Masterclass in Diplomatic and Consular Practice

All sessions are designed as 1 hour content delivery and 15 minutes Q & A, the lecturers can distribute it as they see fit.

4-5 November 2026
Brussels

WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2026

18.30 - 19.30	Arrival and networking drink
19.30 – 22.30	Welcome Conference with special keynote guest speaker the **Honourable Willy Claes**, former Secretary General of NATO and former Minister of Foreign Affairs. "The current geopolitical landscape and *quo vadis* democracy?" Followed by a reception
Location:	FU-US Fondation Universitaire-Universitaire Stichting Egmontstraat 11- 1000 Brussels

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2026

8.30 – 9.00	**Registration**
9:00– 9.10	**Welcome** **Frédéric L. Agneessens,** *Honorary Consul of Canada for Flanders & President Belgian Consular Union* **Anthony Antoine,** Executive *Director VUB Brussels School of Governance*

9.10 -10.30 **Session 1. Diplomatic Law**

Prof. Cédric van Assche, *Professor of diplomatic and consular law at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB).*

Aim of session: to understand the diplomatic law context in which honorary consuls operate.

This session examines following topics:

- Organisation of diplomatic intercourse
- Categories of diplomatic missions
- Status of permanent diplomatic missions
- Functions of permanent diplomatic missions
- Duties of permanent diplomatic missions
- Diplomatic Inviolability & Immunities
- Sanctions in diplomatic law
- Q & A

10.30-10.45 **Coffee Break**

10.45-12.30 **Session 2. Diplomatic Protocol**

pending

Aspects of protocol that are important for HCs, *i.e.* those they are most likely to be confronted with.

12.30-13.30 **Lunch**

13.30-14.45 **Session 3. Consular Law in Theory**

Prof. Cédric van Assche, *Professor of diplomatic and consular law at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB).*

Aim of session: to understand the consular law context in which honorary consuls operate, and which law applies to them.

This session examines following topics:

- Organisation of consular intercourse
- Categories of consular officers: career and honorary consuls
- Categories of consular posts
- Status of consular posts
- Functions of consular posts
- Duties of consular posts
- Consular Inviolability & Immunities

- Sanctions in consular law
- Q & A

14.45 -16.00	**<u>Session 4. Consular Law in Practice</u>** ***Prof. Dr. Christian Behrendt,*** *Honorary Consul of Germany* Aim of the session: to examine some practical (legal and political) aspects of the exercise of consular functions by honorary consuls.
16.00-16.15	**Coffee Break**
16.15-17.30	**<u>Session 5. Economic Diplomacy</u>** **The Honourable Rik Daems,** *former Minister of Public companies & European Council of Europe*
17.30 -18.30	**<u>Session 6. Keynote Speaker</u>** **<u>Why do we Need Honorary Consuls in our Diplomatic Policy?</u>** **The Honourable Karel De Gucht,** former European Commissioner and *Minister of Foreign Affairs, President VUB Brussels School of Governance* Awarding of certificates and photo

Location: VUB Main Campus, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels

Room : building D, room D.2.01 (promotiezaal)

Date : 5 NOV 2026

Parking availability participants: VUB main campus is accessible by car through entrances 6 and 8 situated on the Triomflaan. See VUB campus map:

https://www.vub.be/en/about-vub/faculties-institutes-and-campuses/our-campuses/vub-main-campus-brussels/parking-vub-main-campus

Participation fee:

- Members BCU: 250 EURO (in order with membership fee)
- Non-Members: 450 EURO

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