

**Date and Time:** Friday 15 January 2021 16:17:00 CET

**Job Number:** 134178147

**Documents (59)**

1. [*Presidential elections First round in Slovakia goes to Zuzana Caputova*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VNN-JJV1-DYMH-R2KS-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: mar 18, 2019 Fino a mar 18, 2019 |

2. [*France discovers participatory democracy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VNN-JJV1-DYMH-R2KV-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: mar 18, 2019 Fino a mar 18, 2019 |

[*We underestimate Europe's resilience'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R52N-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831).

**Client/Matter:** -None

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| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: Apr 02, 2019 Fino a Apr 02, 2019 |

4. [*What? Complaining? For you ten other day labourers;Column*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R545-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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5. [*Support softer Brexit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KS-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: Apr 02, 2019 Fino a Apr 02, 2019 |

6. [*Exports to the UK already encounter problems*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R523-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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7. [*King makes Barrie subject*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3N6-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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8. [*A Churchill missed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KK-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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9. [*Newcomer strikes in Slovakia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KP-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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10. [*Tackle the exploiters of migrant workers for once and for all;Comments*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R52V-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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11. [*No, No and No*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KV-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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12. [*Cabinet does not want European giants*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-117H-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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13. [*Ruttes attack on Baudet is doomed to fail*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-115D-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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14. [*This is where trade and expats come in;Border life How does a person or product enter Europe?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114Y-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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15. [*Link between European attacks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54P-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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16. [*Brussels politicians radiate reluctance*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D544-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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17. [*Never unimportant*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54K-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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18. [*Cybercriminals on EU sanctions list*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54B-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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[*Surprising that the Netherlands now sees China as a threat'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-1150-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831).

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20. [*Boris 'natural'candidate No. 10*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54M-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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21. [*Call for Nexit is own fault*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-6001-DYTV-D01X-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: mag 17, 2019 Fino a mag 17, 2019 |

22. [*United Kingdom Prominent Brexiteer Boris Johnson wants to succeed May*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114M-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
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23. [*Rutte's half-heartedness about Europe continues to feed scepticism*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1013-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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[*Dead' term on European unity leads to fierce debate*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-100F-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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25. [*No Headline In Original*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1010-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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26. [*Strict controls at land borders*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W16-M6X1-DYTV-D0TK-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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27. [*European Court blocks transit routes ;Tax avoidanceTax-free channelling of money through Dutch letterbox companies seems to be over*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102C-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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28. [*Hoekstra offers opening for euro zone budget*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102J-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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29. [*York's mood is a good indicator*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-100R-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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30. [*The economic climate proves to be a crunchy one; Column*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102F-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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31. [*Europe benefits from a militarily strong Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1011-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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32. [*The European Union can now show what "Europe" means ;Comments*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118S-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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| News | Fonti: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Sequenza temporale: Apr 17, 2019 Fino a Apr 17, 2019 |

33. [*European whistleblower protection legislation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118J-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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34. [*European Parliament Pulse fishing permanently banned in the European Union as from July 2021*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-11BR-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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35. [*'Security can be a reason for restricting free trade'; Economics and Law*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-11C0-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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36. [*Accelerating energy innovations*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0PB-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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37. [*Departure of Rutte disastrous for Dutch EU influence'.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-117Y-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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38. [*Notre-Dame will shine again. But when, that is the question*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-1186-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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39. [*Make EU labour market fair*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0P1-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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40. [*Notre-Dame burning cathedral offers chance for European unity;Letters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118T-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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41. [*Cheap Bulgarians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0P6-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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42. [*VVD climate course is about power*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0TF-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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43. [*Dutch fishery changes drastically'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0PG-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

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44. [*Exit Theresa May will not solve the problem, only a new referendum can do that ;Comment*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R05R-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

45. [*German youth also managed to get their grandmothers to vote green*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04N-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

46. [*The 'innovation summit' does not care about the new trade war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R061-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

47. [*Innovating on the Silicon Prairie; KC Cool Kansas City yearns for innovation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R05Y-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

48. [*The European Parliament has gained strength;Not afraid of Europe Germany was greening,Europe was splintering. Yet citizens made the EU stronger;The higher turnout in the European elections is an overwhelming political fact, writes . Europeans want influence.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R047-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

49. [*We laid the foundation*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-RRC1-JCBS-P0YM-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

50. [*Europe belongs to the hard workers across the border;In Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04M-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

51. [*European electionsPvdA garners most votes in Rotterdam, while PVV falls hard behind*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R08V-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

52. [*Populists are economically illiterate';Eichengreen*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WB7-K2Y1-JC5G-14F6-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

53. [*The magic of Geert Wilders no longer works by itself'.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04R-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

54. [*Just like us*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-RRC1-JCBS-P10M-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 01, 2019 Until Jun 01, 2019 |

55. [*Albania cuts so deep that it has no judge left*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PM-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 17, 2019 To Jun 17, 2019 |

56. [*Agricultural Commissioner: the most important job;Column*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PT-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 17, 2019 To Jun 17, 2019 |

57. [*Opportunism may help Boris Johnson as Prime Minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PV-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 17, 2019 To Jun 17, 2019 |

58. [*No Headline In Original*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PR-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOR euro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 17, 2019 To Jun 17, 2019 |

59. [*Where is Boris?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?id=urn:contentItem:5WC1-8KM1-DYTV-D3KF-00000-00&idtype=PID&context=1516831)

**Client/Matter:** -None

**Search Terms:** european union OREUOReuro\*OR European\*

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

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| **Content Type** | **Narrowed by** |
| News | Sources: NRC Handelsblad,De Telegraaf; Time sequence: Jun 17, 2019 To Jun 17, 2019 |

[***Presidential elections First round in Slovakia goes to Zuzana Caputova***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VNN-JJV1-DYMH-R2KS-00000-00&context=)

NRC Handelsblad

18 March 2019 Monday

1st Edition

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 14

**Length:** 100 words

**Dateline:** BRATISLAVA

**Body**

With the promise of tackling corruption and radical political change, 45-year-old Zuzana Caputova won the first round of the presidential elections in Slovakia on Saturday. She received over 40 per cent of the votes. In the second round, on 30 March, she will face the candidate of the ruling Smer party, ***Eurocommissioner*** Maros Sefcovic, who received almost 19 percent. Caputova is a member of the pro-European party Progressive Slovakia. The murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak a year ago has fuelled discontent with the government. (Reuters)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** International Relations (94%); Campaigns + Elections (69%); Corruption (69%); ***European*** Union (68%); Heads Of State + Government (63%)

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2019

**End of Document**

[***France discovers participatory democracy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VNN-JJV1-DYMH-R2KV-00000-00&context=)

NRC Handelsblad

18 March 2019 Monday

1st Edition

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 14

**Length:** 932 words

**Byline:** Peter Vermaas

**Dateline:** Orléans

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*ReportageNational Debate*

In the 'Grand Débat' after the yellow shirts revolt, citizens think up solutions together. This has never been done before.

**FULL TEXT:**

No, she has not worn a yellow vest. And she ignored earlier local debates. But when Marie-Christine Desbois (58) received the message by phone a few days ago that she had been selected by lot to participate in one of the regional final conferences of President Emmanuel Macron's 'Great National Debate', she could not refuse. "If you don't go when you are asked to participate in discussing the direction of the country, then you should never criticise again", she said.

Desbois is one of 71 people who came from all over the Centre-Val-de-Loire region to the conference centre in Orléans this Friday afternoon to spend three days discussing the four themes identified by Macron. It is a bold experiment. While there is widespread complaint, especially from 'yellow jackets', that representative democracy has had its day, the French government had about a hundred citizens per region selected at random to identify problems and come up with solutions. For this form of participatory democracy, the participants are reimbursed for their travel expenses and, if necessary, are accommodated in hotels. As long as they participate in the discussion until the end.

And that goes wonderfully well. At each table, six people deal with one of the themes. At the table of Desbois, who is a project manager in everyday life, the topic is 'the organisation of the state and public services'. Other tables discuss 'the ecological transition', 'taxes and public spending' or 'democracy and citizenship'. Should disagreements about the facts arise, there is even a fact checker in the room to sort out the issues.

All public services suffer from the same problem: lack of money", says 32-year-old Antony Boyer, who works for the railway company SNCF, at table 2.

**Scam**

"When I got the text message saying I had been selected, I thought it was a scam", Boyer had admitted on entry. "I hope it's not an attempt to explain Macron's policy", he said distrustfully. But at the table, he defended the public cause with fervour to a sceptical Marie-Christine Desbois. "The government is a bad manager", she says. "I think the state should deal with as few things as possible, only the most necessary."

Half an hour later, the table is agreed. Boyer is appointed 'rapporteur' to share the conclusions reached together in a plenary session: the big problem in the organisation of the state is "the many different levels of government" and, therefore, "too many elected executives". But the positive points are "free care and education", says Boyer. Bizarre", he summarises a little later. You don't know each other at all and then you have to agree. But it works."

The exercise marks the success of the national debate proclaimed by Macron in December after weeks of protest by "yellow skirts". 16,000 French municipalities opened 'cahiers' in which people could post their complaints and solutions, 10,000 debates have been organised at municipal level. There have been 41 thematic conferences with interest groups, such as trade unions, and the approximately 1.7 million online contributions are also being analysed. After the last 14 regional debates, like the one here in Orléans, a "synthesis" per theme should be made in April, so that the government can move forward.

The French love debating, it has been proven again", laughs Nadia Bellaoui, member of the Conseil Économique, Social et Environnemental, a kind of French SER. She is one of the five independent supervisors *('garants')* of the debate. In Orléans, she walks between the tables to get an impression of the discussions. As in all previous debates, the average age is relatively high. But there will be a separate conference with only young people. We are also trying out a completely new form of democracy," she says. This has never been done before in France.

It has not done Macron any harm. Not only is he climbing up the polls since the debate, he is also back at the popularity level he had before the first yellow jacket protests. Political scientist Pascal Perrineau, one of Bellaoui's fellow supervisors, complained in the media about Macron's "omnipresence" in the first phase of the debate. This would unfairly help the president in the campaigns for the ***European*** elections in May. Opposition parties filed an official complaint with the commission that monitors election campaigns.

Not that the "hesjes" are now giving up their resistance - Saturday in Paris was another day of intense rioting - but, according to sources in the Élysée Palace, the debate was mainly intended to get the 60 per cent or so of French people who were in solidarity but did not demonstrate themselves back on board. In Orléans, too, 32 out of 71 randomly selected people raised their hands when asked if they sympathised with the vests. It's great that it looks like we are being listened to now", said Boyer during the buffet after the first debate afternoon. But the hardest part is still to come. In the end, Macron has to draw conclusions from all the proposals. I hope they are the right ones, because I don't want to become an accomplice."

In case of disagreement about the facts, there is a fact checker to sort out issues

**Graphic**

On Saturday, the Yellow Shirts demonstrated again (above). Because of large-scale destruction and violence, 237 people were arrested. Earlier this month, President Emmanuel Macron attended a 'Grand Débat' in Greoux Les Bains, southern France (centre). Participants contribute themes to the debate in Marseille, Friday (below).

Photos Alain Jocard/AFP, Claude Paris/AP and Boris Horvat/AFP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Journalism (94%); Rule Of Law (86%); Immigration (75%); International Organizations + Bodies (69%); Crime, Law Enforcement + Corrections (64%); Police Forces (64%); Freedom Of Expression (63%)

**Industry:** Public Broadcasting (86%); Media + Telecommunications (69%)

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2019

**End of Document**

[***We underestimate the resilience of Europe'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R52N-00000-00&context=)

NRC Handelsblad

2 April 2019 Tuesday

1st Edition

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 14

**Length:** 1846 words

**Byline:** Caroline de Gruyter

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Alexander Clarkson ***in European*** Studies

The ***European Union*** is still wrongly seen as a peace project, says British researcher Alexander Clarkson. "The ***EU*** has over the years become a power factor."

**FULL TEXT:**

We must stop seeing the ***European Union*** only as a peace project. That is how it was seventy years ago, after the war. But we continue to cling to that old image and therefore fail to see that the ***EU*** has become a hegemon with solid structures and institutions. A hegemon that has power and will not easily collapse. One that does good things, but can also do harm."

Alexander Clarkson, a lecturer in German and ***European*** studies at King's College London, is fed up with the outdated way in which many ***Europeans*** view the ***EU***. For his work, he delved deeply into the ***euro crisis*** and the Ukraine crisis. Many predicted that these crises would be ***Europe***'s undoing. He soberly concludes: the ***EU*** can handle this. And maybe even stronger.

"We underestimate the resilience of the ***EU***," says Clarkson during a long telephone conversation from Berlin, where he teaches once every six weeks. "Many say that the ***EU will*** not survive the Brexit. Or that Russia or China will destroy us. China is buying part of the port in Trieste, which would be a threat to the ***EU***. Come on. Of course we have to look at our competition rules and protect vital infrastructure in ***Europe***. We are working on that. But the idea that the ***EU*** is stumbling on this is absurd. ***Europeans*** are too defeatist about the ***EU***."

Where does that come from?

,,Many still see ***Europe*** as an idealistic dream. The dream is that the ***EU will*** prevent and help solve conflicts. Every time there is a conflict in ***Europe***, everyone starts shaking and trembling: will we be able to overcome this? People keep focusing on this. If you look at ***Europe*** this way, every crisis becomes existential. And wrongly so. You become blind to geopolitical reality. The ***EU has become*** a power factor over the years. A kind of state, with strong institutions. However, thinking about ***Europe*** is dominated by people who see everything from the perspective of the nation state. The nation state is not that old, but for many it serves as a frame of reference. That prevents many citizens from seeing what the ***EU*** is, and is not.

Do you really see the ***EU*** as 'a kind of state'?

Of course. What else, with all its institutions, control bodies and jurisdiction? The ***EU*** is not identical to a nation state, because it does different things, but it has the structure of a federal state. It is a legitimate level of government, just as national, regional and municipal levels are. I grew up in Germany and Canada. Canada, everyone thinks, is a solid state. Yes, but in many ways Canada has a looser form of government than the ***EU***. The ***European*** single market is more integrated than the Canadian one. It is harder to sell a piece of Quebec cheese in Ontario than a French cheese in Germany. Few ***Europeans*** know that. Their two mantras are always: the ***EU*** is not a state, and the ***EU*** is weak. That is no longer true."

What do we gain by seeing the ***EU*** as 'powerful'?

It protects us from making mistakes. Take the Brexit. The British thought they could leave the ***EU*** while retaining the rights and privileges they had as a member state, but without the obligations. They would dictate the terms to the weak, divided ***EU***. That turned out to be a cardinal mistake. They would not have made it if they had seen the ***EU*** for what it is. The ***EU*** is more powerful than the UK and can do harm to others. The British are learning this *the hard way*. They are challenging the ***EU system*** and getting their due.

The ***EU*** protects its collective interest and says to the British people at every step: sorry, this is not what is good for us, so we are doing things differently. By invoking Article 50, London was already signalling that it was entering a process determined by the ***EU***: Article 50 is an ***EU procedure***. The Greeks did the same in 2010 by letting in the troika in exchange for loans: they thereby accepted the primacy of the ***eurozone***."

Are you surprised by the unanimity of the 27?

Not really. The continued existence of the single market and other common laws and regulations outweigh the loss of trade relations with the UK for them. A 'No Deal' would hit the Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium hard. But even they are almost laconic about it."

You say that the ***EU*** is so powerful. Why do politicians never talk about that?

They are in a difficult position. On the one hand, ***EU heads of government*** realise how powerful the ***EU*** is. For example, in the fight against illegal migration we are now deep in Africa. With training missions, stabilisation missions and a kind of ***European*** gendarmerie. No EU country can carry out these missions alone, not even old colonial powers like France or Italy. Other EU countries have to join. They make demands, of course. After a while, the ***EU steps*** in, as an arbiter, so to speak.

Such a mission becomes an ***EU mission***. That is what government leaders want. They put the ***EU forward*** because they don't want one country to decide or spoil everything for the others. But on the other hand, government leaders do not want the ***EU*** to be strong on all fronts. That would saw the legs from under their national chairs. That is why I think that in the future we will have a ***European*** defence rather than a ***European*** social system. Benefits and health care are typically services that the national state provides to the citizen. And will continue to do so.

If the Brexit is such a lesson about power relations in ***Europe***, should it continue?

My heart says there should be no Brexit. But my head says: it is better for the ***EU*** if the UK is out for a while. Because it hinders the ***EU*** in its development. Many Bremainers keep saying the same thing as Brexiteers: that the ***euro*** is doomed, that it is shameful how we handled Greece, that the ***EU*** is undemocratic, and so on. What this shows is a total lack of commitment. The UK is not in the ***euro***. It had nothing to do with the Greek crisis. It is eternally outside criticising others.

,,It is the British who want to stop the emergence of a more powerful ***European*** policy. They want to keep ***Europe*** intergovernmental. They want a ***Europe*** where member states continue to decide everything, behind closed doors, without interference from the ***European*** Parliament with its much more transparent procedures and votes. This is exactly what makes ***Europe*** undemocratic: the secretive behaviour of member states in the Council [of Heads of Government]. Nobody knows what is discussed there. An intergovernmental ***Europe*** is a less democratic ***Europe***."

So after the Brexit, ***Europe*** can integrate? You forget that the ***Eurosceptics*** are also against further integration.

***Eurosceptics*** show more commitment than many Britons. Seeing the Brexit chaos, most ***Eurosceptics*** no longer want to leave the ***EU***. They prefer to stay in, with their fingers on the controls. ***Eurosceptics are*** even helping to create a ***European*** 'demos'. They are constantly talking about ***Europe***.

Twenty years ago, '***European*** identity' was seen as something that suppressed national identity. It was either/or. Nobody thinks like that anymore. Now those two identities exist side by side. Younger politicians like Macron and Salvini understand that. Yes, even Salvini. He is of the Erasmus generation, who benefit from free travel and roaming and who have experienced ***European*** crises. Salvini talks in the same breath about refuse collection in an Italian city and ***European*** budget rules. Macron is on the ***European*** stage in the morning and debating with citizens in a town hall in the evening. Smart politicians can play all those levels of government at the same time. That's true across ***Europe***, except in the UK."

Why?

I lived in Germany. My friends who are politically active there all started at the local level and then moved up. There is a word for this: the '*Ochsentour'*. You start with neighbourhood issues and only later do you end up in national politics. And then, eventually, ***Europe***.

,,My friends from Oxford worked in the City for a while after their studies and then went straight to Westminster. Straight into national politics, with no local experience. Under Thatcher and Blair, the two major British parties were highly centralised and far removed from the electorate. And from practice. Many young, politically active Britons have national politics as their only frame of reference. In other ***European*** countries, you see the opposite. Italians or Spaniards understand that there are several levels. They therefore understand ***Europe*** better - whether they are fond of the ***EU*** or not."

What is the ***EU'***s greatest challenge?

We are faced with a number of choices that will determine what kind of military power the ***EU*** will become. The challenge will be to make the right choices. ***Europe*** can no longer count on full US protection. How that will work out, we do not know yet. But we must work on a plan B. How far do we go, and how do we manage it?

At the end of March, there was a massacre in a village in Mali. More than a hundred people died. Horrible. Many ***Europeans*** do not know this. But this is increasingly becoming our problem. We now defend our borders deep into Africa. We 'externalise' our border control. We have become a central player in Mali. We went there because we do not want Africans to come to ***Europe***. We started with a few ***European*** countries, and now we are there as the ***EU***. We can no longer say: such a massacre is not our business."

So what is the choice we have to make?

,,We are sitting there. That choice has been made. Now comes the next choice. The ***EU*** has little say in what we do in Mali. ***European*** foreign policy is in the hands of national governments. Should we ***Europeanise*** this and speak more with one voice, like we do with Trade and Competition? And to what extent? We must answer these questions for the simple reason that the ***EU*** can do harm.

,,We are responsible for it, we have to dose its impact. That means thinking ahead. No more ad hoc decisions, as at present, but solid, responsible political management. The ***EU*** is engaged in wars. In Mali, and also in Libya, where the French and the Italians are supporting different factions that are attacking each other. We need to think through what this means for the ***EU*** and its neighbourhood."

Is it not ironic that ***Europe, which*** began as a 'peace project', now has to think about war?

We are not interested in war. But wars are interested in us. That will be our biggest challenge in the years to come."

*The British Alexander Clarkson (Canada, 1977)* studied history in Hanover and Oxford. He studied the relationship between immigrants and the political movements in Germany after 1945. He is also concerned with the effects of ***European*** (external) border policy on countries just outside the ***EU***. He lives in Liverpool, Berlin and London.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (82%); International Relations (74%); Foreign Policy (63%)

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***What do I have to complain about? For you ten other day labourers; Column***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R545-00000-00&context=)

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2 April 2019 Tuesday

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 629 words

**Byline:** Menno Tamminga

**Body**

If there were a ***European*** award for the most impertinent company, Ryanair would be in the running. The Irish price-fighter looks like a 19th-century employer: bonus for the boss, the whip for the Dutch workers. You can see Ryanair as an example of what is wrong with cross-border ***European*** labour. The employer is in one country, the employees come from other countries and their labour relations look like a moth-eaten patchwork quilt. One right seems stronger and more stubborn: the right of the strongest. Whether it is a multinational like Ryanair that ignores Dutch labour regulations, or a temporary employment agency that places Polish workers in the Westland region.

Free movement of labour is one of the basic principles of the ***European Union***, but control of working conditions is poor. A revival of the day labour economy from the last century is the result. See the report on Saturday about the lousy conditions of Polish labour migrants in the Netherlands. Boarding school practices with fines for unkept rooms. Housing in former social housing that now looks more like antisocial housing. Unequal relations: Complaining? For you, ten others."

First Ryanair. Earlier this year, CEO Michael O'Leary was granted buying rights on 10 million shares that will bring him ***EUR*** 99 million if he manages to boost the price to ***EUR*** 21 over the next five years. Now the price is hovering around 11 ***euros***. A year and a half ago, it was hovering around 20 ***euros***. So it is achievable. The commissioners who offer O'Leary the bonus opportunity can earn half a million euros themselves under a similar arrangement. The entire top flight is on board to save costs (personnel, fuel, flight tax).

In the Netherlands, Ryanair and the unions FNV and VNV (pilots) have been playing a game of cat and mouse for months. It started with a strike. Ryanair then closed its base in Eindhoven. Since then, there has been a row, among other things because Ryanair had not consulted the unions about collective redundancies. That has to be done in the Netherlands. Last week, nine pilots went to court against Ryanair. They demanded money, their jobs are gone.

On a continent with such differences in national incomes and national social systems, an open ***European*** labour market is asking for trouble. Certainly if economic arguments and interests - the free market, that is a ***European*** matter - impose themselves and want to dominate social systems, a national matter. Consider the lively ***European*** horse-trading that is currently going on in the Unemployment Insurance Schemes. Will you soon be able to choose whether unemployment benefits are paid in your 'country of work' or your 'country of origin'? Will the benefit be for three or six months? And how will it be monitored? The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany have no interest in the extension, while the ***European*** Parliament and EU President Romania do.

Whatever you think of the unemployment riot, that benefit marks the end of a working relationship. You would wish that politicians would apply the same zeal to decent working conditions before someone is unemployed. So: action against the race to the bottom, whether it is Ryanair or the Westland.

Hesitantly, a ***European*** Labour Authority is now being set up to provide more social protection. It will be an information and coordination desk, not a watchdog with teeth against fraudulent practices and lousy working conditions like the Dutch Inspectorate SZW. It is telling that each Member State is allowed to appoint one liaison officer to the new Authority. With 350,000 Polish labour migrants in the Netherlands alone, you cannot say that ***Europe*** takes social safety and decent working conditions seriously.

*Menno Tamminga* writes here every Tuesday on enterprise policy and the economy.

Ryanair: the whip for the workers, for the boss the bonus can be 99 million ***euros***

**Notes**

Menno Tamminga writes here every Tuesday on corporate policy and the economy.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Labor Force (94%); ***European*** Union (78%); Government Grants + Subsidies (75%); Minimum Wage (74%); Wage + Hour Laws (74%); Public Finance (68%); Social Security (68%); Aircraft (65%); Labor Unions (65%); Immigration (62%)

**Industry:** Air Transportation (82%); Airports (74%)

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Support for a softer Brexit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KS-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 595 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

Labour goes for customs union with ***EU***

by Joost van Mierlo

LONDON - More and more British MPs are opting for a close future relationship with the ***European Union***. In this respect, both the options of remaining part of the Customs Union, without tariffs, or even a membership of the Internal Market, whereby own products may be sold elsewhere, are gaining more and more support.

Not all the fireworks came from the delegates on Monday. In the public gallery, a group of environmental activists caused some commotion by taking off most of their clothes. The television, however, ignored the protest. Soon the discussion was back to No Deal instead of No Clothes.

On Monday, as on Wednesday, the British House of Commons debated various ways of shaping the relationship between the UK and the ***EU***. Last Wednesday, all the proposals were successively rejected. Although the vote had not been completed by the time this newspaper went to press last night, the stakes seemed to have changed somewhat.

For example, the Labour opposition gave up its opposition to membership of the Single Market. As a result, the party has to accept that the free movement of people will not be abolished. This is sensitive in many of the urban constituencies where Labour has a sizeable majority. These were also areas where people voted massively for Brexit. Mostly out of discontent due to an invasion over the past 15 years of Eastern European immigrants.

The party also supports a softer Brexit in the form of a Customs Union with the ***EU***. This means bypassing the potential conflict over possible border controls between Northern Ireland and Ireland. The 'Common Market 2.0', also known as the Norway Plus variant, regulates free access to the ***EU market*** through the ***European*** Free Trade Association.

Former Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke is a strong supporter of this model. He admits that it means the UK cannot enter into trade agreements with third parties when it comes to industrial products or agriculture and fisheries, but it does not affect possible agreements when it comes to services.

These account for about 80% of the UK economy. The financial sector is the only sector in which the UK has a truly dominant market position, at least in ***Europe***.

A choice for a softer Brexit may cause a schism within the Conservative Party. Meanwhile, more than 170 Conservative MPs have signed an appeal calling on the government to leave the ***EU*** May 22.

A softer Brexit is not an option for them. The only alternative is to leave without a deal, a No Deal.

The fragile unity within the government now seems a thing of the past. Should Prime Minister May opt for a softer Brexit, an exodus of ministers and secretaries of state who cannot live with that will follow. If, however, she opts for a departure without a deal, the supporters of a softer Brexit will walk away.

Theresa May on Monday tried again to gain support for the compromise she was fighting for - a bit of leave and a bit of stay. It did not seem very successful. The Northern Ireland DUP persisted in its opposition.There was one House of Commons member who changed his mind. Conservative Richard Drax regretted that he had first supported May's proposal last Friday and, if the plan comes up again, will not do so again.

Barefoot activists

hijacking House of Commons

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (62%)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Exports to the UK already encounter problems***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R523-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 1009 words

**Byline:** Juurd Eijsvoogel

**Dateline:** Berlin

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Volker Bahr Director of Communications Medac

The German pharmaceuticals company Medac does not yet know whether Britons will recognise patents after the Brexit and whether test subjects will still be insured.

**FULL TEXT:**

It sounds so simple, sighs Volker Bahr, when he explains how a company like the German pharmaceutical company Medac is preparing for the Brexit. And how this medium-sized company, like so many in ***Europe***, is dealing with the practical - and moral - problems that the United Kingdom's departure from the ***European Union is*** already causing for a firm that exports to the British market.

Just produce some more medicines for a while, the British said to us, then we store them somewhere in the UK, we are at least somewhat prepared for a hard Brexit and patients do not run out of medicines."

Such an approach seems obvious, says Bahr, Medac's director of communications. ,,But unfortunately, it is not practically possible in all cases. For example, we have medicines that can only be kept for two years. So we try to keep stocks of them as low as possible.

On top of that, he explains. Some of our medicines are in demand all over the world. Ethically, it is not easy to say: we are sending a lot to the UK, where it is stored, but we don't know if we will have enough for Eastern Europe. What if Poland or the Czech Republic say at some point: we need it here now? Are we then supposed to say to the Poles and Czechs: sorry, but we cannot deliver your order, because we do not yet know exactly what will happen in Great Britain, so we are stockpiling it just to be on the safe side? That is a big dilemma for us."

According to Bahr, this does not apply to everything that Medac sells, but it does apply to a number of cancer medicines. With our knowledge and long experience in the different countries, we try to assess what the markets really need. And we have to act accordingly and take responsibility. But it's not that simple.

**Medium**

Medac, based near Hamburg, produces and exports drugs used in the treatment of rheumatism, bladder cancer, breast cancer, brain tumours and leukaemia, among others. The company has a turnover of around ***EUR*** 400 million, of which 10 per cent is in the UK.

After Germany, the UK is the most important market for Medac. It employs 1,729 people at its various German and international sites. A typical company of the German *Mittelstand*. Immediately after the Brexit referendum in 2016, Medac decided to form a small team to map out: what do we need to worry about, how will this all affect us? ,,The industry associations, both at ***the European level*** and in Germany, helped us enormously with this. They organised meetings and issued reports on what you had to take into account. Sometimes you heard what another company was doing and you thought: oh yes, we have to think about that too!

The British division has been made into a separate company under British law. It is still a wholly-owned subsidiary of Medac, but can operate much more independently. It now has to manage its own marketing and legal affairs and ensure that medicines authorised in the ***EU*** are also licensed for the UK market.

Medac's market position in the UK is good now, says Bahr. But that may change in the future, depending on what kind of trade agreements it concludes with other countries.

While in the short term the security of supply of medicines for British patients is the main concern, in the somewhat longer term other problems loom large. For example, the clinical testing of new drugs. Bahr: "If you develop a new drug, you test it in the decisive, third phase on large groups of patients. Normally, this is done all over ***Europe***. For example, three hospitals in Germany participate, two in the Netherlands, three to five in the UK, two in Italy, three in France, and so on. Now many companies are asking themselves: what about the British hospitals, can we still use the data from these tests?

Then there is the question of whether the British will recognise ***European*** patents. And how will it work if I want to plan joint research proposals with British university clinics? What about the insurance of patients who participate in a clinical trial, how will that be organised in the UK if the ***European*** rules no longer apply?"

**No production in UK**

The UK remains a very important research country with leading universities and clinics, says Bahr. ,,But the current uncertainty is leading us to do all the new things without the British, unfortunately. Because it just brings too much uncertainty. We can't wait, we have to make decisions now for the next five years."

And then, says Bahr, Medac has it comparatively easy, as a German company, with a German headquarters, with production taking place in Germany and the Czech Republic. We have no production at all in the UK, so we do not have to worry about our production process running into trouble. This is more problematic for other companies. I don't think that we or other pharmaceutical companies will be thinking about building a production company in the UK in the near future."

How did it come to this? Take our company: we supply our medicines to 95 countries, and in 94 of them we are guests. Perhaps Britain's self-image no longer quite reflects the realities of the global economy."

If we send lots of medicines to the UK for storage, will we have enough for Eastern ***Europe***?

**Volker Bahr**

Directeur Corporate Communication & Governmental Affairs van Medac.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); COVID-19 Coronavirus (68%); Banking, Lending + Credit Services (67%); Company Revenues (65%); Death + Dying (65%); Communities + Neighborhoods (62%)

**Industry:** Pharmaceuticals Agents + Products (71%)

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***King makes Barrie subject***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3N6-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** PRIVATE; Page 09

**Length:** 638 words

**Body**

Choreographer outpaces Brexit

"That I declare and promise." With those words, BARRIE STEVENS completed his naturalisation ceremony yesterday at the City Hall in Amsterdam. After 57 years of living and working in our country, the British actor and choreographer may now officially call himself a Dutch citizen. "I want to bring my life to a beautiful end here."

"I swear that I will respect the constitutional order of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, its liberties and rights. And I swear to faithfully fulfil the duties which citizenship entails." That is how it sounded yesterday in the Amsterdam Town Hall from the mouth of BARRIE STEVENS (74). It took a while, but at the end of this month, he will for the first time be able to wave at 'his' King on Queen's Day and sing the Wilhelmus as his own national anthem.

Through a real naturalisation ceremony, Barrie was inaugurated as a citizen and, visibly emotional, he received the Royal Decree. "I cherish this one", he said proudly. The choreographer also used the moment to address all the new Dutch citizens: "Dear people, I hope - from the bottom of my heart - that you are all as proud to become Dutch as I am. I am extremely proud that I am allowed to experience this. Good luck and keep going.

The British-born man crossed the ocean in 1962 to tour for a few weeks in the Snip & Snap Revue, but finally settled down in Amsterdam. Via Ja zuster, nee zuster and The Soundmixshow, he ended up in Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden and after the summer as a participant in Dancing with the Stars. The latter project will be his first as a Dutchman, because until yesterday, on paper he was still An Englishmen in Mokum.

"I remember when I was 18 years old, I went to the immigration police and had to renew my residence permit every time. When England joined the ***European Union*** in 1973, I no longer had to do so, but since the whole Brexit issue, I want to be on the safe side. Prime Minister THERESA MAY has asked for a postponement several times now, but just imagine if the time really comes, it could be a lot harder to obtain Dutch citizenship. Moreover, the disgusting way in which she and the British Parliament have dealt with each other over the past three years has made me completely unhappy with 'that side'. For years Britain and ***Europe*** have mixed strength and talent, but now it's not at all clear which way we're going."

Since the death of his father in 2014, Barrie has only visited his homeland sporadically. Moreover, his future lies in the Netherlands on all fronts. "My career has received a huge push in the past year and that encourages me to get everything out of it here. Holland has enriched my life and I feel safe and at home here. Think of accepting this passport as a kind of marriage I am entering into, something I have never known in my life. In the eighteen years that I was together with LEEN JONGEWAARD, this subject was never discussed and I have accepted that this will not happen with another man. This official step that has now been taken is for me the best and most beautiful way to bring my life here to a happy ending. The Dutch way, with kale and beef. I love it and I have to. If I want to look sharp in a suit on the 'dancing floor' this autumn, training and healthy eating are an absolute must. That's why I get up every morning with oatmeal or yoghurt with blueberries.

I am completely cut off from my homeland'.

Holland has enriched my life and I feel safe and at home here'.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Death + Dying (94%); Sex + Gender Issues (87%); Religion + Spirituality (86%); COVID-19 Coronavirus (83%); Epidemics (83%); Infectious Disease (83%); Viruses (83%); Film (82%); Immigration (69%); Musculoskeletal Disorders + Injuries (69%); Freedom Of Expression (67%); ***European*** Union (65%); Associations + Organizations (63%); Behavior + Cognition (62%); Ethnic Groups (62%); Indictments (62%)

**Industry:** Entertainment + Arts (78%)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2019

**End of Document**

[***A Churchill missed***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KK-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** Inland; Page 15

**Length:** 816 words

**Body**

Author Andrew Roberts lacks leadership in Brexit debate

Visionary leadership in difficult times, that is what is lacking in the British Brexit debate. Churchill biographer Andrew Roberts knows all about it. He is extremely annoyed by the clumsiness of British politics. As an inveterate Brexiteer, he does not want the half-baked solution that Prime Minister May is now advocating. He would rather wait a little longer for a real Brexit.

Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965) was already a renowned statesman when, as British Prime Minister from 1940 to 1945, he defied Hitler. He was praised for his speeches. Roberts slaps his hands before his eyes when asked about Churchill-like leadership in the Brexit debate. "Boris Johnson has something of the humour that Churchill used to engage people with, but even that is missing from most other politicians. If they have any jokes at all, they are pre-cooked jokes by communications advisers. They are the worst."

Prime Minister Theresa May is the scapegoat. In Robert's view, her premiership has nothing to do with leadership. "Of course she has a hard time with a minority government and her dependence on the Northern Ireland Unionists. But to then make a deal with Brussels that this very group can never agree to, no, that is a mistake not even Churchill would make."

Wrong end

Because Churchill made plenty of mistakes, Roberts would not want there to be any misunderstanding about that. "But he also learned from his mistakes. Not like Theresa May. As things stand, she will be voting on her Brexit deal for the fourth time this week. And by then she probably won't admit she was wrong."

Roberts is convinced that Churchill would have been an opponent of the political union that the ***EU*** has become. Roberts: "He was a supporter of the ***European*** idea, but he saw a role for the UK from the sidelines."

Roberts' position is diametrically opposed to that of Conservative MP Nicholas Soames, a grandson of Churchill, who is convinced that Churchill was a "remainer" at heart. Nicholas' mother, Mary Soames, Churchill's youngest daughter who died a few years ago, told Roberts before her death that it was impossible to know what the temperamental Churchill would think.

Archives

Roberts, of course, was not the first to write a Churchill biography. According to him, a total of 1009 biographies have been written. Not all of them are cradle to grave descriptions - the Dutch translation of Roberts's book Churchill de biografie (Churchill the biography) counts more than 1200 pages - but still. Not all of them are worthwhile, according to the author. "The last real Churchill biography was written more than twenty years ago. Since then, numerous archives have been unlocked. I am, for example, the first person to have received permission from Queen Elizabeth to read the war diaries of her father (King George VI). In the second half of my book, there is not a page where I do not refer to a source that has never been used."

Roberts has turned Churchill into a man of flesh and blood. Someone with genuine emotions. During the Second World War alone, fifty moments were recorded in which Churchill was moved to tears. "No, he was certainly not the hard aristocrat with a stiff upper lip. It's hard to imagine what would happen if Theresa May were to burst into tears now, although she has every reason to, but Churchill's was accepted."

Threat

Of course, Churchill became the hero he is because of his actions in the Second World War, Roberts also knows. "But I do not share the view of people that what he did before was irrelevant. He was a voice in the desert in the 1930s when it came to the threat of Hitler Germany. He was booed in the House of Commons. He was almost forced to give up his position in his constituency. But Churchill refused to change his message. That unshakeable conviction of his own rightness drove him."

Spin doctors, communications advisers, Churchill had nothing to do with it. Today, you see politicians in the House of Commons reading speeches from advisers," says Roberts. Churchill would never have done that. He wrote speeches with more than 6.5 million words. He learned them all by heart. Several he could still recite decades later. And they were all his own words. That gave him an authenticity that most politicians lack today. Yes, Trump has a similar authenticity, but not the same eloquence. By the way, I am convinced that Churchill would have been a great twitterer. His quicksilver humour suits that medium perfectly."

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Profiles + Biographies (94%); Celebrities (80%); ***European*** Union (65%); Ear Nose + Throat Disorders (63%)

**Industry:** Internet + Www (75%)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Newcomer strikes in Slovakia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KP-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 257 words

**Body**

From our editors abroad

Amsterdam - She has virtually no political experience, but still managed to beat the much better-known candidate of the Slovakian ruling Smer-SD party Maros Sefcovic, who is also Vice President of the ***European*** Commission.

Zuzana Caputova was elected as the head of state of Slovakia in the second and final round of the presidential elections with 58% of the votes. This makes her the first woman to hold the largely ceremonial office.

Caputova campaigned as the candidate of Progressive Slovakia, a party that has no seats in the Slovakian Parliament. She framed the campaign as a battle between good and evil. The 45-year-old lawyer, divorced and a mother of two, said she decided to enter politics after the murder of journalist Jan Kuciak in February 2018.

Kuciak was investigating links between politicians and organised crime when he and his fiancée were shot dead in his own house. He was the first journalist ever to be murdered in Slovakia. Eight arrests have been made in the case so far, including prominent businessman Marian Kocner, who had allegedly threatened Kuciak before. The murder marked the end of the premiership of Robert Fico, who was forced to resign.

Caputova made a name for herself as a lawyer in a court case against an illegal landfill that lasted more than 14 years. She also championed the rights of the gay and transgender community.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Trial + Procedure (94%); Political Parties (81%); Campaigns + Elections (77%); Freedom Of Expression (71%); Journalism (71%); Heads Of State + Government (69%); Justice Departments (68%); Law Courts + Tribunals (68%); Death + Dying (61%)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Tackle the exploiters of migrant workers for once; Comment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VSW-07Y1-DYMH-R52V-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; page 17

**Length:** 627 words

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Unequal treatment

**FULL TEXT:**

At least two things stood out about the report on the large-scale and persistent exploitation of Eastern European labour migrants in *NRC* this weekend. One was the impotence of the government, employers and labour mediators to get to grips with this problem, which has been going on for years. Already in 2011, the Koopmans Parliamentary Committee called the situation of labour migrants in the Netherlands 'unacceptable'.

This story can be rewritten every so often, it seems. It has all the classic pre-revolutionary ingredients - unskilled, young foreign workers who do not speak the language or know the country, who are mercilessly exploited and forced into dependence on their employer. They are trapped in a system where rents are charged for poor housing, with the added bonus of a system of fines for all sorts of rather arbitrary living arrangements. Add to that occasional unpaid overtime, excessively long working hours and the constant threat of dismissal, and the picture is complete. Here, the weakest are disenfranchised, thanks to the inadequate protection of temporary and other flexible workers. As described, those who complain about their jobs lose their homes, those who complain about their homes lose their jobs.

The profiteers are apparently hardly hindered by either the government or trade unions, parties or civil rights organisations. It is fuel for the type of emancipation struggle for which the native worker is only gently tapped on the shoulder on 1 May. The eight-hour working day, remember? The five-day working week, were you ever happy with it? Well, it's completely different in the greenhouses.

And the second thing that stood out was the abstract windscreen of arrangements that effectively keeps the problems out of sight. Or at least keeps them immune to correction or discipline. There is an excess rather than a shortage of inspections, supervisors, certificate holders, bodies, procedures, investigations and control. Fragmented over numerous levels and parties, most are doing their best. At least, that can be assumed. But they do not get any further than the occasional fine and prosecution. The Polish ambassador and his consul-general described the situation of their working compatriots as that of a "parallel society", which The Hague has no control over, and which also gives the impression of not being very ambitious. They' come here to work and then they leave again - everyone happy.

Unless, of course, an unemployment benefit is 'included'. That this group is exploited on all sides does not seem to be a problem. But of course it is. In the Netherlands, everyone is treated equally in principle and everyone should be able to claim equal rights. So that means that labour migrants can receive their own care cards, that they are not subjected to vacuuming or mattress-topping duties, that they are paid correctly.

Employers who take on employment agencies offering unbelievably low rates are acting unlawfully, indecently and immorally and should be punished for it. An industry that allows such conditions to continue must face up to them. Politics and management should ask themselves whether the weak position of flex workers should not be corrected. Such abuses have no place in a modern country.

An industry that allows such abuses to continue for so long must finally face up to them itself.

In the Commentary, NRC gives its opinion on important news facts. The commentators write these articles in consultation with the editors-in-chief.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Labor Force (94%); Economic Migration (82%); Human Resources + Personnel Management (75%); Slavery (75%); Human Trafficking (69%)

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***No, No and No***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VST-GKY1-F086-H3KV-00000-00&context=)

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2 April 2019 Tuesday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 592 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

House of Commons once again deadlocked in Brexit debate

by Joost van Mierlo

London - Support for a softer Brexit is growing, but there is still no majority in the House of Commons for any Brexit scenario. On a day when Commons members could once again air their Brexit hearts, the greatest excitement came from the public gallery. A dozen activists stripped off some of their clothing to draw attention to the environment. The television ignored them. Fortunately, there were journalists.

Soon the discussion turned to No Deal instead of No Clothes. During the course of the day, there was hope among supporters of a soft Brexit that their proposals would gain a majority. The Labour opposition not only embraced a customs union with the ***EU***, but now wanted to be part of a single market.

In the end, they were not decisive decisions. The Customs Union proposal fell by 273 votes to 276, a minority of one vote less than last week. That is not good.

The scenario of remaining part of the Internal Market was still voted down on Wednesday with a majority of over 200 votes. Now the difference was considerably smaller: 261-282. The proposer, the Conservative Nick Boles, then withdrew from the Conservative Party. He opposed the lack of willingness to compromise.

The problem with the House of Commons' ideas exercise is that many MPs abstained. Although most of the 100-plus-strong government was allowed to vote as they wished, May forced her cabinet, 22 ministers in all, to abstain. That happened bravely.

Many other Conservatives, including a group of inveterate Brexiteers, also have no appetite for the MPs' own initiative. They know that this - in their eyes - dead-end road will only lead to a softer Brexit. The Northern Irish DUP also refuses to give way. They have been difficult enough for the government in recent months, but are now helping the government by preventing alternative proposals from being embraced.

A choice for a softer Brexit may cause a schism within the Conservative Party. Meanwhile, more than 170 Conservative MPs have signed an appeal calling on the government to leave the ***EU*** by 22 May. A softer Brexit is not an option for them. The only alternative is to leave without a deal.

The fragile unity within the government now seems a thing of the past. Should Prime Minister May opt for a softer Brexit, an exodus of ministers who cannot live with that will follow. If, however, she opts for a departure without a deal, the supporters of a softer Brexit will walk away.

Theresa May on Monday tried again to gain support for the compromise she was fighting for - a bit of leave and a bit of stay. It did not seem very successful. The Northern Ireland DUP persisted in its opposition. There was one member of the House of Commons who changed his mind. Conservative Richard Drax regretted that he had first supported May's proposal last Friday and, when the plan comes back to the table, on Thursday at the earliest, will not do so again.

A new referendum received the most support, as did last week, but with 280 supporters it is still a long way from a parliamentary majority. Cancelling Brexit is still clearly going too far for the House of Commons: 191-292.

Four alternatives rejected again

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Cabinet does not want European giants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-117H-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 5

**Length:** 1071 words

**Byline:** Menno Tamminga

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

***European*** strategy

The cabinet wants nothing to do with '***European*** champions' who compete with China and the US. Rutte III prefers to invest in broad technology.

**FULL TEXT:**

. China can breathe a sigh of relief. The Netherlands feels nothing for stimulating ***European*** industrial champions who have to take on competitors in, for example, China and the US.

In the policy paper that the Cabinet presented on Wednesday on the China strategy, you have to read between the lines to be able to draw this conclusion. The long-awaited strategy is vague when it comes to business. China is a sales market for the Netherlands, an investor in the Netherlands and a competitor.

The cabinet mainly repeats previous announcements, such as an investment test for foreign takeovers on the criteria of national security and public order. Political negotiations on this test have been going on since 2013, when KPN turned down a bid from Mexican telecom company América Móvil that was perceived as unfriendly.

The readmission test fits smoothly into the core of the China strategy: cooperation within the ***European Union*** is the best way to tame the 'dragon'. But in that cooperation, the government is choosy.

The ***European*** cooperation envisaged does not extend to the new industrial policy that the Franco-German tandem wants to pursue. Their vision is that ***Europe*** should put its own champions in the world market. Governments have a directing role here. The 'father' of this industrial policy is Peter Altmeier, the German Minister (CDU) for Economy and Energy.

The first concrete example was immediately controversial: the merger of the train construction divisions of the German industrial group Siemens and its French counterpart Alstom. One of the arguments for their merger was the competition from China.

***European*** Commissioner Margrethe Vestager (competition) made mincemeat of this. She rejected the merger, because there is no competition from China in the ***European*** market, while the Chinese market is completely closed to foreign companies. In response, France and Germany proposed new powers for ***European*** government leaders: the power to revoke a merger veto. Does the Netherlands support this?

**Always alert, never naive**

The answer is not in the China strategy, but in the ***European*** competition strategy that was sent to the Lower House two days before, on Monday. This document of only ten pages exudes the concrete urgency that the China strategy (102 pages) lacks. The two documents have common ground and overlap. Global relations are changing and the Netherlands and ***Europe*** must play a new role, is the common thread. In the China strategy, the credo is: 'open where possible, protective where necessary'. In the ***European*** competition strategy it is called: open where possible, protective where necessary, always alert, never naive'.

In its ***Europe strategy***, the Cabinet wholeheartedly opposes the industrial policy of ***European*** champions. The Netherlands' priority is competition for the benefit of the consumer, not scaling up in pursuit of the world market.

Rutte III does not feel anything for mergers that, with or without state support or subsidies, lead to the formation of (semi) monopolies. The Netherlands is sober. Besides, a merger does not automatically guarantee a ***European*** champion: after all, merging companies has not always been a success."

The Dutch position is the traditional liberal one. Two Dutch ***Euro Commissioners***, Frits Bolkestein and Neelie Kroes, previously fought for open competition. The cabinet stands firm for politically independent merger control.

There are also practical considerations, which do not appear in the paper. As a medium-sized country, the Netherlands has few industrial companies or banks that could qualify as ***European*** champions through a merger. Dutch industry is relatively small and is mainly a supplier. Sometimes there is a world player, but not in high-tech - think of paint giant AkzoNobel - or it already has a number one position, like chip machine manufacturer ASML.

**Long live the Forum**

To recap: the Netherlands is indeed enthusiastic for ***European*** economic cohesion. But not for Franco-German champions. So...?

The Netherlands is taking a pan-European approach: every country must be able to participate. And the Netherlands prefers to aim for a ***European*** leading position in chains of companies "that are of strategic economic importance or are crucial to our security".

The cabinet has in mind "the transition to a sustainable and digital ***European*** economy". Not very concrete, but Germany and France cannot be against it, you might say.

Rutte III recommends an existing ***European*** platform to arrange this: the *Strategic Forum for Important Projects of Common* ***European*** *Interest*. This programme has been running for over a year now and is trying, for instance, to realise a ***European*** lead in battery technology and microelectronics. According to the Cabinet, this *Strategic Forum* could also give a nice boost to the 'large-scale joint investment plans with which ***Europe*** can continue to lead in the future'.

This is the attack strategy that Minister Wopke Hoekstra (Finance, CDA) hinted at a week earlier in his 'Future of ***Europe'*** lecture at Humboldt University in Berlin.

He argued there for a "fundamental rearrangement of priorities" in ***Europe***, in which the hundreds of billions of ***euros*** that are now spent on agriculture are (largely) freed up for investments in "innovation, *artificial intelligence*, nanotechnology and biotech". In the Netherlands, his plea was measured against the national yardstick: is this CDA minister ***Europhile*** or ***Eurosceptic***? Hoekstra has long since passed that question.

In Berlin, he unambiguously opted for the need for "***European*** power politics". And for the accompanying capital investments in new technology. Because that is what China does. That is now the new norm.

The US, China and ***Europe*** are competing in the new industrial revolution (3D printing, robotics, batteries, superfast 5G network). Technology has become "part of the competition for world power", says the cabinet. China is the opponent in this battle, but the defence must come from the whole of ***Europe***.

The government is opposing the Franco-German economic course

**Graphic**

A high-speed train of the French-German alliance Alstom and Siemens in Berlin. Rutte III prefers to invest in broader innovation than in ***European*** giants.

Photo Jochen Eckel/Bloomberg

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**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (63%)

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[***Ruttes attack on Baudet is doomed to fail***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-115D-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 794 words

**Byline:** Felix Klos  
  
Felix Klos

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Prime Minister Rutt's half-heartedness about ***Europe*** is powerless against the fact-free delusions of Baudet, writes Felix Klos.

**FULL TEXT:**

As Prime Minister, Mark Rutte has rarely been caught out in his peppery political attacks. Fuck off', 'be normal' and 'windmills run on subsidies'. That's about it. This week Rutte added to this somewhat lacklustre repertoire the description of Baudet as a "fiddling attic scientist" who, by "flickering candlelight, using a quill", writes down fabrications about "how the ideal world works".

What Rutte underestimates is that goose feathers, candlelight and attic rooms are part of the false mysticism with which Baudet grips hordes of adolescents and other identity seekers. What he fails to see is that voters hunger for a vision of an 'ideal world' that does not come from the optician.

Rutte wants to neutralise the electoral danger of Baudet with a duel that he thinks he can win by affably ridiculing Baudet *for* having a vision. Rutte thinks he can make voters immune to Baudet's fact-free delusions by contrasting them with his own lack of vision. Grinning, shouting 'act normal, man'.

It is doomed to failure. Half-heartedness about ***Europe*** is powerless against the feverish dream of 'regaining' national superiority and the return of a glorious, trouble-free past that never existed. Rutte has no answers. He has no ***European*** vision that can make the appeal of Baudet's fantasies pale before the voter.

Rutte once called the ***European*** Parliament a party committee in search of a party. At the beginning of this year, he referred to the ***European*** elections as 'not that relevant'. A poor attitude towards our ***European*** democracy.

