



General Intelligence and
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Foreword

International developments are increasingly difficult to predict and control. As a result, the threats posed against the Dutch society are diverse and often complex.

In 2019 the General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD) observed how more and more countries were attempting to gain influence over Dutch interests. Our country is one of the most economically, scientifically, and technologically advanced countries in the world. As a result the Netherlands is an attractive target for digital espionage and influencing.

2019 was also the year in which the AIVD witnessed a resurgence in right-wing extremism. Extremists carried out violent attacks in the United States, European countries, and New Zealand. In the Netherlands this resurgence has mainly manifested itself online.

In 2020 the service, including its predecessors, will celebrate its 75th anniversary. During this period the threats to the Netherlands have come and gone in waves. What has remained unchanged is the AIVD's dedication to the discovery and elimination of these threats.

The Intelligence and Security Services Act 2017 (Wet op de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, Wiv 2017) allows the service to use the possibilities of modern telecommunications to achieve this, while at the same time individual, personal privacy remains protected. To carry out its mission of discovering hidden threats and protecting national security it is important that the AIVD has enough room to manoeuvre. That is why we welcome this year's review of the Act by an independent committee.

The AIVD is not an island. Our partners rely on our expertise. We in turn rely on theirs. Now that COVID-19 is keeping the world in its grasp, we see once again how valuable cooperation is. In these times too you may count on us, and on our partners, to protect the safety and security of the Netherlands.

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General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD)

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Contents

Espionage and undesirable foreign interference	6
(Jihadist) terrorism and radical Islam	10
Extremism	17
Making the Netherlands a safer place	19
Intelligence and Security Services Act 2017	22
<i>Appendices:</i>	
- <i>Facts and figures</i>	23
- <i>Glossary</i>	25

Espionage and undesirable foreign interference

When other countries engage in covert activities in order to collect information in and on the Netherlands, thereby harming our national interests, the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) considers this to be espionage. The AIVD considers espionage to encompass digital espionage, the diversion of information through hacking computer systems, as well as 'classic' espionage, people secretly stealing information. Other countries or state-sponsored actors are interested in various kinds of information. Through espionage, they attempt to obtain political and economic information regarding government policy and decision-making.

In addition to espionage, state-sponsored actors carry out covert and undesirable activities with the purpose of influencing administrative and political processes in the Netherlands. There may be covert political influencing, influencing and intimidation of emigrated (former) fellow nationals (diaspora), sabotage, and abuse of Dutch ICT infrastructure. The AIVD views such activities as undesirable foreign interference.

The AIVD considers something political influencing when a country directly and covertly interferes in the Netherlands' political affairs. Covert influencing can also be aimed at manipulating public perception, for example through the spreading of disinformation. Intelligence services often play a role in covert influencing operations.

The technological advancements of the past years offer state-sponsored actors new possibilities for large-scale espionage through cyber-attacks and for undesirable foreign interference through social media.

Espionage

Espionage focusses on both political and economic information. The aim of the AIVD's investigations is to safeguard the national security of our country by identifying acts of espionage in time and by raising awareness of the dangers of espionage. Investigation reveals that more and more countries carry out political and/or economic espionage. In 2019 the AIVD investigated the intentions, capabilities, and/or activities of a number of state-sponsored actors who run an offensive cyber-programme of which it is known that this also targets the Dutch national security and democratic legal order, and other Dutch interests.

To the AIVD an offensive cyber-programme is when a state shows a prolonged investment in capabilities that are intended to enable digital espionage as well as undesirable influencing and sabotage, so that it can achieve its own political, military, economic, and/or ideological goals.

Political espionage

State-sponsored actors try to find ways into institutes such as ministries, intelligence and security services, political parties, and socio-cultural organisations. The intelligence obtained through political espionage serves as foreknowledge for states to prepare for political or social developments. The intelligence can also be used to influence decision-making and possibly elections or to gain a grip on the diaspora. Moreover, Dutch politics and the judiciary have become more increasingly to strategic Russian interests since the downing of flight MH17 in July 2014.

To that end Russia collects information which can be used to undermine Western unity and international cooperation (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and European Union (EU)) in order to increase its own geopolitical influence. This intelligence can be used to influence decision-making processes and play countries off against each other.

In the past year the Netherlands was again an interesting espionage target for Russia. Political espionage is carried out using both classic and digital means. In spite of investments in the digital resilience of public institutions, state-sponsored actors from e.g. Russia, Iran, and China remain very successful at compromising (government) systems within and outside of the Netherlands.

In 2019 the AIVD published its brochure 'Offensive cyber-programmes. An ideal business model for states', which emphasises risks to the cyber-domain.

Economic espionage

The Dutch economy is highly advanced, innovative, and internationally oriented. This makes it a target for economic espionage.

The largest threat with regard to economic espionage comes from China, with China's cyber-activities in particular standing out. Investigation reveals that several Dutch top sectors are or have been targeted by digital espionage. The Chinese focus their interest on high-quality Dutch technology in various sectors. A large part of China's (digital) espionage activities is aimed at improving the country's own economic development. Chinese economic policy is primarily aimed at transitioning from a production economy to a knowledge economy that is largely independent from foreign technology.

In order to realise its modernisation and independence, China is investing in strategic long-range plans (Made in China 2025) and the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), the New Silk Route that runs both over sea and land from China via South(-East) Asia to Africa and (Western) Europe. Investigation shows that countries on this route are often targets of digital espionage. Chinese policy plans give focus to espionage campaigns which are largely aimed at acquiring high-quality knowledge and technology. Leading sectors in the Netherlands thus run a

greater risk of being targeted by Chinese (digital) espionage.

The AIVD expects that China's economic and political influence will grow in both the short and the long term. Furthermore the AIVD expects that China's considerable investments in new and upcoming technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and 5G communications will enable the country to become the market leader in those fields.

There is a risk that this technical dominance will allow China to set the technological standard for the future and as such create a global dependency on Chinese technology. In time this potential dependency would make Dutch businesses even more vulnerable to (digital) espionage and possibly also to sabotage. In addition to Chinese cyber-actors, Iranian cyber-actors have – to a limited degree – also undertaken digital activities aimed at economic espionage against Dutch targets. There have been international sanctions in force against Iran for several years now. These sanctions have direct consequences for the Iranian economy. As a result of these sanctions, it is more difficult for Iran to gain access to advanced Western (technological) knowledge.

