of Uruguay. Thanks to the National Meat Institute of Uruguay (INAC), authentic Uruguayan beef, spinach empanadas, and dulce de leche mousse were served, paired with renowned Uruguayan wines. The evening began with the anthems of Uruguay

and the Netherlands, performed by pianist Jessie de Bellis and soprano Sara de los Campos.

Ambassador González Otero's Address

Ambassador González Otero reflected on Uruguay's 200 years of independence: "It is an honour to highlight the place that Uruguay occupies in its region and in the world — not because of its size, but because of the strength of its institutions, its commitment to sustainability, and its dedication to human development."



He underlined Uruguay's position as a leader in democracy, ranked 15th globally in the Democracy Index, and emphasized progress in digital transformation, renewable energy, and innovation.

"In 2024, 99% of Uruguay's electricity was generated from clean sources — mainly wind and biomass, but also hydroelectric and solar. This model has consolidated Uruguay as the country with the cleanest energy matrix in the region. We are already preparing for a new stage: the production of green hydrogen, with the first plant planned for 2026."

The Ambassador also praised Uruguay's macroeconomic stability, its investment-grade economy, and its emerging innovation ecosystem, citing dLocal, PedidosYa, and Nowports as examples of global Uruguayan startups. He concluded:

"Uruguay does not lead in volume, but in institutional quality, sustainability, and transparency. For all these reasons, Uruguay has become a regional and global benchmark. Progress is possible with vision, consistency, and commitment."

After introducing the short film The Nation of the Future, he raised a toast:

"First, to Uruguay's 200 years of independence; second, to Dutch-Uruguayan friendship and cooperation; and third, in the hope that we may soon find the way to



lasting and stable peace across our planet.
¡Vivan Uruguay y los Países Bajos!"

The Hague's Tribute

Mayor Jan van Zanen paid tribute to Uruguay, addressing guests first in Spanish: "Les deseo muchas felicidades, es un honor poder acompañarles hoy en este día tan especial."

He continued in English, highlighting shared values of freedom and self-determination: "Just like the Dutch, the people of Uruguay fought in the 19th century for their independence and self-determination, often against the odds. This evening we remember those struggles and celebrate the peace and friendship that now unite us."

A Celebration of Uruguayan Spirit

The evening featured a captivating artistic program with ten performers from Uruguay and Argentina presenting tango, candombe, and popular Uruguayan music. The tango performance by Silvia Mancuso, with Jessie de Bellis and dancers Ezequiel Paludi and Geraldina Rojas, drew special admiration.

Sara de los Campos, Rosina Álvarez, Gabriel Mateos, and Group Bircuyamba continued with traditional Uruguayan rhythms, while banners displayed quotes from Uruguay's heroes, poets, and musicians — a symbolic bridge between past and present.

A Night to Remember

The evening extended joyfully over three hours, filled with music, gastronomy, and a warm atmosphere reflecting Uruguay's democratic and innovative spirit. As glasses were raised, the message was clear: Uruguay, 200 years young, proudly embracing its future. Viva Uruguay!

URUGUAY'S BICENTENNIAL

Organ Concert by Cristina García Banegas in The Hague

To mark the 200th anniversary of Uruguay's independence, the Ambassador of Uruguay to the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Álvaro González Otero, hosted a commemorative concert on 22 August at the Church of Our Saviour in The Hague. The evening featured an exceptional performance by world-renowned Uruguayan organist Cristina García Banegas, as part of her European tour. The concert drew around three hundred guests, including ambassadors, diplomats, international officials, and distinguished figures from the legal community, among them Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, former ICC President, and Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, President of the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Members of the Uruguayan and Dutch communities, business representatives, academics, and parishioners were also present.

García Banegas performed works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Lionel Rogg, Joan Cabanilles, Antonio Sáenz, and Astor Piazzolla, alongside two of her own compositions, on the newly restored 1955 organ of the Church of Our Saviour.

"We are honored to welcome Ms. Cristina García Banegas, a world-renowned organist from Uruguay," said Ambassador González Otero. He praised her illustrious career as a performer across Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Israel, her role as founder of the Ensemble Vocal & Instrumental De Profundis, and as creator of the Festival Internacional del Órgano de Uruguay. With more than 50 recordings—including the complete organ works of Bach—she has brought Uruguay's musical tradition to the world stage. Her cultural achievements have earned her Uruguay's highest honors, including Ciudadana Ilustre de Montevideo (2022) and the Delmira Agustini Medal of Cultural Merit (2023).



