

A new beginning

Freedom for everyone,
but nobody left behind

Concept Election Manifesto 2021-2025

The logo for the D66 political party, consisting of the letters 'D66' in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green square.

D66

We believe that in the Netherlands, we're all connected by means of a promise: if you go to school and work hard, you get an honest shot at good work, your own house, and a beautiful future. Regardless of your place of birth, what neighbourhood you went to school in, or the profession of your parents. That's the foundation of our free and just society.

However, countless studies have shown that it has become increasingly hard for people to be in control of their own lives. This is a consequence of a job market that creates a division between people with job security and those without. And of a housing sector where young people fruitlessly look for decent and affordable housing. It's because too often children are already behind when they start school, and teachers aren't properly equipped to do their important work. But it's also because of an international world order that's not working as it should, which greatly affects both our economy and our safety. That is how our society has become more and more divided. Between the poor and the rich. Between people with different levels of education. Between people with Dutch roots and those with roots both here and elsewhere.

The coronavirus has stopped our country in its tracks. People have been affected by personal loss or have seen their livelihoods destroyed. Healthcare workers continue to work tirelessly. Teachers are rapidly developing new teaching methods. From shelf stocker to truck driver, countless people are tirelessly working to help the Netherlands get through these hard times.

The pandemic has uncovered the flaws and injustices in our society. This crisis teaches us that it's worth investing in a strong society. A society that's resilient. Where people can live healthy lives and are secure in the knowledge that they'll be able to overcome any misfortune. Where people and companies don't have to deplete their savings at the slightest disturbance. Where we're not dependent on one company or one country for essential products like medicine. And where our climate is no longer pressured by a world economy that's constantly looking for the lowest price. This may not always be efficient or cheap, but it will provide us with the certainty that we can make it through hard times. And that we can come out of this crisis stronger.

For D66, it's an extra incentive. Because in the end, one thing is perfectly clear: we need to do more to turn the Dutch promise – of a genuine shot at a good future – into reality.

Convictions for the future

Since 2017 we've taken our responsibilities by governing. We are proud of many achievements. Big investments in education. A record number of houses for middle-income earners. Climate agreements for a cleaner country. And a pension agreement that brings young and old together.

This fits our beliefs about politics: that it should be devoted to results, through tackling the big issues of our time together.

But four years is not enough time to turn ideals into reality. Our work is not done. There is so much left to do. In this election program, you'll find our plans for the next four years. Connecting these plans are five convictions that we strongly stand by.

We are committed to honest politics. No guarantees, but we promise to do our very best. And all our work will be based on the conviction that people deserve equal opportunities. That people should be free to decide what to do with their own lives. That we think about the future with every choice we make. With a government that protects our shared public interests while taking into account the world around us. Because the only way to be free is together.

1. We will provide each and every child with the best possible school day: quality education, art and culture, music and a healthy lunch.

Childcare will be free, so no child will start with a disadvantage, no matter what their background may be. Teachers will be better equipped and paid. Higher education will be accessible with new financial aid. We will invest in art and culture, which is even more important now that the coronavirus has made the sector vulnerable.

2. We will not only meet our climate goals, but will even transcend them.

The Netherlands will become the largest producer of wind energy in Europe, with an offshore wind farm made up by thousands of mills. Until 2025, we will decrease the use of natural resources by 30 percent. There will be more room for nature. Circular agriculture will become the norm, and we'll be working towards reducing the cattle population by half.

3. We will take up the fight against health inequality.

It is harrowing that people with a practical education or lower incomes live shorter lives, and in poorer health. We will invest in everything that reduces this disparity: from a good education to a healthy living

environment, lifestyle and personal care close to home. Prevention of chronic illnesses and obesity deserves to be prioritized over treating its symptoms with medicine.

4. We want work to be the foundation of a free and dignified existence.

We will make it more appealing for companies to give out permanent contracts. Differences between workers will be made smaller, so that everyone will have job security. When you don't have a job, we'll help you in obtaining one. We are abolishing the complicated benefits system. Every citizen will receive either a tax cut or they will get a fixed net sum when they don't make enough money.

5. We will build a million new houses to stop the quiet disaster in the housing sector, so that all people can enjoy the security of having good and decent housing.

We'll protect renters and decrease the differences between renting and buying.

6. There is no room for racism and discrimination in our country.

We are all free and equal. We'll come down hard on anyone who acts differently. Specially appointed investigators will ensure that people will no longer get away with this kind of misconduct. And we want harsher punishments for companies who discriminate in hiring people.

7. People are looking to start a new life in the Netherlands every day.

If you're fleeing war and violence, we will offer you a safe haven here. The horrible images of children in refugee camps in Greece or of the overflowing boats in dire straits in the Mediterranean Sea show us the importance of getting a handle on irregular migration. It requires a European, cross-border approach. When people arrive in the Netherlands, it's important that they're immediately provided with language lessons and have access to work. Because when you speak the language, you're able to participate in your neighbourhood, speak to your children's teachers or get an education yourself. Apart from that, we will need labour migrants in the near future, such as skilled workers in construction, our greenhouses, or in healthcare. We want these labour migrants to be able to temporarily come to the Netherlands in a safe way.

8. Sex, sexual preference and gender continue to have an impact on the opportunities people get.

That's why we're fully focused on emancipation. We're fighting against pregnancy discrimination at work and domestic violence. We're standing up for free birth control and the abortion pill will become available in general practitioners' offices.

9. We are committed to a strong government. This means investing in public works, like police officers, healthcare workers and teachers, who form the foundation of our society.

Because no one can make a living on appreciation alone. But neither can we solve these problems by merely raising salaries. Politicians need to start trusting people again and give them room to do their work. We want the government to protect all of our public interests. The government also needs to ensure transparency and honest competition. Authorities on competition conduct need to act as modern watchdogs. The power of Big Tech, Big Pharma and other large enterprises can never come at the expense of fundamental rights like personal freedom, democracy or public health.

10. We're heavily investing in the rule of law: the justice system, Public Prosecutor's office, probation services and legal aid.

Because people are not truly free without access to the justice system, and also because our safety and curbing crime are important conditions for our freedom. That's why we want the police force to focus particularly on the crimes that greatly affect our society, like extremely violent crime and mass fraud.

11. We are renewing our democracy.

We believe having a say should be at the centre of this. We'll modernize the electoral system, we want an elected prime minister, and we'll give people a greater say at every level. We'll come down hard on racism and discrimination to defend our open and inclusive society.

12. We will ensure self-determination of the body, even in a future filled with new medical opportunities.

That requires both research and debates on new ethical questions, for example on growing embryos for research, embryo modification and more room for stem cell research.

13. We will protect the rights of people who are seizing the great opportunities that digitalization provides.

People should have more say about their own data. Data collection by companies and governments should be increasingly monitored. We will ensure that decisions that are made based on algorithms will always be monitored by actual people. This is the only way we can be free in a digital world.

14. We encourage companies to transition from focusing on money to focusing on values.

Ambitious companies striving for economic success while adding value to society will be offered a good climate to settle in and help with innovation and digitalization. That also applies to small- and medium-sized enterprises. They are the driving force behind good jobs for everyone in the Netherlands, in the present and for the future.

15. We proudly continue our tradition of international cooperation and want the Netherlands to reclaim its leading role in Europe.

Together, we can defend our countries and interests. Together, we can create safe routes to give labour migrants the opportunity to reinforce our economy. Together, we can take in refugees in a humane way. Together, we can prevent conflict and intervene where and when that is necessary. Because D66 believes that the nation state can only protect its own justice system while working together with others.

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