In the government statement of his first cabinet, which was tolerated by Wilders, he said that the transfer of 'national competences' had to stop. Rutte I also mimicked Margaret Thatcher: it wanted "a substantial reduction of the Netherlands' contributions to the ***EU***". In the 2012 election debates, Rutte played the role of the tough Dutch accountant who would wash his hands of Brussels' profligacy: 'not a penny to the Greeks! Not much later, he agreed to a new aid package.

Rutte II set out to 'repatriate' ***European*** policy measures, but could not identify a measure of any substance and blew a smokescreen by firmly urging Brussels to refrain from further interference in the area of school milk and school fruit.

In the final days of his second cabinet, Rutte shone in the Ukraine referendum campaign by calculated absence. And after the Brexit referendum bash, Rutte was the first to turn against the new ***European*** dynamic of Macron and Merkel. The anti-European Dutch voter will be disappointed to learn that Rutte is now living under the same political roof as Macron.

In his recent Churchill Lecture and earlier in speeches in Berlin and in the ***European*** Parliament, Rutte showed a late ***European*** conversion. This has not yet prevented him from turning a blind eye to the fact that three weeks ago, his VVD supported a Lower House motion that deployed the sledgehammer against the foundation of all ***European*** treaties, the phrase 'an ever closer union' between the peoples of ***Europe***.

Now that he wants to enter into an electoral battle with Baudet's FVD, Rutte suddenly presents himself as the fearless champion of ***European*** unity. The voter who is looking for a ***European*** course will not be enthused by Rutte, however. On the eve of the elections, 'Act normal' and 'just stay in the ***EU***' are not enough.

The voter deserves so much better. The antidote to the poison of the ***Europhobes*** is a convincingly delivered, historically informed, optimistic vision of a dynamic and progressive ***Europe***. As a bastion of freedom and human dignity, the ***European Union is*** the flickering light in the rapidly falling darkness of autocracy, lawlessness and imperialist aggression of China and Russia, and of the political decay and directionless capitalism of the United States. The ***European Union*** is the hope for the future of the world.

Rutte will not say any of that in the television debate. He is giving Baudet a dream stage for his gossipy talk laced with jargon. Talks that, in the ideological vacuum created by Rutte, could pass as an educated vision. And so Rutte's ***European*** half-heartedness threatens us almost as much as Baudet's ***Europhobia***.

Felix Klos is a candidate for the European Parliament (#4) for D66.

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Subject:** Economic Policy (94%); Government Departments + Authorities (82%); International Relations (70%); Housing Market (63%)

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[***This is where trade and expats come in; Border life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114Y-00000-00&context=) [***How does a person or product enter Europe?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114Y-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 11

**Length:** 1045 words

**Byline:** Arjen Schreuder

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

How robust is the ***European*** external border? At the Maasvlakte, customs is on the lookout for illegal goods: weapons, drugs or faulty wood. Elsewhere in Rotterdam, highly skilled migrants receive all the help they need for a smooth integration. By our editor Arjen Schreuder

**FULL TEXT:**

**Goods**

Welcome to East London", jokes customs officer Onno van Elswijk. Every year, millions of containers cross the ***European*** external border in the port of Rotterdam and one of them is today in a customs warehouse on the Maasvlakte, almost fifty kilometres from Rotterdam. Ready for an inspection. We are the *first point of entry*. We check for goods that are not allowed to enter the ***European Union***", says Van Elswijk. According to the papers, the container should contain furniture from India. Scan images also point in that direction. But was there perhaps other cargo in between? And is the wood not from protected species?

Iris Moulijn is going to check it out. The flora and fauna specialist from customs cuts open the packaging. Strong men wring out a wine rack from a box. Moulijn starts scraping a layer of wood off the wine rack with a knife. She grabs a magnifying glass and studies the structure of the wood for minutes, meanwhile consulting the book *Loofhout herkennen*. I study the wood for a number of characteristics, to decide whether to release the consignment or take a sample and check for more characteristics.

**Needle in a haystack**

The container was selected for inspection by a team of experts at Customs, the Customs National Tactical Centre (DLTC). This team makes a risk analysis of containers based on dozens of criteria. Which criteria they are, we will not tell you", says Van Elswijk. We are looking for a needle in a haystack, but we try to divide that haystack into small stacks.

In 4 to 5 percent of the checks, customs actually find goods that are not allowed to enter the ***European Union***. The chance of being caught differs per country. It is up to the Member States themselves to give substance to their customs tasks." For example, customs in Rotterdam have divers. They can find narcotics attached to the bottom of a ship like a real torpedo. Antwerp recently asked for assistance. "They don't have divers there."

Despite the secrecy surrounding the criteria for high-risk transports, it is clear that the control of counterfeit goods is especially necessary for goods from Asia, that weapons usually come from North America, that the origin of narcotics is usually South America and that illegal waste from the Netherlands sometimes heads for Africa and Asia. More and more attention is being paid to the control of flora and fauna, including those from Asia. Van Elswijk: The subject is becoming more and more important. Trade in illegal wood is "lucrative", just like trade in rare animal species, such as turtles. Customs has to check on about thirty thousand plant species and five thousand animal species that are protected by the CITES convention, which has been signed by 183 countries. Rhino horns are sometimes found among legal cargo. Or other hunting trophies. We have also found sawed-off elephant legs used as umbrella stands in household removals. The customs officers say that they once found rare page jays on a ship. The captain supposedly knew nothing about it", says Van Elswijk. But a search dog hit on a hoover bag, which contained parrot feathers."

The wood of the furniture from India has been studied. I have seen enough", says Iris Moulijn. She found no irregularities. I can't say what kind of wood it is, but I can rule out that it is rosewood or sandalwood. Those are protected types of wood."

**People**

The ***European*** external border is guarded for goods by customs. How do people enter ***Europe***? What procedures does an average employee have to go through when a company brings him or her from outside ***Europe*** to the Netherlands?

It all went smoothly," says Rubayet Akbar (30) from India. He lives in Rotterdam and for the past year and a half has been working as a business analyst at the head office of Stolt Nielsen, which carries out and stores chemical transports by sea. He came to the Netherlands as a graduate 'knowledge worker', was given a year to look for a job and found it after nine months. He is happy here. ,,It is easy to integrate", he says. You can make your dreams come true here. If you have ambitions and ideas, there are people who listen to you."

**Best city for expats**

Akbar was shown the way in Rotterdam by the Rotterdam Expat Centre, which provides services to about two thousand foreigners annually. This organisation mediates for 'knowledge migrants' who work for a company that is an 'acknowledged referent' - that is, a company that can demonstrate to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) that it needs foreign knowledge workers that are hard to find in the Netherlands.

The migrant is now entitled to a 30 per cent reduction on his income tax and may stay for a maximum of five years. After that, they can apply for a permanent residence permit, Laura Salm explains. Salm is account manager of the expat centre in Rotterdam, one of eight in the Netherlands. We do everything to make it as easy as possible for expats", she says. They can open a bank account here in one go and collect a citizen service number and a residence permit. We also refer them to estate agents, when looking for a home."

The number of expats in Rotterdam is increasing rapidly, according to the Rotterdam Expat Centre. Recently, the expat forum Dispatches ***Europe*** proclaimed Rotterdam "the best city" in ***Europe*** to live as an expat, among other things because of the good career opportunities and the relatively low housing costs. One of the attractive conditions for expats is that their families can come along and work here. The latter is becoming increasingly important", says Salm. The time that women only wanted to do voluntary work in the international school is over.

How do you enter ***Europe*** as a person or a product?

You can make your dreams come true here

Rubayet Akbar knowledge worker

**Graphic**

Iris Moulijn, a flora and fauna specialist from the customs department, checks a container and a car in the port of Rotterdam.

Photos David van Dam

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Smuggling (67%); Tobacco + Health (67%)

**Industry:** Harbors + Ports (94%); Construction Materials + Components (63%)

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[***Link between European attacks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54P-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 17

**Length:** 238 words

**Byline:** Rob Savelberg

**Body**

by Rob Savelberg

BERLIN - Anis Amri, the asylum seeker who caused death and destruction at the Christmas market near Berlin's Gedächtniskirche in a truck, was part of a ***European*** IS network. This was revealed yesterday during the trial in Berlin of 31-year-old Russian Magomed-Ali C.

C. was friends with the radical Frenchman Clement B. and Amri. The trio had gathered a large amount of explosives in a Berlin flat in October 2016 to blow up the Gesundbrunnen shopping centre in the Wedding district, the prosecution said.

The trio also sought contact with Muslim extremists in Verviers, Belgium, the prosecutor said. One of these extremists was Abdelhamid Abouaad, one of the masterminds of the attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 and the attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016.

The lawyers of Magomed-Ali C. vehemently denied that their client wanted to commit attacks. According to them, he wanted to start a family. C. had already fled to Germany in 2011, after he had been imprisoned several times in Russia for Islamic extremism. He went into hiding after his asylum application had been rejected.

The explosives collected by the terrorist trio were never found. When the German police wanted to search the flat, it turned out that they did not have a court order to do so. As a result, the judicial authorities temporarily lost track of the three men, with fatal consequences.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Bombings (94%); Law Courts + Tribunals (93%); Death + Dying (88%); Terrorist Organizations (87%); Terrorism + Counterterrorism (75%); Police Forces (74%); Wiretapping (69%); Crime, Law Enforcement + Corrections (67%); Lawyers (67%); Criminal Defenses (63%); Justice Departments (63%)

**Industry:** Explosives (93%)

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[***Brussels politicians radiate reluctance***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D544-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 11

**Length:** 906 words

**Body**

I regularly express my amazement here at the pitiful list leaders' debates just before regional or national elections. Hurriedly held with deadlines that are too short and an unrelenting stopwatch. The poor clichés fly by. But after watching the first list leaders debate for the ***European*** elections, I start to reappraise the efforts of our MPs. At least they are standing there on behalf of their supporters and they are radiating that message. They keep their finger on the pulse of the debates that matter and know the voters' priorities. They know what is going on here. They do.

Some Members of the ***European*** Parliament seem to be from another planet. What a poor, amateurish performance in Nieuwsuur. There, our ***European*** list leaders were mainly radiating distance, reluctance and panic. Horrified heads, shrill voices, dutiful statements, tight little mouths. So that is what remains when you take these elected representatives out of their Brussels comfort zone. Representatives without people. Political homeless people. ***Europeans*** without national roots. Searching looks, no recognition anywhere. The eyes of Frans Timmermans (PvdA), Sophie in't Veld (D66) and Bas Eickhout (Groen Links) spoke volumes. Like frightened rabbits in the glare of the headlights. And at the same time suspicious, disapproving. This is how you look when you end up in a junkyard after a long night flight; nobody picks you up, the car makes a thudding noise and the hotel turns out to be a smelly dump. This is how you look when you want to polish your plate as quickly as possible.

Were we any the wiser from this wavering debate? Mostly, we talked at cross purposes. I thought I saw a mixture of despair and amused amazement on the faces of the moderators: hard work to keep this talking bunch on task. There were comic moments too. Thanks to list leader Ayhan Tonca of Denk, who just barely avoided accusing Derk Jan Eppink of Forum for Democracy of slave trading, foaming at the mouth. The astonished Eppink defended himself excellently, but his observations came to nothing in a deadlocked conversation. The hefty accusations of slavery came not only from Denk's victimizers. The SP's ***European*** debutant Arnout Hoekstra told a perplexed Sophie in't Veld that she had first stolen spices from the Third World and now wanted to rob those countries of their labour force as well. And so a debate about labour migration and wage competition foundered in pitiful nonsense.

Why did these politicians not prepare themselves better? Why did they not take the trouble to remain coherent? Did they not think the performance at home was worthwhile? When it recently came to light that Sophie in't Veld had unjustly received substantial allowances on top of her generous Brussels salary, she was asked what she had done with the money. Working visits to the Netherlands, she said. After all, the bond with the Netherlands had to be intensively maintained. Well, there was nothing to show for that bond during her chilly, detached performance. CDA member Esther de Lange and VVD member Malik Azmani did manage to articulate the shared national interests with ***Europe***.

Frans Timmermans seemed to be hanging on for dear life. These days, he is described with the ludicrous Teutonic term 'Spitzenkandidat'. A title that Brussels, oh irony, uses to bring ***Europe*** 'closer to the people'. But Spitzenkandidat Frans, who did not tire of emphasising that just about all left-wing parties see the Saviour in him, had made little of his appearance. Throughout the evening, he listed his achievements in the ***EU***, only to roar in his closing speech that he wants to become President of the ***European*** Commission to 'radically break with the policies of recent years'. The dullest spin doctor could have saved him from such an inconsistency. But Timmermans did not mince his words. There he was, the polyglot who is an excellent debater in many languages, suddenly mumbling a few constipated sentences in inarticulate Dutch. All the staged joviality of his North Korean-directed promotional spots ebbed away; the listlessness shrieked shrilly.

This Jan Salie attitude says a lot about the relationship of many ***European*** politicians with their constituencies. In the heart of ***Europe,*** they have forgotten to be accountable to those to whom they owe their mandate. They no longer feel comfortable in front of the cameras of the public broadcaster who benevolently brings them home to their voters. The convinced ***Europeans*** of the PvdA, D66 and GroenLinks, in particular, have lost their inspiration. Gone is the imagination with which they could present the ***European*** values they hold dear in a clear and attractive way. Gone is the warmly propagated ***EU sentiment***, which certainly not everyone shares, but which is the last thing they should neglect if they want to defend the benefits of the Union.

Voters cannot possibly agree with all politicians. But a representative of the people who realistically and with commitment makes his case commands respect. The least you can do for your electorate is to take the trouble to communicate your views convincingly, in deep awareness of what they mean to your fellow countrymen. But alas, those who have the biggest mouths in Brussels take very little notice of this task. Why favour them any longer?

Frightened rabbits in the glare of headlights

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (76%); Foreign Policy (75%); International Relations (68%)

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[***Never unimportant***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54K-00000-00&context=)

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**Length:** 470 words

**Body**

Just one more week and you can vote again. This Thursday, the Dutch and the British will be the first ***Europeans to*** go to the polls. Because yes, the Brexit is a bit more difficult than expected in practice, so also the United Kingdom participates in the elections.

Most of the 28 EU countries vote at weekends, especially on Sundays. Only after the Italian ballot boxes close at 11 p.m. will there be official results. No earlier is allowed because that could influence the election result, at least in theory. It means that for the Netherlands there is no clarity until three days after the elections.

After 7.5 years in The Hague and now 2.5 years in Brussels, my first ***European*** elections take some getting used to. The dynamics are, to put it mildly, different. The campaigns for the Lower House elections in particular are long and intensive and the newspapers are filled with them weeks in advance. The interest in ***Europe*** is much less. It is more distant from the reader.

What makes it difficult is the complexity in Brussels. There are relatively more journalists in The Hague. And much more than in the ***European*** bubble, the delusion of the day often prevails there. It is more of a 'game' of opposition versus coalition, one often bounces from one riot to the next.

In Brussels, the playing field is different. First of all, the ***European*** Commission is not a real government; individual ***Eurocommissioners***, for example, cannot be dismissed by the ***European*** Parliament. The parliament is also co-legislator. Behind the scenes, there is co-negotiation on adjustments to proposals, mainly very technical, specialist work. It is also extremely boring.

Debates therefore hardly matter. The first time I followed a debate in the ***European*** Parliament, I could hardly believe my eyes. Everyone obediently read out a statement in their own language and then sat down again. The ***European Commissioner*** responsible did not have to answer any questions. A surrealistic spectacle.

Yet it is anything but boring in Brussels. Especially when the heads of government gather for their summits, it is enjoyable for political junkies like me. Standing with your nose on top of Chancellor Merkel or President Macron remains special. It is history in the making.

The elections are also anything but boring because of the enormous challenges in the areas of security, migration and climate. Which way will the ***EU go***? How powerful will the populists be?

In 2004, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the campaign '***Europe***, pretty important'. The slogan was meant to inspire the Dutch to better understand the importance of the ***EU***. It was a failure; the slogan was ridiculed. Therefore, a new attempt: '***Europe,*** often quite boring but never unimportant'. So vote!

Which way do

What about the ***EU***?

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (67%)

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[***Cybercriminals on sanctions list EU***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54B-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 13

**Length:** 155 words

**Byline:** Niels Rigter

**Body**

by Niels Rigter

The Hague - Cyber soldiers, election saboteurs and economic spies can now expect punitive measures from the ***EU***. The Netherlands has succeeded in getting all 28 member states to support a sanctions regime for cybercrimes.

The sanctions apply to individuals, companies and groups.

Once on the sanctions list, they are no longer allowed to travel to the ***EU*** and cannot access their money in ***European*** accounts or real estate.

It is not yet known who will be on the list. "The prison has been built," says Minister Stef Blok (Foreign Affairs). "Now we can deliver the convicts."

It is obvious that the Netherlands is trying to get the four Russians on the list who tried to hack into the computer network of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in April last year.

Their names and faces are known, car and equipment have been confiscated, so there is plenty of evidence.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (83%); Chemical + Biological Weapons (63%); Embargoes + Sanctions (63%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (63%); Weapons + Arms (63%)

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[***Surprising that the Netherlands now sees China as a threat'.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-1150-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 744 words

**Byline:** Garrie van Pinxteren

**Dateline:** Beijing

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Cui Hongjian ***Europe expert*** in Beijing

The Dutch China strategy is causing a stir in Beijing.

**FULL TEXT:**

Cui Hongjian works in a beautiful villa with high ceilings in Beijing, which housed the Austro-Hungarian embassy until 1918. At the time, the negotiations for the British handover of Hong Kong to China took place here," says Cui, a man with a full head of hair and heavy eyebrows. Now, the Chinese Institute for International Studies (CIIS) is located here. Cui is director of the department that researches ***Europe***.

The CIIS falls under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, what Cui says is probably not too different from what is thought within the Ministry. Former Chinese ambassador to the Netherlands Chen Xu updated him on the Dutch cabinet's China strategy, which was published on Wednesday. The core of it: The Netherlands is going to adopt a "constructive-critical" attitude towards China, insisting, among other things, on fair trade relations.

What do you think of the strategy?

I find it confusing. Why should the Netherlands come up with a strategy when the ***EU*** has already published a strategy in March? Surely there is already a common position then? I also find it surprising that the Netherlands suddenly sees China as a threat. This was not the case last year: then we were still very welcome with our investments."

How do you explain this change?

China used to be more submissive, it wanted to learn from ***Europe***. But now China is putting more emphasis on equality in its relationship with the ***EU***. We want to share our experiences so that we can learn from each other.

,,Many people in ***Europe*** are afraid that China wants to export a Chinese model to the rest of the world, including the Netherlands. But that is a ridiculous thought. The model we use for China is typically Chinese, it has typically Chinese characteristics. For that reason alone, you cannot export it at all.

,,The reason why ***Europe*** is afraid of this is that ***Europe*** has lost a lot of self-confidence. That is because of the Brexit, the earlier economic crisis, terrorist attacks and the refugee crisis. All of which have also made ***Europe*** a less attractive model for China."

Do you think the Netherlands would be wise to take a different course with regard to China?

I understand that the Netherlands wants to change its policy towards China, because the world has changed. But keep your own interests in mind. You serve them badly if you portray China as some kind of monster and therefore reject Chinese investments. China is becoming more open; you can negotiate with us about anything. So do that.

It is also important that the Netherlands continues to separate the economy from security. If everything is linked to security, what will be left of ***European*** values? Surely it's about open markets and an open economy, not about market protection?

People in the Netherlands see China as a country with different values. We see what is happening to the Uighur minority in Xinjiang as a violation of human rights.

Xinjiang is a matter of national security. We do not want a hotbed of terrorism to develop there. That is what happened in ***Europe*** when it turned out that terrorists were able to hide in the Belgian neighbourhood of Molenbeek without being noticed.

,,A few years ago, the security situation in Xinjiang was very bad. That was also because we showed too much understanding for their culture and religion. But you have to demand that Uighurs first and foremost see themselves as Chinese citizens. Religion and ethnicity must come second. We are not unique in demanding this. France is also a secular state. It also demands that all citizens identify with the French state first.

Do you think the Chinese government will react in an irritated way?

,,No, because the Netherlands is focusing on more cooperation with China. There will be no Chinese repercussions. But China does take note of the changed position. We must make even more of an effort to help the Netherlands understand us better. Then you will see better how some of the things you now misjudge are here."

**Graphic**

Prime Minister Rutte visiting Chinese Premier Li Keqiang

PHOTO Robin van Lonkhuijzen/ANP

Cui Hongjian

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** International Trade (93%); Nontariff Barriers (88%); Intellectual Property (82%); Nondurable Goods (82%); Clothing + Accessories (81%); ***European*** Union (78%); Developing Countries (75%); International Relations (75%); COVID-19 Coronavirus (73%); Economic Conditions (71%); Embargoes + Sanctions (71%); Trade Treaties + Agreements (70%); Emerging Markets (67%); Entrepreneurship (67%); Industrial Espionage (63%); Rule Of Law (62%)

**Industry:** Footwear (69%); Manufacturing (69%)

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Boris 'natural'candidate No. 10***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-5YY1-DYTV-D54M-00000-00&context=)

De Telegraaf

17 May 2019 Friday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 459 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

Exit of Prime Minister May inevitable

by Joost van Mierlo

LONDON - The battle for the succession of British Prime Minister Theresa May has now really begun. In early June, she will make clear when exactly she will leave. Former foreign minister Boris Johnson took the opportunity to announce that he is a candidate 'of course'.

May was yesterday forced to clarify the timing of her departure. Waiting until she would have reached a Brexit deal is no longer acceptable to her supporters.

In a "frank" conversation with the non-government part of the Conservative group - about two-thirds of the group - May made it clear that she will resign if her Brexit deal is voted down again. This announcement has further reduced her chances of finding a majority for her Brexit deal in the House of Commons. The Conservatives are already lobbying hard to get on good terms with the leading candidates to succeed her. If she still had any authority within the party, it is now gone.

The only salvation for May is to reach an agreement with Labour on Brexit. However, the chances of that are also small. Labour, after all, has no interest whatsoever in mitigating the malaise within the Conservative Party. But even if the deal does happen, May has announced that she will resign. After a complicated voting procedure, a new Prime Minister will be in place in early September.

Johnson is without doubt the leading candidate and favourite in the polls. If he is elected as the new party leader, the wind will be taken out of the sails of Nigel Farage's rapidly growing Brexit party.

Johnson's problem, however, is that he is much more popular with Conservative supporters than with his group mates. And it is precisely the group members who will determine which two Conservatives will soon be allowed to compete for the premiership.

That is why there are plenty of other Conservative candidates who could end up winning. These include fellow Brexiteers such as former Brexit minister Dominic Raab and current environment minister Michael Gove. But also the foreign minister Jeremy Hunt, who has been transformed into a Brexiteer, and his Home Secretary colleague Sajid Javid, are less controversial.

The likelihood of leaving the ***EU*** without an agreement is significantly increased by almost all of these candidates. They will push the ***EU*** to reopen the agreement. There is a very good chance that the 27 Member States do not want this.

But the Tories think that a new wind will blow through Brussels after the ***European*** elections.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (92%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (61%)

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Call for Nexit is own fault***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4D-6001-DYTV-D01X-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** WATU-SAY; Page 18

**Length:** 135 words

**Body**

Letter of the day

Rutte has challenged Baudet to a debate on the ***EU***. Rutte claims that the Nexit would be disastrous for the Netherlands. Does Rutte really not understand that the call for a Nexit was caused by the Dutch government and the ***EU*** itself?

Would Baudet also want a Nexit if the ***EU*** would do what it was founded for? I doubt it. The resistance to the ***EU*** in its current form has been aroused by the enormous interference and the introduction of rules and regulations that limit countries in the basic idea of the ***EU***.

The roaring lion that Rutte sometimes claims to be is a resigned kitten in Brussels that lets itself be petted by the other Member States. So, come on Thierry, put Rutte back on the world stage and fight for a permanent ***EU membership*** as it was once intended.

Corrie Geerders, Alkmaar

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (69%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (68%)

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[***United Kingdom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114M-00000-00&context=) [***Prominent Brexiteer Boris Johnson wants to succeed May***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W4F-N1J1-JC5G-114M-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 134 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

Boris Johnson wants to succeed British Prime Minister Theresa May as leader of the Conservative Party, and thus as Prime Minister. He announced this on Thursday during a meeting in Manchester, reports the BBC. Johnson is one of the most prominent advocates of the departure of the United Kingdom from the ***EU***. May has promised to resign as soon as parliament approves her Brexit deal. Whether and when this happens remains to be seen. At an event for insurance companies, where Johnson spoke on Thursday, he was asked if he would follow in her footsteps. Of course I'll go for it," replied Johnson, who was foreign minister in May's cabinet until last summer. He stepped down because he disagreed with her Brexit plan. (NRC)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (82%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (70%)

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Half-heartedness of Rutte about Europe continues to feed scepticism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1013-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 919 words

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The Lower House supports a motion that undermines a basic value of ***European*** integration. Prime Minister Rutte should have been tougher, five former ministers write.

**FULL TEXT:**

The fact that few media reported on the discussion in the Lower House last week about the upcoming ***European*** summit in Romania, on 9 May, is indicative of the lack of any serious debate in the Netherlands about the future of the ***European Union***. The joint motion adopted at the time by SGP and SP - with the support of three governing parties VVD, CDA and CU - can be called downright shocking. It calls on the Cabinet to propose to the ***European*** Council that the phrase "an ever closer union among the peoples of ***Europe***" be deleted from the ***European Union*** Treaty by way of an amendment to the Treaty. Since the EEC Treaty of 1957, the idea of an '*ever closer union*' has been a basic value and the foundation of the ***European*** integration process.

To give in to this nonsensical statement would be a fundamental break with the pursuit of a democratic and effective ***Europe*** that successive Dutch cabinets have been striving for over the past 70 years.

Although Prime Minister Rutte advised against the motion, his reaction could only be described as half-hearted. He spoke of "a bit of a dead term" that should be seen as a "thought from the past". He said he did not want to waste political capital on it. However, it would have been to Rutte's credit to make a more forceful case for further cooperation in his reply in the run-up to the ***European*** elections. In doing so, he would have confirmed the line of his Churchill Lecture, which he delivered in Zurich in February. At the time, the Prime Minister showed himself to be a '***European*** convert'. But nothing of the sort now: once again two stories, one for a ***European*** audience and one for the home front.

In terms of content, there is much to criticise in the SGP and SP motion. After all, a closer union between the peoples of ***Europe*** is not a plea for more powers for the ***European Union***. It is, however, a recognition of the fact that the peoples ***of Europe*** - and not just those of the ***EU*** - in the light of the horrors of two world wars, want to share a future based on common values.

As the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the ***European Union*** states, it means the recognition of a common 'spiritual and moral heritage' and of 'indivisible and universal values of human dignity'. Nothing more, but also nothing less.

By calling all this "a bit of a dead giveaway", the Prime Minister in a way contributed to the acceptance of the motion in an increasingly ***Eurosceptic*** Lower House.

The current crisis of the ***European Union*** has everything to do with the unwillingness and inability of the Member States (including the Netherlands) to strengthen common achievements, and to complement the free movement of internal borders with a more common policy on the external borders. In a geopolitical world with new giants, ***Europe is*** increasingly on its own. We do not seem to be aware of this.

National sovereignty and a strong ***European Union*** do not represent opposing interests. Both are closely intertwined. ***European*** commitments are only entered into by joint decision-making by national ministers in ***European*** Councils of Ministers, ultimately in a ***European*** Council at the highest level of Heads of Government. Brussels, that is us.

The EU treaties guarantee respect for the identity of nation states and protect democracy under the rule of law. To say otherwise is *fake news*. National and ***European*** sovereignty complement each other and need each other like Chinese yin and yang. Day after day, national sovereignty proves illusory if it is not simultaneously embedded in ***European*** sovereignty. This would simultaneously provide the Union with the ability to act independently in relation to third parties, which is much needed in a far from friendly world.

It is therefore time to take a stand against a growing undercurrent of political negativity about the ***European Union***. The negative forces are on the rise. Only recently, an initiative by - once again - the SGP was rejected by a small majority in the Senate, which would have meant that from now on new ***European*** treaty agreements could only be adopted with a two-thirds majority. This would have led to a blockade of any ***European*** progress. In a country that prides itself on having enshrined the promotion of the international legal order in its constitution, this is an incomprehensible internal contradiction.

We must speak out against fatalism, naysayers and enemies of the ***European Union***. The ***European*** values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are at stake.

The ***European*** elections at the end of May will be decisive for the direction of the ***EU*** in the coming period. Let all the parties that have ***Europe*** in their hearts show it this time!

*Sybilla Dekker* (Minister of State, former Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, VVD), *Bernhard Bot* (former Minister of Foreign Affairs, CDA), *Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst* (former Minister of Economic Affairs, D66), *Wim F. van Eekelen* (former Minister of Defence, VVD), *Joris Voorhoeve (*former Minister of Defence, VVD, now D66), *Joost van Iersel*(former Member of the Second Chamber, CDA).

**Notes**

Sybilla Dekker (Minister of State, former Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, VVD), Bernhard Bot (former Minister of Foreign Affairs, CDA), Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst (former Minister of Economic Affairs, D66), Wim F. van Eekelen (former Minister of Defence, VVD), Joris Voorhoeve (former Minister of Defence, VVD, now D66), Joost van Iersel(former Member of the Second Chamber, CDA).

**Graphic**

Prime Minister Rutte during a speech in the ***European*** Parliament in Strasbourg in June last year, where he said he had become more aware of the broad necessity of ***Europe***; not only a common market but also security, stability and the rule of law.

Photo Frederick Florin/AFP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (71%); Foreign Policy (70%); International Relations (61%)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2019

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[***Dead' term on European unity leads to fierce debate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-100F-00000-00&context=)

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2 May 2019 Thursday

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 458 words

**Byline:** Mark Kranenburg

**Dateline:** The Hague

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

EU INEGRATIONOud ministers are angry with Prime Minister Rutte for not adequately defending the term '*ever closer union*' from the ***European*** Treaty.

**FULL TEXT:**

Is the ***European Union*** or not an '*ever closer union*'? On the way to the ***European*** elections that will take place at the end of May, a term from the ***European*** Treaty, the 'charter' of the ***European Union,*** which Prime Minister Mark Rutte (VVD) referred to as a 'dead term', has, with some delay, suddenly led to a fierce political debate in the Netherlands.

Six former Dutch politicians, five of whom are former ministers, accuse Rutte of 'half-heartedness' by not distancing himself sufficiently from the Lower House's call to delete the words 'ever closer union' from the ***European*** Treaty. According to the six, it would have been "honourable" for Rutte to make a more forceful plea for ***European*** cooperation when this issue came up last week. They write this on Wednesday in an opinion piece in *NRC*.

**Motion to delete**

For some days now, a debate on the 'ever closer union' has been going on on social media, since the Lower House adopted a motion late last week by SGP and SP calling on the government to submit a proposal to the ***European*** heads of government to remove the contested phrase from the ***European*** Treaty.

The motion by the - for the Binnenhof- remarkable reformed-socialist combine was supported not only by SGP and SP but also by the government parties VVD, CDA and ChristenUnie plus the Party for the Animals, 50Plus, PVV and FVD.

Ever closer union', translated in the official Dutch treaty text as 'an ever closer union', has become a more hotly debated term in ***European*** cooperation and in some circles. The English term suggests ever closer integration.

**Willingness to cooperate**

But when the six founding members of what was then the ***European Union*** incorporated the words into the ***European*** Treaty in 1957, they were merely expressing a desire to cooperate, say ***EU representatives*** like President Tusk.

The term 'ever closing union' took on a heavy political charge in the UK on the way to the 2016 referendum on the Brexit. Removal from the ***European*** Treaty of this hotly debated concept was one of the demands of the then British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Prime Minister Rutte has repeatedly said in recent years that the time of ***European*** integration as a separate goal is over. The Dutch attitude has long been summed up by the fixed phrase: "***European*** when necessary, national where possible."

The term 'ever closing union' was one of the demands in the Brexit debate

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

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[***No Headline In Original***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1010-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; page 17

**Length:** 627 words

**Byline:** M. Gerlagh  
  
Phil Tokkie  
  
Paul Op Heij  
  
M. Sinke  
  
Jim van Elst

**Body**

Westerbork (1)

**Learn from the past**

Brutals have half the world and the rest remain silent', sighs the director of the Westerbork Memorial Centre in the piece *Westerbork-Tour cancelled after 'persistent intimidation'* (30/4). I am not silent, and fortunately neither is this researcher. In her book *Niemand wil ze hebben,* Linda Polman reminds us how, more than eighty years ago, later victims of the Holocaust could have escaped with an adequate reaction of countries during the Evian Conference (1938). The cover shows newspaper headlines from that time: "*Keiner will sie haben*", and more recently from *De Telegraaf*: Chance-free asylum plague continues unhindered'. The same newspaper now quotes someone who says that Westerbork as a starting point for this event was "ridiculous" because it "linked the event to the Holocaust". There is nothing to ridicule here. Commemoration is only meaningful if we are prepared to learn from the past. Also in Westerbork.

M. Gerlagh

Westerbork (2)

**Never again Auschwitz**

Of my family, 76 members were deported to Poland and murdered. That is partly why I am a 'friend' of the Westerbork remembrance centre. The threats from the Jewish community on the intention of the Night of the Refugee surprise me. These 'spokespersons' give a one-dimensional interpretation of the concept 'Never Again Auschwitz'. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Westerbork Refugee Camp. A good reason to draw attention to the fate of refugees - partly by means of the walk during the Night of the Refugee. A broader interpretation of 'Never Again Auschwitz'.

Phil Tokkie

***European*** elections (1)

**Explain *EU* more simply**

It is noteworthy that in the article *Because all politics has a* ***European*** *dimension* (30/4), the Council of Ministers/Council of the ***European Union*** was not mentioned in the explanation of the ***EU***'s legislative function. As a result, the two levels of the ***EU are*** not adequately portrayed: the supranational and the intergovernmental level. An illustration of the ***EU triad makes it*** easier to capture these two levels. In the same way, an illustration of the topics on which decisions are made within the ***EU*** supranationally or intergovernmentally (the so-called pillars of the ***EU***) offers more insight and understanding than a text alone. ***EU politics*** then becomes less complicated than written media often suggest.

Paul Op Heij Lecturer in History and Social Sciences

***European*** elections (2)

**Double-double mandate**

In the early days - the late 1970s - of the ***European*** Parliament, MEPs had a so-called dual mandate: being a member of both the national and the ***European*** Parliament. That this was - if only physically - impossible is obvious. However, the idea of involving the national parliament more in the ***European*** and vice versa seems to me to have gained in value. The introduction of a double mandate could be considered: two MPs, occupying one seat, both (together) in the national and in the ***European*** Parliament. That would make the workload bearable and the connection assured.

M. Sinke

Sportswomen

**Divide the attention**

Despite the increasing attention for women in sports, I was unpleasantly surprised by the full-page article (*Fascinating fight in the Ardennes*, 29/4) on the winner of the cycling classic Liège-Bastogne-Liège, and especially in relation to the small report on the winner of the women's stage Annemiek van Vleuten and the other Dutch podium places (2, 3, and 12). A bit more attention to that would not have been amiss.

Jim van Elst

Letters 2/5/2019

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

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[***Strict controls at land borders***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W16-M6X1-DYTV-D0TK-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** WATU-SAY; Page 18

**Length:** 142 words

**Body**

Letter of the day

It makes no sense to increase the penalties for 'mobile banditry'. The rapid increase in international crime makes the reintroduction of strict border controls inevitable.

More and more countries are doing this regularly, including France, Italy, Germany, the former Eastern Bloc countries and soon the United Kingdom. There is no legal or logistical objection to this if state security is at stake. The ***European Union*** would rather not see this happen, because the end of Schengen means the end of the ***EU***.

Border closure puts a brake on 'free movement', but also prevents the free passage of weapons, drugs and drug commodities. It prevents human trafficking, illegality and the export of stolen goods. How hard can it be for our political weak-kneed elite to see that?

J. Vermeer

**Classification**

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (83%); Drug Trafficking (75%); Human Rights Violations (75%); Controlled Substances Crime (69%); Illegal Drugs (69%); Drug Policy (67%)

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[***European Court blocks transit routes; Tax evasion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102C-00000-00&context=)[***Tax-free money transfers through Dutch letterbox companies seem to be over***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102C-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 1

**Length:** 1212 words

**Byline:** Jorg Leijten

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Four questions on* tax avoidance

A recent ruling by the ***European*** Court could mean the end for 15,000 Dutch letterbox companies. It puts a stop to the abuse of ***European*** tax exemption rules.

**FULL TEXT:**

Take a successful American multinational that also makes millions in profits in ***Europe***. The company would like to see that profit returned to its account as untaxed as possible. The company can then choose to channel the money to a tax haven like the Cayman Islands. Directly is not possible: then you still have to pay taxes in the US. The ***Europe route*** is much more favourable. ***European*** directives stipulate that things like royalties and interest need not be taxed twice within the ***EU***. It is therefore attractive to let the money flow between private companies in different countries and ultimately to let it go to a tax haven via a country like the Netherlands, where royalties are untaxed.

The 15,000 or so letterbox companies in the Netherlands serve as a conduit for many companies between the ***EU*** and countries such as the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands. Luxembourg and Ireland are also home to many of these types of companies. Thanks to some recent judgements of the ***European*** Court of Justice, these shortcuts and therefore the many letterbox companies in the Netherlands could soon be a thing of the past.

1 What is going on?

The ***European*** Court recently ruled that a Danish company owned by a private equity firm must pay dividend tax in Denmark. The company thought it could escape this with a construction via private companies in the Netherlands and Luxembourg. To the dissatisfaction of the Danish tax authorities. In its ruling in February, however, the Court of Justice drew a line under the abuse of the ***European*** exemption rules.

The decision may have far-reaching consequences. Not only did the Court rule on this case, it also established a number of criteria for determining when these exemption rules are being abused. According to the Court, national tax authorities are obliged to check this. Questions that the tax authorities must answer include: does the flow-through company incur actual costs? And is the letterbox company able to dispose of the money itself or is it only a transit company?

2 What does this mean for Dutch letterbox companies?

The Dutch rules are much more flexible than the Court now determines. For example, a company is allowed to transfer dividends to an intermediary in Luxembourg without paying tax if the company has at least one tonne in wage costs and rents an office for 24 months. For large multinationals, this is quite easy to comply with.

Professor of corporate taxation at the University of Amsterdam, Jan van de Streek, thinks that the ruling could spell the end of the letterbox company. For years, companies abused the rules with artificial constructions. But nobody knew which facts were relevant to determine what constituted abuse. That is now a lot clearer and it appears to be the case more often than thought, so as a company that makes use of such a letterbox company I would be very worried."

According to Jaap Bellingwout, partner at the tax consultancy KPMG Meijburg & Co and professor of tax law at the Free University, the ruling is less shocking than presented. The national profit tax has reached the end of its life cycle in the globalised world. With plasters we repair connections between countries. This judgment therefore fits in a development that has been going on for some time. From looking at a PLC as a purely legal form to more focus on economic reality."

In the past, he says, something could be called a PLC if the notary had put his stamp on it. In the debate on tax avoidance, which has become increasingly heated in recent decades due to globalisation, the focus has shifted to what a PLC actually adds. Thanks to this international pressure, letterbox companies without any economic content hardly ever occur anymore. The Dutch Tax Authorities now set far more requirements. With these abuse criteria, the Court is therefore mainly looking to the past. So does this strike a chord? No, we are already one stage further in the development."

3 What are the countries themselves already doing to prevent tax avoidance through letterbox companies?

The Court's ruling fits in with the trend, already under way for some time, for Western countries in particular to try to close the tax loopholes in each other's laws. In 2015, the OECD and the G20, organisations with many rich industrial nations, launched the BEPS programme to tackle unwanted tax evasion, particularly by multinationals.

The Rutte III cabinet also announced in the coalition agreement that it would focus on companies that "have added value in the Netherlands" and no longer on companies that "only use the Netherlands as a postbox". This was particularly bad news for trust offices, which are involved in the management of companies.

State Secretary Menno Snel (D66, Finance) wants to present a more detailed elaboration of this intention around Prinsjesdag. It is already clear that the government wants to move towards the introduction of a so-called withholding tax, so that interest and royalties no longer disappear untaxed via letterbox companies to tax havens as of 2021. According to a 2016 report by economic research agency SEO, companies annually channel 22 billion ***euros*** to countries such as the Bahamas.

In total, some 200 billion ***euros*** in dividends and royalties passed through the Netherlands, but the vast majority went to countries within the ***EU*** and the US. The government wants to leave these flows undisturbed, because according to the Netherlands they do comply with the rules.

4 What will the Netherlands do with the judgment?

State Secretary Snel previously told the Lower House that he was "studying" the Court's ruling and that he would "return to the consequences of this ruling for our own legislation and regulations" when he presented his bill on withholding tax.

The question is, however, whether the Netherlands as an EU country can wait until 2021. In the ruling, the Court explicitly obliges countries to check for abuse and to use the criteria provided for that purpose. An important question is how the Tax and Customs Administration will look at people moving through the country with these criteria in hand", says Peter Kavelaars, professor of fiscal economics at the Erasmus University and associated with Deloitte. If they want, they have gold in their hands but they can also just ignore the ruling. Then the ***European*** Commission might ask them to take action.

Kavelaars follows with interest the further consequences of the judgment. ,,The current tax treaties state that the exemption for double taxation may only be granted if, for example, interest goes directly to the beneficial owner, says the American investor. The Court now says: the interest does not end up with these conduit companies and therefore no tax relief may be granted. With this judgment, there is a means to enforce that provision in treaties."

**Graphic**

Illustrations Pepijn Barnard

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[***Hoekstra offers opening for eurozone budget***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102J-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 5

**Length:** 560 words

**Byline:** René Moerland

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Hanseatic group

Minister Hoekstra sees something in a ***euro zone budget*** after all . Provided that the wishes of the small 'Hanzelanden' are met.

**FULL TEXT:**

Minister Wopke Hoekstra's (Finance, CDA) threat to exclude the Netherlands from the new ***eurozone budget*** has been taken off the table for the time being. Instead, he and six other smaller northern EU countries have now made a proposal to structure the budget more according to their preferences.

The informal club of seven, known as the Hanseatic League, opposes, among other things, French ideas to have ***euro countries*** contribute extra - above their regular EU contribution - through, for instance, specific ***eurozone taxes***. They also want to ensure that ***euro countries*** retain control over how the money is spent. On Tuesday, the seven (Netherlands Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden) sent their proposal to ***Eurogroup president*** Mário Centeno.

That there will be a separate ***eurozone budget was*** already agreed by ***European*** government leaders in December. Their compromise did not come close to French President Macron's original plans from 2017 to make a new leap in ***European*** integration. It will mainly be an additional "instrument" to make EU countries more competitive and economically closer to each other, partly due to Dutch pressure.

At the moment, the finance ministers are working out together how this should be organised. They have to come to an agreement in June. The French and German finance ministers are still looking for ways to develop the budget into a fund that helps weaker EU countries cope with economic shocks.

During an informal meeting in Bucharest last month, Hoekstra appeared irritated about growing support for this. Only if it fits in with Dutch wishes and agreements is this "something we will participate in", Hoekstra told the *Financial Times* at the time.

**Incentive for reform**

Now the tone is different. In a letter to the House of Representatives, the minister underlined on Tuesday that the new budget instrument for the ***eurozone*** can indeed provide 'added value'. It can give "incentives to member states to reform their economies". Hoekstra speaks of "growing consensus" in the ***EU*** that the money should really be used for that. He promises a "constructive attitude" of the Netherlands.

Conditions for the Netherlands and the other Hanzelanden countries include that access to the new fund is linked to the requirements of the ***European*** budget policy and that countries that do not claim financing from the ***eurozone budget*** receive a discount on their ***European*** contribution. The Netherlands is not convinced by an extra intergovernmental contract, outside the ***EU budget***, as some countries advocate in order to make higher expenditures possible, but Hoekstra has objections in principle.

The size of the budget will not be discussed until after the summer in the negotiations about the new ***European*** multi-annual budget, which it falls under. The Hanzelanden are making an advance payment: they want it to be "considerably smaller" than the 22 billion that the ***European*** Commission proposed earlier. A few weeks ago, ***Eurogroup president*** Mário Centeno already said that the new budget "will not be a bazooka".

**Graphic**

While Minister Wopke Hoekstra (Finance, CDA) was irritated about the ***eurozone budget*** last month, he is now promising a "constructive attitude".

Christophe Petit Tesson/EPA

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (86%); Economic Crisis (64%); Monetary Unions (64%)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***York's mood is a good indicator***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-100R-00000-00&context=)

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2 May 2019 Thursday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 1443 words

**Byline:** Melle Garschagen

**Dateline:** YORK

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Reportage* Municipal Elections UK

Millions of Britons are going to the polls this Thursday for a new local council. Local politicians, such as Stuart Rawlings in York, are trying to avoid the B-word as much as possible.

**FULL TEXT:**

As Stuart Rawlings, in his all-terrain vehicle - British-made, of course - joins the queue at the traffic lights, he points to a residential area. That's part of my district. If I go to the doors there, I'll take 30,000 steps a day," says Rawlings, a 57-year-old businessman and Vice-Chairman of the Conservatives on the York City Council (population 208,000).

On his campaign tours through Rawcliffe and Clifton Without, the suburbia of the old fortress city, Rawlings throws everything into the battle to convince voters: his plans to build more houses, his promise not to increase council tax, his ideas for more dustbins, his view of York Central, a huge project to revamp the station district.

Two issues he does not mention: the Brexit and party leader Theresa May. These are local elections that revolve around local issues. That is what voters find important. Refreshing actually." Would he involve national politics more in his campaign if May was immensely popular? What a suggestive question! And what does he say when someone goes on a tirade about May and threatens to vote for the new Brexit Party of supreme Eurosceptic Nigel Farage, which is soaring in the polls, in the ***European*** elections at the end of May? That happens with great regularity. I myself was in favour of *Remain*, but it is fine to express a protest vote like that in the ***European*** elections. In the local elections it makes more sense to vote Conservative," says Rawlings, whose grey hair, beard and spectacles make him look like a younger and better groomed version of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Three power blocks

On Thursday, millions of residents of England and Northern Ireland will go to the polls. There are elections in 248 of the more than 400 local councils. York is an indicator. Since the last election in 2015, the city council (47 seats) has been governed by a coalition of Tories (12 seats) and Liberal Democrats (12 seats). Labour has 13 seats. The city is a *three-way marginal*, where due to the composition and socio-economic position of the population, the three power blocs are balanced. Who becomes the largest depends on the mood of the moment. Even if the whole country doesn't vote - Scotland, Wales and London are not on the ballot - the ballot is seen as an outlet, a chance to judge political bumbling.

The Tories are expecting a beating. Robert Hayward, a pollster who sits for the Conservatives in the House of Lords, predicts his party will lose 800 of its 4,900 seats. Deputy party leader Helen Whateley said the party faces "a difficult night" after the votes are counted.

Rawlings sees cranky voters in York. He tells of one resident who wrote down on a piece of paper how many politicians had knocked on his door or put flyers in his mailbox. Six visits and ten letters. People were not happy about that. Underneath the counting was: that's a lot of wads of paper for the cat to play with.

During a neighbourhood tour, Rawlings and his fellow candidates receive mostly lukewarm responses. Sorry, no time, I'm at dinner. Sorry, I'm not voting for the Tories because they've cut back too much in recent years. Rawlings remains cheerful. Can you think it over again," he says when a woman closes the door before he has finished speaking. "My biggest fear is that voters will be apathetic and not vote."

In 2015, the turnout rate was almost 65 per cent. The local elections were linked to the national ballot for the House of Commons. "It may well be that we now get a turnout of 35 per cent. Disastrous for democracy."

For a party leader at election time, Prime Minister Theresa May is remarkably silent. No speeches. No big interviews or very few lightning visits to places where the battle is exciting. That is a completely different campaign strategy to the one used during the 2017 House of Commons elections. Then, May was the only face of the campaign. The prime minister, who began her political career as a councillor in London, knows that she helps her party most by pretending she does not exist.

**Disastrous failure**

May's main opponents are doing their best to prevent that strategy from succeeding. Boris Johnson, in his column in *The Daily Telegraph,* deftly called on voters to vote locally for the Conservatives and "ignore our current disastrous failure to leave the ***EU***". The call to leave the Brexit for a while contains a reminder like a buzzing alarm clock: impossible to ignore.

Conservatives reckon that their loss is greater than in 1995. Then the Tories, under John Major, lost 2,000 council seats. That local ballot was part of a swan song for the Tories. Two years later, Labour leader Tony Blair would win the national elections in a landslide and the Conservatives had to settle for being in opposition for thirteen years.

An election defeat will not directly affect May, but it will further fuel internal anger. More leading figures will push for her departure and a different Brexit course.

Labour leader Corbyn realises that a good result is a boost. That is why he wants peace in the tent. An attempt by pro-European party members to bind him to pledges to work towards a new Brexit referendum was turned down by him on Tuesday. Corbyn wants the debate in the country to be about the Conservative cuts to council budgets and not about his Brexit stance or Labour's problems with anti-Semitism.

In the spring sunshine, with the sweet scent of blossoms, York has much to be pleased about. Tourists chat in front of Exhibition Square. Consultants lunch on the banks of the Ouse River. York Minster, the cathedral, towers above everything. Yet the city has struggled. Ten years ago, the city still received tens of millions annually from the state treasury. That has been cut back. This financial year, York has to pay for its municipal activities entirely with local tax money.

That national austerity policy has been criticised. Our democratic model no longer works", says Ian Walker (32). Politicians don't feel the need to think about the long term. They promise to fight crime because there are too many stabbing incidents. They dare not say that our society will be fairer, more content, safer and healthier if we invest in education, social care, housing and sustainability. "That costs money, is abstract and only yields results in a few years' time."

In the evening, St Peter's School, founded in 627 and one of the oldest schools in the country, hosts an election debate. The leading candidates are seated in a row. Conservative Rawlings wears a blue rosette on his jacket, the Greens candidate a green one, the LibDems a yellow one, Labour's Kallum Taylor a red one. That is the clear and customary political order in British elections.

The debate, which attracted 50 people, largely follows a predictable division of roles. Labour wants more affordable housing. The Greens want a cable car in the centre because that is climate-neutral transport. The LibDems do not really come out on top.

**Xenophobic filth**

That local politics must change according to the list leaders, that local government will not escape the dance, only becomes clear in the course of the evening at St Peter's, the alma mater of Guy Fawkes who in 1605 plotted to blow up the British Parliament.

Kallum Taylor, Labour candidate, says he is not easily scared. But I have to swallow what I've experienced during this campaign", he says. More and more xenophobic and aggressive crap is being thrown at him. It's still a minority, but people are angry and disappointed", says Taylor.

Politicians spend citizens' money and need to regain their trust, says Rawlings. That means breaking the cycle of promises, elections and government. I want York residents to be able to get involved permanently, I want us to look for modern forms of participation." Three years later, the Brexit vote reverberates through the capillaries of British democracy.

The Tories lose 800 of the 4,900 council seats according to a poll

**Graphic**

Street scene from the English fortified city of York, with the two towers of York Minster Cathedral in the background.

Photo Dutch Height, Getty Images

Stuart Rawlings, businessman and Deputy Leader of the Conservatives on York City Council.

Photo York Conservative Association

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Political Parties (94%); ***European*** Union (78%); Politics (63%)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***The economy proves to be a scratchy business; Column***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-102F-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 616 words

**Byline:** Maarten Schinkel

**Body**

It is called nowcasting: estimating the economy on the basis of the here and now. A quarter of a century ago, you had to wait a few months for a figure on economic growth for the previous quarter. Now it is miraculously fast. Well-known - or, if you prefer, infamous - is China, which knows the economic growth of an economy of 1.35 billion people by the end of the month following the quarter. Nobody has any idea how accurate that is. Nowcasters, and other suspicious economists, prefer to look at electricity consumption or oil consumption to interpret the state of the Chinese economy.

This miraculous speed is not entirely Chinese. On Tuesday, four weeks after the end of the first quarter of 2019, ***Eurostat***, the statistical office of the ***European*** Commission, came out with the growth rate for the ***eurozone***. It turned out to be a growth of 0.4 percent compared to the last quarter. And that while the Netherlands and Germany have not even published their own economic growth yet. That will not happen for another two weeks.

