

INTERNATIONAL SCAN 2014

Signals: emerging issues
in an international context

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CONTENT

▶ INTRODUCTION	3
▶ ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN	4
▶ SUSTAINABLE LAND USE: FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE	8
▶ ADDRESSING RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN	10
▶ KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN: DEVELOPMENT, USE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE	11
▶ CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN: THE CHANGING ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NEW ARRANGEMENTS	13
▶ 'GLOCALISATION': GLOBALISATION AND LOCALISATION WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN	14

APPENDICES

▶ 1. OVERVIEWS OF GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY AGENDAS IN RELATION TO THE COUNCIL'S POLICY DOMAINS AND PROGRAMME LINES	16
▶ 2. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	20

INTRODUCTION

The secretariat of the Council for Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) has, at the request of the Council, conducted an international scan to support the preparation of the Council's Work Programme 2015-2016. The scan identifies 'signals': indications of emerging issues in the international context which are relevant to the Council's activities. These signals have been classified according to the six multiannual programme lines applied in the [Rli Work Programme 2014-2015](#), which are linked to the advisory themes which the Dutch government has commissioned to its various advisory councils. The findings confirm that the Rli's multiannual programme lines remain current.

The scan also provides an overview of the most relevant global and European policy agendas for the medium to long term. The appendix includes a table showing an overview of the main agenda points, the Council's relevant policy domains and programme lines, the responsible policy bodies, important (assessment) moments, as well as emerging or central issues.

The scan does not attempt to quantify the relative importance of the individual signals, establish the priority of the topics on the global and European policy agendas, or determine the appropriate moment for the Council to present its advice. These are matters to which attention will be devoted when preparing the new Work Programme. The secretariat presents with the current document only an account of the scan findings.

ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN

Sustainable development and a new approach to the economy

The economy will not benefit from the ongoing depletion of natural resources, a fact now acknowledged by policy-makers worldwide. It will, however, benefit from sustainable development, which demands a broadening of the traditional definition of (economic) 'prosperity'. The European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) now refer to 'Green Growth'. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) uses the term 'Green Economy', while the World Economic Forum (WEF) calls for the introduction of 'New Growth Models' in a 2014 report subtitled, 'Challenges and steps to achieving patterns of more equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth' (2014). In its report '[Now for the long term](#)' (2013), the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations goes a step further, identifying various challenges posed by the current economic system.

Society's attitude to work and employment is changing. In the past, the focus has been on achieving the highest possible level of employment in the form of paid work. It is now acknowledged that paid work can be effectively combined with voluntary work, care tasks, and other activities. Furthermore, the management of our natural resources demands better coordination of sectoral policy, as well as closer cooperation between governments and the research field. Intersectoral and fully integrated processes must be put in place to ensure resource efficiency coupled with a reduction in the environmental impact caused by greenhouse gas emissions and waste production.

The shift from a purely economic mind frame to thinking in terms of connecting economy with sustainable development (ecological, social, and economic) demands an entirely new approach to the challenges and problems. Various concepts have been proposed in this regard.

The [Stockholm Resilience Centre](#) has developed the 'Safe Operating Space for Humanity' (Planetary Boundaries) concept, the essence of which is that the transition to a new sustainable development agenda will be based on a number of 'sustainable development goals' (SDGs) and an exploration

of safe and just boundaries for human society's development, to be undertaken by organisations such as the UN, the EU, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), and the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN). The question of goals and boundaries at the national level will be relevant to the Council's new Work Programme.

In late 2013, Olivier de Schutter – the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food – introduced the concept of '[Transitional Governance](#)' (Europe's Fifth Project). He contends that sustainable (economic) development is dependent on social innovation and local experiments, which must be facilitated in order to push forward the collective learning process. According to De Schutter, reduction of adverse environmental impact and the development of a fully inclusive society go hand in hand. His approach is not so much concerned with a new governance model but with promoting a discussion of the practice of governance, and particularly its current 'top-down' nature. The food, energy and transport sectors in particular face significant challenges when it comes to rapidly achieving sustainability, not least because changes imposed from above now meet with increasing dissent and opposition.

We now see the emergence of the 'participative economy', which builds upon the networking society. It comprises many small, local initiatives which seek to integrate the social, ecological and economic dimensions. It is highlighted by the growing popularity of alternative forms of financing (such as 'crowdsourcing' and participative financing), new forms of food production and consumption (such as urban agriculture, a trend exemplified by initiatives such as Marq and Willem & Drees), and new trends in mobility (the majority of young people in Paris, for example, have neither a driving licence nor the ambition to obtain one).

The manner in which government policy addresses complex problems is attracting ever greater criticism: it is not seen to result in affirmative

action – on the contrary. The term ‘mutation’ has been coined to refer to the far-reaching changes now seen in the field of the economy and sustainable development ([ESPAS Conference](#), 17-18 February 2014).

What consequences will such changes have in terms of the work programmes of the Dutch government’s advisory councils, and that of the Rli in particular?

Food, health, environment

There is growing international attention for the relationship between food and health. People with health conditions caused or exacerbated by (serious) overweight now outnumber those suffering from famine and starvation. Urbanisation, increasing general prosperity, and the widespread availability (and promotion) of unhealthy food products are responsible for a widening division in our food culture. The UN has determined that a ‘business as usual’ approach is no longer appropriate.

