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Report **Case report on the responses to the Delphi questions**

Case report **The Netherlands**

Author: Jeannette Mak

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**National Delphi Report – The Netherlands
Political and Media Actors’ Visions of the Future of Europe’**

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I. Analytical summary

Due to the choice of interviewees, the timing of the interviews and some earlier questions of part of the questionnaires, many answers on the question on the process of European integration focus on the contribution the Convention would make. Equally, enlargement of the EU is expected to make a significant change to the nature of the EU and the European integration process. As a result, some interviewees find it difficult to make predictions on the future.

1. Main perceived area of change

Probably the most striking finding of the questions on future scenario's of the EU is the high number of interviewees that mention the irreversible process of proceeding European integration. The qualifications that were given to the evolution of the EU were for example ongoing train and unstoppable train. Some others talked about the fact that we have moved too far to withdraw, and that there is no way back. Many said to be puzzled, and some to be worried, by this almost mechanical process. One interviewee who was in principle in favour of the EU got particularly excited when he protested against the fact that integration is a thoughtless automatic ongoing process that nobody can explain. Asked about the rationale behind ongoing integration in more detail, most interviewees agree however that it is mainly part and parcel of the equally unstoppable process of globalisation and growing economic interdependence. As some acknowledged: integration of the European continent is necessary in order to limit economic disparities that might otherwise lead to political instability.

Most representatives thought that the first pillar of the EU, which consist of economic cooperation, would remain intact the way it is. Political cooperation, which is already deemed to be far more difficult to accomplish, was expected to become even more complex after enlargement. As a result, people expected continued supranationalist cooperation in economic matters but more intergovernmentalism and even renationalisation in the second and third pillar. Some interviewees specifically argued that social, cultural and moral issues should remain national. A federal future scenario of the EU is not favoured by any of the interviewees and most cannot imagine that the EU will ever be a fully fledged political union. Rather, they argue that it will always remain an organisation of member states. Steps towards a deeper EU are believed to depend to a large extent on political will and strong leadership that should be able to convince the domestic publics to choose the European interest over the national interest. Fiercely defending the national interest or focusing on the net contribution is on the whole not regarded as a positive attitude towards the EU. At the same time, respecting diversity amongst member states and preserving national identities is regarded as important.

2. Type of change

Most representatives expect that enlargement will lead to larger differences between member states and will hamper the functioning of the EU. The most often mentioned solution to this problem is a multi-speed Europe, closely followed by a Europe à la carte. Many see this as inevitable, as it may be the only way in which the EU may function in the future. One calls in particular for flexibility in the third pillar. These answers are probably largely biased as a result of the timing of the interviews. Most of them took place in summer 2003, which was the peak of the diplomatic dispute on military measures against Iraq. In general, what is expected is increasing intergovernmentalism, which is by some feared to lead to disputes between small and large member states. In this framework, surprisingly few interviewees specifically talk about the position of the Netherlands as a small country. Several interviewees

fear that future disputes in the EU would be about money, which is generally regarded as a negative change. These expected disagreements are explained by increasing differences between member states that would diminish mutual solidarity.

3. Degree of change

Due to the overall opinion that European integration almost seems an organic process, people find it hard to imagine that the EU will suddenly become a whole different system. While a fully fledged political union or federation is by nobody regarded as a serious future scenario, neither is complete renationalisation. Most change is expected in differentiation along policy fields. The first pillar may even become more supranationalist, whereas the second and third pillar are expected to become more intergovernmentalist. Some interviewees have specifically stated that according to them, there should be limits to the ongoing enlargement of the EU.

4. Attitudes to European integration

In general, most interviewees agree with the current state of the EU and are even in favour of further going integration. Nearly all regard Dutch membership of the EU as beneficial to the country. There is even a certain idea that the European interest should at times prevail over the national interest. The main fears are that enlargement will lead to increasing differences between member states and enlarge the distance between the EU and the citizen.

