

Top-7 Dutch Political Party Manifestos

❖ **VVD (Party for Freedom and Democracy, aka the Dutch Conservatives)** **Manifesto: Zeker Nederland (multiple meanings: A Sure/Assured Netherlands; A Secure Netherlands; Netherlands for Sure)**

The VVD is currently represented with 40 seats in the Dutch Parliament (total number of seats in the Parliament is 150). The VVD is the largest of the two Dutch current government parties. The Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte is a member of the VVD. Program revolves around 'making an already fantastic Netherlands even better'. The party states it wishes 'to protect what has been collectively built, assure that step by step people's lives will improve even further and that The Netherlands will remain a country in which it is great to live, reside and work.

The Europe paragraph is part of the first chapter: 'Security and freedom', which also includes paragraphs on Security, Justice, Emancipation and Discrimination, Immigration, Integration, Foreign Affairs, Defense and International Relations.

The party highlights that the Dutch are active in the world: 'This open attitude has brought us a lot of good. Trade and a network of good relations with other countries have offered us much stability and prosperity. We would like to keep it this way. At the same time, we realize that we cannot take such achievements for granted. The world is in continuous flux. Power relations are shifting, geographically, financially and militarily – and so are the chances and threats with which we are confronted. Think of the rise of China, the turbulence in Russia, the unrest in the Middle East and the explosive population growth in Africa. Destructive wars at the borders of Europe, aggressive big powers, terrorism and large-scale migration streams could potentially damage and unsettle freedom in the Netherlands. Thus we wish a realistic foreign policy aimed at containing these threats, so that chances can be used and the Netherlands will remain a country in which we feel at home. We are not alone in this ambition. We work together with our loyal allies within NATO and in international alliances such as the EU, UN and OSCE. All those alliances, and the EU in particular, should work in service of our freedom, security, prosperity and way of living. Where beneficial, we work one-to-one with other countries, such as e.g. with the Belgians, French, Germans and British in the field of military cooperation. These alliances bring responsibilities. The security umbrella which the US have provided us for decades can no longer be taken for granted.'

The party favours a strong military, coordinated anti-terrorism measures and security interventions, and a strong emphasis on trade. The party wishes to expand the external EU border control. Migrants should be returned to countries of origin and non-European shores. The party favours receiving refugees in the regions, which according to the VVD 'will also reduce the risk of importing terrorists into Europe.'

The party states that ‘human rights do not determine with which countries we entertain relationships, but we can use diplomatic relations to promote human rights.’ According to the VVD, international human rights treaties should be formulated ‘in more concrete terms’. The Dutch should have a chance to understand the consequences of international treaties. Any direct translation of binding provisions of treaties and decisions of international organizations should be abolished.

The VVD is traditionally a strong proponent of the European internal market. The VVD Manifesto Europe paragraph starts by stating that the main economic chances for the Dutch lie in the countries around the Netherlands. For the internal market, open borders are vital. It is due to these open borders that Dutch companies can quickly export their goods from Schiphol Airport and the Rotterdam harbour to the rest of the EU. This economic activity yields jobs and wealth. The VVD Manifesto continues:

- That open internal borders require strong control of the EU external ones, especially now these borders are under pressure due to the ‘influx of refugees and other migrants and the continuous threat of terrorism’. The party states that if ‘we wish to protect our market, but also our freedom, we would have to let our economy grow, and fight terrorism and aggression’. This can be best achieved with other countries.
- The EU has to prove its value in specific crossborder areas of cooperation such as internal market, migration, energy security and climate change. Strong and credible policies in those domains will not only stir economic growth and prosperity, but also protect our security and way of living.
- The VVD Manifesto states that much can be improved in the EU. The belief in a well-functioning EU, which focuses on its core business is waning. Unnecessary interventions from the EU irritate people. The same applies to countries, which benefit from the collaboration but do not meet their end of the bargain. The EU itself should not fiddle the rules. The rules apply equally to all. Cooperation within the EU should focus exclusively on its core business: increasing wealth and improving the quality of living of its citizens.
- The VVD stresses that in order to remain relevant the EU should focus predominantly on key international tasks such as internal market, trade, energy, climate, and migration. They stress subsidiarity: What the Netherlands can do better itself it should in fact undertake itself. Brussels should not mingle with ‘national affairs’ such as pensions, health care, housing, planning, taxes and social insurances. All new direct tax from Brussels we will reject.
- The VVD acknowledges that it is adamant that the EU should operate effectively. ‘If important decisions for the Netherlands are delayed because the EU cannot arrive at a decision, we will continue with a small group of like-minded countries. We are in favour of a Europe of different speeds and goals’.
- The VVD sees a role for common foreign and security policy in areas in which this is more effective than going alone. According to the Manifesto, this is for instance the case in stemming the influx of migrants, and in closer cooperation around terrorism. It is crucial to have a strict control of our external borders.
- The VVD underscores it will judge European proposals on their quality, quantity, proportionality and subsidiarity. Brussels should primarily deal with legislation that

