



General Intelligence and
Security Service
*Ministry of the Interior and
Kingdom Relations*



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International political developments form the backdrop to the AIVD's investigations. Directly or indirectly, states' political ambitions and actions can endanger Dutch interests.

International developments and threat levels in 2016

The level of threat to the Netherlands and Europe increased during 2016, with the dominant factor remaining the risk of terrorism emanating from the belt of instability along Europe's external borders. The majority of the year's terrorist attacks on countries around the Netherlands had their origins in the Middle East and North Africa.

Perpetrators were directed, encouraged or inspired by ISIS, Al-Qaeda or their affiliates. The fact that ISIS suffered substantial territorial losses in Syria, Iraq and Libya towards the end of 2016 has done nothing so far to mitigate the terrorist threat against the West. The Netherlands remains a potential target.

Political developments in countries on the edge of Europe also contributed to the worsening threat situation. Directly or indirectly, states' political ambitions and actions can endanger Dutch policy aims, interests or security.

In the aftermath of the failed coup of June 2016, President Erdogan of Turkey launched a concerted campaign against supporters of the cleric Fethullah Gülen, whom Erdogan accused of being behind the attempt to seize power. In Western countries this resulted in unrest and intimidation within Turkish communities.

Following its annexation of Crimea and clandestine involvement with the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine, Russia's military intervention in Syria has once again demonstrated its readiness to act on the world stage. In its efforts to restore

its image as a superpower, Russia has no hesitation in using Cold War methods like exerting covert political influence – and in so doing skilfully exploiting the freedoms enjoyed by the West's open and democratic societies.

In the past year Russia has further estranged itself from Western democratic values. September's elections to the State Duma were highly orchestrated and in violation of international election standards. Changes to the country's internal power structure indicate that this is being further centralised.

Russia's relationship with the Netherlands came under particular pressure due to its unfounded criticism of the professionalism, integrity and impartiality of the Dutch-led investigation into the downing of flight MH17 and accusations that our nation is anti-Russian.

These developments formed the backdrop against which the AIVD gathered intelligence in support of Dutch interests in 2016.



Jihadist networks extend into the Netherlands

Attacks on Europe during 2016 show that the terrorist threat to the West takes a variety of forms.

Those in Brussels, for example, were masterminded directly from Syria. Others were personal initiatives on the part of the perpetrators, either encouraged by members of ISIS in Syria or Iraq or more abstractly inspired by jihadist ideology and ISIS propaganda.

Some jihadists have reached Europe in the recent stream of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa. In certain cases they have applied for asylum under multiple identities, making it harder to detect them. Once again, the AIVD conducted investigations into abuses of this kind in the past year.

The arrest in Rotterdam in late March of a man believed to be a member of a French/Belgian terrorist cell reminds us that it is quite possible that violent jihadists may be living in the Netherlands. A second man, arrested in December on the basis of information provided by the AIVD, was found to have a fire-arm, ammunition and ISIS propaganda material at his home.

All in all the number of Dutch jihadists travelling out to fight in Syria and Iraq may have risen, but the increase was less great in 2016 than in previous years. A similar fall-off was also observed in other European countries. The number of returnees was small, too – only a handful – although the AIVD expects their number to rise as ISIS comes under ever greater pressure in Syria and Iraq. Returnees are more likely to arrive sporadically rather than in greater numbers all at once. Whilst their return

to the Netherlands in principle increases the threat we face, they always need to be examined carefully on an individual basis.

In 2016 the AIVD also continued to investigate the dangers to the West and its interests emanating from core Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in the Middle East, northern and eastern Africa and the Gulf region. These, too, remain real.

Part of the service's mission in investigating jihadist terrorism is to mobilise its partners in the national security domain. Among other things, the reports and analyses it produces help to shape counterterrorism policy and interventions.