The Iranian regime has been looking for alternative methods to obtain this knowledge and use it to boost the national science sector. To that end Iranian state-sponsored cyber-actors hack think tanks, businesses, and educational institutions around the world.

Globalisation will make the Netherlands increasingly vulnerable to (digital) espionage. Foreign branches of Dutch businesses often hire local employees, who sometimes have far-reaching access to company information, and not always under effective supervision. Globalisation has also caused many production processes to become splintered and internationalised.

Insufficient security measures with suppliers result in new risks of (digital) espionage. Lastly, foreign investments and takeovers in the Netherlands lead to the (partial) loss of authority over vital infrastructures, such as electricity, internet access, drinking water, and payment transactions. This loss of authority may also lead to undesirable economic and political dependencies, in addition to risks of espionage and sabotage.

Sabotage and abuse of infrastructure

The possibility of digital disruption and sabotage of our vital infrastructure is one of the most significant cyberthreats to the Netherlands and its allies. Several states have shown that they have the capability and willingness to use digital sabotage to achieve their geopolitical goals. For some time the AIVD has also observed how some of these states are making preparations to enable future digital sabotage. These preparations consist of gaining access to and hiding out in the ICT systems of vital infrastructure.

These states currently do not have the intention to cyber-sabotage the Netherlands, but intentions depend on geopolitical developments and are subject to change. Some states abuse the Dutch ICT infrastructure to carry out cyber-attacks on other countries. State-sponsored cyber-actors are attracted to the Netherlands because our digital infrastructure is high-quality and it is relatively easy to rent ICT capacity. Abuse of Dutch ICT infrastructure by other countries, including China and Iran, may cause damage to the interests of our allies and to the integrity of the Dutch ICT infrastructure.

Covert political influencing

It is entirely legitimate that countries protect their own interests abroad. However, if a country does so using covert action or false pretences, going beyond the regular diplomatic or political lobbying, the AIVD calls this covert political influencing. Spreading disinformation is one example.

Intelligence services often play a role in covert influencing operations.

Russia in particular engages in covert political influencing. The AIVD has observed attempts at Russian interference in the Netherlands. There are, for example, constant Russia-directed (online) influencing activities on social media in which influencing public perception with regard to the circumstances surrounding the MH17 disaster plays a sizeable part. To this end the country uses not only increasingly advanced technological capabilities and IT systems, but also employs individuals who serve Russia's interests in parallel with their own. The impact on the Netherlands as yet appears to be limited.

Influencing and intimidation of the diaspora

Various countries, including Turkey, China, and Iran, carry out intelligence and influencing activities on their diaspora. They collect intelligence on opponents of their regimes. In the Netherlands, too, they do not shrink away from mobilising members of the diasporic community to identify and silence opponents and critics of the regime within these communities. This may lead to tensions within these communities.

The pressure of these intelligence and influencing activities may lead members of the community to be afraid of voicing their criticism and limit them in their freedom of speech. Members of foreign diasporas in the Netherlands often want to retain access to their country of origin, as they often still have family or possessions there and because they feel connected to the culture and religion. Some countries even use violence against their opponents abroad.

Activities and results

Through its investigations the AIVD has been able to uncover and interpret the risks of espionage and foreign interference to the Netherlands and to

Dutch businesses. To that end the AIVD paid visits to various organisations and businesses; gave presentations and awareness training; and informed government partners such as the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) and various ministries, provinces, and large cities on both conceivable and concrete espionage threats.

AIVD account managers with the various police intelligence units (IDs) play an increasingly important role in these activities to promote and improve security.

The AIVD deems it undesirable that where vital processes and the exchange of sensitive information are concerned, the Netherlands is dependent on companies in countries that are known to engage in offensive cyber-operations against Dutch interests. The AIVD provides the government and other involved parties with insight into the relations between such companies and their governments, so that they can assess the risks. It is important to look at the possibilities, intentions, and interests of the states involved.

In 2019 the AIVD issued 9 official reports and 41 intelligence reports on espionage and undesirable foreign interference.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/spionage.

(Jihadist) terrorism and radical Islam

Where terrorism is concerned, the AIVD's prime area of interest is jihadist terrorism, as this form of terrorism still poses the largest threat. Radical Islam can act as a breeding ground for jihadist-terrorist violence.

Terrorism

On 18 March 2019 there was an attack on a tram in Utrecht, claiming four fatalities and two seriously injured. On 20 March 2020 the Utrecht court sentenced Gökmen T. to life in prison for this act. Just like the attacks at Amsterdam Central Station and at The Hague Hollands Spoor Station in 2018, the targets were easily accessible, and the victims were chosen at random. As far as is known, these cases all concerned lone actors.

Threat assessment jihadist terrorism

The jihadist terrorist threat is still characterised by the danger of attacks in the West by a few globally active jihadist organisations, local networks, and individuals.

The threat against the West has diminished since 2017, as evidenced by the strong decrease in the number of attacks in Europe in the past years. Nevertheless there is still a relatively high number of arrests in Europe, including the Netherlands, to prevent attacks and incidents that may be linked to jihadist terrorism. Consequently the threat has diminished, but it is still substantial.

Jihadist threat in the Netherlands

The Dutch jihadist movement is relatively hidden from public life. This is due to organisational and ideological discord as well as a lack of hierarchy and leadership within the community. The movement also does not appear to be growing: few people join and few people leave.

Be that as it may, the movement still poses a threat. After all, jihadists in the Netherlands support an ideology of violence which they predominantly propagate in private online circles. Some jihadists threaten Dutch persons or objects and there are jihadists who genuinely wish to carry out violent terrorist acts.

Jihadists believe they are at war with the West, and that the fight against the West is a duty. The contribution they make to the fight can range from raising money to going on jihad, from deepening their knowledge to spreading online propaganda, and from activism on behalf of those in prison to carrying out attacks.

An example of a non-violent contribution to the fight was a transnational trend witnessed in 2019 among jihadists in Europe and elsewhere where money was raised for women affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) who were in the camps operated by the Syrian Democratic Forces in north-eastern Syria.

