

# *Manifesto on Europe*

**Building a Europe  
where everyone counts**



## Introduction

This Manifesto is the fruit of an extensive debate on Europe within the CDA. After the elections for the European Parliament in 2009 it was concluded that an election campaign is far too short for an in depth debate. The new Working Group European Affairs of the CDA Foreign Affairs Committee developed a plan for a permanent discussion. From early 2011 onwards, a series of meetings were organized throughout the country. Where needed provincial European Committees were established or reactivated. Ad hoc expert groups wrote discussion papers on key European issues. A virtual CDA European Network was established with now over seven hundred CDA members, regularly receiving updated information on the EU and providing valuable input.

The input of hundreds of committed CDA members in all those meetings and discussions across the country resulted in the first draft of the Manifesto. This was presented in October last year at the Party Congress. All CDA members could comment on the draft during the months of November and December 2012. That happened in meetings and dozens of written comments.

This Manifesto is thus the harvest of two very broad discussions within our party. It follows the lines set out by the Strategic Consultation and the election program of 2012. The purpose of the Working Group European Affairs has been to present a vision on Europe that can count on broad support within the CDA. It would like to thank everybody who has contributed to it.

The Working Group European affairs

*Winand Quaadvlieg, Chairman*

*Hubert Beusmans, Secretary*

## Summary

This Manifesto on Europe intends to present a vision on the EU that commands broad support in the CDA. It is the fruit of extensive debate with hundreds of CDA members.

## Key Message

The subtitle "*Building a Europe where everyone counts*", reflects the essence of the Manifesto: the CDA wants us to work on a Europe with added value for all its inhabitants. Only by participating in Europe we can create a safe, sustainable and prosperous Netherlands that is able to handle the competition with other continents such as Asia. To realize this goal, Europe must be strong, it must be given the competences and resources to properly carry out its tasks. But it should also give the human individual a central place in all its policies. This means that the EU should do the things it does well, and that it should do the right things:

- Europe should preserve the valuable results it achieved
- Europe should recognize its shortcomings in the past and repair them
- Europe should stop policies that are no longer needed
- Europe must take bold steps where new challenges demand a European approach

It is upon the Netherlands and the CDA to steer Europe in this direction. And now that all Member States need to apply budgetary cuts, the EU too will have to accept a sober budgetary framework.

## The 10 priorities for the CDA Europe Policy

### *Europe: Do the things right!*

In Europe, the EU institutions and Member States take decisions together: that means working through the "Community method". The CDA doesn't want a 'Europe à la carte': all Member States must eventually reach the same level of integration. But the CDA doesn't intend to define a political endgoal – finalité politique - for the EU. Europe is a dynamic process that evolves over time.

Europe can function better. The CDA wants to:

### 1. *Build Europe on values and awareness*

Europe is a community of values, it is more than a calculation or a free trade zone. This must always be recognisable in the European policy. Solidarity remains the basis of European cooperation, but must go hand in hand with solidity. Education must devote sufficient attention to Europe and there should be more youth exchanges for study and training. The Member States and the EU should together make visible what connects us as Europeans in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.

### 2. *Democratic legitimacy and strengthened control*

The European Parliament must get the right to take legislative initiatives and get the possibility to depose a single Commissioner. National Parliaments must be more proactive when it comes to European policy.

### 3. *Recognize shortcomings in the past and repair them*

The support for Europe will be undermined when shortcomings in the past are not recognized and repaired. Europe must therefore be more prepared to recognize its own shortcomings.

- The use of European funds should be effectively monitored; sanctions must be possible. The system of the EU's own resources should be reformed because the current system is too complicated.
- Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU too early, and Greece joined the EMU too fast. New countries can therefore only join if they match all the conditions.

*Europe: Do the right things!*

We need to look closely at the tasks of the EU. Decisions should be taken as closely as possible to the citizens, which means where possible on a local or national level; but when a European approach clearly adds value, the EU should shoulder its tasks, to which end Member States should transfer competences (subsidiary principle). The tasks of the EU should regularly be critically screened.

The CDA sees the following main tasks for Europe:

*4. Strong economic governance*

The first priority of the EU should be solving the economic and financial crisis and tackling unemployment. To effectively fight the crisis and prevent a recurrence in the future, the EMU must be completed by a reinforced economic governance. This means: coordination of macroeconomic policy and a fiscal policy, strengthening the competitiveness of weaker countries, creating a banking union and solving the debt problem.

*5. Completing the Internal market*

Completion of the Internal Market and maintaining the euro are the fundamentals of the EU's international competitiveness and therefore of our prosperity. The Internal Market has to be reinforced with a strong knowledge and innovation policy, the digital economy, free movement of services and trans-European networks for transport, telecom and energy. Knowledge workers should have easy access to the EU. The internal market should be complemented by an open international trade policy.

