



Multinational corporations in a geopolitically dynamic world: How to shape Business Diplomacy competencies in practice

12 December 2014

Egmont Palace, Petit Sablon 8/Kleine Zavel 8, Brussels

Goal of the seminar

The globalization of markets since the 1980s has increasingly forced firms to operate internationally. This tendency has been reinforced in the West by the contraction of domestic markets provoked by the economic and financial crisis: the economic survival of many firms is predicated on their international activities. But being internationally active also means that firms are exposing themselves to a broad range of geopolitical and other non-commercial risks.

This expert-practitioner seminar will bring together businessmen, experts and other practitioners to deepen the understanding of how MNCs can shape Business Diplomacy competencies. Moving away from a purely shareholders approach to a stakeholders approach is a necessity in this geopolitically dynamic world. Firms will need executives with skill sets similar to those of effective diplomats. It is only by adopting a more 'diplomatic mind set' provided by Business Diplomacy that a company will be able to manage ever-expanding international risks, safeguard its profit-making and secure in the long haul its existence.

Participation is free of charge, but as places are limited, registration is required with
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Program

09.00–09.30 *Welcome coffee and registration*

09.30–09.45 **Welcome and Introduction**

Welcome by Prof. Dr. Sven Biscop of the Egmont Institute.

Introduction by Prof. Dr. Jan Melissen of Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

09.45–11.00 **Panel 1: Necessity of BD in times of globalized uncertainty**

Companies are increasingly confronted by the complex interplay between the necessity to become internationally active and the enhanced risks of doing business abroad. Numerous case studies will be presented which illustrate how MNCs go amiss to efficiently cope with geopolitical and non-commercial risks. By doing this, this panel wants to underline the necessity of adopting a 'Business Diplomacy' mindset to deal with those risks, rather than acting through purely traditional management perspectives.

Jennifer Kesteleyn: Researcher at GIIS, Ghent University

Alexis Brouhns: Region General Manager Europe Solvay, former Belgian Diplomat

Piet Steel: Consultant Dröge & Van Drimmelen, former Belgian Diplomat and former Vice-President External Affairs of Toyota Motor Europe

11.00–11.30 *Coffee*

11.30–13.30 **Panel 2: BD competencies**

Operating in today's international business environment requires Business Diplomacy competences, perhaps more than ever before. However, what are these specific competences that representatives of international firms need to possess in order to be successful business diplomats? And does operating in recently developed countries require a different set of Business Diplomacy competences and skills than operating in developed countries, such as most of the OECD countries. This session will address these questions and aims to result in answers and new insights.

Huub Ruël: Professor International Business Windesheim

Annemarie Muntz: Director group public affairs, Randstad Holding NV. Randstad.

Maartje Van Putten: CEO of Global Accountability and former European Parliament Member

13.30–14.30 *Standing lunch*

14.30–16.30 **Panel 3: Managing Corporate Geopolitical Risk**

Business Diplomacy centers on the creation of strategic coalitions of state and non-state actors to shape the firm's geopolitical risk environment. This session will explore the development and implementation of Business Diplomacy in the real world and how coalitions can be used to both influence and isolate non-cooperative actors. It will focus on practitioners' experiences in both identifying corporate geopolitical risk and minimizing its impact on the bottom line. Finally it will also explore the extent to which Business Diplomacy is a mind-set as well as a skill-set.

Christopher Nason: Director of Corporate Intelligence PWC

Debbie Rosario: Director of Aurora Partners Ltd

Shaun Riordan: Senior Visiting Fellow Clingendael and former British Diplomat

16.30–16.45 **Concluding Remarks**

By Shaun Riordan

16.45-17.45 **Keynote Speaker**

17.45-18.45 *Network reception*

(Global energy enterprise Saudi Aramco, through its affiliate Aramco Overseas Company based in The Hague, is a sponsoring partner of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' and co-sponsor of this seminar)