



# AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND COOPERATION



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KARIEN VAN GENNIP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

## Dutch and Swedish companies meet at “virtual” trade mission

Committed to promoting international trade links, the Agency for International Business and Cooperation (EVD) – part of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs – hosts regular trade missions. These overseas networking events provide a platform to help Dutch companies to meet potential business partners and discuss shared commercial interests.

However, trade missions can be time-consuming and expensive for participants such as MedComfort – a Dutch company looking to enter the Swedish market. “A traditional trade mission involves a lot of time and money,” explains Mr van Nierop, Managing Director of MedComfort. “And you can’t predict whether or not you will achieve a return on your investment.”

## World’s first “virtual” trade mission

To minimize the time and costs involved for participating companies, EVD decided to take advantage of new video communications technology to host a “virtual” trade mission to Sweden – the first event of its kind. Around 30 Dutch businesses gathered in Amsterdam to take part and virtually “meet” Swedish companies and entrepreneurs located in Stockholm.

The day began with an introductory videoconference. This was followed by individual video calls through a web-based meeting room, providing an opportunity for businesses and potential partners to learn more about each other. Finally, the day ended with a group evaluation session – again, by videoconference.

## BUSINESS ISSUES

Commitment to initiate and strengthen international trade relations.

## SOLUTIONS

A “virtual” trade mission using TANDBERG videoconferencing systems, supported by a high-capacity network from Cisco.

## RESULTS

Face-to-face meetings – without the need for costly and time-consuming business trips.

## FUTURE

EVD will continue to use videoconferencing in future trade missions, helping companies around the world to form – and sustain – business relationships in a powerful and cost-effective way.



**TANDBERG PROFILE MAESTRO MXP**  
For medium to large-sized meeting rooms - turns existing monitors, projectors and displays into interactive video systems.

### **Cutting-edge solution**

This “virtual” event was made possible by the installation of a TANDBERG Profile Maestro MXP video system, supported by a high-capacity Cisco network. Using TANDBERG videoconferencing technology participants were able to have face-to-face discussions with potential business partners – without meeting them in person.

TANDBERG worked closely with Cisco to provide a solution that provides security, while avoiding conflicts with network settings or firewalls. The solution also integrates with existing IT applications and equipment to ensure straightforward implementation and smooth operation.

### **Building relationships**

Van Nierop feels that although visual communication is not a replacement for meeting business partners in person, it can play an important part when following up on detailed arrangements, as well as strengthening relationships overall. “I still believe that meeting in person is vital,” comments van Nierop. “However, after that you can communicate by video to discuss details or prepare contracts.”

EVD staff also benefited from being able to communicate with their Swedish counterparts using videoconferencing technology. “It’s very impressive to be able to see each other and talk face-to-face over such a distance,” says Karien van Gennip, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. “I’ve had several great conversations with my Swedish counterpart, Sven-Eric Söder. We don’t often have time to meet – but with videoconferencing it’s possible to catch up more often.”

### **Enormous potential**

Participating companies were enthusiastic about using videoconferencing technology to communicate with potential partners. “A “virtual” trade mission is a very effective way to acquaint ourselves with possible trade partners,” says van Nierop.

Van Gennip is excited about the potential of video communications technology for her organisation. She concludes: “I consider a more intensive use of videoconferencing to be a positive development, and am very enthusiastic about the possibilities it offers.”

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**MR VAN NIEROP, MANAGING  
DIRECTOR OF MEDCOMFORT**

Contact TANDBERG today to learn how our solutions can support your business processes.

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