



National government

Our vision of Europe

Opinions, ideas and recommendations

Topics

- Climate Change and Environment
- Migration
- Health
- EU in the world

14 January 2022

This document is a translation of the report entitled 'Onze kijk op Europa; meningen, ideeën en aanbevelingen', the Dutch-language version of which was published on 14 January 2022 at www.kijkopeuropa.nl. This translation is a simplified version in which the original layout (illustrations and other stylistic elements) has been removed for translation purposes.

Our vision of ...

Report summary: all recommendations one by one

Through the citizens' dialogue 'Visions of Europe', we have gathered the opinions and ideas of Dutch citizens on the future of Europe. This has led to the following recommendations being made to the European Union on the last four topics (out of a total of nine).

Climate Change and Environment

- 1. Provide a clear direction for Europe's approach to climate change**
- 2. Ensure that countries and undertakings cooperate more closely on targeted solutions**
- 3. Introduce a fair and practicable CO₂ system**
- 4. Communicate more clearly and more positively on climate challenges**

Dutch people think that the EU should take the lead when it comes to combating climate change. While member states should be able to make their own choices, they must work towards the same goals. Instead of pointing fingers at one another, EU countries should make more of an effort to exchange knowledge and identify common solutions. A CO₂ taxation system may well be effective, but it must be fair, practical and clear. In general, Dutch people think that the EU should communicate more clearly and more positively on the subject of the climate.

Migration

- 1. Prevent the debate about refugees from losing sight of the finer points**
- 2. Ensure that refugees are distributed fairly and sensibly**
- 3. Use knowledge and experience to help refugees' regions of origin**

Dutch people think it is important to distinguish between people fleeing from unsafe areas and economic refugees. Discussions nowadays about migration and integration often lose sight of the finer points. To ensure a fair distribution of refugees across Europe, the EU should agree on clear criteria which do justice to both the member states and the people who have fled their countries. Finally, Dutch people suggest that the EU should provide regions hosting refugees not only with financial support, but also with know-how.

Health

- 1. Be more proactive in the face of a pandemic**
- 2. Provide affordable and reliable medicines for everyone**
- 3. Countries must act individually to make their healthcare systems fairer and more effective**

Dutch people take the view that EU countries should cooperate more closely when combating a pandemic. In the case of the approach to COVID-19, the policy is sometimes confusing. While the rules need not be the same everywhere, they should at least be compatible. As regards vaccines or medicines, Dutch people want the costs to be kept as low as possible while ensuring reliable quality and responsible production. Moreover, we think it is important that large undertakings should not abuse their power; healthcare should primarily be a national responsibility.

EU's role in the world

- 1. Take advantage of the EU's strength, in particular on major international issues**
- 2. Encourage cooperation, not conflict, both inside and outside Europe**
- 3. Take a considered approach when offering to help resolve conflicts**

Dutch people think that European cooperation should be directed primarily at major issues of common interest. This should also be the focus of the EU's cooperation with third countries. In addition to climate change and the coronavirus pandemic, such issues also include international security and protecting the European economy from unfair trade. Both inside and outside Europe, Dutch people prefer cooperation to conflict. In addition, in terms of an approach to conflict, an effort should always be made to seek a non-violent resolution.

Introduction

Between 1 September and mid-November, the citizens' dialogue 'Visions of Europe' enabled all Dutch people to share their opinions and ideas on the future of Europe. The Netherlands is putting the recommendations that came out of this dialogue, together with the opinions and ideas gathered, to the European Union (EU). This report focuses on the last four topics (out of a total of nine). The first five topics have already been addressed in a report published on 3 December 2021.

About 'Visions of Europe'

The EU wants to know what its inhabitants think about Europe. The EU is therefore organising the Conference on the Future of Europe. The opinions and ideas of inhabitants throughout the EU will eventually feed into the future plans for Europe. As part of that Conference, the Netherlands is organising the national citizens' dialogue 'Visions of Europe'.

'Visions of Europe' was launched on 1 September with the online gathering of opinions and ideas by means of a survey involving a representative panel. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the initial insights gained from the panel survey and formulate specific recommendations, we organised topic-based dialogues online. The dialogues were open to anyone who wanted to get involved. We also criss-crossed the country to talk to young people and other (harder-to-reach) groups.

From schoolgoers, students in senior secondary vocational education (MBO) and university students to farmers, migrants and the Minister himself

In October and November, a total of eight online topic-based dialogues took place, with an average of 30 participants at each meeting. We also organised one online topic-based dialogue and seven on-site topic-based dialogues with various groups of Dutch people. For example, we talked to the Turkish community in Schiedam and were hosted by volunteers from the Piëzo Foundation in Zoetermeer. There, we were also joined by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Knapen. The Minister discussed the dialogue and the opinions on the future of Europe with the participants. Finally, we organised six meetings with various groups of young people. For example, we were hosted by a secondary school in Helmond, an MBO institute in Doetinchem and the University of Leiden.

'It's about our children's future. That's why I think it's important to get involved in this.'

Participant in a topic-based dialogue

About this report

Based on the opinions and ideas we have gathered over the past few months, the EU has been presented with recommendations from Dutch people. The conversations which took place between Dutch people gave rise to interesting discussions and innovative ideas and suggestions. Some of those ideas and suggestions are included in this report. The content of this report thus reflects the voice of the Netherlands: our vision of Europe.