In the Netherlands persons suspected and convicted of a terrorist crime are detained in the special wards of two prisons, where they are kept separate from other detainees. The Dutch system of centralised detention of persons suspected and convicted of terrorism largely prevents non-extremist detainees from becoming radicalised and recruited by jihadists. In some cases this does result in unwanted influencing within the group and the formation of new networks.

The AIVD sees this network formation on terrorist wards, and the return of jihadists to the jihadist movement after their release as a threat. When they return to their old network, these jihadists can bring a new dynamic to that network. Seeing as a small number of sentenced jihadists consists of returned travellers from the conflict area, they could form new, transnational networks with returned jihadists in other countries.

After their detention period ends, they could carry out violent acts, as has happened several times in other countries.

The Netherlands, and other European countries, could be facing something like this in the coming years.

Incidents and arrests in the Netherlands

In 2019, the following persons who are part of the Dutch jihadist movement were arrested on the basis of official reports issued by the AIVD. The relevant AIVD investigations and the criminal prosecution against them show how Dutch jihadists too pose a (violent) threat.

In February 2019 a man who is considered a member of the Dutch jihadist movement was arrested in the village of De Lutte. He is suspected of making preparations for a terrorist offence. A firearm was found upon his arrest.

In March 2019 a man was arrested in Breda on suspicion of involvement in terrorism. He had allegedly joined the al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab while in Somalia.

In July 2019 a man was arrested in Maastricht on suspicion of inciting a terrorist offence. He is also suspected of training others for terrorism through collecting and disseminating information online. The man was active on websites on which transnational online networks share all kinds of jihadist information, collect and expand jihadist knowledge, and produce and disseminate propaganda. These networks give jihadists access to propaganda, sermons, and speeches by jihad scholars, but also to instruction material that can be used for carrying out an attack.

In October 2019 a woman from Uithoorn was arrested, also on suspicion of inciting a terrorist offence. She is also suspected of involvement in a terrorist organisation and of providing opportunity,

means, knowledge, and skills to carry out a terrorist offence. She was active on online networks similar to the ones the above-mentioned man from Maastricht frequented.

In November 2019 two men from Zoetermeer were arrested on suspicion of preparing an attack in the Netherlands. The time and location were as yet unknown.

November 2019 saw another arrest, namely that of a fifteen-year-old in Heemskerk, who was arrested for incitement to a terrorist offence and dissemination of inciting material. He was spreading jihadist material on social media.

Furthermore in November a total of six people were arrested in the Netherlands and Belgium on suspicion of financing terrorism. Money had been raised through a foundation in order to help victims of war, but the suspects had allegedly given the money to ISIS fighters or persons affiliated with ISIS in Turkey and Syria.

All cases are still with the court.

International jihadist threat

The international jihadist threat to the West is mainly posed by ISIS, al-Qaeda (AQ), and organisations and networks loyal to them. The al-Qaeda and ISIS-affiliated groups are primarily involved in local or regional conflicts.

Some groups also carry out attacks against Western interests in their region or in the West itself. Furthermore, jihadist networks or individuals who have no ties with either of these organisations also pose a threat. Some networks or individuals are involved in supporting and facilitating as well as planning and carrying out attacks.

Threat posed by ISIS and al-Qaeda

The immediate threat ISIS poses to Europe has diminished even further over the past year, but in spite of the loss of its geographical ‘caliphate’, the organisation still has the intention of carrying out – or having its supporters carry out – attacks in Western countries. In March 2019 the group lost Baghuz, its last bulwark. Geographically, the ‘caliphate’ no longer exists, but that does not mean that ISIS has ceased to exist. Over the past years the group has reshaped itself from a centrally-led organisation to what it has termed an ‘uprising’ in Iraq and Syria. This means that underground cells carry out attacks, assassinations, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom, etcetera.

The central leadership in Syria and Iraq still exists and is still in contact with ISIS-affiliated jihadist organisations. These so-called provinces are involved in local and regional conflicts in various countries and regions in Africa and South Asia, and as such they also pose a threat to Western interests there. At the same time, the ISIS leadership can provide these provinces with instructions. Neither the death of ISIS’ leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October 2019 nor the appointment of his successor Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qureishi has had an effect on the threat posed by ISIS.

ISIS still wants to carry out attacks in the West, and the group will probably remain based in Syria and Iraq. It is possible that ISIS’ provinces will contribute to this more in the future.

Al-Qaeda also still intends to carry out attacks in the West. The possibilities for planning and carrying out attacks against the West from Pakistan/Afghanistan, which is where AQ’s senior leaders are situated, seem slim. However, there are jihadist networks and individuals affiliated with al-Qaeda in north-western Syria who want to carry out attacks against the West. The threat posed by these networks and individuals partly depends on the military developments in the area. The offensive

launched by the Syrian army against the fighters in north-western Syria at the end of 2019 could in the future be the decisive blow.

The threat of violence posed by al-Qaeda affiliates became clear from an attack on an American military base in December 2019, as this attack was claimed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Like ISIS, though with less frequency, al-Qaeda also encourages attackers to carry out attacks of their own accord.

Threat posed by networks not affiliated with ISIS or al-Qaeda

Apart from al-Qaeda and ISIS there are other jihadist networks in and outside of Europe that also focus on planning and providing support for attacks. In principle, it is possible to travel through the Schengen Area unnoticed. Consequently jihadists can travel from one Schengen Area country to another to carry out an attack. Then there are the transnational facilitating networks that provide support to jihadists. These networks provide connections between jihadists in the West and elsewhere in the world and as such they play an important role in contributing to the international threat of jihadism.

Threat of foreign terrorist fighters

In 2019 around five persons with a Dutch background returned from the conflict area in Syria and Iraq to the Netherlands or another Western European country. In late 2019 some 120 jihadists with a Dutch background were still in Syria and Iraq. This number excludes minors of Dutch descent in this area. For each returnee, the AIVD assesses what kind of threat they pose.

Returnees have a higher threat profile than jihadists who did not travel to the conflict area. This is mainly the case with men, because they have often had combat and explosives training, combat experience, and a network of (international) jihadist contacts.

After they return, they could use these experiences and contacts to bolster local and transnational networks or mobilise them to carry out acts of violence. Many returnees are involved with propaganda or facilitation and still adhere to the jihadist ideology, but without the desire to carry out violence. As yet only a few of the returnees could be proven to have been involved in actual attacks.