Several major cities – including New York, London, and Amsterdam – have produced ‘food visions’ which examine the various factors underlying the trends in diet and nutrition, and which propose response measures such as urban agriculture, education programmes, and the promotion of vegetable gardens. In recent years, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) continue to exert pressure on both food producers and governments (national and international) to reduce the content of salt, sugar and (trans) fats in food products.

The division in food culture is equally visible within the developed countries, where an increasing number of people have a diet which contains too few healthy products and too many unhealthy products. Bad eating habits are often adopted at an early age, resulting in poor childhood development and a higher risk of health problems in later life, which in turn leads to higher healthcare costs. Research has shown that various factors within the social, economic and physical setting play a part in creating and perpetuating this situation.

What is the government’s role in this development? The Dutch government attaches great importance to consumer freedom of choice, even though this freedom is actually severely restricted by the food producers. Those producers in turn justify their actions in terms of consumer choice: it is the consumer who opts to purchase

unhealthy food products. The Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) is currently preparing an advisory report examining the correlation between issues related to the production, distribution and consumption of food products, in which it will offer recommendations for necessary interventions. The Council for Environment and Infrastructure has been asked to concern itself with the relationship between food, health, and the physical setting, and with the government’s role within that relationship.

Resource security

The management of natural resources, as well as access to those resources, will in future be one of the most critical points for attention, particularly in terms of food, water and energy. This is because of the high risk of political, social and economic instability which scarcities can cause. There could even be a threat to global security (see the [Wilton Park](#) conference report).

In December 2012, Chatham House published the report ‘[Resources Futures](#)’, which examines the new political economy of natural resources. The authors stress the interdependency and interference between scarcities. An important conclusion is that, even if resources are not depleted to the point of exhaustion, prices will remain extremely volatile, supply problems will persist, and there will be ongoing ecological deterioration. Political tensions regarding access to resources will increase. International trade will be in the front line of the resultant conflicts. It is therefore essential to develop and implement measures which will serve to inspire confidence and trust, and which will increase the transparency and predictability of the deployment of export controls and other restrictions. It will also be crucial to introduce subsidy arrangements which differentiate between resources which are environmentally responsible and those which are not, thus precluding subsidies with unintended or ‘perverse’ effects. Resource politics will dominate and indeed set the global agenda in the years to come.

At the European level, the Europe 2020 strategy devotes attention to resource security by means of the [Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe](#) and the various action plans for its implementation which contain concrete targets and measurable indicators. From both the economic and the ecological perspective, it is essential to ‘close the cycles’ by means of the reclamation and re-use of materials and resources, thus promoting the development of the biobased, circular economy.

Moerman's Ladder is a phased approach intended to reduce food wastage and maximise efficient use of residual waste streams. Its potential is now the subject of intense and ongoing discussion. The [EEAC](#) network states a 'water-wise biobased economy' is needed to protect and further develop the 'ecosystem services': the functions of the natural system which benefit mankind and society, such as production services, regulatory services, and cultural and support services. The Council devotes attention to the biobased and circular economy in advisory reports on sustainable agriculture and the future of the Dutch logistics sector, as well as in its forthcoming advisory report on the future waste management infrastructure.

Market arrangements in sustainable energy and water

The emergence of smaller-scale, local and 'green' forms of energy production (wind, solar, biogas, CHP cogeneration) has made electricity the main source of energy. This has led to a demand for supplementary infrastructure at all levels, including the international level. This development requires modifications to be made to local supply networks for natural gas and electricity, as well as the introduction of 'smart grid' systems which apply new technologies to achieve a better balance between energy supply and demand. Further developments include the generation of energy from dredging spoil ('sludge') and the reclamation of resources such as phosphates during the water purification process. As a result, public sector institutions such as the water management authorities are operating on the private international markets to an ever greater extent. What role should central government assume in this transition? What lessons can be learned from countries such as Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom in this regard?

In the Netherlands, responsibility for water management (including flood safety, fresh water supply, and the quality of surface water) has traditionally fallen to public sector authorities, which also undertake most of the implementation tasks. The broad societal trend whereby greater responsibility is being devolved to the private sector and the individual, combined with an ever greater intermingling of public and private interests within both policy and implementation, raises the question of whether it is now appropriate to reassign responsibilities for water management.

How can the responsibilities for fresh water supply, water quality and flood safety be shared? What key tasks must be retained by central government, and which subsidiary tasks can be apportioned to other parties? What is the 'public' value at stake, and how can it be increased by involving the private sector? How can the government encourage a general re-examination of the shared and delegated responsibility for fresh water supply, water quality, and flood safety? What will be the most appropriate division of tasks and responsibilities between the various government departments and agencies, and what is the impact of European policy in this regard?