Germany accounts for some 30% of the ***euro economy***. It has become a game among economists to take the growth rates of countries that have already published (Spain, Belgium, France and Italy), compare them with the ***Eurozone-wide*** growth rate published by ***Eurostat*** and then estimate how much remains for Germany.

Even if there are other countries, such as the Netherlands, that have not yet reported either, Germany is so large that the method is quite accurate. In this way, it was possible to foresee early on that Germany had shrunk surprisingly in the third quarter of 2018.

This time, for the first quarter of 2019, it can be concluded that the German economy should have grown by 0.4 to 0.5 percent. Economists of the Rabo even arrive at more than 0.5 percent.

Figures on the economy are becoming more sophisticated, better and arrive earlier and earlier. This does not automatically mean that the nowcast will also be better. The consensus forecast in the market for economic growth in the ***eurozone*** was just over 0.2%. Now that ***Eurostat*** came up with 0.4%, it was way off. The margin between the estimate and reality may seem small, but it is the difference between imminent stagnation and a surprisingly stubbornly growing ***European*** economy that is at stake.

That may have consequences. Italy appears to have grown by 0.2% in the first quarter. That is meagre, but a lot compared to the government's official forecast, which had just been lowered to 0.1 per cent growth for the whole of 2019. In Germany, the Ifo institute predicted 0.6 percent growth for the whole of 2019 a week ago. With the likely growth rate of 0.4 to 0.5 per cent for the first quarter, this will be comfortably exceeded.

Does this mean the ***eurozone*** continues to do surprisingly well? Peter van Houten, ING economist, points out that the current upward phase of the economy has been going on for a very long time. You can be surprised by a greybeard still doing quite well, he says. But you can't expect him to pick up the pace of his youth.

And the Netherlands? Our economy weighs too lightly in the ***eurozone*** to be able to fish the growth out of the ***Eurostat forecast*** for the first quarter. Unlike in many other ***euro countries***, the official forecasts for 2019 are still relatively favourable here. The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis expects 1.5 per cent economic growth in both 2019 and 2020. So our greybeard is running a little faster than the rest.

*Maarten Schinkel* writes about economics and financial markets.

Germany surprises with higher-than-expected growth in the last quarter

**Notes**

Maarten Schinkel writes about economics and financial markets.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Economic Conditions (94%); Economic Growth (88%); Population + Demographics (83%); Gross Domestic Product (82%); Central Banks (77%); Recession (77%); Consumption (73%); Unemployment Rates (69%); Public Finance (68%); Inflation (63%); Social + Economic Status (62%); Unemployed Persons (62%)

**Industry:** Oil + Gas Industry (63%)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Europe benefits from a militarily strong Germany***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W18-3G21-JC5G-1011-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 696 words

**Byline:** Christ Klep  
  
Rein Bijkerk

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The German Bundeswehr urgently needs to be strengthened. That is no longer a taboo, 75 years after the Second World War, write Christ Klep and Rein Bijkerk.

**FULL TEXT:**

In 2016, the German-Dutch Panzerbataillon 414 was launched. '*Panzer hurra!* ' is their constant yell. This is a fully integrated unit - a Dutch company of about a hundred soldiers, and three German ones, equipped with Leopard battle tanks and armoured vehicles. It takes some getting used to, but times change.

The German-Dutch battalion is facing something bigger. The Netherlands has a vital interest in restoring Germany's military capability. Considering the war past, which we commemorate on 4 and 5 May, this may sound strange. But after 1945 Germany developed into a stable and peace-loving democracy. Prussian militarism is long gone and the Bundeswehr is under tight parliamentary control, perhaps even more so than in the Netherlands - and that is saying something.

In recent decades, Germany has had to economise even more draconianly than the Netherlands. Naval ships can no longer go to sea, helicopters and fighter planes are on the ground, and usable tanks are scarce. During an exercise, the military even saw itself forced - due to a lack of real weapons - to attach black-painted broomsticks to their armoured vehicles as imitation machine guns; the German variant of the 'pang-pang', which the Dutch military had to shout without practice ammunition.

But a militarily strong Germany is important to the Netherlands, for strategic and operational reasons. Operationally, because two of the three brigades - the largest remaining units, each a few thousand strong, that the Dutch army still has - cooperate intensively with the Bundeswehr. In a NATO context, they are part of larger German divisions; not something that every Dutchman will realise.

The strategic dimension is even more important. There is a belt of instability around ***Europe*** from Casablanca to Murmansk. Under President Trump, the United States is an uncertain partner. Just look at how he abandoned the Kurds, who were pulling out all the stops in the fight against Islamic State, overnight.

The two most important military powers in ***Europe***, France and the United Kingdom, which is in any case an uncertain factor because of Brexit, are militarily incapable of compensating for the US. If ***Europe*** wants to be taken seriously militarily, Germany will also have to make a full contribution.

In concrete terms, this means the following. Firstly, Germany must work towards the NATO standard: a defence budget of at least 2% of GDP. This may seem like idle talk at first glance, but do not forget that economically prosperous Germany is already seriously considering an increase in the defence budget from 1.3% to 1.6% of GDP in the coming years.

Secondly, Germany must restore the operational capability of its heavy units, especially as a conventional deterrent. Thirdly, German rapid response units should be brought up to standard for interventions in NATO border areas.

On the basis of these three points, Germany can also build on its role as an 'anchor nation' for units of smaller NATO partners such as the Netherlands.

It is not about warmongering, but about preventing war. A real defence effort is a deterrent and also keeps the 'nuclear threshold' high: in the event of an unexpected escalation, the use of nuclear weapons is not immediately inevitable.

But ***Europe*** must develop the ability (and the political will) to intervene militarily in a measured way if intervention is really unavoidable, for example if new caliphates emerge or humanitarian disasters threaten. All this is only possible if a militarily adequately equipped Germany participates.

*Rein Bijkerk* and *Christ Klep* are military historians and authors of *De oorlog van nu*(2018)

It is not about warmongering but about preventing war

*Rein Bijkerk* and *Christ Klep* are military historians and authors of De oorlog van nu (The War of Today, 2018)

**Notes**

Rein Bijkerk and Christ Klep are military historians and authors of De oorlog van nu(2018)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Defense Departments (94%); Weapons + Arms (81%); Armed Forces (75%)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2019

**End of Document**

[***The European Union can now show what 'Europemeans'; Comment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118S-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 622 words

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Notre-Dame de Paris

**FULL TEXT:**

We did not know it could be done. Notre-Dame de Paris was a cathedral in Paris but also a constant. Something that had always been there and would always be there. Even for those who never went there, and even for those who never thought about it. But now it happened anyway, on a Monday evening in April. Notre-Dame was on fire, and not just a little. The flames were shooting out. The famous contours of the cathedral were now the contours of a sea of fire.

The fire brigade was still extinguishing the fire when the conspiracy theories flared up. Sneaky. A parlour game for the poor of spirit, who even exploit a disaster like this for themselves and their world view. Research has been done. This fire was not terrorism, nor was it cunningly plotted. This fire was an ambush of reality. Bad luck.

The fire raged after closing time; fortunately, there were no individual casualties. But France mourns and the world mourns with it. Heads of state expressed their sorrow. Prime Minister Rutte and Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven (Culture, D66) offered help to France. In Belgium, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts hung their flags at half mast.

This illustrates how much more Notre-Dame de Paris is than a religious symbol. The cathedral is Paris, is France. Built from 1160 onwards, completed at the end of the thirteenth century. That was a long time ago and beauty does not last, but that is not true of monuments such as Notre-Dame. They endure as centuries-old testaments to human ingenuity. They are a testament to human perseverance. And they testify to the human need for art and culture. It is no coincidence that, after almost nine centuries, 13 million visitors come to see the cathedral with their own eyes every year.

Notre-Dame survived the Huguenot iconoclasm, the French Revolution and the Second World War. But now it is seriously disfigured. In the roof, two-thirds of the centuries-old wood did not hold. The famous spire, in which Victor Hugo let his hunchbacked anti-hero flee, is gone. With the walls and the roof, knowledge of medieval building techniques and materials disappeared. But the famous silhouette with the two sturdy towers has fortunately been saved. It is still unclear how much in the way of art objects and religious treasures was lost. However, a large part of the stunningly beautiful stained glass seems to have been preserved.

French President Emmanuel Macron immediately announced reconstruction and restoration. Citizens everywhere are raising money. The French art collector François Pinault, owner of the fashion houses Gucci and Alexander McQueen and the auction house Christie's, ***euros***. His example has since been followed by generous donations from various wealthy French benefactors.

In France, President Macron is leaving the yellow shirts for what they are. Notre Dame comes first. In the same way, the ***EU*** can let the Brexiteers do the anti-Christianising and show the ***Eurosceptics*** their place, saying that there is something bigger at stake in the ruined Paris cathedral. The ***European Union*** must now show what a united ***Europe*** is capable of and must commit itself without delay to the restoration of Notre-Dame: financially, with action and with thought. The Union can illustrate the story of ***Europe*** by paying attention to Notre-Dame as a matter of course. Notre-Dame de Paris is ***Europe***, we are Europe.

Some monuments endure as centuries-old tokens of the human need for art and culture

In the Commentary, NRC gives its opinion on important news facts. The commentators write these articles in consultation with the editors-in-chief.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (74%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (67%); Human Rights Violations (67%); Visual Arts (63%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Legislation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118J-00000-00&context=) [***European protection of whistleblowers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118J-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 276 words

**Byline:** René Moerland

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Legislation It is the first time that throughout the ***European Union*** equal protection will be offered to people who report abuses by their employer.

**FULL TEXT:**

Whistleblowers get ***Europe-wide*** protection. The ***European*** Parliament voted on Tuesday by 591 votes to 29 for a regulation that obliges EU countries to introduce it within two years. The member states still have to agree, but the ministers concerned reached a compromise last month.

It is the first time that throughout the ***European Union*** equal protection will be offered to people who report abuses at their employer. This may concern, for example, fraud, corruption, money laundering or insecurity in public tenders.

In most EU countries, there is now inadequate protection for whistle-blowers. Sometimes there are only internal regulations in governments or certain sectors, elsewhere protection is completely absent. For ***European*** institutions, which are not covered by the new law, there is already a separate whistleblower regulation.

The Netherlands is one of ten EU countries that do have comprehensive legislation. Since 2016, reporters of abuses can seek help from the House for Whistleblowers. Last month it appeared that the House, due to administrative chaos, had not yet settled any cases.

According to the forthcoming law, whistle-blowers will soon be free to choose whether they first report abuses internally within their organisation or immediately go to supervisors and the authorities concerned, nationally or ***Europe-wide***. They will then be obliged to provide advice and assistance, including psychological and financial assistance if necessary.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Whistleblowers (94%); Investigations (65%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***European Parliament***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-11BR-00000-00&context=) [***Pulse fishing permanently banned in Europe from July 2021 European Union***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-11BR-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 136 words

**Dateline:** Strasbourg

**Body**

The total ban on pulse fishing as of 1 July 2021 is final. An ultimate attempt by Dutch parliamentarians to block a ***European*** ban on pulse fishing has failed in the ***European*** Parliament. With 571 votes in favour, 60 against and 20 abstentions, the Parliament voted for a large package of measures for fisheries, of which the ban on pulse fishing is a part. The sector association for cutter fishermen speaks in a reaction of a "huge blow" for Dutch fishermen. According to the Dutch fishermen, who have invested above average amounts in pulse fishing, the decision was taken for the wrong reasons. ChristenUnie, CDA and VVD wanted to free up pulse fishing throughout the ***EU*** as a last resort. Parliament did not go along with this. (ANP)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (77%); Associations + Organizations (64%)

**Industry:** Fishing Regulation + Policy (94%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Security can be a reason for restricting free trade'; Economics and Law***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-11C0-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 4

**Length:** 310 words

**Byline:** Joop Meijnen

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

This section highlights business cases on which the courts have recently ruled. This week, ***European*** *law.*

**FULL TEXT:**

Following a series of terrorist attacks on ***European*** soil, including those in February 2015 in Copenhagen (three deaths) and in November 2015 in Paris (120 deaths), the ***European Union*** tightened controls on the acquisition and possession of firearms. As required, a large majority of the 28 ***EU member states*** had agreed to the stricter measures. But the Czech Republic disagreed and, supported by Hungary and Poland, went to the ***European*** Court of Justice.

The Czech government felt that the ***EU had exceeded*** its powers by basing the tightening of policy on its competence to ensure the free movement of goods, when the aim was rather to combat crime, in particular terrorism. The Czech Republic also felt that the tightening was disproportionate to its objective.

In her opinion to the ***EU Court***, Advocate General Eleanor Sharpston rejects the Czech objections. She emphasises that the ***EU Member States*** would probably have adopted different measures. The different national approaches would have distorted the ***intra-EU*** trade in arms. Against this background, Sharpston said that the ***EU*** had to act in order to keep the conditions for the trade in and possession of firearms on an equal footing and to avoid unfair competition. She points out that the ***EU*** often interferes with the free movement of goods for security reasons, such as with toys, foodstuffs and fireworks. As regards proportionality, the Advocate General also sees no reason to uphold the Czech criticism. Her opinion is not binding. The Court will rule shortly.

*Judgment*: ***EU***:C:2019:321

**Notes**

Judgment: ECLI:***EU***:C:2019:321

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Accelerating energy innovations***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0PB-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 24

**Length:** 627 words

**Byline:** Gabi Ouwerkerk

**Body**

InnoEnergy: ***Europe*** can catch up by joining forces

by Gabi Ouwerkerk

Amsterdam - Now that the government's climate plans are taking shape, criticism is mounting. Is it feasible to get all homes off gas by 2050 and who will pay the bill? Bart de Beer, cfo of InnoEnergy, understands the criticism of the climate agreement. "But you should not only look at the problems, also at the solutions."

InnoEnergy, supported by the ***European*** Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), brings together ***European*** companies, researchers and knowledge institutes to speed up the market introduction of sustainable energy solutions. De Beer admits that ***Europe*** has some catching up to do with China and North America. "But by joining forces ***Europe-wide***, we can catch up."

Egg of Columbus

He points to the numerous innovative solutions being worked on under the InnoEnergy banner. "The egg of Columbus does not exist, but together they add value to accelerate the energy transition. As an example, he mentions the Spanish company Eolos, which has developed a floating platform with measuring equipment that can be used to investigate the best location for a new wind farm at sea. "They are now achieving international success with this. We support them with a combination of investment, education, knowledge and access to our ***European*** network."

In the past eight years, InnoEnergy has coached more than two hundred startups. "We don't offer a fixed programme, like many other incubators, but look at what a company needs. That may be knowledge in a particular field, or help with the introduction into a particular market." The innovation institute also often steps on board as an investor at an early stage.

Hope for unicorn

InnoEnergy receives an annual contribution of around EUR 100 million for these activities from the ***European Union***, which is supplemented by shareholders including major concerns such as Naturgi, Total and Schneider Electric. "We are of course hoping for a unicorn," says De Beer, who is happy to share a number of success stories, such as Skeleton from Estonia, which raised over EUR 40 million for its ultracapacitors. These are batteries that can be charged in tens of seconds and provide a lot of energy in a short time. Electric buses can be charged quickly at every stop, so they do not have to be powered all night. He also has great confidence in Northvolt, the Swedish battery factory set up by two former Tesla employees.

Crucial part

De Beer's colleague Jacob Ruiter, ceo of InnoEnergy Benelux, emphasises that batteries are a crucial part of the energy transition. After all, they are the engine of electric cars and the energy larder of households. "If we in ***Europe*** don't start producing batteries ourselves soon, we will become too dependent on China," says Ruiter. "In the foreseeable future, China will produce more than 70% of the lithium-ion batteries on which cars run."

InnoEnergy also leads the ***European*** Battery Alliance, which was established two years ago to stimulate cell production and recycling of batteries. The aim is to have ten so-called gigafactories in ***Europe*** within five years, the equivalent of Tesla's large-scale battery cell production facility in Nevada. Besides Northvolt, German car manufacturer Daimler also has plans for two gigafactories.

Ruiter emphasises that, as a company, when building a battery facility you at least do not run the risk of disappointing demand. He therefore wonders aloud why you still hear so few plans from Dutch industry. "They are welcome to call me for help."

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Alternative Fuel Vehicles (94%)

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Departure of Rutte disastrous for Dutch EUinfluence'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-117Y-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Stéphane Alonso

**Dateline:** The Hague

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Brussels Image Survey

According to new research, the Netherlands defends its own interests in the ***EU*** quite well. Without Rutte, this would be more difficult.

**FULL TEXT:**

The Dutch influence in the ***EU*** rests heavily on Mark Rutte and his long experience among ***European*** government leaders. This is still positive, but also makes diplomacy vulnerable. If Rutte (VVD) leaves as Prime Minister, this will seriously erode the Dutch authority in Brussels.

This is stated in a Clingendael report published this Wednesday on the image of the Netherlands among diplomats and civil servants, especially from other EU countries, commissioned by the permanent parliamentary committee for ***European*** Affairs. The institute calls Ruttes dominant position in the diplomatic game a "cause for concern" and says that the Netherlands should actively pursue various ***European*** key positions to compensate for his possible departure. The prime minister is often mentioned as a candidate for a top job in Brussels, although he denies being interested.

**Lack of solidarity**

Clingendael sees another potential weakness in Dutch interest representation: the lack of "empathy or solidarity" towards other EU countries. The quality and knowledge of Dutch ministers and officials are widely recognised in Brussels, but the Dutch commitment is often considered "rigid", for example on the ***euro*** or the ***EU multi-year budget***. As a result, the Netherlands runs the risk of achieving less in other areas.

The study shows that by adopting an inflexible attitude and merely insisting on compliance with the rules, the Netherlands could antagonise other Member States", Clingendael writes. Abandoning "a moralising attitude" would create more confidence and even strengthen the Dutch negotiating position.

The 62 respondents and the ***European*** policymakers with whom in-depth interviews were held say that the Netherlands too often puts national self-interest first. France and Germany package their interests in 'a ***European*** agenda', which makes them appear less 'selfish'. The Netherlands should do the same, is one of the seven recommendations.

At the moment, The Hague is too often seen "as a builder of blocking minorities" and not as a constructive bridge builder. The 'Hanseatic League' of northern EU countries with which Minister Hoekstra (Finance, CDA) wants to slow down ***euro reforms,*** is for some respondents an example of how not to do it.

According to Clingendael, the rigid attitude can partly be explained by the need of the Lower House to send the cabinet to Brussels with strict mandates. This makes it difficult to manoeuvre and the Netherlands quickly comes across as "measured".

**Reliable and predictable**

Compared to other EU countries, the Dutch commitment is very transparent. The Chamber is involved early, comprehensively and publicly in ***EU dossiers***. That earns appreciation: The Netherlands is considered reliable and predictable. But it limits the scope for negotiation: many respondents therefore also find the Netherlands lacking in creativity. According to Clingendael, this problem could be overcome by informing the House more often in confidence, in 'technical briefings'.

The Netherlands is also said not to be visible enough at meetings of specialist ministers. According to Minister Blok (Foreign Affairs, VVD), Dutch ministers are usually present, but in Brussels it is noticed "that ministers do not always come to the Councils". The Netherlands is also said to participate relatively little in informal and bilateral consultations, on the margins of meetings, while in that circuit "much is achieved" and Brussels is precisely around the corner for the Netherlands geographically. Members of Parliament are also said to show too little face, which is partly due to the limited official ***EU support*** they can count on.

The Netherlands must actively pursue key positions to compensate for departures

**Graphic**

In Brussels, the Netherlands is seen as competent and effective, not as empathic or inclusive

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (77%); International Relations (71%); Drug Policy (65%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Notre-Dame will shine again. But when, that is the question***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-1186-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 6

**Length:** 1818 words

**Byline:** Peter Vermaas

**Dateline:** Paris

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Five questions on*  the Notre-Dame fire

President Macron thinks that the French will restore Notre-Dame to its former glory in five years. Money seems to be plentiful, but whether the President's optimism is justified, experts do not dare to say at this time.

**FULL TEXT:**

Five years. That is how much time French President Emmanuel Macron is giving himself and his countrymen to raise the badly damaged Notre-Dame de Paris from the ashes. We can do it", he said in a televised address on all channels on Tuesday evening. We are a nation of builders. We still have so much to rebuild." The cathedral will be "even more beautiful than before".

While France has been going through a deep political, social and democratic crisis in recent months, Macron praised the unity of the nation in the face of such tough tests as this. The fire shows that "what we think is indestructible can also be hit", he said. "It is up to us to turn this disaster into an opportunity to come together."

1 What do we know now about the cause of the fire?

Still not much, except that the Paris prosecutor, Rémy Heitz, sees no evidence of intent. The first report of a fire was supposed to have come in at 6.20pm on Monday. A mass had just started in the cathedral. The faithful were evacuated, but the source of the fire was not immediately located. At 6.43 p.m., said State Secretary Laurent Nuñez, a second report came in, after which flames were seen at the level of the oak roof vault and the equally wooden roof spire. Due to the strong wind, the fire spread quickly.

Last year, an immense scaffold was built around the spire, due to an intensive restoration costing 150 million ***euros***. The lead roofing allowed water to penetrate. Twelve employees of scaffolding builder ***Europe*** Echafaudages and restoration firm Le Bras Frères from Metz had stood on the scaffolding on Monday, said co-owner (of both companies) Julien Le Bras to French journalists. His specialised companies also work for the Louvre and Chartres Cathedral, among others. He assured that all employees had already left when the fire broke out. All procedures were followed", he said with tears in his eyes. Four other firms were involved in the restoration, according to the public prosecutor. Staff members were questioned on Tuesday.

The fact is, experts say, that fires break out much more frequently at construction sites. According to Jean-Charles Du Bellay, foreman of the technical directorate of the Fédération Française du Bâtiment, there is a report of fire on a construction site every three days in Paris. He said this in 2014 at a debate of the Paris fire brigade. "We could have prevented this", therefore believes editor-in-chief Didier Rykner of *La Tribune de l'Art*. The regulations for work at historic monuments are "inadequate", he told France Info. According to the trade magazine *Le Moniteur*, soldering is the culprit in 30 to 40 percent of cases. This was the case with the fire at the Saint-Donatien-et-Saint-Rogatien basilica in Nantes in 2015.

2 Who is responsible for the maintenance of Notre-Dame?

The Vatican, through Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, has so far only offered "technical and scientific support" for the restoration. Because it is not the Catholic Church or the Paris municipality that owns the cathedral, but the French state. The state is therefore also fully responsible for maintenance and restoration. Paradoxically, this is a consequence of the law of 1905, which regulates the strict separation of church and state in France, the so-called *laïcité*.

In exchange for religious freedom, the Catholic Church promised to stay out of politics. The secular republic was to remain religiously neutral and would, therefore, no longer subsidise any religion. But religious monuments nationalised during the Revolution in 1789 remained the property of the state and were to be made available to the church free of charge. Apart from Notre-Dame, the French state therefore owned 86 other cathedrals and many other religious monuments.

That is not an unqualified pleasure. According to a 2007 parliamentary report, more than 10 billion ***euros*** would be needed to restore the often dilapidated heritage. That money is not there. But when national heritage guru Stéphane Bern, a Macron confidant, proposed charging admission to Notre-Dame and other cathedrals in 2017, he was buried in criticism. That may be normal in other countries, in France it is a "violation" of the 1905 law, politicians said. Bern finally organised a heritage lottery. It brought in the 20 million.

3What will the repair cost and who will pay?

According to experts, the restoration of the cathedral will cost hundreds of millions of ***euros***. More precise estimates cannot yet be made. But money does not seem to be a problem this time, jubilated Bern. Wealthy businessmen and companies have already pledged some 700 million in donations. The government is promising tax breaks for donors. Former Minister of Culture Jean-Jacques Aillagon even proposed a 90 per cent discount.

It started on Monday evening with François-Henri Pinault of the luxury group Kering, owner of Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci among others. He pledged 100 million ***euros***. The same Aillagon leads his *fondation*. The rival Arnault family, which owns Louis Vuitton and Dior, among others, through LVMH, came up with 200 million. It is a "powerful and symbolic gesture" that should ensure "that the money will not be lacking", said Antoine Arnault, son of founder Bernard. The real concern must be the search for qualified restorers, he said. The Bettencourt Meyers family, which became rich with L'Oréal, also came up with 200 million. Oil company Total donated 100 million. The City of Paris said it had 50 million ready and Mayor Anne Hidalgo would like a donor conference. TV station France 2 is organising a benefit concert on Saturday.

But not everyone agrees with the philanthropy *captains of industry*. The French left has been complaining for some time that the big luxury corporations, with their enormous real estate portfolios and private museums, are gaining an excessive influence on Paris. Don't fall into the American trap", warned the left-wing economist Julia Cagé on Twitter. Billionaires should pay taxes, not give when it suits them.

4What about the restoration of Notre-Dame?

We will rebuild this cathedral", Macron insisted emotionally on Monday evening after visiting the church. According to experts, it is not yet possible to say whether the five-year deadline he has set (in time for the Paris Olympic Games) is realistic. Although the fire has been extinguished, it will not be possible to carry out a thorough analysis of the repair work until later in the week. Until then, it is "premature to give a time estimate", historian Philippe Plagnieux, an expert on gothic architecture, told the French *Huffington Post*.

There are three large holes in the stone roof vault of the church, including where the roof spire used to be. The façade of the northern side aisle, which contains one of the three famous rose windows (or rosettes), is still very fragile and needs to be stabilised. It is in danger of "collapsing on the Rue du Cloître" next to the church, Culture Minister Franck Riester said on Tuesday. Five buildings on that street are therefore still evacuated. "It is still a precarious matter." More will be clear on Thursday at the earliest. Frédéric Létoffe of the Groupement des entreprises de Restauration de Monuments Historiques, which specialises in restoration, estimates that the work will take 10 to 15 years.

The reconstruction of Reims cathedral, which was destroyed in the First World War, took 40 years. At the time, however, the technical structure of the building had to be completely reconstructed from photos and drawings. Notre-Dame is one of the best-documented monuments in the world. In 2013, the American scientist Andrew Tallon used new 3D techniques to map out the entire structure with the utmost precision.

The question is whether enough oak can be found in France to rebuild the completely destroyed roof (above the stone vault) in the original way. The main French producer, the Groupe Charlois, calculated that eight centuries ago, 1,300 oaks were used, a total of "at least 3,000 cubic metres of wood". It is difficult to find trees that are 150 to 200 years old with a diameter of 1.5 to 2 metres, director Sylvain Charlois told AFP. "That stock is not available." A rumour on social media that oaks were planted preventively in Versailles in the 19th century because, after Chartres in 1836, one day the Paris cathedral would also burn, has been debunked by local authorities. A concrete roof, as was done in Nantes Cathedral in 1973 after a fire, is not being considered.

5Does the fire already have political consequences?

As after the first terror attacks in 2015, the French political class is opting for a *union national*, for national unity, after the tragedy in Paris. All political parties have temporarily suspended campaigns for the ***European*** elections at the end of May, which began officially on Monday. "We don't have the heart to polemicise", said list leader Jordan Bardella of the national-populist Rassemblement National. Atheist or believer, Notre-Dame is our common cathedral", wrote foreman Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the hard-left La France Insoumise. Only Nicolas Dupont-Aignan of Debout La France, Forum's ***European*** partner, broke the unanimity. He demanded a parliamentary committee of inquiry to establish whether the fire was really an accident.

President Macron on Monday blew off his long-awaited TV lecture at the end of the "Great National Debate". He had hoped to re-energise his presidency with plans leaked on Tuesday for tax cuts for the middle class, indexation of pensions and the abolition of the ENA executive school. He will return to the debate "in the coming days", he said Tuesday. "Now is not the time."

But his swollen call for solidarity cannot be separated from the crisis of confidence that has beset France over the past six months. He praised "the rich and not so rich who have given money" for Notre-Dame. It is up to us to find the thread of our national project, that which made us, which unites us: a human project, passionately French.

Wealthy businessmen and companies have already pledged some 700 million in donations

It took 40 years to rebuild the Reims cathedral, which was destroyed in the First World War

**Graphic**

Left and right the interior of Notre-Dame, the day after the fire.

Photos Reuters, AFP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Fires (94%); Human Rights Violations (74%); Natural Disasters (74%); Environment + Natural Resources (67%)

**Industry:** Forestry + Logging (88%); Forestry Regulation + Policy (75%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Make labour market EU fair'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0P1-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 22

**Length:** 744 words

**Body**

Employers and trade unions unanimously reject unfair competition

Employers and employees just can't seem to agree on pensions. But suddenly there is a SER advisory report on a more social ***Europe***. "The ***EU*** must become a citizens' project again".

It is unique: Mariëtte Hamer, Han Busker and Hans de Boer all three give an interview. The chairmen of the Social and Economic Council (SER), the FNV and VNO-NCW. "Now a dream has come true," jokes Hamer to the reporter. Today the SER publishes an opinion on ***Europe***. At their request, pensions will not be discussed in this interview. Hamer: "With this opinion, the intention was to once again put in order: what is ***Europe for*** and what does it do for us? We are fairly unanimous on that."

Many people do not see that the ***EU is*** of any benefit to them.

De Boer: "The perception that the ***EU*** has brought us much is not there. Peace and prosperity were the two original motives. We have achieved peace. As far as prosperity is concerned: we earn about 25% of our national income from the ***EU***. That is EUR 200 billion and 2.5 million jobs. ***Europe*** started out as a citizens' project, economically speaking. It has degenerated into a political and technocratic project. It is no longer a citizens' project."

Busker: "Most people have absolutely no warm feeling about the ***EU***. This is mainly because ***Europe*** is seen as a threat to social security."

The ***EU*** has become a business project?

Hamer: "For us, people, profit, planet is a very important starting point. It's about people. It's about business profit, prosperity. And about sustainability, both nature and people."

Busker: "We have to work hard in ***Europe to make*** people see it as a plus. People now see it as a negative thing because there are all sorts of regulations. Because there is all this evasion of regulations that is facilitating the race to the bottom. If you don't turn that around, we will have failed. The insecurity that people experience in the Netherlands also largely comes from ***Europe*** and we have to find an answer to that."

Hamer: "This uncertainty is not so much caused by the institution of ***Europe***. But by developments such as globalisation and digitalisation."

Labour migration within the ***EU*** is a source of concern. Even if you equalise the wages, the wage costs for temporary secondment vary (see box). A Bulgarian will cost 18% in premiums, a Dutchman 35%. That is legal competition on employment conditions.

Busker: "You have to regulate that this is no longer possible. Otherwise, it remains facilitating a race to the bottom."

De Boer: "I want to support what Han is saying. Our line is as follows: if unfair practices take place in this ***Europe*** that is becoming one, that is the axe to the root of ***Europe***. We do not want that. If you as an entrepreneur think, I'll get a cheap Bulgarian and keep a Dutchman out, that's understandable from an individual opportunistic point of view, but it kills the system. And we don't want that.

Can you give concrete examples of how to make the ***EU*** more social?

Busker: "More social mainly means more honest. That people no longer have the feeling that there is a competitor waiting at the border to push you into unemployment."

In what way is the VNO constituency committed to this?

De Boer: In the way I just said.

Your members are no longer taking advantage of the wage differentials?

De Boer: "Together with MKB-Nederland, I have 300,000 companies in my constituency. I can't vouch for individual entrepreneurs. But this is the big administrative line: anything that is not fair, we don't want."

Hamer: "We also wrote that in the advice of 2014: equal pay for equal work in the same place. I can imagine that you say: make it more concrete. But this is pretty concrete."

Busker: "That parental leave is a very concrete thing.

There is a huge elephant in the room. ***Europe*** is very important, but would it not have been better to put this energy into saving our pensions?

Hamer: "We are working on that."

De Boer points at Busker, gesticulating: that's his fault, and starts laughing loudly.

De Boer: "We have to do that ourselves, ***Europe*** is not going to do it for us."

When was that arranged?

Hamer: "If it is settled. (To Busker and De Boer) Come, let's take a picture."

***Europe*** seen as a threat

'This is pretty concrete, isn't it?'

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (92%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (64%); Agriculture Regulation + Policy (63%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (94%)

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Notre-Dame***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118T-00000-00&context=) [***Burning cathedral offers chance for European unity; Letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX2-HGX1-JC5G-118T-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 254 words

**Byline:** R.P.Boon

**Body**

Every country has its national cultural heritage, heritage of which its inhabitants are justly proud.

I see a France plunged in deep mourning, French citizens , that is understandable, but if you turn on your television unsuspectingly, you are confronted with images that make you suspect for a *split second* that it is a Twin Towers-style tragedy, with many fatalities. I am nevertheless relieved that the damage is limited to material damage. The French government is already talking about a national fundraising campaign to rebuild Notre-Dame. A fabulously wealthy French family has*, without embarrassment,* pledged ***EUR*** 100 million. That same family might have been better off spending the amount on more hidden needs among fellow countrymen. But perhaps the benefactor is hoping to cleanse his own soul? Right now, I would appreciate it if the ***EU*** would make a gesture. Can Brussels create a ***European*** International Heritage Grant? It would be a nice gesture to save France's national heritage and pride in ***Europe*** from extinction.

A positive side effect: it would send a signal to nationalist populists. It would show that synergy produces a better result than the short-sighted harking back to bygone nostalgic times, to times and desires of each little country on its own.

R.P.Boon

Letters

**Graphic**

Photo AP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Customs + Cultural Heritage (94%); Teaching + Teachers (63%)

**Industry:** Entertainment + Arts (64%)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Cheap Bulgarians***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0P6-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 23

**Length:** 118 words

**Body**

A Bulgarian is much cheaper than a Dutchman. According to EU rules, both get equal pay if they do the same work in the Netherlands. But the wage costs are not equal, writes the SER in the opinion 'Priorities for a fair ***Europe***'.

The difference is in the contributions that are paid. If the Bulgarian works temporarily in the Netherlands, he can remain under the social security of his home country. The Bulgarian then costs 18% in premiums. A Dutch employee costs 35%, plus 15% in pension contributions.

This premium difference applies to a two-year secondment. "In addition, for the first six months, no tax needs to be paid in the Netherlands on the Bulgarian employee's wages."

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Social Security (94%); Wage + Hour Laws (89%); Minimum Wage (87%); Wages + Salaries (87%); Cost Of Living (80%)

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***VVD climate course is about power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0TF-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** WATU-SAY; Page 18

**Length:** 106 words

**Body**

Letter of the day

The VVD makes a leap to the left by increasing the climate requirements further than the ***EU*** wants. The VVD thus becomes a friend of GroenLinks. And the CDA and D66 are also going down this road. Why?

Forum Voor Democratie (FvD) is coming up. This (largest) party must be sidelined with the above coalition. It is all about power. FvD (common sense) will have to make way. It is not about what is good for the country and its people, but about power.

Should this coalition fail, then there is always a place in the ***EU*** for Rutte, as champion of climate demands. People there prefer co-founders and frontrunners.

B.S. Engelbert, Assen

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Taxes + Taxation (94%); Politics (78%); Government Departments + Authorities (77%); Political Parties (64%); Teaching + Teachers (62%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (75%)

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Dutch fishery is changing dramatically'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VX1-2CY1-JCBS-P0PG-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 25

**Length:** 628 words

**Byline:** Gert van Harskamp

**Body**

Definitive pulse ban is just one of many threats

by Gert van Harskamp and Ruud Mikkers

Strasbourg - Dutch fishermen are facing enormous restructuring and the sector must quickly look for a new earning model.

Offshore wind farms, land obligation, Brexit and a ban on pulse fishing threaten the sector. Yesterday, the ***European*** Parliament put a definitive stop to pulse fishing, fishing with electric shocks.

"You have the idea that Brussels looks at facts, but it doesn't." Speaking is Willem Snoek (31) from Urk. He has come to Strasbourg especially with a large group of fishermen, not only from Urk but also from Stellendam and Vlissingen. A large lorry is parked in front of the building with a banner on it, and a large pulse net is hung from a crane. An ultimate attempt at explanation, the angry demonstrators say.

But on Tuesday, the ***European*** Parliament drew a definitive line under pulse fishing, a method of waking up fish from the seabed with electric shocks. On 1 July 2021, the last pulse fishermen will have to stop.

Together with his brother, Snoek has been fishing with the pulse method for about five years now, an investment of 3.5 to 4 tonnes. He lists the advantages: major fuel savings, little bycatch and a reduction of the seabed because there is no need to drag heavy nets. He will switch back to the old method with the beam trawl. "Now we have to go back to an outdated technique. It's very unpleasant when complete outsiders just shout something", says Pike bitterly.

Of the 100 Dutch cutter fishermen, 84 have switched to pulse fishing. Of the EUR 81 million profit that Dutch fishermen made in 2018, according to Wageningen University & Research (WUR), EUR 54 million came from cutter fishing. "So that profit is completely evaporating," says director Pim Visser of Visned, spokesman for the Dutch cutter fishery. "That is not only bad for the fishermen, but also for the crew's income. Their remuneration is determined on the basis of the profit."

It is not the only threat hanging over the heads of the fishing industry. "Nowadays, all fish that is caught has to be taken ashore, including fish that is unfit for human consumption. That costs the sector EUR 25 to 30 million", calculated WUR researcher Arie Mol recently during the presentation of the fishery figures.

Because of the Brexit, many fishermen have to look for new fishing grounds. No less than 35% of the catch by Dutch fishermen comes from UK waters. The construction of wind farms at sea will reduce the fishing grounds by another quarter.

The fishing industry is reckoning with restructuring. "There are bound to be fishermen who will stop, perhaps thirty out of a hundred," says fisherman foreman Visser. "There will have to be a transition for the remaining fishermen. We will have to start fishing in a different way and, because of the wind farms, with different vessels. That is why we want a fund, but we are still investigating how much money and what form it should take."

The cabinet has already made EUR 15 million available from the national innovation fund. According to the fisheries organisations, 'the call to innovate fails because it asks for a solution to a problem that has already been solved'.

Although most threats remain, pulse fishermen are hopeful that the pulse gear will only have to be put away temporarily. Visser: "Next year we can reapply for an exemption for 2022 based on the latest scientific research at the end of this year."

Towards a new way of fishing

30 out of 100 fishermen might disappear'

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Fishing, Hunting + Trapping (80%); Associations + Organizations (69%); Fishing Law (61%)

**Industry:** Fishing Regulation + Policy (94%); Commercial Fishing (64%)

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Exit Theresa May does not solve the problem, only a new referendum can do that ; Comment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R05R-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION & DEBATE; Page 10

**Length:** 834 words

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

United Kingdom

**FULL TEXT:**

Political careers often end in tears. Usually in the figurative sense, but in the case of the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, also literally. After more than a thousand days of tough battles in Brussels but especially in her own house, the British Parliament, she announced on Friday a week ago that she would be resigning from Queen Elizabeth. And this Friday, on 7 June - a day after the seventy-fifth anniversary of D-Day - she will put her money where her mouth is. She will resign as leader of the Conservative Party and will remain in office (in Dutch terms) until her successor is elected.

The tears shed by the politician at the time of his downfall may have various causes. Self-pity, for example. Or frustration over goals that have not been achieved. Or anger over unjust treatment. In May's case, all three seem to apply. She broke down in tears when she said that she had always only served the country she loves so much. But she must also be frustrated because the main task she had since taking office in 2016 was to get the UK out of the ***European Union*** in an orderly fashion. The complexity and scale of that task made it the toughest challenge for any British Prime Minister since the Second World War. And it has ended in hopeless gridlock in Parliament. But it is partly caused by the same group of Conservative adventurers who declined the honour of succeeding the resigned Prime Minister David Cameron after his ignominious exit. Cameron's reckless decision to put a Brexit to the British electorate by referendum was the starting pistol for the current permanent British government crisis.

History will judge May. Whether she, as the second woman in office, may also have failed because of male opposition? Or whether her initially highly praised intransigence got in the way? The fact remains that she de facto lost power when she lost her majority in the House of Representatives in the 2017 by-election. That decision, motivated by the desire to broaden her power base, was in retrospect "a bit stupid".

For the UK and for the ***European Union***, the question remains: what are the consequences of the departure of the British Prime Minister? Answer: May is gone but the problems have remained. It is expected that the Tories will spend a lot of time and energy in the coming precious months fighting over the succession. Boris Johnson, the fickle stokebrand of the Conservative Party, is widely tipped as the next Prime Minister.

The risk of a hard Brexit is estimated to be greater in that case. It is tragic for all those Britons who wanted to stay in the Union. But also tragic because it is a weakening of the ***European*** ideal of peace and prosperity, fought for on those beaches in Normandy.

But whether that hard Brexit will come remains to be seen. Johnson has not yet been elected and has many enemies at home. And moreover: he - or any other successor - will be faced with the same deadlock in parliament as Theresa May. There is simply no majority for one of the three options that have been before us for months now: No-Deal Brexit, 'soft' Brexit (by May) or staying in the ***EU***.

The ***European*** Parliament elections last weekend made two things clear. The UK's split over Brexit has deepened further and, historically, support for the two largest parties that have ruled the country over the last century has plummeted.

This leads, also among leading Conservative politicians like the Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond, to the conclusion that the issue of the Brexit cannot be solved by representative democracy. There is a growing consensus that the Brexit should be put back to the electorate now that parliament has failed to resolve it. But the EU elections have made it clear that the Tories risk being wiped out at a general election, given the huge turnout for Nigel Farrage's Brexit Party.

As we know, the Baron Von Münchhausen was able to pull himself up out of the swamp by his braid. The House of Representatives has so far failed to do so. The most realistic way out is to use a second referendum as leverage. It is time the British who are striving for 'à la carte Brexit', without free movement of people but with free trade, realised that this is a fallacy. That means the question becomes simple: in or out. Anything in between has already failed. The ***European Union is*** also entitled to clarity.

The issue of Brexit cannot be solved by representative democracy

In the Commentary, NRC gives its opinion on important news facts. The commentators write these articles in consultation with the editors-in-chief.

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[***German youth also managed to get their grandmothers to vote green***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04N-00000-00&context=)

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**Length:** 1533 words

**Byline:** Juurd Eijsvoogel

**Dateline:** Berlin

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Germany

The German Greens became the second party last week, thanks to the vote of young people. 'The climate is finally no longer seen as a luxury issue'.

**FULL TEXT:**

For Jana Brix (22), the ***European elections were*** a double victory. The Greens became the second largest party in Germany. And among voters under the age of 30, it was by far the largest. No less than one third of all young voters voted for the Greens.

A few days after the results, sitting behind a cup of ginger tea in a Berlin café, Brix is still beaming. She is a student of cultural management and one of the two chairpersons of the Berlin branch of Green Youth, the Greens' youth organisation. You could already tell during the campaign", she says. We got a lot of encouragement on the streets. And that during ***European*** elections! I see it as a reward for our years of commitment to the climate. It's a wonderful feeling. At last, the climate is no longer seen as some sort of luxury issue.

The governing parties CDU and SPD are left with a big hangover. While the Greens almost doubled their result (from 10.7 to 20.5 percent), the CDU dropped from 35.3 to 28.9 percent, and the SPD even from 27.3 to only 15.8 percent of the votes. Both are in danger of becoming parties for the elderly - they are mainly dependent on voters over sixty.

Concerns about climate change and the environment were the most important issue for almost half of the voters (48 percent) in Germany, according to a poll by Infratest. Immigration was mentioned by only 25 per cent as a decisive factor in their choice and thus came in fourth place, after social security and the preservation of peace.

Two factors played a part in mobilising the young generation of voters in Germany, says Brix. This spring, many young people took to the streets to demonstrate against a ***European*** bill to adapt copyright to the Internet age. That politicised many young people.

The Friday school climate demonstrations have also helped. Most pupils are not old enough to vote themselves, but they have confronted their parents and grandparents with the issue."

**Think of the climate, grandma**

So did Brix himself. Under the motto "Grandma's voice for your future", Green Youth encouraged young people to cheer on older relatives. My grandmother is not very political and not very 'green' either. I called her and said: 'Vote what you want, but think about the climate. That's important to me, I want to have a future'. I don't know what she voted, but an uncle and aunt who I also called voted for the Greens."

Young voters do not have a good reputation among campaign strategists, says Pawel Zerka, researcher at the ***European*** Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), by telephone. "People don't say that out loud, but in confidential conversations you hear: the group is not that big, they rarely vote and in Britain the Brexit referendum showed once again that many young voters stay at home even when the stakes are high."

Zerka saw something different this spring: a strong political commitment among young people in ***Europe***. In early May, he wrote an article about it for the ECFR, entitled: ***Europe****'s underestimated young voters*. ,,What happened with the Brexit was important. After the result, many young voters in ***Europe*** said: I don't want us to end up in a situation like that. They realised that you can make a difference if you take part. The rise of the nationalist right has also led to more engagement among young people."

The situation does vary greatly from country to country, Zerka emphasises. Not everywhere young people vote as they do in Germany. In Poland, for example, the radical right-wing Konfederacja, which says that the ***EU*** is a conspiracy of gays, Muslims and Jews, did well among voters under the age of 30."

In order to raise political awareness at an early age, Germany has a rapidly growing project that organises elections in schools (comparable to the school elections in the Netherlands). This year, some 650 thousand pupils took part in this 'Juniorwahl' (compared to over six thousand in the Netherlands). The number of participating German schools has tripled since 2014 to 2,750. Participating schools have to spend six to eight teaching hours on politics and explaining how the ***EU*** works. While CDU/CSU emerged as the strongest party among schoolchildren in the 2017 Bundestag elections, the Greens generously won the Juniorwahl in the ***European*** elections.

**In action for the jerk to the right**

In the cafeteria of Humboldt University, on the boulevard Unter den Linden in Berlin, students Jan Leisse (19) and Elias Koch (21) are having lunch - for one, "a delicious Schweinebraten with rice" (Leisse) and for the other, "a disgusting Thai soup" (Koch). They both study sociology and political science and consider themselves social democrats. They thought the ***European*** elections were important - "because of the climate debate and the shift to the right" (Koch), "especially because of the rise of populism and because this time there were two good Spitzenkandidaten, Timmermans and Weber" (Leisse).

But the elections were also painful, both admit. And not only because of the results. One week before the elections, the popular YouTuber Rezo launched an all-out attack on the governing parties CDU, CSU and SPD in a video lasting almost an hour (entitled *The destruction of the CDU*). The video was watched by 11 million people before the elections. The leaders of the parties had difficulty reacting effectively to the hard and emotional attack via this for them relatively unknown medium.

I wouldn't present it like that", says Koch, "I prefer an orderly argument. But especially the criticism of climate policy makes sense." His fellow student adds: The CDU/CSU and SPD cooperation in the Grand Coalition is a debacle. This is leading to people turning away from these parties. The criticism is justified. But I still believe in the idea that popular parties are important for keeping society together."

**Dying supporters**

Did the results of the elections and the YouTube video show a 'rebellion of young people', as the weeklies *Die Zeit* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Wochekopten* put it? This is part of a social change that has been going on for decades", political scientist Achim Goerres, professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen, puts into perspective over the phone. More and more people who grow up in families that are doing well are guided by post-material values: self-development, world peace, the environment. The Greens are making the voters an offer that fits in with this. For SPD and CDU, this is more difficult, given their constituencies. The time when they were really big parties is over. They still benefit from the fact that the elderly form a large group, but they are becoming fewer and fewer, they are dying out."

The Greens, says Goerres, are identified with the political issue that German voters now find important: the climate. They have the so-called *issue ownership*. If SPD and CDU also start hammering away at that topic, everyone will see that as copied from the Greens, and they will prefer to choose the original."

Whether the Greens can hold on to the group of young voters who have now voted for them is not yet clear, Goerres believes. New voters are fickle. Only when they have voted two or three times do you know where the journey is going."

For Hanna Lupper (29), this has long been clear. She represents the SPD in the Berlin district council of Kreuzberg, where on Sunday the Greens gained 40 per cent of the vote, against only 10.5 per cent for the SPD. The Greens have a clear profile and a vision of what they want to achieve in the next ten or fifteen years: climate protection", she says with a touch of envy.

Lupper opposed her party's participation in the Grand Coalition with CDU/CSU, which came about last year after much resistance. Now people think: if you vote SPD, you get the CDU too. That's not attractive if you're left-wing." She adds: ,,We still badly need a party that deals with distribution issues. But young people have grown up in a completely neo-liberal working environment. They don't even know what a trade union is for anymore."

Dissatisfaction with their own party also prevails among the CDU young people. The party has not taken young people seriously enough", says Thorben Meier (31), a member of the Junge Union and a trainee judge. When the CDU's first analysis of the election defeat concluded that the Junge Union had scared off young voters with its conservative line, he reacted bitterly. He wrote in the magazine *Cicero* that all those young volunteers who had campaigned tirelessly in recent weeks were entitled to it. As the CDU, we must put forward our own themes more, regardless of what has been agreed within the coalition. The ageing of the party is a thorn in his side. If you are 55, you still count as a young person in the CDU. A bitter joke? It is the reality.

**Graphic**

A student choir sings the ***European Union*** anthem 'Ode to Joy' in front of the Brandenburg Gate on election day, 26 May.

Photo by Markus Schreiber/AP

Greenery by far the most popular among young Germans

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[***The 'innovation summit' does not care about the new trade war***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R061-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 505 words

**Dateline:** Kansas City

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Global Entrepreneurship Summit

Hundreds of companies, mainly from the US and ***Europe***, enter into dialogue.

**FULL TEXT:**

An international economic summit in times of trade war, how does that work? That question was asked repeatedly a few weeks back at a formal countdown event for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) that begins next week in The Hague. In March in Kansas City, the summit organisers spoke to journalists. But questions about President Trump's aggressive trade policies were deflected.

"We don't talk about trade at the GES", said US Secretary of State for Economy, Manisha Singh. "I am not a trade expert", said Maureen Cormack, ambassador to the Balkans and adviser to the organisation. "I do know that few countries are as open to trade as the US and the Netherlands."

We are committed to free and fair trade," said Chief of Mission Shawn Crowley. "And some trade relationships we don't see as free or fair at this time."

With a slight nod to Foreign Trade Minister Sigrid Kaag, Crowley said: "I believe we have a trade surplus with the Netherlands of 24 billion, so no complaints about that."

Minister Kaag, in Kansas City, did show something of the ***European*** concerns about US policy. The trade war is only a distraction. The US and the ***EU*** can better face China together." On the tariffs imposed by President Trump on ***European*** countries, Kaag said that "of course we want them off the table. We want to formalise the trade agreements, not erode them."

Kaag did not feel that the tensions would negatively affect the GES summit in The Hague. Can the summit defuse tensions? ,,I see the summit as an element in a continuous dialogue. Of course we continue to trade with the United States. The Netherlands alone is responsible for 825,000 American jobs."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was silent on the trade war in Kansas City. Asked about his previous trips to ***Europe***, during which he lashed out at the "bureaucrats" of the ***European Union*** in December, for example, and sneered that multilateral treaties do not necessarily make the world a safer place, Pompeo said with a big smile: "Who knows, maybe I'll do it again."

**1,200 companies in The Hague**

The Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES), a summit organised (almost) every year by the United States in collaboration with a host country, begins in The Hague on Monday. In 2017 it was India, in 2016 Kenya, last year there was no GES. Under the motto 'the future is now', representatives of 1,200 companies gather to discuss innovation and business creation. Of those companies, 400 are American, 400 ***European*** (including 200 from the host country the Netherlands) and 400 from the rest of the world. Queen Máxima will open the summit, Ivanka Trump, daughter and advisor of the American president, will close it on Wednesday.

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[***Innovating on the Silicon Prairie; KC Cool***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R05Y-00000-00&context=) [***Kansas City yearns for innovation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R05Y-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Bas Blokker  
  
Bas Blokker

**Dateline:** Kansas City

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Regional development

Kansas City wants to get rid of its provincial image and is investing in high-tech. However, the creation of jobs and personnel still leaves much to be desired.

**FULL TEXT:**

We ride in the tram with Bob Bennett. His bow tie and matching pocket square give him a more classic appearance than his title would suggest: Bennett is Kansas City's Innovation Chief - at least, until he resigned in May. But today, a few weeks earlier, in a tram running from Union Station to the Missouri, Bennett tells us that we are passing "the 54 smartest housing blocks in North America".

We ride in the KC Streetcar. That's not just any tram, but the one that "all of Kansas City is looking to to promote economic growth," according to the website. The KC Streetcar should "spur development, increase real estate prices, attract businesses and residents and redefine the city. Bennett: "It's meant to be a testing ground to close the digital divide in the city."

