Translated Text

3 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='They threw us out with two children'; Fred's home suddenly turned out to be a holiday home

The Telegraph

August 18, 2023 Friday

Amsterdam

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Section: REGION; Page 12

Length: 519 words

Byline: Marijn Schrijver

Body

Fred's home suddenly turned out to be a holiday home

by Marijn Schrijver

AMSTERDAM - Fred Bostdorp would prefer to live in his home on the Diemerzeedijk every day of the year. But that's not allowed. It is officially a recreational home. That is why he is now forced to live in Purmerend. The VVD would like to see this differently.

""I have always lived here, I was more or less born here,"" says Bostdorp. First with his parents and in 1988 he moved into his own home, which he was able to buy in 2010. ""There seemed to be no problem,"" he says. ""Until we wanted to replace the house.""

The house of about 90 square meters on the water dates from 1921. When Bostdorp wanted to rebuild it, it turned out that it was not possible within the zoning plan. It is located in a recreational area. “The municipality started an enforcement procedure. This meant that we had to leave immediately in 2019, on penalty of 6,500 euros.""

Suddenly Bostdorp was on the street. He first had to stay with his daughter and eventually found social housing in Purmerend. Procedures, up to the Council of State, yielded no results. “That makes you quite frustrated. The dividing line between the recreational and residential areas runs straight through our house,"" he says.

Now he can only stay in the house in the summer. ""In practice, I am very careful, because there is a lot of enforcement involved. There are few in the winter."" Meanwhile, he now spends much more time and kilometers for his work. ""I always say: I want my place of residence back. The municipality says I never had it, but they just made mistakes with the new zoning plan.""

He longs to find peace again. “There is something within the community that is against us. They keep coming up with excuses. But there are houses next to ours. There is water, light, internet. What's the real reason? They just threw us out and put two children on the street.""

The VVD wants to help. Frans van Vliet, district committee member in East, has now asked questions. Party member and Member of Parliament Peter de Groot is also on the issue. ""You see these kinds of situations all the time,"" says the latter. Last year he submitted a motion calling for recreational parks to be transformed into residential areas.

Housing crisis

Municipalities could arrange it themselves through the new **Environmental** Act, although this has been postponed. ""I don't have much confidence that municipalities will do that,"" says De Groot. ""They seem to want to keep recreational homes at all costs, while such parks (the Diemerzeedijk is not in a park, ed. ) there is almost no recreation anymore. There is often no longer even a reception.""

If holiday homes then comply with all building regulations, they could become regular homes as far as the VVD member is concerned. If you look at the whole of the Netherlands, this could free up a lot of homes in the housing crisis. ""It is crazy that people are forced to have an extra home because of this,"" he says. Next month, the House will debate De Groot's plan.

'Something in the municipality is against us'

PDF file of this document

Load Date: August 17, 2023

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7 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Residents of Rheden are powerless: 'A McDrive in the middle of nature, you don't believe that, do you?'

NRC.nl

March 13, 2024 8:02 PM GMT

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Length: 1237 words

Byline: Arjen Schreuder

Highlight: McDonald's wants to open a restaurant in Rheden, including McDrive. The municipality says it is powerless, residents are resisting. “Soon the first things everyone will encounter will be light, noise and litter.”

Body

The houses in the area appear to have already fallen in value. Logical, say local residents, because who wants to live next to a McDrive? Emotions are running high in Rheden, east of Arnhem, just outside the Veluwezoom national park, a European protected nature reserve.

About six months ago, local residents accidentally learned that McDonald's wanted to replace the existing Chinese restaurant China Palace with a branch of their fast food restaurant, including a McDrive. Arlette Groenewoud: “My children heard it at school. A crazy plan, it seemed to me, and I didn't believe it at first. We went to investigate. And the next day it was indeed in the newspaper.”

Groenewoud owns a small-scale holiday park on the Posbank, the highest point of the Veluwezoom. She took the initiative for a petition that has already been signed more than fourteen thousand times. “The fact that a McDonald's is being built here in the middle of nature without a municipality doing anything about it represents the degradation of our living environment,” she says.

It seemed like an idiotic plan to me, and I didn't believe it at firstArlette Groenewoud Owner of holiday park

Neighbor Stephanie Alexander: “This plan hits like a pair of tongs to a pig. We are sitting here at the edge of a forest. We moved back here from the Randstad because of the nature, the peace and the greenery. And soon I will suddenly have a view of a McDrive.”

Groenewoud: “When we drive off the highway to our houses, we drive towards greenery. That feels proud. Soon the first things everyone will encounter will be light, noise and litter, in short, everything we don't want.”

Sculptor Anketien van Zellingen, who lives diagonally opposite the current China Palace, expects a large increase in nitrogen emissions from traffic, especially next to a protected nature reserve. “While nitrogen emissions are already high here, and the municipality wants to take measures to reduce them.”

'Raids'

Responsible councilor Paul Hofman (GroenLinks) finds it all too unfortunate, he responds, that his municipality can only test the application against existing regulations. “We are very concerned about the nuisance to local residents, damage to nature, traffic safety and litter, but there is little we can do. That is a dilemma.” The municipality has asked the province of Gelderland to conduct further research into the effects of nitrogen emissions on the surrounding nature reserve. “That could be a ground for refusal.”

The councilor states that he felt ""surprised"" by McDonald's application for the permit. But how can this be reconciled with the fact that the plans had been assessed months earlier by the municipal aesthetic committee? Hofman: “The aesthetics committee received a sketch of the building from a project developer without knowing that the restaurant would be operated by McDonald's. That only became clear much later.”

What the councilor considers ""a justified point of criticism"" is that Rheden, like many other municipalities, works with zoning plans that are not specific. For example, no distinction is made between a ""small lunch restaurant"" and ""intensive catering establishments"" such as McDonald's. “That is a vulnerability and also a lesson for the future: be clear and specific.”

And what does he think of the criticism from activists that the municipality has failed to update the zoning plan, as a result of which the arrival of the restaurant may not be banned? The councilor: “That is not correct. The current zoning plan is fifteen years old but has no influence on policy regarding nature reserves such as Veluwezoom, as they fall under the management of the province.”

The members of the action group 'No Rheden for the Mac' live along a road that is quite busy during the day with commuters, students and recreationists. But in the evening and at night there is pleasant peace and darkness, they say, and then they regularly observe rare animal species. “We see red deer. A tie. A wolf. A grass snake. Birds of prey. Roe deer. And bats,” says Anketien Van Zellingen.

Stephanie Alexander: “Years ago, our neighbor turned off his garden lighting at night at the request of the municipality, because it was disruptive to bats. The cycle path is also illuminated with soft green light to disturb wildlife as little as possible. And McDonald's will soon be allowed to alleviate all of that?""

There is great outrage among local residents, people from the wider area, and nature lovers. Van Zellingen: “The farmers here do their best to sow wild flowers and maintain the bee population. Soon visitors will throw their waste on the street and also in the forest.”

No crossings

Road safety is also very important to local residents. “It's already difficult for us to cross,” says Van Zellingen. “There are regular traffic jams here.” That will only get worse because, opponents say, a McDonald's branch will attract many times the number of guests of the current Chinese restaurant.

It will lead to a huge increase in traffic movements, says Alexander. While, according to local residents, six thousand cars and 2,600 cyclists now use the road every day, they believe that soon there will be approximately a thousand additional traffic movements.

Alexander: “This road is already not very safe. Many students from the surrounding villages take this road to Arnhem. When they return, they want to cross the road and eat a hamburger there. While there are no crossings and sidewalks. And while the cars drive along that cycle path to the McDrive.”

Local residents accuse McDonald's of providing incorrect data about the number of guests, traffic movements and nature.

Van Zellingen: “A gentleman came here to see if there are bats here. 'in the afternoon. And he then finds that there are no bats here. That is ridiculous."" The activists are now having another investigation conducted themselves.

'Convenience serves people'

Alderman Hofman, in turn, accuses McDonald's of deliberately applying for the permit quickly before the introduction of the **Environmental** Act this year. “The old law is rigid and well-known. The new law gives the mayor and aldermen more room to deviate from the rules. They didn't want to wait for that.”

In addition, the councilor notes that McDonald's has also submitted applications elsewhere in Gelderland and Overijssel. “It appears that McDonald's has changed its strategy and wants to move closer to residential areas.”

Very few of these assumptions are correct, says a spokesperson for McDonald's Netherlands. “The permit in Rheden was applied for last year because it just happened to be that way,” reports 'impact director' Dolly van den Akker. And the fact that the company aims for more branches close to residential areas is ""not a strategy"".

McDonald's has 263 branches in the Netherlands, 141 of which have a McDrive. Van den Akker: “We are looking for locations that already have a catering permit. They must also be easily accessible, because convenience serves people. Of course we know that local residents have concerns and we would like to discuss them. We know that a petition has been signed fourteen thousand times. But do all those signatories come from the Rheden area? There are also many consumers who like to come and eat with us. We have a lot of fans.”

Load Date: March 14, 2024

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11 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Construction Act brings Senate into conflict with Hugo de Jonge

NRC.nl

July 18, 2023 7:35 PM GMT

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Length: 1116 ​​words

Byline: Sjoerd Klumpenaar, Rik Rutten

Highlight: A construction law causes a conflict between the Senate and Minister De Jonge, which threatens its introduction on January 1.

Body

'Out of office' is written on Hugo de Jonge's white cycling socks. In a cheerful Instagram video, the outgoing Minister for Housing (CDA) cycles from his office to the elevator, smiling broadly, where he looks back and gives a thumbs up. The message: I'm going on holiday without any worries.

Members of the Senate think very differently about this. Last week an argument arose between the Senate and De Jonge about the introduction of part of the **Environmental** Act. Since De Jonge refused to implement a motion by Ferd Crone (PvdA-GroenLinks), among others, senators have been considering follow-up questions and a possible debate after the recess.

The point is the implementation date of the Quality Assurance for Construction Act (Wkb); This would come into effect on January 1, 2024 as part of the **Environmental** Act. A majority of the Senate voted last week in favor of the motion to suspend the effective date.

But De Jonge does not intend to implement that motion, he said in a letter on Monday. According to the minister, the Wkb is so intertwined with the **Environmental** Act that it would not work properly if they did not come into effect at the same time.

Senator Crone had initiated the motion together with BBB colleague Eric Kemperman. It bothers him that De Jonge, as a caretaker minister, ignores a motion from the Senate. “We can't send him away anymore, because he's already resigned. But that doesn't make him any less responsible.”

Concerns about feasibility

It is not the first time that the **Environmental** Act has caused a stir in the Senate. The law bundles all legislation in the field of spatial planning and environmental permits. This should make matters regarding spatial planning simpler, but the fear of legal inequality and problems with ICT during testing made the Senate hesitant.

After five postponements, the Senate finally opened in March of this year, as of January 1.

The Wkb stipulates that supervision of construction quality will be the responsibility of market parties instead of municipalities. From next year, when constructing small offices and homes that require a permit, a 'quality assurance' must monitor the construction - an external company hired by the person applying for the permit. It must ensure better construction quality, lower costs of failed construction projects and a stronger position for consumers in construction.

But the Senate has concerns. For example, there are doubts as to whether there are enough quality assurance officers to assess all construction projects. Without a guarantor, a construction project will not be able to start, which could cause further delays in housing construction. There are also concerns that the use of market parties will make construction even more expensive.

There are also legal concerns. For example, quality assurance authorities must reject buildings if they do not meet one hundred percent of the building standards. For example, if the ceiling of a bathroom is five centimeters too low, then according to the Wkb the building would have to be raised until it is just right - with all the associated costs. The municipality may decide to tolerate it after all, but no policy has yet been drawn up for this. This means more legal uncertainty, which also raises the question of whether insurers still want to bear the risk during renovations, says Crone. “The minister has said that we will be working on this in October. That seems very short notice to me, because it is not clear whether they will be finished with it in October.”

In his explanatory letter, De Jonge argues that there will indeed be enough quality guarantees, especially as the demand for their services increases - and that postponement will in any case not result in more quality guarantees.

But De Jonge cannot ignore the criticism from the Senate. Certainly not now that the coalition has fewer seats than before since the elections a few months ago. And since the two largest opposition blocs, the BBB and the shared list of PvdA and GroenLinks, have joined forces.

The two groups previously announced that they were asking the House of Representatives to demand wage increases and more money to combat poverty.

Postponement of the **Environmental** Act?

But that is not the only problem for De Jonge. Because now that the effective date of the Wkb is under discussion, the introduction of the entire **Environmental** Act is also coming under pressure.

While Kajsa Ollongren (D66), De Jonge's predecessor as minister on the housing construction dossier, was of the opinion that the Environment Act could also come into effect without the Quality Assurance Act, according to De Jonge this is now a different story.

Also read: Major law change could delay expropriation of farmers

According to De Jonge, the Wkb is already so ""intertwined"" with the digital part of the **Environmental** Act that problems will arise in implementation if the laws do not come into effect at the same time. In a letter to the Senate on Friday, De Jonge describes the **Environmental** Act as a ""structure"" from which ""a stone cannot simply be taken out"", not even temporarily. According to the minister, other rules are ""figuratively hanging in the air"" and are ""not readable and therefore not enforceable.""

If both the Senate and De Jonge hold firm, another postponement of the **Environmental** Act cannot be ruled out.

The **Environmental** Act was supposed to come into effect in 2019, but that will now be in 2024. In the meantime, municipalities and construction companies are waiting for the introduction of the Wkb, which was postponed with the several postponements of the **Environmental** Act.

Bouwend Nederland has never been a fan of the Wkb. The trade association shares the concerns of the Senate about the number of available quality guarantees and possible cost increases. But since the effective date of the **Environmental** Act has been approved by parliament, the trade association has taken a pragmatic position: if the law does come into force, construction companies must know where they stand and what they need to prepare for. “The lack of clarity for our members is very annoying. They have been preparing for months for the introduction of the law, and what its introduction from January 1 will mean for them,"" said lawyer Reina Uittenbogaard of Bouwend Nederland. A new postponement would prolong that uncertainty.

An important addition is that, as far as Bouwend Nederland is concerned, the law should initially only apply to new construction and not also to renovations, so that construction companies have more time to get used to it. “We advocate a phased introduction of the law.” Municipalities want the law to immediately apply to both renovations and new construction - after all, exceptions mean extra regulations.

Member of Parliament Crone says he is disappointed in De Jonge's attitude. “He is now taking a big risk: things could go wrong with this law from January 1 because there is still a lot of legal uncertainty for consumers and the construction sector.”

Load Date: July 19, 2023

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15 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Corona, gas extraction, inflation: whatever the reason, in the Zuiderpark they are angry with the government

de Volkskrant

March 13, 2023 Monday

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Section: First; Page 4, 5

Length: 656 words

Byline: FLEUR DAMEN

Highlight: Thousands of demonstrators expressed their dissatisfaction in The Hague on Saturday afternoon about a wide range of issues, from the nitrogen rules to the **Environmental** Act. Wilders and Baudet were present, hoping to make an electoral contribution.

Body

Report: Zuiderpark manifestation

Shaking his head, car mechanic Mike (36) watches on Saturday afternoon as PVV leader Geert Wilders on stage in The Hague's Zuiderpark rails against asylum seekers in a characteristic manner. ""He's missing the point there,"" says the Eindhoven resident, a can of beer in his hand. 'This isn't of any use to me.'

The demonstration was an initiative of the radical farmers' organization Farmers Defense Force (FDF), with Samen voor Nederland, but it was not a farmers' protest: all groups that felt left out in the cold by the cabinet were called on to come to The Hague.

This was complied with. In the park in The Hague there is a colorful coalition of benefit parents, victims of Groningen gas extraction, social minimums, corona skeptics, nitrogen deniers and scattered farmers.

The symbol they share is the inverted flag, their shared goal of blocking the coalition's majority in the Senate. But that's where the unanimity ends. The grievances range from the European Union and NATO to alleged election fraud, and from the war in Ukraine - for and against - to the **Environmental** Act for spatial planning.

""For me it is not about a specific sector or specific themes,"" Forum for Democracy leader Thierry Baudet summarizes the meeting from the stage. ""We're all targets!""

Baudet is also taking the opportunity to campaign for the Provincial Council elections on Wednesday. His party is the most visible: supporters hand out flyers and balloons, campaign posters hang on the lampposts towards the park.

The major absentee is BBB leader Caroline van der Plas, who dropped out due to threats. The SGP and JA21 are also absent, to the regret of Eindhoveen resident Mike, who wants to vote for 'an underdog' on Wednesday, but does not yet know which one.

Mike - also a volunteer firefighter and therefore reluctant to have his last name published in the newspaper - was never a voter until trouble came knocking at the door. His girlfriend, an employee in outpatient care, has been at home with long Covid complaints for a year.

""First people applauded her, and now she has to give up a third of her salary while the bills rise,"" he says, while his walking shoes bounce nervously up and down on the swampy lawn. 'There is no safety net.' They gave up the desire to have a second child. ""Too expensive,"" he explains calmly, almost resignedly.

The speakers on stage are anything but. A woman with an Ongehoord Nederland cap excitedly depicts the grandparents of public figures as NSB members. A little further on, two demonstrators are waving a prince's flag, an NSB symbol.

But the relentless stream of verbal frenzy on stage doesn't translate to the field. There, annoyed texts go hand in hand with an exuberant mood. Bring on the typhoid, we're fed up, this is done now!, the demonstrators happily sing along to the techno blaring from the speakers, a mayo chip in their hand.

Those present follow the instructions of the organization, which asked the demonstrators - their 'warriors' - to behave. Because 'the party cartel', the 'incumbent power', wants things to go wrong, is the reasoning, so that the media reports about it and deters voters. And so farmers park their tractors outside the city.

The shovel that breaks through a police barrier shortly after the start turns out to be the only incident. Two officers are slightly injured when they arrest the reluctant driver. Just after four, a reggae singer closes the program. “Love and light!” he shouts, after an afternoon full of resentment. 'I am grateful!' The field is then largely empty.

First my girlfriend was applauded, and now she has to give up a third of her salary while the bills rise

View the original page: page 4, page 5

Graphic

One of the two permitted tractors.

Geert Wilders (PVV) passes the Forum bus.

Load Date: March 12, 2023

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19 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The **Environmental** Act is a potential stumbling block for Minister De Jonge

NRC.nl

January 27, 2022 9:04 PM GMT

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Length: 913 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan

Highlight: Minister De Jonge wants to quickly introduce the **Environmental** Act. Those involved fear an IT drama, high costs and implementation problems.

Body

Satisfaction among the top officials of the Ministry of the Interior: Hugo de Jonge, CDA Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning, declared himself fully in favor of the Environment Act within a week of taking office. This is potentially a stumbling block for De Jonge, but he still wants to see the law come into force as soon as possible, this summer. No postponement after postponement, as was the case under his predecessor.

The **Environmental** Act, devised twelve years ago to simplify spatial planning, procedures and permit granting, is called the biggest change in the law since Thorbecke: fewer regulations, digital procedures and more opportunities for citizens and companies to arrange permits themselves. From new residential areas to large-scale repurposing of agricultural areas.

De Jonge made his intention clear during his introductory meeting at the ministry with the responsible top officials. Director General Erik Jan van Kempen was present. Just like project director Cathelijn Peters, responsible for introducing the law. Although it was a private and confidential meeting, his message was immediately leaked. Within the ministry, and outside it, also on the blog of ICT journalist Bas Linders. Gone were the doubts whether the massive opposition from local administrators, software suppliers and IT experts had destroyed all preparations.

Also read: According to the Senate, the **Environmental** Act will lead to chaos

Strategic importance to the leak

There was a strategic importance to the leak. Next week, De Jonge will negotiate with the organizations of municipalities and provinces (VNG and IPO) about whether this law should be introduced as soon as July 1. Or whether a new postponement or even cancellation should be decided. The fact that the new minister had spoken out unequivocally in favor of the law and the July deadline was an internal boost.

But it sparked surprise among critics of the law. There is great fear that this will herald the next IT drama, will cost millions more and will not function in practice. This was also the case with the reactions to internal communication about De Jonge's statements. Comparisons are made with the Benefits Affair. And with the Fyra drama or the difficult decentralization of Youth Care.

Thousands of legal articles and ministerial regulations have been combined in the new law. To make this possible, local rules and zoning plans must be linked to a gigantic national database, the so-called DSO.

And that's where things go wrong. Because the government works with various software suppliers, which means that ICT systems are insufficiently coordinated and difficult to access. The database that must support everything has become a fragmentary repository of information, as stated in consultation documents between municipalities and the ministry. Municipalities, provinces and water boards are struggling and are unable to obtain information during the ongoing trial period.

Simple permit applications went wrong during this test run; in Amsterdam it was impossible to arrange solar panels on monumental buildings. Municipalities can hardly communicate with each other. This also applies to communication with urban planning agencies.

Introduction of the law has already been postponed three times because the national database was not in order. But it must happen in July 2022, the previous minister Kajsa Ollongren wrote to the Senate at the end of 2021. She also wrote: “There are still many disruptions in the system and in the chain. There will still be a lot of work to be done to keep all processes surrounding licensing, supervision and enforcement properly organized and running.”

Also read: New construction crisis threatens due to 'unworkable' mega law

Muddling through

The practice is more difficult. Spatial planning policy is at a standstill, urban planning consultants and software suppliers warn. Or, as spatial planning consultant Lieuwe Koopmans from Tercera, one of the most important software suppliers, describes it: “A six-month delay only leads to muddling through. Just introduce that law in July 2022. Then the resulting chaos will be convincing enough.”

There is also little trust elsewhere. Last year, almost half of the aldermen responsible for introducing the **Environmental** Act said in a survey by the trade magazine Domestic Governance that they wanted further postponement or to abandon it altogether. Reasons: fear of IT dramas and major financial blunders. A third of the council members interviewed in December want nothing to do with the new law for the time being. They also want a postponement to prevent chaos.

Chairman Bahreddine Belhaj of the Dutch Association for Council Members: “No one believes that the government will get this national system in order in a timely manner. Municipalities also do not have the official capacity to deal with this new law. The civil servants involved are busy implementing the government's new housing plans.”

Before the deadline, De Jonge still has to convince the Senate. This is awaiting an investigation by the ICT Assessment Office. This agency, the government's internal IT watchdog, previously gave negative advice twice about the national database in particular.

De Jonge's spokesperson remains mum about the start date, after the minister's initial optimism. First the administrative consultation, then ""it must become more clear about the precise timetable.""

Load Date: January 27, 2022

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23 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The closing notes of Bohemian Rhapsody still resonate when all kinds of rules change on January 1: an overview

NRC.nl

December 28, 2023 3:28 PM GMT

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Length: 926 words

Byline: Rein Wieringa

Highlight: At New Year's Eve, the government uncorks a lot of new rules. NRC lists the most important ones.

Body

A series of new rules will apply from Monday. Taxes and benefits shift, regulations expire, laws come into effect. An overview of the most important changes.

Education

Schools have received ""urgent advice"" from the Ministry of Education to ban telephones from January 1. How exactly do they fill that in? At one school there is a total ban, at the other there are 'mobile-free zones'.

From next year, students can receive a supplementary grant if their parents together earn a maximum of around 70,000 euros per year, more than the current limit of more than 50,000 euros. The amounts of student financing are also increasing.

Another thing that is rising: the interest on student debt. It was 0.46 and will now be 2.56 percent. This means that the 'unlucky generation' that did not receive a basic grant does not have to pay higher interest.

Also read Mobile-free zones in schools: 'They suddenly start talking to each other'

Smoking and drinking

E-cigarettes should no longer taste like blueberry, strawberry ice cream or mojito. Only the 'tobacco' flavor will be allowed from next year. Supermarkets and catering establishments are allowed to sell tobacco for another six months - as of July 1, they must remove cigarettes and accessories from the shelves. Albert Heijn is already doing this in January.

The tax on soft drinks, low-alcohol beer and fruit juice will increase from 9 to 26 cents per liter, while the tax on mineral water will disappear. The excise duty on alcoholic beverages will increase by 8.4 percent. As a result, a case of beer will cost an average of 50 cents more, the government has calculated. Smoking is also becoming considerably more expensive: a pack of cigarettes goes from an average of 9 to 11.10 euros, rolling tobacco from 17 to 24.62 euros.

Also read 'Vapers? These are first and second graders,” says Lisa (15) wearing a black hoodie

Pensions, wages and benefits

When the final chord of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' sounds on the radio, the state pension age rises by two months to 67 years. The retirement age will increase further in 2028. Employees between the ages of 18 and 21 already start accruing a pension, whereas previously this accrual started in most cases at the age of 21.

From now on, the minimum wage is no longer calculated per month, week or day, but always per hour. Because the minimum wage was based on a 36-hour working week, hundreds of thousands of people who work 40 hours will benefit.

The minimum hourly wage also increases from 12.79 euros to 13.27 euros per hour. All kinds of benefits are increasing, such as the WW, the WIA and the Wajong.

All allowances will increase, except for the healthcare allowance, which will decrease because this year's temporary increase will expire. The energy surcharge and the price ceiling will also disappear.

Also read: Detested and hated, now suddenly crucial to combat poverty: Rutte IV still keeps the unpopular benefits in place

environmental code

The **Environmental** Act will come into effect on Monday, after years of delay. This mega law must bundle all kinds of different rules about the living environment. Citizens who want to request information or apply for a permit for a dormer window, for example, can do so at a new digital counter.

At least that is the intention, because a ""significant part"" of municipalities are not yet ready to switch to the new ICT system, spokespeople for the Interior and the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) told the ANP news agency earlier this month. The VNG expects that those lagging behind will also switch quickly. Other people involved

Read also Yet another IT drama seems inevitable with the introduction of the **Environmental** Act

Last names

Anyone who has a child from January 1 can also give the surnames of both parents. Determine the order of the double surname at the registry office. One surname is still allowed.

Also read: Soon you can choose: Smit, Kuiper, Smit Kuiper or Kuiper Smit

Plastic

The disposable cup in the office will be a thing of the past in four days. Entrepreneurs are also no longer allowed to give cups or containers with plastic in them to customers who eat their food on the spot. If they do, there is little chance that they will encounter any problems as a result. The Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate will not enforce the rules in some cases.

Also read: The disposable coffee cup in the office will be banned from January. Or not?

Donate

The jubilee barrel will soon be completely abolished. In 2022, people were still allowed to give away more than €100,000 tax-free for someone else's house, this year that amounted to around 29,000 euros and as of 2024 the 'donation exemption' will have disappeared. Parents who want to give their children money can still fall back on

Also read The jubilee barrel is disappearing, but there are still plenty of ways to donate tax-free

Doxing

Doxing, also known as ""sharing someone else's data with the intention of intimidating that person"", will be punishable from January 1. Anyone who is guilty of this risks a prison sentence of two years or a fine of 25,750 euros. The fine amounts for other criminal offenses are also increasing.

Also read: No politician is against a law that combats 'doxing', but do enforcers know what to do with that kind of intimidation?

Streaming

Viewers can soon expect more Dutch content from streaming services such as Netflix, Disney+ or HBO Max. From January 1, these services must invest at least 5 percent of their Dutch turnover in projects that have a link with the Netherlands, for example because the main characters speak Dutch or Frisian or because the scenario is based on Dutch literature. Tens of millions of euros.

Also read: After years of debate, Parliament passes a law requiring streaming services to invest in Dutch productions

Load Date: March 18, 2024

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27 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=These changes apply as of January 1: soft drink tax, more expensive gas, tougher approach to animal abuse

de Volkskrant

January 2, 2024 Tuesday

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Section: First; Page 4

Length: 921 words

Byline: NIELS WATLO

Highlight: This year also started with a pile of new policies and wallet changes. A few important ones at a glance: from the changed minimum wage to the ban on disposable cups in offices and canteens.

Body

New policy

Energy bill up, price ceiling no longer necessary

To make the use of natural gas less attractive, the tax on natural gas will increase and that on electricity will decrease. In addition, grid management costs are increasing due to investments to prevent the power grid from becoming overloaded. An average household pays roughly 11 euros more per month. A gas-free household actually has a lower energy bill.

In addition, the price ceiling has been abolished, but that seems to make little difference. The vast majority of Dutch households spend less than the maximum price for electricity and gas set by the government.

Drink tea, not soda

In an attempt to get Dutch people to drink less unhealthy cola, the government is increasing the tax on soft drinks to more than 26 cents per liter. Now this is still 9 cents. This also applies to lemonades, non-alcoholic beer, vegetable and fruit juices. Where animal dairy is exempt, alternatives such as oat milk will be subject to the tax increase. Protests from producers and a petition (signed more than 50,000 times) have so far been to no avail.

Fixed minimum wage for everyone

Until now, there were separate minimum daily, weekly and monthly wages, but now there is one minimum hourly wage for everyone. This prevents minimum wage workers who work 40 hours from earning less per hour than people with a 36-hour working week. This has been the case until now.

Just like every six months, the statutory minimum wage also increases. This concerns an increase of 3.75 percent, to 13.27 euros gross, for employees aged 21 and over. Benefits such as the AOW, Sickness Benefits Act and WIA - which are linked to the minimum wage - will also increase. For example, the AOW benefit increases from 1,378.98 to 1,459.53 euros net.

Take disposable cups out of the office

Single-use plastic packaging is no longer permitted for on-site consumption. This also applies to paper coffee and tea cups with a thin layer of plastic. Offices, sports canteens, zoos and catering establishments will have to find alternatives to the containers and cups en masse.

Officially there is one exception: disposable PET cups. This type of plastic is relatively easy to recycle. The condition is that the organization collects at least three-quarters of the used copies for recycling. After parliamentary motions, another exception has been added in practice: if an organization continues to use cardboard coffee cups with plastic but collects three-quarters of them for recycling, the inspectorate will tolerate this for the time being.

What is still allowed is to provide disposable containers and cups with plastic for a takeaway meal or coffee to go. Since last summer, entrepreneurs have had to charge a levy for this, although the cabinet has decided to no longer enforce this.

More double surnames

Children may receive the surname of both parents. Until now, parents had to choose. This is the largest system change since 1998, when children could be given their mother's surname for the first time.

Obviously, the length of surnames is not intended to increase exponentially with generation. Parents who already have a compound surname must split it again if they both want to pass it on. If dad is called Willems Bakker and mom is called Bosch de Jong, then they can, for example, name their child Bakker de Jong.

Interest on student debt multiplies

Despite the anger of student union LSVb and protests in the House of Representatives, interest on student debt is rising sharply. This increases from 0.46 to 2.56 percent, with a repayment period of 35 years. The interest on student debt is simply linked to the interest that the government itself pays on loans, according to the government.

With an average debt of 17 thousand euros, this amounts to 350 euros in interest per year. The interest rate is determined individually for a period of five years. Anyone who did this two years ago, for example, will still be affected by the interest rate increase.

The idea is that people with student debt will be able to get a higher mortgage from this year if they pay off faster. Until now, banks looked at the total student debt, from now on they will only take into account the monthly costs associated with repaying the student debt. Making additional repayments therefore means being able to borrow more for a mortgage, because the monthly amount for the student debt then decreases.

**Environmental** law feared by civil servants has come into effect

Dozens of different laws and hundreds of measures for nature, the environment, construction and housing have been combined into one **Environmental** Act. That sounds like a simplification, and that is how it is intended. Anyone who wants to build a dormer window or shed should be able to obtain a permit within 8 weeks, instead of 26.

The law was repeatedly postponed because implementation proved to be very complex for local authorities. It is quite a job to digitally bring together the large amounts of data from different systems, from data on soil quality to zoning plans. Provinces and municipalities still fear that the system does not work properly and will actually lead to delays.

Tougher approach to animal abuse

Abuse or neglect of animals now carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, instead of 3. This is part of a package of measures to tackle animal abuse more forcefully. For example, suspects can be banned from keeping animals for a longer period of time, in the most serious cases for life. Moreover, the judge can more easily close companies if they treat animals poorly.

View the original page: page 4

Graphic

At the Quickboys football club in Katwijk, recyclable cups have been used, collected and washed for some time.

Load Date: January 1, 2024

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31 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=A PVV narrative is up for grabs; IF ONLY IT CHANGES

NRC

December 5, 2023 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 6

Length: 1222 words

Byline: Martine Kamsma

Body

ABSTRACT

What ideas does the largest party in the House of Representatives have about health? They see prevention as a 'crazy patronizing instinct'. And all this while a PVV narrative in favor of healthier schools, football canteens, streets and shops is up for grabs.

COMPLETE TEXT:

As long as it changes, this section is called, assuming there is some sort of consensus on where it should go. More sustainable. And that also means: healthier. The Netherlands has goals for this. And these have been elaborated in the Prevention Agreement that the cabinet concluded with social partners in 2018 to ensure that the Netherlands exercises more, eats healthier and smokes and drinks less. But who says you have to? The largest party in the House of Representatives has its own ideas about this. And the question is what kind of change that will bring. Whether change can also mean regression.

When the PVV talks about prevention, it is not about 'lifestyle change' or tackling the 'obesogenic environment'. Those words don't sound good at all. According to the PVV election programme, prevention is: abolishing the deductible so that people do not continue to have pressure on their chest or a lump. The PVV calls prevention as most parties mean it 'an exaggerated patronizing instinct'. “The government can provide information, but it does not determine whether you smoke, drink or what you eat. No sugar tax and no meat tax."" But: an affordable full shopping cart by abolishing VAT on food. Not only on fruit and vegetables, but also on Red Bull and pink cakes.

It won't go that fast, you might think when you look at the other programs. Pieter Omtzigt's NSC wants healthier school canteens, taxing unhealthy products more heavily, banning unhealthy advertising and encouraging exercise. According to NSC, prevention also means: promoting social security. Whether you have debts, how good or bad your house is and what happens in your immediate environment also determine how healthy you are. The BBB wants 0 percent VAT only for fruit and vegetables, healthy food in schools and healthcare institutions and more money for sports and exercise.

The VVD has also realized that we must ""from care to health"" by promoting a healthy living environment and encouraging healthy living. ""Without restricting people's freedom."" Of course. But the VVD wants to curb unhealthy marketing to children and continue with free school meals.

""The VVD has shifted enormously,"" says Jochen Mierau, professor of health economics in Groningen. What this has to do with this: employers must continue to pay wages for two years in the event of illness. ""They are increasingly realizing that absenteeism due to lifestyle diseases is a huge cost item."" The business community managed to lobby the sugar tax out of the Prevention Agreement in 2018, as political scientist Herman Lelieveldt has already pointed out. ""I don't think VNO-NCW would do that anymore,"" says Mierau. Companies are shifting and the VVD is moving along.

Putting your foot on the brakes from coalition and tolerating partners is one way to temper the PVV. And otherwise there is existing legislation that stands between prevention policy and trash bin. Without us thinking about it every day, our food environment is already completely legalized. Food safety, ingredients, labels: much is laid down in European guidelines. The Netherlands has to adhere to this. The healthy living environment is also explicitly included in the new **Environmental** Act, which regulates what is allowed with nature, the environment, construction and housing. Mierau: ""You cannot simply reverse legislation and regulations.""

And finally, citizens can go to court, says Mierau. ""Both the constitution and European treaties state that the government must protect public health."" The Supreme Court ruled that the government must do more to combat 'dangerous climate change'. Citizens can follow the same path to combat the unhealthy food environment. Consumer organization Foodwatch is already on that track.

The PVV will therefore not be able to destroy all policies for prevention and a healthier food environment on its own. But delaying and sabotaging is possible. Plans that could hardly count on a parliamentary majority will quickly evaporate. The meat tax is the first to go through the meat grinder. And a smart sugar tax, which makes cola with sugar really more expensive than zero and oat milk, also has little chance. The argument is: expensive coke puts poor people at a disadvantage.

This was already warned in 2018: the Prevention Agreement offers few guarantees for the future. The Netherlands is bursting with non-binding agreements, but there is too little legislation and regulations to achieve the set goals. Moreover, many expenditures on prevention are not structurally budgeted. If the PVV considers prevention a left-wing hobby, the incidental financing of 170 million per year will simply stop from 2026.

Resistance

It is no surprise that resistance to well-intentioned lifestyle advice is greatest among the people who need it most, people who live in neighborhoods where people up to fifteen years of age have fewer healthy life years than a zip code away. ""If you have other priorities and you keep hearing what you need to do, it will be disappointing,"" researcher Tim van Meurs recently said in NRC. When the government tells you to make 'smart' choices, they say you are stupid. ?

The PVV uses that sentiment. At the same time, they know very well how great the health differences are. And they make a valid point when they say that an unhealthy lifestyle is a consequence of poverty and that more purchasing power makes it easier to make healthier choices.

Herman Lelieveldt points this out and sends along what PVV MP Vicky Maeijer said about it in a committee debate about lifestyle. ""Their question is not: did you eat your fruit today or do you want broccoli or Brussels sprouts tonight? But: is there enough money to eat hot food or will it be bread again? [...] Make groceries affordable again and abolish VAT on groceries, so that people are even able to make the trade-off between more expensive healthy and cheaper unhealthy food.""

But where exactly the PVV wants to go, and for whom, is difficult to say. The party previously voted in favor of abolishing VAT on fruit and vegetables, but against motions for healthier schools and school meals.

The PVV opposes measures that would benefit the most from people who send their children to school without bread. And while a PVV narrative in favor of healthier schools, football canteens, streets and shops is up for grabs, says Mierau. “Really address this short life expectancy. Whose fault is it that people become chronically ill and die earlier? Or bring in popular role models: whose fault is it that Johan Cruijff died of lung cancer? You could say that it is the industry that is responsible for this, and the government must protect people against that.""

The PVV is opposed to health measures that would benefit their voters the most

The Netherlands is bursting with non-binding agreements

In this section, four authors write about the dilemmas that arise from the major transitions in society and economy due to the need for sustainability.

Once a month Martine Kamsma writes about food production and consumption.

Link to PDF

Graphic

illustration Mart Veldhuis

Load Date: December 4, 2023

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35 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Senate for introduction of **Environmental** Act on January 1

NRC.nl

July 12, 2022 11:42 AM GMT

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Length: 246 words

Byline: Rein Wieringa

Highlight: With an adopted motion, the Senate wants to make it clear that the Environment Act is intended to come into effect on January 1, so that other authorities can already practice.

Body

The intention is and remains that the **Environmental** Act will come into effect on January 1, 2023. The Senate expressed this in a motion that was adopted on Tuesday. An ICT advice will be issued in October, which should show whether the systems behind the new law are technically functioning properly. If that is the case, the Senate will definitively agree.

The **Environmental** Act should make it easier for citizens and companies to arrange permits themselves, for example for a renovation or for an event. A simplification of rules and laws for public spaces, it was said at the announcement in 2014, but since then the law has been plagued by technical problems and. Last month it emerged that the top officials of the Ministry of the Interior were internally critical of the introduction.

Research agency Deloitte published a report in mid-June on the progress of the ICT behind the **Environmental** Act. The interpretation of this differs: the motion adopted on Tuesday states that various parts are ""functioning stably"", while other senators believe that the ICT is ""totally not in order"".

Not everything is working as it should yet, Member of Parliament Theo Rietkerk (CDA), who submitted the motion, acknowledged in a debate last month. Nevertheless, the Senate wants to make it clear that the intention is for the **Environmental** Act to come into effect on January 1, so that other authorities can already practice implementing the law.

Also read: Ministry of the Interior suppressed criticism of the **Environmental** Act

Load Date: July 12, 2022

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

39 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=On to the roof!

de Volkskrant

February 19, 2024 Monday

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Section: V; Page 4, 5, 6

Length: 2059 words

Byline: KIRSTEN HANNEMA

Highlight: Minister Hugo de Jonge sees 'topping' buildings, where extra floors are placed on roofs, as one of the solutions to the housing shortage: one hundred thousand additional homes should be built in this way by 2030. Architects see opportunities, but also obstacles.

Body

Architecture Analysis Top up for extra living space

The Aquarius flat in Amstelveen was sometimes called 'the horror flat'. A building like many in post-war neighborhoods, but where the problems went beyond poor insulation and outdated installations. ""Weed plantations, prostitution: we came across all kinds of things here,"" says Thijs Faber, project developer at the Eigen Haard housing association, the owner of the flat. 'Making it more sustainable, as we did there in 2016' - he points to two adjacent flats - 'will not solve that problem. Moreover, another problem arose: the increasing housing shortage.'

Various scenarios to tackle the Aquariusflat were considered, from demolition-new construction to total renovation. But when it turned out that the zoning plan offered the option of 'topping' the flat with an extra floor, the choice was quickly made. Faber: 'This allowed us to preserve the building, which is sustainable, and create 34 apartments at the same time as the renovation.'

The flat was cleared, completely stripped and then fitted with a well-insulated facade, energy-efficient installations and new entrances. Architect Roald van den Bedem of AG NOVA Architects has crowned the building with the extra floor, made of wood. 27-year-old Anouschka, resident of a 37 square meter 'penthouse' - her first home - imagines herself in the tower of the Petteflet. 'The view is grand, but the wood also gives it something cozy.' Fellow resident Arjen, who moved back after the renovation, believes that he now lives in 'the most beautiful flat in Amstelveen'.

Minister Hugo de Jonge sees 'topping off' as one of the solutions to quickly realize new homes. Research shows that approximately one hundred thousand additional homes can be built in this way by 2030. Now that new construction production is stagnating due to rising mortgage interest rates and construction prices, this approach seems promising. After all, infrastructure and sewerage are already there, and if you approach it wisely, you can immediately make a building more sustainable.

What is needed to give wings to this development, which has been seen as promising for some time, but has not yet taken off?

The roof structure is not a new phenomenon. Until now, it was mainly private individuals who had an upper floor added to their house to create extra living space. A spectacular example is the Smurf blue 'village' that architectural firm MVRDV built in 2006 on a monumental building in Rotterdam-West. The designers placed three houses on the flat roof, in which bedrooms were created for the residents, with a small square, picnic area and an open-air shower in between. The design was a call to make better use of the 400 million square meters of flat roofs in the Netherlands.

Architect Mark Snitker sees 'certain opportunities' for this. But when he and his partner Leen Borst built eight maisonettes on an office building in Amstelveen, he also encountered the necessary challenges. Snitker: 'The first question was: can the building bear the extra load? According to the construction calculation, not much weight could be added; topping was only possible with timber construction. You have to look carefully at sound transmission and fire safety. Furthermore, according to the zoning plan, you must provide parking spaces at every new home. Fortunately, there was a parking lot near the office where we could fit in extra parking space with some puzzling. Local residents then objected, which led to a one-year delay.'

The reason for the project was the dated office building, which was in need of maintenance and sustainability; a costly operation. The building owner decided to finance this with the development of rental apartments, which were built on the roof at the same time as the renovation. In contrast to the brick building, the architects designed an 'airy' top, finished with white aluminium.

The terraced 'mountain' with penthouses that has risen in the heart of Amstelveen on top of the parking garage next to the V&D building is part of a similar business case. ""We often combine topping with the transformation of old shop buildings whose upper floors are no longer profitable,"" says Frederik Vermeesch, architect partner at Rijnboutt, which made the design. 'Because these buildings are in the center and you do not have to create extra parking spaces for new homes, it is interesting for investors to develop apartments there. And because the supporting structure is usually stronger than necessary, you can often add three or four layers.'

Here it turned out to be more beneficial to place additional homes on the adjacent - rebuilt - parking garage. Vermeesch: 'Initially we were going to create 2,500 square meters of living space, but during construction it turned out that 6,000 square meters were needed to make the plan financially viable. The parking garage, which was already there, was not designed to support so many additional homes. That is, if we were to build those homes in the standard way, with concrete. We therefore developed a special, lightweight steel construction with the constructor, with which we could still realize the extra homes on top of the garage.'

Vermeesch is currently working on plans to raise the height of the former V&D building in Maastricht and the C&A building in Groningen. In the latter building, the concrete structure is demolished up to the first floor and then topped up. ""If we were to leave the entire structure standing, twenty apartments would fit in it; by placing a new supporting structure on it, we could realize 45 homes,"" the architect explains. 'Topping up is therefore a nuanced matter: you have to look at each project to see how you can make optimal use of the available space and capacity within the revenue model.'

Bram Hertzberger thinks that topping should be tackled 'systematically'. 'Otherwise you won't achieve those hundred thousand extra homes.' Together with Levi Koppenhol and Younes El Ayadi, he founded the company Creative City Solutions in 2021, which realizes sustainability and top-up projects for owners' associations, especially in post-war neighborhoods. 'We saw homeowners' associations struggle with maintenance and renovation. The budget usually does not take into account the minimum amount of 30 thousand euros required to bring a home from energy label G to A. They find it difficult to weigh up the investment, comfort, inconvenience and the monthly energy bill. We have devised a format to guide them in these types of projects. We use the income from the sale of top-up homes to improve the existing apartments.'

Their first completed project includes two gallery flats in the Amsterdam district of Buitenveldert, each with ten homes. Because the extra building layer is built with the same type of brick as the facade, you do not immediately recognize it as an addition. “People are surprised,” says Hertzberger. 'When they think of roofing, they think of a built-in roof structure, but these are modern apartments with energy label A+++. When the residents of the adjacent flat, an identical one, saw the plan, they wanted this too.' The two flats were renovated at the same time to save costs. Hertzberger hopes to repeat this project in more places. 'That is possible because these types of flats were built in series at the time. We see this as the low-hanging fruit.'

Yet there are stumbling blocks. For example, everyone in the association must agree to the plans. And in Amsterdam many homes are on leasehold land. Hertzberger: 'For these additions, the municipality charged 140 thousand euros per home for the buyout of leasehold. That amount cannot therefore be invested in making existing homes more sustainable. We are discussing this with the municipality.'

The enthusiasm for building on roofs has increased in recent years, Faber notes. 'We did not even consider topping up the flats that we previously renovated in Amstelveen. We now include it as a standard option in preliminary research for sustainability. We have also mapped the flat roofs within our housing stock; This resulted in about four hundred buildings that you could top up on.' To achieve this, he believes, corporations and municipalities must 'move away from traditional working methods' and 'develop a shared vision'. Architect Van den Bedem: 'What will help is that the new environmental law will soon create one municipal counter, where you can submit your plan to the various departments: building, traffic, landscape. So that you know immediately: is this even a case?'

Hertzberger advocates an urban vision in which locations for topping are determined. 'Then you can already map out what the situation there is with parking, foundations and aesthetic requirements.' 'The preconditions for topping up must become more favourable,' concludes Vermeesch. 'This can be done, for example, by removing the requirement for extra parking spaces, by banning demolition-new construction in certain places and by tackling certain tax rules. So that these types of projects can get off the ground more easily.' Or better said: onto the roof.

DAKVILLAGES, ROTTERDAM

'When creating extra living space on roofs, we should not only think about people,' says urban anthropologist Renée Rooijmans. 'There is also a need for space for birds, insects and plants; green that can help with climate adaptation.' With the Dakdorpen foundation, which she co-founded, Rooijmans is committed to making roofs greener, in combination with the realization of small, sustainable homes. To test their idea, they placed a tiny house on the roof park above Rotterdam's Hofbogen in 2019; Rooijmans lived there for a year. The foundation now wants to realize a permanent 'roof village' on the De Kroon business complex in Rotterdam-West. 'The construction calculations have been made, the building owner is enthusiastic, the building permit has been received. We are now looking for partners who want to invest in the realization.'

HOFJE OP HOGTE, EINDHOVEN

The transformation of the Veem building in the Strijp-S district of Eindhoven is a good example of how you can top up a national monument - for which strict rules apply when renovating. The striking brick building, built in 1942 as a warehouse for Philips, was purchased by housing association Trudo in 2009 for redevelopment. Due to the low floor heights and enormous depth, the building turned out to be unsuitable for living, so it was repurposed as a parking garage, retail space and workplace. In 2022, 39 apartments on the roof were added, designed by the British agency Caruso St. John in the style of the building. What is special is that the apartments are located around a green garden, which makes it feel like you are standing in a courtyard at ground level.

MODULAR TOPPING

Build a lot of homes quickly, with less inconvenience for the neighborhood and existing residents, and affordable houses as the end result. That is the promise of modular topping, where ready-made residential units are placed on the roof. Construction company VORM launched the Optopper in 2022, a prefab house made of sustainably produced wood, developed to be placed on post-war flats. Architect Burton Hamfelt designed the three-room apartment of 50 square meters with outdoor space, a green roof and solar panels integrated into the eaves. A prototype has been built in Rotterdam and is currently being developed for use in projects. 'Blokje op' is a similar concept, developed by construction company Dura Vermeer. With these timber construction modules, EGM Architecten is realizing 44 homes on top of the Rotterdam residential building De Klapwiek, commissioned by the Stichting Ouderenhuisvesting Rotterdam. Construction started at the beginning of this year and the project should be completed in the autumn.

CREATIVE WITH ROOF

The Rotterdam architectural firm MVRDV has been creative with roofs for some time. In 2016 it built the installation The Stairs to the roof of the Groothandelsgebouw, the roof park at Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen and a temporary viewing platform on top of the Nieuwe Instituut (2022). To encourage private initiatives on roofs, the architects developed RoofScape, a digital instrument with which you can see how and where you can build on roofs in Rotterdam. For inspiration, they created a roof catalog with 130 examples.

View the original page: page 4, page 5, page 6

Graphic

Up-Mountain in Amstelveen, designed by architectural firm Rijnboutt.

The top flat of Creative City Solutions on the Arent Janszoon Ernststraat in Buitenveldert, Amsterdam.

Homes on an office building in Amstelveen, executed by Mark Snitker and Leen Borst.

Het Veem in Eindhoven.

A roof village.

Load Date: February 18, 2024

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43 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Yet another IT drama seems inevitable with the introduction of the **Environmental** Act

NRC.nl

October 23, 2023 8:05 PM GMT

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Length: 804 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan

Highlight: Minister De Jonge must explain all the warnings and the predicted chaos in the Senate this Tuesday.

Body

Hugo de Jonge will breathe a sigh of relief after this Tuesday. If all goes well, the outgoing Minister of the Interior and Housing from the CDA house will have debated the Environment Act with the Senate for the very last time.

This troubled law, intended to simplify spatial planning rules, must finally come into effect on January 1, 2024 after five postponements. But civil servants, architects and software developers are not confident that this is feasible. They outline doomsday scenarios that could bring construction to a dramatic standstill. With lost building permits, municipal officials who cannot guarantee services to citizens and architects who do not even dare to apply for permits for fear of chaos. And with project developers pushing through their own construction plans. As the deadline approaches, the **Environmental** Act threatens to become an obstacle for architects, civil servants and unsuspecting citizens.

There is no longer any question of postponing the law, Tuesday is about the warnings from civil servants, urban planners and software suppliers that the predicted chaos and yet another ICT drama seem inevitable. With at least delays in spatial planning policy and, in the worst scenario, speculators who can take advantage of the chaos.

De Jonge sticks to his deadline. A new cabinet also needs this **Environmental** Act to get the public housing plans (900,000 homes in 2030) and the nitrogen policy in order. “Introduction will not go smoothly,” the minister wrote in a letter to the Senate in preparation for the debate. “But there is confidence that entry into force can be done responsibly.”

The law that bundles all rules in the field of spatial planning and environmental permits would result in less bureaucracy and more effective regulations. But a national digital database, the DSO, that should make all this possible, is not getting off the ground sufficiently and, according to experts, threatens to become one of the government's most expensive IT projects (estimated costs of 2 billion euros).

Municipal officials who have to work with the new law from January 1, 2024, expect to be the victims. Software suppliers also assume chaos and delays in procedures. An internal presentation leaked earlier this month shows that the national database is not yet able to provide the requested information. More than half of the submitted applications disappear into a digital hole or are declared invalid for unclear reasons. And many municipalities cannot use the software at all, even if it functions - due to a lack of staff or because the organization is insufficiently prepared for it.

Also read: Ministry of the Interior suppressed criticism of the **Environmental** Act

Longer waiting times

In Flevoland, the Courts of Audit involved investigated last month whether the province and the municipalities involved can get started with the new law. That is not yet the case, resulting in longer waiting times. And on top of that is the faltering DSO database. “This digital counter is essential to maintain government services,” said Court of Audit Chairman Robert Douma. “Conversations with civil servants and administrators show that there are concerns about the operation and stability of the digital counter, especially due to delays in the development of the national part of this system.”

The law is like a new car that cannot yet be sold. Wico Ankersmit, director of the Dutch Building and Housing Supervision Association.

Architects can also hardly cope with the new regulations, as became apparent earlier this month after a further training course organized by the Trade Association of Dutch Architectural Firms (BNA). It was unclear to the hundred students, all BNA architects, what to do with it in practice. Most people learned one thing from it: when the law comes into force, most people will no longer dare to submit a permit application. Too much risk, too much uncertainty. “The law is like a new car that cannot yet be sold,” says director Wico Ankersmit of the Association of Building and Housing Supervision Netherlands, who gave the course.

Lieuwe Koopmans, advisor at Tercera, one of the larger software suppliers for municipalities and provinces, can describe the IT drama as follows: delays, ambiguities, chaos. “Urban planning agencies that cannot communicate with municipalities. Or zoning plans that get stuck in the systems, causing project developers to know prematurely what a municipality wants in terms of planning.” According to Koopmans, a financial drama is also unfolding. “And by the end of 2024, the promised benefits of that digital database will be further away than ever.”

Load Date: October 24, 2023

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47 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=ICT advisory board warns: 'major social risks' when introducing **Environmental** Act

NRC.nl

October 11, 2022 7:42 AM GMT

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Length: 620 words

Byline: Rik Rutten, Jorit Verkerk

Highlight: If the government introduces the **Environmental** Act on January 1, 2023, it will likely lead to significant problems for the granting of permits, the IT watchdog warns.

Body

If the government introduces the **Environmental** Act on January 1, 2023, it will probably lead to significant problems for the granting of permits, such as delays in construction projects. The government's ICT watchdog, the ICT Assessment Advisory Board, warns of ""social risks"" if Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing and Spatial Order, CDA) sticks to the implementation date.

The advice published on Tuesday is yet another alarm signal about the **Environmental** Act, which was devised twelve years ago to simplify spatial planning and related procedures and permits. This is a major revision of the law, which has been postponed time and time again in recent years. The Senate, which is the last to agree to the introduction, has previously stated that approval depends on the ICT advice that has now been issued.

The Advisory Board does not want to burn itself with the question of whether postponement is inevitable: that is ""a difficult dilemma"". But the report is unrelenting: if the government wants to opt for introduction in 2023 at all costs, it must get to work quickly to ""limit social risks"".

Delay in housing construction

The fear is that the granting of permits could come to a standstill if the systems do not work properly. For example, Neprom, the umbrella organization of project developers, recently called it ""irresponsible"" to introduce the law on January 1. Builders fear that housing construction will not be implemented smoothly due to the new system.

The suppliers of the software also have doubts. And civil servants also appear concerned about the introduction: a poll by I&O Research and civil servants' trade magazine Binnenlands Bestuur in September showed that seven in ten municipal civil servants hope for a new postponement.

The Advisory Board therefore writes that the sum of problems may also lead to ""the conclusion that the social risks of the **Environmental** Act coming into force on or shortly after 1 January 2023 are too great"". In that case, according to the council, it is obvious that the cabinet will take a lot of time to reconsider the law. It may then take years before the **Environmental** Act is fully implemented.

Also read this article: Ministry of the Interior suppressed criticism of the **Environmental** Act

Problematic digital system

The major stumbling block is the digital system on which the **Environmental** Act must run. This Digital System **Environmental** Act (DSO) has been causing problems in design and testing for a long time.

The Advisory Board has issued extremely critical advice about the DSO several times in recent years. Since the last advisory report, there has still not been sufficient testing and the tests that have been carried out have been carried out ""with insufficient quality"", the new report states. For example, according to the Advisory Board, insufficient tests were carried out that included the entire permit process from start to finish. “As a result, the program cannot sufficiently demonstrate the stability, reliability and technical operation of DSO as of January 1, 2023.”

The Advisory Board also notes that many municipalities have now announced that they are using alternative solutions, whereby they want to temporarily use the old and the new method of granting permits simultaneously in order to prevent problems. This should prevent the systems from breaking down, but ""at the expense of user-friendliness, understandability and usability,"" according to the council. Moreover, it is unclear whether permits drawn up in this way are legally valid.

The Senate will vote on the **Environmental** Act in the coming weeks.

Also read this report: The village of Oranje is still in trouble with the bungalow park

Load Date: October 11, 2022

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

51 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The introduction of the **Environmental** Act is being pushed through out of prestige, even though it stands in the way of climate goals

de Volkskrant

April 13, 2021 Tuesday

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Section: Opinion and Debate; Page 28

Length: 250 words

Byline: HERMAN WEELINK,

Body

Recently, former minister Cees Veerman and emeritus professor Louise Vet argued in this newspaper for a delta plan for agriculture, which should determine the limits for ammonia and nitrogen emissions in certain areas.

Groundbreaking for climate policy. But such a plan can only be implemented if there is a legal basis for it in addition to sufficient financial scope. If its introduction goes ahead, it will become the **Environmental** Act from 1 January 2022. But unfortunately for the climate goals, the law is not designed for that.

This deficiency is yet another objection to the **Environmental** Act. More and more scientists and planners are speaking out against it, and half of the municipalities do not want it. The law has no national control function, shifts national spatial issues to lower levels of government, limits participation opportunities, does not achieve the promised budget neutrality, is at odds with legal certainty and is built around an ICT system that has not wanted to work properly for years and that will cost billions.

The introduction of the law has been postponed several times since 2016, but after years of preparation, prestige counts; the **Environmental** Act is being pushed through despite all objections.

How many more objections are needed? Or will prestige remain more important than responsible policy even after Rutte III?

landscape architect and planner

The law has no national control function and limits opportunities for participation

View the original page: page 28

Load Date: April 12, 2021

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

55 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Would you like permission for a new shed in just a few clicks? That will be disappointing

NRC.nl

January 1, 2024 10:00 AM GMT

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Length: 1003 words

Byline: Martin Hendriksma

Highlight: Do not expect any positive effect for the time being from the **Environmental** Act, which finally came into effect on January 1 after years of delay, writes Martin Hendriksma.

Body

The government is investing almost three billion euros in the **Environmental** Act. The law is intended to speed up spatial planning procedures in the Netherlands, but for the time being the opposite seems to be happening.

Martin Hendriksma is a writer and editor of space and environment for Domestic Governance.

On January 1, the **Environmental** Act finally came into effect after five postponements. Twenty-six separate laws on protecting and utilizing the physical environment will be bundled from 2024. This should accelerate decision-making on new initiatives, ranging from the construction of a residential area to the installation of solar panels on your house. The only question is when the **Environmental** Act will have that effect. Even proponents of the law are more likely to expect delays in the coming years. The fear is becoming increasingly louder that less vocal citizens are being put at a disadvantage by the law. The implementation costs of the **Environmental** Act are now estimated at 2.7 billion euros. What are we getting into?

The idea of ​​the **Environmental** Act emerged at the beginning of this century, as the answer to the compartmentalized decision-making of governments. Anyone who wanted to start an initiative had to go to a dozen counters. That didn't work out. Under the **Environmental** Act, the national government, provinces, municipalities and water boards will work together as one government. Motto: 'Simply better'. The say of local residents is also changing. From now on, the initiator must take care of the participation himself. And not only when all decision-making has been made, but from the first serious idea. Where necessary, the plans can be adjusted in a timely manner.

Happy seagulls

An important advantage of the law is the more flexible rules. Social tasks such as housing construction, water storage and the energy transition place great pressure on our scarce square meters. A province such as Gelderland calculated that it needs one and a half times its own land area to realize all its spatial ambitions. That ground is not there. The **Environmental** Act makes it easier to combine various tasks. In 2017, a Groningen provincial official proudly guided me through the Eems Delta, where experiments had already been carried out with the rules of the **Environmental** Act. Controversial plans by local industry were thwarted by nature organizations. Until the higher emissions from companies could be compensated with the construction of a bird island. Company happy, seagulls happy.

The crucial facilitator of the **Environmental** Act is the digital system. The idea is that you and I can arrange our new shed with just a few pushes of a button from behind our laptop. To achieve this, the licensing rules of the four governments have been combined in this system. A series of questions should lead citizens to a clear answer and relieve overcrowded municipalities. Well, not so.

It is usually not a match made in heaven, the government and ICT. This also applies to the Digital System of the **Environmental** Act (DSO). The connection of the municipal software to the basic government provision was particularly difficult. It was the main reason that the **Environmental** Act had to be postponed five times.

Also read: Yet another IT drama seems inevitable with the introduction of the **Environmental** Act

It is difficult to assess whether this vulnerable system is ready for use. In the summer of 2022, on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior, I requested the minutes of the consultation between the software suppliers and the Ministry of the Interior, under which the Environment Act falls, invoking the Open Government Act (Woo). This resulted in what the responsible minister Hugo de Jonge had predicted. It is impossible to say what has been discussed in the consultations between the ministry and software companies since then. No minutes have been kept since that appeal to the Woo. Last month I put it to the test with four common requests, such as installing solar panels and that shed in the backyard. In all four cases the conclusion turned out to be: 'Contact your municipality.' That was precisely not the intention.

Rubber rules

The Council of State was also critical of the **Environmental** Act last summer. Chairman of the Administrative Jurisdiction Division Bart Jan van Ettekoven, a “playground for the commercial legal profession”. According to him, the rubber spatial rules and the new method of participation will raise ""hundreds of new legal questions"" until case law arises. In addition, the Scientific Council for Government Policy recently published the Grip report. According to the council, leaving participation to the initiator will lead to less vocal citizens being left behind. The **Environmental** Act thus reinforces the division in society. According to Minister De Jonge, municipalities can overcome this with a participation regulation, but not all municipalities already have one.

And will it work that way soon? I spoke to two leading members of the VTH committee, which released an alarming report at the beginning of 2021 about the state of our licensing, supervision and enforcement system. Can the **Environmental** Act sufficiently restrict the polluting practices of companies such as Tata Steel and Chemours? Commission chairman Jozias van Aartsen and his right-hand man Winnie Sorgdrager fear the opposite. “Large polluters have free rein under the **Environmental** Act.”

It is usually not a match made in heaven, the government and ICT

It is becoming difficult to continue to see the benefits of the **Environmental** Act. Yes, in a crowded country, combining ambitions in one location is necessary - the **Environmental** Act certainly helps with that. But it won't be 'simply better' for a while. Research has shown that the payback period for municipal investments in the **Environmental** Act is up to 35 years. Lawsuits will prove to be a brake on necessary spatial development. And the question is whether municipalities can organize participation in such a way that all citizens feel heard, especially when they are faced with large private parties.

The **Environmental** Act starts under a gloomy star.

Load Date: March 18, 2024

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

59 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Minister De Jonge is further intensifying the housing construction dispute with South Holland

NRC.nl

March 8, 2024 7:06 PM GMT

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Length: 850 words

Byline: Sjoerd Klumpenaar

Highlight: South Holland has its own standards in its housing policy, while Minister De Jonge wants the same policy everywhere.

Body

If the province of South Holland does not comply with the national housing policy drawn up by outgoing Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing, CDA), the minister may force the provincial government to do so administratively. This message, which De Jonge conveyed to the provincial government of South Holland on Thursday, further intensifies the conflict between the province and the minister. GroenLinks-PvdA, the largest faction in the Provincial Council, speaks of a ""remarkable letter"" and calls the content ""completely unacceptable and undemocratic"".

The South Holland provincial government has been at loggerheads with De Jonge for a few months over housing policy. With more than 235,000 homes up to and including 2030, South Holland has the largest housing construction challenge of all provinces. The province and minister agree on the main points: more homes must be built, and especially affordable ones. The way is where things go wrong.

Emergency call

De Jonge would like to see the same housing policy in every province, but South Holland in particular is choosing its own course. For example, the province is at odds when it comes to how many of the new homes to be built should be social housing. While De Jonge is aiming for 30 percent social rent nationally - with a rent of up to 880 euros - the South Holland parties agreed that 40 percent of new homes should be social. “Based on income, more than half of the residents of our province should be eligible for social housing. So that 30 percent is simply too little for us,” says Member of Parliament Tijmen Lamers of GroenLinks-PvdA. “With this condition we can also encourage municipalities that have lagged behind in social housing in recent years to do more.”

According to De Jonge, South Holland's course will compromise affordability and construction will come to a standstill. After all, project developers make less profit on social housing, and if they cannot complete their project budget, nothing will be built at all. Lamers thinks this is a political argument, mainly motivated by project developers. “There are plenty of cities in South Holland where 35 percent or more social construction is possible. The minister simply has a slightly different view than us, politically.”

It is not appropriate for a resigning minister to further reduce the authority of a missionary provincial governmentTijmen Lamers Member of Parliament GroenLinks-PvdA

Another point of contention is the different definition that South Holland uses for what exactly an 'affordable' owner-occupied home is. Not De Jonge's 390,000, but 355,000 euros as the maximum amount. The province also refuses to make construction sites larger than 3 hectares available to municipalities - with the exception of Sliedrecht-Noord and the Gnephoek near Alphen aan den Rijn. Eighteen smaller municipalities made an emergency call at the beginning of this year: they did not want an ""additional street"" but an ""additional neighbourhood"".

Deputy Anne Koning (PvdA) stands her ground; the provincial government – ​​including VVD, BBB and CDA – does not want to continue to invade nature and agricultural land. De Jonge states that the province's position is slowing down construction instead of accelerating it. “Undesirable in these times of housing shortage,” the minister concludes. A conversation between De Jonge and Deputy Koning could not resolve the friction. The minister now wants to talk to the entire council.

Management of public housing

On Thursday, De Jonge alluded to the situation in South Holland during the presentation of the long-awaited bill that should give the government back control over public housing. Under the new law, all housing agreements between the government, provinces and municipalities will come together in their own public housing program. This sets out how much, where and for whom construction will take place. The government is leading in this regard, provinces and municipalities must follow. If they do not do so, the minister will soon have more legal options to intervene.

Also read: with this law, Hugo de Jonge wants to regain control over public housing

Under the new **Environmental** Act, the minister can now force the provincial government with such a ""legal instruction"" to overrule provincial legislation when it comes to matters of national importance. In the conclusion of his letter to the provincial government, De Jonge writes that he should not shy away from “the use of legal instruments” if administrative consultations with South Holland do not yield any results. In short: if South Holland does not change its policy course in line with national policy, De Jonge wants to force the provincial government to do so.

“An administrative remedy,” states Member of Parliament Lamers. “As a province, we are responsible for our spatial planning policy and have been given more powers for this since the introduction of the **Environmental** Act. It is not appropriate for an outgoing minister to further restrict the authority of a missionary provincial government.”

Correction (March 8, 2024): an earlier version of this article stated that in South Holland, 40 percent social rent was sent per construction project. This should be: a total of 40 percent and has been adjusted above.

Load Date: March 10, 2024

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

63 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=New bill finally puts the environment first. But the text must be sharper, otherwise enforcement will be difficult

de Volkskrant

February 14, 2024 Wednesday

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Section: Opinion; Page 28

Length: 815 words

Byline: SJOERD LOPIK

Body

Ecocide

The Party for the Animals recently submitted a bill to criminalize ecocide. The proposal is intended to add a new offense to the Criminal Code. Under this offense, a prison sentence of up to fifteen years could be imposed if someone causes very extensive environmental damage.

This draft law fits within an international trend. For example, French law has made ecocide a criminal offense since 2021, and many other countries are in the process of legislation. The Party for the Animals' proposal attempts to use this international trend to finally correct two flaws in Dutch environmental criminal law.

Currently, environmental crimes in the Criminal Code can only lead to liability if a risk of damage to human health can be proven. If this is not possible, no punishment can be imposed; not even in cases of enormous environmental damage. The bill would nullify this restriction when it comes to massive environmental damage. By no longer requiring proof of health damage in these cases, environmental criminal law would gain more effectiveness.

Moreover, this would have an important symbolic value. Criminal law is the area of ​​law that can most clearly express social disapproval. The fact that the Criminal Code currently does not recognize the environment as a goal worthy of protection is indicative of an outdated approach to our living environment.

A second shortcoming to which the bill responds is the so-called administrative dependence of environmental criminal law. In practice, this means that companies cannot be punished for damage resulting from behavior that was permitted under an environmental permit. This is a very defensible starting point. Companies must be able to trust that they can carry out activities with impunity if the government has given them permission to do so with a permit.

It can be problematic if the government issues a permit with one hand and then punishes the licensed activity with the other. At the same time, exceptions to this principle should be possible. In practice, permits often prove to be inadequate or outdated. Companies may also discover after issuance that the licensed activity has disastrous environmental consequences. Therefore, in certain cases it should still be possible to impose punishment under strict conditions.

It is very important that it is clear when the justificatory effect of the permit can be broken. The bill describes certain cases of major environmental damage when this is possible, but could have been more specific on this point. The proposed criminalization is quite complicated and contains several vague concepts. For example, the bill sets the goal of responding to 'serious and widespread or serious and long-lasting or irreversible damage to an ecosystem'.

This is an unnecessarily complicated formulation with all kinds of open standards that can be interpreted in different ways. If companies can be held criminally liable for behavior that takes place in accordance with a permit, then it should be more predictable when that can happen. The current proposal creates too much legal uncertainty.

Nevertheless, the bill is a good starting signal for a much-needed discussion about our environmental criminal law. Other developments must also be taken into account during the parliamentary debate. For example, a (provisional) agreement was reached in November for a new European environmental crime directive. This is intended to force EU member states to impose some new environmental criminalizations, including one intended to protect the environment as such.

The treatment can also build on the **Environmental** Act, which came into effect on January 1, 2024. That law contains some duties of care that can also be enforced if the suspect acted in accordance with a permit. However, these duties of care are so vague that lawyers rightly doubt whether they can lead to effective enforcement. Without tightening, the Party for the Animals' bill runs the same risk.

At a time of ecological crises and social interest in the environment, a parliamentary debate on this issue is inevitable. With the necessary refinements, this proposal could be an important step towards sustainable environmental criminal law.

Sjoerd Lopik is a partner at De Roos Advocaten in Amsterdam and a PhD candidate in the field of environmental criminal law at Leiden University.

The fact that criminal law does not currently recognize the environment as a goal worthy of protection is indicative of the way we deal with our living environment

View the original page: page 28

Graphic

Employees of the province of North Brabant are remediating a contaminated drug discharge well at De Brabantse Wal.

Load Date: February 13, 2024

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

67 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Ollongren must postpone the introduction of the **Environmental** Act again

NRC.nl

May 27, 2021 12:12 PM GMT

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Length: 273 words

Byline: Thomas Borst

Highlight: The ICT systems are not yet ""working stably"" and that is why outgoing Minister Ollongren is once again postponing the introduction of the Environment Act.

Body

The introduction of the **Environmental** Act has been postponed again. Outgoing Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs, D66) wrote to the Senate and House of Representatives on Thursday that July 1, 2022 is the intended effective date. According to the minister, the delay is because more time is needed to get the ICT systems ""working stably"". The law should have come into effect years ago - the House of Representatives has already approved it, the Senate is as good as in agreement.