The European Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC, amended) allows Member States to recover the costs of water management services from those who benefit, i.e. the users of the water. Is it also appropriate to do so in the case of, say, flood safety measures? The mandatory privatisation of drinking water supply companies, as proposed by European Directive COM/2011 897 (on the award of concession contracts) will not proceed, partly due to a civil initiative which successfully sought exemption for water supply companies. Nevertheless, privatisation is now taking place in various countries of Southern Europe as a condition of continued financial support from the European Central Bank (ECB). The need for greater free market competition in the drinking water sector remains a 'hot issue'. These are questions which lie at the boundary between public and private, and at that between national interests and European harmonisation. The Council is interested in examining whether the developments will help to achieve a more sustainable energy and water policy.

Sustainable mobility and financing

The number of electric vehicles on the roads is rising. Many are recharged on private premises, using the domestic power supply. This means a reduction in revenue from fuel duty. In the Netherlands, vehicles are taxed according to weight. The growing popularity of smaller, lighter vehicles has resulted in decreased revenue from this source, which will not be compensated now that the proposals for road pricing measures have been abandoned. The financing of mobility is based on the user paying for a service as it is received. This is in contrast to, say, health insurance whereby the policy-holder pays for protection against the risk of incurring costs at some later date.

In view of the rapid developments in ICT and other areas of technology, investments in infrastructure made today or in the recent past are unlikely to show the returns initially expected. It therefore becomes necessary to re-assess the investment requirement in infrastructure and to review the division of costs and returns between the government, the private sector, and road users, doing so in the light of the developments in the transport and mobility sector.

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE: FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE

Cities in the focus at European and global level

Cities are the subject of worldwide attention in view of current issues such as resource and energy efficiency, climate change, technological development, and the ongoing need to achieve sustainability. The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group held a meeting in February 2014 to consider urban climate problems and to discuss opportunities for further cooperation. The UN is to hold a conference in 2016 with the aim of increasing global commitment to sustainable urban development and to formulate a joint agenda for cities, to be known as Habitat III. This conference may prove an important step in implementing the new global sustainable development goals which are due to be finalised in 2015.

Within the European Union, a number of programmes are ongoing to link urban sustainability with relevant themes such as mobility, the reduction of carbon emissions, climate adaptation, resilience, public health and the environment, integration ('social inclusion'), and culture and heritage. As a result, alliances have been established and a number of international projects have been launched. They include initiatives such as 'Green cities', 'Open cities', 'Resilience in cities', 'Innovative cities', 'Creative cities', and 'Urbact'. Ministers representing the various Member States have signed Memoranda of Understanding confirming their commitment to joint initiatives, including the Leipzig Charter and the Toledo Declaration.

The Netherlands has joined other Member States, the European Commission, and a number of cities to produce the European 'Urban Agenda'. This document provides a conceptual framework and sets out action lines intended to establish the process of achieving urban sustainability more firmly within national and European policy. The Urban Agenda will offer Member States a new working method whereby they can rise to the challenges and exploit opportunities in all aspects of urban sustainability. The underlying principle is that cities will play a key role in achieving the EU 2020 objectives and are crucial to an economically competitive Europe. Accordingly, it is essential that the European Union, national governments, and

all other stakeholders create a climate in which cities can thrive. This may entail closer consultation with the cities when devising EU policy and the introduction of new financial instruments.

The Council has considerable knowledge and expertise in the field of sustainable urban development. How is it to make this knowledge available to the European and global forums? What role will the Council play within those forums?

Inner cities

Inner cities are important because of their public amenities, opportunities for social interaction, and their role in the urban economy (notably leisure and tourism). However, important components of the inner city economy are at risk: many high-street retailers are under pressure (due in part to the increasing popularity of online shopping), while public amenities such as libraries are being closed. Some cities, such as Barcelona, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg, and Den Bosch, appear to have coped well with the transition. Others (like Heerlen, Emmen, and Lelystad) have not. Ribe (Denmark) offers a good example of a city which has been able to 'reinvent' itself and recover, largely due to its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is not always clear what factors are at play in a city's deterioration or their ability to recover. It may be of interest for the Council to investigate these factors. The Netherlands has long applied a strict policy with regard to peripheral retail development, one aim being to avoid a proliferation of 'megastores' which would detract further from the position of the inner cities. Other countries, France being a notable example, have not been so circumspect. Their inner cities have suffered far more from the presence of out-of-town megastores and 'regional malls'.

What can the Netherlands learn from other countries? What will be the significance of the inner cities in terms of spatial and economic development?

Bilateral spatial issues

Many spatial issues are not unique to the Netherlands but are also faced by our neighbouring countries, often (although not necessarily) in the border regions. Examples

include flood safety in the Rhine, Maas and Delta region, the development of sea harbours in the Netherlands and adjacent Flanders (notably the proposed cooperation between the mainports of Rotterdam and Antwerp, together with satellite ports such as Amsterdam/IJmond, Vlissingen, Gent-Terneuzen, and Zeebrugge), the clustering of regional airports in the border regions of the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium, and the completion of the National Ecological Network (EHS). The challenges are often more visible and more urgent in the border regions than at the higher European level of scale. Given the transnational nature of such issues, an effective response will often involve several layers of government. All such issues are likely to give rise to requests for the Council's advice, based in part on the reports issued by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL).

