

# DIPLOMAT AFFAIRS

A man in a dark suit and glasses is looking at a display in a museum. The display features a large, yellow, cylindrical object, possibly a rocket or missile, and a smaller, white, cylindrical object. The man is standing in front of a glass display case. The background shows a modern interior with large pillars and a curved ceiling.

AMBASSADOR FERNANDO ARIAS DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
OF THE OPCW SHARES INSIGHTS ON THE CONTINUOUS  
NEED FOR THE OPCW IN THE POST DESTRUCTION ERA

KING WILLEM-ALEXANDER CELEBRATES KING'S DAY  
WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY IN MUNICIPALITY OF EMMEN

THE HAGUE 125 YEARS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE  
A BEACON FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

WORLD EXPO 2025 OSAKA KANSAI JAPAN  
DUTCH PAVILION - SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

DIPLOMAT CLUB WASSENAAR WELCOMES AMBASSADORS

10TH ANNIVERSARY

IN TOUCH WITH THE DUTCH



*Diplomat Club Wassenaar*  
*The Netherlands*



**KASTEEL DE  
WITTENBURG**

AUDACIA AMICITIA FIDES

Landgoed De Wittenburg 1, 2244 BV Wassenaar

# *Your Excellencies, dear members, and readers*

**I**t is with profound joy and gratitude that I present you with the latest edition of Diplomat Affairs Magazine – in touch with the Dutch. A special edition celebrating the 10th Anniversary of both Diplomat Club Wassenaar and our magazine.

We are celebrating this milestone with several events this year. The most significant being with one of our partners, CHIO Rotterdam at their 75th Anniversary edition of the revamped, exclusive Longines League of Nations™ that will be organized in June. I thank CHIO board member Mr. Peter Goedvolk – an inspiring visionary – and Mrs. Lisette Goedvolk for their support over the years.

Looking back on the past decade, I feel we have accomplished a lot towards implementing my vision of a Club which would be a ‘home away from home’ for the Ambassadors posted here in the Netherlands and their spouses, facilitating a more informal contact with the worlds of Dutch Art, Sport, Culture, Business and Charity. A neutral space to connect and dialogue under the umbrella of our shared humanity. The Pandemic clearly highlighted the value of the bonds we had created.

Thank you for being part of this, for participating, for creating synergy at our events, for collaborating with your articles, beautifully facilitated by your Embassy staff.

I would also like to seize the opportunity to thank our partners: the Municipality of Wassenaar, and in particular



Mayor Leendert de Lange; Mr. Ralf Meppelder of Kasteel De Wittenburg; TenRande Foundation and in particular, the President, my husband Peter Bliet. Last but not least, to my team for their dedication: Ms. Nadia van Gaalen, Mr. Anton van der Riet and Mrs. Julie Kennedy.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Diplomat Affairs Magazine and I look forward to pursuing our collaboration in the coming years.

Shida Bliet, Publisher

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# ROYAL REJOICING KING'S DAY IN EMMEN

Experience the Vibrant Festivities and  
Rich Culture of the Cycling Province



King's Day is a national holiday in the Netherlands, celebrating the birthday of His Majesty King Willem-Alexander, who was born on April 27th. Like in many Dutch cities, King's Day (Koningsdag) is a significant and widely celebrated event. This annual tradition honours the Dutch monarchy and brings communities together in a spirit of unity and

celebration, highlighting the rich cultural heritage and national pride that define the Netherlands. This year, King's Day will be celebrated in Emmen, a city in the Province of Drenthe. With the Wildlands Adventure Zoo, Veenpark open-air museum, several ancient dolmens or hunebedden, forests, heathlands, and lakes,

Emmen offers a blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, making it a compelling destination for tourists interested in exploring the Netherlands beyond its more well-known cities. The Province of Drenthe is also the cycling province of the Netherlands. Fittingly, King Willem-Alexander, and his family will be



**King Willem-Alexander, Queen Máxima and the princesses Amalia, Alexia and Ariane.** Beeld © RVD



The Royal family celebrated King's Day last year in Rotterdam. Beeld © RVD

*The Province of Drenthe is also the cycling province of the Netherlands. Fittingly, King Willem-Alexander, and his family will be accompanied by a platoon of cyclists to the starting point of the festivities.*

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The Mayor of the Municipality of Emmen, Mr. Eric van Oosterhout stated: “We want to show the best of ourselves during the visit and introduce the King to the diversity of our

city, villages, and neighbourhoods. We also use this introduction to draw his attention to the residents’ pride in the municipality and region.”

King’s Day in Emmen will be a joyful and vibrant celebration. Visitors can explore the

lively street markets, enjoy the music and entertainment, take part in the many activities planned throughout the city, indulge in delicious food and drinks, and revel in the festive spirit of the day.



Mayor of the Municipality of Emmen, Mr. Eric van Oosterhout

The Mayor of the Municipality of Emmen,  
Mr. Eric van Oosterhout:  
*“We want to show the best of ourselves during the visit and introduce the King to the diversity of our city, villages, and neighbourhoods. We also use this introduction to draw his attention to the residents’ pride in the municipality and region.”*

# IN THE POST DESTRUCTION ERA, A CONTINUOUS NEED FOR THE OPCW

Last year, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) marked the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) after lengthy negotiations between various stakeholders.

BY AMBASSADOR FERNANDO ARIAS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The founders of the CWC envisioned the OPCW's primary mission as overseeing the elimination of all Cold War-era chemical weapons stockpiles. That milestone was reached in July 2023, through the tireless work of a generation of diplomats and experts over the past 26 years. More than 72,000

metric tonnes of declared chemical warfare agents were irreversibly destroyed under the OPCW verification regime. The complex process of destruction of these agents turned out to be more difficult and expensive than their production, because of the need to ensure the safety of people and the protection

of the environment.

For its work, the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013. Some presumed that the OPCW would no longer be needed after the end of the destruction. Events have proven them wrong. Today's world is very different from that of the 1990s. Political



Photo taken during an intervention of the Director-General, Ambassador Arias, during the Conference of the States Parties (27 November to 1 December 2023).



tensions, international crises, and wars make media headlines each and every day. Over the past 10 years, the use of chemical weapons both by States and by non State actors has become a reality. In these instances, the OPCW met the expectations of the international community, in accordance with its mandate, by gathering facts, analysing, and investigating, and by identifying perpetrators, and including the results of such activities in the many reports that the Organisation has produced. New developments, such as technological advancements, including artificial intelligence and additive manufacturing, make our work more complex. New and more toxic chemicals can be produced faster, cheaper, and more covertly,

NEW DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, INCLUDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING, MAKE OUR WORK MORE COMPLEX. NEW AND MORE TOXIC CHEMICALS CAN BE PRODUCED FASTER, CHEAPER, AND MORE COVERTLY, AND BE DELIVERED IN A MORE LETHAL WAY.

and be delivered in a more lethal way. These are a few of the reasons why the OPCW must continue to work on this open-ended agenda, to combat any re-emergence of chemical weapons. OPCW Member States must work together now more than ever before. The OPCW Technical Secretariat must preserve its traditional chemical demilitarisation knowledge, together with new expertise, including in forensics, biotechnology, and other scientific fields to address new challenges in the so called post-destruction era. In anticipation of this new phase, the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation, supported by Member States, embarked already five years ago on an ambitious project—the new Centre

for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). The ChemTech Centre is located near The Hague in the municipality of Pijnacker Nootdorp and was inaugurated on 12 May 2023 in the presence of His Majesty King Willem Alexander, Ambassadors, and High Authorities of the States Parties. The ChemTech Centre is already operational. It houses a multipurpose central area, a state-of-the-art laboratory, a technology and training hub, and new training facilities. It provides an inclusive global platform and powerful new tools for analysis, research, and training. The implementation of the Convention must be carried out by each one of its 193 States Parties. Therefore, it is

THE CHEMTECH CENTRE IS ALREADY OPERATIONAL. IT HOUSES A MULTIPURPOSE CENTRAL AREA, A STATE-OF-THE-ART LABORATORY, A TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING HUB, AND NEW TRAINING FACILITIES. IT PROVIDES AN INCLUSIVE GLOBAL PLATFORM AND POWERFUL NEW TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, AND TRAINING.

essential to enact specific national legislation to ensure that the competent authorities of each country (judges, chemical industry, police, customs officials, etc.) can implement the provisions of the Convention. Looking forward, the OPCW will continue to upgrade its capabilities and knowledge related to its equipment and experts. These efforts, which aim at fostering international cooperation and at enhancing the national capacities of OPCW Member States, are vital in the quest to eradicate the threat of misuse of toxic chemicals by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. A world free of chemical weapons will require constant vigilance and unwavering commitment from us all.

# DIPLOMATIC CORPS STRENGTHENING BONDS AT DIPLOMAT CLUB WASSENAAR



first row, from left to right: H.E. Mr Ziad Al Atiyah (Saudi Arabia) and Mrs Amal Al Masser, H.E. Mr Hatem Elsayed Mohamed Kamaleldin (Egypt) and Mrs Rania Abouelela, H.E. Mrs Salima Adelhak (Algeria), H.E. Sheikh Dr Abdullah Salim Hamed Al Harthi (Oman) and Mrs Ghada Al Saifi, H.E. Dr Greg French (Australia), H.E. Mr Victor Biyagov (Armenia), DG, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias (OPCW), Mrs Shida Bliek, Mayor Leendert de Lange and Mrs Marleen De Lange-Heldens, H.E. Ms Frances-Galatia Lanitou Williams (Cyprus), H.E. Mr Mario Oyarzábal (Argentina), H.E. Mr Hiroshi Minami (Japan), Mr Daniel Hallman, H.E. Mr Roseli Abdul (Malaysia), Mr. Peter Bliek and H.E. Ms Corinne Suzanne Cicéron Bühler (Swiss Federation)

Second row, from left to right: H.E. Mr Vusi Madonsela (South Africa), H.E. Mr Mohamed Basri (Morocco) and Mrs Insaf Ghanemi, H.E. Mr Askar Zhumagaliev (Kazakhstan) and Mrs Ainura Zhumagaliev, H.E. Mr Selçuk Ünal (Türkiye) and Mrs Lerzan Kayihan Ünal, H.E. Mr Agustín Vázquez Gómez (El Salvador) and Mrs Mirella Poscasangre de Vasquez, H.E. Mr Arnoldo Brenes Castro (Costa Rica), H.E. Mrs Liguemoh Ondoua Madeleine (Cameroon), H.E. Mr Oliver Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe (Rwanda), H.E. Mr David Solomon (Georgia) and Mrs Olena Terentieva, Mrs Patricia van Oordt de Arias, H.E. Ms Elizabeth Ward Neiman (Panama), Mrs Bianca French, Mrs Misao Minami

Twenty-two ambassadors, many accompanied by their spouses, attended December 8th 2023, the welcome ceremony for newly accredited ambassadors to the Netherlands where they were warmly welcomed as honorary members of Diplomat Club Wassenaar at Kasteel De Wittenburg.

The vibrant and colourful gathering, with some ambassadors in their national attire was beautifully set off against the backdrop of this charming castle dating back to 1899. The solemn Dutch notables depicted on the paintings adorning the walls seemed to be gazing down at the assembly.