stimulates the economy and safeguards security. The European Commission should monitor which existing rules hinder such developments and strike them.

- According to the Manifesto, in many institutional negotiations EU legislative proposals run the risk of becoming very intransparent, especially in their consequences for SMEs. The VVD wishes to see the whole decisionmaking process in Brussels independently monitored. New rules from Europe should have added value and be clear to all.
- The Manifesto emphasizes that EU cooperation is not gratuitous. Rules have to be followed by everybody. Too often budget rules are violated, without consequences for the offending memberstates. Countries which systematically do not meet the agreements should be held accountable and meet with stricter sanctions
- The internal market is the corner stone of European cooperation and of immense importance for the Netherlands. This applies to both the physical and digital markets.
- The VVD stresses the importance of fair competition, and speaks out against protectionism of states of their own companies. The European Commission should be a more effective arbiter.
- The Dutch will not apply extra strict (better than others) rules to their own companies.
- Extension of the EU is not a goal in itself. The internal challenges at the moment are big enough. The VVD does not want to allow new memberstates at the moment. And in the future, the weighing of EU extension will not only depend on the state of affairs in candidate MS but also the readiness of the EU to expand. Accession rules will not be weakened. Currently, no candidate MS meets the criteria and it does not look like they may meet them any time soon.
- EU neighbourhood policy or accession treaties are not an automatic stepping-stone to EU-membership.
- Once the United Kingdom will start the negotiations regarding Brexit, it is in the interest of the Netherlands to work towards very close cooperation with the UK in economics and security issues, such as e.g. bilateral cooperation of our security services in the context of anti terrorism. The VVD wishes to strive for a strong role in the EU27 after Brexit.
- In addition, the VVD wishes the EU to begin to work more efficiently and diminish the distance to the citizens.
- The VVD wishes to reform the multi-annual budget process. It favours billions of euros lesser contribution to Brussels. According to the Manifesto, this would enhance the Dutch competitive position and free up money for innovation in the Netherlands. Financial contributions should be based on the GNP of each country. The VVD is not in favour of adding extra money after Brexit, the EU should work with what is there and diminish its remit. Money should go to things that really matter, not 'money seeking projects'. The VVD proposes to work more through loans, which need to be reimbursed by those getting the loan.

❖ **PvdA (Dutch Labour Party / Social Democrats)** **Manifesto: Een Verbonden Samenleving (A Connected Society)**

The PvdA is the Dutch social-democrate party, currently with 38 seats in Parliament and the second member party of the current coalition government. Dutch Finance Minister and Eurogroup chair Jeroen Dijsselbloem and Euro-Commissioner Frans Timmermans are members of the PvdA.

For 2017-2021, the party claims to stand for an open, fair, solidair, secure, sustainable society, with fairness, good living conditions, jobs, healthy living conditions, access to schooling, emancipation, the right to selfdetermination, in an atmosphere of optimism, trust in people, with a sharing attitude as 'normal'. This ideal is a permanent challenge. The PvdA has taken responsibility in the coalition government with VVD since 2012 and has been much criticized for it. What is needed is a new sense of individualism and collective. What is also required is a rebalancing of the role of the 'market'. Security, determination/participation, and trust are under pressure. Basic trust is necessary, as is a feeling of connectedness, the party wishes to focus on this: new connection is key!.

