



## 2023-2025 Work Programme of the Advisory Council on International Affairs

This work programme sets out the advisory reports that the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) is currently working on and possible subjects for future reports. It is not a fixed list of upcoming reports. Owing in part to rapidly changing international developments, the AIV would like to maintain some flexibility in respect of accommodating unforeseen requests for advice from the government and parliament, and potentially drawing up advisory reports at its own initiative.

### Advisory reports produced in 2022

In 2022, the AIV produced the following reports:

- [Choices for the Armed Forces](#) (advisory letter, March 2022)
- [Designing smart industrial policy: new departures for the Netherlands within the EU](#) (March 2022)
- [Foundation for a Dutch Global Health Strategy](#) (April 2022)
- [Human Rights: a core interest in the current geopolitical context](#) (July 2022)
- [Urgent need for a new Dutch strategy on Africa](#) (advisory letter, July 2022)
- [A consideration of various COVID-19 scenarios](#) (contribution to a joint report by the advisory councils, September 2022)
- [The War in Ukraine: a Geopolitical Shock to the System | Press release | Advisory Council on International Affairs](#) (20 October 2022)
- [The Geopolitical Role of Türkiye: Trends and Future Scenarios | Publication | Advisory Council on International Affairs](#) (8 November 2022)

The AIV is currently working on the following advisory reports:

#### [A stronger international role for the euro](#)

The AIV has been asked to analyse the extent to which the euro's international role could be expanded as a result of EU policy and the degree to which that could in turn contribute to strengthening the EU's economic and geopolitical position. The AIV has also been asked to advise on the most effective measures for achieving this, for instance in the areas of capital markets and banking, and the role that the Dutch government could play in this regard. Lastly, the AIV has been asked to discuss the extent to which the renminbi is expected to become an internationally traded currency, and what the implications of this would be for the global financial system and geopolitical relations.

#### [Advisory report on hybrid threats](#)

The government has requested the AIV to produce an advisory report on hybrid threats. Given the rapidly changing security situation and the deployment of hybrid techniques, it is fair to say the Netherlands is now in a continual state of confrontation or low-intensity conflict, which is playing out in a large number of domains. This means that our entire society can be the target of hybrid campaigns. Domestic and international security are closely intertwined in this regard.

## **Planned advisory reports for 2023**

### Follow-up report on the consequences of the war in Ukraine

In 2023 the AIV expects to produce a report – whether or not at the request of the government and/or parliament – on the far-reaching consequences of the war in Ukraine. This may include recommendations on the war's effects on the European security structure, the energy market, the global economy and European integration, particularly in the light of the prospects of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and other countries joining the EU. Effects are also expected in areas such as diplomacy, the economy and human rights, and the AIV could provide recommendations in this connection as well.

### Sustainable growth (request for advice on a fair and just transition, 26 October 2022)

The world is confronted with major challenges when it comes to climate change, shortages of minable raw materials and clean water, and shrinking biodiversity. In Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America, governments lack the resources to take the measures that are needed.

The Netherlands' current climate policy is aimed at implementing EU policy. Besides the government, other players are also active in this area. NGOs as well as the private sector are developing plenty of green growth initiatives, norms are being established for sustainable chains and there is now a focus on social and natural capital. The central question in this report will be how to make growth in poorer countries sustainable, and how the Netherlands can help promote this. Attention could also be paid to the effectiveness and the quality of international negotiations regarding the coherence and financing of such efforts.

### Shrinking civic space

For some time civic space has been shrinking worldwide. This is true in a number of countries in Europe, but also in places such as the Middle East and North Africa. Civic space is being constrained by repressive legislation, among other things. This presents the Netherlands and the EU with difficult choices. It makes it increasingly difficult for NGOs, including those supported by the Netherlands, to do their work. A number of questions have arisen in this connection. What specific circumstances are causing the shrinking of civic space? How can the Netherlands and the EU best respond? What possible courses of action does the Netherlands have, and what tools can it use in this regard? Considering the effectiveness to date of policy in this area, what are the options for a renewed approach and renewed partnerships?

## **Possible subjects for advisory reports in the longer term**

### Solidarity within the EU

Many of the major political crises that have played out in the European Union in recent years have dealt with issues of solidarity and the sharing of costs and responsibilities. Examples include the debt crisis and the support provided to Greece (starting in 2010), the migration crisis and the fair distribution of asylum seekers (2015-2016) and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, decisions regarding vaccines and recovery funds. On numerous occasions, the call for solidarity has created tensions among member states, because it came on top of the traditional 'de facto' solidarity of market integration and related policy (such as regional support), and because not all member states agreed with it in equal measure. In the coming period, these dynamics involving the issue of solidarity will also influence the intra-European debate on energy (gas) and the economic recession. It would therefore be useful to dedicate an analytical advisory report to this matter. In this regard, attention could be paid to the wish in multiple member states and among part of the public for a more 'social Europe', for example with a pillar of social rights (in line with the Porto Declaration of the European Council, May 2021). In this area, too, the Netherlands has long been reluctant to adopt such policy for fear that it could result in European regulations paid for in accordance with the member states' means, or for fear of 'moral hazard'. At the same time, there are also situations in which the Netherlands expects solidarity from other member states (when it comes to the reception of asylum seekers, for example). How to deal with this broad tension could be a primary question in this advisory report on solidarity between and within EU states.

