Dear Madam Speaker,

The living environment in the Netherlands has become cleaner and safer over the past decades. Harmful emissions have been dramatically reduced, acid rain and smog are things of the past. We can be justifiably proud of these improvements. However, the major environmental issues we are encountering now and that lie ahead, are of a different order, and require a new approach in our environmental policy. The policy needs to be modernised to be ready for the 21st century and to prevent public health problems in the future. Finding answers to current and new problems is not a task for authorities on their own. The cabinet therefore, now more than ever, wants to use the energy that many parties in our country have in the fields of the environment and sustainability.

The appended document, Approach for the Modernisation of Environmental Policy, outlines the (new) way in which we – together with others – will tackle the problems and challenges of the 21st century in our environmental and sustainability policy. It describes both the new approach and the modernisation of the instruments that are needed in this regard. The relationship between the environment (environmental standards) and a healthy and safe living environment was also dealt with during the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (I&M) on 5 and 6 November 2013. In Approach for the Modernisation of Environmental Policy I describe how I will realise the commitment I have made in this regard. The modernisations is based on the following points.

**Focus of the environmental policy is on public health**

Thanks to the environmental policy of the past decades, a great deal of progress has been made but we are yet a long way from having solved all the problems in our living environment. For example, improving air quality still demands our full attention. In addition, the cabinet wants to anticipate new environmental problems and any public health issues and to be alert to the introduction of new substances into the environment.

We need to focus on public health and formulate an approach that takes into account the uncertainties which go hand in hand with the risks and opportunities of new technologies.
International cooperation given priority

More active international cooperation than in the past – with our EU partners and globally – is in line with responding to the issues we are facing. Not only because a large portion of our environmental policy is generated in European and global forums, but also because these problems cannot be tackled effectively without successful international cooperation. After all, air and water pollution do not stop at borders. Moreover, companies operate across borders far more often today than in the past and the significance of national governments has been reduced by, among other things, the corporatisation of public enterprises and increased privatisation. Combating environmental crime needs continued attention, both in the Netherlands and abroad. This requires collaboration with our international partners.

Amendments to environmental laws and simplified regulations

In addition to working actively at the international level, changes are also needed within the Netherlands. The legislation and regulations of the “old” environmental policy could, for example, hinder the approach needed and the related innovations. The cabinet wants to avoid this by amending legislation and regulations wherever possible and necessary. In addition, legislation and regulations ensuing from the Omgevingswet (Environment Act) will become more accessible. The integration of regulations for, among other things, spatial planning, nature, water and the environment will improve the legal support for an integrated and area-oriented approach to the living environment. This can provide opportunities for the effective and efficient improvement of the quality of our living environment.

21st century requires new coalitions

Results will not be achieved simply by standards being set in The Hague or Brussels. The cabinet wants to utilise the energy that many parties have in the areas of the environment and sustainability. With the Duurzaam Doen (Sustainable Action) programme the cabinet wants to offers prospects for action for everyone who wants to give high priority to sustainability, and provide inspiration for more sustainable actions. Large-scale and small-scale initiatives of civil society organisations, market parties, as well as critical and involved citizens from every layer of society contribute to a sustainable society in which we can live, work and enjoy leisure activities in a safe, healthy and pleasant way.

The role of our (growing) cities is important in this. People live, work and enjoy leisure activities in relatively close proximity to one another and, increasingly more often, they form networks that deliver innovation and sustainability. Seemingly small-scale initiatives may have a significant impact. In addition, the high population density of cities ensures that sustainable (environmental) solutions can have a relatively higher impact than they do outside urban areas. This means that our cities have the potential to be social, technological and sustainable breeding grounds and “intelligent” networks. The cabinet wants to make use of this strength by linking together people, ideas and innovations in a coalition that fosters healthy and smart cities. This involves arriving at concrete actions aimed at improving safety, health and liveability in and around our cities. This is of direct importance for millions of residents. This effort does not detract from the fact that attention still has to paid to environmental issues in more rural areas, for example in relation to fertilisers, nature and water quality.
Relationship between the Modernisation of Environment Policy and other environmental issues

The modernisation of environmental policy is the third issue in the area of the environment and sustainability on which the cabinet is working. The other two themes are:

1. Combating climate change by reducing CO2 emissions. This requires a shift to a more sustainable energy supply based on non-fossil materials.

2. Improving the use of raw materials by dealing with them more efficiently. The cabinet is aiming for a circular economy in which waste virtually no longer exists: zero waste. Each product will therefore be linked to a new use so that a closed circle is realised.

You have already been extensively informed about the cabinet’s efforts regarding the first two issues: in the Energy Agreement for Sustainable Growth\(^1\), the Climate Agenda\(^2\) (that builds on the Energy Agreement) and the Policy Document on Raw Materials Progress Report\(^3\). In the Green Growth memorandum\(^4\) the cabinet sets out its green growth ambitions aimed at strengthened the competitive capacity of the Netherlands and at the same time reducing the burden on the environment and dependence on fossil fuels. The memorandums on the structure of the Afval Naar Grondstof\(^5\) (From Waste to Raw Materials) programme also outline the approach for dealing efficiently with raw materials.

Approach for the Modernisation of Environmental Policy

This Approach for the Modernisation of Environmental Policy first of all outlines the new working method in the environmental policy. Second, it outlines the cabinet’s agenda for retaining and strengthening a safe and healthy living environment. Where appropriate, a link is established with the Wissels omzetten- Bouwstenen voor een robuust milieubeleid voor de 21e eeuw Signals Report of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)\(^6\). Where relevant, each chapter in the appendix closes with an overview of ongoing and new actions.

In the time ahead, the cabinet will be going full steam ahead with the implementation of the actions referred to in this letter. I will inform you on an annual basis – in advance of the budget debate – about progress and concrete results. In addition, I will also include any relevant new actions. This will enhance the possibility of discussing the policy with you in its context and in a focused manner.

Yours faithfully,

THE STATE SECRETARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Wilma J. Mansveld

\(^1\) Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), "Energieakkoord voor duurzame groei", 9 September 2013.
\(^2\) Parliamentary Document 32813 no. 70, "Klimaatagenda: weerbaar, welvarend en groen", 4 October 2013
\(^3\) Parliamentary Document 32852 no. 15, "Voortgangsrapportage Grondstoffennotitie", 4 July 2013
\(^6\) Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), "Wissels omzetten - Bouwstenen voor een robuust milieubeleid voor de 21e eeuw", 16 June 2013.
APPENDIX: Approach for the Modernisation of Environmental Policy

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1 New working method

The context in which we make and implement environmental policy has changed. International relationships have increased dramatically, also in terms of the production of and trade in goods. Companies operate across borders far more often today than in the past and the significance of national governments has been reduced by, among other things, the corporatisation of public enterprises and increased privatisation. At the same time, society is increasingly more involved with environment and sustainability. Various stakeholders are taking the lead in this, including decentralised authorities, for example cities that are aiming to build climate neutral buildings and to become more sustainable through green innovations. There are over 500 local energy initiatives in the Netherlands. In the search for answers to the current issues, the cabinet wants to make more use of the energy that many parties in our country have in the fields of the environment and sustainability. The Netherlands is brimming with sustainable initiatives, small-scale and large-scale alike. These initiatives contribute to a sustainable world. A world in which our children and their children can live, work and enjoy leisure activities in a safe, healthy and pleasant way. The cabinet has faith in the strength of this energetic society. The Energy Agreement is a good example of cooperation. It makes clear that in a sustainable society, the business community, local authorities, citizens and the national government need one another. This requires the state to adopt a different working method. And it entails the express awareness that the national government cannot solve these problems on its own, and it is not by definition the right party to be in control. Cooperation between different parties is needed more than ever before. This cooperation can take place at various levels: locally, regionally, nationally, or at the European or global level where necessary, depending in part on the underlying problem.