It was an occasion for the ambassadors to meet new ambassadors, some of whom only presented their letters of accreditation to his Majesty King Willem Alexander of the Kingdom of the Netherlands last week, and which enabled them to meet their colleagues and other distinguished guests before the majority return to their country of origin for the end of year celebrations.

In her welcome speech, Mrs Shida Blik, founder and President-Director of Diplomat Club Wassenaar, welcomed the guest of honour, the Mayor of the Municipality of Wassenaar Leendert de Lange and all the guests, expressing her gratitude that so many had made time in their busy agendas to attend, before she addressed the Guest of Honour, Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias who was accompanied by his wife Mrs Patricia van Oordt de Arias. Mrs Blik thanked Director-General, Ambassador Arias for playing an inspiring role in Diplomat Club Wassenaar since his arrival ten years ago, then as Ambassador of Spain.

THE AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, H.E. MR ZIAD AL ATIYAH TOOK THE FLOOR TO CONGRATULATE MRS. SHIDA BLIEK WITH THE SUCCESSFUL WELCOME DINNER. HE EMPHASIZED HOW IMMENSELY THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS APPRECIATES THESE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO NETWORK IN THIS INFORMAL AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE TIGHTENING OF FRIENDSHIPS .

Quote: “Director-General, Ambassador Arias we are grateful for your almost 10-year support, in creating a neutral place, where friendships are strengthened. As a token of our appreciation, we would like to award you with a pearl pin: symbolizing integrity, acceptance, and the understanding of others. It also represents wisdom, tranquillity, and peace. Far from us the idea of competing with the countless, prestigious international awards that have already been bestowed on you, but we wish in this way to express our gratitude”. Once His Excellency the Mayor of the Municipality of Wassenaar had emphasised the important role Mrs Blik fulfils, he too addressed the guest of honour: “Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias and Mrs Patricia van Oordt de Arias, the municipality of Wassenaar gave you almost ten years ago a tie on your arrival in the Netherlands. The ties are undeniable .....so this time we would like to present you with our famous local cheese, made from the milk of cows here in Wassenaar”!

Mayor Leendert de Lange endeared himself immediately to the assembly by welcoming the newly arrived ambassadors in their native tongue. After sharing many Dutch anecdotes Mayor de Lange said:” I am of course the mayor of Wassenaar, and I love to recommend my village, but the entire province of South Holland deserves to be visited, as of course



Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias and Mrs. Shida Blik

President Director of Diplomat Club Wassenaar Mrs. Shida Blik:  
*“Director-General, Ambassador Arias we are grateful for your almost 10-year support, in creating a neutral place, where friendships are strengthened. As a token of our appreciation, we would like to award you with a pearl pin: symbolizing integrity, acceptance, and the understanding of others. It also represents wisdom, tranquillity, and peace. Far from us the idea of competing with the countless, prestigious international awards that have already been bestowed on you, but we wish in this way to express our gratitude”.*

does the rest of the country, preferably by bicycle, the Dutch way”. He concluded his speech with the following words:”A new year lies ahead of us. Let us hope it will be one in which we continue to live in peace and harmony with each other. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me, my door is always open”. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr Ziad Al Atiyah took the floor to congratulate Mrs. Shida Blik with the successful welcome dinner. He emphasized how immensely the Diplomatic Corps appreciates these unique opportunities to network in this informal and friendly environment that contribute to the tightening of friendships. He also thanked Mayor Leendert de Lange for his contribution. His Excellency Al Atiyah then turned to the guest of honour the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Arias thanking him for his leadership and the impressive contribution he has made since his appointment in 2018 as Director-General, also expressing his deep respect for him as a person.

Director-General Arias in turn thanked Mrs and Mr Blik and it was clear through

MAYOR LEENDERT DE LANGE ENDEARED HIMSELF IMMEDIATELY TO THE ASSEMBLY BY WELCOMING THE NEWLY ARRIVED AMBASSADORS IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE. AFTER SHARING MANY DUTCH ANECDOTES MAYOR DE LANGE SAID:” I AM OF COURSE THE MAYOR OF WASSENAAR, AND I LOVE TO RECOMMEND MY VILLAGE, BUT THE ENTIRE PROVINCE OF SOUTH HOLLAND DESERVES TO BE VISITED.

recognition. Director-General, Ambassador Arias also thanked the Mayor of Wassenaar for his kind words and for the gift he received from the municipality. Ambassador Al Atiyah was heartily thanked for his fine words by Director-General Arias and he emphasized how paramount mutual respect is in these challenging times so that important decisions can be made together, bringing a positive contribution to the dire events currently occurring in the world.

In essence, the Bi-annual Diplomatic Corps ceremony for newly arrived ambassadors to the Netherland, welcoming them as Honorary members of Diplomat Club Wassenaar, hosted graciously by the founder, President-Director, Mrs. Shida Blik for almost ten years, in collaboration with the Municipality of Wassenaar and Kasteel De Wittenburg, continue to be highly appreciated by the diplomatic community. The statements made this evening testified to the actual “building of bridges” and tightening of friendship between colleagues and with Dutch Society, experienced by the members of the Club.

# 75TH REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA: CELEBRATING UNITY AMONG DIVERSITY

In a splendid display of cultural abundance, Her Excellency Mrs. Reenat Sandhu, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Kingdom of the Netherlands graciously welcomed the large array of invitees to the reception, held on January 26th at Kasteel De Wittenburg in Wassenaar.

PHOTOS COURTESY EMBASSY OF INDIA



Speech by H.E. Mrs. Reenat Sandhu, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Among the distinguished guests were H.E. Prof. Jan Anthonie Bruijn, President of the Senate; Mr. Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague, and many ambassadors, diplomatic colleagues, senior officials and members of the Dutch and Indian communities.

“AS INDIA STRIDES TOWARDS ITS VISION OF BECOMING A DEVELOPED NATION IN THE NEXT 25 YEARS, THE NETHERLANDS STANDS AS A VALUABLE PARTNER IN OUR QUEST FOR BUILDING A STRONG AND SELF-RELIANT INDIA, BRINGING TOGETHER OUR MUTUAL SYNERGIES FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.”

In her speech, the Ambassador stressed all India has achieved as a nation over the past 75 years but also “the essence of India and its vibrant spirit”. To quote: “Today, every corner of India is brimming with self-confidence, imbued with the spirit of a nation on the path

of development and rapid transformation. We are the world’s 5th largest economy, inching steadily towards becoming the 3rd largest by 2030. We are making big strides in human-centric development, digital public services, and green growth. India’s talented youth are generating new ideas, innovation and technologies that are driving the Indian economy and global growth.” Examples such as developing a Covid vaccine, landing a rover on the moon, and of course the successful G20 summit in New Delhi (which included the Netherlands as a guest country) “affirm India’s ability to shape the global agenda and influence its outcomes.” She added: “Representing a sixth of humanity, India knows that its actions matter ...and is ready to assume greater responsibility.

The Ambassador also touched on the thriving partnership with the Netherlands, in particular in the areas of water, agriculture & health, trade and investment, cultural and educational exchanges, and people-to-people ties.

Her Excellency concluded saying: “as india strides towards its vision of becoming a developed nation in the next 25 years, the netherlands stands as a valuable partner in our quest for building a strong and self-reliant india, bringing to-gether our mutual synergies for a prosperous future.”

The President of the Senate, Prof. Jan Anthonie Bruijn quoted His Majesty King Willem-Alexander: “India is proof that democracy and freedom are stronger and more durable than oppression. What India has built over the last 70 years is extremely precious and a unique achievement”. Mr Bruijn said he was impressed by the close relations between India and the Netherlands on many levels. He observed that not just economically, but also politically and culturally, the exchanges between India and the Netherlands are extensive and solid. A mesmerizing light ceremony was held, featuring the lighting of a lamp creating a truly magical sphere which further enhanced the feeling of joint strength and connection. Guests then delighted in an exquisite Indian buffet, offering a tantalizing array of flavours and delicacies: a true delight to the senses, and were charmed on departure to receive a large pink box, containing a hand-crafted gift supporting charity work in India. What an unforgettable celebration, a wonderful start to the year.

THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE SENATE,  
PROF. JAN  
ANTHONIE  
BRUIJN QUOTED  
HIS MAJESTY  
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ALEXANDER:  
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Speech by the President of the Senate, Prof. Jan Anthonie Bruijn



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From left to right:  
Mr. Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague;  
H.E. Prof.. Jan Anthonie Bruijn, President  
of the Senate; Mr. Rabin S. Baldewsingh,  
National Coordinator against Discrimination  
and Racism and H.E. Mrs. Reenat Sandhu,  
Ambassador of the Republic of India

# CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIGING THE TREATY OF TURKISH DUTCH FRIENDSHIP



# AN ALLIANCE, ROOTED IN CENTURIES OF SHARED HISTORY, UNDERSTANDING, AND A COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

By H.E. Mr. Selçuk Ünal, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Kingdom of The Netherlands



The Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of The Netherlands are celebrating 100th anniversary of the signature of the Friendship Treaty of 1924. The treaty that has been signed was one of the earliest of its kind for the young Republic which was founded in 1923. But Turkish-Dutch ties go further back than 1924.