This was not successful for various reasons. For example, Ollongren writes that not ""all parties"" are ready for the law, which bundles thousands of legal articles and regulations. Municipalities of large cities: the law is said to be so comprehensive and complicated that major construction projects were in danger of being delayed. Municipalities have recently been able to test run the new system, in which local zoning plans are linked to a national database. The idea behind this was: with digital procedures and options for citizens and companies to arrange a permit themselves.

According to Ollongren, the ""minimum"" functions of the system must be running on October 1, so that private individuals and companies have time. The cabinet actually wanted the law to come into effect in January or April. The new postponement of the law also has financial consequences for the provinces and municipalities involved. The minister writes to make an inventory of how much extra money this will cost. Previously, consultancy firm KPMG estimated the costs of the **Environmental** Act at 1.3 to 1.9 million euros for the authorities involved. Municipalities incur the largest costs.

Also read: New construction crisis threatens due to 'unworkable' mega law

Load Date: May 27, 2021

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71 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=environmental code

The Senate wants a postponement of the **Environmental** Act

NRC

November 1, 2023 Wednesday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 10

Length: 451 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Spatial planning

At the last minute, the Senate wants the minister to postpone the **Environmental** Act one more time. De Jonge is not looking forward to that.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Outgoing Minister of Housing and Home Affairs Hugo de Jonge (CDA) is maneuvering diametrically opposed to the Senate. A majority of the Senate wants him to postpone the introduction of the troubled **Environmental** Act, but De Jonge wants nothing to do with that.

On Tuesday, the GroenLinks-PvdA senate faction called on the minister in a motion to wait with the law until after January 1, 2024, the intended implementation date. That motion was co-signed by BBB, SP, PvdD, JA21, 50Plus and OPNL, the party of cooperating provincial factions. Together these parties form a large majority in the Senate.

In the motion, the parties say that several parts of the law ""still have too great implementation problems to be implemented responsibly as of January 1, 2024"". They fear that ""major risks may arise for the legal protection and legal certainty of citizens and companies in the Netherlands"" if the law is introduced now.

Lost permits

It is yet another clash between the Senate and the Cabinet over the **Environmental** Act. This law, the first proposal of which was written in 2013, is intended to simplify rules on spatial planning. But with every step closer to implementation, the tension increases. Last week, software builders expressed fears in NRC of a new IT drama. Meanwhile, officials fear lost building permits and project developers who could push through their plans.

A year ago, the government's IT watchdog warned of serious problems. Internal concerns were withheld by the top officials of the Ministry of the Interior and critical officials were put under pressure to paint a positive picture.

De Jonge has always maintained that the problems can be solved. With that promise, he persuaded the Senate in June to accept January 1, 2024 as the implementation date. But nothing came of his promises, a majority of the Senate now believes.

""We must learn from what went wrong in the past, and we must dare to stop when we still can,"" said Saskia Kluit, the senator for GroenLinks-PvdA who submitted the motion. ""And that is now. ""

De Jonge, who previously called the **Environmental** Act ""a blessing for humanity"", does not think so. He said in a response in the Senate that the motion comes too late and is ""unworkable"". And so he does not change his implementation plans.

The Senate is diametrically opposed to Hugo de Jonge on the postponement of the **Environmental** Act

Link to PDF

Load Date: October 31, 2023

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

75 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=**Environmental** law postponed again

NRC.nl

February 1, 2022 6:23 PM GMT

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Length: 514 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan

Highlight: For the third time in two years, the **Environmental** Act, which regulates all legislation regarding spatial planning and environmental permits, has been postponed.

Body

The introduction of the **Environmental** Act has been postponed again. This environmental law must regulate all legislation in the field of spatial planning and environmental permits.

Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing and Spatial Planning, CDA) announced the postponement in letters to the Senate and House of Representatives on Tuesday. The **Environmental** Act is therefore postponed for the third time in two years. According to De Jonge, introduction as of July this year is irresponsible because in practice, services to citizens and businesses could be jeopardized.

Prestigious law Announced in 2014

The **Environmental** Act must become a radical simplification of laws and regulations, a revolution in spatial planning, even the largest constitutional revision since 1848.

When it was announced in 2014, the Rutte II Cabinet was still hopeful and ambitious: zoning plans, permits for an event or renovation, rules on tree felling and noise pollution: a whole tangle of rules would be brought together in one law that could be understood by every citizen. . But merging thousands of articles of law is disappointing in practice.

De Jonge thus deviates from the policy of his predecessor, then minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs, D66). Until just before her departure from the ministry, last December, she insisted on rapid implementation, despite the risks of chaos and yet another ICT drama. Originally, De Jonge also seemed to want a quick introduction, as his internal staff said after the first introductory meetings with the new minister. But after follow-up consultations with representatives of municipalities and provinces (VNG and IPO) and the software suppliers involved, he has now decided to postpone.

Also read: The **Environmental** Act is a potential stumbling block for Minister De Jonge

Digital database

On Monday, those software suppliers informed De Jonge that the digital processes for implementing the law are still far from in order. The biggest stumbling block is the national digital database. Thousands of legal articles and ministerial regulations have been combined in the new law. To make this possible, local rules and zoning plans must be linked to the national database, the so-called DSO. In practice - municipalities and provinces have been testing the new system for more than a year - the software of the various systems appears to be unable to communicate sufficiently with each other. The database that must support everything has become a fragmentary repository of information, as was previously mentioned in consultation documents between municipalities and the ministry.

De Jonge confirms in his letter to both Houses that the digital systems are not yet in order: “More time is needed to practice properly. This is currently not possible with all systems.”

De Jonge does not specify when the law can be introduced: immediately after the summer in October, or only in January next year. The House of Representatives has already approved the new law. The Senate will only agree if it is clear that the law is sound in practice.

Load Date: February 1, 2022

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79 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Opinion: New bill finally focuses on the environment, but must be tightened up

De Volkskrant.nl

February 13, 2024 Tuesday 02:45 PM GMT

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Length: 872 words

Byline: Sjoerd Lopik

Body

The Party for the Animals' proposal to criminalize ecocide (damaging ecosystems) is an excellent move, but the wording is still too vague. The text needs to be tightened up for proper enforcement.

The Party for the Animals recently submitted a bill for <a href=""https://www.feestvoordedieren.nl/nieuws/feest-voor-de-dieren-stuurt-wetsadvies-tegen-ecocide-naar-tweede-kamer- en-council-of-state"" target=""\_blank"">a criminalization of ecocide</a>. The proposal is intended to add a new offense to the Criminal Code. Under this offense, a prison sentence of up to fifteen years could be imposed if someone causes very extensive environmental damage.

This draft law fits within an international trend. For example, French law has made ecocide a criminal offense since 2021, and many other countries are in the process of legislation. The Party for the Animals' proposal attempts to use this international trend to finally correct two flaws in Dutch environmental criminal law.

Currently, environmental crimes in the Criminal Code can only lead to liability if a risk of damage to human health can be proven. If this is not possible, no punishment can be imposed; not even in cases of enormous environmental damage. The bill would nullify this restriction when it comes to massive environmental damage. By no longer requiring proof of health damage in these cases, environmental criminal law would gain more effectiveness.

Social disapproval

Moreover, this would have an important symbolic value. Criminal law is the area of ​​law that can most clearly express social disapproval. The fact that the Criminal Code currently does not recognize the environment as a goal worthy of protection is indicative of an outdated approach to our living environment.

A second shortcoming to which the bill responds is the so-called administrative dependence of environmental criminal law. In practice, this means that companies cannot be punished for damage resulting from behavior that was permitted under an environmental permit. This is a very defensible starting point. Companies must be able to trust that they can carry out activities with impunity if the government has given them permission to do so with a permit.

Disastrous consequences

It can be problematic if the government issues a permit with one hand and then punishes the licensed activity with the other. At the same time, exceptions to this principle should be possible. In practice, permits often prove to be inadequate or outdated. Companies may also discover after issuance that the licensed activity has disastrous environmental consequences. Therefore, in certain cases it should still be possible to impose punishment under strict conditions.

It is very important that it is clear when the justificatory effect of the permit can be broken. The bill describes certain cases of major environmental damage when this is possible, but could have been more specific on this point. The proposed criminalization is quite complicated and contains several vague concepts. For example, the bill sets the goal of responding to 'serious and widespread or serious and long-lasting or irreversible damage to an ecosystem'.

<br>This is an unnecessarily complicated formulation with all kinds of open standards that can be interpreted in different ways. If companies can be held criminally liable for behavior that takes place in accordance with a permit, then it should be more predictable when that can happen. The current proposal creates too much legal uncertainty.

Good starting shot

Nevertheless, the bill is a good starting signal for a much-needed discussion about our environmental criminal law. Other recent developments should also be taken into account during parliamentary consideration of the proposal. For example, a (provisional) agreement was concluded in November for a <a href=""https://www.consilium.europa.eu/nl/press/press-releases/2023/11/16/environmental-crime-council-and -european-parliament-reach-provisional-agreement-on-new-eu-law/"" target=""\_blank"">new European environmental crime directive</a>. This is intended to force EU member states to impose some new environmental criminalizations, including one intended to protect the environment as such.

The treatment can also build on the **Environmental** Act, which came into effect on January 1, 2024. That law contains some duties of care that can also be enforced if the suspect acted in accordance with a permit. However, these duties of care are so vague that lawyers rightly doubt whether they can lead to effective enforcement. Without tightening, the Party for the Animals' bill runs the same risk.

At a time of ecological crises and social interest in the environment, a parliamentary debate on this issue is inevitable. With the necessary refinements, this proposal could be an important step towards sustainable environmental criminal law.

Load Date: February 13, 2024

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83 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Senate approves: **Environmental** law will finally come into effect in 2024

de Volkskrant

March 15, 2023 Wednesday

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Section: First; Page 10

Length: 480 words

Byline: NATALIE RIGHTON

Highlight: The Senate approved 'the largest legislative operation since the Second World War' on Tuesday. The introduction of the so-called **Environmental** Act has already been postponed many times, but now the decision has really been made: the law will come into effect on January 1, 2024.

Body

The **Environmental** Act will have far-reaching consequences for anyone who ever wants to build a shed, dormer window or house. The law bundles more than 150 laws and regulations in the field of spatial planning, which should make applying for a building permit easier and faster.

In this way, many unnecessary rules about water, air, soil, nature and buildings are being deleted. The intention is that the waiting time for a permit will increase from 26 to 8 weeks.

After years of pushing and pulling, the law was already adopted by the Senate in 2016, but its introduction has been postponed several times since then. Partly because of the complexity of the law and the IT problems that the new digital counter for environmental permits appeared to have to deal with. A majority of the Senate now believes that these problems can be surmounted.

During a roll-call vote on Tuesday, 41 senators ultimately voted in favor and 29 against the introduction of the **Environmental** Act as of January 1, 2024. The major supporters - coalition parties VVD, CDA, D66 and CU - were helped to gain a majority by the senators from the Nanninga faction (JA21). The Senate members of opposition parties Forum for Democracy and the Fentrop faction also voted in favor. Voters against this include the PVV, GroenLinks, PvdA, SP, Party for the Animals, 50-Plus and the Otten faction.

Blessing for construction

Despite all the criticism about its feasibility, CDA Housing Minister Hugo de Jonge calls the law 'a blessing for humanity'. According to him, the law will 'really help' to build hundreds of thousands of new homes. Last summer he spoke of a 'dark forest' of laws and regulations that 'slow down area development'.

VVD Prime Minister Mark Rutte has also been enthusiastic for years. He believes that the **Environmental** Act 'puts a strong line' on the excessive number of regulations that construction currently has to deal with. De Jonge's distant predecessor - Infrastructure Minister Melanie Schultz, who initiated the law in 2010 - called the **Environmental** Act 'the largest legislative operation since the Second World War', which would pull the ailing economy out of the doldrums.

Despite all the advantages mentioned, civil servants have been slightly less optimistic than policymakers in The Hague in recent years, partly because they fear that the new digital counter will not work properly. Yet it is precisely the officials of municipalities, provinces and water boards who urged the Senate last summer to quickly decide on the implementation date of the new **Environmental** Act. As long as the entry date is not one hundred percent certain, civil servants must work with two digital systems side by side. That costs a lot of time and money, and can also lead to problems for permit applicants.

New law should greatly simplify applications for building permits

View the original page: page 10

Load Date: March 14, 2023

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

87 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Stop sticking plasters on old IT

NRC

October 10, 2023 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: OPINION; Page 18

Length: 883 words

Byline: Onno Eric Blom

Alexander Klöpping

Body

ABSTRACT

The government's incompetence in the field of ICT causes a lot of misery, write Onno Eric Blom and Alexander Klöpping. ICT must become a crucial theme for politics.

COMPLETE TEXT:

The Dutch government's IT infrastructure is like an old, dilapidated house. The wiring is broken and the pipes are leaking. It's drafty and it creaks. The foundations need to be renovated, but no one dares to touch them anymore for fear that everything will collapse. As a result, we continue to make expensive repairs, the system becomes increasingly unreliable, and new policies remain on the table.

The consequences for our society are immense. For example, politicians have been asking for a fair box 3 tax for years, but the Tax Authorities have not been able to achieve this technically. ""Speed ​​is required,"" NRC previously wrote, ""because doing nothing costs 400 million euros per year.""

The same tax authorities are afraid that within a few years they will no longer be able to collect the most crucial taxes. That would mean losing a third of our annual tax revenue. Cost: the insane amount of 100 billion per year.

But the consequences of incompetence in the field of ICT go further than just the Tax Authorities. For example, the launch of the **Environmental** Act has been delayed for almost 10 years due to poor ICT management, while the budget has already been exceeded by 1.1 billion euros. The project surrounding the digitization of personal budgets, which was initially to be set up for free by health insurers, also cost almost 100 million and is five years overdue. At Defense, the Speer ICT project was so delayed that the total costs far exceeded one billion.

These problems are just the beginning of the misery that awaits us if we continue on our current course. For far too long, digital infrastructure has been treated as an afterthought by administrators. Executors are given a limited renovation budget, only to lose it in the meantime and see all the work disappear into the trash bin. ICT talent is also undervalued in the government, resulting in increasing staff shortages. Due to a lack of internal knowledge, it is not possible to write proper tenders, causing greedy private parties and consultancies to walk away with hundreds of millions of taxpayers' money. And if the decision is made to build something internally, policymakers hardly think about the technical implementation. Programmers are then confronted with unfeasible or extremely impractical plans, without being able to make any adjustments.

This cannot go on any longer. Politicians must see the digital functioning of the government as a crucial matter and radically change course before the ship sinks. ICT must be high on the agenda for the upcoming formation. We are already making a first step with a number of policy proposals, based on the best advice from committees, professors and top technical talent.

First of all, politicians must seriously invest in ICT renovation. We need to stop sticking plasters on very old systems and take a real step towards modernization. Therefore, technical debt must be eliminated within ten years.

To achieve this, there must be digital-first implementation bodies that can pick up projects if they have stalled with other implementers. Within these organizations, IT professionals must be able to build without the baggage of decades of outdated computer systems, processes and internal politics. By giving the cabinet the choice to, for example, place sales tax as a framed project with such an executor, we also prevent even more knowledge from leaking to private parties.

In addition, we want to make it more attractive for technical talent to work for the public good, with a market-based scale system in which you can grow without having to become a manager. Furthermore, IT professionals must be involved in policy making. This means that technical obstacles are identified early and adjustments can be made in time during the legislative process.

Look at the country with the most digitalized government in the world: Estonia. There they set up the X-road system, which connects all government services in a safe, transparent and standardized manner. Due to the once-only principle, citizens and companies only have to share information with the government once and it is only stored in one place. This means that data can no longer 'float around' and citizens have control over who can view what data. These types of implementation principles are not only desperately needed, but will soon even be mandatory under European legislation. If we want to be able to comply with this on time, the government must take action quickly.

Reprogramming the government is not just about saving money, retaining knowledge and increasing agility. It is also about renewed confidence in governance. That is why now is the time to break the digital standstill.

ICT talent is undervalued by the government, causing staff to leave

Onno Eric Blom is a tech entrepreneur.

Alexander Klöpping is a media entrepreneur. He founded the Blendle platform.

Link to PDF

Graphic

Photo Rob Voss

Load Date: October 9, 2023

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91 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Opposition to **Environmental** Act

NRC.NEXT

February 10, 2021 Wednesday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 8

Length: 322 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan

Dateline: Heerlen

Body

ABSTRACT

Municipalities

Almost half of the aldermen want to postpone or cancel the **Environmental** Act. The Senate fears chaos in the implementation.

COMPLETE TEXT:

The **Environmental** Act, which must combine dozens of laws and hundreds of ministerial regulations on the design of outdoor spaces, from noise standards to catering regulations and environmental legislation, is encountering resistance in municipalities. Councilors responsible for the introduction of this law, which should come into effect in January 2022, fear IT dramas and a financial debacle.

Research by the trade magazine Domestic Governance and the national Aldermen's Association shows that almost half of the 177 aldermen interviewed are opposed to the introduction. Of these, 37 percent want a postponement and 11 percent even annulment of the law.

Since the beginning of this year, municipalities have been testing the software and IT systems that must make the new law work in practice. But many municipalities do not get around to doing this, the research shows. The test phase is failing in many places in the country due to unworkable software. Smaller municipalities in particular cannot cope with the new law in practice because measures surrounding the corona crisis now require their attention. As a result, there is hardly any administrative capacity available. Moreover, the corona crisis is rapidly consuming the financial reserves of municipalities.

Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs, D66) had wanted to get the law through both Houses before the elections. The House of Representatives agreed at the end of last year and called on the minister to introduce the law on time. The Senate is blocking this for fear of chaos in implementation at municipalities and provinces.

Ollongren says in response to the research that further delays will only make the operation more expensive. She says she understands ""municipalities where implementation is a major challenge"", but sticks to the introduction date. The question is whether she can convince the Senate.

Link to PDF

Graphic

Minister Ollongren.

Photo Bart Maat / ANP

Load Date: February 9, 2021

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

95 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Housing dispute continues to intensify

NRC

March 9, 2024 Saturday

1st Edition

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 8

Length: 791 words

Byline: Sjoerd Klumpenaar

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

ABSTRACT

'remarkable letter'

South Holland has its own standards in its housing policy, while Minister De Jonge wants the same policy everywhere.

COMPLETE TEXT:

If the province of South Holland does not comply with the national housing policy drawn up by outgoing Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing, CDA), the minister may force the provincial government to do so administratively. This message, which De Jonge conveyed to the provincial government of South Holland on Thursday, further intensifies the conflict between the province and the minister. GroenLinks-PvdA, the largest faction in the Provincial Council, speaks of a ""remarkable letter"" and calls the content ""completely unacceptable and undemocratic"".

The South Holland provincial government has been at loggerheads with De Jonge for a few months over housing policy. With more than 235,000 homes up to and including 2030, South Holland has the largest housing construction challenge of all provinces. The province and minister agree on the main points: more homes must be built, and especially affordable ones. The way is where things go wrong.

Emergency call

De Jonge would like to see the same housing policy in every province, but South Holland in particular is choosing its own course. For example, the province is at odds when it comes to how many of the new homes to be built should be social housing. While De Jonge is aiming for 30 percent social rent nationally - with a rent of up to 880 euros - the South Holland parties agreed that in every construction project 40 percent of the new homes should be social. ""Based on income, more than half of the residents of our province should be eligible for social housing. So that 30 percent is simply too little for us,"" says Member of Parliament Tijmen Lamers of GroenLinks-PvdA. ""With that condition we can also encourage municipalities that have lagged behind in social housing in recent years to do more.""

According to De Jonge, South Holland's course will compromise affordability and construction will come to a standstill. After all, project developers make less profit on social housing, and if they cannot complete their project budget, nothing will be built at all. Lamers thinks this is a political argument, mainly motivated by project developers. ""There are plenty of cities in South Holland where 35 percent or more social construction is possible. The minister simply has a slightly different view than us, politically speaking.""

Another point of contention is the different definition that South Holland uses for what exactly an 'affordable' owner-occupied home is. Not De Jonge's 390,000, but 355,000 euros as the maximum amount. The province also refuses to make construction sites larger than 3 hectares available to municipalities - with the exception of Sliedrecht-Noord and the Gnephoek near Alphen aan den Rijn. Eighteen smaller municipalities made an emergency call at the beginning of this year: they did not want an ""additional street"" but an ""additional neighborhood"".

Deputy Anne Koning (PvdA) stands firm: the provincial government - including VVD, BBB and CDA - does not want to continue to invade nature and agricultural land. De Jonge states that the province's position is slowing down construction instead of accelerating it. ""Undesirable in these times of housing shortage,"" the minister concludes. A conversation between De Jonge and Deputy Koning could not resolve the friction. The minister now wants to talk to the entire council.

Management of public housing

On Thursday, De Jonge alluded to the situation in South Holland during the presentation of the long-awaited bill that should give the government back control over public housing. Under the new law, all housing agreements between the government, provinces and municipalities will come together in their own public housing program. This sets out how much, where and for whom construction will take place. The government is leading in this regard, provinces and municipalities must follow. If they do not do so, the minister will soon have more legal options to intervene.

Under the new **Environmental** Act, the minister can now force the provincial government with such a ""legal instruction"" to overrule provincial legislation when it concerns matters of national importance. In the conclusion of his letter to the provincial government, De Jonge writes, not to shy away from ""the use of legal instruments"" if administrative consultation with South Holland does not yield any results. In short: if South Holland does not change its policy course in line with national policy, De Jonge wants to force the provincial government to do so.

De Jonge further intensifies the housing dispute in South Holland

It is not appropriate for a resigning minister to further reduce the authority of a missionary provincial government Tijmen Lamers Member of Parliament GroenLinks-PvdA

Link to PDF

Graphic

A new construction project in the South Holland town of Berkel en Rodenrijs.

Photo Peter Hilz/ANP

Load Date: March 8, 2024

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99 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Use and necessity of new **Environmental** Act is a mystery'; OPINION Eric Meijer, Johan van Oldebarnevelt Foundation

De Telegraaf.nl

October 12, 2022 Wednesday 8:15 AM GMT

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Section: WHAT YOU SAY; THE MATTER; WHAT YOU SAY; FRONT PAGE

Length: 535 words

Byline: Our editorial staff

Body

“Almost every Dutch person will have to deal with the controversial **Environmental** Act, which will most likely be introduced on January 1, 2023. This merger of 26 old laws must regulate everything about the quality of the physical living environment. The implementation costs, although not known exactly, run into billions of euros. **Environmental** services, civil servants, lawyers and project developers are waiting anxiously.

The digital system is crucial in the new **Environmental** Act. Through this system, citizens can, for example, apply for a permit for their dormer window or project developers can even arrange the permit for an entire residential area.

However, during the test run of this system, many imperfections and ambiguities came to light. This revealed confusion about certain terms such as environmental tax and the question of which government is competent.

Moreover, there do not appear to be enough civil servants available at the municipalities to implement this complex law. As chairman of the Licensing, Supervision and Enforcement (2021) committee, former minister Van Aartsen questions the functioning of the environmental service. Due to the shortage of people, health aspects, for example during the construction of factories - odor, noise and chemical emissions - are difficult to investigate, monitor and convert into a permit.

Concerned

Citizens should already be involved in an important part of the **Environmental** Act (participation). However, many municipalities have no idea how to approach participation seriously and often omit participation in new projects. Yet municipalities and the Ministry of the Interior are positive about the **Environmental** Act, while citizens and experts know that the law is shaky and may only come into effect partially in three years' time after the digitalization of all surfaces and procedures in the Netherlands. Not to mention the billions in costs involved.

The law still stipulates that you can claim damage in the event of spatial changes. That possibility practically disappears. Presumably, there are still €800 million in possible planning damage claims for citizens who are victims of apartments and/or residential areas that have recently been built. After January 1, plan damage will be converted into disadvantage compensation and a threshold will be set in law of 4% of the value of the immovable property, so that the possibility of compensation virtually disappears.

Not easier

From the beginning, governments have asked about the usefulness and necessity of this law. There has never actually been a good answer to that. The new legal system has no clear objective and will not be simpler or better, but will be packaged in a complicated IT system. Opportunities to recover damages will virtually disappear. The interpretation of the participation paragraph remains unclear to citizens and project developers wonder whether the weak environmental services can process their applications on time and adequately within this new law. In short, we shouldn't start with it.”

Mr. Eric Meijer is director of the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt Foundation

Graphic

Image, Homes under construction in Oud-Beijerland., ANP/HH

Load Date: October 12, 2022

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103 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Too little help with road closures'; The municipality states: we provide tailor-made solutions

The Telegraph

October 13, 2022 Thursday

Haaglanden

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Section: REGION; Page 12

Length: 465 words

Byline: Tanja Verkaik

Body

The municipality states: we provide tailor-made solutions

by Tanja Verkaik

THE HAGUE - The city council of The Hague is looking at tailor-made solutions when it comes to affected entrepreneurs who are inaccessible due to the work on tram line 16. Alderman Saskia Bruines promised this in a debate on Wednesday. Entrepreneurs are happy that the city council is looking for a solution, but find the commitments 'not yet concrete enough'.

“There must now be a compensation scheme with retroactive effect. Because the **Environmental** Act will come into effect on January 1, which means that this regulation will disappear in this form,"" says owner Jim den Harder of the Old Fashion catering business in the Zeeheldenkwartier. ""I don't even have skin left on my bones."" PvdA councilor Mairan Sewtahal also thought the councilors' promises were 'empty shells'. They are beating around the bush."" ​​Ralf Sluijs of Hart voor Den Haag, who requested the debate, also misses quick solutions for entrepreneurs in the Zeeheldenkwartier, Scheveningen and the center, who have been difficult to reach for months due to construction sites. ""Entrepreneurs have no insight into anything. The city council has unleashed an unprecedented amount of bullying on this city and must take political responsibility,"" says the councilor.

'Swipe sign'

The fact that the existing disadvantage compensation scheme, which the councilor now also wants to use for us, is only used about ten times each year is 'a bad sign', says Den Harder. ""On average, the request of one to three applicants is honored,"" Bruines explained. This may also be due to the fame of this scheme. ""Entrepreneurs who only have an open street for two weeks are not eligible for disadvantage compensation, but especially for entrepreneurs who suffer a loss of turnover for a long time through no fault of their own,"" the councilor indicated.

Bruines is looking at the possibility of having these entrepreneurs make an appointment directly at city hall for a personal meeting. This also applies to starting entrepreneurs."" Councilor Alexander Roep (VVD) points out that the requests will be answered quickly. ""There is a period of eight weeks, which can also be extended by eight weeks. "" Bruines asks for a few days to work out the details. Councilor Anne Mulder (Mobility) promised to do everything she can to have the work completed in the Zeeheldenkwartier on December 23. There will also be a discussion with entrepreneurs about solutions, such as better signage and loading and unloading areas. Bruines and Mulder will make a working visit together to the hard-hit Zeeheldenkwartier. ""These are moving stories of the entrepreneur through which despair seeps through. And that is also understandable after two corona years and now road closures,"" said Mulder

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Load Date: October 12, 2022

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107 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=14 things you shouldn't do on the first date

NRC.nl

June 12, 2023 7:22 PM GMT

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Length: 863 words

Byline: Japke-d. Bouma

Highlight: We all want a successful first date. Don't talk about your ex all the time, leave your wedding dress at home and don't immediately start talking about an STD test, Japke-d advises. Bouma.

Body

For everyone who has been happily married, partnered, engaged or otherwise committed for years, this week will be a piece of cake: you don't have to read my column - that's also nice, right?

For all the people who are looking for the love of their life, or just someone to watch Netflix with on the couch for the rest of their lives, I also have good news: this one is especially for you.

Because since I wrote about what you should not do, the time has now come to approach the first date in a radically different way. Here are the best tips.

1 Don't talk about yourself all the time.

The Fidel Castro effect, so to speak. So suppress the urge to spend hours talking about your heavy metal hobby, your horoscope, your cycling laps, your cat, everything related to 'brewing beer' and instead ask for something in return. Works like crazy! If necessary, pretend you are interested.

2 Leave your work at home.

There is really no one interested in Kanban boards, opex dashboards, refinements that need to be added to the backlog, task forces, quartermasters and the new **Environmental** Act. You're on a date, aren't you? Not during a quotation meeting. Avoid the word 'bitcoin' in any case. There are women who, upon hearing it, get up and leave. You might as well say that you think Harvey Weinstein was treated very harshly.

3 Don't spend hours whining about your ex.

That's so unattractive. Above all, avoid painful details. That she had such stupid breasts, that he had such a small one, that he cheated on him with his boss, that she never wanted to be from behind - I'm making up these examples, of course - cough. If you want to end the date quickly, it is of course very smart to say these kinds of things.

4 Don't start talking about your special interests in the first minute.

Wait a while with that (witchcraft, folding bicycle, foot fetishism, Tesla, believing in gnomes, astrology, etc.) Ideal for the second date!

5 Don't show too much understanding.

Keep it light. Otherwise, before you know it, you will be in a therapy session for which you cannot send an invoice.

6 If you want to have children, don't start talking about it in the first minute.

And therefore not 'whether there is Down syndrome or autism in your family in connection with our children' - it really happened. Then your date feels reduced to being a sperm donor.

7 Also avoid other knife-to-the-throat situations.

Such as asking for an STD test, the 'you have to choose: cats or dogs!' and visiting schedules along the lines of 'I have squash on Mondays, an office day on Tuesday, cycling on Thursday, Sunday for myself and Friday and every other weekend with me'. n children so I can go every Wednesday and every Saturday every two weeks, can you?

8 Do not wear a wedding dress, do not bring a cohabitation contract or brochures for the summer holidays.

Also bad: the 'are you prepared to move to The Hague, otherwise we better put an end to it now'. Dude, I've only known you for an hour. Chill.

9 Don't give your date tips about appearance in the first minute.

About hairstyle ('you could dye your hair'), clothing ('prefer a skirt'), posture ('this diet does work well'), teeth ('maybe braces?'), shoes ('preferably no sneakers' ). Look at yourself dude.

10 In fact, don't go on a date without first looking in the mirror.

It will of course be noticeable if you have binge-watched NikkieTutorials, but don't show up with the spaghetti sauce from three weeks ago on your SuperDry shirt when you haven't looked at your teeth, toenails, nose and ear hair for six months.

11

Never have sex on the first date?

I do not know. Take a look for yourself to see how the flag hangs or stands.

12

Then, finally, something about rejection.

Don't 'ghost' your date if you didn't like it, but always let them know. I once called in Derk Bolt because I was afraid that my date had died. But keep it short. So stop with those endless rejection apps, and especially those with 'tips and tops' in the category 'what I often saw you do is react very defensively, while I think you are a people person'. Get lost. If I want 360-degree feedback, I'll look on LinkedIn.

13

Don't argue if you've been rejected.

That's creepy. Dating is not a matter of being right. You can be rejected because of your canines, because of your place of residence, or because of your car – let it go.

14

And oh yes: don't sit around feeling gloomy!

Try to have some fun with it. As if your alternative is so much more attractive, also: spending another evening on the couch - yes, right.

Certainly: too much love will kill you, as Freddy Mercury once sang. But he also wrote: play the game – who knows. Moreover, if it fails, you have a good story for your friends who all have a super happy relationship. Let me know how it went!

Bravely move forward.

How was your week? Tips for

Japke-d. Bouma

through

@Japked

on Twitter.

These were the Pearls on Twitter this week

Champion is looking for editor-in-chief. “Do we have a match?” Um. No! @japked   #kantoortaal   pic.twitter.com/pZXJGDiFHA — Bert Mollema (@bert\_mollema) June 2, 2023

Just met an impact-driven entrepreneur.— Taaldokter (@Taaldokter) June 9, 2023

'Character-packed' and 'striking' is what real estate agents say when they recommend a shack. https://t.co/NQaAMyyTV3 — Sander Schimmelpenninck (@SanderSchimmelp) June 12, 2023

Load Date: June 13, 2023

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111 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Construction projects are delayed because citizens are much more likely to lodge protests with the highest court

NRC.nl

April 19, 2022 8:41 AM GMT

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Length: 292 words

Byline: Tobiah Palm

Highlight: The number of construction-related cases at the Council of State increased to 2,300 last year. A year earlier there were still around 1,800. Due to a staff shortage, the Council cannot properly handle that number.

Body

In recent years, citizens have increasingly turned to the Council of State in an attempt to stop construction plans. The number of lawsuits before the **Environmental** Chamber, which judges on construction-related issues, increased last year to more than 2,300. In 2020, there were still 1,820 cases. The Council does not have enough staff for the number of cases, causing construction projects to be delayed. A spokesperson for the Council of State confirmed this after reporting from Trouw.

The Council of State aims to have every construction case resolved within one year. That is not always possible, says the spokesperson. The Council, like many other organizations, is struggling with a staff shortage. In particular, there are too few clerks who prepare cases legally. Due to the increasing number of cases and the shortage of staff, cases are taking longer than desired. It is not known how many cases last longer than a year, according to the spokesperson.

It is also not clear why the number of lawsuits has increased in recent years. According to the spokesperson, a possible explanation is the arrival of the - often postponed - new **Environmental** Act that will come into effect in 2023. Municipalities may implement their construction plans before that law comes into effect, the spokesperson says. And more building plans means more protests. “But that is speculation.”

Citizens are mainly opposed to large-scale projects, such as wind farms, the spokesperson says. According to him, this is nothing new: when construction plans are made that have a major impact on local residents, there will always be protests. “You also saw this with the expansion of the Betuwe Route in the Achterhoek and when the fifth runway at Schiphol was constructed, many people were angry about the increase in noise and exhaust fumes.”

Load Date: April 19, 2022

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115 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=De Jonge wants to speed up the criticized law

NRC

January 28, 2022 Friday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 10

Length: 953 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

environmental code

Minister De Jonge wants to introduce the **Environmental** Act quickly. Those involved fear an IT drama, high costs and implementation problems.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Satisfaction among the top officials of the Ministry of the Interior: Hugo de Jonge, CDA Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning, declared himself fully in favor of the Environment Act within a week of taking office. This is potentially a stumbling block for De Jonge, but he still wants to see the law come into force as soon as possible, this summer. No postponement after postponement, as was the case under his predecessor.

The **Environmental** Act, devised twelve years ago to simplify spatial planning, procedures and permit granting, is called the biggest change in the law since Thorbecke: fewer regulations, digital procedures and more opportunities for citizens and companies to arrange permits themselves. From new residential areas to large-scale repurposing of agricultural areas.

De Jonge made his intention clear during his introductory meeting at the ministry with the responsible top officials. Director General Erik Jan van Kempen was present. Just like project director Cathelijn Peters, responsible for introducing the law. Although it was a private and confidential meeting, his message was immediately leaked. Within the ministry, and outside it, also on the blog of ICT journalist Bas Linders. Gone were the doubts whether the massive opposition from local administrators, software suppliers and IT experts had destroyed all preparations.

Strategic importance to the leak

There was a strategic importance to the leak. Next week, De Jonge will negotiate with the organizations of municipalities and provinces (VNG and IPO) about whether this law should be introduced as soon as July 1. Or whether a new postponement or even cancellation should be decided. The fact that the new minister had spoken out unequivocally in favor of the law and the July deadline was an internal boost.

But it sparked surprise among critics of the law. There is great fear that this will herald the next IT drama, will cost millions more and will not function in practice. This was also the case with the reactions to internal communication about De Jonge's statements. Comparisons are made with the Benefits Affair. And with the Fyra drama or the difficult decentralization of Youth Care.

Thousands of legal articles and ministerial regulations have been combined in the new law. To make this possible, local rules and zoning plans must be linked to a gigantic national database, the so-called DSO.

And that's where things go wrong. Because the government works with various software suppliers, which means that ICT systems are insufficiently coordinated and difficult to access. The database that must support everything has become a fragmentary repository of information, as stated in consultation documents between municipalities and the ministry. Municipalities, provinces and water boards are struggling and are unable to obtain information during the ongoing trial period.

Simple permit applications went wrong during this test run; in Amsterdam it was impossible to arrange solar panels on monumental buildings. Municipalities can hardly communicate with each other. This also applies to communication with urban planning agencies.

Introduction of the law has already been postponed three times because the national database was not in order. But it must happen in July 2022, the previous minister Kajsa Ollongren wrote to the Senate at the end of 2021. She also wrote: ""There are still many disruptions in the system and in the chain. There will still be a lot of work to be done to keep all processes surrounding licensing, supervision and enforcement properly organized and running.""

Muddling through

The practice is more difficult. Spatial planning policy is at a standstill, urban planning consultants and software suppliers warn. Or, as spatial planning consultant Lieuwe Koopmans from Tercera, one of the most important software suppliers, describes it: ""A six-month delay only leads to muddling through. Just introduce that law as of July 2022. Then the resulting chaos will be convincing enough.""

There is also little trust elsewhere. Last year, almost half of the aldermen responsible for introducing the **Environmental** Act said in a survey by the trade magazine Domestic Governance that they wanted further postponement or to abandon it altogether. Reasons: fear of ICT dramas and major financial blunders. A third of the council members interviewed in December want nothing to do with the new law for the time being. They also want a postponement to prevent chaos.

Chairman Bahreddine Belhaj of the Dutch Association for Council Members: ""No one believes that the government will get this national system in order in a timely manner. Municipalities also do not have the official capacity to deal with this new law. The civil servants involved are busy implementing the government's new housing plans.""

Before the deadline, De Jonge still has to convince the Senate. This is awaiting an investigation by the ICT Assessment Office. This agency, the government's internal IT watchdog, previously gave negative advice twice about the national database in particular.

De Jonge's spokesperson remains mum about the start date, after the minister's initial optimism. First the administrative consultation, then ""it must become more clear about the precise timetable"".

The **Environmental** Act: a potential stumbling block for Minister De Jonge

Just implement that law. Then the resulting chaos will be convincing enough Lieuwe Koopmans consultant software supplier

Link to PDF

Graphic

The **Environmental** Act includes permits for new construction.

Photo ANP

Load Date: January 27, 2022

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119 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Big bill for construction fees: same piece of paper, six times as expensive; Eigen Huis wants minister intervention

De Telegraaf.nl

August 26, 2022 Friday 3:30 AM GMT

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Section: DFT; MONEY; DFT; DFT/NEWS; FRONTPAGE; INTERIOR

Length: 680 words

Byline: Martijn Klerks and Marlou Visser

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

The Netherlands has to build a hundred thousand houses every year, but anyone who actually wants to do that will spend more than a hundred euros more on a permit in the average municipality than a year ago. The average request for a dormer window or other renovation is more expensive than 400 euros for the first time.

The North Holland Wormerland takes the cake with a more than doubling in both cases: in that municipality on the A7, where many people come to see who want to escape the hustle and bustle of Amsterdam, new builders have lost more than 12,000 euros before the first stone has been laid. , according to figures released today by the Eigen Huis Association. Terschelling and Zeist also charge top prices, but building permits were already expensive there.

The Home Owners Association wants Housing Minister De Jonge to make agreements with municipalities to control price increases. A building permit is on average 10% more expensive this year than in 2021.

Eigen Huis, together with IGG Bouweconomie, looked at the price of a permit for a minor renovation of 10,000 euros excluding VAT, for example for a dormer window, and for a new-build home of 170,000 euros excluding building land and VAT.

Huge price differences

For the first time, a permit for minor renovations costs an average of more than 400 euros. But the differences are big: where a resident of The Hague only has to pay 121 euros, a builder in Veenendaal pays 992.33 euros - almost ten times as much.

The price differences are also enormous for new-build homes. For the same building permit, new-build buyers in Wormerland, Terschelling and Zeist pay up to more than 12,000 euros, six times as much as buyers in Weert, The Hague and Waddinxveen, who only pay around 2,000 euros.

Wormerland and Putten

In the municipality of Wormerland, the fees have even more than doubled. A correction, a spokesperson explains. “In order to cover the budget for 2022, it was necessary that, among other things, the rates for construction fees were made cost-effective. We did not charge enough for this for years and were therefore unable to achieve it financially.”

And the North Holland municipality still contributes money, according to the spokesperson. For 2022, 87% of the costs are covered.

In Putten the increase is more than 50%. And that is because the Gelderland municipality cannot find officials to process all applications.

“We are a small municipality, people are being moved away from here,” says a spokesperson for responsible councilor Ewoud 't Jong. “And so we not only asked retirees to come back, but also had to hire interim workers to clear the large backlog of work. These are expensive, and our starting point is that the price for the permit must be cost-effective.”

Point of concern

The result: anyone who wants to build a house in Putten now pays almost 5,000 euros for the permit alone. Last year that piece of paper only cost a little more than 3,000 euros. “Those expensive fees are a point of concern,” says the councilor's spokesperson. “But the amount is up to the municipal council. They can determine that the price no longer has to cover costs.”

How is it possible that prices differ so much between municipalities? “A large municipality can work more efficiently than a small one, that plays a role. No profit is made on it. The price must cover costs, but each municipality makes its own calculation. One only includes the costs of the official, the other also those of his office and the reception.”

environmental code

The interest group is seriously concerned about next year. “If the new **Environmental** Act is introduced on January 1, 2023, private parties will test the quality of new homes during construction,” says Cindy Kremer, director of the Eigen Huis Association.

“The costs thereof, in addition to the municipality's fees, will be borne by the buyer. That is why we want binding agreements to be made quickly about how these costs can be calculated. If this does not happen, a new-build home will soon cost thousands of euros more due to the high costs of the new legislation, even before the first stone has been laid.”

Load Date: August 26, 2022

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123 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Senate calls a halt to Minister Ollongren

NRC.nl

December 8, 2020 8:57 PM GMT

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Length: 1005 words

Byline: Jos Verlaan, Rik Rutten

Highlight: First MPs fear that Ollongren is ""pushing through"" the **Environmental** Act under the guise of time pressure, according to an internal note.

Body

The Senate is on a collision course with Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs, D66) over the **Environmental** Act. Members of Parliament from the coalition and opposition are openly annoyed by the way in which Ollongren is ""pushing through"" that law, a major transformation of spatial planning, and slammed on the brakes on Tuesday, according to an official note seen by NRC. This means that the proposed introduction of the law, in a year's time, will suddenly become extremely difficult.

The Senate will become less political and will have less say in constitutional changes – if it is up to the House of Representatives. A majority there agreed on Tuesday with two of Ollongren's proposals. The Senate itself must still vote, and a second reading is required for both constitutional amendments.

One of the proposals is to have the Senate and House of Representatives vote jointly on the second reading from now on. If the 75 senators were to vote together with the 150 members of the House of Representatives, their influence would shrink.

According to the second proposal, senators are no longer elected at once after the provincial elections, but half of the senate is 'refreshed' by an election every three years. A fast-growing party cannot shake up the Senate in one go, such as FVD with 12 seats in 2019.

The **Environmental** Act was once announced as the 'largest revision of the law since 1848'. That was in 2014, under the Rutte II cabinet. Zoning plans, a permit for a dormer window or a street party, rules on felling trees and noise pollution: they all had to be brought together in one law. The foundation for the entire operation is a gigantic digital infrastructure: it takes over many tasks from civil servants and must easily guide citizens through the system of rules.

More and more political friction

But the introduction, which has been in the hands of Ollongren since the third Rutte cabinet took office in 2017, has since led to increasing political friction. Annoyance is growing, especially in the Senate: about major problems faced by the software developers and the municipalities that will soon have to work with it, about the risks of a rapid introduction and about the speed that Ollongren is putting behind it.

On Tuesday, the tension between the Senate and Ollongren reached a new level. With the introduction date in sight – January 1, 2022 – the Senate and House of Representatives may vote one more time to give the green light due to all the initial problems. With this compensation, Ollongren has managed to retain the support of the Senate so far. But in recent weeks she has given varying signals about what she will do if the majority of the members of the Senate say no.

The House of Representatives, where the coalition can obtain a majority without much difficulty, passed a motion this month urging progress. Both Houses should give their final agreement by the end of January at the latest. Ollongren is working on its implementation, says a ministry spokesperson. And so the Senate is rarely angry.

The senators feel overwhelmed by the haste of the House of Representatives and the ministry. And they express the concern that Ollongren is trying to force a majority under time pressure - or will simply ignore a no vote.

“As the Senate, we do not have the backbone of a slug,” says Theo Rietkerk of the CDA. Coalition partner ChristenUnie also expressed ""major concerns"" about a hasty introduction during a committee meeting on the Environment Act on Tuesday, committee members told NRC, and D66 also has doubts.

One by one, Senate members from the committee emphasize that they have serious concerns about the law, based on recent signals. For example, the municipalities that have to manage the **Environmental** Act properly – and bear part of the costs – are critical, as are the software developers.

“The minister is either ignorant or has started to believe the lies of her own ministry,” says director Lieuwe Koopmans of developer Tercera, who, among other things, must prepare the provinces for the **Environmental** Act. He now calls the chance of failure ""extremely large"". “The connection to the national ICT facility was a major drama.”

The BIT, the IT watchdog that the government itself set up to test IT projects and prevent digital blunders, already raised the question last month whether a ""timely and successful"" introduction is compatible. The advisory department of the Council of State also raised serious doubts about the desirability of an introduction, as long as it is unclear whether the digital infrastructure is in order and the municipalities are ready for it.

Both the Council of State and the BIT had already completed the investigation before the summer, but their findings were only recently shared with the House, several senators say. In the case of the Council of State, the ministry had even forgotten to do this: the registry accidentally discovered that they had been on the internet for quite some time, say insiders. That further fueled dissatisfaction among senators.

'Political hooliganism'

After a majority of the House of Representatives supported the motion calling on Ollongren to speed up, members of the Senate had their own clerk's office record that they could also participate in the discussion. That note intended for internal use, seen by NRC, emphasizes that ""the wish of the Senate to have a final assessment moment"" has been promised by Ollongren himself.

On Tuesday, the Senate members decided to complain by letter to the minister about the poor information position and the undesirability of a quick decision. Ollongren must say in a response that she will not skip the Senate, senators say. One of them speaks of “political hooliganism” when the minister refuses to listen.

The ministry does not want to respond to questions from NRC as long as Ollongren is still working on the elaboration of the House of Representatives motion. The petitioner, Julius Terpstra (CDA), also supports his encouragement to hurry after the criticism from the Senate. “The ship should leave the shore. Otherwise the puff will run out.”

Load Date: December 8, 2020

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127 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Senate approves the introduction of the **Environmental** Act

NRC.NEXT

February 12, 2020 Wednesday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 10

Length: 528 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Jos Verlaan

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Legislation

From 2021, the new law must merge many laws and regulations. Citizens and municipalities have more say.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Pretend that there is nothing new under the sun and hope that the storm will blow over. On Tuesday, the cabinet tried to defuse a new round of impending unrest in the Senate over the introduction of the **Environmental** Act. The preliminary score: that tactic is a success. Although Minister Stientje van Veldhoven (Home Affairs, D66) had to acknowledge in the Senate that ""unrest has arisen"".

The **Environmental** Act, which has been discussed by the national government and local authorities for ten years, must combine dozens of laws and hundreds of regulations. The law should simplify spatial planning policy and give citizens and municipalities more influence. The Rutte II cabinet has sometimes called the **Environmental** Act ""the largest constitutional revision since 1848"".

The reason for the unrest about the new law was the revelation in NRC on Monday that the Ministry of the Interior had blocked the publication of a critical inspection report. The subject of that report: problems that had arisen since the decentralization of spatial planning, resulting in danger to local residents, such as houses that were built too close to the storage of explosive materials - fireworks, ammunition.

Was this a harbinger of the problems that the **Environmental** Act could bring?

Van Veldhoven responded with two letters in two days in an attempt to dispel doubts among the senators. Message: the content of the reports was not new and not a cause for concern. The Senate, which was about to approve the **Environmental** Act on Tuesday, asked for - and was given - a few hours' extension to deliberate.

As it turned out during the vote on Tuesday evening, the coalition could still count on the support of PVV, Forum for Democracy and SGP, enough for a majority (53 of the senators in favor, 19 against). The PvdA voted divided, as did the SP, GroenLinks, Party for the Animals and the Otten factions.

Changing mood

Yet this day marked the changing mood in parliament regarding the **Environmental** Act. Only since the autumn has attention for the law been growing - as has the criticism. Suppliers and municipalities that have to work with new software doubt whether they are properly prepared in time and whether the law is enforceable. In an interview with NRC, the National Ombudsman warned of the risk that only a ""participation elite"" will be able to handle the complex rules and new responsibilities well. Those who cannot handle this, for example, those who cannot communicate digitally, are in danger of losing out. to mine.

The **Environmental** Act is not yet completely safe. The BIT, the critical watchdog for government ICT projects, must still rule on the feasibility of the law in April. And the cabinet will submit a final implementation decision (Royal Decree) to parliament this summer, as was promised during the debate. Only once this has been approved will its introduction in 2021 be inevitable.

Link to PDF

Load Date: February 11, 2020

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

131 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Appoint expert on De Jonge's power over construction locations: 'He does not have that authority'

De Telegraaf.nl

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 9:13 PM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC; FRONT PAGE

Length: 518 words

Byline: our reporters

Dateline: The Hague

Body

Housing Minister Hugo de Jonge says he will, if necessary, forcibly designate areas as construction locations. “But how?” asks director Coen van Rooyen of the trade association WoningbouwersNL. “The problem is that unfortunately he does not have that authority.”

According to Van Rooyen, the minister cannot legally ignore municipalities or provinces. “As a minister you can say: 'do something with that location'. But that is different from implementing a decision. The local authorities will have to draw up the zoning plan. If the municipal council does not approve, the construction site will not be built. Minister De Jonge cannot simply say: an apartment complex will be built at Dorpsstraat 23.”

De Jonge will therefore have to consult, says Van Rooyen. “His designation will also have to fit in with regional and zoning plans. If he wants to build in Rijnsburg in Utrecht, it means, for example, that you can no longer install wind turbines there.”

Text continues below the photo.

Exceptional situation

Professor of housing construction Peter Boelhouwer from TU Delft states that such a zoning plan can be adjusted, but that it will take years. And even then, the question remains whether the judge will allow it if there is an objection from the municipality or province. “It must be in the interests of the government to do that. This is the case if, for example, a public road, a wind farm, a recreational area or industrial estate with national significance is needed. But just a few houses? I can not imagine it.""

The coalition agreement also states that an appointment must come from De Jonge 'with due regard for local autonomy and appropriate guarantees'. The cabinet is now working on a bill that will determine 'how the government can regain control over public housing policy'.

An exceptional situation, says Boelhouwer. “It has never happened before that the government said: construction must take place there. They will try to make that possible with new legislation. For example, they could include that in the new environmental law, which should be introduced next year.” However, according to the professor, it would be quite a blunt measure. “In principle, the local government is responsible for the design of space. You then try to reject that. That's no small feat.”

Text continues below the photo.

Interfere in

However, according to both the professor and the director of the trade association, many municipalities will be happy if the minister gets involved. “Municipalities often do not mind it when the government plays a role, because it is often the provinces that obstruct construction plans,” says Van Rooyen.

He thinks that De Jonge can best focus on land that has already been purchased by developers and where the zoning plan allows housing construction. “Otherwise it could take a long time before anything is published. From the moment of a good idea to the zoning plan, there is an average of about six years.”

If De Jonge wants to be faster, the law must indeed be changed, Boelhouwer confirms. “At the moment he cannot simply say to municipalities: you have to build houses there.”

Graphic

Image, Peter Boelhouwer in front of his house., ANP/HH

Load Date: April 6, 2022

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

135 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=No housing development under Schiphol flight route; ambitious housing plan off the table

De Volkskrant.nl

May 18, 2022 Wednesday 09:03 AM GMT

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Length: 694 words

Byline: Marcel van Lieshout

Body

Amstelveen has worked for nine years on the transformation of vacant offices in Kronenburg into housing for students, knowledge workers and expats. The zoning plan can be thrown into the trash bin now that the Council of State honors objections from the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate.

The plan of the municipality of Amstelveen to convert vacant offices in the Kronenburg district into, among other things, 2,500 student rooms has been annulled by the Council of State. It is contrary to the so-called Airport Layout Decree (LIB), which imposes restrictions on residential construction under Schiphol's flight routes due to noise pollution.

On Wednesday, the Council of State ruled in favor of the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) - which challenged this part of the zoning plan. Amstelveen has been busy transforming the Kronenburg office area into a mainly residential area for nine years. The ILT, a service of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, has pointed out to Amstelveen all along that large-scale housing development in a zone 4 area (a lot of noise pollution from air traffic) is contrary to aviation legislation.

The ruling of the Council of State was eagerly awaited not only by Amstelveen but by many municipalities in the Amsterdam metropolitan region and the provincial government of North Holland. In that region, tens of thousands of homes are to be built under the flight paths of Schiphol. The protracted conflict between Amstelveen and the ILT was intended to clarify where housing development is and where not possible in certain noise zones.

Special circumstances

For a zone 4 area, the regulations stipulate that 25 homes may be built there per building plan. This is to limit the number of people affected by noise pollution from air traffic. The ILT occasionally allows larger-scale housing construction, but only if there are 'special circumstances'. According to the Council of State, the Amstelveen plan could have gone ahead if the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management had granted a 'declaration of no objection'.

The latter did not happen. The municipality wrongly thought that such a declaration did not need to be requested since legal rules were changed in 2018, the highest administrative court ruled on Wednesday. “Without this legally required statement  from the minister, a large housing project like this would not be possible.”

Amstelveen itself thought that residential functions would be possible there with a 'special' approach to the vacant offices in Kronenburg. The zoning plan not only provided for the construction of 2,500 student rooms, but also 1,580 so-called 'extended stay' rooms. Knowledge workers and expats could live there for six months.

According to Amstelveen, there is no question of regular housing construction but of 'temporary occupancy'. The intention was to build 'sound adaptive'. The municipality received support from student housing provider Duwo. The GGD, which was called in to identify possible health damage due to noise pollution, announced that it had no objections. Close to Kronenburg, in the Uilenstede area, 3,400 students live under the same flight route.

Advantages and disadvantanges

Three months ago, during the hearing of the ILT's objections by the Council of State, it became clear once again how the benefits and burdens of air traffic in the Schiphol region must always be weighed. The ILT emphasized that housing shortage (and certainly student housing) is a major problem in the region. But air traffic also represents a social interest, according to the service.

The village of Rijsenhout (municipality of Haarlemmermeer) has been experiencing for years what this weighing of benefits and burdens can lead to. That village has been trying to prevent the exodus of housing that has been taking place for years, but is encountering even stricter regulations than those that apply to Amstelveen.

Administrators in the region, from the provincial government to those in Amsterdam, fear that housing construction will come under even more pressure when the new **Environmental** Act comes into effect next year. In this law, all kinds of noise pollution are added together to determine whether or not a place can be lived in.

Load Date: May 18, 2022

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139 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Hague power grab goes wrong for VVD

The Telegraph

August 18, 2022 Thursday

The Netherlands

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 3

Length: 315 words

Body

From our parliamentary

editorial

The Hague - The VVD has run out of steam. Party leader Sophie Hermans has allowed the cabinet to switch to a remedy by accommodating asylum seekers in municipalities via the Environment Act, even if they do not want that. Tubbergen has the scoop.

With the State elections around the corner, the VVD is once again antagonizing its own supporters. Several former ministers criticize both State Secretary Van der Burg (Asylum) and faction leader Hermans, who in their view fail to tackle the problem at its root. ""That won't happen, because they are in a coalition with D66 and CU,"" it sounds. Sophie Hermans really needs to show her teeth now, one thinks. ""The VVD has traditionally been against unbridled immigration. If you as a party If you hold the controls for too long, you dilute your own position. If you don't correct that, you will pay the price,"" he said. It bubbles and ferments in more places in the party. The Limburg department has written a letter stating that this is no longer the case. ""It does not sit well with us if our constitutionally autonomous position is trampled upon."" The letter states: ""The support for receiving asylum seekers is actually decreasing drastically with the current working method."" The stretch is out, it is emphasized. “Our municipalities are cracking under the high influx figures. The cabinet must really get the matter under control itself."" Other local departments are also distancing themselves from the power grab in The Hague. ""It is a shame to sideline the local democracy of Tubbergen in this way. That is far below standard,"" says VVD member Reinier Geerligs of the Rijssen-Holten department. ""Forgot the VVD election programme?"" he sneers. Joris Poffers, party leader of VVD Dinkelland, is ""completely done with this cabinet"". ""Worthless and unworthy of liberalism.""

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Load Date: August 17, 2022

End of Document, pronunciation=None, extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

143 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=How major issues must wait for elections and cabinet formation; Fallow files

NRC

July 10, 2023 Monday

1st Edition

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Section: COVER PAGE; Page 1

Length: 1971 words

Byline: Eppo König, Rik Rutten

Erik van der Walle

Body

ABSTRACT

Important files

The outgoing cabinet had big plans for agriculture, public housing, the climate and asylum. What will become of this now?

COMPLETE TEXT:

If the outgoing Rutte IV cabinet remains in office until the new elections, what policy can it still make and what cannot? That is one of the topics that will probably be discussed on Monday during a parliamentary debate, in the first week of the summer recess. The consequences of the cabinet fall for four important topics:

Agriculture and nitrogen

Certainty after years of erratic agricultural policy, that is what the government wanted to give the farmers. Angry farmers will be happy with the fall of the cabinet, but the uncertainty about the future of the agricultural sector will last longer.

More than a year ago, the government came up with the infamous nitrogen card and the maligned 'perspective letter' on making agriculture more sustainable until 2040. With the cabinet fall, it could easily take a year and a half before the next cabinet has a new agricultural policy.

That means standstill - or continuation of the status quo. In the meantime, the clock is ticking for, for example, the tightening of manure standards in 2026, or the improvement of water quality by 2027. It puts pressure on a new cabinet to come up with solutions, while nature and the environment are the silent losers. There is also a delay to improve animal welfare in livestock farming.

It seems unlikely that outgoing Minister Piet Adema (Agriculture, Christian Union) will still issue his own 'agriculture letter' in September after the collapse of the Agriculture Agreement. A new cabinet will want to consider the path to sustainable agriculture, with a revenue model for farmers. And this again in negotiations or coordination with the agricultural sector, food industry, nature organizations and provinces.

The new cabinet, like Rutte IV, will be stuck between two parties: protesting farmers who are against sensitive interventions, such as a significant reduction in the livestock herd, and the European Commission's critical view of whether the Netherlands is seriously working on nature restoration.

One difficult political point is off the table for now: the CDA does not have to renegotiate with the coalition about the pace at which nitrogen emissions will be halved. The target year of 2030 (instead of 2035) will expire, as will probably the nitrogen law that was supposed to establish this ambition.

What could in principle continue are the voluntary buyout schemes for 'peak loaders' and other farmers. There has been approval from Brussels, money has been set aside (1,475 million euros) and the arrangements have just been opened. All nitrogen emissions that are now being reduced would help a new cabinet.

However, the announced coercive measures for peak loaders who do not want to be bought out may also expire. The cabinet was already happy if a fifth of the three thousand peak loaders would participate, but who knows, the enthusiasm for the scheme may now appear to be even less.

A major uncertainty in all of this is the money that must be legally reserved for making agriculture more sustainable: the 'Rural Areas and Nature Transition Fund' of 24.3 billion euros. A small majority of the House of Representatives approved it in May, but the question was already whether the bill would pass the Senate. No agricultural reform without money.

Asylum and migration

It is an ironic outcome of the fall of Rutte IV: further restrictions on asylum, the Casus Belli on which the cabinet fell, will not be possible in the next six months.

Given the previous struggles over asylum, it is striking how close the coalition parties came to each other in the past week. VVD, D66, CDA and ChristenUnie could all agree to the (re)introduction of a 'two-status system', with a distinction between people who flee because of their orientation or religion, for example, and people who flee a war.

There was also agreement in other areas. Asylum seekers from safe countries, with little chance of obtaining a residence permit, would no longer be assured of legal assistance in the event of an appeal or appeal, as is currently the case. There would be a detention center for asylum seekers who have already applied for asylum in another European country and need to return to that country.

Due to the VVD's strict demand to ban family reunification if the limits of Dutch reception capacity have been reached, all these plans are now shelved. The next cabinet will have to renegotiate who is welcome in the Netherlands as an asylum seeker, or as a knowledge or labor migrant, whether or not by setting maximum numbers.

It can seek help in this regard from the State Commission on Demographic Developments 2050, which will provide advice to parliament and government early next year on drawing up new, long-term demographic policy - also with regard to migration.

A new cabinet also faces another major dilemma: how asylum seekers are distributed across the Netherlands. Rutte IV devised the dispersal law for this purpose, a law that could force municipalities to arrange shelter places if necessary. But that law has still not been adopted: the VVD in particular remained critical behind the scenes. The distribution law also received a lot of criticism from municipalities. The Council of State called the bill ""unnecessarily complex"".

An emotional State Secretary Eric van der Burg (Asylum and Migration, VVD) still called the dispersal law ""very necessary"" after the cabinet fall. The Spring Memorandum has already made a lot of extra money available for asylum reception, but it seems unlikely that the Second The House still continues with this unpopular law.

This means that Van der Burg will have to negotiate for additional reception places if the number of asylum seekers increases. He wanted to promise one thing, immediately after the cabinet fell: there will be no scenes in the registration center in Ter Apel, like last year. ""I have promised and I will continue to promise and I will also ensure that no people sleep in the grass in Ter Apel.""

The international situation could well help Van der Burg: the number of asylum seekers so far this year is many times lower than expected for this year - in April the forecast was still 70,000 asylum seekers - even lower than last year.

Spatial planning and public housing

Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing and Spatial Planning, CDA) will also continue to work with ""a lot of energy"", he tweeted on Saturday. ""Public housing and spatial planning have made a comeback. That has been successful,"" De Jonge wrote. .

The question remains what will become of his ambitious agenda, and if so at what pace. The spatial issues surrounding the housing shortage, climate change and energy transition have not suddenly disappeared. But a subsequent cabinet, for example with the BBB, may think very differently about central control by the government.

How things will proceed with De Jonge's new Spatial Policy Memorandum, for example, is uncertain. In September, the cabinet actually wanted to outline the first plan for the 'major renovation of the Netherlands' until 2030, 2050 and 2100. That memorandum concerns, among other things, the regions, agriculture and energy transition - major issues that the cabinet hoped to provide guidance on.

The plans to build 936,000 homes by 2030 will not simply be scrapped. The provinces have signed 35 regional 'housing deals' with the government. There remains a high demand for new homes and there is broad political support for this. With previous bumps - rising interest and material costs, nitrogen - the question now arises as to what the government can contribute.

It is mainly De Jonge's innovative laws that seem to die before they reach the House of Representatives and the Senate. For example, the Public Housing Reinforcement (Regulation) Act, which should give the government more control over how much, where and for whom construction takes place. This is a far-reaching change to the new **Environmental** Act, which will come into effect on January 1.

For example, the new law must ensure that new homes in all municipalities are two-thirds affordable. The procedures for legal disputes about construction sites are shortened. The minister can also make binding decisions in conflicts between housing associations and municipalities, and in protracted disputes about construction locations.

A sensitive law by De Jonge that does not appear to be passing either is the Affordable Rent Act. Landlords who charge too high a price for 'mid-range rent' (up to approximately 1,120 euros per month) could be fined up to 90,000 euros. The bill received a lot of criticism from the market: landlords, real estate investors and banks feared that their revenue model would be affected.

Another plan by De Jonge to allocate owner-occupied homes up to 355,000 euros to low incomes and middle incomes recently failed. The House of Representatives did support that municipalities may partially award housing to their own residents and people with crucial professions, for example - but it is uncertain whether that law will also pass the Senate.

The climate problem

Last Monday, Minister Rob Jetten (Climate and Energy, D66) presented two reports on the energy system of 2050 and informed the House of Representatives about the latest developments surrounding the construction of the hydrogen network. On Tuesday, after a late-night debate, he achieved a large majority in favor of the arrival of the climate fund, which represents 35 billion in investments. Later that week, Jetten made additions about solar energy and heating networks.

Of course, a minister is above average productive in the last days before a summer recess, but the past week is still a good illustration of the pace of Jetten's plans. As if Friday's cabinet crisis had been on its heels for some time.

For the first time, the Rutte IV cabinet provided ambitious energy and climate policy, without it having to be ""feasible and affordable"". It was also the first time that all coalition parties fully supported the minister, without one or two parties being forced to 'ribbled along'.

Of course, there is a lot of criticism of Jetten's policy on the left (too many subsidies to industry) and on the right (wasted money). When he introduced additional climate policy last spring, motorists, meat eaters and air travelers were ostentatiously spared. Despite this political compromise, no one doubts the government's intentions to achieve the 2030 climate goals: at least 55 percent less CO2 emissions compared to 1990, as is now also the European Union's aim to limit climate change to some extent.

The big question is to what extent these goals are still achievable. Serious reinforcement of the power grid and, for example, the realization of hydrogen factories require years of preparation, partly due to long permitting processes.

As early as November 2020, then Climate Agreement chairman Ed Nijpels warned of irreparable delays if the Rutte III cabinet did not tighten climate policy. The goals of the Climate Agreement, which remained out of reach with the policy of the previous cabinet, ""cannot tolerate political shelter,"" Nijpels wrote to the then responsible minister Wiebes. It was only in January 2022, fourteen months after Nijpels' letter, that the ambitions became serious. tightened with the arrival of Rutte IV.

Whether '2030' is still unachievable depends largely on whether climate policy, despite its caretaker status, maintains momentum with the support of the House of Representatives. If a political lull arises again, the goals will quickly become unattainable: after elections in November and after a similar formation as for Rutte IV, only 76 months remain before 2031.

What does the fall of Rutte IV mean for policy?

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Graphic

Above: farmers' protest against the nitrogen plans in Stroe, Gelderland, June 2022. Middle: asylum seekers arrive at the registration center in Ter Apel. Below: the Delftse Grasbuurt under construction.

Photos Olivier Middendorp, Vincent Jannink/ANP, Walter Herfst

Load Date: July 9, 2023

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147 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Letters sent: 'I am ashamed of this cool country'

De Volkskrant.nl

October 11, 2022 Tuesday 12:53 PM GMT

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Length: 982 words

Byline: Editorial

Body

Today's reader letters: about refugee shelter, education, red or green cards and overpopulation.

Letter of the day

Refugee reception in the Netherlands appears to be inadequate. People had to spend the night outside, and many suffered from health problems afterwards. Doctors Without Borders intervened.

It is difficult for me to imagine that it is not possible to arrange space and shelter immediately, but that you cannot provide medical care in an emergency situation? In such a 'cool' country like the Netherlands, that shouldn't be a problem. But yes, there must be a will. Now there has been a court ruling: the problem with the shelter must be resolved within a certain time.

You would think that the government would now throw its weight behind it. But no, they will appeal. I am ashamed.

Herman Beuvens

Overpopulation

In addition to the nitrogen problem, there is also the problem of water management and zoonosis, Ibtihal Jadib rightly notes in her column (First, 11/10). There is another topic that almost no one dares to tackle, and that is overpopulation.

Due to overpopulation, we slaughter billions of animals for food, there is overfishing, carbon dioxide enters our atmosphere and the diversity of nature has been murdered by billions of people.

Almost all topics in the Volkskrant are focused on human problems and occasionally on problems in nature. The basic problem of overpopulation is still too much avoided.

Dick Speijers

Participation

There is a misconception in the sophisticated Netherlands about what participation entails. For example, Peter Kool (O&D, 10/10) writes that it is striking that Sharon Dijksma submits a piece about 'Cities and residents who are sidelined in climate plans' (O&D, 7/10).

According to Kool, Dijksma's councilor in the municipality of Utrecht is a 'textbook example of pretending that citizens have a say through 'participation', after which she decides on what she already thought in advance.'

Participation means participating in discussions, thinking along and making your opinion heard. It does not mean that you can order the municipality to carry out your wishes. The municipality is free to disregard your opinion in the weighing of interests and come to a different decision. This cannot be otherwise with multiple interests. The misconception about participation and participation does not bode well when the **Environmental** Act comes into effect.

Luuk Spruit

Demand cartel

Peter de Waard discusses the idea of ​​a 'demand cartel' of oil importers as a counterpart to the 'supply cartel' Opec (11/10). Such a demand cartel existed: until about 1970, the major Western oil companies ('Seven Sisters') worked together to keep the oil price low, with political and, if necessary, military support from the British and American governments. The creation of Opec was a response to the market power of this demand cartel.

Camiel van Altenborg

scandalous

“Sector wants money from government,” I read on Saturday in Firstly about the poultry breeders. What a strange reflex it is for companies to want to be financially compensated in the event of a setback. I've never seen the headline 'Company deposits unexpected profits into tax pot', even though that would make just as much sense.

The poultry sector is doing very well. They have been ignoring clear warnings from virologists for decades about the risks of bringing together bizarre numbers of birds in a small area. This also ignores the fact that food suitable for humans is given to chickens en masse. Against their better judgement, poultry companies took increasingly greater risks, which is now turning the tide: bird flu is here to stay and millions of chickens have already been culled this year.

Why on earth do I have to pay for that? Companies that take too many risks can go bankrupt. That's how it should be, it's their own problem. Just let them go bankrupt.

This is not about energy or medicines, but about products that we can easily do without. How bad will it be if we can no longer eat chicken meat or if we have to pay more for our eggs? Compared to our real problems, we would hardly notice it.

René Dijkgraaf,

Green card

Yesterday I took my grandson to his soccer practice. Afterwards we talked about yellow and red cards. 5-year-old Sinne asked why referees don't give green cards. Why only repressive interventions? Indeed, give out a green card for uplifting or sporting actions. It definitely makes for a sportier game.

Gaston Guest,

Educational problems

On Monday morning I watched with amazement the launch of Minister Dennis Wiersma's new site on WNL: www.leeroverzicht.nl.

Let Minister Wiersma first 'help' with all those children who have been wrongly expelled from school, who are pushed into the 'homeschooler' box, who are stigmatized, whose family situation is disrupted, as a result of which parents can no longer work and who are thrown out of the box. be sent to the wall.

His predecessor, Arie Slob, had come up with 'appropriate education', which did not work. Millions of money is spent on education for teachers and everything that surrounds it, but no one wants to put energy into a real interest in getting a child back to school. They are all too busy for that – with themselves and with appreciation for their work.

Tell me why my child is no longer welcome, and why there are 15,000 children at home who have no prospects whatsoever, except to talk to the next 'professional' every time, who then says: 'As far as I'm concerned, you don't have to go to school anymore. '. And professionals who give the advice: 'just say what you want'. As if a 17-year-old who has been left out for five years should know that.

By the way, I would also be happy if my child was 'where he should be' again, because that means that I can also start looking for work again. Maybe even on the new site.

Carin van de Ploeg

Load Date: October 11, 2022

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151 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Children of less educated people are heavier and are more often exposed to tobacco smoke

NRC.nl

November 9, 2022 9:29 AM GMT

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Length: 531 words

Byline: Charlie Ubbens

Highlight: More than one in ten children between the ages of 2 and 12 were overweight between 2018 and 2021. Obesity in children is twice as common among children with a low level of education.

