

Democrats International

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D66 ready for the European elections

At the last party congress (February 6 and 7, 1999) members of D66 decided on the D66 European Election Manifesto. This manifesto, underlining some specific D66 points of view regarding the European Parliament, was accepted only with merely minor amendments.



Lousewies van der Laan surrounded by other top-candidates for the EP

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The main points focus on democratization, a well co-ordinated European social policy, investments in sustainable economic development, a swift but meticulous European enlargement, and an effective and convincing common foreign and security policy. A summary of this five star program can be found in this issue of Democrats International.

The congress also thanked and said fare well to present members of the European Parliament, Jan Willem

Bertens, Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, and Doeke Eisma who will not return to the EP after the next elections. They wished to make way for a new generation of MEPs. Of the present MEPs only Johanna Boogerd is a candidate for the EP. Both Eisma and Bertens are now candidates for the Senate, that will be indirectly elected just after the provincial elections at the beginning of March.

Lousewies van der Laan (33), for-

Continue on page 2

mer spokeswomen of Dutch Commissioner Hans van der Broek, and a member of the renewal movement "Opheaval", was elected leader for the European elections. Although Van der Laan became only third after the internal ballot, she skillfully managed to convince the Congress of her leadership qualities leaving former MP Bob van den Bos and present MEP Johanna Boogerd at a second and third place. The final list of candidates for the European elections can be found on back side of this issue.

Upon accepting her nomination Van der Laan addressed the congress. Excerpts of her speech show her and D66's commitment to a truly democratic Europe.

'It is up to D66 to clarify the facts: Europe takes decisions that affect our common lives. Europe has substance. It makes a difference to vote for D66, because our party gives the highest priority to democracy and democratization. This is not a leisure habit, but a believe. D66 believes that democracy, the feeling to be able to control decisions that affect us personally, adds to the quality of life. Quality of life is not something that can found in your wallet. A Europe of the cash till, like other parties proclaim, will not arise. That is not a Europe of citizens. The EURO will be a part of us. That sounds nice. But Europe being a part of us should be the goal of D66.'

'European co-operation seems to run smoothly as long as economic issues are involved. But, this co-operation is less effective if non-financial

issues are at stake. For instance, how will The Netherlands be able to maintain a human asylum policy? Labour Prime Minister Wim Kok said: "Who knows may answer." D66 knows and answers: it is a global problem with Dutch implications and a European solution. That is the way to approach these matters. Other European countries may not be eager for such a solution, but for many years The Netherlands have shown solidarity with them too. Who turns away now, abandons the asylum seekers. If D66 really believes in this European solution, we shall have to fight for it.'

'Within D66 the voters will find fighters for a tolerant, green and trustworthy Europe. Individual freedom, protection of human rights, and care for the environment are at the heart of this Europe. Such a Europe can only be achieved in a democratic way. Our Europe and democratization go hand in hand.'

'Much less than other political parties D66 takes root in large civil pressure groups. That is why D66 is the obvious party to break the powerful establishment in Europe as

well. One of the major European aberrations is the monthly moving circus of the parliament to Strasbourg. No voter understands this. And rightly so. If D66 wants to change this aberration, we will have to introduce this issue on the European agenda time and time again. Even if the French national pride causes strong resistance.'

'For the cynics in The Netherlands, who probably will not vote in the coming elections, I have but one message: Europe will not go away! We better be prepared and build a Europe for all. D66 can make the difference in the 21st century Europe. We have to offer real and clear choices. Choices on individual freedom, human rights, and personal responsibility.'

D
DEMOCRATEN



Goodbye to Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, Jan Willem Bertens en Doeke Eisma

The five star European Manifesto of D66

★ Regarding a democratic Europe D66 advocates

1. the drafting of a European constitution in which all civil rights of Europeans are laid down.
2. an intergovernmental conference before the year 2002 to attain a clear and democratic structure of the Union.
3. more controlling power for the European Parliament regarding all expenditures, and the right of initiative regarding legislation.
4. commissioners, that are individually accountable towards the European Parliament.
5. Brussels as the sole assembly place for the European Parliament.
6. a constituency voting system for the European Parliament based upon European ballot lists.

