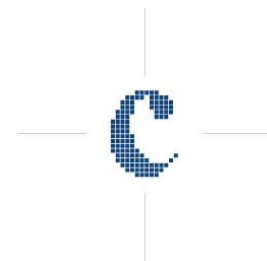


# **MATRA TRAINING FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION**

**(MTEC)**

## **HOW TO OPERATE IN BRUSSELS**

13 – 26 September 2009



The Netherlands Institute of  
International Relations, **Clingendael**

## **Introduction**

Enlargement is an inherent feature of the European integration process. The European Union has successfully completed its biggest enlargement with ten new member states on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004. Romania and Bulgaria have joined the EU on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007. Turkey, Croatia and FYR-Macedonia are official candidate countries. Other countries on the Balkan have obtained the prospect to become candidate countries in the (nearby) future.

The administrations of both the new member states and the pre-accession countries are facing the challenge of negotiating and interacting with Brussels. The ability to operate in the European arena is crucial to an effective representation of national interests. Yet, given the complexity of European decision making, this is not an easy task.

Bearing this in mind, the Matra Training Programme for European Cooperation (MTEC) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs offers the course 'How to Operate in Brussels'. In line with MTEC's objectives, this course aims to 1. promote strategic cooperation and coalition building with new member states and 2. offer pre-accession support and preparation for partnership in the enlarged Union for candidate countries. It prepares government officials from ten countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, FYR-Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) for operating and lobbying in Brussels.

The course 'How to Operate in Brussels' is organised by the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael', with support of EVD International Business and Cooperation /CROSS, who executes the MTEC Programme.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of this training is preparing the participants for the promotion of their countries' interests in an effective way while operating in, or in contact with, Brussels, before and after accession.

By participating in this programme, the participants will:

1. Gain practical knowledge and insight in the decision making procedures of the European Union and the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred to the Commission (comitology);
2. Become familiar with the requirements for an effective government lobby and ways to influence the key players and procedures;
3. Develop general and specific skills necessary to work professionally both in a national and European context. Skills covered include negotiation, intercultural communication, teamwork, presentation techniques, and networking.

## **Approach**

The programme has an interactive and practical character. There will be ample room for open discussion and many practitioners will be involved in the programme (e.g. diplomats, lobbyists). 'Learning by doing' is the didactical philosophy. The participants will exercise with practical and recent EU examples, case studies and simulations. They will often work on the basis of own dossiers and experience, and develop a 'back home action plan' to be implemented in their work at home.

The development of individual skills is at the heart of the course. Active participation is constantly promoted by seducing and challenging the participants to leave their comfort zone, show themselves, and push beyond their limits. After having followed 'How to Operate in Brussels', the participants are better professionals able to be a serious and effective player within, or in relation to, the EU.

# Programme

The programme consists of three components: theory, skills development and working visits.

## I. Theory

The theoretical part of the programme will cover the following topics:

### ➤ **The EU playing field and the essence of EU lobbying**

An introduction will be given to the workings of the different EU institutions and procedures. Particular attention will be devoted to the Union's 'maze' of groups and committees. An understanding of these issues is key to an effective lobby for national interests in Brussels.

### ➤ **National EU policy-making: a comparative approach**

Effectively operating at the EU level starts at home. Theoretical insights will be given as to how to equip a national administration in order for it to perform successfully in Brussels. How best to prepare instructions and negotiating mandates, deal with political-administrative procedures, and involve the parliament in EU affairs? The participants will share best practices and practical experiences related to their national context, on the basis of two preparatory assignments.

## II. Skills development

Theory will be complemented by trainings, focusing on the following skills:

- Presentation/debating
- (EU) negotiation
- Lobbying
- (EU) networking
- Intercultural communication
- The management of EU funds
- Working in a team

## III. Working visits

Several working visits will be scheduled. The participants will meet with experts from various Dutch Ministries to discuss the positions and experiences of the Netherlands in the Brussels arena. They will also meet representatives of the Dutch Parliament to discuss their role in EU decision-making. During the second week, a working trip to Brussels will take place. During this trip, participants will meet with European officials, and visit their permanent representatives or missions to the EU, as well as the European Institutions.