In 2016 the AIVD submitted 63 official reports ('ambtsberichten') to the Public Prosecution Service (Openbaar Ministerie, OM) in respect of persons travelling out to the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq. These documents enable the OM to initiate criminal investigations if and when the subjects return. A further twelve such reports were supplied to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, IND); they concerned supporters of jihadist terrorist organisations or their fighters, the majority of whom were active in Syria or Iraq. Other partners supplied with similar material, in official reports or some other form, included the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (Nationaal Coördinator Terrorisbestrijding en Veiligheid, NCTV),

5,400 tip-offs

The AIVD team handling incoming, not directly referable terrorism-related reports from the police, members of the public and partner services abroad dealt with almost 5,400 tip-offs in 2016. That was 7 per cent more than in the previous year and a rise of 70 per cent compared with 2014. The reason for the increase was the impact of the attacks in Brussels, Nice and several German towns and cities. Of the 5,400 reports, 238 prompted further investigation.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local authorities and the national Child Care and Protection Board (Raad voor de Kinderbescherming). In the summer of 2016, information from the AIVD led to an intensification of security at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

Last year's jihadist attacks in the West were directed against "easy" targets with little or no security: public events and locations like shopping complexes, entertainment districts and city centres. As part of its remit to promote safety measures, the AIVD has compiled target analyses to help other responsible parties better understand how jihadists select their targets.

As well as specific government partners, the AIVD also shares information with a wider audience. In 2016, for instance, it published *Life with ISIS: the Myth Unravelling*. This shows how the reality of life in the so-called "caliphate" is far from the paradise depicted in ISIS propaganda, with men, women and children all likely to be involved in or exposed to acts of violence.

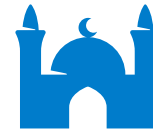
The events of the past year have demonstrated yet again that investigating jihadist terrorism effectively is impossible without international co-operation. During the Dutch presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2016, the AIVD chaired the European Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) and initiated important steps to reinforce collaboration within this alliance of European intelligence services.

On 1 July, a database was opened in which all the member services pool their information about identified European foreign fighters in jihadist conflict zones. The information is now accessible to participants 24 hours a day, in real time. Also in 2016, a platform was established to simplify the exchange of operational intelligence: officers from the participating services now meet on a daily basis to share and interpret information, so that they can see immediately whether another agency holds additional information about known or potential terrorists. This has made intelligence exchanges faster and more efficient, with connections easier to establish, and has already resulted in a number of operational successes in the past year.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/TERRORISME

European collaboration, in the form of a physical platform and a shared database, has led to operational successes in 2016.

Moderate Muslims under pressure



In the past year the AIVD has observed attempts in a number of places by young Salafists to gain a foothold in moderate mosques and their governing bodies. On several occasions they have even resorted to violence to assert themselves.

This is just one example of the techniques being used by radical Salafists to extend their power. In particular, they are endeavouring to draw vulnerable groups like children and asylum seekers into their sphere of influence. Whilst most of their activities are not in breach of the law, intimidation and threats of violence are unacceptable in an open, democratic state.

In 2016 the AIVD made a concerted effort to raise awareness about Salafism, both nationally and at the local level, with a particular focus on prominent recruiters with a broad reach and growing influence. This work was done for and with partners such as local authorities, the NCTV and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

In 2016 the AIVD brought several of these worrying developments concerning Salafism to the attention of national political leaders and local governments so that they could take effective countermeasures.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/SALAFISME

Cyberthreats increasing in scale and impact

The AIVD has noticed that Dutch government institutions have repeatedly been targeted by extensive and persistent digital espionage attacks.

Helped by the National Detection Network (Nationaal Detectie Network, NDN) and other partners, the AIVD identified several of these at an early stage and alerted the organisations affected. The number and extent of such incursions reflects a widespread ongoing interest in our government and its workings.

Cyberespionage with an economic motive also remains a cause for concern. Last year the AIVD warned numerous companies and partner services about such activities. In the Netherlands, investigations were undertaken into attacks on firms in the ICT, maritime technology, biotechnology and aerospace sectors. The service also observed widespread long-term malware infections at a number of foreign companies in the defence and other industries. As well as personal data, these have resulted in the theft of highly sensitive and advanced, maritime, ICT, energy and defence technologies. Such attacks thus endanger both commercial interests and military effectiveness.

More and more countries are engaging in cyberattacks. State actors use these attacks for strategic purposes, such as influencing conflicts and elections.