*6. A modern social dimension*

Unemployment demands our full attention. European economic policies must also be accompanied by a good and modern social policy, which builds on the Rhineland model (social market economy). Europe can provide added value in the formulation of labor conditions that relate to workers' safety and should therefore not be subject to competition between Member States. Europe needs an adequate labor migration policy. The EU and Member States should address the drawbacks of labor migration within the EU. European social policy should preferably be achieved through the social dialogue.

*7. Modern innovative agriculture*

The European agricultural policy is facing unprecedented challenges the coming years. Food security and food quality are major political themes. The CDA wants more innovation and sustainability in the agricultural sector. The agricultural policy should be more tailor-made and should be more oriented towards the world market.

*8. Resolve asylum and migration issues together*

Differences in asylum and migration schemes provide a waterbed effect from one Member State to another. That is why a European approach is needed. The control of external borders and European cooperation between police and justice authorities should be strengthened. Refugees must be accommodated in the region of origin. Humanitarian refugees have the right to access to the EU and should be distributed over the Member States proportionally. This requires solidarity of Northern and Western Europe with the European countries where the refugees arrive.

*9. More cooperation on foreign policy and defense*

The Netherlands should use the EU more as an instrument to achieve goals in our foreign policy. Further European defense cooperation will eventually be inevitable. EU-wide task specialization should be implemented step by step. To this end political cooperation should be improved. But only national parliaments can decide on sending troops abroad. The pre-accession support should be continued to countries that the EU has offered a perspective of accession. In development cooperation the EU can better coordinate the existing aid of the Member States.

*10. Sustainable Europe*

Europe should develop a leading and ambitious sustainability policy and set an example for the world. This sustainability policy should however be compatible with maintaining the competitiveness of the EU in the world. There should be joint and binding targets for sustainable energy, addressing resource scarcity, tax incentives and the protection of biodiversity. In addition, Europeans must invest together in R&D and sustainable technology and the exchange of best practices.

The last priority concerns the Dutch engagement in Europe:

### 11. *A smart engagement in Europe*

The Netherlands has always had significant influence on European policy. That can be so in the future too. Our country must work towards the realization of the abovementioned ten points by providing a proactive and optimal input to the EU. This is not only a task for the government, but also for civil society. Good coordination and a Europe academy, to provide training for optimal functioning in the EU decision-making process, are needed to that end. Our country must also have a nationally coordinated strategy for the use of the Structural Funds. The more recognizable our influence in the EU is, the more the Dutch citizens will recognize themselves in Europe.

With our agenda the CDA builds a strong Europe that enables its inhabitants to use the opportunities of globalization but also provides protection against its risks. Because everyone counts. Thus Europe contributes to a safe, prosperous and sustainable future for the Netherlands and the other European Member States.

## *Introduction*

### **A good future for the Netherlands through a strong Europe**

#### *Europe has something to offer to us*

Europe is there for all of us. Together with the other EU countries, the Netherlands can achieve more for its citizens than alone. That is the basis of the CDA's European vision. European cooperation is justified by the added value it brings to Dutch and European citizens.

European cooperation has brought us lots of benefits since the 1950s. First Europe has brought us peace. For centuries wars determined the history of Europe. But now peace is so selfevident that we even can't imagine war anymore on our continent. But this did not come by all by itself. Peace in Europe is the result of an intensive cooperation. Europe also brought economic growth and more jobs. Without the European Internal Market the port of Rotterdam and our exports would have never been able to grow so strongly over the last decades. Europe brought the Netherlands also better social services - such as equal treatment of men and women - , lower prices, better consumer protection, cross-border police cooperation, food security, a common approach to infectious diseases, free travelling, living, working and learning without borders.

Europe offers many benefits for young and old, at various moments in the life and work of everyday. For many, Europe is now a matter of course. Cheap mobile phones, no borders, traveling and working abroad as well as the euro are part of our lives. We enjoy the benefits of integration and we expect Europe to provide security and prosperity in our lives. The question therefore is not whether one is in favor or against Europe. Just as it is not a question whether you are in favor or against the Netherlands. Europe simply exists. And it has something to offer to us. The question is what tasks Europe should take upon it and what tasks it should not take upon it, and how Europe can best perform its duties.

#### *Europe: for us and by us*

The EU is unique in the world. Nowhere else so many countries work so closely together in so many areas as in EU. In doing so, they are inspired by the European ideal: to work together in peace on welfare and values (Article 3 of the Treaty). The EU is an influential and internationally valued confederation. We have already achieved a lot with Europe: peace, freedom, the rule of law, prosperity, social justice on a higher level than anywhere in the world. Many countries and peoples also see the EU as an example. As founding father and as member, the Netherlands may be

proud of this result. Because the Netherlands have always had a strong influence on the European policy. European decisions are made together with us in Brussels and are effective in our country's domestic and international policy. Europe is there for us and was designed by us. Europe is not foreign. Today the main frame of many Dutch policies - security, monetary, economic, internal market, competition, research, environment, trade - is jointly established at European level. The Netherlands co-determines European policy and to that end shares sovereignty with the other EU Member States.