The new working method comprises two key elements.

Further integration of environment and sustainability

First, there is the challenge of further integrating the environment and sustainability, in both the everyday actions of the general public and companies, and in economic and broad social themes. For example, from the outset, health, safety and sustainability must be one of the starting points for new traffic and transport infrastructure, residential areas or modifications to existing neighbourhoods and
infrastructure. This can influence, for example, the choice of building materials, decentralised energy supply, (e.g. using solar panels, biomass, geothermal heat or wind turbines), the location choice of traffic and transport junctions and the design of cycling facilities.

The cabinet has been busy with this shift for some time already. Naturally, a new working method cannot be realised from one day to the next. The strong push for green growth and the green deal approach are examples of far-reaching integration of policy areas. Economic growth, sustainability and the environment go hand in hand in this respect. In the transition to a more sustainable economy, the state is a facilitating and stimulating network partner and is working with other authorities, the business community, research institutes, civil society organisations and the initiatives of citizens. The state safeguards the public interest, provides direction, ensures the use of intelligent market incentives and provides a framework of legislation and regulations that stimulates and promotes dynamism. It also keeps the playing field open, weighs conflicting interests in the balance, links up with international agendas, and where necessary, makes decisions. This requires cooperation, such as in built-up areas, in which collaboration that transcends these sectors is becoming increasingly important.

Forming coalitions and partnerships

Second, there is the challenge of forming coalitions and partnerships. Authorities, civil society organisations, research institutes, market parties and the general public can – in different combinations depending on the specific subject – only truly tackle solving major social issues when they do so together. Take, for example, the Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition7 which focuses on the integration of sustainability and corporate social responsibility in the core business of the affiliated companies and institutions.

It is also necessary to make progress at the state and international levels. Cross-border and global environmental problems require a coordinated international approach. In 2014, the new European Parliament and the new European Commission together with the member states will re-evaluate the aims and priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This EU-wide exercise will influence the room to manoeuvre for our national policy development, also in the area of the environment and sustainability.

A new working method naturally also involves appropriate instruments, such as a properly functioning European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and legislation and regulations that are in accordance with the revision of the system set out in the bill for the Environment Act.

This new integrated working method and the amendment of the associated regulations contribute to a contemporary environmental policy, that encourages the initiatives of citizens, the business community and authorities. Dialogue and debate with stakeholders contribute to establishing public support and to making the new approach and working method more concrete, especially for issues involving a healthy and safe living environment. The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) has also asked for this.

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7 The coalition is made up of eight Dutch multinationals: Unilever, DSM, AkzoNobel, FrieslandCampina, Philips, Shell, KLM and Heineken.
Healthy and safe living environment

Risks and threats to public health were the original reasons for environmental policy. Later, attention for nature and natural resources were added. The Netherlands has achieved a great deal with this policy. The living environment in particular has, in general, become healthier and safer. Smog, acid rain and polluted surface water are now largely things of the past. We have solved the problem of large-scale soil contamination (like in Lekkerkerk). Noise nuisance has been reduced and air quality has made great strides forward. For example, emissions of nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter into the air have been more than halved since 1990. Moreover, the burden on surface water by nitrogen, phosphorus and lead has been reduced since 1990 by almost 40%, 70% and 90% respectively. The table below illustrates these reductions.

Table 1: Emissions of air pollutants and the burden on surface water in the Netherlands 1990-2011/2012. Source: Compendium voor de Leefomgeving, PBL, August 2013 (water) and October 2013 (air).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emissions of air pollutants</th>
<th>Nitrogen oxides (NOx)</th>
<th>Fine particulate matter (PM10)</th>
<th>Fine particulate matter (PM2.5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kilotonnes</td>
<td>kilotonnes</td>
<td>kilotonnes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burden on surface water</th>
<th>Nitrogen as Total N</th>
<th>Phosphorus as Total P</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000 kg</td>
<td>1000 kg</td>
<td>1000 kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>147000</td>
<td>21900</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>93200</td>
<td>6880</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>91900</td>
<td>6790</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another example is the Besluit externe veiligheid inrichtingen (External Safety Decree for Establishments, abbreviated as “Bevi” in Dutch). This decree stipulates that high-risk activities (such as LPG filling stations) must meet the safety requirements by a set deadline. This applies for over 1700 LPG filling stations (in 2003 it was estimated that 253 LPG filling stations possibly did not meet the safety requirements)⁸. This operation has since been completed and all LPG filling stations now meet the requirements.

All that is good news. However, not all problems have as yet been solved. The targets set down in policy documents, laws, regulations and EU agreements still have to be achieved. Bringing air and water quality up to standard across the country remains a challenge. There are still a number of problems regarding air quality. Recent research\(^9\) again confirms that air pollution can have a negative impact on public health. Noise also still requires attention: in several places, reducing noise and noise nuisance is a challenge. In short: attention and actions remain needed to further improve the quality of the living environment and thus public health too. That is the aim of modern environmental policy and it is a major reason to continue to work hard on it.

2.1 Air quality

The *Nationale Samenwerkingsprogramma Luchtkwaliteit* (National Air Quality Cooperation Programme, abbreviated as “NSL” in Dutch) was set up on 1 August 2009 to work on improving air quality. The programme will run until 1 August 2014. The NSL and the *Programmatische Aanpak Stikstof* (Programme-based Approach to Nitrogen, abbreviated as “PAS” in Dutch) are aimed at ensuring that the Netherlands will meet the European prerequisites for air quality on time (fine particulate matter in 2011 and nitrogen dioxide, NO\(_2\), in 2015). The cabinet wants to extend the NSL until 1 January 2017.\(^10\) This is because there are several persisting problems in certain heavily affected areas, such as areas with intensive livestock farming (fine particulate matter) and urban areas (NO\(_2\)). Specifically in these areas, it is desirable to continue the NSL approach for several years and to monitor progress. It also remains important to obtain insight into the development of the number of citizens who are exposed to concentrations of pollutants in outdoor air. Reducing concentrations leads to an improvement in public health. Cooperation remains necessary to ensure the implementation of supplementary (local, regional and national) measures. At the EU level, source-based policy should be developed to achieve the desired effects on emissions from cars. As far as fine particulate matter is concerned, I will advocate at the European level for a further ambitious and realistic tightening of the standard.

The NSL has resulted in many national, provincial and municipal measures that improve air quality. The participating authorities have provided for measures that are being implemented throughout the duration of the NSL. To this end, they have made significant resources available so that with the NSL we are on course to achieve the set targets.\(^11\)

**More than standards alone**

Despite this progress, not all the health risks have disappeared. If all official standards are met, the focus will no longer be on the monitoring of environmental standards for local air quality. However, the work will then by no means be done (cf. paragraph 3.2). For the health of our population and visitors to our country, further improvement is desirable. A tightening of the EU standards will, however, only take place in the longer term. Other roads should therefore also be taken to ensure our air is cleaner and healthier. This involves deals and partnership projects including participation in the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (cf. paragraph 5.2).

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\(^10\) The "Ontwerpbesluit (Draft Decision) - Verlengen Nationaal Samenwerkingsprogramma Luchtkwaliteit" was available for inspection up until 6 November 2013.