The AIVD assesses the threat of violence posed by women who have returned from the conflict area to be lower than that of men, because they have not necessarily received weapons training or acquired combat experience. Some of these women, however, could play a strengthening role in the movement due to their experiences in Syria and the status they may derive from this. Time spent in detention may also contribute to the status and level of influence they have within the movement. At the same time it is possible that other women are turning away from jihadism as a result of their negative experiences.

After the fall of ISIS' final stronghold in Baghuz in March 2019 many jihadist women and their children, including Dutch women, ended up in refugee camps in north-eastern Syria. Not just the humanitarian situation in these camps is worrying, but security is also poor. Children who grow up in the camps continue to be exposed to ISIS' radical ideology and recruitment.

This contributes to the long term threat posed by ISIS. Turkey's invasion of north-eastern Syria at the beginning of October 2019 as yet does not seem to have led to fundamental changes with regard to the refugee camps in north-eastern Syria.

Some women and their children, including some Dutch women, have since escaped from the camps.

Activities and results

In 2019 the AIVD issued 64 intelligence reports on developments in jihadist terrorism. The public

prosecution service received 41 official reports containing information pertinent to criminal investigations.

In addition, the AIVD issued 11 official reports to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and 2 official reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

International threats demand an international response, which is why the AIVD cooperates with partner services throughout the world. When cooperating with another service or country, a number of matters are very important to the AIVD. Among these important considerations are the democratic embedment of the foreign service and the human rights situation in the country in question. Also in 2019 international cooperation between partner services proved crucial in the fight against terrorism. Some of this cooperation is consolidated in the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG), which is a European cooperation between the security services of the members of the European Union (EU), plus those of Norway, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

Our country is host to a platform where information on jihadist fighters is shared between the partners directly, which simplifies cooperation and contributes to gaining a better understanding of transnational and international connections. The cooperation strengthens our – and our partners – access to intelligence. More concretely the cooperation has led to results in the early detection, identification, and arrest of potential jihadist attackers in Europe.

Radical Islam

In addition to jihadism there are other forms of extremism where supporters use their religious conviction to justify their democracy-undermining activities. This is the case for Salafist inciters' who

¹ This concerns influential imams, mosques, and organisations which (may) pose a threat to the democratic legal order.

display problematic conduct which may not be against the law, but which is contrary to our democratic legal order and threatens to undermine this. These are some examples.

1. Promoting structural bigotry, intimidation, and/or intolerance towards people outside of the personal circle of faith, such as dissident Muslims, dissidents, and non-believers. On certain points this may be contrary to the law and (in the short or long term) have an undermining effect on the democratic system.
2. Undermining the authority of democratic institutions (constitution, legal system, democratic processes, government, police, etc.) because the legitimacy of such institutions is not recognised and thus rejected.

In addition, the conduct of Salafist inciters may constitute a breeding ground for further radicalisation towards a (violent) jihadist ideology. Only a limited number of mosques and organisations in the Netherlands can be said to be extremist to a greater or lesser degree. The AIVD's investigation focuses specifically on radical Salafist inciters.

Influential radical Salafist inciters

The AIVD has observed that in spite of the fact that, relatively speaking, they form a minority, radical Salafist inciters have a disproportionate influence within the Dutch Islamic community. This usually concerns a younger generation of preachers, often born in the Netherlands, who received extra-curricular education from an older generation of radical Salafists.

Some of them then went to the Gulf region to study religion. An important reason for the success of these new radical Salafists is that they preach in Dutch a strict, one-sided interpretation of the Islam that connects with the experiences of certain groups of young people. Other reasons are that they offer professional and cheap extracurricular education

and often have plenty of money. The AIVD is investigating to what extent these financial means come from the Gulf States. The extremist nature of the message being spread by these radical Salafist inciters is not always clear at first glance. Consequently it is more difficult for relative outsiders to recognise their true intentions.

The AIVD notes that some of these leaders purposefully utilise a strategy in which they get their followers to gradually turn away from dissident Muslims and what they perceive as the unbelieving Dutch society. Dissident Muslims who do not agree with the extremist interpretation of these Salafist inciters are often the first victims of their activities. After all, the social pressure which these inciters exert, curtails their freedom of choice to participate in our society.

Their own group in the right

A strongly polarising rhetoric allows the followers of these radical Salafist inciters to further distance themselves from Dutch society and strengthen their bonds with their own group. In this rhetoric any criticism of the group is framed as an attack on Islam itself.

Radical Salafist inciters compel their supporters to take a stand for their strict interpretation of Islam. This may be an aggressive rhetoric that leaves little room for nuance and which can also be found online.

Negative impact on Islamic education

Many of the activities of radical Salafist inciters are aimed at teaching their intolerant - and in their eyes the only correct - interpretation of the Islam. They consider missionary work to be the only justifiable reason to live in a non-Islamic country such as the Netherlands.

This missionary work is mainly carried out in the form of providing extracurricular education to children. In this case too, the extremist nature of

the message is not always immediately clear.

Such extracurricular education initiatives are often funded with foreign money. The financing ensures that they can give shape to these initiatives in a professional manner. This makes them very attractive to large groups of Muslims, because it satisfies an increasing demand for well-organised extracurricular education on Islam and the Arabic language.

Various investigations by AIVD and others reveal that the extracurricular education by such radical Salafist inciters teaches children a black-and-white vision of Islam and an anti-democratic attitude. This alienates these children from Dutch society. In the long run this could contribute to the unravelling of national social cohesion, which would undermine our democratic legal order.

When Salafist inciters are involved in mainstream education, this is extra cause for concern. An example in mainstream education would be the Amsterdam Cornelius Haga Lyceum (CHL). At the end of 2019 the Oversight Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (Commissie van Toezicht op de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, CTIVD) concluded that in general the AIVD's data furnishing with regard to the CHL was lawful.

The CTIVD did have some critical remarks concerning observed irregularities and inaccuracies in sections of the information provided.

The AIVD always strives to be as meticulous as possible when it furnishes information. The fact that the CTIVD nevertheless judges that the AIVD was remiss in some elements is a very serious matter to the AIVD.

The CTIVD indicates that most of the provision was found to have been proportionate and necessary and that the AIVD's assessment of the risk of the threat remains valid.

The outcome of the CTIVD's report confirms the importance of the AIVD's investigation into Salafist inciters.