But then the policies of the EU must be right: the integration should provide benefits. And European policy must have a democratic legitimacy. Therefore the national parliament and the European Parliament should be more closely involved in European regulations and decisions. Together these two institutions represent our citizens in the European decision-making process.

### *Subsidiarity and proportionality*

The best approach is to take decisions as closely as possible to the citizens, where possible on the local or national level. But in cases where it is better to arrange something together on the European level, it must be done at European level. This is also expressed in the Lisbon Treaty, which determines the areas of competence of the EU. Before Europe starts making policy, the subsidiarity check should first be applied to determine whether measures should be adopted nationally or on the European level. The treaty also states that the EU should never do more than is required to achieve the intended purpose (proportionality). Subsidiarity and proportionality are for the CDA essential elements of European cooperation.

This means for example that Europe is not competent for health care, but it is competent for cross-border cooperation in the fight against epidemics and provides a warning system for contaminated food; that Europe does not regulate the national education, but it does promote student exchanges; that Europe is not determining the content of national criminal law, but it has developed a European arrest warrant and the enforcement of judgments in other European countries; that Europe is not competent for the pension system, but it ensures that citizens keep their pension rights when they move to another EU country.

### *A way out of the crisis*

At this very moment all we have achieved together in Europe is overshadowed by the economic crisis. Everyone is confronted with its consequences at work, at home and in the purse. European cooperation has not prevented the crisis. This is a major shortcoming. There are a number of Member States that made mistakes in the financial and economical policy, such as not respecting the conditions of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). And there appeared to be serious deficiencies in the agreements on the euro and banking supervision. Europe must now first ensure to overcome the crisis as soon as possible. In addition, lessons should be learned from the mistakes made; Europe must be designed to make sure such a crisis can't occur anymore. It will certainly take some time before the euro crisis is fully behind us. The solution of the crisis will demand efforts, sacrifices and adjustments. The EU is now fully occupied to solve the problems. Despite disagreements Member States are intensely and effectively co-operating and important steps towards a solution have been made.

More in general, Europe, together with its Member States should be more self-critical about things that went wrong in the past. Important things that went wrong in the past are the overproduction in agricultural policy, too detailed regulation, too early accession of Bulgaria and Romania and poor expenditure control.

### *A future with Europe*

The CDA is convinced that Europe has much to offer to us also in the coming years. By preserving and perfecting the good things that have been achieved. By acknowledging mistakes and repair them. By getting rid of policies that are no longer needed. And by looking what new challenges need a European approach. To that end it is not necessary now to formulate an political end goal for Europe. Also in the future, the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and democratic legitimacy will remain leading. Europe must not do things that do not provide added value. But where more Europe is needed, Europe must take concrete steps, and bold steps. Examples are given in this manifesto: a tighter and enforceable coordination of the main lines of the macro-economic policies, so that a new crisis is impossible; the completion of the Internal Market, to enable further growth; a much closer scrutiny of the expenditure of the EU, so that EU money is well spent.

A European approach is also required to provide answers to the great challenges of our time. Nowadays' challenges are different from the time that the EU was created. The issues of today - economic crisis, energy, environment, climate, resource scarcity, security - know no boundaries. The balance of power in the world is shifting and new large countries emerge. These developments will directly affect us all. But our country alone, with a quarter percent of the world's population, will have little impact on them. But Europe can have an impact: it is the largest trading power, the largest integrated market, a powerhouse of culture and creativity, with half a billion citizens. As part of Europe, the Netherlands can have an influence on the developments and participates in the decision making. Together with Europe the Netherlands can achieve what it can no longer achieve alone. If there is one field where the slogan of the CDA, "Together we can achieve more" applies, then it is Europe.

Therefore, a new implementation of European cooperation is needed: we must, in the interest of all of us, work towards a Europe that stands strong in the world, which is equipped for the future. This manifesto also gives examples of policies that we need to that end: the improvement of competitiveness, greater coordination of foreign policy, concrete steps towards a European defense policy, an effective international environmental policy.

### *Participate and give direction to the world economy - space for own identity*

The EU needs to put its house in order, by pursuing good internal policies and a strong position in the world. Thus it can provide an answer for its citizens to the twin challenges of this time: on the one hand, providing people the opportunity to participate in the ever bigger global economy and to use the opportunities of globalization; and on the other hand to provide protection against the excesses of globalization, by promoting our values in the world and by preserving our 'unity in diversity', the proper identity of the regions and local communities.

### *An EU of results and a proactive Netherlands*

Therefore the CDA wants an EU that brings results where it is desired, that brings added value for all of us, that is guided by the principle of subsidiarity and by democratic legitimacy, that sees its values reflected in its policies, that provides solutions for common European and global challenges, that offers security to its citizens and takes responsibility in the world.

In order to shape Europe in such a way our country must invest in a proactive attitude towards the EU.