Of course, just as there are differences between European countries and citizens, we in the Netherlands do not always see eye to eye with one another. But it is precisely those differences that are worth so much and an important feature of a democracy. The recommendations stem from the most prevalent opinions and ideas voiced by participants in 'Visions of Europe'. We also describe the concerns, thoughts and feelings which are less common, but struck us during the dialogues and in the online research.

'It was nice to be able to express my views about matters which are important to me, and to feel that my voice is being heard.'

Participant in a topic-based dialogue

Nine topics have been identified for the Conference on the Future of Europe. Those topics are also at the heart of the Dutch citizens' dialogue 'Visions of Europe'. In October, we published an interim report containing initial insights and follow-up questions based on the panel survey. At the beginning of December, another report appeared describing the opinions, ideas and recommendations on the first five topics. The present report covers the remaining four topics.

Previous report - December 2021

- Values and rights, rule of law, security
- A stronger economy, social justice and jobs
- European democracy
- Digital transformation
- Education, culture, youth and sport

Current report - January 2022

- Climate Change and Environment
- Migration
- Health
- EU in the world

What happens next?

The Conference on the Future of Europe brings together the ideas, opinions and recommendations of all the EU's inhabitants. The meetings will discuss not only the results of all the national citizens' dialogues, but also the outcome of other initiatives from the Conference. For example, there are also European Citizens' Panels, and all EU citizens (including Dutch citizens) can access a European Digital Platform.

'I hope that those in charge of the EU take my views on board, and that this helps them make the right choices.'

Participant in a topic-based dialogue

The Conference will close in the spring of 2022. The Netherlands will then draw up a final report on the citizens' dialogue: a compilation of this report and the previous report, containing the recommendations on all nine topics. The Conference will produce recommendations for its Presidency: the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. They have committed to explore ways in which to follow up on the recommendations. For the Netherlands Government, the results also constitute a valuable contribution in terms of shaping the country's EU policy.

The process in the run-up to the spring of 2022 can be summarised as follows:

Timeline

Visions of Europe

1 Sept	12 Oct	22-23 Oct	15 Nov	3 Dec	14 Jan	21-22 Jan	Feb	18- 19 Feb	11-12 Mar	22-24 Apr		
Gathering ideas online												
	Topic-based dialogues											
		Interim results (interim report)		Interim report on the topics of economy and democracy	Interim report on the topics of climate and EU in the world		'Our vision of Europe' final report					
		↓				↓		↓	↓	↓		
		Conference meeting				Conference meeting		Conference meeting	(possible) Conference meeting	Final event of the Conference	→	Recommendations for Presidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament • European Commission • Council of Ministers
						↑		↑		↑		
				More opinions and ideas on the future of Europe:								
Citizens' dialogues					European Citizens' Panels					European Digital Platform (incl. for Dutch citizens)		

Structure of this report

This report focuses on four topics. For each of the topics we describe the following:

- Recommendations based on all strands of the citizens' dialogue
- Discussions and ideas online and in person: impressions of the opinions, ideas and discussions raised in the (online and physical) topic-based dialogues

A statement of accountability appears at the end of the report.

Climate Change and Environment

Recommendations - Our view on climate change and the environment

71 % of Dutch people see climate change and the environment as important issues and think the EU should tackle them.

1. Choose a clear direction for the European approach on climate change

68 % of Dutch people think that the EU should take a leading role in the fight against climate change. Global warming is a problem that no single country can solve on its own. Although Dutch people do not all see alike on climate change, we think the EU needs, in any event, to develop a clearer vision of the future. Despite the Green Deal, it is noticeable that member states' views often differ. While countries should still be able to make their own choices, they must work towards the same goals. We also think we have our own responsibility as citizens, which includes adapting our behaviour as consumers.

'The Netherlands wants to get rid of natural gas, but it's being promoted in Germany. I find that rather hard to understand.'

2. Ensure that countries and undertakings work together better on the solutions aimed at

Dutch people have the impression that countries often play the blame game on climate change and the environment. The main focus is on differences, for example between poor and rich countries in the EU, or between those with more or less industry. We would prefer them to look for agreements. Similar companies in different countries can exchange their knowledge, for instance, and work out solutions together. Poorer countries can also be more involved in this type of cooperation on tackling climate change. They can help design and also benefit from joint solutions.

'Tackling climate change should not be about competition but cooperation.'

3. Introduce a fair and practicable CO₂ system

In tackling climate change the EU has put great emphasis on reducing CO₂ emissions. Dutch people think we need a better system, which penalises both producers and users fairly. They disagree on whether countries with larger populations should be allowed to emit more CO₂. Some countries have highly polluting industries, for instance, whilst others simply have a lot of potential to produce green energy. These differences need to be taken into account, though without making things too complicated, as everyone needs to understand the system.

'Industrial countries export a lot. Does that mean they should be the only ones to pay the CO₂ tax? I think the users should also contribute.'

4. Communicate more clearly and more positively on climate challenges

Dutch people hear and read a lot about climate change. However, for many people it is still an abstract and complex notion. It is often seen as something that costs a huge amount of money, though tackling climate change provides opportunities too, for instance to promote local food production and develop new, sustainable technology. The EU can tell that story better and more often. We also think the leaders of member states could set a better example themselves. Less travel – for example between Brussels and Strasbourg – and more online meetings can be ways of supporting sustainability.