Body

Children with parents who have completed at least a higher vocational education are less likely to be overweight than children of parents with a maximum of an MBO-1 education. Children of poorly educated parents are also more likely to inhale tobacco smoke. This was evident from figures in the Annual Youth Monitor Report of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) on Wednesday. 12 percent of children aged two to twelve years between 2018 and 2021 were overweight.

In almost one in three cases, at least one parent of children up to the age of twelve with poorly educated parents is obese, an extreme form of overweight. For children of highly educated parents, this is about one in seven. Obesity in children is twice as common among children with a low level of education. Passive smoking, inhaling tobacco smoke from the environment, is also higher among children of less educated parents. Between 2018 and 2021, at least one parent smoked in more than half of the cases. This was 15 percent for children up to the age of twelve of highly educated parents.

The report shows that between 2018 and 2021, children of highly educated people played sports more often. They were also more often members of a sports club than children of less educated parents. However, children with low levels of education more often met the Exercise Guidelines, which were drawn up by the Health Council in 2017. They played outside more often, among other things.

Statistics Netherlands distinguishes between highly and poorly educated parents on the basis of the level of education achieved. A high level of education includes a completed HBO or WO study. A low level of education concerns VMBO, the first years of HAVO/VWO and MBO-1.

Fast food

Children of poorly educated parents do not eat enough fruit or vegetables, according to the CBS Youth Monitor. And according to a calculation by the RIVM in 2018, 60 percent of adults in the Netherlands are expected to be overweight in 2040. The government's ambition is to reduce obesity to the level of 1996, when a third of Dutch adults were overweight. In 2020, figures from Statistics Netherlands showed that approximately half of Dutch people aged twenty or older were overweight.

To combat the increase in obesity, municipalities have long been calling for new laws that would make it possible to ban fast-food restaurants. The number of fast food restaurants in the Netherlands is growing: over the past ten years, the number of providers increased by 12 percent. In January, the municipalities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Ede sent a letter to the then outgoing State Secretary Paul Blokhuis (Public Health, Christian Union), in which the municipalities requested adjustments to the Environment Act and the Commodities Act.

In response, State Secretary for Health Maarten van Ooijen (CU) wrote a letter to the House of Representatives in March in which he stated that the daily food environment must become healthier or whether he can help municipalities to combat the increase in unhealthy food. The municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht previously advocated a sugar tax on soft drinks. But there was no majority for this in the House of Representatives.

Also read: 'How often I am told: you are not going to decide what I eat'

Load Date: November 9, 2022

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155 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Ministry withheld major concerns about the introduction of the

Act

NRC.NEXT

April 2, 2020 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 1

Length: 553 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Jos Verlaan

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Internal Affairs legislation withheld an official cry for help regarding the **Environmental** Act. Now the ministry has opted for a postponement, ""because of corona"".

COMPLETE TEXT:

Chaos in the systems, unattainable deadlines. The top of the Interior kept major concerns about the **Environmental** Act secret. It had been known internally for months that the planned introduction in 2021 was virtually impossible.

On Wednesday evening, a few hours after NRC had reported on the internal concerns and had reported that the two main builders of the necessary software were pushing for a postponement, the ministry announced a postponement in a letter to the House of Representatives, saying ""partly in view of [ ...] the coronavirus"".

According to the software developers, the new delay surrounding the **Environmental** Act - which decentralizes spatial planning in one fell swoop - was already inevitable. Crucial parts of the system are not yet available, testing the software will still take months.

""I think we are so far into the danger zone that if we let it continue now, things will really not go well on January 1,"" said director Sander van der Merwe of main supplier Visma Roxit on Tuesday at a private video conference. Director Lieuwe Koopmans of Tercera, which must prepare the provinces for the **Environmental** Act, predicted ""a failure, yet another ICT drama in the government"".

The top of the Ministry of the Interior cannot be surprised. After an internal inventory that the top officials had made - the contents of which are known to NRC - a warning was issued in December about chaos and fragmentation in decision-making. Due to internal opposition, the introduction and testing of the software would take longer, almost certainly resulting in a delay, possibly even of several years.

According to the inventory, things are going wrong with national management. Government services such as Rijkswaterstaat and the Land Registry must cooperate when introducing the law. But the note contains terms such as ""mutual misunderstanding"" and ""old pain"". Participating organizations take ""revenge"" among themselves if they lose influence and ""hope that someone else gets the blame"" if things go wrong.

If the introduction is to be successful, the conclusion after the inventory is made, ""strong intervention"" is necessary and parties must stop ""fighting for territory"".

Decision moment

The ministry did not share the findings with the Senate, which at that time still had to vote on the **Environmental** Act. ""There is sufficient confidence that that date is feasible,"" Van Veldhoven said in the Senate in February. It agreed and approved.

It is unlikely that the ministry would opt for a postponement on its own initiative, said Koopmans van Tercera, who therefore came forward himself. ""I have been talking to those civil servants for years and hearing the minister in Parliament, but those civil servants are the boss. And they are certainly not going to tell the minister that her own ministry does not have its affairs in order.""

""More time is needed to make a good start together,"" says Visma Roxit director Van der Merwe. He proposes introducing the systems gradually.

The coronavirus, an insider said before the letter to Parliament was published on Wednesday, could well become a ""grateful excuse"" to announce a postponement without losing face.

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Graphic

Photo Koen van Weel / ANP

Load Date: April 1, 2020

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159 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Not sexy, but good for the country

NRC.nl

July 12, 2022 12:00 AM GMT

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Length: 446 words

Byline: Mark Lievisse Adriaanse

Highlight: The judiciary was already fully reflecting on its own role in the Benefits Affair, Mark Lievisse Adriaanse saw. Not so the legislator.

Body

“The state is oppressive, the law is a lie,” the socialists used to sing, and on Thursday I saw a liberal former minister nod in agreement when a CDA member delivered a similar message. In court, Chris van Dam said in a lecture, as a citizen you are already 1-0 behind the government.

Van Dam was substantively one of the strongest justice spokespersons in the House of Representatives and became known as chairman of the committee that investigated the Benefits Affair. In a healthy political culture, this would have assured him of a respectable career as a Member of Parliament. In reality in The Hague, the CDA put him in an unelectable position.

Before a small but typically Hague audience of lobbyists, administrators and people with the aura of a former senator/undersecretariat at an embassy, ​​he made an important suggestion. Reform administrative law, the law that limits state power over citizens.

That too, I thought. Half of the government will be overhauled in the coming years. Much has already been written about the **Environmental** Act. It rarely goes away, but the operation is just as drastic. The entire practice by which suspects are tracked down and punished is changing. A project spanning decades. And then administrative law also has to go to the drawing board?

Yet Van Dam has a point. Too often, administrative law does not protect citizens against the state, but the state against citizens. Then the citizen is powerless against a state that can argue its way out of everything (and destroy lives) thanks to extremely complex legislation.

“The government is seen as the good party that serves the public interest,” said Van Dam. “And in many cases the reflection of this is that the citizen is the party that is distrusted.” Anyone who has ever faced the state in court - as a benefits parent or with minor suffering - will recognize this. An MP who would delve into revising that right ""really does something good for the country,"" Van Dam argued. “Not sexy, but good.”

are now fully committed to their own role. The legislator does not. The toxic cocktail of fragmentation and mediacracy in The Hague does not stimulate MPs to do the Good. Certainly: there are good MPs, but they are rarely rewarded by their parties and the media. Fractions are too small for specialists. For each party, marginalization threatens or rapid success beckons. So they seek fleeting relevance – which follows from attention and attention follows from the snap opinion. On Sunday, the poll shows an extra seat, but the order has been further weakened. Not sexy, not good for the country. And especially bad for the citizen who finds the government in his path.

Mark Lievisse Adriaanse

(m.lievisseadriaanse@nrc.nl) is writing a few columns this summer.

Load Date: July 12, 2022

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163 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=**Environmental** law: 'bureaucratic miracle' under heavy fire; Decentralization

NRC.NEXT

November 28, 2019 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 4

Length: 1396 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Jos Verlaan

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Background Digital revolution Local customization, more say for citizens: the **Environmental** Act must simplify everything. But just before the introduction, municipalities and ICT suppliers doubt whether they can handle further decentralization and digitalization. ""The Wild West is looming.""

COMPLETE TEXT:

By our editors Rik Rutten and Jos Verlaan

The largest legislative operation since the constitutional revision of 1848: the Rutte II cabinet announced the **Environmental** Act in 2014. All regulations on spatial planning, zoning plans, permits from catering to tree felling to the environment - approximately 3,000 articles of law and 120 ministerial regulations - reduced to one simple law, accessible to every citizen, who regains control over their own living environment.

Because on the drawing board, the **Environmental** Act is a bureaucratic marvel. It won't be long before you can arrange the permit yourself to cut down the tree in your backyard, organize a street party or build a dormer window. The citizen then arranges his own participation procedures. The municipality only sets the rules - and is given more freedom, for example to relax or tighten noise standards or pollution limits. In the ideal scenario, everyone can see the local permits with one click on a digital map.

But five years later, a month before the first major trials start and a year before introduction, the problems are piling up.

Municipalities are short of staff and money. ICT suppliers warn internally of impending fiascos. Even before the law was approved by the Senate, the National Ombudsman set up a special internal task force to process the expected flow of complaints. And parties in the Senate want a postponement - or cancellation. ""What is threatening,"" says Senator Saskia Kluit (GroenLinks), ""is a kind of Wild West in spatial planning.""

Senator and professor of Public Administration, Peter Nicolaï (Party for the Animals): ""It took us thirty years to convert the Civil Code into a New Civil Code. And this bill would have been completed in five years? That is not possible. There is now a monstrosity of legal texts that no one will be able to deal with, including judges and lawyers."" On Friday, the Council of Ministers will consider the complications surrounding the introduction of the **Environmental** Act.

Yet another decentralization

The idea behind the **Environmental** Act seemed simple: one law to regulate spatial planning, zoning plans and environmental permits instead of the 26 separate laws that currently exist, from soil to odor to noise. The promise: local customization, faster and easier.

With this formula, the Rutte II cabinet also decentralized youth care (Youth Act), long-term care (Wmo) and the labor market (Participation Act) in 2015. As with those decentralizations, the same cabinet estimated that the **Environmental** Act would save the local civil service millions. For this reason, municipalities themselves bear the majority of the costs. The initial estimates estimated these at approximately 370 million euros.

""But it just doesn't work out,"" says councilor Klaas Valkering from Bergen. ""That's how it was with the previous three decentralizations. The government promises us an efficiency boost that will make everything cheaper, but in the meantime we are given all kinds of additional tasks, which ""We don't yet know the costs and effort. Everyone can taste that.""

Valkering speaks from experience. Bergen is already working with a number of neighboring municipalities on a program that should guide the introduction of the **Environmental** Act. This costs the municipalities 3.3 million, but the returns are questionable. Civil servants had to spend an unexpected amount of time adjusting the rules - and their own role. Now they have control over permits, but soon they will facilitate much more.

""Decision-making is now happening very quickly, but the outcomes are unclear,"" said Valkering.

Earlier this year, the Bergen Mayor and Aldermen warned the Association for Dutch Municipalities (VNG) about the financial consequences of the law. Support first came from the entire Alkmaar region and now also from municipalities from the rest of the country. The VNG speaks of ""a major task"", although the organization does not yet want to officially ask for a postponement.

Dwindling confidence

Some municipalities are enthusiastic about the introduction of the law: they expect great policy freedom to draw up rules themselves. But optimism is dwindling, according to figures collected partly by the government and the municipalities.

Halfway through 2018, three-quarters of municipalities were still confident that they would be ready on time for the implementation ""with the current approach and efforts"". Six months later, this was only 57 percent. The number of municipalities that feared they would not be ready on time doubled. , from 16 to 31 percent. Newer figures are not yet known.

In a month's time, the government wants to run large-scale tests before the system can be introduced from 2021. In an expert consultation with the Senate, provinces, but also software suppliers, expressed their doubts about whether this will work. It is now clear that the software is not in order, especially locally, and scenarios are circulating in which implementation is not arranged before 2024. The expected costs have now risen sharply.

The biggest concern among municipalities is the digital system on which the entire **Environmental** Act is based. Originally, these rules from environmental law decrees were supposed to become accessible to citizens with 'one click on the map'. But in 2017, the government's IT watchdog, the ICT Testing Bureau (BIT), came to a damning verdict. ""IT functionalities are so complexly designed that they will lead to problems when creating and using them,"" the BIT wrote, ""and it is questionable whether they will ever all work as intended.""

After the BIT advice, the greatest ambitions of the digital implementation system were scaled back. But precisely by scrapping those ambitions, a number of municipalities complain, the returns promised by the government from the entire **Environmental** Act have also disappeared from view. The costs remain high. Although the programming of the national data systems has been simplified, it is still not ready. That is why the ICT suppliers of the municipalities say that they are currently unable to have the local software ready on time. It has already led to many crisis consultations at the Ministry of the Interior.

'New insights'

Much depends on the decision of the Senate. A number of parties that previously voted in favor of the law in the House of Representatives have now become critical. ""Progressive insight"", 50Plus leader Henk Krol explains his party's change of course. He voted in favor in the House of Representatives, but now views it differently: ""We threw the package over the wall of the Senate too easily. It is right that we vote differently there than in the House of Representatives."" In particular, the implementation and dealing with setbacks are not what many members of the Senate find wrong. ""I am not against the entire **Environmental** Act, but how are we really going to do this?"" says Jopie Nooren (PvdA). ""I think the answer to that has been very poor so far.""

Five years after the major decentralizations of Rutte II, municipalities appear to be having great difficulty with their new tasks. The returns are often not as hoped, the costs are often higher than expected. The WMO created neighborhood teams to reduce healthcare costs, but these appear to be more expensive. The Rutte III cabinet is now trying to regain some of the authority with the Youth Act and the Participation Act. Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Health, CDA) wants to transform youth care, State Secretary Tamara van Ark (Social Affairs, VVD) wants to force municipalities to demand compensation from benefit recipients.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the **Environmental** Act is still on track. Minister Stientje van Veldhoven (Environment and Housing, D66) recently called on the Senate to agree to prevent ""loss of momentum"". At a meeting with administrators last week, she said she has every confidence in the 2021 implementation date. Then, according to the minister, everyone is ""ready enough"".

Link to PDF

Graphic

With the **Environmental** Act, the government aims to give citizens back control over their own environment - in an accessible manner.

Photos Cees Elzenga/HH, William Hoogteyling/HH, Bert Spiertz/HH

One law to capture all laws

Load Date: November 27, 2019

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167 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Opinion: by introducing one environmental law, values ​​such as nature and biodiversity will be the first to die

De Volkskrant.nl

December 3, 2020 Thursday 03:59 PM GMT

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Length: 1090 words

Byline: Fred Kistenkas

Body

It looks fantastic, one environmental law that will soon replace all other laws and regulations. But in New Zealand, which has such a law, they are pulling their hair out: it has not become more sustainable, argues Fred Kistenkas.

Another year and then the **Environmental** Act must come into effect in the Netherlands. It is a law that combines dozens of separate environmental laws into one law and, according to the ministry, that would make everything simpler and better. The latter is now increasingly disputed, certainly also in the circles of environmental lawyers, but people usually do not get much further than some grumbling along the lines of 'managerial jargon' or 'advertising talk'. Of course, you are not yet sure how such an integral law will work out, because it does not yet apply. Moreover, it seemed that no country in the world had experience with such an integral mega law that brings together all sectoral environmental regulations.

But by chance I discovered that far away another Western country has more than 25 years of experience with such a mega law: the New Zealand **Environmental** Act. This summer, that law was evaluated by an official state committee and the criticism was harsh. It is recommended to repeal the law and simply start working with various sectoral environmental laws again, just like the rest of the world does. Is better for the environment and gives weak values ​​such as biodiversity and water quality its own law with independent ecological minimum values.

What awaits us

So it was essentially a failed experiment, and in retrospect one wonders why it continued for more than two decades. The media already regarded the law as New Zealand's 'worst piece of legislation'. I didn't hear anyone about that in the Netherlands; I think because Dutch universities do not conduct comparative law research into a small country on the other side of the world. That is a shame, because this legal criticism from practice gives a good idea of ​​what awaits us.

I think three points of criticism from the state report are also useful to us. First of all, New Zealand simply wants back a Spatial Planning Act, a Nature Conservation Act and other sectoral environmental laws. Exactly as we still have in the Netherlands. Why? Because sectoral assessment against hard environmental standards is better than suggesting an integrated assessment where there is a risk that you will exchange weak values ​​such as biodiversity, air or water quality or consider them less important because in the short term they will yield nothing or at least less than simply clear-cutting and build up.

The second point of criticism seems to be explicitly addressed to the Netherlands: less municipal decentralization please, please have more government direction again. The latter is also reflected in our own National **Environmental** Vision (NOVI) from a few months ago, but what does our **Environmental** Act do? Exactly the opposite: municipalities are competent. That decentralism from a neoliberal era of 'council planning' that is coming to an end has led to all kinds of building plans that lost sight of the bigger picture. The environment, and nature in particular, is the first to die and the New Zealand evaluation committee therefore again advocates a 'greater use of mandatory national direction by the Minister for the Environment to guide planning at local government level'.

In simple Dutch: establish a Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment again, give the minister the age-old authority of a Planning Key Decision (PKB) again, subject municipal building plans to preventive higher supervision and scale up environmental and spatial planning to a higher level.

Cheerful consent

Exit aldermanic planning, environmental law is also far too complex for the small scale of an average municipality. More rich and more regional, we now also read in a policy memorandum such as the recent National **Environmental** Vision: this makes the upcoming **Environmental** Act, with the municipality as the primary competent authority, outdated before it comes into effect.

Why does no one in the Netherlands know about this New Zealand law evaluation? No idea, but we always hear here that we must have confidence in the municipality as a fellow government, so it will not be good if an evaluation now shows that it is better to have distrust in the municipality as a lower government .

But I think the New Zealand committee may be right. Around the corner from me, the municipality of Zeist cheerfully granted itself permission to cut down a few thousand trees for a construction plan in the Zeisterbos. And the KNVB is now also ready to cut down another 5 hectares of forest a few hundred meters further for more sports fields, parking spaces and accommodations. Does that permission also come so easily if the municipality feels more the hot planning breath of the higher authorities?

A third point from the New Zealand evaluation also indicates that our **Environmental** Act is old wine in old bottles. The New Zealand State Commission is positive on one point, and that is that 'sustainability' is the leading legal principle in their legal system. All other standards are subordinate to this. This structure was and is innovative and would also help the current transitions and must therefore be maintained.

The law is structured as a pyramid, with the overriding legal principle of sustainable area development at the top. This makes current linking with the most sustainable solution much easier: the law will then never lag behind. And it is precisely this one really positive point that is missing from our **Environmental** Act, because it does not have that dominant legal principle of sustainability.

Soft values, hard test

I think that in New Zealand, based on 25 years of experience, they would say the following about our **Environmental** Act: 'Yes, we know it, we have already tried it here, it adds sectoral environmental laws

together, throws a staple through it, hopes that governments will then work more integrated, because everything is included in an integrated law, and then simply gives the municipality central authority for already complex policy fields in transition such as spatial planning and the environment.

In integrated considerations, soft values ​​such as nature, biodiversity, water quality and air quality are the first to be lost. So give those soft values ​​a hard sectoral test. Is such an **Environmental** Act really good legal innovation? No. Certainly not without that legal principle of sustainability. So don't enter it like that. This will soon lead to headlines such as 'Worst legislation ever'.

Fred Kistenkas

Cited report:

Load Date: December 3, 2020

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171 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Concealing views with enormous openness; column

NRC.NEXT

February 11, 2020 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 2

Length: 471 words

Byline: Tom-Jan Meeus

Body

What you never actually see anymore, except sometimes in Andere Tijd, are politicians who talk to the media but hide their position. Speaking clearly is now lesson one on the course: words with few syllables, short sentences. Only: the simplification of language, the systematic simplification of positions, reinforces another phenomenon, which no one ever complains about, but which is a problem: that politicians can also hide reality with crystal-clear statements.

The Senate will vote on the **Environmental** Act on Tuesday. A large-scale but sympathetic project, intended to give people more freedom in matters such as the construction of a dormer window or the organization of a street party. Setting standards, for example for noise pollution or waste processing, will become a municipal task.

The only question is whether it will work. If you give citizens more control over their environment, you can also create more conflicts about that environment. If you give municipalities more control over standards, you can also provoke more objections from citizens. On Monday, NRC revealed that a critical inspection report on this from 2018 has been kept under wraps. The Council of State also previously issued skeptical advice. And Amsterdam lawyer Jan van der Grinten, specialist in environmental law, warned in Trouw of ""chaos for citizens, governments and companies"".

You now already know on whose plate any conflicts about this will end up: the judge's. In the debate on the law in the Senate two weeks ago, Member of Parliament Saskia Kluit (GroenLinks) started talking about parties that complain that judges are engaging in politics, ""while we pass legislation here that falls short of clear standards"". water to FVD, which has so far supported the **Environmental** Act because of the simplified procedures, but also complains about the politicization of the judiciary. Former FVD member Henk Otten also reminded FVD senator Johan Dessing that Van der Grinten, the lawyer who Trouw voor de Wet warned that ""the FVD's in-house lawyer"" is.

It is true that Paul Cliteur, FVD faction leader in the Senate, recently agreed in his party's YouTube news that the politicization of the judiciary also occurs because politicians hand over ""a lot of power"" by setting vague standards.

So this is a typical case where two crystal-clear positions obscure political reality. You cannot be against political interference from judges and at the same time agree with the **Environmental** Act. Then you may have expressed clear views, but what you really find important remains unclear.

Tom-Jan Meeus (t.meeus@nrc.nl; @tomjanmeeus) writes an exchange column here with Lotfi El Hamidi.

Is that possible: being against political interference by judges and supporting the **Environmental** Act?

Link to PDF

Notes

Tom-Jan Meeus (t.meeus@nrc.nl; @tomjanmeeus) writes an exchange column here with Lotfi El Hamidi.

Load Date: February 10, 2020

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175 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Council of State concerned about complicated laws: 'Inadequate enforceability is a persistent problem'

De Volkskrant.nl

April 20, 2023 Thursday 09:01 AM GMT

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Length: 1028 words

Byline: Remco Meijer

Body

Legislation is too often unnecessarily complicated. And when the Council of State points this out, the cabinet sometimes ignores it completely. Vice President Thom de Graaf believes that the government should choose more clearly what it will and will not do.

The Council's Advisory Division ruled in February that the Distribution Act, which must distribute asylum seekers fairly across the Netherlands, is 'unnecessarily complex' and raises 'probing questions' about whether it is feasible. The Council of State is the most important advisor on legislation, but last month it emerged that the cabinet is ignoring the criticism.

The Spread Act, a difficult political compromise, is now before the House of Representatives unchanged. De Graaf: 'An advisor must accept that his advice is sometimes not followed. But we are not happy about it. This is not good for the quality of legislation.'

The importance of sound laws is a subject that former politician De Graaf (65) has been drawing attention to since he took office almost five years ago. The 2022 annual report published on Thursday also contains warnings about 'needlessly complicated regulations', culminating in the observation: 'Inadequate implementation of laws is a persistent problem.'

Do you feel you are not being taken seriously?

“No, that's not the point. Government and parliament attempt to capture social reality in laws, but the tendency is not to do so in broad outlines. An attempt is often made to overcome even the last, potentially minor injustice. A small balcony will be added here, a back door will be opened there or a shed will be added. With the best intentions, but it makes the law increasingly complicated and implementation increasingly difficult. It is our job to continue to warn about this.'

In the case of the Spread Act, a factor that plays a role is that the government coalition does not want to renegotiate the compromise reached.

'It occasionally happens that a political wall has been erected that makes it impossible for the cabinet to follow advice. Not every day, not even every month. But where political deals have been concluded, at consultation tables in a specific area, or compromises in a rock-solid coalition agreement, we notice that our advice is difficult to follow. I do see that the government and parliament are trying to seriously shape their legislative task, but I also notice how difficult that is in a heavily fragmented political landscape.'

You are referring to the political situation, with 20 factions in the House of Representatives?

'Political governance is complicated at the moment, with so many contradictions and the difficulty of having to work with different majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate. At the same time, many factions are limited in size. If there are three or five of you in a faction, it is very difficult to find space to delve into legislation, read through it and think through it. As advisors, we can only hope that the country will one day return to more politically stable waters.

'De Graaf was, among other things, party leader of D66 in the House of Representatives, minister, mayor and senator. That long career took him to the Council of State in 2018, where, in addition to the Advisory Division, the Administrative Jurisdiction Division is also housed. As the highest administrative court, the Council had to deal with the benefits affair, in which hard paper legislation in daily legal practice turned out disastrous for many people.

'In order to achieve more enforceable laws, without undesirable side effects, De Graaf advocates more intensive contacts between administration, legislature and judiciary. Too often there is still 'poor coordination', while the public sector is under great pressure. In the annual report, the Council also suggests that judges should make more use of the opportunity to 'feed back' their knowledge of and experiences with laws to government and parliament.'

Does this not feed the already existing image that the judge too often takes the seat of politics?

'No, it's quite the opposite. I think it would be wise for the highest judges, both here and at the Supreme Court, to explicitly signal if laws prove to be too rigid, with too little room for individual considerations. Or if they are not feasible in practice. They must also be able to raise the alarm about laws that lead to an enormous workload for judges.'

With whom?

'To the legislature, i.e. government and parliament, and preferably in a timely manner. Hence my plea for more coherence. Judges must be able to say that certain legislation leads to major implementation problems in practice, without giving a political opinion. On the contrary, the judge then says to politicians: be careful that I don't have to sit in your chair! Last year, the Council for the Judiciary identified eleven 'stomach pain files', involving laws that are unjust in practice. And our Administrative Jurisdiction Division, for example, has expressed concerns about the upcoming **Environmental** Act. That is a sensible move.”

To relieve pressure on the public sector, you believe that the government should choose more clearly what it will and will not do. Can you give an example?

'I argue for some reconsideration of what the government can do. Financial resources are limited. Manpower is also a problem, given the tight labor market throughout the public sector. This is also felt here, with dozens of vacancies for lawyers to support the administrative judges. If the government promises a lot but cannot deliver in practice, it damages people's confidence. The government cannot solve all suffering.

'An example is the tendency to financially compensate dissatisfaction without legal obligation or responsibility. Whether it concerns students from the loan system, healthcare workers with long Covid or Surinamese Dutch with a gap in their AOW. All understandable in itself, but not sustainable in the long run. The government must make choices and implement them consistently. We often quote the words of Willem Drees senior here. “Not everything is possible, and certainly not at the same time.” That realization should be heard more often.'

Load Date: April 20, 2023

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179 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=More and more often I think: government, better do nothing for a while

De Volkskrant.nl

March 31, 2023 Friday 02:00 PM GMT

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Length: 857 words

Byline: Kustaw Bessems

Body

If an alien had landed and immediately after leaving his spaceship had said: 'politics doesn't work for everyone here, think about facilities in the countryside', I think we would have thought that was very clever. If that creature had added in the same breath that recovery for benefit parents, help for Groningen victims and the nitrogen approach should be improved, we might have thought: he had been reading up in another galaxy.

But it wasn't an alien. It was Mark Rutte, Prime Minister for twelve years.

What are the possibilities? One: what he is telling us was always possible, but he is only taking action now that an election defeat threatens his political fate. Two: he had trained himself to consistently say “terrible earthquakes” and “terrible benefits scandal,” but he meant little of it. Or three: nothing will be solved, but this is what it has to look like to give the coalition a boost and so they start doing things, no matter what.

I am most concerned about such a spectacle of decisiveness. Because it is not that the government has done little in Groningen. Much correct. Convincing demands for compensation from residents are fought with fire and sword on behalf of institutions that are officially there to help. Another investigation and another counter-expertise, until not only the house but also the will is cracked.

You can argue that it was decisiveness that caused the recovery for benefit families to stall more than ever. The rationale sounded good: 30,000 euros for each affected family and then see who is entitled to more. The result is that those most affected are now drowning in a sea of ​​applicants. And no matter how tragic, perhaps the least bad choice is to walk down this difficult path, instead of taking yet another side road.

More and more often I think: government, better do nothing for a while. If the idea is sympathetic, we must be extra careful of the consequences, because that makes us stink. This week a study was published into the intention to abolish VAT on fruit and vegetables. You can hardly resist it. But then the outcome: you incur a lot of lawsuits about which items are exempt, the tax authorities cannot implement the plan and there will probably be little improvement in health.

Left-wing politicians reacted with irritation and scorn: which country cannot decide that broccoli is a vegetable and pizza is not? I found the research convincing. The systems at the Tax Authorities are so outdated that we will be happy if they can perform the simplest tasks in the coming years. And in the business world, lawyers already seem to be warming up.

Free childcare is the same thing. There are serious indications that this will lead to even greater staff shortages, price increases and greater inequality. Not even an implementing organization has been found that can put the measure into practice. The left thinks it's just whining. And later make a fuss about the resulting chaos, for sure.

The House always demands intervention, never not to intervene. And we in the media are participating. “**Environmental** Act postponement again,” our news headlines complain. It is not clear from this that the introduction is risky and that all those delays have saved us from worse. We will soon be shaking our heads as we read the empathetic interviews with citizens stuck in the system.

I have not yet recovered from the obligation for thrift stores to register all their items, a perverse effect of a measure against fencing. Still stunned by the news about another ten thousand families who have been pushed into poverty for years due to a kink in the tax system. But look, here comes State Secretary Van der Burg again with a dispersal law for asylum seekers under his arm that everyone and their mother is screaming about as being unworkable. There is simply 'support' for it.

Getting plans 'through' is where ministers score. Rarely do you read praise because something is canceled. A 'political index' is circulating on Twitter, in which MPs are judged on adopted motions and bills. A first place is celebrated jubilantly by the lucky person. The more activity, the better! And all you can hope is that the damage caused by all that activity isn't too bad.

We really don't need a government that only sits on its hands. Look at nitrogen. Precisely because of the years in which everything was allowed to take its course, everything now has to happen at once. Doing nothing leads to doing too much. But there is insufficient awareness that our government apparatus is broken. And if you keep powering a broken device, it will burn out.

These times require revaluation of what we find important. Overdue maintenance deserves more reward than coming up with something new. Discussions focus too much on what should be done and not enough on how. Taking a step back more often, taking a deep breath, looking at the matter again, that would improve everything. And apart from crises, a good rule of thumb is: if you have serious doubts, don't do it.

Mail? k.bessems@volkskrant.nl

Load Date: March 31, 2023

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183 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Your permit application will soon be resolved with a few mouse clicks: who will believe it?

De Volkskrant.nl

December 3, 2020 Thursday 04:35 PM GMT

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Length: 622 words

Byline: Herman Weelink

Body

The **Environmental** Act, which will unite countless laws and measures on spatial planning, relies heavily on a computer system that connects everything with everything. That will be a disaster, argues Herman Weelink.

In an interview, Government Advisor Berno Strootman argues for a centrally coordinated spatial policy and for a Minister for Spatial Planning with 'power and money'. As a landscape architect and planner, I wholeheartedly agree with this. Unfortunately, the interview does not discuss 'power and money' in more detail.

Of course, every minister needs money, but in order to exercise power, a minister also needs legal instruments. What instruments could that be for a Minister of Space?

This is currently still the Spatial Planning Act, but the aim is to replace it in the foreseeable future with the **Environmental** Act. This should simplify planning procedures by combining a large number of regulations. According to Prime Minister Rutte, 'the largest legislative operation since Thorbecke'. A misplaced comparison, because that will be a disaster.

Great disappearing act

The **Environmental** Act is a lot like a big disappearing act. Twenty-six laws are reduced to one law, sixty General Administrative Orders are reduced to four and 75 ministerial regulations are compressed to one. To this end, the **Environmental** Act relies heavily on a computer system that connects everything to everything and should, among other things, make it clear after a few simple mouse clicks where someone stands when he applies for a permit.

That sounds too good to be true and it is. The system has not yet been fully developed and that will take some time, if it is successful. There is too little money: municipalities must implement the law, but the promised budget neutrality appears to be unattainable. Things also go wrong in terms of content.

Slowly but surely it becomes clear that you can try to tie laws and regulations together into one digital mass of bits and bytes, but that this would undermine the variability and complexity of all the sometimes incomparable, incoherent and possibly conflicting environmental aspects that are involved in countless individual permits. having to play a role has not disappeared. That complexity cannot be magically removed with a computer trick.

Naive and dangerous

And that's actually a good thing, because the idea that environmental policy can be automated is not only naive, but even dangerous. If an individual citizen can see where he stands at a simple glance, civil servants and administrators will do the same.

As practice at the Tax Authorities has recently shown, such an automated system will give civil servants and administrators the irresistible temptation to simplify individual considerations and decision-making with those mouse clicks. The danger is then enormous that, together with 25 laws, 56 General Administrative Orders and 74 ministerial regulations, a balanced spatial policy, good governance and even legal certainty will be taken away.

New debacle

The next National Automation debacle, which will cost millions and perhaps billions more than budgeted, cannot deliver on its promises and will ultimately lead to protracted political wrangling, is on its way. The **Environmental** Act was already adopted in 2016, but its introduction has therefore been postponed several times. It is currently officially expected that it will finally come into effect on January 1, 2022, but calls are already growing to postpone its introduction even further.

It would be even better to just get rid of it altogether. We are looking for a Minister of Space with money and power, not a handy **Environmental** Magician with a computer system.

Herman Weelink

Load Date: December 3, 2020

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187 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Doubt is not allowed when building houses

De Telegraaf.nl

December 7, 2021 Tuesday 6:15 AM GMT

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Section: OPINION; FRONT PAGE

Length: 206 words

Body

The waiting lists for a rental home and the rising prices of owner-occupied homes are signals that there is a dire shortage of housing. But as easy as this conclusion is, it turns out to be difficult to build on a large scale. Of course, there are obstacles such as expensive raw materials and a lack of construction workers.

Even more often, however, new construction hardly gets off the ground due to the difficult procedures that provinces and municipalities have to implement. Due to patchwork of permits and constantly changing rules, processes are stuck.

Precisely to streamline this patchwork, the cabinet wants to introduce the **Environmental** Act by the middle of next year. This law makes procedures faster and simpler. But serious signals are now coming from the municipalities that the **Environmental** Act does not make the complicated procedures easier. In fact, municipalities warn, new construction is actually delayed or even paralyzed.

When almost all laws are introduced, there is some wrangling beforehand, because negative consequences are feared. Panic is not always necessary, but in this case the social consequences are very serious. The outgoing cabinet must be sure that the **Environmental** Act contributes to the construction of more houses. There should be no doubt about this in advance.

Load Date: December 7, 2021

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191 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Do we want a healthier Netherlands? Then finally focus on prevention, says this professor

De Volkskrant.nl

May 26, 2023 Friday 08:30 AM GMT

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Length: 1819 words

Byline: Michiel van der Geest, Hessel von Piekartz

Body

The richest Dutch people live no less than 25 years longer in good health than the poorest Dutch people. If we include health goals in the law, we could reduce this enormous difference, says Groningen professor and creator of the plan Jochen Mierau.

Of course you can have fries every now and then. And really, have that beer. There are fears that the government would take all of this away as soon as health goals were included in the law. Jochen Mierau, professor of public health economics at the University of Groningen and the UMCG and scientific director of Lifelines, is discouraged by such simplifications.

On the other hand, a significant change is definitely needed in society. The latest CBS figures show that people from the highest socio-economic class live 25 years longer in good health than their fellow countrymen from the lowest class. Mierau: 'If that were four or five years, you might still think: who cares? But this is more than a quarter of your life!'

About the authors

Michiel van der Geest is a healthcare reporter for the Volkskrant and focuses on all forms of healthcare: from hospitals to general practitioners, from disability care to Big Pharma and from health differences to the risk of falls.

Hessel von Piekartz is a political reporter for de Volkskrant and writes about public health, pensions and social security. He was nominated for the De Tegel journalism prize in 2022.

Three years ago, Mierau therefore came up with a plan: the Netherlands should become the first country in the world where 'health goals' are included in the law. Concrete agreements about public health for which ministers (and at a lower level also aldermen and other administrators) must be accountable. He elaborated on this together with professor of health law Brigit Toebes in several scientific articles.

His idea quickly gained acceptance: a parliamentary motion instructed the minister to investigate the plan, last month the Council for Health and Society gave it an important place in its advice on the future of public health care, and in February the medical organization KNMG and seventy others called organizations to embrace the government's Mierau plan. In vain, State Secretary Van Ooijen is holding off for the time being.

What should we consider when considering these 'legal health goals'?

'For example, at least five additional healthy years of life for everyone, 30 percent smaller health differences, the obesity level back to that of the 1990s. These are all the goals in the Prevention Agreement, so lay them down in law. How to reach them is up to you, as long as you get there. If the government does not implement a proven effective way to reduce health disparities, the question quickly arises: why not introduce it?'

But first, says Mierau, it is important to note that the discussion about health disparities has been going on since the 1980s. 'They have been increasing since then. We are in a cycle of noticing that the differences exist, some degree of social outrage, and the firm promise that we will do something about it. Then too little happens, and then a few years later we start all over again.'

It's not that we don't know what to do about it, says Mierau. As early as 1986, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport wrote the so-called Memorandum 2000 - containing excellent plans to reduce health differences, with health goals mentioned no less than 23 times. And the World Health Organization also has a list of ready-made advice. Minimum prices for alcohol, a sugar tax, more expensive cigarettes. Mierau: 'Good health policy requires political courage.'

Apparently more courage than pulling out the wallet for healthcare. Mierau: 'We spend a disproportionate amount of resources on healthcare if we compare that with prevention. Studies from the United States show that the influence of healthcare on public health is about 10 to 15 percent. Healthy food, good housing, clean air, that contributes much more. If you really want to contribute to people's health, you should not work in healthcare.

'In the meantime, our healthcare system is silting up. We have waiting lists and a huge staff shortage. This is because insurers have a duty of care and must therefore provide treatment if an insured person becomes ill. But before someone gets sick, the law doesn't require them to do anything. The pressure to ensure that people do not get sick in the first place is therefore much smaller.'

What difference would it make in concrete terms if these health goals were included in the law?

'In Northeast Groningen, municipalities now want to close swimming pools because they cannot complete the budget. They do not have to account for what that decision does to public health. Targets have been set for the budget for which they must justify themselves. So even though measures are against public health, they are still taken. You can restore that balance with statutory health goals.

'This makes the social objective of government policy more central. A fixation on growth and a balanced budget does not lead to the desired society.'

But don't we already have a prevention agreement? Isn't smoking already becoming more expensive? There are already many measures to improve public health.

'Yet we do not implement quite a few interventions that have been scientifically proven to improve health. We keep ending up in trench warfare, such as around the sugar tax (which has already led to a decline in the consumption of unhealthy soft drinks in, for example, Norway, France and the United Kingdom, ed.), the abolition of VAT on vegetables, or the introduction of a minimum price for alcohol.

'Some pressure is needed to introduce proven policy. That is possible with those health goals.'

In the nitrogen crisis we also have legal targets, and that is not really going well.

'That comparison is nice, because in order to achieve the nitrogen targets, measures were introduced that we knew years ago would help. For example, reducing the speed limit from 130 to 100, or considering the reduction of the livestock population. Precisely because these standards have been introduced, we have started to implement proven effective policies. This legal anchoring ensures that administrators persevere when things become politically complicated.'

You want the government to first identify the health effects of every plan.

'Compare it with an environmental impact assessment, which you also have to submit if you are going to build somewhere. Or take nitrogen: each ministry deals with nitrogen standards in its own way, and Minister Van der Wal is the coordinating minister, so we have also tackled that.

'So yes, you also have to view the **Environmental** Act through health glasses. We know that a large presence of fast food chains contributes to obesity. For example, the law may state that only a maximum number of snack bars may be established in an area. Or you can include that the food you offer as a catering facility must contribute to healthy nutrition. Of course you can have fries, but it's all about how a company markets them.

'All nudging is now moving in an unhealthy direction. If you order food via Thuisbezorgd, you will receive a message the next day at four o'clock in the afternoon: you are not going to do the dishes, you are going to order! If you do that occasionally: live the dream, go wild. But in the long run it has negative consequences. If you do it every day, the supply should be healthy. You could include that in the Commodities Act.'

Extremely patronizing, say opponents.

'The law stipulates how much salt is allowed in bread and how much fat semi-skimmed milk may contain. If you eat too much salt, no one cares. Too much salt for a long time will damage your kidneys, the law protects against this.

'These health goals also result in a cascade of regulations. Snack bars can continue to exist, as long as they offer healthy food.

'We are not doing anything crazy if we want to return to the obesity rate of the mid-1990s. The Netherlands was really not a health dictatorship at the time. We had chips on birthdays, we got fries at the snack bar. But the supply of unhealthy food has become too great. Coffee is now something that you take as a kind of dessert at three times of the day. There are eateries on every street corner. A sports canteen can only make ends meet if it sells enough fries and beer.

“You want to get rid of the growth that can only exist if it is at the expense of public health.”

People choose their own coffee or chips, don't they? It is not without reason that State Secretary Van Ooijen recently wrote to Parliament that people also have an individual responsibility and that health goals ignore this.

'But doesn't that apply to all laws? If the three of us here want to drive on the highway all day in a Volvo from the eighties and set our heating to 26 degrees, we can do that. But if the sum of individual actions means that we do not achieve the climate goals, measures will follow. The deduction for vintage cars will no longer apply, diesel will become more expensive, and the price ceiling for energy only applies up to a certain consumption. Achieving social goals is always a sum of individual responsibilities.

'Policy can make that easier: through a subsidy for solar panels, or someone to come and remove the tiles from your garden. Then you enable the individual to contribute to the collective goal. This applies equally to health.

'And besides, how individual is that responsibility? A large part of the advertising is unhealthy patronage aimed at unhealthy food. When you watch the World Cup final, you see 22 athletes at the top of their game, but the commercial is for beer, chips and McDonald's. Max Verstappen is a top athlete, but drives around in a Red Bull car. The message is: these people are so fit thanks to our products.

'Imagine you enter our society gullibly, perhaps a bit naively, and you think: this free democratic society has my best interests at heart, and I am going to make the most of it. You haven't left your house yet when you come across a gambling advertisement at the bus stop. Once in the shop at the station, one wall is filled with soft drinks and the other with sweets. And only at the cash register is a two-week-old apple.

'It's like a newspaper full of bullshit, with only a small piece of real news at the bottom of page 23. This is how society is now organized, the unhealthy is dominant. What is individual responsibility worth in a society that so strongly encourages unhealthy eating?'

Load Date: May 26, 2023

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195 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Give municipalities the space to build'; OPINION Politicians Nobel (VVD) and Terpstra (CDA)

De Telegraaf.nl

November 25, 2020 Wednesday 8:15 AM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC; FRONT PAGE

Length: 582 words

Body

Although the housing shortage is high, construction in the Schiphol area has virtually come to a standstill as a result of new standards. Now that the House of Representatives is discussing the **Environmental** Act this Wednesday, Jurgen Nobel and Julius Terpstra are urging the responsible minister Ollongren to take action.

'There is a dire shortage of homes in the Netherlands, rising to almost a million by 2030. The waiting lists for social housing are long and owner-occupied homes for young families, healthcare workers, agents and teachers are significantly outbid and have become almost unaffordable. Builders, developers and governments want to roll up their sleeves. But unfortunately, new obstacles are constantly being placed in the way, delaying the construction of houses. Sometimes it's nitrogen, sometimes PFAS and now strict new noise standards are being conjured up.

Impracticable

Last summer, Minister Ollongren (D66) came up with new additional noise pollution and quality of life standards for the **Environmental** Act. These new noise standards threaten to make almost all housing projects around Schiphol unfeasible. The construction of 380,000 (!) homes from Alphen aan den Rijn to Almere and from Castricum to Leiden are in jeopardy. With the new stricter standards, entire villages and municipalities are suddenly classified as unliveable.

While the number of building permits issued is already lagging far behind due to the corona crisis, the fear is that many municipalities will be able to issue even fewer permits due to the new calculations of environmental noise. In the municipality of Haarlemmermeer alone, 20,000 homes are in danger of not being built due to the stricter calculation methodology. A sad prospect for all those home seekers.

Provinces, 54 municipalities and industry organizations such as Bouwend Nederland have previously written a letter to the cabinet, but have so far received no response.

Urgency

In response to parliamentary questions from VVD and CDA, the minister indicated that the noise rules have gone through a 'careful procedure' and that she will look at the development of the measurement and calculation rules. The urgency seems to be completely missing. While Minister Ollongren, on the one hand, concludes 'housing deals' to boost housing construction, on the other hand she just as easily shuts down construction with the stricter noise measures. If it weren't so sad, it would be almost comical.

Of course we have to take the environment and noise pollution into account. A healthy living environment for residents, employees and visitors is in everyone's interest. It is therefore logical that construction cannot take place everywhere around the airport. But these new noise standards are now being imposed unilaterally by the municipalities around Schiphol, without the consequences being clear.

More clear

What we need now is a united, reliable and, above all, clear central government, which gives all the green signals for housing construction.

Give municipalities around Schiphol the space to build. Do not make the procedures even more complicated, but rather clearer. That is how the **Environmental** Act was once intended: room for local consideration.

Quickly come up with a workable solution for the noise standards, do not create a second nitrogen crisis and ensure that construction can take place. Do not put construction projects, and therefore the home seeker, at a 3-0 disadvantage because of these standards.'

Jurgen Nobel (VVD) is councilor for housing and airport affairs in Haarlemmermeer

Julius Terpstra (CDA) is a Member of Parliament and spokesperson for housing, spatial planning and environmental law

Graphic

Image, ""Where on the one hand Minister Ollongren concludes 'housing deals' to boost housing construction, on the other hand she just as easily shuts down construction with the stricter noise measures,"" say Nobel and Terpstra., Photo Ronald BAKKER

Load Date: November 25, 2020

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199 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Housing construction to zero due to new law'

De Telegraaf.nl

December 5, 2021 Sunday 4:03 PM GMT

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Section: DFT

Length: 517 words

Byline: Yteke de Jong

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

New construction will become impossible in the Netherlands when the new **Environmental** Act is introduced next year. Regional and local administrators already sounded the alarm last year, but hardly anything has changed. The noise rules add to a pile of other rules that are already making housing construction difficult.

Next week the House of Representatives will discuss the housing crisis. 1 million homes must be added by 2030, but large-scale construction plans have not yet been made.

Deputy Jeroen Olthof of the province of North Holland says that the construction of 70,000 homes in his region is at stake. He already sounded the alarm last year on behalf of four provinces and 56 municipalities, which have signed up for 380,000 homes. “Nothing has changed in the **Environmental** Act since we raised the alarm with the minister last year. We are hitting walls at the ministry. This is actually unnecessary regulation. Nothing will change for existing residents, but new construction will become practically impossible.”

There are currently separate calculation rules for wind turbines, industry, railways, highways and aviation. These noisemakers will soon be added together in one new sum. The new **Environmental** Act must come into effect from 2022. Everything must become simpler and more balanced. At least that is what outgoing minister D66 Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs) intends.

The Ministry of the Interior states in a response that it will soon be the municipalities' turn to decide 'what is acceptable' with regard to noise. “After all, the municipality is not only concerned with health, but also with providing sufficient living space,” says a spokesperson.

However, local administrators take a gloomy view. They are in danger of drowning in a swamp of even more rules. Moreover, it is already difficult to 'motivate' construction projects. For example, two weeks ago the Council of State sent the province of Brabant back to the drawing board, because the decision to build a new residential area between Den Bosch and Waalwijk was not sufficiently 'motivated'. .

In this case it was a nitrogen problem. And while there have been calls for central management for years, the national government continues to place more responsibilities on municipalities. “Better motivation means that municipalities explain this weighing of interests extra well. Additional measures in the area, for example adapted facades or quiet places, such as courtyards or parks, can help with motivation,"" said the Interior Ministry spokesperson.

But according to administrators, it does not even come down to the 'adapted facades' and talk about a paper reality in The Hague. “We have to build for our own residents, student housing, status holders, migrant workers, urgent seekers, flexible living and also social rental housing,” says councilor Guus Elkhuizen of the municipality of Nieuwkoop. “At the same time, there is a cornucopia of rules regarding nitrogen, sustainability, climate-adaptive construction, nature legislation and, to top it all off, the accumulation of noise regulations in the upcoming **Environmental** Act. We have ended up in a situation where you as a director have no choice anymore.”

Graphic

Image, The construction of new homes is being smothered in regulations., photo ANP

Load Date: December 6, 2021

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203 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Incongruent patchwork' in regional government

NRC

June 24, 2021 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 2

Length: 609 words

Byline: Titia Ketelaar

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Council for Public Administration

Municipalities are involved in an increasing number of regional constructions. The Council for Public Administration (ROB) is critical of this trend.

COMPLETE TEXT:

The number of regional partnerships per municipality has grown to an average of 33. This has created a problematic and ""incongruent patchwork"" between municipality and province, concludes the Council for Public Administration (ROB), an independent advisory body to government and parliament.

""Every time a department such as Economic Affairs or Public Health was going to implement a new law, a new regional construction was chosen, on top of the existing one,"" says Caspar van den Berg, professor of public administration at the University of Groningen and member of the ROB. He signals ""a kind of proliferation in which coordination from the government was lacking"".

In a report that will be published this Thursday, the ROB advises the House of Representatives and the incoming cabinet to make the Minister of the Interior legally responsible for all future decentralizations that directly affect municipalities. There is now a lack of direction, says the ROB. The central government does not sufficiently ask whether local government can adapt to new decentralizations.

""At the start of the Rutte III cabinet, the region was embraced, the word appeared 75 times in the coalition agreement,"" says Professor Van den Berg. ""The approach to more and more social problems has been assigned to the regional scale. But The instruments and finances are not always sufficient for this. That is a task for the new cabinet.""

The ROB says that municipalities should be free to enter into cooperation; For example, waste collection or tax collection is often done jointly by several municipalities for practical reasons. Regional cooperation is logical for statutory tasks such as youth care or major social tasks such as sustainability and housing construction, but may only take place under certain conditions, the ROB advises.

There is increasing dissatisfaction among municipalities about how the takeover of national tasks is turning out. Decentralization is often accompanied by mandatory forms of cooperation and national rules, and therefore with a decrease in policy autonomy. At the same time, there is a lack of money for the tasks taken over. Last week, municipalities announced that if no additional money is added, they will ignore new tasks that the government wants to transfer, such as the Integration Act and the Environment Act. Previously, the conflict between the government and municipalities over the financing of youth care became so high that a arbitration committee was used as referee. Such a means of resolving a conflict between layers of government is unique.

The reason for the ROB's advice is a motion from the House of Representatives, which wanted to know what the ""opportunities and risks"" are of increasing regionalization in (youth) care. The cabinet asked the ROB for broader advice, also about increased regionalization on other themes.

According to the ROB, new tasks should only be assigned to formal levels of government with a democratically elected representative body. Because now ""a formally non-existent organic administrative unit"" has emerged, the ROB notes: ""The region is a no man's land from a democratic point of view.""

Another condition should be that if many national rules are imposed, such as with youth care, the government must bear the costs. ""Municipal contributions should remain limited for well-defined additional wishes of municipalities,"" says the ROB.

Democratically speaking, the region is a no man's land Council for Public Administration

Link to PDF

Load Date: June 23, 2021

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207 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=In the morning Jan Klink was almost a Member of Parliament; Column

NRC.NEXT

March 25, 2021 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 2

Length: 512 words

Byline: Petra de Koning

Body

In the hall of the House of Representatives, newly elected MPs received their access card, their own email address and a telephone. They had their pictures taken and were interviewed by civil servants who would write short pieces about them for the House of Representatives website. That was twenty minutes, but there were those who stayed for more than 45 minutes to tell who they were, where they came from, what they wanted to achieve in politics.

It was Monday afternoon. An MP in sweatpants and a sweater walked past the tables with newcomers. Almost gone, he was no longer on his party's list of candidates. Four years ago, wearing a gray suit and a pink tie, he had told such an official that he wanted to ""close the gap between population groups"" and increase ""mutual respect"".

Pieter Duisenberg, chairman of the association of universities VSNU, also walked past the tables on Monday afternoon. He had just performed in a video to explain to new MPs how they could use scientific knowledge as best as possible. Duisenberg had worked for years at the top of the business community before becoming a Member of Parliament himself in 2012 - for the VVD.

We looked at the newcomers together and Duisenberg said that at first he thought that because of that background he had a lot to offer his party and the country. But no one had asked him what he had to offer. He was given education as his portfolio. Duisenberg did not sound bitter. He felt he could have done a lot, learned a lot.

On Monday morning Jan Klink was sitting at the table in the hall. Farmer's son from Groningen, agricultural economist, number 35 on the VVD candidate list, 36 years old. That morning, according to the provisional election results, he was a new Member of Parliament. Not anymore in the afternoon, when his party suddenly had 34 seats.

When I speak to Jan Klink on the phone a day later, he calls it ""a great shame"". He is an alderman in Wijdemeren, and there is already a successor. Now he almost certainly has to wait until an The new cabinet is with the VVD and MPs will become ministers or state secretaries. The VVD has become used to power, Klink is not worried.

In his conversation with an official, he had said that he wanted to reduce ""the gap between city and countryside"". What he experienced on his parents' farm resembles the story of outgoing Minister of Agriculture Carola Schouten, who as a child lost his father in an accident with an agricultural machine. Klink was 15 when his father fell under a manure injector, possibly due to a brain haemorrhage, and died.

As a Member of Parliament he would like to speak about agriculture. But what if they don't ask him? ""As a councilor, I am also responsible for childcare, education, the environmental law. We'll see.""

And the gap that needs to be closed - the same pieces will appear about it in four years' time.

Petra de Koning (p.dekoning@nrc.nl; @pdekoning) writes a column here every Thursday.

The new MPs were allowed to talk about their ideals for twenty minutes

Link to PDF

Notes

Petra de Koning (p.dekoning@nrc.nl; @pdekoning) writes a column here every Thursday.

Load Date: March 24, 2021

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

211 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Waiting for complaints is no longer an option'

NRC Handelsblad

December 12, 2019 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 10

Length: 1075 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Jos Verlaan

Body

ABSTRACT

Interview Reinier van Zutphen National Ombudsman

The National Ombudsman fears that the government is increasingly sidelining citizens, now again in the proposed **Environmental** Act.

COMPLETE TEXT:

To counterbalance a distrustful government that no longer wants to assist its citizens, but regards it as an obstacle. It has now become core business for the National Ombudsman, Reinier van Zutphen.

""You now see it again in the benefits affair, but also in youth care or debt assistance."" The essence, he says, is the same: where the government withdrew, through decentralization and cutbacks, distrust against citizens increased.

""For ten years, citizens have been labeled as fraudsters if they have placed a check mark incorrectly. That still happens. Look at those parents whose childcare allowance was stopped last week in the House of Representatives. They hadn't made a single mistake. And yet they are mistrusted.""

Where does that mistrust come from?

""It's not all about the question: who did we do it for again, who are we working for? We have forgotten the citizen in that whole process. It's all about whether the rules have been properly implemented. And how the results are settled in politics.""

Does the problem lie with the politician who makes the policy or the civil servant who implements it?

“It starts at the top of the organization. Tight policy, key figures, speed over expertise. Implementation of the official line, in short. Executive officials are held accountable for this. They apply that strict line again to the citizen, because they have no room to deviate from it.""

Why not?

""Because it is extremely difficult as a politician or manager to say: okay, I trust you. And together we have made it so complicated that you can only make policy based on the greatest common denominator. We used ourselves as a benchmark.""

Who are these 'we'?

“The policy makers, the implementers, even the people here with me. Look at consultation evenings, you see the same group: articulate, well-spoken, people who fit into the systems we have devised. But because of this we are in danger of forgetting groups. That has happened with all previous decentralizations and now we are in danger of repeating that mistake with the **Environmental** Act.""

From 2021, the **Environmental** Act must decentralize legislation on spatial planning and environmental policy. The idea: municipalities only set the rules, citizens do the rest. Anyone who needs a permit - for a street party, a cowshed or tree felling - can arrange this themselves.

Citizens and municipalities are far from prepared for this, Van Zutphen noticed. Today he comes up with a list of points of interest based on a tour. ""The question is: will the citizen still be served?""

Van Zutphen is not the only one who doubts this. This week, the Senate postponed consideration of the law to 2020, despite great pressure from the ministry to give the green light this year.

You are early with your doubts.

“I am realistic. This **Environmental** Act will be introduced, whether it is in 2021, 2022 or 2023. But the pessimist in me says: we're going to have a lot of problems with that. Waiting for complaints is not an option. I see that past mistakes are in danger of being made again. That is why we are already approaching the municipalities.""

Which scenario do you fear?

""We come from a system that says: there is a law, there are rules and we know who enforces them. We are now moving towards a system in which everyone is given the freedom to take the initiative themselves. That sounds very nice, if I can soon install a dormer window without a permit. But if the neighbor isn't happy with that, who's to say if I'm right? Then the government cannot say: 'Everyone can decide that for themselves!' There are many people who cannot keep up with that complicated administrative reality of laws, information, consultation and participation - or the lack thereof.""

How big is that group?

,,Big. You often see the idea that those who are self-reliant will be successful. But we see that that group also does not always make it. Look at the homeless, the elderly, people who are not keeping up digitally. These are people we call self-reliant, but who are now also lost in regulations. We have taken away their self-reliance.""

Nobody feels responsible?

""What we see with previous decentralizations is that the withdrawing government is abandoning individuals. The **Environmental** Act concerns entire groups that can no longer rely on the government. Soon, only the participation elite will be able to participate.""

With decentralization you heard: this brings the government closer to the citizen.

""That was the promise. But municipalities had to do a lot at once. The result: those municipalities organize everything again, in joint arrangements. Then you put the citizen at a distance again.

""At the same time, with the **Environmental** Act, you feel that the risk of that one wrong check mark is great. Then the government will be there, because that is not allowed.""

That sounds contradictory: a government that is on top of things when a mistake is made, but is absent when the citizen needs it.

""You now give people the space to do it themselves, but not the confidence and information that they will do it well. If, as a government, you expect a lot from people and give them a lot of space, then you must also support them. Then you can't just look around the corner when someone has made a mistake.""

How can the government fulfill that role?

“By never losing sight of the citizen. Think of a counter official who understands what the citizen needs and offers it. That is not a matter of waiting. Make sure you know who will be affected before you change rules, build or cut down trees. If we do nothing, the government's supporting role is in danger of evaporating.""

The pessimist in me says we are going to have a lot of problems with that law

The Environment Act, announced as ""the largest legislative operation since 1848"", brings together dozens of laws and regulations on the environment and living environment. The law would come into effect in 2021, but the Senate does not yet want to approve it.

Link to PDF

Graphic

Reinier van Zutphen, the National Ombudsman. ""Soon, only the participation elite will be able to participate.""

Photo David van Dam

Load Date: December 12, 2019

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215 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Ank Bijleveld's war

de Volkskrant

November 25, 2020 Wednesday

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Section: Opinion and Debate; Page 27

Length: 730 words

Byline: MARCIA LUYTEN

Body

Marcia Luyten column

Defense Minister Bijleveld sat behind her 'kitchen table' on Friday morning for a meeting of the EU Defense Ministers. Two years ago, the minister warned that the Netherlands must 'get rid of naivety'. At WNL on Sunday she said that the Netherlands is 'at war' with the Russians, a 'cyber war'. Bijleveld then said that the Dutch defense has its own Cyber ​​Command. ""I have offered to NATO that we can deploy our cyber soldiers."" It all sounded very contemporary.

At the start of the meeting on Friday, the minister posted a tweet with a screenshot of the online EU meeting: the High Representative for Security Policy Josep Borrell, a smiling Bijleveld, the entire regiment of European defense colleagues and at the top of the address bar the login to the meeting with five of the six digits of the code.

Tech journalist Daniël Verlaan was also behind his screen. He investigates online crime and his book I know your password was recently published. The RTL journalist saw Bijleveld's tweet. Grinned at the login details in the address bar - and assumed the EU meeting was secured with multiple locks. There was no need to guess a password, just try out a number. There his bewildered and cheerful head appeared next to that of the defense ministers. A laugh of disbelief boomed through the online meeting. Josep Borrell stammered: 'You know you are committing a criminal offence?' Ank Bijleveld's face was not visible.

Bijleveld performed an important service for the Netherlands and the EU. She sacrificed herself to demonstrate digital nonsense. That of himself, with that photo on social media. That of the Ministry of Cyber ​​Commandos, which allows the minister to do her thing online. That of the European Union, with such a lack of security.

The real drama is that the government is failing to automate its core tasks. The search terms 'ICT' and 'fiasco' yield a breathtaking series of failed government projects.

The fact that a parliamentary committee wrote a damning report in 2014 about failing, money-consuming automation changed little. Four years ago, the Ministry of Defense discontinued the most expensive IT project to date. (Almost 1 billion euros gone.) But the IT misery is everywhere. At the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, at the introduction of the **Environmental** Act, at the computerization of the Basic Registration, at the crime registration at the Public Prosecution Service, and the information systems of the GGD appear to be unsuitable for a pandemic. In the Defense Vision 2035 that Bijleveld presented last month, the minister said he needed 13 to 17 billion euros to turn the army into a 'smart, high-tech' organization. Taxpayers can hope that part of this will be spent on top ICT professionals who are paid well above the standard.

Because a young IT professional who graduates from the American MIT or another top university is met at the exit by large tech companies. The Googles and Amazons of this world are ready with a contract for a few million dollars a year. They skim off the top. I imagine that the sub-top will go to the companies that carry out large ICT projects for the government. They also pay a lot.

Unless the government mainly employs idealists who are satisfied with a fraction of the salary they earn in the business world, the state will have to make do with not the very best IT professionals.

The fact that the state is lagging far behind the market is evident from the boulevard of broken IT dreams. When the government as a buyer is less smart than the builder of its information system, when top officials do not understand ICT, there is little chance that it will order exactly the right thing. And she easily sells tubers for lemons. Billions wash away. In this Fourth Industrial Revolution, we are missing opportunities. And we miss the dangers.

I thought about the interview last Saturday in this newspaper (First, November 21), with disinformation expert Nina Schick. She warns that we still have a while to regulate synthetic media such as deepfakes. After that, it is forever impossible to determine whether what someone says or does on screen was actually said or done that way. Just a little while longer.

I didn't find it reassuring.

See that state boulevard of broken IT dreams

View the original page: page 27

Graphic

Marcia Luyten is a journalist and writer.

Load Date: November 24, 2020

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219 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Trade fair week

NRC

April 24, 2021 Saturday

1st Edition

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 4

Length: 807 words

Byline: Egbert Kalse

Vincent Sondermeijer.

ANP, Reuters.

Body

ABSTRACT

The stock exchange week highlights the most important developments in the financial markets of the past week.

COMPLETE TEXT:

MPs often make laws more difficult and complex. Each exception makes the law more difficult to implement and understand

Maarten Camps Chairman of the board at the UWV benefits agency

AEX index 715.77 points | -0.1%

The AEX index lost 2.5 percent of its value on Monday and Tuesday. Especially on Tuesday, many AEX funds were in the negative, such as Shell and ING.

In the days that followed, the index recovered, closing on Friday afternoon at almost the same level as a week earlier. Strong results from companies such as Heineken and ASML provided the impetus for that recovery.

Risers of the week

1. KPN + 6.5%

2. Heineken + 4.8%

3. Adyen + 4.4%

4. ASML + 3.3%

5. DSM + 1.3%

Heineken presented its first quarter results on Wednesday, and they were better than expected. In advance, analysts had assumed that the brewer had sold less beer. Instead, the volume of beer sold remained the same. Investors responded enthusiastically to that news. Heineken continues to suffer from the corona measures. In Europe, sales fell by approximately 10 percent on an annual basis.

Fallers of the week

1. Shell - 4.4%

2. Randstad - 4.2%

3. Unibail-Rodamco-West. - 3.9%

4. ASR - 3.9%

5. ING - 3.3%

In the quarterly figures that temporary employment group Randstad published on Wednesday, barely any traces of the corona crisis were visible. Turnover was slightly higher than last year at 5.5 billion euros. The company expects significant growth in the near future. Investors were not impressed, because Randstad had already announced in January that things were going well.

Last year, the government seriously considered buying part of HEMA for 50 million euros and thus save the ailing department store. The emergency measure would have to be taken if HEMA could not reach an agreement with creditors and there would be no other option to save it. HEMA then threatened to go bankrupt,

The new **Environmental** Act, which combines many existing rules, threatens to become so complicated that large construction projects are jeopardized. The large cities, which must make an important contribution to a solution to the housing crisis in the coming years, are particularly concerned about this. The law is intended to make construction easier. There are fewer strict rules, procedures are being digitized and there are more options for arranging permits yourself.

The United States virtually doubled its climate ambitions this week. By 2030, the world's second largest polluter (China is number one) wants to reduce its CO2 emissions by 50 to 52 percent. President Biden announced this at a virtual climate summit. Other countries have also tightened their climate goals. Europe wants to emit 55 percent less CO2 by 2030.

The government is ignoring advice from the financial supervisory authority AFM to register student debt with the BKR. However, this does not bring a home for young people any closer.

This week, ABN Amro accepted a settlement of 480 million euros for negligence in the prevention of money laundering. The bank is trying to close this negative chapter, but this cannot yet be said for three directors from that time. Former ministers Gerrit Zalm and Joop Wijn and former director Chris Vogelzang may still face prosecution. The Public Prosecution Service is investigating their role as manager during that period. Zalm and Vogelzang immediately resigned as supervisory director and director respectively at Danske Bank.

4.3 billion euros

The global shortage of computer chips significantly increased the demand for ASML chip machines. Turnover rose to 4.3 billion euros in the first quarter. For the whole of 2021, ASMl expects a 30 percent increase in turnover.

JP Morgan, the main financier of the plan for the new international football competition Super League, now distances itself from the plan and claims to have 'misjudged' how the project 'has fallen' in the football world. This means that the plan, which caused a lot of commotion at the beginning of this week, is definitively off the table. Originally, twelve top European clubs supported the proposal, but after fierce criticism from football fans and associations, support quickly crumbled. The American bank JP Morgan would finance the starting capital of 3.5 billion euros.

For some of the tens of thousands of café and restaurant owners in the Netherlands, the brewers (Heineken, Grolsch, AB InBev and Bavaria) are more than just beer suppliers: they are also their landlord. Anyone who rents such a building will receive less discount on the beer price, some entrepreneurs noted. They went to court, but were unsuccessful.

Composition Egbert Kalse and Vincent Sondermeijer. Photos: ANP, Reuters.

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Load Date: April 23, 2021

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223 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Letters

The Telegraph

February 3, 2022 Thursday

The Netherlands

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Section: WHAT YOU SAY; Page 16

Length: 1144 words

Body

Remarkable

Amsterdam will celebrate its 750th anniversary in 2025. Prominent PvdA Lennart Booij was hired to organize this. He receives 10,000 euros per month for 20 hours of work per week. Booij was Halsema's advisor at the time when she applied for the mayor's office. Remarkable detail: Halsema did not think a public tender was necessary for this job. She thought Booij was the suitable candidate and offered him his generous salary. How is Femke Halsema going to justify this?

J. Kluin

Party

It is always a party with Mayor Halsema of Amsterdam. Favoritism, self-interest and wasting money. There is always a new scandal. No, then Mayor Sharon Dijksma of Utrecht, also from a red background, so it is possible.

Eric Kippersluis, Akersloot

Specialists

The Netherlands is prepared to send specialists to counter Russian cyber attacks. So these are IT toppers, the very best. Can't they also go to the Tax Authorities for a while to convert the up button into a down button? And then there are a few government services where urgent action needs to be taken in the field of ICT information.

W.M. Rattink, Mildam

VAT reduction

Rutte should poke a hole in his already busy agenda to ask his Belgian colleagues how they do that. There, the VAT on electricity will be reduced from 21% to 6%. Apparently they are a lot further along in IT technology in Belgium than here?

Jan van de Wetering,

Nistelrode

After whistling

You regularly see men on the street putting down their briefcases to whistle and hiss at women. The other day someone walked out of the bank, loosening his tie to compliment a girl on her butt... GroenLinks report, surely?

Peter v/d Laarse,

Badhoevedorp

Natural gas

Climate Minister Rob Jetten, together with colleagues from Austria, Denmark and Sweden, is making one last attempt to prevent Brussels from giving natural gas a 'green' stamp. It will and must happen, and everything will be done to declare gas a prohibited fuel. But the gentlemen have not yet thought about how to close the resulting gap. Good solutions are not yet available and citizens will have to see how it is solved, but they can bear the consequences. In short, we can all sit out in the cold or pay exorbitant amounts of money to warm the house.

Frank Marinus, Venlo

environmental code

Companies lose track in 'simple' digital counter (Tel. 2/2). Thousands of laws and regulations have been added in the last 25 years, but not one has been abolished. Not only companies but the entire society, including the government, has been missing the point for some time now. It is high time that the government gives priority to simplifying society. Large companies with their own legal department actually benefit from complicated laws and regulations from a competitive perspective.

Duco Douwstra,

Vleuten

Staff

Netherlands aid to Ukraine. 10 helmets; rejected, 15 shard vests; 10 operational, 5 reserve, 2 mine detectors, without batteries. I'm afraid it won't be much more.

Hans Hondema

Illegal

The Afghan who pushed his wife off a metro platform appears to be in our country illegally. The probation service still had to issue a report on the road to successful reintegration into our society, which meant that the process was in danger of being postponed. Is it inexplicable that such a cost-consuming process is made illegal for an unhinged man while he is extradited to France after serving his sentence? Who will make short work of this now?

R. Mondelaers,

Bunschoten-Spakenburg

Fire letter

Northern hospitals write a letter to The Hague and beg not to close the pediatric cardiac surgery department in the UMCG. It is distressing that a Minister of Health, who comes from healthcare himself, does not see this. Let's hope that Kuipers realizes that the pediatric cardiac surgery department should remain in the UMCG.

Kor Bonthuis, Appingedam

Israel

Amnesty International accuses Israel of being an apartheid state. I would like to point out to this organization that Israel is the only democracy in the entire Middle East. There is therefore still considerably more to be done in the field of human rights in all surrounding countries.

Mart de Lange, Uden

Quirky feat

What a fantastic achievement Boskalis and KNRM have done with the adrift Julietta D. Went to sea during a storm to rescue a cargo ship and protect our coast from dire consequences. These kinds of actions suddenly make me feel very proud to be Dutch again. Huge tribute.

Patricia Jansen

Youth Services

It is terrible that people are calling on TV to sign a petition because 1,800 innocent children are being locked up in our country. Are there no more representatives?

Simon Luxen, Lisse

Safety

What if there were no men. Then I would dare to walk quietly on the street late at night and I would only go into a parking garage on late evening. It's in a woman's system to always be alert. On the street, always having your antennae on with health care providers, it feels good or not. Where do those hands go? The worst part is that we almost think it's normal. Fortunately, there are still plenty of men with whom you feel safe, because life would be boring without them.