Topics related to Europe in the PvdA Manifesto are predominantly to be found in chapter 2 (Migration) and 10 (International)

- Europe is privileged continent.
- Migration is one of the major topics today, treated in chapter 2 of Manifesto. Dutch Labour party pleas for the Refugee Treaty to be upheld. They wish a differentiation between economic migrants and refugees. As to regulating the refugee crisis the approach is: Assist refugee countries, apply a fair European approach, engage in new discussions with countries of origin. Create a fair asylum policy. Crack down on human traffickers
- All European countries should take a fair share of the burden.
- Assisting regions in receiving refugees involve agreements with countries in the region, assisting refugee camps (to keep people in the region), but also: EU taking its fair share, swift procedures, basic values (tolerance, solidarity, freedom, equality) should be upheld. Integration (language etc), active role of migrant communities in the country, such as the Netherlands. No criminalization of illegals, volunteer work allowed to asylumseekers etc. Step up actions for better conditions for children. Children born here get Dutch nationality.
- Europe and international treated in Chapter 10. It contains Europe section, deals with the dilemma that on the one hand many developments are intrinsically linked, and problems should be solved together, on the other hand people feel estranged from trans-international relations and unwilling to engage.
- Party underscores that developments such as war, peaceprocesses, climate change, energy, wealth and poverty have strong international dimensions
- It acknowledges that the unease with Europe is growing, EU credibility is also under pressure due to violations of rule of law in some memberstates

- The Party pleads for investment in EU, UN and other missions in the world to assist peacekeeping and development; it favours political and diplomatic approaches in conflicts.
- PvdA wishes to increase the defense budget. The European defence collaboration should be fostered in regional clusters and through European coordination to uphold strategic capacity. Sanctions against Russia and Crimea should be maintained as long as there is no constructive solution of Ukraine crisis
- The EU should play a strong role in the Middle East. The PvdA propagates a two state solution, halt to settlements, and if necessary a reconsideration of the Association Treaty of the EU with Israel.
- There should be more obligatory exchange of intelligence within the EU
- The PvdA supports the fight against illegal arms.
- The party supports the fight for a better gender balance in army
- As far as the workings of the EU economics are concerned: the EU is deemed too much a market, in part institutionally dysfunctional
- The PvdA strives for a better Workers Directive for fair wages for good work and pleads for packages to boost youth employment, reform tax systems, fight corruption
- The PvdA deems EU budget reform necessary: less money should go to agriculture, more to sustainable economic alternatives
- The PvdA supports the fight against tax evasion
- The party stresses the importance of a stable financial system with secure banks: It is in favour of complete the bank union by common insurance against too close ties between specific countries and banks. Capital buffers should be increased to 10%, dividing out commercial and private individual banking should be completed
- The party is in favour of a New Energy Agreement, also to diminish the EU's dependence on Russian gas
- Candidate Member States should fulfill all legal obligations before being granted EU Members' status. No new membership negotiations should currently be opened.
- Keep a close watch on Turkey, open negotiations, but the EU acquis needs to be met before any further steps taken.
- The PvdA wishes a strengthening of the balance of international power (corporate, civic), this is all the more urgent with CETA etc. The PvdA supports democratic, civic, rule of law and institutional initiatives to safeguard this balance, and grants support to women, children, LHBTI and human rights activists
- Structural monitoring of rule of law, against autocratic and authoritarian tendencies and regimes if necessary with sanctions (reduction subsidies). Thus in the context of the Arab spring: Tunisia gets support. The party is also in favour of human rights conventions support
- Public institutions should be prohibited to invest in companies, which deal with production/sales of illegal arms.
- The EU should play a much stronger role in controlling arms deals
- Sustainable and inclusive growth: aid and trade in one portfolio; safeguarding development effects of policies. 0,7% solid development aid, separate funds for first year asylum; targets: SRHR, water, food and security and rule of law remain, fight against child labour and extra attention for equal rights for women and girls added.

- More ownership of beneficiaries of development funds with targeted UN funding plus more direct funding of local organizations. More local embassy work and support of organizations on the ground
- The party support civic space and watchdog role organizations on the ground
- The party is for using sector covenants as model for multistakeholder collaboration in production chains
- The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda of companies should be less gratuitous. OESO and ILO guidelines should be followed
- The party favours a 10 million euro fund to support debate and knowledge development with respect to international cooperation.