Threats make information security essential

The AIVD's National Signals Security Bureau (Nationaal Bureau voor Verbindingsbeveiliging, NBV) undertook numerous activities in 2016 to better safeguard confidential and sensitive Dutch government information.

These included the expansion and professionalisation of the National Detection Network, improving its ability to identify cyberattacks and to compile accurate analyses of the threat they pose.

The service also completed several evaluations of information-security products, including the Tiger S mobile telephone (with NATO certification) and hard-disk encrypter Hiddn.

Furthermore, the NBV issued a number of information-security recommendations. Their topics included the ICT architectures of new premises for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, the IND, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers, COA) and the Ministry of Security and Justice's Directorate-General for Migration (Directoraat-generaal Vreemdelingenzaken, DGVZ).

State actors also use digital means to sabotage vital functions and to influence democratic processes. In Ukraine, electricity supplies and government services were disrupted in this way. In Saudi Arabia, several government agencies and private companies fell victim to a destructive virus. The USA is currently investigating whether the presidential elections might have been influenced by the hacking of computer systems and selective dissemination of information. Events of this kind illustrate both the potency of such attacks in terms of their ability to cause physical and political damage, and the readiness of certain actors to actually undertake them.

The Netherlands' highly developed ICT infrastructure makes our nation an attractive channel for cyberattacks. The AIVD has identified several state actors abusing facilities here to target third countries. As a result, the Netherlands becomes an unwilling conduit for hostile activities to violate the economic, military and political interests of other nations.

Certain state actors regularly use private ICT firms as a cover to conceal the true source of digital espionage. They also engage companies and academic institutions to develop and program malware. Consequently, several countries now have advanced cyber-industrial complexes which enhance the espionage expertise and capabilities of state actors.

For the time being, the threat from digital terrorism remains limited. The level of technical expertise available to jihadist groups is insufficient for causing significant damage or personal injury through digital sabotage. In 2016, however, jihadist hackers acting alone or in groups did publish lists naming potential targets. These included dozens of Dutch citizens. In most cases the personal details released were obtained from open sources rather than hacks, but the leak did generate considerable public disquiet.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/CYBERDREIGING

The NBV also provided advice on the development of a new government-service identity card (Rijkspas, version 2.0) and evaluated its implementation, and also conducted a risk analysis of the Travel Information Portal (TRIP) containing air passenger data. That exercise resulted in improvements to the portal's information-security features.

More than 300 inspections were carried out at companies entrusted with classified Dutch or international (NATO, European Union or European Space Agency) information in fulfilment of official contracts.

In September inspectors from NATO – accompanied by representatives from the NBV in its capacity as the Dutch national security authority – scrutinised the manner in which the Netherlands handles the protection of the organisation's classified information. No shortcomings were found.

The Netherlands again made a significant contribution to international information-security policy in 2016. We provided considerable input for the European Commission's crypto-distribution policy, for example, and for EU commercial tendering policy. One example of such a tender is the development of the new EU global positioning system, Galileo.

Finally, the NBV facilitated the production and distribution of cryptomaterials for the Dutch government, NATO and the EU.

MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.AIVD.NL/INFORMATIEBEVEILIGING

Russia revives traditional influence operations

The Russian intelligence services have their sights firmly set on the Netherlands. Russia herein focuses on gathering information in traditional target areas such as the economy, science, politics and defence.

Their cyberattacks drew the most attention in 2016, but the Russians also still use intelligence officers to recruit human sources. There is a permanent presence of such agents in the Netherlands, operating under false guises in various parts of society to collect information of value to their homeland.

Russia's espionage activities seek to influence decision-making processes, perceptions and public opinion. In this clandestine political influence, the dissemination of disinformation and propaganda plays an important role. This is an area in which Russia and its intelligence services have a long and colourful

history, but the rise of the internet has made it far easier for them to extend their reach and the impact of this can be substantial. In the Netherlands, too, there are issues and processes where Russia has vested interest in the outcome and so may well resort to covert influence and manipulation.

The AIVD is investigating clandestine Russian influence activities against the Netherlands and Dutch interests, and keeps the government fully informed about them so that it can take appropriate action.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/SPIONAGE

The dissemination of disinformation and propaganda plays an important role in clandestine political influence. The internet has increased the reach and impact of this.