Mireille Wildschut -

Hageman

Hands

LTO Netherlands believes that we should bring in labor migrants from outside the EU. But they do not tell us where these people should live. I have a question for LTO. Is the economy there for the people or are the people there for the economy? Perhaps it is time to move some of the economy to countries where the necessary hands are widely available.

Ron Kivit, Bleiswijk

Vattenfall

According to the CEO of Vattenfall, the Netherlands is transitioning too slowly to cleaner energy and we have too little sense of crisis. Well, when I look at the rest of the world, our sense of crisis is not that bad and we are certainly not out of step. We are even going to spend 25 billion on extremely dubious climate measures in the coming years. Perhaps we do not lack urgency, but confidence in the outcome of the ever-changing measures that also cost a lot of money.

Jan Pronk, Beverwijk

Teacher

A reader states that more people will retrain as teachers if the salary increases (WUZ, 2/1). It is assumed that everyone is suitable for that profession. But you really have to have a 'feeling' for it, otherwise you will end up in a burnout. But it is and remains a wonderful profession and I hope that many people will follow the training with the right intentions.

M. van Beers

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Load Date: February 2, 2022

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227 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The municipality of Amstelveen is taking the state to court

de Volkskrant

February 15, 2022 Tuesday

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Section: First; Page 8

Length: 1059 words

Byline: MARCEL VAN LIESHOUT

Highlight: One government taking the other before the Council of State: the municipality of Amstelveen and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management are today facing each other in the long-running dossier of housing construction under the flight paths of Schiphol.

Body

Housing shortage - Management conflict

The conflict between the two governments revolves around the question: can a municipality develop (temporary or otherwise) housing in an area that is subject to restrictions due to noise pollution from air traffic? Not only Amstelveen has this question; all neighboring municipalities of the national airport have been struggling with this for years.

""It seems as if we have become a plaything between ministries that send different signals,"" says Amstelveen councilor Floor Gordon (Spatial Planning, D66). The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs - responsible for housing - encourages housing projects, while Infrastructure and Water Management - responsible for aviation - is not cooperating, the municipality believes.

Necessary

Amstelveen worked for nine years on a new destination for the moribund Kronenburg office district, adjacent to the Uilenstede student campus where 3,400 students live. Agreement was reached with the market parties that own land and offices on the transformation of the area, where, among other things, 2,500 much-needed student homes are to be built. The municipality is happy, the province is happy, student housing provider Duwo is delighted, and even the owners of the vacant offices are satisfied. For the latter, it is not self-evident to participate in such a project, where the rent for half of the rooms is a maximum of 425 euros per month.

But it is all outside the scope of the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. He believes that the zoning plan is in conflict with the so-called Schiphol Airport Layout Decree and wants the Council of State to annul the plan. It is not unique for the government and a municipality to face each other before the Council of State. For example, it happened to the former municipality of Onderbanken in a case about tree felling.

The stage of administrative arm-twisting has now been reached. Councilor Floor Gordon has no intention of bowing down. 'We really didn't just quickly put together a plan. Since 2018, municipalities have been given more room to weigh their own interests when building under the flight routes. We have of course also looked at the impact of air traffic on health and safety aspects.'

In addition to 2,500 student rooms, Amstelveen wants to build 1,580 so-called extended stay rooms in the Kronenburg area, where knowledge workers, expats and international students or teachers, among others, can live for up to six months. The area is close to the Zuidas and the Vrije Universiteit and there is a great need for this type of living space, the municipality reasons.

Councilor Gordon emphasizes that the zoning plan does not provide for 'regular housing', but for 'temporary housing' with all kinds of facilities. The construction will be 'sound adaptive', Gordon assures. 'On average, students will live there for approximately 2.5 years. In much better insulated homes than those a little further away in Uilenstede. 3,400 students live there, under the same flight path.'

In light of possible health damage due to noise pollution, Amstelveen has also involved the GGD in drawing up the zoning plan. Gordon: 'He supports us. Due to the relatively short time that the students live there and also in view of their age, it is unlikely that any permanent health damage will be suffered.'

Not happy

The Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) makes no secret of the fact that it is 'not happy' that Amstelveen is seeking confrontation. The regulator is still keeping secret exactly which grounds for appeal the ILT will submit to the Council of State. It has been established that the ILT considers the zoning plan to be contrary to the Schiphol Airport Layout Decree. Kronenburg falls in a so-called zone 4 area according to that decision. Within this, a maximum of 25 homes may be constructed per building plan.

A municipality may be able to build more, but only if there are 'special circumstances' and after submitting a declaration of no objection to the ILT. The latter did not happen, says the ILT. 'No one disputes that there is a housing shortage, but that is not a special circumstance.' The ILT says it is not blind to interests other than just those of aviation. Two months ago, Castricum did receive permission for the construction of 73 homes, while the offending noise zone also applies here.

The fact is that the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has designated Kronenburg as a 'key area' in the National **Environmental** Vision. That is a kind of predicate for areas where major social challenges need to be tackled more quickly. Amstelveen finds Kronenburg, right next to an existing student campus, a logical place to do something about the major shortage of student housing in the region.

Pious intentions

The fact that the pious intentions in The Hague memoranda can be at odds with the unruly practice has been shown more often in the Schiphol file. The government has planned a major housing construction task for the Schiphol region and at the same time, regulations are being drawn up that will at least make construction plans of the airport's neighboring municipalities even more difficult.

The North Holland deputy Jeroen Olthof (Livability, Aviation) already sounded the alarm at the same Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, which has now been tinkering with the new **Environmental** Act for years. Soon, all kinds of noise pollution will be added up to determine whether or not homes can be built somewhere. Olthof fears that almost the entire Schiphol region will soon be labeled as 'poor quality of life'. When asked, the province says it has still not heard anything from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations about how justified those fears are.

Many municipal plans for the construction of tens of thousands of homes in the Schiphol region are worth little as long as restrictions are imposed due to air traffic. In this region, major social challenges (climate goals, improving the quality of life, tackling the housing shortage) always end up in the discussion about the benefits and burdens of air traffic. Councilor Gordon prefers to leave this aside and points out the benefits of transforming Kronenburg: 'We should not think in terms of limitations, we should look for what we believe is possible.'

View the original page: page 8

Graphic

Councilor Floor Gordon (D66) in front of one of the vacant offices that she would like to transform into student housing.

Load Date: February 14, 2022

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231 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The salami tactic in the Netherlands: always grab a piece of nature

NRC.nl

February 14, 2022 7:21 PM GMT

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Length: 1706 words

Byline: Arjen Schreuder

Highlight: The battle for forest next to the exclusive golf course The Duke and the battle for a site in De Bilt are a harbinger of the way in which the battle for nature will take place in the coming years, it is expected. “Many minimal interventions add up to a major one.”

Body

Walking with the dog along all these trees will soon no longer be an option, say Toine Smits and Berty Weernink. “This piece of forest is being cut down. And digging is underway.” The golf course will be expanded and a large pond will be added. For years, the neighbors, together with the Brabant **Environmental** Federation, have been angry about the expansion drive of The Duke, an exclusive golf club of Karel van Eerd, big man at the Jumbo supermarket company, beautifully situated in the woods between Nistelrode and Heesch in Brabant.

In the late 1980s, the first plots of forest were cleared to build golf courses. According to the Council of State, the course of events was unlawful at the time. A “salami tactic” has also been applied since then, according to local residents: taking a piece of nature again and again. Even now, the damage to the protected nature remains limited to approximately one hectare. “That is called a minimal intervention. But many minimal interventions add up to a major one,” says Toine Smits, emeritus professor of sustainable water management. Recreationalists will soon have to take a detour into a smaller forest. Badgers are also being chased away. And what is the expansion good for? “We were told that they wanted to make a qualitative improvement.”

The battle for the forest next to The Duke is a harbinger of the way in which nature will be fought for in the coming years, expect Natuurmonumenten, the provincial landscapes, Bird Protection Netherlands and Nature & Environment. Because despite all the nice words about nature protection in the coalition agreement of the new cabinet, the cabinet is making a ""historic mistake"" as a result of which much nature will lose out against the ambitions to build recreational parks, homes, wind turbines, solar panels and roads in that nature. they think.

No, not in the European protected Natura 2000 areas, but in areas that are included in the Netherlands Nature Network (NNN). This is considered the 'ecological backbone' of the Netherlands, previously known as the Ecological Main Structure (EHS). The new **Environmental** Act, which has been awaiting introduction for years, formally abolishes the 'no, unless' principle that, according to nature conservationists, has prevented a lot of misery; the principle that no interventions may be carried out in this nature unless it serves a “major social interest” and “no alternatives” are possible.

Deterrent effect

This is a major concern for director Teo Wams of Natuurmonumenten, among others. Wams: “It was a quite effective rule, which not only stopped but also prevented many plans for interventions in nature. It had a deterrent effect: many plans were not submitted because that rule simply existed.”

In addition, protecting the nature network is not going so smoothly anyway. Wams: “The agreement is that the nature network must be completed by 2027. We are far from there yet. Something needs to be done. We need more rather than less protection.”

Utrecht has also been arguing about a piece of nature for years. A project developer wants to transform the former site of the Hessing car company in De Bilt into a residential area with 130 houses, beautifully situated against and partly just within the boundaries of the Sandwijck estate - part of the Netherlands Nature Network. Hendrike Geessink walks in the English-style estate along lovely paths with rustic views and discusses provincial nature policy in the meantime. Geessink is head of policy and planning at Utrechts Landschap, which manages the estate and has been watching over this beautiful greenery for years.

In anticipation of scrapping the 'no unless' principle, the province has come up with something new; Intervention in nature is only allowed if that intervention offers 'added value' to nature as a whole. Geesink: “When does an area improve? How do you test that? That is very vague.”

Sandwijck is located in an ecological zone along the east of the city of Utrecht. “Important for such an urban area. Why build in such a vulnerable area? We need this nature more than ever. It seems that the concept of added value was invented by the province to make much more possible in nature. While it is really better to be clear and say: this far and no further.”

The province tests possible interventions against the ""robustness"" and ""coherence"" of the nature reserve and these are affected, says Geessink. “This plan provides additional nature elsewhere, as compensation. In our opinion, that really does not outweigh the disruption here. It is also often like comparing apples and oranges. The new district extends into the nature reserve. The noise from such a neighborhood, such as a slamming door, a party, honking, has an effect on the habitat of animals, such as birds. They will avoid these areas. Badgers will also have to choose other routes.”

Latest news: the plans have been canceled for the time being, despite previous approval from the province of Utrecht, because a councilor for the CDA in De Bilt, Margriet van de Vooren, unexpectedly and as the only one in her group voted against the zoning plan. The CDA has removed her from the list of candidates for the upcoming council elections. She was second. Anyway; perhaps the project developer will appeal or pull out an old plan for the construction of a hundred villas and apartments in a gated community - that plan does not affect greenery and was once approved.

Some holes are too short

It remains to be seen whether other provinces, like Utrecht, will introduce the concept of added value to determine whether nature may be damaged. Each province can decide this itself. “The government should take control. Especially now that the rural area will be reformed in the coming years,"" says director Wams of Natuurmonumenten.

The province of North Brabant has officially provisionally approved the expansion of the stately golf club in Nistelrode, to the horror of the activists. In a few months, the municipal council will consider the plan, drawn up on behalf of Business Club The Duke, which describes it as ""one of the most beautiful golf courses in the Netherlands"" - mainly because of its nature. The course's growth is necessary to ""attract business associates to join and meet at the golf club,"" according to the plan. Commercial manager André van Heumen of The Duke: “We are sometimes told that some holes are very short. We want to extend this, also to compete with other courses, and for this we need two and a half hectares, of which one hectare is within the nature reserve. We have strictly adhered to the province's conditions.”

Also read this doomsday article on nature conservation from 2005

Local residents grumble and state that more hectares are being sacrificed. “More and more is allowed in the Netherlands,” says Smits, walking along a winding path that will soon no longer lead across the golf course. Smits: “I understand that you cannot lock down the Netherlands in terms of planning. But then you have to demonstrate usefulness and necessity. That didn't happen here. Will this company go bankrupt if there is no expansion? Never saw a report.”

Berty Weernink: “We do not want an expansion. Agreements were once made that enough was enough. But it is never enough.” In addition, The Duke is already behaving ""not sensibly"" in the current area, says Smits. “It is not a poor football club, but a wealthy club. The water consumption on these sandy soils is enormous. You can reduce this by 70 to 80 percent with existing techniques. That doesn't happen. The municipality of Bernheze leases this land to the Van Eerd family, without additional requirements for water management and biodiversity. Why? That is stupid.""

Regional and local government is too weak and unstable to protect nature without national rules, local residents believe. Smits: “You can safely assume that the disappearance of national rules will lead to the crumbling of the natural values ​​that still exist.”

Oh yes, during a previous expansion of The Duke, in 2012, it was agreed that the lost nature would be compensated elsewhere. Smits: “Nothing came of this due to incorrect management.”

Manager Van Heumen of The Duke notes that many objections have indeed been submitted to the plans. “We tried for a year to reach an agreement. That did not work."" He believes that the fact that walkers are losing their familiar path should not be exaggerated: “They will soon turn left instead of right.” According to him, the golf club treats nature with care. “There's nothing crazy going on here. Golf is nature.” Moreover, the rules for compensating for nature are ""not bad"", according to Van Heumen. “So that on balance there is even nature added.”

Nature remains protected

The government and provinces disagree with the criticism from nature organizations that nature protection is not guaranteed. Provinces may now decide for themselves how they manage nature, provided they ""guarantee the protection, maintenance and development of the essential characteristics and values"" of a nature reserve. This is an ""obligation to achieve results"", according to a spokesperson for Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing and Spatial Planning, CDA), and as a result the protection is ""strengthened"" and not damaged.

The comparison may be flawed, but it is as if provinces are allowed to decide for themselves how fast they can drive on the roads, provided they ensure that the number of accidents does not increase, and preferably decreases. Nature organizations now fear long discussions in each province about what exactly the conditions are under which any interventions in nature are permitted. That is “asking for problems,” according to Natuurmonumenten.

The provinces do have a bright future. National politics has established that the protection of nature must be ""at least equivalent to the existing protection"" and that the provinces can decide for themselves how to achieve this. That is a ""logical method"", says a spokesperson for the Interprovincial Consultation. The provinces are already making a ""sharp translation"" of the national obligation. “All in all, we do not recognize the view of the nature organizations that describe this situation as a historical error.”

Load Date: February 14, 2022

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235 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Third of municipalities in financial need

NRC.nl

February 28, 2021 9:49 PM GMT

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Length: 586 words

Byline: Titia Ketelaar, Mark Middel

Highlight: The provinces note that almost all municipalities have financial shortages. A total of 120 municipalities will not be able to complete their budget this year.

Body

Almost one in three municipalities failed to draw up a balanced budget for 2021. This concerns a total of 120 municipalities that will not be able to complete their budget this year. Almost without exception, the other 216 municipalities have had to make tough policy choices, make significant cuts, use their reserves or increase the costs for residents in order to balance their budgets until 2024. This is evident from research by NRC of all 336 supervision letters that the provinces send in response to the budgets submitted by the municipalities.

Also read the background story:

Nineteen municipalities were not included because they have just merged or will do so next year.

Twelve of the 336 municipalities are under the province's guardianship, three more than last year. They were unable to achieve a balanced budget year until 2024 and must submit a recovery plan in the coming months. But the number of twelve ""masks"" the problem, says Floor Vermeulen, deputy in South Holland (Finance, VVD). “You see that in some municipalities the municipal council has decided at the last minute to use incidental money to relieve structural burdens or that reserves have been used. That is bailing, not closing the gap.”

In Groningen, deputy IJzebrand Rijzebol (Finance, CDA) sees that municipalities have made cuts “with all kinds of pain and effort”. “At some point it stops. Then their ability to resist has disappeared or they can no longer withstand any setbacks. Three-quarters of the municipalities have approached that hour.” For residents, the financial shortages mean that further cuts will be made in the coming years on facilities, while costs such as property tax (ozb).

Also read this news from last Friday:

The largest deficits in municipal budgets are in the social tasks of the municipalities, such as youth care, social assistance and the Social Support Act (Wmo), which arranges support for the elderly so that they can continue to live at home for as long as possible. These tasks were transferred to the municipalities in 2015, often accompanied by budget cuts.

Don't take corona into account

Due to corona, the financial position of municipalities is further deteriorating. Many supervision letters warn that municipalities have not taken this into account. Warnings are also given about upcoming tasks, such as the **Environmental** Act and the implementation of the climate agreement. No money has yet been made available for this.

Negotiations are underway about a redistribution of the Municipal Fund, the money that municipalities receive from the government and which provides 85 percent of their income. But, provinces warn, some municipalities are already taking more money into account in their multi-year budgets. While a concept shows that 159 municipalities will suffer during the redistribution.

In 120 municipalities, the budgets were structurally balanced until 2024, although in some provinces it was not possible to determine how municipalities achieved this. For example, the province of North Brabant conducts ""limited"" research if the municipality's annual budget provides ""a sufficiently complete picture"".

That province concludes, like most provinces, that all municipalities could only achieve a balanced budget through drastic measures. Zeeland talks about “a lot of effort”. A number of provinces state: ""Municipalities are therefore increasingly less able to commit to major social tasks.""

Municipal budgets p. 10-11Homeowner pays p. S10-11

Load Date: February 28, 2021

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239 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Municipalities juggle with construction fees; 'Making money from permits is not allowed, but you can shift the costs'

The Telegraph

August 24, 2021 Tuesday

The Netherlands

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Section: FINANCIAL; Page 20

Length: 521 words

Body

'Making money from permits is not allowed, but you can shift the costs'

For a building permit for a home you pay €1,700 in The Hague and €10,829 a little further in Oegstgeest, according to research by Eigen Huis into construction fees this year. ""Such enormous differences cannot be explained,"" says a spokesperson for the interest group. Oegstgeest even added 18% this year.

In its annual study, the Eigen Huis Association compared what municipalities charge for a small renovation requiring a permit up to €10,000 and what they charge for an average new-build house with a construction cost of €170,000. Including land and VAT, such a house costs more than double.

In 41 municipalities, construction fees increased by more than 10%. Costs fell in 14 municipalities. For example, Putten now asks €3073 for a new-build home, compared to €4831 last year. On average, construction fees increased by 3%. The first prize for the strongest increase in new construction goes to Montfoort. In the Utrecht municipality, construction fees increased by 53% to €8,469.

Renkum in Gelderland was a leader in small renovations. For this you have to pay €450 to the municipality (+65%). ""At the request of the municipal council, we have made the fees for building permits more cost-effective,"" says councilor Joa Maouche. ""Previously these permits cost less, but then all taxpayers paid the rest through property tax and the like."" In The Hague you pay €100, in Veenendaal in Utrecht it is no less than €978.

At Eigen Huis they have already heard many explanations for the sky-high price differences for exactly the same document. ""Some municipalities say: the civil servant works in a building, we take those costs into account.""

There are just as many question marks at the WoningbouwersNL trade club. ""You sometimes suspect that municipalities have run into budgetary problems,"" says researcher Jannes van Loon. He emphasizes that fees only concern costs incurred for the building permit. ""It is separate from the costs for spatial development. ""

Harmonize

Eigen Huis' director Cindy van de Velde finds the price differences in construction fees unbearable. ""We therefore call on municipalities to use the introduction of the new **Environmental** Act on July 1, 2022 to harmonize the rates.""

“In principle, fees must cover costs. You are not allowed to earn on it,"" says spokesperson Esther Verhoeff of the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG). ""But you can shift fees, with one becoming cheaper and the other more expensive. Political choices are made in the amount of fees. As a municipality, for example, you can keep the sewerage tax, which everyone pays, as low as possible by increasing others.""

Grow

According to the VNG, it also depends on the type of municipality and whether it is a long-term construction project. It can then take up to ten years before the fees are collected, after many costs have first been incurred. ""A growing municipality with new-build neighborhoods has a relatively large turnover of relatively easy building applications. That will make a difference in the average costs.""

'Huge differences cannot be explained'

PDF file of this document

Load Date: August 23, 2021

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243 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=How citizens often delay the construction of new houses themselves

De Volkskrant.nl

February 3, 2022 Thursday 08:31 PM GMT

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Length: 715 words

Byline: Margriet Oostveen

Body

Even now that the housing shortage is untenable, people continue to come to The Hague's Kneuterdijk, where the Council of State sits, to protest against the construction of new houses. They may or may not be right, but they always manage to delay construction. And their numbers seem to be growing.

Watch on a weekday as citizens throw sand into the municipal machine and you think: everyone has a point, but is that point always worth helping to maintain the housing shortage? In the hallway, a project developer grumbles about the prices that are now skyrocketing: ""If we continue like this, my starter homes that we are talking about here will soon be unaffordable for starters.""

Local residents Rop Monster, Woutje de Zeeuw and Usman Santi from Waalwijk complain about two planned villas to preliminary relief judge Eric Helder - an excellent name for environmental law, a forest of laws and regulations. The new **Environmental** Act, which is supposed to make decisions about the physical environment simpler, also appears to be so complicated to implement that it has been postponed for years - again this week by Minister Hugo de Jonge.

With a steady hand, Helder guides us through the planning situation, urban development structure and management regulations. More than thirty local residents from Waalwijk are resisting: the offending villas are located for their views of De Loonse and Drunense Duinen, a protected Natura 2000 area.

“Villas with 'indoor swimming pools',” says Woutje, slightly disgusted.

Rop: 'While many objectors built their detached houses here thirty years ago.'

Usman: 'The neighborhood was finished. And that is now being disrupted.'

This often appears to be the main argument: the status quo should not change. But objectors mainly talk about nature or nitrogen to make their case more likely. 'Nimbyism has always existed', stated an essay in the FD last spring about the increase in 'not in my backyard' procedures, 'but has gained enormous braking power due to the tightened regulations regarding the preservation of nature and landscape'.

In how many environmental cases per year do citizens want to thwart housing development? Strangely enough, the Council of State does not know exactly. They do not specifically register this with the environmental chamber, because it is 'not important' for their own planning.

When asked, I receive an overview of the total number of environmental cases that the Council of State was dealing with: nature, felling and environmental permits, route decisions, cases about housing construction. At the last full annual count, in 2020, there were 3,524. For comparison: in 2019 there were 'only' 2,608. An increase of more than a quarter.

In April last year, following a judgment by the European Court, the Council of State also expanded access to justice for local residents and environmental organizations who had not previously objected: good for complaining local residents, again bad for housing.

This day, Judge Helder will also consider an issue in Bergeijk, where local residents want to stop the construction of forty homes for starters and seniors because they do not like the design, but they mainly screen with trees. And a room further away, residents from Schalkwijk have cleverly united under the name 'Stichting Natuur Vroeger', because they do not want the municipality of Houten to build thirty much-needed homes in an old orchard. 'There was only one house for sale in this village last year, sighs the municipality's project leader.

The province determines in so-called 'red contours' where urbanized areas may be expanded. Many municipalities only get this opportunity when the built-up area is fully built up where possible. Almost every patch of houses leads to new objections from local residents.

Nitrogen procedures also hold things up. How skillfully municipalities anticipate this is evident in the Waalwijk case. The municipality believes that the expected nitrogen increase due to two new villas can be offset by one horse, which would once have grazed on this site when it was still fallow. It has been decided that the residents of the villas will never be allowed to keep a horse again. This is called 'internal balancing of the horse's nitrogen disposition'.

""But no horse has been grazing there for years,"" says the counsel for the objectors. 'Several residents can confirm this. And the postman.'

Load Date: February 3, 2022

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247 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Professor: 'Not as chic if the cabinet were to resign today'; Wim Voermans fears that debate with Parliament will be avoided

De Telegraaf.nl

January 15, 2021 Friday 10:43 AM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC; FRONT PAGE

Length: 523 words

Byline: Niels Rigter

Body

The cabinet will resign, as a sign that it is concerned about the failure in the benefits affair. But what difference does such a self-chosen fall actually make? The affected parents will not receive an extra cent and the corona crisis will in any case require a government to take action. And if the cabinet wants to be held accountable, it should certainly not resign today, but properly during the debate in the House of Representatives, according to constitutional law professor Wim Voermans.

If the cabinet resigns today, it will become caretaker. What will change then?

""Few. Although there are a few consequences. In principle, the cabinet can then no longer take controversial or sensitive decisions. It will then make agreements about this with the House of Representatives. When Rutte-II resigned towards the elections, there was a list of 250 controversial topics on which it was no longer allowed to decide.”

And what about the corona policy? An outgoing cabinet will soon decide to introduce a curfew. That's controversial, isn't it?

“That is crisis policy. That must continue. If the dikes break, you also expect an outgoing cabinet to make decisions about dike repairs or evacuations. You could also call these controversial decisions. But a controversial decision by an outgoing cabinet has more to do with legislation that has long-term consequences. As a result, things will now be at a standstill, such as the **Environmental** Act, because parties want a different law that gives the government more control over construction projects. Quite necessary, with the current housing shortage. Because the cabinet is resigning, you have really lost a few months on that file. At the same time, one should not exaggerate the practical significance of this resignation. There will be elections in March. Normally, the cabinet would actually become paralyzed by mid-February and the House would go into recess.”

What do the parents affected by the benefits affair gain from this?

""Very little. They have still not received the 30,000 euro compensation and some are still receiving bailiffs. On the other hand, a feeling has arisen that the benefits affair is so extensive and the suffering of the parents is so deep that the government can no longer continue as usual. That a symbolic gesture is needed. Resigning is such a gesture.”

But if it doesn't benefit those parents and it has little impact on policy, then the government is fooling us, right?

“You get to a point where things can no longer be explained. That is why it would be a shame and not so chic if the cabinet were to resign today. Next week's debate in Parliament will probably have a different content. While the House still has all kinds of questions, about withholding information, for example. You will then no longer be able to answer the question of how we can prevent this in the future. It would really be the royal way if, during the debate in the House of Representatives, the cabinet would say, after all the questions asked: we find this no longer explainable, we are resigning. Now the government is threatening to answer all questions about the lack of openness. That would be a shame.""

Graphic

Image, Minister Wopke Hoekstra before the Council of Ministers at the Binnenhof., ANP/HH

Load Date: January 15, 2021

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251 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Will there still be enough concrete in the Netherlands to build all those houses?

NRC.nl

November 24, 2021 9:45 PM GMT

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Length: 1710 words

Byline: Sjoerd Klumpenaar

Highlight: Sand and gravel companies are raising the alarm about a lack of extraction permits. Provinces consider themselves bound by sustainability requirements.

Body

What's the news?

There is a threat of major shortages of primary building materials in the coming years if permits are not issued for new extraction projects. The trade association of sand and gravel producers Cascade warns about this in a letter to four provinces and two ministries. Sand and gravel are the most important raw materials for concrete, which is needed for the construction of houses, for example.

The sector accuses the provinces of lacking ""capacity, expertise and sense of urgency"". The provinces say that the companies do not submit useful applications. A number of extraction projects will be completed in the coming years.

If nothing is done, the production of industrial sand will decrease by 30 percent every five years from 2025, Cascade calculates. From that year onwards there would already be a shortage of gravel. While the government wants to build one million more homes by 2030. This should be done as 'circularly' as possible, but according to Cascade, recycled concrete can only meet a fifth of the demand for building materials.

With a deafening thunder, a continuous stream of sand and pebbles rushes over the conveyor belts in Limburgs Born. Bulk ships moor on either side of the tens of meters high installation on the water, which are simultaneously loaded with gravel and sand. Near a large machine barrel, Michiel Dankers gestures enthusiastically as if he is hitting two imaginary cymbals together. “Look (…) crushing plant!” can just be heard with the roar of the machine, from which the larger pebbles indeed roll off the belt like small gravel.

Dankers is director of sand and gravel producer NV Niba, one of the parties in the consortium that operates the Limburg Grensmaas extraction project. More than a million tons of sand and gravel will be extracted this year from the 1,100 hectare area where the Meuse is being widened. The pebbles are scooped from the bed of the Meuse by excavators and sorted in the installations, cleaned and then broken into processable gravel. Every week, a hundred full inland vessels sail back down the Maas to the processors, who mainly turn it into concrete.

The consortium of gravel producers has a permit to mine raw materials in Central and South Limburg until 2025, but after that it will be over and Grensmaas will become a nature reserve. Nijmegen NV Niba, like many industry peers, is therefore already looking for new projects, but is running into an administrative wall when granting permits, says Dankers in the quiet of a green construction site, a few minutes from the extraction project. “The well-known not in my back yard effect is now occurring in municipalities; Aldermen indicate that they only want to start a project if the province really has to. In turn, the provincial government says it will only issue a permit if the municipality supports the plan. And that is why we are now stuck, while we want to keep our work and our people going and our products are desperately needed.” Dankers points to the pine walls of the construction site. “You are not going to build a million homes like this in 2030.”

Also read: What has Ollongren's housing policy achieved?

Sector sounds the alarm

Primary construction raw materials such as industrial sand, gravel, clay and marl occur in various places in the Dutch soil. As a rule, the further upstream, the coarser the material. Gravel is often extracted in the basins of the Meuse, in the catchment area in South and Central Limburg. Coarse sand occurs further downstream in the Rhine and the Meuse. The most important provinces where extraction takes place are Limburg, Gelderland, North Brabant and Overijssel.

Cascade, the trade association that represents eighteen major gravel and sand producers, sounded the alarm in a letter to these four provinces last week. The sector accuses the government of, among other things, a ""lack of urgency"" in granting permits for new extraction projects or expansions of existing operations.

Given the ambitions for the construction of infrastructure and housing, this creates a major problem Leonie van der Voort, chairman of Cascade

Because a number of major projects will be completed over the next five years, the supply of primary raw materials is in danger of coming to a standstill, says Cascade chairman Leonie van der Voort. “Given the ambitions we have in the Netherlands for the construction of infrastructure and housing, this creates a major problem. The sand and gravel that we need will have to be imported from Germany and Belgium – with all the associated costs and consequences for our footprint.”

A study commissioned by the trade association shows that gravel will no longer be extracted in the Netherlands from 2025 if no new projects are designated. According to Cascade, the problems also arise from the extraction of gravel and industrial sand - these are needed for the production of asphalt and concrete, among other things. The extraction capacity of industrial sand would decrease by 30 percent every five years from 2025, unless new projects are added.

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Decentralization

Until 2000, the allocation of gravel and sand extraction projects was a matter for the central government, which designated extraction sites and put contractors to work. This policy of 'targets' meant that the land companies mainly focused on their targets and the yield of raw materials - with the result that gaping extraction wells remained in the landscape and there was little participation from local residents.

Nowadays, issuing permits is a task for provinces. The sand and gravel sector was given more responsibility: when an application is submitted, it must come up with a plan for a new gravel extraction project in consultation with municipalities, which must also serve a social purpose. For example, the Limburg Grensmaas project is developing a nature reserve and widening the river. The project contributed to the fact that the floods this summer caused relatively little damage on the Dutch side of the border.

Decentralization causes problems when finding new projects, Co Verdaas professor of area development

Co Verdaas, professor of area development at TU Delft, sees it as positive that the gravel sector has more responsibility thanks to decentralization, but also sees the downside: “Decentralization causes problems when finding new projects. There is now no more 'ownership' in matching supply and demand for raw materials such as sand and gravel, while we still need primary raw materials for the time being.”

Circular construction

The issue of new sand and gravel excavations also touches on the debate on 'circular' construction, in which the construction sector and politicians are looking for ways to make construction climate neutral. For example, the production of cement, which is necessary for concrete, is a significant emitter of CO2 (6 to 7 percent worldwide).

With the **Environmental** Act, which is to come into effect from July next year, the government is setting goals to become less dependent on polluting building materials such as concrete - which means less sand and gravel needs to be extracted. Construction companies are looking at ways to build with renewable raw materials such as wood. More and more project developers are coming up with initiatives for wooden homes. For example, it was agreed per covenant that 1 in 25 new Amsterdam houses will be made of wood from 2025, and construction company BAM announced last week that it would open a factory that can produce up to a thousand wooden homes annually.

Raw materials such as concrete and steel are also increasingly recycled – secondary raw materials in construction jargon. When introducing the new **Environmental** Act, provinces are obliged to reduce the use of primary construction raw materials as far as possible - and to focus on reuse. According to Professor Verdaas, it would not be surprising to manage the supply and demand of primary raw materials more centrally. “On the one hand, there must be a transition to a circular construction system, but the lead time for new extraction projects often takes years,” says Verdaas. “It would make a difference if the government made an inventory with the provinces and looked in the longer term at how many construction raw materials are needed until we are fully circular.”

Cascade chairman Van der Voort agrees: “It takes years to develop new projects, and it is an illusion that we can get by with only recycled concrete. After all, we build more than we demolish, and the population only continues to grow.”

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Responses from the national government and provinces

Three of the four provinces that Cascade has written to have stated in a response to NRC that they do not recognize the problem of too few permits. According to the Limburg provincial government, the number of permits granted for sand and gravel depends on the number of applications. “That has indeed decreased in recent years.” Spokespeople for the provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland add that applications that comply with the regulations ""will simply be issued"". The province of North Brabant can understand Cascade's frustration, but it is also pointed out that there are still opportunities to combine sand extraction with a social goal such as landscape development.

The provinces further indicate that there is urgency in encouraging the reuse of construction raw materials for the ""enormous construction task"". According to the province of Limburg, greater use of secondary and alternative construction raw materials will ""in the long term have consequences for the quantity of primary construction raw materials required"". Although the province of Gelderland indicates that reuse of demolition waste can provide this in a ""limited"" manner. “That is why we also focus on the use of bio-based raw materials with the aim of making construction future-proof.” None of the provinces see reasons to relax or accelerate the licensing process after Cascade's call.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management stated in a response that it wants to enter into discussions with the sand and gravel sector. “Based on the conversation with Cascade, we will work with the Ministry of the Interior to examine what is possible and necessary from the government, for example a conversation with provinces and market parties.”

Load Date: November 24, 2021

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255 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=KLM against new residential area: 10,000 more complainants

De Telegraaf.nl

July 29, 2021 Thursday 8:38 AM GMT

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Section: DFT; DFT/NEWS; FRONT PAGE

Length: 588 words

Byline: Yteke de Jong

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

Local residents and airline KLM are on a collision course with the municipality of Ouder-Amstel over the construction of a new residential area of ​​4,500 homes on the A2 near Amsterdam. The residential area is located under an approach route to Schiphol, but according to the municipality, the homes are just outside the zone where construction is not allowed. KLM disputes that.

The airline has objected to the plan because the new construction will create 10,000 additional complainants. “According to KLM, the plan does not meet the administrative agreements for the area. It stipulates that no new homes may be built in outer-urban areas,"" a spokesperson said. The homes are built in green areas.

Fail

A long legal process lies ahead, because the current plan is only a draft. There are still two steps to go in terms of participation before a final zoning plan can be drawn up. This can be litigated.

The so-called **Environmental** Impact Assessment Committee ruled last week that the effects of noise pollution have not yet been 'insufficiently' mapped out. A spokesperson for the municipality of Ouder-Amstel said in a response that additional information will be provided. “We expect this will be sufficient.”

Housing construction around Schiphol has been a divisive issue between the aviation parties and surrounding municipalities for years. However, the province of North Holland is cooperating in the realization of the residential area, a spokesperson said when asked. The 4,500 homes are part of a housing plan, in which a total of 38,000 homes are to be built around Amsterdam. At the same time, the province is also concerned about noise pollution. “The plan meets the requirements,” says the province of North Holland.

Flight path

Why is Ouder-Amstel building these homes in the Schiphol flight path? “There is a need for housing in the Amsterdam region. This is the only area in our municipality where new homes can be built on this scale,"" says a spokesperson.

According to the municipality, hotels, offices and sports fields are mainly constructed in the zone where the noise is too great. 'Temporary' homes are also a solution, until the boundaries where housing construction is permitted are adjusted. The question is whether that will ever happen, because the new **Environmental** Act threatens to prevent any houses from being built in the Schiphol region.

Noise limit

However, Schiphol has not objected. In a response, the airport states that it is 'important' that new homes do not 'by definition' lead to new restrictions on air traffic. ""We expect that the noise limit and the number of people affected will shrink in the coming years due to fleet renewal, the airspace review and nuisance-reducing measures that we are taking,"" a spokesperson said.

The residents in the Schiphol **Environmental** Council argue that the houses cannot be built on this site. “Our position is: construction is possible, but not under an approach route such as the Buitenveldertbaan runway,” says foreman Matt Poelmans. According to him, buyers are not sufficiently informed about the nuisance.

'Inappropriate'

“There is hardly anything on the website about noise pollution, which is inappropriate. As far as we are concerned, it is a violation of the government's duty of care, because it is not actually allowed to build there. The municipality makes construction possible with an exemption and shifts the problem of nuisance to the citizen. The future residents will come home from a rude awakening.”

Graphic

Image, There will be a new residential area with 4,500 homes between the A2 and the Johan Cruijff Arena., De Nieuwe Kern

Load Date: July 29, 2021

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259 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Readers' letters: You are definitely not untouchable on your e-bike

De Volkskrant.nl

April 14, 2021 Wednesday 02:37 PM GMT

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Length: 758 words

Byline: Editorial

Body

Unfortunately, the sharp increase in the number of accidents involving e-bikers does not surprise me. Just like cyclists or pedestrians who use a mobile phone, you can tell that many people are using it from a distance by looking at their body language. This differs greatly from that of ordinary cyclists, they radiate something like: look at me riding like a king or queen. Light paddle strokes, much too high speed for their real place on the bike track. It is a kind of implicit pride that takes possession of people, imagining themselves untouchable.

And that's why things quickly go wrong. I advocate that people think more carefully before handing over their good old bicycle and their common sense to the e-bike seller, who likes nothing more than to make people dependent on his product. From the point of view of road safety and public health, there should be a ban or hefty fine on idiotic trade-in premiums when purchasing e-bikes and preferably also a ban or at least a large leaflet text when advertising them, such as with smoking. E-biking is more dangerous than you think.

tF.M. Bean

Mayors

The government's erring corona policy is detrimental to support among the population. But what is really shocking is the permanent undermining of authority by mayors, at least those of the big cities, because you don't hear others. It has been said for weeks that they cannot enforce the law because 'their limit has been exhausted'.

The already critical citizen only needs half a word from the mayors and this way you will never get them back in line. It fuels divisions among the population and presents the cabinet with an almost impossible task to maintain some form of regulation.

However much the desire for relaxation is understandable, it is unnecessary for this mutiny to be fought out in the open on media and talk shows. It is time to close the ranks of government.

tRonald Stevens

Competition

Can messages about the international vaccination competition be placed on the sports page from now on to improve clarity?

tPeter de Leeuw

Calculate

There was once a fuss that Schiphol was not allowed to expand because it would cause unacceptable noise pollution. But fortunately, a new calculation method for this nuisance was introduced just in time, causing it to disappear like snow in the sun.

Last week, the Netherlands dangled somewhat at the bottom of the European list of numbers of vaccinations. But thanks to a new calculation method, we are now quite ahead of the pack. I am very curious about the content of these calculation methods, but I fear that it is not much more than 1 + 1 = 3.

tMichael Fork

Politics versus citizen

National politicians must take people's problems seriously and a new welfare economy must be created. The same Volkskrant states that Groningen wants to build an industrial solar park in an area suitable for organic agriculture, nature and recreation. This illustrates that national change is not possible without a change in local governance. This is not just about energy transition, but about the balance between many interests. Local governments are under financial pressure. Then the monetary economy often calls the shots in spatial decisions.

An important factor is the difference in power. (Prior) knowledge and resources give local government, industry and project developers a major advantage over the citizen. They must inform, organize and speak out in their spare time. The new **Environmental** Act does not address this power problem. In the meantime, I'm holding my breath.

tChristine Sijbesma

Politics versus citizen (2)

Erik Schoppen's article is one big indictment of the cold disinterest of politicians in their voters. With sustainable generation of electricity as a respectable goal, big money, subsidy options and investors play a leading role and the interests of citizens and nature in Groningen are neglected. Elsewhere in the country things are not much better. The shocking analogy with the message in the book Phantom Growth and the recent TV broadcast Scheefgroei in de polder speaks volumes.

tRob Riedijk

Max Pam

Perhaps Mr. Pam should put himself in the shoes of someone younger. He is angry about the delay of his second (!) vaccine and blames it on logistical inability. Isn't the goal to protect more people sooner? We have all been inside for a year, Mr. Pam is lucky that he received initial protection so early.

tHidde de Vries

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Misschien is het bos voor niks gekapt

NRC.nl

augustus 10, 2022 8:00 PM GMT

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Length: 4143 words

Byline: Freek Schravesande

Highlight: In februari werd na acties en procedures het Sterrebos in Born grotendeels gekapt. Het moest wijken voor uitbreiding van autofabriek VDL Nedcar. Bewoners die zich verzetten tegen de kap blikken terug en hebben twijfels over de compensatie. „Dit is zoiets als: zet een huis in de woestijn en succes ermee.”

Body

De auto rolt voort over een blubberig zandpad en Har Pluijmakers absorbeert in stilte het nieuwe landschap. Een kale vlakte. Boomstronken. Graafmachines. Twee blauwe reigers, cirkelend over het open veld.

„Die zijn hun nest kwijt”, knikt René Janssen vanachter het stuur.

„Sjonge jonge”, zegt Pluijmakers, turend door het raam vanaf de bijrijdersstoel. „Ze hebben wel veel gekapt hè.”

Van het oude bos met zijn kronkelige monumentale eiken, ondoordringbaar en vol leven, het bos waar de 71-jarige Har Pluijmakers zo graag kwam met de hond, veertig jaar lang, is weinig over. Ja, er staat nog een plukje bomen met een wit kruis erop. Daar was tijdens de kap onverwachts het nest van een bosuil gevonden – mag nog niet om. En in de verte staat een stuk overeind dat behouden blijft. Maar de dichtheid van het bos, die „robuustheid” waar Pluijmakers zo van genoot, is verdwenen.

„Dit hier is compensatiegebied”, zegt René Janssen. Hij knikt naar de overkant van het pad. Daar is op een voormalige maïsakker een laag aarde gestort met om de zoveel meter bosaanplant. Boomsprietjes, een deel ervan ligt omgewaaid op de grond. En overal staan lange palen met een kastje eraan, bedoeld als verblijfplaats voor de vleermuizen die zijn verdreven uit de boomholtes van het oude bos. „Tja, die kasten… zo in het open veld, zonder eten in de buurt.” Janssen, voorzitter van Stichting Ecologisch Vleermuis Onderzoek Nederland (Sevon), verwacht er niet veel van. „Dit is zoiets als: zet een huis in de woestijn en succes ermee.”

Het Sterrebos was een bos – bosje, eigenlijk – van zeven hectare in het Zuid-Limburgse Born. Het stond al op de oudste Tranchotkaarten van de omgeving (1802-1807) pal naast een kasteel. De kasteeleigenaar had het vermoedelijk aangeplant voor zijn eigen houtverbruik: eiken voor de balken, hazelaar voor de kachel. De tijd verstreek en toen autofabriek VDL Nedcar in 2015 het terrein kocht en de kasteelheer werd, lag het Sterrebos ingeklemd tussen een snelweg en twee provinciale wegen en had het zijn functie verloren.

Wandelpaden en bankjes ontbraken en op Har Pluijmakers en drie andere hondenbezitters na kwam er vrijwel niemand. Des te meer ruimte was er voor de natuur. Volgens tellingen van ecologen was het Sterrebos de woonplaats van één dassenfamilie, zes vleermuissoorten en zestien broedvogelsoorten. Daarnaast foerageerden er regelmatig vijf reeën, één wild zwijn en tien vleermuissoorten van een nabijgelegen bos. Niet geteld maar wel gelokaliseerd: bevers, eekhoorns, kikkers, salamanders, vlinders etc. etc.

Begin dit jaar was het Sterrebos landelijk nieuws. VDL Nedcar wilde vier van de zeven hectare kappen om er een nieuwe fabriekshal te bouwen. Die zou nodig zijn om te kunnen voldoen aan de vraag van mogelijk nieuwe opdrachtgevers. Twee stichtingen, waaronder die van Janssen, gingen bij de Raad van State in beroep tegen de kap en vlak voor de uitspraak verenigden milieuactivisten uit het hele land zich in actiegroep Red het Sterrebos. Ze klommen in de bomen en er ontstond een kat-en-muis-spel tussen de activisten en de beveiligers van het terrein.

Wandelpaden en bankjes ontbraken in het Sterrebos, er kwam vrijwel niemand

Het huis van Har Pluijmakers, die de milieubeweging eens in een mailtje had geattendeerd op de kap, werd het hoofdkwartier van de actiegroep. In zijn houten bungalow in Susteren, waar hij alleen woont met de hond, liepen tientallen actievoerders de deur plat. Ze sliepen er op matjes en ondersteunden van daaruit de boomklimmers. En op het toppunt van de bezetting, dag twaalf, wandelde Pluijmakers mee in een mars van tweehonderd betogers die zwaaiend met spandoeken en vlaggen de klimmers steun betuigden. ‘Climate justice’, klonk uit vele kelen.

Maar zo plots als het Sterrebos op ieders radar verscheen, zo plots viel het er ook weer vanaf. Een dag na de mars trokken de twee stichtingen tot veler verrassing hun bezwaar in, nog voordat de Raad van State uitspraak had gedaan over de rechtmatigheid van de kap. De stichtingen waren akkoord gegaan met een schikkingsvoorstel van VDL Nedcar, waaronder extra voorzieningen voor het aangrenzende dorp Nieuwstadt en meer natuurcompensatie dan wettelijk vereist is. Meteen daarna ontruimde de politie het Sterrebos en een dag later ging op advies van de lokale veiligheidsdriehoek – die zulk protest niet nog eens wilde – de kettingzaag erin.

Hup, weg bos.

Wettelijk was de kap toegestaan en alles ging volgens de regels. En toch laat de hele episode betrokkenen achter met een wrang gevoel. Want nu, zes maanden later, heeft VDL Nedcar nog geen nieuwe opdrachtgever gevonden en vragen Limburgse Statenfracties zich af óf die er wel gaat komen. Vlak na de bomenkap begon de oorlog in Oekraïne, die zwaar drukt op de wereldwijde auto-industrie, en verloor de belangrijkste kandidaat-opdrachtgever van VDL Nedcar, Rivian, een jong Amerikaans automerk met Europese ambities, 70 procent van zijn beurswaarde.

Misschien is het Sterrebos voor niks gekapt.

En ja, het democratisch besluitvormingsproces is keurig gevolgd, met inspraak- en informatieavonden en ruime compensatie van de verloren natuur. Maar achteraf, zeggen de stichtingen die in verzet kwamen tegen de kap, hadden ze tegen de machtige plannenmakers geen schijn van kans; een gevolg van de wijze waarop inspraak is geregeld. En dan volgt compensatie, het toverwoord van de maakbare samenleving. Vliegverkeer, bomenkap; we compenseren van alles. Maar wat stelt compensatie werkelijk voor?

Het plan

„Stukje vlaai?”

„Lekker”, zegt Emile Schreurs, oud-werknemer van VDL Nedcar.

Schreurs zijgt neer in een stoel terwijl Pluijmakers de kersenvlaai aansnijdt in de keuken. Alleen een vlag in de hoek van de woonkamer – ‘Red het Sterrebos’ – herinnert nog aan de enerverende periode in zijn huis. Uitgeputte boombezetters kwamen hier op adem. Er werd gehuild, gelachen, „het was een bijzondere tijd”.

Pluijmakers kijkt vanuit zijn serre uit op een populierenbos en elke dag pakt hij de telescoop om te zien hoe de torenvalk erbij zit waarvoor hij in 1989 aan de bosrand een nestkast heeft geplaatst.

Pluijmakers en Schreurs zijn buurtgenoten, maar hebben elkaar pas leren kennen bij de bezetting van het Sterrebos. Schreurs was nooit zo’n natuurfanaat. Niet zoals Pluijmakers die van jongs af aan geïntrigeerd is door de natuur. Schreurs is meer een avonturier. Klimmen, kajakken, Afrika, Zuid-Amerika. En ja, hij vindt natuur prachtig, maar vooral als recreant. En toch. Misschien komt het door zijn pensioen, de rust die hij nu ervaart: de episode met het Sterrebos heeft hem anders laten kijken naar de natuur.

„Voor mij is het allemaal begonnen op 10 april 2019”, zegt Schreurs, die een map met documenten op tafel legt. „Tijdens een avond in het Amrâth hotel in Born.”

Het was zo’n typische informatieavond voor buurtbewoners, voorafgaand aan de inspraakprocedure die bij zulke infrastructurele projecten wettelijk verplicht is. Zaaltje met koffie en thee, wand vol plantekeningen en „een hele batterij” mannen in overhemd om ze toe te lichten. Van VDL Nedcar, van de provincie en van de gemeenten Echt-Susteren en Sittard-Geleen. Het plan was een initiatief geweest van VDL Nedcar en het was vanwege de omgevingseffecten en het belang van werkgelegenheid voor de streek uitgegroeid tot een samenwerking met meerdere overheden.

Schreurs hoorde op die avond hoe VDL Nedcar, het bedrijf waar hij zijn leven lang heeft gewerkt, de fabriekshal wilde uitbreiden om te kunnen voldoen aan de vraag van mogelijk nieuwe opdrachtgevers. Daar begon zijn verbazing.

Schreurs, 71 jaar, begon in 1980 als ingenieur bij VDL Nedcar toen het bedrijf nog Volvo heette. Hij weet hoe belangrijk het bedrijf is voor de omgeving. Door de sluiting van de mijnen in de jaren zeventig hadden veel Limburgers hun baan verloren en de autofabrikant bood een dankbaar alternatief. Inmiddels werken er zo’n 4.500 mensen aan de fabricage van BMW’s. Maar het contract met BMW loopt begin 2024 af – het Duitse automerk gaat produceren in eigen land – en een nieuwe opdrachtgever is nog niet gevonden. De fabrieksuitbreiding zou nodig zijn om in te spelen op de behoeften van mogelijk nieuwe opdrachtgevers.

Schreurs proefde in het zaaltje zorgen bij omwonenden over verkeers- en geluidshinder en angst voor uitzichtbederf

De auto-industrie, weet Schreurs, is een onzekere markt. Altijd in verandering, afhankelijk van de wereldeconomie. Niet voor niets werd DAF Volvo en Volvo Mitsubishi en Mitsubishi VDL Nedcar. In de vier decennia dat hij er werkte, stond de bestaanszekerheid geregeld onder druk. Is uitbreiding dan de beste keuze?

Alleen met de meest efficiënte bedrijfsvoering kun je in de autobranche overleven, en laat dát nu net de expertise zijn van Schreurs. Hij werkte als industrial engineer in de carrosseriebouw, de montagehal, in de lakstraat en de pershal, gaf leiding aan self supporting-teams en boog zich over de vraag waarom de ene auto meer onderdelen nodig heeft dan de andere. Lijnoptimalisatie, heet zoiets. En dat alles binnen het bestaande vloeroppervlak van de bedrijfshal, want elke extra vierkante meter kost geld.

Dus toen Schreurs op de informatieavond in 2019 hoorde over het uitbreidingsplan, was hij niet meteen overtuigd. Hij proefde in het zaaltje zorgen bij omwonenden over verkeers- en geluidshinder en angst voor uitzichtbederf. Vooral het praatje van een Duitse natuurvereniging trof hem. Die toonde op de kaart het belang van het Sterrebos als ecologische verbindingsroute voor reeën tussen de bossen in Duitsland en België.

Over het plan, begreep Schreurs, hadden autofabriek, provincie en gemeenten al nagedacht vanaf 2015. Ze hadden de haalbaarheid van verschillende varianten onderzocht en in 2017 geconcludeerd dat scenario 3.1 vanwege de geringe kosten en beperkte negatieve effecten op de omgeving de voorkeur genoot. Alleen, dan moest het Sterrebos deels worden gekapt.

Er moet toch een alternatief zijn, dacht Schreurs. Thuis pakte hij de landkaart erbij, maakte een wandeling door het gebied en vijf dagen later stuurde hij aan de provincie een brief met daarin een scenario dat nog niet was onderzocht. De noordvariant, noemde hij het. Daarbij was onder meer de nieuwe carrosseriehal een kwartslag gedraaid waardoor ’ie paste tussen het Sterrebos en het kasteel – het huidige ontvangstcentrum van VDL Nedcar. Dat zou het bos sparen en volgens hem de hinder voor omwonenden méér beperken dan scenario 3.1. „Gaarne terugkoppeling”, schreef hij onder zijn brief.

Schreurs kreeg geen reactie. Totdat hij een maand later opnieuw aan de bel trok en op gesprek kon bij de mensen van het projectteam, één van VDL Nedcar en twee van de provincie. Hij legde zijn plan op tafel, liniaaltje erbij, en de gesprekspartners oogden geïnteresseerd. Maar gaandeweg proefde Schreurs dat scenario 3.1 eigenlijk al beklonken was. Er was hard aan gewerkt, begreep hij, en uiteindelijk hoorde hij de vraag „Wat kost zoiets?”. Schreurs zucht. „Met die vraag sla je alles dood. Want ik wéét niet wat het kost. Dat zouden we nu juist moeten uitzoeken.”

De afwijzingsbrief ontving hij twee maanden later. Het projectteam voerde zeven redenen aan waarom zijn variant „niet realistisch” was, waaronder de „grote cultuurhistorische gevolgen” voor het kasteel, dat een deel van de grond niet in eigendom was en dat de logistieke stroom „complex” zou worden. Schreurs kon de argumenten in zijn ogen weerleggen en vroeg om een tweede gesprek, maar dat kwam er niet. En nee, hij is geen protesttype. Hij wilde ook zijn voormalige werkgever niet al te hard voor het hoofd stoten.

Maar achteraf is Schreurs er nog altijd gefrustreerd over. Want hoe goed is zijn scenario écht onderzocht? Hij weet het niet, en hij komt daar als burger ook niet achter. Volgens de provincie is zijn plan „serieus beoordeeld”, is er „gemotiveerd” gereageerd en had Schreurs – hij wist dat niet – zijn voorstel na de afwijzingsbrief alsnog kunnen inbrengen in de officiële besluitvormingsprocedure. Maar Schreurs vermoedt dat aan het oorspronkelijke plan al „een vinkje” gegeven was.

De inspraak

„Hoe kunnen jullie dit doen, natuur verkwanselen met handjeklap!!!”

„De ‘Groene’ Wolf in schaapskleren. Schaam jullie diep!”

De reacties op sociale media waren niet mals toen stichting De Groene Sporenwolf half februari akkoord ging met het schikkingsvoorstel van VDL Nedcar. „Omgekocht!” „Zakkenvullers!” „Gefêteerd!”

„We kregen de hele milieubeweging in onze nek”, zegt secretaris Dirkjan van der Hoven thuis in Nieuwstadt.

Wim Rennenberg, het enige andere lid van de stichting, knikt driftig mee. „Alle schuld werd bij ons neergelegd.”

Van der Hoven is in het dagelijks leven bedrijfsadviseur en Wim Rennenberg werkte tot aan zijn pensioen in de elektrotechniek. De stichting zet zich sinds 2004 in voor de leefbaarheid van het dorp Nieuwstadt en het uitbreidingsplan van VDL Nedcar schoot in het verkeerde keelgat. Verkeershinder, geluidsoverlast, uitzichtbederf. Van der Hoven: „Wij zijn niet tegen uitbreiding, we weten hoe belangrijk werkgelegenheid is voor de omgeving. Maar we zijn wel tegen de manier waaróp.”

En eerlijk? Het Sterrebos – in het dorp amper bekend – interesseerde hen eigenlijk niet eens zo. Maar de stichting zag hoe juristen van de autofabrikant samen met ambtenaren van de provincie en de gemeenten na jaren voorbereiding het uitbreidingsplan juridisch hadden „dichtgetimmerd”. Dus toen het eenmaal aan de burger werd voorgelegd, zagen ze de aanstaande kap van het Sterrebos nog als het „enige slagveld” dat ze konden betreden om de uitbreiding tegen te houden.

De stichting ging er fanatiek in. Na de informatieavond op 10 april 2019 waren er twee rondes waarin burgers bezwaar konden maken. Rennenberg schiet in de lach. „En elke keer openbaarde de provincie nét voor de zomervakantie…” hij heft zijn hand centimeters boven de tafel, „zó’n stapel papier. Súperspecialistische rapportages. En dan heb je zes weken om in beroep te gaan.”

‘Concept-notitie reikwijdte en detailniveau’, heette het eerste pak papier. Een effectstudie van 453 pagina’s vol berekeningen, tabellen, diagrammen en figuren, ter inzage gelegd op 27 juni 2019. En ‘vaststelling ontwerp-provinciaal inpassingsplan’, voorgelegd op 2 juli 2020. Die timing, weten bestuurskundigen, kunnen plannenmakers met opzet hanteren, als overvaltechniek. Maar in dit geval, zegt VDL Nedcar, kon het niet anders. De plannen hadden „nadere aanvulling” nodig waardoor de indiening „later was dan aanvankelijk voorzien”; uitstel tot na de vakantieperiode zou „kritische deadlines” in gevaar brengen. En ja, de specialistische aard ervan is het gevolg van „de complexiteit en omvang van het project” en de „geëiste diepgang en kwaliteit van de onderliggende studies”.

De Wolven offerden hun vakantietijd op om meerdere verweerschriften te schrijven. Rennenberg: „En dan gaat datzelfde leger van ambtenaren en juristen al jouw zienswijzen fileren en pareren en krijg je, keurig afgetikt, een heel boekwerk terug met verwijzingen naar rapporten en experts.”

Toen in het najaar van 2020 de Provinciale Staten het uitbreidingsplan goedkeurde, ging De Groene Sporenwolf in beroep. De stichting had 700 euro aan donaties opgehaald voor een advocaat en vond er één via actiegroep Red het Sterrebos, „een junior”, maar vlak voor Sinterklaas trok die zich terug. „De advocaat vond het dossier te omvangrijk”, zegt Van der Hoven. Een bekend probleem, weten bestuurskundigen: de rechtspraak is zó complex geworden, mede door de groei aan nationale en Europese regelgeving, dat je je kunt afvragen of de besluitvorming bij grote infrastructurele projecten nog democratisch is.

De kap van het Sterrebos aanvechten? Dan zul je je moeten buigen over milieueffectrapportages vol bijlages

De kap van het Sterrebos aanvechten? Dan zul je je moeten buigen over milieueffectrapportages vol bijlages. Je zult de omgevingswet moeten kennen, de wet op natuurbehoud, de stikstofwet én de monumentenwet, inclusief jurisprudentie, en je zult het moeten opnemen tegen topadvocaten. De Zuidas-advocaten van Houthoff, internationaal vermaard, ingeschakeld door VDL Nedcar. En Envir Advocaten, volgens insiders dé specialist in Nederland in omgevingsrecht, betaald door de provincie.

Wim Rennenberg: „En wij zijn maar een gemiddeld mens, hè.”

Er waren meerdere natuurorganisaties die de kap van het Sterrebos hadden willen aanvechten, maar ze waren te laat, er was geen geld en een gezamenlijke strategie ontbrak. Dus nadat secretaris Van der Hoven op een zitting voor de Raad van State in zijn eentje tegenover de twee advocatenteams zat en zijn betoog „als een kaartenhuis” in elkaar zag donderen, besloten de Wolven dat onderhandelen met de autofabrikant wellicht zinvoller was.

Meermaals zaten ze daarna met VDL Nedcar in een „goed gesprek” om tafel. Maar toen een (inmiddels ex-)lid van de Wolven nog tijdens de onderhandelingen tegen de lokale pers uit de school klapte over het resultaat met als gevolg dat VDL Nedcar not amused was en de Wolven nóg zwakker stonden, waren ze uiteindelijk vooral opgelucht dát het tot een schikking is gekomen.

Of je mag concluderen dat de strijd voor behoud van het Sterrebos nogal amateuristisch is verlopen? Wim Rennenberg en Dirkjan van der Hoven, gelijktijdig: „Ja!”.

De compensatie

„Hoor je? De boomklever!” René Janssen steekt zijn vinger omhoog. „En daar, het zilveren lachje van de pimpelmees.”

Met zijn kaplaarzen stapt Janssen enthousiast over de bemoste grond, Pluijmakers op zijn nette schoenen weifelend er achteraan. Een pad ontbreekt hier in ’t Hout, een bos even verderop, en hoe verder ze lopen des te donkerder het wordt. Populieren, eiken en essen ontnemen het zonlicht, overal hazelaar en kamperfoelie. „Die kleine witte bloempjes daar”, zegt Janssen wijzend naar de eerste bosanemoon. „Staat het straks vol mee.”

Als er in de omgeving één bos is dat enigszins lijkt op het Sterrebos, dan is dat ’t Hout, het bos van Pluijmakers’ jeugd. Hier bouwde hij als kind hutten en vocht hij met de jongens van zijn Mariaveld-parochie tegen de andere parochies.

Het was op zo’n speelmiddag dat zijn strijdlust voor de natuur geboren werd. In ’t Hout vond Pluijmakers als kind eens op de grond twee enorme roofvogels. Hij tilde ze op, spreidde hun vleugels uit en zag ademloos hoe majestueus ze waren. Twee buizerds. Dat zulke enorme vogels in dit bos leefden, had hij nooit geweten. Maar hij dacht ook: hoe kán zoiets? Vergiftigd, bleek. Bij de fazantenjacht werden buizerds gezien als concurrent van de jager. Het trof Pluijmakers „recht in de ziel” en sindsdien was hij natuur-activist, naast zijn baan als manager in de gehandicaptenzorg.

Vanaf zijn zeventiende telde Pluijmakers samen met de plaatselijke vogelwerkgroep driemaal per jaar het aantal vogelsoorten in de omgeving. Telkens telde hij er minder. De buizerd, de patrijs, de boomvalk, de geelgors, de zomertortel, de kwartel, de veldleeuwerik: vroeger waren ze overal, nu ziet hij ze amper nog. De jacht is al lang hun grootste bedreiging niet meer, dat is de verdwijnende natuur.

Want zoals in heel Nederland zag Pluijmakers het landschap rond zijn woonplaats veranderen. De keuterboeren maakten plaats voor grootschalige landbouw. Akkers vol maïs, bestemd als veevoer. Maïs. Maïs. Maïs. Kilometers maïs. En aardappelen. Bieten. Vlees, patat en suiker, dat is wat de consument wil.

De grootschalige landbouw ging ten koste van drassig weiland en percelen vol heggen, houtwallen en kruidenrandjes; woonplaats van de haas, het konijn en de patrijs, van rupsjes en vliegjes en vlindertjes waar de vogels van leefden, en van de pinksterbloem en andere kruiden waar insecten op af kwamen die weer werden opgeslokt door de tortelduif. En als je nu de diersoorten telt die er in de omgeving van Susteren nog zijn, dan vind je vooral mollen, muizen en regenwormen, en een enkele vogelsoort die daarvan leeft.

„Die daar stonden ook in het Sterrebos”, zegt René Janssen wijzend op een dikke eik. Een Amerikaanse, vol gaten en zachter dan de zomereik – „vindt de grote bonte specht fijn om in te hakken”. Omhoog kijkend: „Al die takken, al die bladeren. Bedenk eens hoeveel insecten er rondom zo’n eik leven. Insecten die weer voedsel zijn voor vogels en vleermuizen. En dan te bedenken dat zulke bomen in het Sterrebos…”

Tja, wat ís eigenlijk de waarde van één boom? De economische waarde kun je uitdrukken in houtprijs of in recreatiewaarde of CO2-waarde. Maar de natúúrwaarde? De waarde die één boom heeft voor de talloze insecten, bladluizen, vogels en vleermuizen die erin leven, de waarde die hij heeft ná zijn dood, als ’ie met omhoog gestoken wortels nieuwe nestmogelijkheden voor broedvogels creëert terwijl op de stam planten en schimmels een heel nieuw ecosysteem beginnen? Zulke waarden worden nooit berekend. Terwijl dát volgens natuuronderzoekers juist de meerwaarde is van een oud bos.

In een oud bos – meer dan honderd levensjaren – leven bomen van meerdere soorten en leeftijden en als er eentje omvalt staan nieuwe bomen ondergronds te dringen om het gat te vullen. Een oud bos telt meer plantensoorten en meer diersoorten dan een jong bos en is veerkrachtiger en minder kwetsbaar voor stormen, bosbrand, houtkap, klimaatverandering.

Het Sterrebos is geen landelijk beschermd Natura 2000-gebied, maar valt onder de provinciale compensatieregels voor ‘goudgroene’ natuur. De regels zijn in elke provincie anders en volgens de Limburgse mag zo’n bos niet worden gekapt tenzij een zwaarwegend belang geldt – zoals werkgelegenheid. Is dat belang aangetoond, dan dient er vanwege de goudgroene status dubbel zoveel hectare vergelijkbaar bos voor terug te komen.

Om aan de Limburgse compensatie-regels te voldoen liet VDL Nedcar twee jaar achtereen tellingen in het Sterrebos verrichten. De autofabrikant schakelde meerdere ecologische adviesbureaus in die met turflijstjes, sonarapparatuur en camera’s het aantal beschermde diersoorten inventariseerden. Dassen, reeën, broedvogels. Voor de vleermuistelling werd onder meer René Janssen ingehuurd, als zelfstandig ecoloog. Hij zocht naar vleermuissoorten en hij vond er uitzonderlijk veel, vooral in de holtes van de oude bomen. Het Sterrebos, concludeerde hij, is niet te compenseren. Maar de ecologische adviesbureaus die VDL Nedcar had ingehuurd waren het daar niet mee eens. Met de riante plaatsing van vleermuiskasten in resterende bospercelen en het compensatiegebied zouden er „in potentie” voldoende verblijfplaatsen voor de vleermuizen moeten zijn, aldus hun eindconclusie. „Voor alle soorten geldt dat monitoring alsnog dient uit te wijzen of de aangeboden alternatieven zullen worden gebruikt.”

Janssen had nooit verwacht dat het Sterrebos werkelijk omver zou gaan. Toen dat toch dreigde te gebeuren ging hij als voorzitter van stichting Sevon in beroep tegen de kap en trok deels samen op met de Wolven. Maar die muur van rapporten en advocaten – „pfffff, als je dit juridisch goed wil doen… En ik was te laat ”.

Ook hij zette zijn handtekening onder het schikkingsvoorstel van VDL Nedcar.

Janssen wendt zich tot Pluijmakers. „Het voelde voor mij ook wel een beetje als verloochening, naar jou toe.”

„Kan ik me voorstellen”, zegt Pluijmakers kortaf.

„Anderzijds”, zegt Janssen, „als we hadden verloren was de natuur misschien nóg slechter af geweest”.

Pluijmakers schudt zijn hoofd. „Als je zo denkt kun je net zo goed niet procederen.”

De afgesproken compensatie: ruim dubbel zoveel bosaanplant, 130 nieuwe vleermuiskasten, herplant van 55 bomen met een diameter van minimaal 40 centimeter op anderhalve meter hoogte, twee nieuwe dassenburchten, nieuwe bijenkorven, nieuwe fiets- en wandelpaden, een voetgangersbrug en een leefbaarheidsfonds voor de omgeving waar VDL Nedcar 200.000 euro aan bijdraagt.

En toch is Pluijmakers er allerminst gerust op dat de natuur hiermee is gediend. Volgens Rekenkamerrapporten schiet de controle en monitoring van compensatiebossen in het algemeen tekort. Een deel van de bomen overleeft de eerste jaren niet. Omgewaaid, slechte grond. Er is geen aangroeigarantie en geen garantie dat dierlijke bewoners overleven. En de garantie dat een compensatiebos moet blijven, ontbreekt vaak. VDL Nedcar zal volgens afspraak de compensatie van het Sterrebos twaalf jaar lang monitoren met in de eerste vijf jaar een wekelijkse schouw. Maar daarna? Compensatiebossen zijn jong en van weinig natuurwaarde, dus wie maakt zich er druk om als ze – dit is eerder gebeurd – later worden vervangen door een parkeerplaats?

„Sprookjesachtig, een bos zoals een bos moest zijn”, zo noemt Pluijmakers het Sterrebos. Maar waarom is zo’n bos, natuur in het algemeen, eigenlijk van belang?

Terug in de serre van zijn huis pakt Pluijmakers de telescoop erbij. Hij bukt zich en richt ’m op de nestkast van de torenvalk in de verte. „Omdat natuur zo… zo spannend is.” Scherp stellend: „In tegenstelling tot al dat maïs, waar mijn ogen vermoeid van raken als ik erlangs rijd.” Pluijmakers richt zich op en glimlacht: „Moet je eens zien… hij is z’n veren aan het poetsen.”

Graphic

Har Pluijmakers richt zijn telescoop op de nestkast van de torenvalk in de verte. Foto Merlin Daleman

Load-Date: August 11, 2022

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Misschien is het bos voor niks gekapt

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augustus 10, 2022 8:00 PM GMT

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Length: 4143 words

Byline: Freek Schravesande

Highlight: In februari werd na acties en procedures het Sterrebos in Born grotendeels gekapt. Het moest wijken voor uitbreiding van autofabriek VDL Nedcar. Bewoners die zich verzetten tegen de kap blikken terug en hebben twijfels over de compensatie. „Dit is zoiets als: zet een huis in de woestijn en succes ermee.”

Body

De auto rolt voort over een blubberig zandpad en Har Pluijmakers absorbeert in stilte het nieuwe landschap. Een kale vlakte. Boomstronken. Graafmachines. Twee blauwe reigers, cirkelend over het open veld.

„Die zijn hun nest kwijt”, knikt René Janssen vanachter het stuur.

„Sjonge jonge”, zegt Pluijmakers, turend door het raam vanaf de bijrijdersstoel. „Ze hebben wel veel gekapt hè.”

Van het oude bos met zijn kronkelige monumentale eiken, ondoordringbaar en vol leven, het bos waar de 71-jarige Har Pluijmakers zo graag kwam met de hond, veertig jaar lang, is weinig over. Ja, er staat nog een plukje bomen met een wit kruis erop. Daar was tijdens de kap onverwachts het nest van een bosuil gevonden – mag nog niet om. En in de verte staat een stuk overeind dat behouden blijft. Maar de dichtheid van het bos, die „robuustheid” waar Pluijmakers zo van genoot, is verdwenen.

„Dit hier is compensatiegebied”, zegt René Janssen. Hij knikt naar de overkant van het pad. Daar is op een voormalige maïsakker een laag aarde gestort met om de zoveel meter bosaanplant. Boomsprietjes, een deel ervan ligt omgewaaid op de grond. En overal staan lange palen met een kastje eraan, bedoeld als verblijfplaats voor de vleermuizen die zijn verdreven uit de boomholtes van het oude bos. „Tja, die kasten… zo in het open veld, zonder eten in de buurt.” Janssen, voorzitter van Stichting Ecologisch Vleermuis Onderzoek Nederland (Sevon), verwacht er niet veel van. „Dit is zoiets als: zet een huis in de woestijn en succes ermee.”