Spatial implications of new working practices

New working practices (such as The New Way of Working) have major spatial consequences: there has been a drastic reduction in the office space requirement, for example. At the same time, production chains are being split up, which means that production activities at any given location are more specialised and smaller in scale. It is more common for the residential and business functions to be combined. Many companies are making their surplus space available to others. All such developments have implications in terms of the design of the residential and business environment, also in terms of mobility. The emergence of the 3D printer may make the production chain even shorter, and may have a significant impact on the retail trade, as the consumer might eventually be able to purchase a product design online and 'manufacture' that product without even leaving home. The surplus of real estate and the mismatch between supply and demand are pan-European phenomena. Other countries have developed innovative measures which can usefully be emulated in the Netherlands. It may, for example, be appropriate to introduce a rule whereby new development is permitted only if it takes the place of an existing building (which is demolished). In Germany, banks are willing to finance demolition costs in order to maintain the price level of the remaining stock. This is of particular relevance in the housing market, but it will be interesting to examine the effects of such measures in the non-residential property sector, including government buildings.

What can the Netherlands learn from other countries? How will new working practices affect the spatial and economic structure of the future? These are questions to which the Council can devote attention in its advisory reports.

Biodiversity and nature in the spatial perspective

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (2011) is an integral part of the wider Europe 2020 Strategy, and is intended to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity while increasing resource efficiency and the development of the 'green economy'. A major step in the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy was taken in 2013 with the publication of an EU Communication entitled Green Infrastructure (GI): 'Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital' (COM(2013) 249). The document is concerned with the spatial structure of natural and semi-natural areas and their public services.

The European Union's 7th Environment Programme, ['Living well, within the limits of our planet'](#), came into effect on 1 January 2014. It sets out the EU's long-term vision (to 2050) with regard to climate change, biodiversity, public health and the environment, waste management, and the sustainable management of natural energy resources. The programme translates the 'limits of our planet' of the title to the European level. Sweden and Switzerland (in association with the UNEP) are now working to make the concept workable and significant at the national level.

To what extent will it be useful for the Netherlands to translate the limits of the planet to the national level, and is there a role for the Council in doing so?

ADDRESSING RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN

Division of responsibilities

Many of the developments described thus far place greater responsibility on the private sector than has previously been the case. This applies in terms of (legal) liability for environmental damage, for example, as in legislation governing the offshore sector. It also applies to the Health and Safety culture within companies, and to the relevant safety performance indicators: legislation now places greater emphasis on performance rather than (the presence of) physical safety measures. In this context, initiatives by the UN (such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UNISDR) and OECD to combine the strengths of various stakeholders to manage the risks to the critical infrastructure are interesting. In this regard, it is appropriate to examine the extent to which the Netherlands can be said to apply an adequately integrated approach to the assessment of its critical infrastructure and the identification of new risks within society.

What impact would a more integrated approach have in terms of the division of responsibilities between the government and the private sector?

Flood safety and risk management

The overall strategic flood safety policy in the Netherlands is established by the national Delta Programme and the European Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (2007/60/EC), which take a number of trends in flood management into account. It would be interesting for the Council to examine some interesting points of convergence with the wider risk management policy, such as early warning systems and disaster response scenarios. (See also the 'Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda' of the Joint Programming Initiative 'Water challenges for a changing world', which forms part of the European Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.)

In the international context, it is interesting to note that the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment, Ms Melanie Schultz, has recently been invited to act as vice-chair of the UN High Level Experts and Leaders Panel for Water and Disasters. Her appointment may entail an advisory role for the Council.

Water pollution, nanoparticles, and elimination at source

The Netherlands' surface water has an increasing content of nanoparticles, traces of medication, and chemicals which can disrupt hormone systems, known collectively as 'emerging pollutants'. Removal of these substances demands the application of new technologies during the water purification process, which results in higher costs. It is preferable to prevent the substances from entering the water at all: elimination at source. This calls for measures such as product agreements, and it demands an integrated approach at the European level.

What forms of governance are necessary to bring the technological advances in nanotechnology, (livestock) food technology, and pharmaceutical production in line with the precautionary principle established by the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development? The Rio Declaration expressly states that new technologies may not be applied if they pose any potential risk to health or the environment, even where that risk has not (yet) been established by means of scientific research.

KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN: DEVELOPMENT, USE, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Knowledge requirement of decentral authorities

The ongoing decentralisation of government (policy) responsibilities in the Netherlands will have consequences in terms of the desired knowledge infrastructure and the process of sharing knowledge with regional and local authorities (see *Kennismaken met decentrale overheden*, PBL 2013).

How can strategic knowledge be maintained, the links between knowledge areas be safeguarded, and efficient knowledge development be achieved? Do other countries provide useful examples of how the knowledge infrastructure can be adapted? What implications will the knowledge requirement of lower government levels have in terms of central government's statutory responsibilities for decentralised policy areas under European legislation?

Digital data and the social media: empowerment or exclusion?