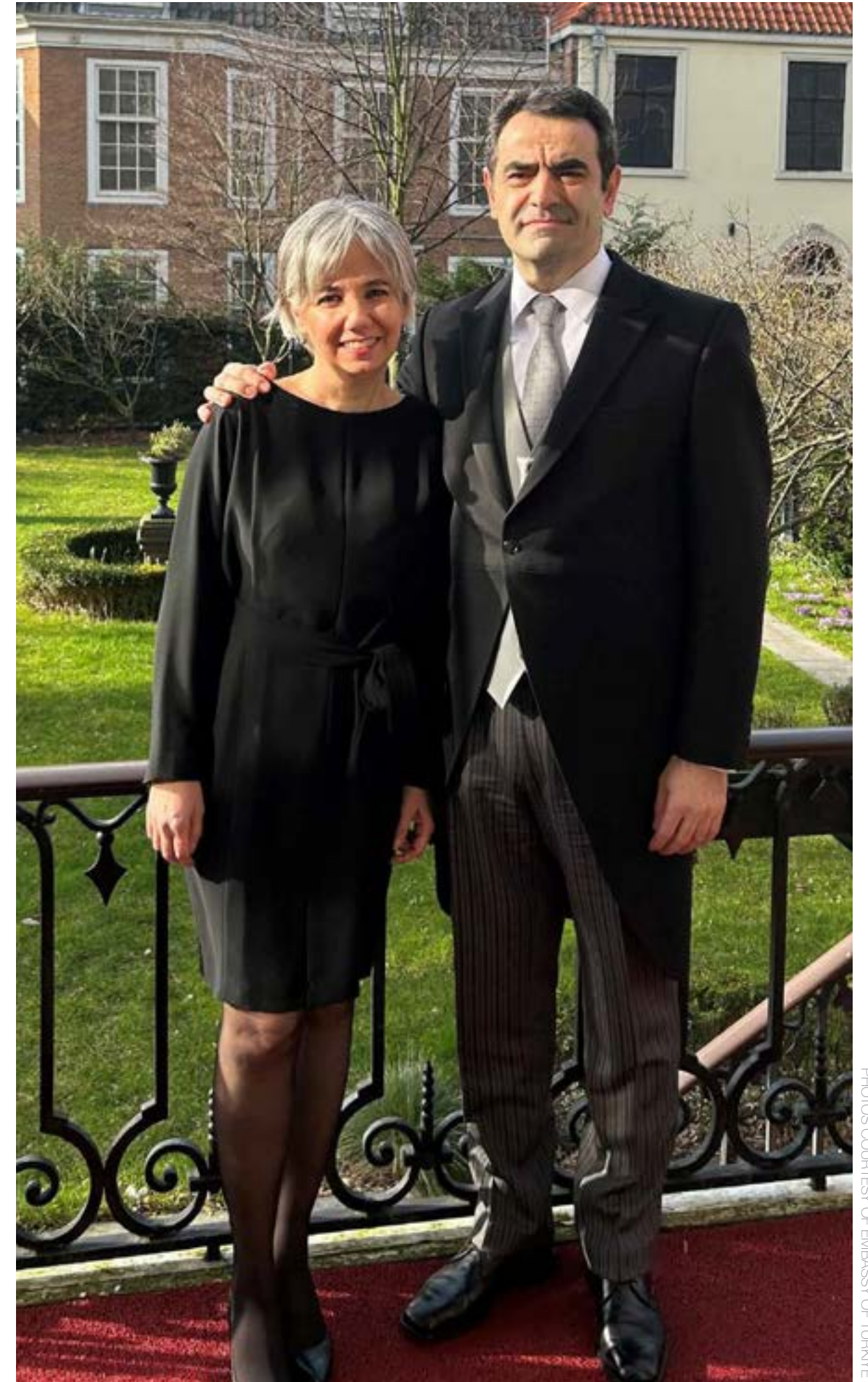
Formal diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the then Dutch Republic were established in 1612, when the States General appointed its first resident Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Cornelis

Haga. That is why the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of The Netherlands celebrated 400 years of diplomatic ties in 2012 which is a symbolic milestone in our relations.

However, not everyone knows that the seeds of this relationship were actually sown long before 1612. The Dutch, as fervent merchants, had been active in the Mediterranean and the Levant since the Middle Ages. Naturally, they faced fierce competition from commercial and military powers such as Venice, Genoa and Spain. Dutch merchants have started trading in Ottoman ports under privileges awarded

to third parties, such as France. This led the Dutch to seek to develop contacts with the Ottoman Empire. It was actually during one of those visits to the Ottoman Empire by Dutch traders that the first tulip had been brought to The Netherlands, Leiden, in 1561.

When seafaring Dutch merchants frequented Ottoman ports in the 16th century, The Netherlands was under Spanish rule and during the 1560's Dutch emissaries explored the possibility of an alliance with the Ottomans in their aspirations for independence. Dutch diplomacy finally secured consistent



H.E. Mr Selçuk Ünal and Mrs Lerzan Kayihan Ünal.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMBASSY OF TÜRKİYE

Ottoman political support to the Dutch Revolt, resulting in the Dutch Republic. This relationship was further strengthened after the Siege of Sluis in 1604 by Prince Maurice of Orange following the capture of this important port from the Spanish, when around 1.500 Ottoman galley slaves were freed by the Dutch. It is said that the hamlet of Turkeye in the province of Zeeland today had been named in recognition of those freed Ottoman Turks’ aid to the Dutch resistance to stronger armadas. Following the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1612, the Ottoman Sultan Ahmet I eventually awarded the Dutch Republic their own commercial privileges.

There are many more historical connections between the Turks and the Dutch. One of the notable examples is the Testa Family, which, to say the least, constitutes an outstanding historic bond among the two nations. Their story begins with Pasquale Testa, a Dutch tradesman who had settled together with his family in the then Genovese colony of Galata, Istanbul in 1261. In time, Testa family members rose to prominent positions in the administration of the colony. Following the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, their role was recognized by the Ottomans and eventually they were officially employed by the Ottoman Empire as interpreters and mediators with other European powers. The last member of the family to have lived in the Ottoman Empire, Gaspar Testa, had been the representative of the Kingdom of The Netherlands as a diplomat and eventually Ambassador in Istanbul during the first half of the 19th century. Since we never forget friends, the Turkish Embassy in the Hague has always been and is still in close

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contact today with the remaining descendants of the Testa Family. This rich historic context between Türkiye and The Netherlands has enabled the two countries to develop their ties during the following centuries in every field. The Turks and the Dutch never fought each other or have been in opposing sides in their history. This arises from the deep-rooted mutual understanding of the importance of friendship, cooperation and alliance.

Today, Türkiye and The Netherlands still share the same determination. As being among the co-founders of the Council of Europe, strong NATO Allies and powerful supporters of multilateralism to name a few, Türkiye and the Netherlands are bound together in their shared global outlook based on maintaining and further strengthening international peace, justice, security, stability and sustainable development. In addition to the ever-growing bilateral trade volume, we have well-established high-level consultation mechanisms such as the Wittenburg Conferences. Furthermore, half-a-million Dutch-Turkish community is a constant bridge of friendship and cooperation.

Last October 29th, we celebrated the centennial of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. By this, Türkiye entered its second century as we call the Turkish Century. Türkiye and The Netherlands are also on the verge of the second century of their current friendship. Future of Turkish-Dutch relations, continuously supported by their rich history, carries enormous potential for realizing countless opportunities ahead and will live from here to eternity.



**Speech by H.E. Mr Selçuk Ünal at the National Day reception of Türkiye, at Kasteel De Wittenburg in Wassenaar**

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# CELEBRATING 242 YEARS OF DUTCH-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP

Dutch-American Friendship Day is annually celebrated on April 19 to commemorate the start of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Netherlands.

BY H.E. MS. SHEFALI RAZDAN DUGGAL, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS



An official Act of the U.S. Congress created Dutch-American Friendship Day in 1982, on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official Dutch recognition of the United States of America. As then-President Ronald Reagan said when inaugurating Dutch-American Friendship Day, the U.S. relationship with the Netherlands is “the longest unbroken, peaceful relationship that we have had with any other nation.” Indeed, our relationship, born in the very early days of my country, has grown and blossomed into a beautiful and important friendship. I have witnessed the close friendship countless

“I CELEBRATE  
OUR BEAUTIFUL  
FRIENDSHIP  
BORN IN HISTORY,  
STRENGTHENED  
IN WAR TIME AND  
FLOURISHING IN  
THE PRESENT”

times since arriving in the Netherlands. I see it as we work together on issues of strategic global importance, such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine or keeping critical technology secure. I see it in the many Dutch families who have adopted every single grave at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, honoring the memory of the brave U.S. servicemembers who lost their lives fighting for our shared freedom. I see it in the many Dutch students who travel to the United States to study, and the Americans studying here in the Netherlands. I see it in the warmth of the Dutch people I have



From left to right: Ms. Marjan Kamstra, Director of the Western Hemisphere Department MFA; Mr. Klaas Peter de Geus, Maveridge International Inc; Mr Geoffrey van Leeuwen, Minister for Foreign Trade; Ms. Pascale Grotenhuis, Director-General International Cooperation of MFA; Ms. Sandra Bechtholt, Director of De Keukenhof and Mr. Mark-Jan Terwindt, Director Royal Anthos. Photo ‘De Keukenhof’.

experienced since I arrived. And it was a genuine honor to be the first Ambassador to receive the high honor of having a tulip named after me at De Keukenhof on International Women’s Day this year. As an immigrant to the United States and the first person of color to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Netherlands, I have a different background than some other ambassadors. My background, filled with challenges and no definition of privilege, leaves me determined to reach out to people who also have faced challenges and feel unseen and unheard. I have prioritized visiting every Dutch province

“I HAVE  
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TO GO!”

and have already visited nine provinces so far – three to go! Through this, I make a point of speaking with people who normally never would have the chance to speak with a U.S. Ambassador. Our friendship with the Netherlands encompasses all of the people of the Netherlands, no matter their background. This year on Dutch American Friendship Day, I celebrate our beautiful friendship born in history, strengthened in war time and flourishing in the present. I am certain our two countries will remain close friends in this century and beyond. Happy Dutch-American Friendship Day!



AMERICAN AMBASSADOR BAPTIZES THE TULIPA SHEFALI, A COLOURFUL AND RESISTANT TULIP, ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

US Ambassador, Ms Shefali Razdan Duggal baptizes the Tulipa Shefali



On March 8th, US Ambassador Ms Shefali Razdan Duggal baptised a tulip with her name, the Tulipa Shefali at Keukenhof Castle. This is no ordinary tulip. It was meticulously bred at Maveridge International B.V. in St Maarten during an extensive project dedicated to developing strong and disease-resistant tulips. The tulip was baptised by Her Excellency on International Women’s Day, in recognition of her outstanding advocacy for gender equity.

Ambassador Shefali Razdan Duggal: **“It is a genuine and surreal honour to be included amongst such a remarkable group of individuals who have received this recognition.** The tulip is a beautiful flower which has been cherished and loved for centuries and so positively represents the Netherlands. As first Ambassador to receive the high honour of having a tulip named after me, it is so befitting to unveil the “Shefali

tulip” today, on International Women’s Day. Throughout history, women have been forced to overcome gender bias and discrimination, we have worked hard, and continue to work hard to reach milestones. We do this for ourselves and future generations of women to be seen, to be heard, to be fully part of society as powerful and valuable contributors.”What

a fitting way to mark International Women’s Day 2024, dedicated to gender equality and a more inclusive world full of inspiring women who can truly be themselves than having Her Excellency, an international Acknowledged Gender Champion, radiant in her pink dress, baptize this beautiful and resilient tulip.Ambassador Shefali Razdan Duggal:

**“Advancing gender equity and equality is a critical matter of inclusion, justice, and fairness”. As was famously stated at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women, “Women’s rights are human rights, democracy is fundamentally dependent on the full empowerment of women”.**This unique tulip can be seen in

the Keukenhof which will be celebrating its 75th jubilee this Spring, together with visitors from all over the world.



