

# [***Dutch coalition government dominated by an anti-Islam party struggles to find prime minister***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C34-JG11-DYMD-61XJ-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 1:28 PM GMT

Copyright 2024 Associated Press All Rights Reserved

**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS; DOMESTIC NEWS

**Length:** 425 words

**Byline:** RAF CASERT and MIKE CORDER, Associated Press

**Dateline:** THE HAGUE

**Body**

THE HAGUE — The parties that agreed to form [*a Dutch coalition dominated by the far right*](https://apnews.com/article/netherlands-government-radical-right-immigration-wilders-77ff99e0798d54d150d320706a685a38) are struggling to find a prime minister and warned Wednesday that the search might leave the Netherlands without a fully functional government for months.

Anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders, who convincingly [*won the November election,*](https://apnews.com/article/eu-wilders-populist-farright-migration-muslims-netherlands-c8617a97a03011f98ed898ce863b579f) told legislators it might take until after the summer to cobble together a technocrat government. He reiterated that he would not become prime minister as part of the outline coalition deal.

The initial candidate for prime minister that Wilders had in mind withdrew early this week following reported allegations of his involvement in medical patent fraud.

“It could take one or two months,” or even up to a key parliamentary meeting in September, he said.

[*Wilders has been a divisive figure*](https://apnews.com/article/netherlands-wilders-profile-election-9da8ea7defb91f892868995cab333fcf) in Dutch ***politics*** for the past two decades and his appointment as prime minister would be seen as a step too far.

“No one had predicted this would work,” Wilders said about the coalition. “And I assure you that the government team, including the prime minister, will be presented. We will naturally make that work too.”

Wilders was instrumental in building a coalition with outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte’s center-right People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, the populist Farmer Citizen Movement and the new centrist New Social Contract party.

With plans to enforce the most restrictive asylum policy in the history of the Netherlands, Wilders has pushed a Dutch coalition far to the right and obscured the traditional view of the country as an open, tolerant society.

The coalition plan has also raised questions about the next government's climate commitments that are enshrined in European Union policies. The Farmer Citizen Movement has made sure the deal includes soothing language and concessions to farmers who have choked roads with tractors during disruptive protests.

Asylum and climate could quickly set up bruising battles with EU headquarters in Brussels, which oversees how policies are implemented in member states, and dent the nation's stature as a pillar of the 27-nation bloc, which Rutte had carefully nurtured during his nearly 13 years in power.

Rutte remains in office in a caretaker capacity and is seen as a strong candidate to become the next NATO secretary general this year.

His party, however, risks being expelled from the liberal Renew bloc in the European Parliament because of its alliance with Wilders. The Renew bloc said it would not accept coalitions with the extreme right.

\_\_\_\_

Casert reported from Brussels

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

**End of Document**