The widespread availability of (online) information can lead to greater transparency and direct democracy. It can encourage behaviour change in areas such as mobility and diet. Large companies and more affluent members of the public have greater access to digital information, whereby they are likely to have a greater influence in decision-making processes than smaller companies and those in the lower income groups. Although the social media have achieved worldwide penetration, it cannot be said that they have led to greater world unity. Online platforms are chiefly used at the local or national level, whereupon the differences within and between countries persist. At the European level, not everyone shares the view that digital information will lead to the universal empowerment of the people. The [RAND Corporation](#) (a non-profit institute which aims to improve policy decisions through research and analysis) notes an increasing social division based on the accessibility of information.

How will the opportunities presented by 'big data' (the instant availability of numerous and diverse sources of information) and the social media influence the process of achieving a more inclusive, just society and economy?

Questions based on a broader perspective

The perception of noise is very much dependent on the source. The rustle of trees, for example, is experienced very differently to the roar of aircraft or traffic. While technology can establish 'acceptable' noise norms, how can the listener's perception be included in the process?

Ultra-fine particulates and nitrogen compounds (PM10 and NO_x) have a marked influence on human health. If their effects are taken into account when zoning the areas alongside major traffic routes, the zoning norms will be different. Is the intention to comply with the absolute (emission) regulations established by the European Union, or should policy be geared towards achieving the desired effects in terms of public health, biodiversity, and a pleasant residential and business setting? Legislation can quickly become outdated, lagging behind the rapid technological developments.

To determine whether a policy is effective or must be amended, its results are measured. The most appropriate (performance) indicators in several policy domains are the subject of ongoing international discussion. In terms of mobility and accessibility, for example, the inclusion of the number of accessible locations in the assessment, alongside the transport costs, would result in a very different picture of current accessibility problems. Accessibility in the Randstad conurbation would be classified as good, while that in Groningen or Friesland would be rated as poor. The definition and the 'sensitivity' of indicators have a major influence on the results of their application, just as (over)simplification of the assessment process can lead to hasty and possibly incorrect conclusions being drawn.

Another example is the new approach to natural resources which focuses on their scarcity. The report 'Critical raw materials for the EU' (2010) identifies fourteen 'critical' minerals based on two criteria: the risk of a supply shortage, and the economic impact of that shortage. The value of this sort of assessment is heavily dependent on political, economic and technological developments which are difficult to predict.

Rather than attempting to increase the value of the assessments, it will be more useful to include them within policy-based solutions. It is not the resources themselves which are the key consideration, but the functions they have in terms of end products. Through innovation, improvement, discovery and invention, waste flows are now increasingly seen as raw materials for new products.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN: THE CHANGING ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Examples from Germany and the United Kingdom

Just as the King's Speech given to open the Dutch parliamentary year in 2013 mentioned the 'participation society', the current [German coalition agreement](#) states the intention of promoting active citizenship ('*bürgerschaftliches Engagement*'). This often takes the form of community projects run by volunteers, such as village shops, child-care services, accommodation for the elderly, and local energy generation. Such initiatives are to be facilitated by government, perhaps by introducing new organisational structures which avoid excess bureaucracy and red tape. Members of the public are also encouraged to play an active part in urban development and regeneration.

Parallel to the trend whereby environmental legislation and planning regulations are being simplified and more closely interlinked in the Netherlands, the current British [government programme](#) announces a radical decentralisation of the responsibilities within the physical domain in the short run. The system of regional development plans is to be abandoned, decision-making on housing and spatial development is to be devolved to the local level, there is to be greater public consultation on matters of infrastructure, and local communities are to be given the opportunity to take over the management of public services and to decide how public funding is to be spent in their own area. Interestingly, the agreement not only promises greater financial autonomy for local authorities, but announces that local taxes (rates and the 'community charge') are to be frozen indefinitely.

In the longer term, the British government intends to apply the '[open source planning](#)' concept to neighbourhood (re)development. The national spatial planning framework is to be streamlined, but will continue to protect the green structure (including national parks, landscapes of scenic interest, and the 'Green Belt'). Major traffic and energy infrastructure will remain a central government responsibility, and central government will be able to veto construction in areas with a high risk of flooding. Within the national framework, local communities (villages, towns, neighbourhoods, housing estates, etc.) are able to develop their own bottom-up construction plans.

Public tasks such as waste collection and transport will be undertaken at the supra-local level by the county councils and metropolitan regions.

What can the Netherlands learn from these examples of the civic engagement in policy?

Private initiatives and regulation in mobility and tourism

New forms of private initiative are emerging which do not fall within the existing regulatory framework governing the private sector. The question is how this should be addressed. Is it necessary to make them subject of regulation? Other countries have experienced problems such as unfair competition in the taxi industry. In the United States, there are private taxi operators who do not charge a fare but request a 'donation', thus evading tax liability. Similarly, websites such as Airbnb¹.com are seen as unfair competition for the hotel industry, and local authorities are deprived of the tourist tax they collect through licensed operators. (This is why New York has prohibited short-term private rentals.)

What are the implications in terms of consumer protection, Health and Safety, and suchlike? Is regulation appropriate; should there be a system of subsidies, or should strict conditions be applied? Is an anti-competition clause appropriate?

1 Airbnb is opgericht in 2008 in Californië en is een community marktplaats voor unieke accommodaties over de hele wereld; online of mobiel te boeken.