'Sustainability is still perceived too much as a cost; it should be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat.'

Discussions and ideas online and in person

'We shouldn't see CO₂ emissions as a right, but as a troublesome side effect.'

'I have the impression that more is being said than done in Europe on climate change.'

'Stronger climate rules can benefit us over time; as a trading continent we should look for the opportunities here.'

'We cannot wait for other continents – there's no time for that.'

IDEA: *'Reward countries financially when their natural environment and biodiversity flourish.'*

IDEA: *'Promote ecofriendly tourism in the EU's poor regions.'*

MBO college students in Doetinchem: 'Long-distance travel should remain open to anyone'

It was suggested to students in the Graafschap College in Doetinchem that flying within the EU should become more expensive. Some students agreed, as more expensive tickets encourage people to look for more sustainable alternatives. It was stressed, however, that the EU should ensure there were better, climate-friendly options, such as better train connections. Other participants said they did not support more expensive flight tickets. 'Rich people fly the most now and can easily pay', said someone. 'They'll carry on doing so with higher prices, but long-distance holidays will then become impossible for ordinary people.'

Nature-inclusive farmers: 'The EU can help spread knowledge about sustainable solutions'

BoerenNatuur is an association of agricultural collectives. The topical dialogue included a discussion on climate change and the environment. The participants felt that implementation of EU laws and regulations by individual countries could be improved, taking the nitrogen legislation as an example. 'EU legislation only states that nature areas should 'not deteriorate', but that requirement is treated quite differently in Southern Europe to the Netherlands.' Most participants agree that Europe should take the lead in combating climate change. The farmers believe words are not enough; they should lead to results, above all through knowledge-sharing. 'In the agricultural sector we are working on ways to achieve cleaner farming. The EU should help spread the relevant knowledge quickly.'

Migration

(Migration and refugees)

The borders between EU countries are open. So countries work together in the EU, e.g. on managing the external borders and combating migrant smuggling. The fair distribution of refugees among EU countries is also under discussion. How does the Netherlands view this?

Recommendations - Our view on migration and refugees

65 % of Dutch people find migration and refugees important and think that the EU should tackle these issues.

1. Stop the debate about refugees from losing sight of the finer points

70 % of Dutch people think that the borders on the fringes of Europe need better protection. And 72 % of those would still think that way even if it meant that more refugees would be sent back to unsafe countries. Dutch people think that more attention should be paid to the reasons why people flee unsafe countries. In some cases climate change is the reason, in others it is war. Often the underlying reasons are only discussed to a limited extent when talking about refugees. And the added value refugees can bring to a country often only gets limited mention. Lastly, we think that the EU should draw a greater distinction between people from unsafe regions who are at the borders and economic refugees. To summarise, we think that the debate about migration and refugees often ignores the underlying reasons and lacks nuance. European politicians ought to be able to do something about this by setting a good example.

'We should see refugees as fellow human beings. Because not many of us would stand by and let someone in need die.'

2. Ensure that refugees are distributed fairly and sensibly

A European immigration service ought to be able to ensure that refugees are distributed fairly among EU countries. However, Dutch people think that there should be clear criteria for determining what is fair. A good social and welfare system can make a country attractive to refugees, for instance, but there are other factors of importance to both the refugee and the country concerned. In the Netherlands, for instance, we have a housing shortage. And some countries or sectors actually need more migrant workers. We think it is important for the EU to take this into account when distributing refugees. Clear agreements not only mean clarity, they also mean less discussion. Ultimately, that is a good thing for everyone concerned.

'Refugees must be allowed to use their talents in the country of destination too.'

3. Use knowledge and experience to help refugees' regions of origin

67 % of Dutch people think that the EU should give more help to unsafe regions to prevent flows of refugees. We realise that refugees do not choose to leave their home countries just like that. That is why we should address the causes, such as climate change or conflicts, which make regions unsafe or unviable. Support from the EU to regions of origin of refugees could be in the form of knowledge, not just financial assistance. For instance, in the Netherlands we know a lot about agriculture. We can help other countries deal with drought and erosion better through modern farming methods. And people who have fled to Europe can do some training in a European country and then provide help in their countries of origin themselves.

Discussions and ideas online and in person

'The EU should make provision for faster asylum procedures. Then there would be more room for people who really need it.'

'I know a lot of young people near me who want to buy a house but cannot find anything affordable. And in the meantime, refugees are given housing. I find that tough.'

'Climate change will continue to force people to flee their countries. You can't stop it, but perhaps you can regulate it better.'

'I live in Betuwe. We really need a lot of migrant workers here during the pear and apple season.'

'Unsafe regions are not unsafe for no reason; governments there are often corrupt. How do we know what happens to our help and money?'

IDEA: *'Also think about local strategies, such as citizen participation in the local reception of refugees, and financing local integration initiatives.'*

IDEA: *'Build 'tiny houses' in cities where refugees can live to start with. Then you would relieve the pressure on the housing market and increase support for taking people in.'*

Volunteers who were refugees themselves: 'People keep their distance in Europe.'

