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Dutch elections - Post-election climate policy

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- **General elections in the Netherlands are scheduled for 29 October.**
- **During the tenure of the outgoing government, the pace of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction has slowed, the emission intensity of the Dutch economy has stagnated, and long-term projections for renewable energy use have declined.**
- **The latest report by the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency concludes that "reaching the 2030 climate goal is extremely unlikely" and highlights the urgent need for "additional and structural policy".**
- **We have assessed the possibility that climate policy in the Netherlands will be intensified in the next few years by looking at the climate policy plans in the election programmes of the political parties that currently are polling the highest for the election.**
- **We find that two parties (GL/PvdA and D66) have a strong pro-climate stance and set clear and strict targets; one (CDA) also has a pro-climate stance but sets limited targets; two (PVV and JA21) clearly are against climate policy and one (VVD) is in favour of climate policy but gives equal or greater weight to economic growth and profitability.**

Introduction

General elections are scheduled to take place in the Netherlands on 29 October 2025. The outgoing government, which assumed office in July 2024, collapsed within a year, adopting caretaker status in early June 2025. In a previous note we reviewed the outgoing government's climate policies and the latest developments in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other climate-related variables (see here). We found that during the tenure of the outgoing government, the annual reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has slowed to its lowest pace (excluding the pandemic years) since the adoption of the Paris Agreement. According to the September 2025 report by the PBL Netherlands Environment Assessment Agency (PBL) it is extremely unlikely (probability < 5%) that the Netherlands will meet the EU targets for GHG emissions, primary energy use and renewable energy use in 2030 on the basis of current policy. Therefore, the PBL states that there is a need for additional and structural climate policy measures to meet these EU targets.

In this note we assess the probability of such a step-up in climate policy taking place in the next few years by evaluating the climate policy plans in the election programmes of the six political parties that currently rank highest in the polls. These are the populist right-wing PVV, the social democratic green centre-left GL/PvdA, the Christian Democratic centrist CDA, the conservative liberal centre-right VVD, the social liberal progressive centrist D66 and the populist conservative liberal right-wing anti-immigration JA21. In this note we will also discuss the assessment by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) that traditionally evaluates the economic and financial consequences of the election programmes before general elections are held.

Climate and energy policy plans of the biggest parties

Below we summarize the main policy plans concerning some of the more important climate and nature-related issues in the Netherlands as presented by the six political parties mentioned above. First, we present an overview table, and next we summarise the main points per party.

Key climate policy issues *	PVV	GL/PvdA	CDA	VVD	D66	JA21
Stick to EU climate targets	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Invest in sun and wind energy	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Invest in nuclear energy	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phasing out of fossil fuel / stop NL gas extraction	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X
National carbon tax / carbon pricing industry	X	✓	X	X	✓	X
Green subisidies for house renovation		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)	X		✓	✓		
Lower energy tax / VAT rate on energy	✓			✓		✓
Promote green mobility	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Nitrogen reduction agriculture / less livestock	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X

* left empty in case of no clear policy plans in election programme

Party for Freedom (PVV): The populist right-wing PVV is against any form of active climate policy. The party wants to end the energy transition, leave the Paris Agreement, turn away from EU climate laws, end the Dutch Climate Fund and end subsidies that support investment in green technology. It is in favour of the use of coal and gas and wants to increase gas and oil extraction in the North Sea, and it is against the construction of new wind turbines. Moreover, PVV wants to lower energy taxes (the VAT rate on energy will be reduced to 9% from 21%) and end the carbon tax paid by companies. Finally, it is against any obligations regarding the use of electrical cars or ships, and it wants the reduce and/or downsize the number or size of Natura 2000 areas.
Summing up: PVV has a clear and straightforward stance against climate policies.