Het Sterrebos was een bos – bosje, eigenlijk – van zeven hectare in het Zuid-Limburgse Born. Het stond al op de oudste Tranchotkaarten van de omgeving (1802-1807) pal naast een kasteel. De kasteeleigenaar had het vermoedelijk aangeplant voor zijn eigen houtverbruik: eiken voor de balken, hazelaar voor de kachel. De tijd verstreek en toen autofabriek VDL Nedcar in 2015 het terrein kocht en de kasteelheer werd, lag het Sterrebos ingeklemd tussen een snelweg en twee provinciale wegen en had het zijn functie verloren.

Wandelpaden en bankjes ontbraken en op Har Pluijmakers en drie andere hondenbezitters na kwam er vrijwel niemand. Des te meer ruimte was er voor de natuur. Volgens tellingen van ecologen was het Sterrebos de woonplaats van één dassenfamilie, zes vleermuissoorten en zestien broedvogelsoorten. Daarnaast foerageerden er regelmatig vijf reeën, één wild zwijn en tien vleermuissoorten van een nabijgelegen bos. Niet geteld maar wel gelokaliseerd: bevers, eekhoorns, kikkers, salamanders, vlinders etc. etc.

Begin dit jaar was het Sterrebos landelijk nieuws. VDL Nedcar wilde vier van de zeven hectare kappen om er een nieuwe fabriekshal te bouwen. Die zou nodig zijn om te kunnen voldoen aan de vraag van mogelijk nieuwe opdrachtgevers. Twee stichtingen, waaronder die van Janssen, gingen bij de Raad van State in beroep tegen de kap en vlak voor de uitspraak verenigden milieuactivisten uit het hele land zich in actiegroep Red het Sterrebos. Ze klommen in de bomen en er ontstond een kat-en-muis-spel tussen de activisten en de beveiligers van het terrein.

Wandelpaden en bankjes ontbraken in het Sterrebos, er kwam vrijwel niemand

Het huis van Har Pluijmakers, die de milieubeweging eens in een mailtje had geattendeerd op de kap, werd het hoofdkwartier van de actiegroep. In zijn houten bungalow in Susteren, waar hij alleen woont met de hond, liepen tientallen actievoerders de deur plat. Ze sliepen er op matjes en ondersteunden van daaruit de boomklimmers. En op het toppunt van de bezetting, dag twaalf, wandelde Pluijmakers mee in een mars van tweehonderd betogers die zwaaiend met spandoeken en vlaggen de klimmers steun betuigden. ‘Climate justice’, klonk uit vele kelen.

Maar zo plots als het Sterrebos op ieders radar verscheen, zo plots viel het er ook weer vanaf. Een dag na de mars trokken de twee stichtingen tot veler verrassing hun bezwaar in, nog voordat de Raad van State uitspraak had gedaan over de rechtmatigheid van de kap. De stichtingen waren akkoord gegaan met een schikkingsvoorstel van VDL Nedcar, waaronder extra voorzieningen voor het aangrenzende dorp Nieuwstadt en meer natuurcompensatie dan wettelijk vereist is. Meteen daarna ontruimde de politie het Sterrebos en een dag later ging op advies van de lokale veiligheidsdriehoek – die zulk protest niet nog eens wilde – de kettingzaag erin.

Hup, weg bos.

Wettelijk was de kap toegestaan en alles ging volgens de regels. En toch laat de hele episode betrokkenen achter met een wrang gevoel. Want nu, zes maanden later, heeft VDL Nedcar nog geen nieuwe opdrachtgever gevonden en vragen Limburgse Statenfracties zich af óf die er wel gaat komen. Vlak na de bomenkap begon de oorlog in Oekraïne, die zwaar drukt op de wereldwijde auto-industrie, en verloor de belangrijkste kandidaat-opdrachtgever van VDL Nedcar, Rivian, een jong Amerikaans automerk met Europese ambities, 70 procent van zijn beurswaarde.

Misschien is het Sterrebos voor niks gekapt.

En ja, het democratisch besluitvormingsproces is keurig gevolgd, met inspraak- en informatieavonden en ruime compensatie van de verloren natuur. Maar achteraf, zeggen de stichtingen die in verzet kwamen tegen de kap, hadden ze tegen de machtige plannenmakers geen schijn van kans; een gevolg van de wijze waarop inspraak is geregeld. En dan volgt compensatie, het toverwoord van de maakbare samenleving. Vliegverkeer, bomenkap; we compenseren van alles. Maar wat stelt compensatie werkelijk voor?

Het plan

„Stukje vlaai?”

„Lekker”, zegt Emile Schreurs, oud-werknemer van VDL Nedcar.

Schreurs zijgt neer in een stoel terwijl Pluijmakers de kersenvlaai aansnijdt in de keuken. Alleen een vlag in de hoek van de woonkamer – ‘Red het Sterrebos’ – herinnert nog aan de enerverende periode in zijn huis. Uitgeputte boombezetters kwamen hier op adem. Er werd gehuild, gelachen, „het was een bijzondere tijd”.

Pluijmakers kijkt vanuit zijn serre uit op een populierenbos en elke dag pakt hij de telescoop om te zien hoe de torenvalk erbij zit waarvoor hij in 1989 aan de bosrand een nestkast heeft geplaatst.

Pluijmakers en Schreurs zijn buurtgenoten, maar hebben elkaar pas leren kennen bij de bezetting van het Sterrebos. Schreurs was nooit zo’n natuurfanaat. Niet zoals Pluijmakers die van jongs af aan geïntrigeerd is door de natuur. Schreurs is meer een avonturier. Klimmen, kajakken, Afrika, Zuid-Amerika. En ja, hij vindt natuur prachtig, maar vooral als recreant. En toch. Misschien komt het door zijn pensioen, de rust die hij nu ervaart: de episode met het Sterrebos heeft hem anders laten kijken naar de natuur.

„Voor mij is h"

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De Telegraaf.nl

June 23, 2020 Tuesday 5:49 AM GMT

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Section: DFT; FRONTPAGE; INTERIOR

Length: 585 words

Byline: Ruben Eg and Yteke de Jong

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

House prices are still going crazy, corona crisis or not. In addition, Schiphol's new noise standards also mean that many of the new construction plans in the Randstad will be cancelled.

Figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics published on Monday show that owner-occupied homes became 8% more expensive in May. The Dutch Association of Real Estate Agents and Appraisers (NVM) recognizes the trend in the CBS figures of continued rising house prices. “The housing market has a major shortage, and the corona crisis has not changed this,” said a spokesperson. From its own figures, the NVM notes that half of the homes sold still sell for more than the asking price.

Fire letter

The impending recession may throw a spanner in the works. Both the Economic Institute of Construction and De Nederlandsche Bank expect a price reduction due to the corona crisis. Last week, an emergency plan was presented for the construction of more than 800,000 homes over the next ten years, but half, approximately 380,000 of these are at risk of being scrapped due to new noise standards around Schiphol, according to a letter from 52 municipalities and four provinces.

The housing market around Schiphol has been overstrained for quite some time, because the municipalities around the airport can hardly build due to the noise of take-offs and landings. These standards were once laid down to partly protect municipalities around Schiphol from themselves. New construction around the airport creates new opponents. But noise standards will be further tightened, according to a plan by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water. He applied the consequences of the new **Environmental** Act.

Sad

New construction is hardly possible within the new noise standards because the quality of life would then be 'too poor'. This applies not only to new construction close to the airport, such as in the municipality of Haarlemmermeer itself, but also to municipalities further away, such as in Almere. That is one of the major new construction locations for the coming years. “We will discuss this with the ministry. This stricter standard for aviation will soon hinder us in housing construction that is still possible. That standard must be lowered, otherwise I have a gloomy outlook for new construction in large parts of North and South Holland,"" says deputy Jeroen Olthof of North Holland on behalf of the municipalities and provinces.

The noise standards arise from the new aviation memorandum. This shows that the government wants to develop Schiphol further. “By locking down housing construction around Schiphol, the government is taking the step towards the construction of the airport's Second Kaagbaan Runway. This is necessary to partly facilitate that growth,"" says councilor Guus Elkhuizen of the municipality of Nieuwkoop.

Growth ambition

He assumes that Schiphol will grow to 750,000 flight movements in the coming decades based on the growth ambitions of the government and Schiphol. The councilor is one of the signatories of the letter. Schiphol Airport reports in a response that it has taken note of the letter. The Ministry of Infrastructure states in a response that it will talk to the concerned administrators. “Of course we don't want everything to be closed down,” a spokesperson told De Telegraaf. “We need to add 1 million inhabitants by 2030. But where should they go if we cannot build,” Elkhuizen wonders. “It might be an idea to move some of the airport's runways out to sea.”

Load Date: June 23, 2020

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271 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Ollongren prefers to wait, and the House will not accept that

NRC.nl

September 9, 2020 6:26 PM GMT

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Length: 703 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Highlight: Minister Ollongren's housing policy is causing increasing resistance.

Body

Will things still work out between Kajsa Ollongren (D66) and the House of Representatives? On Tuesday, PVV leader Geert Wilders called the Minister of the Interior an ""elitist Minister of Antisocial Affairs"" because she continues to refuse to freeze all rents. He received support from a large part of the House: from SP to Denk, from PvdA to FvD. “The minister simply has a different reality,” grumbled Denk leader Farid Azarkan. Ollongren, said SP leader Lilian Marijnissen, has “failed terribly”.

Ollongren was called to the House of Representatives after the Central Bureau of Statistics calculated at the beginning of this week that rents have not risen that fast in six years. What was she going to do about it? Was she going to do something?

The minister pointed out that the rent increase was not too bad given inflation and called a freeze on all rents far too general a measure. And she warned that landlords will cut back on building and making homes more sustainable if they are not allowed to increase rents. Meanwhile, sources from The Hague leaked that the government wants to reduce the controversial landlord levy, which corporations have paid to the government since 2013, by 200 million euros next year. Housing associations can then use that money to help poor tenants.

Also read:

The reactions to this charm offensive were lukewarm. “A cloth for the bleeding,” sneered Lilian Marijnissen (SP) and Henk Nijboer (PvdA). According to the opposition, left and right, Ollongren underestimates the group of tenants who have difficulty paying the rent. “A quarter of tenants in social housing cannot make ends meet at the end of the month,” said Nijboer. “That was already the case before the corona crisis, but it has become even worse”

It was Ollongren's umpteenth collision in a short time. The Senate recently passed, the first since 1875, after refusing to implement an SP motion that also called for a rent freeze. Things have also been simmering in the House of Representatives for some time between Ollongren and the opposition about her housing policy. The criticism: the minister waits, prefers to come up with an investigation rather than a law, and has little political feeling.

Praise as a top civil servant

These are qualities that earned her praise during her time as a top official at the Ministry of General Affairs, as right-hand man to Prime Minister Mark Rutte. There, Ollongren was seen as someone who could keep an overview among large piles of files, remained calm in times of crisis and who never let her political color (she had already been on the list of candidates for D66 in the House of Representatives elections in 2006) play a role alongside Rutte.

But a civil servant is not yet a director, especially on an issue that divides the government parties as much as housing policy. Although ChristenUnie and CDA now reject the landlord levy, the VVD wants nothing to do with it. When it comes to housing construction, VVD and CDA are again calling for more action from the minister.

Ollongren above all does not want to enforce anything. She prefers to place the initiative for housing construction with municipalities and provinces. Just like last year, she is softening the landlord levy, but abolition is not an option. And at the beginning of the corona crisis, she tried to convince landlords with a ""moral appeal"" to spare their tenants. Better agreements than bans.

Campaign themes

High rents, expensive houses and growing housing shortage are attractive campaign themes for the opposition. That also makes an unpopular minister like Ollongren an electoral risk for the cabinet. Such a ""hefty dossier"", it was already heard in the coalition this year, ""deserves more guidance"".

Ollongren's portfolio does not make that easy. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is a repository. In addition to the housing file, Ollongren was responsible during Rutte III for the burqa ban, the abolition of the advisory referendum, the AIVD, privacy, protection of threatened mayors, municipal finances, the Environment Act (""the largest law revision since 1848""), financing and transparency of political parties and the fight against fake news and election interference.

Ollongren has been a popular bogeyman for the PVV and FvD in particular since her debut as minister. The more she symbolizes the housing crisis, the more she also becomes the target of the rest of the opposition.

Load Date: September 9, 2020

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275 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Stop the fiction of 'local customization'; Management

Use the province to get stuck local government out of trouble

NRC Handelsblad

May 1, 2021 Saturday

1st Edition

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Section: OPINION & DEBATE; Page 1

Length: 1451 words

Byline: Annemarie Kok

Body

ABSTRACT

Opinion

Management

Skewed relationships between the national government, provinces and municipalities affect the quality of the rule of law, government and democracy, writes Annemarie Kok. Central adjustment is urgently necessary.

COMPLETE TEXT:

While the number of social problems in the Netherlands is increasing rapidly, our public administration is declining. The causes are a negligent government, wait-and-see provinces, over-demanded municipalities and more than 1,200 regional partnerships that are not very democratic.

As constitutional law expert Douwe Jan Elzinga recently noted in a lecture during the Day of the Council (read: municipal council), there is ""not yet the beginning of a thought"" in the administrative Netherlands about which government task is suitable for which level of government: ""We just do what."" And it has been that way since 1970.

Between then and now, the central government (which expanded partly due to the welfare state) assigned a large number of substantive, implementation and supervisory tasks to municipalities and other bodies. Responsibilities that were perceived as administrative burden were thus conveniently organized away, at lower costs for the government. In the short term, at least. It was often said that local implementation makes policy more integral, specific, flexible and recognizable to citizens - that would be the beauty of decentralization.

The municipalities (united in the VNG) bravely took on new tasks again and again, from inspection work and welfare tasks, and from the implementation of social laws and climate policy to the establishment of a 'multiple democracy'. They are currently also preparing for the entry into force of the **Environmental** Act on January 1, 2022 - a complex and controversial operation.

In order to develop enough 'administrative power' for all their tasks, municipalities merged. They also started to collaborate more in regions on individual themes, from safety to the labor market and from transport to energy. As a result, the average municipality is now involved in 33 regional associations. Bad for local democracy, because councilors have too little influence on it, civil servants get lost and citizens are generally unaware of it. In the meantime, a fully equipped democratic administrative layer, namely the province, ended up sidetracked.

To date, the seriousness of this inter-governmental trouble has remained woefully underexposed in both the political and public debate. And the responsible Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) is not taking action. The latter recently led to strong criticism again from the Advisory Division of the Council of State.

In a concise review at the request of the minister and the so-called decentralized umbrella organizations (VNG, Interprovincial Consultation and Union of Water Boards), the Council of State writes plainly that there are ""structural tensions and associated management problems"" in public administration.

The Council also notes that municipalities are overloaded and calls the 2015 decentralizations in the so-called social domain insufficiently thought through. The advisory body therefore believes that no new decentralizations should be implemented in the coming cabinet period, that the problem of insufficient democratic legitimacy at a regional level is urgent, and that the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, equipped with new powers, ""should concentrate on public administration, democracy, the rule of law and the constitution"".

Striking observations. But some other points from the Council of State's memorandum are open to dispute. Such as the view that various municipalities are too small. Rather, the excessive supra-local collaboration reveals something else: that it was often not logical or responsible for municipalities to take on additional tasks.

Even when decentralization meant drastic cuts, as in 2015, the VNG was happy to go along with it. And just like the national government, the VNG also stated time and again that social tasks (WMO, Youth Act and Participation Act) were best left to municipalities because 'customization' could be delivered there: taking into account local wishes and circumstances in the implementation of a law, and giving 'to each his due' - instead of to each the equal.

However, in the decentralization discourse personal and local circumstances are invariably confused. It seems to me that there is no reason to implement a social law differently because people are residents of, for example, Vlaardingen or Vlagtwedde. On the other hand, a person's personal situation, regardless of where he or she lives, can be taken into account - within certain margins and on the basis of general administrative principles.

If we look at local situations, different policies are obvious. After all, no municipality and no province is the same in terms of area, population, population structure and economic structure. And so there are various issues here and there around housing, spatial planning, level of facilities and social problems. Local elections and municipal councils exist especially to deal with this.

However, this has nothing to do with customization. 'Local customization' is therefore a misleading concept that is used by the government to avoid responsibility for decent legislation and implementation, and that gives municipalities an attractive aura of importance and people-oriented, but in practice they have to pay for this by suppressing their basic political tasks and damage to their democratic character. And in the meantime, residents in need of help are encouraged to become more self-reliant in quasi-empathetic 'kitchen table conversations'.

Moreover, a more complex society benefits more from keeping political structures clear than from making the government incredibly complicated. That is why I advocate a reorganization of activities, with renewed attention to legal certainty and legal equality on the one hand, and with a sharper eye for personal circumstances and local differences on the other.

In my opinion, all citizens and (local) politicians and administrators benefit from carefully designed legislation. Just like with easily accessible, staffed information desks in every municipality, including as part of newly formed provincial or national implementation organizations. For example, in the areas of environmental supervision, licensing, issuing passports, organizing elections and youth care.

Once again: the current administrative malaise did not arise because certain municipalities are too small, as the Council of State states, but mainly because too many tasks were assigned to the municipalities. More municipal reorganizations - a suggestion from the Council - is therefore not a solution. These will, among other things, lead to even more meaningless provinces. And that is a shame, because in view of various current problems, these provinces can still or once again fulfill a useful function: relieving municipalities, taking over tasks from regional partnerships and helping to carry out future government tasks properly and therefore with authority.

The second way in which the Council of State wants to make municipalities more decisive and democratic is to integrate the above-mentioned thematic regions more closely. But even in the case of a smaller number of regional partnerships, municipal councils are still at a distance. Unless there are own elections for such a condensed regional layer. However, anyone who seriously wants to reduce 'administrative pressure' and prefers to avoid endless system discussions should once again look sympathetically at the constitutionally anchored province as a potentially vital part of necessary changes. Regional branches are conceivable in the larger provinces for certain implementation tasks.

In short, there are enough reasons and considerations for a thorough political-official reflection on valid inter-administrative principles. This reflection should take place within and from a Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations that is the guardian of high-quality, rule-of-law public administration. It would be good if this responsibility were stated and made concrete in a new coalition agreement. So that national government, provincial-regional government and local government can together cope with the multitude of crises with which the Netherlands is struggling.

Another version of this piece appeared this week in De Hofvijver, a publication of the Montesquieu Institute.

The government is avoiding responsibility for decent legislation and implementation

Annemarie Kok is a publicist and affiliated with the University of Groningen.

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Notes

Another version of this piece appeared this week in De Hofvijver, a publication of the Montesquieu Institute.

Load Date: April 30, 2021

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279 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Stricter standards do not affect Schiphol but housing construction

de Volkskrant

July 6, 2020 Monday

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Section: First; Page 8

Length: 799 words

Byline: MARCEL VAN LIESHOUT

Body

Many housing projects in municipalities under the Schiphol flight paths are in danger of becoming impossible to implement. New standards for noise pollution and quality of life, by Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Housing), mean that the construction of tens of thousands of homes in the Schiphol region is encountering major restrictions.

Ollongren has laid down the standards in the recently published Noise Supplementary Regulations to the **Environmental** Act. There are now objections from municipalities and provinces, with North Holland in the lead, against this recent arrangement. The previously revealed Aviation Memorandum from Minister Cora van Nieuwenhuizen (Aviation) is also coming under heavy fire. The core of the criticism: the biggest cause of noise pollution, aviation, is not being hindered while the region is virtually 'locked down'.

Unlivable

""We are actually labeled as a kind of unliveable area,"" says councilor Robert van Rijn (Housing, VVD) of Aalsmeer, a municipality that has been complaining for years about increasing nuisance from Schiphol and its consequences for housing construction. According to Van Rijn, construction plans for four thousand homes are now at risk. 'Project developers are threatening to withdraw.'

Based on Ollongren's new scheme, the quality of life in almost all of Aalsmeer as a result of noise pollution is characterized as 'poor' to 'very poor'. Van Rijn's fellow councilor Bart Kabout (Schiphol, CDA): 'We are getting the bill for a problem caused by Schiphol.' Aalsmeer has been insisting for some time that Schiphol should take a stand, while Minister Van Nieuwenhuizen wants to allow air traffic to grow.

The growth municipality of Haarlemmermeer has also sounded the alarm. According to North Holland deputy Jeroen Olthof (Schiphol, PvdA), the cabinet is sending conflicting messages: Schiphol can continue to grow, the housing shortage must be tackled, but regulations make housing construction more difficult. In a letter to Minister Ollongren, Olthof points out that 368 thousand homes are planned in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region alone.

Olthof wrote that letter as chairman of the BRS, the directors' delegation in the Schiphol **Environmental** Council. In that council, which also includes residents of the airport, the aviation industry and the environmental movement, parties are finding it increasingly difficult to reach compromises. Directors want air traffic not to get in the way of other activities, local residents want to limit nuisance, and Schiphol wants to be able to continue to grow beyond the currently permitted 500,000 flights per year.

Now it becomes clear once again how difficult it is to reconcile all kinds of wishes. In the new **Environmental** Act (which will come into effect in 2022), the concept of 'liveability' is the core issue when, for example, issuing building permits, and all kinds of environmental nuisance (noise, air pollution) are given more weight. Resident delegations within the Schiphol **Environmental** Council are happy with this.

In response to parliamentary questions, Minister Ollongren said last week that he would consult with municipalities and the province of North Holland. The objectionable Noise Supplementary Regulation is now available for consultation. Ollongren: 'What matters now is the elaboration of measurement and calculation rules.' The regulation sets standards for the accumulation of noise pollution, not just nuisance caused by air traffic. The World Health Organization WHO issued new guidelines in October 2018 to reduce harmful health effects. In large parts of the Netherlands, especially in the Schiphol region, these guidelines are not met.

Buttery soft

""In itself it is of course good that our complaints about noise pollution from aviation are, as it were, officially recognized in Minister Ollongren's regulations,"" says Aalsmeer councilor Bart Kabout. 'But then you have to tackle the problem at the source. Schiphol is allowed to continue to grow quietly under all kinds of soft promises about nuisance reduction and we as municipalities can hardly do anything anymore. Go ahead and explain that.'

Councilor Robert van Rijn points out that approximately one third of the total Dutch housing construction for the next ten years is planned for the Randstad. The change in standards affects dozens of municipalities located in the area of ​​the so-called noise contours of Schiphol.

'You spend years trying to deliver custom solutions, in consultation with the government: where can you build and where can you not? Then you eventually reach an agreement and then the government tightens standards that take us completely by surprise and in fact undo all the work. In Aalsmeer it was already the case that housing was no longer possible for 71 percent of the territory, now we are going to 100 percent.'

View the original page: page 8

Graphic

A plane flies low over the houses near Schiphol.

Load Date: July 5, 2020

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283 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Discord over Second Kaagbaan; Ministry continues with research despite decline in air traffic

The Telegraph

August 19, 2020 Wednesday

The Netherlands

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Section: FINANCIAL; Page 20

Length: 612 words

Body

Ministry continues with research despite decline in air traffic

The battle over the arrival of the Second Kaagbaan at Schiphol has started. The ministry wants to make the decision next year while the corona crisis has a deep impact. The airport warns against irreversible decisions.

The site of the Tweede Kaagbaan has been reserved for years and is currently partly used for the storage of contaminated soil. If the cabinet were to decide to cancel the reservation, the curtain would in principle fall on the new runway.

The Ministry of Infrastructure does not want to postpone the investigation, according to inquiries from De Telegraaf. ""Given the pressure on space in the area around Schiphol, the ministry wants to provide clarity to all parties involved as soon as possible about whether or not to continue the reservation,"" says a spokesperson.

Schiphol warns that no 'irreversible steps' should be taken. ""It is good that the government provides insight into whether long-term adjustments can lead to an operation with less nuisance to the environment. This requires careful research,"" a spokesperson said in a response. Schiphol expects that the number of travelers will only return to pre-corona levels in a few years.

Now that the government is sticking to the Schiphol aviation hub and has actually ruled out the option of an airport in the sea in the recently published Aviation Memorandum, the Kaagbaan runway is explicitly in the picture for the long term. The alternative of a second Polderbaan has also been considered, but it is less safe and also offers fewer benefits.

Grow

""The Second Kaag Runway is simply necessary for the growth to 650,000 flight movements, for reasons of safety and capacity. Because this will be located parallel to the current Kaag runway, the aircraft do not have to cross other runways. This can increase the number of take-offs and landings per hour,"" says councilor Guus Elkhuizen of the municipality of Nieuwkoop.

The municipality of Haarlemmermeer, where Schiphol is located, wants the reservation for the Second Kaagbaan to be canceled, preferably today. “Now everything is kept locked down by the reservation, which means we cannot build homes. With a Second Kaagbaan Runway, a center like Rijsenhout would have to be given up. It will then become unliveable,"" says a spokesperson.

Schiphol's vision for the future is partly based on a flourishing KLM, but the company is currently on the brink of collapse. ""We are busy surviving to maintain the network function for the Netherlands. Discussions about growth after 2024 are not a priority now,"" a spokesperson said.

Permit

The municipalities of Haarlemmermeer and Nieuwkoop are expressly looking at Lelystad Airport or other regional airports. The minister should also look again at an airport at sea, according to Alderman Elkhuizen.

Although the ministry is launching an investigation, it could take decades before the runway is completed. Schiphol is currently working on a nature permit, which is lacking for 500,000 flight movements. In addition, the future plans must be tested from an environmental perspective.

There will also be a new **Environmental** Act in which noise nuisance will count much more heavily. How realistic is it that the Second Kaagbaan Runway will ever be licensed? ""Nothing surprises me anymore,"" says Elkhuizen. ""Due to the new **Environmental** Act, we can hardly build anymore. Moreover, the number of houses that are there in 2018 is taken into account. This means that on paper the number of people seriously inconvenienced is much is lower than at the moment when the shovel goes into the ground.""

'Necessary for 650,000 flights'

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Load Date: August 18, 2020

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287 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=You don't have to leave the house for the Senate

de Volkskrant

December 9, 2021 Thursday

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Section: First; Page 9

Length: 693 words

Byline: ARIEJAN KORTEWEG

Body

Column in The Hague and Hilvarenbeek

First through the baggage check, jacket off, another jacket off; hand in keys, phone, pen, glasses, take off belt. Welcome aboard Air Eerste Kamer, ready for a rough flight above a democratic landscape. Later a lunch from a box, with gravy and sandwiches. The service is good. Only, where are the other passengers?

The Senate also moved. It is rarely about that, just as it is not often about the Senate anyway. Especially now that legislation is on the back burner due to corona and endless formation.

A lot has already been said about the new housing and it hasn't gotten any better. More precisely: the factions sit under the chandeliers of Huis Huguetan, a city palace. That's neat. Even a pumping room - not yet used - has been thought of.

But above the service entrance there is a colored plateau that the average primary school would thank. And the plenary hall is the extreme version of the concept of 'sober and efficient', the motto under which the renovation of the Binnenhof is taking place. The gray painters struck and the carpet is a leftover from the gray banger - people should start thinking that politicians are pampering themselves. The good news is that the walls will still be painted during the Christmas recess (a first), and the lighting will be improved.

Many senators have not yet seen that plenary chamber with their own eyes. If they do come, they will go to the Ridderzaal for the plenary meetings, which will be closed for renovation in two weeks. In the corridors I mainly meet the right flank: Annabel Nanninga with a cake to celebrate the one-year anniversary of JA21; I see Johan Dessing from FvD, Henk Otten from the Otten Group says hello.

Somewhere in the stairwell is an elegant table where senators can sign the attendance register. At 11 am only ten signatures have been signed, which will gradually increase to 33. Less than half of the senators are therefore present on this meeting day. This is due to the lockdown, but a lot was also done digitally during the relaxations. The Senate is quite modern when it comes to digitizing democracy. There is a digital attendance register and therefore also a digital quorum.

To see the Senate at work, I go to Hilvarenbeek. Tanja Klip-Martin (67) lives there, having just moved from Drenthe - she was a deputy and then a dike manager. She is vice-chairman of the VVD Senate faction, which likes to set a good example: the faction meetings are also largely held via screen.

In her house on the edge of the village, Klip-Martin has a kind of Senate room with a wall with folders and a secure connection via the Senate's iPad, where about a dozen heads report to the Senate at a quarter to four sharp. the Economic Affairs and Climate Committee. The chairman asks whether there are any objections to a journalist watching. Well, no, the Senate is not like that.

At a quarter to five, the Infrastructure, Water Management and Environment committee will follow, followed by the evaluation of an expert meeting on the Environment Act. There are still fifteen meetings today.

Between acts I ask Klip-Martin, trained as an art historian, whether she has already seen the plenary hall. She is cautious: 'It's not sad. The best has been made.'

You miss the informal conversations here, she thinks, looking up from her screen. And the walk to the House of Representatives - referred to as 'the other side' - to hear what people think there. Although there are Senate bicycles with which senators can travel to the Bezuidenhoutseweg.

They had agreed to call each other 'you' online as well. But via the screen it is immediately more informal. Mary and Saskia soon inquire about the move, Ilse wants to know whether she is going to build the garden herself.

""I don't see any hands anymore,"" chairman Meijer notes after 25 minutes. 'Then Mr Korteweg is also thanked for his attention.'

Klip-Martin, afterwards: 'This is efficient, you can see that. Still, when corona has become a normal flu, we will meet physically again. Man is a social being.'

View the original page: page 9

Graphic

Signing in the Senate

Load Date: December 8, 2021

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291 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=For example, steel giant Tata wants to reduce its emissions; Significant investments are needed to meet clean production requirements

De Telegraaf.nl

January 24, 2022 Monday 7:48 PM GMT

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Section: DFT; DFT/NEWS; FRONTPAGE; INTERIOR

Length: 1181 words

Byline: Theo Besteman

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

Tata Steel faces an unprecedented task. The ancient blast furnaces are disappearing after persistent protests and political pressure. Hydrogen technology replaces coal. “We are in a big hurry, we want to be ready well before the 2030 deadline.” But there is no certainty yet, as it turns out on the ground.

The hot yellow-red pig iron slides down from the oven at the top of the factory. A little further on the 750 hectare site in Velsen-Noord are the end products from the rolling mill: large rolls of rolled steel, 7 million tons per year.

The Dutch product travels around the world by its own train or moored low-loaders at the quay. The steel is purchased by car builders but also can manufacturers. Along the quay, operators with 25- and 40-ton cranes with enormous grabs empty two gigantic coal ships.

These coals of different types are piled here in addition to iron ore mixing up to seven hundred layers, and those mountains of ore are then scraped away from top to bottom by large wheel diggers. “That broad mixing, including iron ore, is necessary for consistent quality of steel production,” says Annemarie Manger, sustainability director at Tata Steel.

Capture

“But soon this coal will disappear,” the chemist points to the hundreds of meters of high black storage.” Good for just four days of firing up the large steel furnaces. The blast furnace gases are captured and led to the two Vattenfall power stations just outside the site.

September last year, Tata decided, based on the FNV plans, to switch to steel production from hydrogen. “Feasible,” concludes the hired agency Roland Berger. The plan to store its CO2 in the North Sea is suddenly canceled. Ultimately, new DRI technology will soon no longer require coal.

In the years in between, a mixture of gas and 20% natural gas is still required. “There is no certainty yet that we can go to 100% hydrogen,” says energy company manager Peter Hoppesteyn, who acts as a connecting link between the old and new production methods.

There cannot yet be that certainty, says Manger: new permit applications are being submitted and numerous projects are being prepared in parallel with the €300 million improvements already underway in this area. “A lot of technology for the application and scaling up of hydrogen production is still being developed. There is a dilemma between business as usual and testing these major innovations for steel production, which must be as stable as possible. Such ovens,” Manger points out, “cannot simply be shut down for three months.”

Hydrogen new

But Tata Steel must accelerate. Lawyers are calling for closure. The steel giant from Velsen-Noord is under fire on all sides. The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment determined on Friday that the emissions data provided by Tata may be incomplete. There is a gap between measured emissions of metals and carcinogenic suit materials and Tata's reports. Further research should clarify this enormous and unusual difference, according to the province.

At the end of 2020, Tata will scale back toxic 'substances of very high concern'. The government uses a list of 1,655 of these substances, in IJmuiden 178 come from steel production. They are partly captured.

Local residents and interest groups have been conducting proceedings against the largest CO2 emitter in the Netherlands since very high emissions were reported in 2009. The Public Prosecution Service has been asked to initiate a criminal investigation because of the damage to health. At the end of last year, State Secretary Van Weyenberg announced that he would drastically increase the permit requirements in order to reduce Tata's emissions in the environment.

Hole emissions

Tata must comply with the **Environmental** Act with new permit applications. It invests millions in reducing emissions such as lead, PAHs, particulate matter and heavy metals from the pellet factory. And it says it's taking steps to reduce that pungent odor from the coking plant. But new permits will also be challenged by environmental clubs and local residents. “We understand the concerns, we have to be very transparent about what we do in order to regain trust,” says Manger.

Drastic decrease

In addition, the cabinet wants to increase from 11 gigawatts of offshore wind turbine capacity to 21 gigawatts. Tata ultimately needs about 5 to 6 gigawatts of wind energy to produce hydrogen via electrolysers for steel production. This hydrogen drastically reduces CO2 emissions in IJmuiden.

First Hoogovens 6 will close, combined with a coking factory, then Hoogovens 7. ""Although a usual renovation of Hoogovens 6 will still be necessary in 2023,"" says Manger. That seems illogical, but inevitable if Tata wants to continue supplying steel. Manger: “So it is that complex.”

The Indian Tata Steel took over the Dutch blast furnaces at the mouth of the North Sea Canal from Corus in 2007. The company saw a potential marriage with the Swedish SSAB fail last year. Now the Dutch part of the Tata Steel Group from Mumbai, India, is looking for an independent future for its production with 9,000 employees in IJmuiden with large-scale innovation in hydrogen technology.

“But we don't have all the details yet. We are now consulting with two parties to obtain the data for the design and permit applications. We want to clarify this as quickly as possible,” says Manger.

'Deprecated'

Residents of Kennemerland complain about completely outdated factories and lack of investments from Mumbai. They may seem like old installations, but in terms of production efficiency, Tata Steel is in the global top 3 with lowest CO2 emissions per ton of steel in the rankings of the World Steel Association. Ranked ahead of countless Chinese manufacturers.

Government subsidy is indispensable for the transition to large-scale hydrogen production, says Manger. It hasn't arrived yet. Mumbai has not committed any investments for its subsidiary so far.

Residents of Velsen, IJmuiden, Beverwijk and Wijk aan Zee en Duin therefore remain skeptical about the country's largest steelmaker. How clean will Tata be? This promises an approximately 50% reduction in emissions of toxic PAH substances this year. And approximately 55% less emissions of heavy metals, such as lead, which should have fallen by 70% by 2023. And a 65% decrease in all dust precipitation in the residential environment in 2023, with 85% fewer malodorous odors that year in 2023, with also 35% less particulate matter.

Wash windows

A window cleaning crew still goes into neighborhoods when particles fall. Just like the first graphite rains in 2018, this is now causing protests. Little has changed since then, according to the Village Council, for example.

“It will be quite a puzzle to arrange clean hydrogen production, in addition to the environmental improvements announced in the Roadmap Plus and investments in new factories on the same site,” says Manger. ""But it has to. Also for the environment. Not only do we benefit, I think it is ultimately good for the energy transition in the Netherlands.”

Graphic

Image, Annemarie Manger and Peter Hoppesteyn of Tata oversee renewal plans., Jean-Pierre Jans

Load Date: January 25, 2022

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295 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Noise rule is disastrous for construction'; Municipalities and builders fear new calculation method

De Telegraaf.nl

August 1, 2020 Saturday 3:30 AM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC; FRONTPAGE; DFT/NEWS

Length: 1358 words

Byline: Alexander Bakker and Yteke de Jong

Body

To build! To build! To build! The credo of the Rutte III cabinet in the fight against a dire housing shortage. But due to legal nitrogen problems and the PFAS malaise, The Hague seems to be achieving the opposite. The end is not yet in sight: a new way of calculating noise threatens to paralyze housing construction.

The decision of D66 State Secretary Stientje van Veldhoven (Infrastructure), responsible for environmental policy, to calculate noise in a different way is reminiscent of her PFAS approach. It is correct on paper, but little attention is paid to the consequences in practice.

Disastrous and unacceptable

“The consequences for us are disastrous and unacceptable. According to the new calculation method, 75 percent of the municipality of Haarlemmermeer (where Schiphol is located, ed.) has a poor or very poor acoustic living environment. This means that we can no longer build homes in 75 percent of our municipality,"" Mayor Marianne Schuurmans-Wijdeven warns in a letter to the cabinet. “The construction of roads and activities is also becoming much more difficult.”

Housing market professor Peter Boelhouwer from TU Delft fears a paper reality in The Hague. “Van Veldhoven has blundered with PFAS. This caused construction to come to a standstill and that was unprecedented stupidity,"" says the professor. “Now the same thing is in danger of happening, because the consequences are not being fully considered.”

Living environment

The new calculation rules are part of the **Environmental** Act. From 2022, this law will replace hundreds of rules and laws in the field of the living environment. Everything must become simpler and more balanced. At least that is what D66 Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs) intends. But that is precisely where the problem lies with the new calculation rules.

State Secretary Stientje van Veldhoven has decided to adjust the rules for calculating noise in an addition to the law. The precise details of the new calculation do not need to be approved by parliament.

What will change? There are currently separate calculation rules for wind turbines, industry, railways, highways and aviation. These noisemakers will soon be added together in one new sum. Noise from aircraft is more annoying and therefore counts more than noise from a highway.

That doesn't seem so strange: after all, a resident doesn't just hear either the road or an airplane. It is a sum of sound. “The data on aviation noise was outdated and gave an underestimate of the annoyance,” a spokeswoman for Van Veldhoven explains.

New calculation has different results

The intentions are good. But the new calculation has a completely different outcome in parts of the Netherlands compared to now. While the noise factor is currently still 'reasonable', the same area may soon be labeled 'very poor'. A disaster for municipalities that have plans for housing in those areas and annoying for people who want to sell their house there.

The Schiphol region in particular – where there is a great need for more housing – is in danger of being hit hard. But not only there: the immediate vicinity of airports in Groningen, Maastricht, Rotterdam, Eindhoven and around military airfields is in danger of being compromised. Ports, industrial complexes and public transport companies also fear the consequences for the housing market.

“We want to build 1 million new homes by 2040, including in centers where there is air traffic. A large part of this new construction is at risk,"" says Ruben Heezen of Bouwend Nederland, who points out the many ambitions of the government, but that the surface area of ​​our country is limited. “We want to keep an aviation hub, build homes and participate in the energy transition. If, as a government, you want to tighten existing rules, you must look at all the consequences. That seems to be missing now.”

Demonstrate general interest

Minister Ollongren and State Secretary Van Veldhoven deny that no more construction can take place in the future noise zones. “The municipality must assess the acceptability of the added noise. If this is well substantiated, construction can be done with that data,” explains the spokesperson for the State Secretary. “How they substantiate this depends on local policy.” Underlying documents indeed show that municipalities can build if this is in the 'general interest'.

The ministry seems to realize that the 'public interest' is not a license to relax local rules and that more needs to be done to be able to build. “Additional measures, for example by building homes in such a way that they also have a quiet side, can help to reduce nuisance,” the ministries of the two D66 ministers suggest.

Municipalities fear years of delays for housing construction projects, if not cancellation of plans. “This noise bureaucracy is locking down society. We just have to figure it out as municipalities. I see extremely complex and contradictory decision-making coming my way.” says councilor Guus Elkhuizen of the municipality of Nieuwkoop, under the flight path of Schiphol.

“It will be very difficult for municipalities to motivate people to build homes in a poor living environment,” says Heezen of Bouwend Nederland. “There are already existing regulations for noise standards, maintain and enforce them. Then we can continue to solve the growing housing shortage without additional obstacles.”

The municipality of Lelystad does not want to choose

An example is the municipality of Lelystad, which has offered to build 10,000 additional homes to alleviate the worst needs. At the same time, the current airport near the polder city will be made suitable for holiday flights. The municipality does not want to choose, because it believes that economic development is also needed.

“The functioning of airports – which limits municipalities' growth – and the national construction task should not get in the way of each other. We want to discuss this with the minister with the aim of ensuring that this scheme does not reach the finish line in terms of cumulation,"" says a spokesperson. Another fear that exists is the legal side of the coin. Will the Council of State soon be in favor of new construction projects, as it did with the nitrogen problem? “The Council of State is already overloaded, with cases sometimes being delayed for up to two years,” says housing market professor Peter Boelhouwer of TU Delft. “There will soon be a need for prior consultation with various stakeholders. That takes extra time. Moreover, the option to file an objection remains available. This is already happening on a large scale against residential construction, for various reasons. The people who already have a home do not feel the urgency of the shortage. It now takes an average of ten years to get a housing project off the ground in the Netherlands, while in countries around us it takes two to three years.”

Lawyers Pieter van der Woerd and Pim Oremans of NewGround Law do not think that the judge will dismiss construction plans. “The new regulation does not impose binding rules against which judges can assess permits or zoning plans,” the two experts write in their weblog. They also do not expect a problem in advance regarding choices made by municipalities.

Carefully

“A weighing of interests between noise climate and an acute housing shortage is largely a local political issue. If the judge intervened, he would quickly take the driver's seat. People are usually very careful with that.” But in political The Hague, they also have different experiences with the judiciary after the nitrogen debacle and Urgenda verdict. Councilor Elkhuizen mainly sees a parallel with the nitrogen dossier. The consequences of rules were not recognized there at the time. That happened in court last year, causing the country to go into lockdown.

“With the law in hand, interested parties will soon be able to undo the limited option we have for new construction in court. Because these new calculation rules are laid down in the **Environmental** Act and the word 'general interest' is a legally extremely flexible concept, as the nitrogen file has now taught us.""

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Body

After Minister Kajsa Ollongren sat idle for four years while housing construction stalled, Minister Hugo de Jonge is now also in danger of getting bogged down in consultation rounds and new legislation. This while he already has all the necessary powers to force municipalities to build housing, say administrative lawyers.

Last February, De Jonge presented his National Housing and Construction Agenda, with plans to create 100,000 new homes annually. “The government will regain control of public housing,” the new housing minister promised. For example, work is being done on the new Housing Management Act. That's going to take a while. The text of the law has not even been drafted yet, a spokesperson for the minister said.

But that doesn't matter, says Friso de Zeeuw, emeritus professor of area development at TU Delft. “There are already a number of options for the minister to take control. I don't know what you need more.”

Intervention is most needed at construction sites that remain fallow due to opposition from municipalities or provinces. “In that case, the minister can give a proactive instruction,” says De Zeeuw. “The Spatial Planning Act offers that possibility. The municipality must then adapt the zoning plan to the content of the instruction. De Jonge does not need a new law for that.”

Destination plan

But that designation is certainly not the only means of power. De Zeeuw: “If the municipality resists, the integration plan will be discussed. The government can then draw up a zoning plan itself. Another instrument is the national project decision, which is already used for energy supplies.”

De Zeeuw attributes the fact that Ollongren and now De Jonge hesitate to use their power to the 'policy philosophy' that the government only intervenes in lower levels of government when absolutely necessary. This is also what Rogier Kegge, assistant professor of constitutional and administrative law, says. “This reluctance is strongly expressed, especially by liberals. The CDA is somewhat more inclined to intervene, social democrats even more likely.”

Also according to Kegge, De Jonge already has all the weapons in the cupboard. “It does not depend on the instruments, but on the role that people take. At the ministry they have been watching in amazement at how things are going in the country for ten years.” Kegge thinks that attitude is somewhat ingrained there. “The task is to plan and make policy, not to dig in the mud yourself. But that won't help you combat this housing crisis.”

Kegge states that De Jonge will not achieve this with his housing and construction agenda alone. “That is a very soft policy. If you only write down that 100,000 homes must be built, the municipalities of Amersfoort and Zaandam, to name a few, will not necessarily build more homes.”

In recent years, the government has rarely or never used force to enforce housing development. In 2020, the House of Representatives adopted a motion in which then minister Ollongren was asked for a proactive designation for the Utrecht construction locations Rijnenburg and Reijerscop. The minister responded that Reijerscop was not eligible for residential development due to its landscape value, while residential development near Rijnenburg would put too much pressure on the existing road network. She left the decision-making to the next cabinet.

Leiden scientist Kegge thinks that discussion about housing construction should start with consultation. “It is ideal to sit down with municipalities and make agreements. If the municipality is silent too much, you can give proactive instructions. If the municipality does not do anything about this, an integration plan will be drawn up.”

Such a zoning plan made from above is quite a job for a ministry, says Kars de Graaf, professor of administrative law at the University of Groningen. “It requires a certain expertise. And knowledge about the area for which you are going to draw up such an integration plan.” In principle, with an integration plan, the arrangement of consultation procedures and legal settlement falls on the shoulders of the government.

Tools

De Graaf also believes that De Jonge's toolbox is already well stocked for identifying housing construction locations. “I think he is able to do that, through a proactive designation or an integration plan. It must be a matter of national importance, but you can argue that with the current housing shortage.”

According to the professor, administrative consultation is preferable to maintain good relations. “And then he has a big stick behind the door. My cautious opinion is that you sometimes need tough instruments to get through from higher to lower levels of government.”

But even then it can take a long time before a residential area is built, says De Zeeuw. “It takes roughly 1.5 years to draw up a zoning plan. That is the turbo procedure. Then you get the legal procedures.”

That's why he doesn't expect miracles. “A lot of time was lost due to Ollongren's passivity. Hugo cannot catch up on that on his own.” According to De Zeeuw, the new housing minister will probably not reap the fruits of his work himself. “That is a standard frustration of housing ministers, that you only open projects that your predecessor has started.”

Stompetoren

In Alkmaar, the province of North Holland is blocking construction plans on the east side of the city at a location that was designated for housing decades ago. The province wants to stick to building within the city limits of Alkmaar. The province also introduced the term 'Protected provincial landscape', which makes it even more difficult to designate agricultural land for housing development.

According to Alkmaar municipal councilor Gosse Postma (CDA), small centers that the province also has are hardly taken into account. The province says that 13,000 homes can be built in Alkmaar.

A few weeks ago, Postma went out with Minister De Jonge to impress on him what, in his view, the province constitutes a 'nuisance power'. “The province is conducting mismanagement at the expense of home seekers. The most unfortunate thing is that it affects the low and middle income people.”

The province confirms that construction in rural areas may only take place once all other options have been exhausted, according to a spokesperson. But it is cheaper to build in the meadow than in the city. The Hague must bypass the province, otherwise a social drama will arise, says Postma. “All villages and centers in North Holland are aging due to this mismanagement, causing club life to disappear and schools to die out.”

Blockade

Eemvallei can become a new district near Almere, on the territory of Zeewolde. Builder Heijmans and developer AM housing association Alliantie presented a ready-made plan for a maximum of 50,000 homes. But the province and the municipalities of Zeewolde and Almere are blocking it. If there were the green light tomorrow, the first homes could be completed in five years, says Maarten van Duijn of Heijmans. “Almere is sticking to the original plan, which provides for detached homes. If the minister wants a lot of affordable housing relatively quickly, our plan is an excellent opportunity,” says Van Duijn.

But during a working visit, the minister hinted that he would keep an eye on it. The province and Almere are difficult about the accessibility of Eemvallei, which is located on two highways and can be provided with public transport via a bus lane. Deputy Jan de Reus of the province of Flevoland would rather focus on Almere-Pampus, he says in a response. But this first requires a metro line costing billions through the IJ, which will not be ready for fifteen years at the earliest. A bus lane for Eemvallei is cheaper, according to Van Duijn. Almere says in a response that it is 'still not convinced' of Eemvallei.

Minister's response

Minister Hugo de Jonge says in a response that he first wants to make agreements with provinces about their share in the housing construction task. Only when things really go wrong does he want to resort to instruments to enforce housing development. “Where necessary, I am prepared to use my authority, but this must be done carefully and after the other intervention options have been exhausted.”

The minister wants to reach an 'indicative target' with provinces before June 1 about the numbers and types of homes. “Provinces then translate these agreements to municipalities. A definitive target must be in place by October 1 and the regional housing deals will be concluded in the fourth quarter.”

The goal is to achieve 900,000 new homes by the end of 2030, by accelerating housing construction to 100,000 new homes per year. De Jonge: “The agreements are not without obligation. We monitor progress and agree on how we will make adjustments if progress stalls, via an intervention ladder that does as much justice as possible to the division of responsibilities between the government, provinces and municipalities.” In short, the policy principle 'decentralization, unless' remains intact.

De Jonge says he will show his teeth if necessary. “Sometimes extra guidance and perseverance is needed, for example to make a decision if there is an impasse over a location. This is certainly possible to some extent via the Spatial Planning Act and the **Environmental** Act. But the legal instruments are the final step on the ladder. Speed ​​is paramount.”

According to him, the Public Housing Management Act is necessary after all. “We must further fill the toolbox with instruments that are necessary to further improve the possibilities for taking control.”

Graphic

Image, Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing) has the option to intervene at construction sites that remain fallow due to opposition from municipalities or provinces, ANP/HH

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What were the worst terms in the office this year? Shiver along with Japke-d. Bouma career

NRC.NEXT

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1st Edition

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Byline: Japke-d. Bouma

Body

ABSTRACT

Office language

Also last year, Japke-d. Bouma is again bombarded by her readers with examples of annoying jargon. She made it a top 10.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Every year I think: surely it will be over now, with all that jargon in the office? But every year that turns out to be a vain hope. This year was no different. Because you sent me loads of office words again in 2019! When I read through all the 'itch tweets' from the past year again this week, it made me laugh out loud again (thank you!), but it also made me a little dizzy. Here are the highlights, supplemented with your slang tips on Twitter. Read, enjoy and shudder.

10First of all: the 'journey'. We have known this for some time in marketing, from the 'customer

journey' (which means: the considerations that consumers make before purchasing something). But in 2019 a lot of journeys were added.

Such as the 'employer journey' for employers, the 'student journey' for schoolchildren, the 'candidate journey' for applicants and the 'patient journey' for people in a hospital - everyone had to go on a journey. Do you think it's strange that we have a nitrogen problem in this country?

9 I had never heard of it, but suddenly it was there: 'integrated working'.

Maybe it means: 'doing all the work', instead of doing everything half way. That would be quite an improvement in many companies.

In any case, what it is should be explained more clearly. ""Seriously, no one here knows what it means, but it is ""a spearhead for us,"" someone wrote on Twitter.

8 Then: the 'decision tree'. A reader sent it in the sentence: ""The welfare bill is not included.

in the decision tree."" I think they mean 'decision making', but with trees you can never be completely sure, in terms of proliferation. Is that your decision tree or are you just happy to see me? ""The plan is going not through, we just sawed down the decision tree,"" said a reader on Twitter.

That is of course also possible.

7 Been on the rise for a while, but over the past year the 'chief' has become unstoppable.

The 'lead' who works in a 'squad', on the other hand, is a bit like going backwards. Just like the 'chapters', a name for 'teams'.

Maybe because the Hells Angels are banned everywhere, or because someone found out that the Ku Klux Klan also calls its branches outside the US 'chapters' - you don't know.

In any case, the chiefs are advancing. Such as the 'chief digital transformation officer', the 'chief happiness officer', the 'chief nursing officer', the 'chief cultural diversity officer' and so on.

It is probably no coincidence that more and more companies are calling their departments 'tribes' and having campfire conversations about their 'totem'. I would definitely order tepees for 2020.

6 I looked everywhere in 2019, but the 'course' has disappeared! They are now called 'workshops' (and then

preferably 'interactive workshops'), 'clinics', 'break-out sessions', 'living labs' (I think with monkeys and mice) but above all 'master classes'.

There are no longer any course leaders, who are now called 'top teachers'.

In any case, I personally love receiving a masterclass from a top teacher. Sounds a lot better than 'listening for 45 minutes to a boring man trying to sell his unnecessary book on 'leadership''.

5 In the past you had 'boosters'. Do you still remember? Such as: the 'booster team for confused people', or the 'booster team for Barneveld tourists'.

But because no one was still moving, 'pullers' were devised in 2019 to drag people to work by the hair.

For example, last year I read about 'enthusiastic theme leaders', about 'programme leaders', 'agenda leaders', about 'programme leaders' (that was called 'labbekakken' in my time).

But there were also regular 'tractors', and I don't mean those on the Malieveld or on the highway. No, 'pullers' are people, and sometimes they have to pull hard. By the way, that's called 'traction': how big is your traction?

A reader wrote: ""Our innovation project has pillars, those pillars have drivers and under those pillars there are foundations.""

Phew, get on it!

4 You used to call someone on your phone. Nowadays you 'make a call'.

Someone said that to me in 2019: ""I can't talk to you for long because I have to make a call."" When I laughed very hard at that, it turned out that she had meant it seriously.

I always call it the 'English disease': speaking English when it is not necessary at all. And many people suffered from this again in 2019.

For example, I was inundated with 'save the dates' (because tomorrow the world will end), with 'calls to actions' (don't shout like that), and many people wanted to 'meet' with me 'face to face' (no, no and still a cut).

Furthermore, the word “nice” made a huge splash in 2019, as in “I have a new job” – “NICE!” Many people on LinkedIn also thought that I had 'shined' and 'challenged' in my presentations. I had really 'sliced, nailed and owned' it (cry).

And then of course there were a lot of people last year who called their email 'traffic', wanted to 'improve their social skills' and 'change their mindset'.

But I thought the epitome of unnecessary English was this: ""Why didn't you mention that in the meeting?""

It gives me a pointhead.

3 Then the chain. Man, you couldn't turn your back in 2019 without there being a rusted chain somewhere.

Such as the 'order chain' and the 'customer chain'. But I also came across 'lineless chain care', 'chain integration', 'overview of information chains', 'focus on the chain - both decentralized and central' - and of course 'the integral chain': a kind of overarching dungeon where we all all in prison.

And then I almost forgot the 'integral, chain-wide progress report', which I of course devoured from cover to cover.

Dear people, throw off your chains in 2020!

2 But what really left a bad taste in my mouth was 'the aftertaste'.

I had already been warned about this expression at the beginning of this year, but you wrote to me that you nevertheless continued to hear 'the aftertaste' more and more often in the office.

For example, when colleagues ask you if you would like to 'share' your 'aftertaste' of a meeting or conference with them. Share your aftertaste?! How? In a French kiss?!

I have of course checked for you whether this phrase might have something to do with alcohol. But even that turned out not to be the case. So get rid of it. That really is better for everyone.

1 But the undisputed slang highlight of 2019 was of course 'the deep dive' or the 'deep dive session' (with wrong spaces).

I had heard it before, but it really struck me through Marcel Canoy's book about Rabobank, which stated that management regularly takes employees 'into a deep dive into the why'. You'll just work there.

What it means? Well, just: 'thorough research'. But apparently this has become so exceptional in so many companies that a separate - of course English - word has been invented for it.

What I find craziest about the deep dive is that deep diving is quite dangerous: every diver knows that. Because the deeper you go, the greater the 'nitrogen narcosis' - you start to speak gibberish, do strange things and can no longer think coherently. These are the kinds of things you often see during a deep dive, but I don't think they are really the intention.

I can therefore inform you that from 2020 all deep dives are prohibited, especially those of thirty meters or deeper, and I hope that we will all stay on the surface more often in the new year.

That's what most deep dives remained anyway.

The only question left is how we are going to survive all the jargon in the coming year. I don't know a solution for that at the moment, other than using earplugs, laughing out loud about it and continuing to ask what it means. ""If you stick 'in your panties' behind every itchy word in your mind, every working day is a party,"" wrote one of my readers - but you don't get that from me. See you in 2020 and have fun under the decision tree!

Often heard in the office: whether you want to 'share' your 'aftertaste'. Share your aftertaste?! How? In a French kiss?!

Someone told me: 'I have to make a call soon.' When I laughed really hard, it turned out to be serious

These were the best job titles of 2019

3

The 'team leader of substantive matters' (now a 'team leader of useless matters' and we can move on)

2

The 'strategic clarity coordinator' (works closely with the 'strategic clarity coordinator')

1

The 'circular professional' (someone who keeps going around in circles); the 'business continuity manager' (finally: someone who keeps things running!); the 'task accent holder' (I think someone from Brabant); the 'integral improvement coach' (who also immediately does the MOT of your car, I suspect) and the 'regional manager of line-free chain care' (who falls under the 'CEO of line pulling').

These were the worst 'meetings' in 2019

3

The 'harvest dialogue' ('get the combine out of the grease,' someone responded on Twitter)

2

The 'cohesion moment' (a meeting where everyone is stuck together with adhesive tape)

1

The 'interactive substantiation breakfast' (the wattes?), the 'wind tunnel session' (a club of windbreakers with open doors), the 'consultation meeting' (yep), the 'workfield catch-up meeting' (can I leave this?) and my personal favorite: 'the deflation session ' (Delicious).

And these were the biggest slang tigers of 2019

3

The municipality of Den Helder, which wrote the following in a PowerPoint: ""Neighborhood-oriented work means that we visit and have a view of natural sites"", and: ""We provide integral access with a broad inquiry.""

Anyone?

2

The province of Flevoland wrote that they would ""actively focus on #sustainability and #innovation"" together at the new Lelystad airport.

Sustainability! When you open an airport. You just have to dare.

1

But the undisputed number 1 was of course the Ministry of the Interior, which launched a 'clear language campaign' in 2019 but nevertheless posted a vacancy with dry eyes for a 'Interface Manager Strategic Management Organization Digital System Environment Act'. Humour. That's right.

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Graphic

Illustration Tomas Schats

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307 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Stop the squandering of our landscape'; Landscape architect Adriaan Geuze warns against the loss of valuable space

The Telegraph

May 22, 2021 Saturday

The Netherlands

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Body

Landscape architect Adriaan Geuze warns against the loss of valuable space

According to landscape architect Adriaan Geuze (60), our country faces a 'gigantic task'. A million new homes must be built. Water management must be adapted to climate change. The energy supply must become fossil-free and agriculture must be reinvented. ""These issues are comparable in scale and urgency to corona.""

When Adriaan Geuze walks through the polder, which he likes to do, he misses the lark. ""You no longer hear them, just like many other birds. And the insects are gone. That makes me grumpy."" The internationally acclaimed landscape architect and professor can make a connection in a few sentences between the disappearance of the lark and the baby boomer generation's abandonment of the Great Works - the ambitious, often hydraulic engineering projects from the end of the 19th century.

“We are done, the Netherlands is finished, the baby boomers thought. The engineers and practitioners were removed from the ministries in the 1970s and replaced by project managers and lawyers,"" says Geuze in the reception room of West 8, his design agency for urban planning and landscape architecture, in one of the Fenix ​​Loodsen on Rotterdam-Katendrecht. ""The great works of the baby boomers were the reorganization of education, health care, you name it. And they invented spatial planning, an impenetrable maze of official procedures, resulting in the dramatic cluttering of our unique cultural landscape.""

You have long been pointing out the clutter of the landscape due to the industrial estates, the elongated data and logistics centers, the windmills and furniture boulevards that mar the horizon. You think the central government should take back control.

“The Netherlands is densely populated. It is impossible that we can continue to grow indefinitely with wind turbines, suburbs, solar fields, new nature, horticultural greenhouses, millions of people: that does not fit, we are too small for that. Let us cherish the precious space, the enormously rich palette of cultural landscapes that we have, and let us ensure that there is management at a high level. Given the immense challenges we face, we cannot leave the landscape to aldermen, deputies, market parties and the lobby clubs whose chairmen - ex-politicians - all have each other's 06 number.""

What do those assignments consist of?

""It is 1953, the dikes are breaking. This is how you should see the problems we face. Spatial planning must curb four crises. There is a housing shortage, a million houses need to be built: that is a very major social challenge. Furthermore, we must reinvent the energy supply if we take the task of getting rid of fossil fuels seriously. Because even if we fill the whole of the Netherlands with solar collectors and wind turbines, we still won't have enough energy. We need to recalibrate agriculture: all agricultural areas, whether clay, peat or sand, are now injected with manure. Insects and chicks die in the ammonia, the landscape takes on an industrial look with large stables, tanks and silos. The agricultural machines are so heavy that the soil has to be drained up to 1.40 meters deep, causing the soil to break down: the peat oxidizes, the sandy soils dry out, and the precious clay soils are crushed. We must reinvent agriculture together with the farmers. They must be able to run a normal family business with a stable income so that they can find a wife and their children can succeed them. But such an adjustment takes a long time, perhaps twenty years. Then: the climate changes. We are below sea level and experience enormous rainfall and river water peaks. We must therefore be proactive about our water safety in the coming century. Fortunately, our water sector is well organised, with central management by the Delta Commissioner and the water boards. These four issues are each comparable to the corona pandemic in scale and urgency. Compare it with the reconstruction.""

How are we going to approach these projects?

""This is only possible if the national government, just like in water management, has a place with experts who can diagnose these types of tasks and manage them properly. With full discussion in the House of Representatives. So not, as is currently happening, at the consultation tables of civil society with Natuurmonumenten, the ANWB, LTO and all kinds of other lobby clubs. The voter must be directly involved in this perspective on the future. A new football field in Zeist? Can easily be arranged via existing procedures, consultation, the new environmental law and all rules from the Building Decree Act. No problem. But the four tasks I am talking about require an enormous social operation. Comparable to the Great Works of previous generations. There should be a separate national authority for this.""

Despite the enormity of that assignment, you are optimistic about the future.

“Yes, because we can fall back on our rich, brilliant planning tradition. Look at how space has been created for the rivers in recent years. The redesign of the northern Waal bank near Nijmegen, for example: everyone there is proud of it. Our beautiful lowlands are half below sea level, but we will be the last country to be flooded. That's not going to happen to us. The battle against the water is our soul, that is the epic that binds us. Máxima was wrong when she claimed that the Dutch identity does not exist, because it does exist: the Dutch are land makers. Not poets or thinkers or gastronomes, we conquer land on the water. And then that beautiful landscape is captured by our painters. That's who we are. The Rijksmuseum with the Night Watch is actually beneath the waves. But we will enforce!""

What does the beauty of the Dutch landscape consist of for you?

“It is so stunningly beautiful. The connotation with the Netherlands is landscape. Ask a foreigner what he sees when he thinks of the Netherlands and he will answer: tulips, windmills, the horizon and the sea. We have more than eighty different cultural landscapes! The bulb soil, the floodplains, the Brabant stream valley, the drifting sands, the peat meadows, the mound landscape, high ground, peat, clay, dunes, high and low, fresh, salty and brackish. And all man-made. This has created an ecology and a person who wants to belong to it. Dutch people identify with the land on which they live; they come from the island of Tholen or from the Alblasserwaard. I think every day: what do we owe this to? I enjoy it, it makes me very happy.""

You call the fact that this landscape is being squandered at such a rapid pace the 'betrayal of the baby boomers'.

""They called their parents the Brussels sprouts generation, even though they had experienced the crisis years, the Second World War, the loss of the East Indies, the Flood and the start of the Cold War. Their parents initiated the Delta Works, built cities, and saved for their children's education. That's not a Brussels sprouts smell, it's Napoleon! Following the fiascos around Hoog Catharijne and the Volgermeerpolder, the baby boomers stopped the Major Works and the government services were closed down. They denied that tradition. Write it down: they betrayed it and introduced the Spatial Planning Act, with a taboo on vision. And now we find ourselves without prospects in such a densely populated country with the landscape as a big loser. Spatial planning makes incantations and is not concerned with the unruly reality. Such Frans Timmermans who claims: 'Europe must be climate neutral by 2050'. He can't make that happen at all. As a perspective for action for the Netherlands, such a statement cannot be taken seriously at all.""

Aren't you fighting against windmills?

""Even if the Netherlands is climate neutral around 2050, companies like ASML will still say: where will we sit? In Bavaria, where you can see the Alps without any horizon pollution? Or in Eindhoven between the windmills and goat stables with the risk of Q fever? In the Netherlands, people think that the wind turbines will automatically end up in the right place through the subsidy system. Which is not the case. Then the residents say: I can see it, I can hear it, so that windmill will be located two kilometers from the village. The result: the end of the Dutch landscape, of the IJmeer, the Waterland, the Bulb Region, the Groningen vistas. There are entire parts of the Dutch cultural landscape suitable for windmills, but other parts are completely unsuitable. Therefore: you cannot leave the design of our landscape to the lobby clubs. That must be a national task. We are now dealing with pure land spoilage, just like with those enormous data centers of Google and Microsoft in the Wieringermeer and the greenhouses and the logistics centers. They are located on young marine clay, the best agricultural land on earth.""

I don't hear you (yet) about the elephant in the room: immigration. The Netherlands is also so full because eighty thousand newcomers settle there every year.

""If you look at this as an engineer, it is a relevant question whether you should treat yourself to eating the landscape in such a densely populated country. Exactly that can happen if you have to build so many extra homes. A simple analysis from the spatial planning sector: we have disadvantaged neighborhoods in The Hague and Rotterdam that we want to upgrade with taxpayers' money. Now you are a farmer in South Holland and you put greenhouses on your land. Migrant workers go to work there. The same applies to international developers who build large logistics halls. Migrant workers also come to work there. They are housed in houses at holiday parks or they go to live in those problem neighborhoods in The Hague and Rotterdam, in far too cramped homes of slumlords where they contract corona. So you see how closely everything in this sector is interconnected. But to return to the initial question: why can't we afford to continue to waste our landscape at this rate? This is partly because we want to live in a country with a high-quality economy. The tech region is now the second pillar of our economy. Then you need highly educated people, including migrant workers from California or Bangalore with their families. They don't want to live in a holiday park or next to a stable. In Brabant it is understood that you have to invest in beautiful parks, a clean environment and culture. See: the Van Gogh National Park. And immediately start building a new city in the sea, off the coast near Monster. You can arrange that in a few years. That should be part of that national task. It is time to put our shoulders to the wheel.""

'The battle against water is epic

binds us

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Load Date: May 21, 2021

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311 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The province's right to exist deserves a serious discussion; Commentary

NRC.NEXT

March 16, 2019 Saturday

1st Edition

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Section: OPINION & DEBATE; Page 10

Length: 781 words

Body

ABSTRACT

State elections

COMPLETE TEXT:

The Netherlands can go to the polls next Wednesday for two of the most unknown and misunderstood levels of government in the country: the Provincial Council and the water boards. The fact that there is political excitement on the way to these elections has everything to do with a derivative of this. The members of the Provincial Council who are elected next week will in turn elect the members of the Senate at the end of May. All polls indicate that the coalition will soon no longer have a majority in the Senate. This will have a direct impact on the functioning of the cabinet.

As usual, the election campaign that is now almost over - or what must pass for it - was hardly about the Provincial Council and certainly not about the water boards. The first major election debate on television was held by the party leaders from the House of Representatives, with, among other things, the color of Zwarte Piet as a burning issue. The radio made a brave attempt to stay closer to the goal of the upcoming elections by inviting the 'list leaders' for a debate in the Senate. However, the Senate formally has no party leaders because there are no direct elections. In other words, it was all a lot of 'pretending', and that with one of the most important fundamental democratic rights.

It is telling that most parties no longer even make any effort to stick to the subject of the actual elections. The 570 members of parliament spread across the twelve Dutch provinces are once again not there by the grace of their election manifesto, but mainly because of the performance and statements of their fellow party members in The Hague.

The complaint is certainly not new. But it remains worrying that no attempt is being made to improve the democratic legitimacy of the provincial government. This also concerns the role that the province can still play as a middle government in a rapidly changing society. Because an administrative layer that is sometimes disparagingly qualified as 'wearing cartilage' or 'rusting hinge', has a problem.

Six years ago, then Minister of the Interior Ronald Plasterk (PvdA) launched a revolutionary plan. He wanted to transform the existing twelve provinces into five parts of the country. The guiding idea here was that the tasks and size of the board should be brought more into line with each other. Because since Thorbecke unfolded his blueprint for the administrative structure of the Netherlands in 1848, a lot had changed in this area. For example, the average size of municipalities had increased by a factor of 14.

Unfortunately it came to nothing. The ever powerful lobby of regional administrators skillfully torpedoed Plasterk's intentions. A year later he withdrew his plan and his proposal was placed on the impressive pile of rejected administrative reorganization proposals. In the coalition agreement of the current cabinet, the provincial division is wisely left untouched.

The inconvenience in the elections for the Provincial Council remains that, unlike the House of Representatives or the municipal council, it is unclear to the voter whether and to what extent he can make a difference with his vote. This is even more true now that tasks from the provinces, such as youth care, have been transferred to municipalities in recent years. Nowadays, provincial tasks mainly lie in the field of spatial planning. But here too, the role of the province is diminishing now that the municipalities will soon have a greater task here as a result of the **Environmental** Act.

In short, what political role does the province still play? ""Provinces are increasingly concerned with consultation and process"", is noted in the collection 'Provincial Politics' published this week. It is not really a reason to mobilize voters to go to the polls. Over the past thirty years, turnout has fluctuated the quadrennial elections for the Provincial Council are always around 50 percent. Given the diffuse nature of the elections, that figure is actually not too bad. But that turnout has more to do with the indirect composition of the Senate than with the provinces. also every reason to continue to think about the province's right to exist.

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

It remains unclear to the voter whether and to what extent he can make a difference with his vote

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Notes

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

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315 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Conflicting interests meet an ambitious vision

NRC Handelsblad

November 28, 2019 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 4

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Byline: Arjen Schreuder

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

ABSTRACT

Interview Kees Linse Chairman of environmental impact assessment

The objectives of the National **Environmental** Vision are not all achievable at the same time, is the conclusion of the environmental advisory committee.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Enough ambition. In thirty years' time, we want to be a ""healthy and climate-proof"" country with a circular ""excellently functioning economy"", with ""pleasant and vital cities and villages, and a productive and attractive countryside"", a country where you can ""quickly and easy' travel, with space to 'exercise and relax', a country that is also protected from 'floods and other dangers'.

These are the views from the provisional National **Environmental** Vision, which should provide ""direction and inspiration"" for the spatial planning of the Netherlands. The vision is part of the new **Environmental** Act, which must come into effect in more than a year, intended for a ""good balance between utilizing and protecting the physical environment"".

The question is whether this will work, says Kees Linse, chairman of the national Commission for **Environmental** Impact Assessment (EIA). His committee recently issued advice on the environmental impact report that accompanies this vision, which describes what consequences the spatial choices will have for the environment. Linse: “I respect the ambitions in the vision. There is no beating around the bush. It describes the areas in which something needs to be done: climate, economy, cities and agriculture. But the question is whether all ambitions can be achieved simultaneously. It is difficult to fit all these feet in one shoe. Our question is: where is the problem?""