★ Regarding a social Europe D66 emphasizes

7. the importance of and possibilities for a European Monetary Union without extra costs for European consumers.
8. the need for minimal social standards to strengthen the existing social systems.
9. a stronger co-ordination regarding the employment policies of the member states.
10. more exchange of employers and students, while the freedom of settlement of EU citizens becomes effective in all member states in 2005.
11. a proper transfer of pension and social insurance rights between national systems.
12. the prevention of tax competition between member states and the need for minimum tax levels regarding profits and capital gains. Less tax on labour however increases employment.

★ Regarding a green Europe D66 encourages

13. sustainable economic development.
14. less tax on ecologically sound production methods.
15. a market-wise operating agricultural business with sufficient incentives for more sustainable and ecological agriculture.
16. more liberalisation and large-scale investments to promote more transport by rail.
17. VAT on flight tickets and excise-duties on kerosine in order to reduce commercial aviation within the European Union.
18. more European money and a step-by-step plan for environmental issues with regard to the coming enlargement of the Union.

★ Regarding an international and safe Europe D66 supports

19. a swift but meticulous enlargement.
20. essential reforms of the structural funds in favour of the new member states.
21. the urgent demands for a European asylum policy.
22. a special European budget line for financing the reception of asylum seekers.
23. the call for executive powers (controlled by the EP) to fight cross-border crime by Europol.

★ Regarding a global Europe D66 demands

24. an effective and convincing common foreign and security policy to be controlled by the European Parliament.
25. more European co-operation and co-ordination concerning development aid and co-operation.
26. a vote for the European Union within international financial organisation like the International Monetary Fund and the Worldbank.
27. more European defense co-operation within NATO.

Europe has to become a real Democracy

An Opinion by Thom de Graaf MP, Leader of D66 Parliamentary Group

The constitutional battle in Strasbourg at the beginning of 1999 between the European Parliament and the European Commission has unmistakably led to a strengthening of the Parliament. It is a pity that when the EP showed its teeth it did not dare to bite. However, the Commission has been placed under political restraint. A first test of the new balance of power will be in March when the parliament debates the final discharge of the 1997 budget. Also in March an investigation committee will report on the enforcement of measures as proposed by the Commission's chairman, Jacques Santer. Though the EP could have strengthened its own position by deciding to form such a committee itself.

In The Netherlands these events have put the European policy dimension on the map again. Rightly so, because with the introduction of the EURO as a fact, the European integration process becomes more closer to home than ever. Vanishing borders create opportunities for people and business, but also for the crossborder operating criminal. This makes it increasingly important that the Dutch parliament keeps sight of the European decision process.

A European role for the Dutch parliament

Moreover, the Treaty of Amsterdam will come into force soon. The Treaty gives national parliaments for the first time a role in the law-making process of the Union. The Dutch parliament has to be well equipped for that. One of the practical interpretations of the Treaty could be the introduction of a constitutional right of the parliament to receive relevant information on European rules in advance. An explicit right of information does not only do justice to the position of the Dutch parliament, but also gives the government a means to acquire European documents in time and publicly by referring to an internal obligation towards the national parliament.

Likewise, the parliament should get a legal right of consent concerning a number of decisions in the

field of the common foreign and security policy. The question remains whether Brussels already takes decisions that are politically binding or under international law and therefore require parliamentary involvement.

Another issue concerns the right to speak for Dutch MEPs during parliamentary sessions preliminary to the Council of Ministers. Although the government is officially only accountable to the national parliamentarians, the involvement of

Thom de Graaf



MEPs will generate more information and sharpen the debate. It is an old proposal that finally gets support by a house majority. Next to these issues on the national level, it is important to strengthen democracy on the European level. During the coming months major decisions will be taken about the enlargement of the Union: e.g. reforming the agricultural policy and the structural funds, and the settlement of the new financial perspectives for the years 2000-2006. The Treaty of Amsterdam implied a leap forward towards more openness and democratisation of the Union. In three rounds (1986, 1991, and 1997) the European Parliament transformed from a toothless tiger into an influential institution that matters. Instead of the team of European Commission - Council of Ministers now a triangle of Commission - Parliament - Council exists. However, this still implies that the parliamentary angle of this triangle needs strengthening. European citizens will only start filling the ballot boxes again if the EP becomes a democratic force of importance. With the accession of new member states also a democratic strike has to be made. Enlargement of the Union and strengthening of democracy go hand in hand, without excluding the one or the other.