5. Democratic deficit of the EU

Following up on the previous paragraph, it is regarded by most actors as very important that the EU should comply better with the expectations of the citizens. One representative criticized the efforts of the European institutions to get closer to civil society actors by pointing out that Brussels is overgrown with out of touch NGO's.¹ Another interviewee equally foresaw a major problem here as according to him the citizens will expect more and more from the EU in terms of political unity and foreign policy; two fields in which the EU so far has not been able to act effectively for a lack of agreement.² The other way around, citizens should be better informed about, and involved with, the European integration process. More debate is regarded as crucial here. One actor even hoped for more disagreement amongst Dutch political parties on the issue of European integration as that would automatically lead to debate. According to him, the lack of discussion on the issue in the Netherlands was ridiculous.³ However, another interviewee warned that the debate should at the same time not get too politicised and simplified.⁴

Limiting the democratic deficit is by nearly all interviewees regarded as very important. The EP is generally regarded as the institution that is most suited to close the gap between the EU and its citizens, and to make the EU more democratic. At the same time there were also several actors that emphasised the role of the member states and the Council of Ministers in this respect.

¹ Instituut voor Publiek en politiek, Project leader, 9 October 2003.

² VNO/NCW, Secretary, International economic affairs, 8 July 2003.

³ Instituut voor Publiek en politiek, Project leader, 9 October 2003.

⁴ Ministerie van Landbouw, Deputy director, International affairs, 19 September 2003.

II. General Overview

Table 1, below, aids us in giving an overall impression of how different actors perceive the contribution of European integration to the situation in the EU region. Interviewees were asked whether the process of European integration contributed to six specific developments in Europe: peace and security (*vrede en veiligheid*), political stability (*politieke stabiliteit*), economic growth (*economische groei*), economic competitiveness (*economische concurrentiepositie*), environmental protection (*bescherming van het milieu*), and social equality (*sociale gelijkheid*). Where they gave a positive response, their score was recorded as 3; where they claimed European integration ‘partly’ contributed, the score was 1.5; and where they said that European integration did not contribute to that development, the score recorded was 0. Aggregate scores for all actor types are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 **Actors’ perceptions on whether European Integration contributes to specific developments in the EU**

	All	State actors	Political parties	Interest groups	NGO’s	Journalists
Security	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.1	3
Political stability	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.1	3
Economic growth	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5
Economic competitiveness	2.5	2.4	3	2.6	2.1	2.3
Environmental protection	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.8	1.4	1.8
Social equality	1.6	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.1	1.2
All	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.3	1.9	2.3
N	57	12	8	12	12	13

In line with the tradition of a permissive consensus and lack of disagreement of Dutch actors on the EU, most Dutch actors are rather similar in their overall judgement of the contribution of European integration to different aspects in the European region. It is political parties, closely followed by state actors, that are most positive. NGO’s are clearly most sceptical about this contribution. Their opinion deviates most from those of other actors on the issue of security. While nearly all actors agree that European integration has made a clear difference here, representatives of NGO’s judge that this is only partly the case.

Journalists in the Netherlands seem to have an opinion on European integration that is very much in line with the other actor categories we interviewed. Rather striking is their unanimous positive judgement of the fact that European integration has made a difference in the areas of security and political stability of the European continent. The only other unanimous opinion was from political parties on the positive influence of the integration process on economic competitiveness of the European region.

All actors agree that the areas where European integration is less significant are environmental protection and social equality. Given the two specific issue areas on which we interviewed, namely agriculture policy and immigration policy, it may be speculated that more detailed knowledge on these aspects have led to a more detailed yet more critical opinion on the contribution of European integration in these fields as compared to rather abstract concepts like security and stability. During the interviews it also transpired that

people found it more accurate on these two concepts to make a difference between the influence of European integration on the situation in the Netherlands and the EU as a whole. This suggests that disparities between member states are felt to be bigger in the fields of environmental protection and social equality. On the issue of social equality it is finally interesting to note that journalists are rather critical on the effect of European integration, whereas political parties are the only actor category that judge that this is not the issue where European integration has contributed least.