'GLOCALISATION': GLOBALISATION AND LOCALISATION WITHIN THE PHYSICAL DOMAIN

Upscaling versus decentralisation

In a report produced for [Platform 31](#) – a knowledge and networking organisation for urban and regional development – its Scientific Director, Geert Teisman, observes a trend of upscaling complex issues to a higher administrative level. Where problems are complex, simple solutions are not enough. Moreover, authorities at various levels must work together to provide an appropriate response. Knowledge relevant to complex issues is often fragmented between various people and organisations, whereupon 'multi-level governance' is required, although it is not simple to achieve. Teisman lists a number of topics for attention, including climate adaptation and stagnating regional development. Examples of complex issues at the European level include (rules for) employment migration, telecommunications, and regulation of the banking and financial markets. The resultant legislation can lead to dissent due to a perceived loss of autonomy. Teisman goes on to note that solutions to certain other issues are being sought through decentralisation: much of the responsibility for social and welfare policy and provisions now rests with the local authorities, while in the spatial domain it has shifted to the regional authorities.

How will central government's role change if complex issues are subject to even greater upscaling, demanding cooperation between all levels, while other issues are decentralised? How can local authorities be facilitated in assuming the tasks which come together at this level?

The ongoing 'Europeanisation' of Dutch spatial planning

Spatial development is not a European responsibility, yet spatial planning in the Netherlands is increasingly influenced by European sectoral policy. Many EU measures and directives leave their mark on the spatial structure of the various Member States. Examples include European transport policy, agricultural policy, environmental policy, nature policy, water management policy, and competition policy. According to David Evers, a researcher with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), the influence of the European Union on the Netherlands' spatial development practice is gradually increasing due to the ongoing

development of the policy dossiers in all these areas. Evers, who specialises in European spatial planning, is currently working on a study due to be published during the first half of 2014. He notes that the 'Europeanisation' of Dutch spatial development practice has been ongoing for some time, and will continue for some time to come. What effect will this have on the Netherlands and for the Dutch government? Evers provides initial answers to this question. In this context, it is interesting to note the Netherlands' stance – and particularly that of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (I&M) – towards European spatial planning. In the past, the Netherlands was a proponent of coordination by the European authorities, given the common interests of the EU Member States. (In the 1990s, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) formed the basis for territorial cohesion and the territorial agenda). Today, the Ministry of I&M appears to take a more cautious, sometimes even defensive, attitude with regard to the spatial effects of European policy and legislation. At the same time, an increasing number of 'sectoral' European policy domains are influenced by the spatial mind frame, by thinking in terms of spatial patterns and cohesion.

The forthcoming PBL study may raise questions which prompt the Council to devote attention to the relevant topics.

Transnational civic engagement and responsibility

In various countries of Western Europe, there is an emerging trend whereby [care for the elderly](#) is being 'offshored' to other countries, not only for reasons of climate but also of cost. A growing number of retirement homes can be found in southern, central and eastern Europe, and even in south-east Asia. To date, the Dutch government has discouraged [housing corporations](#) from investing in facilities in other countries, such as student accommodation in Belgium or retirement homes in Spain. However, it is possible that collective [housing and care concepts](#) will be introduced abroad, whereupon Dutch people wishing to [spend their winters](#) in another, warmer country will be able to do so in a local residential care facility. What division of responsibilities between the public and private sectors, and between the EU Member States, is needed to facilitate and regulate this development?

Governance of the oceans

A sustainable and responsible approach to the management and *exploitation* of the oceans is a policy area of increasing importance. What are the tasks and challenges in terms of global, national and regional governance? The oceans play a major role in sustainable energy and food production. Their significance seems to have been underestimated in the past. The German Advisory Council on Global Change (*Wissenschaftliche Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen; WBGU*) recently published an extensive advisory report entitled [World in Transition: Governing the Marine Heritage](#), based on the concept of the 'oceans as a global public good', on a broad system approach, and on the precautionary principle. The OECD is currently preparing a report under the title 'The Future of the Ocean Economy: exploring the prospects for emerging ocean industries to 2030', for which a steering group has been appointed.

Ms Melanie Schultz, the Netherlands' Minister for Infrastructure and the Environment, has recently been appointed vice-chair of the UN High Level Experts and Leaders Panel for Water and Disasters. Will this position prompt her to request the Council's advice on this topic, or about 'Flood Safety and Risk Management'?

APPENDIX 1

Overviews of global and European policy agendas in relation to the Council’s policy domains and programme lines

