

# Research on emotions in diplomacy and global policy

## Context

After many decades of research focusing on formal systems and quantifications, emotions have returned to policy research mainly through behavioural economics, which tries to analyse economic developments through human attitudes. Emotions (the term here covers a wide range of behavioural aspects of diplomacy, including trust, attitudes, and professional characteristics) are gradually entering the field of international relations and development. Recent developments in Egypt and Tunisia show that emotions play a very important role in shaping modern policy. A better understanding of prevailing regional or national ‘moods’ could help in shaping foreign policy and development projects.

Diplo’s researchers have noticed patterns in ‘regional moods’ during our Internet governance course. Over the last five years, hundreds of participants divided into regional groups have been reacting differently to the same texts. They read these texts in different ways. Predominant tendencies include, for example, high levels of optimism in Asian groups, a lot of pessimism in the Middle East groups, and strong social-responsibility comments in the Latin American groups.

## Proposed activities

Diplo plans to conduct a comparative study of emotions/attitudes in the main global regions. The study will use a comparative dataset developed at Diplo’s courses over the last five years (more than 100 000 online comments and questions made by more than 1000 participants). The project will also consult emerging literature in the field of behavioural economics and intercultural communication.

Survey results and recommendations will be prepared for policymakers in the field of foreign relations and development and presented at an international conference on this subject.