

Annual report 2022

For the Sen foundation, the year 2022 was also dominated by the issue of wars in Europe and in the Middle East. In 2021, the foundation had started a project in the municipality of Nideggen in Germany for the reception of refugees with official asylum status who need to be integrated into European society. The goals of the project were both to help asylum seekers and to examine aspects of the practice of German asylum policy.

In the year 2021, an analysis of refugee reception in Turkey had first been made by the Sen Foundation. This was published on the Internet in the Sen Foundation's series " Making Sense of International Developments."

This project first seemed to become rather large in that year following the intention of a board member to personally purchase an old boarding house with financial support from the former Vietnamese boat refugee Binh Vinh Trinh. The guest house would help accommodate refugees in the Nideggen region. This intention was discussed several times with the city government. The conclusion was that it made more sense for the city government to acquire the property. Thus it was done. In 2022, it housed about twenty refugees from the Middle East and Ukraine. The activities of the Sen Foundation could therefore be limited to researching and promoting integration activities, especially of the refugees from the Middle East who integrate less easily than refugees from the European region. Sen Foundation's former intern, Lisa Geerts, who works at the IND and focuses on Syrian issues, visited the project together with an interpreter to speak to Syrians on the ground and analyze their integration issues. About fifteen Syrians participated in a meeting about their issues. Their main problems, as might be expected, turned out to be learning German, finding work, the very low participation of small children and wives in education, and finding affordable housing.

Due to the predominant issues of large numbers of refugees from Ukraine, the project portion of the Sen Foundation for the Middle East was limited to three families. However, a lot of volunteer work was organized for these refugees. This project continues through 2023 and has incurred only minor costs so far because Germany pays the refugees an allowance and provides limited housing and an allowance.

Ukraine's refugee problem became predominant from late February 2022, when the Russian attack on Ukraine took place. Activities for these refugees were undertaken within the framework of the OpenDoorUkraine.nl foundation, which was established by Sen foundation board member Voorhoeve and the Netherlands' first ambassador to Kiev, Mr. Robert Serry, in 2019 to promote the then faltering cooperation with Ukraine. This "ODU" foundation reported on the various refugee activities and other work of the said Sen board member for the benefit of Ukraine. Furthermore, in 2022, many activities were undertaken on television and radio programs focusing on analysis of international developments. Contributions took place almost biweekly. A number of newspaper and magazine articles were also published.

The new research intern, Swiss Pablo Mathis, wrote an analysis of the possibilities of cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany on river water storage in the Eifel region for the benefit of both countries in 2022. This analysis was not published because the final conclusion was that no suitable area could be found for it, besides the already existing reservoirs. Mathis then made an analysis of the systems in the Scandinavian countries for social and military service, particularly those of Finland, Sweden and Lithuania. This analysis has not yet been published; publication is expected in 2023. The conclusions from this preliminary study did play a role in contacts with the scientific bureau of the political party CDA, which is interested in introducing a social service system in the Netherlands. This has not yet been published either.

Work on social service gradually extended to measures for the protection of the population in case of war. This led to preparation of a lecture at the annual study day of the Royal Dutch Medical Association in Utrecht, the so-called Domus day, on the problems of war and peace seen from the medical professions. This lecture was published on the Internet and in the journal of the KNMG, as well as on the site of the Sen Foundation. The honorarium received for it was donated to ODU. The same happened with an earlier lecture for entrepreneurs in the north of the country on the issue of Ukraine.

A not insignificant contribution could be made to a conference in Lithuania of the University of Kaunas dedicated to the idealistic legacy of the Nobel laureate Sakharov and his vision of democracy from the then USSR. Developments were discussed in several Eastern European countries that made democratic openings but still have problems finding the right path to rule-of-law democracy. The cost of this conference participation was reimbursed from the Lithuanian side.

All in all, 2022 was a Sen year with little income, but a number of expenses, such as for the benefit of interns, the refugee project, travel and accommodation expenses regarding media appearances, lectures and meetings.

The board met physically twice in the year 2022, as the Sen Foundation considered its future work, given stagnant income from education. Led by the chairman, Rob Zeldenrust, it was determined that the foundation should focus on analysis of issues of European security broadly defined. Board meetings took place approximately every three months, generally digitally, to reduce travel time and costs.

The year 2022 ended with a small deficit.