



clingendael
netherlands institute of
international relations



1st International Conference on Business Diplomacy

December 4th 2015 – The Netherlands

Venue: Windesheim University of Applied Sciences – Zwolle (The Netherlands). In collaboration with Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, Ghent University (Belgium), Diplomacy dialogue (Geneva)

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

Global legitimacy challenges for international companies and strategic business diplomacy

Introduction to the theme:

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) experienced 'golden days' during the 1990s and 2000s, they expanded globally and were major players in globalization. Today they have become powerful actors in the global economy. CEOs of international businesses are welcomed by heads of state as their counterparts, they are invited by governments to help solve global issues such as climate change and poverty, and they are facing dilemmas comparable to those of other international actors.

However, MNEs are facing global legitimacy challenges. They are suspected of tax avoidance, using low wage countries for corporate benefits only, disrespecting privacy regulations, abusing consumer data, violating local community rights, exploiting natural resources, ignoring basic human rights, and employing too many lobbyists targeting national and international political decision-making processes for their own corporate interests.

Although many of these challenges are not new, they have resurfaced and become more apparent during the past couple of years, partly due to the economic recession that many developed economies have faced and to the broader awareness of increasing global inequality and the importance of sustainability.

How can international business respond? Strategic business diplomacy may be the answer. *Business diplomacy involves developing strategies for long-term, positive relationship building with governments, local communities, and interest groups, aiming to establish and sustain legitimacy and to mitigate the risks arising from all non-commercial or exogenous factors in the global business environment.*

Business diplomacy is different from lobbying or strategic political activity; it implies an (strategic / holistic) approach of an international business to look at itself as an actor in the international diplomatic arena. Representation, communication and negotiation are key in such an approach.

One of the consequences is that MNEs are able to operate in and show respect for an international business environment that consists of multiple stakeholders. This demands a strategic perspective and vision on the sector and the business environments in which the company wants to operate, and requires a specific set of instruments, skills and competences.

This conference brings together international business representatives, practitioners and researchers in a one and a half day-event. Insights into business diplomacy presented by leading international companies are seen as important input for the conference. Researchers who have contributed to the development of the field and who have worked with business leaders will address what strategic business diplomacy looks like from their perspective, and how it impacts the legitimacy challenges that international business faces.

DATE: December 4th (full day) & 5th (morning) 2015 – The Netherlands. (December 4th morning: key notes; afternoon: round tables with research presentations; December 5th morning: conclusions/agenda setting/wrap up)

HOST and ORGANIZING UNIVERSITY: Windesheim University of Applied Sciences – Zwolle (The Netherlands)

PARTNERS: The Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, Ghent University

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: Jan Melissen (University of Antwerp (Belgium)/Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael), Shaun Riordan (Clingendael), Jennifer Kestelyn (University of Ghent (Belgium)), Raymond Saner (Diplomacy Dialogue, Geneva & Sciences Po, Paris), Donna Lee (Bradford University – UK), Huub Ruël (Windesheim UoAS, The Netherlands)

GOAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Addressing and discussing the global legitimacy challenges of international business in today's global economy and how strategic business diplomacy can help to deal with those issues.

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

Researchers and practitioners with a scholarly interest from around the world are invited to submit an extended abstract of a paper to be presented at this conference.

Those whose abstracts are accepted will be invited for this conference. Their final papers will be included in a conference proceedings.

The best papers will be invited for inclusion in the book 'Business Diplomacy' for the [*Advanced Series in Management*](#) of Emerald Publishing.

Furthermore, as a follow up, the organizers are working on a special issue for an international journal.

Topics of extended abstracts can be (but are not limited to):

International Business and global legitimacy challenges

International Business, Business diplomacy and the OECD guidelines

International Business, Business diplomacy and mitigating risks

International Business, Business diplomacy and sustainable development

International Business, Business diplomacy and the impact and potential of digitalization

International Business, Business diplomacy and fragile states

International Business as international political actors

International business and inequality

MNEs, business diplomacy and tax avoidance schemes

International Business, business diplomacy and ethical dilemmas

International Business and public-private partnerships

Extended abstract format

The conference committee welcomes extended abstracts of empirical papers as well as of conceptual/theoretical papers. Abstracts should clearly reflect the content of the full paper, as based on this the committee will decide on acceptance or not.

Length of an extended abstract: min 500 words – max 1000 words (excluding references)

Language: English

Important dates:

Extended abstracts deadline: August 31st 2015

Acceptance notification: September 15th 2015

Final full paper submission: November 1st 2015

Send submissions to:

hjm.ruel@windesheim.nl or Lectoraat.internationalbusiness@windesheim.nl