Extremism: migration and “Black Pete”



Although the influx of migrants stagnated in 2016, this issue led to public confrontations between the far left and the far right on several occasions during the year.

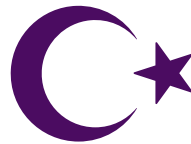
However, there were fewer nationalist-instigated activities than in 2015. And whilst there were some calls on social media to form “neighbourhood watch groups” to counter supposed disturbances around asylum centres – a new development – none translated into the appearance of vigilantes on the streets.

Social media also hosted a fierce polemic about “Black Pete” (Zwarte Piet), St Nicholas’ blackface companion during the annual Sinterklaas festivities. The threat of violent confrontations hung over some of these events, and on a few occasions there were indeed scuffles between individuals on the extreme right and protestors who regard the character as a lingering symbol of slavery and colonialism.

To assist local and national policymakers, in 2016 the AIVD conducted two threat assessments of public events and issued three related intelligence reports and one official report. These helped the authorities to take appropriate precautions, including changes to the security arrangements at the national Sinterklaas procession in Maassluis.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/EXTREMISME

Separatist struggle in Turkey



Developments in Turkey have substantially increased tensions within the Turkish Kurdish community in the Netherlands.

The Kurdish conflict flared up again in 2016, with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) more frequently resorting to violence and both PKK and the militant Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan, TAK) committing several acts of terrorism in Turkey, this time also in the west of the country. The AIVD is investigating the PKK strategy towards Europe and the threat that poses.

The same applies to the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi/Cephesi, DHKP/C). The arrest of this group’s leader in Germany, holding Dutch citizenship, caused anger and unrest among its supporters, including those in the Netherlands. In 2016 the AIVD identified a new association with links to the DHKP/C and submitted an official report about it to the mayor of Rotterdam.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

With regard to the production and spread of weapons of mass destruction, the principal question for the Netherlands and the rest of the Western world in 2016 concerned the repercussions of the international nuclear deal with Iran.

The Counterproliferation Unit (Unit Contraproliferatie, UCP) operated jointly by AIVD and its military counterpart, the MIVD, reported on this issue to the government, as it also did on Iran’s development of ever more advanced ballistic missiles, with an apparent focus on improving their accuracy and extending their range beyond 2,000 kilometres.

Certain other countries continue to give cause for concern in this respect, too. North Korea conducted two nuclear tests in 2016 and is working on new missile systems with greater ranges.

The AIVD and MIVD reported regularly last year on the extent of Syria’s willingness to reveal details of its chemical weapons programme. The UCP also provided technical assistance to the investigation into the chemical and biological capabilities of non-state actors in Syria and Iraq, especially ISIS.

In addition to providing intelligence, the UCP also disrupted several attempts to acquire proliferation-sensitive goods. In this area the AIVD and MIVD work closely with the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, the customs service, partner services abroad and others. Reports were issued on this topic, too, including 37 official reports for the ministry in support of Dutch counter-proliferation policy. UCP personnel also visited a number of institutions and businesses to advise them on potential risks in this field.

MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.AIVD.NL/MASSAVERNIEGINGSWAPENS

Venezuela in deep crisis



Political, economic and social tensions in Venezuela have risen, exacerbated by the fall in world oil prices.

As a result of the economic problems, the Venezuelan people face shortages of basic commodities and a rapidly worsening security and health situation. On the political front there is growing polarisation between the Venezuelan governing party and the united opposition. The ongoing crisis in Venezuela is adversely affecting regional stability, including the security situation in the Dutch Caribbean.

National safety and security



Within the framework of the national Safety and Security System (Stelsel Bewaken en Beveiligen, SBB), the AIVD issued 68 threat assessments, fourteen threat analyses, three risk analyses and eleven other reports in 2016. These covered political officeholders, members of the Royal Family, diplomatic missions, international organisations and major (national) events.

The information they contain helped the national Safety and Security Co-ordinator (Coördinator Bewaking en Beveiliging, CBB) of the NCTV decide when particular precautions needed to be taken, and what they should be.

During the year the service also began assessing potential threats to and around the general election of March 2017.

