

The House of Representatives
Attn. the informateur
c/o Bureau Woordvoering Kabinetsformatie
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RE SER letter for the informant regarding formation of new government

THE HAGUE	17 November 2025	EMAIL	secretariaatvz@ser.nl
OUR REFERENCE	25.32577	EXTENSION NUMBER	070 3499 504
ENCLOSURE(S)	1		

Dear informateur,

We look forward to working with a new government and parliament to develop a stable policy trajectory and help restore public confidence. For 75 years now, in a sometimes divided country, the SER has been bringing together parties and interests to reach broadly supported solutions. SER advice enjoys support among employers, employees, self-employed representatives and crown-appointed members, as well as society in a broader context. For example, SER recommendations are developed in collaboration with nature and environmental organisations and the SER Youth Platform.

The SER opts for a social market economy based on broad prosperity. Broad prosperity can only be achieved if the Netherlands has and retains sufficient earning capacity. At the same time, earning capacity only contributes to broad prosperity if the proceeds reach the people and the collective, and damage to nature and the environment is prevented and repaired. The Netherlands is at a crossroads. It is time to strengthen our democratic rule of law, for a consultative economy, not an adversarial economy. Seeking consensus rather than polarisation. The SER is at your side and together, we have all the instruments to structure tomorrow's economy.

We have identified three related priorities for a new investment and reform plan for the dialogue with the next government:

- The Netherlands stands for high-quality work and cannot afford to leave anyone behind
- The Netherlands moving forward: room for knowledge, earning capacity and entrepreneurship
- Unblocking the Netherlands: solutions in the physical domain

This letter outlines our recommendations in these three areas¹. During this term of government, we also offer to work together on the WIA (Work and Income (Capacity for Work) Act), agriculture, lifelong learning, the tax system, ICSR/regulatory burden, and scaling up defence.

¹ This is just a selection from our recommendations; you can find the full list in our letter to election programme committees: [SER \(2025\)](#)

1. The Netherlands commits to high-quality work and cannot afford to squander human capital

Implement the SER-MLT recommendation in full for a secure and flexible labour market:

The SER aims for a labour market based on decent work, a labour market that offers work and income security for people and agility for companies. The SER makes the following recommendations:

- Implement the labour market package based on the SER advice *Certainty for people, a manoeuvrable economy and recovery of society*² by ensuring the progress of the legislative processes that were initiated in recent years. The SER is committed to the integrated and simultaneous implementation of these measures, thus ensuring that greater job and income security for workers and the necessary flexibility for employers are in balance.

Ensure the continued, full implementation of the Pension Agreement and the 'Healthy Retirement' agreement and comply with all arrangements made in both agreements.

Improve the position of international workers and reduce the demand for low-paid labour³: labour migration is indispensable in the Dutch open economy. There are, however, limits to what our society can bear; there are too many abuses in the treatment of international workers. The deployment of migrant workers does not sufficiently align with the social challenges and transitions facing our country. The SER makes four main recommendations:

- Improve the position of low-paid migrant workers, for instance, through stricter enforcement of abuses and an income guarantee for agency workers from their first day at work.
- Promote investment in labour-saving technologies to reduce the demand for low-paid labour.
- Invest in those who are currently on the sidelines to reduce reliance on labour migration.
- Investigate how skilled workers can be recruited in a targeted manner and under favourable conditions to achieve social challenges and transitions. Also, knowledge workers remain of great importance to our economy

2. The Netherlands must move forward: room for knowledge and entrepreneurship

Declining investments and stagnant labour productivity threaten the preservation of our prosperity, employment, businesses, and tax revenue. The business community experiences a lot of regulatory pressure. To promote earning capacity, we recommend the following, among other things:

2 This specifically concerns the More Security for Flexible Workers programmes, the introduction of a legal presumption for self-employed persons (VBAR), the Legislative Proposal on staff retention in the event of a crisis (Wpc), the Self-Employed (Loss of Income due to Incapacity for Work) Basic Provision (BAZ), the amendment of the rehabilitation obligation for the 2nd year of illness for SME employees and the Provision of Personnel Accreditation (TTA).

3 See recent SER advice (2025) - Labour migration based on value: less where possible, better where necessary

Work towards a stable, competitive and innovative business climate:

to promote activity in future technology⁴, to capitalise on the opportunities of AI and strengthen the business and investment climate, we recommend, among other things:

- Increase the adoption of technology by involving SMEs more (for instance, through a network of digital innovation platforms).
- Invest in digital infrastructure, building on the Netherlands' position as a digital hub. An AI facility can provide hardware and services to businesses.