Taal Doet Meer is a voluntary association which helps people who are new to Utrecht and speak a foreign language get involved in the community. In the topical discussions with this association, it was not just migration but particularly integration that was talked about. Some participants came to the Netherlands as refugees themselves, including someone from Syria. 'After seven years I still don't feel Dutch. I still haven't found a job, even though I have a master's degree. I have noticed that European countries are mainly preoccupied with themselves and are not fully open to other countries and cultures.' Another participant said that Europeans often keep their distance from each other too. 'Most people are on their own; everyone does their own thing. Whereas I think we should talk to each other and learn from each other.'

Young people from the Nationale Jeugdraad (National Youth Council): 'Only let people in if you can take good care of them.'

In Utrecht members of the various working parties of the Nationale Jeugdraad (NJR) spoke to each other. The participants (between 16 and 23 years old) think that various aspects should be taken into account when distributing refugees across Europe, such as a country's population size, surface area, welfare and the number of reception centres. 'You should only let refugees into your country if you can take good care of them', said one of the participants. Young people also think that there should be consequences if a country does not live up to agreements on taking in refugees. They should be made to pay a fine, for instance. 'And refugees themselves should also have a say in where they go', one participant said. 'For instance, if they have family somewhere, you can't have them sent somewhere else.'

Health

(Healthcare)

Although healthcare is mainly run by individual countries, European policy can support and strengthen it. For instance, when tackling the coronavirus crisis or other (future) health crises. Or by joint research into serious illnesses. How does the Netherlands view this?

Recommendations - Our vision of healthcare

64 % of Dutch people consider healthcare an important issue and think that the EU should deal with it.

1. Take greater control of pandemic-countermeasures

83 % of Dutch people think that countries in the EU should work together more to prevent infectious diseases from spreading across the world. Because viruses do not stop at borders. We have seen this now during the coronavirus pandemic. Policy in the EU can be confusing. That is not good for compliance with the rules. We think that measures to prevent viruses spreading in Europe should be better coordinated, but without the rules having to be the same everywhere. There should be room to make choices at local level. Not only because infection rates can vary, but also because Europe is made up of different cultures. Some measures work better in one country than in another.

'I live in the Netherlands near the German border. The different Covid rules in the two countries are driving me crazy.'

2. Provide affordable and reliable medicines for everyone

71 % of Dutch people think that the EU should make us less reliant on countries outside the EU for the development, production and supply of medicines. But if that would mean people having to wait longer for medicines as a result, opinions differ. Dutch people think that this would make the production and distribution of medicines complicated. On the one hand, the Netherlands is facing soaring care costs, and we think it is important to keep costs down for as long as possible. On the other hand, we want to be able to trust in medicines even if they come from far away. This is not just a question of quality, but also sustainable and ethical production. Generally we think that important medicines should be universally available, including in poorer countries.

'Care costs are almost unaffordable nowadays. So we should try and buy new medicines as cheaply as possible.'

3. Countries must act individually to make their healthcare systems fairer and more effective

Dutch people are worried about healthcare, and those concerns reach beyond the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, we are facing structural capacity problems in hospitals. Some Dutch people do not take a positive view of the effects of the market on healthcare. We understand that pharmaceutical companies have to earn back their investments and that health insurance companies want to buy care cheaply, but big companies should not abuse their power. The EU should do something about this through regulation. Otherwise, we regard healthcare as primarily a national matter. After all, countries themselves know best what the local problems and priorities are. We do, however, think it is important for European countries to learn from each other to improve healthcare.

Discussions and ideas online and in person

'We should be a bit more careful where the availability of medicines in Europe is concerned. We are giving too much away at the moment.'

'It's good that Germany has been taking COVID-19 patients from the Netherlands. I would like to see more of that sort of solidarity in Europe.'

'Wherever you live in the EU and whether you are rich or poor, everyone has the right to good healthcare.'

'When buying medicines don't just look at the price, but at the ethics too. That means no child labour, for instance.'

IDEA: *'Improve Europeans' health by making sure they have less stress. Reduce the number of working hours in a week, for instance.'*

IDEA: *'Use serious games or augmented reality to help young people make healthier choices.'*

People from Utrecht with a Moroccan background: 'Health comes at a price'

The association *Marokkaans Dialoog Overvecht (MDO)* fosters the participation of the Moroccan community in the Overvecht neighbourhood of Utrecht. It encourages dialogue in the neighbourhood in order to mitigate disadvantages. Participants in the topical dialogue for Visions of Europe think that European cooperation has many benefits. However, some participants think that the Netherlands is sometimes too dependent on other countries. The COVID-19 pandemic has been given as an example. The participants think that the lengthy deliberations in Europe meant that the Netherlands was too late in getting started with vaccinations. 'Maybe it would be more expensive if the Netherlands wanted to take more decisions for itself', one participant said. 'But this is about health, and health comes at a price.'

School pupils in Helmond: 'Better to be smart and copy from each other than all take the same approach'

In the Dr. Knippenbergcollege in Helmond, 15- and 16-year-old pupils discussed the way Europe has handled the pandemic. Some pupils think that the EU Member States should have set the vaccination programme together. Most participants think that each individual country has a better idea of what is necessary and what works there and so is in a better position to determine what is best for the population. For instance, they know which sectors need to be vaccinated first and which sectors can wait. 'Of course it's a good thing to discuss this internationally', said one of the pupils. 'When different countries have their own different approaches, they can watch and learn from each other.'

The EU's role in the world

The world is facing enormous challenges. The EU is convinced that issues such as climate change and pandemics can only be addressed by global cooperation. And the EU wants its voice to be clearly heard on the world stage, alongside the United States and China, for instance. How does the Netherlands view this?