Research shows that traffic (particularly through the emission of soot particles) makes a relatively large contribution to the negative effects on public health. It can be expected that reducing these soot emissions will deliver additional health gains. This is in line with the PBL’s appeal for more attention to be focused on the intended effects of environmental policy rather than on complying with regulations agreed at the EU level and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{12} This does not detract from the fact that the EU standards in place (PM10 and PM2.5) are actually a good starting point for reducing the amount of harmful particles in the air.

\textbf{(Area-oriented) Customisation}

Much can still be achieved in improving air quality in collaboration with cities and other social parties. A more integrated spatial design is needed that encourages urban areas to become more car-free and stimulates people to travel more often by bicycle and public transport, to vary other forms of (clean) taxi transport and to use collective transport rather than their personal car. However, this always involves customisation, because the possibilities vary from one area to the next. A concrete example of such a partnership is the green deal on zero-emission urban distribution on which, within the framework of the Energy Agreement, work is being done by the business community, the government and various regions. In this regard, I also refer to paragraph 5.1 which describes a coalition involving smart and healthy cities.

In the long term, we expect to make environmental gains through the increase in the number of electric and hydrogen-powered cars. Innovations like self-driving cars can, over time, contribute to both less space being used and to lower emissions from road traffic.

In areas with intensive livestock farming, the traditional approach through regulations and procedures for granting licences should be supplemented by an area-oriented approach in which the municipal authorities, in consultation with livestock holdings, explore the best and quickest way to solve the problem of poor air quality in the area concerned. Area-oriented customisation by decentralised authorities and agrarian businesses together, should deliver positive results, for example through agreements on spatial zoning and the clustering of activities. In my consultation with the decentralised authorities, I will emphasise the importance of this customisation and ask them to enter into dialogue with agrarian businesses in this regard.

The degassing of inland tank vessels or making them free of vapours can result in the release of substances that are harmful to the environment and public health. The cabinet wants to call a halt to these practices. Work is being done at the international level to amend the CDNI convention\textsuperscript{13} for inland navigation. In advance of this, it is important that in the time ahead, concrete local agreements are made with the shippers of these substances. A green deal is currently being drawn up with local stakeholders for the Rotterdam region. The aim is to have the tanks of inland navigation vessels degassed of benzenes or substances containing benzenes at installations. This would reduce air pollution as a result of the release of these harmful, volatile organic compounds.

\textsuperscript{12} PBL, “Wissels omzetten - Bouwstenen voor een robuust milieubeleid voor de 21\textsuperscript{e} eeuw”, 16 June 2013. Bouwsteen 7: “Richt het milieubeleid meer op impact dan op emissies”.

\textsuperscript{13} Convention Déchets en Navigation Intérieure: Convention concerning the collection, storage and discharge of waste from ships navigating along the Rhine and other inland waters.
2.2 Noise

Noise has a great impact on the quality of the living environment. People experience noise extremely directly, as well as the negative effects of noise on health and wellbeing. Much has been achieved over the past years. The biggest challenge in the years ahead is in cities and urban areas which require additional attention. Work has to be done there together with the decentralised stakeholders in an area-oriented manner. This is one of the issues for the coalition for smart and healthy cities (cf. paragraph 5.1).

Efforts of various authorities

Noise has always been a major theme in the realisation of new projects and in changes in the use of existing traffic and transport infrastructure. This theme is being dealt with at all administrative levels. For the state, noise is a concern in large-scale infrastructure projects, for provinces and municipalities it often involves friction between the quality of residential areas and the space for infrastructure or other sources of noise. When applying the statutory noise standards, authorities have a certain amount of room to manoeuvre, and there are various measures aimed at reducing noise. This makes noise an essential part of the administrative considerations involved in projects and area development in general, now and in the future.

Policy results and tasks

A great deal has been achieved over the past years. The population, mobility and the number of economic activities have all increased dramatically. At the same time, the number of people that are bothered by noise is slightly lower, broadly speaking. This is not easily seen and not impressive, but it is still quite an achievement. The use of innovative measures has had an effect, for example quieter generations of road surfaces (including pervious coated macadam), quieter brake blocks for trains, rail dampers and replacing noisy trains with quieter ones. Efforts are being made, not just nationally but internationally too, to tackle noise at its source (vehicles on the road, railway carriages, tyres). This has been a success (Tyre Label Directive). The reduction of the engine noise of vehicles is, however, lagging behind. In urban areas the engine noise from cars is louder than the noise from tyres. Urban traffic is a greater source of noise nuisance than motorways. This is therefore the biggest issue.

Greater efforts are thus needed in cities and urban areas. Tackling the sources of noise delivers the highest possible reduction in the number of residents bothered by noise. It is also by far the least costly option in financial terms. Reducing the noise level of vehicles will have to be accomplished at the EU level through vehicle requirements. Developments in that field, despite the efforts of the Netherlands, have not been cause for hope as yet. This year I will further explore how and when noise and noise nuisance can be further reduced, in consultation with cities – and in close contact with the smart and healthy cities coalition that is to be established.

Modernisation of noise regulations

Noise is characterised by many and often complex regulations. Within the framework of the Omgevingswet 14 (Environment Act), after the introduction of Swung 15, other regulations will also be updated. In this regard, it is important for cities and urban areas that the restructuring is further developed and expanded where possible in a cost efficient way. In addition to these developments, we will look for opportunities that have been insufficiently utilised up until now. In 2014, a study will

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14 Cf. paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.
be launched into possible noise measures and the effects to be achieved in the broadest sense. One of the opportunities that is currently being investigated is combining noise measures in houses with measures aimed at saving energy within the framework of the Energy Agreement. Insight into the possibilities for solutions at the local level is usually present locally. This not only involves efforts on the part of authorities, but also a strengthening of the initiatives of civil society organisations and local groups. An investigation is being conducted into how this can be structured with the *Stiller op Weg* (Quieter En-route) programme.

### 2.3 Soil and water quality

Over the past years, the Dutch soil remediation policy has undergone considerable amendments. Whereas at the start of the remediation operation all contaminated sites were completely excavated (multifunctional remediation), currently an area-oriented approach is increasingly adopted focused on the development possibilities for the entire area. Depending on the functions that the area will have after development, the extent to which the soil must be completely decontaminated is considered against the alternative that only the risks should be reduced to an acceptable level. In this way, area development and remediation can be tackled in an integrated manner and considerable cost savings can be realised.

**Area-oriented approach to soil**

This transition to area-oriented policy can be made because many decontaminated sites have already been tackled over the past years. In 2011, a list was drawn up of 404 sites with high risks for people: “human urgency” sites. It was agreed with the other authorities that these would be tackled or managed by the end of 2015. In addition, other sites with distribution risks and ecological risks were set down and have in part already been tackled. As shown in the progress report on these agreements which I recently sent to your House, the tackling of these sites is on course.

The area-oriented approach leads to a soil management and soil development policy in which priority is given to opportunities for the subsurface. Execution is performed in collaboration with the other authorities. The set of legal instruments for this will be made part of the new Environment Act. In addition, work is being done on broadening soil policy: soil is more than only contaminated sites. The (deep) subsurface offers various opportunities and harbours many essential functions for people and the environment, such as clean drinking water, a good pipe network, underground parking, thermal energy storage, extraction of geothermal heat, shale gas, etc. These functions all lay claim to subsurface space. To steer this in the right direction and to ensure there is room, work is now being done on a national policy vision for the sustainable use of the subsurface. As you were informed earlier, the *Structuurvisie Ondergrond* (Spatial Vision on the Subsurface) will be implemented in 2015.