Father Sjaak de Boer, celebrating 40 years of priestly service, expressed his joy in hosting the celebration: "It is a great honor to congratulate Uruguay on its 200th anniversary. Thanks to the Embassy's engagement, we welcome such a distinguished gathering this evening. It was a privilege to hear Ms. García Banegas rehearse for the first time on our newly renovated organ."

The evening closed with a standing ovation. Showered with applause and flowers, García Banegas returned to the stage for an encore, leaving the audience with an unforgettable tribute to Uruguay's Bicentennial.

CUBA MARKS 72ND NATIONAL REBELLION DAY IN THE HAGUE

The Embassy of Cuba in the Netherlands hosted a reception to mark the 72nd anniversary of the National Rebellion Day at its premises in The Hague. The event brought together diplomats, Cuban families, and friends of Cuba in a warm and festive atmosphere.

Among the distinguished guests were the ambassadors of China, Uruguay, Peru, Angola, Panama, Venezuela, as well as the Chief of Mission of Palestine. Guests enjoyed live Cuban music, a traditional menu, and an authentic cultural celebration.

The highlight of the evening was the address by H.E. Ms. Eva Yelina Silva Walker, Ambassador of Cuba, who recalled the significance of July 26, 1953, the day of the attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks:

"July 26 is a date of profound historical significance for the Cuban people. In the centennial year of our Apostle José Martí, a group of young people, filled with courage and revolutionary passion, stormed the second most important military barracks in the country, and with this action, they began

the final stage of the struggle for definitive independence, achieved on January 1, 1959.

Today, 72 years later, Cuba remains a rebellious island, populated by men and women determined to safeguard their hard-won sovereignty, whatever the cost."

Ambassador Silva Walker highlighted achievements of the Cuban Revolution, particularly in education and healthcare. She noted that both services are universal and free for the entire population, and emphasized Cuba's contributions abroad:

"Over 10 million people in 30 countries, including indigenous communities in Australia and Mozambique, have benefited from Cuban literacy programs. More than 600,000 Cuban health professionals have served in 165 countries since 1963, with over 24,000 currently active in 56 nations." Despite the ongoing U.S. embargo, the ambassador underscored Cuba's determination to pursue "a prosperous and sustainable socialism." She pointed to efforts to update the legal framework following the adoption of the 2019 Constitution, strengthen the economy, promote new economic actors, and expand



renewable energy to improve the country's energy outlook and protect the environment.

The evening concluded with Cuban talents from the Cuban National School of Arts, who invited guests to dance, followed by a Cuban culinary experience accompanied by rum and mojitos. The reception was made possible thanks to the support of Casa Ron, Swinkels Family Brewers, and VION.

SLOVAK NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION IN THE HAGUE



H.E. Mr. Juraj Podhorský, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, hosted a jazz concert featuring the acclaimed Slovak duo Lash&Grey to celebrate the Day of the Constitution of Slovakia with a distinguished evening at the historic Kloosterkerk.

Ambassadors, diplomats, heads of international and European organizations, Dutch officials from various ministries, and members of the Slovak community gathered for the occasion. In his address, Ambassador Podhorský reflected on the symbolic meaning of the day, emphasizing culture as a universal bridge that connects people and deepens understanding among nations. He quoted the Dutch humanist Erasmus, reminding guests that "culture is the common bond of humanity."

The Ambassador also highlighted milestones in Slovak-Dutch cultural cooperation, including the 25th anniversary of the Danubiana Meulensteen Museum of Modern Art near Bratislava—an emblem of friendship between the two nations. The celebration included an exhibition of

award-winning Slovak illustrations from the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, transforming Kloosterkerk into a gallery of creativity and color.

Following the concert, guests enjoyed a reception featuring authentic Slovak cuisine and warm hospitality. The evening beautifully showcased the richness of Slovak culture, its artistic spirit, and the enduring friendship between Slovakia and the Netherlands.