Recommendations - Our vision of the EU's role in the world

56 % of Dutch people consider the role of the EU in the world an important issue and one that the EU should address.

1. Take advantage of the EU's strength, in particular on major international issues

The creation of the EU is one of the reasons Europeans have lived in peace for more than 75 years; many Dutch people see this as the greatest achievement of the EU. Apart from that, Dutch people think that the EU's strength lies in tackling big, international challenges together. For example, climate change, the pandemic and the refugee crisis. Member states can also have a greater impact vis-à-vis countries outside the EU by concluding international agreements jointly as the EU. We think the Netherlands is too small to make a difference to these issues on our own. Then again, Dutch people want our country to be able to continue making our own decisions, in line with our culture and our own interests. Cooperation in Europe should therefore be mainly about ensuring efficiency and impact.

'It is easier to conclude international cooperation agreements as the EU than as an individual country.'

2. Encourage cooperation, not conflict, both inside and outside Europe

66 % of Dutch people think that the EU should form a stronger bloc against other international blocs of power. We think that there is less and less of a balance in the world. Countries such as China and Russia are acquiring more and more power in different domains. This is something we are quite concerned about. The EU should therefore address issues such as international security and protecting the European economy from unfair trade. We think that it is important for member states to agree a single approach more often and more quickly. Then we could make our voice heard more clearly. The fact that, as European countries, we are stronger together does not mean that we want to engage in conflict more often. Above all, we want to work together well with countries outside Europe too whenever we can.

'If we reduce internal differences and conflict, the visibility and impact of the EU on the world stage will grow.'

3. Take a considered approach when offering to help resolve conflicts

With the EU's role in the world growing, 50 % of Dutch people think that the approach to conflicts in the world is an important issue. We find it hard to say what the best way of tackling conflicts is. Past experience has shown that military intervention does not always end well. It can generate unexpectedly high costs and extra flows of refugees. Countries should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they want to join a war, given the local impact. We generally see greater cooperation between European armies as a good thing: we think it is important for Europe to be able to defend itself properly. But our preference is always to solve conflicts without resorting to violence.

'During the evacuation from Afghanistan each country came up with its own plan. Surely that could have been done better?'

Discussions and ideas online and in person

'The EU should put its own house in order before telling others what to do.'

'By buying Chinese products in great quantities, we Europeans are giving China a leg up.'

'The US is still hugely important to European defence.'

'Being a member of the EU means that you have a seat at the negotiating table too. So you can have your say in important decisions.'

'The EU has to stop seeing itself as a separate entity, because it is not. It is a cooperative association of European member states and should behave accordingly.'

IDEA: *'Just like the regular international climate summits, there should be a regular conference on human rights.'*

IDEA: *'Make European armies more efficient by, for instance, buying equipment together.'*

Moroccan-Dutch women: 'Stand up for human rights'

Femmes for Freedom is a Dutch association that campaigns against forced marriages, sexual repression and financial abuse of girls and women from a bicultural background. A meeting with a group of Moroccan-Dutch women was organised with the association. The participants think that the EU is currently too dependent on Russia and China. 'You can tell that the EU simply doesn't dare do anything because it is scared of sanctions', one participant said. As an example they mentioned the manufacture of medicines, which can be far from cheap. 'If there is a conflict, China can simply turn off the tap and we will be left with nothing', said another participant. The subject of human rights was also raised. 'We pretend to find this really important but we turn a blind eye to what China is doing to the Uyghurs', another participant said.

Pupils from Alkmaar STEM secondary school ('technasium'): 'No joint army'

During their topical dialogue, pupils from the Jan Arentsz STEM secondary school in Alkmaar spoke about the pros and cons of a joint European army. The participants made it clear that they were not in favour. 'If a country in the EU had a problem with a country from outside the EU we would automatically have to join a war. I think countries should be able to decide that for themselves', said a participant. The possibility of a third world war was also discussed. The pupils did not think it was very likely to happen, but if it did come to that, they thought that a solution could still be found quickly. 'Armies can work well together too. As far as I'm concerned, there doesn't have to be a European army.'

Statement of accountability

Visions of Europe is made up of different, interlinked dialogue formats that gather Dutch citizens' views and ideas on the future of Europe and the EU. This section provides evidence of the way in which the

interlinked dialogue formats comply with the guidelines applicable to national Citizens' Panels in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Design of interlinked dialogue formats

The following forms of dialogue have been used:

1. Panel survey

Online survey of a representative cross-section of the Dutch population.

2. In-depth online topic-based dialogues

Dialogues in which the results of the first interim report 'Our vision of Europe: initial insights and follow-up questions (8 October 2021)' are explored more with a group of Dutch people.

3. Dialogues with specific groups

Meetings with Dutch people who are not accustomed to participating in (online) surveys and panels.

4. Dialogues with young people

Meetings focusing on the European topics that are most relevant to young people.

5. Online open research: Questionnaire and 'Swipe to the future'

The panel survey questionnaire could also be completed by all Dutch nationals, including those resident abroad. It was open from 1 September 2021 to 14 November 2021. In addition, during the same period, every Dutch person was able to participate through the 'Swipe to the future' tool, an online tool with 20 statements.