We drive down Main Street, past Commerce Towers flats. "Here the Internet speed must be above 30 megabits per second," says Bennett. "A little further north, on a day off, that can be upwards of 80."

In this free KC Streetcar, passengers get free wifi. Along the route, there are thirteen public 'iPhones', interactive two-metre screens with information about the neighbouring districts, restaurants, cafés and shops. If a tornado occurs - not a rarity in Kansas - the government can use the screens to guide passers-by to a place of refuge. Data from 328 Wi-Fi points, 1,300 traffic sensors and all the water meters in houses along the tram line make City Hall's policies smarter, Bennett says. If they point out a run-in at an intersection, it could be "a crazy street performer, but it could also be an accident. We then send our police cars by."

**KC Cool**

The American organisers of the biennial Global Entrepreneurship Summit, this year in The Hague from 3-5 June, started the countdown in Kansas City in March. Foreign Minister Pompeo, himself a *Kansan*, spoke highly of the economic vitality of his home state. His ministry had invited foreign correspondents to visit the innovative business community there.

Since Google rolled out the first superfast fibre-optic cable in Kansas City in 2014, the region has been nicknamed *Silicon Prairie*. With the motto 'KC Cool', an attempt is being made to blow away the provincial image. The Trump administration is keen to help generate positive attention for the languishing states in the north and mid-west. This is where Trump laid the foundation for his election victory.

The programme included visits to a playful whiskey distiller, a computerised soy and corn farm just outside the city, and LMV Automotive's robotic factory. The Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) presented survey after survey showing that in 2018, this was the best city for students to start their careers (according to employment agency Ziprecruiter). That it was number 2 on the list of good cities for women in the tech industry (according to financial advisor SmartAsset). And number 2 on the list of cities with high-paying jobs and a low cost of living (according to broadcaster CNBC).

They were mostly incantations.

Yes, the city is the centre of the US. Kansas City has always been a major rail hub. Almost all the John Wayne films ended at our Union Station," says Bennett. From here, cows were transported to Chicago slaughterhouses."

But meanwhile, 'centre' also means that there is no major American city further from the coast. From Kansas City, it is over 1,500 kilometres to both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. And it is the coasts that are the focal points of 21st-century globalism, from global tourism in the east to innovative hubs in the west. These are the regions where real estate prices have exploded.

On the plus side of the middle: unemployment here was lower than the national average of 3.6 per cent in March 2019: 3.4 per cent in Kansas City, 3.5 per cent in the state of Kansas. The region's economy is growing along with the US economy. On the minus side: the region's revenues are growing only half as fast as the average of 30 comparable regions, according to its own research.

**Production work**

Frank Lenk, a researcher with the KCADC, is particularly concerned that Kansas City is lagging far behind these competitors when it comes to students with STEM degrees. STEM stands for the innovative fields of study: *science, technology, engineering, mathematics*. ,,The STEM jobs we have are more in production work than in developing new technology. Research and development is done elsewhere, things are assembled here." These are the *manufacturing jobs* that President Trump proudly says he has brought back to the US. But those jobs are not producing as much growth in innovation as we would like," says Lenk.

KCADC President Tim Cowden: "Once we get people here, they usually say, *wow*, I didn't know Kansas City was so cool. But just try to get them here."

A day later, the foreman at the LMV car plant would demonstrate the problem using a vacancy. It took five years, he said, to fill 130 vacancies for highly specialised work in his robotised production line. We ended up recruiting the last ones in Brazil.

Innovator Bob Bennett was asked why a bright young student would choose Kansas City when he could go to Seattle or Boston. "If you make $100,000, you can afford your beer here. If you make a ton in Portland, you're drinking water, pal."

Nearly all of John Wayne's films ended at our Union Station

Bob Bennett Innovation Chief

From 3-5 June, the biennial Global Entrepreneurship Summit will take place in The Hague. Among the guests is US Secretary of State Pompeo, from Kansas, who wants to make his home state more innovative.

**Global Entrepreneurship Summit The 'innovation summit' does not care about the new trade war**

An international economic summit in times of trade war, how does that work? That question was asked repeatedly a few weeks back at a formal countdown event for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) that begins next week in The Hague. In March in Kansas City, the summit organisers spoke to journalists. But questions about President Trump's aggressive trade policies were deflected.

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Bas Blokker

**Graphic**

Kansas City with the KC Streetcar on the left, "the tram that all of Kansas City looks to for economic growth", as it passes by all the hotspots.

Photo TriggerPhoto

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[***The European Parliament has gained strength; Not afraid of Europe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R047-00000-00&context=) [***Germany greening,Europe fragmented. Yet the citizens made the EU stronger; the higher turnout at the European elections is an overwhelming political fact, writes . Europeans want influence.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R047-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Luuk van Middelaar  
  
Luuk van Middelaar  
  
Luuk van Middelaar

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Opinion*

***Europe***

The incumbent power in ***Europe*** has been challenged, writes Luuk van Middelaar. In ***Europe***'s new politics, the debate takes place in the light of publicity.

**FULL TEXT:**

How does the field look a week after the phenomenal 2019 ***European*** elections? Losers are licking their wounds, winners are reveling, Parliament and government leaders are positioning themselves for the battle for ***EU top positions***, while commentators are racking their brains to interpret the new landscape.

Fragmentation and polarisation, it sounded from *Le Monde* ("a fragmentation bomb") to the *Financial Times*, as if something bad had happened. In this analysis, fear of democratic politics can be heard. The new ***European*** Parliament will be more diverse, more plural and more representative - and thus, in principle, stronger. As a Brussels legislative machine, it will probably falter more often, since majorities will in future require at least three parties. What is more important, however, is that Parliament will gain strength at its traditional weakest point: as a public agora and representative body, in which voters can hear their wishes or concerns expressed.

The 400 million voters in the Union have forced this on themselves. After ten years of ***European*** political drama involving a collapsing currency, streams of refugees and a conflict with Russia, they are demanding a democratic space in which they can have their say and speak out. At 51%, the turnout was massively higher than the 42.6% in 2014: a political fact of life. The people want to influence ***EU decisions*** because they affect their lives, their values and their interests. The ***euro***, migration, Brexit, the rule of law: it matters. Poland: turnout from 24 to 46 percent. Germany: from 48 to 61. France: from 42 to 50. And so on, almost throughout the ***EU***. In the Netherlands, it went from 37 to 42 (the downward trend had already stopped five years ago, after the ***euro crisis***).

Political scientists can investigate to what extent the turnout increased thanks to the ***Europe-wide*** list leaders (the *Spitzenkandidaten)* promoted by Parliament. In the Netherlands, certainly, thanks to social-democratic figurehead Frans Timmermans, whose ***European*** stature attracted many left-wing and centre voters, confident that he can put their (climate) concerns to rest in Brussels. By contrast, Timmermans' Christian Democrat opponent, Manfred Weber from Bavaria (CSU), was only known to a quarter of the voters even in his home Germany. The *Spitzen procedure* is not a democratic panacea, but it is one aspect of a fundamental politicisation.

This ***European*** ballot was more than the sum of 28 national elections. Of course: you vote in your own country, for national candidates with national party programmes, only loosely united in ***European*** umbrella parties. (I will ignore the ***EU citizens*** who stood for election outside their own country, such as the Greek ex-minister and *global star* Yanis Varoufakis, in 2015 tormentor of the ***euro-establishment***, who stood with his own party in Germany, but in vain). All member states have their own story. And yet this election was more '***European'*** than ever. From three perspectives, this stands out.

First, there are obvious ***Europe-wide*** trends. Traditional governing parties have been hit everywhere. The cool BBC World presenter with whom I sat in the studio on Sunday night was stunned: that in his country Labour and the Conservatives *together* got less than a quarter of the votes. Parties that positioned themselves sharply on the axis of *Remain* (Liberal Democrats) versus *Leave* (Nigel Farage's new Brexit party) walked away with the spoils. In France, too, the former power blocs on the right (Les Républicains: 8 per cent) and on the left (Parti Socialiste: 6 per cent) combined for less than a sixth, pushed aside by the duel between Macron's centre coalition (22 per cent) and the winner Marine Le Pen (23 per cent). In Germany, Merkel's CDU lost, but the sledgehammer blow to the SPD, outpaced on the left by the Greens, was particularly striking.

Green also scored high in many other northern and western member states, such as France, Ireland and Finland, but never became the largest. The Liberals also rose, mainly thanks to Macron's party getting into the family and the LibDems' gain (which will leave again after Brexit).

The national-populists won, but less than predicted. Strong scores in Italy, France and Flanders were offset by (for them) disappointing results in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. The score of Viktor Orbán's Fidesz in Hungary was chilling: 52%. This result was treated like any other in journalistic reviews. But self-proclaimed 'illiberal' Orbán has been busy expanding the opposition, media and judiciary in his own country since 2010, so the question is: were the Hungarian EP elections democratic at all? The big winner of the evening was Italian Lega leader Matteo Salvini (34 per cent). He delivered the second-largest group of national MPs (28 seats), after Merkel's CDU and (for now) Farage's Brexit party (both 29).

On the far left, the blow to the Dutch SP (0 seats) also fitted in with a continental trend, one that provides food for thought for the SPD and other losing Social Democrats: moving to the left does not help immediately.

All these shifts show a dynamic ***European*** party landscape. The old left-right axis of socio-economic preferences can no longer structure the debate on its own. Voters also move on a scale from culturally and economically open to closed, as the British and French examples show. And while one can still fit climate and migration on the left-right axis, this is not possible with the controversial topic of the constitutional state in Eastern Europe. Both the 'right-wing' investor in Warsaw and the 'left-wing' activist in Budapest fear judicial arbitrariness - and in turn value the ***EU*** as a protector of fundamental rights.

Secondly, it appears that, more than ever, people are letting EU-related issues determine their vote. Voters with climate concerns expect action from the ***EU***; it partly explains the high turnout. The same goes for migration, the other big priority: according to figures from French think-tank Fondapol, two thirds of those polled demanded EU action in this field. Brexit also left its mark: because of the British convulsions, many voters no longer find a departure from the ***EU*** credible. Le Pen in France and Salvini in Italy could only win by dropping their exit pleas. Geert Wilders did not do this and ended up with 0 seats.

Rutte and Macron used the courtship with Russia against their far-right rivals Baudet and Le Pen. This worked all the better because of the 'Ibiza' scandal in Austria involving the far-right FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache, who resigned as vice-chancellor after leaked recordings of his almost drooling willingness to be bribed by a Russian oligarch. Campaigns among neighbours resonate, ***European*** party ties weigh.

The third perspective in which this election is overwhelmingly ***European*** is that the result itself sets in motion new events that affect the entire Union. This applies, of course, to the filling of five top ***European*** posts, with the Presidents of the Commission, the ***European*** Council and the ECB. The horse-trading on this issue between political parties and capitals could - because of Parliament's power of appointment - only begin *after* the result, and it takes the campaigns into account. Timmermans' chances increased due to his convincing TV appearances and the home win of his PvdA, while Weber's dropped.

Conversely, the ***European*** result has an impact on national arenas. Two prime ministers threw in the towel because of disappointing results: in Athens, Alexis Tsipras, overtaken by the right-wing opposition, promptly called early elections, while in London, Theresa May offered her resignation in a *pre-emptive resignation* the day after the British vote and before the vote count. For her, it was one election too many. The aftershock may yet come for the governments in Berlin (weakening of coalition partner SPD) and in Rome (reversal of the balance of power between the Five-Star Movement and Salvini's Lega). In Warsaw, the ruling PiS is facing the autumn parliamentary elections with confidence, having defeated the gathered opposition ('***European*** Spring') on Sunday. And French President Macron, after his defeat against Le Pen, will be even less inclined to grant the British a new Brexit extension, should May's successor ask for it before the 31 October deadline. He has had enough of British blackmail, which gives his challenger oxygen at home. This is also how storylines in the ***European*** arena get connected.

On 2 July, our 751 MEPs will take their seats in Strasbourg. The incumbent has been challenged, the Brussels consensus broken. The majority will be formed in the centre, around Christian Democrats (EPP) and Social Democrats (S&D), but this time with Liberals and/or Greens. The latter two can give a progressive impulse to the policy, for example, on the rule of law and climate. In the battle for power and personnel, the Liberals have the advantage of strong representation in the ***European*** Council of Heads of Government (with heavyweights Macron and Rutte and a few Prime Ministers), while the Greens have nobody at the top table. In the coalition formation process, Liberal, Green and S&D can put pressure on the Christian Democrats to expel the suspended autocrat, Orbán, from their party. It would help democratic clarity.

In addition to a fresh centre majority, Parliament is also getting a new kind of opposition. That role falls to the nationalists; the question is what they will do with it. It is said too quickly that, by definition, they cannot work together and therefore - even with a quarter of the seats in Strasbourg - they will have little influence. Indeed, the nationalists have enough conflict among themselves, such as over South Tyrol (between the Italian Lega and the Austrian FPÖ) or over Russia (between the Polish PiS, virulently anti-Kremlin, and most of the others, rather Putin sympathisers).

But even if they remain scattered among two or three party groups, all of them are linked by a hard-right agenda on migration. And asylum and migration are the burning issues for the new Parliament. Salvini, the leader of this group, has governing power in Rome; for his party, he aims for more than the role of opposition clown à la Farage (who used the parliamentary hall mainly as a backdrop for YouTube videos) and wants to sit at the policy buttons - or offer an alternative. In this delicate field, the parliament, together with the governments, must find a responsible compromise between borders open and borders closed.

That too is ***Europe***'s new politics: a game between majority and opposition, in the light of publicity. With politicians and parties who are accountable in all elections in the Union - in the many national ones and in five years' time in the ***European*** ones again. Let's see what the turnout will be then.

Luuk van Middelaar is a political philosopher, historian and Professor of ***European*** Law (Leiden). Last month, the updated edition of his book *Improvisation and Opposition. The New Politics of* ***Europe***

**Graphic**

Illustration Cyprian Koscielniak

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[***We laid the foundation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-RRC1-JCBS-P0YM-00000-00&context=)

De Telegraaf

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 19

**Length:** 887 words

**Body**

Lech Walesa 30 years later still militant

Gdansk is celebrating Lech Walesa's Solidarity trade union with days of festivities. Thirty years ago, the mustachioed leader was the first in Eastern Europe to bring the communist dictatorship to its knees. But Poland's current authoritarian leaders refuse to come to the famous port city.

Do you know how important it is that Poland is free?", says Radoslav, a 35-year-old worker, puffing on a cigarette. He steps through the gate of Gdanska Shipyard after a hard day's work. This is the birthplace of 'Solidarity , the union of workers that at its peak in 1989 had ten million members.

"At least now we can buy everything and travel where we want. Before, there was hardly anything in the supermarket, and no bananas or chocolate at all," continues Radek, a single who, like many Poles, lives with his sister in a small flat. But he does not have a lot of money and has never been abroad.

"I earn four thousand zloty, or one thousand ***euros***, a month at the shipyard," says Radek, who dreams of a nice trip to Japan. The social gifts of the authoritarian government, such as a higher child allowance, are fine by him. "But they should stop abolishing democracy."

Like many Polish men, the man in his thirties has a stocky build, a bull-neck and short shaven hair. He looks at the thirty-three metre high grey crosses, shaped like an anchor, in front of the shipyard. "A memento of the 44 people who died here in the early 1970s during uprisings against the communist dictatorship."

One of the strikers then was the young electrician Lech Walesa. The future president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate received De Telegraaf with a broad smile: "Thank you for making time for an old revolutionary." He is seated a hundred metres from his old workplace in a brand new building, a museum colossus with post-modern shapes, lots of glass and rusty colours.

This is where his office is, inside the ***European*** Centre for Solidarity (ECS). And this is a thorn in the side of the current ruler, Walesa's former fellow fighter Jaroslav Kaczynski. So the Warsaw government refused to pay for the anniversary, which attracted half a million visitors. Within a day, however, a spontaneous fundraising campaign by citizens had raised the missing million ***euros***.

Walesa, with white hair and the most famous moustache of the Western Hemisphere, is combative, wearing a grey T-shirt with the inscription K-o-n-s-t-y-t-u-c-j-a, the letters of the Constitution. It is a protest against his archenemy Kaczynski who is in the process of dismissing all independent judges in the country. Walesa: "Our constitution is broken, the separation of powers is broken. We have no democracy any more."

Harsh words from one who knows. Walesa was in prison and was State Enemy No. 1. In 1981 he led the general strike which under General Jaruzelski led to military martial law. "These were dangerous times. Poland was full of Soviet soldiers, and we were afraid of their tanks and nuclear missiles."

But the years of struggle bore fruit. In early June 1989, the first free elections in the Eastern Bloc took place, six months before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Solidarity trade union won with conviction. Walesa is still very proud: "After our victory half of ***Europe*** voted for freedom. But we laid the foundation. The Poles broke the chains that held us captive."

Nevertheless, Walesa is worried: "The lies, populism and demagoguery in the world are frightening. Look at US President Trump. But also in Poland, to Kaczynski." This former comrade-in-arms and current ruler will not be attending the Solidarity Day, nor will his stooge, President Duda.

These conservatives can drink Walesa's blood. The workers' leader was in favour of compromise and in 1989 organised a "round table" with the old communists. Now, a quarter of a century later, Kaczynski wants to cleanse Poland of former apparatchiks who are mainly in his own party.

Everywhere, judges, prosecutors, public broadcasting journalists and senior officials are being replaced by yes-men. "The current government is breaking the rules of the ***European Union***," said the new mayor of Gdansk, Aleksandra Dulkiewicz.

She is the successor to the stabbed to death city father Pavel Adamovicz. He was murdered last January by a radicalised madman in Gdansk, incited by years of incitement on state TV. "The government is partly to blame for the murder by their propaganda," judged Dulkiewicz, a former lawyer.

"Recently, Adamowicz's widow was elected to the ***European*** Parliament with two hundred thousand preferential votes. Her main point is that hatred in Poland must end," says Dulkiewicz, with humility in her voice.

Outside, Dutch tourists admire the vast terrain of the shipyard and the imposing ECS building. "Freedom is very important. We have no idea what it is like to be oppressed", says an elderly man from Rotterdam.

We have no democracy now'

Gdansk commemorates first free election

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[***Europe is of the hard workers across the border; In Europe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04M-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 8

**Length:** 654 words

**Byline:** Caroline de Gruyter

**Body**

With all due respect to those Romanians who last Sunday, in dozens of cities across ***Europe***, had to wait for hours in the burning sun until they could vote - if they could vote at all. But those few pictures of long queues of citizens from one EU country living and working in another EU country made it clear at a stroke that ***Europe*** is not only for 'cosmopolitan elites with their cultural relativistic world view', as some sometimes claim.

Not by a long shot.

Most ***Europeans*** who live and work in other ***European*** countries do not belong to the elite at all. The largest group of 'mobile ***Europeans***' are the 3.4 million Romanian workers across the continent, hotel staff and construction workers whom you rarely see or hear, but who were captured *for once in* a few impressive images because they all came to a Romanian consulate at the same time. The many Portuguese in France, Switzerland and Belgium also belong to this group. They came as caretakers and servants, and never left. They are the ones who pulled their country out of poverty with hard work - exactly what the Romanians are doing now. These ***Europeans include*** French people in London. Some bank in the City, but most work their asses off in restaurants in Soho and *flagship stores* on Bond Street for £9 an hour. Those ***Europeans are*** also Bulgarian and Slovakian nurses who keep the informal care in Vienna going, two weeks on, two weeks off. They are British sixty-somethings who spend the winter on the Costa del Sol on early retirement: ordinary citizens with a Cockney accent who fly Ryanair. They are young Swedes, unpacking your moving boxes in Oslo and making lattes in Norwegian coffee bars. They are the children and grandchildren of Italian miners in the Belgian Borinage who still have Italian passports.

There are 17 million such 'mobile ***Europeans***'. If you include all the seasonal workers, and the 2 million who cross the border every day for work, you get to 20 million - or 4% of the ***European*** population.

For those who now angrily cry, 'Don't say ***Europe*** when you mean the ***EU***! Switzerland and Norway are also part of it. They are not in the ***EU***, but they are in Schengen. They participate in most of the internal market, and much more. Nobody is forcing them. They want this for themselves.

The assumption is often made that ***European*** integration is a project of 'delusional global citizens', moralists who impose a politically correct way of life on the people by moral means. The reality is, again, completely different. Precisely mobile ***Europeans***, for whom this integration is a reality and who have to live with the advantages and disadvantages (ever tried to recover all health insurance costs?), hardly vote in ***European*** elections. If they did, they would account for 26 seats in the ***European*** Parliament. But last time 8 per cent registered and only 5 per cent went to vote. The bureaucratic and logistical burden is enormous. There is little time to register. Many do not recognise themselves in the candidates, who profile themselves nationally because each country organises its own ***European*** elections, with national lists. This year, many ***Europeans*** were turned away from British polling stations with valid ballot papers. And those Romanians were queuing up because of an anti-corruption referendum in Romania.

It is time for pan-European parties and electoral lists. Politics is becoming ***more*** and ***more European***, and 20 million ***Europeans*** are barely represented. It is ordinary people who are building ***Europe from the ground up*** who have the least political grip on it.

The real '***European*** elite' could care less about that.

*Caroline de Gruyter* writes weekly about politics and ***Europe***.

Mobile ***Europeans***' are the 3.4 million Romanian workers

**Notes**

Caroline de Gruyter writes weekly about politics and ***Europe***.

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[***European elections***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R08V-00000-00&context=)[***PvdA garners most votes in Rotterdam, while PVV falls hard on the polls***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R08V-00000-00&context=)

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**Dateline:** Rotterdam

**Body**

In Rotterdam, the PvdA received the most votes in the elections for the ***European*** Parliament. Over 25,000 people voted for the social democrats, 16.2 percent of the total number of votes cast. In 2014 this was still 10.6 percent. This is evident from data from the municipality.

GreenLeft and VVD also received good votes, with 14.2 and 13.7 percent of the votes respectively. The turnout was 34 percent, considerably higher than in 2014. At that time, the turnout was 28.3 percent.

The PVV did not do well in Rotterdam. In 2014, the party was still the largest, with 18.8 percent of the votes. Now, the PVV obtained only 4.3 percent. It is plausible that a large part of the electorate of Wilders' party voted for Forum voor Democratie this time; it obtained 12 percent of the votes. D66 also lost badly. In 2014, it still obtained 17.7 percent of the votes, but this time it stuck at 9 percent. (NRC)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Subject:** Political Parties (94%); Politics (87%); Election Fraud (69%); Population + Demographics (69%); Campaigns + Elections (65%); Consumer Confidence (65%)

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[***Populists are economically illiterate'; Eichengreen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WB7-K2Y1-JC5G-14F6-00000-00&context=) [***Populists are economically illiterate'; Eichengreen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WB7-K2Y1-JC5G-14F6-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 1

**Length:** 1459 words

**Byline:** Arnold de Groot

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Barry Eichengreen Economic Historian

Right-wing populists can be contained, says Barry Eichengreen: reduce economic uncertainty.

**FULL TEXT:**

Right-wing populist politicians and parties have been indispensable in Western countries for some 20 years now. Political scientists are passionately discussing the explanations for their rise. Is it mainly about culture, such as identity politics, immigration and other *issues*? Or should we rather look at economic factors: unemployment, globalisation and shrinking welfare state?

The renowned economic historian Barry Eichengreen acknowledges that populism rests on two pillars. But as an economist, he admits that he tends to attach more importance to economic aspects. Perhaps this is the most important lesson from his latest book, *The Populist Temptation*: in two hundred years of American and ***European*** history, he sees no examples of populists who were truly successful without economic discontent.

Whereas many political scientists focus on the last two decades, Eichengreen looks further back. You can argue about the label 'populism' and the exact meaning, but citizens who are dissatisfied with the political establishment and are considering radical alternatives have been around for a long time. Just like racial or nationalistic sentiments against foreigners and minorities, and the call for a charismatic, strong leader.

However, Eichengreen could not imagine that in the 21st century the US would elect a president like Trump - "a president who visibly encouraged hatred of foreigners and minorities, who referred to Mexicans as rapists and murderers". It troubled him: not only as a citizen, but also as an economist. As with the Brexit, he saw arguments and plans that were "economically illiterate". It led to his book, an overview history of socio-economic politics.

At the invitation of the John Adams Institute, Eichengreen is in Amsterdam. Over an espresso and a farmer's cheese sandwich, he explains that he wanted to expose the political and economic circumstances in which populists were successful and in which they were not. In this way, we can learn something about the way in which populist movements can be contained: by implementing social policies that reduce economic uncertainty. An example: in 1935, at the time of the Great Depression, American President Roosevelt introduced the *Social Security Act*, which, among other things, insured workers against unemployment.

Why is populism a threat?

,,Some human instincts that populists appeal to, such as nativism, xenophobia and religious intolerance, are social ills. Political institutions are ideally designed to control or limit these. And from a more economic perspective: populist politicians and parties deny the existence of restrictions on government budgets. They make unrealistic economic promises. Often these promises have positive effects in the short term. But not always: in Italy, Salvini's proposals for a larger budget deficit did not have a positive effect, they increased uncertainty and discouraged investment. But what they have in common, whether you are talking about Trump, Salvini or any other populist, is that they have negative long-term effects. Because the promises cannot be kept.

"The economic policy that Trump embraced, starting with tariff protectionism, was economically illiterate. His arguments for it are nonsensical: just the idea that he can bring back the production of motor vehicles to the US, and good jobs for workers in the car industry. Because those jobs will be mechanised: there will be good jobs for American robots, not for American workers."

For years before Trump's election, there was economic growth, but not everyone benefited from that growth, you write.

There is a kind of forgetfulness in the US. Certain economic changes we have undergone have not automatically been beneficial to everyone. We sometimes talk about *trickle-down economics*, but that trickle-down does not happen. It is a basic proposition of international economics: when you open up to trade, when you globalise, some groups in society gain and others lose. To make this politically sustainable, you have to be able to promise the losers that they will become winners in the future. And in the US, social mobility has declined."

Why is that trickle down effect not taking place?

It has never really been there. The point is: economic change and economic progress do not benefit all groups. A prime example that economists love is the automobile industry and the horse-drawn carriage. If you depended on horses and carriages for your well-being, you were out of work when the automobile came along. As the economy grows, people who become unemployed because of technology can more easily switch to other activities. But now that we are in a period of slower growth, that becomes more difficult."

If you want economic growth, must you accept that it will be at the expense of jobs and businesses?

They can be lost, yes. But the point is: governments should not protect regions, or jobs, governments should protect people. By compensating them if they lose their jobs, by providing them with skills and retraining to find their next job."

Anyone reading Eichengreen's book will be struck by how much social action and economic policy are central to modern politics, whether in the USA, Britain, Germany or other ***European*** countries. Issues and arguments that you find in newspapers today were also there in 1890 or in 1932. Should the steel industry in Birmingham be protected with import tariffs? That was in the nineteenth century. Should there also be general insurance against unemployment, or would that stop people from taking their own responsibility? You heard that argument in 1930s Germany."

A question that is both historical and topical: should mainstream parties copy populists or cooperate with them?

,,I focus on Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal in the United States in the 1930s. The leader of one of the two major middle parties in the US pursued policies to address economic problems and discontent: unemployment insurance, minimum wage, public pensions.

At the same time, he exploited sentiments against foreigners - especially anger towards Mexican Americans - to build his coalition with Southern white leaders, whose votes he needed. So the question is: can parties of the centre or centre-left gain and maintain power by embracing populists for their progressive economic plans, but without the reactionary attitude towards foreigners and minorities? Roosevelt is just one example. Should it necessarily always be like this? No. You can build political coalitions in different ways."

You are optimistic about the future, talking about climate change and technological progress.

I am an economic historian, and they have studied two or more centuries of economic prosperity, during which time sceptics have always said that growth would stop. I don't think it will stop, I think there is a productivity revolution going on around us, with artificial intelligence, new materials and robotics. We just haven't figured out how to commercialise it, how to apply these new technologies. That process will be disruptive, yes. But I am optimistic that we will be able to tackle the problem of climate change, because most people are aware of it and sensitive to the threat. Recognition is the first step. A president, and the right policies, those are the next steps."

**CV**

*Barry Eichengreen*(1952) is Professor of Economics and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley and is touted as a 'world leader in drawing lessons from economic history'.

He has previously written about the Great Depression, the international monetary system, the gold standard and the ***European*** economy.

Barry Eichengreen: The Populist Temptation. Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the Modern Era Oxford University Press 244 blz. (***EURO***) 21,99

**Notes**

Barry Eichengreen: The Populist Temptation. Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the Modern Era Oxford University Press 244 blz. (***EURO***) 21,99

**Graphic**

Barry Eichengreen: "Governments should not protect regions, or jobs, government should protect people."

Photo Salvatore Laporta

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[***The magicof Geert Wilders no longer works by itself'.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-T741-DYMH-R04R-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Barbara Rijlaarsdam  
  
Enzo van Steenbergen

**Dateline:** The Hague

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

PVV

This week, PVV leader Geert Wilders was openly self-critical for the first time. But he does not want to change the party. There has never been a political horizon.

**FULL TEXT:**

The PVV is Geert Wilders and Geert Wilders is the PVV. That is how it always has been and how it always will be - if it is up to Wilders. But the 'one-man show' is showing flaws, according to (former) PVV members. And Wilders himself knows, as it turned out this week, that he has to change to break the fall of his party.

Last week, the PVV faced dramatic news: in the elections for the ***European*** Parliament, the party dropped from four to zero seats (if the Brexit goes ahead, the party might get one more seat). This was no incident: in the Provincial Council elections in March, the PVV had already lost considerably, in the Senate the party went from nine to five seats. In the municipal elections last year, the results were also disappointing and the attempt to become a broad popular party failed.

Last Tuesday, Wilders visibly had to get used to answering questions about the survival of his party. Surrounded by journalists and cameras, he tried to relax, but trembling fingers pressed against his waistband. His outburst against a journalist who accidentally bumped into him ("Please don't touch me!") was also telling.

Wilders had received e-mails from voters, he said. Expressions of support, but also angry e-mails. Why had they not seen the PVV in the campaign? And so Wilders was - and that never happened before - openly self-critical. The PVV has lost contact with the voters, he concluded. We should be much more visible, organise meetings and actions. We used to do that more. We have to take to the streets again."

**Not everything can be done via Twitter**

The PVV members consulted by *NRC* also believe that something has to change. André Elissen, who is retiring from the ***European Parliament,*** says: You can't do everything via Twitter. The automatic pilot has to go.

Why, for example, did Wilders not take up the fight with Thierry Baudet, wonders former PVV member Hero Brinkman. Forum for Democracy has had great success recently, but Wilders and Baudet did not attack each other and differences were hardly mentioned. Brinkman thinks Wilders should have reacted sharply to Baudet's essay in *American Affairs*, in which he makes controversial statements about women's rights, abortion and euthanasia. Brinkman: "I thought: Geert, go crazy on LGBT rights, say that women should not be alone behind the kitchen sink and that abortion is a natural right. That's three points in a row.

It has become more noticeable lately: Wilders is less sharp than in the early years of his party. He left the climate debate entirely to Forum voor Democratie, for example, which won Baudet many votes. And that while the PVV agrees with Forum in substance: both parties are against far-reaching climate policy. It was a conscious choice by Wilders to let the climate issue drop: voters do not vote for the PVV because of the climate, he argues.

But he also made a serious error of judgement on the Marrakech Pact, which is the PVV's main area of interest. In debates on the UN Migration Agreement, the PVV was completely snowed under. Once again it was the PVV that put the issue on the agenda and drew a lot of attention - and voters - with it. Within the PVV, this is considered a blunder.

Unlike Baudet, Wilders rarely makes the news or the front pages anymore with his own plans or statements. Coincidentally, he made the news on Friday because he was blocked on Twitter, because of a message about the "suckers of D66", but in recent months he has mainly been withdrawn into a secure corridor of the Lower House, barely visible to the public and the press.

A former member of parliament: "That he is not visible will hurt him the most. Wilders has become a long-playing record, who appeals to that anymore?" A former member of parliament: "The *magic of* Geert Wilders does not work anymore. He has to deliver." Both former PVV members do not want their names in *NRC*. They want to get rid of the PVV-stigma.

This invisibility also applies to election campaigns. André Elissen, who lost his job as a politician because of the loss in the ***European*** elections, says: "Let me put it very gently: our campaign could have been more robust." Elissen thought the slogan "Nexit!" was not well chosen. He would rather have explained to the voters that the PVV first wanted to become big in ***Europe***, together with right-conservative ***European*** 'relatives' who did win, such as Lega (Italy), Vlaams Belang (Belgium) and Rassemblement National (France).

Why did he not do that? ,,As number four on the list, I don't have much to say about the strategy during the campaign. That is up to The Hague."

**No members' party**

When things go badly for the PVV, the same mechanism almost always comes into play. Most PVV members do not want to talk about it. A small minority demands that the party become more democratic. There should be members and party congresses, participation and debate. That would be the way to get back in touch with voters.

René Dercksen, PVV party leader in the Utrecht Provincial Council and until this week a senator, told RTV Utrecht: "We are disappointed in how the party is developing and will not develop [...] Anyone who wants to move forward is being pushed out."

It is reminiscent of the departure of Hero Brinkman in 2012. He wanted a democratic party structure. When Wilders refused to set it up, Brinkman left. He said at the time that Wilders "wilfully" did not want to work on "a PVV for the future".

These days, Brinkman has a restaurant in The Hague, BBQ Hero's. While throwing some charcoal under the grill ("timing is everything at barbecue"), he says: "Wilders should have democratised nine years ago. He should have broadened and deepened the party. He can no longer rely on the idea that people will always vote for him."

Another former Member of Parliament thinks that Wilders does not want to build the party at all: There has never been a political horizon. Geert wants to be in the Lower House and let his voice be heard, that's the only goal."

Wilders' reaction this week indeed points in that direction. He immediately made it clear that the party will not change. For a large part I am the PVV", Wilders said - and that should remain so. Therefore his only answer is: take to the streets more often. The former member of parliament thinks it can have an effect to become more visible. "When he gets out of his armoured car on the market of Spijkenisse, he still has his aura and charisma."

This is how Geert Wilders will remain the most important trump card. Even if he has to walk through the corridors of the Lower House with a walker, Wilders said, he will not hand over the baton: "I will never resign. Never."

**Graphic**

Geert Wilders and his spokesman Sebastiaan Kruis, on the way to Question Time in the Dutch House of Representatives.

Photo Bart Maat/ ANP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Religion + Spirituality (94%); Muslims + Islam (93%); Freedom Of Expression (78%); Political Parties (71%); Social Assistance + Welfare (69%); Trial + Procedure (69%); Population + Demographics (67%); Politics (63%); Verdicts (63%)

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**End of Document**

[***Just like us***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5W7K-RRC1-JCBS-P10M-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 41

**Length:** 488 words

**Byline:** Jaap van Duijn

**Body**

During the debates prior to the ***European*** elections, our politicians were once again wagging their finger. Poland had to respect the independence of its judges, Italy had to put its budget in order, Romania had to tackle corruption, and Hungary, with its rotten prime minister, was not even mentioned. If only everyone were like us. Then the ***EU would look*** a lot better.

The problem is that not everyone is like us and never will be. Thank goodness for that. For me, the strength of ***Europe*** lies in the diversity of its countries and peoples, each with their own language, history, economy, culture and religion. Let Greece remain Greek and Finland Finnish and do not try to fit everyone into the same Brussels mould.

If we had ever wanted to form a union of equals, it would have had to consist of the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. These countries broadly share the same ideas about how an economy should be run: good collective provisions, not too much debt, no high inflation, consultation, an important role for small and medium-sized enterprises, doing business properly and capitalism without the rough Anglo-Saxon aspects. Despite the presence of a large Catholic population in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, the Protestant work ethic is dominant in these countries. It would have been a nice union.

The southern countries, but also France and Belgium, have historically always had a very different economic model: a weak currency, higher inflation, higher debt, distrust in the institutions, resulting in tax evasion, corruption and many strikes. What is also significant is that Greece, Portugal and Spain had military dictatorships until the mid-1970s.

With enlargement to the East, after the fall of the Wall, a group of countries entered the ***EU*** with which we have very little in common. When it comes to values, we share more with the New Zealanders than with the Romanians and Bulgarians. We may want them to become like us, but we will not succeed. In the list of the most corrupt countries, Romania and Bulgaria were at the top of the list before their accession in 2007, and they still are.

The question that always arises is how sustainable is the current ***EU***, with such fundamental differences between the participating countries, and with a common currency that has led to major welfare losses for some (especially Greece and Italy)?

The only thing that has really worked for ***Europe*** is the free movement of goods and services. The free movement of labour, both inside and outside the ***EU***, is already stalling. We will continue to do our best, but muddling through is, for the time being, the most positive vision of the future. After all, the others are not like us.

Protestant work ethic as basis for beautiful union

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Monetary Unions (75%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (70%); Public Finance (64%)

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[***Albania cuts so deep that it has no judge left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PM-00000-00&context=)

NRC Handelsblad

17 June 2019 Monday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 14

**Length:** 1810 words

**Byline:** Emilie van Outeren

**Dateline:** Tirana

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*reportage*  Corruption

The Albanian judiciary is being drastically cleaned up. The approach is so rigorous that in both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court only one judge remains in office. But ***EU membership*** is still no step closer.

**FULL TEXT:**

In the main hall of the Supreme Court in Tirana, removal boxes are piled up. The clock on the wall no longer ticks. No one bothers to put a new battery in it. No hearing has taken place here since November 2016. The corridors of the building are also deserted. On most doors, a stain under the word *gjyqtar*, Albanian for judge, betrays that a nameplate once hung there. Only Ardian Dvorani's is still firmly glued in place. The Chief Justice has been left alone after seven of his colleagues were removed from office and another seven resigned.

Dvorani (54) comes to work every day to study incoming documents. But he needs at least four colleagues to handle complex cases and pass judgment. And there have been none since Albania began a rigorous clean-up of the judiciary, at the behest of the ***European Union***.

The Supreme Court has now accumulated a backlog of 31,591 cases. It is problematic for the people who have to wait long, but this is acceptable collateral damage", says Dvorani. We have to choose whether to muddle through with a broken system or to clean it up and rebuild. I think most people would understand if we did the latter."

In order to strengthen the rule of law and tackle rampant corruption - and to gain the prospect of ***EU*** accession - Albania rewrote a third of its constitution in 2016. In addition, every Albanian judge and prosecutor, 738 people in total, must publicly prove that they have always acted with integrity and professionalism. Before a tribunal, all their assets are examined, their personal contacts are checked and old cases in which they acted are dusted off. Those who cannot prove an unblemished past are thrown out.

The screening is such a great 'success' that, so far, as many as three out of five magistrates have been summarily dismissed. Because the staircase is swept from the top, only one judge is now fully competent in both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court. It is not something to be proud of. But the numbers are no surprise", says Dvorani.

**Dutch accession fatigue**

The judge has seen many traces of corruption and nepotism in his career. Sometimes of ostentatious bribery of magistrates, by politicians, criminals or criminal politicians, but mostly more subtle. "It is very common in Albanian culture to give a 'tip' when you are satisfied" with help from the judge, doctor, teacher or policeman. The only way to avoid being corrupted as a judge in this troubled country of 3 million people, laughs Dvorani, "is to keep your social contacts very limited".

International observers watch and decide on the vetting of the magistrates. They praise Albania's dynamic approach. No other country has ever carried out such a far-reaching judicial reform", says Luigi Soreca, the highest ***EU diplomat*** in Tirana, in his office with a view of the city and the surrounding mountains. It takes courage" to hand over part of it to the international community. Because nothing is closer to the heart of a sovereign state than its judiciary", Soreca said. The Balkan country should be rewarded for its commitment and implementation, he said.

Albania is eager to become a member of the ***EU***, or at least to formally start substantive talks about it. According to the ***European*** Commission, Albania and North Macedonia are ready to receive the same waiting room status that Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey have. The two countries "have done their part of the work. Now it is time for the ***EU*** to do its part", ***EU foreign chief*** Federica Mogherini said late last month.

This Tuesday, the foreign ministers of the Member States were supposed to take a decision on this, but Paris, Berlin and especially The Hague are threatening to use their veto. The House of Representatives believes that Albania is "not achieving enough tangible results in the fight against corruption and organised crime". Neither Albania nor the magistrates in the dock are being given the benefit of the doubt. The decision in Brussels on Tuesday will almost certainly be postponed until the autumn. Invisible Albanians move up in coke trade

There is an understanding in Albania of the 'enlargement fatigue' prevailing in Western Europe. And there is a realisation that, despite the ***EU***'s promise to the Balkans in 2003, no country currently qualifies to become the 29th member. But there is a fear that if the ***EU*** continues to keep Albania at arm's length, political motivation and public support for painful reforms will fade. "Of course we are cleaning up the judiciary to make Albania a better country," says Afrim Krasniqi of the Institute of Political Studies. But people need hope and perspective, a signal that we are on the right track. Instead, member states are changing the criteria." Albania plays a football match in which the goal is constantly moved.

It is annoying that there is more sympathy within the ***EU*** for the accession of Northern Macedonia, which changed its name last year. If that country is allowed to climb a rung on the accession ladder, Albania will be left behind with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, fellow Muslim countries.

Religious fundamentalism is virtually absent in Albania - there are more women walking around in hot pants than wearing a headscarf. But I am sure that, with support from Turkey, this can become a factor of political significance if we lose our ***EU*** perspective', says Krasniqi.

**Public humiliation**

Thirty years ago, Albania was one of the poorest and most isolated countries in the world. Then, the modernist congress palace of Tirana was the scene of communist party congresses. Now, in a city with trendy restaurants and shared bicycles, the public hearings of magistrates take place in the basement. In a small room with orange panelling, the entire judiciary is publicly put through the wringer. The hearings may not be recorded and, apart from relatives of the accused, attract little attention, but they are widely covered by the present press.

Of the 136 magistrates summoned for such hearings so far, 62 have been summarily dismissed, mostly because they could not explain how, as civil servants, they could have afforded villas, flats and fat cars on a salary of up to a thousand ***euros*** a month. Another 17 resigned prematurely to avoid public humiliation. Only 57 were allowed to keep their jobs.

**Experienced administrative law judge**

Today's target, the experienced administrative law judge Kastriot Selita, casts his eyes down like a shy child and stares at his hands when the accusations against him are listed. Anonymous fellow judges accuse Selita of favouring the partner of a politician: possible conflict of interest'. Several citizens have complained about him. And "can the person concerned explain why, in 2007, before she married him, his wife sold a flat whose selling price is discrepant with the value of such an area at the time?"

The woman in impossibly high heels who is the subject of the film begins to sigh heavily in the audience. Her whole life is being publicly scrutinised here: from the car she drives to the lengthy tax arrears she only settled when the judiciary's screening process began.

For every accusation that the committee has not refuted by its own investigation, it issues a firm *disclaimer*: "The burden of proof to show otherwise has been shifted to the person concerned." In the Albanian inspection, judges and prosecutors are treated as suspects. And everyone is guilty until proven guilty.

Kastriot Selita defends having "always acted in line with the law and the constitution". But he must fear the worst when the Albanian commission and the Dutch judge who is watching the case pass judgement this week.

**Political crisis**

Polls show strong public support for the vetting of magistrates, but criticism is also being voiced. In order to remove the cancer of corruption from the judiciary, is there not too much cutting of healthy meat? Are some of the dismissals, or approvals, politically motivated? And is Albania not bowing down too deeply to the ***European Union*** without any real chance of really belonging?

Moreover, the drastic clean-up that was intended to win the confidence of the Albanian population in the judiciary and bring it closer to the ***EU*** threatens to achieve the opposite if the unresolved cases pile up and criminals are given free rein. These doubts are particularly being fuelled by politicians, who only three years ago unanimously approved the amendment to the constitution. For them, the success of this reform is also a threat. If Albania soon has a functioning and clean judiciary, it will have to tackle corruption elsewhere in society. Especially by prosecuting and convicting politicians who previously got away with everything.

Judge Ardian Dvorani prefers not to talk about politics and he nervously twists his wedding ring when asked about it. Because, yes, it is politicians who are keeping the judiciary small at the moment. The problem is not that too many judges are being dismissed, but that not enough new ones are being appointed.

Previously, this was done by the parliament and the president, so most judges had a political colour. The commission of - screened - judges that should do that from now on has been delayed for a long time by political opponents. Dvorani: ,,I did expect some resistance, but it turned out to be huge. It would help the reforms if the ***EU*** would open up to us. Because if it doesn't, it gives courage to the opponents of this process."

In the vacuum of ***European*** indecision and the vacancy of the Constitutional Court, President Ilir Meta has postponed the local elections at the end of this month indefinitely. The parliament therefore wants to depose him, but even that cannot be done without a functional Constitutional Court.

At the moment, Albania seems to be precisely the politically unstable country without the rule of law that Western European countries reject.

No country has ever carried out such a profound reform of the justice system

Luigi Soreca ***EU diplomat***

**Graphic**

Judge Ardian Dvorani in his office. The magistrate prefers not to talk about politics.

Photo Ghent SHKULLAKU

Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, now a city of trendy restaurants and shared bicycles.

Photo by Getty Images

**Classification**

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[***Agricultural Commissioner: the most important job; Column***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PT-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 621 words

**Byline:** Louise O. Fresco

**Body**

It is an attractive pastime to speculate about the candidates for ***Europe'***s top positions. But who will be the ***European Commissioner*** with the agriculture portfolio is what we should really be looking out for. No position is so important for the future of ***the EU*** and yet so invisible and undervalued. In the public mind, agriculture is synonymous with money-grubbing interference, destruction of the landscape, animal cruelty and impossible regulation. At the same time, issues surrounding food, climate, animal welfare and biodiversity are of high concern to ***European*** citizens. This split alone calls for a heavyweight.

Agriculture and rural development account for almost 40% of the ***EU budget***. Of this, more than 70% is spent on direct payments per hectare. The outgoing ***Commissioner*** Hogan has proposed fairly substantial changes that give the member states more room, especially for ecological goals. This gives the Netherlands the opportunity to translate the plans for circular agriculture into concrete proposals for operational management. Last month, the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure made some sensible suggestions in this respect.

But the reasons why the Agriculture Commissioner is becoming a key figure go far beyond reforms of agricultural policy and related ecological goals. First, there are additional challenges such as adapting to fluctuations in weather, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, storing carbon in soil and vegetation and securing biodiversity in agricultural areas and beyond. This is a delicate balance, because more nature does not automatically mean more species: our national icon, the black-tailed godwit, thrives on a mild mowing regime on grasslands.

Meanwhile, new questions arise. Is the ***EU*** aiming for more self-sufficiency in agricultural products or will it continue to import and especially export? How large may the ***European*** livestock be - a question that has great significance for the Netherlands.

How to deal with an emptying countryside due to ongoing migration to cities and an ageing population? Abandoned farmland will not become attractive nature just like that. Will the farmers of the future be robots and drones? Or agricultural entrepreneurs with immigrants as wage labourers? Can the wandering shepherd and her small flock survive in Umbria? How much food will be grown in the urban environment, on roofs and on industrial estates?

Can the relationship between city and countryside be revived through digital links between city dwellers and farmers, for example by ordering directly from the farmer? Will monotonous fields change back into a mosaic of small plots, and if so, how much income support and administration will this require? Or will an increase in scale become inevitable?

And not the least question: does ***Europe*** want to invest in technological innovation to stay ahead, not only in productivity but also in environmental and social sustainability? This involves substantial amounts of money, but also a serious discussion about the regulation of new genetic techniques or the use of waste.

With the phasing out of fossil fuels, those who manage the earth's biomass as cycles, and thus some substitutes for petrochemicals, will become major players. Agriculture in the broad sense is the sector for the future, so watch out for that ***European Commissioner***! Wanted: a person with vision and courage.

*Louise O. Fresco* is a writer and chairman of the Board of Wageningen U&R; [*www.louiseofresco.com*](http://www.louiseofresco.com)

Climate, demographics, technology make agriculture a linchpin of ***European*** policy

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

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**Industry:** Agriculture (94%)

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[***Opportunism may help Boris Johnson as Prime Minister***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WC2-S251-DYMH-R3PV-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 1001 words

**Byline:** Camilla Cavendish

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

London's former mayor is on course to become party leader, writes Camilla Cavendish. But if he blunders, it could bring Labour to power.

**FULL TEXT:**

Boris Johnson is on a roll. Now that Theresa May's premiership has fallen apart ignominiously, the bombastic rich boy is ready to take the crown with his hand outstretched. Conservative Party members still adore the former Mayor of London, despite his blatant blunders as Foreign Secretary. The Tories in the House of Commons left May in place for two years for fear of being led by an "inverted pyramid of chatter", to borrow Johnson's phrase. Meanwhile, many are concluding that he has the best chance of beating Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Johnson is on course to become Prime Minister unless he makes another spectacular blunder. It could even be a real coronation. The Commons may not want the uncertainty of the country to be prolonged by the leadership contest. A number of potential candidates are competing more to get into the next cabinet than because they expect to make it to 10 Downing Street. It may well be that many will soon withdraw and that Johnson will become Prime Minister without his appointment being officially ratified by members.

What would a Johnson premiership look like? The big question is whether the man who ran London as a socially liberal *One Nation-Tory*, who invested in public transport and demanded amnesty for illegal immigrants, will be able to get out of the ideological corner he has parked himself in.

It was of monumental stupidity and also at odds with his conduct as mayor to say "*F\*\*k business*" when asked about the challenge Brexit would pose to British businesses. That he joined the Brexit campaign because his great rival, former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, was *in favour of* staying in the ***EU***, and then for two and a half years not to present a plan for what leaving the ***EU*** would entail, was a monstrous irresponsibility.

But it is precisely because of this opportunism, this willingness to change tack in time, that Johnson is so well able to renew himself. And he will have to, because May's departure will not change anything, neither in Brussels nor in the House of Commons.

If he becomes Prime Minister this summer, he will try to renegotiate the Brexit in Brussels, threatening to resign on 31 October without a deal. That trick can be mighty tough for a day only to turn into an embarrassing fiasco. Brussels will put its foot down and Johnson will have to choose.

Either he takes the UK out of the ***EU*** and into World Trade Organisation rules, which would be economically disastrous. That gives Corbyn the bad Tory Brexit he so fervently desires to put Labour in power for a generation. Either he comes back and tells his country and his party honestly that there are only two ways out of the impasse: a second referendum or new elections.

No matter how hard they push now, party members may still prefer a second referendum. I suspect Johnson will eventually make a U-turn on that, perhaps supported by Amber Rudd, whose calm wisdom helps her to encourage the moderate One Nation conservatives.

Would Johnson be able to handle the power too? His time as foreign minister, which his own officials could not make sense of, does not bode well. A man who does not like details is made or broken by the quality of his advisers.

As mayor, he had a powerful communications director in the person of Guto Harri, a former BBC journalist, and a wise chief of staff in Edward Lister. Such people ensured results and kept his worst instincts in check. Since stepping down as mayor, he has seemed stupidly fickle and careless.

He might panic. That happened in 2016 after Michael Gove dropped him, angry and shocked by his lack of seriousness. That breach need not have been fatal, but the entirely new experience of being unpopular - he had protesters at his door - had a paralysing effect. His supporters watched in dismay as he went all over the place in a speech and, to cap it all, withdrew from the race. If that happens again, someone else could come 'through the middle', as Theresa May did in 2016 - but the recurrence of such a shock reaction is less likely now that Johnson is backed by his new lover, a public relations expert.

The paradox of Boris Johnson is that many voters and MPs, from Labour and the Tories alike, think he is the most likely to beat Corbyn - but also the least likely to be Prime Minister.

When he began his second term as Mayor of London in 2012, he was the most popular politician in the country. Now the polls show that he is strongly polarising - especially among the centre voters who are essential to winning elections.

Since Corbyn's lack of suitability for office is the Tories' greatest hope, it would therefore be a huge gamble to elect Johnson. We may soon know whether an outright Tory opportunist can prevail over a Marxist who pretends to be principled but in the meantime pursues a Brexit policy of constructive ambiguity.

Boris Johnson did not take part in the televised debate with his rivals for the party leadership at Channel 4 on Sunday 16 June, but said he would like to debate with the BBC on Tuesday night.

*Camilla Cavendish* worked as an adviser to Prime Minister Cameron and is affiliated with Harvard. This piece previously appeared in the *Financial Times*.

