



Executive summary of the six priorities of the Netherlands for the EU for 2019-2024

#EUagenda2024

The Netherlands has identified five central themes which should be given priority in the EU: migration, security, a strong and sustainable economy that offers protection, climate policy and protecting values and interests abroad. Next to these five priorities the Netherlands considers that EU governance and the functioning of the EU should also be embedded in the Strategic Agenda, to chart the course towards a future-proof, effective and robust European Union.

Migration

In 2015, an unprecedented number of persons entered the EU irregularly; fleeing conflict, seeking protection, or looking for better opportunities. Since 2015, **much has been done to bring flows of irregular migration under control**. A lot has been achieved by the Juncker Commission in developing a **common European Agenda on Migration and its implementation**. The EU increased support to host countries receiving large numbers of refugees and IDPs and invested substantially in addressing root causes that could lead to irregular migration. In addition, important steps were made in the global fight against human trafficking and smuggling. In 2018, the number of detected irregular arrivals decreased by 92% compared to 2015. The number of first asylum applications in the EU has also decreased by 53% in three years' time. Nevertheless, a lot still needs to be done especially as **secondary migration continues to persist**.

The common European as well as our **national asylum and return systems are still not crisis-proof**, with no perspective for a speedy conclusion of the intended reform. Migration pressure is persisting and will increase in all future scenario's. In the Netherlands as well as in other parts of Europe, asylum and migration continue to be topics of great concern for citizens, often leading to highly divisive debates. With a negative spill-over to dialogues with third countries. We clearly need to step up our efforts to **improve the management of irregular migration** into and within the EU.

Security

Europe is facing major and complex challenges in the area of internal security: **terrorism, cyber related threats and organized crime** are ever increasing. Considering the cross-border dimension and effects and impact of these crimes on our citizens, societies and economies, **strengthening security is a joint endeavor** of the European Union and its Member States. To effectively respond to these challenges a common and comprehensive approach is needed. An approach by which the European Union shows its true added value in facilitating and supporting Member States, whilst respecting their essential state functions including safeguarding national security. By further **streamlining the security domain**, a more effective and efficient cooperation and comprehensive approach could be

fostered. This requires further **strengthening and improving the exchange of information and operational cooperation** for the years to come, without prejudice to existing legislation and arrangements. Furthermore, it is essential that Member States **transpose and apply EU legislation timely and fully**, both in their national legislation and in practice.

A strong and sustainable economy that offers protection

Through strong cooperation between EU countries and a **policy of open markets**, the EU has become one of the most prosperous, most competitive and successful economies in the world. In the face of several fundamental transitions and changing global dynamics it is important to **keep an open economic outlook and make use of the EU's strengths** to take on these challenges.

For this we need:

- An enhanced and future-proof internal market, in which firms compete on an equal basis and in which the ambitions and needs of citizens are at the centre.
- **A sustainable economy that is both innovative, competitive and that offers protection.**
- To lead in the demographic, energy, circular and digital transitions and continue on preparing Europe for the future of work in order to realize a sustainable European labour market. This should be supported by investments in research, development and education.
- As a basis for all the above we **need a strong and stable economy with solid macro-economic foundations** to stay competitive in a changing world. The Netherlands calls for a renewed European Agenda that includes the following elements and initiatives to deliver on an open, strong and sustainable European economy that offers protection.

Climate change

Climate change is one of the largest global challenges the EU faces. Living up to the Paris agreement means **European climate neutrality by 2050**. This target must be accompanied by concrete policy measures and all sectors have a role to play in achieving it. There are opportunities for innovation, new businesses and the creation of new jobs. **Ambitious climate targets can lead to economic growth** even without the inclusion of the benefits of avoided damage of climate change and related adaptation costs. This transition means **decarbonising the energy system** and building up a strong and competitive **low-carbon industry** based on new technologies, fostered by innovation and green markets. New coherent regulations on products and production will accelerate the development of the circular economy, while more stringent

standards for vehicles and infrastructure will lead to **sustainable mobility**. **Circular agriculture** should be accompanied by redesigning the financial incentives in the Common Agricultural Policy towards sustainability. Horizontally, **the European budget should become Paris proof** and climate change should be a **cornerstone in foreign, trade and development relations of the EU**.

Protecting values and interest abroad

The world the EU finds itself in in the years to come, poses great challenges. The **core values of the liberal world order are under threat** and the rules-based multilateral order that has brought unprecedented security and prosperity is being challenged. Traditional partnerships cannot be taken for granted. Focus is less on cooperation and more on confrontation. These developments call for a European Union that safeguards European **values and interests abroad and defends the rules-based multilateral order**. In a turbulent world, a united EU puts us in a position of power. The fact that it has the world's biggest internal market gives it great economic power, which can and must be used to greater advantage, for example by **making greater use of the EU investment and trade policy to strengthen the rules-based international order** and ensure that it reflects European values and standards. The EU is in a position and has to show leadership when it comes to addressing global challenges, for example in relation to **achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**. This is in the interest of the EU, and in the interest of the wider world. To deliver results on the EU's key priorities – migration, security, a robust economy and climate – **vigorous external action** by the EU is a necessity. This calls for greater coherence between external and internal policies.

A future-proof, effective and robust European Union

The Netherlands wants a future-proof, effective and robust European Union, an EU of results and values. An EU that is accountable and gives and takes responsibility. The rule of law, the functioning of the EU institutions and agencies, subsidiarity and transparency are, amongst others, essential for a well-functioning EU and should be included in the Strategic Agenda.

Key points regarding the functioning of the EU for the coming legislature Union of values are:

- **Rule of law is a key priority.** The EU instruments need to be protected and if possible enhanced.
- Constant monitoring of the functioning of the EU to ensure it delivers through:

- Pressing forward with the clustering model as introduced in 2014 with the aim to come to a comprehensive working method.
- As guardian of the treaties, the Commission must objectively **safeguard compliance with the rules**.
- Implementation and enforcement: Member States (good governance) and the Commission (objective enforcement) have to **improve implementation and enforcement**.
- **Better Regulation** – Subsidiarity and proportionality should be permanently embedded in the Commission’s working methods and ambitions.
- Governance of EU agencies needs to be reviewed.
- Transparency: **open up the EU decision making process**, without compromising the necessary space to think.
- National parliaments: explore possibilities for an informal ‘green card’ and extend the deadline for national parliaments to submit opinions concerning the subsidiarity principle.