**Source-based approach to water**

Regarding water quality, priority is still being given to a source-based approach. Together with the State Secretary of Economic Affairs (EZ) and the agricultural sector, hard work is being done on reducing emissions of nitrates and phosphates (and the substances they carry along) into

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16 Examples are the remediation of the Volgermeer Polder above Amsterdam and the Grift Park in Utrecht.


groundwater and surface water. Currently, the fifth action programme within the framework of the Nitrates Directive is in the completion phase.

In addition, within the framework of the second round of the River Basin Management Plans of the Water Framework Directive, we will examine where regional customisation is needed.

Within the framework of fertilisers policy, policy on volume is of great importance. Currently this consists of a system of animal rights, as well as the European milk quota system. The system of animal rights for pig and poultry farming will for the time being remain in force until 2018. In addition, a system of mandatory manure processing was introduced as of 1 January. This means that all livestock farmers that have surplus manure at the company level, must have a portion of that surplus (which is determined by the government) processed. This fertiliser must then be sold outside the Dutch fertiliser market. The European milk quota system will lapse in 2015. No national animal rights for dairy cattle will be introduced as a replacement. Instead, the cabinet is supporting a shift towards more land-based dairy farming. Dairy farmers who want to expand will only be allowed to do so if they have sufficient land available or if they will have all the additional manure processed. To get manure processing up and running, the Ministries of I&M and EZ are working together with the decentralised authorities on speeding up the granting of licence extensions to manure processing installations.

Moreover, hard work is being done on reducing instances in which norms are exceeded regarding the level of plant protection products in surface water. The policy document entitled Gezonde Groei, Duurzame Oogst19 (Healthy Growth, Sustainable Harvest) contains targets and measures aimed at reducing the use of plant protection products within and outside the agricultural sector. This will lead to a significant improvement in water quality and a general improvement in the living environment. You have by now received for inspection the promised studies into the banning of plant protection products outside the agricultural sector.20 The transition path leading to the time of the introduction of these bans will be used to effect the required innovations together with the stakeholders.

There are also opportunities regarding sewage and wastewater management. An example is the large installation for the extraction of phosphates and struvite production21 from sewage waste (from about one million people and many companies) that Waternet recently established in Amsterdam.

2.4 External safety and (new) risks

The incidents at Chemiepack and Odfjell a short time ago made it clear to everyone that there is still work to be done for our safety and health. The cabinet response to the recommendations made as a result of the dangerous situations at Odfjell22 provides an important starting point to further improve safety, especially in the chemical industry (cf. paragraph 3.4).

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20 Parliamentary Document 27858, no. 227, “Gewasbescherming buiten de landbouw; toezenden drie rapporten”.
21 Struvite (magnesium ammonium phosphate) is a phosphate mineral that can be extracted from wastewater and sewage and can serve as the basis for the production of fertilizers.
Streamlining and developing the policy

The cabinet vision entitled *Nuchter Omgaan met Risico’s*\(^23\) (Dealing Practically with Risks) and the cabinet response to the recommendations of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) and the Health Council\(^24\) include a framework for policy on safety and risks. The streamlining of the policy (and the associated regulations and standards) was put in motion with that framework. Social developments, such as a different view of corporate responsibility, and the responsibility of citizens and the government in the event of accidents, dangers and risks, require that this framework be further developed, including the principle that companies must take their own responsibility and that the government cannot bear the entire responsibility.

There is a lot of concern and unease in society about the way in which accidents and dangers are dealt with. This feeds the social desire to limit these risks through regulation (the risk-regulation reflex).

In addition, there is unease in society about the amount of (European and Dutch) regulations. I have also discussed this with your House. Under the title *Bewust omgaan met veiligheid* (Dealing Consciously with Safety) – in consultation with the Minister of Security and Justice – I will draft an assessment framework for safety and risk issues (involving infrastructure, spatial planning and the environment) which can hinder a healthy and safe living environment. Pursuant to my promise, I will present this to the Senate in 2014. Needless to say, I will send it to your House at the same time. In the draft, insofar as possible, a link will be made to the *Ladder voor duurzame verstedelijking*\(^25\) (Ladder for Sustainable Urbanisation) and the agreements on the physical living environment to be made between the state and regions in the MIRT\(^26\) administrative consultation. The modernisation of the environmental safety policy is closely linked to the draft referred to above.

New risks

Due in part to technological advances and scientific insights, new (potential) risks are being detected for both people and the environment. Recent examples of this are nanotechnology and micro-contaminants in wastewater, open water and the sea. And, we should not forget substances of very high concern which require attention. The safety of people and the environment must be safeguarded when new technologies, chemical substances and advanced pesticides are used. This requires a new form of partnership between the government, the business community and citizens in which a practical way of fulfilling the duty of care and taking precautions is sought and innovations are hindered as little as possible. The maximum reuse of material and, at the same time, dealing responsibly with substances of very high concern which return in the production chain, are concrete examples of such challenges. These relatively new subjects also require clear choices to be made. For one of these new technologies, nanotechnology, the Netherlands and the EU are currently working on the necessary limiting conditions. For other emerging technologies, on the basis of the experience we gain with nanotechnology, it is necessary to formulate an approach that takes into account the uncertainties that go hand in hand with both the opportunities and risks of new technologies. In 2014, I will make clear to you how the uncertainties of nanotechnology and

\[^{23}\text{Parliamentary Document 28 089, no. 15, "Kabinetvisie "Nuchter Omgaan met Risico's"," 29 May 2006.}\]
\[^{24}\text{Parliamentary Document 28 089, no. 23, "Kabinetreactie op advies WRR "Onzekere veiligheid" en the recommendation of the Health Council "Voorzorg met rede", 2 April 2009.}\]
\[^{25}\text{Cf.: Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, "Structuurvisie Infrastructuur en Ruimte - Nederland concurrerend, bereikbaar, leefbaar en veilig" (SVIR: Spatial Vision on Infrastructure and Spatial Planning), March 2012.}\]
\[^{26}\text{MIRT: Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur, Ruimte en Transport (Infrastructure, Spatial Planning and Transport Multi-year Programme).}\]
other emerging technologies (such as synthetic biotechnology) will be tackled. Regarding micro-contaminants, the cabinet will set down possible approaches to resolving the problem and send this document to you in 2014.

Where necessary, at the international level the Netherlands will strive to have items put on the agenda, for example concerning the phasing out of the use of micro-plastics in cosmetics because these substances contribute to the problem of plastic soup in our seas.

**Distribution of tasks and responsibilities**
I support the suggestion of the PBL\(^\text{27}\) to place responsibility more with the initiator. The starting point is, for example in the case of companies that release hazardous chemical substances into the environment, that these companies bear primary responsibility for removing and reducing any risks. This development had actually already been set in motion with the introduction of the EU regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) in 2007. This regulation prescribes that producers and importers must demonstrate that substances are safe. I believe it would be promising to shift the distribution of tasks and responsibilities of public and private parties in this direction. Ultimately, for each safety issue it must become clear who is in the first place the party to take action aimed at resolving a particular issue, even though many cases will involve a collective (chain) responsibility. The PBL recommends investigating the extent to which the amendment to the legislation can aid in this, also in relation to liability. I will take the initiative of exploring the possibilities for embedding in law liability for adverse effects on the environment.

**2.5 Actions**

- The cabinet has chosen to continue to work for better air quality and to extend the NSL until 1 January 2017. In this way, we are ensuring that the partnership remains intact in order to tackle the remaining problems. Together with several cities, work will be done on a set of supplementary measures to be certain that in 2015 we meet the targets at all locations. I will outline these measures for you in the year ahead.
  
  I will also enter into dialogue with the decentralised authorities regarding the tailored solutions to the problem of fine particulate matter from intensive livestock farming.