Increase labour productivity: invest in research, knowledge dissemination, social innovation, and put productivity at the heart of policy: Dutch investments in knowledge development are lagging behind. In addition, new knowledge and technology only truly pay off in a well-educated and healthy workforce with strong (digital) skills and a high adoption rate. Among other things, the SER makes the following recommendations:

- Increase public and private investment in R&D and reverse cuts to education and research. Strengthen basic vocational and adult education and encourage further education/retraining to achieve greater mobility in the labour market and promote the health of the working population.
- Make a joint commitment for real wage growth in line with labour productivity growth.
- Develop an ecosystem for the self-employed and SME entrepreneurs that promotes the diffusion of frontrunners' innovations into the wider SME sector and a 'social innovation platform' from the government and social partners. Develop an ecosystem for the self-employed and SME entrepreneurs that ensures trailblazers join SMEs (e.g., through coaching and knowledge centres). The National Productivity Board (NPB) must play an important role in the annual policy cycle. In the Netherlands, the CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis takes on the role of NPB. It is important to establish an independent Productivity Board in the short term, which, in addition to analysis, also provides advice across the entire breadth of the economy (private and public sectors, at macro and sectoral levels) and with close involvement of social partners.

Promote SME growth by addressing financing bottlenecks:

Limited financing impedes the growth of SMEs⁵. Among other things, we recommend:

- Encourage pension funds and other institutional investors to include SME financing and the start-up and scale-up sector in their investment mix.
- Investigate the extent to which information and lower transaction costs can convince citizens to invest their savings in a more balanced way.
- When considering financing options, specifically consider the instruments available for businesses experiencing bottlenecks (financing requests of <1 million for the broader SME sector and bottlenecks for tickets >50 million for the scale-up sector)⁶.

3. Unlocking the Netherlands: solutions in the physical domain

Accelerate grid reinforcement and tackle high energy costs:

The lock on the physical domain makes it increasingly difficult to develop tomorrow's economy. Grid congestion impedes the energy transition and house building and causes a deteriorated business climate. As a result of the nitrogen issue, house building, infrastructure, industry and agriculture are stuck in the permit system.

⁴ SER advice (2024), *Perspective on broad prosperity in 2040; Building the economy of the future*

⁵ The state of SMEs (2024)

⁶ Idem; Central Government (2025), *Follow-up advice towards the end of the legation period*. IBO (2024), *Choose benefits - IBO business financing*.

If the energy transition is not brought back on track, our future earning capacity will be fundamentally at risk.

The SER advises:

- Accelerate the reinforcement and expansion of the electricity grid, facilitate grid operators in obtaining sufficient staff, materials, and space, and ensure expedited permitting procedures. When granting permits, take into account the structural effect on nitrogen reduction.
- Create a level playing field with our neighbouring countries in the short term to prevent our industry from collapsing, therefore use a targeted approach to tackle high energy costs. Preference is given to a European solution, but this does not rule out national intervention. In parallel, we should look at how sustainability is rewarded and vulnerable groups are assisted.
In this way, we ensure that the energy transition becomes affordable, feasible and fair for citizens and entrepreneurs, and that the switch to electrification is attractive.
- Accelerate the sustainability of the manufacturing industry by making tailored agreements with major emitters quicker - with strong safeguards - using the regional cluster approach, the SDE++ scheme, and other forms of support for businesses that are demonstrably willing to make their operations more sustainable.

4. Preconditions: stable policy, defence of the rule of law and a European approach

Several important preconditions apply for the success of major societal transitions.

Implement stable, workable policies and protect the rule of law: to enable investments and provide citizens with certainty, stable and predictable policies are a precondition. Legislation is necessary, but it should always be feasible and explainable. Legal certainty, the protection of citizens and businesses against legal arbitrariness, is a building block of our economy. The rule of law therefore deserves full protection from politicians and civil society. As a consultative economy, we also explicitly see ourselves as part of this democratic rule of law. We play our role by weighing interests, pooling knowledge and supporting the legitimacy of policy and decision-making.