1. Panel survey

The Dutch citizens' dialogue Visions of Europe (Kijk op Europa) was launched on 1 September 2021 with a panel survey. In this statement of accountability we briefly describe the design and implementation of this panel study.

Goal and target population

Visions of Europe was launched with an online questionnaire exploring how Dutch people feel about the future of Europe. The questionnaire was presented to a representative panel and made accessible to all Dutch people (including those living abroad). In addition, the online tool 'Swipe to the future', which featured 20 statements that people could give their views on, was also available to everyone. The results of the panel survey provided input for the various topic-based dialogues in the follow-up to the Visions of Europe citizen dialogue.

The target population for the panel survey consists of all Dutch citizens aged 18 or over and registered (from the time the field work began) as Dutch residents in the municipal Personal Records Database. According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS), on 1 January 2021 this target group numbered 14 190 874 people. The lower limit of 18 years is in line with the voting age. This is the population identified for the panel survey.

Field work

To obtain a statistical picture of 'the Dutch', a survey was conducted of a nationwide panel of over 100 000 members (ISO-certified, Research Keurmerk group, Dutch Market Research Association). These members have all registered for the survey panel and regularly give their opinions on a range of topics. In addition to their personal motivation for providing input, they are also paid for filling in the surveys. Various scientific studies have shown that respondents who receive financial compensation for filling in surveys do not give significantly different answers from those who do not (source: Does use of survey incentives degrade data quality? Cole, J. S., Sarraf, S. A., Wang, X., 2015).

Field work started on 11 August 2021 and ended on 19 September 2021. A single data-collection method was used: internet research. The members of the survey panel each received an email containing a personalised link to the online questionnaire. After two weeks the panel participants received a reminder email. Invitations to participate were sent in batches and in stratified form (with due regard to equal distribution among subpopulations) until the required number of respondents had been reached.

Sampling and distribution

The guiding principle for the study's design was that a minimum of 3 600 respondents would have to participate in order to achieve good statistical reliability. This number also provided a good distribution across various background characteristics in the population. Dutch people do not come in one shape or size. For this reason the study ensured in advance that the sample was properly distributed to factor in a number of characteristics. The Netherlands is a relatively small country, but regional opinions can differ. A person's attitude to the relative importance they attach to a topic may (also) be determined by where they live. For example, people who live in rural areas may feel differently about security to urban dwellers. In addition, studies by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) have shown that more educated people generally support the EU more than less educated people, and that young people are more often pro-EU than older people (source: 'Wat willen Nederlanders van de Europese Unie?' (What

do the Dutch want from the European Union? Netherlands Institute for Social Research, The Hague, 2019).

To address this, we assigned quotas in advance across the following characteristics, to ensure a representative sample distribution: (1) region (using COROP regions), (2) age and (3) level of education. In addition, the sample reflects the following background characteristics: sex, origin, primary day-to-day activity and political leanings.

The COROP regions were developed using the nodal principle (population centres which provide services or which serve a regional function) on the basis of commuter flows. Here and there, the nodal principle has been abandoned in favour of provincial boundaries. After a redrawing of municipal boundaries crossed the COROP boundaries, these regions were adjusted (source: CBS). Within the COROP regions, we ensure a good distribution across the following age groups: 18-34; 35-54; 55-75 and over 75.

Finally, we also ensured a representative distribution across levels of education. The sample distribution of respondents is in line with the national distribution of the highest level of education attained, which is as follows:

Highest level of education attained

Low: primary education, pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO) (years 1-3), senior secondary vocational education (MBO) (year 1)	32.1%
Medium: senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO) (years 4-6), senior secondary vocational education (MBO) (years 2-4)	44.6%
High: higher professional or university education	22.9%
Unknown	0.4%

Response

In total, 4 086 respondents took part in the panel survey. The target of 3 600 fully completed questionnaires was met.

Response by COROP region and age group

	18-34 years	35-54 years	55-75 years	75+ years
North Drenthe	11	14	17	5
South-East Drenthe	10	12	14	4
South-West Drenthe	7	10	11	3
Flevoland	29	33	28	6
North Friesland	20	22	25	8
South-East Friesland	12	13	14	3

Response by COROP region and age group **18-34 years** **35-54 years** **55-75 years** **75+ years**

South-West Friesland	8	11	11	4
Achterhoek	22	27	34	11
Arnhem/Nijmegen	52	53	55	15
Veluwe	44	48	51	17
South-West Gelderland	16	18	20	5
Greater Delfzijl	2	4	5	1
East Groningen	7	10	12	3
Rest of Groningen	36	26	28	8
Mid Limburg	13	17	21	7
North Limburg	17	20	23	7
South Limburg	38	40	52	17
Mid-North Brabant	34	35	35	11
North-East North Brabant	41	43	51	14
West North Brabant	40	47	49	15
South-East North Brabant	55	56	58	18
Greater Haarlem	13	18	18	7
Greater Alkmaar	14	19	19	6
Greater Amsterdam	116	104	88	23
Het Gooi & Vechtstreek	13	21	19	7
IJmond	12	14	15	4
Top of North Holland	22	27	30	9
Zaanstreek	11	13	12	3
North Overijssel	25	28	25	8
Twente	41	44	46	14
South-West Overijssel	10	11	12	3
Utrecht	96	100	89	27
Rest of Zeeland	16	21	23	8

Response by COROP region and age group **18-34 years** **35-54 years** **55-75 years** **75+ years**

Zeelandic Flanders	6	8	9	3
Greater Leiden & Bollenstreek	30	31	31	10
Greater The Hague	63	70	57	18
Delft & Westland	19	15	15	4
Greater Rijnmond	103	107	99	31
East South Holland	22	24	25	8
South-East South Holland	24	26	26	9

Response by level of education

Low	1382	34%
Medium	1747	43%
High	915	22%
Unknown	42	1%

[Reliability and representativeness](#)

With 4 086 respondents, it is possible to make observations about the population with 95 % reliability and a 1.53 % margin of error. The reliability and margin of error of the results depend on the size of the sample. The larger the sample, the more reliably and/or accurately the results can be extrapolated to the population as a whole.