CELEBRATING ARMENIA 34TH ANNIVERSARY



On the occasion of the 34th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia, on 6 October 2025 in The Hague, H.E. Ambassador Viktor Biyagov hosted an outstanding commemoration at the historic Pulchri Gallery.

The event gathered Dutch government officials, heads of international organizations, ambassadors, members of the Diplomatic Corps at large, members of parliament, reverend fathers, business leaders, members of the Armenian diaspora, artists, and friends of Armenia. Distinguished guests included Judge Tomoko Akane, President of the ICC; Dr. Cezary Czepelak, Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration; Mr. Philippe Gautier, Registrar of the ICJ; Mr. Osvaldo Zavala Giler, Registrar of the ICC; and the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Caspar Veldkamp.

"It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all to the celebration of the 34th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia.

For more than three decades, my country and people have been navigating an uneasy path, striving to safeguard our independence and national security amid persistent geopolitical turmoil.

And now, I am filled with hope that in the next three, ten, one hundred decades, the citizens of Armenia will be living in the long-awaited peace and prosperity that we aspire to," said Ambassador Biyagov.

Armenia is internationally recognised for its historical and cultural treasures. "But today I'm especially pleased to speak about the Armenian national costumes, known as taraz, which beautifully reflect our country's rich heritage and cultural diversity. For centuries, people wore them, taking pride in every touch of the needle. Every detail in these dresses speaks a language of its own. They tell the story of the family who wore them, their region, and their profession. They contain all the colours of the Armenian highlands and showcase the artistry and techniques of Armenian masters."

The highlight of the evening was a unique presentation of Armenian national costumes, staged with the support of the Teryan Cultural Centre of Armenia and the youth of the Abovian Centre in the Netherlands. The performance was accompanied by works of renowned Armenian composers Arno Babajanyan, Alexander Spendiaryan, and Aram Khachaturyan, performed by talented pianists Aylin Vardanyan, Adam Akopian, and Meline Yeghoyan.

After the performance, a photo zone at the back of the hall offered guests the opportunity to experience the taraz up close. "Make sure to enjoy the evening to its fullest with the Armenian food and Armenian brandy.

Long live Armenia!"



A DOMINICAN NIGHT

On the occasion of the 168th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the Dominican Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, H.E. Mr. Carlos de la Mota, hosted a festive reception at the historic Hotel Des Indes in The Hague. A Dominican Night highlighted more than a century and a half of lasting bilateral relations, celebrated by ambassadors, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Dutch government officials, business representatives, the Dominican diaspora, and friends of the country.

After the national anthems, Ambassador De la Mota delivered a warmly received address. "It is a great honor for me to extend a warm welcome to this Dominican Night, an evening filled with our identity, culture, and hospitality," said Ambassador De la Mota. "During this evening, you will be able to appreciate and taste some of the emblematic products of the Dominican Republic, such as tobacco, coffee, rum, and chocolate, which represent the quality, dedication, and talent of our producers."

A lively highlight of the evening was the performance of Rolf Sanchez, the popular Dutch singer of Dominican descent, who took the stage and quickly had guests dancing to his well-known rhythm blending Dutch lyrics with unmistakable Dominican flavor.

The Netherlands is home to 18,000 Dominicans, making it the third European country with the largest Dominican community, in addition to more than 10,000 mixed Dominican-Dutch families.

"Every Dominican in the Netherlands carries a piece of the Caribbean in their heart, but also a deep gratitude towards this nation that has welcomed them with respect and opportunities," he said. "This human and emotional reciprocity is the strongest foundation for any lasting relationship between peoples."

Ambassador De la Mota expressed his appreciation to the supporters of the event. Special thanks were extended to Barceló, Heineken, Chocolala, Café Santo Domingo (INDUBÁN), Diplomat Magazine, RIZEK



(KahKow), Cacao Mae, Oliver & Oliver, Cortés, ECMA, Caricca, La Aurora Cigars, and DHL, as well as all companies and institutions whose enthusiasm helped showcase the best of the Dominican Republic in the Netherlands.

"¡Que viva la amistad entre República Dominicana y el Reino de los Países Bajos! Laten we het feest beginnen—¡Que comience la fiesta!"

CELEBRATING THE 102ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

By Roy Lie Atjam

On 31 October 2025, H.E. Ms. Fatma Ceren Yazgan, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye, hosted a reception in The Hague to celebrate the 102nd anniversary of the Republic. The event brought together diplomats, officials, and representatives of the Dutch-Turkish business community.