- In order to ban the degassing of inland tank vessels, we are working at the international level on amending the CDNI convention for inland navigation.

- In consultation with the cities – and in close contact with the smart, healthy cities coalition that is to be established – this year I will further explore how and when noise nuisance can be further reduced, including research focused on possible noise measures and the results to be achieved in the broadest sense.

- In 2014 a study will be initiated into possible noise measures and the results to be achieved in the broadest sense.

- Drawing up of a Spatial Vision on the Subsurface. This will be implemented in 2015.

- In February this year you will receive the promised studies regarding the banning of the use of plant protection products outside the agricultural sector.

  Under the title *Bewust omgaan met veiligheid* (Dealing Consciously with Safety), I will draft an assessment framework for safety and risk issues (involving infrastructure, spatial planning and the environment) which can hinder a healthy and safe living environment. Pursuant to my promise, I

will present this to the Senate in 2014. Needless to say, I will send it to your House at the same
time.

- In 2014 we will make clear to you how the uncertainties of nanotechnology and other
  emerging technologies (such as synthetic biotechnology) will be tackled.
- Regarding micro-contaminants, we will set down possible approaches to resolving the problem
  and send this document to you in 2014.
- Start of a study into liability for adverse effects on the environment. You can expect to
  see the interim results in 2014.

3 Modernisation of environmental policy instruments

The modernisation of the instruments is a major element in the modernisation of environmental
policy. For example, it involves amendments to legislation and regulations, such as simplifying and
improving rules and regulations, introducing a system revision in the Environment Act, the revision of
standards and streamlining of the policy. In addition, it involves the use of instruments that are
aligned with market conditions, creating room for eco-innovations, the further digitisation of
government agencies, providing transparent environmental information to the business community
and making visible how citizens themselves can contribute to sustainability and how the government
is achieving its sustainability aims and is setting a good example.

3.1 Environment Act

With the new Environment Act, the cabinet is simplifying the legislation and regulations and creating
clarity and transparency by considerably limiting the number of laws, Orders in Council, and
Ministerial Orders. In the Environmental Bill, the Environment Management Act will be incorporated
into the new Environment Act, as will the laws on, among other things, water, spatial planning,
nature, cultural heritage, infrastructure, aviation and mobility. The new Environment Act will thus
provide a clear, integrated and as simple as possible legislative framework for the living
environment. This creates room for initiatives on the part of society. When incorporating the
Environment Management Act into the Environment Act the powers that will be placed with
individual authorities will be explicitly examined, in order to ensure that the layer of government
that is best suited to solving certain problems will also have the power to do so.

You will receive the Environment Bill in 2014. A start has already been made on preparing the
Orders under this Act. These will ultimately replace about 114 Orders in Council in the
Environment Act, some 100 of which have to do with the broad terrain of the environment. You
were recently informed about this.28

The current construct of European regulations and framework directives came into being
incrementally over a long period of time and from a sectoral perspective. For this reason, it
sometimes chafes with the desire for integrated regulations within the member states. Our move
towards an integrated Environment Act and regulations has already attracted the interest of other
EU member states, not least because with the Dutch bill implementation will also become easier

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28 Parliamentary Document 33118 no. 8, “Voortgangsbrief Stelseherziening Omgevingsrecht oktober 2013”, 28 October
2013.
and will result in fewer discrepancies between sectors. Together with other member states, the cabinet would like to identify options for improvement, and would like to consult with the European Commission about how these options can be implemented, for example in planned revisions of existing regulations, or within the framework of the REFIT programme. Examples of this are the streamlining and standardisation of regulations concerning instruments like environmental quality requirements, plans and programmes, licences, reporting and inspections, as well as better harmonisation (in terms of duration, measures, procedures, and scope) of obligatory sectoral action plans (arising from the Habitat Directive, Water Framework Directive, Ambient Air Quality Directive and the Environmental Noise Directive). In addition, we are consulting with other member states in order to share best practices in the implementation of directives like the Water Framework Directive.

3.2 Setting standards

To date, the emphasis in the way legislation and regulations are constructed has been to a large extent on the standards to be met and the associated regulations. It is of importance to re-examine how these standards contribute to the underlying objective of environmental policy: the realisation of a healthy and safe living environment. I will ask the RIVM[^30] to list the various standards and to relate them to the underlying objectives. I will also investigate or have investigated whether there are still gaps in the areas of health and the environment, in particular in relation to intensive livestock farming. Even when the official standards are met, the quality of air, soil and water, for instance, can still have negative effects on the health of the population. Needless to say, setting standards remains an important instrument for the government in tackling safety and risks issues, and in safeguarding the basic quality of the physical living environment in terms of health and safety. It is, however, time to place new emphases within the complex construct that has been created over the past decades, and to revise it in its entirety (using the underlying objectives), streamline it and simplify it. This will give citizens, the business community and authorities a better grasp of the matter. To accomplish this, we will work along several lines.

**Source-based policy**

Source-based policy is the primary tool used to meet environmental quality standards. In this regard, Brussels is the best place for making agreements on source-based policy. This involves, for instance, emissions requirements for inland shipping, the noise emitted by trains or standards for more efficient and cleaner production within the framework of the Eco-design Directive and the Infrastructure and Environment Directive. For each EU proposal, the Netherlands systematically examines whether a source-based approach is possible. In addition, the aim is to achieve progressive standards, giving manufacturers investment security and rewarding leaders in the field. The cabinet’s line is that national regulations should not to go further than European regulations. The national standards are therefore not more stringent than the European ones.

Apart from supporting ambitious emissions standards in the ongoing negotiations on vehicle emissions, the Netherlands is ensuring that the regulations on the admission of substances onto the EU market are well aligned with the European objectives in regard to chemical water quality.

[^29]: Under the flag of “smart regulation”, the European Commission is focusing on improving the effectiveness of EU regulations. To this end, the REFIT programme performs analyses to determine if directives are fit for purpose.
Programme-based approach
A programme-based approach is increasingly being used where there is a danger that environmental quality standards will not be met, despite source-based policy. Such an approach sets out the responsibilities for taking additional measures. Examples are the National Air Quality Cooperation Programme (NSL), the Programme-based Approach to Nitrogen (PAS) and the River Basin Management Plans within the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This approach also allows room to be created for new developments.

Modernisation of regulations
A start was made several years ago on modernising existing noise regulations (Swung-I) with the goal of arriving at a more effective and more efficient set of legal instruments. This has led to the introduction of noise production ceilings for national infrastructure. The new noise regulations for decentralised infrastructure, industrial sites and the noise standards for noise-sensitive objects are currently being elaborated. The system of the Environment Bill will be the decisive factor in the final form of the new noise regulations.

3.3 Pricing instruments
The cabinet recognises the importance of properly functioning pricing instruments. The Netherlands is among the leaders in Europe in terms of green taxes. There are, however, limits to one-sided charging. With a view to “border effects” and the desire to have a level playing field, the cabinet is therefore aiming for charging at the European level wherever possible. For example, as stated in the Climate Agenda and the Energy Agreement, the cabinet is working on strengthening the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). This is in line with the far-reaching internalisation of environmental costs, including a properly functioning emissions trading system and a review of environmentally harmful subsidies, as expressed by the PBL.31

3.4 Incentive instruments for eco-innovations
We are going to focus current environmental legislation more on innovation. By offering leaders in the field room to experiment with sustainable initiatives and where necessary amending legislation and regulations, we can make the desired eco-innovations possible. For example, the definition of waste in REACH requires revising in order to stimulate the circular economy. We are making agreements to this end with innovative parties through green deals. Our attention is particularly focused on setting progressive standards (that only come into effect in several year’s time), and on setting technology-forcing standards (i.e., standards which cannot yet be met by current technology) will come into effect after a longer passage of time). In this way, innovation is rewarded and those who lag behind are penalised or dealt with less favourably. We are also trying to strengthen this approach through our efforts in Brussels.