The reliability level is defined as 1 (100 %) minus the significance level. It is normal to assume a significance level of 5 %, which means a reliability level of 95 %. This means that, if the study were to be repeated in the same manner and under the same conditions, the results would give the same picture in 95 % of cases.

The accuracy level (expressed as the margin of error) indicates the range of values within which the actual value in the population lies or, in other words, how far the results from the sample might deviate from the results that would be obtained if the entire population were to complete the survey. A margin of error of 1.53 % means that the actual value in the total population may be up to 1.53 % higher or lower than the value in the sample. In practice, this means that, if a survey result from the sample indicates that 50 % of respondents find a particular topic important, the actual percentage may be up to 1.53 % lower or higher than 50 % (i.e. between 48.47 % and 51.53 %). A margin of error of up to 5 % is common and generally accepted in (statistical) quantitative research.

Besides reliability, the representativeness of the sample is also important. Since the invitations to participate in the survey were sent in batches and stratified, the results are representative in terms of COROP regions and age groups within each COROP region. The response is also in line with the national distribution of the highest level of education attained.

Other background characteristics

The respondents in the panel survey were asked a number of extra background questions. The questions covered gender, views on the EU, origin, primary day-to-day activity and which political party they would vote for if an election were to be held now.

49 % of respondents were male, 50 % were female and 1 % preferred not to answer this question.

51 % of respondents thought it was a good thing that the Netherlands is a member of the EU, 13 % thought it was a bad thing, and 36 % saw it as neutral or did not have an opinion.

95 % of respondents were born in the Netherlands. For 89 % of respondents, both parents were born in the Netherlands. For 5 % of respondents, both parents were born abroad.

Respondents' current political leanings

Party	%
VVD	14%
PVV	13%
SP	8%
D66	6%
CDA	6%
Labour Party (PvdA)	6%
Party for the Animals	4%
GreenLeft (GroenLinks)	4%
Christian Union	3%
JA21	3%
Farmer-Citizen Movement (BoerBurgerBeweging)	2%
Forum for Democracy	2%
Reformed Political Party (SGP)	2%
Volt	2%
DENK (THINK)	1%
Van Haga Group	1%
BIJ1	1%
Den Haan party	0%

Party %

Other	2%
Blank ballot	3%
Prefer not to say	13%
Would not vote	5%

What is your main day-to-day activity at the moment?

Occupation %

Pupil/student	6%
Part-time employee	16%
Full-time employee	31%
Self-employed	3%
Homemaker	5%
Jobseeker	2%
Volunteer	2%
Unfit for work	6%
Retired	27%
Other	1%
Prefer not to say	1%

Questionnaire

The questionnaire and this report were commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and drawn up by an independent external organisation. The questionnaire has a modular structure and comprises the following sections, which correspond to the topics identified for the Conference on the Future of Europe:

- key topics and Europe’s role
- climate change and environment
- health
- the economy and jobs
- the European Union’s role in the world
- security and the rule of law
- the online world
- European democracy
- migration and refugees
- education, culture, youth and sport

When developing the questionnaire, close attention was paid to the quality, reliability and validity of the phrasing of the questions. The aim was to ensure neutral, non-leading wording of questions, statements and choices. In addition, the questions were reviewed to ensure that they were written in plain language (B1 level).

The questionnaire was tested qualitatively in a face-to-face setting with test respondents belonging to the target group, to see how the questions came across to different types of respondent. The wording was adjusted wherever it proved to be too complex.

Methods of analysis

Two methods of analysis were used in this study:

Univariate analysis

In univariate analysis, descriptive statistics are used to describe variables in a study. In this study, frequencies and averages have been used.

Bivariate analysis

Bivariate analysis looks at the relationship between two variables, in this case the relationship between the importance of the various topics and whether or not the EU should deal with them on the one hand, and the background characteristic of age on the other. Significance testing was used to determine whether different age groups attach different degrees of importance to a given topic, and think differently about whether or not these are topics the EU should deal with.

Reporting and completeness

This report analyses the results of all questions put to the survey panel respondents. For some questions, respondents were able to give 'open' answers (as opposed to choosing from a set of multiple-choice answers). These open answers were then categorised and incorporated into the report. Ideas that respondents shared in the free comment fields serve as input for the various topic-based dialogues in the follow-up to the Visions of Europe citizens' dialogue.

2. In-depth online topic-based dialogues

The key topics of the Conference on the Future of Europe were discussed in more depth in eight online topic-based dialogues. The aim of the dialogues was to find out *why* people think the way they do, and their underlying reasons and feelings. What concerns them and what opportunities do they see? During the dialogue sessions, participants were also given a chance to contribute suggestions and ideas about the topics. They were also able to raise issues that are not part of the Conference but that are important to them.

