



NATIONAL SECURITY AUTHORITY

Annual report 2016
A (security) world in a state of flux



NATIONALE VEILIGHEIDSOVERHEID
AUTORITÉ NATIONALE DE SÉCURITÉ
NATIONAL SECURITY AUTHORITY

2016 has been another pivotal year for the National Security Authority (NVO/ANS). The terrorist attacks in Europe (amongst others in Paris, Brussels, Berlin) and elsewhere (Turkey was badly affected several times) have all clearly reconfirmed that the fight against terror must be sustained in a coordinated and concerted way, both in Belgium and abroad.

In this framework, the NSA – as collegial authority – has been charged with various new projects.

Screening of the sensitive professions

In the course of last year, security verifications have gained considerable importance (see also statistics below). Due to the stricter and constantly evolving security environment, the competent authorities are confronted with an increasing number of security verification requests, especially in sectors with a specific security risk.

In order to provide an appropriate response to this growing demand, a number of legislative amendments have been prepared within the NSA to avoid the unnecessary use of security verifications and an unnecessary burden on public resources. In addition, our aim is to ensure that whenever a security verification is desirable in the interests of public security, it shall effectively be carried out.

These legislative amendments will take full effect in the spring of 2017.

Development of a national cryptosystem

Traditionally, the various Belgian and European security and intelligence services transfer their sensitive and classified information through secure channels. Within the framework to combat terrorism and with the aim of further optimizing this information transfer, the Belgian Government has awarded a specific budget to the NSA for the development of a national cryptosystem.. Besides, the project includes an additional protection of the Secretariat as well as an enhanced cooperation with the Royal Military Academy and the Belgian universities.

These activities create a significant impact on the daily functioning of the Secretariat and the supporting services to the NSA. Given the challenging management of these projects, the Secretariat has been increasing its staff up to 30% with appropriate expertise to address the existing constraints.

As well in the area of IT, the upgrade of the existing Habil-application for the processing of the security clearance requests has been proceeded. The purpose of the new Habil+ application is to centralise the full management of the security clearances, the security recommendations and the security certificates. Moreover, the accounting treatment of all payments will be more transparent and efficient, shortening the lead time of a request.



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Website NSA

Henceforth, our stakeholders as well as the general public will find the answers to their questions on the website of the National Security Authority (www.nvo-ans.be). This site contains a great deal of relevant information that may be of interest to our clients and to the citizens. This activity report will be posted on the website as well.

In our drive to continuously optimize our service we will consider the possibilities to improve interaction with our partner services via our new website.

Since its launch in September 2016 the site received about 2,500 visits, which illustrates the necessity of a thorough external communication medium.

Some statistics concerning the issuance of security clearances, certificates and recommendations

The efficiently functioning website provides the file managers with more time to focus on the follow-up of individual files. In this respect, some records have been broken in 2016.

For instance, the NVO issued 7452 individual security clearances, among which 405 files in cooperation with foreign NSA's. Belgium provided assistance in 862 files in order to issue foreign security clearances. Besides, the NVO issued 262 security clearances for companies, representing an increase of 25% compared to the year 2015.

Furthermore, 34,134 applications for security verifications (certificates and recommendations) have been lodged, representing an increase by more than 10% compared to 2015. The largest number of applications related to airport identification badges (23,164) and access to European summits (9,270).

International cooperation

Last but not least it must be mentioned that the NSA represents various Belgian interests on the international level as well.

Bilateral agreements on the mutual exchange of classified information

The negotiation of **general security agreements** remains an important priority, in particular as regards their significant economic importance for our companies. In 2016 an agreement was signed with Finland. Furthermore, negotiations with France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are at an advanced stage. Negotiations with Poland and the Baltic States have been initiated.

Cooperation with International Organisations

On the multilateral level, the NSA has received **security assessment visits** from NATO and the EU (Council and Commission).

- The NATO inspection took place from 11 to 13 October
- The EU inspection took place from 8 to 10 November



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Gallileo

Within the European satellite navigation systems there is an independent Security accreditation board, composed of delegates from the member states and Norway, EU Commission and ESA. This board's responsibilities include authorisations to launch and the development of ground and space segments. For Belgium, the NSA assumes this representation duty. The European GALILEO is operational since 15 December 2016.

It should be noted that the NSA, beside the evaluation of the security aspects of this signal, also handles, on an ad interim basis and until the launch of the Belgian space agency, the operational tasks for the secured GALILEO signal.

Multinational Industrial Security Working Group

The MISWG was established in 1985 in order to develop an unequivocal security policy and relevant security procedures for the protection of classified information regarding multinational cooperation programmes in the fields of defense and international industrial security.

The MISWG is an informal collaborative approach bringing together representatives of 33 countries and 3 international organisations, meeting annually. . The host country, Sweden in 2016, provides the chairman and the secretariat. In 2017 the MISWG will be hosted by Belgium.

Cooperation with the EU

A **Memorandum of understanding** was signed with the institutions of the EU in order to perform security verifications for their suppliers.