Sustainable innovations are only used if there is a market for them. The government has at its disposal various instruments for creating this market, realising market introductions and scaling up sustainable innovations. The cabinet actively uses these instruments (cf. the Green Growth memorandum), which include charging (cf. paragraph 3.3; examples are regulatory energy tax and tax incentives for clean lease cars), setting progressive standards whereby incentives are provided

for innovations, a government that is the launching customer of innovative products, sustainable procurement (cf. paragraph 3.7; an example is the provision of sustainable food in government canteens). Via fiscal investment arrangements like the Milieu Investeringsaftrek (Environmental Investment Allowance, abbreviated as “MIA” in Dutch) and the Willekeurige afschrijving milieu-investeringen (Random Depreciation of Environmental Investments, abbreviated as “Vamil” in Dutch), environmentally-friendly investments are encouraged and/or rewarded. These stimulate the scaling-up of sustainable innovations.

The Netherlands needs to introduce a “trendsetter approach” elsewhere which offers opportunities to the creative and innovative Dutch construction, transport, water, industry, energy and agricultural sectors. This would also offer opportunities for the environment and sustainability. Eco-innovations and other innovations in these fields can be developed and tested through European programmes like Horizon 2020, LIFE, Interreg and TEN-T.

3.5 Expanding the accessibility of environmental information

Digitisation enhances the user-friendliness and accessibility of information. Moreover, it contributes to faster and better decision-making. Digitally compatible spatial plans already provided accessible information on spatial visions, spatial planning Orders in Council, provincial regulations and zoning plans for the general public, entrepreneurs, policymakers and enforcement bodies. Via the internet, everyone can already click on a location on the map and see what the spatial planning policy is and what regulations apply there.32 At the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, we are going to expand the use of digital spatial planning practices to make the policy and all associated requirements for the physical living environment, also in the area of the environment, even more accessible. One click on the map will provide all relevant information on the living environment. The digitisation aims are closely aligned with the Visie Digitale Overheid 201733 (Vision on the Digital Government 2017). This vision describes the fully digital provision of government services. A prerequisite for this is that all government information is available online.

The Atlas voor de Leefomgeving (Atlas of the Living Environment), the functionalities of which will be developed further under the Environment Act by means of geo-coordinates, is a step in that direction. This will mean that in due course it will be possible to surf the internet using geo-coordinates. The goal is that in time, under the Environment Act, all relevant environmental information can be called up and viewed per location via geo-standards.

3.6 Transparency and green accounting

At the initiative of the Netherlands, the 5th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the (UNECE)34 Aarhus Convention will be held in July 2014 in Maastricht. This emphasises that the Netherlands is continuing to pursue a transparent, accessible environmental governance infrastructure and also that our country is taking its responsibility in that respect. The aim is to set down in a Maastricht Declaration, as a result of this meeting, that access for everyone to information on the environment and on risks to the environment must be drastically improved. The business community will play an important role in this in providing accessible data on production processes, technologies and products and on business strategies regarding sustainable development.

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32 Cf.: RO-online, www.ruimtelijkeplannen.nl
The cabinet believes it is important that companies (and institutions) make visible how sustainable their operations are, and what they are actively doing in the fields of the environment and sustainability. The PBL proposes having the use of natural resources registered (green accounting).\textsuperscript{35} The Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition too, underscores the importance of accountability and transparency, also when non-financial information is involved.\textsuperscript{36} Together with the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, I will explore this possibility, whereby we want to link up in as far as possible with ongoing international developments and initiatives, like the Global Reporting Initiative. I will inform you further about this in 2014.

3.7 Sustainable Action

The cabinet wants to provide people who care about sustainability with concrete prospects for action and to inspire them to act more sustainably. By doing so, we are demonstrating that sustainability and the environment are not abstract terms. In fact, they go hand in hand with concrete economic opportunities and this makes it even more attractive to adopt active and sustainable work methods.

Programme

To this end we are launching the Duurzaam Doen (Sustainable Action) programme. In 2014, we will be working with inspiring stakeholders. Via various channels and media we will show that “sustainable action” is attractive and contemporary, and can offer concrete opportunities in everyday life. We have already made a start by displaying activities on the www.duurzaamdoen.nl website through which members of the public can contribute to a more sustainable and better environment.

The state as an example to follow

In addition, we are going to make visible that the state is setting a good example regarding its premises, operations and facilities. For instance, by converting buildings so that they constitute an example of sustainable construction. One example is the conversion of the building of the former Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)\textsuperscript{37} into a government office in which, among other things, an installation for the extraction of phosphates (innovative sanitation) is to be placed. The Ministry of I&M will realise a reduction in CO\textsubscript{2} emissions of 28% in 2016 compared to 2011. In concrete terms this means an annual reduction of almost 30 million kilograms of CO\textsubscript{2} emissions. This will be achieved by, among other things, a savings programme at the Rijksrederij (national shipping organization) that includes sailing more economically and making more use of shore-side electricity. Part of the savings programme is also to reduce energy consumption in buildings, consuming green energy and making the vehicle fleet greener, reducing commuting and the number of business trips, and advocating for energy awareness and energy-saving behaviour among all staff. Due to this plan, the Ministry of I&M has already been the first ministry to receive the Lean and Green Award.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{37} Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment

\textsuperscript{38} Cf.: www.lean-green.nl
Rijkswaterstaat (the executive arm of the Ministry of I&M) is investigating the opportunities for the sustainable use of biomass within its domain. Moreover, in the tendering procedure for large-scale infrastructure works, Rijkswaterstaat sets requirements aimed at increasing efficiency and sustainability in construction supply chains and logistics.

The majority of ministries are working on sustainability in numerous ways. For instance, by digitising hard-copy files and meeting documents within the framework of Smart Working that is being introduced across the entire government and civil service. Other examples include (agreements on) sustainable catering, sustainable building management and daylight-dependent lighting which has been installed at various ministries, including Economic Affairs. The state is also setting a good example with energy-efficient premises (such as those of DUO, the Education Executive Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in Groningen, and of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands in Amersfoort) and with the separation of waste at source. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), for example, is replacing all individual rubbish bins and will be collecting waste separately on waste islands, as is the case at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. Most of the ministries are in the mean time working with energy-efficient equipment including printers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is encouraging video conferencing in order to reduce the number of missions and flights. The IPKD (inter-ministerial post and courier service) uses electric cars. These examples show that across the entire government and civil service work is being done to further sustainability and that the cabinet wants to serve as an example across the entire spectrum.

**Procurement policy**

The Ministry of I&M is encouraging sustainable procurement. Now that government policy has been established, the instruments for buyers assessed and delivered, and the environmental criteria documents are available, sustainable procurement is an integral part of the policy for all state purchases. The Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) oversees and coordinates the application of this policy by all government buyers. Developments in Europe play an important role in this. The Netherlands is among the leaders in Europe in terms of sustainable procurement. The Ministry of I&M continues to be active in the EU in order to consolidate our position as one of the leaders in this field. As the responsible member of the cabinet I will inform the European Commission and all member states about our experiences with sustainable procurement. This will also serve as a stimulus for the European Commission to arrive at a sustainable EU procurement policy.

### 3.8 Actions

In 2014, you will receive the Environment Bill. A start has already been made on preparing the Orders under this Act.