US Ambassador Ms Shefali Razdan Duggal; Mr Geoffrey van Leeuwen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation; Mr Mark-Jan Terwindt, Director-General of Royal Anthos. PHOTOS ‘DE KEUKENHOF’

# THE STATE OF KUWAIT CELEBRATES ITS 63RD NATIONAL DAY, 33 YEARS SINCE LIBERATION, AND THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE NETHERLANDS



From left to right:  
His Excellency Mr. Ali Aldafiri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait;  
Mr. Jaber Alsabah, Deputy Head of Mission; Mr. Waleed Almenayes,  
Diplomatic Attaché; Mrs. Laila Alkandari, Diplomatic Attaché

PHOTOS COURTESY EMBASSY OF KUWAIT



**The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Ali Aldafiri**



**The portraits of HM King Willem-Alexander and the Emir of the State of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**

The reception was hosted on February 19th by the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Ali Aldafiri. His Excellency warmly addressed the assembly, celebrating the anniversaries of the National Day and Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait and placing special emphasis on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and the State of Kuwait. A beautiful logo was created to mark this milestone, containing symbols of technical and architectural renaissance from both countries and aspects of development and civilization. Ambassador Aldafiri whole-heartedly greeted the Minister

“SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1964, OUR BILATERAL TIES HAVE THRIVED THROUGHOUT THE PAST DECADES ACROSS VARIOUS FIELDS BASED UPON THE FOUNDATION OF MUTUAL RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING, AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION ACROSS MANY FIELDS AND SECTORS.”

of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, H.E. Dr. Riad Malki who was visiting the Hague for the hearing at the Peace Palace and was present at the reception. His Excellency stated: “Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1964, our bilateral ties have thrived throughout the past decades across various fields based upon the foundation of mutual respect, understanding, and mutually beneficial cooperation across many fields and sectors. (...) As we recognize the achievements of the past six decades, we look forward to further strengthening and deepening our ties and unlocking potential opportunities across various fields, such

as energy, water and waste management, agriculture, technology, and logistical services, while moving forward at a faster rhythm for the benefit of both countries”. His Excellency also mentioned the significant investments, the trade ties and the shared values around upholding international law and promoting dialogue and multilateral cooperation as means to promote and foster peace. Ambassador Aldafiri concluded his speech with: “Recognizing that education and human capital are the primary sources of wealth and drivers towards development, sustainability, and innovation. We look forward to deepening cooperation between our respective academic and research institutions and increasing exchange and

interactions in the academic field.” H.E. Mr. Aldrik Gierveld, Ambassador at Large of the Kingdom of the Netherlands took the floor as guest speaker and warmly congratulated Kuwait on the National and Liberation days expressing the Netherlands’s appreciation to Kuwait’s humanitarian record stating: “despite the challenges in the past, today the State of Kuwait is a stable country in the Middle East and a passionate donor just like the Netherlands.” Ambassador Aldafiri extended his sincere appreciation to Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8), an esteemed entity within the energy sector and a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), renowned as one of the world’s largest corporations. The occasion was adorned with the presentation

of an impressive video, showcased on expansive screens, highlighting the significant role of Q8. Acknowledged for their invaluable contribution to the event, Q8 stands as a pivotal figure in the global energy landscape, within the Netherlands market where they operate under the brand name Tango, and across Europe. Embracing a steadfast commitment to fostering a sustainable and environmentally conscious future, Q8 exemplifies a dedication to cleaner energy solutions. The warm hospitality which included an abundance of delicious food, added to the lovely goodie bags containing souvenirs and electrical devices, contributed to a special afternoon.



H.E. Mr. Aldrik Gierveld, Ambassador at Large of the Kingdom of the Netherlands took the floor as guest speaker and warmly congratulated Kuwait on the National and Liberation days expressing the Netherlands's appreciation to Kuwait's humanitarian record stating:

*“Despite the challenges in the past, today the State of Kuwait is a stable country in the Middle East and a passionate donor just like the Netherlands.”*



AMBASSADOR ALDAFIRI EXTENDED HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION TO KUWAIT PETROLEUM INTERNATIONAL (Q8), AN ESTEEMED ENTITY WITHIN THE ENERGY SECTOR AND A SUBSIDIARY OF KUWAIT PETROLEUM CORPORATION (KPC), RENOWNED AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST CORPORATIONS. THE OCCASION WAS ADORNED WITH THE PRESENTATION OF AN IMPRESSIVE VIDEO, SHOWCASED ON EXPANSIVE SCREENS, HIGHLIGHTING THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF Q8.



ACKNOWLEDGED FOR THEIR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE EVENT, Q8 STANDS AS A PIVOTAL FIGURE IN THE GLOBAL ENERGY LANDSCAPE, WITHIN THE NETHERLANDS MARKET WHERE THEY OPERATE UNDER THE BRAND NAME TANGO, AND ACROSS EUROPE. EMBRACING A STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS FUTURE, Q8 EXEMPLIFIES A DEDICATION TO CLEANER ENERGY SOLUTIONS.

# THE HAGUE: 125 YEARS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE A BEACON FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

REFLECTING ON A LEGACY, ENVISIONING A FUTURE

BY THE MAYOR OF THE HAGUE, MR. JAN VAN ZANEN

The Hague describes itself as the ‘international city of peace and justice’. Anyone who is interested to discover how that came about, sooner or later, will come across the First Peace Conference in The Hague in 1899.

During that conference it was decided to set up the very first international court in world history, the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Housed in the Peace Palace since 1913, along with its famous library. Where it was joined in 1946 by the International Court of Justice, the principal legal body of the United Nations.

Over the past 125 years the number of international organisations in The Hague has grown to around 500. Among them are the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the International Criminal Court and the many non-governmental organisations that have settled here. The Hague also recently welcomed the Register of Damages for Ukraine and the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression. Proof that our city remains the acknowledged legal capital of the world. The 125th anniversary



of the First Peace Conference, which we will be marking with numerous activities for our residents, is a good opportunity for The Hague to take stock but, more importantly, to look ahead: what is needed to ensure that our city continues to be a beacon of peace and justice in the future? In so doing, The Hague also specifically focuses on local authorities. Many conflicts are essentially fought at local level. At the same time, it is often those local authorities who are best placed to resolve such conflicts because they are closest to the warring parties. The Peace Prize of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) was created specially for that purpose. It is therefore fitting that

later in this anniversary year, 300 to 400 local government officials will be meeting in The Hague for the UCLG World Council. There has been international cooperation between municipalities for more than a century now. This might involve exchanging experience and expertise or providing support after disasters or conflicts, for example. Nowadays, we call this city diplomacy. The Hague and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) do a lot of this. Internationally, we are connected through networks such as UCLG, as well as through projects and programmes funded (in part) by the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union. Cities are also seeking and finding support for this from embassies in the relevant countries. For example, when promoting events or receiving delegations. National *and* local governments working together globally for peace, justice and security. Who would have thought that in 1899? Something to be proud of *and* an incentive to do even more. The world needs it, more than ever.



The Mayor of The Hague, Mr. Jan van Zanen

PHOTO MARTIJN VAN BEEK

# TOWARDS WORLD EXPO 2025 OSAKA, KANSAI JAPAN

Finding common ground to design future society

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMBASSY OF JAPAN



The scale model of the Dutch pavilion was presented.



H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami, Ambassador of Japan



*The Ambassador and Mrs. Minami hosted a well-attended reception at their Residence and dishes from the Osaka, Kansai region was served*



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The Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami and Mrs. Minami hosted a well-attended reception, March 7th at their Residence in The Hague, for guests from the Dutch and Japanese public and private sectors, who are involved in the EXPO 2025,

“SHARE YOUR IDEAS  
ON HOW WE CAN  
SUCCESSFULLY USE  
THE OSAKA EXPO  
AS OPPORTUNITIES  
TO FURTHER  
DEVELOP BILATERAL  
COOPERATION IN ALL  
THESE FIELDS.”

celebrating the upcoming World Expo 2025 which will be held in Osaka, Japan from April 13th to October 13th, 2025.

Among the guests, who also gave speeches, were present Ms. Aino Jansen, Director of the EXPO 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Ministry

Ms. Aino Jansen, Project Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Netherlands:  
“Preparations for the Expo 2025 in Osaka are in full swing. We had fruitful discussions during the International Participants Meeting (IPM) on 14-15 November. We also had succesful meetings with the AND BV consortium that will start with the construction of the Dutch pavilion early 2024.”

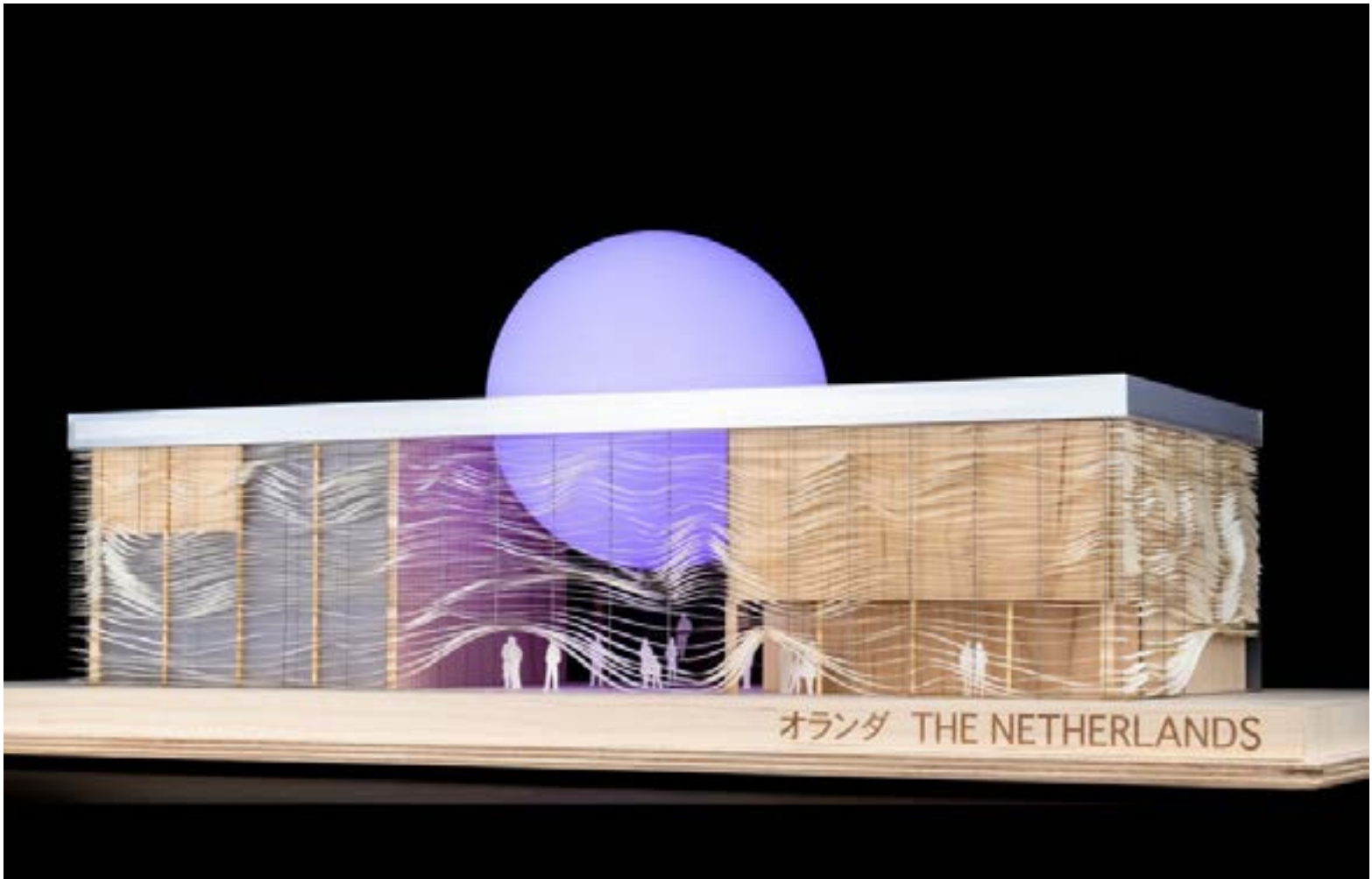


Commissioner General for the Netherlands at EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai,  
Mr. Marc Kuipers and Ms. Aino Jansen, Project Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Ms. Irene Linthorst, Director of the Policy Division at VNO-NCW / MKB-Nederland. A video message from the Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Osaka and Commissioner General for the Netherlands at EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Mr. Marc Kuipers was shown, along with

footage of the groundbreaking ceremony held in Yumeshima. During his speech, Ambassador Minami explained that the Dutch pavilion focuses on: energy transition and circular economy, sustainable agri-food & hi-tech horticulture; life sciences and healthcare, hi-tech and digital transformation and cultural activities.