In her inaugural National Day address, Ambassador Yazgan thanked all sections of Türkiye's diplomatic presence in the Netherlands. Before speaking, she invited guests to hear the historic voice of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. "He led us to independence and decided not to be the ruler himself, but he strived to have a Republic," she said, adding that both Atatürk's message and that of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan affirm that "sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation."

Highlighting shared histories, she noted: "We find a kindred spirit in the Dutch people, who centuries ago fought their own struggle



for independence." She also recalled that "the Ottomans were the first to recognize the Dutch Republic," marking the start of relations in 1612.

Ambassador Yazgan praised the strong economic partnership: "The Netherlands is the largest investor in Türkiye, and our trade volume has reached 13 billion euros." She emphasized the importance of the Dutch-Turkish community, now spanning

generations and professions, and remarked with humour on language challenges among new expats.

Quoting Queen Beatrix, she reaffirmed that "openness and tolerance form a major basis of trust," and reflected on historical traditions of coexistence. She also pointed to today's global challenges: "Our children are very aware that this order could not protect innocent lives... Peace is worth much more than any domestic political victory."

On NATO cooperation, she stated: "We are now doing much better... Yet the best defense we can build is common sense, consistency and coherence." With a cultural wink, she added: "Tikkie is not for the Turks — we will always fight to pay the bill."

Concluding, Ambassador Yazgan expressed pride in serving in The Hague: "Here, distinguished diplomats from all over the world work within one of the best diplomatic traditions. Together, we shall make diplomacy great again."

ECUADORIAN FOOD FESTIVAL IN THE HAGUE

FROM THE ANDES TO THE COAST

The Embassy of Ecuador and H.E. Andrés Terán Parral, Ambassador of Ecuador to the Netherlands, in collaboration with Leonardo Royal Hotel, Diplomat Magazine, and Air Europa, organised a one-night-only culinary experience celebrating the richness and diversity of Ecuadorian gastronomy.

At the heart of the evening were two distinguished Ecuadorian chefs—David Reyes and Emilio Dalmau—who, together with Chef Sido de Brabander, presented a menu crafted with authentic Ecuadorian products, bringing guests on a gastronomic journey from the Andes highlands to the coastal regions. The event formed part of the Leonardo Royal Hotel's Food Festival series, which highlights a different international cuisine at each edition.

The Embassy of Ecuador ensured the authenticity of the experience by providing premium ingredients, including the country's renowned cacao, chocolate, and other delicacies sourced directly from Ecuador.

Chef David Reyes

With over 20 years of culinary experience, David Reyes is celebrated for his ability to blend Ecuadorian tradition with contemporary techniques. He has led two distinctive restaurants in London—one focused on modern British cuisine, the other offering an elegant Peruvian-Japanese fusion concept. His dedication to promoting Ecuadorian flavours has inspired collaborations with the Embassy of Ecuador, the Ministry of Tourism, Quito Tourism Board, and Pro-Ecuador, showcasing Ecuador's culinary heritage across high-profile events in London.

Chef Emilio Dalmau

Equally acclaimed, Emilio Dalmau brings two decades of expertise grounded in creative modern Ecuadorian cuisine, enriched by Spanish avant-garde methods and French Mediterranean influences. A consultant and lecturer in gastronomy at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito



Chef David Reyes from Ecuador and H.E. Mr. Andres Teran Parral, Ambassador of Ecuador

(USFQ), he plays a key role in training the next generation of Ecuadorian chefs. Emilio is also a recognised brand ambassador for Crocs, Stella Artois, 3M Nexcare, Hoja Verde Chocolate, Diners Club, Totto, and more. A popular culinary influencer, his presence extends to national television, including appearances as a guest chef and judge on MasterChef.

A Feast of Ecuadorian Flavours

Together, Reyes and Dalmau curated a menu showcasing Ecuador's finest ingredients—from world-renowned cacao and fresh seafood to avocados, cassava, and tropical fruits. Paired with Ecuadorian wines, the evening offered a vibrant and memorable exploration of Ecuador's culinary landscape, brought to life in the heart of The Hague.



Chef Emilio Dalmau, Ecuador.



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