Green Left/Labour Party (GL/PvdA): The social democratic green centre-left GL/PvdA wants to aim at net-zero emissions by 2040 (so ten years earlier than the EU target) and a 65% GHG emissions reduction in 2030 (versus 1990), which is ten percentage points more reduction than the official EU target. Finally, by 2035, all the Netherlands' electricity sources should be climate-neutral, and by 2040, all other energy sources and industry should also be climate-neutral. Sun and wind electricity will be the future drivers of the energy system. The construction of offshore wind farms will be promoted, and the government will take on part of the financial risks. Starting 2030, only electric vehicles will be sold. The government has reserved EUR 14bn for the construction of new nuclear power plants. GL/PVDA aims to re-allocate this money to support businesses, households and farmers in their efforts toward sustainable transition. Large polluting companies will pay fair taxes on their harmful emissions, while fossil fuel subsidies will be phased out. The national CO2 tax for industry will be maintained and the resulting government income will be invested in the sustainable transition in industry. In addition to financial incentives, there will also be strict rules, such as expanding the energy-saving requirements and setting mandatory savings targets per sector. The government will invest in retrofitting existing houses. Public transport will be promoted by giving financial incentives to public transport users. In agriculture, industrial livestock farming will be ended, and intensive livestock farmers close to nature areas will be sold out.
Summing up: GL/PvdA has a strong pro-climate stance, backed by clear and strict climate targets.

Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) The Christian democratic centrist CDA wants to stay committed to the EU target of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, as well as to the Paris Agreement. However, it does not want to set emission reduction targets for the Netherlands' non-ETS sectors. The party wants to invest in a balanced mix of nuclear energy, wind energy, solar energy, hydrogen, green gas, sustainable biomass, geothermal energy, and clean fuels. It wants to ensure there is enough CO_2-free, flexible energy capacity (such as small nuclear reactors) to guarantee reliable energy supply in the long term. It also encourages the conversion of existing gas power plants and the use of coal plant locations for other forms of clean energy. Offshore wind energy parks need to be expanded but the costs should be shared with neighbouring countries. The party aims for stable and clear (financial) policies to support residents and businesses in taking responsibility for climate adaptation and transition. This includes, for instance, insulation, solar panels, heat pumps, and potential new technologies. Also, the party is in favour of the construction of two new nuclear power plants. It plans to reduce the emission of nitrogen by farmers by introducing new technologies for manure processing. The motor vehicle tax will be reformed to better align with the transition to electric cars. The national CO2 tax for industry will be abolished. CDA favours European cooperation in climate policy and the climate transition in industry. Regarding energy efficiency, the party wants to make binding agreements with the biggest polluters and focus on a balanced mix of renewable energy, nuclear energy, energy saving, and CO2 storage. The party thinks that carbon capture and storage (CCS) is an essential part of achieving net-zero. The

sector (greenhouse) horticulture should be climate neutral by 2040. Animal farming companies will face sanctions (e.g. revoking permits) if they miss their emission standards by 2030 and 2035.
Summing up: CDA has a pro-climate policy stance, albeit without setting very strict targets.

People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD): The conservative liberal right-wing VVD states that it will ensure that the Netherlands, like other countries, meets its EU climate and energy obligations. It wants to update the Climate Act to a Climate and Growth Act, while adding the pillars of energy independence and affordability. It plans to lower energy taxes and abolish the CO2 tax for industry. It wants to give financial compensation to companies with high electricity bills and is exploring investment discounts for companies that want to become more sustainable. Also, it favours supporting companies through tailored agreements, providing a targeted, individual approach to help them meet goals up to 2030. It plans to invest significant amounts in offshore wind energy parks, in solar energy, in green gas, hydrogen and geothermal energy. It also wants to speed up the construction of extra nuclear energy plants, financed partly by the government and the private sector and it wants to make electric driving accessible to everyone, without specifying. VVD favours nitrogen reduction by focusing on emissions, with all sectors contributing fairly, leading to a guaranteed 50% emission reduction by 2035. It also wants to explore sector-specific thresholds, starting with the construction sector, which only causes limited and temporary emissions, according to the election programme. The agricultural sector should fit the environmental capacity of the area, which means that emissions and pollution should be reduced where necessary. Gas extraction from domestic sources will continue from small fields on land and in the North Sea. The party plans to invest in the timely development of CO2 storage and focusing on CO2 capture, removal, and reuse. It is open to purchasing carbon credits outside the EU and wants to actively work on establishing an international carbon market.
Summing up: VVD is in favour of complying with the EU climate law but gives equal or greater weight to economic growth and profitability.