“Five themes (which) are very pertinent for the Dutch-Japan relationships. Last January, Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa visited the Netherlands to have a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Bruins Slot. In the meeting, the Osaka Expo was high on the agenda, and both Ministers have agreed that our countries should deepen the cooperation in



### NL Pavilion Expo 2025 Osaka

Presentation model, client: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Netherlands Enterprise Agency / architect. RAU / exhibition design. Tellart / team. Kaita Shinagawa (founder of Studio KU +), Christianna Tsigkou, Giuseppe Ceci.

renewable energy and advanced technology.” Ambassador Minami touched on the strong bilateral cooperation between the two countries on topics such as circular economy, the agri-food and horticulture sector, life science and health, medical technology, biopharmaceuticals, and regenerative medicine and invited the assembly to “share your ideas on how we can successfully use the Osaka Expo as opportunities to further develop bilateral cooperation in all these fields.” The Expo takes place in the Kansai area “which covers famous and old cities such as Osaka, Kyoto, Nara and Kobe (...) Osaka is still regarded as the center of commercial activities, famous for its own unique culture, its entrepreneurship and strong dialect.” Osaka was also known under the Edo period

AMBASSADOR  
MINAMI THANKED  
ALL THE DUTCH AND  
JAPANESE COMPANIES  
INVOLVED, AS WELL  
AS MR. TAKAHARU  
IKEDA, CHAIRMAN OF  
JCC, - AN EXECUTIVE  
ADVISER FOR OSAKA  
EXPO- AND CLOSED BY  
WISHING EXPO OSAKA  
2025 EVERY SUCCESS

as “Japan’s kitchen” as it was an important base for the transportation of goods during the Edo period. Nowadays it is known for its delicious, good value food and the guests were delighted to hear that the Ambassador’s chef, present that evening, ails from Osaka and they were going to get to taste for themselves. The food was indeed delicious and Japanese wine, sake and whisky were also served. Ambassador Minami thanked all the Dutch and Japanese companies involved, as well as Mr. Takaharu Ikeda, Chairman of JCC, - an executive adviser for Osaka Expo- and closed by wishing Expo Osaka 2025 every success. Which indeed it deserves to be with such a powerful theme, an estimated 28 million visitors and the participation of 150 countries.



H.E. Mr. Roseli Abdul, Ambassador of Malaysia and Madam Khadijah Kok Abdullah at the King's Palace in The Hague

# BRIDGING CONTINENTS: MALAYSIA, NETHERLANDS, AND ASEAN

In a world where globalisation has become the norm, international partnerships and collaborations have become essential for fostering economic growth, cultural exchange, and diplomatic relations.

By H.E. Mr. Roseli Abdul, Ambassador of Malaysia

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EMBASSY OF MALAYSIA

Among the myriad of global connections, the relationship between Malaysia, the Netherlands, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) stands out as a dynamic plurilateral cooperation that bridges continents, fostering mutual development and cooperation.

Historical Ties

The historical ties between Malaysia and the Netherlands trace back centuries, rooted in the era of the European “Age of Sail”. Malacca, one of Malaysia’s historic states, was once a vital trading post for the Dutch East India Company. This colonial past has left a lasting imprint on both nations, shaping their cultural landscapes and economic structures. It is also worth noting that the historical ties between Malaysia and the Netherlands are not only significant but also present a wonderful opportunity to bolster cooperation vis-à-vis the ASEAN framework, adding a rich layer of collaboration and mutual growth. ASEAN, established in 1967, aims to promote regional cooperation and economic integration among its ten member states. In 2023, ASEAN welcomed the Netherlands as an official development partner. Malaysia, located at the heart of Southeast Asia, will assume the ASEAN chairmanship in 2025.



IN 2023, ASEAN WELCOMED THE NETHERLANDS AS AN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER. MALAYSIA, LOCATED AT THE HEART OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, WILL ASSUME THE ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP IN 2025.

Economic Collaborations

Economic collaboration forms the cornerstone of the relationship between Malaysia and the Netherlands. Malaysia showcases a diverse economy, with key sectors including manufacturing, electronics, sustainable palm oil production, and tourism. The Netherlands, on the other hand, is renowned for its expertise in agriculture, maritime logistics, renewable energy, and financial services. Through strategic partnerships and investment initiatives, Malaysia and the Netherlands have capitalised on each other’s strengths to drive their respective economic growths. Dutch companies have made significant investments in Malaysia, particularly in sectors such as sustainable agriculture, water management, and technology. Likewise, Malaysian companies have expanded their presence in the Netherlands, leveraging its strategic location as a gateway to European markets. Within the ASEAN framework, the Netherlands’ expertise in water management and flood control, for instance, has been instrumental in supporting ASEAN member states in addressing climate change challenges. As an official development partner, ASEAN members and the Netherlands stand ready to gain from further economic collaborations. ASEAN collectively forms the fifth largest



H.E. Mr. Roseli Abdul, Ambassador of Malaysia

economy in the world, with a population of over 660 million people.

Future Prospects

The Netherlands’ inclusion as an ASEAN Development Partner marks a significant milestone in the collaborative journey towards a resilient, sustainable, and prosperous ASEAN community. It reflects the shared commitment of ASEAN Member States and the Netherlands to harnessing the power of partnership to overcome common challenges

and achieve shared aspirations for the betterment of the world. Looking ahead, the future prospects for Malaysia, the Netherlands, and ASEAN are promising. As the global economy continues to evolve, opportunities abound for collaboration and innovation. Malaysia’s prime positioning within ASEAN, along with its thriving economy and energetic workforce, makes it an appealing destination for Dutch companies aiming to broaden their footprint in the region, offering an ideal blend

of opportunity and growth potential. Similarly, the Netherlands’ status as a leading hub for innovation and technology makes it an ideal partner for ASEAN Member States looking to enhance their digital capabilities and infrastructure. By fostering greater collaboration, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and ASEAN can collectively address pressing global challenges while unlocking new opportunities for growth and development.

# ARUBA AS AN INVESTMENT HUB IN THE CARIBBEAN

As part of our economic strategy, Aruba aims to become a leading investment destination in the Caribbean, attracting investors from the region and within the Kingdom of the Netherlands

By H.E. Mrs. Evelynna Wever-Croes, Prime Minister of Aruba



H.E. Mrs. Evelynna Wever-Croes, Prime Minister of Aruba

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a sovereign state composed of four distinct constituent countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten. This geopolitical entity is characterized by its remarkable cultural diversity, with each constituent country offering unique contributions to the Kingdom. Aruba is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands with its own government and parliament and governs all internal affairs, including laws, policies, and currency. As part of the overarching Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Netherlands oversees the defense and foreign affairs of the Kingdom, which includes Aruba. Aruba's history with the Netherlands dates to 1636, when the Dutch occupied the island to protect their salt supply and establish a Caribbean naval base during the Eighty Years'



War with Spain. Despite brief British control during the Napoleonic Wars, Aruba returned to Dutch possession in 1816. Aruba was historically part of the administrative entity 'Curaçao en Onderhorigheden' until changes in the Dutch constitution in 1922 led to the term 'colony' being abandoned. In 1936, it became 'Gebiedsdeel Curaçao,' or 'Territory of Curaçao.' In 1954, this evolved into the federation of the Netherlands Antilles, of which Aruba was a part until 1985. After

a challenging, intense and difficult process against the Netherlands, Aruba became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands on January 1st, 1986.

## Aruba's Journey to Economic Growth

Aruba's allies and partners refer to us as a proud nation, a statement we recognize and embrace. Pristine beaches and fantastic weather surround us, and tourism is a thriving economy. While visitors enjoy our natural beauty and hospitality, we take pride in the resilience and resourcefulness of our people. Our economic journey has been diverse, from reliance on slavery and natural resources to embracing industries like oil refining and tourism.

During the 1800s, Aruba's economy relied on slavery and the trafficking/movement

of indigenous people from nearby South American countries, but the discovery of gold and guano (phosphate) on the island shifted its focus to natural resources. A land once perceived as a 'useless island' by Spanish Conquistadors became a hub of industries exploiting natural resources and its strategic Caribbean location. The 'cunukero,' or Aruban farmers, particularly felt this transformation during the dry season when unemployment peaked. Despite the arid climate limiting crop diversity, aloe thrived, making Aruba a leading supplier of aloin resin in the region during the 19th century. In the early 20th century, Aruba departed from using natural resources. It shifted its focus to a new industry when the oil refinery and oil transport company was established on the island. The locals faced initial challenges due to language barriers

-they could not speak English- and the lack of training required to work in a refinery. Despite setbacks, our community persevered, adapted, and thrived. The closure of the oil refinery in 1985 dealt a significant blow to our economy, but with autonomy in 1986, we took control of our economic development. The Aruban Government boosted tourism by investing in infrastructure, accommodation, and hospitality training, contributing to our status as a premier Caribbean destination.

## COVID-19: the need for economic diversification

Aruba's resilience and innovation have long been cornerstones of its history, particularly evident during trying times like the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the crisis, the Government of Aruba swiftly

implemented flight cancellations and border closures, underscoring the island's economic vulnerability and heavy dependence on tourism. Recognizing the imperative of economic diversification even before the pandemic, Aruba identified six key sectors for strategic investment: agriculture, circular economy, creative industries, knowledge economy, logistics, and niche tourism. The pandemic expedited efforts to bolster growth in these sectors, showcasing Aruba's ability to adapt and progress in adversity.

The economic vitality of Aruba is mirrored in its 2023 GDP per capita of \$35.72 thousand and an unemployment rate of 8.5%. Despite the challenges of the global pandemic in 2020, Aruba experienced a remarkable 27.6% GDP growth in 2021. Moreover, between 2022 and 2023, the GDP continued to expand,

indicating sustained economic momentum. Aruba realizes that it must focus on economic diversification and uphold responsible financial management and governance practices to ensure ongoing GDP growth and build resiliency to absorb future shocks.