III. Detailed Analysis of Actor's Perceptions

1. State actors

In general, the state actors think the direction of European integration is difficult to predict at the moment. Much will depend on the actual effects of enlargement and the outcome of the Convention. Nevertheless, the state representatives are unanimous in their judgement of the EU: they all agree with the integration progress itself, which they think will proceed. According to a majority of the interviewees, the underlying reasons for the tendency to proceed with European integration are mainly economical. Globalisation, economic interdependence and the single market effects make block-forming and integration indispensable. Nevertheless, some are rather puzzled about the integration process:

‘It seems an unstoppable train. Why does this continue the way it does? The drive to continue may be smaller than the fear to stop. It is hard to grasp⁵’.

‘Enlargement is a risky business. The same is true for the Convention. [...] European integration is generally a success story, while in daily life it always seems a misery. There is a certain dynamic despite difficulties. That give hope for the future⁶’.

Although one generally regards ongoing integration to be in the Dutch national interest, one of the interviewees was particularly worried about the new eurosceptic tone in Dutch politics. According to him, European integration should not be phrased in terms of winners and losers and the Netherlands should be careful not to simplify the debate and only focus on financial aspects.⁷

In general, it is expected that enlargement will have an important impact on the EU as we know it today. Nevertheless, it is regarded as indispensable. As one interviewee put it:

‘Peace in Europe is unsustainable with poor and rich countries⁸’.

One state representative put the whole discussion in perspective by pointing out that earlier enlargements were equally sceptically judged beforehand but have turned out to be very

⁵ ‘Het lijkt een onstopbare trein. Waarom gaat dit zo door? Misschien is de drive om verder te gaan wel kleiner dan de angst om te stoppen... Het is ongrijpbaar.’, Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Policy officer, DG European integration and strategy, 15 July 2003.

⁶ ‘De uitbreiding is een groot waagstuk. Hetzelfde geldt voor de Conventie. [...] Europese integratie is over het algemeen een succesverhaal terwijl van dag tot dag de ellende altijd groot lijkt. Er is een bepaalde dynamiek ondanks moeilijkheden en tegenvallers. Dat geeft hoop voor de toekomst’, Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER), Deputy director, Economic affairs, 12 September 2003.

⁷ Ministerie van Landbouw, Deputy director, International affairs, 19 September 2003.

⁸ ‘Vrede is in Europa niet vol te houden met arme en rijke landen’, Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst (IND), Director, 24 July 2003.

effective⁹. Nevertheless, one thinks that the enlargement process will be made more problematic with the current economic recession. This is regarded as particularly troublesome, as another critic of the European integration process is that economic and social policy were not very well balanced in the first place. Enlargement is equally expected to contribute to political disparities, which may in turn lead to political conflict between old and new member states. At best, it will lead to different speeds of integration amongst the member states and more intergovernmentalism. Policy fields that are expected to function with more flexibility are in particular foreign policy. The accession of ten new member states are equally expected to be of influence on the institutional set-up and balance of the EU.

Notwithstanding the fact that, according to the representative of the Ministry of Justice, philosophizing on the role and performance of EU institutions might ‘take at least 4 years PhD-research’¹⁰, most representatives of state actors managed to formulate a clear statement on the issue. The first prevailing idea is that European institutions are important, and increasingly so. As a result, tackling the generally acknowledged democratic deficit becomes more important as well. In that framework, the European Convention is regarded as a crucial development in the future institutional set-up of the EU. Finding a new institutional balance is however regarded as a difficult task as the following quote shows.