❖ **PVV (Party for Freedom)**

Manifesto: The Netherlands is ours again (one page, 11 points)

The PVV is the party of Mr. Wilders, currently in the Dutch Parliament with 15 seats, rapidly on the rise.

For 2017-2021, the party issued a one-pager with 11 points, addressing ‘the common Dutchman’. The main points are:

- Money should go to ‘the common Dutchman’ instead of spending it on the whole world; direct democracy, own risk in health care to be abolished, lower the rents for housing, old age pension starts at 65, more care for the elderly in homenuresing care
- De-islamicizing of The Netherlands: zero asylum, no immigrants from Muslim countries
- Making the Netherlands independent: leave the EU
- No money to development aid, the arts, windmills, innovation, the media etc.
- Lower income tax and higher spending on police
- Reducing motor vehicles tax by 50%

❖ **SP (Socialist Party) (to be included 10-03)**

Manifesto: #PakdeMacht – Programma voor een sociaal Nederland (#GrabPower – Programme for a social Netherlands)

Currently in the Dutch Parliament with 15 seats and in the opposition.

❖ **CDA – Christian Democate Party**

Manifesto: Keuzes voor een Beter Nederland (Choices for a better Netherlands)

The CDA is the main Dutch Christian Democrat Party, currently in Parliament with 13 seats, and in the opposition.

For 2017-2021 the party emphasizes the values and traditions that built the country, and indicates that liberties are restricted by responsibilities and respect for each other. It aims for a country in which diverse views and religions can live in peaceful coexistence, a country with democracy and rule of law. The party notices a lacking sense of togetherness and respect. It elaborates fundamental rights in a balance: no right is boundless. Bottom up right to challenge should be cultivated.

The party observes difficult integration, and many questions of 'our own' identity among the Dutch. Integration is more than speaking the language or being involved in a job: nobody can live in a country in which one does not wish to share its values.

Main themes in this Manifesto are therefore: Citizenship, togetherness, voluntarism, value of culture. The CDA is one of the parties that focuses on shrinking regions, which should deserve extra attention. They feel a stronger democracy may be necessary, which may require a change in the voting system: the CDA proposes choosing regional candidates and national ones. The party also puts more emphasis than before on new economic forms, circular economy. On a 'strong society' to counter terrorism

Paragraph 2.6 is the paragraph in the Manifesto dealing with Europe. Title: A Strong Netherlands in the World. This paragraph highlights:

- The CDA thinks that the reconfiguration of Europe needs to be discussed urgently
- The Netherlands is a small country in the world. It is a trading nation, building coalitions to strengthen our economic position
- The Netherlands is an open country, which realistically wishes to protect its values and economics
- The CDA wishes to contribute to international rule of law, peace, security, human rights, stability and the development of other parts of the world. For this, a strong and decisive Europe is necessary
- The CDA emphasizes that the Dutch economy benefits from a strong, transparent financial sector and fair competition.
- The CDA sees security, climate, energy, refugee policies and economic stability as the EU's core business
- Other domains may be added, as domains in which all of Europe could operate together or there could be a Europe of different speeds
- The Manifesto stresses that with regard to the EU, the party does not wish to shy away from bold solutions to problems even if this means 'to discuss the current institutions more fundamentally'
- The CDA expresses itself in favour of a 'German-style Europe law, regulating transparency better'
- The CDA gives special attention to border regions, euregios, shrinking regions
- The Manifesto stressed that economic deals and sustainability demands should go hand in hand
- The party does not favour any immediate expansion EU
- The CDA deems frontrunning coalitions advisable, in a Europe of multiple speeds

- The party is in favour of strong defence, growing towards NAVO 2%BBP, ad interim growing to meet the average EU NAVO. CDA does not plea for a European army as such
- In terms of international relations: diplomacy, defence, trade and development could be addressed in one approach, with special emphasis on women. There is no mention of the traditional 0,7% BNP for development
- The Manifesto expresses the CDA's view regarding refugees as: first reception in the regions, active policy on return; and no aid to countries, which do not comply to return policies. In the Netherlands itself: refugees should be received in small-scale asylum centres. The aim of asylum is to return as soon as this is safe.
- Real integration means only one passport.
- Change Workers' Directive, accumulation to be suppressed

❖ **D66 (Liberal Democrats) – (To be included 10-03)**
Manifesto: Samen Sterker – Kansen voor Iedereen (Better Together – Chances for Everybody)

This liberal-democratic party is currently represented in the Dutch Parliament with 12 seats and in the opposition.