**Post-COVID Tourism Resurgence and the Aruban Resiliency**

In 2023, Aruba experienced a resurgence in tourism, marking a remarkable rebound from the challenges posed by the global pandemic. The island welcomed unprecedented visitors, signaling a significant triumph for its tourism sector. Throughout the year, Aruba hosted over 1.24 million tourists, showcasing an impressive growth rate of over eleven percent compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019. The American market played a pivotal role in driving this achievement, contributing to a notable growth rate of 13.3 percent compared to 2019. Additionally, visitors from the Latin American region also made significant contributions to tourism growth. The opening of new air routes in Colombia and Peru and increased air frequencies in Latin American hubs connecting to Aruba further facilitated this growth. Furthermore, strategic marketing and sales initiatives with key tourism partners in South America, featuring innovative campaigns targeting various demographics, bolstered Aruba’s regional recovery. As a result, Aruba closed 2023 with a regional recovery rate of 122% compared to 2019 and a market share of 10.5%, an increase of more than three percentage points from 2022. Notably, tourists displayed increased spending and extended stays, highlighting Aruba’s growing reputation as a premier holiday destination.

Moreover, cruise tourism experienced a substantial upswing, with 817,670 cruise tourists in 2023 compared to 610,474 in 2022, reaffirming Aruba’s growing appeal as a coveted cruise destination within the Caribbean region. These tourism accomplishments underscore Aruba’s resilience and adaptability in navigating global challenges while showcasing its innovative mindset. In recent years, Aruba has distinguished itself as one of the most innovative and creative Caribbean islands in destination marketing, a trend that will continue into 2024. We are committed to channeling our creativity and ingenuity beyond tourism, collaborating with local

and international partners to develop new, sustainable industries and propel Aruba forward.

**Aruba as an Investment Hub in the Caribbean**

As part of our economic strategy, Aruba aims to become a leading investment destination in the Caribbean, attracting investors from the region and within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. One of the strategies to achieve this is the Aruba Investment Summit 2024 (AIS24) hosted on March 21st, 2024, at the

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VNO/NCW in The Hague, Netherlands. This collaborative effort involved key stakeholders such as the Aruban Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communication, and Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic Affairs and Industry of Aruba, the Aruba Investment Agency, the Chamber of Commerce Aruba, and VNO–Aruba. AIS24 provided a platform for attendees to explore investment and partnership opportunities in Aruba beyond tourism, showcasing our

diverse business prospects and serving as a strategic gateway to new markets.

**Responsible Financial Management and International Recognition**

Aruba has achieved remarkable progress in recent years, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to diligent governance and transparent fiscal practices. By prioritizing adherence to international standards, technical compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and embracing responsible financial management, the island nation has earned recognition for its dedication.

A significant milestone was reached in 2019 when the European Union, acknowledging Aruba’s proactive legislative adjustments to align with EU requirements, removed it from the blacklist of tax havens. Although initially placed on the grey list due to incomplete compliance with financial data exchange standards, Aruba swiftly addressed the concerns. This proactive approach shielded the nation from reputational harm and stringent EU transaction regulations. Through persistent dedication, Aruba’s efforts culminated in a notable achievement by February 20, 2024, with its removal from the OECD’s grey list and official placement on the whitelist. This development underscores Aruba’s growing international confidence and commitment to upholding global fiscal transparency and responsibility standards.

Aruba’s dedication to upholding international financial standards and combating illicit financing is exemplified by our recent evaluation by the Caribbean Financial Task Force (CFATF). On July 14th, 2022, CFATF released Aruba’s Fourth Round Mutual Evaluation Report, conducted after an extensive assessment launched in 2020, which included an on-site visit from August 30 to September 10, 2021. The report praised Aruba’s exemplary compliance with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations in tackling money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. Specifically, it highlights the effectiveness of Aruba’s AML/CFT framework and the robust supervision by the Aruban Central Bank. Aruba is one of only three countries worldwide with outstanding supervision and preventive measures ratings.



H.E. Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes and the European Commissioner for International Partnerships, Mrs. Jutta Urpilainen

*In February, at the 20th OCTs EU Forum in Brussels, Aruba took on the presidency of the ministerial conference and will host the ministerial conference in Aruba in 2025. Aruba also holds the chairmanship of the Executive Committee of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA). A clear support and belief in Aruba’s involvement with the OCTA. During this Forum, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Communication and Sustainable Development of Aruba signed a financial agreement for 14.2 million euros for digitalization at the Aruban government. In addition, I, as OCTA President, signed an agreement for 15 million euros for all 13 Overseas countries and territories (OCTs) to support intra-regional cooperation.*

**Multilateral Collaboration for Innovative and Sustainable Solutions**

Multilateral collaboration is vital in addressing global challenges like climate change and achieving collective goals such as economic development and sustainability. Aruba recognizes this and aims to foster cooperation and share its best practices internationally. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Aruba faces significant challenges. One is vulnerability to climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. These phenomena threaten the livelihoods, infrastructure, and ecosystems of these islands. Another challenge we face as a SIDS is limited natural resources, which make us more dependent on imports for essential goods, and vulnerability to price fluctuations in global markets, which can hinder economic

development and sustainability. Due to SIDS’s small size and limited economic diversity, we are more economically vulnerable and susceptible to external shocks such as natural disasters, global pandemics, and fluctuations in tourism and trade. Addressing these challenges requires local, regional, and international efforts, including investment in sustainable development, adaptation to climate change, improved governance, and enhanced cooperation and partnerships between SIDS and the global community.

On climate change, Aruba has aligned with global initiatives and is committed to limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This is exemplified by its active participation in events like the regional climate conference (CECC 2023) initiated by the Netherlands

and Aruba. Aruba has set ambitious targets for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. It has adjusted its national energy policy, emphasizing a balanced approach with 50% renewable energy alongside cleaner fuels like LNG and Hydrogen. Aruba remains dedicated to aligning with international objectives and contributing to combatting climate change, paving the way for a sustainable and resilient future. In addition, Aruba signed the Multiannual Indicative Program (MIP) financial agreement with the European Commission for digital transition during the 20th OCTs–EU Forum in February 2024. Aruba’s comprehensive e-government vision aims to enhance transparency and better serve its citizens and businesses, potentially serving as a model for other Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) to follow.

# JOINING HANDS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Time flies and it's been more than three years since I first arrived in the Netherlands. Though small in terms of population and land area, the Netherlands is, in my view, a “big” country which may punch above its weight.

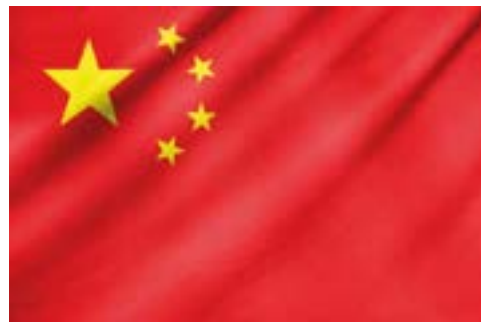
BY H.E. MR. TAN JIAN, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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The Netherlands was a world power in its golden age of the 17th century, a country with global footage. Now it turns to be a major player in the world economy, full of vitality, with a lot of world-renowned companies, innovative SMEs and start-ups. It is culturally rich, science and technology advanced. In the eyes of many Chinese, the Dutch are seen both as merchants and missionaries, we like the former more than the latter.

How is my work over the past three years? For the first year, I was struggling to find my feet, Covid only making it more difficult. For 2022 we focused on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level. For 2023, the first post-pandemic year, we worked hard to resume contacts and catch up. To sum up, I have good relations with the business; good working relations with the government; challenges with the parliament and media. My job is to promote our relations. I have been working hard to drive home the message that, China is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This year 2024, is the 10th anniversary of



CHINA REGARDS THE  
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BILATERAL EXCHANGES  
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the establishment of the open and pragmatic partnership for comprehensive cooperation between China and the Netherlands. China regards the Netherlands as the gateway of China-EU cooperation. Bilateral exchanges in various fields have fully restarted after the pandemic and exports from the Netherlands

to China have increased rapidly, demonstrating the huge potential of our cooperation. China is developing new quality productive forces to promote high-quality development. China is creating a world-class business environment for a higher-level open economy. Chinese market is instrumental for Dutch companies to maintain competitiveness. I hope that China will still be seen by Europeans and Dutch as a partner, not a rival, not a challenge, let alone a threat. I hope that the Netherlands will continue to uphold free and open trade, support globalization, multilateralism, and international cooperation, contributing to the stability of the global industrial and supply chains. China is getting more connected with the rest of the world. In addition to the recently introduced visa free policy for Dutch citizens which is sure to facilitate people-to-people exchanges between our two countries, we are also planning high-level exchanges and deepening cooperation in various fields. In the face of unprecedented challenges like climate change and artificial intelligence, let's join hands to promote the sustained and steady development of bilateral relations, and build a shared and brighter future for humanity.



**H.E. MR. TAN JIAN, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS**

# WHY “KWIBUKA” MATTERS IN THE NETHERLANDS

“On the 7th of April 2024, Rwanda commemorated, for the 30th time, the Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi. “Kwibuka”, which means to remember, is an annual period of solemn reflection when we come together to honour the victims, unite in our collective grief and renew our commitment to continue to build a better future for all Rwandans.

BY H.E. OLIVIER J.P. NDUHUNGIREHE, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA  
TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS



RWANDA'S HISTORY  
HAS SHAPED  
RWANDAN SHARED  
IDENTITY - THIS IS  
WHY THE HISTORICAL  
CLARITY ABOUT  
THE GENOCIDE  
AGAINST THE TUTSI  
IS OF NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL  
IMPORTANCE.

This important act of preserving memory, and ensuring the accurate re-telling of history, matters to Rwandans. And though it might not be immediately apparent, it is also important to the Dutch citizens. The

international community played a part in the tragedy while the world watched it unfold. Every nation can benefit from reflecting on the lessons from this preventable genocide borne of division and hatred.



H.E. Olivier J.P. Nduhungirehe, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
and Ms. Joan J.J. Wiegman, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Rwanda.

PHOTOS COURTESY EMBASSY OF RWANDA



On April 19th, 2023, the first memorial in the Netherlands to honor the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was unveiled in the Beatrix Park in Amsterdam. On the photo from left to right: Mr. Marcel de Vink, Director-General for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Mrs. Christine Safari, Chairperson of IBUKA-Netherlands; H.E. Olivier J.P. Nduhungirehe, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Mr. Reinier van Dantzig; Deputy Mayor, city of Amsterdam.