‘The issue of the European institutions is one big power play’¹¹

In line with the national-interest-based supranationalist tendency of the Netherlands, a weak Commission, and in particular a weak Commission president, is regarded as a bad thing. After all, a good Commission is deemed beneficial for small countries as it may function as a counterweighting power against large states. What constitutes a good Commission is however less clear, as it is acknowledged that a small, less hybrid Commission might be better able to get its point across than one that would include Commissioners from all member states. One is equally consensual on the role of the European Parliament. This institution is judged to become gradually stronger, which is regarded as a positive development. The arguments for a stronger EP is induced by the concern about the democratic deficit of the EU. The same argument causes the less positive opinions on the European Council. As one of the interviewees put it ‘the heads of state undermine the European spirit’¹². In contradiction to the Council of Ministers that was only addressed once as an institution (inefficient unanimity rule), several interviewees mentioned the Court of Justice. This seems contradictory as the Court is normally a rather invisible institution. Yet, it is deemed to become more important everyday. It is praised for its clear position and its role in the ‘juridification’ of the EU. The government representative on the Convention even thought that it might be able to solve those unsettled questions with respect to the institutional framework that large and small countries would not be able to solve.

⁹ Interprovinciaal Overleg, Programme leader environment, water, agriculture and nature, Platform and lobbying, 20 August 2003.

¹⁰ Ministerie van Justitie, Director general, 12 November 2003.

¹¹ ‘De instellingen zijn een groot machtsspel’, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Deputy Head Judicial and Police Cooperation Division, 16 July 2003.

¹² ‘De Europese Raad is een bedreiging voor het Europese idee’, Eerste Kamer, Convention delegation, CDA, 18 November 2003.

2. Political parties

A characteristic of the integration process that was mentioned several times by representatives of political parties, yet not by other actors, is the erratic nature of the EU. Factors that were thought to determine the pace of the process are elections, referenda and the economic cycle. It may not be surprising that it is particularly political figures who mention these aspects as they are more directly confronted with the unstable factors of politics than other actors. Nevertheless, the general opinion is that the European integration process will gradually proceed. According to the representative of Groenlinks there would however be limits to this integration process, as he could not imagine that the EU would ever have a large own budget with its own fully fledged tax base.

The only two political parties that showed criticism on the evolution of the EU are the SP and LPF; interestingly enough broadly the most left and right-wing political parties of the Dutch political system. The LPF protests against a too federalist version of the EU, as promoted by Giscard d'Estaing's draft version of the Constitution. The SP equally fears a federal Europe that would dismantle national states and fiercely criticises the EU for being undemocratic and intransparent.

The representative of the Dutch political parties generally regard the European institutions as important, in particular for the citizens. The European Commission is expected to remain a constant force but one that should be more strictly controlled by the European Parliament. The only parliamentarian that is rather critical about the EP is the VVD representative. According to him the EP will simply 'muddle through'¹³. Again, several interviewees mentioned the role of the ECJ. It is not only expected to play an important role in specific policy areas, such as in the harmonization of criminal law or asylum policy, but to generally construct the EU as a legal community.

3. Interest groups

Like the other actor categories we already discussed, the interviewees of interest groups generally agree that European integration is an ongoing process. However, they equally acknowledge that the EU finds itself at a decisive point in time, and that it will not be an easy process.

'It will always remain a complex system'¹⁴

'It will be complicated'¹⁵

'It will be even more difficult than it was'¹⁶

Two representatives give a highly analytical explanation of the current dilemma's of the EU. The representative of the MKB¹⁷ argues that the strange nature of the EU causes two main problems: the functioning of the institutions and competences of the EU. Normally in a federation, economical and social matters are de-centrally and foreign policy and defence centrally arranged, whereas in the EU it is the other way around. He thinks this will always

¹³ VVD, Member of parliament, 27 August 2003.

¹⁴ 'Het zal altijd een complex systeem blijven', Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute for International Affairs, Director of research, 28 August 2003.

¹⁵ 'Het zal niet over rozen gaan', VNO/NCW, Secretary, International economic affairs, 8 July 2003.

¹⁶ 'Het wordt nog moeilijker dan het al was', Nederlandse Vakbond Varkenshouders, President, 23 July 2003.