The Dutch Safety Board (Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid) has recommended closer co-operation between the government and airlines. In pursuit of that aim, the AIVD is represented on the expert group considering threat information for the civil aviation sector. A special hotline was also opened, through which Dutch airlines can contact the AIVD and the MIVD at any time with urgent security queries.

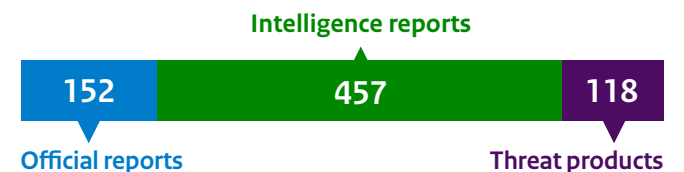
Meanwhile, the service has continued to share threat information with civil aviation and other sectors to ensure that they are protected as effectively and efficiently as possible. Intelligence disclosed through the public-private expert group on maritime security in 2016 resulted in several warnings, and revisions to the threat assessments for our merchant fleet.

The AIVD also finds itself answering more and more questions from various government departments about the implications for national security of takeovers in the commercial sector. As with the dozens of awareness presentations given by the service during the year, activities of this kind aim to raise awareness and enhance the protection of national security interests.

MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.AIVD.NL/BEVEILIGINGSBEVORDERING

AIVD PRODUCTS



Of the 8,000 security screenings the AIVD carried out itself, 93 per cent was completed within the maximum term. In 800 cases the Certificate of No Objection was withheld.



More than 35,000 security screenings completed

In 2016 over 35,000 security screenings of persons in or appointed to positions involving confidentiality were conducted by the AIVD and the mandated organisations: the National Police Service and the Royal Military Constabulary (Koninklijke Marechaussee, KMar).

More than 8,000 rulings on the issuance of a Certificate of No Objection (Verklaring van Geen Bezwaar, VGB) were delivered by the service itself. In approximately 800 cases, the Certificate was withheld.

Of those screenings conducted by AIVD, 93 per cent were completed within the statutory period of eight weeks – a reflection of the service’s strong commitment to comply with this requirement in 2016.

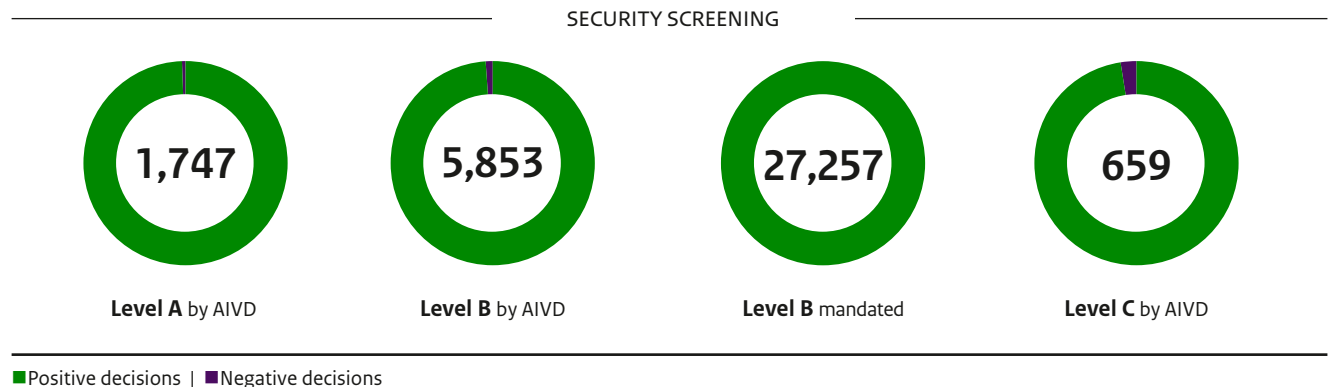
First implemented during 2015, this new approach has resulted in a more efficient process. Where possible, security screening

has been automated. That has cut the cost of level-A screenings, the most thorough form, whilst extending the breadth of administrative enquiries has enhanced the quality of those at levels B and C – although this has also slightly increased their cost.

In 2016 work continued to establish a joint AIVD-MIVD security screening unit (Unit Veiligheidsonderzoeken), which is now taking shape.