The Netherlands should take an active, constructive and agenda-setting role in Brussels: The Netherlands is dependent on foreign countries for its prosperity. A strengthened internal market and capital markets union are vital for our earning capacity and to enable investments. In addition, issues such as the energy transition and the transition to a circular economy can only be shaped at European level due to the required level playing field. A strong economic Europe is also a strong social Europe, aimed at upward convergence for stability and solidarity.

Implement budgetary policies that provide scope for investing in transitions: The Netherlands and the EU face major and urgent challenges. Advisory bodies are calling on the Netherlands to focus its budgetary policy more on the long term and to free up funds to resolve economic bottlenecks. We join this call to invest in the future, and the European budget rules allow for this. It is important to use that scope wisely and to observe the anchors and budgetary rules.

5. Moving forward, together: our offer to a new government

During the next term of government, we will be happy to support a new government with our advice. To move from advice to impact, we are also a platform for agreements or we can play a role in their implementation. Specifically, in this letter we offer the following:

Together, we develop a better occupational disability system: The system is stuck in implementation. Hardships in the WIA lead to income uncertainty. The rate of absence due to illness and incapacity for work is too high in the Netherlands. Also because the WIA is an employee insurance scheme, structural solutions cannot be achieved without consultation and approval of social partners. We offer:

- To work with the government on a supported approach to address and prevent bottlenecks, absenteeism and the associated high number of WIA claimants.
- Next year, we will develop a better system for incapacity for work in general and the WIA in particular.

Through collaboration and self-organisation, we can reduce the regulatory burden on businesses and increase the effectiveness of regulations, for instance in the case of International Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR). For some time now, the SER has been bringing together businesses, trade unions, and civil society organisations to put ICSR into practice. The OECD has praised our model internationally as an example for the results it delivers. Where legislation can start as a perceived burden, this approach transforms implementation into an opportunity in which robust chains result in a good competitive position.

SER parties are prepared:

- To organize this ICSR approach broadly among the Dutch business community, with the government as partner and co-financier.
- In other areas, we should also together map out where and how we can make necessary rules more enforceable, for instance, through forms of self-regulation and self-organisation. Special attention must be paid to supervision and enforcement that must be future-proof, risk-oriented and proportionate.

We are working to ensure a viable future for agriculture: Farmers and horticultural producers are under great pressure and are facing a lot of uncertainty about the future. The previous government asked the SER⁷ to work on future prospects for agriculture by identifying opportunities, barriers and solutions for development pathways in agriculture and advising on appropriate policy instruments. The SER aims to present this advice in 2026.

Together, we will arrive at a feasible scheme for lifelong learning embedded in a more effective labour market infrastructure: The working population must be given more control over its own development. At the same time, a learning economy starts on the work floor, and workers must be able to move more quickly into the right job and navigate the labour market. To also fulfil our role as social partners, we offer:

- Develop appropriate arrangements for LLO, based on SER advice⁸.

⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (2025), SER Request for Advice on Future Outlook for Agriculture.

⁸ Including SER (2023) *Lifelong Development. Structural anchoring in society*.

- To work together on a labour market infrastructure that offers a wider scope, with investments in further education/retraining, but also career guidance, useful websites for job seekers and lateral entry programmes for sectors with few staff⁹.

We are happy to continue working with the government on the labour market implications of the scaling-up at Defence. We are continuing the earlier initiative from the Labour Foundation to mobilise reservists¹⁰.

We offer advice on taxes and benefits to promote broad prosperity. The government faces major fiscal challenges. The benefits system requires a thorough revision. Within the committee for simplification of the tax and benefits system, the SER has started preparing advice on income tax and benefits:

- The SER intends to issue advice on benefits and tax revenue from labour in mid-2026.
- It will then offer follow-up advice on capital taxation and the broader tax mix.
- To move forward together and continue discussions in the period thereafter to structure a long-term transition.

Given the major issues that demand breakthroughs in the coming period, it is especially important that politicians and 'the Polder' collaborate and ensure broad political and social support. This is something we have to shoulder together.

We see this offer and these proposals as a solid basis for a stable political course for the new Netherlands and will be happy to discuss this with you.

We wish you and the political parties all the best and wisdom in this formation process.

On behalf of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands,

K. (Kim) Putters
SER chairman

⁹ Labour Foundation (2025), *Vision and approach of partners on the Job Mobility system*.

¹⁰ Labour Foundation (2025), *Collective bargaining agreements for reservists*.