More co-legislative powers for EP

Because of these reasons a new conference of the member states' governments should start in the short term. As one of the outcomes of this conference the European Parliament has to attain co-legislative competence regarding the legislation and the budget on agriculture and fishery. At the moment neither the European Parliament nor the national parliaments have any competence regarding almost half of the Union's budget, i.e. about 45 billion of 100 billion EURO. This is an intolerable situation. Also in the field of immigration and asylum policy the national governments have to delegate as soon as possible co-legislative powers to the EP. Until the Treaty of Amsterdam the nation-

al governments totally controlled the European asylum policy. Because unanimity in the Council of Ministers is required the decision process can easily be frustrated and Europe remains hostage of the most conservative member state. In the Treaty of Amsterdam it was decided that within five years a majority decision process in the Council will be introduced, while the European Parliament will receive co-legislative powers regarding asylum policy. This is a very important opportunity. It is now up to the national parliaments to pressure the governments not to wait until the Treaty of Amsterdam comes into force, but to demand strengthening of openness and democracy as soon as possible.

More generally, the European Parliament needs to get co-legisla-

tive competence regarding fields on which the Council takes majority decisions. In cases in which the national ministers can be outvoted the scope of the national parliaments to check the decision process is limited. The obvious body is the European Parliament. Co-operation between national and European parliamentarians is indispensable. Finally, the European Parliament should be enabled to elect the Chairman of the Commission on a recommendation of the European Council. As in The Netherlands there has to be a collective political accountability for the European Commission as a whole and an individual accountability for each Commissioner. In short, Europe has to become a mature democracy. For this quite a number of more radical steps is needed.

Politeia

The Network for Citizenship and Democracy in Europe

The Network for Citizenship and Democracy in Europe is a virtual organisation of more than 1000 institutions and persons working in the field of citizenship and political education and wishing to co-operate at European level.

The internet-site www.politeia.net

This is the web-site for citizenship and democracy. The objective of this site is to reach out to persons and institutions that are active in the promotion of political participation on a European level and that can pass on their knowledge and experience to other network participants. The site contains accessible information about the network, the current and back issues of the Newsletter, a database of organisations, the announcement of seminars and a visitors' book that offers the possibility to communicate with colleagues, to give information about activities and projects in which one is involved, to look for project-partners, to ask questions and start discussions. A wealth of information is offered in the Resource Center. Here you will enter a virtual library with internet-sites that offer information about European political institutions, political parties, governments, media, non-governmental organisations in Eastern, Central and Western Europe, decision-making processes, European citizenship, citizenship education, teaching and training materials, and a lot more.

Politeia Network for Citizenship and Democracy in Europe can be reached at:

Prinsengracht 911-915, NL-1017 KD Amsterdam, tel. +31 20 5217600, fax +31 20 6383118, e-mail: international@publiek-politiek.nl, internet: www.politeia.net

Liberal International

At the last party congress a majority of D66 members present voted in favour of applying for full membership of Liberal International (LI). D66 has observer status since 1986. The VVD has been a member since 1960, while former VVD leader Frits Bolkestein is president of LI since 1996.

During a fringe meeting at the congress international secretary Wilfried Derksen explained the impossibility of a new extension of the observer status. It was time to join or to quit. 'D66 is special, but not unique,' Derksen declared: 'also outside The Netherlands social liberal parties exist. An ideal situation would be a separate international organisation of social liberal parties, but at the moment this is not feasible. The majority of our sister parties, like the British Liberal Democrats, Det Radikale Venstre of Denmark and Austria's Liberales Forum, have deliberately decided for the LI membership. A social liberal co-operation without these parties is in the eyes of the D66 Board undesirable.'

Past and present opinions

Previous international secretary Michel Groothuizen declared in 1991 that D66 would follow the discussion within LI from a sideline and would remain to do so. According to Groothuizen D66 was not aspiring full membership. Political leader Hans van Mierlo did not even want to be associated with the ideology of liberalism, for it represented a movement from the 19th century. D66 as a new political movement desired to avoid altogether these traditional principles. Derksen: 'But the present Board favours international social liberal co-operation. It sees good possibilities for this within LI and ELDR.'

Membership of LI is valuable because of the important contacts that can be established. An internationally orientated party like D66 welcomes such a global network. Previously this has proved to be valuable for the International Democratic Initiative Foundation of the

party. The solidarity with like minded parties in developing countries should receive priority. As they can benefit from our knowledge and support to strengthen the position of their own country. Moreover, D66 in co-operation with the British Liberal Democrats could counterbalance the conservative liberals within LI. Derksen quotes: 'Joining is an expression of solidarity with the social liberals in LI. Both speakers from Det Radikale Venstre and Liberal Democrats have made this perfectly clear at the last congress.'

Liberal or social liberal principles?

But how liberal is LI? To begin with, the Austrian extreme nationalist Haider is not a member of LI, as is often believed. The LI is a co-operation of liberals founded in 1947. The Danish social liberal party Det Radikale Venstre is one of the founding parties. At the founding a Liberal Manifesto was drafted, a kind of liberal declaration of human rights. According to the statutes the most important aim of LI is 'to win general acceptance of Liberal principles throughout the world, and to foster the growth of a free society based on personal liberty, personal responsibility and social justice, and to provide the means of co-operation between men and women of all countries who accept these principles.'

What do these liberal principles in fact mean for D66? After the upheaval at the November Congress the party is working very hard on the formulation of a revised political program. How can one, without identifying its own principles first join an organisation that requires the party to accept upon entering three basic documents: the Liberal

Manifesto of 1957, the Liberal Declaration of 1967 and the Liberal Appeal of 1981? Was a social liberal conference on this topic not more a necessity than a fringe meeting which only twenty members attended? Derksen: 'Party chairman Tom Kok has said it clearly at the congress: "Entering LI does not move D66 an inch more to a right-wing position." Membership does not mean that we now embrace Bolkestein or the VVD. D66 keeps its own identity. The committee "Identity" has started to work on this and will get its inspiration from the principles of the sister parties. The basic documents of LI will play no role in this process, because they have been drafted to suit both wings within LI.'

Criticism and caution

Notwithstanding the majority, there were some critical voices at the congress, especially within the EP delegation. Their criticism was aimed at the fact that insufficient discussion within the party had taken place. Moreover, the MEPs believed this was a bad image just before the (provincial and European) elections. Jan Willem Bertens put forward a motion in which the decision would be postponed until the autumn, in order to have a thorough discussion. This in spite of the fact that the ELDR Group in the EP is already a member of LI. The requested discussion will however continue, as Derksen explains: 'Concerning the membership the party will be informed regularly and after three years an evaluation will take place. New developments in countries like Israel, France and Italy justify such a position.'

*Cintha van Heeswijck
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The Top Five Candidates for the European Parliament



1. **Lousewies van der Laan** (33), former spokeswoman of Dutch European Commissioner Hans van der Broek, studied international and European law at the University of Leyden. After her studies at the School for Advanced International Studies of the John Hopkins University in Bologna she worked at the European Commission on environmental projects in the former Soviet Republics of the Tacis programme and at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Developments in London. Van der Laan was already a D66 candidate for the European Parliament in 1994 and is today an active member of Upheaval, a reform movement of young D66 members. She speaks Dutch, English, German, French and Italian.

2. **Bob van der Bos** (51), former member of Parliament and member of both the Assembly of the Council of Europe and of the West European Union, has been active within D66 for many years. The political scientist Van der Bos worked at the Dutch Institute for International Affairs Clingendael. Having been a vice-president on the national board of D66 he entered the Dutch Senate in 1985 for the first time. After a short interval he returned to the Senate in 1991, before becoming a MP in 1994. Van der Bos was speaker for European affairs both in the Senate and the Lower House. As a future MEP Van der Bos wishes to continue his fight against factory farming, international transport of livestock and genetic engineering, for which he already received recognition in 1997 by being nominated Dutch animal rights activist of the year.



3. **Johanna Boogerd-Quaak** (55) is a member of the European Parliament since 1994. After finishing her higher education in social and community work, she became amongst others chairwomen of the Regional Board of Employment Services in the Province of Zeeland. This explains for her present membership of the Social Affairs and Employment Committee and of the Committee on Industrial Policy. Besides being a substitute member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, she is also vice-chairwoman of the delegation to the European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee (EEA) and a substitute member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

4. **Floor Kist** (33) is a policy advisor on police affairs for the municipality of Amsterdam. As a member of the program committee Kist has been involved in the drafting of the D66 European Manifesto. He underlines his candidacy by stating: "The European Parliament needs the people of Europe to meet the challenges of the new century." An improved implementation of European directives on a local level needs however to be checked by a strong European Parliament. The way in which the present European Union operates, leaves too much power to the national governments. Being the son of a diplomat, Floor Kist lived half his life abroad and speaks both English, French and Spanish.



5. **Sophie in 't Veld** (35) is the Secretary of the ELDR group at the Committee of the Regions. From 1994 to 1996 In 't Veld worked as a political assistant of Johanna Boogerd at the European Parliament. In her present function she works at the cross roads of European and regional/local policy and politics, which accounts for her strong plea for a change of the political culture and a rejuvenation of European politics. The present form of government of the European Union is already forty years old and can not cope with the coming enlargement and increasing number of tasks and duties. Sophie in 't Veld is living in Brussels.

D66 Democrats International

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D66 European Parliament

Wiertzstraat (10 G 205)

B-1047 Brussels

Tel: +32.2.2845602 (Brussels)

Tel: +333.88.175602 (Strasbourg)

Fax: +32.2.2849602 (Brussels)

Members of the European Parliament:

Jan-Willem Bertens, Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, Doeke Eisma and Johanna Boogerd-Quaak, members of the ELDR-group.

D66 Party Office

P.O. Box 660

NL-2501 CR The Hague

office:

Noordwal 10

The Hague

Tel: +31.70.3566066 or:

+31.70.3566028 (International Secretariat)

Fax: +31.70.3641917

E-mail: lsd66@d66.nl

Website: www.d66.nl

Party President: Tom Kok

International Secretary: Wilfried Derksen

D66 Parliamentary Group

Postbus 20018

2500 EA Den Haag

Tel: +31.70.3183066

Group-leader: Thom de Graaf

14 out of 150 members of parliament

D66 Senate Group

Postbus 20017

2500 EA Den Haag

+31.70.3183066

Group-leader: Ed Schuyer

7 out of 75 senators

D66 International Quarterly

Editor-in-chief: Ralph E. de Vries

P.O. Box 660

NL-2501 CR The Hague

E-mail: R.de.Vries@d66.nl

Editors: Ralph E. de Vries, Tessa Maas.

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Upon her election Louisewies van der Laan receives congratulations from Laurens Jan Brinkhorst MEP and Bob van den Bos

D66 list of candidates for the European Parliament

	m/f	name and residence
1.	F	LOUSEWIES van den LAAN, BRUSSELS
2.	M	BOB van den BOS, THE HAGUE
3.	F	JOHANNA BOOGERD QAAK, ZAAMSLAG
4.	M	FLOOR KIST, AMSTERDAM
5.	F	SOPHIE in 't VELD, BRUSSELS
6.	F	IEN PEIJNENBURG van der POL, EERSEL
7.	M	BERT KAMPHUIS, SITTARD
8.	F	MARIJN de KONING, BAAMBRUGGE
9.	M	TOM STROOBACH, LELYSTAD
10.	F	ERICA JASPERS, THE HAGUE
11.	M	HANS ROOS, HILVERSUM
12.	F	JOAN van RIJSWIJK, WARMOND
13.	M	RALPH E. de VRIES, UTRECHT
14.	M	JAN FLAMELING, STEENBERGEN (NB)
15.	F	GAITRIE BHAROS, CAPELLE AAN DEN IJSSEL
16.	M	HENK ROELOFS, EMMEN
17.	M	LAURENS BONNEMA, DORDRECHT
18.	M	WIM RITSEMA, MEEDHUIZEN
19.	M	ROBERT VEGTER, LIMMEN
20.	M	JAAP van den DONKER, THOLEN
21.	M	BRIAN ELEY, DELFT
22.	M	COR RESOORT, ROTTERDAM
23.	M	JAN RESOORT, ROTTERDAM

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