¹⁷ Dutch organisation for SME's.

remain a source of disputes and inefficiency. The VNO/NCW¹⁸ interviewee argues that the new phase is characterized by the fact that the division of the continent has gone. This eliminates two external influences: the Soviet threat and American promotion of European integration. Thereby there is more internal room for political alternatives but this goes hand in hand with conflicts. According to him, the US even see advantages in dividing the EU, as has become clear during the Iraq crisis.¹⁹

There is disagreement amongst the interviewees whether the EU will become a full-fledged political system. They all agree that in principle political cooperation is very important but admit that economic integration is easier to accomplish. Therefore, they expect that the first pillar will remain intact the way it is, even after enlargement. For the second and third pillar, this is less clear. In general, enlargement is expected to be problematic and to change the (political) nature of the EU. Moreover, the question is raised where the geographical borders of the EU lie. Most interest groups expect enlargement to lead to a multi-speed, or core Europe.

‘A two-speed Europe is probably the only way in which the EU will keep on functioning’²⁰

The general attitude towards European integration is positive. However, several interviewees fear that enlargement will make differences between member states larger, and at the same time increase the distance between the EU and the citizens. This is regarded as a negative development. With regard to the European institutions, it is argued that if the EU wants to proceed towards more political cooperation, clear choices need to be made about the competences of the EU level and the European institutions. All agree that political integration will need to be accompanied by broad public support. Institutions have a major role to play there.

‘The role of the European institutions is decisive. If one does not manage to make the institutions work, the EU will fail.’²¹

While the EU institutions are regarded as important, their role is very differently evaluated. They are by some regarded as over-ambitious, bureaucratic and intransparent. Others argue for stronger institutions. The opinion differs by institution. The EP is by most regarded as important for a democratic Europe. Everyone agrees that much will depend on the outcomes of the Convention.

4. NGO's

As a result of the selection of our interview partners in this category, which include eurosceptic groups, the ideas about future scenario's of the EU are very diverse. Some regard debate, conflict or even disintegration as a positive development. A federal state is predicted but also complete renationalisation. The only agreement is that the EU should comply more with what people want. But *what* it is that the public wants, seems not so easy to determine. Most interviewees think European integration is an ongoing process which, like we saw in other actors categories, puzzles some:

¹⁸ Dutch employers organisation.

¹⁹ VNO/NCW, Secretary, International economic affairs, 8 July 2003.

²⁰ ‘Een Europa van de twee snelheden is de enige manier waarop de EU zal kunnen blijven functioneren’, Produktschap Zuivel, Secretary, Policy department, 14 May 2003.

²¹ ‘De instellingen van de EU zijn allesbepalend. Als het niet lukt de instellingen te laten werken, wordt het niks met de EU’, LTO, Director, Social, economic and international policy, 15 August 2003.

‘As long as the political will is there, it will work. This has surprised me at many occasions. One thinks it will never work but it always does.’²²

They think that it will nevertheless remain complex. A two-speed Europe may be expected, as well as more diversity according to policy field. Economic cooperation seems to be working smoothly. That is why some interviewees argue that the EU should focus on these core activities. Social, moral and ethical issues should then remain national.

With the exceptions of the eurosceptic organisations, the NGO representatives are rather positive on further going European integration. However, less so on the role of the institutions and the attention that is being paid to the citizens. One of the interviewees even argues that the European institutions undermine democracy and social rights.

‘Predicting remains difficult. However, my hope is that with a couple of conflicts the realisation will finally occur that something needs to be done with regards to the public debate.’²³

‘The institutions should be geared towards clear communication. People need to understand what is going on.’²⁴

The EP is by some organisations described as a joke, and a marginal organisation. Others think it is the task of the EP to bridge the distance between the EU and the citizens. In that framework political parties are by some specifically mentioned. The Council is several times evaluated positively as it represents the national level, and it is actually there where decisions are made. The Commission’s task is defined as those of agenda setter.

5. Media actors

It could be expected that we would find a difference between editors and European correspondents on the one hand and Home correspondents on the other, as they may have a different outlook on the daily news. However, although the nationally based correspondents had a less outspoken opinion on the European integration process, a clear national bias could not be detected.