## **Social Programme**

To stimulate the network function of the course, a social programme will be organised as well. The following activities are foreseen:

- Boat trip through the canals of Amsterdam;
- Dinner party at Scheveningen Seaside;
- Guided bus tour through The Hague;
- Social drinks.

## **Teaching Staff**

The highly experienced teaching staff will consist of:

- Academic staff from the Clingendael Institute;
- Academics from Dutch Universities;
- Skills trainers and consultants with practical experience in the target countries;
- Representatives from Dutch Ministries and the European institutions.

## **Learning Materials**

The learning materials will provide relevant background information to the lectures and skills trainings. The participants will receive a reader with several articles. In addition, two books will be handed out:

- Rinus van Schendelen, *Machiavelli in Brussels: The art of EU-lobbying*, Amsterdam University Press (2005)
- Mijnd Huijser, *The Cultural Advantage: A New Model for Succeeding with Global Teams*, Intercultural Press Incorporated (2006)

## **Dates and Accommodation**

The course takes place from 13 to 25 September. The participants will stay at a hotel in The Hague. The exact programme and venue will be announced at a later stage.

## **Expenses**

The Dutch government pays for all costs (travel to and within the Netherlands, board and lodging, health insurance, the course itself, and the study materials). Lunch and coffee/tea during the course are organised and dinners are taken care of as much as possible. For additional costs, the participants will be granted a small allowance.

## Course Participants

The course group consists of government officials from the new member states and (potential) candidate countries, who are professionally involved with European dossiers. The eligible countries are: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, the FYR-Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia. A balance between the numbers of participants from the different countries will be taken into account during the selection procedure. The maximum number of participants is 50.

## Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be taken into account during selection:

- Relevant professional background (i.e. involvement in European dossiers);
- Excellent command of English;
- Enthusiasm and motivation;
- Level of seniority;
- Gender balance.

## Application

Applications can be made through the Netherlands Embassy in the applicant's country. Application forms can be downloaded from the website [www.cross-agency.nl](http://www.cross-agency.nl). Go to downloads, click on application form for the relevant course, click on your country; you can then download the application form. Applications (duly signed by the applicant and his or her employer) should be submitted latest on the **22nd of June 2009** through the Royal Dutch Embassy in the applicants' country. By this date, all forms, including the signed employer statement, must be received by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Please note that the application instructions on the website need to be followed carefully. After the deadline, the selection procedure will start, which will take approximately two weeks. **Only fully documented applications will be considered.**

Experience tells that the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available. Therefore, admission will be on a competitive basis.

**Applicants who have been accepted for the course are expected to duly attend. In case of no-shows or (too) late cancellations (i.e.) within three weeks before the course commences, the course organiser has the right to claim all costs incurred from the candidate's employer.**

## **Project Team**

Clingendael project team consists of:

- Ms Louise van Schaik, project coordinator;
- Ms Suzanne Nollen;
- Prof. Jan Rood;
- Dr. Mendeltje van Keulen;
- Secretariat of the Clingendael European Studies Programme (CESP)

## **Course Organiser**

'How to Operate in Brussels' is organised by the European Studies Programme of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael'. The Clingendael Institute is an independent, non-profit, academic institute situated in The Hague, specialising in policy-making in the field of international relations. It acts as a think-tank as well as a diplomatic academy in order to identify and analyse emerging political and social developments for the benefit of government and the public.

## **Further Information**

### **Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'**

Ms Louise van Schaik, course coordinator

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For further information on other courses developed under MTEC programme you can contact the Royal Netherlands Embassy in your country, or EVD/CROSS:

### **EVD/CROSS**

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