Global policy agenda ² (UN, WTO, OECD, etc.)	Convergence with Rli policy domains	Convergence with Rli programme lines ³	Responsible policy bodies ⁴	Important (assessment) moments ⁵	Emerging issues
VN-Habitat	Spatial Development, Housing, Transport & Mobility, etc.	END, DR, RISO, KIF, VMF, GLO	UN Habitat	VN Habitat III 2016 (all UN Member States have been invited to contribute)	The cities (in which all aspects converge)
Basel III (international legislation intended to stabilise the banking sector)	Housing etc.	END	Basel Committee on Banking supervision; see also IMF, World Bank, OECD	Ongoing; implementation, assignment of roles and responsibilities to EU Member States (completion by 2020)	The financial/ economic crisis has been a ‘hot issue’ since 2008; regulation will apply not only to the banks but to the monetary and financial system as a whole
UN Conference on Climate Change	Climate Policy, Energy (plus Food, Water, Agriculture, Nature, Environment, External Safety)	END, DR, RISO, KIF, VMF, GLO	UNFCCC, IPCC	2014 ‘Year of Climate actions’ new agreements are in preparation and are due to be finalised in Paris in 2015; emission targets for 2020	Cities C40 coalition of Febr. 2014); alongside climate mitigation and adaptation, greater attention must be devoted to financing, technology, and governance
UN-Water	Water (plus Food, Agriculture, Nature, Environment)	DR etc.	UN-Water	2015 (contribution to ‘Post 2015 Development Agenda’ and Sustainable Development Goals)	Climate change, transnational waters, drinking water & sanitation, water quality
World Trade Organisation (WTO) Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)	Food, Agriculture, Energy, etc.	END, DR, GLO	WTO, TTIP	WTO: implementation of Bali Agreement 2013; TTIP negotiations ongoing since July 2013	TTIP and US Farm Bill can have major implications for EU and Dutch agrifood sector and economy
UN Rio process	Spatial Development, Housing, Transport & Mobility, Climate Policy, Food, Water, Agriculture, Nature, Environment, Energy, Spatial & Economic Development	END etc.	Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)	Ongoing preparations for ‘Post 2015 Development Agenda’ and Sustainable Development Goals; Rio+30 is in 2022	Sustainable Development Goals (in relation to Planetary Boundaries?); green economy guidelines; strategy for SD financing; sustainable consumption and production

² This overview includes the most important policy agenda points and is restricted to those topics which currently appear most relevant to the work of the Council for Environment and Infrastructure (Rli). Similarly, only the most relevant international institutions are named. The list is therefore not comprehensive. It will be supplemented as necessary when preparing publications on specific topics.

³ Multiannual Programme Lines, Work Programme 2014-2015:

END Economy and sustainable development in the physical domain (incl. resource security)

DR Sustainable land use: flexible and adaptive

RISO Addressing risks and uncertainties within the physical domain

KIF Knowledge within the physical domain: development, use, and infrastructure (incl. reviews and horizon scans)

VMF Civic engagement and responsibility within the physical domain

GLO ‘Glocalisation’: globalisation and localisation within the physical domain

⁴ Only the most relevant international institutions are named. The list is therefore not comprehensive. It will be supplemented as necessary when preparing publications on specific topics.

⁵ Important (assessment) moments: international conferences at which binding agreements are prepared, various policy evaluations (such as MTRs), the expiry dates of policy agreements. The timing of an advisory report will be dependent on the policy cycle and the intended effect.



Global policy agenda ² (UN, WTO, OECD, etc.)	Convergence with Rli policy domains	Convergence with Rli programme lines ³	Responsible policy bodies ⁴	Important (assessment) moments ⁵	Emerging issues
(Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020) (Action Plan for non-communicable diseases)	Food, Agriculture	END etc.	WHO etc.	Implementation completed by 2020	Food and health
UN Food security / UN SR Right to food	Food, Agriculture	END	UN Committee on Food Security (CFS), FAO, HLPE	HLPE is currently involved in consultations about emerging trends etc.	Broader agenda: Resource Nexus Perspective
UN Convention on Biodiversity	Nature (Food, Water, Agriculture)	DR	CBD, IPBES, TEEB	2011-2020 UN Decade of Biodiversity; the CBD is also making preparations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda	Ecosystem services; resilience; economic aspects of biodiversity
IEA (International Energy Agency)	Energy etc.	RISO etc.	IEA etc.		Increasing energy requirement (fossil fuels and renewables) demands greater investments in infrastructure; rising costs and their apportionment
UNISDR	External Safety etc.	RISO etc.	UNISDR etc.	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 2015	Shift from culture of reaction to culture of prevention
World Bank	Agriculture, Transport & Mobility, plus (new topics) Urban (Spatial) Development, Climate, Food Security, Water, Biodiversity, Environment, and Energy	END, DR, RISO, KIF, VMF, GLO			The World Bank is increasingly devoting attention to the Rli's policy domains