The topic-based dialogues took place on 12 and 14 October and on 9 and 11 November. In October, there were four online topic-based dialogues on topics in the Economy and Democracy cluster. In November, there were four online topic-based dialogues on topics in the Climate and EU in the World cluster. An average of 29 people participated in each dialogue session (231 in total). Participants were recruited from the panel members (see 1) and through social media.

3. Dialogues with specific groups

We know that certain groups of Dutch people are less used to taking part in (online) surveys and panels. To gain a representative picture of the ‘voice of the Netherlands’ it was important to let them express their ideas and opinions too. That is why we also organised some in-person dialogues for Visions of Europe. The opinions and ideas we gathered through them have been used as one of the bases for the recommendations.

Target groups

There is no clear definition of target groups which are difficult to reach. Research and experience have shown that Dutch people from **non-Western backgrounds** are significantly less likely to participate in surveys and discussions voluntarily. Since they form a large group (14 % of Dutch people¹), they were selected to participate in the Visions of Europe dialogue. The same weightings have been applied as for **people with low levels of literacy**. That is also a large group (2.5 million Dutch people²), which partly overlaps with the group of migrants (39 %). Finally, a dialogue was conducted with a group which rarely appears in surveys and discussions, and is **critical of Europe but has a lot of professional dealings with it**. Businesses in the agricultural sector were selected to take part.

The above groups were approached through organisations they belong to, such as migrant associations, interest groups and professional organisations. Because we limited the number of dialogues to eight, we could not cover everyone. That makes the choice of participants somewhat arbitrary. When selecting participants, we also mainly looked for people who were enthusiastic about taking part and helping mobilise the grass roots, as well as at practical issues such as availability for dates and locations.

On-location dialogues were held with members of the following organisations:

- Stichting Hakder, Alevi community, Schiedam
- Stichting Asha, Hindustani community, Utrecht (2 dialogue sessions)
- Piëzo, civil-society organisation, Zoetermeer
- Taal doet Meer, literacy organisation, Utrecht
- BoerenNatuur, association of agricultural cooperatives
- Marokkanen Dialoog Overvecht (Overvecht Moroccan Dialogue), Moroccan community, Utrecht
- Femmes for Freedom, interest group for women from a migrant background, The Hague

A total of 110 people took part in these dialogue meetings.

4. Dialogues with young people

Young people are a priority target group for the Conference on the Future of Europe. To actively encourage their participation in the Visions of Europe citizens' dialogue, and to give the opinions and ideas of this group extra weight, six in-person dialogue meetings were organised especially for young people.

Meetings were held at the following institutions:

- Studievereniging Geschiedenis, history students' association, Leiden University
- Dr. Knippenbergcollege, secondary school, Helmond
- Coalitie-Y, Socio-Economic Council (SER) youth association
- Graafschap College, MBO institute, Doetinchem
- CSG Jan Arentsz, STEM secondary school (technasium), Alkmaar
- National Youth Council (meeting took place at an external location)

A total of 110 young people took place in the dialogue meetings.

Discussion techniques used

The Socratic method was used for the online topic-based dialogues, the dialogues with specific groups and the dialogues with young people. This method has been used for years in the Netherlands for our 'Dialogue Day', when people across the Netherlands speak to each other about issues that concern them. In the Socratic method, the moderator applies the following principles:

- Let everyone tell their story
- Don't immediately tell a counter-story
- Treat each other with respect
- Speak for yourself ('I think' instead of 'they say')
- Ask for explanations if nothing but generalisations come up
- Don't judge, investigate opinions instead
- Allow silence if people need time to think

The dialogues follow this pattern: divergence - convergence - divergence. The starting point is that first you have to diverge (make room for individual feelings and opinions) before you can converge (discuss possible directions) and finally diverge again (e.g. gather individual recommendations). Theory and practice show that this pattern ensures a smooth dialogue.

All dialogues were led by professional facilitators.

5. Online open research: Questionnaire and 'Swipe to the future'

The panel survey questionnaire was also open to all Dutch citizens, including those resident abroad. It was open from 1 September 2021 to 14 November 2021. In addition, during the same period, every Dutch person was able to participate through the 'Swipe to the future' tool, an online tool with 20 statements.

Response and implementation

In total, 1 967 respondents filled in the questionnaire and 6 968 fully completed the swipe tool. The questionnaire and swipe tool were open to all; there were no prior conditions or selection criteria for taking part. Questions in the questionnaire could be skipped (there were no mandatory questions) to maximise response. Participants answered 'I would rather not say' much more often in the questionnaire than in the representative panel survey.

The backgrounds of participants in the open questionnaire and swipe tool differed from those of the participants in the representative panel survey in a number of ways. The results of the open questionnaire and the swipe tool are not representative, unlike those of the panel survey. The results of the online open survey were used to supplement the panel survey. They give an insight into prevailing feelings and ideas in the Netherlands. The suggestions for improvement given in the free-text fields were used in the sub-topic 'Discussions and ideas online and in person'. The swipe tool was used to gain an insight into some prevailing feelings in the Netherlands. The results were taken into account when preparing the recommendations. Since representativeness is a requirement, this report only takes limited account of the results of the online open survey.

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