❖ **GroenLinks (GreenLeft Party)**
Manifesto: Tijd voor Verandering (Time for Change)

The GroenLinks party is the Green ecologist and sustainable development party in the Dutch Parliament, currently represented as opposition party with 4 seats but rapidly on the rise. GroenLinks has issued a Manifesto in which a green economy and wellbeing take center stage and society is called upon to share its wealth. GroenLinks strives for a society 'in which everybody is included and every child gets the chances it deserves'. It wishes to stimulate better chances and perspectives for everybody. GroenLinks appeals to society 'not to let itself be divided'. Instead, society should tackle inequalities: in income, capacities and chances given to people. It should work towards being a connected society with people who trust each other and have faith in the future. GroenLinks wishes to develop a frontrunner position of the Netherlands in the EU, and proposes efforts to boost the environment, work against climate change, work for clean water, clear air, fair taxes, a humane social order and refugee policy.

The party proposes green investments, new leveling out of inequities, inclusive education, and favours modern solidarity, one society, with agreeable living conditions, solid democracy, that works towards a fair world with 'our Europe'.

The Europe paragraph in the GroenLinks Manifesto is included in the final chapter of the Manifesto called: A Fair World (pg. 70 onwards)

The introduction to this short chapter reiterates that the Dutch Ukraine referendum and the Brexit votes both demonstrated how polarization in Europe is increasing. Many Europeans do not experience any benefits of Europe. They see their neighbourhoods change. They observe open borders, which offer shelter to refugees, but at the same time note a Europe that does not inspire trust with its citizens. They point at a number of paradoxes: Europe allows free movement of persons, but does not create sufficient workers' rights in the eyes of many. Europe has shaped an internal market that expands, but does not seem to control tax evasion. Equally, there is much to do about budget cuts, but little talk about investments which people may feel benefits them.

GroenLinks states that globalization is not automatically working out for citizens. The Manifesto underscores that the world cannot be ruled by financial markets and multinationals. Europe is needed to embed such globalizing forces. A strong Europe can assist fair deals with the world regarding human rights, refugees, climate. Europe should contribute to create a fair labour market, investments in new employment, a transparent, better European democracy. GroenLinks believes that together Europeans can tackle climate change and migration much better. In detail, the GroenLinks party makes the following points:

- The EU should be greener, more social and democratic. More power should go to the European Parliament, with fewer national vetoes, but with bigger involvement of national parliaments in European decisionmaking. The EP should have right of initiative. Solidarity in the eurozone increased by using the European Monetary Fund and eurobonds. A common tax policy should be implemented against tax evasion and for the 'greening' of the tax. The European Agricultural policy should be reformed and made more sustainable, put down in new European Treaty.
- The EU should develop a more just asylum and migration policy, with harmonized asylum procedures. All memberstates should be involved in fair distribution of refugees, against the penalty of sanctions upon non-performance. The Netherlands should follow standards even if other MS do not. Temporary labour migrants should be able to work more easily in Europe and return with special visa.
- The GroenLinks plea for greater transparency in the EU through much more transparent legislation, greater access to documents, and legal procedures, of Eurosummits and Eurogroup summits. The European Policy Transparency law should be improved.
- The Netherlands should aim to reform the Growth and Stability Pact in which sustainable finance, employment and sustainable development are on a par. This reformed Pact should offer more flexibility and space to invest in labour participation, education, innovation and sustainable energy. The EP should get co-decision right over the annual priorities of economic policy and control rights over the socioeconomic guidance, which the European Commission gives to the MS.
- The Netherlands should keep the accession agreements, which the country has agreed upon in the EU: countries can accede if they meet the criteria of democracy, rule of law and human rights. These criteria deserve a central place in the negotiations with candidate-MS. GroenLinks expresses some major worries about

Turkey and states that as long as Turkey does not respect human rights, freedom of the press and freedom of speech, membership of the EU will be impossible and negotiations would be superfluous.