IN THE  
AFTERMATH  
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GOVERNMENT  
OF THE  
NETHERLANDS  
WAS AT THE  
FOREFRONT IN  
SUPPORTING  
RWANDA IN  
ONE THE MOST  
CRITICAL AREAS  
AFTER SUCH  
TRAGEDY: THE  
JUSTICE SECTOR

Thirty years ago, over one million children, women and men were murdered in 100 days just because they were born Tutsi. Hutus who opposed the genocidal government were also killed. This ‘crime of crimes’ happened in plain sight. The international community were, at best, indifferent to the horrific violence, with some countries being complicit in the killings. No one came to Rwanda’s aid. The slaughter was only halted when the Rwandan

Patriotic Front took Kigali and defeated the genocidaires. The Genocide showed what can happen when an ideology built on hatred is allowed to flourish unchecked by those with the power to intervene. Rwanda’s history has shaped Rwandan shared identity – this is why the historical clarity about the Genocide against the Tutsi is of national and international importance. In the aftermath of the genocide, the

Government of the Netherlands was at the forefront in supporting Rwanda in one the most critical areas after such tragedy: the justice sector. It is precisely when victims were crying out for accountability that most professionals of justice had been killed or had fled the country and that most infrastructures of justice and their equipment were destroyed or stolen. The Dutch cooperation in that regard

was quite comprehensive and decisive. Courtrooms and correctional services were rebuilt, equipped and modernized; judges, prosecutors and lawyers were trained, including here in the Netherlands, and a number of genocide suspects who had fled to this country were investigated, arrested, prosecuted or extradited. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is one of the countries in Europe that have done the most in holding genocide

suspects accountable. Our collective memory also provides the world with a warning that the ideology which drove the Genocide must not be allowed to flourish and spread ever again. This is unfortunately happening today just beyond Rwanda’s borders. On the 7th April and beyond, we ask that the Kingdom of the Netherlands stand in solidarity with Rwanda. We ask that you do

this to honour the memory of all Rwandans who lost their lives and others who did their best to help during Rwanda’s darkest hour. And we ask for your solidarity in preserving the true account of Rwanda’s history so that the world can match the words ‘never again’ with tangible action to prevent history from repeating itself.”

# QUEEN MÁXIMA'S VISIT TO COLOMBIA: ADVOCATING FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND FINANCIAL HEALTH

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND BRIDGING GAPS

SOURCE: UNSGSA/PHOTOS PATRICK VAN KATWIJK



Ten years after her last visit, HRH Queen Máxima makes a significant return to Colombia as the UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA).



Queen Máxima poses for a picture with Colombian President Gustavo Petro and First Lady Verónica Alcocer in Bogotá, emphasizing the crucial role of financial health in national policy agenda.

*Reflecting on Colombia's commendable progress in financial inclusion, the UNSGSA noted that the percentage of adults with bank accounts has risen from 39% in 2011 to 60% in 2021*



Queen Máxima delivered a keynote address at the “Payments for Financial Inclusion” technology conference and met with members of Colombia’s financial community.



Her Majesty met with Colombian President Gustavo Petro and Vice President Francia Marquez and held meetings with various government officials, including the Minister of Finance, Ricardo Bonilla; the General Manager of Bank of the Republic, Leonardo Villar; the Financial Superintendent, Cesar Ferrari, as well as representatives of the private sector.

She delivered a keynote address at the “Payments for Financial Inclusion” technology conference, participated in a closed-door discussion, and met with representatives of the country’s financial community. Reflecting on Colombia’s commendable progress in financial inclusion, the UNSGSA noted that the percentage of adults with bank accounts has risen from 39% in 2011 to 60%

in 2021, according to the World Bank’s Global Findex. Queen Máxima’s visit aimed to provide support for ongoing efforts to strengthen financial inclusion and promote financial well-being across the nation, particularly focusing on disadvantaged groups such as women, smallholder farmers, small businesses, and rural populations.

# URUGUAY: UNIQUE COUNTRY IN SOUTH AMERICA

Uruguay, is a heart shaped country, nestled in the southeastern corner of South America, between its neighbours Argentina and Brazil. It stands out for its uniqueness.

By H.E. Dr. Álvaro Enrique González Otero, Ambassador of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay



URUGUAYAN  
CULTURE IS A  
FASCINATING  
BLEND OF GAUCHO  
TRADITIONS,  
EUROPEAN  
INFLUENCES, AND  
A TOUCH OF THE  
RIOPLATENSE SPIRIT.

Despite its relatively small size, the country has developed a vibrant culture, rooted in a progressive society and an incomparable natural environment, with highly diverse landscapes. From the golden beaches of Punta del Este, a well known resort town and peninsula on the Atlantic coast, with an international reputation for glamorous nightlife, and La Paloma to the rolling hills of Tacuarembó and the vast grasslands of its rich plains, each region offers a unique beauty.

A Tapestry of Cultures

Uruguayan culture is a fascinating blend of gaucho traditions, european influences, and a touch of the rioplatense spirit. Tango, folklore, candombe, and milonga are just a

quality natural meats, wines, dairy products, mates, and dulce de leche, conquers palates and earns admiration around the world. A Beacon of Democracy and Progress In this brief overview, we can highlight some of the aspects that make our country stand out:

**Full Democracy:** Uruguay is the most consolidated democracy in South America. This is reflected in the average score of 8.66 it obtained in the recent Democracy Index study published by The Economist's Intelligence Unit, which considers four categories: electoral process and pluralism (10), government functioning (8.93), political participation (7.78), political culture (6.88),



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EMBASSY OF URUGUAY

H.E. Dr. Álvaro Enrique González Otero, Ambassador of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

and civil liberties (9.71). Its low crime rate makes it one of the safest and most valued countries in Latin America.

**Equality and Progress:** Uruguay is recognized for its commitment to social justice and equality. On July 3, 1927, a century after declaring its independence, Uruguay became the first Latin American country to approve the right to vote for women, becoming the sixth country in the world to guarantee this right. It was also a pioneer in promoting the welfare state, legalizing same-sex marriage, and setting an example in promoting a green economy. It ranks as one of the countries with the highest literacy rate and access to health in the region. It is also a benchmark in human rights and gender equality, ranking first in the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index.

**Innovation and Technology:** Uruguay has positioned itself at the forefront as a regional and global benchmark in Digital Government and is part of the Digital Nations (DN). It has been standing out in the implementation of information and communication technologies, with a strong commitment to digital education and e-government.

**Sustainability and Environment:** Uruguay is a regional leader in promoting green energy (99% of its energy comes from renewable sources) and environmental protection, with a high percentage of its territory under

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ENVIRONMENT

protected areas. The country is committed to implementing a long-term climate strategy for low-carbon development and resilience to climate change. It has also been making significant progress in its roadmap for green hydrogen production and a national sustainable tourism plan.

**Quality of Life:** Uruguay offers a high standard of living, with an excellent health system, accessible education, and a safe and peaceful environment. In this sense, it is also worth remembering that on March 15, 2024, Uruguay achieved a Baa1 credit rating (the highest in the country’s history), according to a report issued by the Moody’s Rating risk rating agency. This is two notches above the investment grade threshold, with a stable outlook. The report attributes the decision to the “institutional strength that underpins the implementation of structural reforms and the continuous compliance with fiscal policy frameworks.”

**A Destination Like No Other**  
In short, Uruguay stands out for being a country that combines natural beauty, vibrant culture, a progressive society, and a commitment to the well-being of its citizens and visitors. Every year the number of tourists exceeds the total number of its inhabitants. Its uniqueness makes it an attractive destination for those seeking to experience the essence of a country of latin origin, with a unique and captivating rioplatense touch.



From left to right:  
Writer Maria de los Angeles Esteves (Argentina), Dr. Sylvia Puentes de Oyendard (Uruguay), Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Alvaro González Otero (Uruguay), Ambassador, H.E. Jaime Alex Moscoso Valenzuela (Chile), Mr. Diego Sadofski (Argentina, Prof. Ricardo Cuadros (Chile) during conference: “3 women, 3 countries, 1 language: Alfonsina Storni, Gabriela Mistral and Juana de Ibarbourou”, sponsored by the Embassies of Uruguay, Argentina and Chile.

# DUTCH SOCIETY WELCOMES NEW AMBASSADORS AS HONORARY MEMBERS TO DIPLOMAT CLUB WASSENAAR



There were seven Ambassadors welcomed as honorary members to Diplomat Club Wassenaar, many accompanied by their spouses. This is a bi-annual tradition held for newly accredited Ambassadors to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for ten years now.

**First row from left to right:**

Ambassador of Türkiye, H.E. Mr Selçuk Ünal; Director-General of the OPCW Ambassador, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias; Mayor of the Municipality of Wassenaar, Mr Leendert de Lange; Founder/Director of Diplomat Club Wassenaar, Mrs Shida Blik and Mr Peter Blik; Alderman International Affairs of Wassenaar, Mr Laurens van Doeveren.

**Second row:**

Ambassador of Poland, H.E. Ms Margareta Kassangana; Mrs Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy; Ambassador of Colombia, H.E. Ms Diana Carolina Olarte Bácares; Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. Mr Ngo Huong Nam; Ambassador of Greece, H.E. Ms Caterina Ghini; Mrs Lerzan Kayihan Ünal; Director of Kasteel De Wittenburg, Mr Ralf Meppelder.

**Third row:**

Ambassador of El Salvador, H.E. Mr Agustín Vásquez Gómez; Ambassador of Portugal, H.E. Ms Clara Nunes dos Santos and Mr Pedro Nunes dos Santos; Mrs Patricia van Oordt de Arias

They were warmly welcomed by the Founder/ Director of Diplomat Club Wassenaar and Publisher of Diplomat Affairs Magazine – In touch with the Dutch, Mrs Shida Blik, Mr Peter Blik, the Mayor of the Municipality of Wassenaar Mr. Leendert de Lange and the Alderman of International Affairs of Wassenaar, Mr Laurens van Doeveren. The Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias (appointed for life as Ambassador of Spain) was also present with his spouse Mrs Patricia van Oordt de Arias. He was the first to be

THE CLUB MAY BE CALLED DIPLOMAT CLUB WASSENAAR, BUT IT DOES NOT SEE THE HAGUE AND WASSENAAR AS SEPARATE ENTITIES. KASTEEL DE WITTENBURG WAS CHOSEN AS PARTNER, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS RICH HISTORY AND OUTSTANDING BEAUTY BUT ALSO AS THE LOCATION BORDERS ON BOTH.

welcomed at the founding of Diplomat Club Wassenaar in 2014 and is considered the Dean of the Club. Mrs Shida Blik welcomed the new Ambassadors with a Dutch ribbon and explained the mission of Diplomat Club Wassenaar, a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2014 with the goal to create a “neutral” ground for the Diplomatic community where politics and religion could be put aside and where it could develop connections with Dutch society with a specific focus on art, music, sports, charity and business. A place where our Honorary Members meet and greet other members of

the club, in an informal and relaxed setting. The Club may be called Diplomat Club Wassenaar, but it does not see The Hague and Wassenaar as separate entities. Kasteel De Wittenburg was chosen as partner, not only because of its rich history and outstanding beauty but also as the location borders on both. Mayor Leendert de Lange greeted all the new Ambassadors in their own language, shared some interesting facts about Wassenaar and Zuid-Holland, encouraged the Ambassadors to cycle, all in the spirit of helping the newly arrived adapt to their latest country



**Ms Emilie Bastens graduated from the Royal Conservatoire The Hague**

of residence. He shared some particularly amusing Dutch expressions and explained the special bond that Wassenaar maintains with the Royal House of the Netherlands. All three princesses grew up in Wassenaar and their old school lies three hundred meters from Kasteel De Wittenburg. Mayor de Lange invited the Ambassadors to celebrate Kings Day in Wassenaar, wished them all the best in their new posting and offered them a bag with Dutch cheese made with milk from Wassenaar’s cows! Spirits were high at this opportunity for the

Ambassadors to connect with Dutch society and to meet and greet their colleagues, fulfilling their mission and mandate: to build bridges. It was clear that all the Ambassadors were very keen to further tighten the friendship and business relationship with the Netherlands, as there are so many things that their countries have in common with the Netherlands. The Director of Kasteel De Wittenburg, Mr. Ralf Meppelder was delighted that monthly National Days are celebrated at the castle in collaboration with the honorary members of Diplomat Club Wassenaar.