Undesirable financial support from abroad

As mentioned above, radical Salafist inciters often have plenty of money. Some of these means come from within their own circle, but often the financial support comes from abroad. Think of investments in new and existing mosques, financial support for Islamic studies scholarships at universities abroad, and supplying teaching material for extracurricular education. Such support can entail interference with ideological matters.

The AIVD estimates that foreign financing is partly responsible for the fact that radical Salafist inciters are disproportionately present in the Netherlands, in spite of them being a minority in an absolute sense. This is mostly true for their presence online and their activities in education.

A search for information on Islam quickly and almost inadvertently leads to examples of seemingly professional educational initiatives and high-quality teaching material by (radical) Salafist inciters and organisations.

Anyone interested in Islam and looking online thus gradually comes into contact with an extremist interpretation of Islam which may be at odds with the democratic legal order.

Activities and results

10 official reports and 15 intelligence reports on developments with regard to radical Islam were issued.

In this area the AIVD cooperates with the NCTV, various ministries and local government. On the basis of concrete examples the AIVD provides support to both national and regional government. The AIVD offers tools for dealing with a phenomenon that, although it remains (just) within national

legal boundaries, is at odds with our democratic legal order. In the past year the AIVD gave presentations on this topic to various municipalities and other government partners.

Non-jihadist terrorist organisations

In 2019 the Kurdish Workers' Party PKK continued its non-violent policy with regard to Europe and the Netherlands. The PKK holds on to its long-term goal to see itself removed from the EU's list of terrorist organisations and be acknowledged as an international partner representing the Kurdish cause.

The PKK is lobbying in Europe with European institutions and organising demonstrations and public actions. At the beginning of 2019 the PKK organised 'solidarity hunger strikes' in which Kurdish activists across various cities in Europe participated.

Furthermore the PKK is engaged in a financial campaign among the Kurdish diaspora in European countries, and it encourages Kurdish youths to become active within the organisation. The PKK's activities in Europe and the Netherlands are closely connected to developments in the Kurdish areas in Turkey, northern Iraq, and northern Syria.

The PKK considers the Turkish invasion of northern Syria at the beginning of October and the withdrawal of troops by the United States to be a great betrayal to the Syrian Kurds and other population groups in the area. As a result, the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria seems further away than ever. In Europe the conflict in north-eastern Syria mainly led to more (pro-)Kurdish protests and other political activism.

Activities and results

Within the context of our investigations into non-jihadist terrorist organisations the AIVD issued 4 intelligence reports in 2019.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/terrorisme.

Extremism

Extremism can be defined as actively striving for or supporting profound changes in society, changes that could endanger (the continued survival of) our democratic legal order, possibly through the use of undemocratic methods that may have detrimental effects on the functioning of the democratic legal order. The dividing line between activism and extremism is often very thin.

Right-wing extremism

For decades right-wing extremism in the Netherlands was characterised by a Neo-Nazi, fascist, and antisemitic ideology. Existing groups were small and in general had little influence. This picture has changed in the past years; other forms of right-wing extremism have replaced the traditional Neo-Nazis, who always remained a marginal group. Incidentally this does not mean that the Neo-Nazi ideology has completely disappeared. The different forms of right-wing extremism are much more a mixture of various ideologies, old and new. The most significant new ideological drive that has emerged in the past years is anti-Islamism.

2019 was the year of right-wing extremist attacks worldwide. In addition to a number of attacks by right-wing extremists in the United States, this trend was also visible in European countries as well as in New Zealand and Australia. In particular the attack by an Australian man in Christchurch, New Zealand, in which 51 people were killed in a mosque, inspired copycat behaviour.

The use of social media and in particular live streaming of attacks (similar to Christchurch) plays a role in this. The attackers in Oslo, Norway, and Halle, Germany, see the Christchurch attacker as a saint, and one of the attackers claimed that he had been appointed by him as his successor. The possibility of copycat behaviour grows when attackers and their sympathisers find each other on

right-wing extremist websites. These websites serve as a base from which invitations are sent out, giving access to private groups where the commentary is even more extremist than on the websites.

Extremist content could drive people to radicalisation or even to violence. There are also Dutch nationals who are members of such international online groups. An example of an organisation using democratic means to strive for undemocratic goals is Erkenbrand. This Dutch alt-right movement has the ultimate goal of realising an authoritarian political system in which the civil rights of only white (male) citizens are safeguarded.

Traditional right-wing extremists respond very strongly to the actions of anti-racism activists in particular, and they try to connect with local protesting citizens. Several times this has led to (a threat of) violent action in which the home addresses of anti-racism activists are published and visited, or in which anti-Black Pete protesters are beset by right-wing extremists, sometimes joined by groups of football hooligans.

Left-wing extremism

In 2019 'left-wing' groups did not carry out any violent action. They focused on activism by way of protests and civil disobedience. Partly as a result of this, the left's actions are less individual-oriented. This way they reach a wider group of interested persons, for whom extremism is a bridge too far.

There has also been a visible shift from single issue to multi issue², causing ad hoc coalitions to form (from differing ideologies). Developments such as the rise of right-wing extremism and further polarisation within society could breathe (new) life into left-wing extremism.

² Where in the past activists and extremists often dedicated themselves to only one topic, now they often embrace multiple topics, for example migration and climate.

The topic of 'climate' has caused the number of actions by various environmental groups to rise in the past year. Although these actions were sometimes disruptive in the context of public order, they fit the environmental-activist tradition of non-violent activism and civil disobedience and as such do not pose a threat to the democratic legal order.

In early August 2019 the No Border Camp 2019 (NBC) took place in Wassenaar. The theme of the NBC was 'the fight for freedom of movement and open borders'. It was intended as an accusation against Dutch and European immigration policies. Other topics were anti-racism, LGBTQI tolerance, and the fight against climate change. The organisers of the NBC strived to use activism to draw attention to the Dutch and European immigration policies, which they consider to be too strict. This also fits the trend of civil disobedience. The (intended) actions of the NBC were not individual-oriented either, as was the case in the past with home visits and the naming and shaming of politicians and public officials.

Anti-government extremism and identitarian extremism

Since 2019 the AIVD has been investigating forms of extremism that do not match the traditional division between left-wing and right-wing extremism: anti-government extremism and identitarian extremism. Central to anti-government extremism is the rejection of the government, government policy, and/or democratic procedures. This is not for ideological reasons, but because of experienced or perceived injustice, indignation, and considerable unease.