Both the editors and the European correspondents regard European integration as an ongoing and inevitable process, partly induced by globalisation. As one of them put it:

‘It is a forced process. More and more problems need to be commonly solved.’²⁵

Examples he mentioned were trade, crime and immigration. The process is however expected to be hampered by enlargement, which is thought to be problematic and to create the need to have a different kind of EU. Scenario’s that are mentioned are Europe à la carte and a two-speed Europe. They note a trend towards more intergovernmentalism, which may lead to

²² ‘Als de politieke wil er is, komt het toch kennelijk goed. Dat blijft frappant! Je denkt dat het nooit zal werken maar het lukt altijd.’, Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen / LEI, Director agriculture, Societal issues, 2 September 2003.

²³ ‘Voorspellen blijft lastig. Maar mijn hoop is dat met een aantal conflicten het besef wellicht door dringt dat er iets moet gebeuren met betrekking tot het publieke debat.’, Instituut voor Publiek en politiek, Project leader, 9 October 2003.

²⁴ ‘De instellingen moeten gericht zijn op goede, heldere communicatie. De dingen moeten begrijpelijk gehouden worden voor de mensen.’, Stichting Natuur en Milieu, Policy officer, European agricultural and environmental policy, 10 September 2003.

²⁵ ‘Het proces is noodgedwongen. Meer en meer problemen moeten gezamenlijk opgelost worden’. Volkskrant, European correspondent, 26 August 2003.

politicisation between small and large member states. One of them has worries about growing differences between nations and peoples.²⁶ They think at the same time that deepening might be inevitable but that this should be done gradually. The editors seem slightly more negative about the integration process than the European correspondents. One of them even qualifies it as ‘muddling through’²⁷. They regard economic integration in the first pillar of the EU as successful, even though it is currently slowing down as a result of the recession, but are more critical on the lack of unity in the second and third pillar. They generally seem in favour of a scenario of the EU in which national diversity is respected. The institutions are regarded as important but one disagrees on the exact roles. The European correspondents seem slightly more positive about the institutions. A strong, yet efficient, Council of Ministers is favoured by all. In general, they seem to have different expectations from the various institutions in the respective policy fields. More is expected from the Commission and the EP in the first pillar, whereas it is the representatives of the member states that are expected to play a role in the second and third pillar. Again, the role of the ECJ was mentioned and expected to grow. One of the European correspondents called for statesmen in the old tradition to give up national competences and thus bring the EU further.²⁸

The Home correspondents do not have an outspoken opinion on the course of integration. Again, it is assumed that it will continue. As one of the *Volkskrant* correspondents stated:

‘It will continue like this for another few decades’.²⁹

Since economic integration has already proceeded very far, the new challenge is political integration which will be far more difficult to accomplish. They seem however to be a bit more patient than their editors and the European correspondents as several of them acknowledge that it takes time before something can be really accomplished. They argue that the European institutions need to guide the European integration process strategically and to keep the EU together. However, it is up to the member states to properly solve matters of supranationality and the EU’s democratic deficit.

Other than expected, differences between the journalists of the various newspapers on future scenarios of the EU were not evident. One interesting finding is that the journalists of the *Volkskrant* are relatively positive about the European institutions. They judge that it is their task to guide the European integration process and steer it strategically, to come up with ideas and solutions, and to put the process in practice. Their editor however judges that the EU suffers from an institutional overload.

²⁶ Leeuwarder Courant, Editor, 12 May 2003.

²⁷ ‘Doormodderen’, *Algemeen Dagblad*, Editor, 25 June 2003.

²⁸ Leeuwarder Courant, European correspondent, 17 September 2003.

²⁹ ‘Het kabbelt nog wel een paar decennia voort’, *Volkskrant*, Home correspondent, 10 September 2003.