**Notes**

Boris Johnson did not take part in the televised debate with his rivals for the party leadership at Channel 4 on Sunday 16 June, but said he would like to debate with the BBC on Tuesday night.

**Graphic**

Boris Johnson during the launch of his bid for the Tory leadership on 12 June

Photo Neil Hall/EPA

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**Section:** OPINION; page 17

**Length:** 632 words

**Byline:** Piet van der Wiel  
  
Jozef Haazen  
  
Maarten van Eeghen  
  
L.M.F. Nijst

**Body**

Education

**Appreciation for mavo**

In response to the column *From mavo pupil to Hague macher* (6/6), there was a reaction about the value of the mavo diploma. As a school counsellor, I have seen many pupils successfully make the transition from mavo to havo and from havo to vwo, concluding with an academic degree. Wonderful! But when emphasising the opportunities for pupils with such a progression, also in interviews with Paul Rosenmöller for example, I always sense the unjust disqualification of pupils who choose a practical learning path. Also through vocational education, pupils can develop on many levels. A choice for the theoretical route is often inspired by society's exaggerated appreciation of intellectual talent.

Piet van der Wiel

Russia

**Western prejudices**

This article (*A fresh wind of protest blows through Russia*, 12/6) is, in my opinion, once again inflated and fits in with the predominantly negative reporting on Russia. I have been working here for more than 20 years and do not recognise myself in the continuous diabolisation of this country that - like all countries - is looking for balance and harmony. Western reporting strikes me as biased, intolerant and even hysterical, perhaps under the influence of press agencies that behave like lackeys of political and economic powers, deliberately sowing discord in order to maintain their own position of power in the world. What was it again? If a horse farts on Red Square, some Western journalists think that a new revolution has broken out in Tolstoy's country.

Joseph Haazen

Brexit

**Hard Brexit never comes**

It is generally said that a hard Brexit will be a disaster for the UK. It is feared that there will be chaos in the logistics chains in the Netherlands. But it will not come to that. In fact, a hard Brexit is nothing more than a Brexit decision and a moratorium will certainly follow while Boris Johnson has to negotiate a new 'soft Brexit'. The ***EU*** says it does not want to renegotiate, but does not insist on doing so because a hard Brexit is not a solution for the ***EU*** either. Johnson torpedoed May's soft Brexit to succeed her. That is his primary goal and seems to be succeeding. But he knows that the price for his premiership will be a soft Brexit deal, because he and his party cannot afford a referendum, let alone a new election. Johnson and the ***EU*** are bluffing, but the ***EU*** holds the better cards.

Maarten van Eeghen

Generation z

**Long live smartphones!**

What always remains the same is that older generations look at the younger generation with frowned eyebrows. (*Did smartphones destroy a generation? Well, no*, 13/6) You hardly ever hear that it's so great that, thanks to smartphones, an insane amount of information is now available anytime, anywhere. If I want to know what colour a cuckoo's egg is, I don't have to cycle to the library like 35 years ago. I receive photos from family and friends from their holiday addresses. That saves me another evening of watching slides. And you can make phone calls with a smartphone. This last point is also a tip for my daughter...

L.M.F. Nijst

Corrections/supplements

**Nobel Prize in mathematics**

The column *Er is niets misbruik met de man* (14/6, p. C16) mentions the Nobel Prize for mathematics. This does not exist. However, there is the Fields Medal, which is at least as prestigious.

**The Hague influences**

In the section *Haagse Invloeden* (15/6, p. 10) by Tom-Jan Meeus, the wrong illustration was printed. Below, you will find the correct one.

Letters 17/6/2019

**Graphic**

Illustration Ruben L. Oppenheimer

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[***Where is Boris?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5WC1-8KM1-DYTV-D3KF-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 13

**Length:** 313 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

It is not necessary to have seen all the episodes of Monty Python to understand that only in the United Kingdom can there be a debate between future prime ministers in which the future prime minister does not participate.

Because that was exactly the situation between the five remaining attackers of Boris Johnson, who - completely against his nature - gets the premiership by making himself invisible.

Both public broadcaster Channel 4 (with advertising) and BBC (without) had organised television debates. Johnson, however, passed up the first debate, last night on Channel 4. As high favourite to succeed Theresa May, he thinks he can only lose by showing his face.

Between the remaining candidates - Michael, Jeremy, Sajid, Dominic and Rory - stood Boris's empty lectern. But it soon became clear that Boris was not the only enemy being fought against. The Conservative Party is fighting for its survival as a result of Nigel Farage's success. His Brexit Party remains the most successful British party as long as the UK is in the ***EU***.

The whole succession issue, of course, revolves around Brexit. It is the square in British politics that needs to be made into a circle. Let me sort that out, suggest the various attackers, who, like Johnson, believe it can be done. Perhaps it says something about the upcoming vote battle that Rory Stewart, in fact a newcomer to the Conservative party hierarchy, received the most applause by referring this strategy to Fable Land.

Attacking Boris was a kamikaze policy that most attackers did not want to indulge in. Almost all of them - with the exception of Stewart - are after an important cabinet post in the future Johnson administration.

Premiership debates

without Prime Minister

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (71%); Trade Treaties + Agreements (62%)

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[***Who pays for Brexit gap EUbudget?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCN-1001-DYMH-R113-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** CONTENTS; Page 1

**Length:** 641 words

**Byline:** Clara van de Wiel

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

***EU*** budget

The jousting match over the ***EU's contribution*** for the next few years is entering its final phase. The British departure leaves an extra large hole.

**FULL TEXT:**

For the Netherlands, the ***EU contribution would*** soon increase by 75%, which comes down to an extra ***EUR*** 4 billion a year. And for Germany even 100%, or 18 billion more a year.

The latter is apparent from calculations by the German government that have been leaked to the media. As the debate on the new multiannual budget for the ***EU*** enters its final phase, ever higher amounts are flying across the table.

It has long been known that the ***European*** Commission wants more money from the Member States. But in the run-up to a final decision, resistance is growing.

Of all the discussions that divide ***Europe***, that about the multiannual budget is one of the most predictable. Every seven years, the ***EU Member States*** have to agree on how much money is to be poured into the pot for the coming period. And invariably, there are the reproaches about wasting money, lack of solidarity and the need to dig in.

As the 2014-2020 budget comes to an end, the debate is becoming more heated. The starting pistol was fired last year by the Commission which, in view of the ambitious EU plans, proposed increasing the budget from 1% of the combined ***European*** economy to 1.11%: around 300 billion more.

The mere suggestion of more EU contributions is taboo for some member states, but the Brexit makes the discussion even more tricky this time. The forthcoming departure of the British will leave a gap of around 12 billion ***euros*** annually, which will have to be filled by the other countries. As a result of this additional burden, net contributors - countries that put in more than they receive in return - are even less willing to negotiate an increase in the budget this time.

In addition, the discounts for these countries are also in danger of disappearing. The Brexit is a good reason for the Commission to abolish this arrangement. The Commission proposed that the British should leave, and the rebates should disappear.

However, as a result, some Member States will be paying considerably more. On Monday, the *Financial Times* leaked an internal calculation by Germany, which even assumes a doubling of the current contribution of 15 billion to 33 billion in 2027. Unacceptable, according to the Germans, who are increasingly vociferous in their opposition to the proposal. For the Netherlands, which is possibly even more vehemently opposed to an increase, this German intransigence is pleasing. Together with Denmark, Austria and Sweden, they are known in Brussels as 'The Frugal Five'.

The fact that these five have entered the trenches became clear at the recent summit in Brussels. A compromise drawn up by current EU President Finland of between 1.03 and 1.08% was rejected. The 'frugal ones' are sticking to 1 per cent.

A group of other Member States, however, does not want to see any cuts in the budget. How can the new Commission fulfil its ambitions if we do not give it the budget it needs to do so', said French President Emmanuel Macron at the summit.

The discussion is also about where ***EU money*** should go. Less to traditional items such as agriculture and cohesion funds, according to the current proposals, and more to climate and innovation. But that meets with resistance in Eastern and Southern Europe, where people benefit from EU funds.

For Germany and the Netherlands, this modernisation of the budget, with more money for security and climate, is an important condition. Moreover, they want to make ***EU subsidies*** dependent on the willingness of member states to take in refugees and the functioning of the rule of law. If an agreement is reached, it could look like this: more money after all, but for goals the thrifty want. But a compromise is not expected before spring 2020.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (69%)

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Trade war makes us vulnerable'; Import tariffs hit Philips***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCN-1001-DYMH-R13M-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 6

**Length:** 729 words

**Byline:** Liza van Lonkhuyzen

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Frans van Houten Topman Philips

Philips' profits are falling, partly because of the American-Chinese trade war. Chairman of the Board Frans van Houten fears even more misery when ***Europe*** and the US are at loggerheads too.

**FULL TEXT:**

Philips is 'vulnerable' to a trade war between the United States and ***Europe***. Frans van Houten, the highest boss of Philips, warns against this. He spoke on Monday in the margin of the presentation of the latest quarterly figures.

Higher trade tariffs between the US and China are already expected to reduce Philips' profits by 70 million ***euros*** this year: the company gets roughly a third of its turnover from the US. If a trade war with ***Europe*** were to break out now, Van Houten says, that would be "problematic". Philips' turnover in the Netherlands is about 500 million euro, but we export more than 2 billion euro. In the event of a trade conflict, we are vulnerable."

In the third quarter of this year, the company achieved a profit (from continuing operations) of 211 million ***euros***, well below the 307 million a year earlier. Earlier this month, it already warned that profits are not rising as quickly as promised. Investors, not used to setbacks at Philips, were shocked. The stock market value has since fallen by 7.5 per cent. The company is sticking to its earlier forecast of 4 to 6 percent growth for this year and next year.

At the beginning of this month, the US made it clear that it was going to impose $7.5 billion (***€6***.8 billion) in import tariffs on ***European*** products such as aircraft components and food. A bad thing, Van Houten thinks. The Netherlands has to rely on export. An open economy is important and a trade war is a losing game. Yet we are heading for more geopolitical protectionism."

Earlier this month, the Philips boss spoke at the ***European*** Round Table of Industrialists, a consultative body of top businessmen and women, with French President Emmanuel Macron and Ursula von der Leyen, the incoming president of the ***European*** Commission. "The aftertaste of the conversation was: there is more risk of a trade war between ***Europe*** and America than we realise."

It is striking that Philips' sales in Asian countries are now 10 percent higher than last year. Van Houten: That's mainly because the ageing of the population is also taking hold there and more lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and lung cancer are developing. Although the economy there is also slowing down a little, investments in healthcare remain at the same level."

**Too optimistic**

Disappointing results came mainly from the *connected care* division, which makes 'smart' healthcare equipment. Philips was too optimistic about the speed with which it could move production in response to the new import tariffs. In this branch, there are "relatively many products with a relatively small turnover", says Van Houten. We had to take a lot of measures to make it all work.

Connected care suffered particularly from the trade war because the US is the most important sales market while the electronics mainly come from China. Philips divides its production evenly over America, Western Europe and Asia", says Van Houten. But that concerns the final production, working on the final product. Almost all electronic components nowadays come from Asia, such as screens and semiconductors. Politicians who call for local production often underestimate that."

An important part of connected care is *monitoring & informatics.* Philips is the market leader in this field, but the market is not growing as fast as expected. While this type of care at a distance (*telehealth*) is a buzzword among politicians who want to keep healthcare costs under control. Endless customers are experimenting with telehealth with us, but not yet on a large scale", says Van Houten. And indeed: if we look at how much telehealth there actually is in home care... it is not so much yet. I have high hopes for the long term, but large orders are still a bit out of the question."

Will connected care recover next year and perform as expected? Van Houten still counts on "gradual benefit" from production shifts. "But we have learned to temper that optimism, because connected care is really more work than expected."

**Graphic**

Frans van Houten, CEO of Philips.

Photo Koen van Weel/ANP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Company Revenues (88%)

**Industry:** Consumer Electronics (94%); Computer + Electronics Mfg (64%)

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2019

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[***Mediterranean Sea***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCN-1001-DYMH-R11T-00000-00&context=)  [***Ship carrying 104 migrants seeks safety EUport***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCN-1001-DYMH-R11T-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 106 words

**Dateline:** Paris

**Body**

Although a number of ***European*** countries have agreed in principle on the distribution of migrants rescued at sea, the aid organisations SOS Mediterranée and Médecins Sans Frontières have been trying for several days to obtain permission to dock in Italy or Malta. The Ocean Viking, the rescue ship of these NGOs, picked up 104 migrants 50 miles off the Libyan coast on 18 October. A suggestion by the Libyan coastguard that the migrants be taken back to Tripoli was rejected. The distribution plan on which five countries reached an agreement in principle last month has not yet been worked out. (Reuters)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Refugees (94%); Immigration (93%); Illegal Immigrants (74%); International Relations (61%)

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Rumour travelling senators***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCK-J0J1-DYTV-D4RM-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 11

**Length:** 190 words

**Byline:** Valentijn Bartels

**Body**

by Valentijn Bartels

The Hague - The travel allowance of some 500 ***euros*** per day for senators is causing a stir in the Senate. At present, senators can still travel to international parliamentary meetings with their deputies, but this may soon stop.

The previous President of the Senate, Broekers-Knol, proposed that deputies should not have to travel at all on trips paid for with taxpayers' money. Today, the political group chairmen from the Senate are discussing this austerity.

Critics think it is nonsense that deputies also travel to, for example, the Council of ***Europe*** in Strasbourg. This means that someone besides the person entitled to vote has to accompany them. According to a senate spokesman, the fee is about 500 ***euros*** per day. A week's visit is therefore quite expensive. They are thus compensated for days not worked, even if they are already retired.

SP Senator Kox wants the austerity measures off the table. "It is a fallacy to say that deputies are substitutes who sit on the bench. They can also be of great value as rapporteurs."

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Taxes + Taxation (94%); Retirement + Retirees (76%); Government Departments + Authorities (68%); Reports, Reviews + Sections (63%)

**Industry:** Insurance (82%)

**Load-Date:** October 28, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Shooting fuels heated Islam debate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XCN-1001-DYMH-R11J-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 6

**Length:** 488 words

**Byline:** Peter Vermaas

**Dateline:** Paris

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

France

Le Pen's RN was quick to distance himself from the shooting by a former party member at a mosque. But it is not an isolated case.

**FULL TEXT:**

A shooting at a mosque in the southern French town of Bayonne has reignited a weeks-old debate in France about Islam and alleged "Islamophobia". Two worshippers, aged 74 and 78, were seriously injured on Monday when they tried to stop a man from setting fire to the door of their house of worship. He fired four shots and set fire to a car.

The 84-year-old suspect was arrested in a village a little further away. The man, identified by police as Claude Sinké, was a candidate in departmental elections in 2015 on behalf of anti-immigration Front National party. He obtained 17.5 per cent of the vote, but was not elected.

Party leader Marine Le Pen of what is now the Rassemblement National (RN) immediately condemned the shooting. She said it was an "unprecedented act" that "goes against all the values promoted by our movement".

Party members reacted irritated to questions about the case. While critics usually accuse the RN of lumping all Muslims together after jihadist terror, now RN MEP Gilbert Collard warned on BFMTV against "lumping" a political ideology and a crime. Sinké, who was no longer a member, is "an extremist who had no place in our party", said RN leader Nicolas Bay.

But it is difficult to separate the reactions to the attack from the fierce debate on Islam that has erupted following an incident in which the RN played a leading role earlier this month. In the Burgundy Regional Council, a representative of that party demanded that a mother accompanying her on a school trip remove her headscarf. The images of the woman and her weeping son in the public gallery made their way across the country.

The RN representative invoked *laïcité*, the French principle of a state neutral towards religion. But while teachers and pupils in primary and secondary schools are not allowed to wear religious symbols, such as headscarves, on this basis, this rule does not apply to parents who accompany them on school trips. According to right-wing opposition politicians and the omnipresent Islam critic Éric Zemmour, the headscarf is "a symbol of political Islam". They argue for a total ban.

In Bayonne "the harassment of Muslims has had an effect", the hard-left politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon said on Monday evening. Public statements should no longer incite to hatred". In "the current climate you shouldn't be surprised if such things happen", the French Muslim Council CFCM responded. Earlier in the day, President Macron met with CFCM representatives. According to their spokesman, he would have denounced the "hysterisation".

**Graphic**

The mosque in Bayonne where a man tried to set fire to the door and fired shots on Monday. Two people were seriously injured.

Photo AP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Muslims + Islam (94%); Religion + Spirituality (94%)

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2019

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[***Foreign policy increasingly blurred by bickering coalition***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10HS-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; Page 18

**Length:** 820 words

**Byline:** Liliane Ploumen  
  
Bram van Ojik

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Dissension on crucial issues, from China to Syria, makes Stef Blok an invisible minister, write Liliane Ploumen and Bram van Ojik.

**FULL TEXT:**

How should the Netherlands relate to China? How do we ensure that the Balkans are not overrun by Russia? And how do we deal with the trial of IS personnel? All these issues have been reviewed in the Lower House in recent months. On all three subjects, the government coalition is hopelessly divided. Foreign policy is paralysed in important areas by a 'bickering coalition'. As a result, minister Stef Blok (VVD) looks like a rabbit in the headlights and gets nowhere. On Wednesday and Thursday, the Lower House will debate the Foreign Affairs budget with him.

Let us highlight two topics. Firstly, the illegal Turkish invasion of Syria. The division within the coalition about what should happen is big, and the differences are widely reported. Members of parliament Sjoerd Sjoerdsma (D66) and Sven Koopmans (VVD) publicly attacked each other at *Buitenhof*. Whereas Sjoerdsma believes that Turkey's incursion into Syria is forcing IS fighters to be tried in their own country, coalition colleague Koopmans says: "People should stay there and be tried there."

In the ensuing parliamentary debate, Minister Blok advised against proposals by the left-wing opposition, which were subsequently adopted by a majority of the Lower House. For example, the Lower House calls on the Cabinet to impose economic sanctions on Turkey and to suspend military cooperation with Turkey.

The China Memorandum, which deals with the future relationship between the Netherlands and China, is a second example of a divided coalition. The chapter that dealt with human rights, written by Minister Blok, was particularly meaningless. Tibet, which has been occupied by China for decades, is not mentioned once. In this way, the cabinet seemed to legitimise China's limited interpretation of human rights. On the initiative of CDA MP Van Helvert, the House called on the Minister to rewrite the chapter. Only his own VVD party supported the Minister's China Memorandum.

As a result of this division, the Netherlands no longer has a foreign policy and has become a mere follower. This would not be so bad, if it were not for such important issues. A possible death penalty for Dutch Syrians if tried in Iraq, the retrieval of children of Dutch IS fighters, the accession negotiations of new member states Albania and North Macedonia to the ***European Union*** are not the least; these are issues about peace and security, life and death and the future of ***Europe***.

And in the longer term, too, there are plenty of issues that demand the Foreign Minister's attention. Think of climate change, the weakening of existing alliances (Macron called NATO "brain dead" just last week), human rights, the new geopolitical realities and energy policy.

However, the coalition is allowing the division to continue for electoral reasons. Death penalty for IS fighters? According to MP Dilan Yesilgöz (VVD) it is "the ultimate consequence". Her party benefits from it and D66 adds to the dissension. In this way, they make humanity and the safety of the Netherlands subordinate to electoral gain.

GroenLinks and PvdA agree in their criticism of this divided coalition. That is why we are making joint proposals in the debate on important dossiers. Like the strengthening of the rule of law in ***EU member states*** like Hungary and Poland. The government is only allocating ***EUR*** 100,000 to this, while experts agree that strengthening civil society in these countries is sorely needed. We ask the government to at least increase this amount to one million euro.

We also believe that support for democratisation movements around the world - think of Hong Kong, Algeria, Lebanon - must be much stronger. We ask Blok to join with other countries in expressing support for these movements.

We also propose to build a new, assertive international coalition against the erosion of international cooperation, the undermining of the rule of law by authoritarian leaders like Trump, Putin and Bolsonaro.

Stef Blok has now been the Minister of Foreign Affairs for about one and a half years. This is a good time to take stock. Our provisional conclusion is: what Minister Blok has achieved is insufficient. He is the product of the divided coalition that is weakening the Netherlands' own international position. With our proposals, we hope to get the cabinet moving today. Because one thing is clear: we should not expect too much from this bickering coalition.

*Liliane Ploumen* (PvdA) and *Bram van Ojik* (GroenLinks) are members of the Lower House and spokespersons for foreign affairs.

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** International Relations (94%); Foreign Policy (76%); Justice Departments (69%); ***European*** Union (63%); Human Rights (63%); Taxes + Taxation (63%); Government Departments + Authorities (62%)

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[***No Headline In Original***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10HK-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OPINION; page 17

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Dr. Ir. Jaap de Kam  
  
Paul Kapteyn  
  
Arie Duindam  
  
L.J. Lekkerkerk  
  
Carlo Leget

**Body**

Prosperity growth (2)

**Not science, power**

No generation has ever had it so fantastic. So please, more optimism and less gloom. Technology and science have brought unprecedented prosperity. Technology and science will also solve today's problems. That is the meaning of the story about more prosperity from the self-proclaimed 'Gang of Progress'. No worries about the climate, after all, the ozone hole has been solved too! Naive breast-beating or sinister motives?

Science learned that the ozone hole was caused by CFCs. The solution: an international ban on CFCs. Science is also crystal clear about the cause of the far more drastic climate crisis: fossil fuels. Yet the vast majority of energy investments continue to go to fossil fuels.

It is not about scientific or technical breakthroughs, but about how established powers, unbridled greed and arrogance are broken. Greta Thunberg is absolutely right.

Dr. Ir. Jaap de Kam Physicist

NATO

***EU* in Security Council**

If Macron and his France are serious about ***European*** defence, does he want to transform the French seat on the Security Council into a ***European one***? If not, his call in *The Economist* - NATO is brain dead, a ***European*** defence policy is necessary - is obligatory.

Paul Kapteyn

VROM

**The whole and the parts**

Deciding where stables can be expanded near nature reserves is the domain of spatial planning. Calculations of nitrogen depositions as a result of livestock farming and traffic measures are the domain of environmental management. The government is now trying to bring public housing up to standard (*CDA and D66, also two separate worlds in the case of nitrogen*, 10/11). The problems are visible on the Malieveld. Until 2010, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) was responsible for these policy areas. Unfortunately, VROM was disbanded under the Rutte I government, with the result that attention for these policy areas as a whole was lost. VROM is sorely missed.

Arie Duindam

Emancipation

**Divide the time**

Arjen van Veelen's article on the redistribution of household tasks from woman to man is recognisable and amusing (*De man doen het niet snel goed*, 9/11). However, the question is not whether you divide the household 50-50, but whether both partners spend approximately the same amount of time on 'things that have to be done' and have equal time for themselves and each other. Of course, this includes housework, including walking the dog, taking out the rubbish and administration, but it also includes each other's work time and the commute. My wife and I once did a detailed survey and, to my relief, we arrived at the same number of hours that each 'had' to spend.

L.J. Lekkerkerk

Maximum speed

**Thinking differently**

As long as road users continue to see themselves as individuals, the sum total of everyone's driving behaviour will always get in the way of their own freedom (*What are the consequences of lowering the speed limit?* , 11/11). Traffic jams, accidents, stress and CO2 emissions are the result of a simple fallacy. After all, if we adjust our driving behaviour to suit other road users, instead of focusing solely on ourselves, the whole thing will flow more quickly. And when we all drive a little slower, we all get home a little sooner. The simplest and cheapest way to reduce traffic jams, accidents, stress and emissions is therefore to use the Dutch language. Traffic is another word for interaction, or in other words: a social activity. This is perhaps the most important insight for learning to drive well.

Carlo Leget

Letters 13/11/2019

Will the French seat on the Security Council become a ***European one***?

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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[***Many authoritarian states are weak internally'.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10HH-00000-00&context=)

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**Length:** 1644 words

**Byline:** Maartje Somers  
  
Floris van Straaten

**Dateline:** The Hague

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Thomas Carothers democracy expert

Now that the US is no longer a beacon of democracy, it is up to countries like the Netherlands to fill the gap, says American researcher Thomas Carothers.

**FULL TEXT:**

According to Thomas Carothers, it is nothing short of "a tragedy" that the United States has lost its position as a beacon of democracy in the world because of President Trump. Democratic activists used to look to the US for support," says Carothers, who has spent years researching the democratic state of the world. Now authoritarian leaders look to the White House for support. I get really angry when I walk through Washington."

Carothers, who works at the American think tank Carnegie Endowment, was in The Hague last week to warn members of the Lower House and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a creeping process of erosion of democracy in many countries. He also discussed the possibilities of bringing about a change.

According to Carothers, authoritarian leaders feel that the tide is with them. He points to countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa, relatively young democracies that are going through a difficult period of stagnation or even decline. At the same time, Western states are struggling with populist movements that openly question democracy. And meanwhile, authoritarian leaders are becoming more assertive, not only in Russia and China, but also in Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Carothers is the first to admit that democracies are constantly evolving and never finished. Democracy means little other than: a permanent struggle. It is never a given."

Despite all the criticism, democracy remains, in his view, a superior form of government. We should not be humble about democracy. The top 50 countries that rank highest on the *human development index* and are able to provide good education and good healthcare are - apart from Singapore and some oil-producing countries - all liberal democracies. People have better lives there."

Can you describe how that happens, the erosion of democracy?

The era of the bloody coup after which the autocrat addressed the nation via TV is over. Now things are moving slower, smarter, slowly eroding democracy. The Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán, a shrewd, strategically operating autocrat, has shown how a democracy can now be undermined. In his case, we can truly speak of a fully integrated strategy. Not for nothing is Orbán a hero among leaders with similar tendencies. Autocrats learn from each other."

So how did Orbán go about it?

You start with a story in which you constantly associate democracy with something negative, like the financial crisis. You say we are living at the end of the democratic era. Then you start to suffocate democracy, a bit more every day. One by one you isolate and then undermine the institutions, starting with the courts. You retire judges and appoint judges who are loyal to you. You let your loyalists infiltrate all democratic government institutions, such as the statistical office and the tax office. Through your business friends you take over the media. Then you start attacking the cultural institutions, firing theatre directors. You use the extreme right as a threat and a means of blackmail: I am not that bad, watch out or they will get you! You use the ***EU*** as a punching bag. You portray ***Europe*** as the enemy. Meanwhile you milk Brussels for agricultural and other subsidies which you can then use for your rogue friends. Establish extra ties with China, so you can show the ***EU***: you may not like me, but I have choices."

What does US isolationism mean for democracies elsewhere in the world today?

,,It is not that American diplomatic efforts and democratisation programmes have disappeared overnight. But the President is the face of the nation and the world leaders he gets excited about are all autocrats. The leaders he finds annoying are Chancellor Merkel and other ***European*** allies of the US.

When he was a candidate, he met the Egyptian leader, President Sisi, and he thought he was a great man. When he stood on a stage in Helsinki with President Putin and sneered at the journalists present - the effect of such a statement is so damaging. His saying that Erdogan is doing a great job, his enthusiasm for Saudi Arabia and his unwillingness to acknowledge that the crown prince was behind the murder of Jamal Khashoggi - I could go on."

Yet you see no reason to panic?

The patient has a fever, but his condition has more or less stabilised and he will certainly survive. Young democracies have experienced stormy development, so it is not surprising if things go downhill from time to time. Western democracies are sufficiently resilient to ward off attacks. Even the US, which currently has a leader with obvious authoritarian tendencies, will survive his reign. In Italy, the populist right has been sidelined, France has a centrist government and in Greece, the extreme right seems to have passed its zenith. The UK is in shock over the Brexit but democracy will survive."

Is what we see now exceptional or is democratisation always a matter of ebb and flow?

In new democracies, there is often a kind of honeymoon period at first. Populations are then willing to put up with worse governments. But after twenty or thirty years, they begin to make greater demands. South Africa is a good example. The ANC has established itself in power, and now people are fed up with the systematic corruption and annexing of the state for their own ends. Then you get a crisis. That is what we are seeing now: the ageing of new democracies, and in the West democratic disillusionment due to a combination of slow growth with social change and the influx of migrants.

But aren't authoritarian leaders advancing?

The story that autocrats are winning everywhere is too simplistic. Many authoritarian states that now present themselves so powerfully are in fact weak internally, like Putin's Russia or Bolsonaro's Brazil. But Russia is badly governed. Putin acts forcefully to the outside world, but that cannot conceal the fact that his regime has no grip on the country's major problems. He is deliberately trying to shake up democracies in order to increase his own security. That is very bad."

And do you see countries with a hopeful trend?

The good news is that Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, has a democracy that is as young as it is resilient. Ethiopia, one of the largest countries in Africa, has embarked on the road to democracy. The developments in Sudan, Algeria, Malaysia, Gambia and Armenia, where the authoritarian government has fallen, are also surprising. And it is very hopeful that citizens are also protesting on a large scale elsewhere, such as in Iraq and Lebanon, that they are making more demands on their politicians. It is very good that citizens are demanding more rights."

Can you give an example of a country where the Netherlands or the ***EU*** have made a difference?

Tunisia has helped keep its parliamentary democracy alive with ***European*** aid. It is still very fragile and it is surrounded by undemocratic countries. It is very strong that autocracy has not been embraced there. Democracies can also learn from each other. That does happen, although it is less noticeable. But it is, for example, enormous how the political participation of women has increased in Africa and Asia. More women now sit in parliament in African countries than in the US. Also, if you look at the rights of minorities and disabled people, there has been a lot of improvement."

And a country that has let the West down?

Egypt. There, with great courage and tenacity, the protesters ousted President Mubarak, the country was furious with the system they had. But in the vacuum after that we did nothing and now Sisi is sitting there. Our excuse was: there must be stability there, see Libya. But if a democracy like that is without institutions and then explodes, you're left with the problems. In Indonesia, there was always support for human rights activists and democracy advocates while Suharto was still in power. That made the transition to democracy easier later on. You shouldn't wait with support until a regime like that collapses."

And the Netherlands?

The Netherlands is still known as a country that takes democracy and human rights seriously, at home and abroad. But it can do much more. Now that the US and also the UK are failing due to internal problems, there is a lot of wasteland. Countries like the Netherlands or Canada that are willing could do much more. Sweden sets a good example. There, the government has recently decided that all foreign policy should be characterised by democracy and democratisation. Money has also been made available for this. They are not taking a step backwards, they are stepping up. When the house is on fire, you have to put it out. Don't just stand by and watch."

Viktor Orbán is a good example of how to bring down a democracy today

*Thomas Carothers (1956) heads the research department of the Carnegie Endowment.* He was a legal adviser to the State Department and worked for a law firm in international and financial law.

**Graphic**

At a G20 summit in Japan in 2018, Xi Jiinping (China), Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil), Narendra Modi (India) and Cyril Ramaphosa (South Africa) meet for mutual consultations.

Photo Michael Klimentyev/EPA

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**Load-Date:** November 13, 2019

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[***Moldovan government falls***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10HF-00000-00&context=)

NRC Handelsblad

13 November 2019 Wednesday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 108 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

Moldova is in a state of crisis after Prime Minister Maia Sandu failed to survive a vote of no confidence on Tuesday. Her government, which is serious about fighting corruption in the country, was voted out after a dispute over the appointment of the new public prosecutor. The pro-European Sandu entered into an uneasy political alliance with the Russian-backed Socialists after a protracted formation earlier this year. This was to keep the party of an influential business tycoon out of government. The parties have 90 days to form a new coalition, otherwise new elections will have to be held. (NRC)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Political Parties (94%); Politics (81%); International Relations (70%); ***European*** Union (64%); Resignations (64%)

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Live six years longer as a result of cleaner air***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10GP-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 537 words

**Byline:** Jan van Poppel

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

RIVM Air quality research

That the air has become cleaner has been known for some time, but the outcome is a surprise for RIVM researchers.

**FULL TEXT:**

As a result of ***European*** policies to make the air cleaner, average life expectancy in the Netherlands has increased by six years over the past forty years.

This is evident from calculations by three research institutes, led by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).

Since 1980, the air quality in the Netherlands has improved significantly, which is good for public health.

We have known for some time that air quality is improving, but that our life expectancy has risen so dramatically as a result surprised us," says Guus Velders, senior researcher in air quality at the RIVM. Under Velders' leadership, the RIVM studied the improvement in air quality in the Netherlands from 1980 to 2015, and the associated health effects. This research was published on Tuesday in the scientific journal *Atmospheric Environment*.

Two scenarios were considered. The first scenario examined the health effects without ***European*** air quality policy. The second scenario looked at the reported emissions with ***European*** regulations. This includes well-known cases such as Dieselgate, the emissions scandal in which Volkswagen manipulated emission values for nitrogen oxides (NOx). These reported emissions correspond to actual measurements of concentrations in the atmosphere.

In the scenario without policy, the average quantity of fine dust in the Dutch atmosphere rose from 59 micrograms/m3 in 1980 to 102 micrograms/m3 in 2015. In the scenario with policy, however, the concentration dropped to 12 micrograms/m3. This is in line with the measured quantity of fine dust in the Dutch atmosphere.

We cannot achieve such a reduction in the Netherlands on our own, because the air is everywhere", says Velders. 56 per cent of the difference between the two scenarios in 2015 is therefore caused by reductions in emissions from sectors in other ***European*** countries. Industry, agriculture and transport account for 54 per cent, 23 per cent and 15 per cent of this decrease respectively.

Velders: If we project these values onto our life expectancy in 2015, this will give the Netherlands 700,000 life years per year compared to the scenario without policy. That's an average of six extra life years per Dutch citizen."

In the study, the institutes looked at particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen oxide (NOx) and sulphur dioxide (SO2). According to Velders, particulate matter has the greatest impact on public health. Volatile organic compounds that cause smog, for example, were not included in the study because, according to RIVM researcher Velders, this involved only short-term exposure: "This has little effect on the actual loss of life years."

According to Velders, there is still a lot to be gained: "After all, the current air quality still costs us nine to twelve months of our lives."

Surprised by increased life expectancy

Guus Velders RIVM researcher

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Pollution + Environmental Impacts (94%); Environment + Natural Resources (73%); Life Expectancy (65%)

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2019

**End of Document**

[***CDA wants to talk to Syrian President Assad about expatriates***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGV-JKM1-JC5G-10GW-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 253 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Syria-goers

**FULL TEXT:**

The CDA believes that the Netherlands should start talks with Bashar al-Assad and acknowledge that the Syrian president "is part of a solution". The governing party's MP Martijn van Helvert said this on NPO Radio 1 on Wednesday. Dutch diplomatic relations with Assad have been severed by the civil war in Syria since 2012.

Van Helvert thinks that Assad can play a role in the trial of Dutch Syrians who are still imprisoned in the north-east of Syria. The government does not want to repatriate this group of people and their children and is in talks with Iraq about setting up special tribunals. But the Iraqi government has little appetite for this, so it appears time and again.

On Monday, *NRC* revealed that more and more EU countries want to tighten ties with Assad or have even started doing so, because they no longer believe in an exit of the president. For many Eastern European countries, the hope that Assad can provide stability is a factor, so that Syrian refugees from neighbouring countries or from the ***EU*** can return to their country.

Turkey, too, is not in favour of local trials for foreign Syrians: it started sending jihadists back on Monday.

Minister Blok (Foreign Affairs, VVD) said on Monday that he does not want to talk with Assad. According to Van Helvert, however, it is necessary that the Netherlands "takes a knee" now that it appears that Assad remains in power in Syria. (NRC)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Weapons + Arms (94%); Chemical + Biological Weapons (92%); International Relations (88%); Terrorist Organizations (71%); Government Departments + Authorities (69%); War + Conflict (65%); Civil War (63%); State Departments + Foreign Services (63%)

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Protegé***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XGT-3PJ1-DYTV-D557-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 17

**Length:** 321 words

**Body**

He parades around the market taking selfies with the residents of Saint-Denis, is said to have already gathered a campaign team around him and posted a picture of himself with a mayoral sash around his shoulder on social media. Alexandre Benalla has not yet officially declared his candidacy, but the hints are clear: he wants to run in the municipal elections in the Parisian suburb next year.

That the 29-year-old Frenchman thinks he has a chance is rather curious. After all, he is the one who plunged Macron into his first major affair. Benalla was his bodyguard, but took his role rather broadly: at the traditional May 1 massacres, he took part in the violent arrests of rioters. He managed to push back video footage showing his actions. And these are just the first incidents in a whole series.

Suspected is not yet convicted', says Benalla, who this week published a book about his side of the story. This is how more French politicians think about current affairs, including his former patron Macron. He simply nominated Sylvie Goulard as ***European commissioner***. The former Minister of Defence had to resign after only a month, because her name is mentioned in a case involving money from - no less - Brussels.

An affair seems to be a regular feature of the career of a French politician. The 'old boys network', in which the occasional document or piece of information is passed on, is still very much alive. It is not very difficult to cheat with all those generous expense allowances and envelopes from which you can also reward your own family members. Macron wanted to put an end to this behaviour. But the Benalla case showed that he, too, was practising 'old politics': despite the lapse on 1 May, he kept his protégé's hand over his head until he could not avoid firing him.

Macron also does

to "old politics

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Police Forces (94%); International Relations (88%); Sex + Gender Issues (77%); Rule Of Law (69%); Resignations (68%); Sex Offenses (67%); Arrests (64%); Riots (64%); Justice Departments (62%); Campaigns + Elections (61%)

**Industry:** Movie Industry (71%)

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Europe still not speaking with one voice on climate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM2-4H21-DYMH-R25G-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 767 words

**Byline:** Clara van de Wiel

**Dateline:** Strasbourg

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

***European Union*** *analysis*

Climate is a highly political issue. Everything leads to discussion within the ***EU***.

**FULL TEXT:**

In Strasbourg this week you saw a foretaste of how climate will divide ***Europe***. How much haste is enough? How much ambition does ***Europe*** want to show? These questions remained unanswered in the meeting room of the ***European*** Parliament.

Ursula von der Leyen put it this way on Wednesday: "We don't have a moment to lose." The incoming commission president presented her team of commissioners in Strasbourg, after which ***MEPs***, a month later than planned, gave their approval. With that, Frans Timmermans, responsible for climate policy, can get to work next Sunday.

Timmermans will come up with his first plans "as soon as possible", he said after the vote. Already in the first weeks of December, during the climate summit in Madrid, the contours of the '***European*** Green Deal' must become clear, a broad package of measures with which the continent wants to lead the way in the green transition. In order to "let the world know which direction ***Europe*** wants to go in", said Timmermans. Both he and Von der Leyen will be present at the opening of the climate summit on their first working day next Monday.

**No support from the Greens**

The Commission presents itself as being very green, but was not supported by the Greens on Wednesday. They had too many questions about social policy and the greening of agriculture and trade. An uncomfortable signal, especially since Timmermans will desperately need them in his fight for ambitious climate policy. The biggest challenge: getting Member States on board that are not at all interested in measures that are going to hurt.

And each member state has its own pain points on which ***Europe*** will be pressing: if not the coal industry, then the car industry or agriculture. The omens are not good: even a fairly unambitious goal such as a CO2-free ***Europe*** by 2050 is still being blocked by a number of Member States, including Poland.

It ensures that ***Europe*** cannot speak with one clear voice in Madrid. Timmermans was nevertheless optimistic on Wednesday. I see that even the most reluctant member states are moving in our direction. And he showed understanding, for countries that have to phase out a large coal industry: Those member states want support and I don't think that's an unreasonable demand."

It seems inevitable that ***Europe*** will have to free up money for this. But some Member States, led by the Netherlands, are vehemently opposed to extra funds to compensate 'dirty' countries. Timmermans will have to convince them too.

The fact that climate is so high on the ***European*** agenda is a result of growing social pressure. When asked about the priorities the new commission should have, the largest group of ***European*** citizens (40 per cent) mentioned climate, according to an opinion survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation. In the Netherlands, the figure is 35 per cent.

**Climate emergency**

Climate is now everyone's business, as you could see from the way in which ***MEPs*** of all political hues discussed it this week in Strasbourg. Climate is our "children and grandchildren" and "our earth". The emphasis was always on the shared responsibility and the broad interest, which made the theme almost apolitical.

For example, in declaring the "*climate emergency*", a symbolic action in which several countries and cities have already participated. This is not about party affiliation", said French Liberal Pascal Canfin. This is not about politics, it is about our collective responsibility!

These words cannot conceal the fact that climate change is a highly political issue, where the smallest things can still lead to discussion. German ***MEP*** Peter Liese, for example, preferred not to talk about an emergency. The German translation of this (*notstand*) reminded the Christian Democrat too much of the dark period of German history, when fundamental rights were suspended.

At the same time, the Greens felt that the resolution tabled did not go nearly far enough. They want the run-up to a CO2-neutral ***Europe*** by 2050 to have reduced emissions by 65% by 2030. Timmermans will later announce the reduction target for 2030. It will be somewhere between 50 and 55 per cent, well below the Greens' target but above the Christian Democrat EPP's desire for a maximum of 50 per cent.

Timmermans acknowledged on Wednesday that climate policy will lead to protests. It would not surprise him if farmers were soon to take to the streets in Brussels as well.

**Graphic**

EC President Von der Leyen.

Photo AFP/Frederick Florin

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (71%); International Relations (64%)

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Tractor blockade hits Paris***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM0-NN81-JCBS-P452-00000-00&context=)

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28 November 2019 Thursday

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 17

**Length:** 311 words

**Body**

Farmers want to get rid of 'bullying'.

From our correspondent

PARIS - It is not only in Belgium and Germany that farmers are on the barricades, but in France too they are protesting. A thousand tractors blocked the capital's bypass and the Champs Élysées yesterday, with which farmers wanted to express their general malaise.

It has been a thorn in the side of farmers for years: the minimal payments they receive from large supermarkets and the food industry. According to the unions, farmers produce for less than the cost price. Emmanuel Macron wanted to change this and banned hypermarkets from pricing their products in such a way that they make huge losses on them - thus putting the squeeze on farmers. According to the unions, the price of milk has risen by a few cents, but the price of meat has remained the same. They want more monitoring of the implementation of the law.

That is not the only reason why 10,000 people were mobilised across the country. The demonstrators also want to get rid of the 'bullying': they feel that they are mainly seen as environmental polluters. An example of this is the new regulation that no pesticides may be used within 150 metres of residential properties. For some farmers, this means that they can no longer use large areas of land.

They are also protesting against the trade treaties that have been ratified or are still being negotiated. In the CETA treaty between the ***European Union*** and Canada, import duties for both parties have been removed. According to the French farmers, this results in unfair competition, as Canadians have to deal with far fewer restrictive rules and standards.

In earlier actions, they destroyed offices of deputies of the ruling party, gaining little sympathy.

The farmers wanted to talk to the president, but he did not budge.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (69%); Farm Labor (68%); Agricultural Commodities Markets (63%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (94%); Farmers + Ranchers (64%)

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2019

**End of Document**

[***French farmer fights industrial farming for 20 years: 'Everything must change'; Farm activist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM2-4H21-DYMH-R254-00000-00&context=) [***José Bové: twenty years after his actions at McDonald's***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM2-4H21-DYMH-R254-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** CONTENTS; Page 1

**Length:** 2092 words

**Byline:** Peter Vermaas

**Dateline:** Montredon

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  José Bové *activist*

Twenty years after he tore down a McDonald's, the farmer-activist is still just as militant. The ***EU subsidies*** should finance the transition to a more sustainable agricultural model, he believes.

**FULL TEXT:**

The day before José Bové demolished a McDonald's with fellow farmers in the southern French provincial town of Millau in 1999, the French intelligence service called. Whether he would not rather set fire to Ronald McDonald. In an attempt to de-escalate the situation, the secret agents had arranged for a cheerfully smiling doll of this kind to be displayed at a branch of the hamburger chain in nearby Rodez. Creative thought, but we refused', says Bové, still an important voice in France in the debate about agriculture and free trade, now. We are not setting fire to a clown! We were determined to carry on with our own protest."

The action against the as yet unfinished restaurant had been concocted a few weeks earlier in a café just down the road by members of the local federation of sheep's milk producers, suppliers of the basic ingredient of roquefort, which originates from this region. They had been agitating for some time against new American import tariffs on, among other things, the famous French mould cheese because ***European*** countries refused American meat from cattle treated with hormones.

On a hot Thursday in August, more than 20 years ago now, farmers pulled their tractors from the mountains into Millau. According to local media, they broke down half of the newly built restaurant again with their tools. They wrote *'McDo go home'* on the facade, *'Roquefort d'abord'*(roquefort first). That we are attacking McDo today is because it is the symbol of multinationals that want us to eat *merde* [shit] and let farmers die,' he orates in front of the building. The images of the contemporary, but just as inflexible mustachioed Asterix are going around the world.

**Malbouffe**

The attack on McDonald's appears not only to be the beginning of the political career of Bové, who would become a presidential candidate and, for many years, ***an MEP*** for the Greens. It was also the breakthrough in France of the fight against *malbouffe* (fast food and other industrial food), against waste and international free trade agreements that made all this possible. Bové, now 66 and retired, still lives near Millau, on the 'plateau de Larzac'. In the nature reserve where he protested against the expansion of a military site in the 1970s and where his sheep used to graze afterwards, he has had an ecological new-age house built on stilts. The view over the valley is breathtaking. Smoking his pipe, he talks about the McDonald's action as if it were yesterday.

A well-chosen target, he says. The contradiction between small-scale local production and mass production of food that goes around the world remains topical. Roquefort is France's oldest AOP-registered cheese and McDonald's was the symbol of globally standardised assembly-line food and industrialised agriculture. Small American cattle farmers paid his bail out of pretrial detention in solidarity. That he was later sentenced to a month in jail only added weight to his struggle. Bové was welcomed as a hero in November 1999 at demonstrations by 'alterglobalists' during the World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit in Seattle. He had brought along 500 kilos of Roquefort cheese.

Bové continues to fight for a different way of producing food. Everything must change. The industrial agricultural model "has no future in ***Europe*** anymore", he said at home on a wet autumn day. Earlier this day, farmers took to the streets again in Germany and France.

On the roundabout in Millau, where the McDonald's in question is still located, hangs a rain-soaked banner: 'Let's not import the food we don't want'. To give farmers a chance to switch to less intensive methods, Bové believes the ***European*** subsidy system must be changed. But the reform proposed by the ***European*** Commission, which he says is mainly a cost-cutting exercise, will be "disastrous" for the environment and, at least as important, for good food.

Everything we have been saying about how unhealthy industrial food is has been demonstrated in recent years with an explosion in obesity and other diseases. The WTO has pointed out the dangers of food additives in many reports. You don't find doctors defending these hormones any more." At the time, his protest took place in a context of new trade agreements that began to include agricultural products in the WTO context in the late 1990s. That neoliberal model is cracking. People don't want all that displacement any more while we're trying to fight climate change," says Bové. Even President Emmanuel Macron, long considered an economic liberal, advocated new international agricultural rules early this year. "Unfortunately, it takes 30 years before we realise something like that."

In several ***European*** countries farmers are protesting against what they call 'agri-bashing' in France. Is the gap between society and the world of agriculture widening?

,,There is a gap between society and part of agriculture. It is relatively new that more and more citizens are rejecting the industrial agricultural model. There are annual demonstrations at the Berlin agricultural fair, and here in France organic shops are springing up all over the place. People are more interested in animal welfare than before, in better food. In France, it is mainly the large farmers' union FNSEA that is demonstrating. They want to keep the old model at all costs. They want to continue using pesticides and basically say that the climate is of no interest to them. Although they protest against trade agreements, such as the CETA treaty with Canada, they are still stuck in an export logic. That has to change."

Agriculture is a billion-dollar business, but many French farmers earn next to nothing. Why can't they compete in the world market?

It is not equally expensive to produce milk or grain on all continents. There are not the same rules for the environment, health or social levies everywhere. But the world market price is the same everywhere, according to WTO rules. This is often the price of surpluses. For example, the price of milk is usually based on that of New Zealand, where most production is intended for export and farms are huge. That price is unrealistic. ***European*** aid compensated for that so far, but French farmers, often with medium-sized farms, are indeed not left with much in net terms in that model. "

Dutch farmers demonstrate, against nitrogen measures. Is this right?

It seems to me that it is absolutely right to reduce the Dutch livestock population. There are simply too many animals on too small an area. Dutch agriculture is largely *hors-sol*, not tied to the land. You see this especially around port areas, also in Denmark and Germany, where soya and maize are imported en masse to develop industrial agriculture. But agriculture is related to land, not to kilos of constructed concrete. The Netherlands does not have enough land and should in theory simply not be such a large producer of agricultural products. Not to mention the health problems that this food leads to. The antibiotics administered to animals make people resistant and, according to doctors, lead to problems with the intestinal flora."

According to the 'Food Sustainability Index', France has the world's most sustainable form of food production, partly due to measures against waste. What does France do differently?

,,We are lucky that this is a fairly large country. But I am cautious. We like to talk about grandma's time, small scale and old methods. Our countryside is attractive to tourists. There are certainly areas where farmers are very respectful of the environment. But we also have areas where agriculture is too concentrated: cattle breeding especially in the west and pesticide-intensive cereals around Paris. France has the capacity to diversify, but the ***European*** subsidy policy is causing problems for small and medium-sized farms. I could have built a stable for 1,000 sheep instead of 120. But then I would have had to send whole trucks with food and straw to feed them. That would have been crazy.

Will 120 sheep yield enough?

I am retired, but two families here are now making ends meet with those 120 sheep because they also sell finished products directly. They have eliminated the middlemen, the profit goes directly to the farmers. The families each earn about 2,500 ***euros*** a month."

You think EU agricultural subsidies should be changed. How?

EU support should give industrial farmers the opportunity to work on a different, more sustainable model. That requires guidance, training and research. To achieve this, the current budget has to be maintained, while member states want to spend less. In the plans I have seen, direct aid to farmers is cut by 25% and aid to nature is cut by 15%. ***Commissioner*** Phil Hogan was very much in favour of international trade in recent years. I fear that the announced reforms are insufficient to meet the climate requirements and to change the model. We must stop industrial agriculture. We simply produce too much.

The world population is growing, how do we feed 9 billion people?

***Europe*** has never fed the world. President Giscard d'Estaing once called agriculture France's 'green oil'. That was a demagogic story that amounted to dumping meat and grain in southern countries. With our export policy we have demolished agricultural development there. Exporting pigs or grain makes no sense. From France we exported to Africa frozen chickens that had lived for 25 days and were banned for consumption in ***Europe***. The largest French chicken producer, Doux in Brittany, was the largest recipient of ***European*** subsidies."

Yellow shirts complained that food is too expensive. Has good food become for the elite?

,,I hardly believe that. Yes, if you grew up in the industrial model and are used to buying frozen pizzas and other ready-made products, it does cost an insane amount. But if you just cook your own potatoes and vegetables, you can eat just fine without spending too much. But it is true: feeding yourself well costs money. It is crazy to think that progress means spending the smallest possible percentage of your income on food."

When there is something to celebrate, some of the vets told me, they prefer to go to McDonald's.

Bové pulls a dirty face, puts his pipe on the ashtray. Not me", he laughs. I've never been in there." He hesitates. It turns out to be strictly untrue. ,,When that restaurant in Millau opened after our action, we occupied all the tables and brought out our own wine and roquefort. Decent food, shall we say."

After the US, France is now the most important market for McDonald's. There are even roquefort burgers!

That is pure marketing. The business model is about being cheap and getting the same standard taste everywhere, from Hong Kong to Millau. After 1999, they put a lot of money into PR to recapture the market. They have a big *stand at* the Paris Agricultural Fair every year and they tell the public that the potatoes and meat come from French farmers. But don't be under any illusions: French farmers can also produce *merde*."

Everything we were saying at the time about how unhealthy industrial food is has been proven over the past few years

From France, we exported chickens to Africa, which were banned for consumption in ***Europe***

**José Bové Activist and sheep farmer**

*José Bové (1953) was a Green* ***MEP*** *from 2009 until this year.* During his studies, he took part in the occupation of a nature reserve near Millau in southern France, where the government wanted to build a new army encampment. When President Mitterrand reversed the decision after 10 years of action, Bové settled there as a sheep farmer.

*As co-founder of the alternative farmers' union Confédération* paysanne, he fought for years against genetic modification, industrial agriculture and the excesses of globalisation.

**Graphic**

José Bové in 1999 with fellow demonstrators at the reopening of the 'demolished' McDonald's of Millau.