MORE INFORMATION:

[ENGLISH.AIVD.NL/TOPICS/SECURITY-SCREENING](https://english.aivd.nl/topics/security-screening)





Updated powers for better safeguards

The Dutch cabinet has been working on modernising the Intelligence and Security Services Act (*Wet op de inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten, Wiv*) for some time now. In 2016 it submitted a draft bill to Parliament.

The bill is intended to invest the AIVD and MIVD with powers commensurate with current threats and technological developments, whilst also giving more prominence to safeguards for the protection of personal privacy. For example, it would introduce a system of binding independent checks before either service can make use of its special powers, thus futureproofing the delicate balance between security and privacy considerations.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/NIEUWEWIV



Growth AIVD

Over 240 new employees joined the AIVD in 2016. The workforce stood at 176 FTEs at the end of 2016. This was possible because in 2015 the government made extra funds available to expand capacity to counter the increasing threats against our nation.

The majority of the newcomers are operational personnel: intelligence officers, information specialists and translators.

There are limits to the rate at which the AIVD can grow, since new personnel must be trained, inducted and mentored by their immediate colleagues. More than 200 other new recruits are expected to join in 2017.

The Bill for the new Intelligence and Security Services Act ensures a delicate balance between security and privacy considerations.

Added value AIVD

Prompted in part by the recommendations of a 2015 report by the Netherlands Court of Audit (*Algemene Rekenkamer*), last year the AIVD compiled a document outlining its long-term vision.

Positioning the service's work in the context of an increasingly complex and dynamic society, this emphasises that it can best undertake its duties to protect national security in partnership with other relevant agencies, thus building a stronger network.

Internally, the service introduced the so-called Public Value System in 2016. This supports staff in focusing even more clearly on the added value the AIVD can offer its partners, and thus society as a whole.

Facts and figures

Table 1: results of security screenings in 2016, including delegated procedures.

	Positive (certificate issued)	Negative (certificate refused or withdrawn)	Total
Level A, by AIVD	1,738	9	1,747
Level B, by AIVD	3,908	36	3,944
Level B, taken over by AIVD from KMar/NP/DKDB	1,185	724	1,909
Level C, by AIVD	644	15	659
AIVD total	7,475	784	8,259
Level B, delegated to KMar/NP/DKDB	27,257		27,257
Total	34,732	784	35,516

Table 2: results of objections and appeals against security clearance rulings.

	Dismissed	Upheld	Inadmissible	Total
Objections received				40
Rulings on objections	18	8	1	27
Rulings on appeals	4	4		8
Rulings on second appeals		1		1
Total	22	13	1	36

Table 3: complaints about the AIVD to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Submissions to the minister	
Under consideration as of 1 January 2016	9
Received	24
Dismissed	9
Upheld in full or in part	5
Settled informally	5
Inadmissible	8
Withdrawn	0
Still under consideration as of 31 December 2016	6

Table 4: complaints about the AIVD to the National Ombudsman.

Submissions to the National Ombudsman	
Under consideration as of 1 January 2016	1
Received	15
Dismissed	0
Upheld in part	2
Inadmissible	11
Referred to the minister for consideration	1
Still under consideration as of 31 December 2016	2

Table 5: requests to inspect information held by the AIVD, by nature of subject.

Subject of information requested	Submitted	Dealt with	Granted
Applicant	81	82	27
Deceased relative	12	19	12
Third party	1	3	-
Administrative matters	145	152	33
Total	239	256	72

Table 6: results of objections and appeals against rulings on requests to inspect information held by the AIVD.

	Dealt with	Dismissed	Upheld	Inadmissible	Withdrawn
Objections	24	20	4	-	-
Appeals	7	-	3	4	-
Second appeals	3	-	3	-	-

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.AIVD.NL/INZAGEVERZOEKEN

Table 7: number of notifications.

2016	38
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MORE INFORMATION:

ENGLISH.AIVD.NL/CONTACT/MAKING-A-COMPLAINT

Table 8: number of CTIVD reports on the work of the AIVD.

2016	3 (report Nos. 46, 48 and 49)
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CTIVD: *Intelligence and Security Services Regulatory Commission (Commissie van Toezicht betreffende de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten).*



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