

"Towards the future!"



Arthur van Dijk
King's Commissioner
President of the House

The recommendations of the twelve Dutch provinces to the new European Commission and the Strategic EU Agenda for the period 2024 - 2029 focus on the following six joint priorities, which are guided by climate goals, economic prosperity, security and democratic values.

We would like to discuss how we can make a valuable contribution on these six priorities in an EU-context.



Languages:



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Agrofood

Innovative, circular and nature-inclusive: that is European agriculture

"Our provinces are important for the global food supply. We innovate in a circular and nature-inclusive way. With available EU tools, we contribute to the sustainable agricultural transition!"

Mariëtte van Leeuwen

Regional minister, Province of Zuid-Holland
Political representative for Agrofood



Egbert van Dijk

Regional minister, Province of Drenthe
Political representative for Agrofood

The provinces are in favor of making agriculture more sustainable, with innovation at the forefront: for example by combining savings on concentrates and fertilisers, with investments in technical systems, such as sensors and stable systems. Innovations in the protein transition contribute to food security and a sustainable food system. Innovation is the prerequisite for circular and nature-inclusive agriculture and horticulture. For instance, Dutch circular farmers produce food in a nature-inclusive way. They contribute to food security with respect for soil, water and air. Want to know how agriculture in Dutch regions contributes to effective landscape and nature management? Read about the [forty agricultural collectives](#) we have.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Propose policy that guarantees a revenue model for farmers.
- Combine short chains and public campaigns to encourage sustainable, local products.
- Come up with a proposal to promote sustainable European food systems.
- In the CAP, there is a need for clear objectives where multiple transition paths are possible.
- Reduce administrative burdens in agriculture.
- Support circular farmers through more flexibility in EU regulations and clear incentives.

Circular Economy

The economy of the future is circular

"Circularity must contribute to achieve EU's objectives for: climate change, CO2-reduction, innovation, energy transition and the environment. Continue to build on the Circular Economy Action Plan (2020) and work together with regions. Provinces are the linking pin between the regional and (inter)national level!"

Esther Rommel

Regional minister, Province of Noord-Holland
Political representative for Circular Economy



Friso Douwstra

Regional minister, Province of Fryslân
Political representative for Circular Economy

In today's linear economy we waste a lot of raw materials, which is harmful to our environment. Regions have an important role in stimulating circular entrepreneurship and creating space for circular developments. A good example of this is the [Circular Friesland Association](#) (VCF), which brings together public and private stakeholders and stimulates the transition to a circular province with a bottom-up approach. The VCF is therefore an example of successful regional cooperation on circularity. Through an I3 project such as [RegioGreenTex](#), the East Netherlands is committed to a circular textile industry. Please take a look at how a pioneering company in Noord-Holland creates circular impact in the [EU Interreg WOW! Project](#), with the recovery of raw materials from sewage water.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Choose a regional approach towards the circular transition and support the upscaling and financing of circular innovations.
- Increase market opportunities for circular products and promote circular business cases.
- Make waste flows more transparent.
- Ensure a more coherent and stable policy framework for the (chemical) industry in relation to circularity.
- Pay more attention to circularity from start to end of the value chain.

Sustainable and Healthy Environment

Realising ambition with a robust and resilient environmental system

"Sufficient and clean water is essential for a safe, healthy and attractive living environment. That is why Dutch provinces are committed to implementable European frameworks for water, soil and air."

Mirjam Sterk

Regional minister, Province of Utrecht
Political representative for SHE



Bram Schmaal

Regional minister, Province of Groningen
Political representative for SHE

Water is the source of life. Provinces are therefore working to improve water quality by implementing the Water Framework Directive towards 2027. This is not easy. Whether it concerns urban wastewater, invasive exotic species or emissions from industry and agriculture sector - many factors are important. Improving water quality is therefore a multi-faceted task, which symbolises many provincial environmental challenges: the ambitions are high, the source of pollution is multiple and the provinces have limited policy tools due to their competences. This requires EU policy that is feasible, can be implemented and guarantees the logical coherence of rules and regulations and regional customisation.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Pay more attention to the implementation and regional feasibility of policies, based on provincial practical experience with EU environmental regulations.
- Coordinate and harmonise environmental tasks for soil, water and air at EU level, because of their mutual coherence.
- When implementing European environmental policy, provide room for regional customisation, so that provinces find the right balance between water, nature, agriculture, industry, city and land.