MAYOR LEENDERT DE LANGE GREETED ALL THE NEW AMBASSADORS IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE, SHARED SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WASSENAAR AND ZUID-HOLLAND, ENCOURAGED THE AMBASSADORS TO CYCLE, ALL IN THE SPIRIT OF HELPING THE NEWLY ARRIVED ADAPT TO THEIR LATEST COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE.

Mrs. Shida Blik highlighted one of the partners of Diplomat Affairs Magazine, PAN Amsterdam, that has been one of the largest national fairs for art, antiques, and design for 36 years. Over 125 art dealers, antique dealers and gallery owners from the Netherlands and abroad come together to showcase a carefully curated selection of modern and contemporary art, design, photography, old master paintings, 19th-century paintings, Asian and African art, as well as silver, jewellery, ceramics, glass, prints, books, clocks, and furniture.



**The Mayor of the Municipality of Wassenaar, Mr Leendert de Lange**



# GREEN HYDROGEN AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN THE ALGERIA'S ENERGY MIX

Algeria is positioning itself as a major player in the European energy scene aiming to maintain its position as a significant gas supplier to Europe until 2050 and beyond, while also expanding its services to include green hydrogen by dedicating 10% of its green hydrogen production to Europe by 2040.

BY H.E. MRS. SALIMA ABDELHAK, AMBASSADOR OF ALGERIA TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Aware of the impact of energy on environment, Algeria is firmly committed to sustainability by pledging to reduce methane emissions and investing in carbon capture technologies within its gas sector, alongside producing low-carbon LNG (LNG-Z). Moreover, Algeria aims to diversify its energy mix by incorporating more sustainable and environmentally friendly sources such as renewable energy and green hydrogen.

It is within this context that Algeria has unveiled its strategy for renewable hydrogen, structured around three main phases, with the aim of supplying Europe with 10% of its green hydrogen needs by 2040. This roadmap is divided into three main stages, an initial phase involving pilot projects from 2023 to 2030, followed by an expansion and market creation phase from 2030 to 2040 and finally an industrialization and competitiveness consolidation phase from 2040 to 2050.

By 2040, Algeria aims to produce and export between 30 and 40 TWh of gaseous



and liquid hydrogen, combining both blue hydrogen from natural gas and green hydrogen produced through electrolysis using the country's abundant solar resources. It can rely on qualified human resources, expertise in natural gas liquefaction, storage, long-range transport, and distribution, as well as a long coastline suitable for seawater desalination stations to support green hydrogen production. Algeria is determined to take advantage of its proximity to European markets and build upon its renowned reputation as a reliable energy supplier to Europe, aiming to become a potential hub in North Africa for

green hydrogen and its derivatives mainly ammonia, methanol, e-fuels, or other valuable gases, thereby contributing to Europe's long-term energy security and its industrial decarbonation. Algeria is up to meet this challenge given its abundant natural gas reserves, its oil and gas infrastructure, including pipelines and liquefied gas terminals, LNG carriers, its industrial gas industry, as well as its exceptional potential in solar and wind energy.

By 2040, Algeria plans to direct the renewable hydrogen mainly to Europe, with the aim of meeting 10% of its continental demand. It is therefore a major and priority project for the country all financial means are mobilized, and legislative procedures simplified. The national company SONATRACH is also involved in increasing its investments to that end.

That being said, strategic investment in this sector, particularly during the initial and secondary phases of implementing the national green hydrogen development strategy from

2023 to 2040, may require the participation or contribution of foreign partners. In order to facilitate and ease investment in this area, the government agencies are committed to creating an attractive environment for potential investors interested through adequate procedures and measures.

To achieve this goal, Algeria intends to capitalize on its historical agreements in the gas sector. It's worth noting that in January, Algeria and Italy agreed to embark on a new gas pipeline project allowing Algeria to export not only gas but also electricity, ammonia, and hydrogen while also connecting Algeria and Italy and extending further to Austria and Germany, which are favourable for exports. Algeria is also a part of the so-called SouthH2 corridor project.

Algeria also intends to conclude new agreements within the green hydrogen sector, including collaborations with key partners such as Germany, a leader in green

hydrogen technology. This intensified collaboration aims to pave the way for the establishment of a green hydrogen industry in the foreseeable future through several joint initiatives, such as the "TaqatHy" program dealing with the technological and socio-

"THE NETHERLANDS HAS DEMONSTRATED SIGNIFICANT INTEREST IN GREEN HYDROGEN, PARTICULARLY THROUGH ITS MAIN HARBOURS, IN ROTTERDAM AND AMSTERDAM, WHICH ASPIRE TO BECOME KEY HUBS FOR HYDROGEN STORAGE AND RE-EXPORTATION CORRIDORS"

economic development of renewable energy and green hydrogen in Algeria, and "Green municipalities" cooperation program, related to energy transition at municipality scale, among others.

The Netherlands has demonstrated significant interest in green hydrogen, particularly through its main harbours, in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, which aspire to become key hubs for hydrogen storage and re-exportation corridors. The embassy of Algeria in the Hague follows with great interest the Dutch activities related to hydrogen and endeavours to involve Algerian stakeholders, as was the case last year during the gas summit in Rotterdam.

Finally, I can confidently affirm that there is potential for convergence between Algeria's aspirations to produce and export green hydrogen and the Dutch Ports' interests in hydrogen storage.



H.E. MRS. SALIMA ABDELHAK, AMBASSADOR OF ALGERIA



First row  
Ms. Marlyne van  
Hoeij Smith  
Mr. Klaus de Clercq Zubli  
Ms. Eleonoor Hintzen  
Mr. Theo de Rooij  
Ms. Carolien Lavooij  
Ms. Pien van der Plas

Second row  
Mr. Arco van Nieuwland  
Mr. Peter Goedvolk  
Mr. Job Dura  
Mr. Patrick van der Meer  
Mr. Gerard van der Werff  
Mr. Yves Houtackers  
Mr. Focko Dorhout Mees  
Ms. Bianca Nagtegaal  
Mr. Ron Voskuilen  
Photos CHIO ROTterdam



**Mr. Peter Goedvolk, board member CHIO Rotterdam and Mrs. Lisette Goedvolk, advisory board Diplomat Affairs Magazine**



## Longines League of Nations™ Equestrian Excellence on the Global Stage

CHIO Rotterdam has been an esteemed partner of Diplomat Club Wassenaar under the guidance of their board member Mr. Peter Goedvolk, since the founding of our club 10 years ago, hence we are delighted to wish them a very happy 75th Birthday.

The upcoming 75th CHIO Rotterdam is a special anniversary edition of Rotterdam's oldest international top sports event and will be part of the revamped, exclusive Longines League of Nations™ and will serve as a significant milestone for the Olympic Games later in the year in Paris. This year, alongside all 5-star show jumping and dressage classes in the Rotterdam stadium, there will also be a second arena featuring a varied program of shows, clinics, and a children's program on Sunday.

Only the top international teams will compete in this year's Longines League of Nations™, which offers significant prize money namely the USA, France, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden,

WITH A YEARLY  
TURNOVER OF  
€ 2 BILLION IN THE  
NETHERLANDS,  
10.000 EQUESTRIAN  
COMPANIES,  
450.000 HORSES  
AND 1.2 MILLION  
FOLLOWERS,  
THE DUTCH  
EQUESTRIAN  
INDUSTRY IS IN  
FULL BLOOM.

and Brazil. The world's best Jumping teams compete against each other at only four qualifiers: Abu Dhabi (UAE), Ocala (USA), St. Gallen (SUI) and Rotterdam (NED), in order to secure one of the coveted spots at the Longines League of Nations™ Final in Barcelona (ESP).

CHIO Rotterdam is the only Dutch outdoor equestrian top sports event featuring five-star show jumping and dressage, placing itself among the world's top international events and also the oldest top sports event in Rotterdam. For the business world, CHIO Rotterdam has been 'the place to be' for years, not only during the equestrian sports event but also throughout the entire year as together with the ABNAMRO Open and the KLM Open it is part of the top three Dutch Hospitality events, hence the perfect partner as Diplomat Club Wassenaar's mission is to connect members to be in touch with the Dutch through the worlds of industry, arts, business, and sports.

With a yearly turnover of € 2 billion in the Netherlands, 10.000 equestrian companies, 450.000 horses and 1.2 million followers, the Dutch equestrian industry is in full bloom. Horses are one of the most significant exports from the Netherlands, and have long been considered of top quality, in particular in show-jumping and dressage. Around 300 (inter)national companies have a year-round relation with the CHIO Rotterdam.

For CHIO, it all started in 1948, when Rotterdam was working on redevelopment after the destruction of World War Two. Entrepreneur and builder Job Dura (1904-1975) believed that post-war Rotterdam could benefit from an event of international allure. He said to the then-director of the Rotterdam Manège, Adolf Klebe, "Klebe, shall we start an international competition?" And so, the very first international equestrian competition was organized in 1948. The Dura family remains connected to CHIO Rotterdam; grandson Job Dura (1963) joined the board in 2012.

CHIO ROTTERDAM  
IS THE ONLY  
DUTCH OUTDOOR  
EQUESTRIAN TOP  
SPORTS EVENT  
FEATURING FIVE-  
STAR SHOW  
JUMPING AND  
DRESSAGE, PLACING  
ITSELF AMONG  
THE WORLD'S TOP  
INTERNATIONAL  
EVENTS AND ALSO  
THE OLDEST TOP  
SPORTS EVENT IN  
ROTTERDAM.

Since the beginning, CHIO Rotterdam has welcomed many royals, politicians, pop stars, etc. from all over the world. There is a warm historical relationship with the Dutch Royal family. Former Queen Beatrix and today's King Willem Alexander frequently visit CHIO Rotterdam. This year's program will also feature a parade of royal carriages.

Besides being a meeting point for equestrian enthusiasts and the business community, CHIO also engages in several societal programs for the Rotterdam community. The 75th anniversary edition will take place from June 19th to 23rd, 2024.

Not only five days of fantastic equestrian sports for both the public and VIP's; but also, a lively Merchandise Village with shops, food and beverage outlets, and entertainment, all set within the enchanting Kralingse Bos. [www.chio.nl](http://www.chio.nl)





LONGINES  
LEAGUE OF  
NATIONS  
ROTTERDAM



# CHIO ROTTERDAM

## 19 – 23 June 2024



Longines League of Nations™ – FEI Nations Cup Dressage – Four in hand Show  
CSI 2\* Jumping – CDN Dressage – Para Dressage – CHIO Zuid-Holland Cup  
U25 & Young Riders Dressage – Youth program with Britt Dekker –  
Royal Coaches – Hospitality – Clinics – Shows – Entertainment – Stroodorp

*Jump into the Future*