In the case of identitarian extremism there are certain groups who, reasoning on the basis of their own identity (race, sexuality, gender, faith, etcetera), become frustrated as they are not being heard and as such feel that they are being disadvantaged against. In the past years the AIVD has mainly witnessed a trend in the rise of

anti-racism groups who use their own identity as a basis to campaign against what they consider to be colonial and racist elements of Dutch society.

The AIVD currently has no evidence to suggest the existence of groups which, on the basis of their aversion to the government and government policy or on the basis of their identity, are radicalising in any way or turning away from Dutch society. It is however true that identitarian-infused discussions provide fuel for the polarisation between population groups.

Activities and results

With regard to developments in the field of extremism, the AIVD gave presentations to the police, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), knowledge institutes, and others. The goal was to create awareness of radicalisation and extremism, which can, in a worst case scenario, lead to terrorism.

Within the context of investigations into extremism the AIVD issued 10 intelligence reports and 1 official report.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/extremisme.

Making the Netherlands a safer place

Countering the acquisition of knowledge and goods

Countries like Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Pakistan target the Netherlands and other Western countries to obtain the knowledge and goods they need to further their programmes for weapons of mass destruction (proliferation) and delivery means.

The Unit Counterproliferation (UCP), a joint AIVD and MIVD unit, investigates the ways in which these countries attempt to acquire such knowledge and materials and tries to prevent this from happening. In the past year we continued our extensive exchange of knowledge and information with our foreign partner services to achieve that goal.

Cooperation is also close with those Dutch parties that play a role in export control, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Customs. The UCP is frequently asked for information regarding applications for an export license. On several occasions the UCP has also, of its own initiative, provided information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding attempts to acquire knowledge and materials for weapons.

The UCP also provides information to relevant parties and businesses regarding the risks of becoming involved in the acquisition of knowledge and goods that could be used for weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The UCP provides them with advice on how to identify suspicious transactions. In the year 2019 this resulted in uncovering and preventing several attempts at acquisition.

In 2019 the UCP issued 17 official reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding proliferation and export control.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/massavernietigingswapens.

Vital functions

There are various jobs in society in which those with bad intentions could damage national security. These can be found with the government, the National Police, and companies that play a role in vital processes. Such positions are designated as positions involving confidentiality by the minister in question.

The AIVD carries out security screenings to assess whether someone who is under consideration for such a position involving confidentiality can be issued a certificate of no objection ('verklaring van geen bezwaar', VGB). By carrying out security screenings, the AIVD also enables the organisations in question to take responsibility for national security.

On 1 October 2018 the ministerial regulation regarding the Unit Security Screenings came into effect. This regulation provides the framework for the merger of the security screening departments of the AIVD and MIVD into a single Unit Security Screenings (Unit Veiligheidsonderzoeken UVO).

In addition to carrying out security screenings, the UVO has continued to develop and internal processes have been further improved and standardised as much as possible.

Also in 2018 the online service for filing personal information in relation to requests for security screenings (eOPG) became operational for part of the participating employers. In 2018, 4% of all applications were done via the eOPG service. In 2019, 63% of all applications submitted to the AIVD that could be entered via an eOPG (not all civil

partners are working with this system yet) were submitted using this service. The use of eOPG ensures a quicker handling of the submitted applications with fewer (chances of) mistakes. In 2019 the AIVD and delegated partners (the National Police Service and the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee) carried out almost 46,500 security screenings of persons (hoping to) fill a position involving confidentiality. This number is a little higher than 2018's number of screenings (over 44,000).

The AIVD operates on the premise that 90 per cent of all security screenings by the AIVD should be completed within the maximum statutory period of 8 weeks. With 93 per cent of security screenings completed in time, the AIVD met this objective. In order to further improve processing times and lower the backlog of work, the AIVD hired both permanent and temporary employees over the past year. The effects of this increase in personnel is clearly visible in the last months of 2019, in which the processing times and backlog of work for A-level screenings were lowered considerably.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/veiligheidsonderzoeken.

Reporting at the request of others

In addition to conducting security screenings, the AIVD carries out another type of screening as part of its tasks. In these cases the AIVD reports on information it holds on a particular person. This is done at the request of others, for example at the request of the Prime Minister when a new member of government is to be appointed.

This reporting on information in the AIVD systems was not an explicit task in the Intelligence and Security Services Act of 2002. With the adoption of the 2017 Act, this has become a separate task.

In 2019 the AIVD carried out 68 checks and reported on the results in official reports to the authorities involved.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/naslag.

Role in the Dutch Safety and Security System

Like the MIVD, the National Police Service, and the NCTV, the AIVD plays a role in the Dutch Safety and Security System. This system aims to ensure that public figures such as politicians, members of the Royal Family, diplomatic representatives, and international organisations can perform their duties without being intimidated or obstructed.

In essence this system not only looks at concrete threats posed by jihadist terrorists or right-wing and left-wing extremists, but it also focuses on conceivable threats. The AIVD provides the NCTV with risk and threat analyses and threat assessments to enable them to decide on implementing security measures where needed.

In 2019 the AIVD made threat analyses of diplomatic objects and persons. The AIVD also provided threat analyses in preparation of several large events, including King's Day, Remembrance Day, Veterans Day, Prinsjesdag (on which the King addresses the joint Senate and House of Representatives), and the Eurovision Song Contest which was to take place in 2020.

In the framework of its task to promote and improve security, the AIVD provided government parties and relevant organisations with information regarding concrete and conceivable threats against civil aviation, maritime transport, and other (vital) sectors.

In the past year the AIVD provided 5 threat analyses and 27 threat assessments within the Safety and Security System.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/bewakenenbeveiligen.

Information security

In 2019 there was a significant increase in attention for information security. The AIVD's National Communications Security Agency (Nationaal Bureau voor Verbindingsbeveiliging, NBV) provided expertise and advice to parts of the central government and vital sectors regarding the security of confidential and state secret information and the increase of resilience.

National Cryptostrategy

In 2019 the National Cryptostrategy was established. This strategy details how reliable means of security for very sensitive information will become available and how to deal with the very vulnerable supplier base of these means of security.