The information in the environmental report is ""insufficiently specific"" to determine whether all goals with the scarce space are actually achievable; the government must therefore ""adjust"" the report, the committee believes. Take economic growth. This will be accompanied by the growth of mobility such as aviation, shipping and other traffic. The environmental vision believes it can be based on a circular and low greenhouse gas economy, ""where economic growth and environmental pressure are decoupled"".

But mobility growth ""can collide with energy and climate, the available space in the Netherlands, nitrogen-sensitive nature, the accessibility of cities and regions and people's health,"" the committee notes. ""These effects are not sufficiently understood,"" says chairman Linse from the Commission. ""You cannot simply eliminate the consequences of economic growth by saying: we are all going to work from home.""

The EIA committee recommends conducting ""crash tests""; experiments to determine where interests conflict. For example, what are the effects of building a million homes in the next ten years? ""We are building as much as possible within existing urban areas, so that we are open preserve spaces and greenery between cities,"" the preliminary environmental vision states.

But anyone who builds all homes within existing cities increases the risks of poorer air quality, noise pollution, opportunities for exercise and green areas. And what are the effects on landscape, nature and accessibility if you decide, for example, to build 20 or 40 percent of those necessary homes outside the urban area? ""An analysis is missing here,"" the committee says. Or take the effects of sustainably generated energy. The environmental vision preferably wants to have solar panels installed on roofs. But if that produces too little energy, more solar meadows will have to be created. Is there room for this? Something like this has ""significant landscape effects"", according to the advice.

'Nature-inclusive' agriculture

The final dilemma: the pursuit of both emission-free circular agriculture, good for halving national nitrogen deposition, and land-based, ""nature-inclusive"" agriculture. These targets ""seem difficult to reconcile"", according to the advice. For example, nature-inclusive agriculture is ""certainly not emission-free"". On the other hand, animal welfare can be compromised with emission-free agriculture, ""because fresh air in the stable and outdoor enclosures or grazing in closed systems is not possible"". Conclusion of the advice: ""Smart combinations of functions are necessary to achieve goals, but have not yet been researched enough.""

The Ministry of the Interior ""appreciates"" the advice and will respond in a letter to Parliament in February, a spokesperson said.

The effects of growth in mobility have not been sufficiently mapped out

Kees Linse, committee chairman

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319 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Building with less hassle

NRC.NEXT

March 18, 2016 Friday

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Section: economics; Page 22-23

Length: 943 words

Byline: By our editorJos Verlaan

Body

environmental code

Municipalities are already anticipating the new **Environmental** Act that the Senate will soon adopt. This leads to less bureaucracy. Or not.

The Hague. Project leader Jeroen Traudes of the municipality of Leiden calls the introduction of the **Environmental** Act radical for the entire official organization. Civil servants who are used to running their own business, for example the environment, now have to work together with their colleagues from nature management. Or that of spatial planning. ""And the **Environmental** Act places other, more drastic requirements on civil servants when thinking about the future of the city,"" says Traudes. ""Civil servants must dare to think about the 'state of the city' in 40 years!""

Leiden already works with the **Environmental** Act, which is not expected to be introduced nationally until 2018. The Senate will decide on it this month. The law bundles all legislation and regulations in the field of spatial planning, the environment and the living environment. This should result in less bureaucracy, shorter procedures and more effectiveness for municipalities. The Crisis and Recovery Act introduced in 2010 will be included in the new law. In practice, this should mean that industrial estates, for example, can be more easily converted into residential areas. Without the current hassle of complicated objection procedures and participation.

Responsible minister Melanie Schultz (Infrastructure & Environment, VVD) effortlessly guided the law through the House of Representatives last June, only GroenLinks and the Party for the Animals voted against. The Senate was more critical this week, but Schultz does not have to fear the law's passage.

It does not end there, because there will be many additional regulations, such as those regarding the powers of provinces and municipalities. About environmental criteria that apply to all municipalities. Or about the way in which objection periods and consultation procedures are arranged.

But local experiments with the new law are already underway. Leiden is working with nine neighboring municipalities on a so-called environmental vision, to replace the current structural vision. And just as the structural vision is now the basis for the zoning plan, the environmental vision is the basis for the future environmental plan. This will then replace the current zoning plan.

City conversations

""Just like the zoning plan, this structural vision regulates spatial planning policy,"" says Traudes. ""The environmental vision goes further. It is about the organization of society. So also about the environment, sustainability, nature protection, the long-term consequences of aging , education, sustainability or mobility. How do Leiden residents want to grow old? Should the city invest further in high-quality education and what is required for this?"" Officials took to the streets in Leiden to ask how residents would like to experience their city in 2040. And what the government must do to make that possible.

In Utrecht, too, work is being done on an environmental vision based on the new law and city discussions and 'initiative cafés' are being organised. ""These city conversations are discussions about themes that we are working on as a municipality,"" says planner Martine van Rijn of the municipality of Utrecht. Here too, the law means an official cultural change.

“Will civil servants from different disciplines be able to work together? Civil servants who have never looked over each other's fence before now have to do so. Those who are currently involved in spatial planning at city hall will soon also have to know what their environmental colleagues are doing with air pollution and traffic. And vice versa. This requires a cultural change that must become a reality in 2018.""

Experts point to gaps in the law. Because who has the say in conflicts has not been determined, says assistant professor Daniel Korsse of Utrecht University. ""It is unclear who has the final say: municipality, province or, as a last resort, Brussels.""

""A lot of work has been done in a short time,"" said Professor Tonny Nijmeijer of Radboud University Nijmegen during a hearing on the bill at the end of last year. To immediately add: ""so much for the kind words"". Because although numerous laws are bundled, according to Nijmeijer this will hardly result in simpler procedures or less bureaucracy.

A concern that Senator Petra Stienen (D66) shares. ""The new law must contribute to a healthy living environment, cleaner air and clean water. The minister must provide guarantees for this."" According to Stienen, Schultz must also ensure that municipalities record the climate agreements of the environmental summit in Paris in the environmental plans.

The lack of these additional regulations is a sore point for most factions in the Senate. The PvdA wants a guarantee that the four so-called General Administrative Measures, in which the additional rules are laid down, will also be submitted to the Senate. ""If these are insufficient, the legislation can still be blocked,"" said PvdA senator Lambert Verheijen.

According to GroenLinks senator Marijke Vos, the additional regulations are a tangle of ""hundreds of pages that can hardly be understood by almost anyone.""

In Leiden, too, we have to wait and see how the law will work out. “We still have a way to go officially. A lot of data is floating around the organization in fragmented form. And the data exchange between municipalities also leaves much to be desired. We have no maps of Wassenaar or Voorschoten here. And that will probably be the case the other way around.""

Officials take to the streets with the question: how do residents want to experience the city in 2040?

The new law does not specify who has the say in conflicts

Graphic

A new shopping center will soon rise behind this playground in Leidschendam. With the new **Environmental** Act, municipalities will soon - if all goes well - have less trouble with bureaucracy.

Load Date: March 17, 2016

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323 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Citizens don't build crazy things

NRC Handelsblad

September 21, 2012 Friday

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Section: Domestic

Length: 1174 words

Byline: Arjen Schreuder

Body

RESUME

The minister wants municipalities to start building the Belgian way: without rules. They are trying it in Boekel in Brabant. As it turns out, it won't be a mess.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Prosperity has become a dirty word. Anyone who builds a house in Boekel in East Brabant does not have to submit their plan to a building design committee. It doesn't exist. You can build whatever you want.

""Really everything?"" Minister Schultz van Haegen wants to know. ""And what if someone wants to build a large organic office building here in the middle of the village, such as the KPMG building along the highway in Amstelveen?""

Councilor Ted van de Loo: ""We do have a zoning plan that states something about functions, maximum heights and building lines, but the external appearance of houses is free."" Conclusion: ""Boekel is synonymous with deregulation.""

In eight prosperous years, several hundred houses were built in the rural community. And don't think it has become a mess, says mayor Pierre Bos. The Boekelse administrators drive Minister Schultz van Haegen (Infrastructure and Environment, VVD) to a neighborhood where construction has taken place with and without building supervision. The differences are negligibly small. Van de Loo: “Citizens don't do crazy things. There has never been an excess."" After all, people still want to be able to sell their house. And a little variety is desirable. ""We ask project developers to build in a varied way,"" says the municipal secretary.

Minister Schultz van Haegen is happy with what she sees. She would like nothing more than to cut down the forest of rules in spatial planning. ""It is nice to see that we have already been overtaken by practice in The Hague. The skeptics are wrong. I don't see any purple castles. I don't see any clutter in the landscape."" Well, in Boekelse Kerkstraat someone painted an entire facade with a protest slogan after an argument with the municipality.

The minister is working on what the department calls 'the largest legislative operation' ever. A new **Environmental** Act will be introduced. Fifteen existing laws will be incorporated, as will parts of other laws, and two laws will disappear. The **Environmental** Act must reduce delays and costs during construction. So that, as with the construction of Utrecht Central Station, it does not take 26 weeks just to temporarily relocate shops. “It's crazy,” said the minister.

Hordes of civil servants and advisors are now drafting the new law. A concept should be ready by the end of this year. The law will be submitted to the Council of State for advice next spring. Then there are practical tests, standards are set, and the law is incorporated into measures. And then in about five years the rules should apply to everyone.

The law must stimulate construction, but also guarantee a safe and healthy living environment. According to the minister, the ""essence of the law"" is that administrators can respond ""flexibly"" to changes, such as a shrinking population in rural areas or, in cities, a desperate need for housing in vacant office buildings or abandoned factory sites. ""Where the initiative lies in society itself.""

The examples are there for the taking. In Steenwijk, the construction of more than three hundred hectares of new nature was completed six months earlier because the province, municipality and water board jointly presented the plans and completed the consultation process. ""We have finely coordinated all procedures,"" says councilor Henk Boxum. ""Unique."" When rebuilding the old city, Hoogeveen no longer bases itself on prosperity, but on the ""quality"" of a particular location. Councilor Anno Wietze Hiemstra: ""We say: build a nice plan, as long as you keep in mind the broad outlines sticks to our ideas about that."" This means, for example, that a characteristic chimney of a former dairy factory will remain standing.

The **Environmental** Act offers local administrators more ""room for consideration"". Officials must stop ""checking off standards"", because as a municipal council you must be able to deviate from them. The **Environmental** Act introduces the concept of ""positive proportionality"". So that the councilor can say to the citizen: you will deteriorate in terms of noise pollution, but light, views and social safety will improve. Former minister Ed Nijpels (VVD), advisor for the new law: ""You must be able to establish a noise standard locally, as long as the quality of life as a whole improves.""

Boekel is considered a forerunner. In several ways. Certified architects in Boekel do not have to wait eight to fourteen weeks for a building permit, but receive the permit immediately at the counter. That saves time and money.

Due to the lack of aesthetic supervision and the rapid building permit, the Kandelaars family's house in Boekel was ready about three months earlier than usual. And the legal costs are lower. ""It saved me a few thousand euros,"" says Jeroen Kandelaars, a satisfied citizen who has been living in a partly self-built house for a year. ""And fortunately the glass was already in place before the winter.""

The joint welfare committees in the Netherlands prefer not to hear about ""radical experiments"" such as in Boekel. Director Flip ten Cate of the Welstand Federation: ""The fact that no excesses occur in Boekel does not mean that they will not occur elsewhere in the country."" ""Social control in Boekel is apparently very high. It seems as if they all have the same supplier of stones and roof tiles.""

Ten Cate knows plenty of examples of ""mixed bags"" where the view of local residents has been ruined. ""Does that benefit the value of a city? The value of a house?"" He didn't think so. Some form of supervision remains necessary. Preferably through politics. Ten Cate: ""Give a councilor the space to say yes or no to a construction plan. In all openness.""

'I don't see any purple castles. I don't see any clutter

Belgian situations

""Some people are afraid that our orderly country will become messy if the government interferes less,"" said Minister Melanie Schultz van Haegen in her Planning Lecture this year. ""No Belgian situations, we hear."" She calls that fear unfounded.

In Belgium, the division between city and countryside is less clear than in the Netherlands. Project developers, local authorities and citizens in Belgium have more freedom to build what and where they want.

Schultz said in her speech that it is ""no problem that the Netherlands is fully built up"", if that means that people feel at home. According to the minister, the Dutch fear of 'clutter' ignores something much more important: freedom. Schultz: ""My dream is that everyone has as much space as possible to make their own choices. My dream is to provide space.""

The new **Environmental** Act, which is mentioned in the election manifesto of both VVD and PvdA, should help with this. Freedom has traditionally been the source of prosperity, engineering and commercial spirit. ""To maintain this for the Netherlands, our country must not be governed by a centralized rule machine,"" the minister said.

Graphic

A Boekelaar protests on the facade of his building. But the municipality is not familiar with clutter, says Minister Schultz.

Photo Vincent van den Hoogen

Load Date: September 21, 2012

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327 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The big cities are going to change drastically: fewer cars, more high-rise buildings and radical greening

De Volkskrant.nl

March 26, 2021 Friday 07:25 AM GMT

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Length: 1830 words

Byline: Mac van Dinther

Body

All major cities in the Netherlands are busy making their plans for the future. Amsterdam and Utrecht took the lead. What will change in the city? 'A new museum should no longer be located on Museumplein, but in Zuidoost or Nieuw-West.'

Far fewer cars, more high-rise buildings, radical greening: the major cities of the Netherlands will drastically change their appearance over the next 25 years. City residents are in for nothing less than a revolution, says urban planner Wouter Veldhuis, member of the Board of Government Advisors that advises the government on spatial developments.

In the run-up to the new **Environmental** Act, which will come into effect next year, all major cities are busy making their future plans. Amsterdam and Utrecht recently opened the ball with their vision of what the city should look like in twenty to thirty years.

The plans differ in parts, but the direction is the same. Amsterdam wants to grow into a 'human metropolis', a vital, liveable and green city. Utrecht profiles itself as a '10-minute city' where everything people need is within reach.

These are prospects that will be put into practice in the coming years. One thing is clear: anyone who lives or visits the city cannot count on being able to park their car on the street in the future. And even the cyclist has to watch his step: 'The bicycle is starting to become the new car.'

1. Up high

There will be a lot of construction in the coming years. Amsterdam wants to build 150 thousand homes by 2050, Utrecht 60 thousand by 2040. As far as the cities are concerned, these new homes will be within the current city limits. 'Densification' is the key word: more people closer together. That also means going up.

In Amsterdam there is room for high-rise buildings up to 70 meters along railways and the IJ. At major stations such as Amstel, Zuid and Sloterdijk it can be even higher. In the city center of Utrecht, the Dom Tower (112.5 meters) is the limit, says D66 councilor Klaas Verschuure of Spatial Development. 'It is sacred.' Further from the center, in Leidsche Rijn, there will be a tower of 140 meters high.

“The time for building in the meadows is over,” emphasizes Amsterdam councilor Marieke van Doorninck (GroenLinks). The city must be careful with what greenery remains. For the climate of course, ecology and biodiversity. But also for Amsterdam residents to go outside. 'Living in the city is efficient and sustainable, because it allows you to provide facilities for large groups of people at the same time. You don't need the car for that and it also takes up less space.'

Utrecht chooses to build around new urban nodes. Expansion outside the city is at the bottom of the wish list, says Verschuure. Inner-city construction is complicated, he agrees. 'But let's not pretend that things happen much faster outside the city. Before you can start working there, it will take ten to fifteen years.'

Van Doorninck agrees: 'Building in the meadows is attractive and cheap for project developers, but it is expensive for society. Because who will build roads and provide facilities in those new residential areas?'

This is the final farewell to the vinex, the construction of expansion districts around the city that was initiated last century, says urban planner Veldhuis. 'There is still the idea in politics that we should build more single-family homes. But the Netherlands has more than enough of those. If you look thirty years ahead, you see that there is a great need for urban living environments for single households, seniors and young professionals.'

The last Vinex districts are still being completed, Veldhuis emphasizes. 'That shows how long it takes for changes in the field of spatial planning to take place. If you rely on the current housing shortage, you will soon be too late to make adjustments.' He thinks densification is a logical choice, but adds a warning. 'The Achilles heel of high-rise buildings is what they look like at street level. You must avoid looking at parking garages and storage areas on the ground floor.'

2. Get out of the car, continue on foot

The car is increasingly disappearing from the street scene. Amsterdam is eliminating ten thousand parking spaces until 2025. Busy motorways are being transformed into cycle streets where cars are guests. In the city, 30 kilometers per hour for cars will become the norm.

In Utrecht, the number of applications for parking permits is already decreasing, says Verschuure. Where the car disappears, space becomes available for something else. Parking spaces can be converted into bicycle sheds, playgrounds or community gardens. From now on, residents will park their cars in a nearby parking garage, visitors from outside will park in a 'hub' on the edge of the city and then continue by bicycle or public transport.

That is a huge change, says Van Doorninck. ""But the car really has far too great an influence on the city."" Not only because of the space that all that tin takes up (""Cars are on the street 95 percent of the time""), also because of the unsafety that cars cause for cyclists and pedestrians. Removing the car may be a sacrifice for many, according to the Amsterdam councilor. “What you get in return is a pleasant living environment.”

In Utrecht, a car-free neighborhood is already being built, in the Merwedekanaal zone. That is the future, says Verschuure. City residents who really want a car will now have to walk or cycle a bit to get to their car. But they prefer to use the bicycle, public transport or shared cars that are becoming available everywhere. Utrecht is building a ring of public transport hubs around the city where you can switch to other means of transport.

It sounds like a logical choice. Yet it is a 'revolution', says Veldhuis. 'For the first time, cities are choosing walking and cycling as the dominant form of transport. The business community has always done everything it can to maximize car accessibility. Both cities now say: that is over.'

Looking further, the urban planner already sees a new conflict emerging: 'A battle arises between pedestrians and cyclists in busy places in the city. What used to be a busy car street has now become a scary bicycle street.'

Cyclists will also have to deal with the new reality that they have to park their two-wheeler centrally and have to continue on foot, says Van Doorninck. 'People have to learn that they can no longer park their bicycle everywhere they need to be.' Whether that will work is the question, says Veldhuis: 'I think it is easier to get people out of the car than to ask a cyclist to do so. pedestrian.'

3. More city centers

Amsterdam and Utrecht both have a beautiful historic city center. But if you pile all the facilities in the center, it will become overcrowded, Van Doorninck warns. “The city center is becoming overloaded, the balance is gone.”

Amsterdam therefore wants to build three new city centers in Nieuw-West, Zuidoost and Noord. Osdorpplein, Amsterdamse Poort and Buikslotermeerplein must become new city centers, each with their own character. This also includes metropolitan facilities, Van Doorninck emphasizes. 'A new museum should no longer be located on Museumplein, but in Zuidoost or Nieuw-West.'

The old city center, with the Dom as its center, remains the heart of Utrecht, Verschuure assures. But new city centers are being developed around it in Leidsche Rijn, Papendorp, Westraven, Lunetten-Koningsweg, Overvecht and Science Park. These must become a mix of living, working, greenery and facilities. 'I don't want to say that there should be a theater or a large cinema everywhere, but there will be sufficient facilities for the thousands of people who will live there.'

That is a striking change of course, says Veldhuis. 'Until now, cities had a policy of expanding their inner city.' As a result, wealthy city center residents took up more and more space and poorer residents were pushed to the outskirts. 'I see the new centers mainly as a way to give weaker neighborhoods a new impetus and to ensure that life is also worth living for the residents who already live there.'

According to him, the construction of new city centers is also a logical consequence of the call for more urban living environments. 'Because the historic city centers are limited in space, it is necessary to create new places.'

In addition to developing new city centers, Amsterdam also wants to make the city center attractive again for 'ordinary' people, says Van Doorninck. 'It is now very much aimed at tourists. The baker and the butcher must return to the street. There must be support for that. We can ensure this by repurposing space that becomes vacant for housing instead of something else.'

4. Anarchist green

By taking the car out of the city, there will be room for greenery. These are not large contiguous areas, warns urban planner Veldhuis. 'That is mainly green.' It is impossible for municipalities to manage all those places and it is far too expensive.

That is ideally something to leave to residents, says Veldhuis. 'Radically greening a city is only feasible if you dare to entrust management to residents. But then as a municipality you have to say goodbye to the idea that everything has to look like a raked park. You have to dare to unleash some anarchy. This requires a cultural change within the municipal apparatus.'

According to Verschuure, a lot has changed in that regard in recent years. 'Removing a paving stone and putting in a plant: ten years ago we still had a hard time about that. Now we are encouraging that.' Utrecht is investing a total of 1.6 billion in more greenery.

It must be prevented that a few local residents live out their green dream and the rest suffer from it, says Van Doorninck. But the freedom is there in principle. 'Maybe it will look slightly different than we had imagined. But we now also know that biodiversity benefits more from messy greenery than from a neat park. As a city you have to deal with this in a relaxed manner.'

Financing all these great ambitions is still a challenge, Veldhuis warns. By eliminating parking spaces, cities lose an important source of income, while greening actually results in additional costs. “That works both ways.”

Money is a thing, agrees Utrecht councilor Verschuure. 'We have calculated that if we do everything we plan to do, we will need 7.1 billion euros. We cannot do that alone. We desperately need a contribution from the government for this.' Amsterdam has not provided a cost estimate, says Van Doorninck. 'But I wholeheartedly support that call. The government has asked cities to help solve the housing challenge. We are happy to do that. But it does take something.'

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Load Date: March 26, 2021

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331 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Hague is trudging along digitally

NRC.NEXT

April 14, 2020 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 14

Length: 1041 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Politics

The regular work of the House of Representatives is slowly getting back on track. But digital meetings are not the same as a physical meeting, MPs say. And certainly not when the government bends the agenda to its will.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Meetings at a distance of one and a half meters or using a laptop: parliament and the Constitution are not designed for that. ""Thorbecke could not have known this,"" says Senate President Jan Anthonie Bruijn (VVD).

The Binnenhof is hard at work looking for ways to continue functioning in times of crisis, now that the corona restrictions can last for months or longer. ""There is no doubt that parliamentary democracy must remain intact,"" says Bruijn, himself ""half-time Senate chairman, half-time doctor and professor"" at the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC). The question is how this can be done safely and legally.

The answer is different everywhere. Municipalities, provinces and the Caribbean island councils have been allowed to temporarily meet and make decisions digitally since last week - thanks to a simple change in the law. Things are less easy for the Senate: the rules of the Senate are laid down in the Constitution. This prescribes that sufficient senators must be 'present'. The Council of State must now determine how broadly or modern this can be interpreted. In the meantime, the senators continue to meet once a week - in small numbers, one and a half meters apart.

Chock full

The task is greatest for the House of Representatives, where the agenda is normally chock full. Little came of this last month: of the three weekly meeting days, one remained, entirely devoted to tackling the coronavirus. Physical debates were replaced by written consultations.

That is about to change. Chamber Chairman Khadija Arib announced in a letter on Thursday evening that more space is slowly being freed up for regular Chamber work. This means that the House will soon be able to meet physically two days a week again. The Oude Zaal, the debate hall of the House of Representatives until 1992, will also be opened again. The measures must lead to ""a good balance between the continuity of the parliamentary process and care for the health of MPs, employees and journalists,"" Arib writes.

This is a relief for MPs who have mainly met digitally in recent weeks. ""You don't get any energy from dialing in through your screen,"" says Henk Nijboer (PvdA). ""It remains unpleasant that you cannot look your colleagues in the eye,"" says Joël Voordewind (Christian Union). the consultation by video connection. ""You miss the body language, you no longer see the wink when making a comment.""

Empty corridors

It remains to be seen. According to the Constitution, a minimum number of members (the quorum) must also be present in the House of Representatives during the corona debate days: 76. This would not be appropriate in the plenary hall. As a solution, all factions delegate one or two MPs, while the rest register with their Chamber pass and then stay in the office or leave again.

Interested parties who want to follow the digital meetings of the committees have so far been out of luck: they have not been able to watch, but have to wait for a written summary that will be published at the end of the week. There will now be a listening connection for journalists, Arib promises. It is not possible to watch.

This is how The Hague functions in the corona era: democracy continues, but everything feels different.

The corridors are empty, informal appointments and get-togethers between MPs, like most meetings, take place digitally - unless there is no other option. When Voordewind had a confidential Defense meeting with his colleagues within the coalition last week, calling or Skyping was not an option. ""We did not dare to do that because of confidentiality, so we made an agreement at the ministry,"" he says. ""Well, neatly two meters apart, of course.""

But it was mainly the agenda of the House of Representatives that caused discord in recent weeks. According to many parliamentary groups, the cabinet allowed itself a lot in filling the scarce space. Asked for an overview of legislation that had priority ""given the restrictive circumstances"", the cabinet provided an Excel list of 84 'urgent bill proposals' that should be dealt with before the summer - much more than the House had in mind .

That's what you get, according to an insider from the coalition, if you ask ministers which laws in their department they would like to have approved quickly.

""The cabinet thinks: this is a crisis and we can take advantage of that,"" says Ronald van Raak (SP). ""First the cabinet rightly imposes restrictions that ensure that we can hardly meet. Then they try as much possible to guide laws through the House. Those ministers are misbehaving.""

""A mess,"" PvdA member Nijboer calls the cabinet list. ""If you can hardly meet, you don't expect the cabinet to roll out the whole shit cart."" Many of the laws can hardly be called urgent, he says. Take a law that restricts Airbnb rentals, says Nijboer. ""As if someone is taking advantage of that now.""

Postponement 'due to corona'

The cabinet had already created suspicion by requesting a postponement in a number of headache files - the opening of Lelystad Airport, the **Environmental** Act, the implementation of the climate goals in the Urgenda judgment - by citing the coronavirus.

At his press conference after the Council of Ministers on Friday, April 3, Prime Minister Mark Rutte showed guilt after the criticism from the House. ""What I don't want,"" he said, ""is that atmosphere as if we want to rush through things quickly."" He promised to ""sieve"" the cabinet's list of priorities again.

The House of Representatives has already taken on that task. Of the 84 proposals, fewer than ten have so far been scheduled, so that there is still enough room for the proposals that the House itself makes. The cabinet can request a postponement and make proposals. But the agenda is what the House itself is about.

The government thinks: this is a crisis and we can take advantage of it Ronald van Raak Member of Parliament (SP)

Link to PDF

Graphic

Johan Rudolph Thorbecke, author of the 1848 constitution.

Illustration Jet Peters/image Johan Heinrich Neuman, 1852/Rijksmuseum

Load Date: April 13, 2020

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335 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Exploding construction activities: has A'dam been put up for sale?

NRC Handelsblad

June 17, 2017

NH Saturday

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Section: Domestic; Page 8

Length: 226 words

Body

The existing city within the Ring condenses and petrifies. We recognize ourselves in the article of June 3 about the residents in West. Construction activities are exploding within the Amsterdam Ring. In addition to new construction, old buildings are being basementd and topped up. Five years ago it was mainly owner-occupiers who renovated houses, but now we see more private investors. They want to make money quickly and have little interest in building a good relationship with their neighbors. For the sake of understanding: we would like to see our neighborhood being renovated. But preferably regulated, without subsidence of adjacent buildings, flooding, petrification of the courtyards and construction noise from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

We ask the municipal council for good stewardship of the existing city. Develop an urban Delta Plan with careful permitting, supervision of the quality of the built environment and the construction process and green courtyards. Such a plan is all the more important now that new laws such as the Private Quality Assurance Act and the **Environmental** Act create a greater freedom of regulation and place more responsibilities on construction clients. We have been waiting for more than two months for an answer to our petition with 125 signatures. Amsterdam councilor Van der Burg remains silent.

Christine van Rooijen and Fike van der Burght, Amsterdam

Load Date: June 16, 2017

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339 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Restoring the resilience of the delta requires a vision from Rutte

NRC Handelsblad

November 2, 2017

NH-Thursday

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Section: Opinion; Page 18

Length: 823 words

Byline: Han Meyer

Body

ABSTRACT

Urbanization and safety in the delta require a large-scale spatial policy. A cry for help and a suggestion from forty other experts.

Delta landscapes have enormous resilience. They can absorb large amounts of precipitation relatively easily. After storms, they can quickly recover and adapt to sea level rise or increased river water discharge. This dynamic is also the basis for a wealth of fish species, shellfish and birds. Deltas thus form a pivotal point in global ecosystems.

But worldwide, delta landscapes are losing their resilience. Recent natural disasters in New Orleans, Houston, Bangladesh and Mumbai show what the depleted resilience of the natural delta system – combined with uncontrolled urbanization – can lead to.

But the Dutch delta is also losing resilience. Due to urbanization, embankment, canalization of rivers, damming, drainage and dredging of shipping channels, the absorption and adaptation capacity has sharply decreased and ecological wealth has been decimated.

The pressure on the delta will only increase as the Netherlands faces a major renovation in the coming decades. From new urban growth in the west – hundreds of thousands of new homes – to the energy transition and sustainability of agriculture. Plus further preparations for increasing extreme precipitation, drought, sea level rise and peak river discharges.

Each of these renovations will have major consequences for the spatial planning of the Netherlands. It is not possible without coordination and coherence. Then there is a threat of fragmentation and loss of the spatial qualities of our landscapes and cities.

On a local scale, the Delta Program has been combining dike reinforcement or river widening with urban expansion or nature development for several years: the new 'Waalsprong' near Nijmegen, the 'Zandmotor' near Kijkduin and the new dunes and beach at the Hondsbossche Zeewering are good examples of 'building with nature'. But the new projects make policy necessary on a much larger scale, namely that of entire regions and of the entire Netherlands.

Strengthening spatial quality and resilience are a public, national interest and should be a main task of the new government. Because the improvement of nature and the environment is the key to a coherent spatial policy.

But The Hague has regarded 'nature' as a residual item for too long. Under Rutte I, 'nature' was even completely removed from the agenda; Afterwards it was taken up again hesitantly, but has yet to become anything but a central subject of policy.

A new round of Delta Works is needed, aimed at restoring the resilience of the natural system. Together with more than forty colleagues and colleagues from the world of science, design and technology, I therefore advocate the realization of a national, coherent 'green-blue framework' of 'delta nature' that extends from the Wadden Sea to Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. To strengthen the quality of the Dutch delta, but such a spatial structure can also provide direction for urban growth, sustainability in agriculture and the energy transition.

It requires mutual cooperation between various ministries and the Delta Program, as well as consultation with provinces, municipalities and water boards. Not easy, but necessary.

Who's turn? Dutch spatial planning policy was world famous. But the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) was abolished in 2010. 'Space' was transferred to the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (formerly VWS), where it has become virtually invisible. With the cabinet formation, 'Space' moved to the Ministry of the Interior.

The coalition agreement contains hardly a word about spatial issues and tasks. But there is a chance. In anticipation of the new **Environmental** Act, the government has announced that it will present a first National **Environmental** Vision (NOVI). This is the task of the new Minister of the Interior and Space. On behalf of the forty colleagues, I call on the new minister of this department to take up this task and to give direction to the major renovation of the Netherlands with a green-blue framework.

Recent design studies for the Southwest Delta, the IJsselmeer area and the peat meadow area in the Randstad have already indicated how safety, nature development, urban development, agriculture and spatial quality can be sustainably connected. The national government, provinces, municipalities and water boards can develop joint management for these three areas, as 'pilot projects' of the new National **Environmental** Vision. The Netherlands can once again become an appealing example internationally.

'Green-blue' framework from Wadden to Zeeland must give direction to the space

Han Meyer is professor of urban planning at TU Delft and author of The State of the Delta. Other signatories: nrch.nl/68x4

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343 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=These are not times for partygoers

NRC Handelsblad

October 27, 2017

NH Friday

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Section: Domestic; Page 10

Length: 913 words

Byline: Arjen van Veelen

Kees Versteegh

Body

ABSTRACT

They would be too white. Too gray. Deputy Prime Minister Hugo de Jonge gives a striking signal during the presentation of Rutte III. Mountain boots would have been better.

Image of the day

""Glitzy shoes on the platform photo,"" Teletekst reported. These are shoes from the Rotterdam brand Mascolori, RTL soon knew. Soft blue floral print, from the Winter Garden collection. They cost 199 euros.

Nonsense news, many thought. But we shouldn't stop talking about Deputy Prime Minister De Jonge's partygoers. Those shoes are about the heart of the matter.

“We are going for the best people,” said Rutte. Seven months after the elections, he had found them all. His cabinet was called too white and too gray. This cabinet portrait seems intended as a purely cosmetic answer to that question. Many primary colors. women splash like bright blobs of paint from the otherwise monochrome photo. Brightness! Diversity! We are not gray!

They are camouflage colors that mask representative poverty, but enough has been said about that. These are Hugo de Jonge's shoes.

Because the biggest political question of our time is not 'are you left or right' or even 'are you male or female' and of what color. The question is: are you a populist or not? Everything depends on that.

In America, our greatest friend and role model, there is a populist in power who is transforming the country into a commercial autocracy at a pace that makes experts dizzy.

The United Kingdom is dealing with the Brexit hangover, the ruins of populism.

Or think of Catalonia: who is going to tell those incited citizens there that as a separatist country they really cannot make a stand against the world? That they are not better off? Or who tells the Dutch that Europe is something beneficial?

Rutte was praised after the elections because he managed to turn back the populist wave, but for the time being, that's it. And the price he paid for it was high: he had become a bit populist himself.

His cabinet is a reflection of that half-heartedness, symbolized on the one hand by Halbe Zijlstra, who ridicules universal human rights but fought like a lion for Zwarte Piet. And on the other hand, Sigrid Kaag.

So a half-hearted government, which is not necessarily a bad thing: democracy is a wonderful system where after seven months you never receive exactly what you ordered online. But that compromise system is on the verge of breaking worldwide. And you have to choose.

Despite those Mondrian colors, this photo does not provide a clear answer to whether Rutte III will be a populist cabinet or not. The whiteness of the faces is actually a vague sign, but if you scan the photo for more signals, you will mainly see Hugo de Jonge's party shoes, with those floral patterns that Dutch men like to wear in the collars of shirts.

""We think it's cool that you speak out and show who you are."" According to the brand's website.

Never before has a cabinet photo been the place for product placement, but this is not a matter of etiquette or taste. Shoes don't say everything, but these are not times for partygoers. Mountain boots would have been more appropriate. Rigid combat boots if necessary.

Because these times call for solid, intrinsically motivated, incorruptible, extremely principled politicians, who do not so much shine their faces on TV, but who want to serve the national interest: men and women who know that it is their important task to make the people resilient against geopolitical viruses and against much better organized big money, who know that they sometimes have to protect the people from themselves - the time calls for politicians who dare to be unpopular.

We still have to get to know Hugo de Jonge. He was a primary school teacher, perhaps a popular one. But to the big test question of our time, 'are we going to be popular, yes or no?', he already gives the wrong answer with his choice of shoes.

That signal worries me. Those shoes need to be taken off immediately.

Arjen van Veelen writes in NRC about news photos.

Never before has a cabinet photo been the place for product placement

Home Affairs Kajsa Ollongren removes the **Environmental** Act from Infrastructure and the Environment

Kajsa Ollongren, the new Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister (D66), has made a flying start. When dividing tasks in the cabinet - the traditional land grab between ministers - she has secured important files. For example, the directorate that implements the **Environmental** Act will move from the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment to her department. The Housing Directorate, which had a separate project minister during Rutte II and was 'resident' at the Interior, now also falls directly under Ollongren.

The **Environmental** Act contains new rules for spatial planning, for example under what conditions homes may be built on former industrial sites. Because the involvement of local authorities in this is significant, the Ministry of the Interior will have more say.

It is still unclear the division of tasks in the digitization of all kinds of government tasks, the 'Digitalization of the State'. The Interior had an important role in this in the previous cabinet. However, it had to be shared with other departments, such as Economic Affairs. There is a chance that this task will now be done by one person. Officials involved in this operation see this 'monopolization' as a risk, because no one - except the Home Affairs Department - then feels responsible for carrying out the complex task.

Kees Versteegh

Graphic

King Willem-Alexander with the Rutte III cabinet, which presented itself at Noordeinde Palace on Thursday.

Photo Robin Utrecht/ANP

Load Date: October 27, 2017

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347 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The government can also make use of the corona crisis

NRC.NEXT

March 31, 2020 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 14

Length: 986 words

Byline: Rik Rutten

Dateline: The Hague

Body

ABSTRACT

Parliamentary silence

Files that suddenly get a boost or come to a complete standstill in the shadow of the corona crisis: the House is looking at them with concern. ""Public debate is the core of democracy.""

COMPLETE TEXT:

The debate halls are empty, the corridors deserted, the ministries deserted - but The Hague is anything but silent. Political work continues in the shadow of the corona news. In fact, there has also been movement in a series of controversial files in recent weeks, as if the parliamentary silence suited the cabinet.

For example, Minister Ank Bijleveld (Defense, CDA) acknowledged last week that the cabinet had - again - misinformed the House of Representatives about the air attack on the Iraqi city of Hawija, at a time when debate about this is not possible. Another surprise: the mega renovation of the Amsterdam Zuidas will cost up to a billion euros extra in times of recession. And there was the issue of Albania and North Macedonia: negotiations with those countries about EU membership could still start, after Minister Stef Blok (Foreign Affairs, VVD) suddenly put an end to years of Dutch resistance to this.

All fodder for parliamentary questions - but there is no question time at the moment.

Agenda cleared

On Sunday, March 15, the government announced that it would close schools and catering establishments and ban gatherings. That same evening, the party leaders in the House of Representatives also decided to limit their own activities via Pexip, the video calling program that MPs work with. The debate agenda has been cleared, combating the virus is given priority. But that does not mean that all these other topics will be at a standstill in the coming months.

Last Friday, the cabinet sent out a list of bills that cannot wait until the post-corona era: from the nationalization of ProRail to plans from the pension agreement. That will not be an easy task: except for the corona crisis, the House hardly debates. MPs are expected to provide their input through written question rounds.

FVD leader Thierry Baudet thinks this is undesirable. His objection: the House is not only a legislative machine, but also a stage. “Public debate is the core of democracy. Otherwise, the government can always say: our coalition still has a majority when we vote. Opposition, go home."" Take the U-turn on the EU talks with Albania and North Macedonia, he says. ""Maybe you as the House of Representatives cannot stop it, but then you have to have a discussion about it.""

In a motion last week, Baudet proposed declaring ""politically sensitive"" topics controversial as long as the corona crisis rages on. A pause button, as it were, he explains: ""Everything is on hold until we can continue."" The motion did not receive a majority. Besides FVD, only PVV, SGP and one-man faction Wybren van Haga supported the proposal.

Is the government taking advantage of the corona crisis to hastily implement unpopular legislation? It is not that simple, says Leiden constitutional law professor Wim Voermans. It is difficult to prevent the government from sharing bad news - such as the letters to Parliament about Hawija or the Zuidas renovation - at this time. There is no prior legislation for this. Moreover: ""Setting priorities is always a political process."" When it comes to the parliamentary agenda, it is essentially no different from what the House of Representatives does every Tuesday: jointly determine which topics do and do not deserve their own debate. "" Priorities are made every week, although the current order of magnitude is of course unprecedented.""

Needs 'a little more time'

Esther Ouwehand is not so concerned about the files that are being pushed, but rather about the issues that are completely at a standstill. ""Just look at the nitrogen crisis,"" says the party leader of the Party for the Animals. It seemed inevitable that the coalition would have to quickly take painful measures, but with the corona crisis the urgency has disappeared. This is also visible in the implementation that the cabinet must give in to the Urgenda verdict, which forces the Dutch state to take stricter climate measures.

Since the first verdict in that case - in June 2015 - the government's attitude has been marked by procrastination. After an earlier postponement, Minister Eric Wiebes (Economic Affairs and Climate, VVD) should have informed the House before April 1 how he intends to achieve the Urgenda goals. That will not work, he wrote in a letter to Parliament on Friday. Because of the coronavirus, ""extra care"" is needed when taking new climate measures, according to Wiebes, and that requires ""a little more time"".

Similar stories are circulating about the so-called **Environmental** Act, the planned decentralization of everything related to spatial planning and the living environment. This law is a headache for the Ministry of the Interior: its implementation has been difficult for some time, and the digitization of the legislation is full of flaws. A postponement to put things in order was obvious - although that is always painful for the cabinet. With the corona crisis, there is a ""grateful excuse"" to announce a postponement without political damage, says an insider.

Don't push through, but postpone: that is also a form of political opportunism. And it is precisely this reflex that the House must remain alert to by continuing its work, Ouwehand believes. This can also be done remotely.

According to her, there are even advantages to handling some files in writing. ""You can ask more questions in a written consultation,"" says Ouwehand. ""You are not bound by a speaking time as in an ordinary debate."" This is quite useful in the complex climate and environmental debates that she often conducts. ""Although it is easier to put pressure on a minister in a physical debate.""

Setting priorities is always a political process

Wim Voermans, professor of constitutional law

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Load Date: March 30, 2020

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351 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Cows or houses? Building on pasture splits a Frisian mound village

De Volkskrant.nl

January 4, 2021 Monday 05:51 PM GMT

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Length: 1936 words

Byline: Pieter Hotse Smit

Body

Governments are focusing on agricultural land even more than before to satisfy their 'land hunger'. In the Frisian town of Mantgum, less than one and a half hectares of meadow is the scene of the battle. “I fear war in every village, just like here.”

Next to the light poles of the Mantgumer Tennis Club is a boggy piece of grassland. The cows that graze there in the warmer months are kept in stables. If the construction plans of a group of fellow villagers go ahead, the cows in the meadow will have to make way for twelve luxury homes forever.

“No houses here, just COWS!” was the text on a flat cart that the Mantgumer farmer in question placed on “his” leased piece of land this summer. He does not want to talk to the Volkskrant, now that he is in a legal dispute with the municipal landowner about his lease agreement that has lasted more than twenty years.

In the Frisian terp village of Mantgum you see how a meadow of no more than one and a half hectares can suddenly divide a close-knit community of less than twelve hundred inhabitants. Because the municipality of Leeuwarden, which Mantgum merged with in 2018, suddenly wants housing on the agricultural plot.

The line of sight to the mound, which according to the opponents will be lost with the new construction, can be seen in the photo that the Leeuwarder Courant printed in August of the farmer's protest scene. Behind the tractor with trailer and sign is the church tower of the Frisian terp village. In between is visible the farmhouse of Herbert Schaap and his wife, who strongly support the farmer.

Just like fellow villager Nynke-Rixt Jukema, who has joined Schaap's farmhouse for a conversation. As an architect, Jukema sees that in more places in Friesland the characteristic countryside is being sacrificed for stone. The 'betrayal' surrounding her own village does not only upset her because it is another attack on the countryside. It especially affects her because it goes against many municipal and provincial intentions not to further pollute the view of the old landscape.

“Because people with money and connections want something, it happens anyway,” she says. 'We are now being dismissed as the whiners who are against everything. What kind of society do we live in then?'

Future land claims

The battle for the land at Mantgum is not an isolated event. This is taking place in several places in the Netherlands and will probably become more intense in the coming years. Especially now that agricultural land is being looked to even more closely to satisfy administrative 'land hunger'. After all, the rest has already been built on or protected.

In already hectic times around the farm, the question is how redistribution can be shaped peacefully. And what does this mean for Dutch export agriculture as we know it today?

Between 1950 and 2015, more than 500 thousand hectares of agricultural land were withdrawn from the sector, according to figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS): 2.3 million hectares became 1.8 million. Agriculture went from three-quarters of the land area of ​​the Netherlands to less than two-thirds. In the peak period from 1996 onwards, farmers gave up a piece of land as large as the area reclaimed from the sea in the last century: the Wieringermeer, Eastern Flevoland and the Noordoostpolder.

Add up all future land claims and another half million hectares of land will be needed by 2050 to realize all the plans. With nature and sustainable energy as the most important substitutes.

“It's time for all farmers to wake up!”, came the latest announcement of farmers' protests by Farmers Defense Force (FDF), the agitating wing among the angry farmers. 'This cabinet has only one goal: Land grabbing! Everything must make way for heavy industry, asphalt and concrete. Pollution.' To add: 'We-don't yield! We fight for our land. Our countryside.”

It is not only the more radical FDF farmers who suspect land hunger behind the government's plans to buy out livestock farmers because of nitrogen. More moderate farmers also see the new nitrogen law as another instrument to deprive them of more land. For the largest farmers' organization LTO Netherlands, the land issue is so sensitive in the run-up to the elections that it does not want to comment on it in the media.

Reducing agricultural area

Given the environmental and climate challenges that the livestock-dense Netherlands faces, the outcome will in any case be that agriculture will have to make a concession, according to emeritus professor of rural sociology Jan Douwe van der Ploeg. 'The crux is: should the Netherlands continue to export to the extent it is doing now?' And with three quarters of agricultural production going abroad. His answer: “No.”

Another emeritus professor from Wageningen, Rudy Rabbinge, calls the fact that a shrinkage of agricultural land would be harmful to Landbouw BV Nederland 'a myth'. “We can further increase production with half the agricultural land and at half the costs,” he is firmly convinced. 'Provided the best soils are retained for agriculture, high-quality products are chosen, but strict environmental requirements are also met.'

Historical figures show that it is possible: the decline in agricultural land in the last century was accompanied by increased production. Rabbinge does not advocate that the agricultural land that has been sacrificed can be blindly handed over to project developers. He proposes a large-scale reparcelling of the rural area. 'Troubled' agricultural land, on which production is now kept high through trickery and at the expense of the environment and living environment, would then be given a new purpose. Based on clear future choices, such as restoration of the cultural landscape and nature, but also the neat integration of sustainable energy and housing construction.

Taking less suitable agricultural land out of production to make room for other functions does not seem like a bad idea to agricultural expert Hans van Grinsven of the Netherlands **Environmental** Assessment Agency. But he doubts whether agricultural production can continue to grow. Due to the environment and biodiversity, more and more limits are being imposed on fertilization and crop protection and these are the necessary ingredients for further increasing production per hectare.

“It will also have to be in harmony with nature on very good grounds,” says Van Grinsven. 'This may conflict with the expectation that production can continue to rise. We need a change in both the production and consumption of our food. We must dare to question the large share of meat and dairy in our daily diet. It is not necessary for our health, but requires a lot of soil and water, and at the same time provides a lot of nitrogen.'

Van der Ploeg agrees and warns against Rabbinge's plan, which, according to him, mainly advocates a separation of agriculture and other functions. 'The Netherlands already has a hand in this: a strip of agriculture here, a strip of nature there and housing in yet another place. It is better to combine those functions in a smart way. If you adapt to local circumstances, this can also provide an exciting change in rural areas.'

He points to the Northern Frisian Forests, where an association with hundreds of farmers and private individuals between Drachten, Leeuwarden and Dokkum manages the farming landscape in harmony with nature and the inhabitants. According to him, it could serve as an example for a future Minister of Space, which is what retiring government advisor Berno Strootman recently advocated. Because Van der Ploeg also feels that the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), which was closed down in 2010, feels like 'an ungodly loss'.

At this point the experts find each other and receive support from former Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment Pieter Winsemius. In a recent publication in the magazine Vork, Winsemius, together with Rabbinge, points out the painful consequences of the lack of landscape policy. 'It is frightening how the famous Groene Hart has become largely moldy in recent decades due to ribbon development, misplaced distribution centers and greenhouse horticulture.'

Large-scale new construction

The Frisian terp village of Mantgum has not been spared from white mold, as the white new construction from the last century around old village centers is referred to. In the shape of the Amsterdam canal belt, the expansion districts are wedged in a semicircle around the mound.

The residents with new construction plans hope to stretch that belt just a little, with a plan that in their view fits in with the rural character of the old village. With a fruit orchard and houses designed after farm barns on the plot designed as a 'farmyard'.

In the barn of the Frisian farm in Mantgum, which has been converted into a living room, Schaap serves coffee with home-baked gingerbread. With architect Jukema, herself a farmer's daughter, he explains once again why the farmers' interests are also the residents' interests in this case. That there is more at stake than his view.

Schaap believes that fellow residents and the municipality have been fooled with the 'slick plans' and 'misleading information'. He is particularly angry that they do not fit in with the village vision, which states that there is a need for starter and senior homes. Preferably to be placed within the current buildings of Mantgum.

Schaap: 'If the municipality, as a lessor, can simply allow agricultural land to be cultivated, why shouldn't any farmer be allowed to do the same?' Jukema expects a precedent: 'I fear war in every village, just like here.'

Councilor Hein de Haan of the municipality of Leeuwarden emphasizes that the same expansion requests come from every village, but that nine out of ten times he says no. “The time for large-scale new construction in village centers is really over,” he says. 'Mantgum is an exception because it is a village with a station and a school. Small-scale expansion, organized by the residents, increases the quality of life and finally gets the housing market moving.'

For Schaap and Jukema, it shows what you get when 'the guardian of the public interest' withdraws from plan development and becomes 'blinded' by this so-called collective private commissioning (CPO) - official language for a construction initiative from the residents themselves. A way of working in the spirit of the new **Environmental** Act, which will come into effect from 2022, and makes planners themselves responsible for 'support'.

“If the government does not take control and leaves plan development to private individuals,” says Schaap, “then in a small village like Mantgum, residents with conflicting interests will find themselves diametrically opposed to each other.”

The initiators of the CPO building plans say they understand the concerns of the opponents, but also believe that they have done enough to address them and point out that the village representation - the Doarpsmienskip - agrees with the plans. Councilor De Haan thinks the same way and has few good words for the fierce resistance of the opponents. “Just because we don't agree with them doesn't mean we don't listen.”

He calls the project a textbook example of a bottom-up construction approach, where, in his words, the municipality facilitates and does not organize. “Now that we are moving towards decision-making, I understand that the temperature is rising somewhat,” says the councilor. “But they have had plenty of opportunities to contribute ideas.”

And the farmer? Should he just give up his fertile land after more than twenty years of lease? “That is the disadvantage of such a plan,” De Haan acknowledges. “It is the price you pay in the battle for space.”

Load Date: January 4, 2021

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355 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Play king

de Volkskrant

December 5, 2019 Thursday

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Section: Opinion and Debate; Page 19

Length: 776 words

Byline: ARIEJAN KORTEWEG

Highlight: Willem-Alexander visits the local government.

Body

Column in Raalte

Striding doesn't help, looking haughtily even less. The age-old law of theater states: you must play the king. This means that it is precisely the bystanders who make someone king through their behavior. Think of ironing, obsequious stuff.

But what if someone comes along who is really the king, just because of where his cradle was? Does it work that way?

This is just a thought in advance of the visit that King Willem-Alexander made to the town hall of Raalte on Tuesday. A rarity: the king never goes to the civil service and certainly not to municipal councils. Raalte had therefore won the main prize. The mayor will soon explain how that worked.

Everything is arranged exemplary in Raalte. There are just enough officers outside. There is one crush barrier and a barrier tape, behind which school children with flags. Everything ready for the king in his black car.

A striking appearance among those waiting in a pink overall and a hat that says Willem - the name of her deceased horse, she will tell later. Her daughters are also in pink. At her feet a sign reads: 'Here a farming family business dies.' Her name is Masja Mooren, she comes from Ruinen and her farm has a phosphate problem. She already spoke to the King during his visit to Veeningen. 'He promised me to send a representative to our company. It has come. But he did not send a letter to the judge. That's why we're here again.'

The king is already there, still with a fine reddish beard. And indeed, the king walks up to Masha, and Masha shows that she understands how to make someone king: she falls on one knee. His daughter Stacey gives him a drawing and they talk a bit.

You would like to know whether the king noticed the tapestry with a state portrait upon entering the town hall. Would he still find it strange to be looked at by his own image?

Mayor Dadema enthrones the king to immerse him in the civil service. What a smooth machine this is here in Raalte, what a benevolent cheerfulness there is in this town hall.

A table awaits with involved officials and citizens, there is a walk past departments that deal with energy transition, integration, and environmental law. The town hall appears to be populated by officials who tell stories without hesitation, who are congratulated exuberantly by their colleagues as soon as the King has taken up his heels. Phew, that went well.

They tell him about switching with scale, about doing green together, about working from the outside in, about the nineteen eavesdroppers who talk to residents, about mirrors from outside that are held up, about a new mindset in which the civil servant looks the citizen in the eye. , about residents who are also vision makers.

The king asks many appropriate questions. For example: a civil servant is not an alien being. He lives in the municipality. Why then so much pressure to go outside? That happens naturally, doesn't it? He also wants to know how many hectares of solar panels need to be installed to supply Raalte with power (248). The king appears to be well versed in decentralization and all its associated problems.

Finally, a conversation with the eight council faction leaders, who demonstrate great solidarity. So great that unity rather than any form of polarization seems to be the problem. In Raalte, connection is the magic word, and the council members also go out a lot. When solutions come from the bottom up, political differences tend to evaporate. The king apparently senses this and asks whether representative democracy can conflict with the idea of ​​participation.

A brief farewell, then the king departs for Assen, where public transport awaits, leaving the down-to-earth Raalte in a state of excitement and contentment. Great pride, that is the predominant feeling. Mayor Dadema explains 'how the seed for this visit was planted'. ""We knew that a medium-sized municipality where fun things were happening was being sought for a working visit,"" he says. What helped: Raalte has a positive attitude among the ministries. Moreover: Dadema was third in the Best Director election last year.

Masja Mooren is less happy. “He remembered me,” she says. 'And asked how it went. But when I said we can't get any further, his answer was: I can't do more.'

That's how it is. Our king creates a fine king, close to the people. But in the end he is also just a gentleman in a suit.

But what if someone comes along who is really the king, just because of where his cradle was?

View the original page: page 19

Graphic

Sharp questions.

Masja Mooren: the king still knew me.

What is it like to see yourself everywhere?

Load Date: December 4, 2019

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359 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Less asphalt: 'A greener neighborhood is also a nicer neighborhood'

NRC.nl

February 2, 2021 4:26 PM GMT

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Length: 1825 words

Byline: Wouter van Noort

Highlight: Neighborhoods that are nicer for people and for hedgehogs and bees - 'nature-inclusive neighborhoods' and 'green metropolises' are on the rise. But it also turns out to be hard work.

Body

“It is actually forbidden, but in the summer people sometimes secretly enjoy swimming here,” says resident Hilde Buis as she looks out over the small lake on the edge of her new housing estate: Vogelenzang in Rhenen. Her two children, aged two and four, are playing on a green field near a swing.

You understand that urge to swim. The lake seems more likely to come from a Scandinavian postcard than to match the actual location: right along a provincial road on the border between Gelderland and Utrecht.

Vogelenzang is one of the first 'nature-inclusive' neighborhoods in the Netherlands - a neighborhood in which greenery is a central part of the design. It is surrounded by a protected hilly forest area. The water is now a bit sparse and cold, but it is the middle of winter.

“The district was designed with the red deer from the surrounding forest in mind,” says architect Björn Bleumink of architectural firm BDP, which is designing more of these types of districts, including in Zeist and Putten. And a small park in the heart of the neighborhood acts as a ""sponge"" for excess rainwater, functioning as a ""green water storage"" where wild flowers, herbs and grasses can grow.

Specific plant species have been planted around the lake that can withstand fluctuations in the water level. “It is okay if the bank dries up, but also if the plants are flooded,” says Bleumink. Biodiversity and climate resilience are important, swimming is prohibited to protect the animals and plants in the lake.

Also read:

Vogelenzang is one of the few projects that has already been completed, but in recent months there has been a boom in green urban development plans in which nature and biodiversity are an important part of the design. For example, over the next ten years, the municipality of Arnhem will remove kilometers of asphalt and build parks, trees and neighborhood vegetable gardens to absorb the water from more extreme rain showers and to make the city cooler in the summer. And in Leiden and Oldenzaal, the scattered pieces of greenery around the canals are connected into elongated and continuous canal parks.

Rotterdam announced at the end of January that it will invest 233 million euros in 'greening' the city. The central Coolsingel and the Hofplein will partly become park-like promenades, and a large park will be constructed along the banks of the Maas, ""where new recreational and ecological opportunities will arise."" In recent months, ambitious (and expensive) plans have been announced from Almere to Amsterdam and Utrecht regarding greening and adapting to the changing climate.

Green networks

For the time being, the large Dutch cities are mainly made of stone, concrete and asphalt, but things are definitely changing, notes Harry Boeschoten of Staatsbosbeheer. There he developed the 'The Green Metropool' project six years ago, with the aim of connecting nature reserves in the Netherlands to greenery in the cities. A continuous network of green areas that is pleasant for people and nature - that was quite a challenge for years. “But you have clearly noticed more receptiveness to those ideas over the past year,” says Boeschoten. The pandemic also has something to do with that, he thinks. “We work from home more often, so we are in the neighborhood more often, and a greener neighborhood is also simply a nicer neighborhood.”

And yet there is something wrong: not everyone can live on the edge of a green and picturesque lake. Firstly, there are too few picturesque lakes, and secondly, too few rich people. In Vogelenzang there are an above-average number of Teslas in front of the door. It is a beautiful neighborhood, but the house prices are also there. A house overlooking the lake is now for sale on Funda, 202 square meters for 875,000 euros. These are city amounts.

Five major green projects

In Rotterdam, a completely new ecological city park is being constructed on the Nieuwe Maas: Park Maashaven.

In Leiden, the scattered greenery on the canals is connected into one large canal park.

Amsterdam is investing 26.5 million euros in 'radical greening' by, among other things, renovating parks.

Almere Haven should have several large green meeting places added by 2040.

In Arnhem, at least 10 percent of the asphalt must be replaced by grass and trees by 2030.

Harry Boeschoten thinks that his plan to connect and expand the existing green areas in the Netherlands can contribute to making green living more accessible to many more people. “We often tend to think in green places, and not in green networks,” he says. “While connecting green places is crucial for both people and nature. You could step into nature from your front door and walk through arteries of parks and greenery to the nature reserves outside the city. In addition, the construction of new forests naturally fits in beautifully with the development of that green network.”

According to various studies, connecting greenery would not only improve the quality of life, but it can also make the city cooler on hot days and provide some relief for declining biodiversity. “If you think from the hedgehog perspective, instead of just from the human perspective, connecting green areas is also a good idea,” says Boeschoten.

According to him, we now often regard nature reserves as a destination area – you go there specifically to walk. During corona times you notice that it becomes overcrowded. First everyone in the car, then en masse in the parking lot in front of the entrance to the forest. While: if you were to connect the green areas, the need for greenery would spread out more over space and time, and you would no longer necessarily have to get in the car for it.

Staatsbosbeheer is in discussions with several major cities to implement the ideas of its green metropolis. Boeschoten is also working with a project developer in Krommenie, North Holland, to build a nature-inclusive neighborhood there that is directly connected to the adjacent nature reserve.

Oak processionary caterpillar

Greener living sounds like a no-brainer at first glance. From cradle to grave, more nature in the immediate area is healthy: it provides more outdoor play opportunities for children and it provides more motivation to walk for the elderly. And more greenery can also be much more sustainable, climate-proof and biodiversity-friendly.

But of course there are still many serious problems to be solved before the whole of the Netherlands turns into a blooming green park. In recent decades, there has been considerably less greenery in the cities, so a lot of nature must first be created to realize such green ambitions. Although there are large amounts of government subsidies for sustainability from the various European and national corona recovery funds, it is not yet clear what they will be spent on.

You cannot yet live in an artist's impression of a beautiful green neighborhood, and it often happens during the construction process that cuts are made to the green ambitions - because they are often considered less essential than the bricks. Then, upon completion, projects appear to have become somewhat grayer than initially depicted.

Greenery also needs more water - including groundwater - and there is already a shortage of this in parts of the country during the increasingly drier summers. And, not pleasant for everyone: what is nice for a hedgehog is also nice for an oak processionary caterpillar. Radically greening neighborhoods means hard work, a lot of maintenance, adjusting the behavior of residents and getting used to nature again.

This requires new ways of collaboration between residents, municipalities, provinces, Staatsbosbeheer and project developers, says Boeschoten. “There is still too often talk of the 'topographic disease': the tendency not to think beyond the municipal boundary, the boundary of a nature reserve or the project boundary of the project developer. If we continue to think like this, you will never achieve green networks.”

So combine all these recent ambitious plans from the municipalities with residents' initiatives, he says. Actively involve them, just like local companies. Why couldn't garden centers label their plants more clearly, so that it is easier for residents to choose plants that really contribute to biodiversity or the bee population?

NK Tegelwippen

Architect Björn Bleumink also sees much room for better involving residents in maintaining greener neighborhoods in the long term. “Although you do see hopeful developments such as owner associations that jointly manage the greenery.”

'Bottom-up' and 'cooperative' are the key words for just about everyone working on this subject. The green project plans, brochures and policy documents are full of it. In that respect, a lot is also expected from the new **Environmental** Act that came into effect this year. This should make it easier for residents to come up with initiatives for creating neighborhood parks and managing new green areas. There are more and more subsidy schemes that provide for this, and rules for creating community gardens are slowly but surely being relaxed.

Remarkably, many of these initiatives gained momentum during the past corona year. For example, residents of Amsterdam and Rotterdam organized a competition between the two cities on their own initiative: which city could create the most facade gardens. During the 'NK Tile Wippen' event, it was recorded how many paving stones residents had removed to create a garden. The standings after one year: '010' beats '020' with 47,942 against 46,484. Not that this immediately creates a continuous green vein through the city, but many streets immediately look nicer and according to the initiators, such a garden is an important first step in involving citizens in greening cities.

'Great garden'

In short, there is something in the air about greener and more nature-friendly living. Various party programs for the upcoming House of Representatives elections contain major ambitions for green new construction, with the green Vogelenzang perhaps serving as an example.

And a lot is happening outside the Netherlands too. The Parisian Champs-Élysées will be transformed into “a great garden” by 2024 with many more trees and plants, more space for pedestrians and much less for cars and flashy shops. And Barcelona announced in January this year a radical plan to replace a third of the roads in residential neighborhoods with ""green zones"" with trees and plants over the next ten years.

It seems that the post-pandemic city will be a lot greener than it is now.

Graphic

The Vogelenzang district near Rhenen is one of the first 'nature-inclusive' neighborhoods in the Netherlands. Photo Vogelenzang BDP

Load Date: February 2, 2021

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363 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=No one has time for a say anymore

NRC.NEXT

February 4, 2016 Thursday

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Section: domestic; Page 8-9

Length: 984 words

Byline: By our editor Arjen Schreuder

Body

Life and living

The government wants citizens to think about what their environment looks like. But does he have the desire and time for that?, the SCP warns.

Amsterdam. The new **Environmental** Act promises a lot, but the government still has to fulfill those promises. Don't count outside the citizen! is the title of an essay that the Social and Cultural Planning Office presented to Minister Schultz van Haegen (Infrastructure and Environment, VVD) on Wednesday afternoon. It is advice on a huge legislative operation: replacing 26 laws with a single law for the living environment, and reducing 5,000 articles of law to 350.

The motto of the **Environmental** Act is 'Simply better'. There will be fewer rules and more room for ""involvement"" and ""cooperation"" of citizens.

The concept of 'participation society' has also penetrated spatial planning. But what sounds nice in theory may not work in practice, says Andries van den Broek, one of the authors of the report. ""There are high expectations and many good intentions.""

Van Kooten and De Bie

In their study, interspersed with numerous cultural references, the researchers compare the government's harmonious vision of the future with ""fun pong"": a sketch in which Wim de Bie tries to teach his colleague Kees van Kooten a variant of table tennis in which the game is played without net, without your own half, without scoring and above all: without a winner and without a loser. ""Pretpong is purely focused on the aesthetic pleasure of passing the ball to each other as beautifully, relaxed and gracefully as possible.""

Unfortunately, the researchers say, this cannot be the case in the debate about our own living environment. ""The design of the environment is not fun pong: it is indeed about the marbles, with winners and losers, excluding cases of wonderful win-win situations.""

The new **Environmental** Act makes it easier for citizens, just like companies, to submit plans for, for example, the construction of a tower block, a dormer window, a beach pavilion or the installation of a windmill, and local residents of such plans are also cordially invited to think about their ideal environment.

That's easier said than done. ""Participation does not come naturally,"" SCP director Kim Putters writes in the foreword. Because do we always feel like delving into our environment? ""Just like a herder can lead a horse to water, but not to drink. can force, the government can ensure that citizens have sufficient information, but cannot force citizens to inform themselves,"" the essay says.

The citizen is way too busy

And do we citizens have enough time? ""Citizens have to get involved in a lot these days,"" says Andries van den Broek. ""Citizens have to participate in the labor market; they have to spend their free time in an interesting way to strengthen their identity and self-esteem; they have to support their parents. take care of them when they are old; and the ink on our report was not yet dry when Minister Kamp said that citizens must now also start thinking about the energy of the future. The question is whether citizens are not being asked too much. It appears from the law an assumption that new potential can be tapped into citizens. But is that correct?""

According to the researchers, the government has ""not yet guaranteed"" that information about plans is always available. An ""important precondition"" for this is ""an independent, informative press that is focused on critical truth-finding"". Particularly at regional and local level, where the spatial debate is often conducted, such a press is ""increasingly less present"" and that is a ""worrisome development"".

Even more important is that in the debate about the living environment, richer, assertive and well-educated citizens have an advantage over citizens in, for example, disadvantaged neighborhoods or regions, and over ethnic groups. The SCP notes ""a difference in the ability to bear greater responsibility for one's own living environment"", and that is dangerous because it could widen the gap between the environment of the better-off and the less fortunate.

The Bible already said it

The SCP describes this ""accumulation of inequality"" as the ""Matthew effect"", after the evangelist's Bible text: 'For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have more abundantly; but whoever has not, from him shall be taken whatever he has.” Suddenly a windmill is within sight of a problem neighborhood, and a leafy residential area remains free of unwanted buildings.

Researcher Van den Broek: ""Inequality can arise. Take a highway through the city. On one side of the road, with the less good neighborhood, there is a noise barrier. While on the other side of the road, an architect who lives there can get a smart idea to build beautiful buildings with their backs to the road.""

So organize contradiction and awareness, is the motto. Don't just speak about the citizen in warm words, but actually enable him to inform himself, weigh and discuss this information, and respond to it. If not, you will get a law about which people are already complaining that it is mainly intended to give aggressive project developers or vulgar real estate cowboys free rein, at least without much hindrance from citizens. Without proper supervision, they are enabled to bend the general rules to their will.

The SCP also has a cultural-historical warning ready for this last danger; the researchers refer to the pop group Madness, which sings about the charms of 'how to bend not break the rule' in the song Baggy Trousers.

'In this debate, wealthier, assertive and well-educated citizens have an advantage'

If you don't arrange for participation, you give ordinary real estate cowboys free rein

Graphic

Action group GroenFront protested against the reopening of Twente airport in 2010. You cannot expect such actions to organize the living environment from all citizens, says the SCP.

Load Date: February 3, 2016

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367 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Call to reduce growth of 'distribution boxes'

NRC Handelsblad

October 29, 2019 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 5

Length: 718 words

Byline: Milo van Bokkum

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

ABSTRACT

Landscape

Stricter requirements must be imposed on the proliferation of large distribution centers, a group of leading consultants has concluded.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Only allow new distribution centers on existing industrial estates, and very exceptionally on land that is still 'green' - and then only in special 'clusters' of industrial buildings.

If the cabinet adopts the advice it receives this Tuesday from the Board of Government Advisors, this will have a major impact on the Dutch landscape and the logistics sector. And according to this advisory body for spatial planning, to which the Chief Government Architect also belongs, that is exactly what is needed to tackle the 'dumbing down' of the Netherlands.

Due to the growth of e-commerce and the favorable location of the Netherlands for transit to the rest of Europe, the number of large logistics buildings has increased significantly in recent years. Until 2016, the average distribution center was 7,000 square meters, but now it is almost 10,000 square meters - with peaks of more than 50,000. In 2019, almost two million square meters of logistics real estate were built. Demand is expected to remain high in the coming years.

The 'box growth' has already led to a debate, especially in the logistically strong south. The trend is already clearly visible in the areas around Tilburg, Venlo, Nijmegen and Roosendaal. Supporters emphasize the jobs that all these new buildings create.

Critics - including landscape architects, residents and opposition parties in municipal councils - mainly talk about gray, impersonal blocks of blocks that are simply flattened down and ruin the view. Minister Kajsa Ollongren (Home Affairs, D66) also recently wrote to the House of Representatives that the ""proliferation of distribution centers"" is undesirable.

At the beginning of this year, the Board of Government Advisors decided to conduct research into 'cover-up' and issue advice on that basis. It now concludes that there is ""little counter-pressure"" in the construction of large industrial halls, which means that, for example, municipalities and project developers are too easy to build 'in the pasture'. They do not take ""landscape values"" - recreation, views, biodiversity - too seriously. . The council realizes that this concept may be somewhat vague, but that is no reason not to do anything: ""These values ​​may not represent an easily quantifiable economic value, but they do contribute largely to our social prosperity.""

Large clusters

According to the council, a higher level of government, such as the province or the national government, must decide where logistics real estate can still be built in the Netherlands. This includes existing large clusters such as Venlo or Tilburg, or a limited number of new ones. This means that its influence on the landscape is limited to a few areas.

The council points to greenhouses with their excessive light production as an example: the Netherlands also has enormous areas of this, but in a limited number of regions. Berno Strootman, member of the council: ""If you ask people whether the Netherlands is moving, no one thinks so.""

By prohibiting the construction of distribution centers on 'green' land outside clusters, project developers are encouraged to redevelop existing, smaller-scale industrial areas. According to the council, these are often underused and outdated, but restructuring is expensive. ""You could consider a fund for this,"" says Strootman. ""At cluster locations, where the money is earned, you can skim a few percent off the land price.""

Is implementation of the advice feasible? The final chapter of the report focuses specifically on integrating the proposals into the new **Environmental** Act. This should come into effect in 2021. In answering parliamentary questions, responsible minister Ollongren seemed to anticipate the council's advice by mentioning more guidance from the government as an option. But aren't the proposed measures too ambitious? Strootman: ""We try to convince governments that they really need to deal with logistics real estate in a different way. You can ask the question: what will be gained if we build it? But you can also say: what does it cost us?""

Link to PDF

Graphic

A large distribution center in Tilburg. The city is one of the most important logistics centers in the country.

Photo Merlin Daleman

Industrial halls are getting bigger and bigger

Load Date: October 29, 2019

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371 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The Kempering parking garage in the Bijlmer will be demolished, but will remain in existence to some extent

de Volkskrant

March 31, 2020 Tuesday

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Section: V; Page 3

Length: 815 words

Byline: KIRSTEN HANNEMA

Highlight: By retaining elements from the building and returning the silhouette to the city, a 'mental monument' is created.

Body

Architecture

What makes a building monument-worthy, and who is in charge of that? The status and future of Kempering, the last original parking garage in Amsterdam's Bijlmer, has been discussed for seven years. The bullet is through the church, or rather: the bullet goes into the building, which was handed over to the demolition contractor on March 16.

But that does not mean the end of Kempering, named after the associated flat. The municipality has asked heritage organization Imagine IC to draw up a plan together with residents and involved citizens to allow the building to live on as a 'mental monument'.