- Together with other member states, the cabinet would like to identify options for improvement, and would like to consult with the European Commission about how these options can be implemented, for example in planned revisions of existing regulations, or within the framework of the REFIT programme.
- I will ask the RIVM to list the various standards and to relate them to the underlying objectives. I will also investigate or have investigated whether there are still gaps in the area of health and the environment, in particular in relation to intensive livestock farming.
- We will consult with other member states in order to share best practices in the implementation of directives like the Water Framework Directive.
• We are going to focus current environmental legislation more on innovation. By offering leaders in the field room to experiment with sustainable initiatives and, where necessary, amending legislation and regulations, we can make the desired eco-innovations possible. For example, the definition of waste and the REACH regulations require revising in order to stimulate the circular economy. We are making agreements to this end with innovative parties through green deals.
• We are going to expand the use of digital spatial planning practices in order to improve the accessibility of the policy and all associated requirements for the entire physical living environment.
• The Netherlands supports a Maastricht Declaration in 2014 that will set down that access for everyone to information on the environment and on risks to the environment must be drastically improved.
• The Minister of Economic Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, and I will inform you in 2014 about the progress and outcomes of the study into green accounting.
• We will launch the www.duurzaamdoen.nl website. In 2014 we will be working with inspiring stakeholders and together, via various channels and media, we will show that “sustainable action” is attractive and contemporary, and can offer concrete opportunities in everyday life.
• Rijkswaterstaat will investigate the opportunities for the sustainable use of biomass in its domain. In addition, in the tendering procedures for large-scale infrastructure works, Rijkswaterstaat will set requirements aimed at increasing efficiency and sustainability in construction supply chains and logistics.
• Sustainable procurement is an integral part of the policy for all state purchases. Following on from this, we now want to inform the EU and to encourage it to adopt a sustainable procurement policy. The members of the cabinet from BZK and I&M will work towards achieving this in close coordination.

4   Strengthening implementation, oversight and enforcement

Establishing confidence is an important starting point in shaping modern environmental policy. At the same time, the reports of the inspectorates still reveal many points for improvement. I have had many debates with your House about this. I refer here, for example, to our discussions concerning Chemiepack and Odfjell. I consider the issuing of licences, oversight and enforcement to be of great importance in the implementation of environmental policy. Efficiency and effectiveness are priorities in this.

4.1  Regional Executive Agencies

The establishment of Regional Executive Agencies (abbreviated as “RUDs” in Dutch) furthers the professionalization of the implementation of policies, including environmental policy. It is important that we now start up the RUDs. The effectiveness of enforcement will increase with the introduction of administrative penalties as sanctions. In this way, a varied set of instruments for enforcement is created which can be used to better counter violations. Private safeguarding of compliance with regulations can be used where it is possible and responsible. This means that citizens and companies have more responsibility to themselves ensure that compliance with regulations is structural. The RUDs were established as of 1 January 2014. We will annually monitor
the progress made in the implementation of policy by the RUDs.

4.2 Safety in the chemical industry

Together with my colleagues, I will also work to improve safety in the chemical industry.

Safety coalitions

I will work to form future safety coalitions (and make safety deals) between authorities, research institutes and the business community. The aim of these coalitions is to create a sustainable safety culture at companies that work with hazardous substances and, with concrete projects, to strengthen the supply chain responsibility of the actors that contribute to increasing environmental safety. To illustrate, this could involve coalitions in the following areas:

- safety in relation to the large-scale introduction, storage and transport of liquid natural gas;
- safety in the chemical industry, including positive incentives to lift the entire supply chain to a higher level;
- safety measures in the regions that have/will have to deal with more freight transport by rail in connection with the introduction of the basic network.

I will inform you further about the state of affairs of the safety coalitions in 2014.

Power to intervene

Further to the AO Externe Veiligheid en Handhaving (General Consultation on Safety and Enforcement) of 12 December 2013, the motion of Van Tongeren/Dijkstra (26956-189) was adopted in the subsequent VAO (General Consultation Report) dated 17 December. The motion called for first waiting for the evaluation of the RUDs at the end 2014 before introducing a form of power to intervene for the government. I will therefore only submit an initiative in this regard to your House after the results of the evaluation are known. However, the current statutory advisory role of the Living Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) in the issuing of environmental licences will be strengthened due to the high risks entailed in the use of hazardous substances. A proper licence is, after all, a major starting point, also with a view to improved enforcement. In this way I want to ensure that risks such as those that arose at Odfjell, are reduced.

In the event that the outcome of the evaluation of the RUDs at the end of 2014 reveals that a power to overrule is needed, I will introduce it shortly thereafter. This would involve a statutory power to intervene with associated sanctions for cases of long-term failure to comply, dangers of a disaster or major risks to the environment. Supplementary to this power to intervene, an obligation to report to the State Secretary of I&M could be included in the initiative for the Brzo\(^\text{39}\)/RUD directors, whereby the State Secretary of I&M would be informed at an early stage of situations such as those mentioned above.

4.3 Actions

- We will annually monitor the progress made in the implementation of policy by the RUDs.

\(^{39}\) Brzo: Major Accidents (Risks) Decree.
• I will work to form future safety coalitions (and make safety deals) between authorities, research institutes and the business community.
• I will inform you further about the state of affairs of the safety coalitions in 2014.
• The evaluation of the RUDs will start in 2014.
• The advisory role of the Living Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) will be strengthened, and a further examination will be carried out as to whether a form of power to overrule will be introduced.

5 Establishing ties and forming coalitions

In addition to the coalitions that have already been set in motion in the elaboration of the Green Growth memorandum, I will be paying special attention to coalitions involving cities and those at the international level. After all, many environmental issues are at play on an international scale and require international solutions. I will work closely with the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in this regard.

5.1 Formation of a coalition for smart and healthy cities

Cities are the focal points of knowledge, culture, power and economy. This means they are highly attractive to people and generate a great deal of economic activity. Worldwide, cities are growing larger and their influence on the global economy is increasing. This is also the case in the Netherlands. This growth means that health, safety and sustainability are coming under more pressure within cities than outside them. However, cities can also provide solutions. Cities are home to enterprising, thinking and creative people who live in close proximity to one another. As a result, developments and innovations are effected more quickly and easily. Cities are thus catalysts for sustainable ideas and concrete solutions. IT and other facilities (and innovations) in cities can lead to innovations that contribute to the attractiveness, quality and health of the urban living environment. Smart Working, 3D printing and a decentralised energy supply are examples of this. Cities are also the place where ideas can be tested and applied on a small and large scale, and the place where a small-scale solution can have an effect on a great many people. This makes cities potentially “smart” communities.

Utilising the power of cities
The cabinet wants to use the smart power of cities by establishing coalitions in the Netherlands that work for the smart, healthy, liveable, safe and sustainable design of cities (in analogy with the international smart cities and healthy cities movements). Collaboration in these coalitions covers many areas, such as living, working, mobility, recreation, cultural heritage, public facilities and open data. The subject is already being taken up in numerous places at home and abroad, and links different goals to one another. The Netherlands has good opportunities here to market ideas, concepts and concrete actions, for example in the fields of urban development, water management, energy efficiency in built-up areas and lighting (cf. the PBL report entitled Vergroenen en verdienen, October 2013).