Democrats 66 (D66): The social liberal progressive centrist D66 aims to put the Netherlands back on track to meet the EU climate goals for 2030, 2040, and 2050. It wants to reduce GHG emissions by about 5 to 6% annually. The energy transition should be based on a mix of solar, wind, green hydrogen, and other sources. The use of biomass for electricity will gradually be phased out. Essential green technology will be subsidised by the government. The party wants to invest heavily in offshore wind turbines and solar panels on rooftops, industrial areas, and unused land such as roadsides. Residents will have a share in local energy projects. Energy cooperatives that want to set up projects like neighbourhood batteries or solar farms will be supported. The party remains open to nuclear energy. D66 remains committed to halving nitrogen emissions by 2030 and aims for a rapid reduction in these emissions, based on a plan with clear targets that are legally binding. The party is in favour of an additional EUR 750 to EUR 800bn in European investments in green technology, renewable energy and green infrastructure per year. The Netherlands should take the lead in building a European energy system, with the aim of sharing electricity grids and organize energy storage with other countries. European cooperation is also required in offshore wind energy, green hydrogen, and reliable networks under the North Sea. The party wants to set a clear end date for fossil-based technologies in each sector and create clear plans for the transition to sustainable alternatives. Regarding national carbon taxation the party states that sustainability will become the standard, and pollution will have a predictable cost: the "real" price. As a result, polluting companies will invest heavily in energy-efficient and clean production. The party wants to phase out fossil fuel subsidies more quickly and create opportunities for sustainable innovation. D66 plans to encourage affordable electric cars through subsidies and tax benefits. Also, the use of public transportation will be promoted and subsidised. Concerning agriculture, the party states that buying out farms is a tool to encourage the transition to nature-inclusive and less intensive farming, with reducing livestock numbers being a logical outcome of these efforts.
Summing up: D66 has a strong pro-climate stance and sets clear and strict targets.

JA21: The populist conservative liberal right-wing anti-immigration JA21 believes that the current climate goals are often unrealistic and deliver questionable results. Therefore, the party chooses a pragmatic and realistic approach. Instead of unilaterally trying to control the global climate, they want to focus on climate adaptation. This means targeted investments in water management and dikes, affordable and reliable energy supply, and technological innovations to make the Netherlands resilient. JA21 is against a European industrial policy (Clean Industrial Deal), while sustainability and a circular economy will only be supported if they are profitable. There should be no taxes to pressure people into a more sustainable lifestyle. It strongly favours nuclear energy and wants to invest in extra nuclear power plants. The party is against any subsidies to promote green investment and wants to abolish the national CO2 tax for industry. It opposes closing coal and gas power plants, supports continued use of natural gas, and wants to abandon the 2050 gas-free targets. Natural gas extraction in Groningen should be done responsibly, and gas production in the North Sea will be increased.
Summing up: JA21 has a clear stance against climate mitigation policies.

Analysis by the CPB and financial consequences

The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) traditionally publishes an analysis that evaluates the economic and financial consequences of the election programmes of political parties before general elections are held in the Netherlands ('Keuzes in Kaart' see here, only in Dutch). It evaluates the election programmes of the political parties on request, and the PVV is not among them. However, based on the general tone and message of the election programme on climate policy it seems that the climate-specific results for PVV probably will be not too far away from those of JA21. The CPB has also summarized the amounts that the various parties would like to spend on climate and environment related issues as well as the change in taxes related to climate and environment. D66 seems to have the most ambitious plans in this respect, raising taxes related to climate and environment by EUR 8.8bn, and raising spending in these categories by EUR 5.2bn. On the other end of the spectrum is JA21, which aims to reduce both taxes and expenditures related to climate and the environment.

Main points CPB analysis	GL/PvdA	CDA	VVD	D66	JA21
Effort to meet the target for CO2 emissions reduction *	++	+	=	++	-
Effort to meet the target for nitrogen emissions reduction *	++	+	+	++	=
Spending on climate and environment **	0.7	0.9	1.1	5.2	-1.9
Tax burden related to climate and environment **	5.0	0.8	-2.8	8.8	-3.2

* changes versus unchanged policy trajectory

** total change in spending / taxation 2027-2030 in EURbn due to policy measures

Conclusion

Based on the election programmes of the six parties that currently rank highest in the polls for the general election we found that two parties (GL/PvdA and D66) have a strong pro-climate stance and set clear and strict targets; one (CDA) also has a pro-climate stance but sets limited targets; two (PVV and JA21) clearly are against climate policy, and one (VVD) is in favour of climate policy but gives equal or greater weight to economic growth and profitability. The CPB's analysis yields similar results. It also concludes that D66 is the most ambitious party regarding changes in revenues and expenditures related to climate and the environment. This means that the likelihood of the necessary intensification of climate policy in the Netherlands is highest if D66, GL/PvdA, and CDA are part of the next coalition government, and lowest if PVV and JA21 are included, with VVD taking a more neutral stance.