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European policy agenda	Convergence with Rli policy domains	Convergence with Rli programme lines ³	Responsible policy bodies ⁴	Important (assessment) moments ⁵	Emerging issues
Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)	Housing etc.	END etc.	EMU (18 Member States following Latvia's accession)	2014 (EP elections/new European Commission); NL assumes rotating presidency in 2016	Further economic and financial integration or... (wild card)
Internal Market / level playing field	Food, Agriculture, Transport & Mobility Energy, etc.	END etc.	EU	2014 (EP elections/new European Commission); NL assumes rotating presidency in 2016	
Competition	All policy domains	END, DR etc.	EU	2014 (EP elections/new European Commission); NL assumes rotating presidency in 2016	
Europe 2020	Food, Agriculture, Nature, Environment Energy, Spatial & Economic Development, etc.	END, DR, KIF etc.	EU (coordinated by SG)	Current policy applies until 2020	7 key initiatives , including Resource Efficiency
Horizon 2020	All policy domains	KIF etc.	EU (DG Research & innovation)	Current policy applies until 2020	Based on current social/societal problems
Smart Regulation	All policy domains	Alle programmalijnen	EU (Secretary-General e.a.)	loopt door	Genoemd als een van onderwerpen voor NL's EU voorzitterschap 2016
EU Regional policy	All policy domains	DR etc.	EU (DG Regio en Urban Policy (DG REGIO))	Current policy applies until 2020	Interregional/transnational cooperation
Territorial agenda	All policy domains	DR etc.	ER/EC (DG REGIO)	Current policy applies until 2020	EU sectoral policy is having an increasing influence on spatial development, although spatial development is not an EU responsibility
Various themes in Transport & Mobility	Transport & Mobility	DR, KIF etc.	EU (DG MOVE)	2020/2030/2050	Policy is becoming more integrated and more geared towards the circular economy, placed in a broader spatial context
EU Climate & Energy Pact / Roadmap to a Low-Carbon Economy in 2050	Climate Policy and Energy (plus Food, Water, Agriculture, Nature, Environment, External Safety)	END, DR, RISO, KIF	EU (DG CLIMA)	Interim assessments in 2020 en 2030	Dutch or German model: NL gradual and long-term; DE intense short-term efforts, now somewhat chaotic

³ Multi-year Programme Lines, Work Programme 2014-2015:

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- DR Sustainable land use: flexible and adaptive
- RISO Addressing risks and uncertainties within the physical domain
- KIF Knowledge within the physical domain: development, use, and infrastructure (incl. reviews and horizon scans)
- VMF Civic engagement and responsibility within the physical domain
- GLO Globalisation: internationalisation with attention for the local dimension within the physical domain

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European policy agenda	Convergence with RII policy domains	Convergence with RII programme lines ³	Responsible policy bodies ⁴	Important (assessment) moments ⁵	Emerging issues
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	Food, Agriculture (Nature, Environment)	END, DR, KIF	EU (DG AGRI)	National implementation to be defined; current policy applies until 2020, with interim evaluation of some aspects in 2015/2016	Innovation and certification are important follow-up activities further to the Council's advisory letter of 2013
Birds and Habitats Directive (Natura 2000)	Nature (plus Spatial Development, Agriculture, Environment, etc.)	END, DR	EU (DG ENV)	The Natura 2000 areas are in various stages of progress in terms of designation and the development of management plans	Relationship between water quality and management of Natura 2000 areas
Water Framework Directive	Water (plus Climate, Agriculture, Nature, etc.)	END, DR	EU (DG ENV)	Water quality is to be at the required standard by 2015 .	Better implementation of current legislation/ guidance: on-charging of costs / water rights
Marine and maritime policy.	Water (Climate etc.)	END, DR, GLO	DG MARE/DG ENV	2015/2020	Oceans
7th Environment Action Programme	Nature, Environment, etc.	END, DR	EDG ENV	Current policy applies until 2020	'Living well, within planetary boundaries'
SEVESO III (European Directive on risks of industrial accidents)	External safety	RISO	EU (DG ENV/ DG ECHO/ DG HR)		Division of responsibilities
Smart Cities	Housing etc.	DR, KIF	EU (DG Energy, Move, Connect en Research)	Doelstellingen zijn voor 2020	RII will include 'Smart Cities' in its examination of technological innovations
Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities	Housing etc.	DR, KIF	EU Member States, under leadership of France		The framework is a resource to help local authorities achieve greater policy integration
Urban Agenda	Housing etc.	DR	EC (in close cooperation with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	CoR advisory report to be issued in June 2014	Strengthening the urban dimension within EU policy, and with EU coordination; cities will play a crucial role in the attainment of the EU 2020 objectives
Memorandum of Understanding: 'Energy efficiency in the built environment in the Benelux and adjacent regions'	Housing etc.	END, DR, VMF	Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia (central, regional and local governments)	EU Directives on energy efficiency in the built environment (EPBD, applies to all new buildings from 2021; EED, effective since April 2014)	Energy performance and energy efficiency in the built environment

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APPENDIX 2

Responsibility and acknowledgements

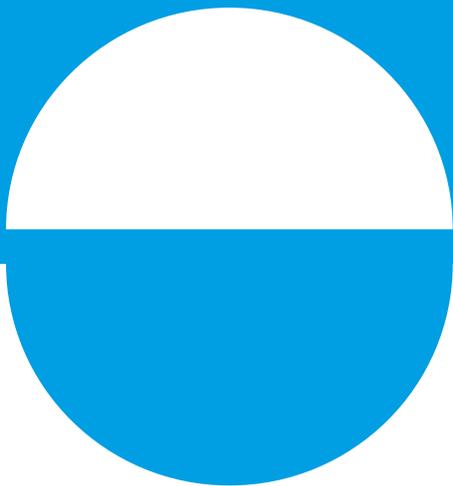
This international scan is the result of several months' creative and inspiring research undertaken by the majority of the Council's secretariat staff. They attended international conferences, consulted counterparts in the Netherlands and abroad, and made extensive use of publications and information available online. The draft version of this document was submitted to a number of external experts. They provided positive and constructive feedback, based on which a number of amendments were made.

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