Photo Stéphane/Getty Images

French farmers drove their tractors to Paris on Wednesday, in protest at their low incomes.

Photo Gonzalo Fuentes/ Reuters

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Genetically Modified Food (67%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (94%)

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2019

**End of Document**

[***EU denies a leash obligation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM0-NN81-JCBS-P446-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 07

**Length:** 340 words

**Byline:** Ruud Mikkers

**Body**

by Ruud Mikkers

Brussels - The ***EU*** will not force cat owners to leash their pets in any way. A spokeswoman of the ***European*** Commission says so.

"We categorically deny that there is an obligation to leash cats on the basis of a nature directive," she said. The ***EU executive*** has not yet had the opportunity to review the study in detail. "But cats are not the biggest threat to biodiversity," she said.

What if, based on the ***European*** Birds and Habitats Directives, a judge were to rule that cats must be kept on a leash because certain bird species - and thus biodiversity - were under threat? Then there is nothing to worry about. ***EU Member States*** can simply amend the rules.

Shame

The ***EU*** seems to agree: cats have nothing to worry about. "There are more important issues to deal with", sighs an ***EU diplomat***. Also in the ***European*** Parliament sighs are heard about the claim that leashes "should be from the ***EU***". CDA MEP Esther de Lange is "ashamed that it is the Netherlands again, which apparently provides a platform for this kind of crazy reasoning. De Lange: "The rest of ***Europe*** is laughing their heads off."

Disbelief

Trouwborst and Somsen's proposition is not getting a lot of support in Dutch politics either. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality said that 'keeping cats indoors is not part of appropriate measures' to promote the recovery and conservation of nature. Members of parliament react in disbelief. "Unbelievable. How are mice caught then?", wonders VVD MP Arne Weverling. PVV-leader Geert Wilders snickers: "As far as I'm concerned all cats can go outside whenever they want, as long as we lock up this kind of crazy pseudo-scientists who come up with this nonsense very well.

Rest of ***Europe*** laughs its head off'

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Animal Welfare (82%); Law + Legal System (78%); Legislation (78%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (77%); Genetically Modified Food (65%); International Relations (64%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (83%)

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2019

**End of Document**

[***EU Full throttle with green***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM0-NN81-JCBS-P44X-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 445 words

**Body**

New commission sets ambitious climate target

by Ruud Mikkers

Brussels - It is a month later than planned, but on 1 December the new ***European*** Commission can start its work. After the ***European*** Parliament gave the green light in Strasbourg, Ursula von der Leyen can finally start as the successor to Jean-Claude Juncker. ***Europe*** can prepare for an avalanche of greening measures and climate policy.

The ambition of 'VDL' and its team is overwhelming. Climate will be an absolute top priority over the next five years, something that Frans Timmermans as the Commission's number two will be directly responsible for. "The climate crisis can no longer be denied," Timmermans said.

He will present a comprehensive package for his 'Green Deal' this month, outlining the plans. "We must share the pain and opportunities fairly", the Dutchman announced.

The ***European*** Commission wants the ***EU to*** be climate neutral by 2050. Not every member state is on board yet. Countries such as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are still struggling and need to be pacified with money to get rid of their polluting coal-fired power stations.

A hot topic is the interim climate target for 2030. Today's target is 40% less CO2 emissions than the 1990 base year. Von der Leyen had already announced that she wanted to go to at least 50 per cent, but this may be raised to 55 per cent.

Timmermans warned opponents of climate policy that the costs of inaction will be higher than those of action, for example because there will be more natural disasters if the temperature rises by 3 degrees. Climate policy will cost "money, a lot of effort and a lot of adaptability", he announced. "But it is for a good cause. The sooner we adapt to the need to keep temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees, the better for our children."

Von der Leyen is the first woman to lead the ***European*** Commission. In the end, she could not fulfil her earlier promise of an equal distribution of men and women. In the end, her team consists of twelve women (including herself) and fifteen men. The 28th member state is the United Kingdom, but it refused to put forward a candidate European Commissioner because of the Brexit.

The fact that VDL could only start a month later had to do with the failure of three candidate European Commissioners in the ***European*** Parliament. Besides those of Hungary and Romania, the rejection of the initial French candidate was particularly painful for both VDL and President Macron.

Timmermans comes up with 'Green deal

**Classification**

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (65%); Law + Legal System (63%); Legislation (63%)

**Industry:** Energy + Utility Regulation + Policy (63%)

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Fussing about the domestic cat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM0-NN81-JCBS-P447-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 07

**Length:** 651 words

**Body**

environmental lawyers: Letting Lizzy out in breach of ***EU rules***

Allowing cats to go outside would be in breach of ***European*** regulations on nature protection. That is the opinion of two lawyers from Tilburg University. The ***European*** Commission thinks differently. And the cats themselves? Miaow!

Lizzy is dawdling at the back door of Katy Hanemaaijer. The eight-year-old cat wants to go outside. "In the four years that I have had her, she has taken two little birds and a frog through the hatch," says owner Katy. "This is in her nature, so my anger wasn't much use."

Diseases

But according to Arie Trouwborst and Han Somsen, two law professors at Tilburg University, domestic cats cause damage to biodiversity. By killing and disturbing wild animals and transmitting diseases, the domestic cat is said to be one of the most harmful 'invasive exotic species' worldwide. They have published a study in the legal journal Journal of Enviromental Law. They argue that, under ***European*** conservation rules, it should be illegal to allow cats to roam freely outside.

But biologist Midas Dekkers thinks this is nonsense. "That is not what Brussels is about, it is not what Tilburg University is about and it is not what I am about either", says the well-known cat and bird lover firmly. "That is a matter between birds and cats. Birds already existed, and that we have domesticated cats is more the fault of humans. On the other hand, people have removed all small predators from the Netherlands over the past two centuries." In addition, according to Dekkers, birds should also look at themselves in the mirror. "Cats are domesticated, but so are a large proportion of birds. If blackbirds are stupid enough to build their nests on the ground, they shouldn't grumble when a cat takes away a nest."

Mice

Trouwborst and Somsen state that if the case goes to court it may well come to a ban on cats running loose. "I do not know why the judge would come to a fundamentally different conclusion", says Arie Trouwborst. But Iaira Boissevain thinks differently. "After the nitrogen ruling you start to believe that everything has a chance in court", explains the lawyer and animal law lecturer. "But maybe we should look at the bigger picture first?" She has doubts about the figures in the report. "It is stated that cats make 140 million victims in the Netherlands. But what are those victims? Are they the mice and rats that everyone wants to get rid of? And with 2.6 million cats in the Netherlands that comes down to, roughly speaking, one animal per cat per week. Moreover, there are many cats in flats that never go outside.

However, forester Arjan Postma, who has several cats himself, explains that cats "generally catch a lot more prey than we think". "It's a dilemma for a nature lover," he says. "It is yet another burden on nature, because some cats can also catch hares and ducks." Artificial tricks, such as putting a bell around the cat, are not always useful either, according to Postma. "Cats use this to their advantage. They stomp through the garden, ringing bells, and if the birds think they are safe, they sneak up on them quietly from the other side." Postma considers keeping new cats indoors. "You don't want to deny your cat the opportunity to go outside, but you don't want victims either," he says.

Lizzy is back from her trip. Without prey. "Lizzy is still an active cat at her age, so I think it would be a very bad idea to keep her inside," says Katy. "She runs all over the house now and then, so I'm glad she can do this even more outside. It's in the animals to want to go outside. On an adventure!"

Nonsense, that's not what Brussels is about'.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Pets (94%); Animal Welfare (89%); Animals (89%)

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Cat infestation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XM0-NN81-JCBS-P443-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 05

**Length:** 504 words

**Body**

On this site, jokes have been made about the newspaper Trouw. Maybe this, maybe that. That work. Cheeky jokes, with reference to their slogan, which, by the way, was copied from Carlsberg.

I take them all back, those jokes. Trouw is indeed 'perhaps the best newspaper in the Netherlands'. After all, the newspaper gave the floor to legal academics Arie Trouwborst and Han Somsen of Tilburg University. They were allowed to argue plainly in favour of a crackdown on the stray house cat.

The taboo finally broken!

It is a plague, ladies and gentlemen. Despite the fact that the ***European*** Birds and Habitats Directives require Member States to protect certain species and their habitats, as many as 140 million animals are killed by Dutch cats every year. "Allowing a cat to roam unsupervised is in fact already prohibited," says Trouw. "A cat can also cause stress to birds."

Cats are no good, believe me. Cats are false, purely hate-driven tormentors who cause stress not only to birds but also to dogs, and therefore to owners like me. It typifies the poverty of Dutch literature that so many renowned writers nevertheless so often expressed their love for their cats: Hermans, Reve, Wolkers, you name it. Campert even wrote a book in total endearment called Dagboek van een poes (Diary of a Cat). And yet here we are talking about ruthless cat murderers.

That I am still married to my current partner is a miracle. In a devious, typically feminine way, she once seduced me into agreeing to her desire to have a cat as a second pet. Then she named it Joli-Coeur, after the monkey from Alone in the World. Yes really: Joli-Coeur. That cat was very adept at two things: 1. using loutish bullying to hasten the death of my then dog, 2. disappearing for days on end. In the latter case, I had to search for him late at night, in our street, calling his name loudly, while the neighbours peeped curiously through the chinks in their curtains.

"Joli-Coeur! Joli-Coeur! Where are you?"

It is a mystery that they never called the GGD.

He was also good at catching mice. Especially field mice, which he constantly threw defiantly at my feet when I was working in the garden. One was still alive, I remember only too well. It was so badly injured that I felt obliged to put it out of its misery. And I couldn't, with my spade, while it lay helplessly floundering in the grass. At least, not right away. First I chopped off his left front leg, then his right back leg and only then his head, after which he finally gave up the ghost. It caused me a trauma, which I still have not recovered from.

Long live ***Europe***!

Leash those bastards!

Lock them up for ever!

I assure you that I am also speaking on behalf of Bavink, perhaps the best dog in the Netherlands.

Put those bastards on a leash! Forever and ever!

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Animal Welfare (94%); Animals (94%); Pets (94%)

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[***WTO***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10R0-00000-00&context=) [***Brussels to speed up imposition of sanctions in trade conflicts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10R0-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 4

**Length:** 365 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The ***EU*** wants to take more of a proprietary approach to trade disputes now that arbitration through the World Trade Organisation has largely ground to a halt.

**FULL TEXT:**

The ***European Union*** wants to impose sanctions sooner on countries with which it has a trade conflict. That is what ***European Commissioner*** Phil Hogan (Trade) announced on Thursday, in a first reaction from Brussels to the American attack on the World Trade Organisation. The United States have largely destroyed the ability of the WTO to settle trade disputes. Hogan fears that ***European*** countries will suffer as a result.

The Americans have put the WTO's highest body, the Appellate Body, out of action since this week. The Appellate Body rules on trade disputes. These rulings actually lead to action: the winners of proceedings can impose sanctions on the losers. Washington is blocking appointments of new lawyers to the Appellate Body, so it can no longer make rulings.

Brussels fears that non-European countries fighting trade disputes with the ***EU*** could block a ruling against them by bringing the disputes before the stalled Appellate Body. This could turn out to be to the advantage of the non-European countries. The ***EU,*** according to its own rules, cannot impose sanctions until the WTO procedure has been completed - which is impossible for the time being.

Hogan wants to ensure that in future the ***EU*** can also take measures without a final WTO ruling on the table. For this, the ***European*** rules have to be adapted. The ***European*** Parliament and the member states are still to discuss the adjustments.

The Americans are annoyed by the WTO's Appellate Body because it claims too much power for itself. According to the US, the Appellate Body is behaving like a court of law, not only dealing with the conflicts in which it has to adjudicate, but also creating its own rules. The Appellate Body is also said to disadvantage the US and favour China. Under George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the US was already critical; under Donald Trump, this attitude has hardened further.

**Graphic**

***EU Commissioner*** Phil Hogan.

Photo Stephanie Lecocq/EPA

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Developing Countries (82%); Nontariff Barriers (82%); International Relations (64%); Agricultural Commodities Markets (63%); Embargoes + Sanctions (62%)

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2019

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[***Is the Dutch plan competition rules in Europe imperative or More flexible or stricter? European European competition policy must change. How do you tackle unfair competition from outside the EU without damaging the internal market?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10R3-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 6

**Length:** 1273 words

**Byline:** Joris Kooiman

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Six questions on* Competition Law Reform

***European*** competition policy is in need of renewal. Paris and Berlin want a more flexible model, while the Netherlands wants it stricter. By our editor Joris Kooiman

**FULL TEXT:**

Industrial policy to create ***European*** champions, more leniency for green cartels, support and protection of 'crucial' sectors of the economy. These are ideas that just a short time ago seemed incompatible with the fundamental principles of the ***EU***, a global paragon of strict and independent competition policy. But now they are rapidly gaining popularity in the Member States.

Times have changed dramatically, is the argument increasingly heard, and so existing competition rules are no longer adequate. According to a recent ***European*** Council statement on the subject, the ***EU is facing*** an "unprecedented number of new challenges and megatrends", ranging from climate change to "digital disruption" and globalisation, combined with growing protectionism, especially in China and the US.

Margrethe Vestager, the ***European Commissioner*** for Competition, also recognises the impact of the above developments on the ***European*** economy. In a speech earlier this week, she spoke of an "earthquake" in the ***European*** markets.

So much for agreement. Because opinions differ widely as to what should happen next. Germany, France and Poland want to relax the competition rules, so that mega-mergers between ***European*** companies will be easier to approve. The Netherlands is afraid that competition within the ***EU*** will be affected, prices will rise and consumers will suffer. Last week, the Netherlands made a counter-offer. Six questions about this Dutch plan.

1 What exactly does the Netherlands propose?

In short, the Dutch proposal means that the ***European*** competition commissioner must become stricter - for companies from outside the ***EU***, that is. Rules that already apply to ***European*** companies will, as far as the Netherlands is concerned, soon apply to everyone. If there are indications that a non-European company is abusing a dominant position on its home market or state aid in order to beat competition within ***Europe***, the Commission can launch an investigation. Indications include a company offering products or services at dumping prices, or making unprofitable investments. If unfair competition is confirmed, the ***European*** Commission can impose fines, block acquisitions, require transparent accounting, intervene in the management of ***European*** subsidiaries or, in extreme cases, exclude a company from the single market.

2 What problem is this solving exactly?

Everything is about restoring a 'level playing field', the Netherlands emphasises. That differs from the pampering of ***European*** players proposed by France and Germany.

Governments outside ***Europe***, including the Chinese, support their main companies with subsidies, cheap financing, priority in tenders, you name it - all advantages that ***European*** players do not have. These enable them to build up market share in the ***European*** internal market at the expense of other companies', writes the Netherlands in the proposal.

That may be fine for consumers "in the short term", as long as they benefit from lower prices. But it affects "the innovative capacity" and the "geo-economic clout" of the ***EU***, says the Netherlands.

3 Are there any examples of this?

This is a sensitive issue. Without hard evidence, politicians and policymakers prefer not to name names. In the letter to the Lower House in which State Secretary Mona Keijzer (Economic Affairs and Climate, CDA) outlined the competition proposal, she referred to the government's China memorandum of May this year. This indicates that the proposal should at least counteract unfair competition from China.

Also striking: last week, Het Financieele Dagblad wrote that VDL from Brabant lost a large Dutch tender to the Chinese company BYD for the construction of 259 buses for transport company Keolis. According to the newspaper, BYD had previously received subsidies worth billions of euros from the Chinese government. Furthermore, ***European*** airlines have been complaining for years about unfair competition from *gulf carriers* such as Emirates, which are said to benefit from illegal state support.

4 Does the ***European*** Commission already have instruments against unfair competition?

Certainly. The ***European*** Commission can intervene if a non-European company abuses its dominant position on the ***European*** market. Think of the billions in fines imposed on Google for abuse of Android, the mobile operating system, and its dominant position in the online advertising market. Only: intervention is only possible after the damage has been done. The Dutch proposal must create the option to act before there is any abuse of power in ***Europe***.

In addition, Brussels can take anti-dumping measures if non-European companies are found to be competing unfairly by selling products below cost within the ***EU***. In such cases, the Commission can impose levies. A well-known example is the levy on Chinese steel, but electric bicycles from China are also taxed at the ***European*** border.

The problem with this trade policy weapon is that it only applies to goods coming from outside the ***EU***. Services are excluded (and also less traded). More importantly, the behaviour of non-European companies or their subsidiaries within the ***EU*** is not affected by anti-dumping duties.

5 How promising is the Dutch proposal?

Difficult to say. That there is unfair competition is hardly disputed. According to a spokesperson from the Dutch representation in Brussels there is also "broad support" for the Dutch proposal. But France and Germany seem more interested in relaxing the competition rules. In addition, legal experts are questioning the feasibility of the Dutch proposal. In principle, I warmly welcome this kind of measure", says Tom Ottervanger, professor of competition law in Leiden. But you have to do research in countries outside the ***EU***. That is very difficult."

His colleague from Groningen, Hans Vedder (RuG), is also sceptical. He points out that state support through subsidies is often not clearly visible. How can you prove that a subsidy has been provided if, for example, a party can rent an office cheaply in its home market? Vedder suspects a certain degree of symbol politics in the Dutch proposal and doubts whether it adds much to the instruments Brussels already has. Vedder: "And if you suspect unfair competition in a tender, a company can simply go to the nearest court."

6 How do economists view the Dutch plans?

Maarten Pieter Schinkel, Professor of Economics at the University of Amsterdam, speaks of a "sympathetic" but "messy proposal". It seems to him that it is mainly aimed at (too) cheap products, but why that is exactly harmful to the competitive process remains unclear. Schinkel: Is it about predatory pricing, which would cause ***European*** companies to go bankrupt, after which the Chinese party can raise the prices again? It does not say so. And really important things like infrastructure and privacy must be protected in some way other than through competition law'.

**Graphic**

VDL from Brabant is said to have lost a Dutch tender for the construction of buses to the Chinese company BYD, which receives government subsidies.

Photo by Getty Images

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**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (74%); Nontariff Barriers (74%); Trade Regulation + Policy (68%)

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[***Conservatives on a roll***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1BN-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 559 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

Boris Johnson gets a free hand from voters

by Joost van Mierlo

LONDON - The Conservatives seem to be heading for a convincing victory in the British elections. Based on the final polls, the governing party has a large majority in the House of Commons. The British are thus heading for an exit from the ***European Union*** at the end of January. Moreover, it creates the necessary space for the negotiations on a trade agreement, which follow afterwards.

According to the final poll, the Conservatives will win 368 seats in the 650-seat House of Commons. That would be the best result since Margaret Thatcher's third term. In the last election in 2017, there were 319, but after a number of party members stepped down or were expelled from the party, there were barely 300 left by mid-October.

Labour remained stuck at 191 seats compared to 262 in the previous election. The party did not score so badly since 1935. The SNP saw its seat count rise from 35 (2017) to 55 now. The Lib Dems gained 13 seats compared to 12 last time.

On the basis of this result, the Conservatives are in a position to secure their desired exit from the ***EU***. Prime Minister Boris Johnson does not need to listen to the most fierce Brexiteers in his group. The big victory provides the negotiating room that Johnson and his most important colleagues have been longing for.

The discussion in recent weeks has been dominated by the question of how the various parties thought they could end the Brexit impasse. Initially, the Brexit Party seemed to be playing a serious role. In the ***European*** elections in May, the brand new party of ***EU-hater*** Nigel Farage emerged victorious.

But general elections, with their treacherous district system where an acceptable candidate must be presented for each of the 650 districts, proved too big a hurdle for Farage's followers. The party saw its following pulverise to barely 2% last week.

The Liberal Democrats were also unable to convince voters of their own 'reasonable alternative'. The party initially scored high, but the star of new political leader Jo Swinson quickly dropped in recent weeks.

Voters in a district system, where only the winners in the 650 districts get a seat in the House of Commons, are almost necessarily pushed towards the two main parties. That made it an unpleasant choice for many voters. Never before have Prime Minister Boris Johnson and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn been so unpopular.

Not for nothing did the satirical weekly Private Eye show a cartoon this week in which voters went into the polling booth with a clothes peg on their nose. After all, the smell of all the obvious choices was malodorous.

With the large majority he seems to have obtained, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has the room for manoeuvre he needs to make the negotiations on a trade agreement a success. He promised that these would be concluded before the end of 2020, but everyone realises that this is an impossible task. With his resounding victory, however, Johnson now has the authority in his party to confront political opponents.

Tories on the way to 'their' Brexit

**Classification**

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Political Parties (94%); ***European*** Union (75%); Campaigns + Elections (69%); International Relations (68%); Politics (65%)

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[***Fighting over a climate neutral EU***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1BT-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 17

**Length:** 434 words

**Byline:** Ruud Mikkers

**Body**

Nuclear power and costs prove to be complex stumbling blocks

by Ruud Mikkers

BRUSSELS - Greenpeace activists caused a stir before the start of the ***European*** summit by unfurling a life-size banner on the façade of the Council building. The green activists called for action on the climate. But once they had been taken away and the meeting could start as usual, it turned out that the EU leaders could not agree on climate neutrality by 2050.

The heads of government of the 28 EU countries could not resolve the sensitive issue in the time allotted. Therefore, the discussion continued over dinner. Two issues caused heated debate: nuclear energy and costs.

Czech Prime Minister Babis refused to agree to the goal of climate neutrality if there were no rock-solid guarantees about nuclear power. His fear is that the ***European*** Investment Bank (EIB) will not grant loans if nuclear energy is considered unsustainable.

Countries are free to choose nuclear power during the transition period, because it does not emit CO2, but if there is no ***European*** funding for it, it is not very attractive. Even a country like France remains attached to nuclear during the transition. Countries like Germany and Austria, on the other hand, are against it.

Officially, the discussion about the goal of making ***Europe*** the first climate-neutral continent was separate from a discussion about money. But Eastern European countries that are lagging behind in terms of greening wanted to talk about support. Poland in particular, which is dependent on coal-fired power stations, wanted guarantees that it would not be alone in the decades leading up to 2050.

In his Green Deal on Wednesday, ***European Commissioner*** Timmermans proposed to help poorer regions with a fund of 100 billion ***euros*** for the period 2021-2027. Prime Minister Rutte did not want to burn his fingers on the sensitive issue of money beforehand.

He does, however, want to take the lead in greening. "The Netherlands wants to be ambitious, but then the other countries have to follow, otherwise the Netherlands will lose jobs." If the other countries join in, this will create jobs in the Netherlands, "because we are more innovative", Rutte said.

The climate conference in Madrid concludes today. The ***EU*** wanted to make a good impression with a unified statement to the rest of the world about climate neutrality in 2050. But last night it looked very much as if Madrid would come a little too soon. For now, it was every country for itself.

Rutte ambitious but no jobs at stake

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (63%)

**Industry:** Nuclear Energy (94%); Nuclear Power Plants (78%)

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[***Opposition by Poland at summit shows disagreement on climate policy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10M4-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 533 words

**Byline:** Clara van de Wiel

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

***Eurotop*** Brussels wanted to show its ambitions as a "green pioneer" at the Climate Summit in Madrid. But the ***EU*** proved to be united on Thursday.

**FULL TEXT:**

The ***EU*** is not united on climate policy. After more than eight hours of negotiations, Poland obtained an exemption Thursday night from the target of being CO2 neutral by 2050. The other member states, however, did endorse this goal.

Poland has been given more time to calculate whether and how it can achieve this goal. Thus, the moment when ***Europe***, as a green pioneer, had to send a signal to the rest of the world, has primarily become an illustration of how divided the continent remains on climate policy.

It is proving difficult to get all member states behind the high ambitions. Already at the start of the ***European*** Council meeting in Brussels, it was clear that three Member States were very reluctant to commit to a CO2-neutral 2050: Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. The considerable symbolic value of this target makes it attractive for Member States to sell their skins dearly.

It is a purely political discussion", said an ***EU diplomat*** beforehand, "about a dot on the horizon." But in practice, the discussion at the meeting table was about much more: the distribution of EU funds, solidarity with lagging regions and which energy can be considered green. Poland in particular demanded recognition of the painful steps it must take and firm guarantees on additional compensation funds.

In their joint conclusion, member states indeed pledge support for the "worst affected regions and sectors". And they agree to compensate citizens and regions via the "fair transition mechanism" - a pot of money that the ***European*** Commission announced in its 'Green Deal' this week. But for Poland it was not enough. We reach the goal at our own speed", Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said afterwards.

Another discussion was settled. Both the Czech Republic and Hungary wanted confirmation that nuclear energy could contribute to the green goal. Although Member States such as Luxembourg and Austria opposed this for a long time, nuclear energy was finally included in the conclusions.

In June, the ***European Council*** will discuss the climate target further and Poland might join after all. The postponement is a major setback for the ***European*** Commission, which announced in the Green Deal presented this week that it would come up with a law in early 2020 that lays down the climate-neutral goal for 2050. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen emphasised Thursday night "to have understanding" for the Polish position. However, the timetable for the Green Deal will not change according to her.

The lack of a clear and ambitious ***European*** climate objective is a disappointment for the UN climate conference in Madrid, which ends this weekend. Moreover, the difficult negotiations in Brussels do not bode well for the green ambitions of the ***European*** Commission. With a package of measures, the Commission wants ***Europe*** to take the global lead in the climate transition.

We reach the goal at our own speed

Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Polen

**Classification**

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (75%); International Relations (62%)

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[***Liberals***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10M9-00000-00&context=) [***LibDems did not benefit from their pro-European view***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10M9-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 225 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

By 149 votes on Thursday, the leadership of Jo Swinson (39) in the British Liberal Democrats came to an end. In her Scottish constituency, the nationalist SNP narrowly won her House of Commons seat. As a result, Swinson had to announce her departure, as a LibDems leader must sit in parliament according to party rules.

Scotland's Swinson, party leader since this summer, ran a difficult campaign. If the LibDems were to come to power - a scenario that sounded a bit ambitious for a party with 12 seats - Swinson wanted to reverse the Brexit without a new referendum - an undemocratic position according to critics.

Swinson was also often accused of being complicit in the harsh austerity measures of the Cameron-Clegg government, in which she served as secretary of state in the first half of this decade. The broken state of many public services is often directly linked to this. Swinson had no convincing rebuttal.

Painful for the LibDems, who now go from 12 to 11 seats, is also the loss of many "defectors" from Labour and the Conservatives. The LibDems hosted seemingly popular MPs like Chuka Umunna and Luciana Berger, who had fled Labour, for the past year. But none of them were able to retain a seat.

**Classification**

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[***Human rights organisations***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10MR-00000-00&context=)  [***Request to the Criminal Court: condemnation of the supply of weapons that kill civilians in Yemen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10MR-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 455 words

**Byline:** Lisa Dupuy

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The International Criminal Court rarely looks at the liability of companies in war zones. Six NGOs believe it is time for the court to investigate the role of ***European*** arms manufacturers in Yemen.

**FULL TEXT:**

Can the International Criminal Court (ICC) convict ***European*** companies for supplying arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are using the goods in Yemen? The ***European*** Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) submitted a request to the ICC prosecutor on behalf of six human rights organisations. It presented evidence of 26 airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition that caused many civilian deaths.

There is "a pattern" in air operations with European-made weapons, the NGOs said at a press conference on Thursday. The coalition has often been accused of "disproportionate force". According to ECCHR, the manufacturers are partly responsible for this.

The report concerns large companies such as the British BAE, the German Airbus and Rheinmetall (and the Spanish and Italian branches) and the French Dassault. They supply new weapon systems, or the spare parts, training and maintenance for fighter planes sold before the war. BAE staff told *The Guardian* in June, for example, that the services of over 6,000 employees are essential to keep Saudi aircraft in the air. That shows the role of manufacturers", says ECCHR lawyer Linde Bryk. Of course we want justice for citizens. If supplies stop, at least the bombing will stop."

For the export of military goods, a licence is needed from national authorities, based on a ***European*** directive. In this way, it is checked whether equipment is possibly used for human rights violations.

Because the ICC deals with cases of individual responsibility, the NGOs investigated the power structures within the companies and the ***European*** Member States. Who is responsible for the deliveries? That was the question. That is senior managers of a manufacturer who could have cancelled a contract. Or an official who could have refused an export licence." says Bryk.

The ICC is a last resort that only deals with cases where the countries involved are unwilling or unable to prosecute themselves. The ECCHR has already sued the RWM company in Italy, but the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office did not pursue the case.

The question remains whether the ICC can do much with the information it has provided. It usually goes after the main culprits - in the case of the Yemen war, not the arms suppliers. Never before has the ICC taken on such a case.

**Classification**

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[***Turkey and Libya divide the sea area***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10MN-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 12

**Length:** 767 words

**Byline:** Toon Beemsterboer

**Dateline:** Istanbul

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

East Mediterranean Sea

Turkey is trying to get its share of the lucrative oil and gas exploitation through a deal with Libya, other countries are angry.

**FULL TEXT:**

A controversial agreement between Turkey and Libya over maritime borders is causing great tension in the eastern Mediterranean. The deal is part of a high-stakes geopolitical joust: the exploitation of lucrative oil and gas fields. The aggressive way in which Turkey lays claim to these fields is meeting resistance from Greece, Cyprus and ***the EU***.

The agreement, signed in late November, marks the boundaries of what Turkey and Libya claim as their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), where they have the right to fish and extract resources such as oil and gas. Although the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea limits countries' territorial waters to a maximum of 12 nautical miles, an EEZ can extend up to 200 nautical miles from the coast.

The agreement was condemned by Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, which lie between Turkey and Libya. The Turkish-Libyan zone passes partly through their economic zones and undermines the construction of a pipeline to transport Israeli and Cypriot gas via Greece to ***Europe***. The billion-dollar project is intended to make ***European*** countries less dependent on Russian gas.

Greece calls the agreement illegal and on Tuesday lodged an objection with the United Nations. This agreement was made in bad faith', said a government spokesman. It is a violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The maritime zones of Turkey and Libya do not border each other, nor is there a maritime border between the two countries."

**Warships**

In response, Greece expelled the Libyan ambassador on Friday. Athens warns that it will not allow Turkish gas drilling around Crete and has sent warships to the island. In addition, Greece has asked the ***EU*** to prepare sanctions in case Turkey and Libya do not withdraw the deal.

The document is of serious concern", the new ***EU foreign coordinator***, Josep Borrell, said on Monday after a meeting of ***European*** foreign ministers in Brussels. He expressed support for Greece and Cyprus. Nevertheless, Borrell did not want to call the agreement illegal. He said ***European*** authorities were still "examining" the details.

The problem is that Turkey is not part of any major international conventions on maritime law, such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea. So Ankara has more leeway to define territorial waters and maritime zones. The Turkish-Libyan agreement serves as legal justification for Turkish gas drilling in the disputed waters around Cyprus.

President Erdogan is determined to implement the agreement. He called the expulsion of the Libyan ambassador on Tuesday an "international scandal" for which Greece "will pay the price". He said Turkey will buy a fourth drillship to continue its gas drilling around Cyprus and possibly even expand into the Black Sea or international waters.

The maritime dispute between Turkey and Greece has a long history and mainly revolves around the islands in the Aegean Sea, almost all of which are in Greek hands, to the frustration of Turkey. Even islands that can be seen from Turkey are hundreds of kilometres away from the Greek mainland. Thus, Turkey has hardly any access to the Mediterranean Sea.

Turkey is the only country in the region not benefiting from the energy boom in the eastern Mediterranean. An estimated 3.5 billion cubic metres of gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil have been found there in recent decades. While Israel, Greece, Egypt and Cyprus agreed among themselves on the distribution and exploitation, Turkey was left empty-handed.

The Turks felt short-changed. Although they were interested in the planned gas pipeline, part of which would pass through Turkish waters, they were not allowed to take part in the project. They were even excluded from the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, a regional partnership between Israel, Egypt, the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Greece and Cyprus.

The agreement with Libya is the Turkish response to the 'fait accompli' that excludes Turkey from regional energy developments. It illustrates the tense relations in the eastern Mediterranean due to the discovery of oil and gas. Turkey is assertively demanding its share, even if this means risking a confrontation with NATO ally Greece and the ***EU***.

**Graphic**

A Turkish oil drilling ship leaves for a controversial mission north-east of Cyprus in June this year.

Photo Erdem Sahin/EPA

Turkey and Libya do not border each other at sea either

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Subject:** International Relations (94%); ***European*** Union (83%); State Departments + Foreign Services (64%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (61%)

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[***The Brexit is really coming***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10KY-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** CONTENTS; Page 1

**Length:** 691 words

**Byline:** Melle Garschagen and Michel Kerres

**Dateline:** london/brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

British elections

Relief prevails in Brussels after Boris Johnson's major victory. The Brexit can now be completed quickly.

**FULL TEXT:**

With a generous majority in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Boris Johnson can quickly lead the United Kingdom to the ***European*** exit more than 40 months after the Brexit referendum. Johnson wants the House of Commons to start debating the Brexit bill next week that governs exit by January 31. That is the "irrefutable, irresistible and undeniable decision of the electorate", the prime minister said in his victory speech on Friday morning.

In Brussels, where EU leaders are meeting, relief prevails. The ***EU*** regrets the imminent departure of the UK, but the Brexit consumed energy and time that they would rather have spent on something else. I don't feel any relief or sadness, but more of a factual determination to wrap this up", Prime Minister Rutte said. "I think everyone thinks that's good news, otherwise it's going to stay with us for years to come."

Now that one issue, separation, has been resolved, the ***EU is*** preparing for the next phase: negotiations on the future relationship. This will potentially be even more complicated and is also of great importance for the future of ***EU***. Even a Brexit UK remains a leading trading partner and an indispensable democratic ally with a robust military force.

The question therefore is what Johnson will do with his new mandate. He has long said he wants an "ambitious trade deal with the ***EU***" in which companies can do business without quotas and tariffs.

Once the UK leaves the ***EU***, the transition phase begins, during which the Brits follow EU rules and enjoy the benefits, but without political representation in Brussels. That period ends at the end of December 2020. That is also seen as the deadline for a new trade deal, otherwise the Brits will have to do business with the ***EU***, their biggest trading partner, on the less favourable and muted terms of the World Trade Organisation.

Negotiating, approving and implementing a trade agreement in 11 months is an enormous task. Other trade agreements took years. The time pressure is great: after leaving the EU on 31 January, the clock starts running. In fact, the Brexit is only halfway through.

The EU leaders are in any case ready, said the new president of the ***European*** Council Charles Michel. The negotiations will again be led by Frenchman Michel Barnier, who also led the ***EU*** through the Brexit and then managed to keep all EU countries in line. The ***EU*** wants to prevent the UK from competing "unfairly" with the ***EU***, for example with lower social standards, looser environmental rules and a more favourable tax regime. At the end of their two-day summit on Friday afternoon, they would reaffirm that the ***EU***'s starting point is to be as close as possible.

What will become apparent in the coming period is how the Conservative election victory will affect Johnson's course. With a large majority, he may be free of the grip of the hardliners within the Tories who prefer to strengthen economic and strategic ties with the United States rather than with the ***EU***. A close relationship is less damaging to the British economy and more protective of the interests of the brand new Tory voters in central and northern England. As a result, Johnson might consider a softer Brexit.

At the same time, Johnson knows that a significant proportion of his voters who have switched from Labour to the Conservatives are socially conservative. Controlling national borders and limiting migration are important issues for these Britons. In his speech, Johnson promised to introduce a visa system based on the Australian model. If the Prime Minister is not prepared to accept free movement of people, very close economic cooperation with the ***EU is*** not negotiable. If the future economic relationship consists only of a trade agreement, without a customs union or participation in the single market, the UK and the ***EU*** will by definition face a hard Brexit.

**Graphic**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrives at Downing Street shortly after the election results.

Photo REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya

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[***Lagarde's ambitions are also risky; ECB President***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10PS-00000-00&context=) [***Lagarde is ambitious and takes risks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10PS-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 966 words

**Byline:** Mark Beunderman

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

***European*** Central Bank

The new ECB chief wants to review the entire monetary policy and is rushing to investigate the digital ***euro***.

**FULL TEXT:**

I am going to do things really differently. That was clearly the message Christine Lagarde, the new president of the ***European*** Central Bank, wanted to get across during her first press conference. With grand plans and a remarkably loose style, she made her debut in front of the press in Frankfurt on Thursday.

The Frenchwoman, who until recently was the head of the International Monetary Fund, wants to open the shutters at the ECB. She wants to completely overhaul the current and controversial monetary policy. And she wants to hurry up with an investigation into a public digital currency in the ***eurozone***.

With such ambition and drive, Lagarde also risks disappointment or accident. That applies, for instance, to her ambition to be more open than her predecessor Mario Draghi. Immediately after the reading of the interest rate decision - the ECB left the interest rate unchanged - Lagarde took the time to explain that she will be "herself" and therefore "different". Lagarde, she said earlier, wants to talk to more people than just bankers, investors and financial journalists, as Draghi used to do. Lagarde also wants to talk to "the public" and to civil society organisations.

But this approach is also risky: the financial world is always listening and weighs every word of central bankers on a gold scale. The ***euro rate*** and the stock markets can go crazy. Lagarde felt the pinch and made an appeal to the press on Thursday: "Don't over-interpret, don't jump to conclusions when I say something in a slightly different language." But it remains to be seen whether ECB watchers, who make their living by following the central bank, will take any notice.

**Big brainstorm**

The style break with the stiffer and more formal Draghi was also noticeable in comments intended to emphasise her modesty ("If I don't know something, I'll tell you I don't know anything"). But Lagarde is aiming for more than a break in style. She wants to scrutinise the entire policy of the ECB in an official review, which is due to start next month. The last time such a review took place was 16 years ago and now, according to Lagarde, it is high time for another one.

The only thing that will not be discussed in this brainstorming session is the ECB's mandate: price stability. That is in the EU Treaty. But what exactly price stability is, is something the 25-member board of the ECB can brainstorm about in the coming year. Not only internally, but also with ***MEPs*** and civil society organisations. Lagarde wants the ECB to come down from its ivory tower.

In the last review in 2003, the ECB agreed that it defined price stability as an inflation rate of "close to, but below, 2%". Since this goal has not been achieved for years - the inflation rate is now 1 per cent - the ECB, under Draghi, has deployed heavy artillery. Interest rates were made negative and the ECB massively bought up government and corporate debt to pump money into the economy. This led to considerable division within the board between 'doves' who support this line and 'hawks' who advocate a more modest monetary policy.

**Opportunities for Knot**

Lagarde sees the 'reflection round', which is to be completed by the end of 2020, as a way of bridging this gap. She herself, she said, is "neither dove nor hawk". "I try to be an owl, an animal often associated with a bit of wisdom." For hawks like Klaas Knot, the president of De Nederlandsche Bank, Lagardes evaluation is an opportunity to exert influence. Knot recently proposed a "bandwidth" around the inflation target, which would allow the ECB to be more flexible and thus less extreme in its monetary policy. Knot did not say how high the inflation target should be. Most central banks aim for 2 percent inflation, in order to build a buffer against deflation, a dangerous spiral of price falls.

What is hopeful for Knot is that Lagarde talked about including the housing market in the inflation figure. At the moment, rental and purchase prices are still not included. Housing prices in the Netherlands and other ***euro countries*** have risen sharply recently, while the inflation rate remained very low. It is possible that the inflation rate will increase automatically if the housing market is included in the calculation.

The new brainstorm should cover more than just "traditional" monetary issues. The "immense" challenge of climate change should also be discussed, Lagarde said. And the "enormous" technological changes that are taking place.

**Digital *euro*?**

As far as the latter is concerned, Lagarde says one issue cannot wait, and that is the discussion on a public digital currency in the ***eurozone***. She therefore wants to "accelerate" an ongoing ECB investigation into this.

The discussion on digital central bank money has moved into gear as the use of cash is declining. As a result, the relationship between citizens and central banks, which issue cash, is becoming blurred. Digital money transfers are taking place via the cash flows of commercial banks. Now the call for digital public money is growing: save and withdraw cash directly from the central bank and pay with central bank money.

In addition, there is at least one private digital currency in the pipeline, Facebook's libra, and other tech giants are reportedly also looking to launch a digital currency. Central banks fear losing their grip on monetary policy as a result. Lagarde: "My personal conviction is that, given the developments we are now seeing (...) it is better to be ahead of the curve."

Lagarde does not want to be a monetary 'hawk' or 'dove', but rather a wise 'owl'

**Graphic**

The new ECB President Christine Lagardonderdag at her first formal press conference in Frankfurt.

Photo Ralph Orlowski/ REUTERS

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Central Banks (94%); Monetary Policy (71%); Economic Conditions (63%); Inflation (61%)

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[***Tories must change to retain working class vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10MB-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 1067 words

**Byline:** Melle Garschagen

**Dateline:** London

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Analysis of* the British elections

Boris Johnson's huge victory gives him unprecedented power within his party. Within his own group, there will be no discord about the Prime Minister's Brexit course.

**FULL TEXT:**

The British political landscape has been rocked. After the monster victory of Boris Johnson and his Conservatives (363 seats, 47 seats up) and the historically poor performance of Labour (203 seats, 59 down), not only will the House of Commons look different, the tone of debate and the political tribes will be completely different.

For a start, the now familiar image of keelhauling votes on the Brexit is passé. If Johnson presents a bill next week to arrange a British departure from the ***EU*** by January 31, 2020, the House of Commons will agree. Numerically, the opposition can offer no resistance.

And Johnson is heading for the biggest electoral victory for a Conservative Party leader since Margaret Thatcher scored a 102-seat majority in 1987. Johnson in the same league as the Iron Lady: it makes him almost omnipotent within his own party. Unlike before the election, there will be no discord within his own group about his Brexit course.

**Shape-shifting**

Yet the Conservatives are changing shape with this ballot. The basis of the victory is in the middle and north of England, in towns and cities that had been in Labour hands for decades, sometimes almost a hundred years. The Tories won in areas like Blyth Valley, a former mining region, where the Conservatives were hated, where Thatcher was reviled for tackling the unions. These are areas of England where the Brexit is in demand, but also where problems with poverty, benefits and poor quality of care are great.

The new Conservatives must be mindful of this if they are to retain the confidence of their voters. Keeping the *working class vote* here means fervently supporting the Brexit and arguing just as passionately for a big government that actively intervenes in citizens' lives.

There you may find a new fissure among the Conservatives that could develop into a fault line in the coming years. For some Conservatives, the Brexit is just a means to an end: after leaving, to re-colour British society and economy as an empty canvas. They, like the prominent Tory Jacob Rees-Mogg, want more free trade, lower taxes, less government intervention, more competition and a less extensive social safety net. Their ideal image for the UK after the Brexit differs substantially from what the new Tory voters in northern England want.

It seems Johnson wants to keep these differences in check. The BBC reported on Thursday evening that the Prime Minister plans to shake things up in February, after the Brexit. Then he wants to come up with a new budget aimed at massive investment and a new composition of his ministerial team. He then has to balance and keep the different factions happy, before starting the second round of negotiations with the ***EU***, about a new relationship (trade, security) after leaving. That budget and plan should be the prelude to at least five years of Boris Johnson in power.

The response from Labour's party leadership was terse: we had no answer to the Brexit question. With that, party leader Jeremy Corbyn and his right-hand man John McDonnell pretend that the expected loss is an aberration. That is a very incomplete explanation for the defeat. Voters did not trust Corbyn, blamed him for not tackling anti-Semitism within his party.

Corbyn promised to heal the wounds of harsh austerity, but the radicalism of Labour's approach did not resonate with Corbyn. He could not convince voters that it was necessary to spend 80 billion pounds (over 95 billion ***euros***) more annually than we do now. With 203 seats, Corbyn performs even worse than former party leader Michael Foot did in 1983. At that time, Labour had 209 MPs in the House of Commons.

After that low point, it took Labour 15 years to recover, to swap the far-left course under Foot for the centrism of Tony Blair, resulting in the monster victory in 1997.

Corbyn reacted to the loss by saying that he will lead the party in the march towards new elections. He will then resign his party leadership before those elections. He called for a period of reflection, but the pressure is on for him to seek a quick exit in the coming days.

In the coming period, Labour risks becoming a party of chaos in search of a new leader. Given the influx of young, activist and very left-wing members in recent years, Corbyn's current allies, such as Rebecca Long-Bailey, are more likely to succeed him than centrists such as Keir Starmer and Emily Thornberry.

A leadership battle is also brewing among the Liberal Democrats. The pro-European party lost a net seat (11 in total). Party leader Jo Swinson was not re-elected in her constituency and resigned.

**Scotland as the next crisis?**

The years of turbulence in British politics began in full splendour in 2014, when the Scots held their independence referendum. At the time, a majority of Scots wanted to continue the 1707 Treaty of Union with England. That referendum seemed to settle the matter for at least a few decades.

The Brexit vote changed that and breathed new life into Nicola Sturgeon's Scottish nationalists campaign.

This election, the Nationalists are doing very well again. North of Hadrian's Wall, the Nationalists won 48 of the 59 seats, thirteen more than in 2017. The division of the UK seems complete: a resounding majority in England wants to be led to the ***European*** exit by Boris Johnson and Scots support a party that wants to go on in its own right and cherishes ***EU membership***.

Scottish Prime Minister Sturgeon may call for a new referendum and Johnson, given the election results in Scotland, will find it difficult to turn down such a request in the end. A new Scottish referendum could well be the next big thing in turbulent British politics.

**Graphic**

Boris Johnson addresses the Conservatives after Thursday's victory (above), Jeremy Corbyn consoles party members in a London constituency after Labour's major defeat.

Photos Neil Hall/EPA and Isabel Infantes/AFPNEIL HALL

Absolute majority for the Conservatives

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**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Political Parties (75%)

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[***Medicine boxes must remain in the Dutch language***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1B2-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** INDOOR; Page 09

**Length:** 382 words

**Byline:** Thijs Rösken

**Body**

by Thijs Rösken

Amsterdam - Minister Bruins refuses to consider the Englishification of medicine boxes. "Patients in the Netherlands should always be able to read what is on the packet and in the leaflet."

The Minister of Health thus rejects a plea from pharmaceutical giant Teva, which supplies a quarter of all prescription drugs in the Netherlands. Ceo Kåre Schultz suggested Wednesday morning in De Telegraaf that a uniform box of medicines could sell throughout ***Europe***. A leaflet in the patient's own language would then be available via a mobile app.

Now a box has to be made in dozens of ***European*** languages. This entails costs and sometimes causes problems if there is a shortage in the Netherlands and stocks are therefore bought from abroad. Those boxes have to be relabelled or repackaged.

Bruins is not enthusiastic about Schultz's idea for uniform boxes. "The patient must have access to a clear and understandable leaflet. On paper and digitally. A box with English text (or from another country) does not help."

However, the minister does leave some room for exploration. "If it turns out that uniform packaging has added value for the patient, for example in terms of better availability, then we can explore that in ***Europe***."

Criticism

Teva boss Schultz also criticised Minister Bruins' plan on Wednesday to make five months' supply of medicines compulsory, in order to deal with shortages. According to him, this would mean that many medicines would have to be thrown away and a national measure would shift the problem to other countries.

The minister recognises that "individual measures per country are not the solution for the future".

"But they are necessary in the Netherlands. I don't want patients to stand empty-handed in pharmacies any more."

Bruins says he opts for both a Dutch and a ***European*** approach. In the Netherlands, we want a quick solution. That is why we provide a 5-month supply. To really tackle the cause of shortages, more and better ***European*** cooperation is important. Many Member States support my plan to have the production of raw materials and medicines take place more in ***Europe***. Long-term stocks per country may then no longer be necessary in the future.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (93%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (83%); Public Health (83%); COVID-19 Coronavirus (75%); Medical Marijuana (68%); Autoimmune Disorders (67%); Immune System Disorders (67%)

**Industry:** Pharmaceuticals Agents + Products (89%); Pharmaceuticals Industry (84%); Retail + Wholesale Trade (82%); Agriculture (69%); Pharmacies + Drug Stores (68%)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2019

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[***Brit hopes for clarity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1BP-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 16

**Length:** 562 words

**Byline:** Joost van Mierlo

**Body**

Do the elections provide a clear mandate?

by Joost van Mierlo

LONDON - The Conservatives seem to be heading for a narrow victory in the British elections. The latest polls all point to a small majority for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's governing party. But even with the unflattering majority - one that seemed within reach even last week - the Brexit impasse will be ended.

Three and a half years ago, on 23 June 2016, the UK voted by a majority (52%) against membership of the ***EU***. Since then, the political discussion has been dominated by the question of how the British would leave the ***EU***. There were considerable differences on this.

These elections were supposed to put an end to that. They did, based on the latest polls. The Conservatives are likely to get a similar majority to that at the time of the ***EU referendum***. Former Prime Minister Theresa May squandered that majority with the 2017 by-election, which was dramatic for her.

The discussion in recent weeks has been dominated by the question of how the various parties thought they could end the Brexit impasse. Initially, the Brexit Party seemed to be playing a serious role. In the ***European*** elections in May, the brand new party of ***EU-hater*** Nigel Farage emerged victorious.

But general elections, with their treacherous district system where an acceptable candidate must be presented for each of the 650 districts, proved too big a hurdle for Farage's followers. The party saw its following pulverise from over 30% of the vote to barely 2% last week.

The Liberal Democrats were also unable to convince voters of their 'reasonable alternative'. The party initially scored high, but the star of new political leader Jo Swinson quickly dropped in recent weeks.

Voters in a district system, where only the winners of the 650 districts get a seat, are almost necessarily pushed towards the two main parties. That makes it an unpleasant choice for many voters. Not for nothing did the satirical weekly magazine Private Eye show a cartoon this week in which voters went into the polling booth with a clothes peg on their nose. After all, the smell of all the obvious choices was unpleasant.

With his probably small majority, Prime Minister Boris Johnson can set to work to bring about the glorious Brexit future he has promised. That will be difficult enough. With the elimination of most Remainers in his party, a departure from the ***EU*** before 31 January next year will probably be possible. After that, however, a trade agreement has to be negotiated. According to many political insiders, that is much more difficult than the exit agreement that has now been agreed.

With his seemingly small majority, Johnson soon has his back against the wall. He will have to convince his followers of a quickly negotiated, half-hearted agreement with numerous new concessions, or ask for another postponement. The Brexit dilemma is not over, only postponed for a few months.

Brexit dilemma not over yet

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Political Parties (94%); Campaigns + Elections (75%); Politics (74%)

**Industry:** Media + Telecommunications (63%)

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[***Lagarde leaves money press alone for now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1CM-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 25

**Length:** 532 words

**Byline:** Dorinde Meuzelaar

**Body**

***Eurozone*** economy 'moving in the right direction'

by Dorinde Meuzelaar

Frankfurt - In the short term, the low interest rate policy of the ***European*** Central Bank (ECB) will not change. As the economic risks have decreased somewhat, the chance of further economic stimulation has diminished.

This was evident on Thursday at the baptism of fire of the new ECB President Christine Lagarde. It was the first time she explained the outcome of the interest rate meeting. She had a cautiously positive story to tell. Yes, economic growth in the ***eurozone*** will remain low in the coming years and inflation will also pick up only moderately. But the worst negative risks have abated somewhat.

"I am not going to make any statements on how the negotiations between the US and China are going, or when there will be an agreement. But compared to a few months ago, we are moving in the right direction," Lagarde said. "When the British election result is known, there will also be more visibility on how the Brexit will go. Then there will be a little less uncertainty, which is encouraging."

That optimism is not yet reflected in the figures; the new estimates published by the ECB on Thursday were hardly an improvement on the previous forecasts from September.

On monetary policy, Lagarde kept to expectations: interest rates will be maintained for the time being and the ECB will continue to buy EUR 20 billion worth of bonds every month in order to boost inflation.

Also in line with expectations, Lagarde announced a review of the ECB's strategy. It will start in January and should be completed by the end of 2020. The last time the central bank reviewed its own strategy was in 2003. "So it's already pretty late," the former International Monetary Fund managing director said.

In its strategic review, the ECB is also consulting the ***European*** Parliament, academics and civil society. When she took office, Lagarde said she wanted to explain monetary policy better to citizens in the ***eurozone***, not just to economists. The central bank will also look at the impact of technological change, climate change and inequality. Lagarde did not want to say whether the ECB will also look at new instruments to boost inflation.

The question is how much room the ECB has to change its strategy. The Maastricht Treaty now states that the ECB must ensure price stability. This has been interpreted as a level of inflation close to, but just below, 2%.

Preventing unrest

This definition will not go overboard just like that; it would cause enormous turmoil on the financial markets. This is particularly unfortunate now that growth is slowing down in many ***euro countries*** and Germany, for example, is teetering on the brink of recession.

In this situation, a hint that the ECB might want to tighten policy could lead to tighter financing conditions. This, in turn, means that companies, among others, are more expensive when they apply for credit. And that would send the already fragile growth into the wrong direction.

ECB to review strategy in 2020

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Central Banks (94%); Monetary Policy (71%); Economic Conditions (65%); Inflation (64%)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2019

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[***Wisdom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1CK-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 25

**Length:** 416 words

**Body**

I am not a dove, I am not a hawk, I am an owl'. With that statement, the new President of the ***European*** Central Bank Christine Lagarde added a new animal to the stable of central banks.

What did she mean by it? That she does not want to be pigeon-holed when it comes to monetary policy. In the jargon of central bankers, a dove is an advocate of a very loose monetary policy, used to stimulate the real economy. The best-known dove is, of course, Lagarde's predecessor Mario Draghi.

He was diametrically opposed to the hawks, advocates of tighter monetary policy. The Bundesbank chairman Jens Weidmann and 'our own' Klaas Knot are in that corner.

According to ornithologists, pigeons are reputed to be peaceful animals, but in nature things are much harsher and meaner. This is certainly true of the dovecote that the ECB became towards the end of Draghi's presidency.

The latest stimulus package, which he announced shortly before his departure, led to major quarrels within the ECB board. Lagarde was therefore the first to organise a "team outing" for all ECB governors to a fancy castle just outside Frankfurt, to calm things down a bit.

"I want to be wise. I want to get the best out of people and make decisions with agreement if possible," Lagarde said on Thursday. And in other ways, too, her first explanation of the interest rate decision was a break from the technocratic but aloof (critics say haughty and headstrong) Draghi. It was her "great pleasure" to explain the policy. She kicked off the question round with "if I don't know, I'll just say so". Vice-President Luis de Guindos, about whom Draghi barely said a word, she introduced as "my good friend".

Can the hawks breathe a sigh of relief with an "owl" at the head of the ECB? That remains to be seen. Draghi has been accused of stretching the ECB's mandate far too far in order to keep the ***eurozone together***. But Lagarde seems to be up to something too. In the strategic review she announced, she said she wants to include criteria like inequality and climate change in the policy. Noble goals, but certainly not the task of an ECB president.

This makes her vulnerable to criticism that the ECB is too political. Lagarde will thus badly need her wisdom.

Dorinde Meuzelaar

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Central Banks (94%); Monetary Policy (69%)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2019

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[***Europe impoverished by green policies***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR6-79W1-DYTV-D1GS-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** WATU-SAY; Page 18

**Length:** 100 words

**Body**

Letter of the day

Of course the climate is changing, I do not deny that and many others with me. But whether we are guilty of it or have much influence on it?

That is the question for people without 'climate faith' and these climate sceptics are cursed. We are being shouted down by climate believers. And what is happening on the climate front in Asia and South America? Nothing, nothing, nothing...

We are impoverishing our continent by following the 'law of inhibiting headway'. If we believe and follow EU climate pope Frans Timmermans with his 'Green Deal', we will be a third world country in the next century.

Hans Bos,

Malden

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Climate Change (86%); Environment + Natural Resources (78%); Developing Countries (69%); Religion + Spirituality (62%); Climatology (61%)

**Industry:** Forestry + Logging (94%); Forestry Regulation + Policy (71%)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Is England's political degradation continuing?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XR7-P5N1-JC5G-10MV-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 14

**Length:** 643 words

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The British House of Commons elections will not put an end to the enormous divisions that have arisen in the country, *Hubert Smeets* suspects.

**FULL TEXT:**

The comedian in politics: it is a trend that usually emerges when a country is in crisis and in need of free vodka. In the UK, whose political culture is already considered to be the most pointed in the world, a comedian also came forward. Comedian John Harvey stood for election to the House of Commons in Uxbridge and South Ruislip, not coincidentally the constituency in which Prime Minister Johnson was up for re-election. There, as Count Binface, adorned with a stainless steel dustbin over his head, he presented his operetta manifesto against Johnson: 20,001 new police officers ("Why stop him? 20,000, Boris"), an extra trillion pounds a week (indeed 10 to the 12th power) for public health care, a referendum on whether there will be one, the nationalisation of model trains and singer Adele. During the election night, one voter shouted: "You feel in a parallel universe, when the most credible candidate is Count Binface."

Yet I did not stay awake last night to follow the results on the BBC, not even to see how presenter Huw Edwards, the successor to the eternal anchor David Dimbleby, would do. The general election is less important than the (folkloric) spectacle suggests. In England and the surrounding area, it is about something else.

Is that not swearing in church for a right-minded democrat? For all the exit or stay variants around the Brexit, doesn't it matter who won the majority in the House of Commons? That is all true. But will the losers accept that? Presumably not. Because of the Brexit, two types of popular will have been facing each other since 2016: the direct popular will through the referendum and the indirect popular will through the parliamentary elections.

That confrontation has turned into an irreconcilable dichotomy. In the 2016 referendum, it was all about black and white: 'leave' or 'remain'. Since then, shades of grey have only become more suspect. That was the colour of "cowards" in a "dead parliament", Johnson's legal right-hand man Geoffrey Cox said in the House of Commons at the end of September, qualifying opponents of the Brexit as "turkeys" for Christmas who, in short, would be inevitably slaughtered.

That sounded eloquent. But in fact Cox was disgracing parliament. In a democracy, there are no turkeys to be eaten. In a democracy, most decisions are reversible. However much politicians like to promise that they can solve problems once and for all, that decisiveness does not last beyond the next election. That's not weak tea from spineless people, that's the essence of a democratic society. Just as a prison where the prisoners cannot even dream of escaping becomes hell on earth, so an administrative system where the winners have everything and the losers nothing is in a permanent state of political civil war - or becomes a dictatorship.

The question, then, is whether yesterday's losers will accept their electoral fate today without risking their social responsibility tomorrow. If not, these elections will not stop the political degeneration that has swept over England since the Brexit.

It is not a wild guess to predict that the likelihood of the 'uncivil war' continuing beyond 13 December is greater than the likelihood of singer Adele being snubbed.

Eastern Europe expert *Hubert Smeets* works at the knowledge centre Raam op Rusland. He writes every other week with geopolitics editor Michel Kerres about the tilting world order.

Due to the Brexit, two types of popular will have been opposing each other since 2016

**Notes**

Eastern Europe expert Hubert Smeets works at the knowledge centre Raam op Rusland. He writes every other week with geopolitics editor Michel Kerres about the tilting world order.

**Graphic**

House of Commons candidateJohn Harvey alias Count Binface.

Count Binface

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Political Parties (81%); Politics (70%)

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[***Return of the law of the jungle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-120S-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** SPECIAL; Page 8

**Length:** 2429 words

**Byline:** Michel Kerres

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The World

In the 1910s, nothing remained the same in international relations. Those in power shamelessly put national self-interest above everything else, a new superpower broke through and in 'Brussels' ice water suddenly came out of the shower.

**FULL TEXT:**

For many ***European*** heads of government, it was their first face-to-face meeting. And it was an immediate hit. Donald Trump made an indelible impression.

During the warm Ascension weekend of 2017, there were two summits in close succession. The NATO summit to mark the opening of the new headquarters in Brussels, followed by a meeting of seven major industrialised nations (G7) in Sicily. It was Trump's maiden trip to the continent where his closest friends live.

There was uncertainty in the air. The new leader of the free West, just a few months into office, had spoken disparagingly of NATO and the ***European Union***. First meetings with ***European*** leaders such as Angela Merkel and Theresa May in the White House had not gone well. The NATO summit had been scaled down to a NATO dinner beforehand because Trump would not be able to concentrate on one topic for long.

Afterwards, it was difficult to say which image was the most disturbing. Donald Trump and Emmanuel Macron, the youthful French president who is boiling over with determination, were holding a handshake competition. That could be seen as a playful macho display. Donald Tusk, the President of the ***European Council***, said after his first meeting with Trump that he was not sure whether Trump and he agreed about Russia. That was already more worrying. Much attention was also paid to the elbowing with which Trump swept aside the leader of mini-state Montenegro so that he himself could be in the front row.

It was not a cosy affair. Trump was angry at the ***Europeans*** for not having their armed forces in order and for investing too little. Hardly anyone met the NATO spending standard of 2 per cent of the gross domestic product. Trump shouted that it should actually be 4 per cent!

The tone was set. Merkel and Macron tried to stop Trump from bidding farewell to the Paris Climate Agreement. They did not succeed. Merkel flew home and said that in the future ***Europe*** would have to stand up for itself more.

The encounter with Trump was a shock. ***European*** leaders realised that the Atlantic link, the basis of ***Europe'***s post-war peace and prosperity, was at stake. There had been high-profile conflicts between ***Europe*** and the US before - over trade, over warfare in the Middle East, over missile deployments. But now there was an American president who was shaking up the friendship and the club spirit itself. Indeed, the president who was supposed to be ***Europe***'s best friend was turning into its enemy.

Trump's world turned out to be a world of every man for himself, of autonomous nation states that don't let international organisations tell them what to do, don't care about international treaties - except when it's convenient. A world where the right of the strongest is valued and cooperation is devalued.

It is not only Trump who has severely challenged the Western model - free market, democracy, open borders, human rights - in the decade. Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin have also radically altered the balance of power this decade. Putin put Russia back on the map - in Eastern Europe and in Syria. Xi became an undisputed ruler in China and began to promote Chinese interests throughout the world. In short, a new, rough game between great powers was born.

And ***Europe***? ***Europe*** slowly woke up and is now trying to find an answer to the shifts. An experienced diplomat put it like this over a bad Chardonnay in an empty Brussels pub this autumn: Everything that is happening now, you just wouldn't have thought possible ten years ago. And it's happening so fast!"

**The mess of bankers**

Politically, the decade began in 2008, with the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States and the near-collapse of the global financial system. The avalanche of financial and economic calamity that began with the collapse of merchant bank Lehman Brothers brought economic disaster and existential doubt. The free market and corporate production were not as reliable as Wall Street had claimed for decades. Suddenly, civil servants and politicians had to clean up the mess caused by bankers.

And all this while, in 1989, the free market seemed to have begun an unparalleled triumphal march. Communism had imploded, the West had won, that was where everyone wanted to be. NATO and ***the EU*** welcomed one new member after another. In 2008, this victory lap came to an end. The *Masters of the Universe* had set in motion a whirlwind of troubled mortgages, bankruptcies and nationalisations that eroded the legitimacy of the Western system. In Beijing and Moscow, of course, they saw this too. The West was not as unassailable as the arrogant Westerners made it seem.

In the summer of 2008, something else happened that would cast its shadow on the next decade. Vladimir Putin's Russia started a war in Georgia. The news bulletins sounded like reports from a lost era. Russian tanks in ***European*** forests. Georgia was far away and the conflict was over before most Western Europeans had returned from their holidays - but it would have been good if the West had adjusted its view of Putin by then. The 'five-day war' was the biggest demonstration of Russian military might since the end of the Cold War.

In 2014, Putin annexed Crimea and intervened in the civil war in Ukraine. This led to great nervousness in Eastern Europe. If he took a piece of Ukraine, why not try something in the Baltics or the Balkans as well? The West now reacted energetically and put a spell on Russia. Economic sanctions were imposed, contacts were broken. That summer, the Netherlands was dragged into world politics when a Russian missile brought down flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine, killing 298 people, 189 of them Dutch.

You often hear it said: the Cold War is back. The Secretary-General of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in ***Europe***, Italian Lamberto Zannier, during a visit to The Hague in 2016, actually called the situation even more worrying than before 1989. At least in the Cold War there was still a conversation with Moscow - now the lines are dead.

The NATO countries agreed to make substantial investments in their armed forces. Defence expenditure is rising again, by tens of billions each year. The alliance also started a long-term plan to strengthen the defence of the eastern flank. In Brussels, old plans for the defence of ***Europe*** were dusted off again.

The comparison with the Cold War is too simplistic. Russia is not the Soviet Union and the world is not divided into two ideological blocs as it was then. Today's east-west standoff has its own dynamic with the medium-sized power Russia that would not win a long conflict with the West, but is strong enough to create a lot of turmoil with few resources. And to achieve lasting victories. On a Russian iPhone, Crimea has been Russian since this autumn.

**Jihadist attacks**

The stewardess at Brussels' Zaventem airport. The black truck at the Christmas market in Berlin. The partygoers on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. Everyone carries an image of the suffering and dismay caused by jihadist terror. The Western world had already experienced radical Islamic terrorism before, but suddenly it was back. According to the AIVD, 112 jihadist attacks were committed in the West between 2003 and 2018, three quarters of them between 2014 and 2018.

Elsewhere in the world, tens of thousands of people were killed by terrorism during that period, but when the terrorist turns up in your own neighbourhood, it makes more of an impression. The terror was an attack on the values of the West. It was the export product of the caliphate of Islamic State, an unlikely bloodthirsty regime that controlled an area the size of the United Kingdom in Syria and Iraq between 2014 and 2018. The caliphate was destroyed, thanks in part to extensive bombing led by the US, but the spirit of IS has not yet been driven out.

Syria turned into a vale of tears this decade. What began in 2011 as Syria's version of the Arab Spring turned into a complicated civil war with foreign intervention. In less than ten years, the country was completely disrupted, hundreds of thousands died and millions were displaced.

The war in Syria brought a flood of refugees to ***Europe***. Virtually endless colonies travelled north via Turkey and Greece. The migration put the parliamentary democracy in ***Europe*** under enormous pressure: how much hospitality could the West offer? *Schaffen wir dass?* as Chancellor Merkel said? Or was her moral appeal a tactical blunder that only encouraged migrants? Many voters saw immigration not as an enrichment but as a threat. ***Europe*** began in earnest to seal off its own territory; from 2021, a permanent corps of 10,000 border guards should secure the ***EU***.

Meanwhile, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, who did not hesitate to use chemical weapons against his own people, remained in office. Originally, the West still thought that Assad would have to step down sooner or later, but with the Russian intervention in 2015, his chances changed for the better. Russia and Iran helped him to victory. Now that a new future for Syria is being sought, the West is sidelined.

**Take back control**

Donald Trump dismisses the responsibility for peace and prosperity in the rest of the world. Under Obama, the US had already started to show more restraint. Obama had in a way shown Trump the way - although Trump will deny this until his death.

Trump not only stands up for himself and his country, he encourages other leaders to do the same. In the temple of global consultation, the UN, he put it this way in 2018: "We reject the ideology of 'globalism' and we embrace the doctrine of patriotism." Trump is the figurehead of a political movement that puts the national interest first.

He sells this idea under the banner of *America First*. In the United Kingdom, political consultant Dominic Cummings coined the brilliant slogan *Take Back Control*. It appealed to voters who felt they had lost something they were entitled to. The slogan was effective: in 2016, a narrow majority of Britons who took the trouble to cast a vote believed that their country should once again stand on its own two feet, separate from the ***European Union***.

For 'Brussels', it was like ice water suddenly coming out of the shower. The history of ***European*** cooperation was one of expansion, of growth. Now a member state insisted on leaving - it was unprecedented! The departure of the British meant a weakening of the ***EU***, but it also led in the long run to a revaluation of the cooperation among those who stayed behind. Partly because the world outside ***Europe*** changed so rapidly in the 1910s.

**A new epicentre**

The rise and fall of world powers is a matter of decades - or longer, but there are also moments when it suddenly dawns on everyone that the proportions have shifted, that an old superpower has gained competition from a new one, that a new epicentre has emerged. The China moment was in the 1910s.

President Xi Jinping is systematically expanding his influence. Not to dominate the world, but to promote Chinese interests in every corner of it. In 2049, the official motto is that the huge country must be 'powerful, unified, unbeatable, prosperous and happy'.

China's economic spurt, with its staggering growth figures, initially drew admiration. Everyone wanted to do business with China and Chinese investments and loans were of course welcome everywhere. Originally, the assumption was even that the country would sooner or later develop according to the Western model. That was a miscalculation.

Xi (66) became party leader in 2012 and president in 2013. He increased the power of the party and took on the appearance of an unassailable ruler. Under his leadership, domestic repression increased. The limit on presidential terms was scrapped and in the western province of Xinjang, millions of Uighurs, a Muslim minority, were locked up in education camps.

Towards the end of the decade, admiration in the West gradually gave way to suspicion. Was Chinese expansion really so innocent? Was it wise to let Chinese companies build the new generation 5G internet? Was the competition with Chinese state-owned companies fair? And if countries become economically dependent on China, how critical are they to the new lender? ***European*** countries with large Chinese investments suddenly sided with China in the UN.

The ***EU*** started describing China as a '*systemic rival*'. The naivety has been discarded, but a balance is still being sought between the economic allure of trading with China and appropriate suspicion in dealing with a new, non-democratic superpower.

**Comfort zone**

The 1910s was a decade of building walls, not tearing them down. Of increased military spending, not peace dividends. Of power realism, not idealism. Of terror in the neighbourhood and new enmities on the world stage.

In the 1910s, the West was, to put it in jargon, taken out of its comfort zone. The Netherlands started investing more in diplomacy and defence. On the threshold of the 1920s, a "geopolitical" Commission took office in Brussels, seeking to "speak the language of power". Looser from the US, challenged by Russia, besieged by China and bordering on the ever troubled North Africa and Middle East, there was nothing for it but to rethink its own power. In the 1910s, vulnerability was rediscovered.

Now there was an American president who tore up the friendship and club spirit

Was it wise to let Chinese companies build the new generation Internet?

**Graphic**

World leaders at the G7 meeting in Taormina, Italy, in 2017.

Photo Sean Kilpatrick/ AP

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Embargoes + Sanctions (93%); Weapons + Arms (93%); International Relations (88%); ***European*** Union (82%); COVID-19 Coronavirus (75%); Censorship (69%); Defense Departments (65%); Rule Of Law (65%); Chemical + Biological Weapons (63%); Election Fraud (63%); Protests + Demonstrations (63%)

**Industry:** Energy + Utility Trade (64%)

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2019

**End of Document**

[***Does the Netherlands want more labour migration; Column***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-11YX-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 2

**Length:** 550 words

**Byline:** Menno Tamminga

**Body**

The future surprises, time and again. Take the basis of society: all of us. The assumptions about steady population growth are no longer correct. So say six research institutes who have been commissioned by nine ministries to conduct a population study up to 2050. In recent years, immigration has reached unprecedented levels, the development of the average number of children has fallen short of expectations and the increase in life expectancy has stagnated. Even the experts sound surprised.

The Central Bureau of Statistics published population forecasts last week. The growth is accelerating. Main cause: immigration. Migration (non-European asylum seekers, workers from the ***European Union*** and India) is always underestimated.

Between 2000 and 2009, CBS counted 119,000 immigrants on average per year. Between 2010 and 2019, this number increased to 201,000. For the next ten years, CBS estimates their number to be 296,000 per year on average.

What consequences does that have? Think of the labour market and working conditions (migrants are more likely to do flexible work, dirty work and dangerous work, a large supply of cheap labour puts pressure on wage increases). Migration also affects public housing (who builds what and where?) and education (in international comparisons, the performance of Dutch schoolchildren is getting worse, not better). In short: what are the consequences for prosperity?

Another quote from the reports of the research institutes that were sent to the Lower House last week without much fanfare. There is a good stock of demographic knowledge, "but few studies specifically address the consequences of developments in child numbers, life expectancy and migration when these do not develop moderately but instead rise or fall sharply." And that is what is happening now.

Population politics does not appeal to the imagination as much as climate. While they do have some things in common: like the long-term orientation. And there is also a connection. Logically, climate politics should start with population politics: fewer people on earth means less pollution. But that is taboo for religious, cultural and economic reasons. What also does not help: climate policy has a 'left' image (anti-oil giants, higher taxes), population policy has a 'right' image (anti-Muslim). The political polarisation makes common policy on both subjects a mirage so far.

Yet it will have to be done. Population size and climate are topical issues that affect everyone and that no citizen can escape. What should that policy look like? Doing nothing is always an option. You can work with migration quotas. You can make demands on education levels.

Do you come into conflict with the ***European*** Commission and the ***European*** Parliament when you raise the issue of the free movement of people in the ***European Union***? Of course you do. But even argument is a core ***European*** value. Moreover, there is always that possibility, or that political danger, that population and immigration policy does inflame voters. As professor Paul Scheffer said last week in *the Volkskrant*: "Look at the Brexit. It is a direct consequence of incoherent immigration policy."

*Marike Stellingais* absent.

Population growth and climate are topical issues that no citizen can ignore

**Notes**

Marike Stellingais absent.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Immigration (94%); Labor Force (73%); Population + Demographics (70%); Population Size (69%)

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[***Love letter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-T1R1-DYTV-D1TB-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 17

**Length:** 462 words

**Byline:** Frank van Vliet

**Body**

Love letters, who hasn't written them? I certainly wrote some, but it was not my best work.

False sentiment, misjudgement through blind love, exaggeration - these are the dangers that lurk. At 58, Frans Timmermans is old enough and, as Vice-President of the ***European*** Commission and a linguist, intelligent enough to recognise these risks, but - now that the Brexit seems to be a fact - he nevertheless wrote a love letter in which he walked into all these pitfalls. Not to a sturdy blonde or a charming brunette, but to the British. The message: 'I love you and you can always come back.'

Timmermans has been singled out for it and could have known that, and not only because he had previously described them as 'idiots' and 'failed Harry Potters'. There is a thin line between love and hate.

But still, I understand Frans (speaking of love letters, I allow myself to be amusing) a bit.

Frans and I have something in common. Like Frans, I was educated in Britain for some time. He was twelve years old at a British school in Rome, and I was twenty-five at City University in London. Later, I lived in England for five years as a correspondent and yes, that does something to you. I recognise a number of elements in Frans's declaration of love for the British. More than in Belgium, education is permeated with culture, literature, speech and acting. The humour is unparalleled because there is always a touch of self-mockery. London is the swingingest city in ***Europe*** and what country produced the Beatles and the Rolling Stones or even the Sex Pistols? Which nation has better actors, better writers?

So, like French, it pains me a little that the British (especially the English, the Scots don't like it at all and the Northern Irish are hesitant) want to separate from 'us' - 'we're friends, aren't we? - but I am not surprised.

The difference between rich and poor in Great Britain is much bigger than in the Netherlands, the 'safety net' of social services is less intricate. Large groups at the bottom of society felt threatened by the hordes of Eastern Europeans who were suddenly allowed to work there because of EU rules.

At the top was always a desire to return to the glorious days of the empire where the sun never set. That is a lethal combination for ***EU membership***. While Frans states in his love letter that all EU countries are unique and that these differences are the very strength of the ***European Union***, the British have understood very well that this is precisely not the message coming from Brussels. They are going too far and are looking for uniformity to be regulated. And that is what Britain is for. Love letter or not.

British pass for

EU uniformity

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**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); International Relations (63%)

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[***Danish laws as an example***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-T1R1-DYTV-D1Y6-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** REPORTAGE; Page 35

**Length:** 361 words

**Body**

At the height of the refugee crisis, hundreds of thousands of migrants applied for asylum in Germany and Sweden. Being sandwiched between these two countries, Denmark had to take action to prevent a similar influx.

The fear of the arrival of large groups of migrants caused social unrest, which in turn led to a great call for action. This created a special political cooperation between the right-wing block and the left-wing social democrats.

The parties worked together on a plan to limit the influx of foreigners and also to subject the group that is already there to stricter rules. According to ***MEP*** Peter Kofod of the Danish People's Party, the Social Democrats supported "about 85 percent" of the proposals to tighten the rules on immigration and integration. According to Kofod, asylum legislation has been made 146 times stricter.

For example, an asylum seeker can only apply for family reunification after three years, whereas in the Netherlands this has to be done within three months. Also, family members now have to pay their own travel costs to come to Denmark.

"Politicians from various countries have come to me in recent months to ask how we have handled this in Denmark," says the ***MEP***. When asked whether Dutch MPs have also approached Kofod, the man had to laugh. "Unfortunately, I can't say that," he confesses.

In addition, Denmark also has a special opt-out clause with the ***European Union***, which gives the country more freedom of movement. "This opt-out clause allows our country to set its own policies on defence, police, the ***euro*** and citizenship," says Kofod. "This is how we introduced controls at the border."

"But we, too, must abide by international rules. Yet we are able to conduct a strict policy without violating international obligations," says Kofod. "Denmark is a leader in strict immigration policy and therefore I think the Danish laws will serve as an example for other ***European*** countries. If we can do it, so can other countries in the ***EU***."

**Classification**

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[***Canal route increasingly used by migrants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-11WX-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 6

**Length:** 415 words

**Byline:** Eva Cukier

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Migration

Increasingly, migrants are avoiding lorries and ferries in their attempt to cross the Channel because of strict controls.

**FULL TEXT:**

A record number of migrants tried to cross the Channel by boat in 2019. In 2018, 586 migrants chose the Channel route, this year there are already over 1,600.

On Thursday night, the French and British coastguards fished out more than sixty illegal migrants from six rubber boats. The people on board, who according to them come from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, dared to cross over from the French Cap Griz-Nez just below Calais. From there it is only 33 kilometres to the British coast. The British Home Office announced on Thursday that it would hand them over to the Migration Service.

Although the Channel is considered very dangerous because of the busy shipping traffic and the cold water, more and more smugglers and their 'customers' are resorting to it. The reason, according to British and French authorities, is the strict control of freight traffic through the Channel Tunnel and on regular ferries. The closure of illegal refugee camps, such as near Calais in 2016, has also caused an increase in the number of crossings.

A large proportion of the crossers are from Iran, followed by Afghans, Pakistanis, Iraqis and Bengalis. According to human rights organisations, the high number of Iranians could be explained by the fact that Serbia lifted the visa requirement for Iran in autumn 2017. After a large influx of Iranians, it was reintroduced at the end of last year under pressure from the ***European Union***.

Smugglers are becoming increasingly inventive, according to Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA). For a fee of two to three thousand ***euros*** they transport migrants from locations in France and sometimes from other ***European*** countries to Calais. There they are sent on the water in sometimes rickety boats.

We see smugglers with a total disregard for human life. They put people they regard as nothing more than commodities at risk," said an NCA spokesman in September, following the arrest of six smugglers in Kent.

Indeed, things are going wrong more and more often. In August, 31-year-old Iranian Mitra Mehrad was (as far as is known) the first migrant to drown in the English Channel. The Dutch and Afghan smugglers she had paid were sentenced earlier this month to three and six years in prison respectively.

The body of Mitra Mehrad was found off the coast of IJmuiden

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Refugees (94%); Immigration (88%); Illegal Immigrants (84%); Smuggling (68%); Government Departments + Authorities (65%); Communities + Neighborhoods (61%)

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[***Brexit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-1203-00000-00&context=) [***British deadline EUdeal too tight'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-1203-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** ECONOMICS; Page 6

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**Dateline:** BRUSSELS

**Body**

. The transition period for the British to conclude a trade deal with Brussels after the Brexit is too tight, says ***European*** Commission President Von der Leyen. The Brits will leave the ***EU*** on 31 January, but must still comply with EU rules during the talks. Prime Minister Johnson wants to conclude a deal before the end of 2020. According to Von der Leyen, that is too short. (ANP)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2019

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[***Populist right proved to be a stayer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-V871-JC5G-120V-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Guus Valk

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

The 1910s brought political fragmentation, polarisation and a "culture of judgement", with historic defeats for governing parties. That Mark Rutte remained the undisputed prime minister all those years, is "the mystery of our time".

**FULL TEXT:**

What defines a decade? The further removed you are from an era, the easier it is to answer that question in a few keywords. Say 'the 1930s', and everyone knows what you are talking about: Colijn, National Socialism, threat of war. The 1950s: Drees, austerity, reconstruction. The 1990s: Kok, the Third Way, Purple. That is how political history canonises.

And the 10s? One thing is certain: Mark Rutte (VVD) was Prime Minister for almost the entire decade. His name will always be linked to this era. But what else? What made this decade different from the previous ones?

At the request of *NRC,* five political scientists make an attempt. Ask them about the political climate in the Netherlands between 2010 and 2020, and you will hear surprisingly unanimous answers.

The 10s, says Rudy Andeweg, are the years when "alarmist visions" of the past became true.

The 10s, says Armen Hakhverdian, "were the decade of political fragmentation in the Netherlands".

The 10s, says Sarah de Lange, "have intensified polarisation".

The 10s, says Merijn Oudenampsen, have shown "a shifting of political divisions".

The 10s, says Cas Mudde, provided "even more success for far-right parties".

Dutch politics fragmented at a dramatic pace this decade, say the political scientists. The large middle parties, which always had the upper hand, have, with the exception of the VVD, virtually been played out. Social contrasts became more pronounced. These were, they say, less about socio-economic themes and much more about identity. In short, it was the decade of the culture struggle.

**Fan democracy**

Rudy Andeweg, emeritus professor of political science at Leiden University, quotes PvdA veteran Ed van Thijn. At the end of the 1960s, he warned of a 'fan democracy'. He meant that the political extremes would move further apart, and that the middle would implode. This trend could threaten democracy. The Dutch parliamentary system could implode, like the Weimar Republic in Germany in 1933.

Andeweg: Ed van Thijn was far ahead of his time. What he feared back then is now happening. Moderate parties have been eroded, voters are no longer loyal to their own group. They often severely punish parties that do govern."

This "culture of judgement" has drastically changed the relationship between citizens and politics, says Sarah de Lange, extraordinary professor of political science at the University of Amsterdam. The list of punished government parties is long. The CDA (-20 seats), the PvdA (-3) and the ChristenUnie (-1) lost seats in 2010. The CDA (-8) and the ally PVV (-9) in 2012. In 2017, the PvdA suffered the biggest defeat in party history (-29). Only the VVD, which has supplied the prime minister since 2010, managed to avoid this.

Disunity, says Sarah de Lange, has always existed in the Netherlands. But the nature of that division has changed. People disagree less and less on the basis of arguments, as they should in a healthy democracy, but have started to see each other as moral enemies."

People reject not so much what someone thinks, but what someone is in their eyes. Affective polarisation', political scientists call it. This has made politics more personal, says De Lange. The percentage of people who say they hate other people for their political views has risen by the end of the decade to the level of the late 1960s, the post-war peak of social polarisation.

**Polish plasterer**

What is causing this conflict? Politicians eagerly quote from the book The *road to somewhere* about the Brexit, by British journalist David Goodhart. The '*anywheres' are* the highly educated cosmopolitans, who have an interest in globalisation and can feel at home 'anywhere', and the '*somewheres'* are the losers, who are afraid of change and feel at home 'somewhere'. De Lange: ,,I think that dividing line is too simple. One moment you can be a winner of globalisation, for example because you hire a cheap Polish plasterer, and the next moment you can be a loser because your job is on the line because your company is moving to India."

According to De Lange, it is more about "the perception people have of their own lives: do they consider themselves a winner or a loser? People asked themselves that question during the major crises of this decade: the economic crisis, the refugee crisis and the climate crisis."

Political scientist Merijn Oudenampsen, now working at the University of Amsterdam, obtained his doctorate at Tilburg University last year on the ideas behind the Fortuyn revolt of 2002. For a long time, he says, political conflicts were primarily socio-economic: they were, for example, about the distribution of wealth. That conflict has faded into the background, to be replaced by a cultural conflict.

It started in the final days of the Purple II government (1998-2002), with the rise of Pim Fortuyn. The difference between left and right became blurred. The Third Way embraced by the PvdA, in practice resembled the market capitalism of the VVD. Because politics needs conflict, says Merijn Oudenampsen, the debate slowly but surely shifted to other themes. From then on, it was all about the multicultural society or Islam.

The 2015 refugee crisis reinforced this trend, says Cas Mudde, professor at the University of Georgia. ,,In more countries, including in Central and Eastern Europe, radical right-wing *frames* became dominant. The process that began in the first decade continued into the second decade. Today, mainstream parties, primarily but not exclusively right-wing, not only want to restrict immigration and make integration stricter, but they want this explicitly to protect national culture and security."

This cultural conflict works out well for right-wing conservative politicians, says Merijn Oudenampsen. The collapse of the middle parties in the 1910s, especially the CDA, created a conservative wave. The CDA united regents and employees, conservatives and progressives. For a long time, the CDA was a bulwark against the rise of right-wing populism, while that movement did emerge in other ***European*** countries. After the collapse of the popular parties, the gap between 'people' and 'elite' emerged."

**Political marketing**

The populist right has long since ceased to talk only about Islam, as it did in the years after 9/11. It is now about a suppressed popular will. Oudenampsen: "Thierry Baudet has a better sense of the Zeitgeist than Geert Wilders, who almost exclusively opposes Islam. Baudet's Owl of Minerva speech [after he won the States elections this year], was about the debris of Western civilisation. He not only distances himself from migration, but also turns against feminism and modernity, which would weaken the West."

In the past few years, climate has become the dominant theme for the populist right. Oudenampsen: "In their criticism, they focus on morally high-minded goat fund types, on the lifestyle of the higher educated. Look: Jesse Klaver flies himself too'".

This is partly political marketing. If you want to be politically successful in this day and age, you have to sell economic issues as a cultural struggle, says Rudy Andeweg. The current climate debate is about redistribution: we have to redesign the economy, and the costs of this will fall on the citizens. Thierry Baudet turned that into a cultural debate, which was a masterstroke. The debate about ***Europe*** shows the same pattern. It should be about the economy, but both supporters and opponents talk about it as a cultural project.

Sarah de Lange says that in the years following the Purple Party, populist parties have given voice to discontent that has been around for a long time. That is good news, she says. But: 'The groups who vote for PVV and FVD are also influenced by those parties. Sentiments deepen. So a group of voters is drifting further and further away from the rest of the electorate. The polarisation has a self-reinforcing effect.

**Mega Identity Politics**

It is a mild version of what has been happening in the United States in recent years. Americans are no longer politically, but socially divided, wrote political scientist Lilliana Mason last year in the book *Uncivil Agreement*. Race, place of residence, culture and religion have become determining factors in the era of 'mega-identity politics', as she calls it. "American citizens think they are in a life-and-death struggle against a socially homogeneous other group."

Democracy has become, as conservative commentator Charlie Sykes wrote, "a binary, tribal world". Everything is at stake: the fate of Western civilisation or the survival of the planet. Therefore, everything revolves around the victory of one's own tribe."

The left has little idea how to deal with the new relationships. Leftist parties are internally divided on cultural matters. They do not want to alienate more conservative white workers. The SP, and to a lesser extent the PvdA, have therefore started using stricter language on migration. The progressive vanguard, visible for example in the anti-racism movement, has remained a small avant-garde.

And when it comes to the economy, "it is difficult for the left to deviate from the centre-right discourse", says Merijn Oudenampsen. The financial crisis, which started this decade, has not led to any real debate. In the Netherlands, the left and the right hold on to each other when it comes to the economy. Although Western left-wing parties have not been striving for a balanced budget for a long time, the PvdA still has it in its latest election programme. Internationally, all kinds of things are shifting on the left. Capitalism is under discussion everywhere. But in the Netherlands there is hardly any commotion."

What about the 'economism' of Jesse Klaver (GroenLinks)? Or the VVD party chairman Klaas Dijkhoff and his CDA colleague Pieter Heerma, who wanted to talk about the excesses of capitalism? It was largely "testimonial politics", Oudenampsen thinks. It never became concrete. That, he says, is due to the Central Planning Bureau, which calculates programmes and counter budgets and can reject them, thus blocking new ideas. But it is also because new economic ideas would mean fiddling with the structure of all the institutions.

And Dutch politicians hate major reforms: they are far too complicated. They prefer cultural politics, which is only symbolic. Oudenampsen: ,,Thierry Baudet could consistently say: 'We are being undermined by our universities'. But when [SP leader] Emile Roemer said '*over my dead body*' in 2012 when it came to budget policy, that immediately disqualified him from participating in the government."

**Democratic regression**

Dutch democracy, say the political scientists, has nevertheless done its cushioning work. Cabinets fell, but the system never faltered, in contrast to other Western countries. According to Sarah de Lange, the fragmentation and tribalisation of politics sometimes caused voters to vote more strategically. Left-wing voters gave the PvdA a major victory in 2012 because they did not want the VVD to win the elections. However, that support is much more fleeting, as party loyalty has declined dramatically.

Armen Hakhverdian, political scientist at the University of Amsterdam, says the 10s witnessed a major democratic regression worldwide. About ten years ago, we had a peak in democratisation. Since then, a decline has set in, particularly in large democracies such as the US, India and Brazil. It doesn't happen with coups. But in the US you can see how democracy is being destroyed by small steps, for example by the way in which electoral districts are being redrawn."

The Netherlands escaped the wave of authoritarianism, says Hakhverdian. Paradoxically, precisely because the political landscape was so fragmented. As a result, voters are less blind to the shortcomings of their party. They can switch to a like-minded party. Moreover, power is no longer concentrated in one party. Seen in this light, the fragmentation has turned out to be a *blessing in disguise*: the international anti-democratic trend has largely passed the Netherlands by."

The fact that Mark Rutte has been the undisputed prime minister in such a divided country since 2010, thus ensuring stability, is, according to Armen Hakhverdian, "the great mystery of our time". In a way, it is typically Dutch: we have only had four prime ministers in the last 35 years. They do not usually polarize, is the idea, and are usually found sympathetic. Rutte also has this kind of pragmatic image. That is strange, says Hakhverdian. Behind the policies of the Rutte cabinets, there was indeed a hidden ideology, that of neo-liberalism.

Other political scientists also have no answer as to why it is of all people that Mark Rutte has dominated this decade. Rudy Andeweg: Rutte is a technocratic manager in the tradition of Kok and Lubbers. He depoliticises the debate. This works out well for Rutte, but he has contributed to the gradual weakening of the political centre. Coalition partners are being eaten up. The CDA and the PvdA are still a long way from recovering from that blow."

The popularity of Rutte, and the stability of the VVD, are both finite, says Armen Hakhverdian: The Netherlands has long premierships that always end dramatically for the largest governing party. The CDA after Lubbers, the PvdA after Kok and again the CDA after Balkenende all collapsed at the end of their reigns. It would be a unique achievement if Rutte and the VVD could escape this in the next decade."

Moderate parties have been eroded, voters are no longer loyal to their own group'.

The international anti-democratic trend has largely passed the Netherlands by'.

**Graphic**

Prime Minister Mark Rutte in front of the Catshuis in The Hague in 2015.

Photo David van Dam

Jesse Klaver and Geert Wilders, 2016

Photo David van Dam

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[***Policy elite has eroded government***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-T1R1-DYTV-D1T1-00000-00&context=)

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**Body**

The economy showed very satisfactory growth after the troubles of the credit and ***euro crises were over***. The spectre of secular stagnation that economists warned about a few years ago has not materialised. Within the ***EU***, the Netherlands was among the fastest growers.

Democracy, too, has functioned well; more than three-quarters of the population is satisfied with the democratic process. On the right, however, there is a considerable group of dissatisfied people, comprising about 15-20% of the electorate. However, the parties representing these dissatisfied people have such eccentric programmatic intentions that they marginalise themselves from the outset. Moreover, the small coalition government of 2010-2012 does not have a very good reputation.

The fact that the economy and democracy are satisfactory by no means implies that the homeland is not struggling with serious institutional and policy problems, which in the long run can at least threaten the democratic and social content of society. It concerns the erosion and resulting dysfunction of a large part of the government apparatus. This erosion is, in fact, the result of government policy itself. For three decades, the dominant policy elite has been of the opinion that the government must be modelled on neo-liberal principles. This means a small, decisive government that leaves as many of its tasks as possible to the supposedly beneficial work of the market. The result of this dominant ideology is that almost the entire executive apparatus of the government has been the victim of lengthy reorganisations and extensive cutbacks. The unpleasant results of this policy are becoming increasingly clear. Just think of the UWV, the Tax and Customs Administration, youth welfare, mental health care, the decentralisation of the WMO, appropriate education, the closure of care homes, the approach to social workshops, the change of study grants into a loan system, and the incredible fiddling with the Groningen problems. The entire energy transition also makes an inconsistent and incompetent impression, with the government seeming to be constantly surprised by the effects of its own policies in the past and present. Thus, traditionally solid organisations have lost the citizens' trust.

Take the Social Support Act, which decentralised part of the care from the national government to the municipal governments. In fact, this was a major cutback; 30% of the budget disappeared. This cutback was accompanied by painful propaganda about self-reliance and the participation society. The municipalities may have done their best, but the implementation proved arbitrary and thousands of the most vulnerable citizens became the victims. It remains incomprehensible that the PvdA was partly responsible for this. The electoral punishment of 2017 was justified. The self-reliant citizens of the participation society, who had in fact simply been abandoned by the government, were at the same time not trusted. If they used government services, they were subjected to draconian regulations and shoddy accountability. The government certainly does not give the impression of being able to master the problems it has created in the foreseeable future.

Maarten van Rossem

Citizen was abandoned and distrusted

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[***DEAR READER***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-T1R1-DYTV-D205-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Margo Stols

**Body**

***European Commissioner*** Frans Timmermans' 'love letter' to the United Kingdom is hard on many readers' minds. "It breaks Timmermans' heart now that England is leaving the ***EU***. You must mean crocodile tears", Els Strikkers responds. "Because this means he loses income for his climate targets, nothing more and nothing less." J. de Laat calls the letter hypocritical. "Now it is all about the Brexit and he tells the British that they are always welcome to rejoin the ***EU***. Some months ago, British politicians who came to Brussels to negotiate were called 'idiots' by him, among others." L.J.J. Dorrestijn: "Timmermans is the figurehead of everything in the ***EU*** that the British want to get rid of." J.H. Boerema notes that, as is often the case in a divorce, both partners are to blame and thinks the ***EU*** should also dare to look in the mirror and recognise that mistakes have been made. "Hopefully then a difficult and expensive fight divorce can be avoided."

Margo Stols

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[***Left-wing Denmark takes right-wing approach***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XVC-T1R1-DYTV-D1Y5-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** REPORTAGE; Page 34

**Length:** 1263 words

**Body**

Socialists: 'We recognised too late the problems migration can cause'.

Tackle the migration problem. Say it in the Netherlands and you are more right than right. In Denmark, it is the (left-wing) social democrats who put their money where their mouth is. Their tough demands on migration and integration seem to work very well there.

Mohammed Afri (18) proudly shows off the coffee shops in his neighbourhood Mjolnerparken in the capital Copenhagen. While a group of students are having cappuccinos, he slaloms across the road between the bicycles. "Look here, the new park. This is not a ghetto at all!"

The government thinks otherwise. Reason: the neighbourhood is frequently in the news because of crime. More than 80 percent of the inhabitants have a non-western background, three quarters went to primary school only and a large part is dependent on social services.

The living conditions, too, offer little cause for optimism. In the low-rise flats, the residents live crammed together in small houses. The few Danes who come to the district prefer to cycle through it as quickly as possible.

"Nobody denies that there are problems here," says Afri. "Only people of colour live in this neighbourhood and some of them have trouble with the language. There are also boys who find it necessary to walk around with a knife in their pocket. Of course that is inexcusable."

Integration

In Denmark, the ghettos have become a symbol of the problems that newcomers cause when integration fails. To put an end to this, the government has been cracking down on the neighbourhoods since last year. The government has designated twenty-eight of these neighbourhoods, which are comparable to Vogelaar neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, as ghettos.

This can have far-reaching consequences. For example, people on welfare cannot rent accommodation in the neighbourhood. In addition, parents are obliged to send their toddlers to childcare, where they are taught Danish language and culture for twenty-five hours a week.

The 'ghetto legislation' is one of the examples that Denmark is taking to tackle the problems. This is done in two areas: the door for asylum seekers is closed as far as possible and those who are already there must integrate better.

Unique

What makes Denmark so unique in its tough approach is that the Social Democrats (SD) support this strict policy. Since the left-wing party seized power this summer, it has continued to enforce the regulations unabatedly.

"Mjolnerparken is an example of a parallel society," says MP Rasmus Stoklund. He is spokesperson for migration and integration for the Social Democrats. "It has taken us too long to realise how many problems migration can cause."

"On top of that, a lot of people who come to our country are not real refugees, but migrants. We spend millions every year on these people, instead of spending this money on the real refugees who are still in the conflict zones."

With strict measures, Denmark was able to drastically curtail the influx of asylum seekers. Whereas at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015 there were still 20,935 asylum applications per year, last year there were only 3,570. By comparison, in 2018 there were 24,025 applications in the Netherlands.

To achieve this, the SD worked closely with the right-wing parties in parliament. This also happened with the right-wing populist Danish People's Party. Together with the right-wing bloc, the Social Democrats voted for restrictions on family reunification and for the 'Jewellery Act'. According to this legislation, asylum seekers must hand over valuables in order to contribute to the procedure and reception costs.

According to Danish Mette (31), who lives near Mjolnerparken, the strict measures are 'crazy'. "This is a way of making foreigners out to be criminals. It is terrible for the parents that children have to go to day care. Bizarre that a left-wing party punishes people like this."

Afri, who works at an after-school centre herself, thinks it is actually a good thing that children learn the language. "About half of the children in my group are foreigners. Sometimes I see that children with a migrant background have difficulty with the language," says the boy. "Children are not harmed if they learn the language. It's just helpful if they speak Danish well."

Peter Kofod also believes that it is primarily "in the interest of the children" to learn the language. He was a Member of Parliament for the Danish People's Party for four years until he was elected as a Member of the ***European*** Parliament this summer. "There are so many examples where children almost don't speak the language," he says. "If you want to live here, you have to adapt yourself to become Danish."

"I am glad that the Social Democrats support this strict policy," Kofod continued. "They have realised that a strict immigration policy is the price you pay to govern."

"The party could never win the elections if the Danes think they are weak on immigration," says Kofod. "After being very weak on this issue for 25 years, they suddenly became radical opponents of migration."

Restrictive

"Nevertheless, we would like to see other parties adopt our views," says the 29-year-old ***MEP***. "It is important that we introduce restrictive measures in the field of asylum. Only I do not believe that they mean these actions deep in their hearts."

"Nonsense", says the Social Democrat Stoklund in his office in the Danish Parliament. In front of him is a bowl of sweets from the right-wing populist Danish People's Party. "Would you like one too?" When asked if the sweets are a metaphor for a political battle over migration, Stoklund has to laugh. "They taste good," he says.

"We are not a right-wing party", says the social democrat. "But we need stability and that's why you shouldn't keep changing the rules. Because we want broad support, we work with everyone."

"A strict migration policy is the consequence of a welfare model with social securities, such as free education and health care. If we want to preserve this model in Denmark, we must be strict about who wants access to this system," the MP argues. "If people do not contribute to the system, then the balance tips and the model becomes unsustainable."

Unemployment

"In all the wrong statistics, we see an overrepresentation of foreigners, such as crime, education level and unemployment," says Stoklund. "For this reason, we must limit this influx. This applies in particular to asylum seekers from North Africa and the Middle East."

"Women from non-Western countries do very poorly in the labour market," says Stoklund. "We want them to do much better and that is why compulsory childcare is necessary. There the children can learn the language and common values."

The Social Democrats, who work together with the Labour Party in ***Europe***, would prefer the problems to be tackled at the ***European level***. "We need to move towards a new system where asylum seekers want to go to a reception centre within the region," the Social Democrat argues. "We want to turn the way ***Europe*** treats refugees on its head."

"The Labour Party is also always welcome for a cup of coffee," says Stoklund. "Should they drop by, they too will receive sweets from the Danish People's Party."

Asylum seekers' flow drastically curtailed

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**Body**

Brexit

London - The ***European Union*** will 'not be rushed into a trade deal with the British after the brexit'. That is what the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney said on Sunday to the British BBC. According to Coveney, the ***EU*** will conduct the negotiations patiently, aiming for the best possible deal. The negotiations on the future (trade) relationship between London and Brussels will start after the brexit, which must take place on 31 January. During a transition period until the end of 2020, the United Kingdom will still abide by ***European*** rules.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2020

**End of Document**

[***Solidarity with Polish judges***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XYT-9WG1-JCBS-P2B0-00000-00&context=)

De Telegraaf

13 January 2020 Monday

Entire circulation

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 13

**Length:** 613 words

**Byline:** Rob Savelberg

**Body**

by Rob Savelberg

WARSAW - In protest against the dismantling of the Polish rule of law, hundreds of threatened judges, prosecutors and lawyers marched through Warsaw this weekend, while thirty thousand citizens applauded. In our country, too, judges are criticised. Some of them travelled to Poland. "We cannot accept the breakdown of democracy," says Marc de Werd, professor of justice.

De Werd, wearing a black robe and white collar, shows his solidarity with the ***European*** flag. "Very special, that people here are clapping for judges. Heart-warming. I am very happy with that", says the justice of the Court of Appeal of Amsterdam. "This protest by judges has never been seen in the world."

How are Polish judges threatened in their duties? How is life made difficult for them?

"It started with smear campaigns. There were billboards along the motorway with large photographs of judges. They contained all kinds of inaccuracies. That they had committed sex scandals. That they gambled in the casino. That they were corrupt. Those campaigns by the government went very far."

Quite a scary feeling, in the middle of ***Europe***.

"That is a very scary feeling. Because Poland is a big country within the ***EU***."

What happens next?

"Polish judges receive disciplinary sanctions when they do normal things like pronounce judgments, or ask questions to the ***European*** Court of Justice. While that is just part of their job. If that were to happen in the Netherlands, the whole legal system would collapse."

Is this only a Polish problem?

"No. We have open borders, trade with each other. Dutch companies with problems in Poland need independent, impartial judges. And that is less and less guaranteed in Poland. The influence of politics on the judiciary here is dangerous. We must ensure that the problem, which also exists in Hungary and Malta, does not spread further in ***Europe***."

In the Netherlands, judges do not interfere much in the public debate. They do not like to pronounce on political matters such as environmental laws and migration. That is a sensitive issue.

"Absolutely. You have to distinguish two things. Judges have freedom of speech, may give interviews. And the other is just doing your job. If you have a judgment in a case like Urgenda (the climate judgment of the Supreme Court about the CO2 emissions of the Netherlands, ed.), then that is not just an opinion. But the government is held to its own agreements by the law."

I hear more and more voices saying that judges should not interfere in politics.

Judges don't often take very clear positions outside of their work. And certainly not politically."

In other countries it is different. There, judges speak out more loudly on all kinds of issues. Judges there are persons of great social authority.

"Judges in the Netherlands are very cautious. They do not easily give interviews or sit on talk shows. They don't want to be associated with political views. That can be difficult for them when they have to make decisions."

So there is tension between law and politics?

Yes, there is discussion about whether they make political decisions. For example, in the judgements on nitrogen and Urgenda, or the IS people. But those are not political decisions, but rulings in which the government is held to the law it made itself."

Do these times not call for more outspoken judges?

"I don't think so. I don't blame the citizens. Judges especially need to explain much better why they make which decisions. People sometimes misunderstand. They don't read the ruling. That's where it goes wrong."

Dutch lawyers

protesting in toga along

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Judges (94%); Trial + Procedure (94%); Law Courts + Tribunals (77%); Criminal Law (61%)

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2020

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[***They give you a boat and you have to figure it out'; Crossing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XYV-T061-DYMH-R4V0-00000-00&context=) [***The routes out of Calais are perilous***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5XYV-T061-DYMH-R4V0-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** CONTENTS; Page 1

**Length:** 1386 words

**Byline:** Eva Cukier

**Dateline:** Cap Gris-Nez

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Reportage*  Migrants by the Canal

Hunted by French police, migrants near Calais have two life-threatening options: hide in a truck or take a rubber dinghy across the busy Channel.

**FULL TEXT:**

Night is falling, a biting wind blows over the chalk cliffs of Cap Gris-Nez, south of Calais. The lighthouse on the cape has just lit its lamp, its long beam waving over the dark hills, the narrow beach and the rough, black sea. This is where the strait of Calais is at its narrowest: just 33 kilometres to England. Anyone who boards a boat here at ungodly hours must be determined - or desperate.

It is exactly what the crew of the lighthouse, employees of the French coastguard CROSS, are seeing here with increasing frequency. A record number of an estimated 2,500 migrants tried to cross the Channel by boat in 2019. By comparison, there were 586 in 2018, although there are no conclusive statistics. December was a constant hit. The French and British coastguards fished dozens of migrants out of the water. Mostly young men, increasingly also women and children. All of them poorly dressed and hypothermic. On 29 December, an Urk fishing boat rescued 21 migrants, including a pregnant woman, near Dunkirk.

Ammar does not want to think about it. The small, talkative Yemeni sits barefooted by a smouldering campfire. He has no objection to publicity. I can swim well, I once went into the water. But it is much too cold, I thought I was going to die! Ammar inhabits one of over 150 green tents, erected in the muddy verge of a smelly industrial area on the northern edge of Calais. Squatting next to him is his Eritrean comrade, whom he met while wandering in Paris. The two have been trying their luck with the lorries for a fortnight, but so far they have not managed to get through the heavily secured Channel Tunnel.

**Mini-jungles**

At the height of the migration crisis, thousands of migrants inhabited the 'jungle of Calais'. Since then-President François Hollande finally evacuated the camp in 2016, even more miserable mini-jungles have sprung up all over the region. Between the ramshackle tents squat groups of young men with hollow eyes and damp clothes. While police buses drive around at walking pace, a few boys kick a ball about. The gendarmerie pursues a hunt-and-peck policy - every other day the camps are cleared and the hundreds of migrants move on a little further.

According to Ammar, it took five months to reach this mess. That is fast, but I have money", he says cheerfully. He moved from war-torn Yemen to Saudi Arabia, where he studied but saw no future. Asked about his plan, he points to the metres-high white fences that close off the route to the Channel Tunnel further on. Do you know the film *Prison Break*? That's the situation here." Ammar and his friend stop trucks - sometimes violently. After every failed attempt the police put them back on the street.

The men around the fire are careful not to get into a boat. A., an Iraqi from Mosul with a friendly face and a black and white checkered lumberjack shirt. He has just arrived, is willing to give his name, but is not allowed in the newspaper. On his mobile phone, he displays his Linkedin profile: online reviewer of scientific articles for Elsevier publishers in Amsterdam. Unpaid, but the experience will come in handy later in England.

Actually, he wanted to stay in Turkey, where he arrived in 2015. But when he received a letter from the UNHCR that he would not get his first asylum interview until 2022, he moved on to Slovenia. On his way to Calais, he looked into the boat route, but he abandoned that option. They ask five or eight thousand ***euro***. They give you a rubber boat and you have to figure it out. If it doesn't work out, you lose your money." He is referring to the smugglers who are active in the region. Professional human trafficking gangs in Paris, Lyon and Brussels who recruit their clients through a network of intermediaries in the camps and through social media. Just say what you want, and there's someone in front of you," says A. "But if you look rich, you have to pay more anyway."

**Parking spaces**

François Guennoc, co-founder of the volunteer organisation Auberge des Migrants, confirms the story. He has been working for years in the makeshift camps around Calais. From a large, old shed in the port area, his organisation provides food, clothing and information. There is a lot of activity in the shed that houses several organisations. At a large table, volunteers from the British Refugee Kitchen peel hundreds of eggs and prepare the meals in steaming pots that they distribute to the migrants every day.

Although the numbers have fallen significantly since 2016, Guennoc has seen the smugglers become tougher and more professional. In Calais there are Afghan smugglers, Sudanese and Iranians. In Grand-Synthe [near Dunkirk] there are the Kurds." They do not hesitate to defend their territory with brute force and weapons. The stakes are therefore high. Many migrants, sometimes supported by their families, arrive with large sums of money in their pockets. A seat in a prepared, often Eastern European truck or refrigerated lorry costs about 2,500 ***euros***", says Guennoc. But the chance of success is minimal and the chance of death considerable. In October last year, British police found a container with 39 suffocated Vietnamese near London.

Without money, migrants are left to their own devices. At night, they scour car parks looking for a truck to hide in or under. But since the car parks have fallen into the hands of Afghan, Sudanese and Eritrean smuggling gangs, that option has also become more difficult," says Guennoc.

The boat route became popular two years ago, allegedly thanks to Iranian migrants. They travelled en masse to Serbia from the end of 2017, when the visa regime there was briefly suspended. But smugglers soon seized control of the 60-km-long coastal strip. A lucrative business with high returns, Guennoc reckons. You buy a rubber boat for two to three thousand ***euros***, put eight, ten or twelve people in it and charge them each a few thousand ***euros. In*** recent weeks, the media have claimed that the impending Brexit is playing a role in the increase in the number of boat migrants on the Channel. Guennoc thinks it is just an argument with which smugglers put pressure on their customers.

**Two or three hour trip**

Once in the rickety boats, the passengers have to see for themselves how to reach British waters. In ideal circumstances, it is a two to three hour journey. They do not have to go any further, because after that they can surrender to the British coastguard and hope to apply for asylum in the United Kingdom. Then they have to look for work, often illegal, to pay off debts. Although with about 60 per cent the success rate is considerably higher than with the clandestine journey through the tunnel, it often goes wrong. In December, a French judge convicted the Dutch smuggler Ibrahima K. and his Afghan ally of human trafficking. They were also held responsible for the death of the Iranian Mitra Mehrad, whose body washed ashore near IJmuiden in August. The woman was the first of probably four migrants to drown so far. The real figure cannot be determined: just like the Mediterranean Sea, the Channel does not reveal all the bodies.

A few hundred metres from Ammar's camp, four men sit in front of the sea of tents on the edge of a sad residential area. The youngest wears a green jacket under a hipster's crest. The boy shows his fingers, successively decorated with a tattoo of barber's scissors, brush, and comb. I was a barber in Iran. It is not good there, I have fled", he says in broken English. The Iranian is looking for a truck, he has no money for the boat. He looks shy, wants to say something, but his comrades silence him with a warning growl.

I went into the water once. I thought I was going to die

Ammar migrant from Yemen

**Graphic**

Clockwise from top: migrant Ammar from Yemen, an encampment near Calais, kitchen of the British aid organisationRefugee Kitchen, Francois Guennoc, co-founder of the volunteer organisation Auberge des Migrants.

Photos Wouter Van Vooren

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Refugees (94%); Immigration (86%); Slavery (80%); Death + Dying (67%); Illegal Immigrants (67%); Human Trafficking (64%)

**Load-Date:** January 13, 2020

**End of Document**

[***Michel wants to tie the knot European multiannual budget***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2V-CKC1-JC5G-13T9-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 138 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

***EU President*** Charles Michel is calling the 27 ***European*** leaders to Brussels for a special summit on 20 February on the size and contributions of member states to the multiannual budget from 2021 to 2027. The time has come to reach an agreement on the multiannual financial framework at the highest level", he wrote in his invitation to Prime Minister Mark Rutte and others. For months, the member states have been negotiating, without much result, about the new multiannual budget that, because of the British departure from the ***EU***, will have a deficit of about 12 billion ***euros*** per year. In addition, the ***EU*** is also faced with the decision on how to finance the Green Deal, the plan to be climate neutral by 2050. Every delay creates serious practical and political problems", Michel said. (ANP)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); ***European*** Union Regulation + Policy (65%)

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[***We have nothing to celebrate'; Brexit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2V-CKC1-JC5G-13TC-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 958 words

**Byline:** Tijn Sadée

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Report*  Union Jack in Brussels

On 'Brexit Day', next Friday, Brexiteers in Brussels want to triumphantly take down the British flag. But ***EU protocol*** *says no.*

**FULL TEXT:**

Don't touch,' shouts a security guard. At the row of flagpoles in front of the ***European*** Parliament (EP) in Brussels, the officer in charge is extra vigilant these days. Even innocently leaning against the pole with the *Union Jack,* the nickname of the flag of the United Kingdom, he considers suspicious.

A fortnight ago, his security colleagues at that other parliamentary seat, in Strasbourg, were unpleasantly surprised by a publicity stunt by British ***MEP*** Martin Daubney of the Brexit Party. Daubney snatched the Union Jack in broad daylight from the row with the other 27 flags of EU countries. Operation Free Jack!", the Brexiteer defended his theft. He now uses the flag as a bedspread in his home in London.

That Daubney remains unpunished says everything about the discomfort in Brussels over *Brexit Day-* a moment that, according to ***EU sources***, "should better pass as unnoticed as possible." On 31 January, at midnight (23:00 UK time) on Friday, the UK will leave the ***European Union***. The Brexiteers among the Brits want to make it an exuberant event in Brussels as well as in London. The highlight will be the ceremonial lowering of the Union Jack in the heart of the ***European*** quarter.

But the ***EU institutions*** want nothing to do with it. After all, we have nothing to celebrate", says an EP spokesman. Prominent ***Commissioners*** such as Frans Timmermans have deliberately turned down offers for media appearances on 31 January. Keeping it small and quiet is also the guideline in the ***European*** Council building. There, two people work in the flag protocol department. A busy job, because flags have to be washed, ironed, hoisted and taken down again at every ***European*** summit or foreign visit. In recent days, they have received numerous requests from British media wanting to film a simulation of the lowering of the Union Jack to use in Friday's broadcasts. At the highest official level in the Council, the General Secretariat, it was decided to close the flag room to the media.

What is 'Brussels' so afraid of? A flag is a very emotional thing, it symbolises the bond between people", says flag expert Thijs van Leeuwen, who works for the Dutch Flag Association and the magazine *Vlag!* According to him, the nervousness in Brussels has to do with the difference between "lowering and lowering" a flag. The ceremony of lowering a flag means: you withdraw. The ceremony of lowering the flag means: you retreat. In both ceremonies you see the same thing, but bystanders should know the correct context, says Van Leeuwen. But malicious media can frame that image any way they want.

**Hong Kong moment**

Britons in particular take the ceremony "very seriously", says the flag expert. Take, for example, the '*Sunset Lowering of the Union Jack'* in 1997, when the UK handed over the crown colony of Hong Kong to China. This was accompanied by a drum roll and six soldiers who then neatly folded the downed flag."

But the ***EU*** does not want to grant the British the ceremony, suspects Brexit Party MEP Nathan Gill. His party lobbied in Brussels in vain for a 'Lowering'. In the British newspaper *The Guardian,* Gill *reacts* with disappointment. Brexit Day' is, according to him, "one of those Hong Kong moments, a symbolic moment when everyone has to realise and accept that we are really leaving.

Gill and his kindred spirits will have to make do with a "dignified and respectful" last moment with David Sassoli, the EP president. Sassoli will this week present the 73 departing British ***MEPs with*** a medal - a tradition that applies to every ***MEP*** whose ***European*** mandate ends at some point.

But what will happen to the Union Jack in the flagpole at the main entrance? From 1 February, the Union Jacks in and around the EP "will no longer be displayed", according to the EP spokesman. One of them will go to the museum collection in the House of ***European*** History. The fact that the flag is being stored there of all places is bad news for Brexiteers. When the museum opened in 2017, ***Eurosceptic*** British newspapers described it as a "costly palace of ***EU propaganda***, a *house of horrors*". To avoid media attention, the EP would not disclose when the flag will go to the museum - expected to be "sometime after 31 January".

"It's a good destination for the flag", thinks Labour MEP Richard Corbett, an outspoken opponent of the Brexit. He is walking through the EP corridors for the last time this week. Around his neck he wears a knitted scarf with the motifs of the Union Jack and the ***EU flag***. "In the museum, Jack hangs safely, awaiting the hoped-for return of the UK to the ***EU***."

Flag expert Thijs van Leeuwen finds it a "bizarre" spectacle. I understand the anger among Brexiteers very well. Whether you are for or against the Brexit: it is a unique and historic moment. And Brussels is leaving that in the hands of anonymous, protocol-ridden officials who, like thieves in the night, are taking away the Union Jack."

A flag is a very emotional thing, it symbolises the bond between people

Thijs van Leeuwen Flag expert

**Brexit week What is Brussels doing?**

*Wednesday:* official vote in the ***European*** Parliament (EP) on Brexit.

*Thursday:* party at the EP, on Luxembourg Square, organised by a Green MEP; under the heading '*The Brexit is shit, but let's party anyway*'.

*Friday* 'Brexit Day'; no ceremony, no activities.

**Graphic**

Flag ceremony in 1997, when the UK handed over the crown colony of Hong Kong to China. There will not be such a moment in Brussels on Friday.

Photo James Leynse/Corbis via Getty Images)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

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[***Immigration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2V-CKC1-JC5G-13T8-00000-00&context=) [***Coalition parties D66 and CU for maritime EUmission Libya***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2V-CKC1-JC5G-13T8-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 2

**Length:** 132 words

**Dateline:** Amsterdam

**Body**

The Netherlands must participate in a military mission off the coast of Libya, according to coalition parties D66 and ChristenUnie. This maritime mission of the ***European Union*** should prevent more weapons being brought to the country, human traffickers continuing their activities and migrants drowning on their way to ***Europe***. The two parties refer to ***EU foreign chief*** Josep Borrell's plan to put the ***EU*** Sophia ***mission*** back to work. This mission has been on hold since last spring, because Italy first wanted to make agreements on the reception of migrants from North Africa. According to Dutch MP Sjoerd Sjoerdsma (D66), with this mission the ***EU*** will get a better grip on Libya and we will keep ***Europe***'s backyard safe. In addition, we can tackle human smugglers". (ANP)

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** Refugees (94%); Defense Departments (88%); ***European*** Union (86%); International Relations (84%); Immigration (76%); Human Rights Violations (73%); Economic Migration (69%); Weapons + Arms (65%); Armed Forces (64%); Human Trafficking (61%)

**Load-Date:** January 27, 2020

**End of Document**

[***Ink dry, Britten ready for departure***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2V-CKC1-JC5G-13TD-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** IN THE NEWS; Page 4

**Length:** 762 words

**Byline:** Melle Garschagen

**Dateline:** LONDON

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Background*  Party in Great Britain

To celebrate the Brexit, there is a special coin and a countdown clock in Downing Street. Ringing Big Ben proved too expensive.

**FULL TEXT:**

Thousands of households in the London borough of Islington (70 per cent *remain* during the 2016 Brexit referendum) have had a cheerful flyer dropped in their mailboxes in recent days. "This is Luisa, born in Portugal, part of Islington", it read alongside a photo of a smiling lady with bright red lipstick. This is Jonas, born in Sweden, part of Islington," reads a photo of a man in his fifties with grey hair and trendy reading glasses. In this way, the London borough portrays a total of six residents who are also ***EU citizens***.

The printed material is accompanied by a more serious letter addressing ***EU citizens***. ,,Britain's departure from the ***European Union*** is approaching, so we want to take this opportunity to assure you personally that we value you highly and that you are welcome here. You are part of Islington and the borough would not be the same without you and the 20,000-plus ***European*** citizens who have chosen to make Islington their home." Camden, the neighbouring London borough, has put up banners in the streets with a similar message.

**Queen**

Just as the United Kingdom has been deeply divided in recent years over whether the Brexit was a wise idea, and over how it will turn out, the moment of departure in four days' time is being anticipated in the country in completely different ways.

British politics is ready to leave. With relative quiet, the law governing the Brexit was passed by parliament last week. Queen Elizabeth II formally approved the law. As a result, Prime Minister Boris Johnson was able to sign the exit agreement he made with the ***EU***. The ink is dry, the British are ready to leave.

The House of Commons rejected at the last minute a number of proposals from the House of Lords, including one to better guarantee the rights of EU workers and underage asylum seekers.

Earlier, Boris Johnson's government weakened provisions in the Brexit bill that were supposed to protect working conditions. The government also did not wish to be bound by a call to ensure, in any event, that the UK continues with Erasmus+, the ***European*** exchange programme for students and academics, after the Brexit.

**Speech**

Johnson would rather not talk about that kind of thing this week. The Brexit should be celebrated, according to the Prime Minister. Friday night will be all about celebration, as 10 Downing Street has already announced. 31 January is a significant moment in our history", said a spokesman for Johnson. The United Kingdom is regaining its independence".

In the run-up to the moment of departure, Johnson will convene a cabinet meeting in the north of England, the part of the United Kingdom where his Conservatives won last December's election by capturing areas traditionally voted Labour. There the government will "discuss how to share opportunities and prosperity", Johnson's spokesman reported.

On the 31st, the Prime Minister will address the country in the evening. All the flagpoles around Parliament Square, the square in front of the Palace of Westminster, will fly the Union flag. A light show will be projected onto the surrounding ministries. A special Brexit coin will be put into circulation, which will read: 'Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations'.

**Bong for Brexit**

Initially, Brexiteers wanted Big Ben to ring the bell at 11pm this Friday, the time of departure. They started a campaign: *'Big Ben must bong for Brexit'*. That proved unfeasible. The Elizabeth Tower, as the bell tower is actually called, is being restored and is undergoing scaffolding. The cost of rushing the clockwork into readiness was estimated at half a million pounds. Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, thought that was too much. That works out at about £50,000 per bong," Hoyle said in Parliament recently.

Boris Johnson has come up with an alternative. A countdown clock will be projected onto the black bricks of 10 Downing Street. This will allow the Prime Minister and Brexiteers to count down to departure, behind the fence of the official residence and secured by the armed officers of the London Police.

The cost of rushing the clockwork to completion was estimated at half a million pounds.

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject: *European*** Union (94%)

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[***Conte government totters on its feet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y2S-XFR1-DYTV-D2YK-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** OUTSIDE; Page 13

**Length:** 452 words

**Byline:** Maarten van Aalderen

**Body**

by Maarten van Aalderen

ROME - Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte will today convene the leaders of the governing parties PD (centre-left) and the Five Star Movement to discuss the results of yesterday's two regional elections and whether any consequences should be drawn.

The big question is what Conte will do. Recently, the party-less prime minister has repeatedly said that the results of the elections in Emilia-Romagna (northern Italy) and Calabria (southern Italy) are irrelevant to his cabinet. This one has its own five-year term. And this second Conte cabinet started only last September. But its birth was unhappy and it is already tottering.

The largest governing party, the Five Star Movement, has been falling hard in the polls for a year and is in deep crisis.

The centre-left PD is also going through difficult times. The two parties were forced to govern together against their will, and amid great protest from their supporters, after the right-wing Lega leader Matteo Salvini blew up the first Conte (Five Star Movement and Lega) cabinet in August last year.

The Lega, meanwhile, is steaming ahead. Last October, it had already achieved an historic victory in the small central region of Umbria, traditionally on the left. In the ***European*** elections last May, the Lega became the largest even in Emilia Romagna. A win for the Lega in the regional elections here, which have always been won by the left, would be an absolute disaster for the PD. The fact that there were three separate far-left candidates to lead the region made it harder for the PD to win.

The Lega's candidate for Emilia Romagna, Lucia Borgonzoni, was not Trump. An interview on a radio programme showed that she did not even know exactly which other regions Emilia-Romagna borders on.

During the election campaign, the charismatic Salvini pulled everything to himself. He travelled throughout the region, sometimes alternating with Calabria, and constantly had himself photographed together with his supporters. Villages were full of proud selfies with the Lega leader. In other photos, Salvini kissed the famous local food and immediately spread them on his social media.

Threat

The outcome in the southern Italian region of Calabria is much less important. This region has always been governed by both left and right. The right-wing candidate here was not from Salvini's Lega, but from Berlusconi's Forza Italia. This once popular party is only at 6.5% of the vote in the polls and cannot be considered a threat by the government.

Crucial

consultation after

two local

Elections

**Classification**

**Language:** DUTCH; ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Politics (94%); Political Parties (78%); ***European*** Union (74%); Heads Of State + Government (67%); International Relations (64%); Economic Crisis (62%)

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2020

**End of Document**

[***EU versus Big Tech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y60-G3M1-JCBS-P2WN-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** FINANCIAL; page 22

**Length:** 658 words

**Body**

Complaints from the travel industry next stick to hit

The ***European*** Commission wants to break the power of Big Tech. Through a single EU data market, ***European*** companies should be better able to stand up to American giants who, according to Brussels, block innovation with their monopolies.

***European Commissioner*** Margrethe Vestager (Competition and Digital Market) will officially reveal her plans next Wednesday. A current example is a complaint from over 30 companies in the travel industry. The search engine would give its own reservation services too much prominence in search results. In this case, Google does not seem to want to wait for Vestager and is already meeting ***European*** consumers with an adjustment of its search results for travel and accommodation.

In recent years, Brussels has become increasingly aware of how great the power of American players in particular is and how destructive that is for competition. The aim is to create an internal market for data (corporate data, government, research, etc.) in the ***European Union***. The Netherlands is a supporter of this. Vestager's draft plan states that a 'small number of large tech companies currently own a large proportion of the world's data'. According to the Danish, this is bad for competition, innovation and growth in the sector. "It is clear that competition rules must be ready for a world that is rapidly changing and digitising," the document says.

Vestager started her second term as competition commissioner at the end of last year. In her first years in Brussels, she did not shy away from cracking down on tech giants, but she is also aware that the ***EU*** is often behind the times when it comes to handing out fines. Developments are often so rapid that once a company has a monopoly it is difficult to remove it from the throne.

Billions of fines

Google was fined three billions in very different cases, totalling almost EUR 9 billion. But the search giant may now face another case: More than 30 online booking sites, including TripAdvisor and Expedia but also the Dutch Chalet.nl and Bugalow.net, have written a letter to Vestager complaining about the American search engine that does not act fairly and puts its own reservation services in the spotlight in an improper manner. Competitors' results are not displayed in a special window, which results in fewer clicks. A Commission spokeswoman confirmed on Monday that Vestager has received the complaint. It seems another stick to beat with, but if and how the ***commissioner*** will act is still unclear.

A Google spokesperson states in a reaction that the company is working on 'a new format', especially for ***Europe***. A kind of carousel with links should be placed at the top of the list of search results.

On Wednesday, the case brought by Google over the EUR 2.4 billion fine it was fined by Vestager in 2017 for favouring its own search results in Google Shopping also begins in Luxembourg before the ***EU court, in what appears to be a*** similar case.

Tax

In the area of taxation, too, the swords are being crossed. Last year, the ***European*** Commission proposed the introduction of a digital tax for tech companies where they make money. Now, due to the nature of their business, the mostly American companies often escape, so their tax burden is very low. In ***Europe,*** however, the ranks are not yet closed. A country such as Ireland has brought American giants in with favourable tax deals and is afraid of the consequences of a digital tax. France is considered a great advocate of the tax. Because of the division, the dossier is at a standstill. In Brussels, it is not expected that it will be discussed before the summer.

Chalet.com

versus Google

**Classification**

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**Journal Code:** telegraph,Telegraph

**Subject:** Internet Social Networking (93%); Mail Order + Internet Retailing (83%); Corporate Tax (82%); Tax Law (82%); Suits + Claims (76%); Experimentation + Research (74%); Cartels (73%); Multinational Corporations (70%); ***European*** Union (68%); Territorial + National Borders (65%); Software Services + Applications (61%)

**Industry:** Internet + Www (93%); Information Security + Privacy (80%); Media + Telecommunications (62%)

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2020

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[***If you act tough behind the dikes, you stay there' ; Interview***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-128S-00000-00&context=) [***Is there still enough support for CETA? Minister Kaag is on a final offensive ; Minister Kaag***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-128S-00000-00&context=) [***The Netherlands cannot afford a 'no' to CETA***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-128S-00000-00&context=)

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**Section:** CONTENTS; Page 1

**Length:** 1564 words

**Byline:** Stéphane Alonso  
  
Marike Stellinga

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Interview*  Sigrid Kaag Minister for Foreign Trade

Minister Sigrid Kaag has to scramble for parliamentary support for CETA. She is surprised by predecessor Ploumen. "How can you suddenly be against a treaty where you yourself were at the controls?" By our editors Stéphane Alonso and Marike Stellinga

**FULL TEXT:**

Can the Netherlands still say no to CETA? No, says trade minister Sigrid Kaag (D66). The Netherlands simply cannot afford to reject the ***EU trade agreement*** with Canada. You would cause enormous damage to the Netherlands and the ***European Union***. We would not be able to commit ourselves as a country to a good, balanced treaty with a country like Canada that has the same standards and values as we do. It sends completely the wrong political signal, especially at this time. Especially now that we are negotiating a trade treaty with the UK after the Brexit."

Yet it could happen: that the Netherlands does say no. The Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament have to ratify CETA and in both Houses a majority is uncertain since the opposition party PvdA withdrew its support for the treaty in October. There is also criticism within the coalition. The Christian Union already voted against CETA in 2016. For former diplomat Kaag (58), these are exciting weeks. On Wednesday, there is a debate in the House of Representatives. Behind the scenes, she is trying to gather support from all sorts of parties, such as the SGP. She spends late into the night with her nose in files.

Additional complication: CETA in particular is a highly inflammable subject, like TTIP (with the US) was earlier. For Kaag, in the race for the D66 party leadership, a golden opportunity to show how agile she is. But the risk of damage is also great. And if the Netherlands rejects CETA, it will have to go back to the ***European*** drawing board.

In this already precarious playing field, the PvdA made a significant turn. This is remarkable, because it was precisely under Kaag's predecessor, Labour Party leader Lilianne Ploumen, currently a Member of Parliament, that CETA came about. Ploumen was also the driving force behind the Investor Court System (ICS), a new arbitration system that makes it more difficult for companies to file billion-dollar claims against governments if, for example, they suddenly tighten their environmental policies.

On Wednesday, the Chamber will talk a lot about that 'investment protection'. The bulk of CETA has been in force 'on a provisional basis' for two and a half years. Only the paragraph on ICS is not yet in force. There, in addition to ratification by the ***European*** Parliament, national parliaments are also required to ratify. Civil society organisations (NGOs), small farmers' unions and parties are seizing this as an opportunity to revive their offensive against CETA.

The PvdA thinks that the arbitration court should also be made accessible to trade unions and NGOs, and not only to companies, as is currently the case. The Christian Union is concerned about the use of hormones in meat production, for example. We can name and address all concerns", says Kaag during a conversation in her office, from behind a thick stack of papers.

Has the Christian Union changed its mind?

,,We are going to see that. I am looking forward to the debate. There has been so much talk about CETA. At some point it is time for mutual clarity."

What did you think of Ploumen's turn?

I am not here as Mrs Ploumen's spokesperson, but the question is: how can you suddenly be against a treaty where you yourself were at the controls? Incidentally, I have never actually heard her say that she is against. The PvdA has changed its position. And I don't believe it had anything to do with the content."

According to the PvdA, it is unfair that the arbitration is there only for companies.

Investment protection was once conceived for when a state selectively expropriates and companies see their investment go up in smoke. Then came the recognition that this gave companies a disproportionate number of opportunities to file claims. Ploumen has achieved some nice improvements. For example, third parties, NGOs or affected citizens can be heard in the new arbitration court, as a 'friend of the court'. In the case of Canada, we have always said: this arbitration is not necessary, because the rule of law is strong in both countries. We didn't think it was necessary, but it is there."

Why then?

That was negotiated by the ***EU***. Other ***EU member states*** wanted it, Canada wanted it. There are EU countries where the rule of law is not as strong as in the Netherlands."

You mean in Eastern Europe?

You can think of all kinds of countries."

So no ICS in the next treaty?

,,It depends on the country. If going to court is imperfect, investors should get protection. Think for example of Mercosur, the country union in South America. I can well imagine that in the case of a treaty with a Mercosur country , you would want to have such an ICS arbitration court."

Your D66 wants far-reaching climate policy. That could harm large oil or gas companies and lead to claims, critics say.

CETA does not affect the right of governments to regulate in the public interest. I see a lot of disquiet among municipalities and local governments about this, but it is a myth that the treaty affects that right. It simply does not."

Can you guarantee that there will be no claims?

"No, I can't guarantee that I won't be dead tomorrow either. But I am sure that claims will not be granted quickly. Based on the past, the rule of law and the behaviour of the Netherlands and Canada, that is a logical assessment."

What are the critics right about?

The perfect treaty does not exist. What I find awkward is that we are dragging our feet in an era of great uncertainties. China is well established worldwide. America is a very unpredictable ally. If the ***EU*** wants to be a powerful player, now is not the time to take a long time over such a trade agreement with an ally like Canada.

,,I mean: how tough is the Netherlands on its own? If you look at the Netherlands from outside, you see a country that is connected to the world economy, but is not politically relevant enough. We derive our influence and strength from our connection with like-minded people. If you act tough behind the dikes, you stay behind the dikes."

Another complaint: CETA puts animal welfare and food standards under pressure.

Nothing comes in that does not meet ***EU standards*** and criteria. Beef can only be imported by 36 certified companies that have set up their production line from A to Z to meet ***EU standards***. Unfortunately, there is no international convention on animal welfare. In the Netherlands, we have strict regulations. Because we think it is important, but also because we are a small country. So everything has to be regulated much better. Canada is much bigger and can afford to do more. There are also such differences within the ***EU***. You can't demand of Canada what we haven't perfectly regulated ourselves within the ***EU*** yet."

Imposing stricter requirements on our farmers, while at the same time arranging for extra competition from Canada. There is a tension there.

First of all, there are sectors that are protected: poultry, chicken, eggs. I can imagine that pig farmers are worried, but they are still benefiting from a transition period in which little meat is allowed to enter. Moreover, after two and a half years, we now see that the Netherlands is exporting pork to Canada. Not the other way round. There are always risks associated with imports. But we also do not want to become so circular that we start producing everything again in our own village, like some kind of commune. I understand that everyone is looking at the concerns from their own perspective, and from their own interests. That is also very important. But what you do with 27 other ***EU partners*** is always a compromise. The Netherlands has come out of this very well. To be honest: this CETA treaty was almost written for the Netherlands."

Another point of criticism: EU officials are in charge of the day-to-day implementation of CETA. Is there sufficient democratic control?

,,We are there too as a country, but to make it more transparent, we want an annual report on CETA. What the problems are, what the consequences are, how they are dealt with. I am negotiating on that and I think it is going to happen. The committee has also appointed a *chief trade enforcer*. He will actively monitor compliance. Because I do agree with the criticism: the treaty contains fine sustainability paragraphs, but what is actually done with them? We will have to keep showing that the treaty does not lead to a *race to the bottom*, but to a *race to the top*.

What I find awkward is that we are dawdling in an era of great uncertainties'.

**Career Former graduate**

*Sigrid Kaag* (Rijswijk, 1961) was previously Special Envoy in Lebanon for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and worked at international organisations such as UNICEF (New York), UNDP (New York and Amman), and as delegation leader of the UN mission to clean up chemical weapons in Syria. Since 2017, Kaag, who speaks six languages fluently, has been Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Kaag is married and has four children.

**Graphic**

This is not the time to take a very long time over such a trade agreement with an ally like Canada", says Sigrid Kaag.

PHOTO PHIL NIJHUIS

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[***Brits want to set up border controls***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y60-G3M1-JCBS-P2WT-00000-00&context=)

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Import

London - The United Kingdom wants to impose border controls on goods imported from the ***European Union*** after the brexit transition period this year. This was said by the British brexit minister Michael Gove. The British are still bound by ***European*** rules until the end of this year. In the transition period that started on 31 January since brexit, it is up to British and ***European*** negotiators to reach a trade agreement. According to Gove, the UK will be outside the single market and outside the customs union. "So we will have to be ready for customs procedures and the regulatory checks that will inevitably follow."

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[***Misuse European money cannot be solved just like that; Agricultural subsidies***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-12BX-00000-00&context=) [***All sorts of things go wrong with EU subsidies, but there is a lot of resistance to reform***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-12BX-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Roeland Termote  
  
Ine Roox

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Six questions on* ***European*** agricultural subsidy

All sorts of things are going wrong with ***European*** agricultural subsidies. But 'Brussels' and the ***European*** farmers' umbrella organisation do not see such a big problem, and proposals for reform are meeting with resistance. The margin of error is less than 2 percent.

**FULL TEXT:**

***European*** agricultural subsidies are wrongly used or end up in the wrong hands, a recent investigation by the Belgian newspaper *De Standaard* has shown.

In the south of Italy, millions are being plundered by organised crime, sometimes even with the knowledge or cooperation of the local offices where the application for funding is made. Agricultural subsidies have been claimed and paid for land on which there was in fact an airport or a steelworks, and on behalf of applicants who were in prison or dead.

In Slovakia, Lubica Roskova, a former politician for the governing party Smer-SD, applied for agricultural subsidies for an airport and car parks. In Slovakia and other Eastern European countries, the subsidies lead to unequal land competition between small farmers and large landowners with political connections.

1 How can fraud be tackled?

Stricter controls of subsidy applications are part of the solution. That is what the new ***European*** Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, promised the ***European Parliament*** last month. "I want to introduce a list of preventive anti-corruption measures," he said.

Many such measures already exist. For example, the Commission has a monitoring system that links land registers and satellite photo databases. A point of concern is the management of these registers and databases by national authorities. In some Member States, the data is outdated or there is a lack of manpower to check everything thoroughly. In others, despite repeated warnings from the ***European Commission,*** authorities are not carrying out even the simplest of checks properly. In Italy, for example, the land register is not connected to the computer system of AGEA, the central service in Rome which pays agricultural subsidies. Linking the cadastre to the computer system would be a simple step towards detecting when subsidies are being claimed for plots of land that are not even farmland, and thus deterring fraudsters at an early stage.

2 Are farmers outraged by the fraud?

Not really. According to Copa-Cogeca, the umbrella organisation of ***European*** farmers and ***European*** agricultural cooperatives, there are sufficient rules and measures to combat fraud. Policy advisor Paulo Gouveia: ,,The margin of error in agricultural subsidies is less than 2%, much lower than in other policy areas. It is the responsibility of the Member States to carry out checks and, in the event of infringements, to take action, impose penalties and recover the unlawfully obtained subsidies."

A spokesperson for the ***European*** Commission points out that the Commission and the ***European*** Court of Auditors found in 2018 that there are "no substantial errors" in the payments of these subsidies. The Directorate-General for Agriculture found an error rate of 1.83% in the same year. The error rate for agricultural policy as a whole is low and the member states have good governance systems in place", said the spokesperson.

3 Is fraud the only problem?

No. Another problem is that large agricultural companies benefit disproportionately from ***European*** subsidies. Particularly in Eastern Europe, they use abusive methods to cheat small farmers out of land and related subsidies. One objective of subsidies is precisely to help small, independent farmers to earn a reasonable income.

,,But this is not working", says Copa-Cogeca advisor Gouveia. Despite agricultural aid, ***European*** farmers earn 46.5 per cent of the average wage in other sectors. And yet, in each new budget round, subsidies are cut back. We strongly oppose that."

But maintaining direct subsidies will not solve the fundamental problem of small farmers, says Alan Matthews, emeritus professor at Trinity College Dublin and expert on ***European*** agricultural policy. Per-hectare payments help to keep some of them afloat for a while, but they are no guarantee of long-term economic survival. Young people are better educated and want more opportunities; they won't stay on a two-hectare family farm for the subsidy."

4 And at the same time, many subsidies flow to large companies?

According to ***European*** Commission statistics, 80% of EU agricultural subsidies reach only 20% of agricultural holdings. In Member States such as Slovakia, the ratio is even worse.

The ***European*** Commission wants to revise the subsidy system, but is sticking to direct subsidies. These will also soon cover more than 70% of the agricultural budget. The Commission does propose another measure to help small farmers: a maximum amount of subsidy that one farm can receive. This is intended to ensure a more equitable distribution of payments", says a spokesperson.

A ceiling of ***EUR*** 50 000 would be good," says Professor Matthews. The Commission has proposed double. No one would get more than 100,000 ***euro***, and from 60,000 ***euro*** the amount paid per hectare would decrease. That reduction above 60,000 ***euros*** was voted down in the ***European*** Parliament's agriculture committee last year. The new batch of ***MEPs***, elected last May, will continue to work on the proposal in the coming months.

Matthews is not optimistic: "There are several loopholes in the Commission's proposal, which means that there will not be a real ceiling. Add to that the resistance of ***European*** farmers, who reject any capping. And then there are the member states that have to co-decide. The problem," says the German Christian Democrat Ingeborg Gräßle, until recently chairwoman of the ***European Parliament***'s Committee on Budgetary Control, "is that the Member States are the first to reject the introduction of a ceiling.

5 Why is there so much resistance?

Many Member States, like some of the ***MEPs***, want above all to obtain as many subsidies as possible. That money is very welcome to serve the rural constituency.

In several member states there is something else at play, says Andrzej Nowakowski, parliamentary adviser for the ***European*** Greens: "Governments are often behind big landowners and agribusiness, which are very powerful and block any change." Some of them are even represented at the Brussels negotiating table: Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis' company receives tens of millions in agricultural subsidies. Last year, German Social Democrat Maria Noichl tabled the 'Babis amendment' to ensure that politicians who co-decide on agricultural subsidies should not receive them themselves. The proposal was voted down.

Environmental organisation Greenpeace revealed that 25 of the 46 members of the previous ***European Parliament's*** agricultural committee had links to the agricultural sector. Some even received tens of thousands of ***euros in*** subsidies every year.

6 In short: abolish those subsidies?

Yes, says Matthews: "I would rather see direct payments disappear as income support, after a transition period." The alternative: "Link subsidies to the measures that farms take to achieve environmental goals. Whether they are small or large farms is then not so important."

Nowakowski does not think that subsidies should be abolished just like that: Many small farmers would go out of business. If you end up with big farms that do intensive farming, it is bad for biodiversity.

In Slovakia, subsidy for agriculture was used for an airport

**About this series**

In a three-part series, journalists from the Belgian newspaper *De Standaard* investigate what is happening with ***European*** *agricultural subsidies* - a huge cash flow that has proved susceptible to fraud. In the previous ***EU budget***, 402 billion ***euros***, or 39 percent of the total ***EU budget***, went to agriculture over seven years.

*Part 3: What can* ***Europe*** *do against agricultural subsidy fraud?* There is a reform proposal, but it is encountering resistance from national politicians and their constituency interests.

**Graphic**

Farmers in Slovakia protested against corruption in Bratislava last year.

Photo Getty

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[***Vote down CETA, it serves big business***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-129S-00000-00&context=)

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**Length:** 599 words

**Byline:** Canadian activists

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Global trade rules must serve the whole planet, write two Canadian activists.

**FULL TEXT:**

Canada and the Netherlands must stand together against CETA, the trade treaty between the ***EU*** and Canada. More than three million ***Europeans*** supported a citizens' initiative against the treaty and Canadian trade unions, parliamentarians, environmental and other groups also rang the alarm bell. On Wednesday, the House of Representatives can show that it takes the objections from society seriously by not voting in favour.

Our planet is approaching the tipping point where a climate catastrophe becomes inevitable; governments must act now for future generations. Precarious jobs are increasingly the new normal, property and income are concentrated among a small wealthy elite. The cause: international capital that escapes taxation, laws and supervision. To change this, we need strong rules that put the interests of people and communities first. But with CETA, the opposite is happening.

The treaty forces Canada to extend patents for medicines, making them expensive. This is in the interests of ***European*** pharmaceutical companies and hinders initiatives for a publicly funded system of drug delivery.

On both sides of the Atlantic, it promotes economies of scale in agriculture. Farmers from around the world envy Canada's well-regulated system that allows the dairy and poultry sectors to produce in line with market needs, with stable incomes for farmers and without the surpluses and uncertainty faced by ***European*** farmers. But CETA cedes part of the market share of Canadian producers to large-scale ***European*** agriculture, making it harder for them to make a decent living.

And your farmers will have to compete with the large-scale part of Canadian agriculture. The average ***European*** farm is 16 hectares; in Canada it is 424. In Canada, there are no central legal rules for animal welfare, only codes of conduct. In Canada, hormones are used that are banned in the ***EU***. ***Europe*** protects consumers with the precautionary principle that only allows products when it has been proven that they are not harmful, Canada does not.

Global cooperation is badly needed to tackle the problems of our time. This includes global agreements to regulate world trade in the interests of the planet. Unfortunately, CETA does not in any way meet this ambition; it is old wine in new bottles. If we vote this treaty down, we can set the course for fair, sustainable trade. And we can set more ambitious goals in the interests of all of us, not just a few rich companies.

*Maude Barlow* is voorzitter van Council of Canadians. *Sujata Dey* is campainer internationale handel bij Council of Canadians.

REFERRAL BLOCK ANKERSMIT VVD

*The House of Representatives will meet on Wednesday 12/2 to discuss CETA.* The ***European*** Parliament approved the treaty with Canada in 2017. It has been in force provisionally since that year. The controversial arbitration mechanism ICS ('investment court'), which has to adjudicate in disputes, is not yet in force; the ***European*** Commission has made additional proposals for it.

*For it to fully enter into force, including ICS*, all ***EU Member States*** must also sign it. So far, thirteen of 27 have done so; the Netherlands is not one of them. If ratification fails, the ***European Council*** must d ecide unanimously. So one country cannot stumble on the treaty.

**Classification**

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**Subject: *European*** Union (94%); Trade Treaties + Agreements (69%); Genetically Modified Food (63%)

**Industry:** Agriculture (83%)

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[***Italy has been warned many times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-12C7-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Ine Roox

**Dateline from** Brussels

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

*Background*  Control

In Italy, better administration would help against abuse of agricultural subsidies. The Commission has already criticised the country on several occasions.

**FULL TEXT:**

Why fraud with ***European*** agricultural subsidies? Yes, legal investigations are underway, confirms a spokesperson from the ***European*** Commission. But: "The member states apply systems of good governance." The evidence: ,,The fact that the Italian authorities have tracked down the suspected crimes proves that the system is working well. The situation is under control, and where necessary the Commission imposes financial corrections."

But the correspondence between 'Brussels' and the Italian government, which *De Standaard could* see, has a much sharper tone. In a letter dated 22 July 2019, the Commission explains to Italy how it should set up its system so that subsidies can only be applied for measurable parcels of agricultural land. According to a ***European*** source, ***Europe*** has been insisting for years that Italy bring its cadastral data into that system. Such a simple change would mean that applying for agricultural subsidies for an airport site would promptly run into a warning.

In a further letter, dated 20 December 2019, the Commission is imposing a deadline on Rome to get management and control of its agricultural subsidy system in order. Italy must report monthly on progress, on pain of reduction or even suspension of ***European*** payments. The ***European*** Commission confirms, when asked, that Italy has to follow an action plan to tackle the 'systematic' weaknesses in its control and management system. It adds that such an action plan has been imposed on more Member States.

**Politically sensitive**

Read also this report on civil servant Giuseppe Antoci's struggle in Sicily: He clashed with the mafia: "They all want my skin "***Europe***'s tone towards Rome has sharpened after a scandal at the national payments agency for subsidies in Rome in 2013. The agency, AGEA, is also responsible for keeping track of who has wrongly received subsidies, recovering the money and returning it to ***Europe***. Auditors found that at least ***€38*** million had not been recovered and returned at all. An Italian judge declared AGEA guilty of mismanagement. But there were no sanctions. A few employees were transferred, and that was all.

This history puts into perspective the harsh language in the exchange of letters between the Commission and Italy. The country could be dealt with more firmly, says the ***European*** source. It has been receiving such warnings for some time, but only has to follow an action plan and is not placed under external supervision, a tougher measure.

Is it too politically sensitive to punish a great founder of the ***EU***? We have imposed an action plan on Italy concerning the management and control system for direct payments, because the measure of external supervision is not possible," explains the Commission spokesman. In any case, the ***European*** budget will be protected by the application of financial corrections.

Italy has encountered such financial corrections before. In the middle of last year, the ***European*** Court of Justice ordered the Italian Government to repay EUR 158.7 ***million***. That seems a trifle small considering the roughly ***EUR*** 4 billion in aid that Italian farmers receive annually. But this was not the first time. Between 1999 and 2018, Italy received a total of ***EUR*** 90.5 billion in agricultural funds. Of that, it has to pay back 2.8%, or ***EUR*** 2.5 billion, to ***Europe***. By comparison, the Netherlands received ***EUR*** 20 billion in agricultural support over those years and must repay a quarter of a billion, or 1.2 percent.

There will always be fraudsters', says the ***European*** source. But as a citizen you also have to ask yourself: is my government doing everything to make the system as watertight as possible? Read also this report about farmers' resistance in Slovakia: Slovakian farmers don't take it anymore: 'The oligarchs are liquidating us'.

Italy had to report monthly to Brussels on how the improvements were progressing

**Classification**

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[***CETA undermines rule of law and energy transition; Trade agreement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-129R-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** Alessandra Arcuri  
  
Laurens Ankersmit.

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

If multinationals can drag states before an investment tribunal under CETA, climate choices will be jeopardised, write Alessandra Arcuri and Laurens Ankersmit.

**FULL TEXT:**

The CETA treaty, which the Chamber will debate on Wednesday, was the showpiece of Jean-Claude Juncker's ***European*** Commission. The '*Investment Court System*' (ICS) therein has been renamed by the Commission as the 'gold standard' for reforming the controversial investment arbitration system. That qualification is misplaced. The ICS, which allows companies to sue states before a special arbitral tribunal, undermines the rule of law, widens the gap between citizens and politics, and hampers a fair and successful energy transition.

The idea behind ICS is that foreign investors are entitled to effective and full legal protection. ICS is needed because the ordinary courts, in the ***EU*** and Canada but also elsewhere, are inadequate.

The ordinary justice system can indeed fail, also in the ***EU***. And not only with '*usual suspects'* like Italy and Greece. Consider, for example, the injustice done to asbestos victims in Belgium. Only one person was heard in court and, after seventeen years, received compensation of only ***EUR*** 25,000 for contracting a fatal disease due to the demonstrable failure of the multinational Eternit. Or see the repeated condemnations by the ***European*** Court of Human Rights in Germany for lengthy procedures before the German courts.

However, it is a mistake to want to correct the shortcomings of the ordinary courts with a system that is only accessible to foreign investors and therefore not accessible to citizens within the ***EU***.

Why is more legal protection needed for foreign investors and not for citizens? If there is corruption, denial of justice or discrimination, it is a problem for the whole of society, not just for foreign investors.

With special privileges for foreign investors, necessary incentives for governments to tackle rule of law problems disappear. Studies show that introducing investment protection is an obstacle to the 'normal' rule of law. ICS can also be seen as a form of regressive indirect taxation. Every court costs money, including ICS. But ICS is only there for foreign investors. It is therefore a form of subsidy to the whole of society, especially to multinationals.

We live in times of unprecedented scepticism towards politics and ***EU politics in particular***. ***Europe*** is suffering from growing inequality and political challenges. A judicial *fast-track* for multinational companies can be read as yet another way in which the elite further marginalise the citizen.

***Europe*** is facing important choices on the issue of this century: how do we prevent the further consequences of climate change and who will pay for it? To meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement, 80% of coal reserves, a third of oil reserves and half of gas reserves worldwide will have to remain in the ground. Yet investments in fossil fuels are still increasing.

Under CETA, all investments are protected, including those in fossil fuels. If governments are serious about meeting the Paris targets that affect these investments, then ICS is an excellent tool to ensure that these investors are compensated. A quarter of all investment claims are from the oil, gas and mining industry.

An omen for the future under CETA is Uniper's threat of an investment case against the Dutch state over the decision to ban coal from energy production. In other words, with CETA, it is not the polluter who pays, but the polluters who get paid. Especially now that the ***European*** Parliament is sounding the alarm on climate change and the ***European*** Commission is unveiling its '***European*** Green Deal', it is important that CETA does not get in the way by making the energy transition unaffordable for citizens.

It is a fallacy to think that a vote against CETA is the same as Trumpian trade policy. We agree that integration and international cooperation is necessary and that there are ways to achieve sustainable trade agreements that work for everyone.

A possible end to CETA signals precisely that trade agreements should not place investments above people and nature. A healthy economy is an economy where care for people and nature is central.

With CETA, it is not the polluter who pays, but the polluter who gets paid

*Alessandra Arcuri* is professor of Inclusive Global Law and Governance at Erasmus University Rotterdam. *Laurens Ankersmit* is associate professor of ***European*** Law at the University of Amsterdam.

*The House of Representatives will meet next Wednesday to discuss CETA.* The ***European*** Parliament approved the treaty with Canada in 2017. It has been in force provisionally since that year. The controversial arbitration mechanism ICS ('investment court'), which must adjudicate in disputes, is not yet in operation; the ***European*** Commission has made additional proposals for it.

*For it to fully enter into force, including ICS*, all ***EU Member States*** must also sign it. So far, 13 of the 27 have done so; the Netherlands is not one of them. If ratification fails, the ***European Council*** must d ecide unanimously. So one country cannot stumble on the treaty.

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[***Support CETA; our prosperity depends on it***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y62-YG91-JC5G-129V-00000-00&context=)

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**Byline:** VVD politicians

**Body**

**ABSTRACT**

Opposition to CETA shows trade shame. That is short-sighted, write two VVD politicians.

**FULL TEXT:**

Free trade is crucial to our economy and our prosperity; a third of GDP comes from trade and a quarter of all jobs depend on it. So we must do everything we can to strengthen our trade position. For example, through the trade agreement that the ***EU*** has concluded with Canada (CETA). It has been in provisional force since 2017, but has not yet been ratified by member states. Canada, one of our oldest allies, has high standards for its products, just like us.

As Minister for Foreign Trade, Lilianne Ploumen (PvdA) negotiated that deal well on behalf of the Netherlands. It is therefore unfortunate that her party has now suddenly forgotten our trade interests and is turning against this treaty. The PvdA is not the only party to suffer from trade shame. Even the Christian Union has its doubts.

The mood swings are based on inaccuracies. CETA would threaten animal welfare, chlorinated chickens would flood our market. Nothing could be further from the truth; ***European*** standards will be maintained. CETA would threaten the position of our farmers. But levies and quotas protect pig and poultry farmers from more competition.

In its provisional form, the treaty is already good for the Netherlands. Tariffs are falling, markets are opening up; exports to Canada have already risen considerably. Let us ensure that our small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, are able to find that market.

We should be ahead of all this scaremongering by means of good communication. This is therefore a task for our Minister for Trade and Development Cooperation. Separating the sense and nonsense about trade treaties creates support for the open trade policy that the minister advocates and is therefore essential for our earning capacity.

The many inaccuracies about CETA fit into a broader picture. More and more politicians are succumbing to the frame that exporting and making money are bad. Politicians who do not want to export more, but less. And who suddenly turn against CETA, while they have always been in favour of it. Or politicians who do not support SMEs that want to trade abroad until they have first explained in fivefold in writing which good causes they intend to help. Emerging trade shame requires a much stronger response: trade is the basis of our prosperity.

The first step is a successful approval of the trade treaty with Canada. The House will discuss it on Wednesday. Last year, the VVD offered the minister a tool for the steps to follow: a 'proactive trade agenda' with eighteen concrete proposals to help our entrepreneurs further and to increase the prosperity of our country. This will ultimately benefit everyone.

*Arne Weverling* and *Liesje Schreinemacher* are, respectively ***Member of the European Parliament*** for the VVD.

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Coalition bickering over Ceta

by Niels Rigter

The Hague - The VVD is annoyed by the 'trade shame' that coalition partner ChristenUnie is suddenly displaying. "The Netherlands will perish if we don't watch out," says VVD MP Weverling.

This week the Dutch Parliament is debating Ceta, the trade agreement between the ***EU*** and Canada. And although it has been agreed in the coalition agreement that the government will stand up for such agreements to promote trade, the smallest coalition partner is threatening not to vote if no commitments are made. The CU will be the deciding factor in the vote. If the treaty, which has already entered into force, is voted down, the government would have to return to Brussels on a mission with little chance of success to negotiate adjustments. The CU says by means of member of parliament Voordewind that they are especially concerned about the import of Canadian 'hormone meat'.

"Weverling believes that this is manipulation of the vote. "With Ceta, the ***European*** standards in the field of animal welfare and food safety are maintained." The VVD member finds it "incomprehensible that the CU plays with Dutch interests like this". "Our whole welfare system and all the amenities we cherish so much are built on our ability to trade with the whole world." He sees "a flood of inaccuracies" being proclaimed about Ceta. "Influenced by the frame that exporting and making money is a bad thing, more and more politicians are beginning to suffer from trade shame."

Weverling is also irritated by the Labour Party, which was still in favour of Ceta in the previous cabinet term. As minister for foreign trade, PvdA member of parliament Ploumen co-negotiated the treaty. "It is unpleasant that the PvdA has suddenly forgotten our trade interests.

Incidentally, the Christian Union is expected to vote in favour of the treaty in the end, if it is reassured by Foreign Trade Minister Kaag this week about the elaboration of the treaty.

Flood of inaccuracies'

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