The garage, which has been empty and dilapidated for years, is seen by some as a symbol of the failure of the Bijlmermeer. Built in the late 1960s as an urban planning utopia, the neighborhood was best known for the crime and drug trade that flourished around the garages. But there are also architecture experts who believe that this part of Bijlmer should be preserved. And there are residents with fond memories of the building, which was also used as an athletics track and church and where cultural events such as the Garage festival have taken place in recent years.

From that moment on, Imagine IC became involved in Kempering. The organization was founded in 1999 when a large-scale urban renewal operation began in the Bijlmer, during which residents were little heard. Under the motto 'heritage democracy', Imagine IC wants to change that. 'Heritage tells who we are together, and who we want to become. Everyone has a voice in this,” it says on their website.

Kempering shows how different feelings people have about buildings and places. Imagine IC talks about emotion networks. In their seminar series City Feeling, in which previous cases were discussed as monuments to the past of slavery, Kempering was also discussed. Writer Murat Isik was invited to the garage to read from his book Be Invisible, in which the garage figures. International experts gave lectures on how citizens can contribute to heritage development.

The district previously called on developers to submit plans for the (temporary) use of the building. For example, entrepreneur Jeannette Seret and architect Peter Dautzenberg came up with the idea for a multifunctional neighborhood complex: Garage4all. According to district manager Dirk de Jager, none of the plans were financially feasible.

The only option left was to abort. There still appear to be opportunities for heritage development: 'directed' demolition. In November 2019, Imagine IC organized a public inspection in which 32 interested parties participated. During a tour of the building, they wrote down what they thought should be preserved. This resulted in a list of items, including the sign of the Ghanaian church, a number of graffiti works and dictionaries of the asylum seekers who moved into the building last year. The objects must find a place in a museum or in the City Archives.

Street Art Museum Amsterdam will make a 3D recording of the building, allowing you to walk through the garage with VR glasses. A concrete column with hearts is retained. A number of stories will be documented, such as that of Amellah, who has been living in the building as a homeless person for three years. Architect Dautzenberg proposed cutting out sections of wall and using them to build a pavilion nearby, in which the smell of urine and diesel would return. That turned out to be a bridge too far.

In the case of new construction, the municipality will give instructions to reuse building parts or materials and to restore the contours of the building. The silhouette, the preserved objects and the recorded stories together form the mental monument.

It is an idea that fits in with the experimental approach to heritage that government architect Floris Alkemade advocates. At the beginning of this year, he announced that he wants to 'return' the old TBS clinic in Rekken to nature by turning the building into a ruin. The Kempering approach is also in line with the government's aim to encourage participation, as laid down in the new **Environmental** Act that will come into effect in 2021. But if you look at it cynically, a mental monument is also a way to demolish buildings to make way for lucrative new construction.

The eviction of the garage, where around ninety asylum seekers are currently staying, has been postponed for the time being due to the corona crisis.

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Graffiti Freeport

In addition to a garage, church, athletics track and festival site, Kempering was also a haven for graffiti artists, including well-known names such as Mick la Rock, Rogier Wagenvoort and SMIB. Prior to demolition, the Dutch Graffiti Library will record the works in a publication. Imagine IC has had a number of objects from the garage on loan since 2018, which can be seen in their building in Amsterdam-Zuidoost.

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Graphic

Kempering parking garage in the Bijlmer. Some graffiti works from the garage will be given a place in a museum.

Kempering parking garage in the Bijlmer. Some graffiti works from the garage will be given a place in a museum.

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Rijtjeshuizen van autobanden en strobalen

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8 februari 2020 zaterdag

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ABSTRACT

Reportage Duurzaam wonen

Plannen voor zelfvoorzienende 'ecodorpen' zijn er genoeg, maar vaak stranden ze al in een vroeg stadium. Niet in Olst.

VOLLEDIGE TEKST:

Een autoband vullen doe je met twee man. Eén schept de aarde erin en de ander stampt met een voorhamer stevig aan. ,,Afhankelijk van je kracht en uithoudingsvermogen"", staat in de handleiding voorzien van tekeningen, is de klus ,,in vijf tot vijftien minuten"" geklaard. Iedereen kan het, ,,en je hoeft ook niet meer naar de sportschool"".

Doe dat duizend maal en je hebt, gestapeld in een U-vorm, de wanden van een huis. Naar het ontwerp van de Amerikaan Michael Reynolds, in 1990 beschreven in zijn Earthship: how to build your own, Vol. 1 . Met een talud van aarde, een groen dak opgaand in het landschap en een brede glaswand gericht op het zuiden, voor optimale warmte-opname. Onverwoestbaar, goed geïsoleerd en met een eigen toiletsysteem, waterzuivering, groentetuin. Zonder vaste lasten, eigenhandig gebouwd en zonder schade aan de natuur. Een huis in de aarde, zo onafhankelijk als een schip.

,,Weet je hoe zwáár dat is, een autoband vullen?"" Lony Strub zet een kopje koffie in de open keuken van haar aardehuis en geeft een rondleiding. ,,Vijf banden per persoon per dag, dat was het maximaal haalbare."" Maar in dat tempo zou het doel, een hele woonwijk naar Reynolds' model in Olst, Overijssel, nooit zijn gehaald. ,,Dan waren we nog jaren bezig geweest.""

Ze loopt de trap op.

Was het gat tussen droom en realiteit niet zo groot, dan had de wereld er nu misschien uitgezien zoals Reynolds voor ogen had. Een landschap vol earthships, in de hoeveelheid van het model T van Henri Ford. En al die autobanden - wereldwijd worden er jaarlijks miljoenen afgedankt - verwerkt tot huizen die opgaan in de natuur.

Reynolds zag de klimaatcrisis naderen. Opwarming van de aarde, verdwijnende natuur, toenemend afval. ,,De bevolkingsgroei leidt tot snel veranderende, bedreigende condities van de aarde"", schreef hij in zijn handleiding voor earthships. We zijn afhankelijk geworden van ,,gecentraliseerde, energieslurpende systemen"" die ons voorzien van water, warmte, voedsel, maar die ons uiteindelijk leiden naar de ondergang. Om te overleven, schreef hij, zullen we moeten loskomen van die systemen. Zoals Noach zijn ark bouwde om het leven te redden van de opkomende vloed, zo zullen we zelfvoorzienende earthships moeten bouwen ,,to sail on the seas of tomorrow"".

Olst geniet wereldwijde bekendheid want hier is de enige gemeenschap gebouwd die is geïnspireerd op Reynolds' concept. Verspreid over de wereld zijn er weliswaar enkele duizenden earthships, maar die zijn vaak losstaand en vormen geen wijken. In Olst zie je huizen met groene daken op een stukje braakliggend terrein tussen treinspoor en een nieuwbouwwijk-in-aanbouw. Het earthship als Hollands rijtjeshuis, 23 woningen, drie sociale huur, op 1,2 hectare. Een wijkje verholen in het landschap, met als enige blikvanger acht grijze bollen bovenop de daken.

,,Die hadden nu begroeid moeten zijn"", zegt Lony Strub boven in haar slaapkamer binnenín de bol. Ze zegt het zonder sentiment, want ja, het hele project is één groot experiment. En dan gaat er weleens wat mis. Zoals met die bollen. En met die autobanden. Slapeloze nachten hadden ze ervan. Totdat de groep halverwege de bouw overging op strobalen muren en dat óók prima bleek. Leermoment!

En zo waren er wel meer. Maar nu, vijf jaar na de oplevering, destijds nog in aanwezigheid van toenmalig minister Stef Blok van Wonen, kun je zeggen: experiment geslaagd. Een aardehuis heeft een lagere CO2-voetafdruk dan een nieuwbouwhuis, becijferde onderzoeksbureau CE Delft in een deze week afgerond - maar nog niet verschenen - rapport. En of het prettig wonen is?

Lony Strub, beeldend kunstenaar, toont haar ruime woonkamer met glas en licht. Ze wilde de drukte van de Randstad ontvluchten en kijkt nu uit op in elkaar overlopende tuinen. Ze heeft vloerverwarming dankzij een zonneboilersysteem en een rietbedfilter zuivert haar water. Tussen juni en oktober kan ze eten van haar tuin, al gaat ze ook gewoon naar de supermarkt, en als ze wil reizen is treinstation Olst vlakbij. Buren brengen hun perenoogst langs en eens per maand is er een borrel in het gemeenschapshuis. Geen verplichting.

Een earthship is een voorbeeld van een zogenoemd 'ecodorp': levende laboratoria waarin mensen zoeken naar zelfvoorzienende woonvormen. Wereldwijd zijn er zo'n zesduizend ecodorpen, en er is een Europees samenwerkingsverband. Lang niet alle ecodorpen zijn earthships: het ene dorp bouwt zijn huizen van turf, het andere van hennep, leem, aarde, glas, of blik. Sommige hebben een spirituele grondslag, zoals het Italiaanse Damanhur, met zo'n duizend inwoners de grootste. Of Findhorn aan de Schotse kust, dat oogt als de filmset van The Lord of the Rings. Voor anderen, zoals in Olst, is het belangrijkste doel zelfvoorzienend zijn.

De droom

Veertig tot vijftig ecodorp-plannen liggen in Nederland klaar voor uitvoering. Nieuwe, duurzame woonvormen; de overheid juicht ze toe. Zo heeft het Rijk onlangs de omgevingswet verruimd om meer experimenten toe te laten. Maar kijk naar de gerealiseerde ecodorpen en ze zijn op één hand te tellen.

Sommige plannen zijn gevorderd. Boekel, waar de initiatiefnemers dit jaar een bouwvergunning kregen. Ter Apel, waar de gemeente het bestemmingsplan van een voormalig fabrieksterrein onlangs wijzigde in 'ecodorp', een unicum. Maar verreweg de meeste plannen blijven in de kast of stranden onderweg. Oorzaak? Het gat tussen droom en realiteit is vaak groter dan gedacht.

In Olst weten ze er alles van.

Op het hoekje met uitzicht op de maisvelden, een paar huizen bij Strub vandaan, zit Paul Hendriksen aan de eettafel naast zijn vrouw. Zij is dirigent van een koor in Olst en bestudeert vanachter haar leesbril een partituur. Hij werkt als zelfstandig adviseur in de duurzaamheidssector. Al was Hendriksen, vertelt hij, tijdens de bouw ook druk met vergaderen, bestuur, financiën, logistiek. Zijn vrouw, opkijkend van haar partituur: ,,Het was wel de bedóéling dat je werkte. Vier dagen per week.""

Nu ja, de droom in Olst was dus in zíjn hoofd begonnen. Hendriksen had in 2005 een restpartij leem op de kop getikt, verbouwde er zijn slaapkamer mee en raakte enthousiast toen iemand de link legde met earthships. Hij was al bezig met het klimaat toen het nog 'milieu' heette, verdiepte zich in Reynolds' bouwtechniek, belegde een jaar later twee bijeenkomsten waarop de animo groter bleek dan gedacht, en begon met een groepje uit het ,,via-via-circuit"" een vereniging. Samen werkten ze het idee van een woonwijk uit.

Maar vind maar eens een lapje grond. Wethouders willen wel, die zien het als een mooi affiche. Maar in Nederland, waar de grondprijs voor akkerbouw vele malen hoger ligt dan in Frankrijk, komt ecologisch boeren al niet van de grond. Laat staan ecologisch bóúwen. Grond is duur, de Vinex-norm - dertig woningen per hectare - leidend. Voor de meeste ecodorpen eindigt hier de droom.

Hendriksen kwam uit in Olst-Wijhe, waar de gemeente nog een stukje braakliggend terrein aan de zuidrand had. ,,Hoeveel hectare heb je nodig?"", vroegen ambtenaren toen hij met hen rond de tekentafel stond. ,,Nou, 4,5? Daar past ons idee mooi op."" Maar toen hoorde hij over de grondprijs en over de kosten voor zelfbouw en al die bureautjes die je moet inhuren voor een stempel op je plannen. Een architect, een constructeur, een notaris, deskundigen in woningventilatie, energieprestatie-advies. Nog exclusief de kosten voor het openhouden van een bouwplaats en de daghuur van een heftruck met telescooparm - de enige noodzakelijke machine, volgens Reynolds' handboek.

De uitkomst, nadat alle huishoudens hadden berekend hoeveel ze bij elkaar konden leggen: 1,2 hectare. Maar pasten daarin al hun woonwensen nog? ,,Dat kostenbewustzijn was een heel proces"", zegt Hendriksen nu.

De groep

Bouwen met een groep gaat niet vanzelf. Dat begint met dromers die vooral willen fantaséren hoe het resultaat kan zijn. Nodig, want onbevreesd om te denken buiten kaders. Maar dan moeten keuzes gemaakt worden en haakt een deel af. De doeners nemen het over, blij dat al het gedroom voorbij is.

In Olst was de droom een leefgemeenschap van jong en oud. Gezinnen, maar ook alleenstaanden, als sociaal vangnet voor elkaar. Een groep van honderd tot honderdvijftig mensen, dat is volgens onderzoeken het ideaal. Dan kent iedereen elkaar maar je hóéft niet met allemaal door één deur te kunnen. Een kleinere groep leidt tot wrijving, een grotere valt uiteen.

Nadat het plan wat publiciteit had gekregen, meldden honderden mensen zich aan. Maar niet alle types heb je even graag in een groep, zegt Hendriksen. Sommigen zijn ,,energieputjes"", die werken het einddoel tegen. En zo kregen aanmelders een infopakket en na blijvend enthousiasme een kennismakingsgesprek, een vragenlijst - 'wat voor persoon ben je in een conflict?' - én een proefperiode.

Hendriksen had zich inmiddels naar de achtergrond gemanoeuvreerd. Want ook hier gaat het vaak mis: dan trekt de initiatiefnemer van een ecodorp alle plannen naar zich toe en kijkt de rest naar hém - recept voor smeulend verzet. In Olst besloten ze daarom te werken met het sociocratisch model: net zo lang met elkaar spreken totdat elk besluit door alle leden wordt gedragen. Zo kun je iedereen betrokken houden, alle handen aan het stuur. En na overleg werk je de plannen in verschillende groepjes uit. Althans, dat is het idee.

De bouw

Een earthship naar Reynolds' model staat met zijn houten palen in direct contact met de ondergrond. Zo gebruikt het huis de natuurlijke warmte en koeling van de aarde op dieper niveau. Maar de grond aan de IJssel is een andere dan de woestijn van New Mexico. Je hebt te maken met zand, veen, rivierklei en de constructeur zei: dit ga ik zonder beton niet doen. Terwijl de groep in Olst, 42 volwassenen, van tevoren had afgesproken: geen beton, dat is vervuilend.

Er werd vergaderd, héél veel vergaderd. En de gezamenlijke beslissing werd alsnóg beton, voor de fundering. Het kon niet anders, zegt Hendriksen. Het was een financiële tegenslag, én een ideologische. Eén stel haakte af.

Zitvlees, dat is sociocratie. Maar in de bouwfase, met duizend-en-één keuzes, kun je niet met z'n allen over alles beslissen. De groep besloot - ook in lijn met de sociocratie - tot invoering van werkgroepen met een eigen mandaat.

En zelfs dan, zegt Hendriksen, heb je niet alles in de hand. Vanaf het begin stond vast dat met autobanden zou worden gebouwd, maar één stel kwam daar plots tóch op terug - want ja, rubber in de grond, is dat wel goed? Ondanks dat er al een milieustudie was verricht waaruit bleek dat het kon. ,,Maar het gevoel 'ZE willen met autobanden bouwen'"", zegt Hendriksen, ,,dat wil je te allen tijde voorkomen"". En dus ga je in overleg, wéér praten. Waar komt deze opstelling vandaan, wat is nodig om het op te lossen? Ook dat stel haakte alsnog af.

Eén dag per week helpen met de bouw naast werk en gezinsleven, dat was het idee waaraan de leden zich hadden gecommitteerd. Slapen kon op het kampeerterrein ernaast en een leger aan vrijwilligers hielp mee - het zouden er uiteindelijk tweeduizend zijn, uit 27 landen.

Een hoop lol, dat zeker, maar bouwen is een race tegen de klok. Een bouwplaats openhouden kost duizenden euro's per maand. En de meeste vrijwilligers waren heus behulpzaam, maar er waren er ook die gewoon leuk een dagje kwamen aanwaaien, of die kwamen voor zingeving, of psychische hulp nodig hadden.

Het duurde te lang, de vereniging stevende af op een faillissement. De werkwijze werd omgegooid. Stoppen met autobanden, over op strobaal, en werken in expertteams met vaste vrijwilligers: zo maakte Lony Strub als specialist potdekselen de dakrand voor alle huizen.

Die ene dag per week bouwen werden er voor sommigen twee, drie, vier, vijf, zes, zeven. Terwijl de leden óók nog op sociocratische wijze de knoop moesten doorhakken tussen de houtsoorten Accoya en Douglas voor de kozijnen, hetgeen vanwege hun nagenoeg gelijkwaardige kwaliteiten een onmogelijke keuze bleek zodat bij sommigen het stressniveau steeg tot ongezonde waardes.

De omgeving

Honderdtwintig jaar deed Noach over de bouw van zijn ark en al die tijd zei hij 'Bouw me na'. Hij wist dat de vloed zou naderen en wilde zijn generatie redden. Maar niemand volgde hem.

Vernieuwers weten: de maatschappij houdt niet zo van 'anders'. En ook Hendriksen besefte: na de bouw begint het pas écht. Het experiment van samenleven met elkaar, maar ook met de omgeving. Die zal de nieuwe gemeenschap moeten accepteren. Beeldvorming telt, juist bij ecodorpen waarvan het heersende beeld nog altijd dat van een groep mensen is in hutjes op de hei, teruggetrokken om met elkaar gelukkig te zijn en ,,keiharde, zelfgebakken broden te eten"". En zo ontstonden de eerste ecogemeenschappen ook, in de jaren zeventig, uit afkeer van de samenleving. Maar wil de omgeving ecodorpen accepteren, denkt Hendriksen, dan zullen ecodorpen juist naar buiten moeten keren.

Hij informeerde vooraf bij de gemeente hoe het idee van earthships in Olst zou landen. ,,Maak je niet druk"", was het antwoord, ,,de helft van het dorp ís al van elders"". De vereniging hield een presentatie op het gemeentehuis, om draagvlak te creëren. Zo'n veertig man kwam erop af en op een paar ,,rooie nekken"" achterin de zaal na was iedereen enthousiast. En toen De Stentor van het project een artist impression toonde in de krant, reageerden dorpsbewoners: oh, toch best gewone huizen, en gewone mensen. ,,Geen holbewoners.""

Tijdens de bouw stonden Olster mannetjes op de fiets geregeld te kijken bij het hek. Sommige inwoners hielpen mee en ook later waren ze welkom, op de rondleidingen die er nog altijd maandelijks zijn. Voor ambtenaren, toeristen. Eén keer, nog tijdens de bouw, was er een Chinese zakenman zo enthousiast dat-ie begon te wapperen met een cheque. Hendriksen herinnert zich nog de opwinding achter de schermen. Een Chinéés. Zákenman. Met een chéque. En de teleurstelling, toen het een tientje bleek.

De aardehuizen staan afgelegen, aan de buitenring van het dorp. De bezoeker loopt eerst door niemandsland en daar is de ingang, met links de brievenbussen en rechts een privéparkeerplaats - eigen terrein. Veel Olstenaren zijn er nog nooit geweest. En de beoogde verbinding moest komen van de ecodorp-bewoners zélf.

Dat lukte. Via de harmonie, de basisschool, de supermarkt, de toneelvereniging, het filmhuis. Maar vorig jaar ging het in de beeldvorming toch nog bijna mis.

Een deel van de Olstenaren is heus tolerant. Maar je hebt óók de ,,Sallandse mentaliteit"", zegt wethouder van gemeente Olst-Wijhe Marcel Blind over de telefoon. Hij was betrokken bij het project, heeft zelfs nog meegebouwd. Wat die mentaliteit inhoudt? ,,De hang naar het bekende, naar de aangeharkte tuintjes.""

Want ja, dan staan er ineens huizen die er wat anders uitzien en daar reageren mensen op. Hetzelfde zag hij toen een inwoner van Olst zijn huis roze had geverfd. ,,Iedereen had er een mening over.""

Het relletje

Gemeentebelangen Olst-Wijhe, nota bene Blinds eigen partij, was het die vorig jaar over de aardehuizen de discussie aanzwengelde. De partij ,,hekelt de rommelige aanblik van de aardehuizen in Olst"" stond in de lokale krant. Omwonenden hadden geklaagd omdat het dorp ongeordend zou ogen, ook vanuit de trein. Een Facebookpost van de partij leverde 2.500 likes op, waarna Blind dacht: oké, dit speelt blijkbaar. Er volgden raadsvragen en een item op RTV Oost.

Het relletje was ook snel weer verdwenen, echte klagers waren op één hand te tellen. Maar wat het toonde, zag Blind, was het grommend onderbuikgevoel van de middengroep. Gegrom over de bollen, die maar niet begroeiden. En zijn daar dan geen regels voor? En zijn ze niet ook groter dan op de bouwtekening?. ,,Ja mensen"", zei Blind, ,,dit is één groot experiment"". Gegrom ook over het gebrek aan schuttingen, een ongewoon beeld in het landschap. ,,Ja, maar al die metershoge afscheidingen in al die Vinexwijken dan"", verdedigde Blind de aardehuizen, ,,is dat nou zo uitnodigend?"" En dan proefde hij ook wel begrip.

Achteraf, denkt hij, ging het relletje over gelijkheid. Over het idee dat zíj, ,,die van de aardehuizen"", door de gemeente werden ontzien terwijl de rest al wordt bekeurd als de caravan één dag te lang op de oprit staat. Een lastig conflict, zegt Blind, want je wil als gemeente bij experimenten flexibel zijn, en tegelijkertijd zo'n onderbuikgevoel voorkomen. ,,Voortaan willen we inwoners vooraf nóg meer bij zo'n project betrekken.""

Lony Strub leidt rond over het terrein. Ze toont het gemeenschapshuis. De kronkelende paden tussen de huizen, waar 's zomers kinderen op skelters rijden en bessen plukken uit de tuinen. De trampoline, hangplaats voor pubers. Zo heeft de oudste dochter van Hendriksen inmiddels verkering met een jongen drie deuren verderop.

,,Toen we hier net woonden, trok iedereen zich terug"", zegt Strub. ,,Even niks. Sommigen waren echt overspannen. En anderen zeiden: hé, waar zijn jullie nou? We zouden hier toch gezamenlijk wonen?""

Nu loopt het goed. De mix die de vereniging voor ogen had, leidt tot uitwisseling in kennis en materiaal. De één werkt in de zorg, de ander in het onderwijs, bij de gemeente. Er is een lasser, een postbode, een fietsenmaker en een jurist. Wie een auto nodig heeft, leent 'm van de buren en wie op de mail om een kampeerbed vraagt, krijgt er meteen drie aangeboden.

De grootste test

De grootste test ervoer de gemeenschap drie jaar na oplevering, toen ze, eindelijk uitgeklust, plots erachter kwam dat overal de houten palen onder de vloeren aan het wegrotten waren. De zandlaag waarin de palen stonden sloot niet goed af. Na een eerste schok volgden een periode van ongeloof, en vele vergaderingen in het gemeenschapshuis. En toen, húp, ging iedereen weer in de bouwmodus. Alle vloeren open, de palen werden voorzien van een betonnen voet.

Strub had wel wat anders aan haar hoofd. Haar man was ernstig ziek. Gelukkig wilde haar buurman helpen, onbezoldigd. En toen haar man overleed, was bij de begrafenis de hele gemeenschap aanwezig. ,,Dat had ik niet verwacht.""

Verbeterpunten zijn er ook. Het autogebruik; laadpalen voor elektrische auto's staan nog in de planning. En voor het bijstoken met hout in de winter zoekt de vereniging een alternatief. En tja, die bollen. ,,We zijn al drie groeiseizoenen bezig"", zegt Hendriksen. En tot nu toe lijkt een combi van blauwe regen en bruidssluier het meest kansrijk. Maar wie weet gaan die bollen er ook wel helemaal af.

Natuurlijk hoopt hij dat de droom van Michael Reynolds uitkomt. Dat de wereld straks vol zal staan met earthships, en niet alleen het randje van Olst. Maar Hendriksen is ook realistisch: het zou al heel wat zijn als straks elke provincie één ecodorp heeft, in welke vorm ook. Een levend laboratorium, ,,om van elkaar te leren"". Hij geeft advies aan ecodorpen en er is een toolkit met alle do's and don'ts. Maar de interesse van nieuwe ecodorp-initiatiefnemers blijft wat uit. Ook dat zijn dromers, en daar wreekt zich hun karakter.

Die zijn natuurlijk stronteigenwijs.

Tijdens de bouw stonden Olster mannetjes op de fiets geregeld te kijken bij het hek

Mensen klaagden dat het dorp ongeordend zou ogen, ook vanuit de trein

Link naar PDF

Link naar PDF

Graphic

Links: een 'earthship' of aardehuis in Olst. Door het begroeide talud gaan de huizen meer op in de natuur. Onder: tussen de huizen lopen onverharde looppaadjes. In de woonkamers laten bewoners de natuur terugkomen, onder meer door gebruik van boomstammen en leem.

Links: een muur van autobanden in een aardehuis te Olst. Onder: een betonnen voet ter versteviging van de houten paal in de woonkamer; rechts onbegroeide grijze koepel.

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Rijtjeshuizen van autobanden en strobalen

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Byline: Freek Schravesande

Novi Zijlstra

Body

ABSTRACT

Reportage Duurzaam wonen

Plannen voor zelfvoorzienende 'ecodorpen' zijn er genoeg, maar vaak stranden ze al in een vroeg stadium. Niet in Olst.

VOLLEDIGE TEKST:

Een autoband vullen doe je met twee man. Eén schept de aarde erin en de ander stampt met een voorhamer stevig aan. ,,Afhankelijk van je kracht en uithoudingsvermogen"", staat in de handleiding voorzien van tekeningen, is de klus ,,in vijf tot vijftien minuten"" geklaard. Iedereen kan het, ,,en je hoeft ook niet meer naar de sportschool"".

Doe dat duizend maal en je hebt, gestapeld in een U-vorm, de wanden van een huis. Naar het ontwerp van de Amerikaan Michael Reynolds, in 1990 beschreven in zijn Earthship: how to build your own, Vol. 1 . Met een talud van aarde, een groen dak opgaand in het landschap en een brede glaswand gericht op het zuiden, voor optimale warmte-opname. Onverwoestbaar, goed geïsoleerd en met een eigen toiletsysteem, waterzuivering, groentetuin. Zonder vaste lasten, eigenhandig gebouwd en zonder schade aan de natuur. Een huis in de aarde, zo onafhankelijk als een schip.

,,Weet je hoe zwáár dat is, een autoband vullen?"" Lony Strub zet een kopje koffie in de open keuken van haar aardehuis en geeft een rondleiding. ,,Vijf banden per persoon per dag, dat was het maximaal haalbare."" Maar in dat tempo zou het doel, een hele woonwijk naar Reynolds' model in Olst, Overijssel, nooit zijn gehaald. ,,Dan waren we nog jaren bezig geweest.""

Ze loopt de trap op.

Was het gat tussen droom en realiteit niet zo groot, dan had de wereld er nu misschien uitgezien zoals Reynolds voor ogen had. Een landschap vol earthships, in de hoeveelheid van het model T van Henri Ford. En al die autobanden - wereldwijd worden er jaarlijks miljoenen afgedankt - verwerkt tot huizen die opgaan in de natuur.

Reynolds zag de klimaatcrisis naderen. Opwarming van de aarde, verdwijnende natuur, toenemend afval. ,,De bevolkingsgroei leidt tot snel veranderende, bedreigende condities van de aarde"", schreef hij in zijn handleiding voor earthships. We zijn afhankelijk geworden van ,,gecentraliseerde, energieslurpende systemen"" die ons voorzien van water, warmte, voedsel, maar die ons uiteindelijk leiden naar de ondergang. Om te overleven, schreef hij, zullen we moeten loskomen van die systemen. Zoals Noach zijn ark bouwde om het leven te redden van de opkomende vloed, zo zullen we zelfvoorzienende earthships moeten bouwen ,,to sail on the seas of tomorrow"".

Olst geniet wereldwijde bekendheid want hier is de enige gemeenschap gebouwd die is geïnspireerd op Reynolds' concept. Verspreid over de wereld zijn er weliswaar enkele duizenden earthships, maar die zijn vaak losstaand en vormen geen wijken. In Olst zie je huizen met groene daken op een stukje braakliggend terrein tussen treinspoor en een nieuwbouwwijk-in-aanbouw. Het earthship als Hollands rijtjeshuis, 23 woningen, drie sociale huur, op 1,2 hectare. Een wijkje verholen in het landschap, met als enige blikvanger acht grijze bollen bovenop de daken.

,,Die hadden nu begroeid moeten zijn"", zegt Lony Strub boven in haar slaapkamer binnenín de bol. Ze zegt het zonder sentiment, want ja, het hele project is één groot experiment. En dan gaat er weleens wat mis. Zoals met die bollen. En met die autobanden. Slapeloze nachten hadden ze ervan. Totdat de groep halverwege de bouw overging op strobalen muren en dat óók prima bleek. Leermoment!

En zo waren er wel meer. Maar nu, vijf jaar na de oplevering, destijds nog in aanwezigheid van toenmalig minister Stef Blok van Wonen, kun je zeggen: experiment geslaagd. Een aardehuis heeft een lagere CO2-voetafdruk dan een nieuwbouwhuis, becijferde onderzoeksbureau CE Delft in een deze week afgerond - maar nog niet verschenen - rapport. En of het prettig wonen is?

Lony Strub, beeldend kunstenaar, toont haar ruime woonkamer met glas en licht. Ze wilde de drukte van de Randstad ontvluchten en kijkt nu uit op in elkaar overlopende tuinen. Ze heeft vloerverwarming dankzij een zonneboilersysteem en een rietbedfilter zuivert haar water. Tussen juni en oktober kan ze eten van haar tuin, al gaat ze ook gewoon naar de supermarkt, en als ze wil reizen is treinstation Olst vlakbij. Buren brengen hun perenoogst langs en eens per maand is er een borrel in het gemeenschapshuis. Geen verplichting.

Een earthship is een voorbeeld van een zogenoemd 'ecodorp': levende laboratoria waarin mensen zoeken naar zelfvoorzienende woonvormen. Wereldwijd zijn er zo'n zesduizend ecodorpen, en er is een Europees samenwerkingsverband. Lang niet alle ecodorpen zijn earthships: het ene dorp bouwt zijn huizen van turf, het andere van hennep, leem, aarde, glas, of blik. Sommige hebben een spirituele grondslag, zoals het Italiaanse Damanhur, met zo'n duizend inwoners de grootste. Of Findhorn aan de Schotse kust, dat oogt als de filmset van The Lord of the Rings. Voor anderen, zoals in Olst, is het belangrijkste doel zelfvoorzienend zijn.

De droom

Veertig tot vijftig ecodorp-plannen liggen in Nederland klaar voor uitvoering. Nieuwe, duurzame woonvormen; de overheid juicht ze toe. Zo heeft het Rijk onlangs de omgevingswet verruimd om meer experimenten toe te laten. Maar kijk naar de gerealiseerde ecodorpen en ze zijn op één hand te tellen.

Sommige plannen zijn gevorderd. Boekel, waar de initiatiefnemers dit jaar een bouwvergunning kregen. Ter Apel, waar de gemeente het bestemmingsplan van een voormalig fabrieksterrein onlangs wijzigde in 'ecodorp', een unicum. Maar verreweg de meeste plannen blijven in de kast of stranden onderweg. Oorzaak? Het gat tussen droom en realiteit is vaak groter dan gedacht.

In Olst weten ze er alles van.

Op het hoekje met uitzicht op de maisvelden, een paar huizen bij Strub vandaan, zit Paul Hendriksen aan de eettafel naast zijn vrouw. Zij is dirigent van een koor in Olst en bestudeert vanachter haar leesbril een partituur. Hij werkt als zelfstandig adviseur in de duurzaamheidssector. Al was Hendriksen, vertelt hij, tijdens de bouw ook druk met vergaderen, bestuur, financiën, logistiek. Zijn vrouw, opkijkend van haar partituur: ,,Het was wel de bedóéling dat je werkte. Vier dagen per week.""

Nu ja, de droom in Olst was dus in zíjn hoofd begonnen. Hendriksen had in 2005 een restpartij leem op de kop getikt, verbouwde er zijn slaapkamer mee en raakte enthousiast toen iemand de link legde met earthships. Hij was al bezig met het klimaat toen het nog 'milieu' heette, verdiepte zich in Reynolds' bouwtechniek, belegde een jaar later twee bijeenkomsten waarop de animo groter bleek dan gedacht, en begon met een groepje uit het ,,via-via-circuit"" een vereniging. Samen werkten ze het idee van een woonwijk uit.

Maar vind maar eens een lapje grond. Wethouders willen wel, die zien het als een mooi affiche. Maar in Nederland, waar de grondprijs voor akkerbouw vele malen hoger ligt dan in Frankrijk, komt ecologisch boeren al niet van de grond. Laat staan ecologisch bóúwen. Grond is duur, de Vinex-norm - dertig woningen per hectare - leidend. Voor de meeste ecodorpen eindigt hier de droom.

Hendriksen kwam uit in Olst-Wijhe, waar de gemeente nog een stukje braakliggend terrein aan de zuidrand had. ,,Hoeveel hectare heb je nodig?"", vroegen ambtenaren toen hij met hen rond de tekentafel stond. ,,Nou, 4,5? Daar past ons idee mooi op."" Maar toen hoorde hij over de grondprijs en over de kosten voor zelfbouw en al die bureautjes die je moet inhuren voor een stempel op je plannen. Een architect, een constructeur, een notaris, deskundigen in woningventilatie, energieprestatie-advies. Nog exclusief de kosten voor het openhouden van een bouwplaats en de daghuur van een heftruck met telescooparm - de enige noodzakelijke machine, volgens Reynolds' handboek.

De uitkomst, nadat alle huishoudens hadden berekend hoeveel ze bij elkaar konden leggen: 1,2 hectare. Maar pasten daarin al hun woonwensen nog? ,,Dat kostenbewustzijn was een heel proces"", zegt Hendriksen nu.

De groep

Bouwen met een groep gaat niet vanzelf. Dat begint met dromers die vooral willen fantaséren hoe het resultaat kan zijn. Nodig, want onbevreesd om te denken buiten kaders. Maar dan moeten keuzes gemaakt worden en haakt een deel af. De doeners nemen het over, blij dat al het gedroom voorbij is.

In Olst was de droom een leefgemeenschap van jong en oud. Gezinnen, maar ook alleenstaanden, als sociaal vangnet voor elkaar. Een groep van honderd tot honderdvijftig mensen, dat is volgens onderzoeken het ideaal. Dan kent iedereen elkaar maar je hóéft niet met allemaal door één deur te kunnen. Een kleinere groep leidt tot wrijving, een grotere valt uiteen.

Nadat het plan wat publiciteit had gekregen, meldden honderden mensen zich aan. Maar niet alle types heb je even graag in een groep, zegt Hendriksen. Sommigen zijn ,,energieputjes"", die werken het einddoel tegen. En zo kregen aanmelders een infopakket en na blijvend enthousiasme een kennismakingsgesprek, een vragenlijst - 'wat voor persoon ben je in een conflict?' - én een proefperiode.

Hendriksen had zich inmiddels naar de achtergrond gemanoeuvreerd. Want ook hier gaat het vaak mis: dan trekt de initiatiefnemer van een ecodorp alle plannen naar zich toe en kijkt de rest naar hém - recept voor smeulend verzet. In Olst besloten ze daarom te werken met het sociocratisch model: net zo lang met elkaar spreken totdat elk besluit door alle leden wordt gedragen. Zo kun je iedereen betrokken houden, alle handen aan het stuur. En na overleg werk je de plannen in verschillende groepjes uit. Althans, dat is het idee.

De bouw

Een earthship naar Reynolds' model staat met zijn houten palen in direct contact met de ondergrond. Zo gebruikt het huis de natuurlijke warmte en koeling van de aarde op dieper niveau. Maar de grond aan de IJssel is een andere dan de woestijn van New Mexico. Je hebt te maken met zand, veen, rivierklei en de constructeur zei: dit ga ik zonder beton niet doen. Terwijl de groep in Olst, 42 volwassenen, van tevoren had afgesproken: geen beton, dat is vervuilend.

Er werd vergaderd, héél veel vergaderd. En de gezamenlijke beslissing werd alsnóg beton, voor de fundering. Het kon niet anders, zegt Hendriksen. Het was een financiële tegenslag, én een ideologische. Eén stel haakte af.

Zitvlees, dat is sociocratie. Maar in de bouwfase, met duizend-en-één keuzes, kun je niet met z'n allen over alles beslissen. De groep besloot - ook in lijn met de sociocratie - tot invoering van werkgroepen met een eigen mandaat.

En zelfs dan, zegt Hendriksen, heb je niet alles in de hand. Vanaf het begin stond vast dat met autobanden zou worden gebouwd, maar één stel kwam daar plots tóch op terug - want ja, rubber in de grond, is dat wel goed? Ondanks dat er al een milieustudie was verricht waaruit bleek dat het kon. ,,Maar het gevoel 'ZE willen met autobanden bouwen'"", zegt Hendriksen, ,,dat wil je te allen tijde voorkomen"". En dus ga je in overleg, wéér praten. Waar komt deze opstelling vandaan, wat is nodig om het op te lossen? Ook dat stel haakte alsnog af.

Eén dag per week helpen met de bouw naast werk en gezinsleven, dat was het idee waaraan de leden zich hadden gecommitteerd. Slapen kon op het kampeerterrein ernaast en een leger aan vrijwilligers hielp mee - het zouden er uiteindelijk tweeduizend zijn, uit 27 landen.

Een hoop lol, dat zeker, maar bouwen is een race tegen de klok. Een bouwplaats openhouden kost duizenden euro's per maand. En de meeste vrijwilligers waren heus behulpzaam, maar er waren er ook die gewoon leuk een dagje kwamen aanwaaien, of die kwamen voor zingeving, of psychische hulp nodig hadden.

Het duurde te lang, de vereniging stevende af op een faillissement. De werkwijze werd omgegooid. Stoppen met autobanden, over op strobaal, en werken in expertteams met vaste vrijwilligers: zo maakte Lony Strub als specialist potdekselen de dakrand voor alle huizen.

Die ene dag per week bouwen werden er voor sommigen twee, drie, vier, vijf, zes, zeven. Terwijl de leden óók nog op sociocratische wijze de knoop moesten doorhakken tussen de houtsoorten Accoya en Douglas voor de kozijnen, hetgeen vanwege hun nagenoeg gelijkwaardige kwaliteiten een onmogelijke keuze bleek zodat bij sommigen het stressniveau steeg tot ongezonde waardes.

De omgeving

Honderdtwintig jaar deed Noach over de bouw van zijn ark en al die tijd zei hij 'Bouw me na'. Hij wist dat de vloed zou naderen en wil"

379 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Municipality titatover formula

The Telegraph

February 27, 2020 Thursday

Amsterdam

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Section: REGION; Page 05

Length: 1458 words

Body

Lawyer Alexandra Boot about leasehold in Amsterdam

“A benchmark for land price increases, against which the reasonableness of ground rent increases can be measured, is completely lacking.” This is what lawyer Alexandra Jurgens-Boot says, who has specialized in leasehold, among other things, in recent years. The rates that the municipality of Amsterdam now charges, with the so-called neighborhood street quote, make living in the capital unaffordable.

In recent decades, the leasehold system has proven to be a tool to guide municipal policy and land policy, says the lawyer from Boot Advocaten. According to her, the original reasons for leasehold are no longer contemporary. The municipality has other options and new instruments in the environmental law to maintain control over the environment.

What is the purpose of leasehold?

It was once invented to give farmers cheap land so that fields could be cultivated. It was never intended to be used in cities. That came much later. Then the system was artificially put together. Legally, many things have also been added to the rules. This has not made it any easier or any better. It is a closed system of property law. Much more attention needs to be paid to its reasonableness and fairness.

Of course there are discussions about that too.

There are rightly discussions about, among other things, the general leasehold conditions and therefore also about permission for zoning change and ground rent revision.

What is unclear?

When I look at my own work, you see that case law is still divided on how to look at the relationship between ground rent (the amount of the lease payment) and land value and to whom it should belong.

Are we not doing well in Amsterdam?

Suppose you compare a house with a car. In Amsterdam we calculate the value of a house residually and only the stones belong to the resident, the rest of the house price is the land value according to the municipality. It would mean that with a car only the tin, the shell of a car, matters. But my dealer says that the most important value can be attributed to the software installed in the car. It's the same with homes. It's about the impact and the content of the building. It's not always about location. It's about relevance and the use of a building. An annual net rental yield or an investment value should be much more decisive than, for example, a neighborhood street quote that is currently used in your land value calculation. Land value is a very fictional concept. Land in itself does not generate money. A building makes money; and its use. But then maintenance also needs to be done. However, the municipality does not enforce maintenance clauses, which means that industrial estates, among other things, are becoming neglected.

How do you determine the value of a home and that of the land beneath it?

There are no clearly defined legal rules for this. Now the building value, the street quote and the WOZ are included and from there a land value is determined. But all those parts can be discussed and all those parts can be challenged. If it is not prescribed how the system should be, you can make comments about each system. Because there are so many interests. As a developer, tenant and landowner. It is complicated to whom which part of the value belongs. Moreover, it is a public-private system. And therein lies the inequality. This must not conflict with reasonableness and fairness.

Does the residual calculation method fall short?

Go ahead and explain that residual calculation method. That is difficult and complicated. How do you distinguish between land, house and development value. And what do you base that on? For lawyers it is a lot of uncertainty. That is the only thing you can determine objectively. These are standards that you have to fulfill together. The final valuation must do justice to all parties involved. In my opinion, it is not doing that at the moment, because the municipality wants to make money. What is reasonable will have to be considered.

What are we forgetting?

In all our desire to regulate, we do not look at Brussels legislation. But it is crucial for all our actions here. What is described in leasehold conditions may conflict with European consumer law and therefore certain clauses may be unreasonably onerous and are therefore voidable. Leasehold conditions may also conflict with reasonableness and fairness. In addition, there may be state aid and/or conflict with procurement law.

So as a resident, but also as a municipal council, you must look critically at the leasehold system. For example, people in Amsterdam now have the opportunity to buy off leasehold, that money flows back to the community, but who actually owns that money? The value of the land and the development of the land price do not correspond with the canon.

Judges look at each individual legal element. So when you look at real estate, you cannot just look at the land transaction and land value and ignore European law at the same time. Because that is what the municipality of Amsterdam does.

And, very important: there is a difference of balance in the power position. For Amsterdammers with their own home, it is a matter of swallowing or choking. They cannot negotiate the price, let alone explain to the municipality how the calculations were made. Because just to be clear: there is no expert in the Netherlands who determines how to determine leasehold rates, so it is extremely debatable. It just depends on what you want to agree on. And if you have no choice about what you want to agree on, like the Amsterdam homeowner, then I say again: it's just take it or leave it.

Then there are leaseholders who do not like the fact that the municipality does not release how the neighborhood street quote is calculated.

As far as I'm concerned, those residents are completely right. The municipality has a dominant position in determining leasehold rates. Transparency is part of this. And also following European rules. The way to determine the distribution of the land value and building value is very important. The municipality has a strict obligation to provide reasons in this regard.

Is it time for Amsterdam residents to protest against purchasing a home?

Buying out is not affordable for many people. Amsterdam is the only city in our country that still has a dated leasehold system. Then what are we doing? And then there are the significant inequalities in payments between residents in the South and residents in the South-East, for example. These are quite significant differences in amounts. People don't have money for that, do they? The only thing that is happening now is that owner-occupied homes in the capital are becoming unaffordable. Did the system help? Nowhere in the Netherlands do we have such a big problem with housing shortages as in Amsterdam. But Amsterdam stubbornly clings to the system. At a certain point, people or groups of people will take legal action against the municipality. It's difficult to explain it simply. Most importantly, there is no legal framework as a benchmark for land prices. Amsterdam has devised the neighborhood street quote for this, among other things. But from a European perspective this is questionable.

I am sure that it will be an extremely interesting process to sort out the Amsterdam leasehold at European level. I dare say that Brussels law will put an end to the entire leasehold system. Because, to begin with, it is simply contrary to Article 1 of the so-called ECHR Treaty and, among other things, the principle of proportionality and the principle of equality.

It is all fictional how the Amsterdam rates are structured. These are all estimates. You can have a discussion about every part. I can only conclude that the standards are lacking. The street quote also says nothing about living enjoyment and exploitation and then all kinds of mandatory insulation standards will soon be imposed on Amsterdam residents. What does that do to the value of a home? And to whom does that value belong?

Should Amsterdam residents be able to buy their land?

People in Amsterdam are not able to buy their land and that is contrary to European treaties.

Shouldn't there be a supervisor? Leasehold is simply a financial product, isn't it?

So far, no body has emerged that is willing to supervise leasehold. It has been regularly raised with the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets, but the bad thing about leasehold is that almost all of them are individual contracts. Where should you start?

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NRC Handelsblad

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Section: ECONOMY; Page 4

Length: 865 words

Byline: Arjen Schreuder

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

ABSTRACT

Slow decision making

The Crisis and Recovery Act of 2010 put an end to long procedures. The 'temporary' support gave construction projects wings.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Everything moves faster during a crisis. “The lines are super short. Positive forces are being unleashed,"" says chairman of the board Carla Moonen of the trade association Royal NL Engineers. ""We can apply what we learn now.""

Ten years ago this Tuesday, a temporary law came into effect that was intended to combat the loss of jobs during the crisis at the time: the Crisis and Recovery Act. ""There are many parallels with now,"" says Moonen. Just like then, there is a ""great willingness to realize a breakthrough"" and limit the consequences of a crisis.

Moonen, now also a senator for D66, was closely involved in drafting the Crisis and Recovery Act ten years ago. She was a consultant at the Ministry of General Affairs, for then Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende (CDA). ""It was the time when the financial crisis spread to the real economy. Wouter Bos [then Minister of Finance, PvdA] was saving the banks and Balkenende wondered what else the government could do to soften the effects on employment.""

In those years, there was a lot of dissatisfaction about rules and procedures that could delay construction projects. Moonen: ""Balkenende saw with his own eyes in Utrecht that a staggering number of permits were required for the renovation of the station area. For inner-city projects, the lead time was ten to fifteen years.""

Former DSM CEO Peter Elverding had already advised to accelerate decision-making for the construction of infrastructure, and Delft University of Technology advocated breaking the ""impasse"" in construction. Carla Moonen: ""After meetings at a European summit in Brussels we discussed the issue. Balkenende came up with the idea for a temporary law that would speed up procedures and stimulate sustainable initiatives. I was put in charge of making that law, which had to be ready in six months.""

Effects 'unclear'

With a team of three lawyers from three ministries, Moonen looked for unnecessary rules and major annoyances and obstacles. Such as legislation that delays the expansion of the rail network, delays in the construction of the Second Maasvlakte due to temporary exceedance of environmental standards, governments litigating against each other, overlapping environmental impact assessments and last but not least time-consuming legal proceedings at the Council of State.

It would have been very close if the law, drawn up at a rapid pace, would not have come into effect on March 31, 2010. Moonen: ""The cabinet fell in February 2010 and it was very exciting whether the Senate would subsequently declare the law controversial and not deal with it. I remember coming to the Binnenhof and the Secretary General of General Affairs said to me: Carla, maybe all the work was for nothing."" Ultimately, after a debate in the Senate, a vote was taken.

With the law, four hundred projects have been realized in two hundred municipalities in ten years; several dozen more are added every year. Seven years ago, the law was made permanent by the second Rutte cabinet, despite criticism from the Council of State that the effects of the law were ""unclear"".

What's up with that? ""The law has generated a lot of work,"" says Diederik Bel, sector director of the built environment at consultancy and engineering firm Witteveen+Bos. ""What has especially helped is certainty about the duration of appeal procedures; the court can be involved in plans and coordinated permits. skipped and the procedure before the Council of State never lasts longer than six months.""

Energy transition

Unfortunately, according to Bel, until recently it took a long time to get a project on the list that would bring it under the scope of the law. ""I have personally experienced that it took a year."" He hopes that the new **Environmental** Act, which has been advanced by the cabinet and into which the Crisis and Recovery Act will soon be incorporated, will work even faster. And that more energy transition projects will be launched. and climate adaptation are included. Bel: ""Many traditional construction projects have been helped by the law. I would say: never waste a good crisis and pay even more attention to other projects.""

In addition to satisfied voices from governments and the construction industry, the law has also provoked resistance, as if it would make participation more difficult and that decisions would be 'pushed through'. Bel: ""The law limits the interest of objectors to people who live nearby and are directly harmed. This puts professional objectors at a distance. Subsequently, more clubs have emerged that can jointly object. In a country like the Netherlands, a counter-movement will always be organised."" Moonen: ""The fact that rules have disappeared has in many cases removed the obstacles to neighborhood participation, for citizens and companies.""

The crisis had one advantage for construction: less bureaucratic hassle

With the law, 400 projects have been realized in 200 municipalities in ten years

In addition to satisfaction from construction and governments, the law also aroused resistance

Link to PDF

Graphic

Fifteen hundred permits were required for the renovation of the station area in Utrecht.

Photo Jerry Lampen/ANP

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Byline: Wouter van Dieren

Body

ABSTRACT

A proven governance model is available to tame the chaos and protests around wind farms, writes Wouter van Dieren.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Sabotage of wind farms under construction is starting to become the rule, not only in Groningen. In Friesland there is broad support for the 'No room for windmills' movement and in other provinces plans are also predictably stalling.

The Hague has handed over control to Regional Energy Strategies (RES), which must make concrete plans in the context of the Climate Agreement. In fact, they have difficulty maneuvering between all the angry citizens and the obstacles in the landscape that can be as high as 200 meters.

In 1974, 18-year-old Henk Lagerweij watched a heavy storm and decided to put those powers to good use. He became a Dutch windmill pioneer. In 1996, Theo Potma, founder of the current environmental consultancy firm CE Delft, drew the first sketches of a wind turbine with six rotors on the side arms of high-voltage pylons. Lagerweij would also build one. His company became the first major producer of turbines, but went bankrupt. The Beek Committee, led by WRR member Wiero Beek, negotiated with the energy sector for a decade about a fair feed-in price for wind energy, but when that deal was concluded it was too late. What failed here grew in Denmark: a large wind sector. Beek advised with foresight to primarily install turbines in the sea; on land the resistance would be too great.

In his book Münchausen in de Noordzee, energy expert Jan Paul van Soest writes that the 'permit period' between plan and the first megawatt is usually twelve years. The delay for the currently planned wind farms is now four to six years, but due to the emerging sabotage, this will soon be much longer.

The wind plans are said to represent the green energy revolution, good for the climate and as many as 100,000 households. But in Groningen and the Wieringermeer - and not only there - much of that electricity goes to large consumers, such as Google's data center (in the Eemshaven). And the profits go to those who are handy with subsidies, to farmers who sell a hectare of arable land to the company, while the rest of the population is saddled with a spoiled landscape.

The national government is making a big mistake by pushing through these plans on the basis of outdated legislation and a policy of looking away, which involves constantly reinventing the wheel, whether it concerns the **Environmental** Act, the National Project Regulations or the Spatial Planning Act. And the road to the Council of State for appeal procedures is always wide open.

In the Wieringermeer, residents want to be able to buy bonds in their own turbine (which supplies cheap energy), and there is also resistance to this 'Polder mill'.

In the Middle Ages, farmers and administrators discovered that a new layer of government was needed to manage the common domain of water through dikes and pumping stations. This became the water boards, which have since stabilized, depoliticized and financed this domain, with benefits and successes for all. In light of the current chaos surrounding the design of wind farms, this idea deserves to be followed in the form of wind boards. For each wind farm there is a board with local authorities, levies and distribution of benefits and costs. This will benefit the domain of the landscape and the horizon. The blueprint is there.

Wouter van Dieren is an environmental expert, was a member of the Beek committee and was a board member of CE-Delft.

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Load Date: July 9, 2019

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391 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Building something fun yourself - soon it will be allowed

NRC Handelsblad

June 17, 2014 Tuesday

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Section: Domestic; Page 5

Length: 702 words

Byline: By our editor Arjen Schreuder

Body

Living environment A new law replaces many old ones and makes construction faster and simpler. The councilor can do more. Does that lead to arbitrariness?

The Hague. The department of Minister Schultz van Haegen (Infrastructure and Environment, VVD) is working on ""the largest legislative operation ever"". In three years, civil servants have rewritten almost thirty laws in such a way that they can be merged into one law. On Friday, the Council of Ministers agree with the **Environmental** Act, which should make decision-making about construction simpler and faster and improve the quality of the living environment.

Schultz van Haegen: ""We have involved as many parties as possible in the preparation: political parties, but also interest groups and other governments. At the beginning we also asked for and received expertise from the Council of State. I think there is broad support for the principles of the law.""

Modernization was desperately needed, the minister said. ""These are static laws that do not fit a changing environment."" The laws that made the construction of large residential areas possible in the 1970s are the same as those that governments in shrinking areas have to deal with. ""Customization is needed.""

She gives as an example the impossibility of temporarily housing shops elsewhere, such as during the renovation of the station in Utrecht, because a zoning plan change here previously took six months. This will soon be possible in eight weeks. Or the rule that you can deviate from the designation of a monumental building for five years. ""Before you have renovated, you have to leave again.""

In addition to shorter procedures, there will soon be more room for municipalities to experiment with projects that are currently not possible. Perhaps for reassurance, they must continue to adhere to ""strict standards"" in the field of safety and the environment that have been agreed in a European context. But municipalities will soon be able to decide much more themselves about noise and odors. ""Take a farmer who retires and has a house built on his land to live there from now on. That house formally falls within the stench circle. But are you not allowed to live there? Didn't he also live on the same property before? It wasn't a problem then, was it? ""

As a municipality, you will of course have to take into account national or provincial agreements: for example, whether a high-voltage network is being constructed in an area; or an area falls under world heritage. But much more is possible. Such as in the municipality of Ommen, where, after years of obstacles, a dairy farmer is allowed to build a cowshed next to a camping site, something that was prevented by the zoning plan.

Schultz van Haegen: ""If all interests are safeguarded and the living environment is improving, why wouldn't that be possible? This law wants to make things possible. As an alderman you will no longer be able to hide behind rules. You can no longer say to citizens and companies who want something: nice idea, but it is not allowed. As an alderman you now have more room to allow things yourself.""

If each municipality is allowed to determine separately whether a plan contributes to the improvement of the living environment, arbitrariness lurks. What is not allowed in one municipality is welcomed as an innovation elsewhere.

Schultz van Haegen: ""I prefer to speak of differentiation rather than arbitrariness. Whether sensible choices are made depends largely on local administrators and the municipal council that monitors them. I hope that this law not only makes procedures simpler, but also stimulates creativity. Take a municipality like Zaanstad. Few people wanted to live there in the past. They are now doing everything there to increase the appeal. Look, I hope that administrators will think about how they can make their cities more beautiful and stimulate sustainable initiatives, instead of filling them up with safe but ugly Rabobank buildings. I like that.""

The new **Environmental** Act should result in savings of 600 million euros, especially for municipalities, companies and citizens. This is due to a reduction in the number of plans, visions and regulations, more general rules and fewer permits, removal of the obligation to continually conduct new studies, and digitalization of procedures.

Load Date: June 17, 2014

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395 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Preservation of the village character of Vleuten-De Meern'

The Telegraph

May 2, 2017 Tuesday

Utrecht

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Section: REGION; Page 017

Length: 244 words

Byline: From our Utrecht editorial staff

Body

From our Utrecht editorial staff

Utrecht - The residents of the Vleuten-De Meern district would like to preserve the village-like character of the neighborhood. This is evident from the environmental vision that the municipality of Utrecht has established for the district, which was the first in the region.

An environmental vision contains all the developments that residents of a neighborhood can expect in the short and long term. The vision is part of the environmental law that will be introduced in the Netherlands in the coming years. Vleuten-De Meern is the first sub-area in the Utrecht region with an environmental vision and is an example for the neighborhoods that will follow later. The vision was created in collaboration with residents, companies and organizations from the neighborhood and clearly indicates what they want to preserve and what can be done differently. “Vleuten-De Meern feels like a village within the city. This is an important, unique value for the neighborhood,” the municipality writes. That village character appears to be essential for residents and must therefore be preserved. High buildings are therefore not desirable. Residents also indicated that it is important that there is sufficient greenery and that they can easily meet each other. A pleasant living and working environment and being able to move around the neighborhood comfortably also play an important role. Residents have until June 8 to submit their views against the environmental vision. The vision will be presented to the council after the summer.

Utrecht comes with a vision

Load Date: May 1, 2017

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399 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Welfare inhibits housing construction'

The Telegraph

May 4, 2018 Friday

Rotterdam

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Section: REGION; Page 14

Length: 450 words

Byline: Maarten Ritman

Body

VVD wants to get rid of negative committee judgments

by Maarten Ritman

ROTTERDAM - The aesthetics committee in Rotterdam is slowing down the municipality's construction task, according to the VVD. Advice would only be necessary for protected faces.

The Maasstad must build fifty thousand new homes in the coming years. Last year, the 'construction record' of recent years was broken with 3,750 new homes. This year we have to go above and beyond again.

Yet the VVD sees the future of construction bleakly. For example, the aesthetics committee has made a negative assessment of the water houses in the Nassauhaven. “The houses would not be nautical enough,” sighs councilor Pascal Lansink. “Let them throw a sloop for it.”

The aesthetic committee investigates 'whether a building plan meets certain spatial quality requirements and fits well into the environment where it will be built'. “But of course it is extremely subjective; let other members of the committee look at those homes today and they think they are beautiful,"" says Lansink.

His party is not in favor of the committee, but in these times of scarcity on the housing market and an enormous construction task, the VVD no longer sees a role for a 'frivolity' such as the aesthetics committee.

“We'll never make it this way, the steam is coming out of my ears. If everyone can piss on every plan then we will never be finished. We have great ambitions as a municipality, but the aesthetics committee forces us to adjust that ambition when they are in charge.”

The committee, consisting of architects and an architectural historian, also reviews applications for a monument. Both the municipal welfare policy and the monument policy are taken into account. As far as Lansink is concerned, this is an excellent task for the committee to focus primarily on.

“Let them occupy themselves only with protected faces. Rotterdam is internationally known for its innovative architecture, and plenty of space should be given to that,"" he believes.

The market should be leading, the VVD member believes. “The houses that are now being demolished have all been sold subject to conditions, and the buyers are very enthusiastic about them. That is what it should be about.”

According to him, the welfare memorandum on which the committee's policy is based is outdated in any case. “It is no longer of this time. And how will things develop in the future with the new environmental law that is coming? Then there is no room for this kind of nonsense.”

Lansink has submitted written questions to the city council about the issue and wants to know how much delay the negative decision will cause and whether the council wants to adjust its welfare policy.

'Just advice

at monument'

Load Date: May 3, 2018

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403 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text='Terrace sheather restricted'

The Telegraph

May 19, 2021 Wednesday

Rotterdam

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Section: REGION; Page 13

Length: 101 words

Body

THE HAGUE - The use of patio heaters should be restricted as much as possible in The Hague. This is the opinion of the Party for the Animals and GroenLinks, who submit written questions to the city council. ""We expect people to insulate their homes, but terraces don't even have walls and are still heated. Let's stop heating the outside air,"" says party leader Robert Barker of the Party for the Animals. Barker and Arjen Kapteijns of GroenLinks point to the **Environmental** Act that can be used to limit the use of patio heaters.

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Load Date: May 18, 2021

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407 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Build smart and chase the heat out of the city

de Volkskrant

July 9, 2018 Monday

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Section: First; Page 14, 15

Length: 1640 words

Byline: BY IANTHE SAHADAT

Highlight: The heat of recent weeks is not only leading to drought, but also drawing attention to another problem: our cities are deserts of concrete. What can be done about that?

Body

It has been remarkably warm in the Netherlands for weeks. This leads to drought and also draws attention to another problem: our cities are deserts of concrete. What can be done about that?

When it is 27 degrees outside, it remains pleasant for lawyers and bankers to stay in the office colossi on the Amsterdam Zuidas - often architectural masterpieces with an abundance of glass. That's all well and good, but it is of course quite idiotic, says Delft professor Andy van den Dobbelsteen.

The Netherlands is full of smooth glass office buildings without decent sun protection, where the air conditioning is already on at 12 degrees Celsius, because a lot of sunlight can enter. As soon as you can fry a fried egg on the paving stones outside, the air conditioners are blowing so loudly that you start to wonder: is there no other way? The professor of Climate Design and Sustainability certainly does that.

Even if the climate did not warm up further, we would have a problem in Dutch cities. Cities are heat islands, deserts of concrete, clinkers, asphalt and tiles that absorb heat all day long, retain it and release it into the air. This causes less labor productivity, health problems and, in extreme cases, more mortality.

It is therefore a mystery to urban climate researchers that not much is happening in the Netherlands anymore in the field of climate adaptation and heat-resistant construction. By this they mean: more grass, more trees, roof and facade vegetation, the right sun protection, building with modern types of stone that absorb less heat and making smart use of wind and shade.

When it is 26 degrees Celsius in the South Holland polder, it can be up to 9 degrees warmer in the heart of Rotterdam. ""That is unpleasant and problematic during the day for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, babies and the sick, but even more so at night,"" says microclimate researcher Marjolein Pijpers-van Esch from TU Delft. 'The major health hazard of heat lies at night. Because the heat lingers in cities, people sleep poorly. And if they do sleep, the body cannot recover sufficiently because it is only busy cooling.' The night temperature also increases a little every hot day in a row.

Heat wave

It sounds harsh, but what we actually need is a modest disaster, says Van den Dobbelsteen. According to him, a heat wave with heat deaths makes more of an impression than good arguments to make policymakers understand the urgency.

'We still build the same as 20 years ago. We love big windows. In combination with poor sun protection and well-insulated houses, you need air conditioning to cool your house. Ten years ago no one had such a thing, now you can just get them at Gamma.'

Today's students of architecture and urban planning are aware of the necessity, says Van den Dobbelsteen. 'But the current crop of architects and city developers still builds large, sleek buildings made of glass where no sun protection can be attached to the outside. You may like that, but above all it is incomprehensible.'

A disaster, or a government that intervenes, are the only two ways to bring about change, according to landscape architect and urban planning scientist Sanda Lenzholzer (Wageningen University). 'We have just completed a study in which we asked a hundred international experts in this field how to achieve climate adaptation. Let a lot of people die from a heat wave like in 2003 or 2006, they say. Then you suddenly see rules emerging, such as: every new house must have a 'green' facade. A little encouragement and subsidies won't get you there.'

Abroad

Lenzholzer, a German by birth, wrote the alarming book Weather in the City a few years ago. She is currently working on a major international study on urban climate. She observes that the Netherlands is lagging behind internationally, compared to South Korea or Kenya, but also to neighboring countries Belgium and Germany. 'You see amended building regulations in our southern neighbors that require less heat-absorbing facade materials, but we don't have that here.'

She gives the example of Stuttgart, a city in a hill basin with many valley winds where temperature and air pollution cause major problems in the summer months. 'They now use cool air flows from the hills by keeping entire areas open or not planting them densely. This is laid down in zoning plans. I don't know of a single example of this caliber in the Netherlands.'

She doesn't really know why that is. 'A strong oil lobby, a neoliberal regime? In Germany, environmental issues have been a serious issue for decades, while in the Netherlands it was the domain of goat's wool socks for a long time. That certainly plays a role.'

There are also some beautiful things happening here and there in green areas, say the microclimate researchers. For example, Arnhem, already quite green thanks to relatively large city parks, is the first Dutch municipality to include a heat map in its 'structural vision', says Lenzholzer. 'Not every neighborhood has a problem, an industrial estate where no one stays at night could be a bit hotter. Not a neighborhood with retirement homes.'

If you ask microclimatologists what our best remedy against urban heat is where the buildings are already 'finished', they unanimously say: trees. Trees are active coolers, says Marjolein Pijpers-van Esch. 'They provide shade and they evaporate their stored moisture - which is cooling. Moreover, they remove harmful CO2 from the air.' Lenzholzer: 'Researchers measured temperatures up to 6 degrees lower more than a hundred meters away from a large city park.'

Another good example is Rotterdam with its 235,000 square meters (about 25 football fields) of 'roof fields': green roof gardens, created with municipal subsidies. 'Roof gardens work as natural air conditioning,' explains Pijpers-van Esch. 'Leaves retain water that evaporates in heat, which provides cooling. With green roofs you see that the underlying house remains cooler and the air directly above the building can be a few degrees lower.'

That's nice, but not enough, says Lenzholzer. 'That has little effect at street level, green facades work much better then.'

Wind corridor

What you actually want, says Pijpers-van Esch, is to bring that cool air down from above the green roofs. 'For example, through more space between buildings and more height differences. You can take this into account in a new neighborhood. Or think about the colours: light colors are nice for the residents, but reflective sunlight actually provides more warmth to the environment.'

Unfortunately, there is no uniform solution, says Pijpers-van Esch. 'We can look at Mediterranean countries, but they have different sun heights and therefore less shade. We can make much more use of shade. In Asia they build cities with a wind corridor (an open strip between buildings in line with the most common wind direction, ed.) but I understand that in the old center of Amsterdam or Utrecht you are not going to immediately use a wrecking ball to make room for that.'

Sometimes an energy solution coincides with climate adaptation. Solar panels and collectors ensure less heating of the immediate environment, because they convert solar radiation into useful electricity and hot water. Many people choose a tiled garden or concrete fence for practical reasons, says Professor Van den Dobbelsteen. 'Realize that plants, grass, wood or vegetable tiles can save a few degrees for your house and the surrounding neighborhood.'

Cities and departments are indeed paying attention to climate changes and the adjustments required for this in the city, a spokesperson for Minister Ollongren (spatial planning) responds to the accusation that too little is being done in the Netherlands. He points to the 'city deal climate adaptation', signed in 2016 by the relevant ministries, nine major cities and various companies to look 'for innovative solutions to these types of issues'. Furthermore, 'we are examining whether you can include limit values ​​in building regulations for the number of hours that a building may be exposed to overheating'. What can also be a good impetus, according to the spokesperson: in the new environmental law (effective from 2021), municipalities and provinces are given the freedom to draw up urban development regulations themselves.

CONSTRUCTION TIPS

- Sun blinds outside the building cool a few degrees more than sun blinds inside the building;

- Build a pipe network under large city squares, use cold winter water for cooling. You store the heated water for the winter, when it can be used for district heating, among other things.

- Remove paving from parking spaces or playgrounds and plant them with grass: it collects water and cools it.

-

Cities usually expand in a circular shape. For temperature regulation it is better to expand in a finger-like manner: long headlands of buildings alternating with green strips. A good example is the Sonsbeek Park in Arnhem, which extends from Burgers Zoo almost to the central station.

BIG TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCES IN THE CITY

When you hear the term microclimate, you may think of a terrarium of one of Freek Vonk's house reptiles. Climate researchers are more likely to refer to the climate of a city or district. You can create a heat map (based on numerous calculations) of a city, which shows, for example, how much higher the perceived temperature is on an urban business park or in a working-class neighborhood compared to the rural environment of the city. That can sometimes differ by almost 10 degrees.

We still build the same as 20 years ago. We love big windows

View the original page: page 14, page 15, page 15

Graphic

DakAkker in Rotterdam: the first harvestable roof in the Netherlands. Vegetables, herbs and fruit are grown on site.

Load Date: July 8, 2018

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eden van de Staten-Generaal,

NRC Handelsblad

17 september 2014 woensdag

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Section: In het nieuws; Blz. 7

Length: 2838 words

Body

In de zomer van 2014 bleek andermaal dat vrijheid en veiligheid kwetsbaar zijn - ook in ons deel van de wereld, ook in Nederland. Op 17 juli trof een verschrikkelijk lot de 298 inzittenden van vlucht MH17, onder wie 196 landgenoten. Daardoor wordt de feestelijke traditie van Prinsjesdag dit jaar omgeven door een rouwrand van verdriet. De vliegramp boven Oekraïens grondgebied heeft velen direct geraakt, ook in uw verenigde vergadering, en ons allen diep geschokt. In heel het land waren mensen zichtbaar één, in stilte en rouw. Die betrokkenheid en saamhorigheid bieden troost aan iedereen die een groot persoonlijk verlies moet verwerken.

De ramp met MH17 en de situatie in Oekraïne en het Midden-Oosten maken duidelijk hoe in de wereld van vandaag alles met alles samenhangt. Wij leven in een open en internationaal georiënteerd land dat door persoonlijke, economische, politieke en culturele banden actief deel uitmaakt van de wereldgemeenschap. Dat brengt ons veel goeds, maar het gaat ook gepaard met reële risico's en kwetsbaarheden. Conflicten die zich duizenden kilometers ver weg afspelen, roepen in ons land emoties en reacties op. Dat is niet nieuw, maar in een tijd waarin iedereen de wereld via de smartphone in zijn hand heeft, is de maatschappelijke impact groter en sneller merkbaar.

De situatie in Noord-Irak, Syrië en Gaza leidt in ons land tot spanningen en tot gevoelens van onmacht en onveiligheid. De haat die elders in de wereld mensen in het verderf stort, mag niet overslaan naar onze straten. Ook in economisch opzicht hebben geopolitieke ontwikkelingen direct hun weerslag op onze samenleving. Een recent voorbeeld zijn de negatieve gevolgen voor het Nederlandse bedrijfsleven van de wederzijdse economische sancties van de Europese Unie en Rusland. De veerkracht van de samenleving en de economie wordt door dit alles op de proef gesteld. Om daar tegenwicht aan te bieden, zijn een vaste koers en duidelijke keuzes nodig. De regering is dankbaar dat hiervoor politiek en maatschappelijk draagvlak bestaat, en zij blijft daaraan werken.

De regering staat pal voor de grondrechten en vrijheden van mensen en grijpt in als grenzen worden overschreden. Haat zaaien, dreigen met geweld of discriminatie van bevolkingsgroepen zal onder geen enkele omstandigheid worden getolereerd. Iedere inwoner van ons land moet zich veilig en beschermd weten. Iedere inwoner van ons land moet zich vrij voelen om uit te komen voor zijn of haar geloof, geaardheid en levensovertuiging. Het tegengaan van extremisme en intolerantie is een kerntaak van de overheid. Veel kracht komt uit de samenleving zelf. Ouders, scholen, sportclubs en andere partijen zijn nodig om radicalisering te voorkomen. Nederland is op dit vlak weerbaar, bouwend op een lange traditie van vrijheid en saamhorigheid.