Appendix – List of interviewees and interview dates

European Integration

- Eerste Kamer, Convention delegation, CDA, 18 November 2003.
- Tweede Kamer, Convention delegation, PvdA, 27 August 2003.
- Government representative, Convention delegation, VVD, 10 November 2003.
- Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Project leader, Communication on European cooperation, 19 September 2003.
- VVD, Member of parliament, 27 August 2003.
- SP, Member of parliament, 30 June 2003.
- Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute for International Affairs, Director of research, 28 August 2003.
- FNV/CNV, European Affairs Officer, 6 October 2003.
- VNO/NCW, Permanent delegate to Brussels, 16 September 2003.
- MKB, Director European Affairs, 27 August 2003.
- Vereniging Democratisch Europa, Former chairman, 6 August 2003.
- Europese Beweging Nederland, Director, 16 July 2003.
- Instituut voor Publiek en politiek, Project leader, 9 October 2003.
- Europese Referendum Campagne Nederland, Manager, 15 July 2003.

Agriculture

- Tweede Kamer, Secretary (griffier), Permanent commission for agriculture, 8 July 2003.
- Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Policy officer, DG European integration and strategy, 15 July 2003.
- Ministerie van Landbouw, Deputy director, International affairs, 19 September 2003.
- Interprovinciaal Overleg, Programme leader environment, water, agriculture and nature, Platform and lobbying, 20 August 2003.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad (SER), Deputy director, Economic affairs, 12 September 2003.
- CDA, Member of parliament, 18 December 2003.
- PvdA, Member of parliament, 15 September 2003.
- GroenLinks, Member of parliament, 25 September 2003.
- LTO, Director, Social, economic and international policy, 15 August 2003.
- Produktschap Zuivel, Secretary, Policy department, 14 May 2003.
- Nederlandse Vakbond Varkenshouders, President, 23 July 2003.
- VNO/NCW, Secretary, International economic affairs, 8 July 2003.
- Stichting Natuur en Milieu, Policy officer, European agricultural and environmental policy, 10 September 2003.
- Consumentenbond, Policy officer, societal interest furthering nutrition and care, 13 August 2003.
- Vrienden van het Platteland, Director, 27 August 2003.
- Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen / LEI, Director agriculture, Societal issues, 2 September 2003.

Immigration

- Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Deputy Head Judicial and Police Cooperation Division, 16 July 2003.
- Ministerie van Justitie, Director general, 12 November 2003.
- Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst (IND), Director, 24 July 2003.
- Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten, Policy officer, asylum issues, 24 October 2003.

- CDA, Member of parliament, 21 October 2003.
- PvdA, Member of parliament, 4 September 2003.
- LPF, Member of parliament, 13 October 2003.
- FNV, Policy officer, labour market policy, 17 September 2003.
- Stichting Rechtsbijstand Asiel (SRA), CEO, Legal Aid Asylumseekers, 22 September 2003.
- Vluchtelingenorganisaties Nederland (VNO), Head Communication, 18 August 2003.
- ASKV / Steunpunt Vluchtelingen, Employee, 24 September 2003.
- Raad van kerken, Secretary, Working group migration, 10 July 2003.
- Vluchtelingenwerk, Strategic policy adviser, 12 June 2003.
- Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographics Institute (NIDI), Vice-director, 28 October 2003.
- Forum, Policy officer, Communication, 24 September 2003.

Journalists

- Volkskrant, Editor, 25 August 2003.
- Volkskrant, European correspondent, 26 August 2003.
- Volkskrant, Home correspondent, 10 September 2003.
- Volkskrant, Home correspondent, 17 september 2003.
- Algemeen Dagblad, Editor, 25 June 2003.
- Algemeen Dagblad, European correspondent, 17 September 2003.
- Algemeen Dagblad, Parliamentary correspondent, 15 July 2003.
- Telegraaf, Editor, 17 June 2003.
- Telegraaf, European correspondent, 18 September 2003.
- Telegraaf, Economy correspondent, 17 November 2003.
- Telegraaf, Economy correspondent, 7 November 2003.
- Leeuwarder Courant, Editor, 12 May 2003.
- Leeuwarder Courant, European correspondent, 17 September 2003.
- Leeuwarder Courant, Home correspondent, 1 July 2003.
- Leeuwarder Courant, Agriculture correspondent, 13 June 2003.