- The Netherlands should take the lead in cooperation and specialization of the EU MS armies, to increase their efficiency and applicability. Together with strengthening common foreign policy MS should gradually work towards a European defense apparatus. The latter will be under control of the European Parliament. NATO may not form any barrier to further European military integration. GroenLinks wishes The Netherlands to plea for abolishing the nuclear arms tasks of NATO
- Since we share one world, GroenLinks deems the foreign policy of The Netherlands should aim for a fairer division of wealth, for sustainability, and for strengthening democracy and human rights. Peace-, human rights- and development diplomacy take precedence over economic diplomacy. Development cooperation should be about the interests of people in developing countries, not about the economic interests of Dutch companies. The Dutch supports the sustainable development goals of the UN, in which the Dutch focus on subjects with solid knowledge and expertise, such as water, foodsecurity, safety and rule of law, SRHR. The Netherlands should support civic society in developing countries: civil movements, human rights and environment activists, women and LHBTI emancipation.
- More money should go to development cooperation. Expenditure should be increased to the internationally agreed 1% of BNP. The expenses for asylumseekers should not be paid from the development budget. Support to developing countries regarding climate change should also come on top of the development budget and not be deducted from it.
- GroenLinks favours a regime in which all aspects of international policy, such as trade, would be tested for their effects on developing countries and their contribution to the sustainable development goals. Tax evasion will be sanctioned, and countries concerned will have a say.
- GroenLinks underscores that trade and investment treaties should not hamper democracy or environmental/social standards. They want to get rid of separate claim justice for multinationals. The Netherlands should resist the signing of trade agreements, which lower environmental and social standards and condone separate claim justice, such as the CETA treaty with Canada. In a European context, the Netherlands should insist on the formulation of a multilateral trade agenda and fundamental reforms of the mandates to the European Commission in order to close trade deals, which will put fair trade and the protection of men and environment center stage. The Netherlands will plea inside the EU for ceasing the TTIP negotiations with the US, as well as the TiSA negotiations.
- GroenLinks wish the Netherlands to become the frontrunner in Corporate Social Responsibility and will issue strict criteria for viable wages, safe labour and environmental conditions in production countries. The party wishes to enforce greater transparency in the whole production chain, from natural resources exploitation to waste management.
- The international community will bare the responsibility to protect people and prevent genocide or human rights violations. After all non-military options have been

weighed and proven ineffective, military interventions can be condoned to protect people from gruesome and large-scale violence. According to the GroenLinks Manifesto, the Netherlands will support conflict prevention. Any military intervention should be following an international legal mandate and be accompanied by diplomacy, humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts to contribute to a more stable, secure situation, also in the longrun. The Netherlands should take responsibility for such military peace missions internationally and in the context of the EU.

- The Netherlands should mount efforts to punish ecocide, a.o through the International Criminal Court.
- GroenLinks favours a ban on nuclear arms in the Netherlands. Export and thoroughfare of arms will be limited. We will step up the implementation of the EU-weapons export code and weapon embargos, and will not promote arms trade by supporting arms fares. In the context of the EU, the Netherlands will strive to impose an arms embargo against countries who use weapons against civilians, such as Saudi Arabia. The Netherlands promotes worldwide signing and ratification of the arms trade treaty and of treaties against landmines and clusterbombs. The country supports a worldwide ban on nuclear arms and ammunition with uranium. No European research money should go into the development of arms.
- GroenLinks urges the Netherlands to help to advance strict European and international regulation of the usage of armed drones. The Netherlands will clamour for a worldwide ban on the development of autonomous armed robots, which use violence without the intervention/control by human beings
- The Netherlands and the EU should increase their efforts to arrive at a just solution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Israel should cease the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza. Both parties should abide by international law and refrain from violence and violation of human rights. The Netherlands will acknowledge Palestine as state. The Netherlands will plea for putting the EU Israel Association Treaty on hold as long as Israel continues to violate international law. The labelling of origin on products imported from Israeli settlements should be imposed immediately.
- GroenLinks underscores that the Netherlands should strongly support the role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, in peace negotiations and reconstruction, and in the protection of women against war violence.
- The Netherlands will seek cooperation with like-minded countries to explore the possibilities to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations.