

## Local Issues & EU Policy Country Report

### The Netherlands

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#### Disclaimer

The insights presented in this Local Issues & EU Policy Country Report: the Netherlands are the result of research on sustainable energy policies at both the European and local levels, with additional input derived from group work exercises collecting individual opinions. The authors have diligently compiled this information to offer a nuanced understanding of sustainable energy initiatives in the Netherlands. It is essential to note that the authors do not claim ownership or endorsement of the viewpoints expressed, and they should not be attributed to the authors themselves. Given the evolving nature of opinions, the authors cannot guarantee the absolute accuracy, or completeness of the information presented. The report may be influenced by language nuances, potential translation or editing errors, and variations in information from external sources. Readers are strongly advised to independently verify and evaluate the information provided. The authors disclaim any responsibility for errors, misunderstandings, or misinterpretations that may arise and shall not be held liable for any

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## Introduction

The EU 24 - Engage for the Planet project aims to organise gender-balanced mixed exchange events in five European countries - Sweden, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and France - focusing on climate justice, climate change and sustainability. The 20-month project aims to address the pronounced democratic participation deficit of young citizens, people from diverse backgrounds and mobile EU citizens. Its overall aim is to bridge this gap by raising awareness of the importance of their voices in the European political arena.

Despite the commendable turnout observed in the recent EU elections, which has been described as the highest in a quarter of a century, it is evident that people from diverse backgrounds and mobile citizens of the Union continue to be under-represented among active EU voters and in the arenas of democratic engagement. Consequently, this initiative emerges as a deliberate response to this perceived imbalance, underlining the imperative of inclusivity within democratic processes.

Central to the thematic scope of the project is the critical concern of climate change - a global challenge recognised as the number one threat to humanity. Recognising the need for transnational and multinational cooperation to effectively address this challenge, the initiative aims to contribute significantly to the building of a resilient European political community. This envisioned community is characterised by its interactivity, diversity and capacity to shape and articulate opinions within the political discourse.

This report focuses on sustainable energy in the Netherlands and at the European Level.

Sustainable energy means energy sources and processes that meet today's energy needs without sacrificing future generations' ability to meet their own. Renewable energy sources are energy sources that naturally replenish themselves over time and are environmentally friendly because they emit fewer greenhouse gases and pollutants than fossil fuels.

Sustainable energy is essential for addressing pressing environmental, economic, and social challenges, promoting inclusive development, and building a more resilient and equitable future for all. Sustainable energy has a positive impact on the environment, public health, energy security and energy access. Moreover, sustainable energy offers long term solutions. Unlike fossil fuels, which are finite resources subject to depletion, sustainable energy sources are renewable and abundant. Harnessing renewable energy minimizes environmental degradation, conserves natural resources, and ensures energy availability for future generations.

In March 2024, the blended international Event on Energy - International Debate: Navigating the Path to Sustainable Energy - took place in Drouwen (Drenthe) the Netherlands. The event aimed to highlight the importance of diverse voices in addressing the global climate crisis. It encouraged people from different backgrounds, including young people, and mobile citizens of the European Union, to come together and share their opinions and innovative ideas to combat climate change.

The aim of this report is to:

- present the current state of sustainable energy policy at EU level; this will help to assess the effectiveness of the policy and its impact on European municipalities;
- examine the current landscape of sustainable energy policy in Netherlands; this research will help to provide insight into the current national framework and identify areas where improvements can be made;
- finally, the report will look at the point of view of the citizens. This will be done by summarising the EU24 debate and summarising the views expressed by participants. This will help to gain a better understanding of public opinion around sustainable energy policies, thus contributing to the ongoing debate at national and EU levels.

### Sustainable energy policies at EU Level<sup>1</sup>

Sustainable energy policies at the European Union level are designed to address the challenges of climate change, energy security, and economic competitiveness while promoting the transition to clean and renewable energy sources.

The EU has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its total energy consumption. The latest target, known as the "Clean Energy for All Europeans Package" aims for at least 32% of final energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2030.

The EU has prioritized energy efficiency measures to reduce energy consumption and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. Initiatives include energy efficiency standards for buildings, appliances, and industrial processes.

The EU is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. This goal is part of the EU's contribution to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The EU has implemented a carbon pricing mechanism known as the Emissions Trading System (ETS). This cap-and-trade system sets a limit on the total amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted by covered entities and allows trading of emission allowances.

The EU funds research and innovation projects to develop clean energy technologies and improve energy efficiency. Programs such as Horizon Europe support projects aimed at advancing renewable energy, energy storage, and smart grid technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package_en);  
[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency_en);  
[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy_en);  
[https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/progress-made-cutting-emissions\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/progress-made-cutting-emissions_en);  
[https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation_en);  
[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en);

The EU provides financial support to member states for implementing sustainable energy policies through various funding mechanisms, including the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the Cohesion Fund, and the Innovation Fund.

The Energy Union is a comprehensive strategy aimed at ensuring a secure, sustainable, and affordable energy supply for EU citizens. It focuses on energy diversification, energy efficiency, decarbonization, and the integration of renewable energy sources.

The EU has established a regulatory framework to facilitate the transition to sustainable energy, including directives and regulations governing renewable energy, energy efficiency, electricity markets, and energy infrastructure development.

Overall, sustainable energy policies at the EU level aim to drive the transition to a low-carbon and resilient energy system, ensuring a secure and affordable energy supply while contributing to global efforts to combat climate change.

## Sustainable energy policies in the Netherlands <sup>2</sup>

Sustainable energy policies in the Netherlands are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and transitioning to renewable energy sources. The Netherlands has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its total energy consumption. The most recent target aims for 27% by 2030. By 2050, Dutch central government wants to reduce the Netherlands' emissions of greenhouse gases (like carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)) to zero.

The following energy forms are considered low in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: solar energy; onshore wind energy; offshore wind energy; biomass energy; geothermal heat; hydropower.

The Netherlands is heavily investing in offshore wind energy projects. The government has awarded contracts for the construction of large-scale offshore wind farms, aiming to significantly increase offshore wind capacity in the coming years.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-economic-affairs-and-climate-policy>;  
<https://www.government.nl/topics/renewable-energy/offshore-wind-energy>;  
<https://english.rvo.nl/>;  
<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/renewable-energy-all>;  
<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/growing-or-upscaling-your-business/funding>;  
<https://www.frontier-economics.com/uk/en/news-and-insights/case-studies/case-study-i7631-energy-power-market-modelling-for-climate-policy-in-the-netherlands/>;

The Netherlands's Effort to Phase Out and Rationalise its Fossil-Fuel

Subsidies An OECD/IEA review of fossil-fuel subsidies in the Netherlands

<https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-3cdf22ee-9f78-4438-947c-73550d9eebc3/pdf>;

<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/electric-transport>;

<https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-infrastructure-and-water-management>;

The Dutch government has implemented various energy efficiency measures, including subsidies and incentives for energy-saving initiatives in buildings, industries, and transportation sectors.

The Netherlands has committed to phasing out coal-fired power plants by 2030 as part of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to cleaner energy sources.

The Dutch government promotes the adoption of solar energy through subsidies, tax incentives, and net metering schemes, encouraging households, businesses, and communities to install solar panels.

The Netherlands supports the development of biogas and biomass energy projects, including the use of organic waste and agricultural residues to produce renewable energy.

The Dutch government provides financial support for sustainable energy projects through various funding mechanisms, such as grants, loans, and subsidies from national and regional energy transition funds.

The Dutch government, along with industry, environmental organizations, and other stakeholders, has developed the Energy Transition Agreement to outline strategies and actions for achieving the country's energy transition goals. The Energy Agenda sets targets for the years up to 2050.

The Netherlands promotes the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) through incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies for EV purchases, and investments in charging infrastructure.

The Netherlands participates in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) and has set national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aiming to achieve a 49% reduction by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

These sustainable energy policies in the Netherlands reflect the country's commitment to combating climate change, enhancing energy security, and promoting economic growth through the transition to a more sustainable energy system.

*Good practices in the Netherlands*<sup>3</sup>

- *Zero-emission zones to be introduced in many cities from 2025*

From 1 January 2025, municipalities in the Netherlands are allowed to designate an urban area where no polluting vans and trucks are allowed to drive. The goal is to reduce particulate matter and CO2 emissions in cities. That area is a zero-emission zone (ZEZ). The perimeter of a ZEZ must cover at least the city centre plus surrounding neighbourhoods. This area can be entered with a van or truck if it does not emit any polluting substances. For example, a car running on electricity or hydrogen.

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[3 https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/environmental-impact/making-your-business-sustainable/zero-emission-zones-to-be-introduced-in-many-cities-from-2025/](https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/environmental-impact/making-your-business-sustainable/zero-emission-zones-to-be-introduced-in-many-cities-from-2025/)  
<https://business.gov.nl/regulation/environmental-zone/>  
<https://www.milieuzones.nl/english>  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50396037>  
<https://nltimes.nl/2019/12/17/dutch-senate-approves-emergency-nitrogen-reduction-plan-noisy-tractor-protest>  
<https://nltimes.nl/2020/03/16/maximum-speed-limit-dutch-roads-100-kmh-starting-monday>

A zero-emission zone is not the same as an environmental zone (millieuzone). An environmental zone, also called a low-emission zone, is an area where certain diesel vehicles are not allowed to enter. Several Dutch cities have an environmental zone.

- *Environmental zones (millieuzone) against car pollution*

With an environmental zone (low emission zone), Dutch municipalities can exclude particular types of cars, vans, and trucks from specific areas. The goal is to improve local air quality. All municipalities with an environmental zone use the same traffic sign to indicate the boundaries of the zone and the permitted emission class.

Environmental zones apply to diesel-powered vehicles. Vehicles using a fuel other than diesel are allowed in all environmental zones. A vehicle's emission standard determines in which environmental zone vehicles are allowed to drive.

- Yellow zone: applies to diesel powered cars and vans. Only cars and vans with an emission rate of 3 and higher are allowed.
- Green zone: applies to diesel powered cars and vans. Only cars and vans with an emission rate of 4 and higher are allowed.
- Purple zone: applies to diesel powered trucks and coaches. Only diesel trucks, buses, and coaches with an emission rate of 6 are allowed.

If a van or truck meets the emission standards and may enter the environmental zone, can be checked with the Dutch Environmental Zones Expert Centre's. Or can be consulted with the Urban Access Regulations in Europe.

There are low-emission zones in some Dutch city centres. Municipalities create these zones to improve air quality in their cities. The rules for low-emission zones also apply to foreign vehicles.

Fifteen Dutch municipalities have low-emission zones. The low-emission zone rules *usually* only apply to trucks and coaches, and sometimes also to diesel-powered passenger cars and vans. Road signs show which vehicles are affected by the low-emission zone.

Vehicles using a fuel other than diesel are allowed in all low-emission zones.

Driving in a municipality that has a low-emission zone does not require registering in advance.

- *Netherlands forced to slash speed limit to reduce emissions*

In March 2020, the Netherlands implemented a new maximum speed limit of 100 km/h on its highways in an effort to reduce nitrogen emissions. This measure is part of a broader strategy to address environmental concerns, particularly related to nitrogen pollution, which has led to protests and legal challenges in recent years. The lower speed limit aims to curb nitrogen oxide emissions and mitigate the impact on vulnerable ecosystems such as nature reserves and Natura 2000 areas.

## Citizens perspective: the contribution of the EU24 debate

For our debate methodology “Articulate a vision” was chosen. With this methodology, we wanted to develop a vision and formulate policy recommendations on energy issues in the context of the EU24 elections. Participants were instructed to find collective solutions and compromises on the issues that arise within energy domain. Within the debate participants were asked to identify current challenges. Then they were encouraged to imagine a future, in short and long terms. Based on their vision of the future participants were asked to formulate policy recommendations.

To allow participants focus on particular subjects and therefore be able to have more in depth debate each group was assigned one of the following topics:

- Topic 1: Fossils: Coal & oil

Coal has been steadily decreasing in popularity in Europe since the start of the industrial revolution. Nowadays, however, there are still some economies that are dependent on coal as one of their main power sources. This begs the question: how can we support these economies and regions to transition to cleaner energy sources? Is it even possible? Or should we look at it in a totally different way? What about energy independence?

- Topic 2: Natural gas and hydrogen

Natural gas has been dubbed as the great transition fuel. It burns cleaner than coal and oil, it is abundant, cheap and already integrated into our energy infrastructure. Natural gas however also has its own problems. One of these is the heavy dependence on infrastructure. A recent example is the events surpassing the invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. When Nordstream was made inoperable after explosions in the Baltic, Germany suddenly lost a huge part of their energy production capacity which resulted in huge price hikes in gas prices.

There could be a lot of solutions to these problems. The EU is particularly interested in the possibility of hydrogen replacing natural gas in the long run. Is this feasible? Should we still invest in gas extraction technologies and expeditions in the North Sea and Baltic Sea? How can we make Europe more resistant to infrastructure problems and price fluctuations?

- Topic 3: Nuclear energy and fusion energy (other future energies)

Nuclear energy and fusion energy stand at the forefront of the global energy discourse, representing both the challenges and promises of the future. You can't think about these topics without questions of safety, sustainability, and technological innovation. Nuclear energy, with its established presence, has been a subject of contention, while fusion energy holds the potential for revolutionary change. How can we navigate the complexities of nuclear power, addressing concerns and optimising its potential? Moreover, as we explore the elusive dream of fusion energy, we grapple with the scientific and engineering hurdles that stand between us and a virtually boundless energy source.

- Topic 4: Wind energy

As the continent endeavours to reduce its carbon footprint and combat climate change, the role of wind energy becomes increasingly pivotal. The winds of change have been blowing, both literally and figuratively, across the continent as nations grapple with the imperative to shift towards renewable energy.

However, this transition to wind energy is not without its challenges and debates. Questions abound regarding the efficiency, reliability, and environmental impact of large-scale wind farms. Moreover, concerns about the visual and ecological effects of these towering structures have sparked discussions about their placement and integration into the existing landscape. How can Europe maximise the potential of wind energy while addressing the associated concerns? What role does innovation play in enhancing the efficiency and acceptance of wind power? Is wind energy alone sufficient, or should it be part of a broader, diversified energy portfolio?

- Topic 5: Solar energy

In the quest for sustainable energy, solar power emerges as a bright contender, harnessing the sun's energy for a greener future in Europe. As solar technology advances, questions arise about overcoming intermittency, effective energy storage, and minimizing environmental impact. Innovation in thin-film solar cells and solar thermal systems adds to the discourse. How can Europe navigate these challenges, encourage widespread adoption, and transition economically? Policymakers play a key role in incentivizing solar energy, while public awareness fosters a solar-centric mindset.

- Topic 6: Energy markets

In the dynamic arena of energy markets, pivotal questions surface as Europe navigates the transition from traditional to renewable sources. The debate over regionalizing prices becomes central – should Europe adopt a regionalized pricing approach? Simultaneously, reflections on the common market arise – was the establishment of a common market a mistake? Balancing these inquiries is essential for shaping resilient, equitable, and sustainable energy markets. Europe grapples with the need for adaptable strategies, innovative solutions, and collaborative efforts to address these central questions and steer the energy landscape towards a brighter future.

- Topic 7: Energy grid

Europe faces a crucial debate on the future of its energy grid. Should the focus be on local resilience, with smaller, regional grids ensuring reliability and empowering communities? Or should the emphasis shift to greater interconnectedness, creating an efficient, continent-wide network capable of optimizing resource utilization and supporting renewable energy integration? Striking the right balance is key, involving considerations of technical feasibility, economic impact, and environmental sustainability. The decision will shape Europe's energy infrastructure for years to come.

- Topic 8: Incentivizing Decentralized Energy Production

Exploring decentralized energy production in Europe raises the crucial query: how can we incentivize its acceptance? Financial incentives, like subsidies, can stimulate investment in small-scale



renewables. Streamlined policies and public awareness campaigns play a vital role in removing barriers and fostering community engagement. Technological innovations, particularly in smart grids and energy storage, contribute to creating a more resilient and decentralized energy landscape. The discussion revolves around striking a balance between individual participation and broader sustainability objectives. Europe navigates this transformative journey towards incentivizing decentralized energy production for a greener future.

- Topic 9: Increasing energy demand due to digitalization / electrification

As digitalization and electrification drive up energy demand in Europe, a crucial question emerges: Can the continent cope with this surge? The strain on existing grids prompts considerations about capacity, necessitating investments and innovations. Balancing the demand while meeting ambitious climate goals requires a strategic approach, leveraging smart grid technologies, energy storage, and renewables. Europe finds itself at the crossroads of managing increased energy consumption with responsibility and innovation.

- Topic 10: Energy Storage: Balancing Innovation and Capacity

Europe faces a pivotal decision in the realm of energy storage—should the focus be on investing in innovative technologies like next-gen batteries, or on increasing storage capacity now with existing solutions? Striking the right balance between immediate needs and long-term sustainability is crucial. How can Europe navigate this dilemma, fostering both short-term capacity enhancements and long-term technological advancements? The challenge lies in aligning investment strategies with the dual goals of addressing current demands and building a resilient, sustainable energy future.

### *Challenges*

During the debate, participants highlighted several challenges currently facing in the energy sector. Participants were giving examples from their countries of origin and on the European level.

One of the challenges recognized was the slow progression of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal power. This slow progression was identified as an obstruction in the transition to sustainable energy. Slow change into renewable energy sources was blamed on a lack of sufficient government subsidies and clear regulations. Bureaucratic hurdles vary depending on the region in Europe.

The efficiency of imported energy was identified as questionable, and there are challenges related to transportation, storage, and distribution. Inefficient energy usage contributes to high consumption levels and price fluctuations, leading to insecurity and social inequality.

Local protests against energy projects, such as wind farms, highlight the importance of social acceptance and public knowledge.

Energy dependency, especially on imports from Russia, is a significant issue, particularly in light of Russia's actions such as the war on Ukraine.

Nuclear energy is controversial, and there are concerns about its safety and environmental impact. Transforming from nuclear and fossil fuel infrastructure to renewables and green energy sources poses logistical and political challenges. In France, there is debate over whether nuclear energy should be labelled as renewable despite concerns about waste and water contamination, while there is local resistance against renewable energy projects. Germany's decision to replace nuclear energy with coal and gas has raised environmental and economic concerns.

The phaseout of coal and the influence of fossil fuel lobbying, remain significant concerns.

Current emissions levels, infrastructure development challenges, and Ukraine's dependence on imported natural gas and outdated energy infrastructure further compound the energy sector's challenges.

### *Visions for the future*

#### Vision 2030

After the current pressing issues regarding energy were identified participants were encouraged to think about the near future. Participants considered questions such as: What are immediate actions to take? Which specific aspects can be improved (e.g. shared energy, alternative fuels, intermodal connectivity)? How would the energy landscape change in the next five years?

In the near future funding of renewable energy sources should be increased. Investing in decentralized sustainable energy infrastructure is vital. A decrease in taxes on green energies and an increase in taxes on coal is needed. Cut funding and subsidies for non-green projects. Make funding for household energy adaptation more accessible.

Moreover, it was expressed that local communities, i.e. municipalities or regions should receive significantly higher funding for climate change mitigation actions.

The private sector was recognized as an important factor in the energy transformation. Companies should be encouraged to invest in greener energy by tax reductions and other incentives offered by the government on local, national and European levels.

Participants identified the pressing need to improve European energy infrastructure and the importance of quickly building additional infrastructure for renewables.

In principle, more investment in renewable energy research is necessary.

Participants recognized that funding and incentives to invest in renewables are not the only challenges. A very important step to increase the utilization of renewable energy is the improvement of regulations. Removing administrative and bureaucratic hurdles would be an important step that could make a significant impact in the short term. Additionally, existing laws and policies must be enforced through monitoring and sanctions.

Another aspect of short term actions that could have a significant positive impact would be sharing knowledge on effective renewable production. It was also recognized that the stimulation of collaboration between scientists and industry experts could have a strong impact on the creation of solutions. Those solutions could be available right away for implementation.

Other short term remedies were recognized in the field of education and raising public awareness. Public participation could be increased through education. Expanding the promotion of renewable energies could help avoid local protests.

In the short term, more focus should be given to researching storage technologies to improve sustainable energies and to develop methods to store excess energy.

On a European level, it was identified that minimizing conflicts between member states would bring significant benefits. Aligning the energy needs of all member states is a target.

Other suggestions were to: increase European solar panel production; expand the use of hydrogen; transform industries, such as hydrogen-based steel production; invest in public transport and improve international train tickets, including ticket compatibility; implementing lower speed limits; increased EU involvement in public transportation; seeking inspiration from nature.

#### Vision 2045

In this section of the debate, participants were encouraged to think even further ahead into the future, twenty years from now. Questions given to consider were: where do you expect to live; how would that place's energy supply and consumption differ from today; what has changed; what role would the EU play in these changes; how would the European energy system look like?

Participants from almost every group identified that in the long term all member states should achieve net zero emissions and strive for 100% renewable energy usage. Working towards achieving 100% renewable energy reliance is a main goal but if that wouldn't be possible share of renewable energies in the overall energy production should be significantly increased.

Phase out coal is important as coal has been recognized as a major pollutant, in the energy production sector. Energy production should prioritize local sources to ensure affordability and efficiency. Strategically locate energy sources, considering their measurable climate impact. Promote decentralized energy production. Prevention of neo-extractivism is in place and local control over resource extraction is ensured. Invest in nuclear fusion as a long-term energy solution.