Area redevelopment, restructuring, transformation and new urban development can be carried out in a manner that takes optimum account of the environment, sustainability and other issues,
thus delivering as much social added value as possible. This goes emphatically further than meeting standards. 40

**Sustainable accessibility and the Infrastructure, Spatial Planning and Transport Multi-year Programme (MIRT)**

Smart and healthy cities are also easily accessible cities. In the Netherlands, the accessibility issues of the future lie not so much in transport connections as within and around cities and urban areas. These are the places where accessibility, liveability and spatial planning intersect the most. At locations that call for an MIRT study on account of accessibility issues, accessibility is therefore examined in combination with other issues in the area. We are aiming for an integrated approach to accessibility, liveability and spatial planning. As the Minister of I&M and I stated in our MIRT memorandum 41, over the course of 2014, a number of broad MIRT studies will be launched in which this integrated working method will be applied and elaborated. Based in part on these studies, we will examine how environmental and sustainability issues can be given a place in the MIRT, and how they can be integrated into the MIRT working method. You will be informed about this in 2014.

The broad MIRT studies will, in the first place, examine creative and smart solutions like changing behaviour as in the *Beter Benutten* (Better Use) programme, using new developments in the field of information technology as in *Beter geïnformeerd op weg, Routekaart 2013-2023* (Better Informed on the Road, Roadmap 2013-2023) and smart spatial quality management and design that leads to fewer forms of transport and more sustainable ones (walking, cycling, public transport). Investment will only be considered if these types of measures offer no solace and there is insight into financing. The *Beter Benutten* programme demonstrates that alternative solutions to the accessibility issue can also be sustainable. The programme involves collaboration with the business community on smart solutions to improve accessibility, like peak hour avoidance and agreements on working from home. These types of measures contribute to better accessibility and make a positive contribution to realising the environmental objectives.

**Sustainable spatial design and buildings**

In addition to accessibility, a smart and healthy city also involves sustainable buildings, the reuse of buildings and materials, and the design of areas that contributes to better air quality and increased safety. Urbanisation thus not only fits in with new forms of area development but is also in line with our aims regarding health, safety, green growth, the circular economy, sustainable mobility and climate. The local and regional levels are ideally suited to experiments and achieving concrete results. Energy efficiency as a driver of collaboration between various decentralised parties for neighbourhood improvement and area development is one of the neighbourhood-oriented examples. The benefits for the energy network operator, the owners of houses (housing corporations, private parties, individual citizens), the energy consumers (residents and entrepreneurs) and the environment 42 can provide impetus for physical and other necessary modifications in a neighbourhood.

An integrated approach also means working for protection from flooding and other risks, striving to become climate-proof and aiming for flexibility in buildings to facilitate changes of use over the years. Smart grids for a more decentralised supply of electricity and modern IT facilities are also

40 Cf.: paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.
42 The Watt for Watt approach in Haarlem serves as an example to follow.
important to 21st century cities. Cities in which residents, visitors, employees and entrepreneurs are happy to be. Amsterdam Smart City is an inspiring example of this. The same applies to Duurzaam Almere 2.043 (Sustainable Almere 2.0), the Rotterdam Climate Initiative, the coalition of climate-proof cities from the Delta Programme, and the collaboration established by I&M under the name Gezonde verstedelijkking (Healthy Urbanisation). I would like to make use of the knowledge gained and build on it further. This is also necessary to make use of the opportunities available.

The focus in urban dynamics will be on broad social values. Different agendas are linked to one another. Opportunities arise for entrepreneurs. The envisaged transformation of the Rijnhaven area in Rotterdam is an inspiring example of this. Here, the intention of the municipality is to award a 30-year concession for the area to the consortium that generates the most social added value. The tender procedure for this has already begun.

**Collaboration and an integrated approach**

Based on inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministries of I&M, Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), Housing and Civil Service (WR), Economic Affairs (EZ), Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), we will enter into dialogue with decentralised authorities, citizens, market parties, research institutes and interested organisations about how we can develop further in a healthy and smart way. This is not only in line with the physical-spatial projects put in motion by I&M, but also fits in with the integrated approach of residing and living in a healthy neighbourhood as set down in the National Prevention Programme, (NPP) Alles is Gezondheid44 (Everything is Health) that the Minister and State Secretary for VWS sent to you in April 2013.

The aim is to set up a “smart and healthy cities” coalition that – further to the above – will get to work actively, share experiences, expand knowledge, put concrete projects on the agenda and assist in getting them off the ground. Innovations involving policy, implementation and the environment can be involved in this, as well as policy results, practical experiences, pilot and demonstration projects, best practices, etc. We would like to build further in two areas in which we are already actively working on the first step towards healthy urbanisation. I will submit the first results to you before the 2014 budget debate. I expect that smart and healthy cities will eagerly take advantage of the opportunities that are available in numerous places.

### 5.2 International coalitions of leaders

The cabinet is working with like-minded member states on a common strategy to arrive at ambitious climate objectives within the EU and is involving leading companies in this. Outside the EU too, we are continuing to invest in coalitions with other countries and civil society stakeholders. For example, the Netherlands, as part of a broad coalition with like-minded countries and companies, is committed to arriving at an agreement on ambitious and feasible new EU objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases for the period after 2020. In addition, the Netherlands is participating in consultation groups that facilitate and push for concrete international climate action (such as the Cartagena Dialogue, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition) and which focus on smart combinations of climate gains, clean air and protecting the ozone layer.

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43 At the Innovatie-estafette (Innovation Relay) 2013, the Almere municipal councillor for sustainable spatial development and the Stete Secretary of I&M signed a Declaration of Intent for a Sustainable Almere 2.0 green deal.
Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition and Public Private Partnerships

As a follow-up to the discussion between the Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition (DSGC) and the cabinet, together with the DSGC we are going to explore the possibilities for furthering the international discussion of sustainability themes with this group of like-minded companies. Our aim is arriving at clear, cohesive policy objectives, together with like-minded companies and countries, making use of cost-effective instruments and strengthening collaboration on themes like climate change and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Public Private Partnerships also lend themselves to building coalitions. A fine example of this is the Orange Goes Green45 programme that, in the United States, is making use of the knowledge and know-how of Dutch companies, research institutes and authorities. The commercial and non-commercial cooperation projects are focused on energy, water and food and their inter-relationships.

Leaders

We want to strengthen consultation, cooperation and the sharing of ideas with leading international parties. An example is the visit to California in 2013 by the President of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), ten representatives from companies and research institutes and myself. We explicitly focused on expanding relationships with leading parties during that visit. California is the first American state to have an emissions trading system and the state is also a global leader in stringent standards for air quality. During the visit, it turned out that there was also a great deal of interest in our approach with the Energy Agreement and other forms of Public Private Partnerships. California’s Secretary for Environmental Protection and I signed a Letter of Intent in which we agreed to cooperate further in the areas of sustainable mobility, climate and energy.

In 2014, among other places, I will visit Brazil and China where there are also concrete possibilities for cooperation in the area of the environment.

5.3 Actions

- Together with decentralised authorities, citizens, market parties, research institutes and interested organisations from the cities, we will set up set up “smart and healthy cities” coalitions that – further to the above – will get to work actively, share experiences, expand knowledge, put concrete projects on the agenda and assist in getting them off the ground. I will submit the first results to you before the 2014 budget debate.
- We will examine how environmental and sustainability issues can be given a place in the MIRT, and how they can be integrated into the MIRT working method. The Minister of I&M and I will inform you about this in 2014.
- We are working with like-minded member states on a common strategy to arrive at ambitious climate objectives within the EU and to involve leading companies in this. Outside the EU too, we will continue to invest in smart coalitions with other countries and civil society stakeholders.
- Together with the Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition (DSGC) the cabinet will explore the possibilities for furthering the international discussion of sustainability themes with this group

45 Cf.: www.orangegoesgreen.org
of like-minded companies.

- I want to strengthen and promote consultation, cooperation and the sharing of ideas with leading international parties during my international missions.