

**Clingendael Institute of International Relations, The Hague
Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels
Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS)
Institut Pierre Werner, Luxembourg**
with the support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Luxembourg

Conference

The future of the Benelux cooperation in a changing Europe

**8-9 February 2007
Castle of Bourglinster (Luxembourg)**

Programme

Thursday, 8 February 2007

20.00: Opening dinner at the Castle of Bourglinster with Luc Frieden, Minister of Justice of Luxembourg

Friday, 9 February 2007

Opening remarks by Ambassador Arlette Conzemius, Director of International Economic Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Luxembourg, and Gertjan Storm, Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Luxembourg

09.00-11.00: Part 1: The role of the Benelux cooperation in the wider Europe

Chair: Jaap de Zwaan, Director of the Clingendael Institute

Discussants: Alfred van Staden, Professor of International Relations, Leiden University
Christian Franck, Professor, President, Institut d'Etudes Européennes,
Université Catholique de Louvain

In this first part the potential of the Benelux cooperation will be discussed from the perspective of changes in the European Union. The following dimensions will be elaborated. First, the impact of enlargement on the position of the Benelux countries. Secondly, the more prominent role of (groups of) the big member states and its impact on the Benelux countries. Thirdly, the increasing need to form coalitions in the EU. Fourthly, the potential role of the Benelux as a laboratory for (enhanced) cooperation. The core issue in this part is to what extent more intensive cooperation among the three Benelux countries help to maintain and strengthen their position in the EU of 27 or even more?

11.00-11.15: Coffee break

11.15-13.00: Part 2: Benelux cooperation in practice: cross-border regional cooperation and police cooperation

Chair: Charles Elsen, former Director General of the European Council

Discussants: Bernard Hoetjes, Professor of regional administration in international perspective, University of Maastricht

Peter Reijnders, Counsellor for police and judicial cooperation, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Brussels

René Lindenlaub, Director of Information, Police Grand-Ducale, Luxembourg

In this part the focus will be on Benelux cooperation within the framework of the Benelux organisation (and treaty). This cooperation has evolved during the past decades. The Benelux has in particular been able to adapt to the rise of the EU as the main framework for economic integration and has changed developed new areas for cooperation among the three member states. This applies specifically to police cooperation and cross-border cooperation, where the Benelux acts as a secretariat and facilitator for the various initiatives. In this session the meaning and potential of this practical cooperation will be discussed. This session will also deal with whether new areas of cooperation can be envisaged (energy, environment, etc.).

13.00-14.30: Lunch at the Castle of Bourglinster

14.30-16.30: Part 3: Political cooperation between the Benelux countries

Chair: Claude Misson, Director general, Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations

Discussants: Thijs van der Plas, Legal Advisor, Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels

Martine Schommer, Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU, Brussels

Raphaël Mathieu, Research Fellow, Defence Study Centre, Brussels

External viewpoint: Wichard Woyke, Professor of Political Science, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Münster

The Benelux political cooperation takes place outside the framework of the Treaty and the Benelux organisation. It has various dimensions, the most noteworthy being the Benelux memorandums that have regularly been published as a contribution to the process of treaty reform (Convention/IGC's). But also on enlargement, justice and home affairs, EU-energy policy, the Israeli-Palestine conflict, etc. the three countries have put forward common positions. The aim of these interventions is to set the EU agenda and to strengthen the negotiating positions of the Benelux countries. In this session the discussion will focus on the results of the political cooperation; to what extent did it have an impact on the EU at large. In addition the question whether this cooperation should be extended, intensified and institutionalised further (role EU organisation, EU permanent representations, capitals, in the Treaty?)

16.30-16.45: Coffee break

16.45-18.30: Part 4: How do we go from here: a new treaty, new instruments / institutions, new policies?

Chair: Mario Hirsch, Director of the Institut Pierre Werner; Chairman of the Steering Committee of the LIEIS

Discussants: Ingeborg Kristoffersen, Ambassador, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Jan Rood, Head, European Studies Programme, Clingendael Institute
Maarten Vidal, Researcher, Institute for International Law, Catholic University of Leuven
Jean-Claude Meyer, Directeur adjoint des Relations économiques internationales, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de l'Immigration, Luxembourg

In this final session the question is what steps should be taken in the process of prolonging the cooperation in order to make the cooperation more effective. This issue refers to different topics. Firstly, how to deal with the treaty: prolonging it, amending it or negotiating a new treaty (including the issue of Belgian representation and ratification), then the role of the institutions and the tasks of the Benelux (the political as well as the practical cooperation).

20.00: Dinner for those leaving after 9 February