Bescherming van de Nederlandse rechtsstaat is niet alleen een binnenlandse aangelegenheid. Een actief buitenlands beleid, gericht op vrede en veiligheid in landen en regio's waar deze in het gedrang zijn, is relevant en in ons belang. Die verantwoordelijkheid kunnen we alleen waarmaken in nauwe samenwerking met onze internationale partners in de Europese Unie, de NAVO en de Verenigde Naties. Nederland is zich van oudsher zeer van die opdracht bewust. Niet voor niets staat bevordering van de internationale rechtsorde in onze Grondwet. Aan die opdracht wordt vorm en inhoud gegeven door mensen en middelen beschikbaar te stellen voor missies zoals die in Mali en de antipiraterijmissie voor de Afrikaanse kust. Alle uitgezonden Nederlandse militairen verdienen groot respect.

Met het oog op de toenemende spanningen in de wereld en de verantwoordelijkheden die daaruit voortvloeien, verhoogt de regering de defensie-uitgaven. Het budget groeit structureel met 100 miljoen extra per jaar. Dit is een trendbreuk met het verleden. Ook stelt de regering eenmalig extra geld beschikbaar voor internationale noodhulp en de opvang van vluchtelingen in de regio. Zo geeft Nederland steun aan de grote groep ontheemden die van huis en haard worden verdreven om wie ze zijn of om wat ze geloven. Nieuwe dreigingen zoals de uitbraak van het ebolavirus in West-Afrika vragen een internationale aanpak en noodhulp ter plaatse, om verdere verspreiding tegen te gaan.

In eigen land werkt de regering aan structureel herstel en groei van de economie en werkgelegenheid. Daarvoor zijn nodig: gezonde overheidsfinanciën, een evenwichtige inkomensverdeling, een houdbaar stelsel van sociale en oudedagsvoorzieningen, een goed functionerende arbeidsmarkt en woningmarkt, een toekomstgericht onderwijsstelsel en betaalbare en toegankelijke zorg. Het oog van de regering is daarbij ook gericht op samenwerking met de Caraïbische delen van het Koninkrijk, om daar eveneens een duurzame ontwikkeling van de samenleving te bevorderen.

Toegang tot goede zorg is voor veel Nederlanders het bewijs van de kwaliteit van de samenleving. Nederland heeft een van de beste en meest toegankelijke zorgstelsels ter wereld. Het is in het belang van alle mensen in ons land dat dit zo blijft. Goede zorg is een onmisbare basisvoorziening. Feit is dat de kosten van onze zorg harder groeien dan onze economie. Daarom zijn met alle partijen uit de zorg afspraken gemaakt over vergroting van het kostenbewustzijn, tegengaan van verspilling en de aanpak van fraude. Zo worden besparingen bereikt met behoud van kwaliteit. De kostenontwikkeling valt dit jaar voor het eerst sinds vele jaren mee ten opzichte van de oorspronkelijke ramingen. Die gingen uit van een stijging met 16 miljard euro tussen 2013 en 2017. Door het ingezette beleid zal de stijging per saldo uitkomen op 6 miljard euro.

Per 1 januari 2015 gaan taken in de thuiszorg en de jeugdzorg en voorzieningen voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking over naar gemeenten. Door dit dicht bij mensen te organiseren, wordt bureaucratie aangepakt en kan beter rekening worden gehouden met specifieke behoeftes en voorkeuren. Het doel is een flexibel stelsel van goede en toegankelijke voorzieningen dat aansluit bij de behoeftes en keuzevrijheid van het individu. Ook zo versterken we de veerkracht van Nederland.

Overheden en bedrijven spannen zich in 2015 in om zoveel mogelijk mensen met een arbeidsbeperking in een reguliere baan aan de slag te krijgen. Voorzieningen in de thuiszorg en de jeugdzorg blijven beschikbaar, maar mensen krijgen wel te maken met andere voorwaarden en aanpassingen in de dienstverlening. Dat vraagt veel van hen en kan tot onzekerheid leiden. Juist daarom is alles erop gericht deze veranderingen de komende jaren in goede banen te leiden. Door het verstrekken van een toelage voor huishoudelijke hulp houden veel medewerkers hun baan en blijven zij het vertrouwde gezicht voor hun cliënten. In het besef dat bij een operatie van deze omvang niet alles foutloos kan verlopen, zet de regering zich intensief in om invoeringsproblemen tot een minimum te beperken, samen met de gemeenten en samen met de mensen en organisaties die voorzieningen verzorgen en ontvangen. Daarvoor is in 2015 400 miljoen euro extra beschikbaar. De energie en daadkracht waarmee aan deze grote veranderingen wordt gewerkt, verdienen waardering en boezemen vertrouwen in.

De Nederlandse economie toont zich veerkrachtig. Het is hoopgevend dat, na een aantal jaren van krimp en stijgende werkloosheid, ons land voorzichtig weer de weg omhoog vindt. Het overheidstekort daalt in 2015 naar verwachting tot 2,2 procent van het bruto binnenlands product. Daarom zijn geen nieuwe bezuinigingen nodig en hoeft voor ongeveer een miljard euro aan eerder voorgenomen lastenverzwaringen voor burgers niet te worden doorgevoerd. In 2015 wordt de loonbijstelling in de publieke sector volledig uitgekeerd. Na een nullijn van jaren kunnen de inkomens van leraren, politieagenten, militairen en ander overheidspersoneel weer mee stijgen met de loonontwikkeling in de markt.

In vergelijking met veel andere landen blijft de economische uitgangspositie van ons land sterk. Met een blik op mondiaal toonaangevende topsectoren als landbouw en voedsel, logistiek, de creatieve industrie en water is er zeker reden tot optimisme. Tegelijkertijd is het economisch herstel in ons land broos en afhankelijk van economische ontwikkelingen in de rest van de wereld, vooral in belangrijke partnerlanden in de Europese Unie.

Het grootste zorgpunt van de regering is en blijft de hoge werkloosheid, die veel mensen en hun families direct treft. Daar ligt voor de regering de allerhoogste prioriteit. Mensen die hun baan verliezen of dreigen te verliezen, krijgen zoveel mogelijk middelen aangereikt om aan de slag te blijven of een nieuwe baan te vinden.

De overheid blijft zich, samen met de onderwijssector, vakbeweging en bedrijven, inspannen voor scholing en begeleiding van werk naar werk, en voor meer leer-werktrajecten specifiek voor jongeren. Een extra maatregel die op korte termijn effect kan hebben, is verruiming van de mogelijkheden om tijdelijk te werken of een kansrijke technische opleiding te volgen met behoud van een WW-uitkering. Deze zogeheten brug-WW verkleint de risico's voor werkgevers bij het in dienst nemen van medewerkers en verhoogt de kans op werk voor hen die al langere tijd thuis zitten. Verder wordt het recht op kinderopvangtoeslag bij ontslag met drie maanden verlengd tot een half jaar. Daardoor kunnen mensen zich voor een langere periode volledig richten op het vinden van een nieuwe baan. Het lage btw-tarief voor de bouw wordt verlengd tot 1 juli 2015, als impuls voor de werkgelegenheid in de bouw.

Het stimuleren en benutten van jong talent is cruciaal voor toekomstige economische groei. De afgelopen jaren heeft de regering forse stappen gezet om de kwaliteit van het onderwijs en het onderwijspersoneel te verhogen en de aansluiting tussen het beroepsonderwijs en de arbeidsmarkt te verbeteren. Met de hervorming van de studiefinanciering en de introductie van het studievoorschot komt op termijn 1 miljard euro vrij voor beter hoger onderwijs. Dit geld wordt onder andere ingezet voor meer contacturen, intensievere begeleiding van studenten en het bevorderen van excellentie. De ov-kaart blijft bestaan en komt beschikbaar voor alle mbo'ers. In aansluiting op gemaakte afspraken met de onderwijssectoren investeert de regering daarnaast extra in het primair, voortgezet en beroepsonderwijs. Daarbij staat werken aan vakmanschap centraal, met veel aandacht voor de leraar zelf, maar bijvoorbeeld ook door een eigentijds meester-gezelsysteem in het mbo te ontwikkelen.

Om de innovatiekracht van ons land te versterken, stelt de regering een 'toekomstfonds' in voor kredietverlening aan innovatieve mkb'ers. De rendementen van het fonds komen beschikbaar voor uitgaven aan fundamenteel en toegepast onderzoek. Deltatechnologie is een van de innovatieve sectoren waarin ons land internationaal koploper is. De fysieke bescherming van ons land tegen het water kent een lange traditie. Het Deltaplan dat tegelijk met de begroting van 2015 wordt gepresenteerd, maakt ons land veiliger en geeft de Nederlandse watersector een stevige impuls.

De aanpak van onnodige regels die ondernemers en particulieren in de weg zitten, blijft een belangrijke doelstelling van het regeringsbeleid. In het nieuwe parlementaire jaar wordt besloten over de Omgevingswet, die procedures rond de bouw van woningen, kantoren en infrastructuur sterk vereenvoudigt en versnelt. Voor de langere termijn werkt de regering aan een herziening van het belastingstelsel. De doelstelling is tweeledig: een forse vereenvoudiging en het stimuleren van werkgelegenheid. Dat laatste kan door de lasten op arbeid te verlagen. De inzet van de regering is dat hierdoor de baankans van mensen aan de onderkant van de arbeidsmarkt groeit en dat iedereen die werk vindt er ook echt op vooruitgaat. Voor kleine ondernemers wordt het aantrekkelijker om mensen in dienst te nemen.

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Leden van de Staten-Generaal, dit jaar vieren we tweehonderd jaar Prinsjesdag. Ons land heeft zich in die twee eeuwen steeds veerkrachtig en saamhorig getoond als omstandigheden daarom vroegen - ook deze zomer weer. De regering blijft vastberaden werken aan een vitale en weerbare samenleving, economisch herstel en groei van de werkgelegenheid. De ingezette hervormingen leggen een fundament onder de toekomst van ons land. Het werken aan deze opdracht vindt plaats in een turbulente en onzekere internationale omgeving en in het besef dat vrijheid, veiligheid en welvaart nauw met elkaar verbonden zijn. Ook uw werk zal daar in het nieuwe parlementaire jaar door worden getekend. U mag zich gesteund weten door het besef dat velen u wijsheid toewensen en met mij om kracht en Gods zegen voor u bidden.

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Troost

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Waarschuwing

Ontwikkelingen in het verre buitenland kunnen overslaan naar het binnenland. Vandaar de waarschuwing dat haat zaaien, dreigen met geweld of discriminatie van bevolkingsgroepen onder geen enkele omstandigheid wordt toegestaan. Voor het eerst wordt ook geaardheid als discriminatiecategorie genoemd.

Trendbreuk

Het begrip trendbreuk komt niet vaak voor in Troonredes. Beleid in coalitieland Nederland wordt immers in hoge mate gekenmerkt door continuïteit. Het gewijzigde wereldbeeld leidt ertoe dat de begroting voor Defensie er voor het eerst in decennia weer geld bij krijgt. In de praktijk betekent het dat er minder wordt bezuinigd dan twee jaar geleden werd afgesproken.

Speerpunt zorg

Een belangrijk deel van de Troonrede ging over de zorg. Het laat zien dat dit een van de belangrijkste onderdelen van het kabinetsbeleid is. De zorgkosten stijgen nog altijd. Maar het goede nieuws dat koning Willem-Alexander had te melden, was dat de uitgaven minder stijgen dan waarmee eerder rekening was gehouden.

Economisch herstel

Voor het eerst sinds 2007 is in de Troonrede sprake van economische voorspoed. Daarom worden er geen nieuwe bezuinigingen aangekondigd en gaan eerder aangekondigde lastenverzwaringen niet door. Overigens wordt nog altijd meer geld uitgegeven dan er binnenkomt.

Speerpunt werk

Hoewel het economisch beter lijkt te gaan, blijft de werkloosheid voor Nederlandse begrippen hoog. Deze zakt volgend jaar licht, naar 6,75 procent van de beroepsbevolking (605.000 werklozen).

Extra scholing blijft een van de belangrijkste maatregelen om mensen weer aan het werk te krijgen.

Europa: ja mits

Net als vorig jaar geen uitbundige beschouwing over Europa. Nederland blijft zich inzetten voor een Europese Unie die zich tot de kerntaken beperkt. Het kabinet schaart zich achter de strategische agenda van de nieuw aantredende Europese Commissie die stelt dat Europa zich alleen moet bezighouden met onderwerpen die waarde toevoegen.

Vertrouwde bede

In de gepolariseerde jaren zeventig was het altijd weer de vraag of en hoe God een rol speelde aan het slot van de Troonrede. Wel of geen bede? De tekst van dit jaar is nagenoeg dezelfde als die in voorgaande jaren.

'Velen' is het compromiswoord waardoor zowel gelovigen als ongelovigen zich in de tekst kunnen herkennen.

Load-Date: September 17, 2014

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eden van de Staten-Generaal,

NRC Handelsblad

17 september 2014 woensdag

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Section: In het nieuws; Blz. 7

Length: 2838 words

Body

In de zomer van 2014 bleek andermaal dat vrijheid en veiligheid kwetsbaar zijn - ook in ons deel van de wereld, ook in Nederland. Op 17 juli trof een verschrikkelijk lot de 298 inzittenden van vlucht MH17, onder wie 196 landgenoten. Daardoor wordt de feestelijke traditie van Prinsjesdag dit jaar omgeven door een rouwrand van verdriet. De vliegramp boven Oekraïens grondgebied heeft velen direct geraakt, ook in uw verenigde vergadering, en ons allen diep geschokt. In heel het land waren mensen zichtbaar één, in stilte en rouw. Die betrokkenheid en saamhorigheid bieden troost aan iedereen die een groot persoonlijk verlies moet verwerken.

De ramp met MH17 en de situatie in Oekraïne en het Midden-Oosten maken duidelijk hoe in de wereld van vandaag alles met alles samenhangt. Wij leven in een open en internationaal georiënteerd land dat door persoonlijke, economische, politieke en culturele banden actief deel uitmaakt van de wereldgemeenschap. Dat brengt ons veel goeds, maar het gaat ook gepaard met reële risico's en kwetsbaarheden. Conflicten die zich duizenden kilometers ver weg afspelen, roepen in ons land emoties en reacties op. Dat is niet nieuw, maar in een tijd waarin iedereen de wereld via de smartphone in zijn hand heeft, is de maatschappelijke impact groter en sneller merkbaar.

De situatie in Noord-Irak, Syrië en Gaza leidt in ons land tot spanningen en tot gevoelens van onmacht en onveiligheid. De haat die elders in de wereld mensen in het verderf stort, mag niet overslaan naar onze straten. Ook in economisch opzicht hebben geopolitieke ontwikkelingen direct hun weerslag op onze samenleving. Een recent voorbeeld zijn de negatieve gevolgen voor het Nederlandse bedrijfsleven van de wederzijdse economische sancties van de Europese Unie en Rusland. De veerkracht van de samenleving en de economie wordt door dit alles op de proef gesteld. Om daar tegenwicht aan te bieden, zijn een vaste koers en duidelijke keuzes nodig. De regering is dankbaar dat hiervoor politiek en maatschappelijk draagvlak bestaat, en zij blijft daaraan werken.

De regering staat pal voor de grondrechten en vrijheden van mensen en grijpt in als grenzen worden overschreden. Haat zaaien, dreigen met geweld of discriminatie van bevolkingsgroepen zal onder geen enkele omstandigheid worden getolereerd. Iedere inwoner van ons land moet zich veilig en beschermd weten. Iedere inwoner van ons land moet zich vrij voelen om uit te komen voor zijn of haar geloof, geaardheid en levensovertuiging. Het tegengaan van extremisme en intolerantie is een kerntaak van de overheid. Veel kracht komt uit de samenleving zelf. Ouders, scholen, sportclubs en andere partijen zijn nodig om radicalisering te voorkomen. Nederland is op dit vlak weerbaar, bouwend op een lange traditie van vrijheid en saamhorigheid.

Bescherming van de Nederlandse rechtsstaat is niet alleen een binnenlandse aangelegenheid. Een actief buitenlands beleid, gericht op vrede en veiligheid in landen en regio's waar deze in het gedrang zijn, is relevant en in ons belang. Die verantwoordelijkheid kunnen we alleen waarmaken in nauwe samenwerking met onze internationale partners in de Europese Unie, de NAVO en de Verenigde Naties. Nederland is zich van oudsher zeer van die opdracht bewust. Niet voor niets staat bevordering van de internationale rechtsorde in onze Grondwet. Aan die opdracht wordt vorm en inhoud gegeven door mensen en middelen beschikbaar te stellen voor missies zoals die in Mali en de antipiraterijmissie voor de Afrikaanse kust. Alle uitgezonden Nederlandse militairen verdienen groot respect.

Met het oog op de toenemende spanningen in de wereld en de verantwoordelijkheden die daaruit voortvloeien, verhoogt de regering de defensie-uitgaven. Het budget groeit structureel met 100 miljoen extra per jaar. Dit is een trendbreuk met het verleden. Ook stelt de regering eenmalig extra geld beschikbaar voor internationale noodhulp en de opvang van vluchtelingen in de regio. Zo geeft Nederland steun aan de grote groep ontheemden die van huis en haard worden verdreven om wie ze zijn of om wat ze geloven. Nieuwe dreigingen zoals de uitbraak van het ebolavirus in West-Afrika vragen een internationale aanpak en noodhulp ter plaatse, om verdere verspreiding tegen te gaan.

In eigen land werkt de regering aan structureel herstel en groei van de economie en werkgelegenheid. Daarvoor zijn nodig: gezonde overheidsfinanciën, een evenwichtige inkomensverdeling, een houdbaar stelsel van sociale en oudedagsvoorzieningen, een goed functionerende arbeidsmarkt en woningmarkt, een toekomstgericht onderwijsstelsel en betaalbare en toegankelijke zorg. Het oog van de regering is daarbij ook gericht op samenwerking met de Caraïbische delen van het Koninkrijk, om daar eveneens een duurzame ontwikkeling van de samenleving te bevorderen.

Toegang tot goede zorg is voor veel Nederlanders het bewijs van de kwaliteit van de samenleving. Nederland heeft een van de beste en meest toegankelijke zorgstelsels ter wereld. Het is in het belang van alle mensen in ons land dat dit zo blijft. Goede zorg is een onmisbare basisvoorziening. Feit is dat de kosten van onze zorg harder groeien dan onze economie. Daarom zijn met alle partijen uit de zorg afspraken gemaakt over vergroting van het kostenbewustzijn, tegengaan van verspilling en de aanpak van fraude. Zo worden besparingen bereikt met behoud van kwaliteit. De kostenontwikkeling valt dit jaar voor het eerst sinds vele jaren mee ten opzichte van de oorspronkelijke ramingen. Die gingen uit van een stijging met 16 miljard euro tussen 2013 en 2017. Door het ingezette beleid zal de stijging per saldo uitkomen op 6 miljard euro.

Per 1 januari 2015 gaan taken in de thuiszorg en de jeugdzorg en voorzieningen voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking over naar gemeenten. Door dit dicht bij mensen te organiseren, wordt bureaucratie aangepakt en kan beter rekening worden gehouden met specifieke behoeftes en voorkeuren. Het doel is een flexibel stelsel van goede en toegankelijke voorzieningen dat aansluit bij de behoeftes en keuzevrijheid van het individu. Ook zo versterken we de veerkracht van Nederland.

Overheden en bedrijven spannen zich in 2015 in om zoveel mogelijk mensen met een arbeidsbeperking in een reguliere baan aan de slag te krijgen. Voorzieningen in de thuiszorg en de jeugdzorg blijven beschikbaar, maar mensen krijgen wel te maken met andere voorwaarden en aanpassingen in de dienstverlening. Dat vraagt veel van hen en kan tot onzekerheid leiden. Juist daarom is alles erop gericht deze veranderingen de komende jaren in goede banen te leiden. Door het verstrekken van een toelage voor huishoudelijke hulp houden veel medewerkers hun baan en blijven zij het vertrouwde gezicht voor hun cliënten. In het besef dat bij een operatie van deze omvang niet alles foutloos kan verlopen, zet de regering zich intensief in om invoeringsproblemen tot een minimum te beperken, samen met de gemeenten en samen met de mensen en organisaties die voorzieningen verzorgen en ontvangen. Daarvoor is in 2015 400 miljoen euro extra beschikbaar. De energie en daadkracht waarmee aan deze grote veranderingen wordt gewerkt, verdienen waardering en boezemen vertrouwen in.

De Nederlandse economie toont zich veerkrachtig. Het is hoopgevend dat, na een aantal jaren van krimp en stijgende werkloosheid, ons land voorzichtig weer de weg omhoog vindt. Het overheidstekort daalt in 2015 naar verwachting tot 2,2 procent van het bruto binnenlands product. Daarom zijn geen nieuwe bezuinigingen nodig en hoeft voor ongeveer een miljard euro aan eerder voorgenomen lastenverzwaringen voor burgers niet te worden doorgevoerd. In 2015 wordt de loonbijstelling in de publieke sector volledig uitgekeerd. Na een nullijn van jaren kunnen de inkomens van leraren, politieagenten, militairen en ander overheidspersoneel weer mee stijgen met de loonontwikkeling in de markt.

In vergelijking met veel andere landen blijft de economische uitgangspositie van ons land sterk. Met een blik op mondiaal toonaangevende topsectoren als landbouw en voedsel, logistiek, de creatieve industrie en water is er zeker reden tot optimisme. Tegelijkertijd is het economisch herstel in ons land broos en afhankelijk van economische ontwikkelingen in de rest van de wereld, vooral in belangrijke partnerlanden in de Europese Unie.

Het grootste zorgpunt van de regering is en blijft de hoge werkloosheid, die veel mensen en hun families direct treft. Daar ligt voor de regering de allerhoogste prioriteit. Mensen die hun baan verliezen of dreigen te verliezen, krijgen zoveel mogelijk middelen aangereikt om aan de slag te blijven of een nieuwe baan te vinden.

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415 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=The uncertain fate of art on the street

NRC.NEXT

September 13, 2016

nn Tuesday

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Section: Culture; Page 26

Length: 1568 words

Byline: Sandra Smets

Body

ABSTRACT

**Environmental** art

It is the most endangered part of Dutch art history. The vast majority of environmental art is demolished. But the tide seems to be turning.

The demolition permit had already been issued, preservation was hopeless. Breda train station has been so extensively renovated in recent years that the art present could not be saved. It was too complicated, because the environmental artwork from 1973 designed by Peter Struycken had completely merged with the former station building: tiled kiosks, an abstract paving, concrete panels as windbreaks on the track and tiling of the floor and walls of a long pedestrian tunnel.

With this type of environmental art, of which Struycken is the most important Dutch representative, preservation is often impossible, precisely because it blends in with the environment: a wavy designed parking lot, dynamic light works, squares and facades. Yet the expected demolition in Breda turned out differently. The artist says that a critical resident, Mr Van den Berg, got things rolling. Former councilor Akinci argued in favor of preservation, architect Van Velsen went along with it, even the heritage association Heemschut, founded in 1911 to protect the medieval cityscape, took action. Part of the work was saved and can now be seen in the middle of a brand new station: two yellow-blue-black tiled kiosks from Struycken, temporarily fenced off to be renovated, as a reminder of a bygone era.

**Environmental** art is the most threatened chapter of Dutch art history. According to Struycken, about 80 to 90 percent of his work in public spaces has been seriously neglected or demolished. And he is also a museum-lauded celebrity. What about lesser-known artists who, like him, made a new kind of art possible on the streets in the 1970s?

Because although you wouldn't easily tell from the concrete paving stone appearance of some works, environmental art was a radical art form at the time. It started at a time when art was in constant motion. In 1966, the art academy in Arnhem opened the Monumental New Style department, with artists Struycken and Berend Hendriks as main teachers. Artists were tired of always sticking a work of art on something afterwards. That could have been better. And so artists started thinking about construction processes and planning. The Netherlands was building hard and the new environmental designers had enough work. Until the 1990s they designed hills and parking lots, spatially placed objects, decorated walls that were architecturally integrated. Mondrian's idea that art would become redundant if the whole world became one work of art became reality.

Later this turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory. The art was so well integrated that no one saw that it was art anymore, those light lines and concrete elevations, according to philosopher Siebe Thissen, author of the book Images published this year. Due to this ultimate integration, a lot of environmental art is quickly demolished. Restoring paving stones or parking spaces is not self-evident, demolition workers do not recognize it as art. Neither does the public. Art, here? , Zoetermeer residents in the Buytenwegh shopping center respond when you ask about the two black sculptures by David Vandekop that stood tall for thirty years, and yet were overlooked. A facade relief by André Volten, also an important sculptor, on the Rotterdam office building where architectural firm OMA is located, was included by the winter painter in the painting work. Not to mention the school art of the 1970s: almost all the fun concrete objects on schoolyards have now been replaced by swings and rubber tiles on which you can safely fall. The Hague Municipal Museum also noticed something like this, which wanted to have Constant's play equipment built for his exhibition this year, which could not take place due to regulations. Art is important, so are baby teeth.

Because of its far-reaching integration, environmental art has a harder time than the monumental reconstruction art of before: also architecture-related mosaics and murals, but better recognizable as art. Citizens are more likely to stand up for this than for environmental art. Moreover, in reconstruction art, with families in the sun and upward diagonals, you can still see some popular upliftment, bildung, the transmission of a social ideal. Not in environmental art. She created meeting places, yes, but it was business, design. **Environmental** art is designed to be just as functional as street furniture, says Jeroen Boomgaard, lecturer in Art & Public Space at the Rietveld Academy. You can't love a lamppost either.

In recent years, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands has also paid attention to the period up to 1965, with publications and the website helpwandkunstopspoor.nl, on which concerned citizens can register reconstruction art. And in his article **Environmental** Art, a visual pacifier, Dirk van Weelden in this newspaper in 1994 called Arnhem School Art the terror of mediocre and stupid art.

Nostalgia

So little love, but the tide seems to be turning, not only in Breda. With demolition comes scarcity, with scarcity comes nostalgia, and in addition, the new heritage law has been in force since July 1 this year. Simone Vermaat of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE): Together with the new environmental law, the heritage law makes integral protection of our cultural heritage possible. Since 2012, buildings younger than fifty years old can also be given monument status. With this new law, an interior in conjunction with a national monument can be designated as an ensemble. Although conservation remains difficult, even with this law. The Rijksmuseum recently exhibited design sketches by Herman Hertzberger for his famous Centraal Beheer building in Apeldoorn, but the building itself is under threat: vacancy. So what now?

Vermaat sees a change in interest: After our attention to the reconstruction period, the 1970s are now looming on the horizon. The RCE focuses on the period 1965-1990 as a new study area for the government to protect, such as the preservation of concrete experiments. That the idea of ​​heritage is rejuvenating is also confirmed by Norman Vervat van Heemschut, who is increasingly concerned with post-war monumental art: This varies from environmental works by Struycken to special stained glass windows from the 1950s. For example, an important facade relief by Berend Hendriks in Waalwijk is scheduled for demolition next month.

Earlier this year, Chief Government Architect Floris Alkemade advocated a national database to protect art in public spaces, because there is no overview. Vervat estimates that perhaps 100,000 to 200,000 art commissions were realized in the built environment in the decades after the war, but most do not venture estimates. We actually have no idea. Not even from what is gone.

If you would like to see some more environmental art, you can hop on your bike and take a look around. Because it is still there. For example in Zoetermeer. At the time, the scene of planning experiments: gallery flats, terrace houses, cauliflower neighborhoods, it is an open-air museum for environmental art: concrete spheres on the sidewalk, posts with serrated plexiglass, steel kinetic sculptures. Zoetermeer welcomed artists in the 1970s and 1980s, also to think creatively in the urban development of neighborhoods. From an exploratory discussion group, Struycken especially remembers a consultation evening in which the idea for a park with a pond was torpedoed by a lady who immediately raised the danger of children drowning.

Art also sometimes has to make way in Zoetermeer. The two-part sculpture by David Vandekop has been moved to the new Oosterheem residential area. In the spirit of the work, it is once again located near a train track. Other art adrift, for example from depreciated school buildings, will be given a place in the town hall from October 2017, which is being renovated. There it is shown as a collection, telling the story of the city that was designated as a growth center in 1962. Just like in Almere, you have a loyal population of residents here who feel like the first inhabitants. Visual arts then work as an anchor point, according to the Society department.

Kees Verschuren, who made a large spatial design on the Dobbe Island in Zoetermeer, now demolished, says that attention to the environment has grown due to environmental art. Artists started to see how the built environment can acquire poetic meaning. Because they promoted this as guest lecturers at designer training courses, architects and planners also started to pay attention to it. The visual arts have achieved this.

Sometimes demolition is understandable, Struycken agrees, except when it happens due to disinterest. He doesn't see that with private clients, he says, but he does see that with governments. But: I find conceiving and realizing so attractive that I accept the prospect of destruction. There are even attempts to rescue damaged works by third parties, but he insists not to make that effort. I'd rather make something new.

In Zoetermeer, environmental art adrift is given a place in the town hall, as part of a collection that tells the story of the city

Graphic

**Environmental** artwork by Peter Struycken in the pedestrian tunnel of the old Breda station. This part has now been demolished. Far left: statue of David Vandekop as it stands now, in the bend of the Randstadrail, at Hugo de Grootlaan in Zoetermeer.

Photo municipality of Breda

Load Date: September 12, 2016

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419 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Kudos to the councilor. He is committed to us

NRC.NEXT

January 27, 2018

Next Saturday

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Section: Opinion; Page 8

Length: 1740 words

Byline: Gijsbert van Es

Body

ABSTRACT

Call

Municipal elections

The municipal elections are coming. wants more respect for those who make your neighborhood, village and city better.

89 Readers' Call Do you have confidence in your municipality?

Municipal councilor – it must be a tough life. It takes loads of time. It pays poorly. Status hardly matters. At least, this is the picture that emerges from a survey among 1,287 council members, recently conducted on behalf of ten regional newspapers in North and South Holland. Question: Why are you a councilor? The most frequently given answer: Because I want to contribute to society.

And how does society reward them? Four out of ten council members complain about a lack of appreciation from fellow townspeople or villagers. It is at the top of the list of unpleasant side effects, followed by meager pay, compared to the many hours it takes to read piles of policy documents, hold meetings and keep in touch with 'the citizenry'.

In an average-sized municipality (approximately 50,000 inhabitants), a councilor receives 1,248.42 euros per month. Gross. A paper route would yield more, converted to an hourly rate.

The harsh wind that hits council members has also been blowing my way for some time now. I (temporarily) exchanged my work as an NRC journalist for a job as a municipal official. At parties I can now respond to prejudices about sticky bureaucracy and clichés about local government.

On Wednesday, March 21, ten million voters in 335 municipalities will be able to appoint approximately eight thousand council members. A national holiday for democracy? Not really.

Two trends are working against each other. On the one hand, voter favor is fading. Turnout has been declining for decades. At the previous elections, in 2014, it was only just above half (54 percent). In dozens of municipalities, parties have great difficulty finding enough candidates for their electoral lists. Where the bar for selection is forced to be lower and lower, criminal infiltrators see their opportunity to extend their tentacles to the administrative upper world.

On the other hand, the number of municipal tasks and concerns is growing in size and importance. The Municipal Fund, the local fund, contains 30 billion euros. That is almost twice as much as four years ago. Have the municipalities received so much extra money? No, on the contrary. The government transferred youth care, social work and other social tasks to the municipalities in 2015, including major cuts in this sector.

Imagine achieving that: renovating an entire sector while cutting around five billion euros from the budget. And to think that this directly affects the lives and well-being of approximately one and a half million Dutch people in weaker positions. Every year, 370,000 children and young people turn to youth care (more than 10 percent of all 0 to 17-year-olds). The new-style home help is committed to more than one million disabled and/or elderly Dutch people (6 percent of the population).

Municipalities will soon have another major challenge to deal with, due to the introduction of a new **Environmental** Act. In a densely built-up country like the Netherlands, issues such as planning and building designations remain a tough point of contention.

In the meantime, the country itself is also changing, without the government piling reorganization upon reorganization. The population is aging, the rural areas are emptying out. The urban area is crying out for more rental properties and the owner-occupied sector is considerably stretched. Angry citizens, often in 'old neighborhoods', grumble about the arrival of their new neighbors, who are sterilely packaged in administrative jargon as 'status holders' and 'labor migrants'. Climate change is increasingly causing storm damage and excessive rainfall that reaches behind the front door - for which 'the municipality' is then blamed.

Enough problems listed, draw the line below, on balance: there is less and less democratic legitimacy, or support, for increasingly onerous tasks that weigh on the increasingly narrow shoulders of council members, aldermen and mayors.

Certainly, this gloomy image can be exposed in a different, more colorful way. For example, in 2015 the Ministry of the Interior provided encouragement by issuing a three-year 'Democratic challenge'.

How? With an ""experiment and learning program, aimed at renewing local democracy."" Why? ""Because our structures, [councils, municipal councils and civil service organizations], sometimes stand in the way of the necessary innovation."" What? Almost too many to mention. Website, social media, conferences, festivals, network meetings – the ministry has used all the power of modern communication in recent years to give local innovators the wind in their sails.

An example. Oldebroek, Breda, Cuyk, Emmen, Oss, plus a handful of other municipalities are experimenting with citizen budgets. A neighborhood is allocated a large sum of money, the residents divide the money. In neighborhood meetings, they opt for, for example, better children's playgrounds, extra neighborhood activities for the elderly, communal vegetable gardens, or longer opening hours for the swimming pool.

Dozens of similar novelties have been tested in all regions of the country. They bear playful names such as 'Eigenwijks Nieuwegein', 'Mooi, meer, Middelland' (a neighborhood in Rotterdam) and 'Nieuwe Ronde, Nieuwe Kansen' (in Coevorden). Goal? Bringing government closer to the citizens. And vice versa: challenging residents to put aside their role as grumbling Muppets and take action themselves.

The most ambitious experiment in this area comes from Belgium, devised by writer David van Reybrouck and explained in his book Against Elections (2013). It bears the name G1000. In recent years, G1000 meetings have been practiced in Amersfoort, Enschede, Groningen, Amsterdam and Uden, among others. Believers argue that such a G1000 will produce a better local agenda and smarter, more widely supported solutions than most actions that bubble up from the existing governance bubble.

But there is just as much criticism – of both the G1000 phenomenon and other democratic trials and experiments. It fits in with the chorus of opinion writers who sneered at the king when he had to read out in the 2013 Speech from the Throne: ""The classical welfare state is slowly but surely turning into a participation society.""

The core of the criticism: promoting participation is a shameful act from the government that is making blunt cuts in order to leave the weaker people in society to their fate. Administratively, such participation would not mean anything either. Old wine in new bottles, that's it. The indigenous, highly educated elite, who provide personnel for all boards (not only of parties and factions, but also of foundations, associations, institutions, etc.), may play the game in different ways, but it remains one and the same network of usual suspects. Call it: the foul-mouthed democracy.

That criticism makes sense, to some extent. But I'm an optimist, maybe even an idealist. I believe in the power and necessity of active citizenship – everywhere and certainly close to home, in municipalities. From a word by Voltaire: 'Il faut cultiver notre jardin.' Dutch translation: ""If you want to improve the world, it is best to start hoeing and sowing in your own garden."" When every world citizen does this to the best of his or her ability, in our own hometown, we can all go a long way.

For that reason alone, I think that municipal councilors deserve respect, because I sincerely believe in the good intentions of the vast majority of them - regardless of their political positions and choices.

I have been active as a volunteer in my hometown for about ten years. With a group of like-minded people I founded a 'City Lab', which has now taken on dozens of jobs to make our city 'more beautiful, more creative, more enterprising, greener, more social'. In 2011 we won an award as the 'most innovative volunteer organization in the Netherlands'.

Now I am, temporarily, a municipal official. I consider this a social internship. Upon returning to journalism, I experienced from the inside how complicated 'good governance' can be. Conflicting interests. Scarce resources. Political choices, necessary compromises. Public opinion, flat image. Force majeure, coincidence. And the eternal human shortcoming – that too every now and then, as everywhere else.

When municipal politics make it to the national media, it often concerns shady practices by office holders, rearguard actions against cannabis growers, or construction projects that cost millions more than previously estimated. Rightly so, that's news.

But it is also news that tens of thousands of care providers have also put their heart and soul into helping hundreds of thousands of children and elderly people in difficult situations every day over the past four years. That municipalities have invested billions in neighborhoods, in public spaces, in greening petrified areas. That traffic congestion has been resolved. That millions of subsidy money has been well spent on home insulation. That money has been invested in better school buildings, theaters and sports fields. That administrators and civil servants do not just arrange this from behind their desks and conference tables, but - on the contrary - can be found in the neighborhoods all the time.

Opinions are free and exchangeable. Clichés are nonsense. City councilors also talk a lot, some undoubtedly too much. But they also do something – they have ideas, wishes, plans that they want to realize.

No one needs to shout hosanna for council members, on the contrary: democracy thrives on critical debate. But in the meantime, voters can show respect for them by voting on March 21.

I believe in the power of active citizenship – especially close to home

Gijsbert van Es is NRC editor. Since spring 2015 he has been working temporarily (on a secondment basis) for the municipality of Leiden.

Call: My municipality is great!

How do citizens maintain confidence in their municipality? NRC wants to know this from you in the run-up to the municipal elections of March 21. Concrete examples of what went well and what improved. The library that remained, the sports field that was added anyway, the meeting place for the elderly or young people. But also from that one director who dared to row against the current and was proven right. Send your contribution of maximum 300 words before March 5 to opinion@nrc.nl with 'top municipality' in the subject line.

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de Volkskrant

September 17, 2014 Wednesday

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Section: First

Length: 2428 words

Body

Speech from the throne

It can always be better. Leaders of opposition parties are rewriting the passage in the Speech from the Throne that upsets them most. And provide a brief response to the text as a whole. Unfortunately, the PVV did not have time to participate.

In the summer of 2014 it became apparent once again that freedom and security are vulnerable - also in our part of the world, including in the Netherlands. On July 17, a terrible fate befell the 298 passengers of flight MH17, including 196 fellow countrymen. As a result, the festive tradition of Budget Day is surrounded by an edge of sadness this year. The air disaster over Ukrainian territory directly affected many, including in your United Assembly, and deeply shocked us all. Across the country, people were visibly united, in silence and mourning. That commitment and solidarity provide comfort to anyone who has to deal with a great personal loss.

The MH17 disaster and the situation in Ukraine and the Middle East make it clear how everything is interconnected in today's world. We live in an open and internationally oriented country that is an active part of the world community through personal, economic, political and cultural ties. That brings us a lot of good, but it is also accompanied by real risks and vulnerabilities. Conflicts that take place thousands of kilometers away evoke emotions and reactions in our country. This is not new, but at a time when everyone has the world in their hands via their smartphone, the social impact is greater and faster.

The situation in Northern Iraq, Syria and Gaza is leading to tensions in our country and to feelings of powerlessness and insecurity. The hatred that is destroying people elsewhere in the world must not spill over to our streets. Geopolitical developments also have a direct impact on our society from an economic point of view. A recent example is the negative consequences for Dutch businesses of the mutual economic sanctions of the European Union and Russia. The resilience of society and the economy is being tested by all of this. To counterbalance this, a fixed course and clear choices are needed. The government is grateful that there is political and social support for this and will continue to work on it.

The government stands firm for people's fundamental rights and freedoms and intervenes when boundaries are crossed. Sowing hatred, threatening violence or discriminating against population groups will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Every resident of our country must feel safe and protected. Every resident of our country should feel free to express his or her faith, orientation and philosophy of life. Combating extremism and intolerance is a core task of the government. A lot of power comes from society itself. Parents, schools, sports clubs and other parties are needed to prevent radicalization. The Netherlands is resilient in this area, building on a long tradition of freedom and solidarity.

Protection of the Dutch rule of law is not just a domestic matter. An active foreign policy, aimed at peace and security in countries and regions where these are at risk, is relevant and in our interests. We can only fulfill this responsibility in close cooperation with our international partners in the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. The Netherlands has traditionally been very aware of that task. It is not without reason that the promotion of the international legal order is included in our Constitution. This assignment is given form and content by making people and resources available for missions such as those in Mali and the anti-piracy mission off the African coast. All deployed Dutch soldiers deserve great respect.

In view of the increasing tensions in the world and the responsibilities that arise from them, the government is increasing defense expenditure. The budget is structurally growing by an additional 100 million per year. This is a break from the past. The government is also making additional one-off money available for international emergency aid and the reception of refugees in the region. For example, the Netherlands provides support to the large group of displaced people who are driven from their homes because of who they are or what they believe. New threats such as the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa require an international approach and emergency assistance on the ground to prevent further spread.

In its own country, the government is working on structural recovery and growth of the economy and employment. This requires: healthy government finances, a balanced income distribution, a sustainable system of social and old age provisions, a well-functioning labor market and housing market, a future-oriented education system and affordable and accessible care. The government's eye is also focused on cooperation with the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, in order to promote sustainable development of society there as well.

For many Dutch people, access to good care is proof of the quality of society. The Netherlands has one of the best and most accessible healthcare systems in the world. It is in the interest of all people in our country that this remains the case. Good care is an indispensable basic provision. The fact is that the costs of our healthcare are growing faster than our economy. That is why agreements have been made with all parties in healthcare about increasing cost awareness, combating waste and tackling fraud. In this way, savings are achieved while maintaining quality. For the first time in many years, cost development this year is better than the original estimates. They assumed an increase of 16 billion euros between 2013 and 2017. Due to the policy implemented, the net increase will amount to 6 billion euros.

As of January 1, 2015, tasks in home care and youth care and facilities for people with disabilities will be transferred to municipalities. By organizing this close to people, bureaucracy is tackled and specific needs and preferences can be better taken into account. The goal is a flexible system of good and accessible facilities that meets the needs and freedom of choice of the individual. In this way we also strengthen the resilience of the Netherlands.

In 2015, governments and companies will make efforts to get as many people with disabilities as possible into regular jobs. Facilities in home care and youth care remain available, but people will have to deal with different conditions and adjustments in services. That demands a lot from them and can lead to uncertainty. That is precisely why everything is aimed at steering these changes in the right direction in the coming years. By providing an allowance for domestic help, many employees keep their jobs and remain the trusted face for their clients. Realizing that not everything can run smoothly with an operation of this magnitude, the government is making intensive efforts to keep implementation problems to a minimum, together with the municipalities and together with the people and organizations that provide and receive facilities. An additional 400 million euros will be available for this in 2015. The energy and decisiveness with which these major changes are being worked on deserve appreciation and inspire confidence.

The Dutch economy is proving resilient. It is encouraging that, after a number of years of contraction and rising unemployment, our country is carefully finding its way back up. The government deficit is expected to fall to 2.2 percent of gross domestic product in 2015. That is why no new cuts are necessary and approximately one billion euros in previously planned increases in tax burdens on citizens do not have to be implemented.

The wage adjustment in the public sector will be paid out in full in 2015. After a zero line of years, the incomes of teachers, police officers, soldiers and other government employees can again rise in line with wage developments in the market.

Compared to many other countries, our country's economic position remains strong. With a look at world-leading top sectors such as agriculture and food, logistics, the creative industry and water, there is certainly reason for optimism. At the same time, the economic recovery in our country is fragile and dependent on economic developments in the rest of the world, especially in important partner countries in the European Union.

The government's biggest concern is and remains high unemployment, which directly affects many people and their families. This is the government's highest priority. People who lose or are at risk of losing their job are provided with as many resources as possible to stay in work or find a new job.

The government, together with the education sector, trade unions and companies, continues to make efforts for training and guidance from work to work, and for more learn-work programs specifically for young people. An additional measure that may have an effect in the short term is expanding the possibilities to work temporarily or to follow a promising technical training course while retaining unemployment benefits. This so-called bridge unemployment benefit reduces the risks for employers when hiring employees and increases the chance of work for those who have been at home for a longer period of time. Furthermore, the right to childcare allowance in the event of dismissal will be extended by three months to six months. This allows people to fully focus on finding a new job for a longer period of time. The low VAT rate for construction will be extended until July 1, 2015, as a boost to employment in construction.

Stimulating and utilizing young talent is crucial for future economic growth. In recent years, the government has taken significant steps to increase the quality of education and teaching staff and to improve the connection between vocational education and the labor market. The reform of student financing and the introduction of the student loan will eventually free up 1 billion euros for better higher education. This money will be used, among other things, for more contact hours, more intensive guidance of students and the promotion of excellence. The public transport card will continue to exist and will be available to all MBO students. In line with agreements made with the education sectors, the government is also investing extra in primary, secondary and vocational education. Working on craftsmanship is central, with a lot of attention for the teacher himself, but also, for example, by developing a contemporary master-apprentice system in secondary vocational education.

To strengthen our country's innovative power, the government is setting up a 'future fund' for lending to innovative SMEs. The fund's returns become available for expenditure on fundamental and applied research. Delta technology is one of the innovative sectors in which our country is an international leader. The physical protection of our country against water has a long tradition. The Delta Plan, which is presented at the same time as the 2015 budget, makes our country safer and gives the Dutch water sector a strong boost.

Tackling unnecessary rules that hinder entrepreneurs and private individuals remains an important objective of government policy. In the new parliamentary year, a decision will be made on the **Environmental** Act, which greatly simplifies and accelerates procedures surrounding the construction of homes, offices and infrastructure.

For the longer term, the government is working on a revision of the tax system. The objective is twofold: significant simplification and stimulating employment. The latter can be done by reducing labor costs. The government's aim is that this will increase job opportunities for people at the bottom of the labor market and that everyone who finds work will actually improve. It becomes more attractive for small entrepreneurs to hire people.

The Netherlands is an export country and many foreign companies are located here. Domestic growth and jobs are largely created abroad. The government therefore wants to strengthen the policy aimed at an attractive investment climate and active support for the exporting business community. The ambitious agenda with trade missions is being vigorously pursued. Export credits are becoming more focused on emerging economies and companies have easier access to these credits.

In a European context, the government remains committed to strengthening the internal market and to budgetary discipline and structural strengthening measures within the member states. These are basic conditions for a strong European economy. Opportunities for economic growth lie in the areas of the digital market, the energy market and the current negotiations on free trade agreements with the United States and other countries.

European cooperation must focus on those areas where joint action really adds value. This is also the core of the strategic agenda for the next five years, which serves as the starting point for the work program for the new European Commission. This includes important cross-border themes such as the internal market, energy and climate policy and tackling organized crime, including cybercrime. Fair work in Europe requires equal pay for equal work within every Member State. The government is committed to this and will step up the fight against bogus constructions.

Members of the States General,

This year we celebrate two hundred years of Budget Day. During those two centuries, our country has always shown itself to be resilient and cohesive when circumstances required it - and again this summer. The government continues to work determinedly towards a vital and resilient society, economic recovery and employment growth. The reforms that have been initiated lay a foundation for the future of our country. Working on this assignment takes place in a turbulent and uncertain international environment and in the realization that freedom, security and prosperity are closely linked. Your work will also be marked by this in the new parliamentary year. You may feel supported by the realization that many wish you wisdom and pray with me for strength and God's blessing for you.

This is the text of the entire Speech from the Throne as King Willem-Alexander delivered yesterday.

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NRC

January 2, 2024 Tuesday

1st Edition

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Section: DOMESTIC; Page 10

Length: 15 words

Body

Also listen to an episode of the podcast NRC Today about the **Environmental** Act.

Link to PDF

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NRC Handelsblad

January 31, 2022 Monday

1st Edition

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Section: OPINION; Page 17

Length: 686 words

Byline: Ameling Algra

Pim de Vroomen

Wim Everwijn

Yfke Osinga

Body

QR pass

No unnecessary rules

We live in a free country, so get rid of the QR pass. This is briefly stated by Christiaan Weijts in his column Deceptive optimism (28/1). He applies an absolute and dogmatic principle of freedom. The fact that the freedom to extend your arm ends right in front of someone else's nose does not occur in his concept. Denmark, England, Ireland and Spain realize that they are a free country, he says. They will (possibly) abolish the corona pass. The vaccination rate in those countries is higher than in the Netherlands. A good example of a paradox: if everyone with common sense adheres to the rules, those rules are unnecessary. I suspect that the medical costs for infected unvaccinated people far exceed the costs of developing that pass. Not to mention the suffering for the people whose necessary operations have been postponed again, or who have not dared to go outside for almost two years because of their immune system. There are no half measures in such extreme emergencies. Vaccination obligation would be appropriate, instead of a half-hearted QR code policy. But with the Christian Union in the cabinet, that is not possible.

Ameling Algra

The Hague

Nitrogen

Finally nature again

Under the inspiring leadership of his cabinets, Rutte I's initial passion for accounting has degenerated into a mechanism of self-destruction in about ten years. Now even our provinces are actively looking for evasion of the nitrogen measures (Nature suffers from nitrogen trade, 28/1). Lobbies find the new **Environmental** Act difficult: imagine if all noise pollution were really measured and added up, or that the same would happen with the scandalous air pollution that causes more death and destruction than smoking. In a little while, Rutte will not only be the longest-serving Prime Minister of the Netherlands, but also the last: the Netherlands no longer exists, eaten away by commercial municipalities, provinces, utilities, health care, a voracious industry that has never cleaned up its own mess. Just a few more years and nature will take control again. There will be no more people. Suffocated, drowned or left. The Netherlands will become the most beautiful landscape park in Europe. Finally, there is room for the wolves. Fortunately, the real one.

Pim de Vroomen

To lead

Soumaya

Deradicalized

The fact that Soumaya deradicalized Sahla (Faction chairman: VVD 'feels discomfort' about advisor Salah, 24/1) is in principle still justified. But why this change with an ambitious function at the heart of democracy? She could also have become a teacher, but she sought and got in touch with a man with a lot of influence in the VVD and beyond. What apparently has not surprised anyone is that Soumaya was first an average Muslim woman in her young life, then became radicalized and deradicalized again within a few years. If you can switch so easily, radicalization is never far away.

Wim Everwijn

Capelle aan den IJssel

Books

Nothing wrong with Riley

In the article about the best-selling books (In 2021: many books sold, but few literary novels, 28/1) the books by Lucinda Riley and Santa Montefiore, among others, are spoken rather condescendingly. The latter is even described as a writer of ""embellished bouquet series books"". According to the CPNB, the development towards lower sales of literary books is worrying. Both the CPNB and the article treat the superiority of the literary book as an objective truth. It is me here. disagree. What is most important is that more books have been sold than in previous years. Even if the list were dominated by real bouquet series books, it would remain a good development if people bought more books. What exactly is wrong with Lucinda Riley or Santa Montefiore? What makes their books apparently less valuable than literary fiction? We can rightly be concerned about the few Dutch titles on the list, but every genre must remain equal.

Yfke Osinga

Amersfoort

Letters 31/1/2022

If you switch easily, radicalization is never far away

Link to PDF

Notes

The Hague; To lead; Capelle aan den IJssel; Amersfoort

Load Date: January 31, 2022

End of Document, pronunciation=[[]], extra\_data=""{'translat..."")"

435 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=No Headline In Original

NRC.NEXT

January 14, 2017

NN Saturday

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Section: The Hague; Page 6

Length: 685 words

Body

Lodewijk Asscher (Social Affairs, PvdA)

Highlight The agreement on cleaners. They returned to permanent employment with the central government.

Low point The MH17 disaster. The day the coffins returned. There I was at Eindhoven airport as Deputy Prime Minister. It was so sad. All those relatives.

Laughed out loud With Jeanine Hennis in Northern Iraq. I had yellow earplugs against the noise of the plane. The next day I read the responses to her: Look, the PvdA is coming to listen.

Jeanine Hennis (Defense, VVD)

Highlight The arrival of the JSF. After twelve years of political debate, the Netherlands has finally been introduced to this new fighter aircraft.

Laughed loudly at the arrival in Erbil, Northern Iraq, with Lodewijk Asscher in white sneakers and jeans. We were told that there would not be a formal reception until the next day. Nothing could be further from the truth. Asscher did not take off his suit and tie afterward. Not even in the mud with the troops.

Bert Koenders (Foreign Affairs, PvdA)

Highlight After an intensive campaign, the world has awarded the Netherlands a seat on the UN Security Council. You should see that as a compliment.

Low point The war in Syria. That's where everything we don't want comes together, despite our best efforts. Resulting in great human suffering, and a flow of migration towards Europe that tests our solidarity.

Edith Schippers (Public Health, VVD)

Highlight The day that Rutte concluded the refugee deal with Turkey. I didn't think that would work because I know how tough the European Union is.

Low point It was very difficult for me every time we lost a colleague from the cabinet. Because I have known Weekers, Teeven and Opstelten well for a long time, even from the time I was in the House of Representatives, their departure affected me even more.

Jetta Klijnsma (Social Affairs, PvdA)

Highlight My visit to De Regenboog primary school in The Hague. I could tell you that we had released 100 million to combat child poverty.

Low point When we found in 2016 that municipalities had only created 115 sheltered workplaces (for disabled people who cannot work in normal companies, ed.). There should have been 1,600 by then.

Laughed out loud With Henk Kamp. He thinks I'm so idealistic: there's Jetta again who always wants to keep helping people.

Sander Dekker (Education, VVD)

Highlight I find it a pleasure every year to award the designation of excellent schools to teachers and school leaders who are doing exceptionally well.

Low point Tim Ribberink's suicide at the end of 2012. He was bullied so much at school that he decided to take his own life. I talked to his parents at the kitchen table. That conversation opened my eyes to the impact bullying has.

Laughed hard Jeroen Dijsselbloem does an excellent imitation of John Cleese.

Jet Bussemaker (Education, PvdA)

Highlight The reform of the loan system. What was nice: the student unions were disappointed, but still came with us to Nieuwspoort to drink away their sorrows.

All time low

Not a low point, but a serious signal was the report by journalist Margalith Kleijwegt about how teachers deal with attacks and Islamic terrorism. It turned out that teachers and students live past each other and no longer understand each other.

Melanie Schultz (Traffic, VVD)

Highlight The moment the **Environmental** Act was adopted in the House of Representatives, one of the largest legislative operations of the past century.

Low point The departure of State Secretary Wilma Mansveld. I still think it shouldn't have happened.

Laughed out loud I'm very bad at remembering anecdotes so they don't come up that quickly.

Sharon Dijksma (Infrastructure, PvdA)

Highlight The Paris Climate Agreement and the deal on stricter air quality requirements.

Low point The bird flu crisis in 2014, terrible for all those farmers with their companies and families.

Laughed out loud at a deal about the export of our onions to Indonesia. It was in the news as: the Dutch onion can be used in Indonesian nasi again.

Load Date: January 13, 2017

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439 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Emergency law now needed against regulations

The Telegraph

July 7, 2022 Thursday

The Netherlands

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Section: WHAT YOU SAY; Page 17

Length: 193 words

Body

Chairman of the trade association WoningbouwersNL, Mr Piet Adema, identifies exactly where the problem lies when it comes to the implementation of many (housing) construction plans (Tel. 5/7).

Our government is saying all kinds of things about solving the housing crisis by providing for the construction of a million homes in the next ten years. That simply won't work because we in the Netherlands are entangled in our building and environmental regulations. We have recorded exactly what is and is not possible in terms of construction. To deviate from this - given the housing crisis - lengthy procedures must be completed. Many municipalities simply do not have the capacity or expertise for this. The desired restructuring of farms is also failing for this reason. The government wants to reorganize agricultural companies, but offers no prospects for farmers. The only option to provide for the various crisis situations that are currently occurring in various policy areas is the rapid introduction of a general emergency law that (temporarily) removes blocking regulations. This is also because the new **Environmental** Act has been postponed for the umpteenth time.

Rob Dommerholt,

Lemmer

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443 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Spatial planning

Introduction of the **Environmental** Act postponed again

NRC

January 27, 2023 Friday

1st Edition

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Section: IN THE NEWS; Page 6

Length: 112 words

Dateline: Amsterdam

Body

The introduction of the **Environmental** Act has been postponed for the fifth time. Minister Hugo de Jonge (Public Housing and Spatial Planning, CDA) wrote on Thursday that the law must now come into force on January 1, 2024, six months later than the date decided last October. The **Environmental** Act should simplify spatial planning procedures in the Netherlands considerably, but the development of suitable software in particular poses a number of problems. The major cities already called at the end of last year to postpone the introduction of the law, because they need a period of six months to be prepared for the introduction of the law. (NRC)

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Load Date: January 26, 2023

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447 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Rutte II gives the opposition ammunition

NRC Handelsblad

September 17, 2014 Wednesday

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Section: In the news; Page 2

Length: 613 words

Byline: By our editors Tom-Jan Meeus and Thijs Niemantsverdriet

Body

Analysis

Million bill

Despite a favorable budget, the opposition has every opportunity to attack the cabinet. She demands a tax reform plan quickly.

The Hague. Lack of ambition: it became the buzz of Budget Day. Rutte II would sit back and present too little new policy.

Today it appears that the cabinet is bringing the 'constructive' and the 'normal' opposition back together. They are primarily aimed at the decision of VVD and PvdA to postpone the announced reform of the tax system.

The party leaders Pechtold (D66) and Buma (CDA) mutually agreed that they will call on the cabinet to come up with a detailed tax reform by February 1, 2015 at the latest. This morning it emerged that faction leader Slob of the Christian Union, another member of the constructive opposition, plans to support D66 and CDA in their call.

A call for the politically impossible: last summer it turned out that the VVD and PvdA lack the money and, above all, political space to pile a new reform on top of the drastic package of the past two years.

Here is the net result prior to the General Political Reflections that started this morning: the cabinet, which for the first time in years presented a budget with relatively positive prospects, a budget for which there is a large majority in Parliament, was forced onto the defensive again.

The same cabinet that was accused time and again last year of wanting to reform too quickly and too radically, is now suddenly a team for the opposition that ""puts off the problems"" (Buma) and a ""powerless Budget Memorandum"" (GroenLinks -left leader Van Ojik) presents.

Pechtold, co-responsible for the budget, set the tone. Unemployment is simply too high to sit back now, he said: more haste and decisiveness is needed. The Council of State, the most important advisory body to the government, also lacks ""the urgency and necessity"" for ""concrete measures or reforms"". Loosely translated: cabinet, keep reforming.

In a sense, some coalition politicians agreed, Prime Minister Rutte is getting a taste of his own medicine. As opposition leader during the Balkenende IV cabinet, he managed to present the lack of reforms under that cabinet as a show of political lethargy. The criticism led to the recovery of the VVD in the polls - and branded Balkenende IV as a cabinet that got nothing out of its hands.

The coalition points out that the cabinet is still full of ambition - but especially in the implementation of reforms that have already been accepted by parliament. Just look at long-term care, the housing market, the labor market, the energy agreement and the student loan system. And then there are new projects, such as a new pension system and the implementation of the 'environmental law' that is overhauling spatial planning. ""I think the agenda is packed,"" Rutte told journalists in the Torentje yesterday.

Yet there was no other option than to draw up a ""cautious"" budget for 2015, Minister Dijsselbloem (Finance, PvdA) said yesterday during the presentation of the Budget Memorandum. The economic recovery is fragile and the international situation uncertain, so the cabinet is cautious. for ""overly confident statements about the future"".

Opposition circles were pleasantly surprised last night about the way the government handled the de facto postponed tax reform plan. The opposition thus received ""a present"" for the General Considerations: to cover up a relatively favorable budget by insisting on a plan for later.

Graphic

Prime Minister Rutte with (from left) Sybrand Buma (CDA), Arie Slob (CU) and Alexander Pechtold (D66) in Parliament this morning.

Load Date: September 17, 2014

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451 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Thorbecke, you would also change your own laws now

NRC Handelsblad

October 11, 2018 Thursday

1st Edition

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Section: OPINION; Page 18

Length: 1711 words

Byline: Kajsa Ollongren

Body

ABSTRACT

How can you give space to differences and still preserve the unity of the country, asks Kajsa Ollongren in her Thorbecke lecture.

COMPLETE TEXT:

Dear Sir Thorbecke, or may I write: Dear Rudolph?

I'm writing to you because I want to share something with you. And I think I can call you Rudolph, because ... yes, it has all become a bit more informal over time. And there is also a bust of you in my office, right behind me. You look over my shoulder every day. You have a new biography out. What remains after reading this monumental work is the image of an outsider who managed to develop into the most powerful man in the Netherlands, and who subsequently succeeded in implementing numerous lasting reforms. [...] The Netherlands is still founded on your constitution. On your three-tiered governance model: central government, provinces, municipalities.

You may think: that sounds like little has changed. Well... For starters, there are more of us. Almost six, seven times as much as in your time. From 2.5 to about 17 million people. You know the horse tram. [...] You know the telegram. If my sons asked what that was, I'd say: an email on a bicycle. Let's say an email is a telegram traveling at the speed of light. [...] But your Constitution still stands proud. Just like your electoral law, your Province Act and your Municipal Act. The fact that you usually wrote these laws yourself still amazes friend and foe.

“Every epoch has its own principle of movement; if it is left to sleep, confusion of movement will arise in the next period. Steady succession is not maintained by unemployment, but by steady creation.”

You said it in so many words: public administration must move with the times, otherwise it will no longer function properly.

The first half of your nineteenth century was a time of gloom. The war with Belgium had cost a lot of money. There was a threat of state bankruptcy. The potato blight was rampant. There were uprisings in various countries. Revolutions. There were even calls for the Netherlands to join Germany. In a table speech you also doubted the ability of the Netherlands to survive on its own strength: ""Does the nation still have the strength and character that it deserves to be independent more than in name?""

Perhaps some people - because you were half-German yourself, your wife was German, and you were very influenced by German culture - had expected otherwise, but you, Rudolph, still chose independence from the Netherlands. You looked for a solution in a new system of government that would provide room for popular participation. Otherwise the same thing could happen here in the Netherlands as in surrounding countries.

You wanted to create ""life and growth"". Involve people in clear, regular public administration. Stimulate the ""productive power of the nation"". Removing local duties and tolls that hindered trade. You intervened in outdated structures and emancipated people who were not being addressed. Jews. Catholics. And this is against the dominant interests of the establishment. In your words: ""It is not an old society that preserves, it is a new one that demands completion.""

You founded secondary schools throughout the country, so that middle-class boys were prepared for work in 'industrial society'. You improved the infrastructure with the North Sea Canal and expansion of the railways. You improved poor relief, because you believed that a civilized state was obliged to care for its poor itself. You ensured that Aletta Jacobs, the first woman, could study medicine at the University of Groningen.

And you put an end to the patchwork of cities, villages, crafts, lordships, lordships. All with their own rights. Everyone was given the same status as a municipality. With the same structure, the same administrative bodies, the same procedures, the same autonomy. ""We are going to do a great and lasting benefit to the country"" - and history proved you right.

Dear Rudolph, The Netherlands in 2018 is a country of unprecedented prosperity. Of progress, opportunities and mobility. One of the freest, safest and most prosperous countries in the world. A country where you can be who you are, regardless of your religion, your origin or your sexual orientation. Where young people enjoy new opportunities and girls are now in the majority at our universities.[...]

Yet, just like in your time, there is unease about the way the country is being governed. [...] The dividing lines are increasing. Between highly educated hipsters in urban coffee shops and aging people in the countryside. Between social trust and distrust. Between people who feel like the world is their oyster. And who have the feeling that they are always in the corner where the blows fall.

While the world has become a large playground for some, their own environment is of greater significance for others. Your own neighborhood. The very own Mienskip. Your own square. [...] A father in Amsterdam will wonder whether his daughter will still be able to find affordable housing in the city. A mother in the Achterhoek will wonder whether her son will ever sell his home. A director of a primary school in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen will wonder whether he can still keep his school open. A teacher in The Hague asks whether she can give every child enough attention in her overcrowded classroom.

The dividing lines are increasing, while national and municipal boundaries are blurring. To achieve coherent policy in your hometown of Zwolle, twenty municipalities and four provinces are now joining forces. I wonder out loud what you think this should mean for the organization and functioning of public administration. [...] The issue of our time is how to give space to this difference and at the same time preserve unity in the Netherlands. Ensuring that everyone gets his or her opportunities, that effort is rewarded, that everyone receives the right care and can live well.

I'm becoming convinced that you would be in favor of exercise. Because wasn't it you who coined the term ""organic polity""? [...] You would adapt your governance model to what the times require. [...] You said yourself: ""The world is moving forward, and I wished to move forward with her.""

So why say no to the large municipalities that want to carry out more tasks themselves? If that helps the daughter of that concerned father in Amsterdam find a home... Or no to a province like Zeeland that wants to carry out municipal tasks if that director can keep his primary school open? Why say no to municipalities that want to collaborate with each other in new concepts such as a 'federation municipality'? If that - to quote you - stimulates ""the productive power of the nation""? [...] And why - if some municipalities do take on more tasks - is actually a 'no' to the possibility of municipalities taking on more of their own to have a board set up, to decide for themselves how many councilors they want, or to hold interim municipal elections?

These are solutions that conflict with our legal frameworks. And I now say 'yes' to those solutions. Yes, with a big proviso. The only conditions I impose are those of the essential edges of the playing field of democracy and the rule of law. Such as: the autonomy of municipalities; the democratic accountability of governance; separation between executive and supervisory powers; the political responsibility of the council for their civil servants; and the requirements we impose on directors in the areas of integrity and incompatibility of functions.

Dear Rudolph, I want a Netherlands in which everyone has the same opportunities. Regardless of whether you grow up in Aalten, Appelscha or Amsterdam. In the interest of this unity, difference is necessary. And isn't that where our historical strength lies? Doesn't that also contain our identity?

The reason Descartes gave for his move to the Netherlands was that the climate was ""better for thinking"", and he referred to our education. Feeling at home together in difference.

We found unity in the fight against water, but left the headstrong cities of the seventeenth century room to flourish. It gave us a Golden Age. Pillarization in the twentieth century offered Catholics, Protestants, socialists and liberals a recipe for living with each other's deviant behavior. Through joint willingness, the foundation has been laid for the Netherlands in 2018. That country of unprecedented prosperity and prosperity. We can now also show that unity in diversity is the winning combination.

The municipalities now have more room to set their own priorities. The current government recently entered into a unique partnership with municipalities, provinces and water boards to work across the boundaries of the administrative levels on the issues of today and tomorrow. And there is now an **Environmental** Act, which provides more room for local considerations when designing the living environment. [...] But is it enough?

I think I have to look for room for experiments within your Municipal and Provincial Act, and your laws offer that space. [...] As if you knew that the solutions of 1848 would not be the solutions of those of 170 years later. The solutions of the future in Rotterdam were not the solutions of the Achterhoek of the future.

Undoubtedly, some things cause unrest and resistance. I hear the counter-thinkers shout: ""But how do citizens know how the government functions?"" You would undoubtedly be confrontational. Strong on the content. When a Member of Parliament warned you that he would not make himself popular with these measures, you replied: ""If there must be popularity, then I do not ask for the popularity of the moment, but for lasting popularity.""

Sincerely, I have the honor to be your distant official successor and your servant,

Kajsa Ollongren

Kajsa Ollongren is Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (D66). The Thorbecke lecture was delivered on Wednesday - due to the illness of the minister by her secretary general - at the Thorbecke debate in Zwolle. This is a slightly shortened and edited version.

Link to PDF

Graphic

Johan Rudolph Thorbecke (1798-1872), Dutch liberal statesman and, as chairman of the Constitution Committee in 1848, founder of Dutch parliamentary democracy

Illustration Hajo

Load Date: October 11, 2018

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455 "Translated(src=nl, dest=en, text=Windmills do not have pleasant contact with the government

NRC Handelsblad

September 3, 2015 Thursday

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Section: opinion

Length: 800 words

Byline: Marc Chavannes Clearances

Body

Ahmed Aboutaleb had the audience almost at his feet when he delivered the annual H.J. School lecture in Amsterdam on Tuesday. The mayor of Rotterdam likes to fool around with ""the ideological bickering of national politics"". Rather pay attention to our kind of urban areas. That's where the new economy is brewing. Singapore on the Maas. Put aside the central government, don't stand in the way.

It was revolution light. The argument of the most watched Summer Guest and pet manager of the Netherlands was in line with what the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior, Richard van Zwol, wrote in June in Domestic Governance: the Netherlands is in danger of falling behind, the economy needs to fast and agile management.

Take down the barricades again, Ahmed. The Hague already agrees with you. Just tell us what to do. Merge provinces? Rushing through environmental impact assessments? Thin out rules? Decentralize more and more tasks? Thank you, you are so close to the people and you can also work cheaper. Thanks for making our cuts.

But don't think that in those shiny towers of The Hague they only talk about the flashy economy of tomorrow. They are also busy with the new democracy in which people together determine what their lives will look like. The government is happy to help. See the 'Pleasant Contact with the Government' project - I am not making this up - which yesterday organized a conference on 'Future-proof Good Governance'.

The new government is strong but also very kind. Yesterday, in addition to being results-oriented, it was mainly about openness, integrity, accountability, participation, nice things like that. 'Does the decentralization and digitization of government tasks take sufficient account of safeguarding the rule of law?'

People with a personal care budget will not immediately recognize all those fine values. According to the recent report of the National Ombudsman, the PGB drama is a textbook example of national politics that focuses on incidental fraud by PGB mediators, and then focuses on a centralistic solution that has never been sufficiently thought through, let alone guided. And then deny it.

Camera to the House of Representatives, where a debate is scheduled for tonight on 'delays in the construction of wind turbines' - a curious formulation that again points to unclear responsibilities.

Ask the people in the public gallery, from Groningen and the Drenthe Peat Colonies, whether they experience 'pleasant contact with the government'. There is a chance that they will throw you over the edge of the balcony.

Minister Kamp of Economic Affairs has already come to talk a few times. This has not generated real support for the dozens of large wind turbines that are planned there. It's a shame because the minister is doing his best to implement the 2013 Energy Agreement. The government does not want to be forced by an action group and the courts, but it does aim for 14 percent sustainable energy by 2020. To this end, 6,000 megawatts of wind energy must be generated on land.

Hence the race against time to install wind farms in all kinds of regions. Citizens, united in action groups such as Storm Meeden, Tegenwind Veenkoloniën and Tegenwind N33, experience the rough and ragged sides of modern thinking in The Hague. They notice that plans that directly affect the quality of life in their municipalities have been imposed as if by an invisible hand. That's no coincidence.

The philosophy of the new **Environmental** Act is that of a privatized spatial policy. This broad law has not yet been adopted by the Senate, but Kamp is already acting on it: let private developers, for example of large-scale wind farms, provide information and support themselves. They may or may not do so. Provinces and municipalities in windy areas also feel attacked and do not know who they are talking to. An hour of Camp won't help.

The confusion and the feeling of being put under pressure from The Hague is all the greater because the government can provide instructions for projects larger than 100 megawatts. That volume is achieved by adding up several separate projects. A trick that does not increase the credibility of democratic public administration. The king's commissioner in Drenthe, former PvdA leader Tichelaar, spoke this week at yet another pleasant management conference about 'a failed decision-making process, full of miscommunication'.

Now that several municipalities, including in Westland, are rejecting the arrival of wind turbines in their area, the government must choose: push through or involve more people than handy landowners. For the time being, we are left with a new government without any idea of ​​a new democracy.

Spatial planning left to private investor

Load Date: September 3, 2015

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