### The future of the 3D approach

In recent decades, the Netherlands has been a major advocate of the 3D approach in foreign policy. That is to say, using a combination of defence, diplomacy and development in crisis areas with a view to limiting vulnerability and instability, and contributing to a lasting political, social and economic transition in the countries in question. The Netherlands' efforts in Afghanistan are generally considered the most representative example of this approach. Now that those efforts have come to an end without having produced the desired results, it is time to ask whether – and if so, under what conditions – the 3D approach can be effective. What lessons can be drawn from the combined efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere regarding the advisability of an integrated approach? Is there a need to adjust the 3D approach and, if so, what adjustments are needed?

### Global citizenship and the SDGs

In the context of this subject, the AIV could set out in an advisory letter the courses of action available for the Dutch public when it comes to certain global challenges involving water, food, energy, health and poverty, for instance. How can the general public contribute to a safe, just and sustainable world, both from the perspective of their role as global citizens and in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Clearly, both action and inaction have an impact on the individual's immediate environment and direct consequences for the position of poor people elsewhere in the world.

### The Netherlands and Europe in the Indo-Pacific region

Current developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, Russia's position and US-China relations in the face of geopolitical changes, are all affecting the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region. This region is of crucial importance to the Netherlands and Europe owing to strategic trade routes and current energy interests. It has become something of a pawn in the power struggle among major powers, and the consequences of this can be felt in Europe too. The recent tensions between the US and China over Taiwan, whose semiconductor industry is of global importance, highlight the risks involved. According to the Dutch Indo-Pacific Guidelines, published in late 2020, to adequately promote Dutch and European economic and political interests in the

world's primary growth region, the Netherlands and the EU need to step up their efforts and develop a distinctive Dutch and EU vision of the region, especially considering the need for broader, stronger partnerships and for a better, and more widely propagated narrative.<sup>1</sup> The question is how the Netherlands can achieve this now that democracy, the rule of law, human rights, free trade and general freedoms are under pressure, and what role the Netherlands can and should play in this regard at EU and NATO level.

### Debt

The current debt burden is limiting the ability of countries in the Global South to invest in development, food security, health, climate adaptation, education and other public services such as safety and security. Debt issues are discussed and decisions taken primarily within international organisations and/or the context of international partnerships, such as the Paris Club, the G20, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In an advisory report, the AIV could examine the causes of the current debt problem and provide recommendations on the courses of action available to the Netherlands.

### Food security

Food security cannot be taken for granted. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has identified a large number of problems. The Dutch agricultural economy is closely intertwined with that of the Global South through value chains and the footprint we leave behind elsewhere when importing animal feed and timber, for instance. The challenge is to increase food security while also lowering the negative impact of food production. In this advisory report, the AIV could address the following questions: How can the Netherlands help improve food security worldwide? How can a more resilient, less vulnerable and more sustainable system of food production be achieved? And what are the roles of circular agriculture, trade policy, the food processing industry (including traders), knowledge and local expertise, and quality standards and certificates when it comes to sustainability and responsible business conduct?

### Security developments in the space domain

A large number of countries, businesses and organisations have access to outer space. More than 2,000 satellites used for a variety of purposes, such as communication, navigation, observation and monitoring, currently orbit the Earth. These satellites are increasingly exposed to the risks posed by extreme solar activity and intentional manipulation, interference or even destruction. Countries such as Russia and China have counterspace capabilities. The United States and France have developed national strategies to protect their security interests in space. In December 2019, NATO recognised space as a fifth operational domain. By 2030, the Netherlands wants to have an operational space capability for defence and security. It is uncertain whether countries will be able to agree on a code of conduct or conclude an arms control agreement to prevent the militarisation of space and avoid outer space becoming a conflict arena in the future. This advisory report could explore how NATO and the EU can work together to promote strategic stability and the peaceful use of space, and the role that the Netherlands could play in this regard.

### Conflict prevention

The goal of Dutch conflict prevention policy is to prevent violent conflict. The Netherlands does this by minimising conflict risks and increasing society's resilience to such risks. In this regard, two timeframes are important: the long-term approach that addresses the structural root causes of conflict, and the short-term approach that prevents the threat of violent escalation. Conflict prevention is a key aspect of modern warfare. How can the Netherlands (and the EU) deal with this effectively?

This report could focus on specific 'regions', such as the European perimeter, or on

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<sup>1</sup> [Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for strengthening Dutch and EU cooperation with partners in Asia | Publication | Government.nl](#)

specific themes, such as weak states or ethnic conflicts.