In the long term vision, the EU was placed as the primary coordinator in establishing a united energy grid. European energy distribution would be managed centrally. However, at the same time, more decisions are made on a local level to maximize local potential. Intense and detailed strategic collaboration among European countries is achieved. Energy distribution systems are established based on solidarity. Streamline of bureaucracy is achieved, and there are no bureaucratic hurdles to utilize renewable energy. Clear priorities are set and advocated to the United Nations.

Energy production decisions are based on scientific evidence. Green policies are implemented free from lobbying influence. Investments in new energy innovations and resources are well funded. Innovation is devoted to new and existing sustainable energy sources. Actions to halt unsustainable practices are well in place. Independence from energy imports is achieved.

Industrial energy consumption is adjusted to fluctuations in renewable energy availability (or the solution of storage of energy is implemented). The circular economy is the major production and consumption model.

Community-owned energy infrastructure is supported. Implement lossless power transmission lines. Enhance storage capacity for renewable energy sources. Improve infrastructure to reduce regional energy consumption disparities.

Rural regions are connected to public transportation networks, prioritizing public transport usage. There is a shift towards fossil fuel-free mobility, including hydrogen-based air travel.

### *Policy recommendations*

As a final step, participants were asked to imagine ways to reach the future vision they created and make recommendations to the EU. They were asked to look at the current issues identified in phase 1 and the future visions for the short and long term. The goal was to identify feasible and relevant actions to be taken.

Key Policy Recommendations presented by the participants:

- Harmonization of Energy Networks through Europe;
- Advocacy for a unified European railway system;
- Acceleration of the switch to renewable Energies;
- Access to renewable energy as a human right;
- Stronger processual and financial involvement of citizens in energy endeavours

### Conclusions

The report is including study of sustainable energy policies in the Netherlands and at the European level revealing a complex and dynamic landscape. Based on the EU24 - Engage for the Planet project's main aim to tackle democratic participation shortcomings and promote inclusivity, the report highlights the central influence of sustainable energy in developing a robust European political union.

Expanding on the previous report's findings, which analysed EU approaches towards sustainability and climate change, this report examines local policies in the Netherlands with a focus on sustainable energy. The document explores the Framework Law on Energy and showcases examples of good practices, including environmental zones, zero emission zones and the lowered speed limit on the highways. These examples demonstrate the Netherlands's dedication to creating modern and ecological energy solutions.

The report explores the citizens' perspective and provides insights from the EU24 event: "International Debate: Navigating the Path to Sustainable Energy". The report identifies current challenges, includes visions created by participants for both 2030 and 2045 and key policy recommendations that would stimulate progress needed to achieve the envisaged future.

Policy suggestions made by those involved in the debate include achieving European energy market, where member states cooperate with each other and have energy networks functioning harmoniously on the European level. Efforts to increase energy production from renewable sources should be enforced and supported from the European level. Another recommendation involved building a system where local communities (municipalities or regions) are empowered to implement solutions most efficient based on the local specificities and circumstances. Another important recommendation was to include citizens to allow them to participate in policy creation and to encourage them to participate financially.

This report provides a comprehension of sustainable energy policies and presents a guide for stakeholders to tackle current challenges and explore prospects for creating a future where sustainable energy is an essential part of European society. Website links and other resources used in the report are listed in the *Resources* section of the report.

*Resources:*

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package_en)

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency_en)

[https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/progress-made-cutting-emissions\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/progress-made-cutting-emissions_en)

[https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/research-and-innovation_en)

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en)

<https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-economic-affairs-and-climate-policy>

<https://www.government.nl/topics/renewable-energy/offshore-wind-energy>

<https://english.rvo.nl/>

<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/renewable-energy-all>

<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/growing-or-upscaling-your-business/funding>

<https://www.frontier-economics.com/uk/en/news-and-insights/case-studies/case-study-i7631-energy-power-market-modelling-for-climate-policy-in-the-netherlands/>

The Netherlands's Effort to Phase Out and Rationalise its Fossil-Fuel Subsidies An OECD/IEA review of fossil-fuel subsidies in the Netherlands <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-3cdf22ee-9f78-4438-947c-73550d9eebc3/pdf>

<https://english.rvo.nl/topics/electric-transport>

<https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-infrastructure-and-water-management>

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package_en)

[https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets_en)

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal_en)

<https://www.government.nl/topics/renewable-energy/central-government-encourages-sustainable-energy>

<https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/environmental-impact/making-your-business-sustainable/zero-emission-zones-to-be-introduced-in-many-cities-from-2025/>

<https://business.gov.nl/regulation/environmental-zone/>

<https://www.milieuzones.nl/english>

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