The strategy and work plans were drawn up in cooperation with other departments, the business community, and knowledge institutions.

5G

As a result of the increase in the number of supply chain attacks by state-sponsored actors and the impact of these attacks on national security, the AIVD has advised the central government to take measures within the existing telecommunications infrastructure and the future 5G infrastructure. In February 2019 the AIVD sent a letter to the Minister of Justice and Security as well as to the State Secretary of Economic Affairs regarding the risks to national security and 5G.

Together with the Radiocommunications Agency Netherlands (Agentschap Telecom), the MIVD, the NCTV, and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the AIVD played a part in mapping the risks in the telecommunications infrastructure and contributed to the development of the measures that were announced by the government in July 2019. One of these measures is the establishment of a structural cooperation between the government and telecommunications

providers, with structural coordination on identified risks and mitigation measures for the current telecommunications infrastructure and the future 5G infrastructure.

Bilateral Security Treaties

In consultation with other relevant departments the AIVD has become the central authority for bilateral security treaties. These are treaties in which the Netherlands and another country record agreements regarding the security of national classified information which may be exchanged between central governments or within the framework of foreign orders or commissions to Dutch businesses (or vice versa).

In 2019, the Netherlands and Belgium signed a security treaty, and negotiations with other countries are also underway.

Facts and figures

In the past year the AIVD provided 21 oral presentations to interested parties. In addition, 39 written information products with security advice were issued in 2018.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/informatiebeveiliging.

Intelligence and Security Service Act 2017

The Intelligence and Security Services Act 2017 (Wiv 2017) gives the AIVD its license to operate. The proper execution of the law is fundamental to the trust that society puts in the AIVD and as such the implementation of the Wiv 2017 received top priority in 2019.

The review by the Investigatory Powers Commission (Toetsingscommissie Inzet Bevoegdheden, TIB) and the Oversight Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (Commissie van Toezicht op de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, CTIVD) made an important contribution to the further improvement of the quality of the AIVD's work.

The TIB has stated that the quality of the requests for warrants made by the AIVD has improved considerably. In its progress report the CTIVD stated that significant steps have been taken, but that there is still a small risk of unlawful conduct.

Where possible, the AIVD strives to reduce these final risks to 'limited' in 2020.

Thanks to the Wiv 2017 the AIVD's powers have been realigned with the possibilities of modern telecommunication. The experiences with the Wiv 2017 in operational practice are largely positive. However, the AIVD has also encountered some obstacles.

Within the current framework there is some concern regarding the AIVD's ability (to continue) to identify hidden threats, both in predicting future threats and looking back at the past. This touches upon the very core of the AIVD's social task. It is therefore good that this year the Act will be evaluated by an independent committee.

The AIVD will inform the committee on the obstacles it faces. After all, the system of legislation and regulation must offer guarantees, both now and in the future, for the protection of civilians' private lives, as well as enable the AIVD and MIVD to continue to do their work to protect that same civilian and our interests and values.

Automated data processing

Automated data processing is the core of the AIVD's work. The AIVD constantly processes information obtained from unclassified sources, from general and special investigatory powers, and from other intelligence and security services and agencies. The majority of the activities in this framework cannot be regarded as processing big data as meant in the 2016 report of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regerings beleid, WRR), 'Big data and Security Policies: Serving Security Protecting Freedom' (Big Data in een vrije en veilige samenleving).

It concerns simple actions such as checking and reporting on communication information in the AIVD's own systems, for example in order to identify contacts or to link identifying data. The AIVD furthermore applies more complex methods that are more predictive in nature.

Any data processing carried out by the AIVD is strictly regulated by law. The CTIVD supervises this and the AIVD carries out and implements its recommendations with regard to this aspect. In this way this important practice can be carried out with the utmost care.

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/wiv.

Appendices

Fact and figures

Table 1: Completed security screenings by the AIVD and delegated partners.

Screening	Positive	Negative	Total
Level A, by AIVD	2049	14	2063
Level B, by AIVD	4560	70	4630
Level B, taken over by UVO from KMar, National Police and Protection Department	1790	1018	2808
Level C, by AIVD	719	8	727
Total screenings by AIVD	9118	1110	10228
Level B, delegated to KMar, National Police and Protection Department	36258	17	36275
Total screenings	45376	1127	46503

Table 2: Results of objections and appeals against security screening decisions.

	Dismissed	Upheld	Inadmissible	Withdrawn	Total
Filed objections	-	-	-	-	77
Ruling on objection	52	16	9	8	85
Ruling on appeal	9	0	2	2	13
Ruling on second appeal	4	1	0	0	5

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/veiligheidsonderzoeken.

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

Under consideration as of 1 January 2019	4
Submitted	30
Dismissed	6
Upheld	1
Not taken up for consideration	8
Withdrawn	7
Handled informally to the satisfaction of the complainant	7
Still under consideration as of 31 December 2019	5

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/klachten.

Table 4: Reports of suspicions of wrongdoing on the part of the AIVD.

2019	0
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For more information, go to: aivd.nl/misstanden.

Table 5: Requests to inspect information held by the AIVD, by nature or subject.

Requests	Submitted	Reviewed	Inspection file sent	Under consideration as of 31 December 2019
Information concerning applicant	85	79	27	25
Information concerning deceased relative	35	54	31	6
Information concerning administrative matters	5	26	17	24
Information concerning a third party	8	9	2	0
Total	133	168	77	55

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

	Reviewed	Dismissed	Upheld	Inadmissible	Withdrawn
Objection	20	4	15	1	0
Appeal	54	15	28	11	0
Second appeal	6	3	2	1	0

For more information, go to: aivd.nl/inzageverzoeken.

Table 7: Number of notifications.

2019	61
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For more information, go to: aivd.nl/notificatieplicht.

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

2019	8 (60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67)
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For more information, go to: aivd.nl/toezicht.

Table 9: Number of wiretaps pursuant to Art. 47 of the Intelligence and Security Services Act 2017.

2019	2.579
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For more information, go to: aivd.nl/taps.

Glossary

Access request

This offers citizens, researchers, and journalists the opportunity to access documents from the AIVD archives. This is similar to the Government Information Public Access request. An access request - formally a request to inspect information held by the AIVD - may concern the person in question or a specific topic. There are legal restrictions on furnishing information, such as source protection.