Climate & Energy

Regional customisation and feasibility of the EU climate target for 2040

"We are working towards the EU climate target for 2040. Therefore, take feasibility for the regions into account. Help us by making it feasible and affordable, so that we can accelerate the energy transition."

Ans Mol

Regional minister, Province of Gelderland
Political representative for Climate & Energy



An effective rollout of sustainable energy projects is highly dependent on a robust and future-proof cross-border and regional energy infrastructure. Achieving this is a priority for the provinces. Regional stakeholders and local populations in the Netherlands experience obstacles due to the pace of the energy transition, especially linked to net congestion and a shortage of capacity. Grid operators warn that new connections to the power grid are no longer possible for large consumers. This is already the case in three provinces, and in probably six by the end of this year. Urgent measures are needed for the provincial commitment to energy transition and a healthy economy.

Regarding the new EU climate target of achieving a 90% CO2 reduction by 2040, the provinces are committed to ensuring the competitiveness of existing industry and agriculture and closing the socio-economic gap in close dialogue with the European Commission.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Focus on regional and preconditional aspects of (border) infrastructure to realise tasks.
- Putting regional customisation and feasibility first when establishing and implementing the 2040 climate goal.
- Sufficient funding from EU programs for energy transition innovations.
- Qualitative instead of quantitative standards and objectives for climate and energy.
- Strengthen the (cross-border) energy infrastructure within the EU.

Mobility

Multimodality in city and countryside, with smart use of space

"The EU must continue on its path towards zero-emission transport in all regions of the EU. With the help of European investments in our regions, we will achieve a clean and smart European transport network."

Erwin Hoogland

Regional minister, Province of Overijssel
Political representative for Mobility
Political representative for Regional Economy



Provinces are working on sustainable and smart mobility: with CEF investments in clean inland ports and shipping ([Rhombus](#) & [RH2INE](#)) and cross-border rail connections ([Wunderline](#)); through Interreg collaboration to stimulate bicycle use ([MegaBITS](#)). In addition, we see innovative developments and pilots in the region to make transport more sustainable in the future, such as the use of drones and the development of the hyperloop. Only together - as the EU, the national government and the provinces - we can we make the European transport sector more sustainable.

The feasibility of EU transport legislation is also of great importance for regions, like the revision of the TEN-T network. Provinces are pleased that one regional mobility plan can now be drawn up for several regions.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Work with provinces on new legislation for multimodal, digital mobility services.
- More attention to implementation and regional feasibility of EU transport legislation.
- Attention to multimodality in urbanised and rural areas, with smart use of space.
- Improve EU investments for energy infrastructure and smart mobility (including vehicles and vessels), not just for frontrunner initiatives. This is to improve cross-border accessibility.

Regional Economy

Maintain the share of developed regions in EU structural funds

"Provinces want to continue to structurally invest in their regional development, using European cohesion resources after 2028. This does not include nationalisation of EU investment funds for regions."

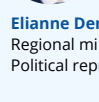
Erwin Hoogland

Regional minister, Province of Overijssel
Board representative for Mobility
Board representative for Regional Economy



Jan Klopman

Regional minister, Province of Flevoland
Political representative for Regional Economy
Political representative for Digitalisation



Eianne Demollin-Schneiders

Regional minister, Province of Limburg
Political representative for Digitalisation



EU structural funds are a fundamental pillar for the regional economy and will continue to be important in the future. Provinces carry out many tasks of European importance, are ultimately responsible for regional spatial-economic policy and invest in society. At [The Green Village](#) in South Holland, governments, researchers, students, start-ups and entrepreneurs come together to work today on the innovation challenges of tomorrow. This is possible, thanks to the structural funds! The [ET Pathfinder](#) project, the infrastructure for the Einstein telescope in Limburg, is also created in this way.

Towards a Strategic EU-agenda 2024-2029:

- Use the reserved EU funds for their intended purpose, such as Horizon Europe, and not automatically for crisis support.
- Sufficient structural resources, also for developed regions, partly to realise the climate challenge, the green transition and innovation.
- More resources for cross-border transnational programs and the I3 Instrument.
- A place-based approach with customised implementation and executable frameworks, also supporting provincial digitalisation objectives and stimulating innovation through Horizon Europe.

Without regions, no Union

Would you like to know more about the six joint priorities? The House of the Dutch Provinces publishes an annual work programme. This work programme provides the framework that determines the activities of the House in Brussels.

Go to the [work programme 2024](#) or download it by scanning the QR code.



The [complete board](#) of the House of the Dutch Provinces, September 2023

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