Activism

Activism occurs within the boundaries of our democratic legal order. Activists that show an inclination towards radicalisation can attract the attention of the AIVD.

Diaspora

(Former) citizens of another country who have moved to the Netherlands.

Extremism

Extremism can be defined as actively striving for or supporting profound changes in society, changes that could endanger (the continued survival of) our democratic legal order, possibly through the use of undemocratic methods that may have detrimental effects for the functioning of the democratic legal order. The dividing line between activism and extremism is often very thin.

Jihadism

Extremist ideology with the glorification of the violent jihad as its central thesis.

Left-wing extremism

The AIVD takes left-wing extremism to consist mainly of anti-fascist extremism, resistance to Dutch asylum and aliens policy, and anarcho-extremism.

Official report

An official report is a document by the AIVD to provide information to a recipient, such as the Public Prosecution Service or the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, who can take measures against the person or organisation named in the report.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the growth into extremism (see extremism).

Returnees

Someone who travelled to a jihadist conflict zone with jihadist intentions, of whom it has been established that they reached the conflict zone, and who is returning to the Netherlands. This also includes jihadists who travelled to the conflict area from a location other than the Netherlands and then travel from the conflict area to the Netherlands.

Right-wing extremism

Persons and groups who (covertly) carry out violent and non-violent actions based on one of the following ideas:

- hatred of foreigners;
- hatred of a foreign culture;
- ultranationalism.

Right-wing extremists pose a threat to the democratic legal order due to the undemocratic nature of their actions.

Salafism

A broad ideological current within Islam that argues for a literal return to the 'pure Islam' of the religion's early days.

Salafist inciters

Influential imams, mosques, and organisations which (may) pose a threat to the democratic legal order.

Security screening

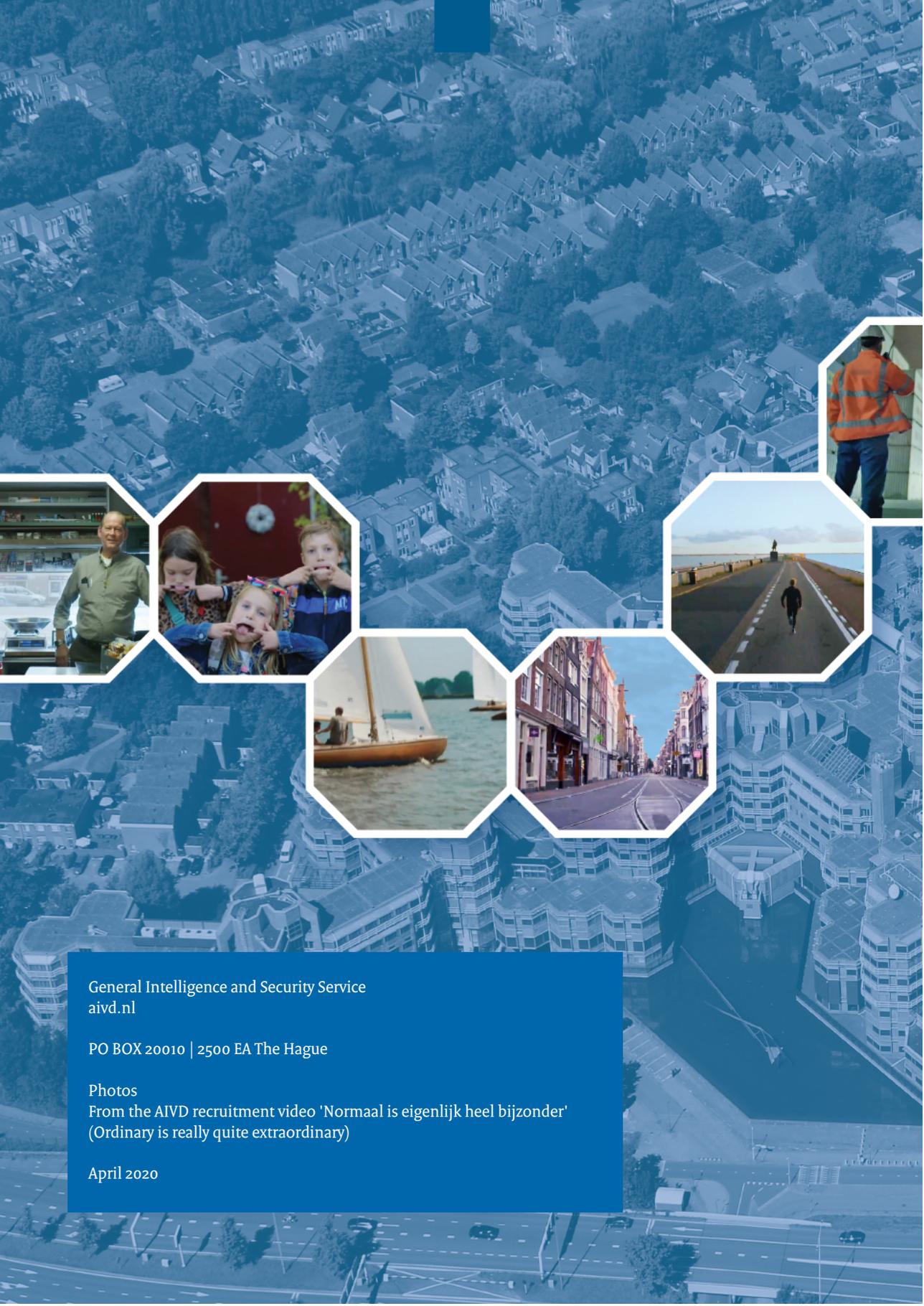
An investigation into the suitability of a person to fill a position involving confidentiality. This investigation focuses on relevant facts and circumstances to ensure that there will be no risks to national security. This concerns, among other things, a candidate's honesty, independence, loyalty, integrity, and security awareness.

Terrorism

Committing or threatening to commit violence against people's lives or causing significant damage to property which is disruptive to society, with the goal of achieving societal change, striking terror into the population, and influencing political decision-making.

Vital infrastructure

Infrastructure, processes, products, and services that are so vital to Dutch society that failure or significant disruption thereof could result in major damage to society.



General Intelligence and Security Service
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Photos

From the AIVD recruitment video 'Normaal is eigenlijk heel bijzonder'
(Ordinary is really quite extraordinary)

April 2020